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Faculty of Philosophy and Arts

Bachelor Thesis

Post 9/11 Islamophobia in Western Europe

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I declare that I prepared the Thesis individually and used only the listed sources and literature.
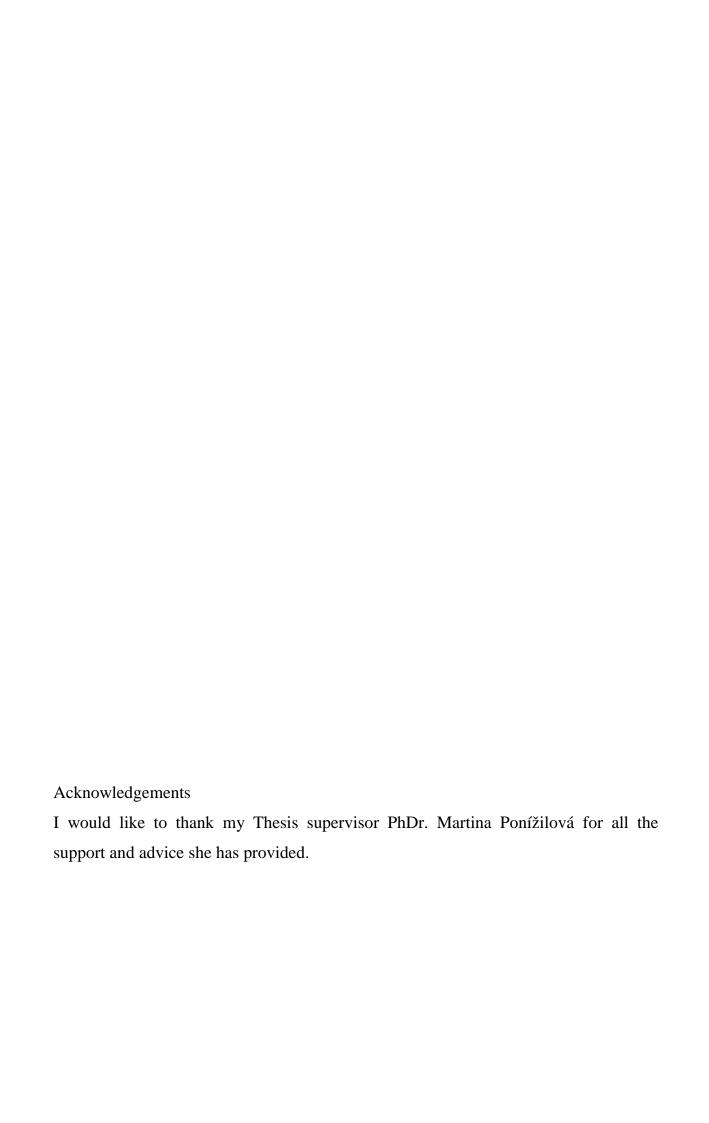

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1. Introduction

The first time the term Islamophobia was mentioned was in an essay written in 1922. Nevertheless, the term became a part of common speech in the 1990s, defining the discrimination of Muslims in Western Europe. As Marcel Maussen points out: "The term Islamophobia groups together all kinds of different forms of discourse, speech and acts, by suggesting that they all emanate from an identical ideological core, which is an irrational fear (a phobia) of Islam" (Maussen 2006: 100). Negative perceptions of Islam exist since the first conflicts between the Muslim world and Europe from the Crusades to colonialism. However, Islamophobia is a modern phenomenon having roots in the integration of Muslim immigrant communities and intensifying after 9/11. Since then, Islamophobia has become one of the most dangerous prejudices of modern world next to xenophobia and anti-Semitism, with its epicenters in the United States and Western Europe. After the 9/11 attacks, there has been a significant increase in calculated discrimination, illicit labeling, negative stereotyping and even physical violence toward Muslims.

The goal of this thesis is to explain the rise of Islamophobia in the post 9/11 Western Europe, with a particular focus on the United Kingdom. The core of my thesis is to find the answers to following questions: How did 9/11 attacks effect status of Muslims in Western Europe and the United Kingdom? Who were the main "catalysts" of this phenomenon, and what are the specific policies used to combat the issue?

In my thesis, I will discuss the post 9/11 reality that Muslims in Western Europe faced, providing basic information on substantial problems such as discrimination, segregation, marginalization, social and political exclusion. I will also name institutions that contributed to the "epidemic" of Islamophobia in the Western Europe. Their actions represented a beginning of a darker time for Muslim population in Europe showing that Western democracy is a very relative and selective phenomenon.

In the first chapter, I will provide statistics concerning Muslim population in Western Europe and present the reasons behind their raising immigration into this part of the world. Moreover, I will discuss their integration in Western European countries after 9/11 attacks, including security laws, immigration policies and other measures that above mentioned countries used predominantly against Muslims. In addition, I will discuss the roles political elites and media played in raising Islamophobia in Western Europe.

In the second chapter, I will focus on the reality of Muslims in the post 9/11 United Kingdom. I will present the roots of Muslim population in the UK as well as introduce the publication that helped define Islamophobia and put it in a spotlight of British public space. In order to show how 9/11 drastically worsened the reality of Muslim communities in the United Kingdom, I will, same as in the first chapter, discuss the legislature, immigration policies, role of the political elites and media but also present several examples of physical abuse toward Muslims. In addition, I will present the depiction of Muslims in British public, discuss their religious freedom as well as discuss significant national and local measures triggered to fight Islamophobia in the post 9/11 United Kingdom.

In the conclusion, I will summarize the key results and answer the research questions I presented as the core of my thesis.

In order to write this thesis, I used mostly literature in English, including books, online versions of leading British newspapers and many other publications on the topic.

2. Islamophobia in Western Europe

The term Islamophobia refers to groundless hostility towards Islam. It also refers to the consequences of that hostility such as political and social discrimination. The phenomenon developed due to sweeping generalization and ignorance of people on the subject of Islam, which further enforced its stigmatization. This ignorance produced animosity and fear, because we fear what we don't know or understand. Closed views of Islam and its presentation as totally different to the non Muslim world, particularly the "Western culture" only deepened the problem. These claims led to stereotypes such as that Muslims are inferior to Western civilization, making the distinction between "us" and "them", "us" being civilized, sophisticated, enlightened and "them" being primitive, violent and irrational. Another and maybe the most significant factor that influenced Islamophobia becoming a global phenomenon is the wide spread opinion that all Muslims support terrorism and are implacably hostile to the non Muslim world (Runnymede Trust 1997: 5-8).

The absence of an open view on Islam, and expression on the contrary of closed views, systematically acted to hurt Muslim communities and enforce Islamophobia. Furthermore, in order to explain the raise of Islamophobia there have been interpretations, such as the one mentioned in Runnymede's Trust report on Islamophobia: "*It is no accident, some commentaries have suggested, that the recent demonizing of Islam began at much the same time that the evil empire of communism receded as a real threat. Western political and popular culture required a new enemy, an implacable other, to replace the Soviet Union. Also, it is cynically if plausibly claimed, the western armaments industry needed a new enemy"* (Runnymede Trust 1997: 8). Be that as it may, Islam is often depicted in Western culture as evil force and even seen as a successor to nazism and communism.

Today Muslims make about 5% of European Union population. Shifting the focus on Western Europe, in France there are about 3.5 million, more than 4 million in Germany, fewer than 2 million in the United Kingdom, and about 150 thousand in Denmark (Muslim statistics 2014). Muslim immigration to Europe started in 20th century and immigrants were arriving from colonies in big numbers. For instance, Muslims in France were mostly North African and Muslims in United Kingdom were mostly Asian. In Germany, Muslim population came as guest workers from Turkey, in the post war years. With the rise of European Union, Muslim populations and their immigration in these European countries, has considerably increased in numbers over the last twenty years (Marechal – Allievi 2003: 456).

