Terrorists, fanatics, and extremists:
The language of anti-Muslim prejudice

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Abstract: This paper examines contemporary expressions of anti-Muslim prejudice in Western society. Representations of "Islam" and "Muslim" were collected in a 9.87 billion-word corpus of web-based newspapers and magazines published between 2010 and 2020, in order to identify and analyze usage and connotation. This paper adopts a corpus linguistics approach, in which an analysis of collocation (co-occurring words) and concordance (contextual) data was performed. The results reveal how Islam and Muslim are frequently framed negatively (e.g., as "radical", "extremist", "terrorist", and "violent"), while other negative stereotypes and images of Islam and Muslim people were frequently attested in the data. This paper further explores anti-Muslim linguicism in Anglophone countries and makes an original contribution to the wider debate on the issue of prejudice against Muslim people.

Keywords: Islam, Muslim, corpus linguistics, sociolinguistics, stereotypes, prejudice, linguicism.

1. Introduction

Religious discrimination involves bias, fear, or hatred of an individual or group based on their religious beliefs. It often encompasses prejudice against people based on their race, ethnicity, or nationality, so there is overlapping with racism. Unlike "racism", there is no single label to describe prejudice against religious groups, although specific forms of religious discrimination are so prevalent that they have their own labels, for example, "Islamophobia". Multiple scholars report a global increase in Islamophobia, or anti-Muslim prejudice, over the past few decades (Awan 2014; Esposito and Kalin 2011; Mondon and Winter 2017; Pew 2012; Yilmaz 2016; Zaal 2016).

With 1.8 billion adherents, Islam is the second most popular world religion after Christianity, and it is also the second-most discriminated against religious group worldwide, after Judaism (Lipka 2017). Prejudice against Muslim people goes back as early as the Crusades (the medieval religious wars between Christians and Muslims that were sanctioned by the Latin Church to retake the Holy land from Muslim control) (Mamdani 2005). But in more recent history, since the end of the Cold War (1947-1991) between the United States and the Soviet Union, Islam has been characterized as the current "enemy" of the West (Hippler and Lueg 2007; Kunnummal and Abbasi 2017; Mamdani 2005; Mohideen and Mohideen 2008). Conflicts such as the Iran Hostage Crisis (1979-1981), The Gulf War (1990-1991), and U.S. military operations in Kuwait, Afghanistan, and Iraq have led to stigma against Islam and Muslim people in Western societies. In particular, anti-Muslim language has increased dramatically following the "9/11" attacks of September 11, 2001 against the United States, and subsequent acts of terrorism perpetrated by extremist groups, such as ISIL (Atom 2014; Kunnummal and Abbasi 2017; Sultan 2016; Bukhari et al. 2019). This paper investigates patterns of representation around the words "Islam" and "Muslim" to uncover contemporary portrayals of the religion and its people, and social attitudes towards them.

Previous research that has examined the representation of Islam and Muslim people in the Western news media has generally found evidence for negative bias. Baker et al. (2013b) studied representations around "Muslim" in the British press and found that the collocations *Muslim world* and *Muslim community* were used to collectivize Muslims, both emphasizing their sameness to each other and their difference to 'The West'. Saeed (2007) also examined the representation of Islam and Muslims in the British press, discovering that British Muslims are depicted as the "alien other" through continuous reference to their alleged "deviance" and "un-Britishness". Mishra (2007)

analyzed gendered representations of Muslim men and women in the *New York Times*, finding that Muslim women were obsessively linked to the veil and portrayed as victims in need of Western liberation, while Muslim men were portrayed as violent and dangerous. Ahmed & Matthes (2016) provide a meta-analysis of 345 published studies, which showed that Muslims tend to be negatively framed, while Islam is dominantly portrayed as a violent religion. Akbarzadeh & Smith (2005) examined *The Age* and *Herald Sun* newspapers in Australia, finding that their discourse contributed to the reproduction of negative, Orientalist stereotypes of Islam and Muslim people as violent, intolerant, barbaric, backward, and sexist. Acim (2015) studied representations of Islam and Muslims in the discourse of the *New York Times* Op-Eds, in which he found evidence for overlexicalization, that is, the proliferation of words for designating Muslims, including "Muslim rage", "irate Muslims", and "Muslim suicide bombers". Silva (2017) analyzed *New York Times* articles from 1969-2014, finding that radicalization discourses of Muslim people are not new, but are the result of complex sociolinguistic and historical developments.

This paper aims to expand on the above research, using a large corpus to collect examples of natural language use in Anglophone countries from 2010 to present day, and to examine the data in light of current events.

2. Definitions and terminology

Before discussing objectives and methodology, it is necessary to explain the language choices used in this paper. Islam is the religious system revealed by the prophet Muhammad. The religion arose in the early seventh century in the community of Mecca (which is in present day Saudi Arabia) (Esposito 1999). The name "Islam" dates back to the seventeenth century in English and is a borrowing from Turkish *islām* ("the Muslim religion") and also Arabic *islām* meaning "submission or resignation (to the will of God)" (OED 2019). It is often claimed that Islam means "peace" in Arabic, and while this is not technically correct, the word is related to *salaam*, literally meaning "peace", which is a Muslim greeting (cf. Hebrew *shalom*). Early English names for the faith that are now obsolete include the fifteenth century term *Mahometry*, and the sixteenth century names *Mahometism* or *Mahometanism* (these terms were prejudiced in that they referred to "idolatry"). In the sixteenth century, *Ismaelite* referred specifically to Arab Muslims, who were said to be the decedents of the Biblical character Ishmael (Websters 1913). *Muhammadism* and *Mohammedism* were used in the seventeenth century, while *Islamism* emerged in the eighteenth century. Today, the religion is known as "Islam" and a follower is called a "Muslim", which comes from Arabic *muslim*, "one who submits" (to the faith) (OED 2019). The variant *Moslem* was formerly common in English, but is now considered to be outdated, and is often offensive to stakeholders. "Muslim" is both an exonym used outside of the community and also a self-identifying label that is preferred by stakeholders.

In Anglophone countries, anti-Muslim sentiment is so common and normalized that a specific term emerged for the phenomenon: "Islamophobia" (Mondon & Winter 2017). The phrase "Everyday Islamophobia" (which is modeled after colloquial terms to refer to related forms of discrimination "everyday racism", "everyday sexism", and "everyday ableism") describes the discrimination and prejudice that are daily experiences for Muslim people living in the West, and anyone perceived to be Muslim (Davids 2009; Beshara 2019). "Islamophobia" is not a recent innovation but has been in use since the 1920s (OED 2019). The term was probably modeled after "Germanophobia" ("a strong dislike of Germany or Germans"), Francophobia ("an intense dislike of France or the French"), and "xenophobia" ("a deep antipathy to foreigners"), which are terms that can be traced to the nineteenth century (OED 2019). The suffix –*phobia* has since been used to label other forms of prejudice, including "homophobia" (prejudice towards LGBTQ+ people) and "transphobia" (prejudice towards transgender people). "Phobia" can imply a clinical disorder involving an extreme or irrational fear of an object or a situation (cf. claustrophobia, agoraphobia, etc.). Islamophobia is not purported to be a psychological condition, but describes prejudice against Muslim people.

