

Islamophobia in Non- Western Online Newspapers

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Every media outlet must assume the responsibility of balanced and fair reporting to demonstrate the professional ethics of journalism. Nevertheless, the issue of objectivity in journalism has been called to question in many aspects including religion. Dart and Allen noted that many news producers claim that they are open to the rules of balance and fairness, but very few of them demonstrate the quality standard of reporting religion.¹ This issue could be seen in contemporary media messages, particularly how the media manipulate information. The essential rules of factual, fair, and balanced reporting have been prompted to highlight prejudices, stereotypes, fear, and hatred. This kind of media representation of religion is worrisome because it reproduces fear and tensions instead of promoting peace and tolerance.²

The interest in media coverage of religious issues has increased recently. However, unethical reporting has raised the question of whether journalists have done more good than harm in reporting events and issues that touch upon religion in particular. This is because media messages could leave the masses susceptible to the manipulation of reality. Newspapers are part of the significant sources of news, and emerging technology promises even more options for expanding their reach. Nevertheless, newspapers tend to highlight prejudice in news reporting of religion. The image of Islam created in the media has become a controversial topic in recent years. This situation attracts the attention of many righteous people.

Since the attacks of the World Trade Centre on 11th September 2001 in the United States, much attention has been paid to Islam. The religion of Islam is often associated with extremism, terrorism, and fundamentalism.³ As a result of globalization and information revolutions, the media have become

¹ John Dart, and Jimmy Raymond Allen, *Bridging the Gap: Religion and the News Media* (Washington, DC: Forum First Amendment Center, 2000), 34-56.

² William Hachten A, *The Troubles of Journalism: A Critical Look at What's Right and Wrong with the Press* (London: Routledge, 2005), 113-115.

³ Faatin Haque and Mahjabeen Khaled Hossain. "Global media, Islamophobia and its impact on conflict resolution." Accessed September 15, 2020. <http://ihmsaw.org/resourcefiles/1260034024.pdf>

like a nervous system to the world, as societies across the globe cannot function without them. It has to be acknowledged that media and religion are inextricable. The media tend to create a negative image of Islam as a result of inaccurate coverage.^{4,5,6} To understand the relationship between media and Islam, one needs to understand the fundamental role of the media in society:

[Media] has been the singular most powerful tool of influence, mobilization, and shaping of political, religious, economic, and cultural agendas and discourse. As witnessed in the past, such as in the case of World War II and the subsequent wars of the later century, the use of media propaganda to mobilize a nation is just as prevalent today as it was then. The global media today are leaders in their own accord; their influence surpasses that of any other institution. Therefore, they must maintain an attitude as global leaders; one that is free of bias and has accountability for the news, publications, and media images and photographs that profile the event.³

It is no longer conceivable to think of media and religion as separate spheres as people's perceptions of religion, particularly Islam, can be attributed to media representations. Media and religion are now converging on one another. This convergence is being brought about by important changes in media and religion. These changes are more complex than how the media frame religion or how religious people use the media. The most important changes in the media are technological advances that make it necessary for print media, particularly newspapers, to integrate the web. New improvements in the production, dissemination, and reception of media messages have led to an explosion in channels and media sources. For example, the Danish Cartoon controversy in 2005 occurred partly because of the actions of a newspaper in Denmark. This newspaper subsequently found its way onto the global stage with consequences beyond what the journalists expected.⁴

The emergence of modern communication technology suggests that society as a whole is now a simple hostage at the hands of the media. However, a time has come to ask whether people are being managed, manipulated, or brainwashed by the media. Journalists with biased minds

⁴ William Hachten A, *The Troubles of Journalism: A Critical Look at What's Right and Wrong with the Press* (London: Routledge, 2005), 113-115.

⁵ Faatin Haque and Mahjabeen Khaled Hossain. "Global media, Islamophobia and its impact on conflict resolution." Accessed September 15, 2020. <http://ihmsaw.org/resourcefiles/1260034024.pdf>

⁶ Stewart Hoover M. "Religion and the Media in the 21st Century." *Tripod*, 29 (February 2012): 27-35.

often become propagandists of their personal opinions by using the media as their vehicle. The traditional role of mass media as defined by media experts is to inform, educate, entertain, and persuade people. Nevertheless, newspapers seem to manipulate information, facts, and beliefs.⁷

Rane, Ewart, and Martinkus noted that the media coverage of the Muslim world may be influential in shaping the audience's opinions and attitudes toward Muslims.⁸ The more reliant audiences are on the media, the more potentially vulnerable they are to media influence. Rane et al. further argued people tend to form a negative perception of Islam and Muslims as a result of increased media coverage of Islam. It is a matter of image versus reality in war and conflict and challenges of reporting the Muslim world.

Islam is recognized as the fastest-growing religion in the world. Notwithstanding, many people believe that Islam is commonly interpreted as being retrogressively backward, unidimensional, inherently separate, "Other" to the West, and enemy to modernization and western values. Thus, the media are blamed for overlooking ethical issues, especially when it comes to the question of Islam. One of the ways of studying the relationship between media and Islam is to examine differences in news reporting between countries and understand why these differences exist.^{9,10,11}

It should be noted that in western society, Islam is often perceived as a religion of violence and a threat to the West, and therefore the West assumes the right to defend itself against such a threat. The media tend to report Muslims as behaving and acting in the same way. This kind of overgeneralization must be objectively investigated. Rane et al. asserted that the phenomenon of Islamophobia has become an increasing concern in

⁷ Faatin Haque and Mahjabeen Khaled Hossain. "Global media, Islamophobia and its impact on conflict resolution." Accessed September 15, 2020. <http://ihmsaw.org/resourcefiles/1260034024.pdf>

⁸ Halim Rane, Jacqui Ewart, and John Martinkus. "Media-generated Muslims and Islamophobia." In *Media framing of the Muslim World*, ed. Ewart, Jac (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 29-46.

⁹ Christopher Allen. 2001. "Islamophobia in the Media since September 11th." Paper presented at the *1st Conference of the Forum against Islamophobia and Racism*, London, September 1-10, 2001.

¹⁰ Farzanah Asmal. 2008. "Islamophobia and the Media: The Portrayal of Islam since 9/11 and an Analysis of the Danish Cartoon Controversy in South Africa." PhD diss., University of Stellenbosch.

