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(De)humanization and (Dis)trust: Representations of Muslims in UK Newspapers

Following the 7/7 London Bombings

Abstract

Dehumanization and distrust can have devastating consequences for intergroup relations. Until now, few studies have examined the ways in which both (de)humanizing and (dis)trust discourse are presented in popular media. Recognizing the detrimental effects of terrorism on intergroup attitudes and the power of media in influencing social and political attitudes, the present research examined the frequency of (de)humanizing and (dis)trustful statements in newspaper coverage of the July 7, 2005 London bombings in the aftermath and at the 10 year anniversary of the attack. Drawing from theoretical work on dehumanization, it was expected that (de)humanizing content in media coverage about a stereotyped outgroup would be linked to (dis)trust of that group, and would also be linked to political orientation of the media source. Primary analyses were conducted using an existing manual coding framework for frequency of (de)humanizing and (dis)trustful statements. Results from coding show that dehumanizing and distrusting discourse was more frequent than humanizing and trusting discourse. Whereas dehumanization was significantly correlated with distrust only in the right-wing source, humanization was significantly correlated with trust only in the left-wing source. The findings advance theoretical understandings of (de)humanization and humanization as they manifest in media discourse following a terrorist event, and how these relate to outgroup (dis)trust.

Keywords: *Dehumanization*; *intergroup trust*; *terrorism*; *Islamophobia*; *political orientation*

Public Significance Statement: An analysis of UK newspaper coverage of the 7/7 bombings in London revealed a high frequency of dehumanizing discourse about Muslims, particularly in the aftermath (compared to the 10-year anniversary). Further, results varied based on political orientation of the source, such that dehumanization of Muslims was associated with distrust in the right-wing news source, whereas humanization was associated with trust in the left-wing news source.

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Dehumanization, or perceiving another group as less than human, can have devastating consequences for intergroup relations. Evidence suggests that dehumanization is associated with support for aggressive policies and violent actions toward other groups (Kteily & Bruneau, 2017). To date, however, relatively little research has explored the manifestations and associations of the opposing process of *humanization* with intergroup outcomes. Importantly, understanding the ways in which humanization of the outgroup manifests and how it is associated with intergroup outcomes, such as trust, could provide a basis for promoting more positive relations between groups. Therefore, a thorough understanding of dehumanization may also involve a consideration of humanization.

Until now, most research on dehumanization has used experimental and survey designs to capture the correlates and impacts of dehumanization on intergroup relations. This work has substantially contributed to our understanding of dehumanization processes. Few, if any, studies, however, have examined the ways in which (de)humanization, as described by psychological theory, manifests in the public sphere and specifically in popular news. This is a significant limitation because the media are believed to have a powerful influence upon public perceptions (e.g., Donohue, 2012; Karim, 2006; Montiel & Shah, 2008; Poole, 2006) and have been linked to public understanding of key social issues and related behavioural responses (Happer & Philo, 2013). Understanding how (de)humanizing discourse appears in the public realm, therefore, is of vital importance; in particular its associations with outcomes such as outgroup trust, which is shown to have both attitudinal and behavioural consequences (Tam et al., 2009).

Addressing current gaps highlighted above, the present research examines the extent of (de)humanizing discourse and its association with (dis)trust in two popular online new sources in the aftermath and the anniversary of a significant terrorist event, the 7/7 London terrorist bombing. Here, we focus specifically on (de)humanization and (dis)trust towards Muslims, as a stereotyped religious group. Although considerable research has examined media representations of Muslims and stereotypical and threatening portrayals are well documented (for a meta-analysis, see Ahmed & Matthes, 2017), much of this research has neglected potential theoretical underpinnings of such discourse. The present research addresses this limitation and extends upon past research in four key ways. First, we consider the relatively understudied process of humanization in addition to the theoretically and empirically established process of dehumanization. Second, we evaluate the associations between (de)humanization processes and outgroup (dis)trust, because trust has been previously shown to be associated with positive intergroup relations. Third, we compare right- and left-wing news sources to determine whether the nature and extent of discourse varies across such sources. Fourth and finally, we examine this in the highly relevant and externally valid context of media discourse in the immediate aftermath and anniversary a significant terrorist event.

Dehumanization and Humanization

Dehumanization is a complex concept but can be defined as "the psychological process of demonizing the enemy, making them seem less than human and unworthy of humane treatment. This can lead to increased violence, human rights violations, war crimes, and genocide" (Maiese, 2003). A detailed conceptualization of dehumanization was provided by Haslam (2006) in which two types of dehumanization were articulated, *Uniquely Human* and *Human Nature*.

Uniquely Human (UH) refers to characteristics that distinguish humans from animals. When a group is deemed not to have these characteristics, UH dehumanization has occurred. Human Nature (HN) refers to characteristics that people typically have, such as warmth, compared to characteristics that would be attributed to robots or machines, such as cold. When a group is deemed to have more machine-like qualities compared to human qualities, HN dehumanization has occurred. Importantly, both types of dehumanization have been linked to morality judgements. Those who are denied UH are seen as unable to inhibit immoral behaviour, whereas those who are denied HN are seen as unable to make a moral contribution to society (Bastian, et al., 2011).

Dehumanization has been associated with negative societal outcomes. Research from the US shows that dehumanization of Latinos and Muslims is associated with greater support of aggressive anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim policies (Kteily & Bruneau, 2017). In addition, the negative effects of dehumanization may be cyclical. Researchers have demonstrated metadehumanization, in which perceived dehumanization of one's group by an outgroup leads to dehumanization of the outgroup (Kteily et al., 2016).

