THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

Representations of Islam and Muslims on a public broadcast television programme in South Africa:

A Case Study of An Nur the Light

Sakeenah Dramat

3602838

A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in the Department of Religion and Theology at the University of the Western Cape, Desmond Tutu Centre for Religion and Social Justice

Supervisor: Dr L.S Scharnick-Udemans

November 2021

Declaration

I declare that *Representations of Islam and Muslims on a public broadcast television programme in South Africa: A Case Study of 'An Nur the Light'* is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the resources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Full name: Sakeenah Dramat (Student Number: 3602838)   Date: November 2021

Signed: ....

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I offer praise and thanks to Allah The Almighty for the countless blessings, knowledge, wonderful opportunities, and amazing people he has placed in my life as this combination has culminated in the completion of this dissertation.

I hardly know where to start expressing my gratitude but my heartfelt *shukran* is extended to everyone who has assisted me along this dissertation completion process. It is impossible for me to list all the names, but a few people deserve a special shoutout.

I would like to express my greatest appreciation to Dr Lee-Shae Salma Scharnick-Udemans (Oops used all your names again) who believes in my abilities and supported and assisted me to accomplish this academic goal. Thank you for providing the financial assistance needed for this dissertation to be completed. Dr Lee you are my supervisor, but you are also my mentor, my colleague, and I am lucky enough to call you, my friend. You have strengthened my resilience and nurtured my vulnerability. Without you this thesis would not even have been a pipe dream. Thank you for investing your time, energy, resources, and trust in me.

To Professor Sarojini Nadar, who partially funded my studies, and completely inspires the feminist in me, I appreciate everything you have done to assist me as a researcher and developing academic. Your intellect and soulfulness inspire me to be kind to myself, to believe in myself and to show up as myself because I am worthy.

To Ashleigh Petersen you sacrificed your weekend and time to help me get my dissertation submission ready. I appreciate you so much! Being able to grow as a postgraduate candidate alongside you has made this journey a thousand times more fun!

To Ishaya Anthony, my brother, colleague, and friend, thank you for the time and effort you put in to help me with my dissertation. I appreciate you so much, your kindness inspires me to strive for the highest accolades.

To my mentors, colleagues and friends at the Desmond Tutu Centre for Religion and Social Justice you are my tribe and I appreciate you all more than words can express.

Dedication

To my parents, Nabila and Adam Dramat, who inspire me to break generational curses because they have broken them and continue to break them. Shukran for believing in my abilities as a scholar and supporting my dreams of becoming an educated woman of colour!

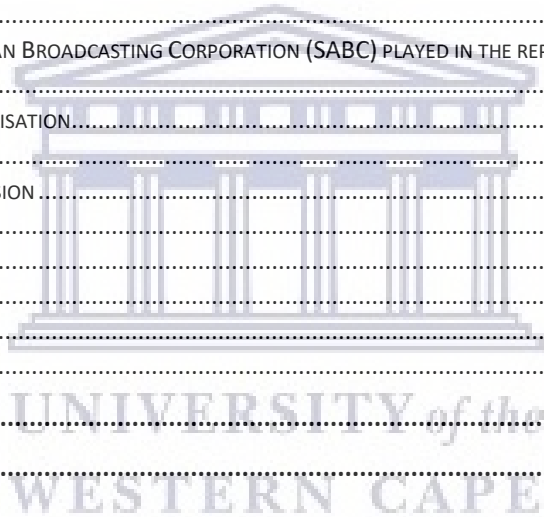To my brother, Bilaal, your passion inspires me, always follow your dreams!

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Abstract

For decades literature on Islam and Muslims utilised nomenclature which drew from commentary within news and mass media that perpetuated bias representations of Islam and Muslims as dangerous, violent, threats to democratic freedom, oppressors of women, oppressed women, terrorists, fundamentalists and a range of other stereotypes in society. Although Muslims have been an inherent part of South African society for nearly five hundred years, and are protected under ambit of religious freedom granted by the constitution, there is a on-going record micro-aggression and covert discrimination against Muslims from sections of society. Against this background, this dissertation explores the production and circulation of representations of Islam and Muslims on public broadcast television in South Africa. *An Nur The Light* differs from news programming and other mass media representations as it falls into a genre of religious broadcasting which is produced and regulated by the Broadcasting Policies of the national broadcaster. As such, it is designed in line with the specific principles that are underwritten by a commitment to fairness and equality in the media. This study adopted a case study research methodology and utilised a mediatiation of religion theoretical framework. In order to develop a nuanced understanding of *An Nur* within the context of religion and media in South African this study employed thematic and critical discourse analysis based on a purposively collected sample of episodes. This study found that with regards to Muslim media representation, the South African context is substantively different from the problematic Islamophobic representations that dominate media representations in and from the Global North as a result of Muslim self-expression that *An Nur* engenders.

Keywords: *An Nur The Light*; Islam; Muslims; SABC; Mediatisation of religion

Chapter One

Introduction

Background and Context

Muslims account for approximately two percent of the sixty million national population in South Africa (Schoeman, 2017). Historians estimate that between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, Islam found its way to South Africa through the bodies of captured and enslaved Muslims from Africa and Asia who were forced to the coast of Southern Africa, where they were sold and resold as though they were property (Tayob, 1998). The majority of South African Muslims can trace their lineage to the enslaved people, indentured labourers and political prisoners that arrived with the mass involuntary migration of human bodies across continents and oceans. When democracy was established, migration from the rest of Africa increased. This was in part due to the country's newly minted political status and its relative economic prosperity (Vawda, 2017). Many Muslims from various African countries as well as from South Asia moved to South Africa for a variety of reasons including the pursuit of political, religious, and economic refuge. This resulted in the South African Muslim community becoming racially, ethnically, culturally, politically, economically, and theologically heterogenous. Given the specificities and diversities of their histories, socioeconomic standing as well as political commitments, South African Muslims and Muslim migrants living in South Africa attach diverse meanings to what it means to be Muslim.

Muslims have been part of the history of South Africa for five centuries and the genealogy of Islam is preserved through several cultural sites. Muslims are a part of the historical, social, cultural, political, and economic fabric of South African society. In terms of politics, Muslims were at the forefront of the fight for freedom and democracy. Religious leaders, academics, and politicians such as Imam Haron, Fatima Meer and Ebrahim Rasool are well-known for the many personal sacrifices they made

in the struggle for political freedom (For more on the role of Muslims during the struggle against apartheid see Tayob, 1998 and Esack, 2009). Muslims also play vast and significant roles in terms of social welfare and development. The largest disaster response non-governmental organisation in Africa, the Gift of the Givers Foundation, was established because of its founder's religious commitment to unconditionally serve all of humanity through acts of outreach and charity (Gabralla, 2009).

Against the background of the 9/11 terror attacks, in the South African context, Muslims have not been subjected to the familiar violent and negative mediated representations of their American (Beydoun, 2018), European (Mythen, Walklate and Khan, 2009; De Rooij, 2017) and Australian (Weng and Mansouri, 2021) counterparts. This may be attributed to a number of reasons of which two will be elaborated here. Firstly, as noted above the presence of Islam in South Africa is longstanding and historically embedded with the struggle for freedom from colonialism and apartheid (Haron, 2020). Secondly, in the democratic era freedom of religion as a constitutional right intentionally protects the rights of all religious individuals and communities including Muslims. In addition, against the background of the suppression of religious diversity during apartheid, there have been a number of nation-building projects directed at the promotion and preservation of religious diversity in South Africa that are inspired by the democratic principles of inclusion and the appreciation of difference (Scharnick-Udemans, 2021). Media in the form of public broadcasting by the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) has been enlisted to play a leading role in producing and circulating representations of religious diversity and religious freedom (SABC, 2020).

Despite the growing popularity of digital media technology that includes satellite and streaming services, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) maintains its considerable influence due to its accessibility and affordability (Ferreira, 2019). Religion finds a place with the public broadcaster since the democratically reformed broadcasting policy of 1995, set out to correct the racialised resource discrimination of the apartheid era as well as the religious and gendered discriminations perpetuated by the broadcaster. The SABC now offers airtime to all

the major religious groups of South Africa. According to the Policy on Religious Content the major religions of South Africa are Islam, African Traditional Religion, Judaism, Christianity, and Hinduism (SABC, 2020). The SABC sets out to redress the discrimination against diversity that was prevalent during the apartheid regime and functions as a site through which social transformation may be produced and circulated. It attempts to offset discrimination through its status as a national pedagogical platform that disseminates the national vision of a democratic South Africa as put forth in the Constitution (Scharnick-Udemans, 2019a). Although SABC Editorial Policies are left up to the interpretation of internal staff as well as the independent production companies that are outsourced to produce content, the Broadcasting Code of Conduct of which the SABC is a signatory requires all content reflect national policies as well as constitutional values. In the context of religious programming, both religious freedom and freedom of expression must be upheld (SABC, 2020).

The SABC offers two kinds of religious programmes. The first is faith-specific and the second is multi-faith programming. Faith-specific programming offers religious groups the opportunity to be represented from an insider perspective and is produced for members of that group as a celebration of their faith. Multi-faith programmes aim to promote religious understanding of and among the diverse religious communities in South Africa, it is therefore more pedagogical in its orientation (Scharnick-Udemans, 2017a; SABC, 2020). Muslims are represented in both faith-specific and multi-faith programming. The focus of this dissertation is on the faith-specific programme *An Nur The Light*. Before offering an introduction to this programme I would like to offer some background into the unique conditions under which mediatised representations of Muslims and Islam are produced, circulated and understood in the South African context.

While the general positive acceptance of Islam and Muslims in South Africa is contrary to the overt Islamophobic sentiments in other global contexts, this does not imply that Muslims in South Africa are not subjected to negative experiences or media representations because of their religious affiliation. Instead, it implies that a different

context requires an alternative approach to identify and examine the possible manifestations of discrimination at play. Despite the integrated nature of Islam and Muslims in South Africa, there is nevertheless evidence that demonstrates that Islam and Muslims are at the centre of various contestations regarding religious identity, freedom of religion as well as freedom of expression (Khan, 2013).

Although there are limited studies on Islamophobia in Africa, recently two studies, one by Luis Cordeiro-Rodrigues (2021) and another by Sylvester Johnson, Edward Curtis IV, Kristian Petersen, Michael Brandon McCormack, Zeinab McHeimech, Will Caldwell, and Alejandro Escalante (2019) considered this phenomenon. Johnson *et al*. argues that studies on Islamophobia have focussed on its consequences for Muslims predominantly in the context of the Middle East rather than the effects it has on the global Muslim community. This results in the minimisation of Africana peoples' Muslimness from scholarship on the topic. Furthermore, Cordeiro-Rodrigues (2021), constructs their critique of the western expression of Islamophobia around an African value-system.

The dominant culture in South Africa is fuelled and maintained by Christian beliefs and ideology. Christian privilege is thus evident in South African society (Scharnick-Udemans, 2020). For example, according to Goolam Vahed (2021) social media was used to vilify Muslim worshippers who wanted to attend mosque services during the more restricted levels of the lockdowns mandated by the South African government due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Another example of anti-Islam sentiments has been the recent Christian contestation of the *Halāl* symbol on food products (Scharnick-Udemans, 2020). Despite no evidence to support their claims, the organisation behind the campaign alleges that *Halāl* certification bodies allocated the funding from *Halāl* certification to terror groups. Additionally, Muslim women have periodically been forced to defend their right to wear a headscarf. In one recent instance the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) brought a criminal charge against one of their employees for 'unlawfully' incorporating *hijāb* (a headscarf) as part of her official military uniform (Githahu, 2019). In this case, a victory for Muslim women was won when the SANDF was forced to amend the dress policy of the military

to allow Muslim women to wear the *hijāb* with their uniform, if they so choose (Daniels and Vuso, 2021). However, this victory does not excuse the trauma and anxiety to which the defendant in this case was subjected.

The 'othering' associated with certain public expressions of Muslimness could be interpreted as micro-aggressions. Although these microaggressions are not physically violent, or even overtly discriminatory, by virtue of its exclusionist and alienating tendencies, it takes the form of both systemic and subjective violence toward minorities (Said, 1978; Wing Sue, 2010). Derald Wing Sue, a professor of multicultural psychology, describes microaggressions as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural and environmental indignities" that are perpetrated against minority groups in society (Wing Sue, 2010, p.5). These covert manifestations of prejudice are laden with derogatory, hostile and negative religious as well as racial slurs. These micro-aggressions formulate narratives of 'othering' in which the dominant religious culture is favoured at the expense of minorities. In the South African context, manifestations and experiences of religious micro-aggressions have received limited media and scholarly coverage. This may result in religious micro-aggressions pertaining to Islam and Muslims generally going unchecked (Nadal, 2010). Furthermore, this may create the impression that these microaggressions are at best unproblematic and at worst, acceptable.

According to Daniel Kaplin (2017) six types of religious microaggressions have been proposed by researchers. These religious microaggressions unfold as either one of or as a combination of the following:

1) The endorsement of religious stereotypes.

2) The exoticization of religious minority faiths.

3) The pathologization of marginalised religious groups.

4) The assumption of one's own religious identity as normative.

5) The assumption of homogeneity of religious constituents from other traditions.

6) The denial of religious prejudice.

Given that Muslims in South Africa predominantly experience more covert demonstrations of discrimination I propose that microaggressions may be read as an expression of Islamophobia. In the section below I set the scene to the research context by introducing *An Nur The Light*.

An Nur The Light

Since the year 2000 *An Nur The Light*, an Islamic magazine lifestyle programme, has been broadcast on a weekly basis to the televisions in South African homes (Scharnick-Udemans, 2019a). The show is currently in its fourteenth season. The aim of this programme is to provide Muslims in South Africa with a platform to express positive narratives regarding their social, political, and religious lived realities (Scharnick-Udemans, 2018a). During the apartheid era, the SABC was used as an instrument by the state to broadcast only narrow Christian programming that aligned with the policies and politics of the apartheid state. This led to Christonormative ideologies being promulgated in society and thus resulted in the projection of South African society as a homogenous Christian state (Hackett, 2006). *An Nur The Light* was designed as a platform that provided a stage for Muslims to express their lived realities and identities. This programme is the brainchild of local producer and filmmaker Munier Parker (For a more detailed account of Parker's intellectual history and filmmaking influences see Scharnick-Udemans, 2018a). *An Nur The Light* may be conceived of as a site of socio-religious transformation since it may be used as a gauge to measure how South African society has advanced from having dominant televised representations of a singular religious tradition to having multi-faith and faith-specific programming, such as *An Nur The Light*, that celebrates and promotes religious diversity in South Africa. A standard episode of the programme comprises a combination of five of the following segments:

1) A Profile Segment that features Muslims in South African society performing interesting things in the civic as well as social spheres.

2) A Topic Segment wherein serious community and national issues such as crime, addiction, as well as familial relations are investigated and discussed.

3) An Islamic Fashion Segment where both women and men showcase their fashion choices and provide an explanation of how to assemble their looks as well as the inspiration behind their fashion choices.

4) A Cooking Segment whereby tasty treats and food are prepared by a friendly hostess who shares snippets of her personal life while preparing meals.

5) A Wellness Segment that includes discussions on health concerns.

6) A Books, Technology and Applications Segment where new products are showcased.

7) A *Tafsīr* Segment in which verses from the Qurʾān are read and interpretation of the verses are shared.

8) A Travel Segment wherein various beautiful and *Halāl* destinations within South Africa are showcased.
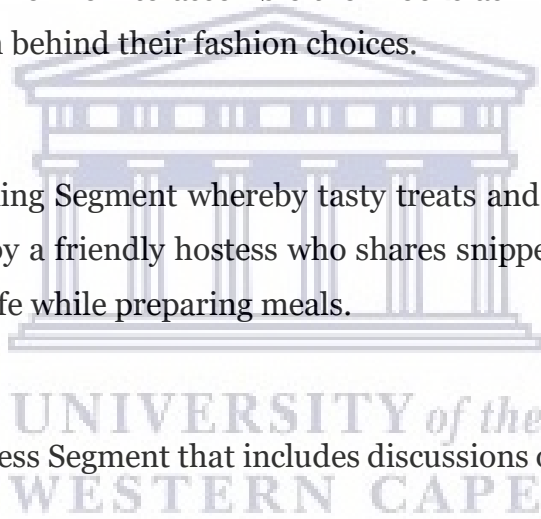
Below is a vignette taken from Episode ten in Season ten of *An Nur The Light*.

"Surfing helps me connect spiritually with Allah. It helps me get closer with him through communing with nature. Once I am in connection with what Allah has created, and the sea is quite a powerful force of nature, so once you are in it you really feel the strength of what Allah has created and the force. It really tests every part of you and that's what I love about it because it is a huge avenue for growth and gives you potential you know to really dive into" (*An Nur The Light*, 2016, Season 10, Episode 10).

In this episode an account of Qudsia Mall, a Muslim woman surfer's lived reality and embodiment of Muslimness was presented. This presentation of the lived reality of a Muslim woman is surprising and interesting for several reasons of which two will be briefly discussed.

First, this segment depicts a Muslim woman in an unusual context and setting, on a beach teaching young women to surf. She shares that she first pursued surfing lessons and after developing a passion for the sport became the owner of her own surfing school, *Nomadic Spirit*. Her motivation for her business was the realisation that there was a need for Muslim women, and young girls to be able to learn to surf in a safe and empowering space. Throughout the segment that Mall is featured, the themes of empowerment, agency and community are apparent. Furthermore, the intersections of gender, religion and race are also quite important within the representation of Mall. Second, her obvious symbols and displays of agency are the antithesis of dominant stereotypical representations of Muslim women. Furthermore, her explanations of how her relationship with the Divine and her understandings of her religious obligations are configured within the material reality of her love for nature and the ocean, offers a unique and subjective interpretation of Muslim agency in general.

Global representations of Muslim women are predominantly framed in negative ways that cast women in stereotypical roles of veiled women with no agency (Posetti, 2010; Rahman and Emadi, 2018). Contrary to these stereotypical disseminations of what Muslim women are supposed to be, the guests who appear on *An Nur The Light*

are knowledgeable, experienced and embody agency, grit and determination. They also all display a willingness to share their perspectives and insights with a broader audience, hence their agreement to feature on the programme.

Mall embodies religious devotion, social and physical empowerment and a spirit of boundary breaking. Although this is a gendered representation of Islam one can garner from this vignette that *An Nur The Light* disrupts preconceived representations that are perpetuated through news articles, television series and movies wherein the thematic focus is violence, terrorism, and the alienation of Islam and Muslims from so-called mainstream society. The representations of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light* dispel normative stereotypical as well as repetitive, negative representations of Muslims such as the oppression of Muslim women by Muslim men who are the embodiment of evil, violence, and terrorism (Baderoon, 2014).

An Nur The Light, is conceptualised as both an archive of mediatised representations of Islam and Muslims in South Africa and a site from which to study mediatised representations of Muslims and Islam. Considering the power of the media to reproduce and circulate representations of religions and religious communities, and the noticeably rising incidences and indications of microaggressions against Muslims in South African society, the main research question of this dissertation was:

How are Islam and Muslims represented within *An Nur The Light*?

The three research questions used to answer the main research question is:

1) What is the SABC's role in the representation of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light*?

2) How is Islam and Muslims represented on *An Nur The Light*?

3) Why are representations of Islam and Muslims constructed in these ways?

For the purposes of the study, three corresponding research objectives are identified:

1) To describe the SABC's approach to Islam and Muslims.
2) To explore the representations of Islam and Muslims on the *An Nur The Light* programme.
3) To theorise how Islam and Muslims are depicted on *An Nur The Light*.

Mediatised representations of Islam and Muslims in South Africa

In the following section a preliminary exploration of scholarship on media representations of Islam and Muslims within the South African context will be discussed. As it will be illustrated, within existing scholarship, research has been almost entirely focussed on Muslim women and issues of representation hence the focus on gender within the literature. This preliminary literature review situates both the case-study and its conceptual framing within the scholarly literature. A dearth of literature is prevalent within the field of media representations of Islam and Muslims in South Africa, this study contributes to the existing literature and hopes to extend prospects for future inquiry.

Through their scholarship South African researchers have attempted to address the stereotypical as well as biased representations of Islam and Muslims portrayed in mainstream media (Muthal, 2010; Baderoon, 2014). According to Gabeba Baderoon, author of *Regarding Muslims*, even though representations of Islam and Muslims in mass media are not predominantly negative, the representations of South African Muslim women are also framed by veiling narratives that under the gaze of the dominant culture subjugate women. The dominant gaze of non-Muslim media upon Islam and Muslims' practices results in limited and misrepresentations of Islam and Muslims even in the South African context where there is an absence of overt discrimination and violence (Baderoon, 2014).

Raheemah Boomberg (2016) conducted a study on the identity of modern South African Muslim women. Her study dealt with various inadequacies that pertained to mass media representations of Muslim women in juxtaposition to the lived realities of a group of Muslim women who resided in a middle-upper class Johannesburg suburb. Boomberg (2016) found that instead of resisting Islamic ideals Muslim women in South Africa embraced these ideals and then curated and mediated how they were received in various spheres of society.

> The 'typical' Muslim woman is easily accepted by society as a married woman who assumes the role of caretaker and mother. My presence in this world, as a student or an individual, that is capable of adopting multiple roles, often understood as contradictory, is questioned by some and admired by others (Boomberg, 2016, p.1).

The women in this study were active determinants in their identity formation rather than passive participants as part of a community. There is a typified Muslim woman narrative imposed on Muslim women that defines her private and public status. When this expected role is defied then Muslim women are deemed to be either a threat to democracy or too modernised to be considered a Muslim woman (Boomberg 2016). However, Boomberg argues against this narrative by indicating that in South African society one is very likely to find a Muslim woman to be embodying the role of student as well as mother. She indicates that in many instances Muslim women are questioned as to how they can be a mother and a student, yet this dual role is quite often taken up by someone of the Christian faith and that is seen as normal. This indicates a Christian privilege that is prevalent in South African society, which is especially critical towards Muslim women.

The homogenisation of Muslim identity is prevalent in society and Boomberg (2016) argues that this culminates in the portrayal of Muslims primarily focussed on womens' dress practices. Boomberg argues that dress practices should not be the deciding factor in society when determining the autonomy or agency of Muslim women in the public sphere. This was especially the case, she argued, in Johannesburg,

where the social circumstances of Muslim women are both dynamic and contested. One can only gain answers to the identity question of Muslim women in Johannesburg by taking a closer look at their lived experiences. Muslim women are identified in society by the material embodiment of their religiosity, the *hijāb*. It is evident from Boomberg's (2016) arguments that token minority status was often assigned to Muslim women who appeared socially acceptable in the public sphere through their veiling practices, modest dress sense, cooking prowess, placing others needs above their own and decisions to care for a family rather than pursue an education.

Saloshni Muthal (2010) in her minor dissertation *Subjective Meanings attached to Muslim Social Identity in South Africa* argues that there is no one singular operational definition of what it means to be Muslim or of the Muslim social identity. Muthal challenged the bias regarding homogenised Muslim identities that had been perpetuated in media scholarship throughout the decades. The aim of her study was to understand the ways that Muslim identity was understood and represented through media (Muthal, 2010). The meanings Muslims attach to their identity were subjective and differed based on location, social context, race, gender, ethnicity and history. For example, it is not uncommon for a South African (geopolitical context) to be a person of colour (race) who is Muslim (ethnicity). This shows a fluidity of Muslim identity in South Africa and media scholarship argued that identity fluidity was interpreted differently by Muslims who ascribe to this identity since birth versus someone who embraced Islam at a later stage in their life (Muthal, 2010).

Recent studies by South African scholars have argued that new media has created spaces for women to express and embody their agency (Ismail and Seedat, 2017). Through their study Farhana Ismail and Fatima Seedat countered the prevalent media stereotypes that Muslim women are oppressed and are not allowed to function in society with or amongst men. Their study comprised an analysis of online fatwas that were generated by a "South African religious legal scholar who identifies with the Deoband Hanafi legal school of thought that originates in India, where forty percent of South African Muslims have their roots" (Ismail and Seedat, 2017, p.98). Their study, *Gender Asymmetry and Mutual Sexual Relations in Online Legal*

Interpretation – Beyond the Dissonance Through the Fatwas of askimam.org, examined the manners in which religious actors, Muslim women as well as Muslim men in minority contexts have engaged and continue to engage debates regarding "contemporary expectations of marriage and sexual intimacy characterised by mutuality, reciprocity and *fiqh*-based gender asymmetrical norms" (Ismail and Seedat, 2017, p.98). The term fiqh is defined as Islamic jurisprudence. With this case study analysis, the authors found that online environments allow Muslims the freedom to acquire knowledge regarding sex and sex related pietistic concerns because of the anonymity that the internet provides. One of their key findings was that because of the sense of anonymity that cyberspace afforded Muslim women they interacted with their male counterparts through asking questions regarding issues in their personal and intimate lives that they would not necessarily have asked a scholar in person or even had the opportunity to ask a religious scholar in a setting other than in cyberspace (Ismail and Seedat, 2017). Furthermore, women's agency was facilitated on these online platforms as they were able to query their concerns without being dismissed.

To conclude, this sample of existing studies of media representations of Muslims and Islam is indicative of the politics surrounding representations of Islam and Muslims not only in South Africa. Muslims in South Africa enjoy the freedom of expressing their religious identity without overt violent backlash. However, existing literature on mediated representations of Islam and Muslims focus on veiling and this may be indicative of media discourses from the Global North being a prevalent influence on South African media and scholarship.

Research Design and Methodology

The overlap of gender, politics, religion, race, and identity on *An Nur The Light* are explored in order to theorise representations of Islam and Muslims. In this dissertation a single-case study method is conducted in order to explore the ways that Islam and Muslims are represented in *An Nur The Light*, a public broadcast programme. The representations of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light* are contemporary, real-life cases and therefore a case study method is the suited design to

employ for this study. Moreover, a case study research design is employed within this study in order to analyse the audiovisual digital material of *An Nur The Light* that is accessible on YouTube. These episodes are examined for the language as well as images that it is disseminating through the speech instances and body movement of guests. The sample comprised thirty episodes that were collected from the *An Nur The Light* playlists on the SABC3 YouTube channel, using a purposive sampling technique. The purposive sampling technique was utilised because this sampling technique allows for an information rich sample to be chosen (Schreier, 2018). These episodes are freely accessible on YouTube. This study had no research participants as I analysed audiovisual material and examined policy documents. This was beneficial due to COVID-19 restrictions that limited the ability to conduct more embodied forms of research.

Two analytical strategies were deployed. The first analytical strategy utilised within this case study is thematic analysis. This was selected to develop a broad understanding of the dataset and to generate themes that could guide the subsequent analysis. The second strategy that was deployed is a critical discourse analysis that is used to excavate the underlying meanings within the representations of Islam and Muslims as well as the discourses that sustain, maintain and disputes the representations on *An Nur The Light*.