¹¹ Faatin Haque and Mahjabeen Khaled Hossain. "Global media, Islamophobia and its impact on conflict resolution." Accessed September 15, 2020. <http://ihmsaw.org/resourcefiles/1260034024.pdf>

recent years.¹² This phenomenon might be perpetuated due to the fear evoked by news values that prioritize stories conveying negativity, conflict, and controversy over those that promote conciliation, peace, and harmony.

The power of words can never be overemphasized, and therefore how they are used, particularly in written communication, matters greatly. The media continue to play a vital role in shaping the people's perceptions of religion, and journalists bear a great responsibility in the representation of religions. According to Hoover, people see two faces of religion: religion as a belief and religion as politics.¹³ How people deal with religion is one of the greatest challenges in the 21st century. Understanding the media's role is essential in confronting these challenges. This circumstance reveals an important change in the way people think about religion.

Said noted that when the western world's attention was paid to the religious revolution in Iran, there was an undisputed notion that Islam can be characterized limitlessly through a handful of irresponsibly general and repeatedly organized stereotypes in the media.¹⁴ The media's negative portrayal of Islam contains instances of sensational and error-filled coverage. The news content is often associated with misinformation that can trigger human emotions.¹⁵ The work produced by Said is regarded as a landmark in the relationship between Islam and the press. Said's work has informed many subsequent studies on the portrayal of Islam and Muslims in the press.^{16,17,18}

¹² Halim Rane, Jacqui Ewart, and John Martinkus. "Media-generated Muslims and Islamophobia." In *Media framing of the Muslim World*, ed. Ewart, Jac (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 29-46.

¹³ Stewart Hoover M. "Religion and the Media in the 21st Century." *Tripodos*, 29 (February 2012): 27-35.

¹⁴ Edward Said. *Orientalism* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1979), 361-368.

¹⁵ Faridah Ibrahim, Normah Mustaffa, Chang Peng Kee, and Fauziah Ahmad. "Images and issues of superpowers: An analysis of international news coverage by the government-owned news agency, Bernama in four national dailies in Malaysia." *The Innovation Journal: The Public Sector Innovation Journal*, 3 (March 2011): 1-15.

¹⁶ Katherine Bullock, and Gul Joya Jafri. "Media (Mis) Representations: Muslim Women in the Canadian Nation." *Canadian Woman Studies*, 2 (January 2000): 35-40.

¹⁷ Patrick Martin, and Sean Phelan. "Representing Islam in the wake of September 11: A comparison of US television and CNN online message board discourses." *Prometheus*, 3 (November 2002): 263-269.

¹⁸ Saeed, Amir. "Media, racism and Islamophobia: The representation of Islam and Muslims in the media." *Sociology Compass*, 2 (October 2007): 443-462.

Today, newspapers pay much attention to religious news, and the number of religious writers and editors increases gradually. However, as mentioned earlier, maintaining balance, fairness, and objectivity in reporting regions is of great concern. At times, journalists tend to distort information just because they fail to meet the journalistic standard in news reporting. Journalists must stick to journalism ethics to report religion objectively. This is because, at times, religion is routinely portrayed in a bad light. On the other hand, journalists feel that “media bashing” has become commonplace simply because religionists do not like the changes taking place in the contemporary world. Nonetheless, the responsibility of accurate reporting of religion is attributed to journalists.¹⁹

Events and controversies related to Islam dominate the press coverage of religion, and Islam has become the main focus of the media. Newspapers tend to focus on Islam as a backward religion. Religion news, particularly Islam, mostly contains accusations about extremism or intolerance. For instance, among the prominent stories of 2011 in the US was a contentious congressional hearing about the threat of homegrown “Islamic terrorism” after a Florida pastor staged a Quran burning.²⁰ It should be noted that stereotyped depiction of Islam in the media is not a new phenomenon; rather it has increased recently. Hence, as pointed out by Thompson, Islam has been subject to certain trends of depictions that are as old as the news media themselves.²¹

Studies found that the media’s portrayal of Islam is one of the most socially prevalent and significant sources of Islamophobia.^{22,23} Apparently, newspapers are seen as the most accessible and indiscriminate disseminators of the idea of Islamophobia in the global environment. According to Thompson, Islamophobic views might be reproduced through the portrayal of Islam as an enemy of the West and inappropriate use of terms such as

¹⁹ John Dart, and Jimmy Raymond Allen, *Bridging the Gap: Religion and the News Media* (Washington, DC: Forum First Amendment Center, 2000), 34-56.

²⁰ Jolyon Mitchell, and Owen Gower. *Religion and the News* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd, 2012), 108-528.

²¹ Philip Thompson. 2013. “Allen’s Islamophobia and the British news media: a critical evaluation of Islamophobia as a concept and its application to the written news media in Britain between 2001 and 2008.” PhD diss., University of Wales, Trinity St David.

²² Rochelle Terman. “Islamophobia and media portrayals of Muslim women: A computational text analysis of US news coverage.” *International Studies Quarterly*, 3 (November 2017): 489-502.

²³ Saifuddin Ahmed, and Jörg Matthes. “Media Representation of Muslims and Islam from 2000 to 2015: A Meta-analysis.” *International Communication Gazette*, 3 (June 2017): 219-244.

terrorism, extremism, fundamentalism, as well as blasphemous statements about the religion.²⁴ It is also claimed that the media reproduce negative images of Muslims through the use of terminology.²⁵ Allen stated that one of the major factors that contribute to the media's reproduction of Islamophobia is their selection of words to describe Muslims.²⁶ Another issue is that the media do not distinguish between Islam and the political affairs that occur in many Muslim nations. As a result, the distinction between facts and fiction becomes increasingly distorted.²⁷

In the digital age of communication, societies depend on the media for information.^{28,29} This dependence makes the media more powerful in shaping public opinions. Newspapers are considered one of the most powerful sources of information and disseminators of knowledge. Presently, the issue of Islamophobia might be connected with the media's association of Islam with violence. This issue has been debated since the aftermath of violent events such as the 9/11 attacks in 2001, the Afghanistan war in 2002, the Iraq war in 2003, the Danish cartoon row in 2005, the London bombings in 2005, and the Paris attacks in 2015. Ahmed and Matthes pointed out that the topic of Islamophobia in non-western media is somewhat ignored by researchers.³⁰

²⁴ Philip Thompson. 2013. "Allen's Islamophobia and the British news media: a critical evaluation of Islamophobia as a concept and its application to the written news media in Britain between 2001 and 2008." PhD diss., University of Wales, Trinity St David.