Given the negative consequences of dehumanization, recent research has turned attention toward humanization with efforts to improve outgroup attitudes. Laboratory research suggests that multiple categorization of the outgroup can increase humanization (Albarello & Rubini, 2012;). Similar effects have been observed with exposure to counter-stereotypical information about the outgroup (Prati et al., 2015). Although experimental research has contributed to an understanding of basic processes and how humanization should work in theory and how prejudice-reducing interventions may increase humanization, research to date reveals little about how

humanization and dehumanization work in real world settings and how these relate to perceptions of outgroups. Of particular relevance to the present research, it has been argued that an examination of language is essential in understanding prejudice and discrimination outside of the confines of laboratory settings (Collins & Clément, 2012). This suggests the importance of evaluating humanization (and dehumanization) in naturally occurring contexts, such as in media portrayals of societal groups.

In a rare study that examined these phenomena outside of the lab, Christie and Noor (2017) elaborated on Haslam and Loughnan's (2014) dual model of dehumanization to include humanization and developed a coding framework to examine dehumanization and humanization in Chinese and Malay newspapers in Malaysia. Their interest was in the frequency and content of dehumanization and humanization in the media reports of messages from political elites in the context of intergroup tensions between Chinese Malaysians and the Malays. Specifically, they evaluated the extent and manner in which each group (de)humanized the other. Themes of humanization that emerged from their research included equity, respect for differences, and solidarity; whereas themes of dehumanization included coarse, immoral, superficial, and emotionally unresponsive. The authors emphasized the importance of the humanizing discourses in facilitating more positive relations between Malays and Chinese Malaysians. The authors did not examine the ways in which this discourse may or may not be associated with other intergroup related outcomes, however. The present work uses their framework in a different context and extends upon this research by considering the role of outgroup trust. Specifically, we consider the ways in which (de)humanizing discourse co-occurs with outgroup (dis)trust, an emotion that has important implications for intergroup relations and that

has only recently started being investigated in relation to dehumanization (Montiel et al., 2019).

Outgroup Trust

Outgroup trust can be understood as positive future expectations of the behaviour of the outgroup toward the ingroup (e.g., Turner et al., 2013; Voci, 2006). The World Values Survey 5, a cross-cultural comparison of trust in 51 different countries, indicated that the expression "trust of others" connoted a trust of outgroup members in 41 of the countries sampled (Delhey et al., 2011). Of particular relevance to the UK context, the study found that only 30% of Britons trusted most other people, suggesting that trust of other groups may be relatively uncommon in this context. Despite the relatively low frequency of trust, outgroup trust has been found to be an important precursor to positive attitudes and behaviour toward outgroups. For example, trust was found to be an important mediator of the relationship between intergroup contact and outgroup behavioural tendencies and is a stronger predictor of outgroup behaviours than positive attitudes (Tam et al., 2009). Similarly, imagined intergroup contact increased outgroup trust and humanization in terms of attribution of human emotions to the outgroup (Vezzali et al., 2012). Together, these results demonstrate the association between outgroup trust and intergroup outcomes.

Limited research to date has evaluated the associations between (de)humanization and (dis)trust to assess whether theoretically derived associations apply in a real world, socially relevant context. An exception is research that employed a quantitative text mining approach in the analysis of newspaper discourse and Facebook posts related to the Muslim-Christian conflict in the southern Philippines. Results revealed a relationship between trust of Christians (the higher power ingroup) and dehumanization of Muslims (the lower power outgroup; Montiel

et al., 2019). This research illustrates how associations between (de)humanization and (dis)trust about real world groups can manifest in media representations. The present research builds upon this work, by evaluating (de)humanizing and (dis)trustful discourse in differently politically aligned news sources. Given that a co-occurrence of (dis)trust and (de)humanization has been observed in past research (Montiel et al., 2019), it was expected that humanization and trust would co-occur in media representations of the outgroup, whereas dehumanization would co-occur with distrust. We sought to investigate these processes in the socially relevant context of political perspectives and media representations about Muslims in the UK.

Media and Political Representations of Muslims

Research that has focused on media portrayals of Muslims after terrorist attacks such as 9/11 and 7/7 has converged on representations of Muslims in contrast to the average Westerner. There is a consistent theme of a value clash between Muslims and non-Muslims (Poole, 2011). Particularly striking is a study of UK newspaper articles that found media portrayals suggested that any Muslim can be susceptible to becoming a terrorist (Featherstone et al., 2010). Other work has found evidence of dehumanization such that Muslims are often portrayed as inferior and less civilized compared to the average Westerner (Shaw, 2012) and a study of 200 037 articles from UK newspapers found differentiating attributes (distinguishing Muslims and typical Westerners) and conflict-related words were among the most frequent associations with the word Muslim (Baker et al., 2013). Other evidence of dehumanization of Muslims in the media comes from a content analysis of 917 newspaper articles (Moore et al., 2008). Two-thirds of sources involved depictions of Muslims as a threat, either in terms of a clash of cultural values or in terms of terrorism. Although this research did not directly assess dehumanization, over a quarter of the articles

analyzed described Islam as backward, dangerous, or irrational, arguably manifestations of dehumanization.

The pervasiveness of threat perceptions also provides a strong implication toward distrust. Related to this, the above study (Moore et al., 2013) found that only 2 % of the articles depicted Muslims as sharing the moral values of the dominant culture and that these media representations provided little impetus for outgroup trust towards Muslims. Similarly, a qualitative analysis of Western media and scholarship suggests that Islam is often represented from a New Orientalist point of view, putting it at odds with modernity (El-Aswad, 2013). The portrayal of Muslims as a threat in American and British media has also been documented in studies by other researchers (e.g., Karim, 2006; Poole, 2006).