"Islam" is often conflated with "Muslim", although Islam is an ideology while Muslim is an identity (Gottschalk et al. 2008; Imam 1997). Islam and Muslim are not synonymous although negative attitudes towards the religion are frequently conferred to Muslim people who are criticized by way of their religion. The label "Islamophobia" purportedly does not refer to disagreement with or legitimate theological or political criticisms of Islam. However, to delegitimize the term and deny racism, some argue that they criticize Islam as a religion, but do not intend to criticize Muslim people and culture (Rizvi 2016). "Islamophobia" is also criticized as an accusation that shuts down debate (Versi 2018). Attacking Muslim people via Islam is then variously defended as "freedom of speech", "artistic expression", and "democracy" (Mohideen and Mohideen 2008). "Islamophobe" and "Islamophobic" are often construed as slurs, in the same way that people often reject the labels "racist" or "bigot" (Stollznow 2020). To deny the accusation of Islamophobia, some speakers claim, "I'm not an Islamophobe, but…" to precede anti-Muslim rhetoric. Given these ambiguities surrounding the use of "Islamophobia," and the manner in which criticizing Islam as a religion has been used to justify criticizing Muslim people, this term is often dispreferred by stakeholders. For these reasons, this paper favors specific terms such as "anti-Muslim prejudice" and "anti-Muslim violence" over "Islamophobia".

3. Objectives
The goal of this paper is to examine representations of "Islam" and "Muslim" in a large corpus, to identify contemporary anti-Muslim expressions. Specifically, this study examines authentic language that occurred on the web from 2010 to present day. The study explores language use within the context of Anglophone countries. That is, countries with a majority of native English speaking people, including the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the Republic of Ireland. This study analyses anti-Muslim language by observing and interpreting common patterns across these expressions using corpus linguistic techniques, in particular, word frequencies, collocation analysis, and concordance data analysis.

4. Methodology
The data collected and analyzed in this paper was retrieved from the NOW corpus (News On the Web), which is freely available and searchable online through www.english-corpora.org/now/, a corpus manager and text analysis software (Davies 2013). The NOW corpus is a database of modern language in usage, compiled from web-based newspapers and magazines from 2010 to present day. These samples of natural text include written and spoken registers, and come from across multiple varieties of English used in Anglophone countries, including U.K. English, U.S. English, Australian English, New Zealand English, and Canadian English. The current version of the corpus contains over 9.4 billion words, while the database is added to on a monthly basis. The data were retrieved from the NOW corpus during November 2019-April 2020 and form the basis for the present study.

This paper adopts a qualitative corpus linguistics approach, specifically, citing frequency data, and using methods of collocation analysis and concordance analysis (Barlow 2011; Gries 2013; Hunston 2006; Pollach 2011; Stubbs 2001). The frequency count tallies the number of instances of words in a corpus. Collocations (co-occurring words) are common or fixed expressions consisting of two or more words that correspond to some conventional way of saying things (Sinclair 1991; Manning & Schütze 1999). For example, the adjective "strong" is frequently combined with certain nouns to form collocations such as *strong argument*, *strong accent*, *strong wind*, and *strong coffee*. Collocational analysis postulates that the meaning of a word can be determined by its immediate textual environment, or that "you shall know a word by the company it keeps" (Firth 1956). A collocational profile of a word provides a deeper understanding of the meaning of the word and its contexts of usage, especially when used in tandem with concordance analysis. Concordance searches generate authentic examples of a search term in context, to provide further semantic insight.

Using the NOW search interface, I performed list searches for the nodes "Islam" and "Muslim" to generate frequency data. Then I used the collocates search feature to generate lists of words that co-occur with these nodes, using the default value of '5' for the window span. The collocates were sorted by relevance, to measure the strength of association between the co-occurring words (NOW uses the Mutual Information Score). The options tab for searching collocates was set to 500 results. These searches also supplied concordance lines to show context, from which salient examples were extracted to demonstrate usage. From this data, I compiled tables of the query word frequency and their top collocates. All collocates were then examined and put into thematic categories through manual concordance analysis. The data are presented, analyzed, and discussed below.

5. Data and Analysis
5.1 Frequency
For the purposes of this article, the analysis focuses on the nodes "Islam" and "Muslim", which are frequent in the corpus data and also highly salient as terms related to the religion and identity. Using the frequency list feature, these query words were initially searched for occurrences within the corpus.

Table 1: Corpus frequency of nodes

Node	Part of speech	Frequency
Islam	Noun	355,126
Muslim	Adjective	551,097

In the NOW corpus, nominal "Islam" appears with a total corpus frequency of 355,126 and adjectival "Muslim" appears 551,063 times.

To give context to the findings, "Muslim" (adj.) appears in the corpus with high frequency in comparison to searches for "Christian" (468,024), "Jewish" (260,839) or "Hindu" (211,216). "Islam" (n.) appears with a higher occurrence than "Christianity" (57,385), "Judaism" (16,241) or "Hinduism" (18,828). Similarly, "Muslims" (n.) appears with greater frequency (365,503) than "Christians" (155,989), "Jews" (136,283) or "Hindus" (64,143). That Muslim and Islam are over-represented as descriptors compared to other major world religion names is suggestive of overlexicalization. Teo (2000:20) explains that overlexicalization "results when a surfeit of repetitious, quasi-synonymous terms is woven into the fabric of news discourse, giving rise to a sense of 'over-completeness' in the way participants in the news discourse are described". This issue is further considered in the discussion section.

5.2 Common collocates of Islam and Muslim
Within the corpus, the nodes were then searched to find co-occurring words, with the options tab set to a maximum of 500 results per word. Below is a list of the top ten collocates for each query word, which were sorted by relevance.

Table 2: Most frequent collocates of Islam (noun) and Muslim (adjective)

Node	Collocate	Frequency
Islam	religion	9,717
	state	6,609
	Christianity	6,319
	group	5,931
	Pakistan	5,612
	radical	5,601
	Iraq	5,598
	movement	5,337
	converted	4,009
	militant	3,866
Muslim	community	34,441
	women	27,298
	countries	26,446
	world	17,132
	group	16,859
	faith	15,944
	people	15,350
	Christian	12,045
	population	10,960
	extremist	10,678

Radical and *militant* (Islam) and (Muslim) *extremist* have explicit negative connotations; although most of these top collocates appear to have neutral connotations on the surface, e.g., (Muslim) *community* and *countries*. However, upon closer examination of the concordance data it was revealed that many seemingly unbiased phrases actually reveal negative bias in context. For example, *converted* is often framed negatively as "forcibly converted to Islam", *Christianity* is used in such phrases as "Islam is the enemy of Christianity" while *religion* reveals negative bias in constructions such as "Islam is a violent religion". The following example of *religion* as a collocate of Islam, extracted from the concordance data, exemplifies this usage.