Positionality and Reflexivity in this study

Positionality and reflexivity are relational terms because positionality is informed by reflexivity. Positionality is a term that may be used to describe both the ways that the individual interprets their social reality as well as the position the individual adopts within their research given their sociopolitical context (Darwin Holmes, 2020). The term reflexivity may be understood as the self-reflection that a researcher undergoes throughout their study in order for the researcher to be able to critique as well as articulate their positionality within their study (Darwin Holmes, 2020). Moreover, reflexivity necessitates a sensitivity to the researcher's social and political context. As a Coloured, Muslim, South African woman I have faced similar discrimination in terms

of tokenism which many Muslim women who are presented in existing literature have faced. This research project is a case study on mediatised representations of Islam and Muslims on a broadcast media programme in South Africa. My aim with this study is to contribute to the field of decolonial knowledge production regarding Islam and Muslims in South Africa, and Africa as a continent.

I was deeply disturbed by the existing literature that I critically examined because of the suffering that people who shared the same religious beliefs as myself experience. To borrow from Sarojini Nadar (2014), I make this admission 'unapologetically' because while dealing with my emotions regarding the representations I was able to use critical analytical skills to interpret the arguments that scholars were putting forth in research (Nadar, 2014). Being in the position of researcher who is investigating the phenomenon of mediatised representations of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light* and also a South African Muslims who has often found themselves having to explain to non-Muslim people that just because I wear *hijāb* and am Muslim does not mean that I align myself with terrorism or terrorist groups. Therefore, I quite often had to pull myself back from pushing the token minority representation of Muslim South Africans being able to assimilate in society because Muslims in South Africa feed the poor and donate to charities and have jobs in the country. Rather, the stance has been taken to acknowledge the token representations and then ask why that framing was used to represent Islam and Muslims in that particular context. Furthermore, aligning my work with feminist, anti-racism, decolonial scholars such as Sarojini Nadar (2014), Gabeba Baderoon (2014), and Lee-Shae Scharnick-Udemans (2018a; 2018b; 2019a; 2020) who have and who continue to illuminate the voices of marginalised and racialised groups assisted in bringing broader understandings of my findings into being. I observed myself consistently using theories generated from outside of Africa in order to understand Islamophobia in this context, however, without disregarding or negating the findings of those studies I wish to contribute to the field by retheorising mediatised representations of Islam and Muslims its meanings and consequences for South African society.

Chapter Outline

In chapter one the historical context and background is offered. The historical background of the SABC is explored. Moreover, 'othering' expressions of Muslimness is characterised as microaggressions and six type of religious microaggression that researchers use, according to Kaplin (2017), were presented. The research context of *An Nur The Light* and the contributions this dissertation is making to media representations of Islam and Muslims within South Africa is also explained. Moreover, the research questions and the ways the research questions are addressed is delineated. The mediated representations of Islam and Muslims within the South African context are analysed and discussed. Furthermore, my positionality and reflexivity of this study is also discussed within this chapter.

Chapter two of the study entails a discussion, description and analysis of existing literature pertaining to media representations of Islam and Muslims in the global context. The literature review illustrates the existing literature of mediated representations of Islam and Muslims that have been circulated in society in terms of five themes, namely, 1) homogenisation and minority bias, 2) social activism and Muslim women, 3) migration and Muslims, 4) hegemony and discrimination, and 5) Islamophobia. The gap in the literature as well as an insight into the theoretical framework used in this dissertation is explained. This chapter also includes a review of the mediatisation of religion theoretical framework, mediatisation of religion. The influence of Edward Said's seminal work *Orientalism* on media scholarship has been discussed.

In chapter three the research design and methodology is explained. In this chapter a case study methodology is used to address the research questions of this dissertation. The social constructivist research paradigm that this case study methodological approach is aligned with is explained. In addition, the research setting, methodological framework, purposive sampling technique and data production methods are also delineated. Furthermore, the methods of data analysis are outlined

in this chapter, the two methods of analysis are namely, 1) thematic analysis and 2) critical discourse analysis.

Chapter four is the findings chapter that is constructed around Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step guide to thematic analysis. This chapter is structured based on the first two research questions of this dissertation. In this chapter the findings of the thematic analysis are structured around the themes of 1) religion, and 2) gender. The theme of religion is characterised around the sub themes 1) countering negative media representations, 2) religious education, and 3) spirituality and faith. Furthermore, the theme of gender is characterised around the sub themes 1) appearance and dress code, and 2) challenges that Muslim women face in society.

Chapter five is the interpretation of the speech instances of guests on *An Nur The Light* incorporating Fairclough's (2002) three dimensional approach to conduct a critical discourse analysis. The chapter is structured according to two headings. The first heading is Muslims, media and marginalisation. This heading has been categorised using two sub-headings namely, 1) religious rights and freedom, and 2) Islamophobia as microaggression. The second heading is gender, media and race. This has been categorised according to four sub-heading namely, 1) appearance, 2) empowerment, 3) breaking barriers, and 4) contested spaces.

Chapter six is the conclusion chapter and I restated the research questions and objectives. Furthermore, I provided insight regarding findings of the study that differed to the initial findings I expected. Thereafter, I provide a reflection of my positionality and reflexivity post-completion of this study. The chapter is closed off with a suggestion in terms of prospective research.

Conclusion

To conclude, Muslims have been part of the history of South Africa for the past five centuries. It was during the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries that Islam was

brought to South Africa through the enslaved bodies of Muslims from Asia and Africa (Tayob, 1998). Furthermore, Islam and various other minority religious faith groups in South Africa faced racialised discrimination during apartheid that was further perpetuated by the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) who was the vehicle through which dominant Christian norms were disseminated into society. Contrary to this suppression of religious diversity during apartheid, democratic South Africa saw an influx of migrant Muslims to South Africa from South Asia and various African countries given the political, economic and religious refuge that democratic South Africa entrenched in their constitution. Moreover, this democratic era intentionally protects the religious rights of all religious communities and individuals.

In this chapter a historical context and background was offered, whereby the discussion was structured around the history of Islam and Muslims in South Africa. Additionally, the 'othering' of expressions of Muslimness was claimed to be interpreted as microaggressions. Thus, a discussion of microaggressions as espoused by Derald Wing Sue (2010) took place. Moreover, the six types of religious microaggressions that Daniel Kaplin (2017) proffered was briefly introduced. Given the discussions of microaggressions and the preliminary review of media representations it was proposed that microaggressions may be read as expressions of Islamophobia within mediatised representations of Islam and Muslims in the South African context.

The scene for the research context was set through an introduction of the research site *An Nur The Light*. It was suggested in this chapter that *An Nur The Light* could be conceived to be a site of socio-religious transformation as one is able to use the programme to gauge the development of the SABC in terms of this faith-specific programme given the SABCs tumultuous history. The aim of this programme was highlighted as being a platform for Muslims to express positive narratives regarding their political, religious and social lived realities within South Africa. The history of the SABC as the instrument used by the state to curate and circulate Christonormative ideologies during apartheid was discussed. *An Nur The Light* is the brainchild of Munier Parker. Parker is both a producer and filmmaker of local content and

specialises in films relating to Islam and Muslims in South Africa (Scharnick-Udemans, 2018a). The structure of a standard *An Nur The Light* episode comprised a combination of five of the eight segments that the programme offered. The three research questions and the corresponding research objectives were introduced in this chapter.

Furthermore, a preliminary exploration of scholarship on media representations of Islam and Muslims in the South African context was discussed. The exploration illustrated that mediatised representations of Islam and Muslims in South Africa predominantly focussed on veiling of Muslim women. These representations were indicative of media discourses from the Global North influencing local media discourses and shaping the narratives that were disseminated into society. Moreover, a claim was made that there is a dearth of literature within the field of media representations of Islam and Muslims in South Africa. In the next chapter, the literature review, mediated representations Islam and Muslims within existing in the global context are explored. Moreover, token minority representation were briefly discussed in the mediatised representations of Islam and Muslims section of this chapter. Thereafter, the qualitative research design and the ways that this case study was conducted was discussed. The penultimate component was a reflection on my positionality and reflexivity within this study. The final component on this chapter was the chapter outline whereby a reflection of the knowledge production in each chapter was done in order to track the progress made towards the end goals of answering the research question of: How are Islam and Muslims represented in South Africa?

Chapter Two

Literature Review and Theoretical Frameworks

Introduction

The September 11th terror attacks resulted in a sharp and sustained increase of media attention on issues related to Islam and a consequent rise in scholarship on the topic of mediated and mediatised representations of the religion and its adherents. Mainstream media in the Global North have been at the forefront of the production, curation and circulation of representations of Islam and Muslims as well as religious and racialised minorities (Ahmed and Matthes, 2017; Singh 2020; Weng and Mansouri, 2021). Furthermore, scholarship related to religious minorities and media indicates a prevalence of narratives perpetuating prejudice, stereotypes, and discriminatory conceptualisations. While the notion of minority is context-dependent, Muslims have been inordinately affected by these media sensibilities (Baderoon, 2014; Ahmed and Matthes, 2017; Beydoun, 2018). These representations have resulted in a rise in distorted imaginaries and confusion regarding Islam and Muslims in the public imagination. This has resulted in the heterogeneity of Islam and Muslims being dismissed while violence, anti-social behaviour, as well as crime become the defining features by which Islam and Muslims are represented and recognised (Mahmut, 2019; Singh 2020; Weng and Mansouri, 2021).

While the events and consequences of 9/11 media representations of Islam and the study thereof, do not frame the context of this study, the predominance of this turning point in modern history permeates through much of the literature. Therefore, it is pertinent to both acknowledge the formative influence of 9/11 on the field of Muslim media representations but also to acknowledge its limited appeal for the African context. Despite this disclaimer it would be prudent to report that scholarship affirms that to a lesser extent and closer to home in the African context, media

reporting on both 'Islamic' terrorism in Africa mirrors and expands the familiar homogenising tropes that were reproduced through 9/11 (Anugwom, 2019).

The prolific writer Edward Said, in his seminal work *Orientalism*, made a notable contribution to the study of prejudice and power. According to Said (1978), orientalism may be observed in mediatised representations of Islam and Muslims that negatively influence the perceptions that audiences would have of Islam and Muslims. These negative perceptions are internalised through viewing, reading, or listening to negative information about Islam and Muslims repeatedly. Said clearly showed through his work on orientalism how the media had the power to sway nations against targeted minority groups. In the context of his work, he showed how European and American public opinion regarding religious communities from the socially constructed 'East' were swayed by the socially constructed 'West' through media reporting on and framing of Islam and Muslims as bad, violent, evil and oppressive.

According to Said (1987) the 'West' is a socially constructed Eurocentric concept that is contrasted with the semi-mythical concept of the 'Orient'. Said indicated that the 'West' was typically discussed in cultural and historical contrast to the 'Orient'. This is illustrated through the conceptualisation of 'us' and 'them'. Furthermore, there is no definitive meaning to the use of the concept 'the West', rather the connotations attached to the concept is dependent on the geopolitical context in which it is used as well as that of the user. When used by individuals from imperialist countries who attempted to perpetuate dominant cultural values of the 'West' these individuals would reference 'Western civilisation' in favourable ways such as associating the concept in this case with individuals and societies who are forward thinking, have moral values and are part of something meaningful. The contrast to this would be the 'Orient', likened to Muslims, Arabs and minorities who are battling against the erasure of their existence, cultures, languages and lived realities (Said, 1978).

Said (1978) indicated that in order for European culture to become what it is in contemporary times Europe needed to create an 'Orient'. The richest and oldest

European colonies can be found in the 'Orient'. Thus, 'Orient' may be understood as the poster-child of 'the other'. Furthermore, the 'Orient' is not an imagined place, but rather a concept that became a physical manifestation of imperialist discourse that supports and perpetuates Eurocentric culture as normative. "Orientalism organized itself systematically as the acquisition of 'Oriental' material and its regulated dissemination as a form of specialized knowledge in periodic form" (Said, 1987, p.165). Thus, the argument that a relationship of domination, hegemony and power is present between the 'Orient' and the 'Occident' is put forth. In this study orientalism is observed not only as a discourse that critiques the discrimination against Islam and Muslims in mediatised representations, but it is also observed as the yardstick that producers and curators of representations have covertly hidden within repetitive representations to camouflage the damage it created and continues to create while these narratives are in circulation within multicultural societies.

According to Laurens De Rooij (2017) orientalism has impacted upon the ways that British media represents Islam and Muslims. Furthermore, the lens of orientalism directed at Islam and Muslims depicts a multi-faceted religion and its people as homogenous and monolithic (De Rooij, 2017). This results in consumers of these representations to perceive Islam and Muslims as incompatible with the values of British society, as violent and unreasonable outcasts to a normative British society. Moreover, the presence of orientalist narratives in mass media is a key cause of Islamophobic discourse being perpetuated in society which in turn impacts greatly upon the acceptance of Muslims and their abilities to integrate into society (Weng and Mansouri, 2021). The pervasiveness of orientalist narratives that manifested in contemporary society as Islamophobic discourses are indicative of asymmetric systems of power prevalent in society. The relationship that exists amongst power, gender and religion and the discourses that sustain these representations within media will be discussed in the chapters to come.

According to Ali Mazrui (2000), *Black Orientalism?*, when Edward Said published *Orientalism* he influenced many scholars to critique the culturally condescending tone certain scholars from the Global North exhibited toward non-

Western societies. Furthermore, Mazrui also critiques Said's work for not adequately addressing the diaspora of Islam but confining it to being a religion of Arabs. Moreover, Said's work was also critiqued for its dismissal of Black African realities under colonial rule. This is an important critique as Mazrui adapted Said's work to the context of not only religious discrimination, but also racial discrimination. According to Tahir Sitoto (2018) the scholarship on Black Africans and Islam is predominantly related to conversion. This is problematic because it unintentionally 'others' Black African Muslims and converts as inauthentic versions of Muslims. Sitoto (2018) argues that repetitive negative media representations of Islam and Muslims result in Muslims, whether migrants, converts, or born Muslim, being ostracized from society and associated with violence.

In scholarship from Europe and America, academics tend to use the 'East' and 'West' formulation (Mythen, Walklate and Khan, 2009; Beydoun, 2018; Bashri, 2018). The 'East' and 'West' are imagined geographic areas. This convention has been used to discuss the way that the world comprises only two cultures, 'Western society' and 'the Other'. The 'West' may be understood as an idea that was constructed around a history of imagery, vocabulary, and thought that perpetuates European and American culture as the ideal society (Said, 1987). The 'East' was constructed around the negative framing of non-Europeans and non-Americans who do not conform to the norms of 'Western society'. According to Pun (2019) the 'West' has framed European and American culture as universal, this may be interpreted as cultural hegemony. Furthermore, any culture that does not conform to the norms set out by 'Western' culture is excluded from so called 'civil society' and framed in terms of negative stereotypes. These stereotypes perpetuate homogenous representations of minorities as barbaric, violent or oppressive (Said, 1987; Mythen, Walklate and Khan, 2009; Ahmed and Matthes, 2017; Rahman, 2020).

Given the arguments by Carl Ernst (2003) that problematises the usage of the 'East-West' dichotomy because it implies a picture that is too simplistic, I use the conventions of Global North and Global South in this dissertation. It offers a sense of inclusion as more countries are grouped together within this conceptualisation and

global knowledge production is encouraged (Collyer, 2016). The 'West' and 'East' formulation is used to situate scholarship from the Global North as the dominant producers of knowledge and then depict scholars and scholarship from the Global South as not contributing to discourse that shapes social practice. The 'West' is used within scholarship to indicate the yardstick with which to measure societal standards and the 'East' is used as a scapegoat whereby everything that is wrong with society is blamed on that imagined geographical area. In addition, the dichotomous 'West-East' formulation is problematic because it is exclusionary and frames the 'West' as good and the 'East' as bad. These representations are sustained through vilifying cultural practices that do not conform to those of the Global North.

By the same token as the introduction indicates a different set of challenges has already between established, for Islam and Muslims in the South African context. According to African media studies scholars, researchers on the continent should "challenge and confront elements of the global knowledge system, which are driven by an implicit 'civilising mission' in which methods and intellectual approaches drawn from the West are seen as sacrosanct, while approaches and concepts emerging from the Global South are deemed to have a lower ontological density in the hierarchical ordering of knowledge" (Schoon, Mabweazara, Bosch, and Dugmore, 2021, p.1). Informed by the epistemological positioning suggested above, the critical context of this study, and the research questions, this literature review intentionally explored literature on Islam and Muslims that was not framed in terms of terrorism and instead looked to literature that focussed on more situated, generalised, and nuanced expressions of media engagement with Islam. Through this critical examination of existing literature, the aim for this chapter was to uncover how religion, gender, and race were implicated in these studies of mediatised Islam and Muslims.

This chapter comprises two sections. The first section characterises the existing scholarly literature in five themes. The themes are namely:

1. Homogenisation and minority bias. Homogenisation may be understood as the ways that media representations of Islam and Muslims frame the minority as being static and characterised through key attributes. Minority bias refers to

how minority groups are framed as being the root cause of societal ills through media representations of minorities.

2. Social activism and Muslim women was explored and explained in terms of the social activism stance that Muslim women take in order to represent themselves within a society where they have always been spoken for, at, and about.

3. Migration and Muslims in wherein challenges that Muslim migrants in 'host' societies face are discussed.

4. Hegemony and discrimination in which the representations of Islam and Muslims of the dominant group have been perpetuated as the main narrative.

5. Islamophobia may be understood as a form of racism that targets not only Muslims but also minorities who are mistaken for Muslims as well.

The second section characterises the theoretical framework of mediatisation of religion and discusses its utility for this study.

Homogenisation and minority bias

Homogenisation may be characterised as the typification of Islam and Muslims as dangerous to civil society (Wigger, 2019; Mahmut, 2019; Demarest *et al.*, 2020; Rahman, 2020). Whereas minority bias may be characterised as instances of discrimination and abuse in which minorities are targeted (Beydoun, 2018; Bashri, 2018; Luqui and Yang, 2018; Rahman, 2020). In their study, *Media representation of Muslims and Islam from 2000-2015: A meta-analysis*, Saifuddin Ahmed and Jorge Matthes (2017) found that media correspondents tend to consistently report on themes that are often skewed toward stereotypical representations of violence, immigration, war, terrorism, veiling, and cultural differences when it comes to Islam and Muslims. The methodological approach of this study was a meta-analysis whereby three hundred and forty-five studies were analysed in order to examine the role of the media in the construction of Islamic and Muslim identity. The aim of this study was to analyse the media constructed narratives in order to craft a general understanding regarding the patterns evident in global media outlets framings of Muslims. Ahmed and Matthes (2017) found that studies on media representations of Islam and Muslims, for nearly two decades, have predominantly placed the attention on Europe,

Australia, and North America at the expense of Latin America, Africa as well as Arab countries.

This speaks to the monopoly that the Global North still holds over media outlets in the 21st Century that is evident in the findings of Ahmed and Matthes regarding media representations of Islam and Muslims being heavily concentrated in the Global North. The evidence for this claim is that ninety-nine studies were situated in the United States of America, seventy in Europe, and thirty-nine in Australia and the studies in those contexts significantly outnumbered the five studies which were set in the South African context (Ahmed and Matthes, 2017). Furthermore, Ahmed and Matthes proposed that the perspective of Islam and Muslims be studied within the context of Muslim news organisations or studies that are conducted with Muslim populations. This would afford the representation of Muslims by Muslim organisations that are muted through international negative narratives regarding the religion and population. Furthermore, the plethora of embodiments of Islam and Muslims that have been influenced by culture as well as society given the various geographical contexts in which Muslims are found, cannot simply be funnelled into a singular, homogenous version of Islam and Muslims that mass media, particularly that which emerges from the United States, Europe, and Australia, deem socially acceptable or politically affirming (Ahmed and Matthes, 2017).

In a ten-year study of representations of Muslims in Chinese news media, it was found that representations of Islam and Muslims were crafted predominantly in a negative light. For instance, Islam and Muslims have been framed in media representations as being uncontrollable predators who are prone to violence (Luqui and Yang, 2018). Furthermore, Dilmurat Mahmut (2019), *Controlling Religious Knowledge and Education,* reviewed contemporary government policies, practices, and rhetoric that have controlled the access to religious education in the Xinjiang province of China. This was a mixed methods study in which the perspectives of Canadian diaspora Uyghurs were incorporated into the analysis in order to ascertain what the results of the ramifications of religious education developments were. For instance, if someone from the Uyghur minority group is suspected of radicalisation

they are transferred to Counter-terrorism Training Schools or education and transformation training centres.

Moreover, Mahmut found that Uyghur Muslims were portrayed in the media as if they were at the re-education centres voluntarily, rather than condemned to the centres because they publicly displayed acts that were considered mainstream religious activities. These acts include wearing the veil, growing a beard, fasting during the month of *Ramadan* (the month in which Muslims abstain from food and drink from sunrise to sunset), fasting in general, women wearing *hijāb*, praying, or adorning oneself with religious symbolism. These internment camps are a graphic reminder of the concentration camps of Nazi Germany. Many Uyghurs have been protesting the Chinese government's repressive policies in the region and have been labelled terrorists or extremists as a result (Mahmut, 2019).

Moreover, in a recent study Aucky Adi Kurniawan, Al Dina Maulidya, Khairul Sa'ban, and Indrawati Indrawati explored the ways that media in the Global North and Chinese media framed the Uyghur Muslim conflict (Kurniawan *et al.*, 2020). The aim of this study was to analyse the ways that mass media from different contexts framed the Uyghur Muslim minority. In this study Kurniawan *et al.* argues that Chinese media operates in the interest of the government and any representations regarding Uyghur Muslims would be framing the Chinese government in a positive light and would thus discredit any information regarding ill-treatment of Uyghur Muslims. American media on the contrary highlights the ways in which minorities have been negatively impacted through the discrimination against them. The author indicates that many journalists who have been invited into Xingjian province to view the education centres in which Uyghur Muslims are housed have reviewed it as an educational opportunity that Uyghur Muslims seemed grateful for. This is contrary to the narratives of social media in which Uyghur Muslims who have migrated to countries such as Canada or America are campaigning for the rights of Uyghur Muslims to be defended (Mahmut, 2019).

Contrary to the studies that were discussed previously Khairiah A. Rahman (2020) argues that a shift discernible in New Zealand media has occurred, from

rhetoric fuelled by othering in which local media outlets echoed international media framing of Muslims and Islam as unwelcome, unadaptable, and unassimilable to local media instituting an inclusive approach toward Muslims in society though media representations (Kabir and Hamid, 2015). Rahman, after the Christchurch tragedy, applied a content analysis to news stories that appeared in her Twitter and Facebook news feeds between 15 March and 23 August 2019. She argues that that news media that focusses on representations of Islam and Muslims contribute to the identity formation of Muslim people.

Through her analysis of representations in New Zealand media Rahman (2020) found that when culture within newsrooms is in favour of perpetuating narratives that continue to frame Islam and Muslims as the other then this mentality is adopted by the dominant culture and Muslims continue to be oppressed through structural discrimination. Rahman argues that in order for Muslims to be part of society, a global shift in representations that news outlets are circulating is required to take place in society. Genuine dialogue needs to occur between media and government so that media narratives can delve beyond token representations of Muslims or acts of care and incorporate Muslim voices that are absent in media representations of this population group.

Furthermore, the idea of Muslim voices includes Muslim women speaking for themselves not men or news organisations speaking on behalf of them. Muting Muslim women's voices within media representations results in the identity of Muslim women being crafted for them rather than by them. This is discrimination and results in Muslim women being further marginalised as they cannot embody their autonomy through media representations that are circulated in society. Even though a shift in media rhetoric has begun in New Zealand media, Muslim women are still marginalised by journalists within media representations (Rahman, 2020). This is problematic as the autonomy of Muslim women are stripped from them and they are not able to self-represent within news media. According to Julia Posetti (2010) Muslim women from marginalised groups in the Global North are more likely to experience a triple marginalisation in terms of religious bigotry, racism, and sexism. Moreover, within

news media Muslim women have been misrepresented as oppressed because they have to wear *hijāb* and fundamental because they choose to not conform to the dominant culture and don *hijāb* in public (Posetti, 2010; Rahman, 2020).

Social Activism and Muslim Women

Social activism in the context of media representations of Islam and Muslims is about how Muslim women are challenging the status quo. For decades Muslim women have been represented ambiguously in media as oppressed, subservient, exotic beings (Said, 1987; Jakku, 2018; Beydoun, 2018).

In a study dealing with Muslim women and media Valentine M. Moghadam and Namrata Mitra (2014) argue that the cultural, linguistic, and dress practices of Muslims are too differentiated and vast for a homogenous representation of Muslim women to ever exist. Muslim women are situated in diverse socio-political, economic, and cultural contexts. The literature indicated that international mainstream journalism pays excellent attention to Muslim women's code of dress and as a result their clothing has become somewhat of a symbol indicative of both their alien status as well as the supposed nameless and faceless threat that Muslim women pose to democracy (Posetti, 2010; Moghadam and Mitra, 2014; Jakku, 2018; Bashri, 2018). The emphasis has been given to Muslim women's dress practices rather than to the discrimination and prejudice that women face as well as the mutism that Muslim women experience through being spoken for, but never being given the platform to speak on their own experiences.

Before 9/11 veiling practices of Muslim women were portrayed in media representations as being alluring, enticing, erotic and exotic, this is in line with Orientalist depictions of Islam and Muslims (Said, 1987). However, when the 9/11 terror attack on the twin towers in New York occurred this representation of Muslim women were struck from the books and supplanted by narratives of Islamophobia, an extreme dislike of Muslims. Through this lens Muslim women were no longer the

objects of men's fantasies but rather became the indicator of highly visible difference that is greatly despised (Moghadam and Mitra, 2014; Bashri, 2018).

Maha Bashri (2018), *Elections, Representations, and Journalistic Schemas: Local News Coverage of Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib in the US Mid-term Elections*, examined whether local news coverage of Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar's candidacy were similar to the existing representations of minorities and Muslim women in media. In this study the author compared the ways in which journalists reported on Tlaib and Omar to ascertain the level at which stereotypes regarding minorities and Muslim women are still prevalent in the portrayal of Muslims and women. Bashri, quantitatively, analysed two-hundred and fifteen newspaper articles thirty-four days before the election that took place on November sixth. Bashri found discussions within newspaper articles or editorials around gender occurred more frequently in discussions pertaining to Ilhan Omar than Rashida Tlaib because Omar wears *hijāb*.