The biggest part of Muslim population in Europe comes from several parts of the world. The Arabs are the biggest national group, along with Turkish and Asian. Muslims from a handful of other countries have immigrated to Europe as war refugees. For instance, Muslims from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo fled to Europe after the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia. This process resulted in many refugees entering Germany. The conflicts in Somalia also had a big impact on Muslim immigration to Europe. This phenomenon where the term "immigrant" and "Muslim" coincide is specific to Western Europe.

2. 1. Security and Anti-Terrorism Laws and Policies

Integration of Muslim population in Europe after 9/11 takes place at the same time as the Western world begins to fight Islamist terrorism. Over the last decade, as the countries in Western Europe have reacted to the threat of terrorism, all of them have revised and adjusted their security and anti terrorism laws and at the same time limited the immigration.

Even though France did not heavily modify its anti-terrorism laws after 9/11, the Law on Everyday Security was introduced in November 2001. This law gave much more power to police towards investigating and questioning Muslims. The immigration law from 2003 made it much simpler to deport people who have committed acts justifying a criminal trial or whose actions threaten public order. The penalties for illegal immigration were also increased, new temporary detention centers were built, and new limits were put on family reunification (COE 2012).

Germany also created new policies regarding civil liberties, immigrant rights, the freedom of churches, and law enforcement powers. After September 11th, Germany has considerably toughened its asylum granting procedures and enacted the legal principle that foreigners considered a threat to German democracy and security can be barred entry and deported (Euro-Islam 2014).

The United Kingdom passed a new Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Bill in November, 2001. The law permitted detention of foreign nationals for unlimited time, if it was not considered safe to deport them to their country of origin. It further allowed the freezing and confiscation of funds associated with terrorism, and required individuals not to associate with suspected terrorists or proscribed organizations and report any suspicions to the police. Person can be arrested and interrogated in anticipation of violence rather than in response to the action (The Guardian 2009).

After the terrorist attacks on the London subway in July, 2005, the government passed a modified Prevention of Terrorism Act. This act permitted arrest of terrorism suspects having them detained for up to ninety days without any charges, and proposed that those who have been accused of terrorism should be stripped of their citizenship (The Guardian 2009).

Two important laws in relation to terrorism have also been enacted since September 11th in Denmark. Several laws under name "L35" came into effect in June 2002, passed by the Danish parliament in order to fight international terrorism. The law gave police greater powers of surveillance, which can be used against Muslim individuals and groups. The law permitted monitoring of emails without a permission of a magistrate, and increased resources to use secret informants. Furthermore, It enabled use of telecommunication companies and internet providers to record all internet traffic and mobile telephone communication (Seneviratne – Hwee 2011: 19).

A study by the Institute of Race Relations suggests that the anti-terrorism statutes have been used mostly against Muslims. Minority of arrests have resulted in convictions. Statistically, of all the cases that were analyzed, one in eight was a Muslim individual arrested for terrorism and turned over to the immigration authorities without any prosecution for the alleged initial offenses (Kundnani 2004).

2. 2. Immigration Policies and Physical Abuse

Another relevant aspect that witnesses the rise of Islamophobia in Western Europe is the significant increase in toughening immigration policies of individual countries since the 9/11.

There have been significant changes In France, where the former French president Nicolas Sarkozy, called for tightening of immigration policy. The law was passed in May, 2006. The changes were mostly directed to the Muslim population. The new immigrants were bound to accept religious caricatures in the papers, women were forbidden to take I.D. Photographs with their head covered and had to accept examination by male doctors (Hiroyuki 2007: 6).

Moreover, Muslim immigrants must confront further difficulties including more control over residence permits, visas and nationalization. The term that politicians use to address the problem is "cultural distance" in order to justify the rising Islamophobic measures taken by the government. Physical abuse of Muslim population in Western Europe has increased dramatically after the 9/11 attacks. Abuse includes property damage and discrimination against Muslims. In the Netherlands, at least eighty violent events against Muslims followed the 9/11 attacks. In 2004, the murder of Theo Van Gogh was followed by a planted bomb at a Muslim school that burned down (BBC 2004).

The Collectif Contre l'Islamophobie en France (CCIF) was founded in 2003. Its purpose was to follow and investigate anti-Muslim actions. In the span of only one year, the CCIF encountered numerous incidents. Among those were physical attacks on Muslims and vandalizations of mosques and cemeteries (CCIF 2014).

2. 3. Role of Political Leaders and Political Parties

In the last decade Europe has changed, became more liberal, more open and more welcoming. The "destruction" of national boundaries and the rise of the European Union have greatly affected the Islamophobia problem that exists today.

After flooding the European countries with immigrants, there has been a trend of rising nationalism in Western European countries. Anti-immigrant atmosphere is a frequent trouble of the modern world, especially problems such as integration of culturally distinctive populations. Nonetheless, in Western Europe, the more suitable phrase for addressing these issues would be Islamophobia.

It has been a continuous trend in Western Europe to promote nationalism in order to fight immigration. For example, many radical right-wing parties were very active in promotion of racist and anti-immigrant propaganda. Be that as it may, since 9/11 it is evident that this rhetoric turned exclusively anti-Muslim. For instance, The North League started to modify its rhetoric in order to use the current anti-Muslim sentiments in Italy, to score political points. In addition, former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi has several times publicly emphasized the superiority of Western civilization and the backwardness of Islam (Hafez 2014: 60).

In addition, the German DVO party gained power in a similar fashion as well. The far right nationalistic parties gaining strength and support is an obvious indicator that the population is turning more hostile towards the Muslims. For example, In Germany the phrase "leitkultur" was extremely controversial before it became a common part of political discourse after the 9/11. The term is associated with a mono-cultural vision of German society, with ideas of European cultural superiority, and with policies of compulsory cultural assimilation (Kumanoff 2004).

In France for instance, nationalist politician Le Pen and his party the National Front, have used the legacy of 9/11 attacks and the rising concern regarding Muslim terrorism to propel the party to a higher position. Furthermore, politicians didn't hesitate to use anti-mosque campaigns in order to win votes and promote their parties (Benammar 2014).

In Netherlands, similar actions were even more radical and transparent. The anti-Muslim sentiment has come to such extent that violence and death threats have become frequent in debates. Some of the policies that were debated were the forbidding of Islam or the deportation of a part of Muslim population. The Netherlands is arguably the best example of Islamophobia becoming a dominant problem in Western Europe. It represents the transformation of Europe from a liberal and open to nationalist and closed environment (Maussen 2006: 25).

Over the years it has become normal and excepted to promote anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant rhetoric in politics. This type of behavior would be extremely criticized and sanctioned in the past.

There are a few more trends in today politics that should be addressed. One being the difference between radical Islam and law-abiding Islam that has been presented to the public. Better explained by the terms of "the good" and "the bad" Islam. One of the most prominent politicians that promoted this rhetoric was former French president Nicolas Sarkozy (Murray 2012). The need for labeling the religion good or bad, means that there is a presumption that Muslim population is potentially dangerous.

Another tendency has been the use of Muslim representatives to criticize Islam because being part of the Muslim population gives them more credibility to their non Muslim counterparts. They can express those radical feelings that the others are hesitant to show or expose. One of the most fitting examples is Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a former Dutch politician from Somalia. She has a reputation in the Netherlands as an expert on Islam. Ali is also famous for her radical opinions. She often stated that some forms of Islam, the way they are now, cannot be integrated in liberal democracy, but her most controversial statement was naming the prophet Muhammad "a pedophile". In addition, a film, written by Hirsi Ali, entitled "Submission", was a highly controversial one, its attack on Islamic culture was overarching and anything but subtle (Holland 2007).

2. 4. Media Coverage

Media in Western Europe and their reports on Islam after 9/11 have greatly influenced the rise of Islamophobic behavior in mentioned area. In Europe most of the media is not forthrightly anti-Muslim. Naturally there has been radical proclamations involving Islamophobic rhetoric but these incidents were not so common.