> Islam is not a religion of peace. It is rooted in worship of Allah, recognition of Mohammad as Allah's prophet and murdering non-Muslims in the most cruel of ways in the name of Allah (Ballantyne 2015).

Implicitly negative usages in public discourse can create an "us and them" dichotomy and lead to the othering of Muslim people. For example, two word clusters such as *Muslim world* and *Muslim population* can also appear to be neutral when considered alone, but in context they can be used to unfairly collectivize Muslims as a homogenous group (Baker et al. 2013b). These usages can have significant influence on the way we think and talk about these groups of people, and contribute to a negative semantic prosody of these terms. Technically, these usages are not neutral at all.

5.3 Categorizations of collocates
This subset of collocates provides strong initial indications regarding the main topics indexed by the

use of Islam and Muslim, including conflict and violence (*radical*, *militant*, *extremist*) and Islam as a homogenized organized entity (*movement*, *community*, *world*) (cf. Baker et al. 2013b). However, to obtain a bigger picture of the situation, all 1000 collocates were examined and categorized through manual concordance analysis. This exercise revealed that the most salient collocates of Islam and Muslim can be sorted into a small number of thematic categories (summarized in Table 3).

Table 3: Categorized collocates of Islam and Muslim

Categories	**Examples of salient collocates**
Religion	*converted, Christian, belief, faith, teachings*
National entity	*community, countries, population, nation, world*
Culture	*values, headscarf, veil, tradition, incompatible*
Immigration	*immigrants, migrants, refugees, asylum, ban*
Conflict	*violent, terrorist, extremist, radical, fanatical*
Group/organization	*state, rebels, movement, regime, insurgents*
Language	*Arabic, words, speaking, writing, profiling*

What emerges from the examination of these categories is that Islam and Muslim are often constructed negatively, in both explicit and implicit ways.

These thematic categories and the analysis are discussed in more detail below.

6. Discussion

In examining the frequency of the query words in the corpus, it was determined that there is an excess of occurrences of "Islam" and "Muslim", in comparison to other major religions (e.g., Judaism, Christianity, and Hinduism). This can be interpreted as possible overlexicalization, which often occurs when a subject is deemed to be problematic or contentious. The evidence that Islam and Muslim are overlexicalized appears in the data, in which the words are highly productive in pejorative phrases, such as *violent Islam*, *Islamic violence*, *violent Muslim*, and *Muslim violence*. This overlexicalization of Islam and Muslim is borne out in previous studies in which the terms are used excessively in labeling (Mayr & Machin 2012; Malik 2013; Acim 2015).

Overlexicalization can be an indicator of prejudice (Delcour & Hustinx 2017; Suleiman 2008). Prejudice is a recurring theme throughout the data, with the collocates *discrimination* (1,025), *prejudice* (332), *stereotypes* (308), and *misconceptions* (267) appearing with "Islam", while the phrase "anti-Muslim" appears 16,361 times in the corpus. In examining the collocates and concordance data, a number of themes emerge surrounding representations of Islam and Muslim people. In particular, the religion and people are frequently portrayed as "violent", and linked to "terrorism" and "extremism". The data further provide insight into popular Western perceptions and negative stereotypes of Islam and Muslim people regarding issues of religion, identity, immigration, conflict, culture, and language.

6.1 Islam and Muslim people portrayed as "violent"
In the mainstream western media, Islam is frequently vilified as an inherently "violent" religion, while Muslim people are often associated with violence and aggression (Ahmed & Matthes 2016; Bail 2012; Baker et al, 2013a; Ibrahim 2010; Powell 2011). This perception is borne out by the data in which the collocates *violent*, *violence*, and *violently* appear with high frequency with Islam and Muslim. The following example is found in the corpus.

> It is foolish to deny that there is a violent edge to Islam (Almond 2019).

In accordance with Mishra's (2007) study, Muslim men are especially associated with violence, and often linked to words such as *rage*, *anger*, *aggressive*, *dangerous*, *violence*, and *violent*.

> The more devout a Muslim is, the more likely he is to be violent (Rab 2012).

In the data, Islam and Muslim are commonly described by violence-related collocates, including *cruel*, *brutal*, *vicious*, *evil*, *Satanic*, and *savage*. In response to this common Western perception, followers of Islam often defend their religion as "peaceful". As noted above, a folkloric etymology of "Islam" claims that the word means "peace" in Arabic. In the data, adjective predicates of Islam as *peaceful* (234) are outweighed by negative descriptors of Islam as *violent* (848). Similarly, "Muslim" is associated with *violence* (3,056) more frequently than *peace* (46). Furthermore, the concordance data reveals that pragmatically, not all usages of "peaceful" as a co-occurring word have positive connotations.

> Islam is violent it is NOT a peaceful religion! There are over one hundred verses in the Quran that tell Muslims to wage war and kill non-Muslims (Atheist Republic 2018).

In the conservative U.S. media, Islam is frequently portrayed as "violent" and contrasted against "Christian America", which is represented as "peaceful" (Powell 2011). On the television show *The 700 Club*, Evangelist Pat Robertson warned that Americans need to "wake up" to the "danger" that Islam presents and added, "Who ever heard of such a bloody, bloody, brutal type of religion? But that's what it is. It is not a religion of peace" (Media 2006). Ironically, the vilification of Islam as "violent" has escalated violence against Muslim people in Anglophone countries in recent years (Rizga 2016). The data often refers to *mobs attacking* Muslim people (301) and *mob violence* (550) against Muslims. This is also represented as *anti-Muslim violence* (which appears 218 times in the corpus).

> Attacks on Muslim are often called hate crimes instead of terrorist attacks, so news audiences may not be aware of the prevalence of anti-Muslim violence (Herrera 2019).

On March 15, 2019, such an incident of anti-Muslim violence occurred in Christchurch, New Zealand. On that day, a terrorist stormed the Masjid al Noor Mosque and Linwood Islamic Centre (Elmasry 2019). Armed with semi-automatic weapons and shotguns, he opened fire on the worshippers, killing 50 people and injuring 50 more. These events occurred during the *jummah* (or *jum'ah*) prayers and sermons on Fridays at noon, which are particularly important for Muslims and involve large numbers of worshippers. The first 17 minutes of the attack was live-streamed on social media in a graphic video. Prior to the attack, one of the perpetrators posted to Twitter and 8chan an 87-page manifesto filled with anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim rhetoric. He revealed himself to be a white supremacist and part of the "alt-right", while he cited United States President Donald Trump

as a "renewed symbol of white identity" (Abdelaziz et al. 2019). During the media coverage and political commentary that followed, the events were characterized as a "hate crime" or "mass shooting" rather than a "terrorist attack", while the label "gunman" was favored instead of "terrorist".