Bashri argues that a shift was occurring within journalistic reporting style because blatant negative stereotypes were not used to report on Muslim women in this study as seen in previous studies (See Moghadam and Mitra, 2014; Kabir and Hamid, 2015). Although Omar's *hijāb* was mentioned and this borders along the line of stereotypical representation of Muslim women, the predominant focus within media narratives were the focus on the arguments she made regarding issues and policy which affected the electorate. The news coverage of the Muslim women electoral candidates even though they contained elements of stereotypical representation were not overly negative. According to Bashri, future studies could serve to benefit from the ways in which the news media did not frame Muslim women as oppressed creatures, but rather American women who are also Muslim.

According to Bashri (2018) the depictions of Muslim women in media are changing. This reported shift in media representations of Muslim women may be because of the integration of migrant Muslims into society. Integration may have resulted in interaction between different ethnic groups in society, which in turn would have provided a correction to the misinformation regarding Muslims that are circulated in society (Bashri, 2018). This shift would occur because mediated

representations would no longer be the only narratives of Muslims that people would have knowledge of and this would result in a shift in their opinions on Muslims. Furthermore, the self-representations of Muslim women that are circulating predominantly on social media could be interpreted as social activism that has resulted in Muslim women causing a narrative shift regarding the media representations of their identities (Rahman and Emadi, 2018; Rahman, 2020).

Migration and Muslims

Europe experienced a large-scale migration of refugees to Europe in general and Germany in particular, across the period 2014-2016. According to Iris Wigger (2019) who studied media representation of migration in the European context, refugees perceived migration to be an opportunity to build a new life. Whereas, politicians and organisations started spreading anti-Muslim animus and campaigning against the presence of Muslim migrants in European society. Furthermore, in a study of migrant Muslim men in Germany, the author examined the ways that German print media spanning the period 2015-2017 represented this demographic within mainstream media. The author found that migrant Muslim men were framed as being sexual perpetrators and criminals. Wigger (2019) proposed the original concept of intersectional stereotyping. She argued that through using said framework the ways in which gendered, racialized and religious patterns within media representations of Muslim migrant men intersect would be conceptualised.

Utilising a historical as well as sociopolitical lens of print media Wigger provided novel insight into racialized stereotyping against Muslims in Germany. The methodological approach was a thematic analysis of thirty-two articles that were circulated in a political newspaper as well as in three German newspapers. Wigger found a trend within the news articles of her sample to be the links that journalists curated between migrant men and the tendency for sexual assault. Domination of women and sexual violence perpetrated against women have been circulated as an essential characteristic of Muslim migrant men in German newspapers. The implication of such imagery is that migrant Muslim men were cast as the antithesis of

secular, 'civilised' European men. Prejudice and fear of non-European migrants as well as refugees have been disseminated in German society by right populist organisations (Wigger, 2019).

Media outlets situated in the Global North exhibit a propensity for pushing images and narratives of "untrustworthy, evil, unsophisticated, and opportunistic" when discussing refugees (Chiovenda, 2020). Refugees are characterised as problems in society. According to Andrea Chiovenda, *Crafting Masculine Selves: Culture, War, and Psychodynamics in Afghanistan*, refugees in Greece actively constructed a positive lived reality to combat the negative narratives that have been perpetuated in society regarding refugees. Being denied the asylum that they seek renders refugees stripped of their sense of belonging to communities as their existences were ignored.

Even though migration was explicitly discussed through the literature of Chiovenda (2020), migration is a predominant narrative throughout much of the existing literature that has been discussed in this chapter. In majority of the cases Muslim minorities with multiple identities are situated in countries such as Britain, United States of America, New Zealand or Australia as a result of globalisation (Mythen, Walklate and Khan, 2009; Beydoun, 2020; Rahman, 2020; Weng and Mansouri, 2021). These are countries Muslims migrated to and are attempting to adapt to and assimilate within. The case of minority Uyghur Muslims in Xinyang province is different because this is an indigenous population to China (Kurniawan *et al.*, 2020). The criticism that minority Muslim groups face through media representations that are controlled by dominant groups may be characterised as hegemonic discrimination (Kurniawan *et al.*, 2020; Weng and Mansouri, 2021).

News media plays a fundamental role in not only informing the public, but also constructing and transmitting portrayals of Islam and Muslims. As discussed previously media from the Global North largely shaped and shared constructions and representations of Muslim minorities when violent attacks have occurred in society. One of the studies that have made it part of their objectives to interrogate the media representations in Nigeria when it comes to the Boko Haram insurgency was *Boko*

Haram Insurgence in Nigeria: Perspective from Within by Edlyne Eze Anugwom (2019). Moreover, Boko Haram is a movement that the media has framed as against Western society and the values that these societies perpetuate. Literature such as Anugwom (2019) states that even though Boko Haram has been argued to be associated with Islam within mainstream media a contrary narrative of Boko Haram being an inversion of Islam has also emerged. In his study Anugwom (2019) found that the perception that emerged from the Nigerian context was that Boko Haram was driven by agency of youth under critical misperception as well as misconception of Islam that was driven by lack of alternative sources for knowledge on Islam as well as frustration at the high levels of corruption within government that negatively impacts upon employment prospects for youth (Anugwom, 2019). This results in Islam on the continent of Africa being associated with violence. This perpetuates the international framing of Islam and Muslims as criminalised.

Leila Demarest, Amélie Godefroidt, and Arnim Langer (2020) are a group of scholars who studied the ways that media from the Global North represented Islam and Muslims by studying how Boko Haram was framed within Nigerian media. Muslims comprise about half the population in Nigeria and media representations in the country have predominantly focused on framing Islam and Muslims, thus the authors argue it is important to study the ways in which Nigerian media have framed representations of Boko Haram. In their study, two Nigerian newspapers were empirically analysed. One newspaper, *Daily Trust*, was from the Muslim majority perspective of Nigeria and one newspaper, and *The Guardian*, from the Christian majority context of Nigeria. Scholars within the media sphere have argued that journalists are actively involved in guiding the understanding of citizens who read their articles.

Demarest *et al.* (2020) argued that the representation of Boko Haram was in line with Western framing of the movement as the focus of the narratives in the newspapers that were analysed, as part of the study, were violence. However, contrary to most studies of conflict news coverage within Western media, Boko Haram's violent insurgency was not associated with Islam and Muslims. This indicates that unlike in

Western media, the Nigerian media does not associate the violence that the small sub-group Boko Haram has perpetrated as being acts which align to religion, Islam in particular. Framing the Boko Haram crisis as being related to Islam has not taken place in Nigerian newspapers, this is indicative that Nigerian news media critiques and contests ethnocentric bias that frames most Western framing of Islam and Muslims as 'other'.

Augustine Ngankam (2021) conducted a more recent study on the ways that media representations framed Boko Haram in Nigerian and Cameroonian newspapers (Ngankam, 2021). The main purpose of the study was to examine whether the media representations of Boko Haram in Nigerian and Cameroonian newspaper media constructed or deconstructed the representations of Boko Haram in similar or different ways than previous studies. The framework of this study was Critical Discourse Analysis through which the author found that language was used in different ways by different Nigerian and Cameroonian newspaper agencies, yet all the newspaper agencies tended to argue for the deconstruction of the Boko Haram phenomenon. Augustine Ngankam (2021) has found the denouncement of Boko Haram in Nigeria and Cameroon are largely because of the ways in which journalists have portrayed the movement. The predominant media representation of Boko Haram has been pejorative arguments that have resulted in fear being the social lens with which audiences perceive this movement.

Hegemonic discrimination

The dominance that one population group, on the basis of political, racial, religious or economic factors, exercise over another group or groups is characterised as hegemonic discrimination (Rahman, 2020). Hegemonic discrimination against Muslims has been perpetuated within media representation in a repetitive manner over a great period of time. This may have resulted in majority of the world's population assuming that the narratives of Muslim men being violent, barbaric, sexual fiends and Muslim women being oppressed and are forced to wear *hijāb* are the true representations of who Muslims are.

Ruta Sutkute (2019), *Media, stereotypes and Muslim representation: World after Jyllands-Posten Muhammad cartoons controversy*, attempted to define the concepts of Muslimphobia, Neo-Orientalism, and Islamophobia. A mixed method comparative content analysis of Muhammad cartoons over the time span 30th September 2005 and 1st March 2006 in newspapers of four different countries was utilised in this study. Sutkute also set out to uncover the connection between negative images regarding Islam and Muslims that exist in society and media representation as well in order to analyse Muhammad cartoon depictions in four countries so that comparisons could be drawn between the main stereotypes in society that target Islam and Muslims.

Satkute found her research approach was beneficial in confirming the hypothesis that depending on the audience the media event is presented in different manners because the orientation of media reports were constructed in value-based manners for the specific audience of that context. Furthermore, Satkute (2019) found that media outlets have perpetuated narratives that are based on discrimination, prejudice, as well as interrogation regarding fundamentalism and terrorism that have been aimed at Muslim identity. These are problematic binary representations that cast Islam and Muslims as token minorities. These representations frame one as either a bad Muslim because you are a terrorist or you a good Muslim because you are not a terrorist and have forfeited any material representations that could link you to Islam and Muslimness in the public sphere.

The media uses a framing tool of repetitive media representations to penetrate the understanding of their audiences. Framing is both useful for the good of a population as well as to the detriment of it. Contrary to this the media has been utilised as a convenient tool to create, recreate and perpetuate stereotypes fuelled with bigotry to specifically target Islam, Muslims and minorities. Negative narratives spur individuals of the host population to scorn migrants because there is an alleged correlation between migrants coming into the city and unemployment statistics within the dominant population rising (Sutkute, 2019).

More recently in Australia, Enqi Weng and Fethi Mansouri (2021), *'Swamped by Muslims' and facing an 'African gang' problem: racialized and religious media representations in Australia*, argued that problematic representations of Islam and Muslims within Australian media has been the catalysts behind crafting African and Muslim identities as 'other'. This has created a rift between the acceptance and welcome of Islam and Muslims within Australian society. This study was a discourse analysis of the 2018 Bourke Street attack and 'African gangs'. The main argument of this study is that despite considerable research and critique, the persistence of media to rely on narrative in which tropes reliant on prejudice essentialise Islam and Muslims as violent, being anti-social, and criminals. These portrayals have severe negative repercussions for Muslim populations globally even decades after the 9/11 terror attacks.

Weng and Mansouri indicated that when media circulates negative representations of Islam and Muslims the prevalence of racist attitudes towards Muslims and especially veiled women spike. The visibility of *hijāb* wearing Muslim women are greater than the visibility of Muslim men, thus as a result of this greater visibility they are more at risk of experiencing racism and discrimination. Moreover, through sustained curation and circulation of information negative representations of Islam and Muslims by Australian media is circulated to audiences in global society. Rather than factual well-researched knowledge being disseminated, discrimination, prejudice and racism were justified. This inevitably results in Muslim immigrants being viewed as unassimilable into the societies that they migrated to.

Islamophobia

Islamophobia may be understood as a machine that perpetuates stereotypes of Islam and Muslims that are founded within citizenship and immigration policies, as well as perpetuated by case law. Islamophobia is deployed in contemporary society to brand Muslims as inherently unassimilable and suspicious (Mythen, Walklate and Khan, 2009; Beydoun, 2018; Sutkute, 2019; Demarest *et al.*, 2020). The negative branding of Islam and Muslims has resulted in Islam being cast as "rival ideology at odds with

American values, society and national identity" (Beydoun, 2018, p.18). One is able to argue that Islam is labelled as 'other' and ostracised in society because the values of Islam and Muslims are different from that which America and Europe has attempted to perpetuate as the ideal values in those societies.

Media are fixated on the imposing male body and this imaging permeates media representations of Muslim men. Beydoun (2018) argues that within media narratives Muslim men are perpetuated as having characteristic dark skin, donning a turban and being of Arab ethnicity. This is a misrepresentation of Muslim men in general as Muslims are not restricted to one geographical area, race group or ethnicity. The media depictions of the violent male sustains stereotypical misrepresentations of Muslim men that in turn perpetuate ongoing chronicles of discrimination and hegemony.

Thus, according to Beydoun (2018) defining Islamophobia is not as simple as stating that Islamophobia strictly targets Muslims. He argues that one must make allowance in the conceptualisation of Islamophobia for the fact that Islamophobes may target anyone from Southeast Asia, Middle East or Central Asia for the difference which they represent from the Islamophobes. Scholars such as Beydoun (2018) and Wigger (2019) argue that Islamophobia is violent racism and hatred toward Muslims and Islam. However, they indicate that Islamophobic discourses are not specific to only targeting Muslims, but population groups who are Arab or non-white and mistaken for Arab are racialised as the 'other' and may suffer at the hands of violent Islamophobes. Furthermore, Sikh men were frequently physically harmed because they were mistaken for Muslim men (Singh, 2020). This dissertation builds on this notion of violent Islamophobia and sets forth to establish how within South African scholarship Islamophobia may appear as non-violent.

There are racialised dimensions to Islamophobia whereby, Muslims and Islam are framed as the absolute enemy (Luqui and Yang, 2018; Wigger, 2019). In a mixed-study, Luqui and Fang found through their exploration of media content in China that news media contributed to the perpetuation of Islamophobic discourse in society. Studies (Luqui and Yang, 2018; Beydoun, 2018) of Islamophobia have found that one

of the common themes running through nearly all of the geo-political contexts are the framing of Islam and Muslims as the 'other.' As inauthentic within and defiant against the Western values of the countries they are attempting to migrate to or once they have migrated to assimilate into.

Multiple scholars have shown through their studies on media representations of Islam and Muslims how journalists and editors through the framing have contributed to the rise in Islamophobic discourse. The rise in Islamophobic discourse in society inevitably leads to the rise of Islamophobia (Beydoun, 2018; Luqui and Yang, 2018; Rahman and Emadi, 2018; Wigger, 2019; Rahman, 2020). Furthermore, the construction of Muslims as 'other' are perpetuated within media representations of Islam and Muslims by media outlets in American (Beydoun, 2018), European (De Rooij, 2017), Australian (Weng and Mansouri, 2021), or Asian (Wigger 2019) contexts. This results in symbolic boundaries being instated that foster a sense of who are outsiders and who belongs.

In the American context media representation of Islam and Muslims are framed in relation to fundamentalism and within the European context Islam and Muslims are framed as threats to societal values (Beydoun, 2018; Wigger, 2019). These media representations of Islam and Muslims have predominantly focussed on veiling narratives when discussing women and violence when discussing men, this indicates a bias toward this minority in terms of the homogenised representations that this minority group is being portrayed as. International literature shows that media representations of Muslims disseminated into the public sphere tend to feature dichotomies that perpetuate discrimination and hegemony in society (Beydoun, 2018; Koo, 2018) .

These representations tend to focus only on the outward visible expressions of Islam which include but are not limited to clothing and dress practices regarding Muslims being portrayed or discussed in media. For instance, Muslim women tend to be framed as victims when they form part of a marginalised portion of society and wear a *hijāb* (Bashri, 2018). Media scholarship attempts to drown out the voices of Muslim

women especially so that they may frame Muslim men as oppressors of vulnerable shy women. Yet the literature fails to acknowledge the part that journalists and news editors have played in depicting Muslim men as violent turban wearing fanatics at the expense of silencing women (Baderoon, 2014; Beydoun, 2018). The media employs hegemonic representation models when portraying visibly Muslim women (Posetti, 2010; Rahman and Emadi, 2018; Beydoun, 2018). I argue that by focussing on one singular aesthetic element in the representations of Muslim women in media these women in their entirety are ignored in order to develop an agenda fuelled narrative that serves the purpose of a specific group of people.

The case study research that I conduct in this dissertation is different from the existing literature because I analyse the lived realities of a minority group of Muslims who are an integral part of society, rather than ostracised, othered or pushed to the margins of society as if their existence does not matter. Furthermore, the approach of study is different because my research location is South Africa, and my participants are African. This is contrary to majority of the studies on media representations of Islam and Muslims that are based in the global context such as America, Asia, Australia or Europe. Moreover, my case study uses a critical lens to attempt to understand the complex mediated identity formation of Islam and Muslims on a national broadcast television programme in South Africa. Existing scholarship has shown that mass media and news media have shaped the global narratives of Islam and Muslims in terms of violence. This study attempts to show through an exploration of media representations of Islam and Muslims in South African media how these are misrepresentations of Islam that has been perpetuated through discourse.

Theoretical Framework

The following section explores the theory that forms the foundation of this study. This theory is namely, mediatisation of religion. A theoretical framework provides an explanation for the way the individual components within a study link together to form a whole (Collins and Stockton, 2018). One has a theoretical framework as it affords both structure and guidance to a research project. Cynthia Grant and Azadeh Osanloo (2015) used the analogy of a house to explain the importance of a theoretical

framework. They referred to the theoretical framework as the blueprint that one uses to plan how to build a house before starting the construction on the building. This advice can be translated to mean that before one starts conducting one's research one plans it through selecting the lens that one will use to study the literature and data. Furthermore, the theoretical framework of the study is important as it not only supports the rationale, problem statement, research questions or purpose of one's study, but also fulfils the role of a grounding base for one's literature review as well as an anchor for the methodology and analysis. The theoretical framework for this study is mediatisation of religion and the conceptual lens is Orientalism, as indicated earlier in the chapter and will assist in the framing of my analysis and study.
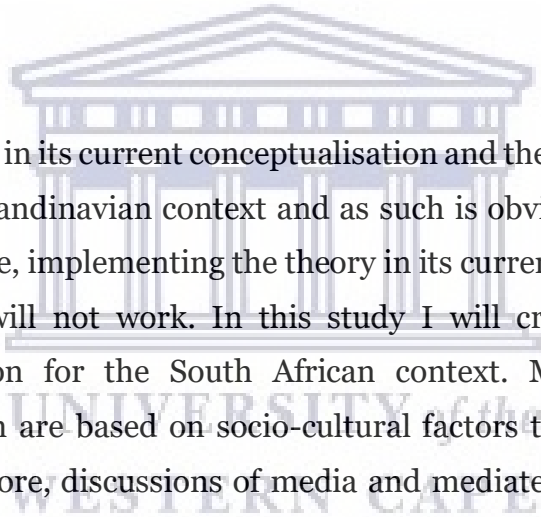
Mediatization of Religion

Mediatisation theory is the study of the ways that society and culture have become permeated by media. Hjarvard (2008) states that media wields a prominent influence on culture and society. When one applies mediatisation to institutions of religion then one is left with mediatisation of religion, whereby religious agency, symbols and beliefs are interrogated regarding the influence media has on it and it has on media (Hepp, Hjavard and Lundby, 2015). Moreover, mediatisation of religion is a theory and a concept that can be used to interpret the contestation, decline, and visibility of religion in the public sphere (Lövheim and Hjarvard, 2019).

Moreover, mediatisation may also be discussed in terms of the role that a particular form of media has played in terms of sociocultural change (Couldry and Hepp, 2013). The aim of the study is to explore the ways *An Nur The Light*, a public broadcast media programme, was representing Islam and Muslims in South Africa. Using a critical discourse analysis, this study explores the ways sociocultural practices and speech instances are connected and influence one another (Mogashoa, 2014). Therefore, mediatization of religion is a suitable theoretical framework for this study. Over the last decade the interplay between media, society and culture has been best studied as a key concept and theory within media research (Hjarvard, 2008; Hepp, Hjavard and Lundby, 2015; Lövheim and Hjarvard, 2019). Both the theoretical and

empirical understandings of mediatization have transformed in the research field (Hepp, Hjavard and Lundby, 2015).

Media, in its various iterations such as print, broadcast, electronic, digital or new media have become the favoured means of establishing communication. Furthermore, when the shift in religious authority took root in contemporary society media also became the means through which religion became circulated. Religion is no longer confined to the walls of religious institutions, rather religion is experienced by many through entertainment commodities in addition to and in some cases in place of ecclesiastical institutions. Mediatisation is not restricted to the realm of religion. It is a process through which various social fields become reliant on media (Hjarvard, 2012).

Mediatisation of religion in its current conceptualisation and theoretical state has been developed within the Scandinavian context and as such is obviously most applicable to that context. Therefore, implementing the theory in its current conceptualisation in South African society will not work. In this study I will critique the concept of mediatisation of religion for the South African context. Most studies utilising mediatisation of religion are based on socio-cultural factors that emanate from the Global North. Furthermore, discussions of media and mediated representations will inevitably intersect with concepts such as power and framing (Haron, 2020; Hepp, Hjarvard and Lundby, 2018). Power is the authority that one group has over another and framing is the ways that the world is represented by media agents (Hepp, Hjarvard and Lundby, 2015). Studying media development in Africa typically entailed ignoring religion, regardless of the contributions that religious actors have made regarding new media technologies on the continent (Hackett and Soares, 2015). With the use of media technologies such as mass media and social media come the eventual consequence of running into conflict, perhaps regarding representations of Islam, Muslims, and other minorities.

Even though the theory needs to be revised and adapted to the South African sociopolitical context this does not mean that mediatisation does not occur in the

South African context. Rather, this is a different context and requires a specific theory of mediatisation of religion to analyse religion in the public sphere. Furthermore, Scandinavian societies are characterised by high levels of intervention and interest from the public. They have a democratic-corporatist media system that is steeped within the long historical tradition of print media, especially newspaper media, readership, and an excellent public service component (Lövheim and Hjavard, 2019). Moreover, major media outlets in Nordic countries are the public's primary source of information regarding religious matters. Another reason why mediatisation of religion needs to be adapted to fit the South African context is because the country comprises a diverse religious population in the public sphere, whereas Nordic countries are stringent secular states.

According to Hjarvard (2012) mediatisation of religion within society results in secularisation. This dissertation through the analysis of the data set will explore whether that is the case. However, given the history regarding the struggle against religious regulation, politics, as well as history on South African television it is difficult to argue that South Africans would set aside public religious freedom for secularisation of the public sphere. For instance, in a study of mediatisation in South Africa, Scharnick-Udemans (2018a) demonstrated the ways the Christian population rallied together to contest a television show in which Satan was the main character. These disputes related to Muslimness included a complaint that accused the programme of being in contravention to nation building.

Furthermore, in the article *Tv is the Devil, the Devil is on TV: Wild religion and Wild media in South Africa*, Scharnick-Udemans (2018c) conceptualises wild religion and wild media as unstable categories which in response to the dynamic changing and evolving societies we find ourselves in define and redefine intermittently. According to Scharnick-Udemans (2018c, p.184) the relationship between 'wild religion' and 'wild media' is an interaction that is "subject to processes of mediatization that are crucial to the operational and ideological character of media technology" (Scharnick-Udemans, 2018c, p.184). Thus, the figures who represent authority on this programme

will also be discussed through the lens of mediatisation of religion to explore whether their authority builds upon traditional notions of authority.

Building on Scharnick-Udemans' (2018c) argument regarding 'wild religion', the programme I am analysing could be considered wild media as it does not necessarily operate within the parameters of traditional religious settings even if there is a component of theology to the programme. Furthermore, 'wild religion' and 'wild media' "inspires us, as scholars of religion, to think more expansively and creatively about the field of research as well as the sites thereof" (Scharnick-Udemans, 2018c, p.194). The programme that I analyse within this dissertation fits into the category of 'wild media' because the programme has not been studied in this manner before. The programme may also be considered to depict an element of 'wild religion' as this programme is not produced by a traditional Islamic religious scholar.

Conclusion

In this chapter I offered a critical analysis and discussions of the media representations of Islam and Muslims in a global context. The influence of Edward Said's seminal work *Orientalism* on media scholarship about Muslims and Islam have been discussed. The 'East-West' dichotomy was problematised and I indicated that I will use the Global North and Global South formulation as it offers a greater sense of inclusion and does not perpetuate problematic notions of Islam's situatedness. Mainstream media in the Global North have been at the forefront of the production, curation and circulation of representations of Islam and Muslims as well as religious and racialised minorities (Weng and Mansouri, 2021; Singh, 2020). Moreover, the 9/11 terror attacks were discussed as the catalyst for negative media representations of Islam and Muslims. While the events and consequences of 9/11 media representations of Islam and the study thereof did not frame the context of this study the predominance of this turning point in modern history permeated through much of the literature. There was limited appeal on the African continent within media representations to report Islam and Muslims in terms of terrorism (Anugwom, 2019). The existing literature on media

representations of Islam and Muslims in the global context could be categorised according to five themes and those themes were namely:

1) homogenisation and minority bias, 2) social activism and Muslim women, 3) migration and Muslims, 4) hegemony and discrimination, and 5) Islamophobia.

A main finding in terms of the theme homogenisation and minority bias was that majority of the studies illustrated that media representations of Islam and Muslims in the Global North were negatively framed. Contrary to the studies that discussed media representations of Islam and Muslims negatively, Rahman (2020) argued that a discernible shift in framing of Islam and Muslims occurred in New Zealand media. This was evident in the inclusive approach towards media representations of Islam and Muslims in New Zealand that local media instituted. Homogenisation was characterised as the typification of Islam and Muslims as dangerous to civil society (Wigger, 2019; Demarest *et al.*, 2020; Rahman, 2020). Minority bias was characterised as instances of abuse or discrimination where minorities are the target (Luqui and Yang, 2018; Beydoun, 2018; Bashri, 2018; Rahman, 2020).

A main finding in terms of the theme social activism and Muslim women was that the media representations of Muslim women were predominantly focussed on veiling practices of Muslim women. According to Bashri (2018) the depictions of Muslim women were changing and she argued that the reason for the change was the integration of migrant Muslims into society. Social activism was defined as the ways that Muslim women challenged the status quo.

A main finding in terms of the theme migration and Muslims was that media representations tended to homogenously represent refugees as evil, opportunistic, unsophisticated and untrustworthy. Moreover, the narratives of migrant Muslims might have been predominantly negative, but media representations in Africa tended to align violence to the particular groups that perpetrated it rather than Muslims as an entire religious population, unlike media representations in the Global North (Ngankam, 2021; Chiovenda, 2020; Demarest *et al.*, 2020; Wigger, 2019).

A main finding in terms of the theme hegemonic discrimination was that negative representations of Islam and Muslims have been perpetuated through media representations for great period of time (Posetti, 2010; Satkute, 2019; Rahman, 2020; Weng and Mansouri, 2021). Moreover, these repetitive negative representations result in problematic binary representations because Muslims are framed as either violent and bad or good and non-violent through media representations. This negates the multifaceted identities of Muslims and oversimplifies their identities through misrepresentation. The dominance that one population group, based on political, racial, religious or economic factors, exercised over another group or groups was characterised as hegemonic discrimination.

A main finding in terms of the theme Islamophobia was the illustration that Islamophobic discourses were not specifically targeting Muslims, but population groups who are Arab or non-white and mistaken for Arab are also racialised as the 'other' and may suffer at the hands of violent Islamophobes. Furthermore, Sikh men were frequently physically harmed because they were mistaken for Muslim men (Singh, 2020). This dissertation builds on this notion of violent Islamophobia and sets forth to establish how Islamophobia is presented within South African media and scholarship. Islamophobia in the South African context may appear non-violent.