Nevertheless, there has been a rising trend since 9/11 to highlight the threat of terror and Islam in the modern age. All mentioned countries have many such cases. The anti-Muslim oriented news have had more air time than any other, with continuous intention to associate radical Islam with the domestic one. These actions had very successful consequences in antagonizing the nation's population against Muslim immigrants.

The leverage that was used by anti-Muslim oriented politicians was the conservative attitude of Muslims towards their women. The "gender question" became increasingly mentioned in order to show the vast difference between the Muslim and the European culture. In the United Kingdom for instance, there has been a significant increase in stories concerning Muslims in the media. There are similarities in portraying the Muslims in the media, comparing The Times and The Guardian newspapers. In both newspaper agencies there has been a tendency of highlighting the negative connotation the word Muslim started to have. The trend of portraying every Muslim as a potential terrorist is present in both newspapers (Poole 2002: 248).

Correspondingly, German media started covering international stories concerning Muslims, but always connecting world events with domestic situation. Similarly, in Germany, the topic of Islam is often being covered as international story, but always mentioning domestic Muslim population that can be equally dangerous. In Germany, the gender issues were in the spotlight, the maltreatment of women and the forced marriages were a handy weapon of anti-Muslim oriented media. The consequence was the simplified and not objective picture of Islam and the Muslim world in the eyes of the domestic German population (Hafez 2009: 41).

In addition, the goal of Italian media after 9/11 was also to simplify and label Muslims as a dangerous, conservative people that have no modern, liberal characteristics. The themes that were highlighted were again conservative attitude of Muslims towards women, terrorist attacks, Muslim integration and citizenship issues (Euro-Islam 2014a).

As a consequence, highlighting the controversial sides of Islam and undermining the positive ones, made people more distant and anxious about the Muslim population. There has been almost no media coverage nor discussions on the similarities between European and the Muslim cultures and customs. For instance honor killings which are a big controversy in the Western civilization were continually highlighted as an example of Muslim primitivism, even though they are uncommon and cannot represent Muslim population as a whole (Daily Mail 2011).

Moreover, Islam has been getting more and more coverage in the Netherlands also. The incidents were many, one of them being canceling the opera Aisha in Rotterdam. The theater feared reaction of the Muslim minority that was antagonized by the play. Controversy of the event started debates about the impact of Islam and Muslim population on artistic freedom (Simons 2000).

There has been a number of similar incidents also in France. The media in France, similar to their mentioned Western European colleagues had a tendency to highlight and promote the prejudices about Islam with a clear intention to rise the anxiety of non Muslim population in France. One of the biggest incidents was the "hijab[1] controversy". A public debate was organized on the topic, but the participants were picked and consulted beforehand. The goal was to show a subjective perspective on the issue in order to further diminish Islam. All the people that didn't speak against wearing of the hijab were eliminated. Part of the debate were social scientists, teachers etc (D'Apollonia 2012: 185).

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[1] A veil that covers the head and chest, which is particularly worn by a Muslim female beyond the age of puberty in the presence of adult males outside of their immediate family.

3. Muslims in the United Kingdom

Muslims migrated to the United Kingdom for the first time in 18th century from the Indian subcontinent. Today they form a big part of the UK society and cultural heritage. British Muslims represent a big cultural and religious edition to the British melting pot. One of the most characteristic aspects of this community is its vast diversity. In the United Kingdom one would find Muslims that originate from all over the world. Most of the UK Muslim community comes from the Indian sub-continent, from countries such as India and Pakistan, in the UK also live Muslims from Saudi Arabia, Africa, East Asia and East Europe. The Muslim population in the UK is growing, one of the reasons being the increase in asylum seekers. The biggest Muslim population is based in the capital, London (Runnymede Trust 1997: 14).

Even though it existed as a sentiment, Islamophobia as a term wasn't understood nor often used. The publication that finally put it in the spotlight was the Runnymede Trust's report "Islamophobia a challenge for us all". The report helped raise the alertness of the problem in the political and social circles. The report defined Islamophobia as: "Unfounded hostility towards Islam, to the practical consequences of such hostility in unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals and communities, and to the exclusion of Muslims" (Runnymede Trust 2001: 4).

The report played a great role not only in defining Islamophobia but triggering many debates on the issue. Runnymede Trust's report made it clear that after the 9/11 attacks, Islamophobia was radically increased among non-Muslim population in the UK. Many other reports and researches following the attacks show a significant raise in discrimination and xenophobia, mostly towards Muslims in the UK and Europe. The 9/11 attacks further contributed to its more frequent use in public discourse. In addition, the London underground train bombings made the Muslim problem even more pressing.

3. 1. Relations between the State and Muslims

In order to understand the relation between the State and the Muslims in the UK, it is crucial to highlight the specific nature of relations between the State and each religious community. Each religious community, in its institutional form has a unique position in relation to the State. For instance the Church of England enjoys a privileged position as regards the function and role of the State. The privileged status of the Church of England also means that there are automatic seats for some of its clergy in the House of Lords. However, there is no official recognition of Islam in the UK (Esposito – Burgat 2003: 227).

In the United Kingdom there isn't a written constitution that defines these relations. The UK therefore does not have a system of recognition of religion as found in EU states such as Germany. It is a complicated relationship, that is driven by different Acts that address the religious community in question. For instance, the Jewish community is recognized as an ethnic group which means it is protected when it comes to discrimination, however Muslims in the UK don't have that status. Nevertheless, when it comes to citizenship, religion is not an important factor. As regards the relationship between British Muslim communities and the State, across the EU there are three main models by which individual states have tried to deal with its minority communities: the "Guestworker", "Assimilation", and "Multiculturalism" models. The latter is used in the United Kingdom (Esposito – Burgat 2003: 12).

Multiculturalism model shows monarchy's effort to preserve its cultural and religious diversity. It is debatable, which of these models is the best one, considering all of them have their positives and negatives.

Jurgen Habermas described the Ethnic Minorities (multicultural) model as following: "*In multicultural societies, the equally protected coexistence of life forms means ensuring for each citizen the opportunity to grow up, and have his or her children grow up, in a cultural world of his or her own origins without being insulted because of this by others; the opportunity to come to terms with this culture – as every other – to perpetuate it in its conventional form or to transform it; and also the opportunity to turn his or her back on its imperatives out of indifference or to break away from them in a self-critical manner, to live to live with a split identity*" (Habermas 1993: 143).

This model has faced great public criticism especially after the 9/11 attacks and the London train bombings. The London bombings were coordinated suicide bomb attacks that happened on the London transit system in July 2005. At 8:50 am explosions tore through three trains on the London Underground, killing 39 people. An hour later 13 people were killed when a bomb detonated on the upper deck of a bus in Tavistock Square. More than 700 people were injured in the four attacks. In September 2005 al-Qaeda deputy leader Ayman al-Zawahiri claimed partial responsibility for the bombings, but the extent and nature of al-Qaeda's true role in the attacks remained murky. In April 2007 three British Muslims were charged with assisting in the planning of the July 7 bombings, but they were cleared two years later (Britanicca 2014). Nevertheless, the incident further antagonized British society toward Muslims.

The success of Multiculturalism in the UK is an ongoing debate, with strong arguments on both sides of the table. Many surveys were conducted in order to illustrate the ethnic feeling and identity of minorities in the UK. For instance, a survey executed by the Policy Studies Institute showed that more than 50% of Pakistani population feel as being British, however the results have also shown that 90% of the population in question feels the same way regarding being Pakistani. It seems therefore that what is evolving among the Pakistani heritage communities (and most likely other ethnic minorities) is a sense of hybrid or dual identity (Tariq 1997: 337).

As a consequence many British citizens don't trust the loyalty of the British born and raised Muslims.