> At least 50 people were killed at two mosques in *Christchurch*, New Zealand, by accused *gunman* Brenton Tarrant in a mass *shooting* on Friday, March 15th (NBC 2019).

6.2 Islam and Muslim people linked to "terrorism"
This highlights a bias in the labeling used in the news coverage of terrorist attacks and media representations of Muslims versus non-Muslims. The word "terrorism" is typically ignored in the context of violence committed by non-Muslim people, although used liberally in news reports covering crimes committed by Muslim perpetrators (West & Lloyd 2017). In the data, *terrorism*, *terrorist*, *terror*, and *suicide bomber* are strongly associated with Islam and Muslim people, and especially Muslim men. The collocates *terrorism* (6,141) and *terror* (3,417) appear with Islam, while *terrorist* (1,757) and *terrorists* (1,151) are common collocates of "Muslims".

> To a *Muslim terrorist*, unbelievers are unbelievers, be they children, women, or men, and killing them is doing *Allah's* work (Brown 2016).

In contrast, when a terrorist act is committed by a non-Muslim, the perpetrator's religion is generally not invoked, even in cases of domestic terrorism. For example, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) has carried out numerous acts of terror over the past 50 years, although the media does not refer to the group by their religious affiliation (the group is rooted in Catholic Irish nationalism). Similarly, acts of domestic terrorism are cast as minor threats and perceived as isolated incidents committed by troubled individuals or a "lone wolf" (Powell 2011). But in the case of violent acts committed by groups with a connection to Islam, they are seen as organized acts of terrorism, while individuals are invariably reduced to their religion (Mohideen and Mohideen 2008).

In general, the western conception of terrorism is currently linked to Islam and Muslim people (Powell 2011; West & Lloyd 2017). In recent decades, incidents such as the September 11 attacks, attacks linked to ISIL in the U.S., U.K., Canada, and Australia, stories of suicide bombings, and the Charlie Hebdo shooting in 2015 loom large in the public consciousness as evidence of this connection. In the corpus, *terror*, *terrorism*, and *terrorist* appear in various contexts with different connotations. Some usage reports current events, while other usage reveals negative bias. For example, the phrase "Muslims are terrorists" (355) holds all Muslims complicit in the creation of terror. Other examples argue the claim using negation.

> It is certainly true that not all Muslims are terrorists, however, sadly we say that the majority of terrorists in the world are Muslims (al-Rashid 2004).

This phrase still implies that *some* Muslims are terrorists, or *all* terrorists are Muslims, which invariably associates terrorism and terrorists with Muslim people. In response to attacks on Muslim people in the aftermath of 9/11, British Prime Minister Tony Blair stated, "What happened in America was not the work of Islamic terrorists, it was not the work of Muslim terrorists. It was the work of terrorists, pure and simple" (Guardian 2001). However, crimes that are complex politically, historically, and socially are naively blamed on Islam and Muslim people. On an episode of the ABC's *The View*, Bill O'Reilly stated "the Muslims killed us on 9/11!" (Ostroy 2017). In response to the events of 9/11, then President of the United States George W. Bush declared the "War in Afghanistan", although much of the general public interpreted this as a war against Islam and Muslim people.

Colloquially known as the "War on Terror", this was perceived as retaliatory to what was referred to as "Islam's War against the West".

6.3 Muslim people portrayed as "extremists"
In Anglophone countries there is a social construction of only two types of Muslim people: "moderates" or "extremists" (Mamdani 2005; Mondon and Winter 2017). "Moderate" tends to imply "liberal", "tolerant" or "open-minded", while so-called "extremist Muslims" are depicted as "radical", "fundamentalist", "intolerant", or "Islamist". These stereotypes have formed a simplistic binary, creating a distinction between "good" and "bad" or "evil" Muslims. Whether a Muslim is categorized as moderate/good or extremist/bad/evil appears to be the based on the individual's religious or theological practices, political position, proclivity towards violence, and goodwill or animosity towards the West (Ramadan 2009). In the data, the collocation "moderate Muslim" (1,036) appears less frequently than "extremist Muslim" (1,740). In general, "moderates" are perceived positively although the concordance data shows that in usage, "moderate Muslim" is often framed negatively.

> There is no such thing as moderate Islam… When people talk about moderate Muslims they are making an error. It is like saying Hitler wasn't such a bad fellow (Devlin 2019).

"Extremist" has negative connotations in most usage and radicalizes Islam and Muslim people. Related collocates found in the data describe some Muslim people as *rebels* (1,498), *fundamentalist* (622), *fanatics* (357), *hardliners* (237), *Salafist* (183), and *Islamist* (121), and refer to Islam as *radical* (5,537), *extremist* (636), *extreme* (477) or *hardline* (338). Collocates of Muslim such as *maniacs*, *fanatics*, *lunatics*, and *loonies* are also suggestive of mental illness or imbalance. *Devout* frequently appears in the corpus (1,521 times) and in some usage the term appears to be a euphemism for extremism (Baker et al. 2013a). Describing Islam as "extremist" conflates the religion with extremist groups that commit violent acts supposedly in the name of Islam. These labels further demonize and vilify Islam and Muslim people as a potential danger and enemy to the West. In the data, Islam is frequently described as a *threat* (943), *problem* (631), *danger* (602), and an *enemy* (549) to the Western world.

> We can not afford to be timid about calling out the threat of radical Islam (Mendoza 2019).

"Extremist" Islam and Muslims are strongly linked to militancy and war. In accordance with Mishra's (2007) study, Muslim men are especially associated with words such as *militant*, *fighter*, and *war*. In the data, Muslim appears with the collocates *killing* (2,148), *militant* (1,151), *hatred* (1,502), *attacks* (1,737), *atrocities* (758), *genocide* (753), and *slaughter* (367). Islam appears with the collocates *militant* (4,389), *death* (672), *fear* (509), *lynching* (400), *murder* (116), and *hates* (302). Political propaganda promotes the idea that Muslim people "hate" non-Muslim people and Western societies, especially America. In a 2016 interview, Donald Trump declared, "I think Islam hates us". (Schleifer 2016). The idea that Muslim people have contempt for non-Muslims fosters suspicion and unease in the West. This is aided by the folk belief that Muslim people denigrate non-Muslims as "kafir" ("unbeliever") or "infidels". This is related to a myth that the Qur'an commands Muslims to kill "infidels."