Political representations. The increasing presence of Muslims across Europe has been associated with the rise in popularity of right-wing parties and media narratives that are often viewed to reinforce Islamophobia and fears of Muslims as a threat (Savage, 2004). Right-wing politics have been linked to opposition to immigration of those from Islamic countries and proposed or actual bans on head scarves, whereas left-wing politics have been linked to the promotion of multiculturalism and an inclusive Britain (Holohan, 2006). In the US, a positive correlation was found between dehumanization of Muslims and support for politically right-wing (Republican) candidates; a negative correlation was found between dehumanization of Muslims and support for politically left-wing (Democratic) candidates (Kteily & Bruneau, 2017). Given these political trends, and the overall more negative and threatening view of Muslims presented by right-wing politics, it would seem reasonable to expect greater dehumanization and distrust from right- versus left-wing news sources.

Although negative representations of Muslims in the media and right-wing politics are well documented, much of the research to date has lacked a theoretical framework to predict or explain associated assertions. While useful in terms of demonstrating patterns and themes as noted above, a more theory-driven approach is needed if we are to truly understand the nature and implications of media representations. To this end, we examined media representations of Muslims from the theoretical perspectives of (de)humanization, described above, and political orientation, as elaborated below.

The Present Research

The focus of the present research was on media representations of Muslims in relation to the 7/7 London bombings. Muslims represent the second largest religious group in the UK (Stokes, 2013) with an estimated population of 2.7 million, which is about 5 % of the nation's population.

The 7/7 attacks had a lasting impact on Muslim-non-Muslim relations in the UK. It was described as the worst single terrorist event on British soil (Dunn & Baker, 2016). Four young adult men working together detonated three bombs on Underground trains leaving King's Cross station in London, and one bomb on a double-decker bus in a nearby area. Fifty-two people were killed and hundreds more were injured (Rodgers et al., 2015). All of the attackers were raised in Britain and three were born in the UK (Rehman, 2007).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, a number of studies have assessed the impact of 7/7 on attitudes and behaviours towards Muslims in the UK context. Racially motivated hate crimes in England spiked 25-30% after both 9/11 and 7/7 (Hanes & Machin, 2014). Research on nationally representative samples found that prejudice toward Muslims was stronger a month following the bombings, compared to one month prior (Abrams

et al., 2017). Other research documents fear and discrimination experienced by Muslims following the 7/7 bombings (Hussain & Bagguley, 2012; 2013). In line with these concerns, an applied linguistic study of emotional responses to the 7/7 bombings showed that Muslims felt that non-Muslims were "lumping" them with terrorists and with a broader group of undesirable foreigners in the UK (Cameron et al., 2013). Given our focus on 7/7, and also on the negative and threatening representations of Muslims observed in past research, we expected greater dehumanization and distrust than humanization and trust in the news coverage.

Drawing on theories of dehumanization and research on outgroup trust and political orientation, the present research used a manual coding framework to evaluate frequencies of (de)humanization in media representations of Muslims in the UK in the aftermath and 10 years following the 7/7 bombings. We focused on two different newspapers; one that is generally considered politically right-wing (the Daily Mail) and one that is considered politically left-wing (the Guardian). Past research by Poole (2006) that compared the articles about Muslims in the left-wing Guardian with a different right-wing newspaper, the Times, revealed that that the Guardian presented a more accepting view of Muslims whereas the view in the Times was generally more negative. Indeed, the Guardian was more likely to report on discrimination against Muslims following 9/11. These findings suggest that whereas greater dehumanization and distrust toward Muslims may be present in right-wing news, greater humanization and trust may be present in left-wing news.

We were interested in media coverage in the immediate aftermath of the event as well as at the 10-year anniversary. Commemorations of anniversaries are important in that they teach us about past events and they also give them moral weight by indicating that they are worth remembering (Corning & Schuman, 2013).

Additionally, memorializing tragic events is important in collective grieving and in promoting community cohesion (Pivnick, 2011). Commemorations also have a group dimension to them, and they connect past events to a group's present identity (Corning & Schuman, 2013). Given the importance of group identities and collective memory during anniversaries of major events, we investigated coverage in the aftermath as well as during a key anniversary of the attacks. Based on research on nationally representative samples which found that prejudice toward Muslims was stronger a month following the bombings, compared to one month prior (Abrams et al., 2017), we expected the frequency of dehumanizing and distrustful statements to be higher in aftermath compared to at the anniversary.

Taking a comparative approach similar to that of Poole (2006) and adopting a frequency coding approach, it was predicted that:

1. Given the salience of threat perceptions in the immediate aftermath, frequency of dehumanization and distrust would be higher in the aftermath than in the anniversary.

2. Dehumanization and distrust would be more frequent than humanization and trust.

3. There would be a higher frequency of dehumanization and distrust in the right-wing newspaper, compared to the left-wing newspaper. Conversely, there would be a higher frequency of humanization and trust in the left-wing newspaper, compared to the right-wing newspaper.

