Title: Islamic Environmental Activism: the case of Muslims for Extinction Rebellion

Abstract: As recent trends have made recent trends in scientific and social awareness of environmental issues harder and harder to ignore, a wide variety of environmental activists have begun to search for a large variety of methods to make their activities meaningful. One dramatic example of this is the decision of a group of activists to openly declare (non-violent) rebellion against the UK government: Extinction Rebellion. This radically democratic and decentralized organizes in somewhat autonomous groups formed not only by geography but also through various communities, professions, interest groups and religions.

This dissertation will explore some of the ways in which activists from the group Muslims for Extinction Rebellion (XR Muslims) have related their activism to their identity; specifically, it will argue that whilst quantifying "how Islamic" an organization is, it is possible to demonstrate that there are different ways in which Islam is performed to different "audiences", and that the interests of these various performances can come into conflict. Contextualising the group in terms of a small but growing tradition of Islamic environmentalism, the paper will discuss the ramifications of the history of environmental activism and British Muslim history on the development of activism in this area. It will discuss some of the demographic trends in the most active members of XR Muslims and will then go on to analyse the complex relationships the activists reported to their religion, the wider environmental movement and other aspects of their identities.

Word count: 18874

Key words: Islamic environmentalism, Muslim activism, Extinction Rebellion, religious identity in activism, Muslims in Britain.

I must acknowledge and thank a lot of people for making it possible for me to write this dissertation:

My family and loved ones for their endless support and love, and for giving me a kick when I needed it.

My tutor Michael Munnik for his kind words, insightful considerations seemingly endless patience.

Azim Ahmed for being my unofficial chaplain and mentor, going well beyond what I could reasonably ask for when I needed help.

Sophie, Mansur, and the whole Islam UK Centre; in many ways they raised me intellectually, and I hope I have not let them down.

Mr Jameel, without whose generosity this whole enterprise would not exist.

Last, and by no means least, I wish to thank my contributors from XR Muslims; I pray my work is a good reflection of what you so kindly shared with me, inshaAllah.

Table of Contents

Introduction **p.7**
Literature review **p.9**
History of the Environmental Movement **p.11**
Muslims in Britain **p.16**
Islamic Environmental Ethics **p.18**
Methodology and ethics **p.21**
Positionality **p.21**
Ethical Considerations **p.23**
Methods **p.25**
Findings and Analysis **p.29**
Activism in lockdown **p.29**
Demographics **p.31**
Ethnicity and migration background **p.31**
Education and Employment **p.33**
Gender **p.34**
Previous activism **p.34**
Religious affiliations **p.35**
Analysis and discussion of themes **p.36**
The perception of disengagement **p.37**
Connections between religion and activism **p.42**
Belonging and Identity **p.46**
Solidarity, Ummah *and globalization* **p.52**
Rebranding **p.56**
Conclusions **p.61**
Bibliography **p.63**

Introduction

> This is our darkest hour…
> The ecological crises that are impacting upon this nation, and indeed this planet and its wildlife can no longer be ignored, denied nor go unanswered by any beings of sound rational thought, ethical conscience, moral concern, or spiritual belief.
> In accordance with these values, the virtues of truth and the weight of scientific evidence, we declare it our duty to act on behalf of the security and well-being of our children, our communities and the future of the planet itself.
> We, in alignment with our consciences and our reasoning, declare ourselves in rebellion against our Government and the corrupted, inept institutions that threaten our future.(Extinction Rebellion UK 2018)

These words are taken from the Declaration of Rebellion, a short document that forms the basis for the environmental group Extinction Rebellion, when, in September of 2018, a group of activists declared themselves rebels against a British government that they viewed as incapable of dealing with the urgency of the climate catastrophe they argue we are currently facing, the sixth mass extinction event in the history of life on Earth. Opinions regarding the group and its activities have been very mixed, with its most vociferous detractors referring to it as an "upper-middle-class death cult" (O'Neil, 2019. More measured and lucid commentators have also critiqued the movement's lack of diversity and alarmism; see Shellenberger 2019; Gayle, 2019) while large sections of the public and even politicians and establishment figures have been vocal in their support as Extinction Rebellion has grown in following worldwide (Knight 2019). Key elements of the group's activity are its focus on non-violent protests (which founders of the movement have linked back to the Civil Rights Movement amongst - Hallam 2019, p.41) and its focus on radical democracy and decentralization via what it calls a "self-organizing system" (Extinction Rebellion UK [no date]a).

Although there is some recognition that there the movement was in some ways "the brainchild of a small group of experienced British radical activists", learning lessons from the Occupy movement etc. (ibid.), their self-organising system means that Extinction Rebellion is radically decentralised and democratic, with individual groups being given autonomy (Extinction Rebellion, *About Us*). These

groups are not only aligned by geography, but also by interests, professions and, in some cases, faith, including Muslims for Extinction Rebellion (aka XR Muslims).[1]

According to one of my interviewees, the Declaration itself drew on traditions of protest from the American Declaration of Independence; the inclusion of references to "reason" being their own suggestion. This activist was a member of XR very early on, and noted that this inclusion was in part inspired by a spiritual journey they were on in reconciling what they had initially believed was a conflict between their Islamic faith and "secular" rationality and reason. As a part of this journey, they suggested to Gail Bradbrook (a founding member of XR) that they start an Islamic group, which came to be XR Muslims.

This study is a qualitative examination of the relationship between the activism of XR Muslims to their Islam; it will begin by historically contextualizing British environmental activist thought and the history of Muslims in Britain to note how this may account for the relative lack of Islamic environmentalists, whilst highlighting the fact that Islamic religious thought and tradition provides an ample source for environmental ethics. Although supplemented by observations of the content of a set of online talks over Ramadan and content from the WhatsApp group that form the main format for communications within the group, the bulk of analysis focuses on a series of qualitative interviews that seek to explore the ways in which XR Muslim activists understand the relationship between their religion and activism. These interviews had widely varied results, from understanding their activism as direct result of engaging with Islamic text and tradition to being to being a reframing of "secular" activism, and various shades in between. However, other paths towards XR Muslms showed that narratives of class, identity and belonging were nearly universally relevant.

Defining "how Islamic" XR Muslims is would require a ways of quantifying "Islamicness", an orthodoxy with which to compare the thoughts and practices of

[1] The group has variously been referred to as Muslim for Extinction Rebellion, XR Muslims, Extinction Rebellion Muslims etc. I have chosen to refer to the group by the abbreviation XR Muslims for the group for convenience (for the same reason consistently abbreviate Extinction Rebellion to XR) and because it is the most common form. As of the beginning of September 2020 it remains on the names of the WhatsApp groups that form the main site of communications across the group. It should be noted that as of early September the group is rebranding as Muslim Ecological Consciousness & Climate Action (M.E.C.C.A.); this will be discussed in the final section of analysis, but as the changes is not yet consistently applied and it was not the name used for most the period in which I was studying the group, I have retained the older name.

the group to. This is methodologically, and I would argue conceptually – problematic. More nuanced understandings of Islam that understand it as a discursive tradition like Talal Asad (2009) and Shahab Ahmed (2016) would indicate that simply by defining themselves in terms of their Islam, they are an authentically Islamic group. However, although these understandings naturally focus on the *production* of Islam. I argue here that XR Muslims demonstrates the fact that there are different audiences for whom Islam is performed in different ways, and whilst that does not make one form any more or less authentic, it does create different expressions of Islam that can come into tension.

Literature review: sociology, historical and religious context

Sociological work on Muslim environmental activism at is relatively scarce, especially in the British context (see Hancock, 2019, p. 3). The main scholar currently working in this field is Rosemary Hancock, who uses social movement theories to examine the cultural factors and processes within Islamic Environmental activism (Hancock, 2019, p 7-12). Some relevant work was done by Gilliat-Ray and Bryant a decade ago, attempting to answer the question "Are British Muslims Green?" (2010). Perhaps predictably, their answer was "both 'yes' and 'no'" (ibid., pp. 302-30); in a recurring theme, they recognize robust sources for an Islamic environmental ethic in the Qur'an and Hadith that is often not found in practice (see also Foltz 2000) whilst at the same time noting

> the findings of our research also demonstrate the emergence of a new generation of British Muslim environmental activists who are using their energy and knowledge to argue that being a 'good Muslim' must involve environmental responsibility. (Gilliat Ray and Bryant 2010, p. 303; see also DeHanas 2009).

More internationally there have been studies focusing on: the role of the Internet in two Islamic environmental organisations, one British and one Singaporean (Irving 2013); environmental scriptural analysis by Turkish Islamists (Erdur 1997); the environmental agendas of radical Islamist groups (Hancock 2019, p.3) like Hamas, Hizb'ullah, Hizb ut-Tahrir, Jamaat-e-Islami, and al-Qaeda (Karagiannis 2015), and the development of a distinctive American Muslim environmental

ethic (Albrecht 2011). The latter is worth examining in more detail. Albrecht's description of Muslim participation in environmental activism functioning as a source of greater social and political inclusion for American Muslims may have implications for Muslims in Britain, especially considering the international scope of Anglophone Islam (Ahmed 2019b) e.g. as shown the popularity of works like Abdul-Matin's *Green Deen: What Islam Teaches About Protecting the Planet* in Britain as well as America (2010; Hancock 2019, p.3).

Regarding non-sociological literature, the work of philosopher and theologian Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1996; 2003) appears to have been influential both to Muslim environmentalists themselves and as the introductory literature on Islamic environmentalism for more secular studies (see citations in Foltz 2000; Gilliat-Ray and Bryant 2011; Hancock 2015; 2019). More recently there is the aforementioned *Green Deen* and Fazlun Khalid's[2] - recent work *Signs on the Earth: Islam, Modernity and the Climate Crisis* (2019), especially useful in how it situates the climate crisis historically in terms of global systems of growth, capitalism and colonialism (with echoes in Extinction Rebellion's conception of system change, see Hallam 2019).

Whilst Gilliat Ray and Bryant's findings regarding the lack of widespread British Muslim involvement in environmentalism and associated difficulties of organisations in recruiting and maintaining members may continue to be relevant (Hancock 2019 p.3), it is worth noting that there have been significant changes in environmentalism and its perception by the wider public in the decade since their study. For one thing, there has been a number of factors that indicate a growing sense of environmental awareness and responsibility. This includes at the international level with United Nations adopting the Sustainable Development Goals and signing of the Paris Agreement by almost every country in the world in 2015, more localized national campaigns like the adoption of plastic bag charges first in Wales (2011) followed by Northern Ireland (2013), Scotland (2014) and eventually England (2015), and on a popular, non-governmental level there was the widespread reaction in Britain and elsewhere to the airing of Blue Planet II

[2] founder of IFEES / EcoIslam, the Islamic organisation I volunteer with.

and what has been called the "Attenborough Effect" (Hayns-Worthington 2018).[3] On the other hand, events like the election of Donald Trump and the subsequent withdrawal of the USA from the Paris Agreement, the increased natural disasters worldwide and more importantly awareness of them (McAneney et al. 2014; Reser et al. 2014) through media like Special Report produced by the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) in 2018 may be acting to involve galvanize activists in a way that encourages more radical mass actions globally like the school strikes initiated by Greta Thunberg in 2018 (Boulianne et al. 2020).

History of the Environmental Movement

The disparate concerns, goals and methods associated with modern environmentalism make it difficult to conceptualize as a single cohesive movement. As Hancock asks,

> What relation do community tree-planting or rubbish collecting initiatives have to the activists chaining themselves to trees and railway lines? How does a 'Green' political part, involved in the process of formal institutional politics, operate in the same movement as a radical group such as the Earth Liberation Front, so called 'eco-terrorists'? (Hancock 2019, p.19).

Whilst it is tempting to root the modern environmental movement in terms of events in the 1960s and 1970s, the origins of these contradictions are best explained by looking into the deeper origins of environmentalism. For her part, Hancock splits the evolution of the movement into three distinct stages: nineteenth century preservationism, interwar conservationism (amidst concerns around the growth of cities) and the post-1950s mass environmental movement (ibid., p.20).

The preservationist trend in especially British and American environmentalism of the 19th century was largely concerned a wildlife and habitat preservation in a

[3] There does appear to be specific evidence that the introduction of legislation to levy plastic bags increased the popularity of not only the measures in question but also other legislation to restrict plastic waste (Poortinga et al. 2013; Thomas et al. 2019). Whilst it is harder to gauge the longer term consequences of the 'Attenborough / Blue Planet Effect', there was certainly considerable social media engagement and large increases in traffic to websites of organisations like the Marine Conservation Society, the World Wildlife Fund and Plastic Oceans Foundation (Hayns-Worthington 2018).

fairly elitist discourse, with upper class landowners anxious about the encroachment of mass tourism and industry on fox hunting grounds etc. (ibid., p.20; Pepper 1996, p.223). Hancock notes that environmental concerns were not conceived of as preservation of the environment for its own sake; it was far more connected to uses of the environment "as a symbols of upper-class status", and cites the focus on protecting wildlife spaces and endangered species in the formation of organisations like the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in Britain (1889) and the Sierra Club in the United States (1892) despite the backdrop of more pressing issues of pollution from newly industrialized cities (2019, p.20). The interwar years saw the a trend of environmental thought that included a broader base of more middle class interests that was in some was at odds with the earlier anti-modernist campaigning with "Rational, modern, planned development, as exemplified by the national electricity grid, arterial roads and National Parks" (Pepper 1996, p.223). After the Second World War, and especially from the 1960s onward, saw much wider shifts in public values of as more information on environmental degradation was disseminated via popular publications like Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) , Paul (and the usually uncredited Anne) Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* (1968) and Garret Hardin's article tellingly entitled 'The Tragedy of the Commons' (1968). This movement "emphasized the negative impacts of pollution on ecosystems and human health and encouraged radical direct action and a quality of life based approach to environmental politics"(Johnson and Frickel 2011, p.307). This period of the 1960-70s form the core of much of present day environmentalism being inseparably linked with the counter-culture movement (Belasco 2007; Hancock 2019, pp.21–22), with the grassroots political culture, the emphasis on non-hierarchical organizational structure, focuses on issues relating to the food industry and animal welfare and connections to social justice issues (initially opposition to the Vietnam War as well as famines highlighting the unethical wastefulness of industrial agriculture and food manufacture) being key elements of movements today, especially ones linked with more politically radical ideas like XR.

It should be noted that the roots of these movements have global contexts that many histories do not give enough attention to. As Grove points out,

> In truth, the roots of Western conservationism are at least 200 years old and grew in the tropics. Arising in a search for utopia, European-based environmentalism first took shape in the mid-18th century. At that time, colonial enterprise began to clash with Romantic idealism and with scientific findings. The setting for this conflict was the threatened ecology of tropical islands and lands, from the Caribbean Sea to Asia. In London, Paris and other imperial capitals, these islands became allegories for the world at large. The power of this metaphor and the simultaneous emergence of a community of professional natural scientists spurred governments to protect the environment. (Grove 1992, p.42)

As such, it is worth complicating the notion that these historical developments constitute distinct stages; rather, they are manifestations of certain kinds of environmental philosophies that range from the more ecocentric modes of thought centred on an idea of the inherent value of global ecosystems to ones that are more anthropocentric (human centred, seeing humanity as the source of value). As Hancock notes,

> most environmentalists operate between these modes of thought, for example the idea of social ecology which "acknowledges that environmental values come from a *human* source: either pragmatism – if we destroy our environment it will no longer support our continued survival; or from moral empathy – we feel distraught at the plight of animals for example… Yet, social ecologists argue, the environment should still have value, even if that value comes from a human source. (Hancock 2019, p.29 ; see also Pepper 1996, p.35).

It is noteworthy that the characteristics of environmentalism are not the same everywhere, which may lead to some interesting continuities between what some might consider "older" forms of environmental thought – for example, systems of game reserves and national parks in Southern Africa may include dimensions

rights of indigenous[4] peoples in a way that is not necessarily obvious in the UK; as such, what may look like (and build on) older conservationist models of environmentalism can in fact be intricately involved with social justice issues that are more firmly rooted in social and anthropocentric ecology in a way that does not exclude the importance of preserving ecosystems in their own right. Even within more localized contexts, different organizations (and individuals or factions within organizations, especially large, decentralized ones like XR) can vary widely in how they manifest these philosophies. Nonetheless, the tendencies of "rural chauvinist preservationism" have continued to be present especially in the more ecocentric strands of the environmental movement. In Britain especially, this may well contribute significantly to perceptions that environmentalism is inherently linked to certain ethnic and class groups.