In addition, considering the relationship between Muslims and the State in the UK, it is important to mention that Muslim population has its place in the state institutions. Muslims are represented in the House of Lords and in the House of Commons (Fetzer – Soper 2005 :59). There is also a great number of Muslims that take part in local government as concilors. All these representatives got to politics through their political parties. It is important to add that all these parties are established British parties, Muslim political parties have had little success in UK politics (Kurzman – Naqui 2009: 9).

3. 2. Legal Status of Muslims in the UK

Before the 9/11 attacks there has been a defined legislature addressing racism in the UK. This legislature was clear but it failed to address more contemporary issues the UK faced. Traditional skin color discrimination has been subsided by religious and ethnic discrimination, towards Islam and Muslims. However, Muslim population doesn't have the same legislative protection. The legislature has not been updated in order to address and protect the multi-ethnic and religious communities.

Race Relations Act from 1976 provided protection on the basis of racial group. This included race, color, nationality and national or ethnic origin as markers of race. Nevertheless, religion and belief were not a part of this Act. In addition, this Act was updated with a new law that included mono-ethnic religious groups as well. The law provided protection to mono-ethnic religious groups such as Jewish and Sikh communities, but still didn't incorporate multi-ethnic religious groups such as Muslims. As a result it became illegal to discriminate against Blacks, Asians, Pakistanis etc. but it was legal and accepted to discriminate against someone because he or she was a Muslim (Allen 2005: 40).

Before the 9/11 attacks different ethnic minorities in Britain therefore had legislative protection depending on the religious minority they belonged to. When the attacks took place, the Muslim minorities didn't have complete protection under law, especially vulnerable were those who identified themselves as a multi-ethnic religious community. However, it is important to mention that legislative protection against religious discrimination did exist in the UK but only in Northern Ireland. Nevertheless, the legislature considering religious discrimination addressed only Protestant and Roman Catholic communities.

The Northern Ireland Act in 1998 was a big step in combating religious discrimination. Discriminating against religious communities by the government and public bodies became punishable by law. In the aspect of Northern Ireland as part of the UK therefore, legislation was successfully enforced that stressed why such legislation was needed, and possibly more importantly, that it was completely applicable.

The implementation of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ("ECHR") by the Human Rights Act 1998 ("HRA") provided within the UK the first direct protection from religious discrimination outside Northern Ireland. The Act provided for the enforcement in UK legislation of those rights secured by the ECHR known as convention rights: the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including the freedom to change one's religion or belief, and the right to freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or in private, to manifest one's religion or belief, limited to acts of worship, teaching, practice and observance (The Guardian 2009a).

From this perspective, it could be argued that as Muslims and other multi-ethnic religious communities were not afforded equal protection under existing legislation that they were subsequently being discriminated against on the basis of religion.

This also seemingly appeared to contravene Protocol 12 of the ECHR: "*Protection against discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, color, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other* status" (COE 2000). However, despite 25 of the Council's member states signing up to Protocol 12, the UK in the end did not, which again left the same legislative anomaly in place (Parliament UK 2005).

Therefore prior to the 9/11 attacks, it was completely legal in the United Kingdom to encourage religious hatred against those communities and individuals that existed outside of the legal definition of racial group. After the 9/11 reality of Muslims in the UK turned to worse dramatically. The "War on Terror" and prevailing anti-Muslim sentiment resulted in many irrational and groundless attacks on Muslim community.

Following are some of the headlines covering anti Muslim incidents since the 2001 attacks till today:

- A mosque in Belfast, Northern Ireland, had two of its windows smashed (BBC 2001).
- Muslim woman's body found in hospital morgue covered with bacon (Moss 2003).
- Boy, 14, beat Muslim student in racist attack (Muir 2004).
- Muslim graves targeted in hate attack (Manchester Evening News 2009).
- Woman fined for racially aggravated assault on woman wearing burka (Metropolitan Police 2013).
- About 700 mosques have been targeted in Britain since 9/11 attacks in 2001 (Rawlinson – Gander 2013).
- Muslim schoolboys banned from lessons for refusing to shave (Williams 2014).

Because these attacks could not be labeled as racial, the attackers could not be prosecuted and punished. That is how lack of legislature encouraged people to abuse, harass and assault Muslims, as well as do damage to their property and their religious institutions. In order to address this problem, strengthen security and combat terrorism that was surfacing as the biggest national threat, the UK government enacted the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Bill in 2001 (The Guardian 2009).

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 was successfully amended to extend the two aggravated offenses of harassment and violence, as well as criminal damage to property that was motivated by religious hatred. As a result, the custodial sentence was extended from a maximum of two to seven years. The Anti Terrorism, Crime and Security Bill 2001 also attempted to legislate against instances of the incitement to religious hatred as well (The Guardian 2009).

In addition: *"The Act conferred greater powers on law enforcement authorities to counter terrorism but severely limited civil liberties and human rights. The most controversial element of the Act was Part 4, which related to immigration and asylum. It stated that, UK Home Secretary is empowered under Part 4 to certify any foreign national as a suspected international terrorist if he reasonably (a) believes that the person's presence in the United Kingdom is a risk to national security, and (b) suspects that the person is a terrorist"* (IHRC 2004). Nevertheless, idea was not supported by Muslims. Following on so soon after 9/11, many felt that a Bill addressing the issue of anti-terrorism was not an ideal way of providing protection to Muslims. The growing trend to label all Muslims terrorists was becoming a major issue. Muslim community didn't want any further associations with the word "terrorist" (Parliament UK 2003).

Many influential Muslim organizations such as Islamic Human Rights Commission didn't accept the privileges the Bill offered thinking it would do more damage than good to the Muslim communities.

Afterward, the attempt to implement legislature on the issue was unsuccessful resulting in neglect of multi-ethnic faith communities, including Muslims, that were again left unprotected against the offense of incitement to religious hatred.

One of the most vocal parties in their hatred of Muslims was the British National Party. Their publications that incited hatred and aggressive behavior against Muslims could not be processed by the Police because there was no legislature at the time to support this type of incitement. In 2001 British National Party and other far-right and neo-Nazi groups caused unrest and tensions throughout the UK because of their anti-Muslim rhetoric. However, the anomaly in legislature concerning Act 1986 was continued to be exploited. In the run up to the 2002 local government elections and in all elections since - at local, national and European levels - the British National Party have run openly Islamophobic campaigns that ignited hatred towards Muslims and caused civil unrest. In addition, their campaign targets the cities with higher Muslim population (Ansari 2012: 165-174).

With the legislative loophole continuing to exist, in early 2002, the Religious Offenses Bill was introduced in 2002 in the House of Lords. On its second reading in January, 2002, the Bill was committed for consideration by a Select Committee where numerous faith and non-faith communities and organizations presented both written and oral evidence either for or against the Bill. The report that followed noted that whilst the Government and all law enforcement agencies were in favor of legislation against incitement to hatred on grounds of religion or belief in principle, there was some concern about legislation. It was the issue of the right to "free speech" that initiated the most opposition and arguments against the proposed legislation. Indeed it was a very significant objection and one that was played out in the liberal left-wing newspapers, namely the Guardian, Independent and Observer. As Elizabeth Poole noted: "*Freedom of speech continued to be a significant issue for the Guardian and resulted in a number of negative articles about Muslims, it exaggerated (the proposed laws) potential to discredit them*" (Poole 2002: 11).

The opportunity to finally address the issue opened in 2005 when the Racial and Religious Hatred Bill was introduced. The purpose of the Bill was to criminalize stirring up religious hatred. The main goals were to extend the racial hatred offenses in the Public Order Act 1986, to apply this to words or behavior that is likely to encourage religious hatred, and to apply it to believers in any or no religion, both mono and multi-ethnic, or where the hatred is against a person or group that does not share the beliefs of the perpetrator. In addition, the offense would carry a maximum seven-year jail sentence (The Guardian 2009b).