4. Dehumanization would be associated with distrust; humanization would be associated with trust.

Method

Sources

Following an initial review of online newspapers, two sources (*The Daily Mail* and *The Guardian*) were selected based on their extant coverage of the 7/7 aftermath and anniversary, their political alignment, and their substantive readership. Whilst *The Daily Mail* is a tabloid newspaper and *The Guardian* a broadsheet, we chose to compare these sources due to their comparable readership numbers and therefore, the similar reach they have within the population. Specifically, evidence suggests that *The Guardian* is the most weekly read online newspaper with a readership of around 5.2 million and *The Daily Mail* the second most weekly read online newspaper with a readership of around 4.2 million (Thorpe, 2019). As such, these papers represent the most popular online news sources that are politically aligned with the left (*The Guardian*) and the right (*The Daily Mail*). It is also worth noting that although categorized as a tabloid, *The Daily Mail* is viewed as a popular middle market newspaper that does not focus solely on sensationalist headlines like other tabloids. It is recognized that a news source like *The Telegraph* (as a right-leaning broadsheet) would have been a natural comparison to *The Guardian*, however, *The Telegraph* has a much lower readership.

Given the vast number of articles produced following the 7/7 bombing, we focused specifically on those that were posted within 5 days of the event, the time at which the event was most salient and had the most media coverage. For the 10-year anniversary of the attacks, we analyzed all available articles in the two days leading up to and the day of the anniversary, due their low number and substantially reduced coverage compared to the immediate aftermath of the event. Relevant articles following period were almost non-existent. Articles were obtained using the website search tool for each online source. A total of 113 articles were analyzed (52 Guardian

aftermath, 40 Daily Mail aftermath, 5 Guardian anniversary, 6 Daily Mail

anniversary).

Coding Framework

Articles were coded using Christie and Noor (2017)'s (de)humanization

manual coding framework (based on Haslam, 2006 and Leyens et al., 2001). This

coding framework provides a basis from which to code both dehumanization and

humanization (see Tables 1 and 2), with humanization coded as the semantic opposite

of dehumanization. The unit of analysis was individual sentences (statements).

Specifically, we coded statements for Uniquely Human (UH) and Human Nature

(HN) indicators of (de)humanization. UH differentiates humans from animals and

therefore, whenever "Others" are denied characteristics that distinguish them from

animals, UH dehumanization has occurred. In coding for UH (de)humanization, we

examined how the outgroup are seen (e.g. as below us, equal to us), what they lack/

what they have that is essentially human (e.g., unintelligent, intelligent) and the

emotions and treatment and they elicit (e.g., contempt, admiration). The same process

was followed when coding for HN, the type of (de)humanization that refers to

characteristics humans possess that are typical or central to their nature contrasted

with machine-like characteristics. Here, we examined how the outgroup are seen (e.g.

as distant from us, as close to us) and the emotions and treatment and they elicit (e.g.,

indifference, positive regard).

INSERT TABLES 1 and 2 ABOUT HERE

For coding of trust, coders looked specifically for terms which suggested

elements of trust and distrust towards Muslims using the terms presented in Table 3.

These terms were derived from themes of outgroup trust and distrust previously

identified by past research (Mayer et al., 1995; Pagotto et al., 2012; Voci, 2006), with the goal of having an inclusive framework for the coding of group-related (dis)trust.

INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

Procedure

For the manual coding, articles were collated in Microsoft Word. Statements from articles that contained aspects of humanization and dehumanization were highlighted and placed into a master Excel spreadsheet and categorized as UN or HN. First, a small number of articles were coded by a single, trained researcher using the Christie and Noor (2018) framework. Trust and distrust were coded using a similar procedure with the relevant statements copied into Excel. To ensure reliability of the coding, a secondary coder, who did not have knowledge of the study hypotheses, coded the same articles using the same coding framework. Any coding discrepancies were discussed early on and common coding strategies were developed before the coders continued on with coding the remainder of the articles. Coding was compared for a random sample of articles across each timescale, to ensure inter-coder consistency.

Analysis Plan

To test our hypotheses, we employed a series of quantitative analytical approaches including frequency and correlation analysis. We did not conduct a thematic analysis of our data, as this was not the aim of our research, but have provided illustrative newspaper examples to demonstrate the ways in which articles were coded and how these examples relate to the core concepts of (de)humanization and (dis)trust.

Results

Frequency Analysis

Frequencies of (de)humanizing and (dis)trust statements from the manual coding can be seen in Table 4.

INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

The very low frequencies of themes at the anniversary compared to the aftermath provided support for H1. Given the low frequencies of themes at the anniversary, tests of significant differences were conducted for the aftermath only.

To test H2, analyses were conducted using non-parametric Related-Samples Sign Test, for each newspaper separately to determine if dehumanization was significantly more frequent than humanization and whether distrust was significantly more frequent than trust. Analyses and results (including the null hypothesis being tested in each case) are summarized in Table 5. For the Daily Mail, UH dehumanization was more frequent than UH humanization, overall dehumanization (UH and HN combined) was greater than overall humanization, and distrust was more frequent than trust. For the Guardian, HN dehumanization was more frequent than HN humanization, UH dehumanization was more frequent than UH humanization, overall dehumanization (UH and HN combined) was greater than overall humanization, and distrust was more frequent than trust.

INSERT TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE.

Comparisons between newspapers were then conducted to test for H3. First, to check for differences in the average article length between the two newspapers, which could have affected frequencies of concepts in the statements, the average word count for the aftermath articles was computed for each newspaper ($M_{DM} = 757.98$, $SD_{DM} = 444.92$; $M_G = 842.17$, $SD_G = 450.38$). No significant difference was observed, $t(90) = 0.89$, $p = .37$.