The concept of environmentalism as being "as white as it is green" (Kuzmiak 1991, p.274) and predominantly middle class (including those outside or peripheral to the labour market like students and retirees) is common not only in public perception and press criticism of XR for example (Bunt 2019; Gayle 2019; O'Brien 2019; O'Niell 2019) and from figures within the environmental movement (e.g. Wretched of the Earth 2019) and XR itself (Knight 2019; O'Brien 2019), but also sociological studies (Melucci 1989, p.98; Kuzmiak 1991, p.268; Rootes 2007, p.617; Johnson and Frickel 2011, p.309). It is worth noting that "class" is a particularly loaded term in that it has differing colloquial and sociological definitions that intersect ideas of wealth, relation to production and social status, and that these terms frequently bleed into one another. Mike Savage notes that this is a key part of why class has remained so relevant, stating that unlike other academic concepts that have entered popular lexicons, with class

[4] I only use "indigenous" in the sense of First Nations/First peoples as used commonly in North America and by organizations like the UN (Gargett et al. 2013, pp.6–8). I recognize that in Britain the term has other connotations, especially given Far Right exploitation of indigeneity to legitimize racism (Williams and Law 2012) and that it's use is also particularly complex in places like Africa and Asia (Gargett et al. 2013, p.7). Nonetheless, I use the common working definition of indigenous groups being non-dominant sectors of society having historical continuity with pre-invasion/pre-colonial societies within the territory in which their society developed who wish to preserve and develop ancestral territories and ethnic identity going forward into future generations.

> the direction of travel is more genuinely bi-directional, with academic authority being actively contested by those outside these circuits. The power of the class concept rests in its ambivalent location betwixt and between academic, political and public fields (2016, p.58).

He tracks the decline of Marxian narratives of class within sociology as understood in more or less purely economic terms to the revival of class analysis in British sociology to include understandings of class, after Bourdieu (1984), “as the contingent outcome of the operation of capitals, habitus and fields” (ibid., p. 67). The understanding of class as being defined in terms of social and cultural – as well as economic – capitals is useful not only in conceiving of newer class distinctions (e.g. emergent service workers, technical vs. traditional middle class, professional-executive class etc.; see Heyden 2013; Silva 2015) but also in mapping colloquial perception, as cultural tastes and affectations are as likely to be a point of judgement than income (people not necessarily openly discussing their jobs in terms of wages/salaries). It is worth noting that these class distinctions are complicated by experiences of migration and multiculturalism, which is perhaps part of why there has been very little class analysis of British Muslims in these terms (Erel 2010; Morris 2019), although some work has been done on more strictly materialist/economic definitions (e.g. Ahmed 2015; Muslim Council of Britain 2015). I did not collect data on the household incomes or systematically map indicators of cultural capital (Silva 2015) as would be needed to assess class in the sociological sense. Rather, I have followed the more colloquial use of my participants and, perhaps more importantly, that of the critics they were largely responding to. The criticism of XR and environmentalism generally being white and middle class or elite is no doubt often in good faith and have some justification in research, but it also functions to discredit the movement and ignore the actual claims and demands of the movements themselves.

Furthermore, Hancock notes that this assessment of the white, middle class/elite nature of the environmental movement is perhaps due in part to “the reliance of many sociologists on formal environmental organisations in their research”

(Hancock 2019, p.25). This is a limitation on the present study too, as interviewees were drawn from the core of active participants XR Muslims and thus more research would be needed to more fully explore the "web of networks" (ibid.;Diani 1990; Schlosberg 1999; Doyle 2000) which is key to understanding Islamic environmentalism.

Muslims in Britain

As significant as the history of environmental activism and activist thought is to this discussion, to understand the place (and absence) of Muslim within this movement in Britain requires a background understanding of the context of Muslims in Britain. Interactions between Islam and Britain have a long and complex history, and there have been Muslims living in Britain for centuries (Matar 1998; Ansari 2004; Petersen 2008). However, the post-Second World War period saw significant growth of economic migrants from various parts of the British Empire including (largely South Asian) Muslims. Whilst this population was overwhelmingly adult and male, in the 1960s and 70s an influx of Muslim women and children coming to "beat the ban" and join their husbands and fathers in the face of tightening immigration laws meant that more established communities began to form, especially as mosques, schools, and other institutions were created (Gilliat-Ray 2010). Muslim settlement in Britain has led to significant Muslim communities to grown in London, Birmingham, Manchester, and other northern towns and cities like Leeds and Bradford, as these places were centres of manufacturing industry in the post-War years.

A participant in Gilliat-Ray and Bryant's paper notes that

> Many of those Muslims arriving in Britain in the post-War years were from rural villages and towns in the Indian sub-continent. These origins have shaped attitudes and perceptions to the environment and horticulture. According to one of our informants, the vast majority… came from rural areas where they struggled to survive as subsistence farmers. When arriving in the UK many turned their backs on anything to do with agriculture or horticulture. Land was considered the cause of their

> deprivation and misery and they wanted nothing else to do with it. (Gilliat-Ray and Bryant 2011, p.287).

Given this background, it is understandable if some British Muslims feel ambivalent towards the concerns of environmentalists and the natural world more generally, especially considering that in a lot of Muslim-majority areas "it is common to see former 'front gardens' covered in paving stones or concrete" (ibid). Interaction and emotional engagement with "green spaces" can be hugely important for encouraging environmental awareness, care and concern (Budruk et al. 2009; although this can be complex, as Nazir and Pedretti's findings in 2016 suggest that specialized pedagogical strategies are necessary to raise environmental consciousness), so it is likely that a lack of these spaces can reinforce cycles of apathy about the natural world. Not only this, but given what has already been said about the class-dynamics of British environmentalism, the ways in which Muslim migration history has effected the current socio-demographic and economic situation of British Muslims should be taken into account. Muslims, compared to all other British faith groups, are more likely to be living in overcrowded and substandard housing and to suffer from lower rates of economic activity, educational achievement, and good health (S. Hussain 2008). 2001 Census data revealed that British Muslims experience a large number of cumulatively disadvantageous socio-economic circumstances than all other faith groups in the UK (Muslim Council of Britain 2015). To conclude, the narratives of migration are incredibly important in understanding how Muslim groups relate to the natural world – not only in terms of the initial rejection of anything related to the land – "the cause of their deprivation and misery" – but also in setting up socioeconomic patterns that may make Muslims less receptive overall to activism that is so often considered to be centred on the upper and middle classes.

However, it should be noted that the Muslim population is incredibly diverse in terms of ethnicity, language, race, religious schools of thought / interpretive traditions, socioeconomic background etc., to the extent that is more usual in British Muslim Studies to use "a vocabulary that speaks of Muslim communities

(plural), rather than a Muslim 'community' (singular)" (Gilliat-Ray and Bryant 2011, p.287); some of this diversity is reflected in this study.

Islamic Environmental Ethics

It may be helpful to briefly summarize of some elements of Islamic teaching that have begun to be emphasized amongst English-speaking Muslims concerned with the environment as the movement has developed. The Qur'an, widely considered by Muslims to be the word of God and as such the ultimate source of guidance on all ethical questions, has formed a basis for understanding ecological issues, the role of science, the principles for engaging with the environment, and the responsible use of the Earth's resources.

Two concepts arguably sit at the heart of Islamic environmental messages: *tawḥīd* and *khilāfah*. The former refers to absolute monotheism, the uniqueness and oneness of God as Creator and Sustainer of everything that exists, 'Lord of all the Worlds' (*rabbi l-ʿālamīn* – see Surah 1:2). *Tawḥīd* also expresses the unity the Creator with creation, although the way this is understood can be quite varied. It is often used in fairly vague terms not directly connected to its traditional use as a contradistinction to polytheism (Foltz 2003, p.253). In other words, it can be used to describe unity in general as a virtue, to generate cohesion amongst human beings working together. On the other hand, *tawḥīd* can be used to fuel Islamic environmentalism in more explicitly theological ways. A prominent example of this would be an expanded conception of *tawḥīd* that includes Creation, linked with Ibn 'Arabi's metaphysical concept of *waḥdat-al-wujūd* (Oneness of Being) that holds that "while God is absolutely transcendent with respect to the Universe, the Universe is not completely separated from Him; that the 'Universe is mysteriously plunged in God'" (Nasr 1969, p.106). The implications of this kind of doctrine can be highly profound, whereby a mistreatment of the natural world (as God's Creation) is a direct act of disrespect to its Creator. Even if this direct line of interpretation is not followed,[5] the relationship between God and the created

[5] Ibn 'Arabi is a controversial figure who has been accused of blurring the line between Creator and Creation to the degree that it crosses into pantheist or monist understandings of Divinity contradictory to strict Islamic monotheism (see Nasr 1969, pp.104–108; Foltz 2003, p.253).

world can still be a source of Islamic environmental consciousness through belief in what Khalid has referred to as the "ontological Qur'an" (2017, p.133; 2019, p.153) and what some classical thinkers referred to as *al-qur'ān al-takwīnī,* "the cosmic Qur'an" (as distinct from the written text or *al-qur'ān al-tadwīnī* – see Nasr 2003, p.95; Safi 2012).[6] As Nasr eloquently summarizes, "the cosmos itself is in fact God's first revelation, and upon the leaves of trees, the faces of mountains, and features of animals, as well as in the sounds of the winds and the gently flowing brooks, are all to be found signs of God" (Nasr 2003: p. 95). This is reflected in Qur'anic language in which the word *āyah* ('sign') is used in relation to the natural world containing proofs of God (see 2:164, 6:37-38 and 95-99, 45:3-6 and 12-13 for a few notable examples). *āyah* is also the word used to refer to a verse of the Qur'an. As an indication of the centrality of this doctrine of the natural word as "God's first revelation" to Islamic environmental thinking, note that the name of Khalid's book, *Signs on the Earth* (2019), is a direct reference to this concept.

The other major cornerstone of Islamic environmental thought refers to the human being's role as *khalīfa*; roughly corresponding to the concept of stewardship.[7] Beyond a theological desire to respect nature to reflect respect for God, this concept is understood by many Muslims to reflect a responsibility to act as caretakers of the earth - see Surah10:14 where God is said to have "made you their successors (*khalaifah*) in the land, to see how you would behave". Thus, the duty of *khīlafa* is understood to be a responsibility for which Muslims will be held accountable for. For many Muslims environmentalists, the natural world exists in a state of balance and harmony (*mīzan* - see Khalid 2019 p. 164 on "The Balance Principle") by God's design, and that maintaining this balance is a core of *khilafa/* stewardship. As the Qur'an describes,

[6] There is a typographical error in the cited page from Nasr that has "*takwīnī*" accidentally repeated. *Ta**k**wīnī*; might be translated as 'formative', but in this context it has other connotations not obvious in the English word as it is commonly used. Roughly it means 'relating to that which has form' or 'to do with physical existence / the cosmos'. T***ad**wīnī* simply means 'written'.

[7] This arguably includes much of the 'baggage' that comes with a word like stewardship, including connotations of domination etc. (see Palmer 1992)

> The sun and the moon follow their calculated courses; the plants and the trees submit to His designs; He has raised up the sky. He has set the balance so that you may not exceed in the balance: weigh with justice and do not fall short in the balance (Surah 55.5-9).

In a way, it could be argued that this way of thinking constitutes its own ecological philosophy in that the value of the natural world is neither inherent (ecocentric/ biocentric) nor is it derived from human sources (anthropocentric and to a certain extent social ecology). Instead, Islamic environmental thought can provide a form of God-centred (perhaps theocentric?) ecology where, although how this would differ materially or sociologically from Islamic sources of environmental activism is difficult to know until more qualitative research is carried out on activists influenced by this thought. Regardless, many Muslim environmentalists this see the current environmental malaise as an imbalance in the natural order resulting from a dependence on the prevailing Western model of secular science that can be seen to desacralize / secularize nature (Özdemir 2003). Several of these thinkers point specifically to a difference between the principles of Western scientific enquiry (with their foundation in the Enlightenment's Cartesian Rationalism that increasingly saw a harder division between the sacred and material) and Islamic scientific enquiry (exploring the signs of God in nature in order to better understand the greatness of its Creator; see Khalid 2019 p. 9-14, Islam 2004; Nasr 2003). Thus, whilst many secular thinkers have largely looked to scientific and technological solutions for the current environmental crisis, Islamic environmentalists argue that science (or at least Western conceptions of it) separated humans from God and detached humankind from nature (Al-Damkhi 2008; Ammar 2001; Hamed 1993; Kula 2001; Nasr 1996; Wersel 1995). For many Muslim environmentalists, then, the solution requires a rejection of the modern Western-based scientific paradigm, and a return to an awareness of the sacred dimensions of nature. In this way, Muslim environmentalists share much with the social ecologists, with their roots so often in socialist and anarchist thought (Pepper 1996, pp.29–34), that focus on the structures of Capitalist-consumerism as a key source of the environmental crisis, and indeed form a significant part of

XR's theory of change, even if this is not always explicit (Hallam 2019, p.24; Hayward 2019).

Methodology and ethical considerations.

Positionality – Biography underpinning methodology and ethics.

This project requires careful, reflexive attention to be paid to the positionality of the researcher given my ongoing work volunteering as a Muslim environmental activist.

Positionality is "the stance or positioning of the researcher in relation to the social and political context of the study" i.e. the group being studied (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller 2014, p. 627). In simple terms, it is the relationship between the researcher and those they are researching. As has been examined especially (but by no means exclusively) by feminist, postmodern and postcolonial scholarship, such relationships are complex and multifaceted; they are defined along lines of "culture, class, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, childhood lived experiences and so on", and they can change even within an individual research project (ibid, pp. 627-628; see also Sanghera and Thapar-Bjorkert 2008, p. 543). Looking at these various aspects of identity allows a more nuanced view than the older image of the insider / outsider distinction (or the even more outdated "native" researcher), and indeed what a researcher brings in terms of experience or "baggage" is not necessarily any more or less in terms of the "outsider" vs "insider" doing research (Narayan 1993). Speaking to this project directly, my personal relationship with Muslim environmentalism does not necessarily give me huge insight into the movement (my own case not necessarily being anything close to representative), nor does it necessarily make my research inherently more biased than someone who has not had that experience – put simply, there is no such thing as a "neutral" researcher, there are just different subjectivities.

Whilst there is a broad acceptance that it is important to think reflexively around positionality within qualitative research, there appears to be a recurrent anxiety amongst scholars that it can go "too far" and become a "self-indulgent" (Probst 2015, p.45) exercise in "navel gazing" (Ahmed, A. 2017, p. 220; Jewkes 2014, p.

387) and “self-awareness can all too easily slip into self-absorption and… thoughtful contemplation may be read as uncomfortably confessional or narcissistic” (Jewkes 2014, p 387). However, considering my positionality as a Muslim environmental activist is important not just in how I select and interpret data, but also in my ability to collect it at all. Access has been called “a paradox in British Muslim studies” in that although there is a lot of work – academic or otherwise – being written about British Islam, access is still a barrier to research which requires a lot of work to overcome (Ahmed, A. 2017, p. 220; Gilliat-Ray 2005, 2018). Being a member of the group I am studying allows me to overcome a lot of these difficulties. However, this means that the sense of responsibility is heightened, not only to academia but to my participants. Abdul-Azim Ahmed spoke about this as “the Other Ethical Approval” (2017) and highlighted the importance of considering the ethical consideration of the group you are studying. Already a co-ordinator for XR Muslims who is acting as something of a “community gatekeeper” (a phrase they used, being trained as a sociologist) has stated that they will expect “work” from me after the completion of my project, and indeed insisted I volunteer for a role within the activities I was hoping to participate in. This has meant parts of the research involved a level of participant observation that leaned towards autoethnography as, especially towards the end, it became increasingly untenable to speak as if I was separate to the group itself. Disclosure was an important element of maintaining a degree of distance – at the beginning of any event or call I was a part of I made clear that I was primarily a researcher alongside my ongoing role as an activist. One of my interviewees (who as a result of their participation is considering doing some research on the group) brought this up and said that they wondered whether they should be making similar declarations even though they were ‘off duty’ so to speak. They questioned the extent to which the kind of sociological and ethnographic thinking inherent to this kind of study can ever fully be ‘switched off’. I think this is a very valid point that applies in both directions, leading me to question how ethical ‘switching off’ my activist considerations is as a tactic. For example, a decision I made early in the process of research design was that I would be willing to participate in activities as directed but would not be involved in direct decision making. So, for

example, I was willing to prepare a brief presentation on some Qur'anic *ayat* / verses, but I would not have suggested this element to them. Similarly, when people directly asked for my opinion on a particular branding or tactical decision, I felt it would be unfair (and risk damaging relationships with my participants) to not answer. However, I would not make any suggestions about which approach I would want the organisation to take, and in making any contributions I would affect a neutral approach that highlighted my perceptions of tactical merits rather than moral ones. That said, this approach became more difficult to maintain as the group clearly began seeing me as an asset (suggesting that I represent the group in Cardiff after my research was complete etc.) which meant that these lines between activist and researcher become difficult to maintain.

Ethical Considerations

The elements of ethics relating to positionality have already been covered, but there are other ethical concerns that need to be addressed due to the specific situation of XR Muslims. The fact that civil disobedience is such a core of Extinction Rebellion's tactics (Hallam 2019) means that, in studying them, there is a risk that any researcher involved with the group will come into contact with people breaking the law – indeed, they are fairly robust in preparing activists for this (see Blackler 2019). As such, the safety of both participants and the researcher (and the university's reputation) is in potential jeopardy. This was exacerbated by revelations in January 2020 that the Counter Terrorism Policing South East (CTPSE) had released guidance listing Extinction Rebellion next to neo-Nazis and jihadist organisations (Grierson and Dodd 2020).