²⁵ Tella Liad. "Media and religious crisis in Nigeria: Any consonance?" *Centre-point Journal (Humanities Edition)*, 2 (September 2014): 113-124.

²⁶ Fleur Allen. 2014. "Islamophobia in the UK: The Role of British Newspapers in Shaping Attitudes towards Islam and Muslims." PhD diss., University of Wales, Trinity St David.

²⁷ Halim Rane, Jacqui Ewart, and John Martinkus. "Media-generated Muslims and Islamophobia." In *Media framing of the Muslim World*, ed. Ewart, Jac (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 29-46.

²⁸ Katherine Lacasse, and Larissa Forster. "The war next door: Peace journalism in US local and distant newspapers' coverage of Mexico." *Media, War & Conflict*, 3 (December 2012): 223-237.

²⁹ Reuters Institute. "2016 Digital News Report of Reuters Institute". Accessed January 12, 2018. <http://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/publication/reuters-institute-digital-news-report-2016-asia-pacific-supplement>

³⁰ Saifuddin Ahmed, and Jörg Matthes. "Media Representation of Muslims and Islam from 2000 to 2015: A Meta-analysis." *International Communication Gazette*, 3 (June 2017): 219-244.

Anatsui and Adekanye noted that western and non-western media report Islam similarly.³¹ This similarity occurs because non-western media rely mainly on western media as sources of news as the former has a limited budget to access first-hand news stories.³² In this regard, Yusof, Hassan, Hassan, and Osman found that western media are still feeding international readers with a negative perception of Islam as a whole.³³ Therefore, it is not clear whether the media in Muslim-majority nations assume the responsibility of disseminating objective, balanced, and fair news about Islam. Although Islamophobia incidents are infrequent in Muslim-majority nations such as Nigeria and Malaysia,³⁴ the media cover religious events both nationally and internationally.

Considering the aforementioned issues, this book explores the reproduction of Islamophobia in selected Nigerian and Malaysian online newspapers. The study employed content analysis and interviews to explore the reproduction of Islamophobia in the selected newspapers. Nigerian newspapers (Punch and Vanguard) have 3.00m and 2.43m site visitors while Malaysian newspapers (The Star and New Straits Times) have 3.34m and 1.99m site visitors respectively. First, a total of 599 news articles focusing on Islam were collected from the selected newspapers using an internet-based search from November 2015 until September 2016. Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather relevant data from six experts in the field of media and communication. According to Zhang and Wildermuth, a content analysis focuses on media message characteristics and provides specific media content that can be categorically analyzed to provide useful information. On the other hand, interviews reveal social realities in a subjective but scientific manner to reveal or model information.³⁵

³¹ Tina Anatsui, and Elizabeth Adetoun Adekanye. "Comparative Analysis of Foreign and Local News Agencies: Public Relations Approach in Restoring the Image of the Local Media for National Development." *Developing Country Studies*, 10 (January 2014): 131-141.

³² Tina Anatsui, and Elizabeth Adetoun Adekanye. "Comparative Analysis of Foreign and Local News Agencies: Public Relations Approach in Restoring the Image of the Local Media for National Development." *Developing Country Studies*, 10 (January 2014): 131-141.

³³ Sofia Hayati Yusof, Fauziah Hassan, Md Salleh Hassan, and Mohd Nizam Osman. "The framing of international media on Islam and terrorism." *European Scientific Journal*, 8 (March 2013): 104-121.

³⁴ Onyinyechi Wariboko. "Prospects of Islamophobia in Nigeria and its dangers." *Journal of Religion and Human Relations*, 1 (March 2015): 42-52.

³⁵ Yan Zhang and Barbara Wildermuth. *Qualitative Analysis of Content* (Westport CT: Libraries Unlimited Inc, 2009), 1-12.

This book contains eight chapters. Chapter One presents an overview of the book and gives a brief introduction to the topic, which entails an analysis of Islamophobia in the selected non-western newspapers. It primarily presents a brief historical origin of Islamophobia, Chapter Two discusses Framing Theory which centers on how manipulated media messages influence the audience's perceptions. Chapter Three reviews relevant studies regarding Islamophobia in the media, particularly in the 21st century. Chapter Four describes how the selected newspapers report Islam. Chapter Five shows how the selected newspapers reproduce Islamophobia while Chapter Six determines the perceptions of media experts regarding the reproduction of Islamophobia in non-western newspapers. Chapter Seven discusses the findings, taking into consideration the assumptions of Framing Theory. Finally, Chapter Eight consists of a conclusion on the reproduction of Islamophobia in news reporting. It specifically draws conclusions based on the findings and discusses the contribution of the study.

Brief Historical Origin of Islamophobia

The existence of Islamophobia has been proven by many researchers, but its definition is debatable in scholarly articles. According to Bravo López, Islamophobia refers to an unfounded hostility towards Islam and Muslims.³⁶ The term represents prejudice against, hatred towards, or fear of Islam or Muslims. Bleich defined Islamophobia as “indiscriminate negative attitudes or emotions directed at Islam or Muslims” (p. 1585).³⁷ According to Bleich, the expression “negative attitudes directed at Islam or Muslims” implies that the target might be the religious doctrine or its followers. This definition demonstrates the multifaceted nature of Islamophobia.

Bleich argued that although Islamophobia has become reasonably prevalent, there is only a slight agreement on the term's precise meaning.³⁸ Since the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in the late 1970s, it has been generally believed that “the West” associates Islam with negative images, sentiments, and stereotypes. Islamophobia is a new word for an old

³⁶ Fernando Bravo López. “Towards a Definition of Islamophobia: Approximations of the Early Twentieth Century.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 4 (November 2011): 556-573.

³⁷ Erik Bleich. “What is Islamophobia and How Much is There? Theorizing and Measuring an Emerging Comparative Concept.” *American Behavioral Scientist*, 12 (September 2011): 1581-1600.

³⁸ Erik Bleich. “What is Islamophobia and How Much is There? Theorizing and Measuring an Emerging Comparative Concept.” *American Behavioral Scientist*, 12 (September 2011): 1581-1600.

concept because the negative perception of Islam was present before the 9/11 terrorist attacks. In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the huge amount of media coverage of Islam and Muslims resulted in a widespread awareness of the religion and its adherents. As a result, a media version of Islam became widely known since people are more familiar with the media-generated Muslims. Since 2001, the term “Islamophobia” has been frequently used in the media.