From the discussions and arguments made by scholars regarding the role media organisations played in the media representations of Islam and Muslims it is evident that the focus of these organisations were to disseminate negative representations of Muslim men. However, the literature on media representations of Muslim women focussed on issues regarding veiling and oppression, to the detriment of their multifaceted identities. Even though Muslim men are discriminated against predominantly in media representations of Islam and Muslims, the bodies of Muslim women are policed within media representations and face more threats of bodily harm because of the visible displays of their religion.

The theory of mediatisation of religion was characterised as the ways in which religion influenced society, culture as well as media and the ways the concepts

influenced religion. In this chapter an indication was provided as to how this theoretical framework will be used to analyse the representations of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light*. The theory of mediatisation of religion is a Scandinavian theory and has predominantly been utilised in that context. Therefore, I also problematised its usage in the context of South Africa.

Existing scholarship has shown that mass media and news media have shaped the global narratives of Islam and Muslims in terms of violence. This study attempts to show how Islam and Muslims in South African media contest the misrepresentations of Islam that has been perpetuated through these discourses. In the next chapter I explain the research design and methodology of the study.

Chapter Three

Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

This dissertation undertakes a qualitative case study, research approach to exploring the representations of Islam and Muslims within the South African Broadcasting Corporation's (SABC) faith specific programme, *An Nur The Light*. A case study is an appropriate research methodology for this study as it aligns with the research purpose of providing a deep examination of the multifaceted representations of Muslims and Islam on the programme (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). This chapter aims to discuss how this qualitative case study was conducted and the justifications for the methodological choices of the study. This study commenced in February 2020 and reached its conclusion in November 2021.

A multitude of definitions of case study research designs exist (Ahlin and Carler, 2011; Jakku, 2018; Yin, 2018; Broughton Micova, 2019). However, a case study research design for this dissertation may be understood as "intensive research into a phenomenon in a particular instance" (Broughton Micova, 2019, p.71). The methodological approach chosen for this study allows for complex social phenomena such as media representations of Islam and Muslims to be understood and interpreted in relation to the theories which sustain and maintain the ways in which Muslimness is represented.

Existing literature, discussed in the previous chapter, indicates that studies on media representations of Islam and Muslims were circulated predominantly by media institutions within the contexts of the Global North and predominantly portrayed Muslim minorities as threats to those societies. The media representations of Islam and Muslims excluded the lived realities of Muslims and rather focused on the ways in which Muslims were perceived through media. Furthermore, the aim of this study is to address this gap by analysing dialogue of a Muslim minority in South African media.

Moreover, through a single-case study research design a thematic analysis and critical discourse analysis is conducted. The aim of using this multi-analytical perspective is to analyse the manners in which existing discourse in society have shaped the representations of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light*.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part describes the research setting and provides a discussion of the *An Nur The Light* programme. The second part comprises the methodological framework, which provides a discussion of the research paradigm, research design, layout of the programme, data production methods and the methods of analysis. Furthermore, the second part of this chapter provides an explanation of the thematic analysis and critical discourse analysis that was conducted for the purposes of answering the research questions of this dissertation.

In this case study, a thematic analysis is used to not only sort and categorise the data set, but also to ascertain which themes were most prominent within the speech instances of guests on *An Nur The Light*. Moreover, a critical discourse analysis follows the thematic analysis and provides a rich description, explanation and interpretation of the mediatised representations of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light*.

Research Setting

An Nur The Light as mentioned in previous sections of this dissertation is a programme which is televised by the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). This indicates that the representations of Islam and Muslims which are circulated on this programme into the homes of audiences are shaped by policies and code of conduct which guide programming on the national broadcaster (Scharnick-Udemans, 2019). Furthermore, representations of religion on the SABC in democratic South Africa has been crafted as a means of redressing the censorship which multireligious programming faced on broadcast programming during apartheid.

According to Scharnick-Udemans (2018a) since the inception of *An Nur The Light,* nearly two decades ago, the sole producer of the programme has been Munier Parker. This is indicative of the noteworthy role Parker as a media expert has played and continues to play in interpreting the public broadcast policies in order to shape *An Nur The Light* into a tool that can be used for nation building (Scharnick-Udemans, 2018a). The presence of this programme indicates a sensitivity regarding the needs of the various religious communities in South Africa (Haron, 2010).

Currently there are thirteen completed seasons of *An Nur The Light* in existence and the fourteenth season is currently being filmed. This study comprises five out of the thirteen seasons, Season 9– Season 13. These seasons which took place from 2015-2019 were uploaded onto YouTube after they aired on the SABC. This is an important television programme because it may be studied as a digital archive of lived experiences of Islam and Muslims in the South African context.

The faces and voices who guide the show

Mariam Mkwanda is the first presenter seen by the audience of the programme. She appears in Season nine, ten, eleven and thirteen. In the screenshot below Mkwanda is seen outside the studio in a garden, as she introduces the audience to the context of Episode twenty-two, Season nine. She is dressed in a colourful garment and her hijab is styled in a fashionable manner. This may be read as an indication of her unapologetically laying claim to her identity as a Muslim woman. She introduced the theme as well as the next segment which was followed by her appearance and context for the episode. Furthermore, there are also some episodes which feature Mkwanda in the studio with a guest who discusses a topic. Often the studio guest was a female doctor who was in discussion with Mkwanda regarding health issues which are impacting not only the Muslim community, but the population of South Africa.

Above is a screenshot of Mariam Mkwanda

Zahrah Robinson is the presenter for Season twelve of *An Nur The Light*. She speaks in a languid, unhurried, manner and this may be read as a demonstration that she is comfortable in this public position of representing Muslims through her lived embodiment of her identity as a Muslim woman on the show. She speaks in a confident manner and the passionate way in which she introduces guests on the show, provides context to segments. Her insight on matters that are discussed throughout the segments in the show are memorable.

Above is a screenshot of Zahrah Robinson

An Nur The Light was initially meant to address past injustices created by the apartheid regime whereby the programming in television only catered for the

Christian religious community (Hackett, 2006; Scharnick-Udemans, 2018a; Scharnick-Udemans, 2019a). This is alluded to in the focus of the programme on social justice and discussions of freedom and rights on the programme. The programme is meant to address and place into focus issues which affected the Muslim community of South Africa. The programme is presented by a dynamic presenter who leads the audience from one segment into the next through subtle cues as well as explicit cues such as stating which segment is to follow. Although the programme episodes do not have a rigid structure, the episodes all contain a mixture of the segments. Although scholars have studied the religious broadcasting policies of the SABC and have in some way discussed the *An Nur The Light* programme, little to no scholarship has given sustained attention to a sample of episodes. For instance, Muhammed Haron (2010) conducted a study on the relationship between religion and media in South Africa and *An Nur The Light* was briefly mentioned in his paper.

Contrary to this approach, Scharnick-Udemans (2018a) demonstrated how a biography of the producer of the programme *An Nur The Light* could be read as an example of mediatisation of religion in the context of democratic South Africa. More recently, Scharnick-Udemans (2019a) used the example of *An Nur The Light* to argue that nation building initiatives enshrined in the South African constitution as well as mediatisation contribute to the regulation of religious programming on the SABC. Through critical analysis of the lived expressions of Muslimness on *An Nur The Light* I aim to show that Muslims contribute to nation building in South Africa. This study differs from existing global literature on media representations of Islam and Muslims because it is a narrative that counters stereotypical representations of Islam and Muslims. In global media representations Islam and Muslims are framed as being violent, sexually deviant, lazy and oppressive (Baderoon, 2014; Wigger, 2019). Furthermore, this study counters the claims that Muslims are unable to assimilate into diverse societies by showing that South African Muslims have successfully integrated into society. This successful integration took root despite predominant global narratives arguing that Islam and Muslims are unable to assimilate into society.

The Methodological Framework

Research Paradigm

A social constructivist paradigm informs the qualitative research approach of this study (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). According to researchers who employ a social constructivist paradigm individuals attach subjective meaning to the events, experiences, or artefacts in their lives. These meanings are multidimensional rather than narrow ideas or categories. Furthermore, these subjective meanings are constructed through cultural as well as historical norms which impact upon the individuals' lives (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Media representations of Islam and Muslims have been circulated predominantly by news and media organisations from the Global North (Ahmed and Matthes, 2017; Bashri, 2018; Ghauri and Umber, 2019; Wigger, 2019; Singh, 2020; Rahman, 2020; Weng and Mansouri, 2021). The media representations rarely feature the narratives of Muslims themselves. While *An Nur The Light* has been studied it has not been engaged as intensively as it has been in this study (Scharnick-Udemans, 2017a; Scharnick-Udemans, 2018a; Scharnick-Udemans, 2019a). Furthermore, this is a unique case and case study research would be able to give nuances to the lived realities represented through *An Nur The Light*. Therefore, a social constructionist paradigm is suited to this study as the subjective representations of Islam and Muslims put forth by the guests on *An Nur The Light* are explored.

Sampling

When researchers perform a qualitative study the sample size of the study should not be too large since it would be difficult to achieve rich, deep analysis and neither should it be too small as this could impede saturation. The sample size of a typical single case study ranges between twenty to forty units of analysis (Schreier, 2018). The sample for this single case study comprised thirty *An Nur The Light* episodes and is considered optimal for a single-case study (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). *An Nur The Light* was purposefully selected as the site for this case study. Through purposefully selecting this programme and then sampling episodes from it I could better formulate an approach

to answering the research questions of the study (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The size of the population was one hundred and fifty-five episodes, which are available and accessible on YouTube.

The sampling design for this study was multistage, first the seasons which were free to access were identified then the sample was drawn from within the seasons (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The episodes that are available online were noted on a spreadsheet according to season. This document is saved on the researcher's personal computer as well as a storage cloud. After compiling the spreadsheet with the available episodes of the programme the sheet was printed, the selection generated a random sample. The episode numbers were noted in a table on a word document (Creswell and Creswell, 2018; Lester *et al*, 2020).

Once the sampling needed for the study to commence took place the storage of *An Nur The Light* episodes that were accessed on YouTube was prioritised. The episodes, as listed above, were saved in the downloads library on the researchers YouTube profile. YouTube is a google affiliated application and anyone, whether one has a Google account or not, can save videos to their YouTube library. A stable internet connection ensured access to the episodes. The case study sample comprises thirty episodes of *An Nur The Light*. Therefore based on the analysis of the sample, valid inferences could be made regarding media representations of Islam and Muslims in South Africa. Furthermore, feasibility was also taken into consideration when selecting the data production method, thus a remote data production method was chosen as it is inexpensive and not too time consuming. Given the Covid-19 pandemic this was the most viable and safe production method.

Data Production Methods

The internet search for episodes after some time led to the discovery that the programme's episodes were freely accessible on YouTube. The social media platform YouTube is conceptualised as an online archive (Englert and Harisch, 2020). For the

purposes of exploring the media representations of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light* data production of episodes of the programme took place through this digital archive (Mikos, 2018). Seasons prior to 2015 were not accessible on YouTube. After consultation with the supervisor of this dissertation it was decided that the sample period would range from Season 9 to Season 13.

Users of the digital audiovisual archive YouTube can access billions of videos for free. A key feature of an online archive is the long-term preservation of digital material (Mikos, 2018). With the development and transformation of technology one can access materials on digital archives via a desktop, laptop or even from your cell phone. *An Nur The Light* content was first broadcast on the SABC and then uploaded to the programme playlist on the SABC 3 YouTube channel.

The data collected for this study fell into the category of qualitative audiovisual and digital materials. A limitation of using the audiovisual episodes of *An Nur The Light* in this study could be that the presence of the camera crew may have caused the guests on the show to alter their responses to appear more acceptable (Creswell and Poth, 2018). The camera crew are external factors and if a guest perhaps perceived a crew member to not agree with what they were sharing the guest could perhaps have altered their responses. This ties into discourses of power whereby someone who is perceived to be of a higher status in society could be viewed as exercising their social power on you in order to frame your behaviour to their liking. Moreover, a guest could perhaps have been nervous to share their perception of Islam in front of the crew or because of the prospect that their opinions would be viewed by a large national audience.

Methods of Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is an iterative, non-linear process whereby researchers make use of phases to guide them through the process of analysis (Lester *et al.*, 2020). In this dissertation two analytical strategies are utilised to derive meaning from the

patterns which emerge from the episodes of *An Nur The Light*. These strategies are namely, thematic analysis, and critical discourse analysis.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was utilised as a data production and analytical tool for this research study. According to Christian Hertzog, Christian Handke, and Erik Hitters (2019) thematic analysis is allowing the researcher to understand the ways in which guests on *An Nur The Light* assign priority status to certain aspects of their lived realities. Thematic analysis equips a researcher with core techniques required to conduct more complex forms of research. This is a research method employed by researchers to identify, analyse, organize, describe, and report themes which the researchers found within the data set (Hertzog *et al.*, 2019). A thematic analysis is free from specific theoretical constraints thus this approach can be modified to suit the study conducted and provide a detailed and rich, yet complex account of data.

Braun and Clarke (2006) argued that thematic analysis is a useful method for examining the perspectives of different research participants, highlighting similarities and differences, and generating unanticipated insights. Thematic analysis is also useful for summarizing key features of a large data set, as it compels the researcher to take a well-structured approach to handling data, helping to produce a clear and organized final report. The disadvantages of thematic analysis become more apparent when considered in relation to other qualitative research methods. A thematic analysis is disadvantageous when compared to other methods, as it does not allow researchers to make claims about language use (Braun and Clarke, 2006). While thematic analysis is flexible, this flexibility can lead to inconsistency and a lack of coherence when developing themes derived from the research data (Nowell *et al.*, 2017). Consistency and cohesion can be implemented by applying and making explicit an epistemological position that can coherently underpin the study's empirical claims.

These themes reflect the experiences of the participants on *An Nur The Light*. From the analysis of the dialogue of guests on *An Nur The Light* two broad themes,

namely 1) gender and 2) religion and faith, were the themes which all the representations of the guests had a link to. These broad themes allowed me to identify patterns which emerged and intersected in the manners in which participants embodied their Muslim identity and religion in a mediated South Africa.

The six-phase guide to thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) is followed for this study because it makes allocation for the preparation and organising of the data for analysis. Furthermore, the first phase is familiarisation. The second phase is the generation of initial codes. The third phase is the search for themes. The fourth is reviewing themes. The fifth is defining themes. The sixth theme is the write-up. Furthermore, a deductive thematic analysis has been performed. A deductive approach to thematic analysis involves approaching one's data with a semblance of themes which the researcher expects to find reflected within the data. Thematic analysis is an approach suited to the purpose of my study as themes which are derived from thematic analysis is the initial step towards answering the research questions of this study.

Phase 1: Familiarisation

During this phase the research process multiple active readings of the sample were performed. This included but was not limited to watching *An Nur The Light* multiple times. Notes were compiled on information which was thought to contribute to answering the research questions. Active readings of the notes were conducted as the episodes were re-watched. The active readings benefitted the thought process of framing possible understandings of the representations portrayed by the guests on the *An Nur The Light* show. Each season was organised in table form in a word document and contained notes on the episodes within its individual word document. After completion of the initial note taking process all the episodes were watched again. Furthermore, codes derived within these documents are kept in mind and used as reference when conducting the analyses which followed. This was an important phase as it allows the researcher to become deeply familiar with the content of the episodes.

These word documents were used to memo the codes and themes in the phases which followed.

Phase 2: Generation of initial codes

The data was organised in a meaningful and systematic manner by reducing it into smaller chunks of meaning through coding. Every chunk of data which was deemed relevant to the research questions were generated into a code of meaning. Line-by-line coding was not performed in this dissertation as coding every piece of text is an inductive approach. Furthermore, open coding was utilised in this study because the codes developed and were modified as the coding process progressed. After phase 1, the researcher had an initial idea regarding codes which would be generated during phase 2. For example, the contested presence of Muslim women in Mosque was a thread noticed on Season nine Episode twenty-two (*An Nur The Light*, 2015, Season 9, Episode 22). During this phase it is important that the researcher reflects on their personal bias when it comes to the research as to not influence the themes, but rather discover them throughout the coding process.

Phase 3: Searching for Themes

The data was collected during this phase in order to group the codes into potential patterns. The ways in which the themes were interconnected between seasons was noted and this resulted in them being grouped as either a theme or a sub-theme. This phase assists the researcher with the creation of possible themes and provides data which could provide helpful insights regarding the data.

Phase 4: Reviewing Themes

This phase assists the researcher in determining whether the themes which have been selected are useful. Moving from phase three to phase four requires constantly revisiting themes as the themes tend to overlap quite often and some themes may

sound similar but are different. For example, 'women's role in Mosque' and 'women's place in Mosque' required that the context of the statement be reviewed so that the difference of these codes which fall under the same theme can be understood.

Phase 5: Defining Themes

At this phase in the thematic analysis the researcher can define and name the themes which contribute to the findings of the study. The themes which have been indicated through coding provides insight and understanding which can be used to address the objectives and purpose of the study on media representations of Islam and Muslims on a public broadcast television programme in South Africa.

Phase 6: The write up

The data production process and the findings of the thematic analysis is described during this. The analysis which follows is a critical discourse analysis and builds upon the findings of the thematic analysis. The data for this thematic analysis is secondary data which is collected from an online archive. However, the findings which come from the analysis of this secondary data is primary research. Furthermore, after collecting the sample the thematic analysis was used to sort and organise the data according to themes. Sorting the data was done as a means of aiding the media content analysis which followed the thematic analysis. The thematic analysis started through a review of all the episodes.

Critical Discourse Analysis

This is a form of qualitative, textual analysis method. Critical discourse analysis represents more than a singular branch of knowledge. This form of analysis was first championed by scholars such as Norman Fairclough, Teun van Dijk, Gunther Kress, and Theo van Leeuwen in the early 1990s. Critical discourse analysis emphasises the

roles that discourse plays in the reproduction as well as production of social problems such as domination or abuse of power (Franck and Allagbe, 2018). Critical discourse analysis is an exploration of the systematic ways that talk and text are used within sociopolitical contexts to resist inequality, abuse of social power, and dominance that are manifested and produced within society. Whereas, critical discourse analysis offers a description and interpretation of discourse in the context in which it is being studied.

Fairclough's Approach to Critical Discourse Analysis

According to Norman Fairclough (2018) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is dialectical reasoning because of the relationship amongst critique, explanation and action of this approach. The focus of CDA is not only on "power *in* discourse but also power *behind* discourse" (Fairclough, 2018, p.14). For instance, the focus lies not only in the themes that have arisen from the thematic analysis of this study, but also in the existing social reality such as the reasons behind the media representations of Islam and Muslims in media.

Fairclough constructed a framework that could be applied to analyse social practice as a form of discourse. This analytical approach is considered critical because it is used to reveal discursive practices that maintain and sustain unequal relations of power and various other discursive practices within the social world (Fairclough, 2003). The aim of critical discourse analysis is to generate research that addresses as well as seeks to correct social issues such as inequality and injustice. Critical discourse analysis is defined by Fairclough as an approach that is used to systematically investigate. Furthermore, he proposes a framework that is a complex, interconnected three-dimensional model for discourse analysis.

Text is the first dimension and this entails analysis at word level. This dimension of analysis provides insight into the social relations and events that shape social relations, reality and social identities in particular ways (Fairclough 2003). Furthermore, discursive practice is the second dimension and this entails analysis at text level. Within this dimension language can be an emissary of change. The reactions

towards a subject is influenced by the ways that a subject is spoken of. Moreover, social practice is the third dimension and this entails analysis at the norm level. This dimension indicates that language characterises as well as creates opinions based on the attitudes within language. Moreover, social relationships and practices are created through language. Communication is a social event. The words that are chosen by the speaker for their speech event shapes the context of social communities. Moreover, the communities that individuals are a part of are closely linked to communication and language.

There is no one specific way to conduct a critical discourse analysis. However, there are three prominent scholars who have made positive strides in providing researchers with approaches to work from (Fairclough, 2002; Fairclough, 2003). For this dissertation the researcher has chosen to utilise Fairclough's Socio-Cultural Approach which focuses on the elements of linguistic structure. This approach was chosen rather than Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach which centres around historical approaches and its relationship to social inequalities or Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Approach which argues that the mediatisation between society and text has a substantial impact on social cognition (Franck and Allagbe, 2018).

Critical discourse analysis has been approached in a few ways (Bloor and Bloor, 2007; Rogers, 2008; Rogers, 2011; Franck and Allagbe, 2018). For the purposes of this study the researcher chose to utilise critical discourse analysis not only to discover the ways in which Muslim on *An Nur The Light* represent their lived realities but also the ways in which the guests on the show challenge the status quo that perpetuates and sustains the inequalities faced by minority groups. For critical discourse analysis to commence the researcher is required to explore the audiovisual material of this study. The researcher then discerns themes relating to social inequality relating to identity, race, gender, political factors, and religion which arose from the data. Critical discourse analysis requires that the researcher combine several approaches such as socio-political, sociolinguistic, sociological, anthropological, and historical to name a few.

Conclusion

In this chapter the research design and methodology used to conduct this study was unpacked. This chapter was divided into two parts. The first part described the research setting and that included a discussion of the *An Nur The Light* programme. The second part comprised the methodological framework and that included a discussion of the social constructivist research paradigm, case study research design, layout of *An Nur The Light*, the methods that were used in the data production process and the two methods of analysis. Moreover, the two methods of analysis were Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase guide to thematic analysis, and Fairclough's (2003) three dimension approach to conducting a critical discourse analysis.

Chapter Four

Thematic Analysis

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a thick description of the representations of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light*. This is done by reflecting on the findings of the thematic analysis. As discussed in chapter three, this dissertation utilises Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step reflexive thematic analysis as a guide. The thick description is achieved through answering the first and second research questions of this study:

1) What is the SABC's role in the representation of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light*?

2) How are Islam and Muslims represented on *An Nur The Light*?
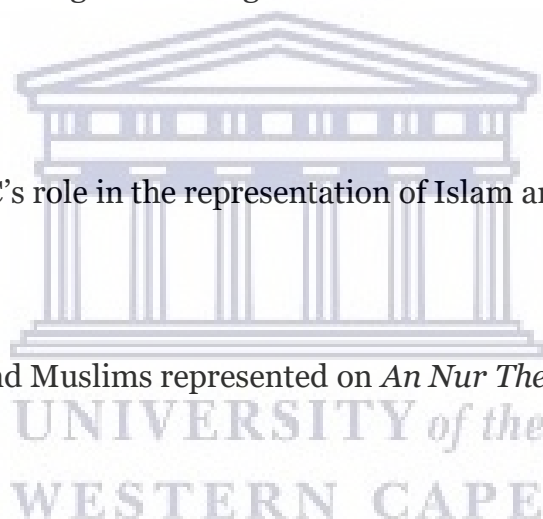
This chapter has been structured as two parts. The first part of the chapter entails a description of the contributions that the SABC makes to the curation of representations of Islam and Muslims disseminated through *An Nur The Light*. Moreover, the second part of this chapter is a description of the findings of the thematic analysis. The thematic analysis conducted allows for the analysis of various overlapping religious, sociocultural, and political factors that contribute to the lived realities of South African Muslims. This chapter indicates that the findings from *An Nur The Light* can be categorised into two themes, 1) religion, and 2) gender.

Religion is a complex concept and therefore does not have a straightforward definition. Numerous scholars have proffered definitions for this concept, however, for the purpose of this study only a few scholars whose definitions complement the scope of the discussion has been selected for inclusion in the study. Mallory Nye (2008) averred that religion is commonly used to describe certain facets of human behaviour that are shaped by social events and cultures. Furthermore, the geopolitical context of communities and individuals contribute to the ways they make sense of religion in relation to their embodiments of cultural practices (Nye, 2008). Moreover, Nye claims that religion is a framework for the set of beliefs which people engage with in their daily lives. The concept of religion may be understood in terms of four characteristics that are clustered in certain areas. These are namely:

1) major texts (sacred books),

2) foundational ideas, 'beliefs' and worldviews,

3) particular histories and leaders,

4) very often a sense of having a distinct identity (Nye, 2004, p.10).

According to Ninian Smart, religion has six dimensions namely, 1) Mythological, 2) Ethical, 3) Ritual, 4) Doctrinal, 5) Experiential, and 6) Social (Rennie, 1999). The collection of images, stories and myths symbolises the invisible worlds and may be understood as being the mythological dimension of religion. The ethical dimension of religion refers to the code of ethics that controls the community and quite often it is the code of ethics of the dominant religion. Ritual refers to inner intention that is linked to outer behaviour of a person who identifies as being part of a particular religious group (Rennie, 1999). Rituals are often used to participate in or make contact with the invisible world. The doctrinal dimension of religion refers to the systematic intellectual power that may be revealed through symbolic and mythological language pertaining to religious ritual and faith. The experiential dimensions entails the sociological ways that people who follow the guiding principles of a religion live out their understanding of the religion. Moreover, social dimensions of a religion are the ways that religion affects and influences the communities in which religious institutions, places of worship, are situated. This definition of religion could be linked to mediatisation of religion theory because mediatisation is a process whereby religion

shapes and is shaped by society and culture (Rennie, 1999). The theory of mediatisation and more specifically mediatisation of religion is used throughout the dissertation to analyse representations of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light*. This dissertation is a study of religion and may be interpreted as a way to ascertain the importance that people ascribe to religion through their lived realities.

In addition, Wilkinson and Charing (2004) claim that religion is a system of practices and beliefs that are based on the existence of the Divine, a higher power, or philosophical traditions. The ways that people who believe in a particular religion exhibit their lived realities as well as the rituals they participate in are expressions of religion (Wilkinson and Charing, 2004). Globally, a multitude of religions exist. In some parts of the world a particular religion may be a minority religion whereas in another geographical location of the world that same religion might be a majority faith. Religion is contextually defined. For instance, Islam is a minority religion in South Africa whereas in Algeria Islam is a dominant religion (Ahmed and Matthes, 2017). According to Wilkinson and Charing (2004) religion offers a sense of purpose and meaning to the lives of worshippers through instructions religion offers pertaining to behavioural and moral codes. Religions guide adherents towards moral actions and behaviours because it offers instruction regarding how to discern between good and bad. In this study the concept of religion is used in relation to the religion of Islam in order to explore the ways in which Islam and Muslims are represented on *An Nur The Light*.