> Evangelist Franklin Graham has described his horror on finding so many Koranic passages that command the killing of infidels: the Koran, he thinks, preaches violence (Jenkins 2009).

It is interesting to note that "infidel" originally denoted a non-Christian, especially a Muslim (Hughes 2006). Related to the myth that it is doctrine to kill non-Muslims is the concept of an *Islamic bomb* (98), which appears in the data as a collocation. Since the late 1970s, there had been a fear in Western society of an "Islamic bomb", a mythical nuclear weapon developed by an Islamic nation that would be used to wage war against the West (Sanadjian 2008). Following the 9/11 attacks on the United States, the fear of an "Islamic bomb" evolved into the fear of the development of "weapons of mass destruction" ("WMDs") in the Middle East. This became the premise for the 2003 invasion of Iraq, which initiated the Iraq War. In the data, the collocates *nuclear*, *weapon*, *war*, *bomb*, *jihad*, *jihadism*, and *jihadist* appear in association with Islam and Muslim.

> Extremist Muslims have waged a jihad against western civilization because they want westerners to convert or die (Stankiewicz and Panandiker 2016).

Jihad is often mistranslated as "holy war" or "terrorism" although it is more accurately understood as a "struggle" on behalf of Islam or an internal spiritual struggle (Barlas 2003).

Further to being perceived as a military threat, Islam and the Muslim world are frequently characterized in the media by misconceptions and negative stereotypes. They are portrayed as archaic, opposed to modernity, and regressive (Uenal 2016). In the data, Islam is variously described as *monolithic*, *barbaric*, *backward*, *primitive*, *ultraconservative*, and *medieval*. Islam is further stereotyped as chauvinistic and is described in the data as *strict*, *oppressive*, *patriarchal*, *puritanical*, *polygamist*, *misogynistic*, and *sexist*. Mishra's (2007) study shows that women are often portrayed as victims of Islamic practices, including such horrors as rape, torture, stoning, and enduring patriarchal oppression, as evidenced by the following quote from the data.

> The reason that Islam is called out for being sexist is because Islamic fundamentalists place restrictions on how women can dress, whether they can vote, whether they are allowed to drive, to leave the house, or to go anywhere without a male family member following her and controlling her behavior (Politics Forum 2013).

The data reveals that Muslim people believe Western society is profoundly misinformed about Islam, holding *ignorant views* (227) of the *authentic* or *true* (2,402) "version" or "teachings" of Islam.

6.4 Ethnocentrism, Orientalism, and the "Clash of Civilizations"
These negative representations of Islam and Muslim people are often a result of Western ethnocentrism, which perceives Western culture as superior and judges Middle Eastern cultures to be inferior. Edward Said developed the idea of "Orientalism" to define the Western world's patronizing representations of the "East", including Middle Eastern, Asian, and African societies (Said 1978). According to this dichotomy, the West is described positively by such words as civilized, sophisticated, democratic, rational, modern, progressive, developed, enlightened, and promoting freedom and humanity (Kassimeris & Jackson 2011; Mamdani 2005; Runnymede 2018; Said 1978). In contrast, the Middle East is negatively portrayed as uncivilized, unsophisticated, undemocratic, and undeveloped (Said 1978; Akbarzadeh & Smith 2005; Silva 2017). These negative perceptions of the Middle East are revealed in the data by the collocates of Islam: *archaic*, *backward*, *oppressed*, *irrational*, and *inhumane*. This apparent conflict of cultural and religious identities has been termed the "clash of civilizations" (Huntington 1996). In Western societies, the prevailing narrative is that Islam is engaged in a *conflict*, *fight*, *battle*, or *war* against the West, in which the so-called "Muslim world" is the aggressor.

The Muslim world is not an actual place although the name appears frequently in the data

(13,435 times). The term is used in political discourse to mark civilizational and racial difference, and implies a place that is distant, faraway, and foreign (Saeed 2007; Baker et al. 2013b). As we have seen, collocations such as *Islam religion*, *Muslim community*, *Muslim countries*, *Muslim region*, *Muslim population*, *Muslim groups*, *Muslim youth*, *Muslim societies*, and *Muslim world* appear to have neutral connotations on the surface, but they are not neutral within context. The following example demonstrates that abstract collectivism can be othering.

> The Muslim world is behind as a whole, and until their poorest people have access to quality education, they're still going to stick to their traditions, no matter how much those traditions continue to oppress them (Greene 2011).

Muslim people are often judged by their apparent similarity or dissimilarity to non-Muslims. As mentioned above, Muslim people labeled as "good" or "moderates" are those who are perceived as more culturally assimilated. However, unassimilated Muslim people living in the West are often viewed as "bad" for their perceived difference and foreignness. Unacculturated Muslims are frequently accused of being unwilling, if not incapable, of assimilating or integrating with Western society (Bowen 2012; Haddad 2013). They are faulted for living separately in cultural *enclaves* (154), and of being culturally *different*, *foreign*, *alien*, and even *deviant* in their lifestyle and *values* (Saeed 2007; Malik 2013). In general, it is often believed that Muslim people do not share the same values and ethos of mainstream Western society, and that they are reluctant to adopt Western values. In the concordance data, Islamic values are frequently described as "incompatible" or "not compatible" with Western values.

> A recent poll published by the BBC suggested the majority of Brits don't think Islam is compatible with Western values (Rashid 2016).

In light of their cultural differences and perceived deviance, Islam and Muslim people living in Western countries are often described as "Un-American", "Un-British", "Un-Australian", etc. (Saeed 2007). They are further accused of being in direct opposition to the West, as "Anti-American", "Anti-British", "Anti-Australian", etc. Their religious traditions are also criticized, including Islamic prohibitions (*haram*, meaning "forbidden") against consuming pork or alcohol, and their practices of worship, such as frequent *prayer* (1,383) (the five daily prayers, known as *salat*), and *fasting* (974) during Ramadan. Especially in the post-9/11 world, cultural differences are viewed with suspicion in the West, where it is feared that Muslim people will impose their own norms and behaviors onto others (Sulaiman-Hill 2007). In the data, it is expressed that the presence of Islamic and Muslim culture in Western countries *endangers* and *threatens* the Western "way of life", referring to the beliefs, customs, and habits of Western society. This kind of language features prominently in the anti-Muslim rhetoric used by right-wing populists to win support (Haynes 2019). For example, the following quote collected from the concordance data was tweeted by Donald Trump during the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign.

> Our *way of life* is under threat by Radical *Islam* and Hillary Clinton cannot even bring herself to say the words (Afzal 2016).