The head of the CTPSE, Detective Chief Superintendent Kath Barnes, later stated that the police did not consider Extinction Rebellion an extremist organisation, adding that the document was "designed for a very specific audience" who understood the nuances of Prevent strategy, and the unit quickly recalled the document (BBC News 2020). However, a couple of factors mean that there is still reason to be concerned. Despite the CTPSE's attempts to underplay the spread of the offending literature, an internal review indicated that it was sent to "the Home Office, the Department for Education, NHS England, the Ministry of Defence, HM

Prison Service, Probation Service and Ofsted, as well as 20 local authorities, five police forces and Counter Terrorism Policing headquarters (CTPHQ) in London" (Grierson and Dodd, 2020). Beyond this, the fact that a retired doctor was reported by his NHS Trust for taking part in an Extinction Rebellion protest, and that he was actually spoken to by the police as a result of this, provides a tangible example of Extinction Rebellion being treated as an extremist group (Evans 2019). Whilst this single example is not enough to extrapolate that there is a systemic singling out of Extinction Rebellion, it may well be enough to raise concerns with participants, especially given my study's focus on Muslims, a group who have been explicitly targeted by this policy. As Alam and Husband point out,

> "the introduction of counter-terrorism policy in the form of PREVENT was met with a wide range of strong resistance. Many councillors responsible for the implementation of this policy saw it as discriminatory in its unambiguous targeting of Muslim communities. At the same time, Muslims saw PREVENT as an assault on their integrity as law-abiding citizens; and Muslim workers required to implement the policy saw it as divisive, as their trusted status within their communities was potentially being exploited to further intrusive policies of control and surveillance. In many senses, then, the PREVENT agenda proved to be highly contentious." (2011, p. 248)

They continue to point out that the actual implementation of Prevent has been no less problematic and has contributed to communal distrust in the state apparatus and civil society as well as fuelling perceptions of Muslim difference in the wider population (ibid., pp. 248-252; see also Birt, 2009 and Cohen and Tufail, 2017). This potentially harmful relationship with Prevent means that I have a greater responsibility to anonymize participants, a difficult thing considering the relatively small world of Islamic environmental activism in the UK. For this reason, I have not made individual interviews identifiable and where I deemed necessary fracturing and reconstituting individuals to better obscure their identities (see Ahmed, A. 2017, pp. 217-218). I have done this by not linking any attributes or characteristics to any statements; furthermore, unless gender is

specifically relevant, I have used ungendered pronouns and phrases such as "an activist", "a participant" etc. Whilst this generates a certain amount of irksome repetition, I felt that the need to ensure anonymity outweighed the stylistic sacrifice.

Methods

Initially, I planned to use three common qualitative methods – interviews, focus groups and participant observation. The qualitative nature of these were decided by my focus on the activists' conceptions of their movement. At the most basic level, these three methods allow me to analyse respectively my participants thoughts on the topic, how they negotiate these thoughts with their peers, and how these thoughts manifest in action (Denscombe, 2017, p. 184). For example, in some cases it might be activists in an interview started from the position of talking about more 'secular' environmental perspectives and then 'bringing faith into it', whereas in a group they may emphasize Islamic terminology to talk about the environmental crisis – or indeed vice versa. On the other hand, interpreting observation could also reveal nuances that participants may not think (or wish) to share, for example potentially using prayer and religiosity as a tool of non-violent protest, specifically against police interference as shown in reporting about activist Sara Zaltash highlighted later (see Skrimshire 2019). These all represent distinct directions of inquiry, all of which are informative in analysing answers to the question of how environmental activism is made Islamically meaningful, so using a mixture of these methods would be significant.

However, due to the coronavirus pandemic, these specific methods are no longer suitable; observation of, say, a protest under these conditions has become unsafe for both researcher and participants and impossible due to no XR Muslim protests taking place in the in the period being studied; whilst legality is not necessarily a high priority given XRs tactics, in conversation some activists expressed worries that even if social distancing was maintained at such events, their movement would be blamed for any new spikes in the number of coronavirus cases. This proved to be well founded given reactions to the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests. Less than two weeks after the first British protest in response to the

death of George Floyd headlines claimed that "protests across Britain helped spread the coronavirus"(Matthews 2020), with widespread social media arguments (including, for example, amongst British Member of Parliament see Butler 2020). As such, I decided to move towards the tools of "online ethnography", variously termed 'virtual ethnography' 'netnography', 'webnography', webethnography etc. (Prior and Miller 2011, p. 507).

XR Muslims had the same conundrum as I did regarding lockdown. Coming up to Ramadan, a time of unparalleled spiritual importance for Muslims, the group faced some important issues. Not only were they facing their own sense of isolation in what is often a very community-focused time, they also risked missing an opportunity to engage with the community when they are perhaps more receptive to hearing religiously focused messages. As a result, the group decided to carry out a series of halaqas (*ḥalaqāt*, literally 'circles', in this sense Islamic study-circles) / talks over Ramadan. As such I initially felt I could use similar methodological approaches, using interviews to indicate the thoughts of activists, analysis of WhatsApp chats etc. for an approximation of group interactions and observation of the halaqas to see interactions "in practice". Of course, there were weaknesses to this approach; for example, analysing chats vs. focus group interactions means that most of the interaction (note the focus on setting in King and Horrocks 2010) is not seen by the researcher; to a lesser extent, this is true of observation and interviews carried out online, where not physically being in the same space makes observation of more subtle signs (body language, tone etc) less easy to recognize. Furthermore, the halaqas were eventually changed to a set of talks, which meant that activists were not directly interacting with each other or with a wider community; rather questions were asked of speakers (usually not directly connected to XR) via various chats that were collated by a member of the XR Muslims team. This study therefore relied heavily on the interviews rather than analysis of chats, but this limits the analysis as "Research interviews, for their part, focus on *self-reports* – what people say they do, what they say they believe, what opinions they say they have" (Denscombe, 2017, p. 184).

In most cases, it is generally understood that methods should be chosen based on what questions a researcher wants answered – the formulation of research questions is what allows the researcher to decide what methods are appropriate. Inspired by the inductive approach of Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss 1999) and the idea of generating research questions from the data runs somewhat counter to this. However, as my primary research aim was to find out how Muslim environmental activists make their activism meaningful in Islamic terms (Ahmed, S., 2016) i.e. how the think about their work Islamically, I was more free to let their own understandings shape the research; a semi-structured interview helped to facilitate this.

Regarding the "onlineness" of this research project, it should be noted that in general there is something of a recurrent debate regarding the extent to which new forms of Information and Communications Technology can be seen in terms of rupture (Appadurai 1996) or continuity (Wilding 2006). In other words, there is disagreement about how much technology changes human interactions. Looking at a large study of transnational families, Wilding noted that although new forms of communication technology have been transformative especially in allowing transcendence of time and space, there are:

> strong continuities in the purposes and experiences of communication that suggest a certain capacity for humans to render new technologies mundane in a short space of time. Rather than a brave new world in which 'reality' is transcended by a visionary future, […] more 'everyday' interactions […] occur between family members who communicate across distance and national borders. …They are not particularly concerned about removing or even inverting international structures of power" (Wilding 2006, p.126)

In a way, online interviews are an example of this same phenomenon. The online medium is a tool to reproduce a 'real', face-to-face interaction; it is a tool, not the subject of study (Lo Iacono et al. 2016). Even so, there are several specific considerations that arise from the online format.

To begin with, the importance of setting highlighted by King and Horrocks (2010) is affected. It may be that, to the researcher's advantage, allowing the participant to choose a space most comfortable for them (in this case, and more or less invariably in current circumstances, within their own home) may encourage them to feel more relaxed, with the added advantage that there is no obligation on them to play host for the researcher as they might do if the interview was held in person.[8] As Hanna put is, "both the researcher and the researched are able to remain in a safe location without imposing on each other's personal space"(2012, p. 241). However, especially since the COVID-19 crisis means that both interviewee and interviewer were restricted to their homes, there are implications on privacy that extend in both directions. Depending on how conscious the individuals in question are, the extent to which a space is "prepared" can vary widely, from being meticulously constructed with specific messages in mind to, at the other extreme, allowing unintentional insights into their personal lives that blur the lines between legitimate collection of data and invasion of privacy. Essentially, tensions can arise between the scientific quality of the research and the ethical responsibility of the researcher to protect the interviewee from harm, and indeed to respect their integrity and privacy (Brinkmann and Kvale 2005; 2018 pp. 101-102; Flick 2018). Ultimately, it is down to the sensitivity, ethical experience and judgement of the researcher as to where this line is drawn (Brinkmann and Kvale 2018 p. 102) and as such it is an area that is scientifically problematic; this may be a weakness of the interview (or at least, the interview alone) for my project, especially given my personal connections to people in the Islamic environmental movement.

My own relationship with Islamic environmentalism (and my involvement in the talks themselves) were useful in building rapport not only for the interview but because activists were able to act "gatekeepers" for others within the community, my hope was that recruiting a larger number of participants could be done

[8] Of course, one should not discount the possibility of the opposite case, where a home that is in some way disruptive or distracting (e.g. other members of the household, especially children, vying with the interviewer for attention) can encroach on the interview and *prevent* the interviewee from feeling fully relaxed. In any case, beyond making sure that a suitable time can be set apart that is convenient for the interview, there is not much that the researcher can do about this one way or another.

through “snowballing” (Denscombe 2017, pp.43–44). As it was, I conducted 8 interviews; I made general requests in various chats, in the talks etc, but had relatively few responses. Of those who did respond, I observed that almost all of were particularly active both in chats and in the decision-making process through online calls etc. I did try to speak to a wider variety of people to gain broader experiences, but perhaps tellingly most of the responses came from the small number of people that were regularly active participants in online meetings.

Findings and Analysis

I have split my findings broadly into three sections. The first will give a brief description of XR Muslims as a group and describe their activities broadly. The second section will describe some of the demographic information collected about my eight interviewees to try and broadly answer the question of who the individuals involved in XR Muslims are. Finally, it will explore some of the recurring themes that were repeatedly relevant throughout the interviews: the relationship between religion and activism, perceptions of a general Muslim disengagement with the movement, questions of XR Muslims’ identity and belonging within XR more broadly and the question of XR Muslims as a site of Islamic globalization. This last section will include a discussion on the rebranding of XR Muslims as Muslim Ecological Consciousness & Climate Action (M.E.C.C.A.) at the end of my study as it illustrates the issues explored in the interviews in microcosm.

Activism in lockdown - Pause for the Earth *talks and an overview of XR Muslim activities*

When XR Muslims was founded, it was started as a Facebook group (https://www.facebook.com/groups/352703038814758/ - set as “private” and requires and administrator’s permission to join) which remains active alongside a more public facing page (https://www.facebook.com/xrmuslims/). The Facebook group description (XR Muslims 2018) includes a distinction of Islamic vs. “Islamicate” (Hodgson 1977), indicating the prevalence of a separation of religion and culture as an idea at least parts of the group, and a desire to include those

that are culturally linked to Islam rather than through religious belief; it shows an attempt to be very ecumenical in terms of schools of thought and sectarian difference. Whilst I had already liked, followed and joined these prior to beginning my research, it appears that most group communications happen via WhatsApp, with one group set up for the general community and another for organizing around specific actions and events. An activist that I have worked before added me to the group and introduced me to the group, and I found that through my previous activism we shared several contacts, although I felt that as I had not specifically worked with them in the past there was not a conflict of interest. Much of the messaging of the WhatsApp group was administrative organization of meetings, sharing pictures of members of the group taking part in activism, general "progressive" advocacy related content (e.g. petitions and newspaper articles – most of these were directly linked to XR or environmentalism, though by no means all e.g. raising funds to support people suffering the effects of war in Yemen). Specifically Islamic content beyond niceties like "Eid Mubarak" "Ramadan Karim" was shared more often around religious festivals, including specific duas (*ʾadʿiyah,* sing. *duʿāʾ* in Arbaic; prayer or invocation) and Qur'anic verses to be recited on specific occasions. Although I cannot confirm this, I suspect that much of this content was shared across other social media groups and that XR Muslims was just one part of a chain in which these messages were forwarded.

With the beginning of lockdown, XR Muslims mainly exists in the form of these small online communities. This is not necessarily a problem – it is certainly possible to build significant movements through online engagements (Boulianne et al. 2020). Also, this is not to say that outside of lockdown there is not a large amount of more direct action. However, one of my interviewees expressed doubts, going so far as to say "I would question the existence of XR Muslims at all to be honest", noting that of the group there were very few people actively taking part, generating ideas and achieving things. This was backed up by another statement by an interviewee that the idea of a working group within XR required an active core of campaigners that is larger than what XR Muslims realistically

have, with only a few members being involved in the generation of ideas and output (Palange 2020).

The exception to the relative lack of action over the lockdown period was the series of *Pause for the Earth* talks during Ramadan. Three of the four talks are publicly available (Muslims for Extinction Rebellion 2020a, b and c); one is unavailable due to technical issues. There are several features of these talks that are interesting to note that will become significant in discussing XR Muslim's audiences. Foe one, the original plan was for a series of halaqas, a specifically Islamic style of learning that was abandoned in the form of a series of lectures with a Q&A session afterwards. One of my interviewees suggested even after the change to run a series of halaqas alongside the talks, but this was not organized, perhaps indicating the importance of a more closed Muslim audience relative to the wider group including non-Muslims. Furthermore, the talks were largely not theologically based but around experiences of activism. Finally, they were incredibly varied in terms of international scope, with speakers focusing on work in Britain, Europe, America, East Africa and Indonesia.

Demographics and background – who are XR Muslims?

It should be noted that this study did not aim to be representative of the movement; participants were chosen to reflect an high level of engagement with the group in terms of attendance online meetings, frequent posting in the WhatsApp group and suggestions by community moderators acting as gatekeepers. The logic behind this was that it would allow access to individuals more heavily invested in the group itself, more engaged with the (theoretically democratic) decision making process etc. Nonetheless, some patterns began to emerge in their demographics.

Ethnicity and migration background

Most participants are of South Asian background. This is not especially surprising, given that this is true of the majority of the Muslim population in the UK**.** That said, it should be noted that there is a significant presence of activists of South Asian ethnicity can be characterized as being (or being descended from) "twice

migrants”. One from Kenya, another had Tanzanian heritage, a third was from Yemen (this respondent considered themselves Arab, but only stated this after disclosing South Asian heritage) and a fourth was born in India but had been brought up in the UAE. Whilst one should be careful not to make too much of this, it is noteworthy that class dynamics amongst migrant communities with this background is significantly different from other Muslim communities in Britain that are similar in terms of ethnicity. Coming to Britain as “twice migrants”, first from the Indian Subcontinent (especially Gujarat) to East Africa, and from there to cities like Leicester in the 1960s and 1970s due to the sometimes violent processes of Africanization policies following decolonization, this group has been shaped their experiences as a middle-class between white and black communities. (Bose 1979; Marett 1989; Peach and Gale 2003, p.474; McLoughlin 2014, pp.469–470). Peach and Gale described them as generally “English speaking, professionalized, and entrepreneurial” noting that they “had often accumulated capital, and had no intention of returning to India” (2003, p.474). This is in stark contrast to the (albeit diverse) “largely peasant population that had migrated directly from the subcontinent” (ibid). This difference in social capital has been used to explain a gap between the two groups in socioeconomic terms, and the various consequences of this – McLoughlin notes the lauded reaction (or lack of one) of communities Leicester to the Northern riots as an example (2014, p.469).

Regarding the ethnic background of other respondents, one characterized themself specifically as Bangladeshi, two identified as white (coming from Italy and Germany).

Educational and employment background

All of my respondents attended, are attending or in one case will soon be starting tertiary education, with one organizer stepping back to work on their PhD, another having just completed an MA and another currently being at university as an undergraduate. These are largely connected to environmental issues in some way, and a couple are actually looking into the sociology of Muslim

environmentalism. While not necessarily a problem in and of itself, this did present some issues when there was disagreement over accreditation. For example, one respondent specifically asked to be accredited due to their own research into social movement as sites of knowledge production, considering activists to be a form of public intellectual, and that anonymising them is an exploitative tool by which the researcher gains status (Fleischmann and Palange 2020, Palange 2020). The also had expectations of my research to engage in decolonial research practices (e.g. Comaroff and Comaroff 2012a; Lincoln and González y González 2008; Connell 2018) and explicit acknowledgement of the unequal power dynamic of the researcher and the institution behind them at the expense of the activist (Palange 2020). Perhaps ironically, this participant's status as a more senior researcher and their role as a community gatekeeper put an extra pressure on me to acquiesce to this (albeit via a compromise, with theory accredited but reference to experiences etc. anonymized), despite the fact that anonymizing only "academic" participants would contribute to an unjustified hierarchy, whilst anonymizing at least some participants was a requirement ethically both because they requested it and because of the issues noted previously around their safety and wellbeing.