The term “Islamophobia” originated during the 1980s and came to be formally coined in 1997 in a report published by Runnymede Trust, condemning negative emotions directed at Islam or Muslims.^{39,40} The term gained wider use in response to events during the period. However, negative attitudes toward Islam and Muslims existed centuries ago under a different guise. Rane et al. noted that there is much scholarly debate regarding the origins of Islamophobia.⁴¹ The development of “othering” is seen as the historical basis of Islamophobia, but one of the explicit uses of the term is evident in the Runnymede Trust’s report.

The Runnymede Trust’s report confirmed that Islamophobia exists and has two main sources: media and politicians. These sources are interwoven in the historical origin and reproduction of Islamophobia. In this regard, Rane et al. posited that there is an increasing identification of specific groups and individuals like politicians who use the media as a means of disseminating their hate messages against Islam and Muslims, which are central to the reproduction of Islamophobia.⁴² They argued that much of what is known about Islam and Muslims in western society is derived from the media. Hrvatin and Petkovic asserted that the entrance of most media owners into politics has become a common occurrence, but most media owners are not willing to publicly admit that they have a relationship with politics.⁴³

³⁹ Farzanah Asmal. 2008. “Islamophobia and the Media: The Portrayal of Islam since 9/11 and an Analysis of the Danish Cartoon Controversy in South Africa.” PhD diss., University of Stellenbosch.

⁴⁰ Mohammad Tamdgidi H. “Beyond Islamophobia and Islamophilia as Western epistemic racisms: Revisiting Runnymede Trust’s definition in a world-history context.” *Islamophobia Studies Journal*, 1 (September 2012): 54-81.

⁴¹ Halim Rane, Jacqui Ewart, and John Martinkus. “Media-generated Muslims and Islamophobia.” In *Media framing of the Muslim World*, ed. Ewart, Jac (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 29-46.

⁴² Halim Rane, Jacqui Ewart, and John Martinkus. “Media-generated Muslims and Islamophobia.” In *Media framing of the Muslim World*, ed. Ewart, Jac (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 29-46.

⁴³ Sandra Hrvatin, and Petkovic, Brankica. 2004. Media ownership and its impact on media independence and pluralism. Accessed August 3, 2019.

The above discussion shows that media and politicians are the main sources of Islamophobia. Schneider asserted that the use of Islamophobia for political purposes also includes the reproduction of social disparities supporting the fear of the “Other” and emphasizing the presence of separate groups in society.⁴⁴ According to Bleich, the term ‘Islamophobia’ was initially developed in the 1990s and early 2000s by political activists, non-governmental organizations, public commentators, and international organizations to draw people’s attention to harmful rhetoric and actions directed at Islam and Muslims in western liberal democracies.⁴⁵ This means that Islamophobia was initiated as a political term.

Bleich further argued that Islamophobia exists not only for political motives but also to create a social reality that Islam and Muslims become objects of hatred, fear, and hostility.⁴⁶ The term “Islamophobia” is used in scholarly articles to examine particular issues such as the causes and consequences of anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim sentiments. Although Islamophobia has become widely established and recognized in academia, there is opposition to the term in many European countries, which can be seen as not only an academic debate but also an indication of the hegemonic power of Islamophobic prejudices.⁴⁷

Some critics have used the term “Islamophobia” to describe the growing discrimination of Muslims in western society.^{48,49,50} This consideration means that the term is highly politicized, which indicates discrimination against Islam and Muslims. Islamophobia has gained increasing usage in

<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/53126508.pdf>

⁴⁴ Elke Schneider T. 2011. “The reproduction of islamophobia in German and Dutch newspaper article discourse: An analysis from a Critical Discourse Analytical Perspective.” Bachelor’s thesis, University of Twente.

⁴⁵ Erik Bleich. “What is Islamophobia and How Much is There? Theorizing and Measuring an Emerging Comparative Concept.” *American Behavioral Scientist*, 12 (September 2011): 1581-1600.

⁴⁶ Bleich. “What is Islamophobia and How Much is There? Theorizing and Measuring an Emerging Comparative Concept.” *American Behavioral Scientist*, 12 (September 2011): 1581-1600.

⁴⁷ Ajdini Juliana. “Islamophobia in Albania.” In *European Islamophobia*, ed. Enes Bayraklı and Farid Hafez (Istanbul: SETA, 2015), 11-19.

⁴⁸ Diane Frost. “Islamophobia: Examining Causal Links between the Media and “Race Hate” from “Below”.” *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 11/12 (September 2008): 564-578.

⁴⁹ Wayne Hanniman. “Canadian Muslims, Islamophobia and national security.” *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice*, 4 (December 2008): 271-285.

⁵⁰ Brian Klug. “Islamophobia: A concept comes of age.” *Ethnicities*, 5 (September 2012): 665-681.

the United Kingdom where Islam is the fastest-growing religion.⁵¹ Research shows that the vast majority of people obtain their perceptions of minority groups through the media rather than direct interaction.⁵² The public keeps in touch with contemporary events through the media. Thus, media portrayal can play a critical role in shaping people's perceptions of Islam.

As a result of the negative and sensationalized stories about Islam and Muslims in the media, Islamophobia continues to seep into the subconscious mind of youths. Islamophobia affects society in two major ways. First, it generates a conspicuous fear among members of society, including non-Muslims, which makes life insecure for both Muslims and non-Muslims. Second, it intensifies tension and apprehension in intercultural relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims.⁵³

To sum up, Islamophobia is not a new phenomenon because it existed before the 9/11 attacks, but its usage, particularly in the media, has significantly increased after the 9/11 attacks. While discussing what he termed as "contemporary Islamophobia", Allen noted that one of the main issues is to overcome the widespread belief that Islamophobia is consequential of the 9/11 attacks.⁵⁴ Allen further went on stressing that due to this belief, a short history of "contemporary Islamophobia" is needed to be both reiterated and remembered. Perceiving Islamophobia as a mere post-9/11 phenomenon makes it easy for its detractors to make simplistic assumptions; if terrorism stops, Islamophobia will also stop. Reiterating how Islamophobia preceded the 9/11 attacks – how it was already recognized as an extremely dangerous phenomenon – will help to negate these assumptions.