There were major concerns over freedom of speech before passing the Bill. Again this became a prominent issue in the arguments being posited against the Bill, with many comedians expressing their concern that they would be barred from joking about religion. Some of them considered that the Bill would undermine free speech, and that religious representatives already use similar legislature to silence critics. The Home Office insisted that the legislation was to penalize only the incitement of hatred, and that satire, criticism and jokes will still be allowed (BBC 2004a).

The Racial and Religious Hatred Bill was presented to Parliament on 31st January 2006. Two more amendments were proposed, in order to make sure that people could debate, ridicule or insult religions as long as they did not intend to stir up hatred, or were reckless about doing so. At the vote though, on both amendments the government were defeated and the Bill didn't pass. Government pursued the enactment of the Bill for a long time and the defeat was seen as a debacle, both by media and the public (BBC 2006).

3. 3. Anti-Terrorism Laws and Policies

The 7/7 bombing attacks in London made terrorism the most pressing issue on the table. There was a need for an effective legislature to combat terrorism on domestic and global front. The Prevention of Terrorism Act was drawn in 2005. Under this Act, the government repealed the powers available to it under Part 4 of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 and proposed their replacement with a system of control orders that could be made against any suspected terrorist, whether a UK national or a non-UK national, or whether the terrorist activity was international or domestic (The Guardian 2009d).

The Terrorism Bill contained measures designed to ensure that the police, intelligence agencies and courts had the necessary tools to tackle terrorism and bring perpetrators to justice, and contained three new offenses: Acts Preparatory, Indirect Incitement, and Terrorist training in the use of hazardous substances (The Guardian 2009c).

The Government stressed that the Bill was not a direct response to London bombings as it had been announced that new terrorism legislation was to be forthcoming in the autumn anyway. Nevertheless, Prime Minister at the time, Tony Blair proclaimed that the government is changing their rhetoric and the purpose of the Bill was predominately to stop extremists from abusing the freedoms Britain provides them.

Tony Blair drew up a Twelve Point Plan which included further proposed legislative measures including:

- Proscribing the group Hizb ut-Tahrir and the successor organization of Al-Muhajiroun - and look at whether the grounds for proscription need to be widened (Hizb ut-Tahrir in Britain has since said that it would fight any ban through the courts).
- Powers to deport or deny entry to foreign nationals who "foster hatred", and an automatic refusal of asylum to anyone who has participated in terrorist activity.
- Consultation to strip citizenship from naturalized citizens engaged in terrorism
- The 90-day pre-charge detention of terrorism suspects.
- Creating new powers to close places of worship used to foment extremism.
- Creating an offense of glorifying terrorism, whether in the UK or abroad.
- Consultation with Muslim leaders about drawing up a list of those not suitable to preach, who will be excluded from Britain.
- Consultation to strip citizenship from naturalized citizens engaged in terrorism.
- Mr. Blair also added that the Government was prepared to amend the Human Rights Act in respect of interpretation of the Article three of the ECHR if legal obstacles were to arise (The Guardian 2005).

After the Twelve Point Plan had been published, Prime Minister was warned that such measures especially those related to banning Muslim organizations and closing mosques are highly dangerous and will incite civil unrest. The Twelve Point Plan was presented to the public, a day after PM Blair was blamed by one of the bombers for the London attacks because of his support of the War on Terror, and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In addition to the plan, and after the London attacks, the UK government formed a "Muslim Taskforce" in order to get the Muslims involved in combating terrorism. In addition a working group was formed in order to fight Islamophobia, and better the image of Islam in public eyes. They were also scathing of the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005 and made demands for a public inquiry into the underlying causes of the July attacks. Prime Minister made a proposal to allow the police to detain terror suspects for up to 90 days without charge did not pass but was afterward modified and reduced to 28 days.

3. 4. Immigration of Muslims in the UK

Muslims living in the United Kingdom cannot be labeled as immigrants today. They are a crucial part of the melting pot that makes the monarchy. Since the 9/11 attacks, there were changes to the immigration policies of United Kingdom, but they didn't have big impact on Muslim population.

However, there were several media incidents that had a negative impact on perception of Muslims in British society. After the 9/11 attacks asylum seekers have become victims of increasing media hostility. In the United Kingdom, for some time before the attacks, there was a lot of hostile press against asylum seekers to the extent that in leading newspapers such stories were covered daily. The headlines were targeting immigrants, saying how destructive effect they had on society. Immigrants were labeled as dangerous and unwanted in the media, especially after alleged information that some of 9/11 attackers were asylum seekers in Europe. In addition, 7/7 underground bombings gave even more legitimacy to those accusations (Mail Online 2005).

There has been a continuous trend of demonizing and attacking asylum seekers through the press. For instance, after the London underground bombings, the leader of al-Muhajiroun, Omar Bakri Mohammad, fled the UK due to a media campaign against him (BBC 2005). As a result, asylum seekers were starting to be identified as terrorists and a potential domestic threat.

3. 5. The Public Space

There has been another phenomenon emerging in the United Kingdom after the 9/11 attacks. Justifying Islamophobia has become a worrying trend in British society. In order to address and understand the problem, it is crucial to explore it from different aspects. The public, the media and the politics.

The Muslim population in Britain is the second biggest religious community, but also, which is very important, a very physically distinctive one too. For instance their clothing is easily recognizable by other members of British society. Especially Muslim women, wearing "burka"[2] and "niqab"[3] are easily identified as different. This has clear negative consequences for Muslims in the UK, as their difference has further separated them from the British society (Sardar 2002: 51).

After 9/11, their difference has become highly negatively viewed and looked upon. The situation that was already bad got worse. The publicity that Muslim communities got after 9/11 was entirely negative. The negative publicity combined with them being very recognizable resulted in aggressive attitude and series of violent acts toward Muslims as mentioned above.

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[2] A full body cloak worn by some Muslim women.
[3] A cloth which covers the face worn by some Muslim women.

As a consequence, after the 9/11, British Muslims have had to accept their new identity of potentially dangerous group, or even being labeled as terrorists. They became increasingly discriminated against which led to a public depiction of Muslims as either being terrorists or supportive of terrorism. Religious and cultural distinction between Muslim and non Muslim part of British society was increasingly exaggerated. Therefore, Islamophobia took its place in the center of British public space (Sardar 2002: 51).

After the 9/11 attacks, the Muslims were depicted as incompatible with the rest of British society, as well as British values, ethics and norms. 9/11 highly influenced the radicalism of British society as well as issues such as the role of women, freedom of speech and multiculturalism. All these questions including "British way of life" amongst many more were seen as being threatened by the "Muslim factor" in the UK (Sardar 2002: 53).

This type of Islamophobic rhetoric was continuously presented to public after 9/11, resulting in increased hate and hostility toward Muslims among British people. With this type of hatred being continuously advertised in public space, public became more receptive to the ideas of Islamophobia. Further normalization and rationalization followed, making Islamophobia in Britain a pressing issue.

3. 6. Role of Political Leaders and Political Parties

As mentioned above, political elites and political parties, especially the right wing ones, used the anti Muslim post 9/11 atmosphere in order to achieve their own goals and score political points. The British National Party, I mentioned above, was one of the first political entities to embrace Islamophobia. Following the attacks, BNP continuously propagated hatred and encouraged abuse and insult of British Muslims. One of their political goals was to present the danger of Islam to British public.

In order to achieve this goal BNP created a leaflet entitled "The truth about I.S.L.A.M." (using "I.S.L.A.M." as an acronym for "Intolerance, Slaughter, Looting, Arson and Molestation of women"). The leaflet was widely distributed in the UK. In the leaflet BNP states: " *Among the native British majority, no one dares to tell the truth about Islam and the way it threatens our democracy, traditional freedoms and identity - except for the British National Party. So angry are the old parties about our willingness to stand up and tell the truth that they are about to rush new repressive 'laws' through Parliament to make exposing the evils of Islam an imprisonable offense. The facts you are reading in this leaflet will soon be 'illegal' - so read on while you can"* (British National Party n.d.).