Gender

The ratio of female participants to male was five to three. Note again that my method of selecting participants favoured people that I recognised as repeated participants in online meetings etc; of my interviewees, five were particularly active and all but one of these were women. I should make clear, none of my participants – male or female – made any specific reference to gender being a significant factor in their experience as activists during interviews, although a comment was made in the last *Pause for the Earth* talk to the fact that there was an all-female panel by the (male) host (Muslims for Extinction Rebellion 2020, talk 4). However, even my interviewees did not seem to feel that gender was a significant contributor to their experience and the absence of quantitative data prevents making more confident statements on this, the prominence of female leadership in the group is still noteworthy, and has some possible parallels with

what has been observed about Muslim chaplaincy. Many traditional Islamic religious professional[9] roles are generally reserved for men, even when there are significant numbers of women with similar levels of classical Islamic education (Bano 2017; Long and Ansari 2018, p.117; Abrar 2019). Chaplaincy, not having a direct parallel with any traditional Islamic institutionalized roles (Gilliat-Ray et al. 2013, p.45) can be seen as providing a space for women to take part in Islamic leadership (ibid. p.38), although the dynamics of this still contain complex levels of exclusion (Ibid. pp.139–144). Even so, less institutionalized forms of leadership e.g. within Islamically-focused activism may be a seen as a space for Muslim women to take on a form of religious leadership in a way that may be more difficult in other situations, although more research would be needed to fully look into the effects of this even in within the confines of a small group like XR Muslims; indeed, it may be that my own positionality as a male researcher was a barrier in fully exploring this topic.

Previous activism

All participants bar one had been involved in some form of environmental (and often other forms of) activism prior to this, with two involved with the Green Party, four with Friends of the Earth, one mentioning anti-fracking protests and one being heavily involved in political engagement around the Israel-Palestine conflict and quite readily saying that their partner had quipped that “if you weren’t involved with the socialists, you’d probably be an anarchist!” (although delivered with humour, they did not deny the accuracy of the description). The degree of relationship between these causes and their Islamic convictions varied. Two brought up Muslim solidarity as being connected to the causes they were involved in, and three explicitly considered their Islamic upbringing as a part of a general call to action / informing values regarding justice, care for nature, not being wasteful etc. For the most part, however, XR Muslims represents the first explicit link between their religion and their activism. More important in many

[9] This term is taken from Gilliat-Ray 2010 (p.157). Terms like “religious professionals” and “religious functionaries” are useful terms, as lack of sacramental or priestly functions make it difficult to speak about an Islamic “clergy”, especially in Sunni Islam which lacks a hierarchical structure of religious specialists (ibid; Tayob 1999).

cases was some sort of connection to the natural world growing up – one participant mentioned the constant presence of the sea (growing up in Aden) as crucial in developing a deep connection to the natural world, two others mentioned the importance of being around wildlife (in both cases within the context of Africa) and one noted being able to find solitude in natural spaces in their home in the Scottish highlands. Paths to environmentalism vary considerably though – in one case it was through secondary education (in the Middle East) where they gained an interest in solar panel technology and renewable energy systems in general. Two came to the movement as a result of other political activities that were not inherently environmental but lead to interacting with wider activist circles. One came to it through looking at environmental law as part of their career. Finally, interviewee was keen to emphasize the importance of an individual activist bringing them to explore Islamic environmental activism as a key part of their existing activist pursuits.

Religious affiliations

It should be noted that the group aims to be as ecumenical as possible. In fact, one participant defined themselves as a "practicing Christian", but due to an academic interest in Islam and Muslims, felt inclined to join the group. Interestingly, this participant noted that while they were members of other XR groups unrelated to faith, they did not feel that their own church – by their judgement a "very tiny" one – is represented on Faith Bridge; this indicates that for whatever reason they do not choose to affiliate with Christian Climate Action (the Christian XR group). It can be argued that this indicated an expectation of theological distance allowing them to feel motivated to join the group to "support and learn", drawing on their past research and "interest in other religions".

One participant identified as a "Liberal Muslim", compared to what they saw as the religious conservatism "back home" in India (they defined conservatism as "attention to details in Islamic practices" and noted his liberalism was defined by the fact "My parents never compelled me to pray… never interfered in my social life as a high-schooler". They spoke about a mixed religious heritage, with ultra-conservative (although not necessarily strict in practice) family on one side and

the other being part of a Sufi community, whilst their father was cahacterized as more "in line with Jamaat-e-Islami… [linked with the thinking of the] Muslim Brotherhood and that kind of an ideology of democratic Islam and so on and so forth" (see Geaves 1996). Another noted that Sufi understandings of Islam are a key part of their religious expression, whilst another became involved in "so-called 'Super Salafi' groups" after an intense conversion experience, although this appears to have been more from association than affiliation.

The group appears to not only be diverse in terms of affiliation but also relationships to Islamic education. One noted the importance of Islamic schooling alongside his secondary education which "gave me the knowledge in terms of Islam, about life, the *fiqh,* the Qur'an memorization and all of that… they had a holistic approach towards teaching Islam". Another noted that a lot of their Islamic education came from deep and wide readings of various Islamic traditions from Classical Islamic legal arguments to Islamic feminists like Fatema Mernissi, whilst yet another noted their rediscovery of Islam through the Sufi tradition, having rejected the Islam of his youth for being at odds with what they saw as modern, Western rationality. However, it should be noted that for half of my interviewees, the question of religious

Analysis and Discussion of Themes

Definitionally, it would be hard to suggest that XR Muslims is not an Islamic group – self-conscious definition as Muslims and Muslim activists is a key part of distinctions made by Timothy Peace between activists with Muslim background (and possibly belief and practice) that did not describe themselves in these terms vs. "Muslim activists" proper (Peace 2015, p.2). It should be clarified that although Peace draws this distinction between Muslim activists and activists of Muslim background - he uses phrases such as "migrant origin activists" (ibid.) to describe those who did not define their activism in this way - he notes that most of the activists interviewed "did not invoke the importance of their faith in their political activism unless they were specifically prompted with a question regarding this" (ibid., p.95). This was reflected in my interviews; only one interviewee presented a direct path from scriptural analysis to care for the

environment. This may lead to the question "how Islamic is XR Muslims?". However, finding a way of quantifying Islamicness has some serious methodological issues, not least of which is the fact that there is a requirement to have some authoritative metric with which to judge this. However, even without deciding on a scale of how Islamic the group is, it is worth exploring who XR Muslims is performing their Islam *for.*

The perception of disengagement

A prevailing attitude amongst the activists I spoke to was a frustration with a perceived lack of engagement with environmental issues by their fellow Muslims, which echoes previous research (e.g. Foltz 2000; Gilliat-Ray and Bryant 2011; Hancock 2019, p.3). The suggested reasons given for this varied widely, although as one participant noted that nothing too definitive can be said in that "it could be so many different things". This activist noted that they found elements of Islamic environmental debate "exhausting" because of what they viewed as a widespread "shallow" understanding Islamic faith by Muslims that focuses on the procedural mechanics of personal salvation. Implicit in this understanding is the suggestion that a deep understanding of Islam would lead to a level concern for environmental causes, although it should be noted that this activist voiced hesitation about this. Another activist was more resolute in this conviction, stating that a lack of focused Islamic education about environmental issues might contribute to what they perceived as a disengaged Islamic community. This interviewee did note their own Islamic education (in the form of weekend class alongside secondary school) did provide a lot of the "knowledge" to inform them environmentally, but that it was not laid out directly in its own "chapter". This also suggests that the activist views Islam as inherently environmental, which they backed up in saying:

> "Muslims … tend to have a lot of struggles of their own, being from the global south generally" and noted the economic concerns associated with this, but noted that "if they defined it as a Muslim struggle, that their Muslim brothers and sisters are being affected by it more than they're being affected by wars in Syria or Yemen or in Palestine… that would

> definitely change the Islamic perspective on the environmentalism – or not the Islamic perspective, but, like, *Muslim* perspectives on environmentalism… that would definitely give it… a certain urgency for Muslims, that if you want to be a Muslim you *have* to be an environmentalist… you have to work for your Muslim brothers and sisters, you have to support them through environmental measures, policies" and general systemically focused activism".

This quote also highlights potential political and cultural barriers that prevent Muslim mobilization around environmental issues. They noted that Muslims do certainly mobilize effectively around issues that *are* considered meaningful to Muslims as Muslims, highlighting international controversies around Kashmir, Palestine, the treatment of Uyghurs in China etc. Whilst, as with much of what is discussed here, this is anecdotal, there is some evidence to back up this claim, with a poll of just over 4000 people in 2012 conducted by ICM Research alongside JustGiving finding that Muslims give on average more to charity than any other religious group in the UK (Ainsworth 2013), though it is noted that this and other forms of political engagement are often focused on 'Muslim' charities or issues (Khimji 2014, p.7; DeHanas 2016), although there are issues with this kind of categorization (May 2019). This would indicate that Muslim solidarity is a force that can be mobilized by activists in building a base of environmental activists with Muslim communities. It is also worth noting that my interviewee was eager not to minimize the dire situation of Muslims facing issues like war, occupation etc. but that it was their belief that Muslim environmental activists should do more to highlight the urgency with which these environmental issues link with other areas of Muslim activism and religion, in the same way that many Islamic charities that started out involved in providing relief from natural disasters (e.g. Islamic Relief, Islamic Help) are becoming more aware of the way climate change intersects with community resilience and poverty and have been more involved with environmental causes in recent years.

Beyond this, however, certain cultural and political designations associated with environmentalism are deemed to be creating an atmosphere that is not

necessarily welcoming for many Muslims. As one activist put it, “If you’re a Muslim who supports Muslim values, you look at environmentalism as a hippie life or a hippie attitude”. Another highlighted that

> “the issue (of environmental concern) is so political, it’s associated with the Left wing, with ‘progressive’ politics; it could be something that either puts them off or makes them not think it’s their ‘scene’…It may be so far away from your world that you don’t think of associating yourself with it.”

The interviewee considered that discussion of certain aspects of these political positions might alienate many Muslims from wanting to be “directly associated with the Left”, with many wishing to “stay out of it”. One example that they highlighted as an element of what she identified with Left wing and progressive politics were issues related to LGBT+ rights. Four of my interviewees directly addressed this concern; the relevance of LGBT+ rights to XR Muslims seems to be a recurring issue as one participant had noted that it had been a source of tension in the past, and not everyone who brought it up was aware that this had been a part of conversations that had happened between the others on WhatsApp and online video calls. These wider conversations happened in the context of (ongoing) debates in XR about a fourth demand to the current list of:

1. Tell the truth: Governments must tell the truth by declaring a climate and ecological emergency, working with other institutions to communicate the urgency for change.
2. Act now: Governments must act now to halt biodiversity loss and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2025.
3. Beyond politics: Governments must create and be led by the decisions of a Citizens’ Assembly on climate and ecological justice. (Extinction Rebellion c.2018)

As the movement developed and spread internationally, criticisms of the movement’s racial and class makeup, as well as environmentalism’s history (and arguably continuing) tendency to not foreground the experiences of indigenous communities and communities of colour that often experience the consequences

of environmental degradation first and hardest (Brave NoiseCat 2019; Dembiki 2020). As such, the group XR U.S.[10] demands:

> "a just transition that prioritizes the most vulnerable people and indigenous sovereignty; establishes reparations and remediation led by and for Black people, Indigenous people, people of color and poor communities for years of environmental injustice, establishes legal rights for ecosystems to thrive and regenerate in perpetuity, and repairs the effects of ongoing ecocide to prevent extinction of human and all species, in order to maintain a livable, just planet for all." (XR U.S. 2019)

This caused a split in the movement in America, with XR U.S. clarifying:

> "Extinction Rebellion US is not affiliated with, nor do we support XR America. Our heart and solidarity is with climate justice. XR America has removed the XR US 4th demand and replaced it with an "All Lives Matter" demand and the foundation of their organization and work is based on the false and discredited idea that the Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) is separate from social justice." (ibid.)

The debate over the connection between social justice and climate justice is rarely an absolute dichotomy; however, there were tactical concerns amongst group members that this would open the door to many conversations that could make the political opinions of XR a will become too specific and split the movement, as it did in America; this was not limited only to racial issues but also opinions that some Muslims might consider to fall into issues of morality. One participant explicitly referenced a post form the Extinction Rebellion UK Facebook page sating the movement's "unconditional support" of transgender rights, proclaiming that the identification of trans people with their gender (and expressions outside of the gender binary) as "valid, legitimate and true. This is not up for debate."

---

[10] XR US/XR U.S. and Extinction Rebellion US/U.S. are synonymous; this organization is distinct from XR America, which split from this group over the issue of the fourth demand.

Interestingly, of the participants who brought up these issues, every one expressed either support of (or at least ambivalence towards) LGBT+ rights and individuals, especially in the context of environmental activism. One noted in a meeting that while they perceived there to be incompatibilities with the teaching of Islam and homosexual relationships, the fact that British society allows this diversity means that XR should be open to supporting LGBT+ protections.
One participant felt the need to retract their statement on LGBT+ rights given in their interview, but allowed me to include their statement that activists with XR Muslims had previously expressed views against LGBT+ rights. XR Muslim activist and scholar Alessandra Palange noted in private correspondence (which she agreed to allow me to cite) XR's principles as an organization mean that in order to be a part of the wider movement, groups within XR must to a certain extent accept certain values like LGBT+ rights, even if individuals within the group reject them (2020). In other words, there is arguable an implicit acceptance of the values of the wider organisation, even if this is not necessarily a conscious on the part of individual activists (ibid). An interviewee noted the work of Jonathan AC Brown (2017) and Dawud Walid (2018) and what they considered the "mental gymnastics"[11] involved in trying to justify LGBT+ allyship; they attributed a lack if Islamic scholarly attention to climate change to preoccupation with issues like this "because they have such a prescriptive, normative way of doing Islam, you know? Rather than thinking about the bigger picture 'Oh shit! We're in the shit at the moment'...Who cares about two men that want to marry each other, you know?" The answer to that rhetorical question – "who cares?" – may be a very important one. None[12] of these participants stated that they had come across

[11] I should note – neither my participant nor I am putting forward that Walid and Brown have the same views on LGBT+ allyship and Islam – rather they are both thinkers who have spent time dealing with these issues. Some of the distinctions between their approaches were clarified by Palange (2020).
[12] One participant did note the position of, for example, Walid (2018) and other "orthodox / traditionalist scholars" (Palange 2020) who make a distinction between allyship and coalition, with coalitions being more around working together for specific goals without fully endorsing a group. I do not subscribe to the same distinction, as in practice what Walid refers to as coalitions may well lead to increased networks between organizations, whilst groups considering each other allies can break up over disagreements. Regardless, there was an effort to give evidence of the effect of pro-LGBT+ activism on Muslim involvement in XR, and it was noted that individuals within XR Muslims *have* voiced

Muslims who had been pushed away from environmentalism through the association with “Left Wing” politics “progressive” ideas of “hippie lifestyles”, and by their own admission the “Muslim values” that one participant mentioned was not necessarily in line with their own “liberal” thinking. Whilst there is likely truth to the idea that these are putting off some potential Muslim activists, the criticism appears to be sourced from an idea of Islamic orthodoxy that none of the individuals highlighting it recognize as their own, with even the most vociferous critic of the fourth demand on the grounds that it might come to include mandatory support for LGBT+ causes stating “I don't have issues with Trans equality campaigns etc.” In other words, a possibly imagined orthodoxy is having an effect on the form of Islamic expressions of activism that XR Muslims are making, and the difficulties in settling the apparent contradictions between the values of this imagined orthodoxy and activist trends are given as a reason for Muslim disengagement. However, as one activist was keen to highlight, Muslims disengagement with the environmental movement does not make them particularly distinct from any other group in the UK necessarily, and many of the contradictions between Islamic orthodoxy (imagined or otherwise) and “progressive” activism exist with other religious groups too (Palange 2020).

Connections between religion and activism

The relationships activists identified between their faith and their activism was hugely varied. Only one activist noted a direct relationship between their activism and the reading of Islamic texts, noting the use of the natural world in the Qur’an and hadith as inspiring them to explore environmental themes. However, like every other interviewee, their path to XR Muslims involved previous activism both environmental and otherwise. Two specifically mentioned turbulent relationships with their faith, with one noting that whilst spiritual ecology became important for their view on the environment (after becoming involved in environmentalism in part through their career), it was more heavily influenced by “shamanic” and Buddhist traditions; “the Islam came quite late”. They noted that

---

direct opposition to XR Muslims in the past (Palange 2020), but there was no direct evidence of an individual leaving/being turned away from joining the group for this reason.

they rediscovered their Islam through the Sufi tradition after re-examining their Islamic identity after feeling alienated by the result of the Brexit vote.

However, although most of my participants did not note a specific Islamic influence, there is some support for the idea that for some of them Islamic environmental teaching forms what Shahab Ahmed (2016) would refer to as the Pre-Text of their environmental thinking, informing the worldview that later manifests in more 'secular' environmentalism. A clear example of this is the fact that three participants noted Qur'anic and hadith injunctions against waste and requiring good treatment of animals etc. taught to them by parents or Islamic schools that may not have put them in environmental terms but which when explicitly examined in this way demonstrate a clear Islamic environmental ethic. So whilst career choices, engagement with the natural world (in the form of a constant awareness of the sea in Aden, the relative closeness to wild land in Northern Scotland, or a experiences of African wildlife in two cases, suggesting that "earlier" forms of preservationist environmentalism continue to be relevant) and networks of related activism may be more important for nourishing environmental consciousness, Islamic teaching on the environment can be an unconscious element of the environmental worldview that is not expressed in explicit terms until given a space like XR Muslims.