There are several other possible terms to refer to negative feelings and attitudes toward Islam and Muslims, such as anti-Muslimism, anti-Muslim racism, intolerance against Muslims, anti-Muslim prejudice, anti-Muslim bigotry, hatred of Muslims, Muslimophobia, and demonization of Islam, or

51 Shahram Akbarzadeh, and Bianca Smith. "The Representation of Islam and Muslims in the Media." *School of Political and Social Inquiry*, 4 (November 2005): 1-38.

52 Chinenye Nwabueze, Chiemezie Ugochukwu, and Egbra Omedomero. "Newspaper coverage of Nigeria Police activities: A content analysis." *Afrrev Lalgens: An International Journal of Language, Literature and Gender Studies*, 1 (April 2014): 92-113.

53 Marandi Ameli Saied, Syed Mohammed, Ahmed, Samera, Kara, Seyfeddin, and Merali, Arzu. *The British Media and Muslim Representation: The Ideology of Demonization* (England: Islamic Human Rights Commission, 2007), 10-117.

54 Christopher Allen. "Contemporary Islamophobia before 9/11: A brief History." *Arches Quarterly*, 7 (July 2010): 14-22.

demonization of Muslims.⁵⁵ The term “Islamophobia” is gradually being used to describe the fear of Islam and Muslims as a social group.⁵⁶ While discussing how the term “Islamophobia” becomes a current topic, Klug explicated that the issue of negative attitudes toward Islam and Muslims, particularly in western society, has been extensively documented.⁵⁷

According to Haque, the Muslim-West relations have become increasingly strained due to a series of events such as the 9/11 attacks which occurred in 2001, the Afghanistan war in 2002, the Iraq war in 2003, the Danish cartoon row in 2005, and the London bombings in 2005.⁵⁸ Other violent events include the Paris attacks in 2015 and the New Zealand shootings in 2019. These events shape the debates on Islam and Muslims all over the world. The contemporary images of Islam and Muslims in the media are also a product of much longer and broader histories that reside within the realm of civilization. The assertion that all Muslims are violent extremists is part of the early Christian discourses and is identified as central themes that run through the messages of Islamophobia networks which are echoed in the media’s portrayal of Islam.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Jocelyne Cesari. *The Oxford handbook of European Islam*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 23-222.

⁵⁶ Jonas Kunst R., Hajra Tajamal, David L. Sam, and Pål Ulleberg. “Coping with Islamophobia: The effects of religious stigma on Muslim minorities’ identity formation.” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 4 (July 2012): 518-532.

⁵⁷ Brian Klug. “Islamophobia: A concept comes of age.” *Ethnicities*, 5 (September 2012): 665-681.

⁵⁸ Faatin Haque and Mahjabeen Khaled Hossain. “Global media, Islamophobia and its impact on conflict resolution.” Accessed September 15, 2020. <http://ihmsaw.org/resourcefiles/1260034024.pdf>

⁵⁹ Halim Rane, Jacqui Ewart, and John Martinkus. “Media-generated Muslims and Islamophobia.” In *Media framing of the Muslim World*, ed. Ewart, Jac (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 29-46.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL APPROACH

The application of a theory helps us to develop a better understanding of the problem being investigated. A theory consists of the application of “what is known so far” in the pursuit of what could be identified in the problem area. In communication studies, theories help in analyzing and explaining the meaning of media texts. This study is based on two theoretical perspectives: First, Framing Theory which considers meaning as existing mainly in the news content; and second, Agenda-setting Theory which focuses on media presentation of more salient issues according to their agenda.⁶⁰ Both Framing Theory and Agenda-setting Theory describe the media’s possible influence on the public understanding of issues, considering their frames and prominence.⁶¹ Framing Theory has recently taken over from agenda-setting and cultivation theory as the most universally practical approach in the field of communication.

Framing Theory

The development of Framing Theory is attributed to Goffman.⁶² This theory considers meaning as existing particularly in the media messages. It focuses on the influence of news viewpoints created by journalists on the audiences. Journalists construct the frame of news stories by how they choose certain bits of information and disregard others and by how they construct their news stories to focus on certain issues. The frame refers to the way the news is presented; it is the opinion from which the news is reported. A frame is the news angle or the context of the story. A news angle refers to the explanatory and ideological framework from which the media report a

⁶⁰ James Potter. *Media effects* (California: SAGE Publications Limited, 2012), 1-400.

⁶¹ Julie Arthur. 2012. “Framing Child Neglect: A Content Analysis of National and Regional US Newspaper Coverage.” PhD diss., American University.

⁶² Erving Goffman. 1974. *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. New York: Haeper & Row.

certain topic and the conceptualization of stories within a particular framework. How news events are reported by the media might influence the audience's understanding of the issues being reported. Recipients of media messages develop their attitudes based on how the news story is framed in addition to their individual frames.^{63,64}

A newspaper outlet may decide to cover a topic about a particular person, group, or society negatively. By being exposed to only the negative aspect of the report, the audience may develop a negative perception of the person, group, or institution being reported.⁶⁵ Accordingly, media messages have different levels of influence on the audience, depending on some factors such as religion, age, cultural background, educational level, life experience, and socio-economic status. The degree to which the audience perceives the media to be credible is also important. The overall notion of Framing Theory proposes that frames are influential regarding how people view the world by manipulating how the media messages come to be comprehended.⁶⁶ However, the direction, nature, and extent of this influence remain a source of disagreement.

Framing Theory is related to Agenda-setting Theory in many ways. Both theories emphasize how the media make a specific issue important in the audience's mindsets, but Framing Theory incorporates how the issue is presented.⁶⁷ Framing is an inevitable part of human communication. It occurs when the production and dissemination of the media messages come to highlight, emphasize, or obscure some aspects of the message over others. This is mostly done through language, particularly how the information is organized and structured. The use of language in framing is not limited to either spoken or written language. It encompasses any coherent symbolic system measured in a linguistic form.⁶⁸

⁶³ James Potter. *Media effects* (California: SAGE Publications Limited, 2012), 1-400.

⁶⁴ Deidre Freyenberger. 2013. "Amanda Knox: A Content Analysis of Media Framing in Newspapers around the World". Master's thesis, East Tennessee State University.

⁶⁵ Pieter Jacobus Fourie. *Media Studies: Institutions, Theories, and Issues* (Claremont: Jutaand Company Ltd, 2001), 638.

⁶⁶ Kyle J Holody. 2006. "Framing death: The use of frames in newspaper coverage of and press releases about death with dignity." PhD diss., Virginia Tech.