The two newspapers were compared in terms of frequencies of each of the main concepts of interest. As the data did not meet the assumptions for parametric tests, the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test for independent samples was

conducted to determine if the Guardian and the Daily Mail differed in terms of the presence of dehumanizing humanizing, distrustful, or trustful statements. None of these tests were statistically significant.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to identify any significant associations between dehumanization, humanization, trust, and distrust (H4). A non-parametric measure of association, Kendall's tau-b, was used, due to the low frequencies of some of the themes[1]. Two significant correlations were observed. In support of our hypotheses, HN humanization was significantly correlated with trust in the Guardian aftermath articles, Kendall's $\tau = .43$, $p = .002$. Also in support of our hypotheses, dehumanization was significantly correlated with distrust, Kendall's $\tau = .32$, $p = .04$. Specifically, in the Daily Mail aftermath articles, UH dehumanization was positively correlated with distrust.

Illustrative Newspaper Statements

Illustrative newspaper statements are presented below to demonstrate the ways in which (de)humanization and (dis)trust are evident in the coded sources. We briefly discuss how these examples connect with the various aspects of (de)humanization and (dist)trust. We also provide some illustrative statements of how these concepts co-occurred in the newspaper articles.

<div align="center">INSERT TABLES 6 AND 7 ABOUT HERE</div>

Dehumanization. For the most part, dehumanizing discourse seemed to focus on the behaviour of and attitudes towards Islamic extremists. Some statements focused on condemning terrorist behaviour and Islamist terrorists. For example, "*It seems probable that the attack was carried out by Islamist extremist terrorists, of the kind who over recent years have been responsible for so many innocent deaths…*"

(Guardian) and "*Prime Minister Tony Blair today condemned the "barbaric" series of terrorist attacks which brought death and destruction to London*" (Daily Mail). It is worth noting that the use of barbaric refers to the attacks themselves, rather referring directly to Islamic terrorists or Muslims in general. Other statements, however, more clearly demonstrated dehumanization towards Muslims (see Table 6). Here, the use of words such as 'them' and 'zealots' (Daily Mail) reflects UH dehumanization whilst the reference to 'copycats' and fear of not knowing how many of 'them' are out there is indicative of HN dehumanization; with copycats suggesting machine-like qualities.

Humanization. By contrast, humanizing discourse tended to be indicative of the moral values of Islam and what was expected of most Muslims. For example, "*We can name the people who did these things as criminals or terrorists. We must not name them as Muslims*" (Guardian). Such statements are indicative of UH humanization where Muslims are represented as being distinct from terrorists and criminals and thereby closer to 'us'. Further examples shown in Table 6 demonstrate the condemning of terrorist behaviours by British Muslims; noting that such acts are against the basic teachings of Islam (Daily Mail) and that individuals should not target hatred towards Muslims who are also suffering, indicative of UH humanization, because of such behaviour (Guardian). There was also some indication that it is important for Muslims to stand up against such narratives, for example, "*Muslims must speak out and explain who they are, what they believe in, what they stand for…*" (Guardian).

(Dis)Trust. Trust statements highlighted the importance of leadership as well as the positive contribution of Muslims to society (see Table 7). For example, community leaders were commended for their fast response and that this 'should provide assurance', demonstrating a positive expectation from the actions of leaders

(Guardian). Further, in reporting the positive contribution of Muslims to national life in Britain (Daily Mail), there are traits that indicate trust. In both newspapers, distrustful discourse involved negative attitudes towards Muslims and immigrants ("…*we became a more intolerant country, fearful of our children and **mistrustful** of our immigrants*," and concerns about Islamic extremism and terrorism "…*we face the risk that fear will build walls of **doubt** and misunderstanding between them. All could come to feel that they are potential victims: of Muslim extremists on the one hand…*," "… *unveiled plans to, among other things, **monitor** Muslim toddlers in nurseries for signs of '**extremism**'…*," Guardian; See Table 7). Distrustful discourse also seemed to be associated with distrust in the leadership of Britain (e.g. "…*that license for dictatorship passed with so little fuss by our spineless Parliament,*" Daily Mail), "…*this outrage is likely to shock us into realising we have become involuntary martyrs for Blair in the service of his master's imperial cause*," Guardian). These statements demonstrate various aspects of distrust by showing risk aversion, suspicion and diffidence.

Co-occurrence of dehumanization and distrust. A number of statements demonstrated the way in which dehumanization co-occurred with distrust. For example, the statement "*It looks as though we have yet another **mindless act by anarchists** who are determined to inflict as much distress, inconvenience and injury in order to promote their **misguided ideals***" (Daily Mail) demonstrates both UH dehumanization (mindless, misguided) as well as distrust in the form of distress. A further example, indicates that Muslims are seen as dominating (a form of UH dehumanization) and are treated with suspicion (a form of distrust) "*Now, I don't doubt that many Muslims do **despise our way of life**, but they **intend to sort that out by Islamising Europe**, a project well under way…*" (Daily Mail). These statements

illustrate both dehumanization ("mindless act") as well as distrust toward Muslims by their assumed motives to "Islamise Europe". It is important to note that general statements of suspicion (distrust) and fear (indicating danger and therefore UH dehumanization) were also evident in articles. For example, *"...suffered 'sleepless nights' and 'genuine fear' because of the threat of Islamic terrorism"*, and "*I'm afraid there's a sufficient number of people in this country willing to be Islamic terrorists*", (Daily Mail).