An unfortunate limitation of this study is the fact that there is limited scope to observe the relationships between religion and activism amongst XR Muslims 'in situ'; the interviews can only demonstrate the view of these individual activists on their faith's relationship to religion. However, there are some observations that can be made from the *Pause for the Earth* talks, the public record, and from a plan for a future event.

Examples from the *Pause for the Earth* talks have already been discussed, including starting the sessions with a *duʿāʾ* / prayer of supplication, the initial attempts to characterise the event as a *ḥalaqa* and the inclusion of a portion discussing verses of Qur'anic scripture are all ways of sacralizing (Demerath 2007) the event in a specifically Islamic way. Another example of this attempt to make activism Islamically meaningful comes from the group adapting the "Cube of

Truth" style of demonstration[13]. This method was taught via an online video-call by some non-Muslim activists from another group connected to XR. The method, pioneered by animal rights groups like Anonymous for the Voiceless, involves silent activists standing in a square facing outwards holding images relating to the issues that they are raising awareness of, whilst other activists encourage discussion with members of the public space (McCasker 2017). During the discussion, there were a couple of suggestions to make the action meaningful in terms of Islam. The event was named "Kaaba of Truth"[14] (Extinction Rebellion UK 2020) to make reference to the *Kaʿbah,* the central element of the sanctuary in Mecca / Makkah, the point at to which Muslims face in prayer and the most sacred place in Islam (Sourdel and Sourdel-Thomine 2007, p.86); this was backed up by aesthetic suggestions, having participants dress in black and possible including yellow / gold elements in imitation of the *kiswa,* the cloth covering the *Kaʿbah* (-ibid., p. 93).

One final event that is worth exploring, however, comes from a report about Sara Zaltash, an XR Muslim activist that I was not able to interview, but who was recommended to me by one of my participants as a potentially useful interviewee for what they considered a less orthodox (but nonetheless interesting) example of Islamic environmental expression.[15] Stefan Skrimshire reported that Zaltash was:

> teaching us, in her own words and gestures, the meaning of Allah and of the *Adhan*, the call to prayer, in the context of the climate crisis:
>
> "*Allahu 'akbar*…There is nothing greater than oneness…there is no God, no H&M, no Piccadilly, none of that, is greater than oneness…*Hayya 'ala I-falah*. Come to sanctuary. Come to success. 'Cause that's how important it

[13] I am only prepared to discuss this as the demonstration will have already taken place by the time this dissertation is made publicly available; putting out this information beforehand may have put participants interests and potentially safety and welfare at risk.

[14] *Kaʿbah* literally means "cube" in Arabic.

[15] The participant expressed a personal discomfort about, for example, Zaltash's interest in things like Tarot cards and astrology.

> is to stay safe...*Hayya 'ala s-salah*. Which means come celebrate. Come worship. Come pray.
>
> …the police are now moving amongst the crowd and begin arresting people at random…
>
> Zaltash breaks off briefly to chastise the police: "we're in the middle of prayer!" When she has finished she says, "You are invited to kiss the ground and place your forehead upon it three times, if you wish." A significant number of people follow her. She finishes with "blessings to you all. You are oneness."(2019)

Zaltash's specific interpretations and translations (e.g. *ṣalāh* as "celebration", the characterization of *tawḥīd* to state that "there no God…greater than oneness"[16] and her explicit folding of human beings into this description) may be unusual and perhaps off-putting to more conservative Muslim commentators, but the demonstration provides several useful insights. For one, the public sacralization of the space in Islamic terms through the performance of the *adhan* and explaining its significance (to her) for the climate crisis represents a distinct example of making environmental concerns meaningful in an Islamic way. However, it is clear that Zaltash does not only have a Muslim audience in mind, as her explanations and invitations to participate appear to be worded in such a way as to be inclusive to those without a familiarity with the beliefs and practices she is "teaching". Furthermore, Skrimshire's reporting seems to suggest that there was another layer of analysis necessary to understand Zaltash's actions, as she appears to mobilize her expression of faith to support her activism, potentially using it to either dissuade police action or to frame arrests as a form of religious persecution by re-framing the protest as prayer. These elements of Zaltash's

[16] Zaltash was not available for interview, and the article was ambiguous as to whether her statement here was a rejection of the idea of God separate from the oneness of creation (Pantheism) or stating that there is no deity beyond the God defined by *tawḥīd.* The latter is not a significant challenge to normative Islamic orthodoxy, essentially being a restatement of the Shahada/*šahāda,* the Islamic declaration that there is "No god but God" (*Lā ilāha illā Allāh* – see Sourdel and Sourdel-Thomine 2007, p.157), whereas the former is a far more radical statement that many Muslims would find heretical. There are unfortunately some areas in the reporting that are unclear and demonstrate a lack of awareness of certain Islamic mores e.g. calling the *adhan* "singing" in a way not necessarily appropriate for this kind of sound art (Morris 2013, p.33).

actions unfortunately highlight some of the limitations of studying only what activists say about the way their work interacts with their religion: it misses the practical application of their faith in a setting that includes not only their sense of personal identity but also how this relates to a wider movement and society.

Belonging and Identity – Muslims in XR

A word that repeatedly came up, especially amongst respondents of colour, was "welcoming"; this was often explicitly in response and rejection of narratives that XR is in some way unwelcoming to a people outside of a perceived class or ethnic background. Whilst everyone interviewed recognized the criticism, there was considerable push-back against it. One interviewee responded to the accusation that XR was mainly middle-class by vociferously insisting that they could not be categorized this was as they are "barefooted anarchists" who "look like they're homeless – you can't call that middle class!" As mentioned before, definitions of class vary – the appearance and political positions of activists within XR does not necessarily exclude them from considering themselves - or be considered by others to be - from middle-class backgrounds. Nonetheless, it represents a challenge to the idea that the perception of the ethnic and class makeup of XR as a movement is off-putting to its building a larger base. One interviewee noted that their introduction to XR was at a Christmas event run by the local XR group, and that they were particularly grateful for the engagement with their young children. Of course, the fact that my participants found XR to have a welcoming atmosphere is unsurprising – the fact that they joined XR makes them to a certain extent self-selecting with regards to their comfort with the movement. It is also notable that many where part of another XR group before someone else (often non-Muslim) introduced them to XR Muslims as a concept. Many expressed a sense of gratitude for a space to be able to speak about environmental matters in an Islamic environment, although there appears to be a certain amount of tension about who the group's 'target audience' is – whether the focus should be on bringing Muslims into XR (or the environmental movement more broadly) or on expressing positive elements of Islamic faith to non-Muslims. Whilst these two goals are by no means

mutually exclusive, the tension between which one to give greater focus to can lead to disagreements. For example, one potential function of a group like XR Muslims for the wider movement is to challenge the stereotypical descriptions of the XR and environmentalism more broadly. In other words, by being vocal about their place as Muslims within the environmental movement, XR Muslims can act to contradict the idea that the movement is hostile to them, improving the image of XR to a wider (non-Muslim) public whilst also sending a message to Muslims that there is a place for them in the movement. However, when I brought this up some members of the group bristled at the idea of this of XR Muslims having this kind of "performative" role, perhaps considering that focusing on this element would be tantamount to accepting a form of tokenism, by which their involvement is only considered to have value in relationship to the wider organisation; in other words, their interests are not authentically valued and addressed (Gallagher 2009, p.905). Some in the group were so vociferously opposed to the idea that one participant subsequently suggested that the group should "focus more on Muslims". However, this is far from a unanimous opinion. An example of the opposite view was revealed in an online meeting about the aforementioned Cube of Truth. The action was primarily concerned with raising awareness some of environmental catastrophe to a wider public audience, but one activist suggested that there might be a the interfaith possibilities associated with the *burqa'*/ *niqāb*[17] – this (male) participant wondered aloud whether a non-Muslim (presumably female) activist whether she would be willing to don such a garment to participate in the demonstration, and indeed later asked one, who gave a comment to the affirmative when reassured by members of the group that this

[17] A full face veil. I am using both words here because both words were used by the activist in question. The distinction is a little complex – I would normally reserve Arabic word *burqa'* for fairly specific garments; either the type famously associated in Afghanistan or a certain type of face-veil traditionally worn by Bedouin women in the Arabian gulf for example. For most cases *niqāb* is the more appropriate designation. Anecdotally, I find the term *burqa'* and its conflation with the *niqāb* to be common amongst non-Muslims, and the activist's use of these words may have been to communicate the with the non-Muslim activists present in the online meeting. On the other hand, I do not know the extent to which this distinction exists in other communities (academic dictionaries seem to corroborate this, but they are inconsistent – the Oxford Dictionary of Islam simple has "see Chador", referring to what I would call an entirely different garment; see also Sourdel and Sourdel-Thomine 2007, p.27 and the language used in Inge 2016). I can only attest to the distinction in the Hejaz region of Saudi Arabia (where my family are from, and whose usage of these terms I follow), so the male activist could also be reflecting either ignorance of the distinction or the lack of one existing in his own community.

would not be inappropriate. The female activist's initial reservations were perhaps due not only to questions about Islamic etiquette but also considerations of cultural appropriation, which have for a long time (and continue to) be a source of criticism of radical environmental movements including XR (Taylor 1997; Brunk and Young 2009; Humi 2019). The male activist's intention was made clear in his comments suggested that this might act to make the lived experiences Muslims more tangible for non-Muslim activist. There are issues with this; for one thing, the essentializing of Muslim femininity to the headscarf / *ḥijāb* has led to some Muslim women to push back against non-Muslims wearing the hijab to express solidarity with them, citing the work of Muslim feminists like Fatema Mernissi (e.g. 1992) – a scholar who one interviewee noted as an influence on them – in rejecting the religious wearing of a headscarf as a symbol of patriarchal oppression (Nomani and Arafa 2015; Quotah 2019). These critiques of the headscarf / *ḥijāb* apply equally, if not even more, to the much rarer *burqa'/ niqāb*. It should be noted that the male activist did acknowledge the fact that the use of a *niqāb* only represented one form of Islamic expression and would not be intended to be representative of all Muslim (or even all female) Muslim experiences, and that there where practical concerns regarding the nature of the specific type of demonstration that called for some form of face covering. However, the suggested use of the *burqa'/ niqāb* – an item of clothing specifically identified with Islam – to do this arguably demonstrates a desire to express environmental concerns in a specifically Islamic way. In other words, there was a conscious effort to make the activism Islamically meaningful. However, the fact that the Muslim activist specifically wanted to involve an interfaith dimension that was focused on non-Muslims gaining an understanding of Muslim lived experience suggests an aspiration to be Islamic *for non-Muslims.* This shows that although there are some members of the group that wish to focus their energies on recruiting Muslims into XR and environmentalism more generally, there are also elements that wish to focus on XR and non-Muslim environmentalists themselves.

One possible reason for the lack of unity surrounding target audience is to do with the fact that the virtual community is not in any way concentrated around specific

Muslim communities – both in terms of philosophical, religious and identarian diversity, but also just by simple geography. Hancock notes the contrast between two American Muslim environmental activists, one in an "ethnically diverse, low socioeconomic Muslim community" and the other "in a more affluent community that is predominantly South Asian", in which the former put focus on "environmental justice and its relation to poverty" whilst the latter "focused on personal responsibility, education and the promotion of environmentally responsible behaviour" (2019, p.110). This difference in fundamental outlook and activity is suggested to be the result of the types of communities in which these activists operate. The dispersed nature of XR Muslims may prevent a sense of a specific sense of an "audience"; this is especially true in the period studied in that concerns over COVID -19 prevented (or at least were perceived to prevent; the BLM movement has demonstrated that this need not have been the case) physical demonstrations. Regardless of possible moral or tactical issues with this demonstration, this suggestion of it as a potential form of activism seems to demonstrate that there is a degree of contradiction in terms of who XR Muslims is *for*. This is reflected in discussion that began towards the end of my study around rebranding XR Muslims in a way that did foreground its affinity with XR. This seems to mainly stem from the perception that XR's reputation from controversial actions and tactics (mass arrests, the oft-cited Tube protest in October 2019, connotations of inflammatory terms like 'rebel' etc.) end up dissuading potential new activists, especially in the Muslim community – this will be discussed later. However, other elements of XR Muslims' relationship with XR are revealing about how some Muslim activists relate to their faith identity within an activist setting. For example, a member of the Faith Bridge group asked if XR Muslims wished to be included on their website under the heading "Diaspora" on XR's website (Extinction Rebellion UK [no date]b). As it stands (August 2020), the group is only listed under religions, and whilst I do not think the group ever came to a decisive conclusion the discussion itself was revealing.

The most substantial answer came from one of my participants over WhatsApp:

> I too think being listed in "diaspora" makes sense from an intersectional approach. Being muslim has both religious and cultural contexts for minority status. Diaspora brings in that other minority context for some of us (but not all of us if one converted to islam from a non-diasporic ancestral context eg ***NAMES REDACTED*** or if one was born to Islam through parents having converted such as Sami I think).
>
> For those of us who do come from diasporic contexts, it is a big part of our identity that our parents/ancestors came to the UK from many other muslim countries (ghana, kenya, yemen, india, bangladesh, pakistan, indonesia etc).
>
> For those of us who don't come from diasporic contexts, there may be other ways that you feel a minority in the UK (e.g. ***NAMES REDACTED*** [Sami, do you identify as white?] - does being "white muslim" in itself feel like a minority identity?)
>
> Interested to hear other views 🙏🏾☪️

It seems that this approach is not only rooted in a sense of personal identity but also tactical considerations – the idea that this is "form an intersectional approach" to bring in the "minority context". Interestingly, this message prioritizes the experiences of white Muslims rather than Muslims of, say, South Asian heritage that may prefer to be defined in terms of their Britishness rather than by their diasporic heritage.

This point can be linked to the idea that environmentalism in general (and XR in particular) to be associated with a small, elite subculture built on the privilege of middle- and upper-class experience and resources. As noted before, the history of environmental activism in Britain especially certainly has its roots in the interests of upper- and later middle-class interests around the preservation of natural spaces from industrialization. Many makers of more middle class and elite levels of cultural and social capital (higher education including postgraduate, professions such as schoolteacher, lawyer, university lecturer, reference to safari holidays abroad etc.) and the over-representation of "twice migrant" individuals

suggest that XR is middle class/elite is replicated within XR Muslims itself. Nonetheless, there is a potential for XR Muslims to utilise their position as being connected to marginalized communities via "diaspora" identifications can serve both to affect change within XR as well as dispel criticisms of the "white as it is green" stereotype of environmentalism, both to bad faith critics of the movement and Muslims who feel there is not a place for them within XR more broadly.

One of my interviewees suggested that as much as some members of XR Muslims might show frustration about a lack of environmental outlets in traditional Islamic institutions, part of XR Muslims' usefulness is in providing a point for It should be noted that the issues of Islamic representation are not unique to environmental activism; this issue has been highlighted by Jones et al. (2015). Their recommendations of claims-based representation, meaning that the fact that their contributions are not necessarily representative are not necessarily harmful, might be useful in understanding the potential for what a group like XR Muslims can be within a larger activist movement. One activist, notably one who identifies as a practicing Christian, felt a dissatisfaction with some of the ways XR approaches XR Muslims and seemed to suggest the scope for a broader definition of *da'wah* that includes introducing Muslim ideas to a wider audience, saying:

> "what does XR Muslims bring to the movement apart from 'we mobilise Muslims'? I think that there could be something… the Islamic reflections on what it means to be human ... the criticism of consumer capitalism, of individualism; and of that richness of the unity of life… there's a lot of really interesting theory and practice… I haven't seen people go 'Oh my God, there's this amazing Muslim concept that they do and lest use that, let's do that and make it a part of our theory of change'".

This recognition of the ways that Islamic understandings of the environment was not taken on board as a part of XR's "political spirituality" was considered by this activist not to be "the fault of XR Muslim", but more to do with what they defined as "liberal Western" or "Leftist" society showing a disproportionate interest in forms of spirituality considered to be focuses on indigenous traditions rather than organized religions. They roundly criticized what they considered the adoption of

“pseudo-indigenous” tradition, considering it to be rooted in colonial mindsets of the “noble savage”. Although the World religions paradigm has been thoroughly criticized in Religious Studies (e.g. Cotter and Robertson 2016), it seems that the continued prevalence if a distinction between between World Religions and indigenous traditions makes some religious traditions considered “liberatory” and therefore acceptable in elements of secular, Left-leaning activist thought, whereas the “World Religions” are more often seen as forms of oppression. This is especially true of Abrahamic faiths, with an interviewee noting that “Buddhists have an easier time” because many practices associated with it (yoga, meditation etc.) are considered “woke and trendy” by largely secular actors. This is arguably true even within XR Muslims, as one activist within the group noted the influence of Buddhist and “shamanic” thought and practice on especially their earlier environmental thought, and was keen to invite a South American indigenous activist to speak about their own tradition in a meeting set up to discuss plans for redeveloping XR Muslims’ strategies going forward.