⁶⁷ David Patrick Houghton. *Political psychology: Situations, individuals, and cases* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), 340.

⁶⁸ Walljet. 2013. Framing. Accessed June 11, 2018.

<https://mediatexthack.wordpress.com/category/media-effects/framing/>

Categories of Framing

Framing approaches can be broadly divided into two categories: episodic and thematic framing. Episodic framing occurs when an issue is approached in terms of a specific event or episode. In short, episodic news frames are those that apply a telephoto lens to the coverage of the issue – focusing on individual case studies and discrete events. On the other hand, thematic framing occurs when an issue is approached as part of an ongoing topic, entrenched within a wide range of social contexts. Thematic news frames focus on the coverage of a topic or trends over time through a wide-angle lens.^{69,70} Walljet noted that news media, in particular, tend to favor episodic frames over thematic frames as episodic framing better suits the constraints of print or broadcast journalism.⁷¹ The importance of this distinction is that the two types of frames have very different effects on how people view a given issue.⁷² Fairhurst and Sarr described the various framing devices as follows.⁷³

1. Metaphor: This device refers to framing a conceptual idea by comparing it with something else.
2. Stories, myths, or legends: This device refers to a situation whereby the media frame a topic through vivid and memorable narratives.
3. Slogan, jargon, or catchphrase: The media may frame an issue using slogans, jargon, or catchy phrases to make the issue more memorable and relate-able.
4. Artifact: This device refers to the framing of an issue using intrinsic symbolic values such as visual or cultural phenomenon that holds more meaning than the issue itself.
5. Contrast: This device refers to a situation whereby an event is described in terms of what it is not.

⁶⁹ Diane Benjamin. "Episodic vs. Thematic Stories." Accessed August 13, 2017. https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/assets/files/framebytes/framebyte_thematic.pdf

⁷⁰ Kimberly Gross. "Framing persuasive appeals: Episodic and thematic framing, emotional response, and policy opinion." *Political Psychology*, No. 2 (February 2008): 169-192. 10.1111/j.1467-9221.2008.00622.x

⁷¹ Walljet. 2013. Framing. Accessed June 11, 2018. <https://mediatexthack.wordpress.com/category/media-effects/framing/>

⁷² Diane Benjamin. "Episodic vs. Thematic Stories." Accessed August 13, 2017. https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/assets/files/framebytes/framebyte_thematic.pdf

⁷³ Gail Fairhurst and Robert Sarr. *The Art of Framing: Managing the Language of Leadership* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996), 1-213.

6. Spin: This situation occurs when the media present an issue in such a way as to convey a value judgment (positive or negative) that might not be obvious. This kind of framing is done to create an inherent bias by definition.

Media content is a combination of textual and visual elements. These visual elements consist of images, photos, and videos. Gamson and Modigliani also suggested five framing devices: metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions, and visual images.⁷⁴ News frames are more than just verbal or textual story topics, and they cannot be reduced or substituted for mere story topics because the former do much more organizing and structuring work.

Agenda-setting Theory

McCombs and Shaw provided the first experimental support for the agenda-setting effect in their study of the 1968 presidential campaign.⁷⁵ Their analysis revealed that when the media report certain issues more saliently than others, these salient issues become the focus of the campaign.⁷⁶ The basic assumption of Agenda-setting Theory is that the media create a particular image of reality, whether consciously or unconsciously, and then confront the audience daily with issues that are important according to the media. Then the media release a list of topics similar to the agenda of a meeting. They omit certain issues and emphasize others to create a particular way for the audience to think about reality.

The findings of McCombs and Shaw indicated a significant relationship between media and public agenda, but the study failed to determine which was influencing the other.⁷⁷ McQuail argued that despite various studies conducted on Agenda-setting Theory, there is still insufficient evidence to indicate a causal relationship between the public's ordering of priorities and the order of prominence placed on issues in the news media.⁷⁸ Agenda-

⁷⁴ William A. Gamson and Andre Modigliani. "Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach." *The American Journal of Sociology*, 1 (July 1989): 1-37.

⁷⁵ Maxwell E. McCombs and Shaw L. Donald. "The agenda-setting function of mass media." *Public opinion quarterly*, 2 (June 1972): 176-187.

⁷⁶ James Potter. *Media effects* (California: SAGE Publications Limited, 2012), 1-400.

⁷⁷ Maxwell E. McCombs and Shaw L. Donald. "The agenda-setting function of mass media." *Public opinion quarterly*, 2 (June 1972): 176-187.

⁷⁸ McQuail, Denis. *Mass communication theory: An introduction* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications Inc, 1987), 245.

setting Theory is still developing both in focus and dimension. McCombs and his associates proposed the most recent development in this theory where they focused on a new level referred to as “the second level of agenda-setting.” This model views the agenda as an abstract notion. In this regard, it is assumed that many other things besides the issues could be part of the items on the list.⁷⁹

The power of media to set the society’s agenda by focusing on public attention on particular issues is a well-documented phenomenon. Agenda-setting depends on the ability of the media to provide salience to a topic while de-emphasizing others in the process of communication. Agenda-setting Theory presumes that what the media consider important will ultimately be reflected in what the society will come to consider important. The theory enables the construction of societal beliefs and the dissemination of values and devalues of a particular topic. The emphasis on people’s attention is shifted away from immediate effects on attitudes and opinions to long-term effects on cognition. Newspapers offer clues about the salience of issues in the daily news, such as a lead story on page one, front page displays, and large headlines. By repeating these clues day after day, the newspapers effectively communicate the importance of each issue.

Agenda-setting explains the media’s ability to influence people’s perceptions. Incidentally, there is a relationship between what the media consider important and its salience in people’s minds. The media set the agenda of public discourse and determine people’s perception of particular issues. However, the relevance of news stories in media agenda-setting matters greatly. The influence of media agenda can be substantial, but it does not determine the public agenda. The provision of salient issues in the news media is not the sole determinant of the public agenda.

According to Folarin, there are four elements associated with agenda-setting: the extent or frequency of reporting; the degree of conflict generated by the reports; the level of prominence attributed to the issue; and the collective media-specific effect over time.⁸⁰ Reporting sources also define issues and determine their future discourse. The media’s ability to raise the importance of an issue in people’s mindsets depends on these elements.

⁷⁹ Okafor Godson Okwuchukwu. “The influence of media ownership and control on media agenda setting in Nigeria.” *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education*, 1 (July 2014): 36-45.