BNP concludes its anti Muslim pamphlet as following: "*It's a war in which the weapons of the enemy are immigration, high birthrates, and the old political parties. A war in which the only response that can do any good is to organize a new political party - one which will stop immigration and ensure that the British remain the majority and take back control of our own country - the British National Party! Join our Crusade*" (British National Party n.d.).

According to the British National Party Muslims were the main problem, and for the benefit and well being of all in British society, the party only wanted to benefit its people. This type of rhetoric being publicly advertised and distributed is the best example of how receptive to Islamophobia British society in the post 9/11 UK was.

Another product of the raising radicalism among British public was the spread of anti-Muslim sentiment among other British minorities. Hindus and Sikhs were distancing themselves from Islam in order to protect themselves from anti-Muslim attacks. The British National Party tried to use the situation by publishing another Islamophobic project, supported by Sikh and Hindu organizations. The participation of mentioned organizations meant further validation of BNP's views on Islam.

In their press statement BNP explained their goal was to: "*Give the lie to those who falsely claim that we are racists or haters. We sympathize and identify with every people in the world who want to secure or preserve a homeland for themselves, their traditions and their posterity. And we demand and strive for that same basic human right for the native English, Scots, Welsh, Irish and Ulster folk who together make up the British*" (Allen 2010: 90).

The effort to exclude the Muslims from the rest of British society is evident. By incorporating others in their version of British nation BNP distanced themselves from racism. Nevertheless, despite their good relationships with Sikhs and Hindus, BNP doesn't incorporate them in their British society. It is somewhat ironic, that Hindu and Sikh groups decided to join BNP's venture, considering the fact that not so long ago, that same party attacked their communities also. This proves how grave their fear of anti Muslim backlash was at the time.

British National Party gained power by their openly anti-Muslim campaigns and ideology. Justifying Islamophobia was its daily agenda and it was crucial to their success. But more importantly it had an enormous impact on shaping part of the British public into anti-Muslim radicals. As a consequence of their success, many other right wing groups such as White Wolves and Combat 18 have grown in size and strength.

3. 7. Media Coverage

Politicians and political elites were not the only source of Islamophobia in the UK, the British media played a significant role in its development. The language, terminology and ideas published in many British newspapers, portraying Muslims in a negative way, influenced greatly the public opinion.

Differences and stereotypes were highlighted, violent Muslim behavior made headlines. Media portrayal of Muslims had a crucial impact on the way British society sees and understands Muslims in post 9/11 United Kingdom. Therefore, in order to understand post 9/11 anti Muslim sentiment in British society, it is essential to consider the role of media in this period.

The media is the primary source through which information and knowledge about Muslims and Islam reached the public. As Cristopher Allen in his book "Islamophobia" noted: *The role and impact of the media is one that is contentious and debatable…to try and explain the media's role therefore remains difficult. None of the reports suggested that the media directly caused or, indeed, were responsible for any reported or identified act of aggression or significant change in attitude. However, this is not to dismiss their impact in any way, and despite there being no direct evidence to suggest otherwise, the media continue to play a major role in the formulation and establishment of popular perceptions in the public sphere"* (Allen 2010: 96).

According to Allen, media plays a very important role, but there is no evidence of it being directly involved in activating anti-Muslim sentiment or acts. There is strong evidence of dramatic increase in writing about Muslims and Islam in the newspapers after 9/11. The newspapers recorded record sales, having increased number of pages and being sold out on daily basis. Therefore, the audience of British press in post 9/11 period was much bigger in numbers.

Press attention that Muslims and Islam received after 9/11 is best portrayed by former Guardian editor Brian Whitaker in his publication "Islam and the British press"[4]. Whitaker did his research by focusing on online version of most prominent British newspapers, that incorporated word "Muslim". First part of his research covered the period from January to the 9th September, 2001.

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[4] see Appendix 1

Second part of his research covered the articles published from June 2001 to June 2002. The results were dramatically different and numbers increased significantly.

As Allen interprets the results, it would be unfounded to say that all of these articles were anti-Muslim oriented, but it would be safe to suggest that as the number of articles about Muslims rose, the Islamophobic content rose also.

In addition, former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher condemned Muslim leaders in The London Times for not taking responsibility for 9/11, furthermore she insisted that all Muslims should take responsibility for the attacks. Margaret Thatcher assumed that a Muslim, who doesn't feel the need to apologize for the attacks, is consequently supportive of terrorism. Such public commentaries were not helping the innocent Muslim communities in Britain; on the contrary it damaged them immensely. It was a rhetoric that divided Britain on "them" and "us", "them" being Muslims and "us" being the rest of British society. The London Times published another article only several days later entitled: "This war is not about terror, it's about Islam". The article supported Thatcher's opinion, and highlighted the fear of Islam saying it was very real and justified. The writer even stressed that the Muslim immigrants are only waiting for their chance to attack, further raising the anti-Muslim sentiment among British public (Selbourne 2001).

Muslim element in British society was continually stressed in British media as a potential threat and a challenge to the "British way of life". In the Guardian for instance Polly Toynbee wrote about her antipathy toward Muslims and Islam in a article "Last chance to speak out". Toynbee already wrote a couple of similar anti-Muslim articles, such as the one published in the Independent "I am an Islamophobe and proud" - Toynbee used Qur'an and selectively referenced from it, in order to prove her point (Toynbee 2001).

The article that describes post 9/11 British mindset the best is the one written by a British politician Norman Lamont. Lamont's article presents widespread anti-Muslim political opinions that circulated in the public space of Britain at the time. It represents a popular trend that emerged in post 9/11 Britain and that is justifying Islamophobia. In his article "Down with multiculturalism, book-burning and fatwas", Lamont states:

"*Multiculturalism can easily degenerate into moral relativism. Our laws are based on values, and the state has the right to intervene to protect them. Individuals cannot be left alone in their chosen communities, if that involves forced marriages, polygamy, burning books, supporting fatwas or even fighting against our Armed Forces. The latter phenomenon, in particular, shows up starkly the danger of rejecting assimilation in favor of facile ideas of diversity. It is natural to want to avoid these issues, but it is dangerous to do so*" (Lamont 2002).

Lamont suggests that this "Muslim difference" is the very danger British society is faced with. Lamont adds that it is not Indians and Africans who were not able to be the part of a multicultural society, which leaves British Muslims as the guilty party. According to Lamont, it is Muslims who are the biggest threat to the "British way of life" and successful British multicultural society.

Articles in the British media such as this one, influenced greatly the anti-Muslim atmosphere in post 9/11 Britain. The "irreconcilable difference" of British Muslims was highlighted and stressed simultaneously justifying raising Islamophobia in British society.

3. 8. Religious Practice of Islam in the UK

It is relevant to point out that Muslims in the UK have the freedom to practice their religion, the same as all other religious groups. However, there are several issues concerning the subject.

The main problem is that most of social practices in the UK are established around Christian institutions. This may be an issue for minority religious groups. For instance, public holidays are established around Christian festivals.

As regards to shari'a law, it has not been officially recognized, but some informal shari'a courts have been established. In 1978, the Islamic Shari'a Council (ISC) was established in London. The Islamic Shari'a Council was formed to solve the matrimonial problems of Muslims living in the United Kingdom in the light of Islamic family law. The council is made up of members from all of the major schools of Islamic legal thought and is widely accepted as an authoritative body with regards to Islamic law. The main function of this council is to guide the Muslims in the UK in matters related to religious issues as well as solving their matrimonial problems which are referred to it by the Muslims of this country (The Islamic Shari'a Council 2014). Also regulations have been maintained in order that animals may continue to be slaughtered in a manner suitable for the provision of "halal" meat.

3. 9. Relevant Measures and Policies to Fight Islamophobia

As regards to combating Islamophobia in the United Kingdom, number of various programs, events and activities were undertaken either as a result of 9/11, or were activated by 9/11 in order to tackle the problem. The primal purpose of these programs was to combat misconceptions and false information about Islam and Muslims. I will present here some of the most relevant.