So, as much as XR has been welcoming to XR Muslims as a form of diversity, to move past a sort of tokenism, the movement would need to engage more with including the “content” of Islamic environmentalism within the “political spirituality” of XR.

Solidarity, *Ummah* and Islamic Globalization

This project was confined to studying XR Muslims as a British group, and every one of my participants resides in Britain, mainly England (Leicester, Leeds, London, Cambridge, Birmingham, Cornwall, as well as someone based in Scotland). However, it should be noted that the international nature of the group was a key feature that stood out over the course of this investigation, both to me and a few of my interviewees. Part of this stemmed from the fact that every single participant was either born outside of the UK or had parents who were. The specifics of this varied, with participants having roots in places as diverse as Germany, Italy, Yemen, Tanzania, Kenya, India, Bangladesh, and Mauritius.

Similarly, the online nature of the to the Pause for the Earth talks meant that in an international scope was very easy to achieve with contributions coming from activists operating in The Gambia, Kenya, Indonesia and the USA alongside various speakers based in Britain. However, I would suggest that the internationalism of XR Muslims' activities is more substantial than pure demography; closer analysis of some content from these talks can provide some potentially helpful insight into the evidence and ramifications of this.

The first session included a presentation by Kebba Jange, the national coordinator for XR Gambia (XR Muslims 2020a) He initially noted some Islamic sources of environmental consciousness, speaking in general terms relating to ideas of unity (*tawḥīd*), Qur'anic injunctions to come together to work for goodness and refraining from sin and transgression- as he puts "What better goodness is there –apart from worshiping *Allah subḥaanahu wa-taʿala* and following also the *sunnah* of the Prophet *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* – than taking care of the environment and giving the environment its due right?" It should be noted that he connects these two immediately afterwards, pointing out that care for the natural world is a part of worship and following the *sunnah*. Interestingly, in comparison to my participant's lack of notice of attention to gender, Jange's presentation noted a specifically gendered approach to activism in linking XR to women's liberation through XR Gambia's activities around International Women's Day. This link between social and climate justice was characterized by Jange in part as a recognition of women as a key part of agriculture and food production; the photographs involved women holing signs with the XR logo alongside slogans that are not explicitly environmental ("We are fighting for a just world", "Every woman deserves education", "We cannot success when half of us are held back", "Equality Everywhere" etc.). This suggests that the way in which Gambian activists have embraced the ideology of XR is radically different in focus, as their concerns are as much on social mobilization of a base of support rather than more uncomplicatedly environmental activities like tree planting (which they also do).

However, perhaps the most interesting element of XR Gambia's involvement in the talks came in the last one, when an activist from Kenya reported on their work

and highlighted a successful campaign to prevent a hotel development that would infringe on Masaai land and a national park in Nairobi. (Kirui 2020; Muslims for Extinction Rebellion 2020a). One of my participants noted that part of this success came though international support via, amongst others, groups in XR that are concerned with international solidarity. They also noted that a key part of this came via XR Gambia and Jange's involvement with the *Pause for the Earth* talks**.** One of my interviewees suggested that an element of Gambian interest in the activism in the UK may be rooted in a "slight imperial notion that what is going on in Britain is somehow interesting or cool", contrasting that with the notion that "we (The Gambia etc. as Muslim majority countries) are the Muslim world". Whilst there might be some truth to this, I would argue that the mobilization of XR Gambia in solidarity with the campaign in Kenya is an example of XR Muslims working as a site of Islamic globalization, particularly through Anglophone Islam (Ahmed 2019b); a sense of transnational Islamic solidarity made XR Gambia linked with XR Muslims, and their communication through English-speaking activists led to actions of solidarity. One activist seemed to feel a sense of responsibility to foster this, voicing their support for XR Muslims being listed as a Diaspora community by saying "all our friends from across the Muslim world can feel even more a part of the scene - Indonesia, Ghana, Kenya, Yemen". Although the word was not invoked directly by any of my participants, I would argue that a way of characterizing the kind of Islamic solidarity displayed by members of the group would be a concern for the *Ummah,* a word used to describe the entire community of Muslim believers which continues to have significance to Muslims despite the historical challenges to a political embodiment of Islamic unity after the death of the Prophet Muhammad (Geaves 1996, pp.10–27). This idea of embodying *Ummah* in activism could be an understanding that Muslim environmental activists use to motivate Muslims environmentally as suggested by a participant in an earlier section; understanding climate change issues as a threat to the *Ummah* makes the problem an internal one and one that requires Muslim action *as Muslims.* In other words, understanding a global *Ummah* as an audience for the performance of Islam can potentially encourage Muslim environmental consciousness.

It should be noted that this shared Islamic identity is not the only factor in understanding the international nature of XR Muslims, with a few of my participants openly and vociferously rejecting the idea of solely Muslim-focused activism on at the expense of a vison that foregrounded the rights of humanity as a whole. Notably, the actions in Kenya were focused on the indigenous rights of the Maasai, a largely non-Muslim group. One interviewee suggested that the international component of XR Muslims connects with wider trends within activism focused on climate justice especially, with a focus on the "front line communities" where "the destruction is actually happening" in the most visible way. They asserted that "the contradictions of capitalism, the destruction it causes [are] far more visible in the Global South" and that "a lot of our struggles in the North should be informed by that".[18] As has already been noted, one activist felt that a general lack of Muslim engagement with environmental issues is due in part to Muslims not seeing environmental catastrophe as an issue that effects Muslims specifically in an Islamic way; in other words, that there is not enough awareness of a global sense of its effects on a globalized but interconnected Muslim *Ummah* to make it meaningful in terms of Islam.

Although language barriers act to partially confine the scope of XR Muslims as a site of more visible elements of Islamic globalization, the work being shared is not within the scope of Anglophone Islam, and looking outside of this milieu can

---

[18] As this interviewee noted, the North-South distinction "has its own problems". To some extent these problems are to do with the complexities involved in economic Globalization, but there are also more conceptual issues summarized by Comaroff and Comaroff (who the same participant mentioned in relation to XR Muslim's theory and praxis):

> Western enlightenment thought has, from the first, posited itself as the wellspring of universal learning, of Science and Philosophy, upper case; concomitantly, it has regarded the non-West—variously known as the Ancient World, the Orient, the Primitive World, the Third World, the Underdeveloped World, the Developing World, and now the Global South—primarily as a place of parochial wisdom, of antiquarian traditions, of exotic ways and means. Above all, of unprocessed data. These other worlds, in short, are treated less as sources of refined knowledge than as reservoirs of raw fact: of the minutiae from which Euromodernity might fashion its testable theories and transcendent truths. Just as it has long capitalized on non-Western 'raw materials' by ostensibly adding value and refinement to them. (2012b, pp.113–114)

The patronizing aspects of the North-South dichotomy are problematic for the kinds of liberatory thinking that XR wants to encourage; nonetheless, I have observed that it is a common framing amongst my participants and global-justice-minded members of XR more broadly, sometimes qualified with terms like "the so-called Global South" etc.

reveal some differences in Islamic environmentalism worldwide. For example, within XR Muslims and Islamic environmental activism more widely, leadership is taken almost entirely by "lay"[19] Muslims, with traditional scholarly religious functionaries being incredibly rare within the movement. However, the contribution of Fachruddin Mangunjaya to the *Pause for the Earth* talks highlighted the way his own work has been partly responsible for a mobilization of fatwas (*fatāwā,* sing. *fatwā,* religious legal rulings) to create an Islamic framework for environmental protection in Indonesia, where he is from and is based (Muslims for Extinction Rebellion 2020c; see also Mangunjayaa and McKay 2012; Gade 2015; Gade 2019). This expansion of the concept of *Ummah* means that Muslim activists can be encouraged to widen their scope beyond the normal confines of local Islamic presentations and be influenced by a sense of responsibility and kinship with a globalized Muslim audience that the effect and are effected by.

Rebranding – M.E.C.C.A. and the conflicts in microcosm

At the very end of my study in mid to late August 2020, the organisation I have been calling XR Muslims began to undergo some changes, and the discussions around these changes can be seen to encapsulate many of the tensions that my study has highlighted – disengagement with the wider Muslim community and the relationship with XR, local activism and international solidarity, and the problems of activism being "too political" and the challenge of rooting the group in Islam as well as other parts of individuals' identities and convictions in a meaningful way.

Based on the suggestion of someone who does not identify as a part of XR Muslims but who has worked with them closely,[20] some of my participants started

---

[19] Although the concept of lay vs. clergy comes from a specifically Christian context, I feel that it is an appropriate way to speak about Muslim leadership that falls outside of traditional religious and scholarly authority (Werbner 1996) whilst also not being more professionalized religious functionaries like chaplains.

[20] I am maintaining their anonymity, but I am familiar with this activist and know that they have worked extensively with Muslim environmental groups on a local and international level, as well as having considerable experience in international development, interfaith work, local community organizing etc., so their statements on working with Muslim communities is an informed one. This does

Figure 1 – Current M.E.C.C.A. logo (Muslims for Extinction Rebellion 2020d.)

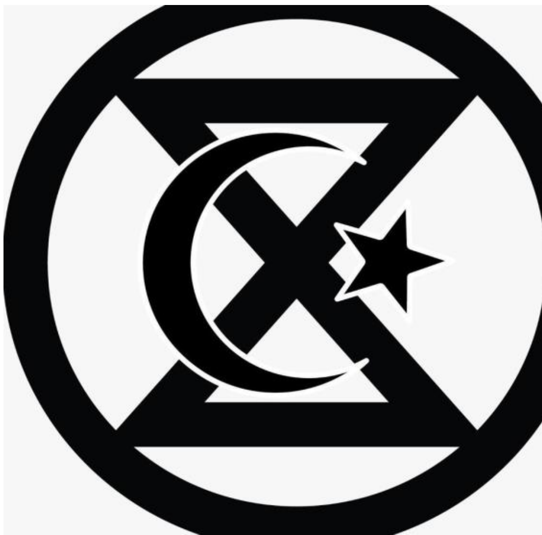

Figure 2 – XR Muslims logo 1 (Muslims for Extinction Rebellion 2019a.)

Figure 3 – XR Muslims logo 2 (Muslims for Extinction Rebellion 2019b.)

---

not make it 'correct' necessarily, but may explain why their suggestions for such drastic changes were taken on board.

making changes the logo and name so as not to make it explicitly linked to XR. One of my participants characterized the link with as "preventing the opening of doors within mainstream Muslim communities". The various potential barriers and problems with XR's reputation were suggested as reasons this change was considered valuable, and I would conjecture that terms like rebel may have different connotations for certain Muslims in the UK that may be off-putting, as could the perception of XR as "extremist" and "radical". So, a decision was made to create distance distance in terms of branding between the XR Muslims group and the rest of the movement. Although as I am writing this it is still not consistent across their social media (e.g. the names on the website, WhatsApp groups, Facebook page and group remain unchanged) a new logo, name and slogan have been adopted (Figure 1).

Although my fieldwork collection was supposed to be finished at this point (though I continued to maintain to the group that I was primarily involved in calls etc. as a researcher), this change in branding and the discussions surrounding it acted as a microcosm for the wider debates that permeate questions about the group's identity and its relationship with Islam, the Muslim community and XR as a whole.

Even in the limited scope of faith groups within XR, the Muslim group would not be alone either in having a name (like Christian Climate action) or logo (as with XR Buddhists) that does not have an immediate connection to XR itself. The name Muslim Ecological Consciousness & Climate Action appears to have specifically chosen to enhance the Islamicness of the group's identity (it is abbreviated M.E.C.C.A.) whilst minimizing the group's connection to controversies surrounding XR. However, the hourglass symbol is retained, albeit in a relatively subtly. Interestingly, while the original logo[21] (Figure 2) contained the XR hourglass prominently, the last logo was a geometric design that did not have any connection before the change did not have any connection at all (figure 3). As one of my participants noted, the new logo is the result of several compromises

[21] I have also seen a design of the XR hourglass surrounded by a crescent but was not able to find any evidence of this online.

between different interests within XR. For example, while some wished to de-emphasize the connection to XR to "open doors" within the Muslim community, others were very keen to maintain the link explicitly. On one hand this included a member who had been with XR since before the founding of XR Muslims and had been a part of the Muslim group since the beginning. However, representatives of XR Gambia that have begun to be more connected to the XR Muslims group since the *Pause for the Earth* talks were apparently also eager to maintain the XR connection. As I limited my investigation to XR Muslims as a British Muslim organization I did not interview members of XR Gambia, but one of my respondents reported this to me and regarding the use of the XR logo by the Gambian group "they love it, they've embraced it, they have no issue with it… they have no identity issues". The interviewee here specifically noted the international element and perception of international responsibility which is a part of what I will for now continue to call XR Muslims' decisions. It also highlights how localized some of the issues XR Muslims faces are. Many of the barriers that Gilliat-Ray and Bryant suggested prevented large numbers of British Muslims being active environmentalists - like their largely urban settlement patters, specific migration histories focused on industrial labour and just their status as a minority - are turned on their head in a place like The Gambia - a Muslim majority country with large portions of the population currently involved in subsistence agriculture (Sonko et al. 2020).

Other elements of the discussions around rebranding highlight some of the compromises and contradictions which define XR Muslims / M.E.C.C.A. Previous design suggestion included a shape reminiscent of a *miḥrāb* (an element of mosque architecture, a niche in the wall to indicate the *qiblah* / direction of prayer) which was rejected for stylistic reasons, but the addition of Arabic calligraphy caused one member to react with a message "No Arabic please! Too off-putting?". I believe the question mark may have been a typographical error and should have been an exclamation mark in keeping with the first sentence, but it may have been to indicate uncertainty. Regardless, considering how ubiquitous

Arabic calligraphy is in Islamic art including mosque decoration etc.[22], it seems implausible that the activist was even suggesting that its inclusion in a logo would be "off-putting" to a significant number of Muslims. As such, this blanket statement that there should be no Arabic calligraphy in the logo appears to be entirely centred on the potential perception of non-Muslims, even as a stated goal of the rebranding was to be more appealing to Muslims. The desire to still communicate "make the design give the 'feel' of an islamic voice (sic)" was possibly why the crescent was important to include.

That said, the crescent itself was controversial with at least one of my interviewees; the earliest logo's inclusion of this element was perceived by the respondent as somewhat unimaginative, but the reason it was deemed unsuitable was that it was "too political". They particularly noted the ubiquity of the star – and – crescent on flags of Muslim-majority countries and seemed to imply that this was a reason to not include this imagery in the XR Muslims logo. Of course, there are reasons to critique the crescent, with or without the star, as a symbol of Islam, and even whether this kind of symbol is appropriate for a faith as generally aniconic as Islam at all (see Grabar 2003). It has been noted for a long time that the desire for a symbol comparable to the cross to symbolise Islam throughout its history is something of an anachronism, and the (star – and –) crescent being used as this image appears to have its origin via an association with Ottoman heraldry (Hayes 1919). However, this was not explicitly given as a reason to reject the symbol in conversations I had with the activists involved. There was a discomfort with the potential implications of the crescent being around the globe, with the idea that it might imply (presumably to non-Muslims especially) that it was symbolizing some form of Islamic global domination. group's identity and its relationship with Islam, the Muslim community and XR as a whole. Although it is possible that this connotation was considered to be a problem for Muslims, it seems far more likely that this concern centres non-Muslim perceptions far more than Muslim ones.

[22] For example, in describing the mosque on the first floor of the Saray Restaurant in Cardiff, Abul-Azim Ahmed notes calligraphic art on the walls along with other features "one would usually find in a mosque" (Ahmed 2019a, p.148).

The globe itself was a source of controversy as well, with concerns that using commonly recognized world maps would continue to perpetuate Eurocentric imagery with a legacy of colonialism (Hodgkinson 1991), something that was meaningful for members of the group that identified themselves with roots in the "Global South", as groups like XR Gambia that they work in solidarity and association with. A suggestion to centre Mecca was rejected by one participant due to undefined issues with the state of Saudi Arabia; they communicated their distaste by simply saying "I don't know, Saudi Arabia…" whilst shaking their head; whether their issues were religious, political, environmental or some mixture of these criticisms was not elaborated on. Other suggestions included flipping the poles so that Europe and North America were at the bottom of the logo and recreating an image of Pangaea, the prehistoric landmass the broke up to form the modern continents, as a way of communicating unity through looking at the earth in a way that was free of political division. However, this was decided against as it was felt to not be recognisable

Conclusions

Although XR Muslims as a group is defined by its variety, what is clear from analysis is that it works as a group to cross the boundaries of various audiences in terms of what it wishes to communicate. To a wider British Muslim audience it seems to want to focus on making them aware of the environmental ethics within their faith tradition, and to make them aware that there is a place for them. To critics of XR's perceived lack of diversity, they can act as an embodied answer to notions that the movement is made up entirely of secular, white elites (even if their own class status is somewhat complicated). At the same time, many reacted negatively to the idea that they would primarily be tokenisticly used in this way, and encapsulated in broader definitions of *da'wah* there is some discomfort with the idea that their Islamic ideas are not being fully engaged with in XR's theory of change. There are also ideas that XR Muslims can act as acitivists for the interests of Muslims more broadly within XR, with some individuals promoting tactics to spread solidarity with Muslims amongst non-Muslim activists. However, the groups is also coming to grips with the international implications of their

representation and are engaging more readily both with a broader sense of Muslim globalization and international solidarity in identifying themselves with the Global South.