⁸⁰ Babatunde Folarin. *Theories of Mass Communication: An Introductory Text* (Ibadan: Stirling Horder Publishers, 1998), 22-36.

Levels of Agenda-setting

Agenda-setting consists of two levels. The first-level of agenda-setting refers to the transfer of salience of certain issues from the media to the public while the second-level is the process of competing for attention among various attributes.⁸¹ These levels set the public agenda and influence people's perceptions of issues. A brief explanation of agenda-setting levels is provided as follows.

1. First-level agenda-setting: This level refers to the transfer of salience of an issue from the mass media to the public.⁸² It primarily centers on issues and events related to the media agenda and specifically how the media agenda influences the audience's perceptions of what issues are worthy of attention. The first-level of agenda-setting is described as a process of presenting certain issues frequently and prominently in the media, where large segments of the society come to perceive such issues as more important than others.⁸³ In this case, the extent of news coverage of particular issues, such as terrorism, crime, or violence, basically determines the perceived importance of those issues in the audience's mindsets.

Salience is a key concept in agenda-setting. According to Kiousis, there are two characteristics of media agenda salience: visibility and valence.⁸⁴ Visibility consists of the attention or prominence accorded to particular issues. Attention is measured in terms of the number of news stories about an issue while prominence refers to the length and placement of stories in print media or the length and time allocated to stories in broadcast media.

2. Second-level of agenda-setting: The second level of agenda-setting expands the original meaning of agenda-setting. This level of agenda-setting focuses on the transfer of attribute salience. It focuses on the attributes and characteristics of a particular issue as well as its tone of coverage. The attribute agenda defines how people think about a particular issue, individual, or group. There are two dimensions of the second-level of agenda-setting: substantive and affective dimensions. The substantive

⁸¹ Maxwell E. McCombs and Shaw L. Donald. "The evolution of agenda-setting research: Twenty-five years in the marketplace of ideas." *Journal of communication*, 2 (June 1993): 58-67.

⁸² Maxwell E. McCombs and Shaw L. Donald. "The agenda-setting function of mass media." *Public opinion quarterly*, 2 (June 1972): 176-187.

⁸³ Renita Coleman, Maxwell McCombs, Donald Shaw, and David Weaver. "Agenda Setting". In *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*, ed. Hanitzsch, Thomas and Karin Wahl-Jorgensen (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), 147-160.

⁸⁴ Spiro Kiousis. "Explicating media salience: A factor analysis of New York Times issue coverage during the 2000 US presidential election." *Journal of Communication*, 1 (January 2004): 71-87.

dimension refers to the attributes of issues or individuals selected by the media to report such issues. The affective dimension is concerned with the tone of news reports on the selected attributes. In this case, the media could report an issue in a positive, negative, or neutral tone.^{85,86}

The second level of agenda-setting is very similar to framing. According to Weaver, there is no consensus among researchers on whether the second-level of agenda-setting is equivalent to framing.⁸⁷ However, whether framing is more or less similar to the second-level agenda setting depends, to a great extent, on how framing is defined. It is not clear why framing has become more popular amongst communication scholars than agenda-setting in recent years. Framing can be applied in different aspects of messages. It can also be applied in a content analysis or a more interpretive textual analysis alone.

⁸⁵ Maxwell E. McCombs and Shaw L. Donald. "The evolution of agenda-setting research: Twenty-five years in the marketplace of ideas." *Journal of communication*, 2 (June 1993): 58-67.

⁸⁶ Kihan Kim and Maxwell McCombs. "News story descriptions and the public's opinions of political candidates." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, No. 2 (June 2007): 299-314.

⁸⁷ David H. Weaver. "Thoughts on agenda setting, framing, and priming." *Journal of communication*, 1 (February 2007): 142-147.

CHAPTER THREE

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN THE MEDIA

Research shows that some studies across the world were conducted to specifically investigate Islamophobia in the media.⁸⁸ Most of the previous studies indicated that the media played a significant role in creating negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims. These studies concentrated mainly on western media, especially in the US and the UK. For instance, Yusof et al. conducted a content analysis of two international news magazines: The *Economist* from the UK and *Time* from the US.⁸⁹ They looked at the tendency of labeling Islam with terrorism after the death of Osama Bin Laden. The study found that the coverage made by the selected media showed that the media still label Islam negatively by associating it with terrorism. Most of the news covered came from the Middle East countries where the so-called Islamist groups, such as Al-Qaeda and Hamas, exist. According to the study, the media are still biased against Islam despite the killing of Osama Bin Laden. It seems that the media's handling of the news about the death of Osama bin Laden has worsened the negative attitudes toward Islam.

The media have been criticized by many researchers concerning their reproduction of Islamophobia. The western media are likely to fuel the notion of "otherness", misrepresent Islam and Muslims in news reporting, as well as portray a negative image of Islam and Muslims.⁹⁰ Abbas discussed

⁸⁸ Saifuddin Ahmed, and Jörg Matthes. "Media Representation of Muslims and Islam from 2000 to 2015: A Meta-analysis." *International Communication Gazette*, 3 (June 2017): 219-244.

⁸⁹ Sofia Hayati Yusof, Fauziah Hassan, Md Salleh Hassan, and Mohd Nizam Osman. "The framing of international media on Islam and terrorism." *European Scientific Journal*, 8 (March 2013): 104-121.

⁹⁰ Maryam Jahedi, Abdullah Faiz Sathi, and Jayakaran Mukundan. "Review of studies on media portrayal of Islam, Muslims and Iran." *International Journal of Education and Research*, 12 (September 2014): 297-308.

how Islamophobia is reproduced in British newspapers.⁹¹ The author argued that the dominant media capital seeks to undermine Muslims by highlighting an explicitly negative view of Islam. The newspaper industry responds to information needs from readers. Nevertheless, the news content consists of local and international events that cannot be easily controlled by the newspapers. Either consciously or unconsciously, newspapers tend to portray British society in more positive terms and Muslims as the initiators of their problems. The media also portray Muslims as an enemy of British society and a threat to western civilization.

Eltantawy employed a discourse analysis to investigate the US newspaper representation of Muslim-Arab women after the 9/11 attacks.⁹² The study revealed that journalists present the Muslim-Arab population through single and mostly unrepresentative examples. The study also revealed that reporters do not give attention to the positive aspects of stories concerning Muslim-Arab women. In line with the assumptions of Framing Theory, the findings of Eltantawy indicate that journalists give attention to certain bits of information about Muslim-Arab women and ignore others by how they structure their news stories. Most of the stories analyzed by Eltantawy associated Muslim culture with problems, injustices, and oppression. Muslim culture is indirectly presented as weird and incompatible with modern civilization.