The guests on *An Nur The Light* have discussed their sacred book as the Qurʾān, the foundational beliefs of guests have been shown to be shaped around five fundamental requirements known as the five pillars in Islam and these are connected to the social, cultural, and political choices that Muslims make in their daily lives (*An Nur The Light*, 2019, Season 13, Episode 12; *An Nur The Light*, 2018, Season 12, Episode 36). It is important to remember that not all religions have compendiums of sacred texts that are recorded in literary form and that many traditions rely on orality as a medium of instruction. In Islam though, there is a rich historical textual tradition. Moreover, in the context of South African Muslims the particular history as discussed

by guests on *An Nur The Light* that shaped the identities of Muslims in this context can be traced back to the colonial as well as apartheid eras in this country's history (Wilkinson and Charing, 2004; Baderoon, 2014; *An Nur The Light*, 2015, Season 9, Episode 49). Furthermore, the leaders whose religious teachings South African Muslims have followed are the Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) and religious scholars such as Tuan Guru whose ancestral trail leads back to Asia, has been identified as one of the initial people who brought Islam to the Cape (Baderoon, 2014; *An Nur The Light*, 2018; Season 12, Episode 10). The distinct identity of Muslims in South Africa has been shaped and constructed through their resistance to structures and policies that have attempted to perpetuate asymmetrical systems of power in society (see *An Nur The Light*, 2017, Season 11, Episode 21). Advocacy for religious freedom is evident on *An Nur The Light* whereby guests discuss their activism in relation to human rights and especially rights concerning religious freedom of Islam and Muslims in South Africa. Contemporary societies comprise a mixture of different faiths. As discussed in chapter one, South Africa is a multifaith and multicultural society. The experience of multicultural and multireligious societies have been indicated to be enriching for some and conflicting for others (Wilkinson and Charing, 2004).

Belief in the unseen is described as faith (Ukah, 2006). According to Khairiah Rahman, *News media and the Muslim identity after the Christchurch mosque massacres*, "the normalisation of Islam and Muslims as a faith that preaches violent acts" is worrying, dangerous and painful for people who identify as Muslim (Rahman, 2020, p.360). She goes on to illustrate that the mosque attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand, were as a result of "one person's irrational hatred" of Muslims that as a result of misconceptions that were disseminated through media and consumed by the person (Rahman, 2020, p.360). Moreover, Rahman argues that ignorance of the Islamic faith is perpetuated by media organisations that depict Islam and Muslims negatively as this results in narratives of 'othering' being circulated in society. Furthermore, Rahman states that Muslims all differ in the ways in which they interpret their faith. The ways that Muslims practice their faith are also evident through the representations of the lived realities of guests on *An Nur The Light*. For instance, a guest on *An Nur The Light*, Sheikh Abduragmaan Alexander, shared through his speech instance that faith in Islam relates to the ways that Muslims shape their lived realities based on their

interpretations of the five pillars of Islam (*An Nur The Light*, 2015, Season 9, Episode 34). According to Wilkinson and Charing (2004) the five pillars of Islam may be understood as five essential requirement.

The first requirement is proclaiming belief in one God and that Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) is the final messenger of God. The second is commitment to prayer, the third is to practice giving charity, the fourth is ritual fasting during the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, the Holy Month of Ramadaan. The final requirement is the Holy pilgrimage, *Hajj*, to Mecca, Saudi Arabia. These requirements are linked to the spiritual, social, cultural, and political beliefs structure of a Muslim (Wilkinson and Charing, 2004). Moreover, a great proportion of people who identify as Muslim are knowledgeable regarding the five guiding principles of Islam. These five fundamental principles are subjectively interpreted by Muslims through their understanding and interpretation of Islam and Muslimness. In addition, through the speech instances and appearances of guests on *An Nur The Light* religion is illustrated as an integral part of South African Muslims lived realities. Even though religion is practiced globally, the interpretation of communities and individuals regarding the moral and behavioural codes of a religion are understood and interpreted differently by everyone.

Religion has been analysed as an ideology based on the ways gender differences are emphasised, perpetuated and contested with the public sphere (Nye, 2008). When it comes to religiosity, Muslim women have often been tasked with being symbolic representatives of their religion (Nye, 2008). This role has many times been assigned to Muslim women without their consent or their knowledge. For instance, when a Muslim woman wears a *hijāb* she is easily identified as a Muslim woman in public. This is not quite the case for Muslim men as their dress practices often reflect the clothing practices of the Global North (Posetti, 2010; Beydoun, 2018). Furthermore, Muslim women express their religiosity through wearing *hijāb*. The different ways that Muslims interpret the meaning of *hijāb* and modest ways of dressing is relational to the ways that Muslims practice and embody their faith.

Like religion, gender is both socially constructed and complex (Scarborough, 2018). William Scarborough argues that gender has been conceptualised by feminist scholars as a "multi-dimensional structure of inequality" (Scarborough, 2018, p.4). Scarborough claims that currently the greatest quantities of research pertaining to gender inequality is being produced. Scarborough states that more research addressing the complexities of gender has been produced and has afforded researchers more ways to conceptualise the ways gender sustains other systems of inequality. According to Scharnick-Udemans (2017b) gender has been identified as a blind spot in media scholarship as well as in media reporting. Moreover, feminist scholars have argued that gender is socially constituted as well as constructed within discourse (Iris Wigger, 2019). Puleng Segalo (2015) argues that one's gender and race play a fundamental role in one's access to resources in society. She argues that women, especially non-White women, as well as ethnic minorities often face greater levels of discrimination and their access to resources are limited. Moreover, women and ethnic minorities were especially wronged during the apartheid era (Segalo, 2015).

Additionally, Line Nyhagen (2019) claims that feminist Muslim scholars have advocated for the reinterpretation of Islam that supports gender equality in politics, at home, and in the labour market. The dress practices of women are indicative of an overlap with religion and gender. Moreover, gender is constructed in relation to the circumstances and interactions within a particular context. According to Coleman and Ross (2010) gender has predominantly impacted upon the embodiment of spaces or expressions of agency by women. Nearly all social interactions are structured around gender (Douglas, 2019). In this study religion and gender constitute the central categories of reproducing difference in society. Nina Hoel claims that within patriarchal religious anthropology no distinction is made between biological sex and "sociocultural constructions of femininities and masculinities" known as gender (Hoel, 2013, p.26). Therefore, a discussion of the ways in which Muslims navigate gender in South Africa is constructed from the speech instances of guests on *An Nur The Light*. Moreover analysing the overlap that exists in the field of religion, media and gender could elucidate feminist, social sciences and political standpoints within media representations of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light*. According to Scharnick-

Udemans (2017b) there is a dearth in literature within the context of religion, media and gender in Africa.

The theme of religion is fairly obvious since this is a programme about religion, however, given how broad the category of religion is along with the diversity of interpretations associated with it, I will provide insight into the various ways that religion is expressed through *An Nur The Light*. The theme religion has been organised using the sub-themes of:

1) Countering negative media representations, whereby the ways guests on *An Nur The Light,* through speech instances, have shown how representations of Islam and Muslims in South Africa are contrary to stereotypical representations that permeate existing media representations.

2) Religious education, whereby religious leaders are guests on the programme and provide interpretation of Qurʾānic scripture. In this section, the understandings of Islam and Muslims in relation to Qurʾānic scriptures are explored and explained. Speech instances on *An Nur The Light* provide insight into the ways that guests have conceptualised Islam in social, cultural and theological ways.

3) Spirituality and faith, where guests share their understandings pertaining to the ways in which they strive to develop dynamic relationships with the Divine.

As a theme, the discussions pertaining to gendered representations of Islam and Muslims are vast and therefore have been categorised into the following sub themes:

1) Appearance and dress code. Under this theme the speech events and images of guests are extrapolated. The focus of this theme is the ways Islam and Muslims

are depicted and perceived in the public sphere through the ways guests chose to clothe.

2) Challenges that Muslim women face in society, whereby Muslim women discuss contestations to their expressions of religiosity in the public sphere.

South African Broadcasting Corporation and representations of Islam and Muslims

Historically Muslims had little input regarding how they were represented in media narratives such as print or television (Said, 1987; Ahmed and Matthes, 2017). Moreover, the presenter of *An Nur The Light*, Mariam Mkwanda indicated that "the history of Muslims remains an important topic for us, and we will continue to bring you such stories" (*An Nur The Light*, 2017, Season 11, Episode 11). From this one could interpret that the role of the SABC in terms of representations of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light* is to provide a platform through which redress measures can take place. Moreover, Mkwanda indicates that the production team of the programme "traverse the length and breadth of this beautiful country in search of stories of hope, inspiration and motivation" (*An Nur The Light*, 2019, Season 13, Episode 8). This extract may be interpreted as an indication that one of the roles *An Nur The Light* has set out to fulfil is to act as the archive for the lived realities of Islam and Muslim in South Africa. Through my analysis of *An Nur the Light* I propose that a fundamental role which the SABC plays in the representations of Islam and Muslims on the programme is to contribute to the nation building efforts of South Africa as a country within which the religious freedom of its citizens is emphasised and supported (Scharnick-Udemans, 2017).

According to Mkwanda, *An Nur The Light* is "intent on showcasing the best of Muslims in South Africa" (*An Nur The Light*, 2019, Season 13, Episode 5). This extract from Mkwanda's speech indicates that the role of the SABC is to provide air time for programmes which feature religious programming in South Africa. Moreover, the role

of the SABC is to showcase good and positive narratives of Islam and Muslims in society. Furthermore, *An Nur The Light* is a faith-specific programme which is afforded airtime by the SABC and is able to showcase narratives of Islam and Muslims that both contest and resist stereotypical representations of Islam and Muslims that permeate mass media in the Global North.

Furthermore, the Mkwanda claims that "we'll be here for as long as you tune in" (*An Nur the Light*, 2017, Season 11, Episode 11). This extract indicates that *An Nur The Light* will continue to be aired on the SABC if the viewership is there. *An Nur The Light* caters for viewers who access the government provisioned television. People who cannot afford or who chose not to sign up for subscription satellite television. Thus, if *An Nur The Light* were to be removed then viewers who fall into this demographic category are unable to enjoy viewership of a programme that brings reminders or new insights regarding issues related to Islam from a socio-religious perspective. Here the term socio-religious is deployed to highlight the ways that the social and religious converge and not to infer a separation between the social and the religious.

Media representations from the Global North permeate South African society. Not all these representations are good and as scholarship has shown in most cases minority groups are framed as being unassimilable into society (Baderoon, 2014; De Rooij, 2017). For instance, British media disseminates imagery into society which casts British Muslims in negative roles within society. These negative roles are stereotypes and caricatures that are constructed from Orientalist framings of Muslims (Baderoon, 2014). For instance, framing Muslims as either violent men who force their women to remain home or as political anarchists (Coleman and Ross, 2010). Contrary to the negative narratives from the context of the Global North, a South Africa Muslim man and filmmaker Munier Parker produces *An Nur The Light* (see chapter one and chapter three). Throughout his filmmaking career he has made significant contributions to the representations of Islam in post-apartheid South Africa (Scharnick-Udemans, 2017a). Moreover, Parker could be perceived as a mediator because he is an industry authority when it comes to making production decisions

pertaining to the mediatisation of Islam within the public sphere through *An Nur The Light*.

Theme 1: Religion

Religion was chosen as a theme because the programme is explicitly about religion and guests on *An Nur The Light* predominantly shared information regarding how religion is entangled with various elements of their everyday lives. This theme evinced the exhibition of religion through guests representations of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light*. Furthermore, this may be read as the identity of South African Muslims being circulated by *An Nur The Light*.

Countering negative media representations

The relationship between religion and media is complicated. This is not a new relationship, however, because we live in a technologically advanced world, people are finding more ways to not only access, but also experience religion through media (Lovheim and Hjarvard, 2019). For instance, three decades ago one would not have been able to access religion on the platforms which we are today. Granted three decades ago it was apartheid in South Africa and one would not have been able to access religious medium which did not pertain to Christianity quite as freely as one does today (See Scharnick-Udemans, 2019).

The guests link their lived realities back to the misrepresentations of Islam and Muslims which are found in news reports within the context of the Global North. For instance, according to one guest "it is important to differentiate between the teachings of Islam and stereotypical societal narratives" (*An Nur The Light*, 2015, Season 9, Episode 22). Through my observation of the guests on *An Nur The Light* it has been found that Muslims are attempting to counter the Islamophobic representations of Islam and Muslims through showcasing their lived realities. According to a guest, Muslims on *An Nur The Light* are not merely perpetuating representations of Islam

and Muslims but are inviting the broader community to learn more about Islam (*An Nur The Light,* 2019, Season 13). Furthermore, many guests indicated that Muslims were constantly faced with rectifying misperceptions about Islam (*An Nur The Light*, 2015, Season 9, Episode 22).

Through sharing their stories these guests on *An Nur The Light* have shown that media platforms in South Africa are different from international media representations of Islam and Muslims. Furthermore, literature by scholars such as Ahmed and Matthes (2017), De Rooij (2017) and Beydoun (2018) has highlighted the prevalence of bias within news media directed toward framing Islam and Muslims as a backward religion and a backward population group, respectively. These stereotypical narratives are challenged on *An Nur The Light* through the embodiment of Islam by Muslims as a lived existence. The presence of Islam and Muslims in South African society challenges the repetitively negative claims against Islam and Muslims.

Empowerment may be characterised as a process of strategic intervention in contemporary society (Cavalieri and Almeida, 2018) and social activism the work which a person puts into practice in order to bring about change to the lives of marginalised people and improve social or political issues (Deslandes, 2018). Social activism and empowerment in the context of this study refers to how guests on *An Nur The Light* shared their understanding in relation to the ways in which sociocultural as well as socio-political issues could be addressed. Furthermore, this category came into existence because the guests would frequently discuss the ways they are attempting to address social inequality in their communities and hoping to address social inequality in the country. In majority of the discussions the guests would mention human rights, religious rights, religious freedom, as well as freedom of person because these rights are enshrined within the constitution of the republic of South Africa.

Furthermore, Episode ten of Season twelve is an example whereby social justice is discussed in relation to a Muslim woman living out her beliefs in public and empowering women at the same time. The name of this woman is Qudsia Mall. She is a knowledgeable woman who through her love of surfing and love for the Divine is

encouraging and empowering women to embrace their passions and become one with nature. She indicates that surfing is a means of connecting with the Divine for her. Furthermore, through her initiatives of empowerment she aims "to dispel myths about Muslim women as oppressed, confined and restricted" (*An Nur The Light*, 2018, Season 12, Episode 10). This is indicative of the ways in which South African Muslim women are changing the pre-existing stereotypical narratives that have been directed at Muslims in mass media.

The discussions of guests on Season eleven of *An Nur The Light* focused on social justice. Muslims in South Africa are represented as having religious freedom which is protected by the constitution of the country. However, contestation against religious attire of Muslim women do occasionally feature in the media (Scharnick-Udemans, 2020; Beydoun, 2018; Jakku, 2018). According to Lebogang Montjane, who appeared in Season eleven, Episode thirty-eight, the Bill of Rights is applicable to all citizens of South Africa. Montjane also shared that as South African citizens one has "the right to practice your religious practices, but like all rights in the constitution there is a limitation" (*An Nur The Light*, 2017, Season 11, Episode 38). Furthermore, according to Fatima Osman, a lecturer at the University of Cape Town and a guest on *An Nur The Light*, schools have to be more open to accommodating religious wear (*An Nur The Light,* 2017, Season 11, Episode 38).

In Episode thirteen of Season thirteen, through a voice over narration presenter Mariam Mkwanda explained that during the Holy Month of *Ramadan* a resident living adjacent to a District Six Mosque filed a noise complaint with the City of Cape Town. As Mkwanda was explaining this various news articles featuring noise complaints against the call to prayer floated across the screen. According to Zahid Badroodien, a Mayoral Committee Member for Community Services and Health with the City of Cape Town, who featured within this segment the regulation and the act allows for anyone in any community to lodge a noise complaint. Moreover, news regarding the complaint went viral on social media and hordes of people advocated in support for the *athān* to be protected and continue being rendered within the South African public sphere. The complaint was lodged against the Muir Street Mosque in District Six, one of the oldest

mosques in Cape Town, South Africa (*An Nur The Light*, Season 13, Episode 13). Global support poured in for the call to prayer to continue being rendered in the South African public sphere. According to Badroodien the good news was that after deliberation with authorities the *athān* "wasn't a noise disturbance" (*An Nur The Light*, 2019, Season 13, Episode 13). However, because one complainant brought a charge against the *athān* that has been called from the Muir Street Mosque for more than 100 years the *athān* was now considered "a noise nuisance" and must be managed (*An Nur The Light*, 2019, Season 13, Episode 13).

Another guest in Season thirteen, Sheikh Mogamad Moerat, emphasised the importance of the call to prayer. He discussed the great levels of respect which the call to prayer requires from Muslims. He indicated that in District Six, the multi-faith community which is an area well-known for its large Muslim population, when non-Muslims walked past a Mosque and the call to prayer sounded, non-Muslim persons would stand still and wait for the call to prayer to finish before resuming their walk and heading off to where they were headed. Sheikh Moerat emphasised that Muslims should "respect the *athān* and respond to the *athān*" (*An Nur The Light*, Season 13, Episode 13). He indicated that the Prophet emphasised respect for the call to prayer and its meaning and Muslims strive to emulate the behaviour of the Prophet (PBUH).

Community is discussed by guests on *An Nur The Light* as clusters of people from the same population who are attempting to make a difference in the areas where they live. The guests on the show have shared the ways that they attempt to bring positive changes to the crime or drug ridden communities which they live in. Furthermore, guests on the show also discuss how empowerment as well as poverty alleviation initiatives are being implemented in their communities. For instance, Moulana Hasan Evans is the Head of Department at the South African National Zakah Fund (SANZAF). The educational as well as social welfare agency whose core goals are empowerment through community building initiatives launched an entrepreneurial workshop whereby, they hoped to encourage skills development in poor communities as well as provide an opportunity for job creation through the establishment of

entrepreneurial ventures by people who attended the workshop (*An Nur The Light*, 2018, Season 12, Episode 3).

The initiative which SANZAF hosted for entrepreneurs aimed to provide a means for people from disadvantaged communities to successfully start, run and sustain their companies. Continuing with the social welfare and upliftment angle, guests Zaheer Parker and Khalil Akleker, the founders of *Accidental Muslims*, provided a platform for established entrepreneurs to share their stories of success and inspire young Muslims to become entrepreneurs. The target audience of the SANZAF upliftment initiative and the *Accidental Muslims* initiative are quite different, but both organisations operate with a community building and empowerment framework in mind (*An Nur The Light,* 2017, Season 11, Episode 14). Through the depiction of guests who uplift different sectors of the community *An Nur The Light* is showing that the programme and the SABC are attempting to build the nation of South Africa through continued social welfare efforts.

Religious Education

Education on the programme is expressed through religious education and this includes the more theological aspects of the show which include the *Tafsīr* segment. In the *Tafsīr* segment a person who is known as a *Qārī* reads a passage from the Qurʾān. A *Qārī* reads from the Qurʾān according to the theologically sanctioned guidelines. Furthermore, a religious leader provides an explanation of the Qurʾān extract.

Religious education has been discussed by guests on the show as an important component which contributes to belief in the Divine within the religion of Islam (*An Nur The Light*, 2018, Season 12, Episode 36). The guests have indicated that the Qurʾān is a guide for Muslims worldwide. Furthermore, the understanding of the Qurʾān which the *Tafsīr* segment on *An Nur The Light* provides is argued "to assist Muslims in staying close to Allah" (*An Nur The Light*, 2018, Season 12, Episode 4).

This alludes to the spirituality of Muslims being linked to knowledge of the teachings of the Qurʾān.

Moreover, a guest on the show indicated that South Africans can freely practice their religious beliefs, however, when "viewed under the lens of education dispensation religious freedom becomes an extremely complex matter" (*An Nur The Light*, 2017, Season 11, Episode 38). Many guests have expressed throughout the programme how grateful they are that they are Muslims within the socio-political context of South Africa. According to Muhammed Bhabha, a guest, who is a Non-Executive Board Member at EVRAZ Highveld Steel and Vanadium, he continuously says "thank God as a Muslim I am living in South Africa" (*An Nur The Light,* 2016, Season 10, Episode 9). Furthermore, under the theme of social justice the guests on the show shared that South African Muslims advocate for equality. According to Sa-diyya Shaikh, a guest, if one makes the claim that Islam advocates for "mercy, compassion, justice and human equality" one must be prepared to devote the time and energy to making this a reality (*An Nur The Light*, 2015, Season 9, Episode 22).

The majority of the guests on the *An Nur The Light* programme were women and many of the guests shared positive, empowering stories. Human rights was discussed within seventy-six of the one hundred and seventy-two speech instances that were analysed and interpreted for the study of representations on *An Nur The Light*. That is close to fifty percent of the speech instances of guests that shared their narratives regarding human rights. This indicates that guests on *An Nur The Light* placed importance on discussions of what South Africa is like for Muslims. Furthermore, this indicates that forty-five percent of the guests opinions advocated for a progressive stance on human rights. For instance, Soraya Williams, an executive member of *South African Women Lawyer Association*, who indicates that "the foundation of our freedom is the South African Constitution" (*An Nur The Light,* 2016, Season 10, Episode 9). This is an indication that social justice is imperative for South African society.

Spirituality and faith

Spirituality is discussed in one hundred and fifteen of the one hundred and seventy-two speech instances of the guests. That is nearly seventy-percent of the guests speech instances that placed emphasis on spirituality. This indicates the importance that guests on *An Nur The Light* placed on representations of spirituality in their lives. Majority of the discussions that feature the theme of spirituality is centred around the five pillars of Islam. Spirituality may be characterised as discussions pertaining to acts that have the intention of making you a better Muslim. For instance, a guest who has featured on the show several times, Sheikh Abduragmaan Alexander, emphasised the spiritual journey of Pilgrimage to Makkah because "*Hajj* for the Muslim is the pinnacle of our worship" (*An Nur The Light*, 2015, Season 9, Episode 34). Alexander also explained that the structure of Islam is built upon the five principles of Islam. Furthermore, he outlines the five pillars as being 1) faith, 2) daily prayer, 3) to pay alms and to see to the needs of the underprivileged and the poor, 4) fasting in the glorious month of *Ramadan*, and 5) going for the pilgrimage to the Holy city of Makkah (*An Nur The Light,* 2015, Season 9, Episode 34).

Moreover, the topic of Episode twelve of Season thirteen is spirituality in Islam. The segment opened with imagery of a young boy and a man wearing traditional garments and praying in a mosque, while the voice over of the presenter explains that spirituality of Muslims is linked to the five pillars of Islam. Nahida Esmail, a guest on this episode, who appears to be an Indian woman, indicated that her "parents were very strict. They would make sure that we prayed on time" (*An Nur The Light,* 2019, Season 13, Episode 12). Esmail using the word 'strict' when speaking about her parent's demeanour when it came to *ṣalāt* is indicative of the emphasis that is placed on the importance of prayer for Muslims. When Esmail spoke, the camera focussed on her and when the voice over of the presenter occurred images of Muslims participating in various activities linked to spiritual growth were depicted. Furthermore, the close-up shots of Esmail could be indicative of the producer attempting to focus the viewers' attention on the woman speaking, emphasising the importance of the person, or emphasising the platform on which the person must share their stories. Esmail

indicated that she grew closer to the Divine through her active quest of seeking knowledge regarding Islam.

Many guests, across multiple seasons have discussed the Holy month of *Ramadan. Ramadan* is a revered month in the lives of Muslims. This is usually the ninth month on the lunar calendar and during this month Muslims abstain from food and drink from sunrise until sunset. The month of Ramadan has been discussed in every season by a variety of guests. A guest on the show, Moulana Suleiman Basha, indicates that the purpose of this month is to increase "spiritual behaviour towards our Creator" (*An Nur The Light*, 2017, Season 11, Episode 14). Furthermore, discussions relating to spirituality are also linked to the ways that guests on the programme framed their speech instances in terms of their actions being intended to gain the pleasure of the Divine.

A guest who framed his response in terms of his actions being intended to gain the pleasure of the Divine is Hanif Loonat. He indicated that he was the Chairperson of the Community Policing Forum in Mitchell's Plain. He made an appearance on the Profile Segment in Episode forty-nine of Season nine. He is a coloured Muslim man from Cape Town who identifies as a community activist. In this segment he was commended for the extraordinary lengths he went through to prevent as well as fight crime in his community in Cape Town. He indicated that he provided the service within his community "to gain the pleasure of my God" (*An Nur The Light*, 2015, Season 9, Episode 49). Furthermore, with the spate of crimes in Cape Town Loonat has dedicated his strength, energy, and time to guarantee the safety of people in Cape Town.

To conclude discussions on the theme of religion, the discussions which were constructed from the stories of the guests on *An Nur The Light* showed that Muslims in South Africa are aware of the ambiguous representations of Islam and Muslims that emanate from news media representations from the Global North. Furthermore, through their awareness of these issues the guests on the programme are attempting to restructure existing misrepresentations of Islam and Muslims through their lived

realities on the programme. This reshaping of narratives is evident from the discussions of guests that were highlighted throughout the sub-themes in this section.

Theme 2: Gender

In the context of this study the theme of gender refers to the speech instances through which the guests on *An Nur The Light* expressed ideas related to the social, cultural or religious differences between men and women. The theme of gender is structured according to three sub themes, 1) appearance and dress code, 2) challenges that Muslims women face in society, and 3) social activism and empowerment.

Appearance and Dress Code

An entire segment on *An Nur The Light* is dedicated to appearance in relation to fashion sense. However, issues of appearance are not only contained in the Style Segment but can be seen throughout the show. Appearance as a sub-theme entails discussions of guests that relates to the physical appearance of women and men according to dress practices as well as the manners in which Muslims have appeared in the public sphere. In many of the style segments and a few topic segments on *An Nur The Light* the guests highlighted the gender bias that is prevalently exhibited toward Muslim women in society. Muslim women were featured more often than Muslim men on the programme. Furthermore, on the Topic Segment of Season eleven Episode sixteen, a Muslim man and two women explained their outfits. The women and man discussed the ways in which they feel free within South Africa because they are able to express their religiosity through dress practices in public. The gender binary is explicitly depicted through discussions of dress practices throughout this segment across the programme.

For instance, Yasira Saley, a guest who appeared on a style segment of the programme, shared that she "looks up to a lot of YouTubers" such as Anam Ahmed,

Dina Tokio, and Amina Khan for her style inspiration and does not wear clothing which is too tight or revealing (*An Nur The Light*, 2017, Season 11, Episode 16). Saley indicated that she grew up with women who wore *hijāb* in a fashionable manner and finds inspiration for her unique outfits in having grown up around fashionable women (*An Nur The Light*, 2017, Season 11, Episode 16). Women are featured more frequently than men on the Style Segment and receive more screen time on the segment than men, in most cases, as well. Furthermore, the clothing explained by men are more laid back and acculturated to fashion from the Global North.