It should be noted that there were serious limitations for this research. Part of this was situational, with COVID and a lack of XR protests leading to an increased focus on self-identification; this lack of seeing people involved in actions, interacting with Muslim and non-Muslim audiences etc leaf to something of a "myopia of the visible" meaning that the focus was on an organization when it would have been better to explore the web of networks (Hancock 2019, p.23). The nature of XR Muslims as a small and changing group means that the specifics are highly bound in time and situation; however, the broader understanding of Muslim environmental audiences can be used to explore the interactions of Islamic groups with wider movements and society.

Bibliography

Abdul-Matin, I. 2010. *Green Deen: What Islam Teaches about Protecting the Planet*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Abrar, S. 2019. *Female 'Ulama in West Yorkshire: How and to what extent do they engage with Muslim communities?* MA, Cardiff University.

Ahmed, A.-A. 2018. The other ethical approval: The importance of being 'Islamic'. *Fieldwork in Religion* 12(2). Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1558/firn.35668 [Accessed: 5 June 2020].

Ahmed, A.-A. 2019a. Conceptualising Mosque Diversity. *Journal of Muslims in Europe* 8(2), pp. 138–158. doi: 10.1163/22117954-12341390.

Ahmed, A.-A. 2019b. Mind the Gap — The Textual, The Social, and Anglophone Islam. *Medium* 13 June. Available at: https://medium.com/@AbdulAzim/mind-the-gap-the-textual-the-social-and-anglophone-islamin-shahab-ahmeds-2015-book-what-is-1e42b79e10ac [Accessed: 1 June 2020].

Ahmed, R. 2015. *Writing British Muslims: Religion, Class and Multiculturalism*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Ahmed, S. 2016. *What Is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Available at: https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691164182/what-is-islam [Accessed: 30 April 2020].

Ainsworth, D. 2013. Muslim donors give more on average than other religious groups in the UK. *ThirdSector* . Available at: http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/muslim-donors-give-average-religious-groups-

uk/fundraising/article/1192969?utm_source=website&utm_medium=social [Accessed: 10 September 2020].

AKUISMC 2020. *Mosques, the Congregation and Anglophone Islam (Abdul-Azim Ahmed)*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ylzvILAajD8 [Accessed: 1 June 2020].

Alam, Y. and Husband, C. 2013. Islamophobia, community cohesion and counter-terrorism policies in Britain. *Patterns of Prejudice* 47(3), pp. 235–252. doi: 10.1080/0031322X.2013.797779.

Albrecht, J. 2011. *Muslim American Environmentalism: An Emerging Environmental Movement in America and Its Implications for Environmentalism and Muslims in America*. LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing.

Ali, S. et al. 2015. *British Muslims in numbers: a demographic, socio-economic and health profile of Muslims in Britain drawing on the 2011 census*. London: Muslim Council of Britain.

Anon 1998. Mecca bingo hall drops name after Muslim protests. *BBC News* . Available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/47352.stm [Accessed: 10 September 2020].

Asad, T. 2009. The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam. *Qui Parle*, 17(2), pp. 1–30.

Bano, M. 2017. *Female Islamic Education Movements: The Re-Democratisation of Islamic Knowledge*. Cambridge University Press.

Baumgart-Ochse, C. et al. 2017. Faith in Justice? The Role of Religion in Struggles for Global Justice. *Globalizations* 14(7), pp. 1069–1075. doi: 10.1080/14747731.2017.1325574.

BBC News 2020. Extinction Rebellion: Counter-terrorism police list group as 'extremist' in guide. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-51071959 [Accessed: 26 April 2020].

BBC One. 2017. *Blue Planet II*

Becker-Olsen, K. and Potucek, S. 2013. Greenwashing. In: Idowu, S. O. et al. eds. *Encyclopedia of Corporate Social Responsibility*. Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, pp. 1318–1323. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-28036-8_104 [Accessed: 1 September 2020].
Belasco, W.J. 2007. *Appetite for Change: How the Counterculture Took On the Food Industry*. Cornell University Press.

Bianchi, R.R. 2013. *Islamic Globalization: Pilgrimage, Capitalism, Democracy, And Diplomacy*. Singapore, SINGAPORE: World Scientific Publishing Company. Available at: http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cardiff/detail.action?docID=1336549 [Accessed: 1 September 2020].

Birt, Y. 2009. Promoting Virulent Envy? *The RUSI Journal* 154(4), pp. 52–58. doi: 10.1080/03071840903216460.

Blee, K.M. and Taylor, V. 2002. Semi-Structured Interviewing in Social Movement Research. In: Klandermans, B. and Staggenborg, S. eds. *Methods of Social Movement Research*. U of Minnesota Press

Bose, M. 1979. The Asians of Leicester: A Story of Worldly Success. *New Society* 49, pp. 339–341.

Boulianne, S. et al. 2020. "School Strike 4 Climate": Social Media and the International Youth Protest on Climate Change. *Media and Communication* 8(2), pp. 208–218. doi: 10.17645/mac.v8i2.2768.

Bourdieu, P. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Harvard University Press.

Boylorn, R.M. 2008. Participants as Co-Researchers. In: *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*. 2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks California 91320 United States: SAGE Publications, Inc. Available at: http://methods.sagepub.com/reference/sage-encyc-qualitative-research-methods/n310.xml [Accessed: 16 September 2020].

Brave NoiseCat, J. 2019. The Environmental Movement Needs to Reckon with Its Racist History. *Vice* . Available at: https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/bjwvn8/the-environmental-movement-needs-to-reckon-with-its-racist-history [Accessed: 11 September 2020].

Brown, J.A.C. 2017. LGBTQ and Islam Revisited: The Days of the Donald. *Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research* . Available at: https://yaqeeninstitute.org/jonathan-brown/lgbtq-and-islam-revisited-the-days-of-the-donald/ [Accessed: 11 September 2020].

Budruk, M. et al. 2009. Urban Green Spaces: A Study of Place Attachment and Environmental Attitudes in India. *Society & Natural Resources* 22(9), pp. 824–839. doi: 10.1080/08941920802628515.

Bunt, P. 2019. Environmental activism has a class problem. *Varsity Online*. Available at: https://www.varsity.co.uk/opinion/18010 [Accessed: 11 September 2020].

Butler, D. 2020. Don't you dare! Don't even go there! Have you said that about the people flocking to the beaches? [Twitter]. 1 June. Available at: https://twitter.com/DawnButlerBrent/status/1267462188219981827.

Carson, R. 1962. *Silent Spring*. London: Hamish Hamilton.

Christian Climate Action [no date]. Christian Climate Action: Direct Action, Public Witness for Change. Available at: https://christianclimateaction.org/ [Accessed: 8 September 2020].

Coghlan, D. and Brydon-Miller, M. 2014. *The Sage Encyclopedia of Action Research London*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. Available at: doi: 10.4135/9781446294406 [Accessed: 28 April 2020].

Cohen, A.P. 1985. *Symbolic Construction of Community*. London, UNITED KINGDOM: Taylor & Francis Group. Available at: http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cardiff/detail.action?docID=178361 [Accessed: 30 August 2020].

Cohen, B. and Tufail, W. 2017. Prevent and the Normalization of Islamophobia. In: Elahi, F. and Khan, O. eds. *Islamophobia: Still a Challenge For Us All*. London: Runnymede Trust

Comaroff, J. and Comaroff, J.L. 2012a. *Theory from the South: or, How Euro-America is evolving toward Africa*. Boulder, Colo. ; London: Paradigm Publishers.

Comaroff, J. and Comaroff, J.L. 2012b. Theory from the South: Or, how Euro-America is Evolving Toward Africa. *Anthropological Forum* 22(2), pp. 113–131. doi: 10.1080/00664677.2012.694169.

Connell, R. 2018. Decolonizing Sociology. *Contemporary Sociology* 47(4), pp. 399–407. doi: 10.1177/0094306118779811.

Cotter, C. R.; Robertson D.G, (eds.). 2016. *After World Religions: Reconstructing Religious Studies*. London and New York: Routledge.

Cowen, L. 2019. Are Extinction Rebellion whitewashing climate justice? *gal-dem* 18 April. Available at: https://gal-dem.com/extinction-rebellion-risk-trampling-climate-justice-movement/ [Accessed: 5 September 2020].

Daniels, S. 1993. *Fields of Vision: Landscape Imagery and National Identity in England and the United States*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

DeHanas, D.N. 2009. Broadcasting green: grassroots environmentalism on Muslim women's radio. *The Sociological Review* 57(s2), pp. 141–155. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-954X.2010.01890.x.

DeHanas, D.N. 2016. *London Youth, Religion, and Politics: Engagement and Activism from Brixton to Brick Lane*. Oxford: University Press, Oxford University Press USA - OSO.

Dembiki, G. 2020. A Debate Over Racism Has Split One of the World's Most Famous Climate Groups. *Vice* . Available at: https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/jgey8k/a-debate-over-racism-has-split-one-of-the-worlds-most-famous-climate-groups [Accessed: 11 September 2020].

Demerath, N.J. (III) 2007. Secularization and Sacralization Deconstraucted and Reconstructed. In: Beckford, J. A. and Demerath, N. J. (III) eds. *The SAGE Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*. SAGE, pp. 57–80.

Denscombe, M. 2017. *The Good Research Guide for Small Scale Social Research Projects*. 6th ed. London: Open University Press.

Eaves, E. 2015. A religious nature: Philosopher Seyyed Hossein Nasr on Islam and the environment. *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 71(5), pp. 13–18. doi: 10.1177/0096340215599785.

Diani, M. 2016. The network structure of the Italian ecology movement: *Social Science Information* . Available at: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/053901890029001001 [Accessed: 11 September 2020].

Doyle, T. 2000. *Green Power: The Environment Movement in Australia*. UNSW Press.

Ehrlich, P.R. 1968. *The Popualtion Bomb*. New York, NY: Sierra Club/Ballantine Books.

Erdur, O. 1997. Reappropriating the "Green": Islamist Environmentalism. *New Perspectives on Turkey* 17, pp. 151–166. doi: 10.1017/S089663460000279X.

Erel, U. 2010. Migrating Cultural Capital: Bourdieu in Migration Studies. *Sociology* 44(4), pp. 642–660. doi: 10.1177/0038038510369363.

Esposito, J.L. 2003a. Burqa. In: Esposito, J. L. ed. *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*. Oxford University Press. Available at: http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195125580.001.0001/acref-9780195125580-e-391 [Accessed: 6 September 2020].

Esposito, J.L. 2003b. Dawah. In: Esposito, J. L. ed. *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*. Oxford University Press. Available at: http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195125580.001.0001/acref-9780195125580-e-511 [Accessed: 1 September 2020].

Evans, E. 2019a. Can religion save us from a global environmental crisis? Available at: https://www.deseret.com/indepth/2019/8/14/20802442/religion-global-environmental-crisis-climate-change [Accessed: 23 August 2020].

Evans, R. 2019b. NHS reports protester to Prevent for joining Extinction Rebellion. *The Guardian* . Available at: Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/sep/01/nhs-reports-protester-to-prevent-extinction-rebellion [Accessed: 26 April 2020].

Extinction Rebellion c.2018. What Is XR?. Available at: https://rebellion.global/about-us/ [Accessed: 11 September 2020].

Extinction Rebellion UK c.2018. Declaration of Rebellion. *Extinction Rebellion UK* . Available at: https://rebellion.earth/declaration/ [Accessed: 9 September 2020].

Extinction Rebellion UK 2020. Kaaba of Truth. *Extinction Rebellion UK* Available at: https://extinctionrebellion.uk/event/kaaba-of-truth/ [Accessed: 7 September 2020].

Extinction Rebellion UK 2020. Trans Pride. *Extinction Rebellion UK Facebook Page* 28 June. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/XRebellionUK/posts/-trans-pride-extinction-rebellion-offers-our-unconditional-support-and-solidarit/748425699319581/ [Accessed: 11 September 2020].

Extinction Rebellion [no date]a. *About Us.* Available at: https://rebellion.earth/the-truth/about-us/ [Accessed 29 April 2020]

Extinction Rebellion UK [no date]b. Community Groups. *Extinction Rebellion UK* . Available at: https://extinctionrebellion.uk/act-now/resources/communities/community-groups/ [Accessed: 8 September 2020].

Fleischmann, L. and Palange, A. 2020. Repertoires of Knowledge Practices: Extinction Rebellion UK. *14th Annual Conference "Voices of Change: Presents, Pasts and Futures of Activism and Protest in Europe.* (Online conference – proceedings not currently available).

Foltz, R. 2000. Is There an Islamic Environmentalism? *Environmental Ethics* 22(1), pp. 63–72. doi: 10.5840/enviroethics200022149.

Foltz, R.C. 2003. Islamic Envrionmentalism: A Matter of Interpretation. In: Foltz, R. C. et al. eds. *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard Divinity School, pp. 249–275.

Fujii, L.A. 2017. *Interviewing in Social Science Research: A Relational Approach*. Routledge.

Gade, A.M. 2015. Islamic Law and the Environment in Indonesia: Fatwa and Daʿwa. *Worldviews* 19(2), pp. 161–183.

Gade, A.M. 2019. *Muslim Environmentalisms: Religious and Social Foundations*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Gallagher, D.R. 2009. Advocates for environmental justice: the role of the champion in public participation implementation. *Local Environment* 14(10), pp. 905–916. doi: 10.1080/13549830903244417.

Gayle, D. 2019. Does Extinction Rebellion have a race problem? *the Guardian* . Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/oct/04/extinction-rebellion-race-climate-crisis-inequality [Accessed: 11 July 2020].

Geaves, R. 1996. *Sectarian influences within Islam in Britain: with reference to the concepts of 'ummah' and 'community'*. Leeds: University of Leeds, Department of Theology and Religious Studies.

Gilliat-Ray, S. 2005. Closed Worlds: (Not) Accessing Deobandi Dar ul-Uloom in Britain. Available at: http://orca.cf.ac.uk/3823/ [Accessed: 26 May 2020].

Gilliat-Ray, S. 2010. *Muslims in Britain: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gilliat-Ray, S. et al. 2013. *Understanding Muslim Chaplaincy*. Routledge.

Gilliat-Ray, S. 2018. From 'closed worlds' to 'open doors': (now) accessing Deobandi darul uloom in Britain. Available at: http://orca.cf.ac.uk/115520/ [Accessed: 26 May 2020].

Gilliat-Ray, S. and Bryant, M. 2011. Are British Muslims 'Green'? An Overview of Environmental Activism among Muslims in Britain. *Journal for the Study of Religion Nature and Culture* 5(3), pp. 284–306.

Grierson, J. and Dodd, V. 2020. Terror police list that included Extinction Rebellion was shared across government. *The Guardian* . Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jan/27/terror-police-list-extinction-rebellion-shared-across-government [Accessed: 26 April 2020].

Grove, R.H. 1992. Origins of Western Environmentalism. *Scientific American* 261(1), pp. 42–47.

Guest, M. et. al. 2020. *Islam and Muslims on UK University Campuses: Perceptions and Challenges.* Doi: 10.13140/RG.2.2.32005.78560.

Hallam, R. 2019. *Common Sense for the 21st Century: Only Nonviolent Rebellion can now stop Climate Breakdown and Social Collapse*. Available at: https://www.rogerhallam.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Common-Sense-for-the-21st-Century_by-Roger-Hallam-Download-version.pdf.

Hancock, R. 2015. 'Islamic' Environmentalism in Great Britain. In: *Muslims and Political Participation in Britain*. Routledge, pp. 103–123.

Hancock, R. 2019. *Islamic Environmentalism: Activism in the United States and Great Britain*. London: Routledge.

Hardin, G. The tragedy of the commons. *Science* 162, 1243–1248
(1968)

Hayes, H.E.E. 1919. The Crescent as Symbol of Islam. *The Muslim World* 9(2), pp. 149–155. doi: 10.1111/j.1478-1913.1919.tb01761.x.

Hayns-Worthington, S. 2018. The Attenborough effect: Searches for plastic recycling rocket after Blue Planet II. *Resource Magazine* . Available at: https://resource.co/article/attenborough-effect-searches-plastic-recycling-rocket-after-blue-planet-ii-12334 [Accessed: 2 September 2020].

Hayward, S. 2019. Extinction Rebellion and anti-capitalist politics. *The Ecologist* . Available at: https://theecologist.org/2019/may/10/extinction-rebellion-and-anti-capitalist-politics [Accessed: 4 September 2020].

Heyden, T. 2013. Can I have no job or money and still be middle class? *BBC News* . Available at: https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-21953364 [Accessed: 15 September 2020].

Hodgkinson, K. 1991. Standing the World on its Head: A Review of Eurocentrism in Humanities Maps and Atlases. *Teaching History* (62), pp. 19–23.

Hodgson, M.G.S. 1977. *The venture of Islam : conscience and history in a world civilization*. Vol. 1 Chicago ; London : University of Chicago Press. Available at: http://archive.org/details/ventureofislamco00hodg [Accessed: 15 September 2020].