Discussion

Given high rates of religiously motivated hate crimes (e.g., Kishi, 2017), understanding portrayals of Muslims in the popular media is of timely importance. Addressing gaps in current scientific understanding, the present paper examined the frequency of (de)humanizing and (dis)trustful newspaper discourse in the immediate aftermath and during the anniversary of the London 7/7 bombings. Taking a theoretically informed approach that moves beyond past research on media representations of Muslims (see Ahmed & Matthes, 2017), we focused specifically on the nature and extent of (de)humanizing and (dis)trusting discourse in UK newspapers using a recently established coding framework (Christie & Noor, 2017). We hypothesized that dehumanizing and distrusting statements would be more frequent than humanizing and trustful statements. We also hypothesized that dehumanizing and distrustful discourse would be more frequent in the right-wing than in the left-wing newspaper, whereas humanizing and trustful discourse would be more frequent in the left-wing newspaper. Further, we expected that discourse would be more negative in the aftermath, compared to the anniversary. To our knowledge, the present research is one of few studies that have examined these complex processes in real

world media coverage and in particular to consider humanization alongside dehumanization and (dis)trust.

Hypotheses were partially supported: Observed frequencies of (de)humanization and (dis)trust were extremely low at the anniversary compared to the aftermath (H1). Overall, dehumanization was more frequent than humanization, and distrust was more frequent than trust (H2). This was the case in both newspapers. There were no significant differences between the newspapers when it came to comparisons of frequencies of the core concepts of (dis)trust and (de)humanization (H3 unsupported), but distinct correlations were observed in each newspaper. There was a significant association between dehumanization and distrust in the Daily Mail and between humanization and trust only in the Guardian. These associations were in line with H4.

Consistent with H1, discourse was less negative at the anniversary compared to the aftermath. This makes sense, given that 10 years had passed since the bombings and events were likely less emotive. The articles from the anniversary also tended to be more factual in nature, which probably also made it less likely that the relevant themes of (de)humanization and (dis)trust would be observed. Nevertheless, examining the legacy of such events is important in understanding their lasting impact. The theory-driven analysis of coverage at two points in time, in the aftermath and at a key anniversary of a terrorist event, was another notable contribution of the present research.

A key finding that was consistent with hypotheses was that dehumanization and distrust were more frequent themes than humanization and trust. This was true for animalistic and machine-like types of dehumanization and humanization. Moreover, the greater frequency of dehumanizing and distrustful content (compared to

humanizing and trustful) was significant in both the news sources. Those interested in promoting harmonious intergroup relations may find this of particular concern because the well established phenomenon of negativity bias (Rozin & Royzman, 2001; Taylor, 1991), in which negative information can be especially memorable. Moreover, when considered in the context of the availability heuristic (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974), the present findings suggest dehumanizing and distrusting accounts of Muslims, given their high frequency, may be more readily available in memory than humanizing and trusting ones. Indeed, other research shows that the 7/7 attacks were associated with increases in prejudice toward Muslims, one month following the attacks when events were still highly salient (Abrams et al., 2017; Van de Vyver et al., 2016).

Importantly our research offers new evidence of the ways in which humanization is presented in media discourse (in the context of a terrorist event) as well as the extent to which humanization co-occurs with trust in the reporting of such an event. Whilst only a few studies have examined humanization and trust together (e.g., Vezzali et al., 2012; Montiel et al., 2019), our findings are generally consistent showing a positive relation between the two concepts, adding to this emerging literature. Importantly, by concurrently examining humanization and dehumanization, we offer further empirical support for Christie and Noor's (2017) conceptualisations; to our knowledge their study is one of the few that has clarified how humanization can be understood in opposition to dehumanization. We also extend the previous work of Montiel et al. (2019), by considering (de)humanizing and (dis)trusful discourse in two newspaper sources in a different cultural context and at two points in time.

Our findings are consistent with expected differences between right-wing versus left-wing news sources. Indeed, past research has linked right-wing sources

with Islamophobia in the UK (Poole, 2006) and linked online sources espousing right-wing populist politics with negative and threatening views of Muslims (Ekman, 2015). In contrast, left-wing sources have been linked to more positive interfaith attitudes and acceptance of diversity (Holohan, 2006; Poole, 2006). The dissociation between right versus left wing news sources observed in the present research shows not only that the UK media follow the expected pattern, but also shows explicit links between dehumanization and distrust of Muslims (in the Daily Mail), and between humanization and trust of Muslims (in the Guardian). If the media shape our views of the world as expected and suggested by some researchers (e.g., Donohue, 2012; Karim, 2006; Happer & Philo, 2013; Montiel & Shah, 2008; Poole, 2006;), and given that the media are often the primary source for information about Islam (Rane & Abdalla, 2008), the present research shows how this may accentuate negative distrusting or positive trusting views of a salient outgroup. Indeed, others have argued that humanizing discourse has the potential to increase outgroup trust (Christie & Noor, 2017), and the co-occurrence of humanization and trust in our findings suggests that these concepts are actually linked in real world media. Having established basic relations between our concepts of interest, the present research therefore offers an important basis for subsequent research on the effects of such discourses on intergroup attitudes and behaviours.