3. 9. 1. Police force

British police forces responded to the anti-Muslim threats on all levels, including local, regional and national. Their goal was to reduce the sense of danger in Muslim communities and make them feel safe by preventing any possible retaliatory attacks.

Across the UK, police patrols were intensified around mosques and Islamic centers. Furthermore, police representatives communicated with Muslim leaders in order to hear their fears and concerns and protect them more effectively. European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia published a collection of reports concerning post 9/11 anti Islamic reactions.

A prime example of efficient police and Muslim communities' collaboration can be found in the document: "*A group was set up in Birmingham, lead by Birmingham City Council and the local Police to discuss current issues and plans to decrease tensions within the city. Its meetings were attended by all faith groups and other key players in the city. A good example of work of the London Metropolitan Police is in the borough of Southwark. Fifty-eight Muslim voluntary and community organizations were mapped by Southwark Police following Sep 11. A meeting was held between the police and the Muslim community and a special dedicated telephone line was set up to record any backlash incidents against the Muslim community or any other communities in Southwark who feel they have been targeted or otherwise affected*" (European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia 2001: 19).

In addition a new program was created in order to tackle violent acts against Muslims. The name of the program was: "Islamophobia – Don't Suffer In Silence". This crime reporting scheme was a collaboration between The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) , National Community Tension Team and the Muslim Safety Forum. It covered several London boroughs as well as parts of West Yorkshire, Lancashire and Lincolnshire. Furthermore, numerous information packs were distributed to mosques, community venues and police stations in order to educate people about Islamophobia and how to help police tackle the problem. The main goal was to reassure Muslim communities of the necessity to combat Islamophobia by helping the police force in form of reporting every crime and incident connected to it. Most importantly it represented how serious the British police was in combating Islamophobia (Eatwell – Goodwin 2010: 80).

3. 9. 2. The Muslim Council of Britain

Muslim Non Governmental Organizations (NGO's) played a crucial role in representing the views and interests of British Muslims, being responsible for and involved in, many of the examples of good practice listed here.

The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) was launched in November 1997, in London, with the backing of around 250 affiliate organizations with the following aims:

- To promote cooperation, consensus and unity on Muslim affairs in the UK.
- To encourage and strengthen all existing efforts being made for the benefit of the Muslim community.
- To work for a more enlightened appreciation of Islam and Muslims in the wider society.
- To establish a position for the Muslim community within British society that is fair and based on due rights.
- To work for the eradication of disadvantages and forms of discrimination faced by Muslims.
- To foster better community relations and work for the good of society as a whole (Hamid 2002: 261). The Muslim Council of Britain is the most representative of the bodies available. MCB has been very active after 9/11 attacks and had a significant impact. It has met with the Ministry of Health, Home Office, held regular meetings with the Foreign Minister and leaders from the Muslim community, and has also been able to get in contact with the Prime Minister. The MCB has also initiated numerous campaigns such as the inclusion of a question on religious affiliation in the National Census (2001) and the initiative directed at affecting political party policy prior to the General Elections. In addition, MCB encouraged Muslims to take part in the electoral system and vote in order to protect their interests (Hamid 2002: 262).

After the 9/11 attacks, the Muslim Council of Britain together with almost every Muslim organization and NGO in Britain, published a statement condemning the attacks. In addition, the MCB organized a press conference shortly after. Their goal was to explain to media and general public how shocked and angry Muslim communities felt after the attacks. Since then, the MCB has organized number of meetings with politicians, other faith groups and the police in order to improve relations and combat Islamophobia (Hamid 2002: 262).

3. 9. 3. The Islamic Human Rights Commission

The Islamic Human Rights Commission was set up in 1997. The IHRC is an independent, not-for-profit, campaign, research and advocacy organization based in London, UK. The IHRC published information and campaigning packages after the attacks which were meant to press the government to act on the increasing number of hate crimes targeting Muslim population in Britain. The IHRC also provided safety advices for the Muslims and stressed the importance of reporting the incidents to the police. It also worked with parents and scholars in order to combat Islamophobia in school classrooms (IHRC 2014).

3. 9. 4. Forum against Islamophobia & Racism

The Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism (FAIR) was founded in 2001 as an independent charitable organization. Their aim is to work towards establishing a safe, just and tolerant Britain without Islamophobia and racism. Representatives of FAIR invited both Muslim and non Muslim academics, scholars, activists and parliamentary members and candidates to debate the raising Islamophobia in British society.

In addition, FAIR regularly campaigned for changes to legislation, submitting written and oral evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee on Religious Offenses amongst others. Every day, FAIR electronically published its "Daily News Digest" highlighting all the news in British press that involved Muslims and Islam (FAIR 2014).

In 2004, FAIR organized a conference in order to debate media approach to Islam and its impact on Islamophobia, the stereotypes about Muslim women, and religion based service delivery. Among the participants were policy makers, journalists, health professionals and representatives of other religious groups.

3. 9. 5. The Islamic Foundation

The Islamic Foundation was established in 1973 in Leicester and has since become one of the leading Muslim academic institutions in the world. Organization encourages dialogue with other cultures, ideologies and religions, recognizing the need for Muslims and non-Muslims to live together in peaceful co-existence.

Since the 9/11, the Islamic Foundation has started to work with British Universities and other academic institutions to support the study of Islam. The Foundation has also supported numerous inter-faith dialogue initiatives, did research on Muslim identity in modern United Kingdom, and the history of Muslims in Europe. Moreover, it has offered cultural awareness and diversity training for non Muslim professionals that has included the police, and has offered chaplaincy training courses for Imams and community leaders. In addition, the Markfield Institute of Higher Education (MIHE), which was started by the organization in September 2000, is the first academic institution of its kind in the west. It presents a unique opportunity to study Islam in an Islamic institution within the context of Higher Education in the UK (Islamic Foundation 2014).

3. 9. 6. Islam Awareness Week

Islamic Society of Britain (ISB), organizes Islam Awareness Week, an event that has existed since 1994 but became much more relevant after the 9/11. Event takes place between 5th and 11th November. The first post-9/11 event involved numerous discussions and presentations including fundraising events across the UK. It was launched at the House of Commons with contributions from a cross-political range of MPs and peers, both Muslim and non Muslim.

As for their beliefs and goals, they are best described in the words of their representatives: *"We believe that these misconceptions must be tackled both within wider society and amongst Muslims themselves - if we are to see the development of a Britain at ease with its diversity. We believe that through awareness and understanding of one another we can create better relations and develop respect and harmony in our society. IAW is an opportunity for us all to come together in addressing the threats posed by misunderstanding one another"* (IAW 2014).

The Islamic Society of Britain explains the goal of event as being to invite all Muslims to work together during the week in sharing Islam with the public at large, providing information regarding its message and way of life, and removing misunderstandings in the process. Islam Awareness Week aims to create an awareness of Islam in our society by involving everyone throughout Britain, irrespective of their school of thought or group affiliation. Everyone is invited to come forward and join hands in practical efforts to rid Britain of Islamophobia.

4. Conclusion

In the first part of my thesis I define the term Islamophobia, I present some of the main reasons of its manifestation in Western Europe, such as closed views of Islam, its presentation as totally different to the non Muslim world, particularly the "Western culture" and stereotypes such as that Muslims are inferior to Western civilization and supportive of terrorism. Further I discuss Muslim immigration to Western Europe. Muslim immigration into Western Europe started in 20th century, Muslims came from Asia and Africa as guest workers, refugees, asylum seekers. Following the 9/11, the countries in Western Europe have reacted to the threat of terrorism, all of them have revised and adjusted their security and legislature in order to limit immigration.