Moreover, a common pattern detected throughout the episodes that featured the Style Segment was modest fashion for women (*An Nur The Light*, 2015, Season 9, Season 10, Season 11, Season 12, Season 13). For instance, three guests, two women and one man, displayed and described their outfits in a Style Segment on Season 9. One woman, Hanaah Metelerkamp indicated that "style for me is a story" (*An Nur The Light*, 2015, Season 9, Episode 49). Another woman, Ruwaydah Ajam, used the metaphor of a fingerprint to describe style because it is unique to every individual. Furthermore, the man in that segment, Wazeerud-Deen Lillah, indicated that style is a visual representation of one's personality that you are showing to the people who see your outfits. He also indicated that he enjoys dressing in Islamic attire and that he perceives that way of dress as comforting rather than restricting. The notion of Islamic wear being restrictive, he shared, is a common representation within news media because "lots of media and propaganda sends out the wrong message" (*An Nur The Light*, 2015, Season 9, Episode 49).

The guests on the style segment extensively discussed the appearance of Muslims in the public sphere. People who were passionate about looking stylish as well as entrepreneurs were featured on the style segment of *An Nur The Light*. For instance, Uzair Bulbulia, a guest on the style segment of the programme indicated that "sunnah has seeped into the fashion scene. For example, cuffing your pants above your ankle" (*An Nur The Light*, 2017, Season 11, Episode 8). This is indicative of the fact that for many Muslims their dress practices are important ways of embodying their religion. Furthermore, an entrepreneur, Wasiullah Panchbhaya, who designs and markets

modest clothing with his wife aims "to cater to every different type of a market, a very modern young guy, a guy who wants to be streetwise kind of, rather than traditional" (*An Nur The Light*, 2018, Season 12, Episode 4). One may read this as a narrative that contest the stereotypes that only Muslim women dress modestly or that modesty presupposed a lack of fashion awareness. The active choice by these men to portray these forms of religious dress in public may be read as agency.

According to Beverly Weber (2015) within the scholarly community it is evident that agency continues to not only be conceptualised but also romanticised as resistance. However, there are forms of agency whereby individuals relinquish their autonomy. Moreover, guests on *An Nur The Light* enact forms of agency whereby they are negotiating both secular and religious norms. For instance, guests, Dr Taahirah Davids and her husband, Umar, conform to gender roles within their marriage, but she did not relinquish her autonomy as a woman who made her own decisions once she got married. Moreover, Dr Davids wore *hijāb* when she featured on *An Nur The Light*, but she did not explicitly draw attention to her *hijāb* as being a form of resistance. Rather, one could argue her not explicitly placing focus on her *hijāb* could be read as a reshaping of societal norms. The dominant culture in South Africa is structured around Christianity. Hence, her wearing her *hijāb* like it was the norm is indicative that some agency is not physically resistant nor is it a relinquishing of autonomy. This is evident whereby the focus of this segment was on her and her achievements as a doctor rather than focus on her husband (*An Nur The Light*, 2017, Season 11, Episode 8). The guests express their religious identities on *An Nur The Light* and these expressions may conform to gender norms regarding certain aspects. Moreover, the guests on *An Nur The Light* also argue for the protection of their rights as per the constitution of South Africa. Constitutions within the Global North usually excludes Muslims from it. However, in South Africa the religious freedom of Muslims is protected (*An Nur The Light*, 2016, Season 10, Episode 9). The voices and perceptions of guests on *An Nur The Light* were analysed in order to understand the ways that Muslims in South Africa make sense of their identities in relation to the cultural, political as well as social factors that inevitably construct their interactions within society. Moreover, on the show women and men are seen as active agents in the shaping of their lived realities (Maelstrom, 2012). In the context of this study

bodily agency refers to the ways that guests have shared the ambitious and assertive manners in which they are operating within society (Sczesny, Nater, and Eagly, 2019). Moreover, the representation of agency is complex because individuals might be enacting agency for the purpose of representing their communities, but it could also be an insistence that people could be both religious and have their rights protected in a secular society, by a democratic constitution.

Challenges that Muslim women face in society

According to the presenter of *An Nur The* Light, Mariam Mkwanda, the programme showcases Islam and Muslims in a predominantly good light. The discussions of guests where they indicate how they choose to appear publicly cements the acceptance of Muslims in South African society because Muslims can function as a part of society without explicit discrimination based on their dress code. Even though Muslims in South Africa, especially Muslim women who wear *hijāb*, can publicly express their religiosity through their dress practices without censure there are other forms of discrimination occurring in society that may not be as explicit. Hence this subtheme is framed around the narratives of guests on the programme in relation to challenges which Muslim women face in the public sphere including sacred sites.

The importance of mosques as spaces of worship and community connection are emphasised in the programme. Mosques have been mentioned multiple times throughout the programme and these discussions include pressures that women experience with regards to access to mosques, and the contestation of the call to prayer. The guests on *An Nur The Light* have constructed representations in terms of Muslims in South Africa holding mosques in high regard. For instance, according to Yusuf Agherdien, "our mosques are the centre of our communities" *(An Nur The Light,* 2018, Season 12, Episode 10). Moreover, Muslim women face tremendous amounts of pressure from society daily and many a times the pressure could lead to the isolation of Muslim women from the rest of society. Places of worship are spiritually significant spaces for Muslims and have been predominantly occupied by men. However, in Cape Town Muslim women are known to have access to mosques as well as to frequent

places of worship. According to the Mkwanda "Cape Town has a more liberal approach that allows women to attend prayers" (*An Nur The Light*, 2015, Season 9, Episode 22). Another guest, Associate Professor Sa'diyya Shaikh from the University of Cape Town, indicated that majority of the mosques in Cape Town allow greater access for Muslim women to mosques than in the northern part of the country which may be related to Islam in Johannesburg and Durban being more conservative than in Cape Town (*An Nur The Light,* 2015, Season 9, Episode 22). One of these mosques in Cape Town, the Claremont Main Road Mosque has invited women to participate and attend the mosque not only when there are events such as talks and lectures on human rights, gender based violence, talks of Muslims living with HIV/AIDS, or drug awareness (Hoel, 2013).

The identities of Muslim women on *An Nur The Light* are multifaceted. Muslims women on the programme represent as being businesswomen, entrepreneurs, mothers, wives, unmarried and free. This is unlike the negative stereotypical representations of Muslim women that have been discussed in chapter two of this dissertation. For instance, a guest has been recognised as "someone who is breaking boundaries and observing hijāb at the same time" (*An Nur The Light*, 2018, Season 12, Episode 10). The usage of social media has evolved in current times. From the guests' discussions of social media usage in their daily lives it is apparent that the ways in which the guests represent themselves are influenced through social media platforms (*An Nur The Light*, 2019, Season 13).

According to the guests it is not a shocking sight to encounter women in leadership positions in South Africa. One such woman who makes ground-breaking strides in her community is Dr Kulsum Jhetam, an Indian doctor from Mokopane, a town in Limpopo Province, South Africa. She pioneered a clinic with the aim of educating women as well as young girls about their reproductive health and rights. According to Jhetam, who started a breast cancer awareness campaign, "women are taught to be ashamed of their bodies" (*An Nur The Light*, 2015, Season 9, Episode 39). She indicated that she hopes to create body positivity among women, and she wishes for her practice to become a haven for women in the community.

Women on the programme also shared the various leadership roles that they embodied within society. The leadership roles include and are not limited to discussions regarding women who are flourishing in environments where for decades women were stigmatised against and labelled as too delicate to function in those environments. One of these so-called harsh environments in which one woman named Rabia Cassim is flourishing is construction. Cassim advocates for empowerment of women but indicates that women must put in more effort to flourish in certain environments and after a while of showcasing one's competence in the field will result in men within your field respecting you (*An Nur The Light*, 2019, Season 13, Episode 8). She indicates that one must realise that the higher up you progress in a career field the more factors there are that count against you. The more highly male dominated the career field is the greater the chance is that a woman in said field would be met with cynicism. Rabia indicated that she did not expect her colleagues to respect her right off the bat and even knew that regardless of her qualifications some would question her presence as a woman on-site. She indicates that she corrected the stereotypical preconceived notions about her role as a woman on-site by correcting her colleagues. She indicated that when she "corrected incorrect procedures followed by men on-site she earns their respect" (*An Nur The Light,* 2019, Season 13, Episode 8). As a guest on the programme Cassim indicated that women have power in society and through taking up unconventional careers within society Muslim women are cementing this notion.

Conclusion

In this chapter Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step reflexive thematic analysis was used as a guide to conducting the thematic analysis. The purpose of this chapter was to provide a thick description of the representations of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light*. This was done by reflecting on the findings of the thematic analysis. The thick description was achieved through answering the first and second research questions of this study namely, 1) what is the SABC's role in the representation of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light*? and 2) how are Islam and Muslims represented on

An Nur The Light? Various definitions of both religion and gender were offered near the start of this chapter.

This chapter was divided into two parts. The first part was a description of the contributions that the SABC has made to the curation and dissemination of media representations of Islam and Muslims. Historically Muslims had little input regarding how they were represented in media narratives such as print or television media (Said, 1987; Ahmed and Matthes, 2017). Moreover, a finding in the first part of the chapter was that *An Nur The Light* attempted to contribute to the nation buildings efforts of South Africa because the religious freedom of its citizens was both emphasised and supported through the speech instances of guests (Scharnick-Udemans, 2017). The second part of this chapter was a description of the findings of the thematic analysis. The thematic analysis was structured according to the themes of 1) religion and 2) gender. The sub themes of religion was 1) contested media representations, 2) religious education, and 3) spirituality and faith. Furthermore, the sub themes of gender was 1) appearance and dress code, and 2) challenges that Muslim women face in society.

The theme of religion evinced the exhibition of religion through guests representations of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light*. A finding of this theme was that guests on *An Nur The Light* placed emphasis on community building. Through an observation of the guests on *An Nur The Light* it has been found that Muslims are attempting to counter the Islamophobic representations of Islam and Muslims in media from the Global North through showcasing their lived realities. According to a guest, Muslims who made appearances on *An Nur The Light* were not merely perpetuating representations of Islam and Muslims but invited the broader community to learn more about Islam (*An Nur The Light,* 2019, Season 13). Furthermore, many guests indicated that Muslims were constantly faced with rectifying misperceptions about Islam (*An Nur The Light*, 2015, Season 9, Episode 22). In chapter five I conduct a critical discourse analysis in order to uncover the discourses underlying the representations of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light*.

Chapter Five

Critical Discourse Analysis

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explore how language in a particular context operates to emphasise the critical reading of a text rather than accepting the reality the text is attempting to present. This is done by critically reflecting on the speech instances of guests on *An Nur The Light*. This chapter includes a description of Fairclough's three dimensional approach to critical discourse analysis as a guide. The critical discourse analysis assists in highlighting the discourses that are constructing, countering and sustaining the media representations of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light*. The critical description, interpretation and understanding is achieved through answering the third research question of this study:

3) Why are representations of Islam and Muslims constructed in these ways?

The previous chapter, chapter four, presents the findings of the thematic analysis. Moreover, the first and second research questions were used to guide the structure of chapter four. Moreover, in chapter four it has been found that Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light* were represented in a predominantly positive light, however, there were minor issues particularly how certain representations of Islam and Muslims were contested in the public sphere. Even though guests on *An Nur The Light* discussed Muslim women in predominantly positive ways, negative reactions to Islam and Muslims were discussed on *An Nur The Light*. For instance, on Season thirteen, Episode thirteen complaints were issued against the call to prayer (*An Nur The Light*, 2019, Season 13, Episode 13). Furthermore, the visibility of Muslim's religiosity were disputed and 'othered' because it does not fit the homogenous societal representation that media from the Global North are attempting to perpetuate.

The current chapter is a critical discourse analysis that aims to provide an in depth discussion of the speech instances of guests on *An Nur The Light*. The chapter comprises two parts. The first is a discussion of the role of the SABC in the representation of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light*. The second part of this chapter is a discussion pertaining to the critical discourse analysis and is structured in terms of two main headings under which the discussion and interpretations of the findings take place. These heading are:

1) Muslims, media and marginalisation whereby speech instances pertaining of guests on *An Nur The Light* are interpreted as reproducing stereotypical representations of Islam and Muslims. Furthermore, microaggressions are conceptualised as an expression of Islamophobia in the South African context.

2) Gender, media and race whereby speech instances pertaining to the appearance and presence of Islam and Muslims within South Africa are discussed and interpreted in relation to existing literature

The tone of media coverage regarding Islam and Muslims may be understood to be positive or negative (Nisar and Bleich, 2020). A positive tone related to media representations of Islam and Muslims frame Muslims as being good and making nation building contributions to society. A negative tone is synonymous with media narratives that serve to disseminate 'othering' narratives when it comes to Islam or Muslims. *An Nur The Light* showcases representations of Islam and Muslims that are predominantly positive. This is contrary to the media representations that are prevalent within the context of the Global North (De Rooij, 2017; Beydoun, 2018; Bashri, 2018). When one takes into consideration the tone with which Muslim women as well as Muslim men are speaking one could argue that a sense of South African Muslims being non-threatening is shared through this manner of speaking. Furthermore, the guests on *An Nur The Light* speak clearly yet are soft-spoken. The guests on *An Nur The Light* being soft-spoken projects an image that Muslims are peaceful and have gentle mannerisms. This representation is contrary to that of most media representations that stem from the Global North because those representations

have framed Islam and Muslims as violent (Beydoun, 2018; Weng and Mansouri, 2021). These mannerisms may be adopted from the religious education that many Muslims receive throughout their lives, but South Africans appear to be non-threatening. This illustrates that being non-threatening is not context dependent, but rather contingent on the framing of the media representations.

These teachings are adapted from Qurʾānic interpretations as well as the interpretations of Ḥadīths. Ḥadīths are a record of the words, actions, and the silent approval of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) as transmitted through chains of narrators. A tone of authority is evident in religious scriptures. Religious leaders who appear on the Tafsīr Segment of *An Nur The Light* offer an interpretation of Qurʾān verses. To quote scholar of religion, Hassan Ndzovu, religious authority "is primarily associated with roles that demand the mastery of Islamic knowledge (Qurʾān and Ḥadīth)" (Ndzovu, 2019, p.17). The mastery of knowledge includes preaching, teaching, leading prayers, providing guidance on religious matters, and interpreting texts.

The tone with which the Muslims on *An Nur The Light* speak is also confident. This tone draws people to listen to the speakers and want to tune in to the programme on a weekly basis. An example of a guest whose tone was clear and commanding is Gafieza Ismail. Ismail is a teacher in a low socioeconomic area of Cape Town known as Mitchells Plain. She passionately discusses her love of teaching and the ways she has incorporated technology into her teachings as a ways of making it accessible to the students she teaches. She also indicates that she hopes to inspire her students to become global citizens (*An Nur The Light*, 2016, Season 10, Episode 13). The tone with which she speaks is inspirational and keeps ones attention engaged.

The guests on the *Tafsīr* Segment through their speech instances project positive attitudes towards learning to the audience of *An Nur The Light*. The encouraging tone used throughout the *Tafsīr* Segment communicates that the guests value educating the audience regarding issues that influence their daily lives. For

instance, the guest on the Tafsīr Segment who predominantly offers an interpretation of verses of the Qurʾān, Sheikh Ismail Londt, emphasises the importance of education (*An Nur The Light*, 2018, Season 12, Episode 36). He emphasises the importance of education for both women and men because it increases ones knowledge. Moreover, Londt claims that educated women and men are refined individuals because education is a tool used to improve oneself and one's community. This indicates that South African media is assisting to disseminate the lived realities of Muslims into society. These representations contest and problematise existing literature on media representations of Islam and Muslims that are laden with and perpetuate the stereotypical narratives that Muslims are violent, uncivilised and barbaric (Sutkute, 2019; Wigger, 2019). The distinction between media representations of Islam and Muslims in South Africa and representations in the Global North are important to analyse because it could lead to addressing the gap in the field of religion, media and gender that Scharnick-Udemans (2017b) has indicated through her work.

Critical Discourse Analysis

A single definition or understanding of discourse analysis or critical discourse analysis is not possible. However, any discourse or critical discourse approach shares certain key premises pertaining to the manners in which 'the subject' or 'language' is understood (Jorgenson and Phillips, 2002). The common aim amongst these analytical approaches is to carry out critical research. Critical research entails investigating as well as analysing the iteration of power dynamics within society and then settling upon a formulation of a normative perspective that could be used in order to critique the possibilities for social change within such relations (Jorgenson and Phillips, 2002).

A critical discourse analysis is a method to empirically study the relationship between discourse, cultural and social developments within various social domains using methods and theories (Jorgenson and Phillips, 2002). For the purpose of this chapter I will utilise Norman Fairclough's approach to critical discourse analysis. As

mentioned in chapter three, this study is based on a social constructionist research paradigm. The combination of thematic analysis and critical discourse analysis is suitable for this study as the 'multiperspectival' work produces a broader understanding of media representations of Islam and Muslims in South Africa as well as in society in general.

According to Marianne Jorgenson and Louise Phillips (2002) there are five common features to any critical discourse analysis approach. These features have been identified as:

1) The character of social and cultural processes and structures is partly linguistic-discursive. Critical discourse analysis assists researchers in making sense of discursive practices (Jorgenson and Phillips, 2002). Discursive practices provide the means for texts to not only be produced, but to also be consumed. Social relations and social identities contribute to the constitution of social practices. One is able to critically examine not only spoken and written language using critical discourse analysis, but visual imagery as well (Jorgenson and Phillips, 2002).

2) Discourse being both constitutive and constituted. This stems from critical discourse analysis being a form of social practice that shapes the social world and is also shaped by social practices within society (Jorgenson and Phillips, 2002).

3) Language use should be empirically analysed within its social context. This entails the concrete analysis of language used in a social situation.

4) Discourse functions ideologically. This approach is critical because the aim of using it is to uncover the role that discursive practices play in maintaining unequal power relations in society. Furthermore, the ideological effects of critical discourse analysis are the ways in which discursive practices create and reproduce unequal power relations in society. For instance, between ethnic minorities or women and men in society (Jorgenson and Phillips, 2002).

5) Critical research. A critical discourse analysis is not politically neutral as it is an approach used to side with oppressed social groups and uncover the discursive practices that sustain asymmetric systems of power in society (Jorgenson and Phillips, 2002).

When working with Fairclough's approach to critical discourse analysis one is dealing with discourse as social practice. Furthermore, this approach comprises a complex three-dimensional model that is interconnected through concepts within a framework. According to Fairclough (Jorgenson and Phillips, 2002) discourse is an fundamental expression of social practice because it not only reproduces knowledge it also has the functionality to change existing knowledge pertaining to social relations such as power relations and simultaneously be shaped by other social practices and structures such as gender and places of worship.

According to Fairclough the analysis therefore should focus on: "1) The linguistic features of the text (text), 2) Processes relating to the production and consumption of the text (discursive practices), and 3) the wider social practice to which the communicative event belongs (social practice)" (Jorgenson and Phillips, 2002, p.68; Fairclough, 2003; Fairclough, 2010). Fairclough's three-dimensional model champions that texts cannot be understood in isolation, but when viewed in relation to social contexts which interconnect with larger bodies of text then one is able to implement the framework and produce interesting results from the analysis.

The first dimension of critical discourse analysis is text. In this dimension the word choice by guests of their speech instances through their word choices indicate their attitude towards a topic. Moreover, the words that the guests have used in their speech instances have also shown the ways in which guests either aligned themselves with a community or created distance between themselves and a community. For instance, scholars from the Global North have indicated that media representations from geopolitical contexts such as America (Beydoun, 2018), Australia (Weng and Mansouri, 2021), and Britain (Mythen, Walklate and Khan, 2009) have shown that

Muslims are not welcome in the communities through their use of words such as 'foreigner' or 'refugee' when referring to Muslim individuals or communities.

The second dimension is discursive practice and the focus is on the way a speaker uses their words to compose their sentences. The way in which a guest on *An Nur The Light* speaks about a subject could change the view of an audience member who is consuming the content of the show. Moreover, language is not neutral and one is able to interpret the meaning of speech instances because language contains values, attitudes and assessments that the guests on the programme convey through their speech instances. For example, the attitude of a guest such as Yasira Saley whose speech instance was analysed and interpreted in chapter four has a positive attitude towards *hijāb* and this is evident from her speech as she discussed *hijāb* using positive values such as 'fashionable' to indicate that this is something that she values and strives to emulate through her representation within society.

The third dimension is social practices and this entails the norms and traditions that are found within language practices of guests on *An Nur The Light*. Moreover, language is associated with power. Fairclough's approach indicates an assumption that change is created through the use of language, behavioural change is created through language, and through this language has developed into a power tool. For instance, existing literature for decades has shaped Islam and Muslims as a religion and cultural group that is prone to violence (See chapter two). Contrary to this, guests on *An Nur The Light* discuss Islam and their lived realities as Muslims in terms of positive framing. The discussions range from how Muslim women are able to freely wear *hijab,* to the ways in which Muslim women are contributing to nation building initiatives in South Africa through implementing empowerment initiatives in marginalised communities. This narrative shift is as a result of Muslims themselves sharing speech instances which detail their lived realities. Moreover, the representations of Islam and Muslim in the Global North are based on news coverage shape by media organisations who perpetuate stereotypical representations of Islam and Muslims and not interactions with Muslims or interviews wherein Muslims share their lived realities (Ahmed and Matthes, 2017).

The role that the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) played in the representations of Islam and Muslims on An Nur the Light

According to Gazi Islam (2014) social identity theory starts from the postulation that individuals are able to define their identities based on the social groups they associate with. This results in the construction of the individual's self-identity. Furthermore, there is no singular definition for Muslim social identity. For instance, some individuals identify as Muslim because they were born to Muslim parents and follow the principles of Islam. There are also people who identify as Muslim because they "accept the beliefs necessary to be considered Muslim" (Muthal, 2010, p.2). Contrary to this there are also people who identify as Muslim because they were born into a Muslim family, but they are not practicing Muslims.

Through the information shared by guests on the programme it is evident that the guests use language to construct and shape not only their social relationships but also their social identities as Muslims within society. Through the information shared by guests on *An Nur The Light* Muslims are positioned as a population group that is attempting to contribute to nation building endeavours in South Africa. This is evident when one takes into consideration the many guests who have appeared on the show and indicated that they are involved in activities to provide support to people who are less fortunate (*An Nur The Light*, Season 9, Season 10, Season 11, Season 12, Season 13).

According to Coleman and Ross (2010) media organisations in countries such as the United Kingdom have been flagged for token minority representation in terms of simply showcasing programmes with ethnically diverse casts. However, the media structures, especially production, did not showcase the same diversity because top structure management were still controlled predominantly by white men. In South Africa broadcast policies such as the SABC Editorial Policies (2020) set out to correct

these imbalances through providing a variety of faith-based content. The SABC Editorial Policy discusses the mandate of the SABC, and the responsibility of the editorial. Furthermore, the editorial also offers guidelines in terms of the local content, educational content, management process, as well as religious content. According to the SABC the Religious Broadcasting Policy "is a guide for all working on the production of religious broadcasting context" (Scharnick-Udemans, 2017a, p.271). Furthermore, the profoundly political character of the South African public sphere is reflected in the policy. Moreover, the policy is an attempt at nation building efforts using the SABC as a platform (Scharnick-Udemans, 2017a).

According to the SABC Editorial Policies the content of faith-based programming should "reflect our African reality" (SABC, 2020, p.47). Contrary to the token representations of "black faces on prime-time programs" the producer of *An Nur The Light* Munier Parker has utilised the programme as a platform to showcase the multifaceted identities of Muslims, who are predominantly people of colour (Coleman and Ross, 2010, p.136). Moreover, this is an indication that people of colour are contributing to the development of diversity within the structures of the SABC. Through the active involvement of people of colour in the production aspects of programmes such as *An Nur The Light* which are circulated by the national broadcaster and consumed by the South African public.

According to Mariam Mkwanda "as Muslims we are ambassadors of our religion. It is up to us to set a positive example of how the world perceives us" (*An Nur The Light*, Season 9, Episode 22). This may be interpreted as the presenter acknowledging that there are negative representations of Islam and Muslims in society because of the narratives disseminated by mass media. Hence, her encouragement that positive images relating to Islam be circulated so that a narrative shift from viewing Islam and Muslims as negative to viewing the religion and population group in a positive light. Moreover, perhaps it is not even about viewing Islam and Muslims in an overly positive light, but rather that realistic images be disseminated about Islam and Muslims. For instance, Christian white supremacists who attack Muslims are solely blamed for their actions and the blame, alienation and demonisation does not

befall the religion of Christianity (Beydoun, 2018). On the contrary, when a terror attack occurs Muslims are immediately blamed for it. When attacks occur in the Global North the immediate response of media agencies are to produce and circulate narratives that frame the attacks around the involvement of Islam and Muslims (Rahman and Emadi, 2018).

Muslims, Media and Marginalisation

The general consensus amongst the guests is that Muslims in South Africa experience a great level of freedom in terms of religious expression (*An Nur The Light*, Season 9, Season 10, Season 11, Season 12, Season 13). Even though this is the consensus of the guests there are Muslims in countries such as America in which Islam as well as Muslims are marginalised by mainstream society (Beydoun, 2018). According to Beydoun (2018) the marginalisation of Islam and Muslims within the context of the Global North is as a result of mainstream media framing representations of Islam and Muslims in relation to an Orientalist paradigm. Framing Muslims in relation to an Orientalist paradigm results in a power dynamic of 'us' and 'them' being established, more specifically the dichotomy of 'us' versus 'Muslims' is established and this further results in the alienation of Muslims within society. (Luqui and Yang, 2018; Kurniawan *et al.*, 2020). This also creates opportunities for alienation and marginalisation to escalate into various forms of oppression that could ultimately translate into physical violence.

We live in a global village that is interconnected through media. The media significantly shapes the attitudes towards marginalised communities in society. Traditionally representations of religion were disseminated through religious organisations. According to Hjarvard (2012) mediatisation of religion does not result in the development of a new religion, rather, the social condition of who has the authority to define as well as practice religion has changed. More recently Lovheim and Hjarvard (2019) have proposed a conceptual understanding of mediatisation of religion as the procedures whereby different media forms such as entertainment, social media, or journalism have become established producers of both religious

experiences and meanings. These religious experiences and meanings occur simultaneously by individuals and religious organisations. Moreover, in order for religious authority to be reasserted in new societal conditions individuals as well as religious organisations are required to reconsider the ways that they engage existing practices in mediatised environments. Moreover, the shift in religious authority could be a result of globalisation and indicates that not only does religion impact upon people in society, but people also impact upon religion in the way that it is disseminated into society (Scharnick-Udemans, 2017). In most contexts Muslims are considered religious minorities, in this dissertation I discuss and interpret the ways that Muslims construct their lived realities through their appearances on *An Nur The Light*.