One of the major strengths of the present research was the evaluation of (de)humanization and (dis)trust by using real-world media sources; this in itself is something that has been rarely conducted in the study of dehumanization and offers a new insight into how these concepts are presented in newspaper discourse. Findings suggest that expected associations suggested by lab research do exist, in that dehumanization co-occurred with distrust whereas humanization co-occurred with

trust. Further, our research suggests that dehumanization is much more dominant in the news, at least in the context of reporting on the 7/7 bombings, than is humanization. (However, this is not surprising due to the focus on articles related to a terrorist event.) Importantly, the relationships that we observed were also linked to the political orientation of the source. This underscores the importance of considering political context, when attempting to understand patterns of (de)humanization and (dis)trust in real world settings.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although the present research revealed important patterns and associations relevant to (de)humanization and (dis)trust of Muslims in the UK media, there are some limitations that should be acknowledged. First, it could be argued that dehumanization of Muslims is to be expected, given our focus on newspaper reports related to 7/7 and its anniversary. Although we agree that the frequency of dehumanization was likely influenced by this terrorist event, negative portrayals of Muslims in the media have been documented by researchers, even when the time period under study was prior to 9/11 (Brown, 2006; Trevino et al., 2010). Additionally, dehumanizing portrayals have been observed in the context of views of Muslim immigrants to the UK, when discourse leading up to the 2015 UK general election was examined (Authors, in press, 2020). Second, our selection criteria resulted in a moderate number of articles, which may limit the generalizability of the results. We also did not distinguish between types of articles (e.g., factual vs. opinion pieces) that met our search criteria, nor did we distinguish between reported speech or author's text within the articles. This is less of a concern, however, as our goal was to assess the frequencies and associations between (de)humanization and (dis)trust within the overall content of the coverage, and to determine if they were consistent

with theoretical predictions. Third, although the right-wing and left-wing news sources depicted the relevant themes according to patterns suggested by past research and theory, our focus was on the UK media and future research will determine the extent to which the same patterns and associations exist in other contexts. Fourth, the low frequency of themes in some categories prohibited the use of a chi-square analysis, which could have revealed some interesting results. Finally, although we believe that our findings illustrate links between (de)humanization and (dis)trust in media reporting about a stereotyped outgroup, our research does not investigate a causal relationship between this and public perceptions. It is worth noting that other research has observed links between (de)humanizing portrayals of Muslims in online news articles and (de)humanization in reader comments (Authors, 2020).

Unfortunately, we could not assess the convergence of articles and comments in the present research as all comments pertaining to the aftermath articles had been removed from the newspaper websites. It should be acknowledged, however, that persons consuming media self-select the sources that they choose to follow, and the media may also be catering to the preferences of certain target audiences. Nonetheless, the present research does address whether the naturally occurring patterns in real world media correspond to predictions based upon psychological theory and research.

Drawing from its theoretical foundation and the current results, our study offers some new insights into the relation between (de)humanization and (dis)trust and in doing so, offers important directions for future research. First, we suggest that an important approach would be to experimentally examine the effects of dehumanizing and humanizing newspaper discourse on readers' distrust and trust of outgroups. This would extend upon the current correlational findings by directly

assess the hypothesized causal influence of media on public perceptions. Indeed, preliminary research supports the positive potential of humanizing discourse exposure on outgroup attitudes (Stitt & Haji, 2019). Second, it remains to be seen whether the left (humanization and trust) vs. right dissociation (dehumanization and distrust) observed in our research generalizes to media in other cultural contexts. Indeed, with the rising popularity of politically right-wing parties (Podobnik et al., 2016; Vieten & Poynting, 2016), and the continued salience of Muslims in the media due to extreme groups such as ISIS, it is of timely importance to understand the ways in which media depict group dynamics, including perceptions of threat and security.

Conclusion

In our analysis of UK newspaper sources in the aftermath and at the anniversary of 7/7, dehumanization and distrust were much more frequent than humanization and trust. Importantly, in the aftermath of 7/7, humanization was related to trust in the left-wing newspaper, whereas dehumanization was related to distrust in the right-wing newspaper. This suggests that not only is news reporting consistent with what one would expect based on political orientation, but that explicit links are made between (de)humanization and (dis)trust that could contribute to our representations of reality. Given the greater salience of an event in the aftermath, discourse is likely more powerful and influential at that time than at anniversaries. We suggest that the challenge for psychologists, political scientists, and journalists who wish to harness the power of media to create a climate of peace is to be prepared to intervene in the aftermath of key events and to promote enough humanizing discourse to offset pervasive dehumanization.

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Footnote

1. Kendall's tau-b can be used to measure associations between ordinal variables, and has more accurate estimates than Spearman's rho of p values when sample sizes are small (Field, 2009; "Kendall's Tau", n.d.).

Table 1: Coding guide for characteristics of dehumanizing and humanizing, Uniquely

Human (*UH*) or "animal-like" type

Dehumanization	Humanization
How they are seen: They are...	How they are seen: They are...
• below us[1]	• equal to us
• uncivil (lack or have inferior culture)[1]	• civil (have a respectable culture)
• coarse or crude[1]	• refined
• immoral[1]	• moral
• childlike[1] (includes lazy/laid-back; ungrateful; greedy; irresponsible)	• mature (includes hard-working; grateful; generous; responsible)
• dominating[2]	• accommodating
• predatory/dangerous[2]	• safe/innocuous
• dependent[2]	• independent
What they lack that is essentially human. They...	What they have that is essentially human. They...
• are unintelligent or cognitively unsophisticated[2]	• are intelligent or cognitively sophisticated
• are irrational or illogical[2]	• are rational or logical
• lack language capabilities[2]	• have language capabilities
• have only primary emotions: anger, fear, surprise, joy, sadness, disgust.[3]	• have secondary emotions: such as sorrow, fondness, contempt, conceit, admiration, disillusion, etc.
• lack religious beliefs[2]	• have a religion
Emotions and treatment they elicit. They elicit...	Emotions and treatment they elicit. They elicit...
• contempt[2]	• admiration
• disgust or revulsion[2]	• attraction
• humiliation and degrading treatment[2]	• dignity and respectful treatment

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[1] Based on Haslam's (2006) model.