"Way of life" also extends to clothing and appearance. In particular, the West is critical of *Muslim attire* (186), especially that of women, who are often reduced to a single item of clothing. The corpus makes frequent reference to the headscarves worn by some Muslim women. In the data, related collocates include *headscarf* (398), *veil* (378), *veils* (266), *headscarves* (238), *veiled* (148), *scarf*

(134), and the three styles of coverings most known to Westerners: the *hijab* (175), *niqab* (184), and *burka* (121). *Hijab* literally means "modest dress" but also refers to a scarf that covers the head and neck. The *niqab* is a veil that leaves the area around the eyes clear, while the one-piece veil that covers the head and body is called a *burqa* or *burka*. This is the namesake of the "burka ban", a prohibition of face-coverings introduced in Quebec (Canada), Austria, Belgium, France, and Denmark, and which is the subject of ongoing debate in the United Kingdom and Australia. In the data, the collocates *ban* and *banning* are frequently used in conjunction with "hijab", "niqab", and "burka". The West has an apparent need to unveil Muslim women, whose adoption of Western attire is symbolic of liberation and modernism (Mishra 2007). Headscarves are worn for modesty, privacy, and as a marker of religious and cultural identity. They may imply rank and status, power, or resistance, although it is argued by critics in the West that they are "sexist" (under the guise of humanism or feminism because Muslim women are said to be oppressed and subservient) or they are "dangerous" because they conceal the identity of would-be terrorists (Perry 2014). Some concordance lines refer to women who *choose* to wear the veil, or position it as a *right*, while other use verbs such as *forced*, *compelled*, or *required*, that imply the veil is imposed on women. Muslim women wearing veils are simultaneously feared and mocked. In August 2018, Boris Johnson (now the British Prime Minister) ostensibly defended Muslim women's rights to wear the burka, but joked that they look like "bank robbers" and "letter boxes".

> It is absolutely ridiculous that people should choose to go around looking like letter boxes (Johnson 2018).

In the West, this kind of anti-Muslim rhetoric has resulted in violence against Muslim women who have had their headscarves pulled off by attackers in public (Perry 2014). Of course, Muslim women are not the only people to wear veils or scarves in the West. Post 9/11, Sikhs who wear turbans, Indian women, and others who wear headscarves in Western countries are often targeted because they are mistakenly identified as Muslim (Awan and Zempi 2017; Bhatia 2018).

6.5 Muslim people and immigration
Western societies often pride themselves on their multiculturalism and claim to embrace diversity, although many people rail against immigration. In particular, Muslim immigrants are singled out as targets of prejudice because of the negative stereotypes with which they are associated. In the data, Muslim immigrants are referred to disparagingly as "the Muslim presence", which is described as a *threat* to society or democracy, or a *problem*.

> The problem of the Muslim presence is increasingly worrying. There are more and more clashes, more and more demands (Reuters 2018).

In general, how governments should interact with Muslim people around issues of integration, religious freedom, identity, and immigration has been posed as "the Muslim question" (cf. "the Jewish question") (Alexander 2013). In the data, references to Muslim resettlement in the West appear with high frequency, including *immigration* (3,102), *immigrants* (2,895), *refugees* (3,042), *asylum* (1,645) seekers, and *migrants* (1,293). In line with Mishra's (2007) study, in the corpus data, Muslim men are often linked to immigration-related collocates indicating illegality, such as *illegal immigration*, *suspect*, *prisoners*, *gangs*, *arrested*, *detained*, and *deported*.

> The Trump administration deported a Muslim man Thursday who was detained by Border Patrol even though he was married to a U.S. citizen, held a valid work authorization and

had a pending green card application (Planas 2019).

In the data, Muslim immigrants are described as "fleeing" their homes, land, countries or Western occupation, implying that they are migrating to the West in large numbers. There is a distorted perception of the number of Muslim people living in Western countries, with many people believing that the "Muslim population" in the West is far higher than it is in reality (Morgan & Poynting 2016). The data further reveals a fear of the West being inundated by a "surge" of Muslim immigrants, which is expressed as a *threat* or *danger* of Western countries being *flooded* or *swamped* by Muslims.

> We are in danger of being swamped by Muslims who bear a culture and ideology that is incompatible with our own (AAP 2016).

There is not only a fear of being inundated by Muslims, but also a fear of the *spreading* of Islam, which is likened to a *cancer*, *virus*, or *disease*.

> Islam is a cancer that must be eradicated/eliminated from planet Earth (Atheist Republic 2018).

Areas with majority Muslim populations are described as "overwhelmingly Muslim" or "Muslim dominated". There is a moral panic of "Muslim domination" or an "Islamic take over" in which Muslims will supposedly "take over" a certain Western country, or overthrow the West itself. This is related to a fear that Muslim immigrants will attempt to recruit or forcibly "convert" non-Muslims to Islam. The collocates *converted* (6,609), *conversion* (1,631), and *converting* (1,327) appear with high frequency in conjunction with Islam, and often imply force or duress. This is often expressed as the belief that Muslim immigrants plot to covert Western countries into "Islamic nations" where they will institute Sharia law, or that citizens have a civic duty to prevent "Islamization", that is, the shift of a Western country towards Islam.

> The day after Trump's registry comments, a makeshift militia, wearing military-style camo, some of them masked, showed up outside an Islamic center in Irving, Texas, carrying assault rifles and announcing they had come to stop the 'Islamization of America' (Fisher 2015).

In anti-Muslim rhetoric, Muslim immigration supposedly heralds the "end" or "death" of Europe (or Britain, America, Australia, Canada, etc.) and the "changing face" of the country. Muslim immigrants are accused of "replacing" white people. In the Christchurch terrorist's manifesto, which he named "The Great Replacement" (after an anti-immigrant tract by French writer Renaud Camus), he referred to Muslim immigrants in hyperbolic language, as those who "invade our lands, live on our soil and replace our people" (Webb 2019). In the data, *replace* appears as a collocate with "Muslim".

> His book tells us the truth about how muslims will replace whites in europe and implement sharia law and rape and impregnate all of the white woman (reddit 2019).

The data confirms that Muslim immigrants experience *persecution* (488) and are *persecuted* (429) in the West. They are the targets of verbal abuse in their adopted countries. They report being abused with phrases such as "Go home!", "Go back to your own country", and "Go back to where you belong", revealing a strong sense of the illegitimacy of "the Muslim presence" in Anglophone countries (Perry 2014; Sulaiman-Hill 2007). That Muslim immigrants supposedly do not "fit in" or

"belong" in Western countries is a recurring theme in the data. On a systemic level, proposed government policies promote the belief that Muslim immigrants need to be feared and driven out, or refused entry to Western countries in the first place. As we have seen, in the data, the collocates *ban* and *banning* appear in reference to Muslim women wearing headscarves, while they also appear in reference to Muslim tourists, immigrants, and residents.