This section has been discussed in terms of two categories:

1) Religious Rights and Freedom. In this category the speech instances of guests that engage with the ways South African Muslims frame their lived realities through a critical engagement of social justice within the public sphere are studied.

2) Islamophobia as microaggression. In this category I interpret the ways that discrimination against Muslims in the South African context may be conceptualised as an expression of Islamophobia.

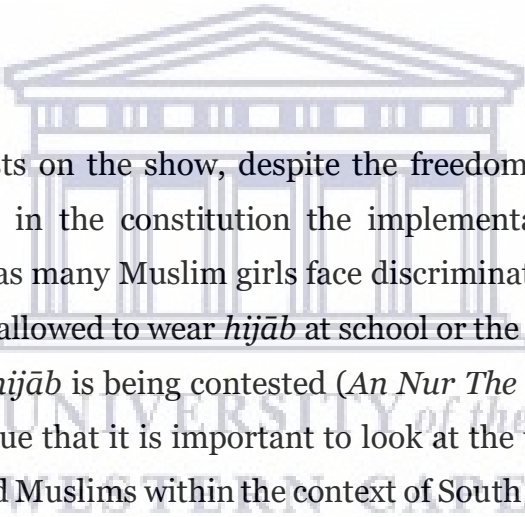## Religious Rights and Freedom

A consistent topic brought up by guests is that of religious rights and freedoms. Guests on *An Nur The Light,* declare that South Africans are fortunate because their freedoms and rights are enshrined in the Constitution of the country. According to Mohamed Bhabha, a guest on *An Nur The Light*, "the kinds of rights and privileges we have in this country, we won't even experience in Muslim countries" (*An Nur The Light,* 2016, Season 10, Episode 9). From the information that Bhabha shared on the show one is able to interpret that South African Muslims are able to display their religiosity in

public and in many cases not be harassed or bodily harmed for their decisions to display their Muslimness. Through existing literature that focussed on Islam and Muslims in the Global North it is apparent that Muslims are often targeted for their visibly displayed religious identities (Beydoun, 2018; Mythen, Walklate and Khan, 2009). Moreover, through their studies, scholars have also shown that Muslims may decide to acculturate to the dominant societal expectations. When Muslims acculturate to the dominant culture it means that they do not publicly display any forms of religiosity in hopes that they will be allowed to integrate into society unhindered and unharmed. The racialisation of Muslim identities have put Muslims at risk of violence in societies who are hostile towards public displays of Muslimness (Meer and Modood, 2009; Weng and Mansouri, 2021). Given the speech instances of Muslims and the happiness that is evident in the episodes when guests appear on *An Nur The Light* it is evident that Muslims experience more freedom to express their religiosity in the public sphere in South Africa.

Guests are quite vocal regarding the advocacy for human rights and freedom of South African citizens. For instance, a guest emphasised that "section fifteen of the constitution speaks to freedom of religion, belief and opinion" (*An Nur The Light*, 2017, Season 11, Episode 38). From this extract it is evident that the Muslims on the programme are advocating for the rights and freedoms that they are experiencing in South Africa to be protected. One of the rights that links into the right to freedom of religious expression that is enshrined in the constitution is the right to visibly display their religious garments. For instance, "discrimination on grounds amongst other religion, belief and culture are prohibited." However, "the seemingly harmless headscarf has been at the centre of controversy in schools with educational institutions citing standard uniform as the reason for prohibition of religious attire" (*An Nur The Light*, 2017, Season 11). This indicates that although the rights of citizens regarding visibly displaying their religious attire may be protected within the constitution, institutions and their policies cannot always be forced to implement the principles of the constitution in every sphere of society.
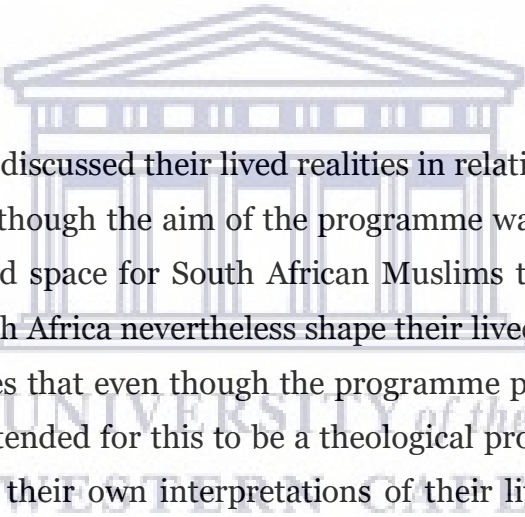
According to Saba Mahmood, freedom of religion guarantees peaceful co-existence for religiously diverse populations (Mahmood, 2015). In the South African context discussions pertaining to religious freedom centres around the ability for religious freedom to be accommodated in the public sphere (Amien, 2015). South Africa faced a race-based discriminatory history in terms of colonialism and apartheid (Amien, 2015; Baderoon, 2014). With the introduction of democracy into South African society in 1994 came the constitutionally sanctioned accommodation of religious diversity in the South African public sphere (Amien, 2015). As a way of ensuring that religious communities did not utilise religious freedom afforded to them in the constitution to legitimize offensive practices, internal limitations were added to the constitution. South Africa is a secular society that incorporates inclusive secularism. This form of secularism makes accommodation for religion in the South African public sphere.

According to guests on the show, despite the freedom of religion of Muslim women being enshrined in the constitution the implementation of said religious freedom is questionable as many Muslim girls face discrimination at school based on the fact that they are not allowed to wear *hijāb* at school or the fact that their presence at school while wearing *hijāb* is being contested (*An Nur The Light*, 2017, Season 11, Episode 38). I would argue that it is important to look at the timeline of community development of Islam and Muslims within the context of South Africa. The community empowerment initiatives were not always openly accepted in this society. This may be read as means of redress of the damage of colonialism and apartheid against Muslims in South Africa (for a timeline of Muslim history from slavery to post-apartheid see Baderoon, 2014).

This may indicate that the identity that Muslims in South Africa have crafted of resistance against oppression was shaped through the tumultuous history that South Africans faced during apartheid as well as the after effects of apartheid that are still floating through democratic South African society. Furthermore, the predominantly negative representations of Islam and Muslims that stem from the Global North may fuel Muslims to continue resisting the homogenous societal ideals

that some officials propose (Mahmut, 2019; Rahman and Emadi, 2018; Bashri, 2018). Through the perpetuation of homogenous society narratives in countries such as Britain and the United States of America it is evident that Muslims as well as minorities have become targets of policies because their multiculturalism is perceived to be a threat (Beydoun, 2018; Sutkute, 2019). Policies that target Muslims who visibly display their religiosity in society have also targeted individuals who appear to be Muslim because of ignorance toward multicultural identities (Singh, 2020; Weng and Mansouri, 2021). Similar to South Africa, China also has a minority population group of Muslims who reside in the country, however, that is where the similarities between South African and Uyghur Muslims end. Where Muslims in South Africa have religious freedom as a minority group, the Uyghur Muslims are contained within concentration camps as punishment for displaying religious symbolism or any form of religiosity in public (Mahmut, 2019).

Guests constantly discussed their lived realities in relation to their spirituality. This indicates that even though the aim of the programme was to be a faith-specific programme that provided space for South African Muslims to showcase their lived realities Muslims in South Africa nevertheless shape their lived realities around their spirituality. This indicates that even though the programme producer and the SABC policy might not have intended for this to be a theological programme the guests on the programme brought their own interpretations of their lived realities that were shaped around their belief in the Divine and wanting to live according to the Qurʾān and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) that they brought an air of theological conviction to the programme.

Speech instances of guests were framed around morality when they spoke of the Divine because guests on the programme align goodness in their lives with behaviour that is in accordance with traditional Islamic values as espoused in the Qurʾān and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammed (PBUH). It appears that the purpose of the morality frame is to place the topic, issue, or featured event in the episode in the context of Islamic moral prescriptions or tenets. In the episodes that dealt with ordinary citizens who shared their lived realities, rather than religious leaders, the

guests used morality framing to reshape stereotypical, negative narratives about Islam and Muslims that are perpetuated through mass media.

Furthermore, guests shared the success stories as well as the struggles that shaped their lived realities. This is a framing technique that is used in mediated representations to exaggerate as well as personalise the story of the guests on the programme (Höpflinger, Lavanchy and Dahinden, 2012). The aim of this technique is to captivate the interests of the target audience. According to a guest on the show "it is important to differentiate between the teachings of Islam and stereotypical societal narratives" (*An Nur The Light*, 2015, Season 9, Episode 22) because Islam has been reduced to a tradition of violence and oppression. Furthermore, many guests indicated that Muslims were constantly faced with rectifying misperceptions about Islam (*An Nur The Light*, 2015, Season 9, Episode 22). Existing literature has indicated that through mass media's insistence on disseminating negative imagery of Islam and Muslims even people who have never met a Muslim are inherently afraid of the perceived threat that Islam and Muslims pose to the safety and freedom of people (Weng and Mansouri, 2021).

The predominant race that is depicted on *An Nur The Light* are light skinned Muslims who identify as either Indian or the racial identity of Cape Malay that stems from the apartheid era. Across the five seasons that compose the sample of *An Nur The Light* for this dissertation there have been two presenters. The first is Zahrah Robinson a coloured Muslim woman who was the presenter of Season twelve. The main presenter of the programme is a Black woman, Mariam Mkwanda. She was the presenter of Season nine, ten, eleven and thirteen. Mkwanda being a Black woman and the face of the only Islamic magazine show is significant because Black Muslim women have always been relegated to sub-par positions within society.

According to Cassim (2017) racial, ethnic and religious identities intersect in multiple ways and has resulted in a variety of religious experiences in South Africa. The identities of Black African Muslims have been shaped throughout history and continue to be shaped as a "mistaken 'other' of the Muslim community" (Sitoto, 2018).

This is evident because existing literature either completely excludes the lived realities of Black African Muslims when Islam and Muslims are discussed, frame the identity of Black African Muslims in terms of stereotypes regarding conversion, or as has been seen in literature (Weng and Mansouri, 2021). Given the legacy of apartheid in South Africa, and the history of the SABC as the vehicle through which the apartheid government disseminated their mission statement having a Black Muslim woman as the face of *An Nur The Light* is a positive stride in the direction of nation building through implementation of policy reform (Scharnick-Udemans, 2018c).

Women of colour are predominantly targeted through misogynistic discourse in society, which is sustained in society through stereotypes (Gansen and Martin, 2018). Furthermore, in general women are discriminated against (Scarborough, 2018; Gansen and Martin, 2018). Having a Black Muslim woman as the face of a programme is few and far between. Perhaps this could indicate that South Africa is moving towards a more inclusive approach within society. This likely indicates that the producer of the programme is attempting to showcase the diversity that is prevalent in the country through their programme (Coleman and Ross, 2010).

Historically women have been represented as being the weaker gender within society (Coleman and Ross, 2010; Baderoon, 2014). However, through women embodying the leadership roles of presenters of the only Islamic programme on the SABC Muslim women are moving out of the shadows and staking their claim in the public domain. The great importance placed on community empowerment initiatives by guests on the programme may be indicative of Muslims contributing toward initiatives aimed at redressing inequality which Muslims experience in society. Through initiatives shaped around the theme of empowerment guests such as Dr Kulsum Jhetam who pioneered a breast cancer awareness campaign at a clinic in a town in Limpopo known as Mokopane, highlights the stigma that is associated with women's bodies (*An Nur The Light*, 2015, Season 9, Episode 39). She is an Indian-Muslim South African doctor who wishes to break the barriers between healthcare and women's rights. Furthermore, another guest on the show Rabia Cassim indicates that discrimination because of being a woman in society is expected. She shared that

women in unconventional occupations face those stereotypes and many more, however, it is possible for women to move past these stereotypes by being competent in the position that you hold.

When Muslims or minorities work to dispel stereotypes then a new stereotype is actually reproduced, a model minority. Media representations of Muslims and minorities may be characterised as cultural texts. Therefore, the media representations carry ideological meanings in terms of the model minority stereotype (Paek and Shah, 2003). Moreover, model minority representations are problematic because the entrenched stereotypes may be framed to perpetuate positive characteristics of minority groups, but it results in the shaming of minority groups for not achieving similar degrees of success. Moreover, model minority framing erases significant differences of various Muslims and all minority groups are framed as being the same (Paek and Shah, 2003). An ideology may be understood as "a system of beliefs that blend various discourses to reinforce and reproduce assumptions about individuals" (Paek and Shah, 2003, p.227).

Guests indicated that they had to face many challenges in society because stereotypes are framed regarding Muslims and their capabilities as well as freedoms in society. Furthermore, a number of guests on the programme indicated that stereotypical representations of Islam and Muslims permeated media narratives and impacted upon their lived realities as Muslims in South Africa. One such discussion took place in the Style Segment of Season nine, Episode forty-nine. The segment started off with two women from Port Elizabeth, a seaside city in South Africa, who took turns discussing what style meant to them. The segment then cut to Wazeerud-Deen Lillah, also from Port-Elizabeth, who indicated that he used his clothing and visibly represents how proud he is to identify as a Muslim. He indicated that "lots of media and propaganda are sending out the wrong message regarding Muslims and Islam" (*An Nur The Light,* 2015, Season 9, Episode 49). This is similar to the findings of Weng and Mansouri (2021), Rahman (2020), Singh (2020), and Beydoun (2018) whereby they indicate that mass media as well as news media had consistently reported on Islam and Muslims in negative ways. These negative representations have impacted upon the quality of life of Muslims in the Global North. Moreover, Muslims from the Global North are in majority of the studies indicated as being unable to

integrate into society because of the manners in which society has alienated Islam and Muslims (Posetti, 2010; De Rooij, 2017; Wigger, 2019). The negative representations perpetuate the dominant societal discourse regarding Islam and Muslims being a threat to freedom. On the contrary *An Nur The Light* challenges these stereotypical representations through providing a platform for Muslims to share their lived-realities.

Islamophobia as Microaggression

Beydoun (2018) in his book *American Islamophobia* indicated that scholarship has identified the Islamic faith as an ideology which is at odds with American societal values. Islamophobia may be understood as "a system that redeploys stereotypes of Muslims deeply rooted in the collective American imagination and endorsed by formative case law, foundational policy on immigration and citizenship, and the writings and rhetoric of this nation's founding fathers" (Beydoun 2018, p.18). Islamophobia is an old system that has been articulated in contemporary society to brand Muslims as "inherently suspicious and unassimilable" and this has resulted in Islam as being cast as "rival ideology at odds with American values, society and national identity" (Beydoun 2018, p.18). From this one is able to argue that Islam is labelled as other and ostracised in society because it is different from that which America has attempted for years to perpetuate as being the ideal in their society.

Thus, defining Islamophobia is not as simple as stating that Islamophobia strictly targets Muslims. Rather, one has to make allowance in the conceptualisation of Islamophobia for the fact that Islamophobes fear anyone from Southeast Asia, Middle East or Central Asia for the difference which they represent. According to Beydoun (2018) Islamophobia resembles racism. However, Islamophobia is not simply racism, rather it is a multi-hatred driven discourse blended with particular visions of the socio-political issues of a particular context to form a super weapon used to marginalize, alienate and other Muslims. Abbas (2020) conceptualises Islamophobia as structural and cultural racism that negatively impacts the assimilability of certain population groups into society and into economic integrity.

These forms of racism targets Muslims, whether they are minorities, majorities, or refugees. For example, through media claims Muslim migrant men in Germany have been framed as violent sex offenders. This framing is racist as it casts refugee Muslim men, a minority group, in Germany as the sole cause for sexual assault in the country. The focus is removed from the blatant sexism against women which exists in that society and therefore failed to conceptualise this as an issue that is societal (Wigger, 2019). Similarly, in the New Zealand media sphere it has been shown that journalists predominantly lacked knowledge regarding Islam and Muslims and the negative narratives that are disseminated through mass media is a mindless action. Muslims are depicted as faceless figures who wreak havoc in the societies where they settle. Through this narrative it is evident that New Zealand media had a general negative attitude toward Islam and Muslims.

One cannot merely discuss Islamophobia on a surface level and dismiss the various elements with which this convoluted system of racism and oppression converges. These other forms of hate include and are not limited to sexism, homophobia, and xenophobia. The main enemy of Islamophobia are religiously pluralistic societies because targeted attacks are meted at individuals and groups of individuals who do not assimilate into society by leaving their identity and customs at the border (De Rooij, 2017; Rahman and Emadi, 2018).

Existing literature from the Global North has shown that Islam and Muslims were predominantly negatively framed within news media representations. The language used when discussing Islam and Muslims created an *us* (insiders) and *them* (outsiders) dichotomy that was used to frame the religion of Islam as a threat to safety and security of citizens as they would force the religion of Islam onto unwilling population groups (Jakku, 2018; Beydoun, 2018; Sutkute, 2019). Contrary to these representations Islam and Muslims on *An Nur the Light* are depicted as a peaceful religion, and peaceful, kind people who care for the empowerment of the marginalised communities within South Africa, respectively (*An Nur The Light*, Season 9, Season 10, Season 11, Season 12, Season 13).

A guest on *An Nur The Light,* Mohamed Bhabha, was quite vocal regarding the rights that South African Muslims experience. His speech instance was discussed in the beginning of this chapter and may be interpreted to mean that the microaggressions that are aimed at South African Muslims in society are being overlooked in favour of the various rights and freedoms that Muslims are experiencing (*An Nur The Light,* 2016, Season 10, Episode 9). According to Bhabha he is grateful to be a Muslims living in South Africa because Muslims are afforded much more religious freedom, even though some aspects of their religiosity may be contested in the public sphere. This may be indicative of a covert Islamophobia that is operant in South African society. What I mean by this is that microaggressions are an expression of Islamophobia within South African society. As discussed previously Islamophobia is an extreme form of prejudice that is aimed at Islam and Muslims. Microaggressions are a form of prejudice that has occurred so frequently that it has become a societal norm that is challenging to identify.

Despite the microaggression one might see reported in media, both news and social media, *An Nur The Light* is actively working to dispose of these representations. As mentioned in chapter one, Daniel Kaplin's (2017) six types of microaggressions that are directed toward Muslim communities include 1) Endorsing religious stereotypes, 2) The exoticisation of religious minority faith, 3) Pathologizing marginalized religious groups, 4) Assuming one's own religious identity is the norm, 5) Assuming religious homogeneity, and 6) Denying religious prejudice.

Endorsing religious stereotypes results in discriminatory behaviour toward Muslims. Existing literature has shown that stereotypes that were directed at Muslims include that the population group are excessively religious, that Muslims are a threat to secular society, and that Muslims detached from the society that they have migrated to (Kaplin, 2017). A stereotype I would like to add to this based on my readings of existing literature as well as what was mentioned previously is that Muslims are framed as if they are always refugees or migrants in America or Europe. Media tends to stay away from reporting on second, third, and so forth generation Muslims in American (Beydoun, 2018) and British (De Rooij, 2017) societies. Media organisations perpetuate stereotypes that Muslims in the Global North are migrants and refugees. The perpetuation of this stereotype results in the exclusion of narratives by for

instance first, second, or third generation Muslim Americans or British Muslims. This translates into the perpetuation of stereotypes such as Muslims are unable to assimilate into society and that Muslims in the Global North are not endemic to a geographical population other than Asia or the Arabian Peninsula (Mythen, Walklate and Khan, 2009; Beydooun, 2018). Given the representations of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light* and their discussions regarding how Islam and Muslims are inherently part of the fabric of South African society it is evident that the lived realities of Islam and Muslims as well as the media representations of Islam and Muslim in the country are contrary to those in the context of the Global North.

The exoticisation of religious minority faiths occurs when people who identify as part of a minority faith are repeatedly 'othered' in media representations because media representations depict the beliefs and practices of minority faiths as bizarre and out of place in the public sphere (Posetti, 2010; Rahman and Emadi, 2018; Beydoun, 2018; Nisar and Bleich, 2020). It is normal for people to be curious about a religious faith, especially a minority faith they are not a part of. However, excessive questions regarding people's beliefs and practices results in the beliefs and practices of the religious group becoming framed as the 'other' in society. Often this results in religious minorities being depicted in news media as unsuitable for inclusion in the public sphere surrounding that community (Kaplin, 2017). Moreover, the hyper fixation on *hijāb* within mass media results in perpetuating stereotypes that Muslim women who wear *hijāb* are different and do not fit into society (Bashri, 2018). Contrary to the insults of stereotypical framing of minorities such as Muslims in media representations of the Global North, *An Nur The Light* represents an insider perspective of Islam that is visible for anyone to see, engage, and learn about Islam. Moreover, majority of the Muslim women who appear as guests on *An Nur The Light* wear hijāb yet the focus is not on the *hijāb* they are wearing, but the success they have attained thus far in their lives. This may be read as an indication that Muslim women are integrated in South African society and when women choose to wear *hijāb* it is not seen as a foreign practice, but rather a norm in South African society regardless of the fact that it has been contested in certain spheres of South African society (Scharnick-Udemans, 2020; *An Nur The Light*, 2017, Season 11, Episode 38).

Pathologizing marginalized religious groups as a microaggression has been characterised as implying that the actions of a certain minority religious group is immoral and even implying that the beliefs and practices of a religious minority are wrong (Kaplin, 2017). The popularly circulated idea that Islam is a backward religion with too many rules could be considered a microaggression that fits into this category (Ahmed and Matthes, 2017; Rahman and Emadi, 2018; Kurniawan, 2020). The pedagogical framing of *An Nur The Light* suggests that the SABC is contesting its own Christonormative inclinations and in some ways the Christonormative culture of South Africa.

Assuming one's own religious identity is the norm is a microaggression that disseminates the message that religious minorities are inferior. Moreover, in South Africa the religious majority are people who identify as Christian and therefore many people could assume that the people they interact with in society who are not visibly displaying their religiosity are Christian (Schoeman, 2017). Christianity is therefore a pervasive religious identity in society and Christian privilege is amplified within the public sphere. This is prevalent in societies where Christian holidays are celebrated and leave is granted in order to celebrate those days, yet Eid or other Muslims holiday celebrations are not granted time off for and these are all indications of microaggressions through expressions of Christian privilege (Ferber, 2012). Furthermore, negating Muslim traditions implies that any traditions that are not related to Christian tradition are seen as unimportant. This suggests that Islam and Muslims in the context of South Africa are attempting to respond to the microaggressions which they have faced through the disregard afforded to Muslim religious holidays by acknowledging a Christian religious holiday.

Moreover, out-groups are assumed to have religious homogeneity in terms of their beliefs. This presupposed the notion that all Muslims practice Islam in exactly the same manner. This is a misrepresentation of Islam and undermines the agency of members of the Muslim community. It is a misrepresentation as well as a misperception because members of the Muslim community are from different sects but even within in the same sect there are different expressions of religious identity, expression and belief (Kaplin, 2017). The perpetuation of the narrative that all religious practices and beliefs of Islam and Muslims are the same is an invalidation of

the multifaceted character of Islam and Muslims globally (Kaplin, 2017). Through the presence of *An Nur The Light* on public broadcast television it is illustrating that the beliefs and practices of Muslims are not as homogenous as existing literature is attempting to depict (Weng and Mansouri, 2021; Singh, 2020; Rahman and Emadi, 2018). The programme is predominantly Sunni, and as mentioned earlier a lack of Black African Muslim representation is prevalent throughout the show.

Denying religious prejudice entails the invalidation of the experiences of religious minorities as 'random' when members of religious minorities indicate that they have been disproportionately discriminated against. Many people will continue to deny that they have prejudice beliefs or exhibit behaviour that is shaped through prejudice beliefs towards religious minorities (Ferber, 2012). There are these microaggressions in society and *An Nur The Light* is working to contest that. This is evident throughout *An Nur The Light* because guests rarely discussed their racial identity, but were people of colour who indicated that they experienced greater levels of freedom in South Africa than their counterparts in Australia, America or Europe (Beydoun, 2018; Singh, 2020; Weng and Mansouri, 2021).

For each of these microaggressions *An Nur The Light* contests violent images of Islam and Muslims through showcasing Muslims who share their lived realities and the freedom and rights that they experience in South Africa. Although the guests are not actively comparing their lived realities to those of Muslims in the global context based on the existing literature that was analysed and discussed in chapter two, the contrast is quite stark.

Gender, Race and Media

In this study guests on *An Nur The Light* presented gender in terms of gender disparities that exist in society and impact upon the lived realities of women and men, especially women belonging to minority groups (Capodilupo, 2010; Ghauri and Umber, 2019). This has been shown within existing literature in which Muslim women

have been negatively framed within new media because they are easily identifiable through their *hijāb* in public.

Furthermore, Sikh men have also been the victims of hate crimes that were supposedly targeted at Muslim men (Singh, 2020). The manner in which Muslims have been discriminated against within news media is an indication of a shift in their identity representations from a cultural identity to a racialized identity (Meer and Modood, 2009). Racialised Muslim identity is apparent in countries where an Orientalist framing of 'us' versus 'Muslims' is used overtly in mass media discussions and representations of Islam and Muslims. Moreover, through this dichotomous representation the global Muslim population's identity has been perpetuated as being a singular, homogenous, identity that could be generalised to all populations. One could argue this is model minority representation. Model minority representations are problematic because the beliefs of all Muslims are essentialised under a singular static ideology that has been crafted in mass media as having an innately violent nature (Mahmut, 2019).

The ability of repetitive, negative representations of Muslims in news media to restructure the public identity of Muslims as racialised is indicative of asymmetrical systems of power in operation (Curran and Hesmondhalgh, 2019).

This section is structured in terms of four sub-categories namely,

1) appearance that includes manners in which guests discuss their style on *An Nur The Light*,

2) empowerment that includes initiatives of nation building which are apparent through guests speech instances,

3) breaking barriers includes representations that counter negative stereotypical media representations from the Global North.

4) contested spaces whereby the complaints against noise instances of the call to prayer and other disputes regarding the presence of Muslimness are extracted from the speech instances of guests.

Appearance

The guests on the Style Segment of *An Nur The Light* extensively discuss the appearance of Muslims in the public sphere. The public sphere has been characterised as a social configuration where interaction among different people take place and various types of relationships develop (Coleman and Ross, 2010). In the digital age we live in the public sphere that also encompasses representations and discussions that occur within digital spheres such as social media platforms.