The opinionated media content contributes to the reproduction of Islamophobia by depicting Islam as a religion of violence, either consciously or unconsciously. Islam is labeled as extremely different from western beliefs and therefore dangerous. Ali, Khalid, and Lodhi claimed that conventional media in Europe and the US, including newspapers, have for long been reproducing false information that portrays a negative image of Islam.⁹³ As a result, Islam is perceived as an awkward religion in the West. Ali et al. further argued that western media misrepresent Islam and its followers through negative portrayals. The study found that a large majority of the newspaper headlines depict negative images of Islam and Muslims. The US mass media are blamed for spreading Islamophobia by providing opinionated news content to other mainstream elite media. This

⁹¹ Tahir Abbas. "Media Capital and the Representation of South Asian Muslims in the British Press: An ideological analysis." *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 2 (August 2001): 245-257.

⁹² Nahed Mohamed Atef Eltantawy. 2007. "US Newspaper Representation of Muslim and Arab Women Post 9/11." PhD Diss., Georgia State University.

⁹³ Shahzad Ali, Muhammad Khalid, and Lodhi. "Negative Image of Islam and US Mass Media: How to Improve the Image of Islam and Muslim Countries." *Social Sciences and Humanities*, 2 (October 2009): 43-49.

kind of journalistic practice is likely to distort the image of the Islamic world.

Moore, Mason, and Lewis conducted a content analysis of newspaper articles about British Muslims in the British press from 2000 to 2008. They also included a series of case studies of news about British Muslims.⁹⁴ The study found that after the 9/11 attacks in 2001 and the London bombings in 2005, the news coverage of British Muslims has increased significantly, peaking in 2006 and remaining at a high level until 2007 and 2008. The bulk of coverage of British Muslims focuses on Muslims as a threat. Haddad and Harb asserted that Muslims are still portrayed in the media as a “potential threat” to the western communities.⁹⁵

While taking a look at the contemporary literature related to the media representation of British Muslims, Poole argued that the media’s focus on race has shifted to Islamophobia.⁹⁶ Poole’s study found that *The Guardian*, a liberal newspaper that advocates for the rights of minority groups in Britain, tends to focus on Islam-related topics. The main topics of reportage are polity, crime, relations, fundamentalism, and education. The reports mostly focused on British Muslims’ fundamentalism rather than their support for terrorism. The news media tend to use “fundamentalism” to describe Muslim extremists alone. Baker, Gabrielatos, and McEnery found that the British press constructs Muslims as “other” and portrays them as people who engage in conflict or hold extremist views.⁹⁷ The newspapers tend to use more conflict frames in reporting Islam than human interest frames.

The media report Islam-related events in the context of conflict rather than cultural or historical contexts. To curtail the spread of Islamophobia, the media’s role in reproducing fear and tension in society must be understood. Since the terrible events of 9/11, the British media’s attention to Islam and Muslims has been substantial and extremely complex in many ways. News reporting of Islam and Muslims is ill-informed, perhaps due to

⁹⁴ Kerry Moore, Paul Mason, Justin Matthew, and Wren Lewis. “Images of Islam in the UK: The representation of British Muslims in the national print news media 2000-2008.” (June 2008). Accessed: June 24, 2018. <http://orca.cf.ac.uk/id/eprint/18277>

⁹⁵ Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Nazir Nader Harb. “Post-9/11: Making Islam an American religion.” *Religions*, 2 (September 2014): 477-501.

⁹⁶ Elizabeth Poole. “Change and continuity in the representation of British Muslims before and after 9/11: The UK context.” *Global Media Journal*, 2 (October 2011): 49-62.

⁹⁷ Paul Baker, Costas Gabrielatos, and Tony McEnery. *Discourse Analysis and Media Attitudes: Representations of Islam in the British Press 1998-2009* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 216-218.

the journalists' weakness in sticking to journalism ethics. The media tend to make "Islam" and "terrorism" synonymous terms while Muslims feel openly targeted.⁹⁸

Frost examined the media's influence on growing Islamophobic trends in British civilization.⁹⁹ The study discovered that racism, hatred, and repetitive attacks on Muslims increase continually. According to the author, the spread of Islamophobia has increased due to negative reports about Islam in the media. The media are largely responsible for the reproduction of "moral panics" by depicting Muslims as a "collective problem" and a threat to British society, Muslims are portrayed as followers of al-Qaida and prospective suicide bombers. Besides, newspapers contributed considerably to the formation of racism by highlighting conflict instead of promoting peace and harmony. This situation implies that newspapers play an influential role in shaping public opinions. The perceptions created by Islamophobes through prejudiced news reporting are destructive, dangerous, and against the unity of religiously divided societies.

Based on the previous findings, print media have been deeply criticized for creating a negative image of Islam. The notion of Islamophobia is undoubtedly not new, but toward the end of the 20th century, extreme anti-Muslim sentimentality originated in the British media industry. Just like the present situation, the fundamental characteristics of anti-Islamism found in the 20th century include the depiction of the "Other" in an undesirable manner and exaggeration of the recognized authorities to legitimize the systems of dominance and relegation. Therefore, the negative portrayal of Islam and Muslims is not a new issue; Muslims have been described as barbarous, uninformed, intolerant, and maddened religious fanatics. This kind of portrayal happened throughout history and remains an issue until the present day.¹⁰⁰

Ahmad interviewed a sample of self-recognized Muslims in the US on media representation of Islam and Muslims, particularly regarding the news coverage of the 9/11 attacks.¹⁰¹ According to the study, there are different

⁹⁸ Fauzia Ahmad. British Muslim Perceptions and Opinions on News Coverage of September 11. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 6 (October 2006): 961-982.

⁹⁹ Diane Frost. "Islamophobia: Examining Causal Links between the Media and "Race Hate" from "Below"." *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 12 (October 2008): 564-578.

¹⁰⁰ Tahir Abbas. "Media Capital and the Representation of South Asian Muslims in the British Press: An ideological analysis." *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 2 (August 2001): 245-257.

¹⁰¹ Fauzia Ahmad. British Muslim Perceptions and Opinions on News Coverage of September 11. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 6 (October 2006): 961-982.