> Yes, we should ban Muslim immigration to the US, a common sense proposition obvious to most reasonable people. We are not obliged to accept Muslim immigrants whose religion commands them to kill us and destroy our nation (Stanley 2018).

This push to deny Muslim immigration is referred to colloquially as "the Muslim ban" in the data. Proposed bans against Muslim people often draw populist support. In 2015, Donald Trump called for a travel ban on people from "dangerous countries", and later advocated a "total and complete shutdown" of Muslim people attempting to gain entry to the United States (Johnson 2015). In general, Trump called for the surveillance of Muslim people in the United States, including Muslim Americans who are legal residents. Declaring them to be a threat to national security, he proposed a registry or "watch list" to track all Muslims in the country. Following the 2017 attacks in London, Australian right-wing politician Pauline Hanson called for a ban on Muslim immigration to Australia, tweeting, "Stop Islamic immigration before it's too late" (Dziedzic 2017). In August 2018, Australian Senator for Queensland Fraser Anning invoked a Nazi euphemism in his inaugural speech as Senator, when he called for a ban on Muslim immigration, which he recommended as a "final solution to the immigration problem" (Kwai 2018).

Muslim immigrants are often blamed for the marginalization they experience, although critics of their alleged failure to integrate are also often advocates of measures that would further isolate and marginalize them (Yilmaz 2016). Representations of Muslim people often position them as embroiled in conflict, either as aggressors, or victims (Baker et al. 2013b). In a statement on the day of the 2019 terrorist attacks in New Zealand, Fraser Anning issued the following statement:

> The real cause of bloodshed on New Zealand streets today is the immigration program which allowed Muslim fanatics to migrate to New Zealand in the first place" (…) "Muslims may have been the victims today, usually they are they are the perpetrators". (…) "Just because the followers of this savage belief were not the killers in this instance, does not make them blameless (Baker 2019).

As we have seen, associations such as "fanatics", "killers", and "savage" radicalize and stigmatize Muslim people in general, and specifically immigrants in Western countries, and links them to violence, terrorism, and extremism.

6.6 "Extremist" groups
A significant contributor to the demonization of Islam and Muslim people is that extremist groups purport to be "rooted in Islam", and are perceived as such by the West. Notable groups include Al-Qaeda (Arabic for "the Base", founded 1988 in Pakistan), the Taliban (Pashto for "students", founded 1994 in Afghanistan), Boko Haram (usually translated as "western education is forbidden", founded in 2002 in Nigeria), and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL or IS, founded 1999 in Iraq). In the data, these groups are often said to misrepresent Islam, and not embody the "true teachings" of Islam or the "true version" of Islam. They are described as promoting a "perverted version of Islam" or a "perversion of Islam", as exemplified by the following quote.

He has repeatedly condemned the 'poisonous' perversion of Islam used to justify terror attacks (Craw 2017).

As we have seen, Islam and Muslim are associated with collocates denoting extremism, including *extremist*, *radical*, *militant*, *hardline*, *fundamentalists*, *fighters*, and *fanatics*. Further showing evidence for overlexicalization, Islam and Muslim are strongly associated with terms referring to deviant movements, including *group*, *rebels*, *insurgents*, *regime*, *militia*, *armies*, *resistance*, *Islamist*, *Salafist*, and *jihadist*. Many Muslim people are offended by the Western appropriation of "jihad", which links a noble religious concept with violence.

Jihadists have cells all over the world; they blow up trains in London, nightclubs in Bali and airplanes over Detroit (if they can); and are openly pledged to war on America (Krauthammer 2010).

The data shows that ISIL has gained notoriety in the West post 9/11. The group has been responsible for human rights abuses and war crimes worldwide, including killing civilians, forcing captured women into sexual slavery, and beheading foreigners in Iraq and Syria (Byman 2016). The media initially reported the group by the acronym *ISIS* ("Islamic State of Iraq and Syria"). "Isis" is also the name of an ancient Egyptian goddess, the name borrowed from ancient Greek Ἶσις (Lewis and Short 1879). Despite this etymology, the name has pejorated because it has now become synonymous with ISIL. This has been to the detriment of the many people and businesses that share this moniker, who have become the targets of harassment in the mistaken belief they were associated with a terrorist group (Schaub 2015).

A Denver area store called Isis Books & Gifts wants the world to know its name comes from the Egyptian goddess of healing and motherhood, and it isn't a retail store run by terrorists (AP 2015).

ISIS appears in the data (426) as a collocate of Islam, while *state* (6,609) is one of the top collocates. Today, most officials refer to the group as IS or ISIL instead. However, IS, ISIS, and ISIL are offensive to many Muslims who disapprove of "Islam" and "State" appearing in the acronyms because the group is neither Islamic nor a state. There is a campaign to instead call the group *Daesh*, which is an acronym of their full Arabic name *al-Dawla al-Islamiya fi al-Iraq wa al-Sham* ("Islamic State in Iraq and Syria"). The name is also an insult to the group. Depending on how it is conjugated in Arabic, Daesh means "to trample down and crush", or "a bigot who imposes his views on others" (Khan 2014). ISIL's attacks have reinvigorated the anti-Muslim prejudice ignited by 9/11, and also reinforced the stereotype that Islam is a violent religion, turning Muslim people into scapegoats and providing some Westerners with an excuse to malign the community as a whole. Although they claim to carry out their attacks in the name of Islam, the actions of extremist groups are not representative of Islam and the worldwide Muslim community. In fact, multiple Muslim leaders have denounced their actions as *haram* (forbidden or proscribed by Islamic law), while Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah issued a *fatwa* (an authoritative legal pronouncement) against the group (Temple-Raston 2014). In the data, the collocates *condemns* (227) *violence* or *terrorism* appear frequently with Muslim to censure acts committed by extremist groups.

I know for sure that Islam does not condone these horrific acts, and that the Muslim community condemns them, as they are among the victims (Cleveland 2016).

6.7 Linguicism

The corpus data also highlights another form of anti-Muslim prejudice that is more covert: linguicism. Linguicism is language-related discrimination, which is prejudice against people based on their use of language, dialect, or accent (Skutnabb-Kangas 2015). Post-9/11, anti-Muslim prejudice has led to a spate of linguicism in Western countries and, in particular, a fear of the spoken and written Arabic language. "Arabic" frequently appears in the data (355), although it must be noted that not all Muslim people speak or write Arabic. Similarly, not all Muslim people are Arabs. Classical Arabic is the language of Islam's scripture the Qur'an and also classical literature. Modern Standard Arabic is the universal language of the Arabic speaking world, while there are many colloquial varieties. There are approximately 420 million (native and non-native) speakers of the language worldwide, making it the sixth most spoken language (El Gayar and Suen 2018). However, the concordance data for "Arabic" reveals that for some people in the West, Arabic is inextricably associated with Islam and Muslim people.