Humi, F. 2019. Let's address the whiteness of climate activism. *Climate Communicators* . Available at: https://www.climatecommunicators.com/climatexplained/lets-address-the-whiteness-of-climate-activism [Accessed: 6 September 2020].

Inge, A. 2016. *The Making of a Salafi Muslim Woman: Paths to Conversion*. New York: Oxford University Press, Oxford University Press USA - OSO. doi: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190611675.001.0001.

IPCC 2018. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5 ^{o}C. Available at: https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/ [Accessed: 1 September 2020].

Irving, L.S. 2013. The Earth Is Your Mosque (and Everyone Else's Too): Online Muslim Environmentalism and Interfaith Collaboration in UK and Singapore. *Cyber Orient* 7(1), pp. 34–63.

Islam, M.M. 2004. Towards a Green Earth: An Islamic Perspective. *Asian Affairs* 26(4), pp. 44–89.

Islam UK Centre 2015. *Zia Salik British Muslims and Charitable Giving*. Available at: http://sites.cardiff.ac.uk/islamukcentre/virtual-centre/public-lectures/2015-public-lectures/zia-salik/ [Accessed: 10 September 2020].

Jewkes, Y. 2014. An Introduction to "Doing Prison Research Differently". *Qualitative Inquiry* 20(4), pp. 387–391. doi: 10.1177/1077800413515828.

Johnson, E.W. and Frickel, S. 2011. Ecological Threat and the Founding of U.S. National Environmental Movement Organizations, 1962–1998. *Social Problems* 58(3), pp. 305–329. doi: 10.1525/sp.2011.58.3.305.

Jones, S.H. et al. 2015. A 'System of Self-Appointed Leaders'? Examining Modes of Muslim Representation in Governance in Britain. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 17(2), pp. 207–223. doi: 10.1111/1467-856X.12051.

Karagiannis, E. 2015. When the green gets greener: political Islam's newly-found environmentalism. *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 26(1), pp. 181–201. doi: 10.1080/09592318.2014.959768.

Khalid, F. 2010. Islam and the Environment – Ethics and Practice an Assessment. *Religion Compass* 4(11), pp. 707–716. doi: 10.1111/j.1749-8171.2010.00249.x.
Khalid, F. 2019. *Signs on the Earth: Islam, Modernity and the Climate Crisis*. Kube Publishing Ltd.

Khalid, F.M. 2017. Exploring Environmental Ethics in Islam: Insights from the Qur'an and the Practice of Prophet Muhammad. In: *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Religion and Ecology*. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, pp. 130–145. Available at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9781118465523.ch11 [Accessed: 27 August 2020].

Khimji, A. 2014. A Survey of Charitable Giving in the British Muslim Community. *Cause4* , p. 15.

Knight, S. 2019. Does Extinction Rebellion Have the Solution to the Climate Crisis? *The New Yorker* . Available at: https://www.newyorker.com/news/letter-from-the-uk/does-extinction-rebellion-have-the-solution-to-the-climate-crisis [Accessed: 2 September 2020].

Kuzmiak, D.T. 1991. The American Environmental Movement. *The Geographical Journal* 157(3), pp. 265–278. doi: 10.2307/635501.

Lincoln, Y.S. and González y González, E.M. 2008. The Search for Emerging Decolonizing Methodologies in Qualitative Research: Further Strategies for

Liberatory and Democratic Inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry* 14(5), pp. 784–805. doi: 10.1177/1077800408318304.

Long, I.J. and Ansari, B. 2018. Islamic Pastoral Care and the Development of Muslim Chaplaincy. *Journal of Muslim Mental Health* 12(1). Available at: http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.10381607.0012.105 [Accessed: 2 September 2020].

Mangunjayaa, F.M. and McKay, J.E. 2012. Reviving an Islamic Approach for Environmental Conservation in Indonesia. *Worldviews 16 (2012) 286–305* 16, pp. 286–305.

Marett, V. 1989. *Immigrants settling in the city*. Leicester University Press.

Matthews, S. 2020. Fears of Covid-19 spike across UK after Black Lives Matters protests. Available at: https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8398865/Fears-coronavirus-spike-UK-Black-Lives-Matters-protests.html [Accessed: 29 August 2020].

May, S. 2019. Islamic Charitable Giving in the UK: A 'Radical' Economic Alternative? *New Political Economy* 0(0), pp. 1–13. doi: 10.1080/13563467.2019.1664445.

McAneney, J. et al. 2014. Reflections on disaster loss trends, global climate change and insurance. In: *Applied Studies in Climate Adaptation*. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, pp. 26–33. Available at: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9781118845028.ch4 [Accessed: 2 September 2020].

McCasker, T. 2017. 'Cube of truth': Anonymous hit streets with violent footage of animal farming. *the Guardian* 31 January. Available at:

http://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/31/cube-of-truth-anonymous-hit-streets-with-violent-footage-of-animal-farming [Accessed: 7 September 2020].

McLoughlin, S. 2014. Discrepant representations of multi-Asian Leicester: Institutional discourse and everyday life in the 'model' multicultural city. In: McLoughlin, S. et al. eds. *Writing the City in British Asian Diasporas*. Abingdon, Oxfrordshire; New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 109–133.

Melucci, A. 1989. *Nomads of the Present*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, U.S.

Mernissi, F. 1992. *The Veil And The Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation Of Women's Rights In Islam*. Reprint Edition. Cambridge, Mass.: Basic Books.

Morris, C. 2013. *Sounds Islamic? Muslim Music in Britain*. PhD Thesis, Cardiff University. Available at: https://orca.cf.ac.uk/49338/1/2013morriscjphd.pdf.

Morris, C. 2019. The rise of a Muslim middle class in Britain: Ethnicity, music and the performance of Muslimness. *Ethnicities* 20(3), pp. 628–648. doi: 10.1177/1468796818822541.

Muslims for Extinction Rebellion 2019a. Untitled (logo 1). *Facebook Page* 21 September. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/xrmuslims/photos/a.117509176309380/117514292975535/ [Accessed: 8 September 2020].

Muslims for Extinction Rebellion 2019b. Untitled (logo 2). *Facebook Page* 27 September. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/xrmuslims/photos/a.117509176309380/126182682108696/ [Accessed: 8 September 2020].

Muslims for Extinction Rebellion 2020a. *LIVE at 18:00 TODAY: Pause for the Earth Ramadan Talks (Talk One)*. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=238567927230333&ref=watch_permalink [Accessed: 23 August 2020].

Muslims for Extinction Rebellion 2020b. *LIVE: Pause for the Earth (Climate change and faith, brough to you by XR Muslims) (Talk Four)*. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=691081825004400&external_log_id=e7ff3377-b72c-4889-ba6b-db71b8c7c1d5 [Accessed: 4 September 2020].

Muslims for Extinction Rebellion 2020c. *LIVE: Ramadan "Pause for the Earth" Talk (Talk Two)*. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/xrmuslims/videos/1332683950455558/?v=1332683950455558&external_log_id=f560b851b381cd0f66dceda7e90ebd0a [Accessed: 4 September 2020].

Muslims for Extinction Rebellion 2020d. SO MANY CHANGES! *Facbook* 27 August. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/xrmuslims/photos/a.154507519276212/353022699424692/?type=1&theater [Accessed: 8 September 2020].

Narayan, K. 1993. How Native Is a 'Native' Anthropologist? *American Anthropologist* 95(3), pp. 671–686.

Nasr, S.H. 1969. *Three Muslim Sages: Avicenna-Suhrawardi-Ibn Arabi*. Delmar, New York: Caravan Books.

Nasr, S.H. 1996. *Religion & the Order of Nature*. Oxford University Press.

Nasr, S.H. 2003. Islam, The Contemporary Islamic World, and the Environmental Crisis. In: Foltz, R. C. et al. eds. *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust*. Cambridge,

Massachusetts: Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard Divinity School, pp. 85–105.

Nazir, J. and Pedretti, E. 2016. Educators' perceptions of bringing students to environmental consciousness through engaging outdoor experiences. *Environmental Education Research* 22(2), pp. 288–304. doi: 10.1080/13504622.2014.996208.

Nomani, A.Q. and Arafa, H. 2015. As Muslim women, we actually ask you not to wear the hijab in the name of interfaith solidarity. *Washington Post* . Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2015/12/21/as-muslim-women-we-actually-ask-you-not-to-wear-the-hijab-in-the-name-of-interfaith-solidarity/ [Accessed: 6 September 2020].

Northcott, M.S. 2018. Reformed Protestantism and the Origins of Modern Environmentalism. *Philosophia Reformata* 83(1), pp. 19–33. doi: 10.1163/23528230-08301003.

O'Brien, H. 2019. Does the environmental movement have a class problem? *The New Statesmen* . Available at: https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/environment/2019/10/does-environmental-movement-have-class-problem [Accessed: 25 August 2020].

O'Niell, B. 2019. The madness of Extinction Rebellion. *Spiked Online* . Available at: https://www.spiked-online.com/2019/10/07/the-madness-of-extinction-rebellion/ [Accessed: 26 April 2020].

Palmer, C. 1992. Stewardship: A Case Study in Environmental Ethics. In: Ian Ball ed. *The Earth Beneath: A Critical Guide to Green Theology*. SPCK, pp. 67–86.

Palange, A. S. 2020. *Unpublished correspondence.*

Palange, A. c2020. FAQs: How can XR engage with Muslim communities? *Extinction Rebellion Muslims* . Available at: https://xrmuslims.wordpress.com/faqs-how-can-xr-engage-with-muslim-communities/ [Accessed: 17 May 2020].

Peace, T. 2015a. *European Social Movements and Muslim Activism: Another World but with Whom?* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Peace, T. 2015b. *Muslims and Political Participation in Britain*. Routledge.

Peach, C. and Gale, R. 2003. Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs in the New Religious Landscape of England. *Geographical Review* 93(4), pp. 469–490. doi: 10.1111/j.1931-0846.2003.tb00043.x.

Pepper, D. 1996. *Modern Environmentalism: An Introduction*. 1 edition. London ; New York: Routledge.

Poortinga, W. et al. 2013. The introduction of a single-use carrier bag charge in Wales: Attitude change and behavioural spillover effects. *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 36, pp. 240–247. doi: 10.1016/j.jenvp.2013.09.001.

Prendiville, B. 2014. British Environmentalism : A Party in Movement ? *Revue LISA/LISA e-journal. Littératures, Histoire des Idées, Images, Sociétés du Monde Anglophone – Literature, History of Ideas, Images and Societies of the English-speaking World* (vol. XII-n°8). Available at: http://journals.openedition.org/lisa/7119 [Accessed: 6 July 2020].

Prior, D.D. and Miller, L.M. 2012. Webethnography: Towards a Typology for Quality in Research Design. *International Journal of Market Research* 54(4), pp. 503–520. doi: 10.2501/IJMR-54-4-503-520.

Probst, B. 2015. The Eye Regards Itself: Benefits and Challenges of Reflexivity in Qualitative Social Work Research. *Social Work Research* 39(1), pp. 37–48. doi: 10.1093/swr/svu028.

Reser, J.P. et al. 2014. Public risk perceptions, understandings and responses to climate change. In: *Applied Studies in Climate Adaptation*. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, pp. 43–50. Available at: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9781118845028.ch6 [Accessed: 2 September 2020].

Rootes, C. 2007. Environmental Movements. In: *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, pp. 608–640. Available at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9780470999103.ch26 [Accessed: 11 September 2020].

Rosa, W. ed. 2017. Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In: *A New Era in Global Health*. New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company. Available at: http://connect.springerpub.com/lookup/doi/10.1891/9780826190123.ap02 [Accessed: 2 September 2020].

Safi, O. 2012. Qur'an of Nature: Cosmos as Divine Manifestation in Qur'an and Islamic Spirituality. *Religions: A Scholarly Journal* 2012(1), pp. 127–134. doi: 10.5339/rels.2012.environment.10.

Sanghera, G.S. and Thapar-Björkert, S. 2008. Methodological dilemmas: gatekeepers and positionality in Bradford. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31(3), pp. 543–562. doi: 10.1080/01419870701491952.

Sarkar, A. 2019. Why we need to pause before claiming cultural appropriation. Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/apr/29/cultural-

appropriation-racial-oppression-exploitation-colonialism [Accessed: 6 September 2020].

Savage, M. 2016. The fall and rise of class analysis in British sociology, 1950-2016. *Tempo Social* 28(2), p. 57. doi: 10.11606/0103-2070.ts.2016.110570.

Sayem, M.A. 2019. Seyyed Hossein Nasr's Works on Environmental Issues: A Survey. *Islamic Studies* 58(3), pp. 439–451.

Schlosberg, D. 1999. Networks and mobile arrangements: Organisational innovation in the US environmental justice movement. *Environmental Politics* 8(1), pp. 122–148. doi: 10.1080/09644019908414441.

Shellenberger, M. 2019. Why Climate Alarmism Hurts Us All. *Forbes* . Available at: Available at: https://www.forbes.com/sites/michaelshellenberger/2019/12/04/why-climate-alarmism-hurts-us-all/ [Accessed: 26 April 2020].

Silva, E.B. 2015. Class in contemporary Britain: comparing the Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion (CCSE) project and the Great British Class Survey (GBCS). *The Sociological Review* 63(2), pp. 373–392. doi: 10.1111/1467-954X.12286.

Skrimshire, S. 2019. Extinction Rebellion and the new visibility of religious protest. *openDemocracy* . Available at: https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/transformation/extinction-rebellion-and-new-visibility-religious-protest/ [Accessed: 5 September 2020].

Sonko, E. et al. 2020. Subsistence farmer knowledge of strategies alleviating food insecurity in the context of climate change in the lower river region of the Gambia. *Food Security* 12(3), pp. 607–624. doi: 10.1007/s12571-020-01024-z.

Sourdel, D. and Sourdel-Thomine, J. 2007. *A Glossary of Islam*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. Available at: http://web.a.ebscohost.com.abc.cardiff.ac.uk/ehost/ebookviewer/ebook/bmxlYmtfXzQ1OTQ2Ml9fQU41?sid=79d669a2-a02a-4139-8492-68561b732eda@sdc-v-sessmgr03&vid=2&format=EB&rid=1 [Accessed: 6 September 2020].

Taylor, B. 1997. Earthen Spirituality or Cultural Genocide?: Radical Environmentalism's Appropriation of Native American Spirituality. *Religion, 27:2, 183-215, DOI: 10.1006/reli.1996.0042* 27(2), pp. 183–215. doi: 10.1006/reli.1996.0042.

Tayob, A. 1999. *Islam in South Africa: Mosques, Imams, and Sermons*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Thomas, G.O. et al. 2019. The English Plastic Bag Charge Changed Behavior and Increased Support for Other Charges to Reduce Plastic Waste. *Frontiers in Psychology* 10. Available at: https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00266/full [Accessed: 2 September 2020].

United Nations Development Programe 2015. Background of the Sustainable Development Goals. Available at: https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/background.html [Accessed: 2 September 2020].

Walid, D. 2018. *Toward Sacred Activism*. Allentown, Pennsylvania: Al Madina Institute.

Watson, B. 2016. The troubling evolution of corporate greenwashing. *the Guardian* 20 August. Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2016/aug/20/greenwashing-environmentalism-lies-companies [Accessed: 1 September 2020].

Watts, J. 2018. We have 12 years to limit climate change catastrophe, warns UN. *The Guardian* 8 October. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/08/global-warming-must-not-exceed-15c-warns-landmark-un-report [Accessed: 1 September 2020].

Werbner, P. 1996. The Making of Muslim Dissent: Hybridized Discourses, Lay Preachers, and Radical Rhetoric among British Pakistanis. *American Ethnologist* 23(1), pp. 102–122.

Wilding, R. 2006. 'Virtual' intimacies? Families communicating across transnational contexts. *Global Networks* 6(2), pp. 125–142. doi: 10.1111/j.1471-0374.2006.00137.x.

Williams, S. and Law, I. 2012. Legitimising Racism: An Exploration of the Challenges Posed by the Use of Indigeneity Discourses by the Far Right. *Sociological Research Online* 17(2), pp. 1–12. doi: 10.5153/sro.2554.

Woodbury, Z. 2020. The Religious Fervor that sets Extinction Rebellion Apart from 350.org. *Medium* 27 February. Available at: https://medium.com/@thubtenzhiwa/the-religious-fervor-that-sets-extinction-rebellion-apart-from-350-org-f3eae6d76cfc [Accessed: 6 September 2020].

XR Buddhists UK [no date]. Extinction Rebellion: XR Buddhists – In grief and love for the Earth. Available at: http://xrbuddhists.com/ [Accessed: 8 September 2020].

XR Muslims 2018. Extinction Rebellion Muslims Facebook Group. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/groups/352703038814758/ [Accessed: 3 September 2020].

XR Muslims 2020. Past events: Pause for the Earth: Ramadan Talks. *Extinction Rebellion Muslims* 22 April. Available at: https://xrmuslims.wordpress.com/ramadan-talks/ [Accessed: 23 August 2020].

XR U.S. 2019. Demands. *Extinction Rebellion US.* Available at: https://extinctionrebellion.us/demands [Accessed: 11 September 2020].