After September 11th, Germany has considerably toughened its asylum granting procedures, the UK enacted Crime and Security Bill that permitted detention of foreign nationals for unlimited time, if it was not considered safe to deport them to their country of origin and France increased the penalties for illegal immigration and put new limits on family reunification. A study by the Institute of Race Relations concluded that anti-terrorism laws have been used mostly against Muslims and minority of arrests have resulted in convictions.

Another relevant aspect that witnessed the rise of Islamofobia in Western Europe, is the significant increase in toughening immigration policies since the 9/11. For instance in France, the law was passed in May, 2006 which was mostly directed to the Muslim population. The new immigrants were bound to accept religious caricatures in the papers, women were forbidden to take I.D. photographs with their head covered and had to accept examination by male doctors.

Physical abuse of Muslim population in Western Europe has also increased dramatically after the 9/11 attacks. Abuse includes property damage and discrimination against Muslims. For example in France, in the span of only one year, the CCIF (The Collectif Contre l'Islamophobie) encountered numerous incidents.

It is crucial to stress that political leaders and parties had a significant impact on raising Islamophobia in Western Europe. I presented case of the Netherlands which is arguably the best example of Islamophobia becoming a dominant problem in Western Europe. I argue that it represents the transformation of Europe from a liberal and open to nationalist and closed environment. Over the years it has become normal and excepted to promote anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant rhetoric in politics.

As well as politics, media in Western Europe and their reports on Islam after 9/11 have greatly influenced the rise of Islamophobic behavior in Western Europe. One of the examples I present is the one of Italy. Italian media's goal was to simplify and label Muslims as dangerous, conservative people that have no modern, liberal characteristics. The themes that were highlighted were again their conservative attitude towards women, terrorist attacks and so on. Elsewhere, In Germany, the gender issues were in the spotlight, the maltreatment of women and the forced marriages were a handy weapon of anti-Muslim oriented media. The consequence was the simplified picture of Islam and the Muslim world in the eyes of domestic German population.

In the second part of my thesis, I discuss Islamophobia in the British society. I start by introducing Muslims in the United Kingdom and their origin. Even though Islamophobia existed in British society it wasn't a part of public discussion. Publication that finally put Islamophobia in the spotlight in the UK was the Runnymede Trust's report "Islamophobia a challenge for us all". The report defined Islamophobia as: "Unfounded hostility towards Islam, to the practical consequences of such hostility in unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals and communities, and to the exclusion of Muslims" (Runnymede Trust 2001: 4).

I further explain the relationship between the Muslim communities and the State, and the challenges 9/11 brought to the British idea of multiculturalism. Legal status of Muslims in the United Kingdom is also unsatisfactory. Muslim communities lack proper legal protection when faced with religious and ethnic discrimination.

The UK government tried to solve this problem by enacting The Crime and Disorder Act in 1998 nevertheless, many influential Muslim organizations didn't accept the privileges the Bill offered thinking it would do more damage than good to the Muslim communities.

More effort has been made to address the issue, The Racial and Religious Hatred Bill was presented to Parliament on 31st January, 2006. At the vote though, on both amendments the Government were defeated and the Bill didn't pass. As for the anti-terrorist laws enforced by the 9/11, in 2005 PM Tony Blair published the controversial Twelve Point Plan, which included banning Muslim organizations and closing mosques in order to stop extremists from abusing the freedoms Britain provides them. Since the 9/11 attacks, there were also changes to the immigration policies of the United Kingdom, but they didn't have big impact on Muslim population. Nevertheless, there were several media incidents that had a negative impact on perception of Muslims in British society.

Another catalyst for raising Islamophobia was the continuous exaggeration of religious and cultural distinction between Muslims and the rest of British society. Therefore, Islamophobia took its place in the center of British public space. Furthermore I discuss how Muslims were depicted as incompatible with the rest of British society, as well as British values, ethics and norms.

In addition media portrayal of Muslims had a crucial impact on the way British society sees and understands Muslims in post 9/11 United Kingdom. In order to back this statement I presented the statistics stressing the drastic raise of articles that incorporate word "Muslim" prior to, and after the 9/11. I argue that articles in the British media justifying Islamophobia influenced the anti-Muslim atmosphere in post 9/11 Britain greatly. The "irreconcilable difference" of British Muslims was continually highlighted and stressed raising the level of Islamophobia in British society.

I further argue that political elites and political parties also used the anti Muslim post 9/11 atmosphere in order to achieve their own goals. I name The British National Party, which made Islamophobia its daily agenda in order to score political points.

Shifting to another aspect of Muslim reality in the UK, I discuss their religious freedoms and conclude that in this aspect they do not differentiate from other religious groups. I conclude the thesis on a positive note, naming the most relevant organizations that made serious effort in order to combat Islamophobia in the United Kingdom. The 9/11 drastically changed the lives of Muslim communities in Western Europe. Their status deteriorated rapidly in terms of protection by law, public discrimination, and even physical abuse. Muslims were excluded from society, deported, discriminated against. Political anti-Muslim rhetoric backed by the media and advertised in public space made Islamophobia grow and manifest itself as a powerful force in Western Europe and the United Kingdom. Therefore, I conclude that political elites together with the media were the main catalysts of Islamophobia in post 9/11 setting. They were helped by already existing cultural prejudices and further backed by lack of protective legislation for Muslim communities.

Nevertheless, measures were triggered on national and local level in order to fight this "disease". In the United Kingdom, police forces consolidated their ranks, made contact with Muslim communities and made custom schemes in order to keep its Muslim citizens safe. Various NGO's also contributed, most relevant being The Muslim Council of Britain, The Islamic Human Rights Commission and Forum against Islamophobia & Racism. They organized conferences encouraging dialogue and discussing Islamophobia, made contacts with politicians, educated through school programs, supported inter-faith dialogue and much more.

The goal of freeing the world of Islamophobia is maybe long and even unreachable but events like Islam Awareness Week which aim to create an awareness of Islam in British society by involving everyone throughout Britain, irrespective of their school of thought or group affiliation, are definitely a step in the right direction.

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6. Резюме

Данная статья посвящена феномену исламофобии после нападений 9/11 в Западной Европе с особым акцентом на Соединенное Королевство. Целью этой работы является объяснить влияние нападений 9/11 на повышение антиисламских тенденций среди не мусульманского населения. Сутью этой работы является поиск ответов на следующие вопросы: "Как атаки 9/11 повлияли на статус мусульман в Западной Европе и Великобритании?", "Что было главным "катализатором" этого явления, и каковы конкретные меры, используемые для борьбы с этим вопросом?". Эта работа представляет доказательства того, что мусульманские общины были постоянно атакованы, дискриминированы и даже подвергнуты физическому насилию в следствие исламофобии. Она утверждает, что средства массовой информации и политические элиты оказали значительное влияние на повышение исламофобии и ее развитие после событий 9/11. Кроме того, правовой статус мусульман в Соединенном Королевстве являлся еще одним вопросом, который сделал мусульманские общины незащищенными и подвергщимся исламофобии. Тем не менее, были приняты меры на национальном и местном уровнях в целях борьбы с исламофобией. В Соединенном Королевстве, вооруженные силы вступили в контакт с мусульманскими общинами и обеспечили безопасность своих граждан -мусульман. Различные общественные организации также внесли свой вклад, наиболее активными были Мусульманский совет Британии, Комиссия по правам человека Исламская и Форум против исламофобии и расизма .

7. Appendices

Appendix 1.

Number of articles in the period from January to the 9th September 2001:

Newspaper	No. of articles
Guardian	817
Independent	681
Times	535
Daily Telegraph	417
Daily Mail	202
Mirror	164
Daily Express	139
Sun	80
Daily Star	40

Number of articles % increase in the period from June 2001 to June 2002:

Newspaper	No. of articles % increase
Guardian	2,043 250%
Independent	1,556 228%
Times	1,486 278%
Daily Telegraph	1,176 282%
Daily Mail	650 322%
Mirror	920 561%
Daily Express	305 219%
Sun	526 658%
Daily Star	144 360%

Source: (Allen 2010: 97).