> Last year Optus was forced to withdraw advertisements in Arabic from some of its stores because of a similar backlash and threats to staff, from people who ignorantly conflated the Arabic language with Islam and Muslims (Stephens 2017).

In Western society, some members of the general public react negatively towards spoken Arabic because of this association with Islam and Muslim people. In the wake of 9/11, Middle Eastern immigrants and tourists in the West often avoid speaking Arabic in public so they do not invite suspicion and harassment from strangers. As shown in the data, the fear of spoken Arabic is particularly evident at airports where there have been several incidents of airport security racially *profiling* (132) Arabic speakers. In 2016, Iraqi student Khairuldeen Makhzoomi was removed from a Southwest flight for speaking Arabic on the phone with his uncle. When ending his conversation he had code-switched from English to Arabic by uttering the word *Inshallah* ("If God is willing") (Antoon 2016). A fellow passenger overheard the conversation and reported Makhzoomi to airline staff who escorted him off the plane, where he was interrogated by police and FBI agents. There have been several similar cases of Muslim people being removed from flights for merely speaking Arabic (Khan 2016). The data reveals that for many Westerners their main exposure to the Arabic language is through media stories connected to war, extremist groups, and terrorism.

> Americans are used to hearing *Arabic* associated with war or *terrorism*. They need to *hear* it in more natural settings to stop being afraid (Kindervatter-Clark 2016).

The data shows that *Arabic words* overheard in Anglophone countries are a source of suspicion, such as *inshallah*, which is an innocuous expression of religious identity and culture that is used commonly by all native speakers of Arabic, regardless of religious affiliation. Similarly, *Allahu Akbar* ("God is great") is another Arabic phrase that upholds religious culture, and functions as a short prayer or an everyday interjection that can express joy and happiness. However, it has been misappropriated. *Allahu Akbar* appears frequently in the data (4,327), the examples showing that in Western countries the phrase is perceived as a slogan or battle cry that is equated with terrorism and extremism.

> Allahu Akbar literally means 'God is great' in Arabic. Nice thought, however...what is said by people beheading hogtied victims 'in the name of God' or what is said by someone in a carbomb seconds before he fires it off in a crowded marketplace (Urban Dictionary 2009).

The Arabic writing system also provokes fear among members of the general public and government agencies in the West. Seen on the flags, murals, banners, and bandanas of terrorist organizations, the Arabic script has become synonymous with extremist groups and terrorism for some people. Referred to in the concordance data as "terrorist writing", the mere sight of the Arabic language in Western countries, or writing resembling the Arabic script, has occasionally resulted in panic and false alarms. For example, in 2016, a gas station was temporarily closed, a nearby daycare center was evacuated, and a bomb squad was called in when a box of cookies, which had Arabic script on the packaging, was discovered near a gas pump in Marshalls Creek, Pennsylvania. A customer discovered that the *maamoul* cookies (a kind of shortbread filled with dates, walnuts or pistachios) had Arabic writing on the box and immediately called the police to report it (Kunzmann 2016). The data shows that this fear of Arabic writing (and similar-looking symbols) arises from its negative associations, and not knowing what it says. The following report of suspicious activity landed an Ivy League professor on an American Airlines flight in questioning under suspicion of being a terrorist.

> Guido Menzio, an economist at the University of Pennsylvania, was working on a differential equation while waiting for the Syracuse-bound plane to take off from Philadelphia. (…) But a passenger somehow mistook the equation for Arabic or some sort of Islamic code for a terrorist attack (Solis 2016).

These incidents of linguicism reveal not only the current moral panic surrounding Islam and Muslim people, but also the prevalence and normalization of anti-Muslim prejudice in Western societies.

7. Conclusions

Since the end of the Cold War, prejudice against Muslim people has been on the rise in Western countries (Awan 2014; Esposito and Kalin 2011; Mondon and Winter 2017; Pew 2012; Yilmaz 2016; Zaal 2016). Anti-Muslim prejudice is often enacted linguistically, in both overt and covert ways. This paper has provided linguistic evidence to support these observations through a corpus data analysis of representations of "Islam" and "Muslim". Using the NOW corpus as the basis for this analysis, this study shows that stereotypes and negative attitudes towards Islam and Muslim people are frequently attested in collocates and concordance data appearing in language between 2010 to present day.

Taking a corpus linguistics approach using frequency data, collocation analysis, and concordance analysis, the nodes "Islam" and "Muslim" were searched in order to identify frequency and co-occurring words, and to analyze the contexts in which they are used. In examining frequency, evidence was found for overlexicalization, indicating an intense ideological preoccupation with Islam and Muslim. The top collocates were presented in a table, which showed a high incidence of collocations that present Islam and Muslim people as a collective entity or homogenous group, e.g. *Muslim community* and *Muslim world*. In usage, these phrases often did not represent balanced or neutral discussions, but were framed negatively. The total amount of collocates were then examined and categorized through manual concordance analysis. This exercise revealed that the most salient collocates of Islam and Muslim could be sorted into a small number of thematic categories, e.g. conflict, culture, and language.

The discussion of these categories provided an analysis of the relevant collocates and the concordance data, which were supported by text examples found in the corpus. These themes were also discussed in reference to current events. The data elicited many anti-Islam and anti-Muslim expressions, stereotypes, and associations that were strongly associated with the nodes, thereby revealing negative attitudes towards Muslims. Evidence was found to support the theory that "Islam" and "Muslim" are overlexicalized, e.g., *violent Islam*, *Islam violence*, *Muslim violence*, and *violent*

Muslim. In terms of characterization, Islam and Muslim people are radicalized in that they are frequently linked to violence, terrorism, and extremism. It was shown that Muslim people are often categorized according to a simplistic binary of moderate/good or extremist/bad, and portrayed as engaged in conflict, either as aggressors or victims. Representations of Muslims were often gendered, with women depicted as "oppressed", and men depicted as "violent". The data further uncovered stigmatizing and marginalizing attitudes towards Muslim culture and identity, and a moral panic in Western societies regarding Muslim immigration and assimilation. Furthermore, the data exposed linguicism as a common expression of anti-Muslim prejudice, involving discrimination against the spoken Arabic language and the Arabic writing system.

In conclusion, the data revealed numerous stereotypes of and negative attitudes towards Islam and Muslim people, and highlighted the prevalence of anti-Muslim sentiment in contemporary Anglophone countries. In addition, it was shown that anti-Muslim discourse is often vilifying, in that it has the intention of inciting others to also fear and hate Muslim people, and even inspires others to commit hate crimes against them. Given the discussion of linguicism, this paper has offered new insights into anti-Muslim prejudice in language, and makes a valuable contribution to the wider debate on the issue of racism, hatred, and violence against Muslim people.

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