[2] Based on Haslam's (2006) review of the literature.

[3] Based on Leyens et al. (2001).

Table 2: Coding guide for characteristics of dehumanizing and humanizing, Human Nature (*HN*) or "machine-like" type

How they are seen: They...	How they are seen: They...
• are distant from us (nonhuman, not subhuman)[1]	• are close to us
• do not have human qualities (machine-like)[1]	• have human qualities
• are passive and ineffectual[1]	• are active and efficacious (have agency)
• are cognitively closed or rigid[1]	• are cognitively open or flexible
• are superficial[1]	• are deep
• are objectified[2]	• are personalized
• lack personality traits[2]	• have an agreeable personality
• have an identity that is alien to our identity[2]	• have a common or identity inclusive of us
• are emotionally unresponsive[1]	• are emotionally responsive
Emotions and treatment they elicit. They elicit	Emotions and treatment they elicit. They elicit
• indifference toward them[3]	• positive regard toward them

Based on Haslam's (2006) model.

[2] Extrapolated from Haslam's (2006) model.

[3] Based on Haslam's (2006) review.

Table 3: Trust coding scheme

Trust	Distrust
Risk exposure,	Risk aversion
Positive expectation	Suspicion
Future actions	Uncertainty
Trustworthy traits of target (honesty, integrity)	Diffidence

Table 4

Frequency Counts of Statements Based on Manual Coding

	Dehumanizing UH	Dehumanizing HN	Humanizing UH	Humanizing HN	Trust
Daily Mail aftermath	15	8	5	0	6
Guardian aftermath	17	18	5	3	5
Daily Mail anniversary	0	0	0	0	1
Guardian anniversary	1	3	0	0	0

Note. UH: Uniquely Human; HN: Human Nature.

Table 5

Results of Related Samples-Sign Tests Comparing Theme Frequencies Within Newspapers

Null Hypothesis The median of differences is zero for	*N*	*T*	*se*	*z*	*p*	*n* Positive	*n* Negative	*n* Ties
UH dehumanization – UH humanization (Daily Mail)	40	8.00	1.50	2.00	.04	8	1	31
HN dehumanization – HN humanization (Daily Mail)	40	3.00	.87	1.16	.25	3	0	37
Total dehumanization – total humanization (Daily Mail)	40	10.00	1.66	2.41	.01	10	1	29
Distrust – Trust (Daily Mail)	40	15.00	2.24	2.01	.04	15	5	29
UH dehumanization – UH humanization (Guardian)	52	12.00	1.94	2.07	.03	12	3	37
HN dehumanization – HN humanization (Guardian)	52	9.00	1.58	2.21	.02	9	1	42
Total dehumanization – total humanization (Guardian)	52	19.00	2.40	2.92	.00	19	4	29
Distrust – Trust (Guardian)	52	22.00	2.40	4.17	.00	22	1	29

Table 6

Examples of Dehumanizing and Humanizing Statementsby Type

Dehumanization			Humanization		
Type	**Newspaper (Aftermath)**		**Type**	**Newspaper (Aftermath)**	
	Daily Mail	**Guardian**		Daily Mail	Guardian
Uniquely Human Distant from Us (Nonhuman, Subhuman)	*Born and bred in just about the most tolerant society on earth, what has turned them into zealots who hate us so much that they are prepared to give up their lives as long as they can take ours with them?*	*…al-Qaeda has mutated into a brand name that covers an amorphous network of groups that are linked together mainly by their adherence to an apocalyptic version of Islamist ideology.*	Uniquely Human Close to Us	*Just like the rest of the UK, British Muslims are sad, shocked and angry about these terrorist attacks. If the perpetrators are indeed Muslims or represent an Islamic organisation then they certainly do not represent the British Muslims as well as the overwhelming majority of the Muslims across the world. This act of terrorism is totally and utterly against the basic teachings of Islam.*	*To those who now talk about 'effing Muslims', I say: How can you hate this girl? How can you hate her family? Their pain is beyond our imagination, and their suffering is our own. Shahara was 20 years old, and her faith meant nothing to the bombers. They were indiscriminate in their murder ... Do not hate Muslims because of bloody Thursday. Save your hatred for those who have surely earned it.*

| Human Nature

Do not have Human Qualities (Machine-like includes materialistic; calculating; greedy) | *We are dealing with people who are prepared to die, who want to become martyrs and we don't know how many more are out there, how many copycats there could be.* | *The terrorists may have thought they could divide us and make us panic. It is our hope that we will all prove them conclusively wrong.* | Human Nature

Have Human Qualities | N/A | *If we bomb other people's countries, it is only a matter of time before they bomb ours in return. The people who carried out these acts are obviously responsible, but it is impossible to understand these actions without the context of George Bush and Tony Blair's war on terror and its impact on the people of Afghanistan and Iraq. Tens of thousands of innocent people have lost their lives in both countries since we invaded, yet not only is their pain not recognised, their deaths are not even recorded. Such are the double standards of our foreign policy.* |

Table 7

Trust and Distrust Examples

	Trust	Distrust
Guardian Article	The rapid response from community leaders across Britain was very welcome indeed and should provide reassurance.	Still, the top deck was noticeably less occupied than the lower, and several pas sengers admitted to having changed their seating habits.
Daily Mail Article	The Muslim community, such a positive and dynamic addition to our national life, faces hard choices.	Blair warns terror threat has 'intensified' in the 10 years since 7/7 and urges Western leaders to combat fanatics 'on the ground'