The guests who featured on Style Segment of *An Nur The Light* were passionate about looking stylish yet at the same time maintaining their Muslim identity. For instance, Uzair Bulbulia, a guest on the style segment of the programme indicated that modest fashion has been making an appearance within the fashion industry and this makes it easier for him to be both fashionable and adhere to the principles of Islamic dress practices. He indicated that rolling one's pants to above the ankle has become a modern fashion trend and describes this as significant as it allows him to "keep up with the evident trends as well as adhere to the sunnah" (*An Nur The Light*, 2017, Season 11, Episode 8). This dress practice being identified as a trend in the fashion industry by Bulbulia indicates that it is a socially acceptable practice to be participating in. Bulbulia appears to be well integrated within South African society as a Muslim. The integration of Muslims into a society where they are minorities is unusual as minority Muslims have been shown in literature to be ostracised from society when visibly displaying their Muslim identities in public (Weng and Mansouri, 2021; Beydoun, 2018; Wing Sue, 2010).

The ways that Bulbulia explained his Islamic dress practices aligns with the mediatisation of religion theory. For instance, when one considers that the practice of a man wearing his pants above his ankles is in line with the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) then one realises that at the level of social interaction the dress practices of Muslims that are contested in societies within the Global North has become a way for Muslims and non-Muslims to share a common dress practice and not be ridiculed for it. Furthermore, this dress practice that was discussed by the guest on *An Nur The Light* is considered a modest way of dressing for men. This representation of dress practice is contrary to the manner in which dress practices are discussed in news media when it comes to Muslims. Typically the dress practices of Muslim women are referred to as modest and also the dress practices of Muslim women is focussed on the most in media (Moghadam and Mitra, 2014; Rahman, 2020).

There have been prior discussions regarding the notion that Islamic dress practices are restrictive, that it offers no sense of individuality. However, from the information that the guests have shared one could argue that acculturation is one of the main results of negative media representations. Furthermore, in modern society there have been various campaigns that are attempting to force Muslims and other minorities to acculturate to modern dress practices. This may be read as an indication that one is only deemed appropriate, accepted and welcome once one does not display visible signs of religiosity through ones dress practices. Spreading information that perpetuates negative media framing of people wearing religious clothing fuels hate crimes in cyberspace against people wearing visibly religious apparel. However, guests on *An Nur The Light* through discussions of Islamic attire and mentioning that this clothing is comfortable, that they experience positive feelings when wearing the clothes are contrary narratives to those that attempt to disseminate Islamic and modest dress practices in Islam as being oppressive.

Through the information shared by guests on *An Nur The Light* it is evident that majority of the time non-Muslim citizens in South Africa are not openly hostile towards the presence of Muslims in society, nor of the religious expressions of Muslim

people be it in their clothing, dress, rituals or prayer (*An Nur The Light*, Season 9, Season 10, Season 11, Season 12, Season 13). Be it internationally (Beydoun, 2018; Koo, 2018) or in the South African context (Baderoon, 2014; Muthal, 2010) media the representations of Muslims disseminated into the public sphere tend to feature dichotomies that perpetuate discrimination and hegemony in society. Islam and Muslims have frequently been framed in terms of three themes within existing literature of media representations of Islam and Muslims. This is indicative of homogenous framing. Examples of such paradoxes include 1) fundamentalist (enemy) or oppressed (victim); 2) veiled women or violent men; and 3) backward thinking oppressor. These representations tend to focus only on caricatures of Islam (Said, 1987; Mythen, Walklate and Khan, 2009; Ahmed and Matthes, 2017; Beydoun, 2018; Wigger, 2019; Demarest *et al.*, 2020; Nisar and Bleich, 2020; Weng and Mansouri, 2021). This is contrary to the South African context because in many cases literature indicate established Muslim communities exist and Muslims are a pivotal point of contact in many institutions, businesses and even service centres (Boomberg, 2016). Yasira Saley, a guest on the show, indicated that she has always wanted to wear *hijāb* because the women she encountered as she was growing up wore *hijāb* in unique ways and she wanted to be as fashionable as those ladies. Existing literature has indicated that Muslim women are not only ridiculed because of their choice to wear *hijāb* in public, but they are also at risk of being physically harmed or even fatally harmed as in the case of the dental student who was murdered by a white supremacist because she was *hijāb* wearing Muslim (Jakku, 2018; Beydoun, 2018).

Moreover, the media employs hegemonic representation models when portraying visibly Muslim women (Muthal, 2010; Beydoun, 2018; Rahman and Emadi, 2018). I argue that by focussing on one singular aesthetic element in the representations of Muslim women in media these women in their entirety are ignored in order to develop an agenda fuelled narrative that serves the purpose of a specific group of people. Thus, I term this the missed representation of Muslim women because by focussing on a particular aesthetic element of the Muslim woman so much more of which she is comprised was missed in the process.

These representations may be factual, or rumours used to alienate migrant Muslims from the society that they are attempting to assimilate into. Muslim women are one of the few groups that embody both highly visible yet decidedly invisible positions in mainstream media. This fuels the incentive for media houses to profit from this highly contested topic. Headlines containing keywords 'Muslims,' 'Islam,' or any other keywords relating to the religion, or its people result in greater profit margins for media institutions (Posetti, 2010). Furthermore, Posetti argues that mainstream media depicts Muslim women as shy, timid, having no agency and as subordinate to Muslim men. This misrepresentation of Muslim women results in mainstream media's hypersexualised imagery of Muslim women succeeding in mainstream media and when this image is not what society experiences Muslim women are marginalised and ostracised. Regardless of this difference, international and South African literature both indicate mainstream journalism assigned the label of 'oppressed' to Muslim women because they wear *hijāb*. Both contexts illustrate that there are multiple instances where Muslims are spoken for, at, and about yet their own voices never come through in the narratives (Mythen, Walklate and Khan, 2009; Baderoon, 2014).

Furthermore, media fixation on the imposing male body permeates media representations when it comes to Muslim men. Beydoun (2018) speaks to media narratives of Muslim men being perpetuated as having characteristic dark skin, donning a turban and being of Arab ethnicity. This is a misrepresentation of Muslims, and Muslim men in general, because Muslims are dispersed across many continents such as Europe (Mythen, Walklate and Khan, 2009; Wigger, 2019), America (Beydoun, 2018), Australia (Weng and Mansouri, 2021) as well as Africa (Cordeiro-Rodrigues, 2021). The ethnicity of Muslims are therefore not restricted to one geographical area. The fixation of media representations on misrepresenting Muslim men results in Muslim women being misrepresented. Furthermore, the racialisation of migrant Muslim men as sexual deviants perpetuate stereotypical representations of Muslim men as violent and oppressive towards women. Moreover, it could be translated into the 'violent male narrative' which media has reared its head in *American Islamophobia* (Beydoun, 2018). This violent male narrative feeds into

stereotypical misrepresentations of Muslim men that in turn perpetuates narratives of discrimination and hegemony.

Media and propaganda are at play within the dissemination of representations of Islam and Muslims in the Global North because the representations have been predominantly negative (Moghadam and Mitra, 2014; Wigger, 2019). In the Global South, here I refer to South Africa in particular, media representations of Islam and Muslims are attempting to counter stereotypical narratives by bringing in the voices of Muslims to showcase their own narratives. This is contrary to the news coverage of Islam and Muslims that predominantly speak at, to, and of Muslims, but never feature the voices of Muslims. It is only recently that media coverage has begun to shift from demonising and alienating Islam and Muslims to discussions that feature Muslims and the injustices that they face in society. Moreover, to refer to a guest discussed earlier in this section, representation of dress practices by Bulbulia on *An Nur The Light* is indicative of the show being a platform on which guests can share their interpretations of acceptable dress practices that are aligned to their lived realities in South Africa (*An Nur The Light*, 2017, Season 11, Episode 8). News and film media exhibit a tendency of circulating images of Muslim men that depict aggressive masculinity and violence. This indicates that media representations of Muslim men in the Global North are laden with stereotypical and 'othering' narratives. Moreover, there is not much South African scholarship that focusses on media representations of Muslim men. Scholarship in South Africa also reproduces representations of Muslim women around the Global North's fixation on *hijāb*.

Empowerment

Empowerment in terms of community upliftment is also a discussion framed around Muslim women on *An Nur The Light*. From the representations of Islam and Muslims which have been shared by guests on *An Nur The Light* it is evident that Muslims are included in the South African society. However, as scholarship shows the system is still rigged against minorities, especially women who fall into categories aligned to

minorities, whether that be ethnically or religiously. The misalignment of the minorities within society may be read as an indication of the unequal power dynamics which are at play in South African society (Coleman and Ross, 2010).

The feature of women on the style segment of *An Nur The Light* was a more frequent experience than men. This could be as a result of the style segment being focussed on fashion and Muslim women's dress practices aligning to the mission and vision of this Segment. Moreover, the appearance of Muslim women within this segment could also be aligned with a countering as well as resisting the stereotypical narratives and representations of Muslim women as oppressed because Muslim women wear *hijāb*. Dress practices of Muslim women seems to be the most controversial topic relating to Muslim women within existing literature (Baderoon, 2014; Bashri, 2018).

This could perhaps be interpreted as model minority representation. Moreover, perhaps the acceptance of the model minority representations of Muslims assists the general public to accept that Muslims are non-threatening and can integrate into society (Rahman, 2020). Furthermore, model minority representations may seem unproblematic as it advocates for "positive qualities which are supposedly unique" to Muslims (Paek and Shah, 2003). However, model minority representations are a form of stereotype that imbeds racial ideology into representations and inaccurately suggests that all Muslims conform to norms of being able to cook delicious food because they are Muslim and dress in colourful clothing (Baderoon, 2014). Instead of empowering Muslims, model minority representations actually alienate Muslims further from society.

Furthermore, rather than 'othering' Muslim women because of their dress practices perhaps the focus should be as Bashri (2018) indicated on the contributions which the Muslim women have made to society rather than categorising Muslim women in relation to *hijāb*. Muslimness of Muslim women have been expressed in various ways throughout *An Nur The Light* and contesting media representations of Muslim women in terms of dress practices are, but one example. The disputes against

Muslim women in public spaces as well as spaces of worship has been opposed by Muslim women on the programme. The findings of this project the An Nur The Light show have also indicated that dress practices for Muslim women are more discussed than the dress practices of Muslim men. This follows that Muslim men, especially in South Africa blend into society easier than Muslim women.

Furthermore, guests also discussed breaking barriers as an expression of empowerment. One of the guests who was framed on *An Nur The Light* as someone who defied stereotypical representations is Qudsia Mall is the founder of a surfing company in Durban called Nomadic Spirit. The initial impression one would have of Qudsia Mall is that of a Muslim woman who wears *hijāb* in a public space where she is surrounded by other who as per the societal norm in South Africa does not wear the headscarf. However, when one listens to Mall speak and one takes note of the content of her speech one realises that Mall is "someone who is breaking boundaries and observing hijāb at the same time," rather than being oppressed because she is a Muslims woman (*An Nur the Light*, 2018, Season 12, Episode 10). Qudsia Mall is depicted as a multi-faceted woman in society who embodies and embraces the roles of wife, mother, and business owner.

Furthermore, Mall shared that her mother was "totally against" her pursuing surfing as a sport (*An Nur the Light*, 2018, Season 12, Episode 10). This could be read as her mother ascribing to normative gender roles within the community in which she lives and within the cultural community she resides (Ahmed and Matthes, 2017). Moreover, Mall was hailed as an individual who is not only breaking barriers of access for Muslim women in society she is also doing it while observing Islamically aligned dress practices. The representations of women on this programme as multi-faceted are a shift in narrative from the news media representations of Islam and Muslims from homogenous to the actual lived realities of being heterogenous people. *An Nur the Light* represents women in a positive light. This is different from majority of the representations prevalent in the field of Islam and media. She has faced much adversity because she is a woman who is actively pursuing her hobbies and passions in the public sphere.

Contested Spaces

The sub theme contested spaces discuss the ways that the presence of Islam and Muslims are disputed within the public sphere in South Africa. The complaints take the form of discrimination against Muslim women by Muslim men, complaints against the call to prayer, and opposition against *hijāb* being worn in everyday situations such as school.

A guest on *An Nur The Light* indicated that mosques hold special significance to Muslims because they are spaces linked to spirituality. However, these spaces of worship have been contested in society. Moreover, guests have indicated that mosques are contested spaces by society as well as spaces wherein the presence of women are problematised. For instance, Sa-diyya Sheikh from the University of Cape Town was a guest on *An Nur The Light* and indicated that a "woman's place is the same as that of the man at the mosque and that women have the right to occupy the same spaces of worship as men (*An Nur The Light*, 2015, Season 9, Episode 22).

The Zeenatul Islam Mosque in District Six, Cape Town, has sounded the call to prayer for more than a century (See Scharnick-Udemans, 2019b). The mosque issue is not only an internal affair or about women, but it is also encapsulates public perception. During the Holy Month of *Ramadan* a resident living adjacent to a District Six mosque filed a noise complaint against the mosque with the City of Cape Town (*An Nur The Light*, 2019, Season 13, Episode 13). The guests on the programme indicated that "our mosques are the centre of our communities" and is the glue that holds communities together (*An Nur The Light*, 2017, Season 11, Episode 10). Community was also discussed by guests on *An Nur The Light* as a means through which the religion of Islam is upheld in South African society.

In Episode thirteen of Season thirteen the discussion regarding the call to prayer being characterised as a noise nuisance was brought up in the speech instances

of guests. When using the example of mosques, one notes that the significance of these places of worship have been discussed and emphasised when many guests have shared their understanding and interpretation of Islam and Muslims on the programme. Given this emphasis on the importance of Mosques in Islam and to Muslims I argue that contesting places of worship that are associated with Islam and Muslims in South Africa is an expression of microaggressions that are a representation of Islamophobia. Therefore, Islamophobia has managed to permeate South African society in a somewhat covert and atypical manner. Moreover, this indicates that Islamophobia that has been conceptualised as a violent prejudice against Islam and Muslims does not always present as physical violence against Muslim. Another example of Islamophobia that is not physically violent against Muslims in South Africa is the opposition against public displays of religiosity, such as wearing *hijāb*. Furthermore, when Muslims are ridiculed or face being harmed because they wear *hijāb,* many times the Muslim women are forced to remove their *hijāb* and acculturate to the dominant societal practices of not visibly displaying their religiosity through their dress practices. This is done in hopes that they would be allowed to peacefully assimilate within Global North societies when their differences are not as visibly displayed through their dress practices (Rahman and Emadi, 2018).

Contrary to the negative representations of Muslim women that are perpetuated through news media, a guest who wears *hijāb,* Yasira Saley, indicates that she "looks up to a lot of YouTubers" whose social media feed comprises *hijāb* style inspiration (*An Nur The Light*, 2017, Season 11, Episode 16). In her speech instances Saley mentions YouTubers who are from the Global North and not South Africa. This indicates that even though news media is predominantly negative, it seems Muslims have migrated to social media as they are able to self-represent on those platforms. The representations that appear on social media are also shaped through societal pressures, however, in majority cases social media content creators are able to decide what to post on their feeds.

Conclusion

The objective of this chapter was to answer the third research question of this dissertation. This chapter was structured similarly to the previous chapter as it comprised two parts. The first part was a discussion of the role of the SABC in the representation of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light*. It was found that the role of the SABC in the representations of Islam and Muslims in South Africa was to provide a platform, *An Nur The Light*, whereby Muslims could counter stereotypically negative media representations of Islam and Muslims that permeated South African media from the Global North.

The second part of this chapter was a critical discourse analysis of the speech instances of the guests on *An Nur The Light*. This part of the chapter was structured in terms of two main headings. The first heading was Muslims, media and marginalisation. This section was discussed using two categories namely, 1) religious rights and freedom, and 2) Islamophobia as microaggression. A main finding under the first heading was that Islamophobia exists in South Africa and is an expression of microaggressions targeting religiosity in the public sphere. Even though microaggressions took the form of complaints against women having space in mosques, complaints against the call to prayer, and opposition against women wearing *hijāb* in public. Nevertheless, through programming such as *An Nur The Light,* religious and various types of microaggressions may be contested.

The second heading was gender, media and race. This section was discussed in four categories namely, 1) appearance, 2) empowerment, 3) breaking barriers, and 4) contested spaces. A finding from this section was that *An Nur The Light* showcased predominantly positive representations of Islam and Muslims. This is contrary to the media representations that are prevalent within the context of the Global North, which is good. However, this is also problematic because in trying to counter one stereotype another was reproduced, namely, model minority representations. This stereotype is problematic as it results in homogenous representations of Islam and Muslims, as well as other minority groups. Another finding was that representations of women on *An Nur The Light* were multi-faceted and was a shift in narrative from news media representations of Islam and Muslims that perpetuated homogenous representations.

Moreover, *An Nur the Light* represented women in a positive light. This was different from the stereotypically negative representations that are prevalent in media representations of Islam and Muslims.

In chapter six, the conclusion, I offer a summary of the whole dissertation as well as discuss the possibilities for future research.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

This dissertation used a mediatisation of religion lens to study representations of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light*. Three research questions defined this study:

1) What is the SABC's role in the representation of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light*?

2) How are Islam and Muslims represented on *An Nur The Light*?

3) Why are representations of Islam and Muslims constructed in these ways?

The first two research questions were answered using a thematic analysis, and the third research question was answered using a critical discourse analysis. Furthermore, the three corresponding research objectives were espoused:

1) To describe the SABC's approach to Islam and Muslims.
2) To explore the representations of Islam and Muslims on the *An Nur The Light* programme.
3) To theorise how Islam and Muslims are depicted on *An Nur The Light*.

In chapter one of this dissertation the historical context and background of the study was provided. Within this chapter the concept of religious microaggressions was introduced and characterised by drawing on the work of Kaplin (2017). An explanation of the research context, of *An Nur The Light*, followed. The research questions and

objectives were presented in this chapter. Furthermore, an extrapolation of the mediatised representations of Islam and Muslims in South Africa was provided. A review of studies of mediatised representations of Islam and Muslims in South Africa were used to problematised global representations of Islam and Muslims because, local studies of the media representations of Islam in South Africa indicated that Muslims are able to integrate into society. In conclusion I offered a reflection on my positionality and reflexivity within this study.

Chapter two was the presentation and analysis of existing literature pertaining to the media representations of Islam and Muslims in the global context. Through the review of existing literature it was found that media representations of Islam and Muslims in the Global North, Asia, and Oceania were predominantly negative (Beydoun, 2018; Satkute, 2019; Weng and Mansouri, 2021). Islam and Muslims were negatively framed throughout global representations as violent, oppressive, and Muslim women were represented as oppressed because they wore *hijāb*. These global representations were contrary to the mediatised representations within South Africa, discussed in chapter one.

The third chapter was the methods and methodology chapter whereby a case study research design framed by a social constructivist research paradigm was discussed. Furthermore, purposive sampling was chosen as the sampling technique. In this chapter, thematic and critical discourse analysis was discussed in order to build an argument for the suitability of these methods of analysis for this study. Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic analysis was chosen because it could be used to categorise and sort the data I produced into themes. Additionally, Fairclough's (2002) three dimensional approach to critical discourse analysis was chosen because it provided insight into the discourses that perpetuate the media representations of Islam and Muslims in South Africa.

The fourth chapter was constructed around Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step guide to thematic analysis. The aim of the chapter was to answer the first two research questions of the study. This chapter was structured according to two parts in order to formulate a rich descriptive answer for the first two research questions. The first part

entailed a discussion of the role that the SABC played in representations of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light*. A finding was that the role of the SABC was to circulate positive stories of Islam and Muslims using *An Nur The Light* as the platform. Furthermore, the SABC also fulfilled the roles of an archive for the history of Islam and Muslims in South Africa and a site for knowledge production regarding the media representations of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light*.

The second part of this chapter comprised two themes, the first religion and the second gender. The theme of religion is characterised around the sub themes 1) countering negative media representations, 2) religious education, and 3) spirituality and faith. The major finding of the first theme was that guests on *An Nur The Light* countered dominant, Islamophobic, global media representations of Islam and Muslims that were disseminated through mass media by showcasing their lived realities on *An Nur The Light*. Furthermore, through the speech instance of the guests it was found that positive stories of Islam and Muslims were circulated on *An Nur The Light*. The counter representations were problematised because it resulted in stereotypical model minority representations. Furthermore, the theme of gender is characterised around the sub themes 1) appearance and dress code, and 2) challenges that Muslim women face in society. A finding of the second theme was that mosques in Cape Town allowed greater access for Muslim women than mosques in Johannesburg and Durban. This illustrated that even though places of worship were significant for both Muslim women and men, the spaces were still predominantly occupied by men.

The fifth chapter of this dissertation comprised two parts. The first part was a discussion of the role that the SABC played in the media representation of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light*. A finding was that the SABC embodied the role of providing a platform, *An Nur The Light*, that Muslims could use to counter stereotypically negative media representations of Islam and Muslims. The second part of the chapter was a critical discourse analysis that served to answer the third and final research question of this dissertation. This chapter comprised two headings. The first was Muslims, media and marginalisation. This was categorised through the sub-headings 1) religious rights and freedom, and 2) Islamophobia as microaggression. A finding of the first part of the critical discourse analysis was that Muslims discussed

their lived realities in relation to the religious freedoms and rights that they experienced in South Africa. Moreover, through the representations of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light* it was found that Islamophobia in South Africa exists and is an expression of microaggressions.

Moreover, findings from the sub heading religious rights and freedom indicated that South African Muslims advocated for rights and religious freedom in South Africa through their guest appearances on *An Nur The Light*. Moreover, guests through their speech instances shaped the programme into a theological programme even though the programme was meant to be less theological and more lifestyle oriented. This could indicate that the lived realities of Muslim were permeated and therefore shaped through theological, and human rights focussed aspects that govern and shaped the lived realities of Islam and Muslims in South Africa.

Another finding was that guests on the show were deeply aware of the human rights that protect their religious freedom and rights that are enshrined in the constitution. Furthermore, the guests have shown an awareness about their context as being different from that of the Global North as well as Muslims from various global contexts. This dissertation has discussed a different perspective of religion and media when it comes to media representations of Islam and Muslims. In this dissertation I have shown that the South African context illustrates an alternative narrative regarding Islam and Muslims and this is important because Muslims have been vilified for decades through global media representations and my dissertation is a contribution to the shift in narratives pertaining to media representations of Islam and Muslims.

The second heading was the gender, media and race. This was categorised through the sub-headings 1) appearance, 2) empowerment, 3) breaking barriers, 4) contested spaces. A finding from this heading was that *An Nur The Light* showcased predominantly positive representations of Islam and Muslims. However, negative views were also shared. For instance, Muslim women's presence in mosques were opposed by Muslim men, a complaint was issued against the one hundred year old call

to prayer by a member of the public, and discussions pertaining to the aversion expressed by the public regarding Muslim women and girls wearing hijāb in public was expressed through speech instances on *An Nur The Light*. These may be characterised as microaggressions because representations circulated on *An Nur The Light* were affirming of Islam and Muslims and negative representations were psychologically harmful, but not physically violent. Furthermore the positive representations of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light* may be read as contestations of microaggressions.

The positive representations of Islam and Muslims in South Africa is different to the predominantly negative narratives regarding Islam and Muslims that fulminated against public representations and religiosity of Muslims after 9/11 attacks (Mahmut, 2019; Ahmed and Matthes, 2017). However, when one contests one type of stereotypical representation one may be reproducing another. The stereotypical representation of Islam that was reproduced through the countering of media stereotypes of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light* was the result of the construction and perpetuation of model minority representations (Peuk and Shah, 2003). Model minorities representation are problematic because minority groups are reduced to homogenous palatable representations that conform to the norms of dominant groups in society. Another finding was that representations of women on *An Nur The Light* represented in a positive way and focus was placed on their multi-faceted abilities. This was a positive shift in narrative, away from the Global North news media representations that perpetuated homogenous representations of Muslim women as veiled and oppressed.

This study has shown that contrary to the framing that Muslims have all migrated from the Arab peninsula and are foreigners, that South African Muslims have their roots in the country since the involuntary movement of bodies took place during slavery. Globally Muslims have stereotypically been shown as being Arab and darker skinned people, who are mistaken for Muslims are Sikh's (Beydoun, 2018; Singh, 2020). While South African Muslims on *An Nur The Light* have been shown to be people of colour, Black Muslims have received far less attention and representation on this program.

In this chapter the five common features to critical discourse analysis was discussed. At this point in the dissertation I would like to reflect upon the fourth and fifth features. The fourth approach claims that discourse functions ideologically. When revisiting the findings of this dissertation this approach has shown that existing media representations of Islam and Muslims globally has framed this religious tradition and religious community in negative ways that have impacted on the abilities of Muslims to migrate to America and Europe negatively. The South African context is different to that of the Global North as Muslims have been part of South African history and integrated into society for five centuries. This representations of guests on the programme through their counter representations of dominant negative representations of Islam and Muslims has reproduced the stereotypical model minority representation regarding the media representations of South Africa Muslims on *An Nur The Light*.

Critical discourse analysis was chosen for this study because this approach is used to side with oppressed social groups in order to uncover discursive practices that are sustaining asymmetric systems of power within society. For instance, the social group experiencing inequality in this study was Muslims. The discursive practices that were uncovered were discourses surrounding power that sustained unequal power relations in society. For instance, the broadcasting policies of the SABC even though they are attempting to redress the injustices that non-Christian religious groups faced during apartheid, still predominantly benefit people who identify as Christian. This indicates that the broadcasting policy is one of the discourses maintaining the unequal representations of minority religious groups within South African society.

Initially, I had thought that one of my findings would be that Islamophobia is prevalent within South African society. Based on this study I am not able to support this hypothesis wholeheartedly. Representations of Muslims and Islam in the media, Islamophobia in South Africa looks different to other contexts. Based on this research project I proposed that microaggressions could be read as an expression of Islamophobia within the South African context. Moreover, I expected that modesty on

An Nur The Light would be framed in terms of Muslim women and *hijāb,* I was pleasantly surprised when findings regarding clothing practices of Muslims indicated that guests speech instances expressed modesty as not only applying to Muslim women, but also to Muslim men. This was discussed by guests on the Style Segment of *An Nur The Light*.

Through the critical analysis of lived realities of Islam and Muslims on *An Nur The Light* this project contributed to the ever-expanding field of religion and media in South Africa. As social media continues to rise in popularity and offers a platform for self-expression and audience reach that is currently under-research and under theorised in South Africa, this space offers exciting prospects for future research. This was a study of the insider lived realities whereby representations of Islam and Muslims were extracted from the speech instances and visual representations of guests on *An Nur The Light*. I am an insider in many ways because I identify as a Muslim woman and come from a similar religious and cultural background as many of the guests on *An Nur The Light* (Darwin-Holmes, 2020). The advantage I had being an insider was that I was able to understand the colloquial language that guests on *An Nur The Light* used in their expressions of speech. As an advocate for social justice, I was deeply affected by the study of representations of Islam and Muslims since the misrepresentation of this group and has caused suffering to many and represents a series of injustices that warrants not only reflection but also corrective action.

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