

Research Article

The Commercialization of Islamophobia: Capitalizing on Apprehension

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ABSTRACT

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Islamophobia, the irrational fear, prejudice, or hatred towards Islam and Muslims, has become a pervasive issue in contemporary society. While historical roots of Islamophobia exist, its commercialization has emerged as a distinct phenomenon in recent years. This article explores the commercialization of Islamophobia and its implications, shedding light on how various actors capitalize on apprehension to further their interests. The study employs a literature review approach to analyze and understand the phenomenon, revealing how media, politics, and business exploit and profit from fear, stereotypes, and negative perceptions surrounding Islam and Muslims. The consequences of the commercialization of Islamophobia are profound, perpetuating discrimination, marginalization, and violence against Muslim communities. To counter Islamophobia effectively, collective efforts must be made to dismantle fear-inducing narratives, promote empathy, and foster a comprehensive understanding of Islam and Muslims.

1. INTRODUCTION

Islamophobia, the irrational fear, prejudice, or hatred towards Islam and Muslims, has become a pervasive issue in contemporary society (Ahuja & Banerjee, 2021; Armijos Bravo & Vall Castelló, 2021; McLaughlin et al., 2022; Sufi & Yasmin, 2022; Tahir & Safdar, 2022). While the roots of Islamophobia can be traced back through history, its commercialization has emerged as a distinct phenomenon in recent years (Kilvington et al., 2022; Zempi & Awan, 2017). This article explores the commercialization of Islamophobia and its implications, shedding light on how various actors capitalize on apprehension to further their interests. The commercialization of Islamophobia refers to how individuals, institutions, and industries exploit and profit from the fear, stereotypes, and negative perceptions surrounding Islam and Muslims (Sufi & Yasmin, 2022). This phenomenon has gained significant attention due to its far-reaching consequences, affecting social dynamics, political landscapes, and the lived experiences of Muslim communities worldwide.

In the past, Islamophobia was primarily driven by societal biases, ignorance, and misunderstandings. However, with the advent of modern technology, globalization, and the influence of media, the commodification and commercialization of Islamophobia have reached alarming levels. Actors in various spheres, such as the media, politics, and business, have recognized the economic and social potential of capitalizing on apprehension toward Islam and Muslims. The media industry, in particular, plays a pivotal role in commercializing Islamophobia (Ali et al., 2022; Sufi & Yasmin, 2022). Media outlets, driven by profit motives, have realized that sensationalized and negative portrayals of Islam and Muslims attract significant attention and viewership. The media creates a climate of apprehension that captures public interest by perpetuating stereotypes, disseminating biased information, and



amplifying fear. This has led to producing news stories, documentaries, and entertainment content reinforcing Islamophobic narratives, contributing to normalizing and accepting prejudice.

Political actors also exploit Islamophobia for their gain (Swami et al., 2018). By capitalizing on existing fears and prejudices, politicians have found that anti-Muslim or anti-Syariah rhetoric can effectively mobilize their voter base and shape public opinion. Islamophobia becomes a means to secure political power, advance divisive agendas, and consolidate support. This exploitation of apprehension perpetuates discrimination and undermines the social fabric of diverse societies, fostering mistrust, intolerance, and marginalization.

The consequences of the commercialization of Islamophobia are profound. It perpetuates prejudice and discrimination and hampers efforts to promote inclusivity, diversity, and interfaith dialogue (Bastug & Akca, 2019; Haque et al., 2019; Hopkins & Kahani-Hopkins, 2006). Muslim individuals and communities face increased marginalization, social exclusion, and even violence due to the commercialized narratives surrounding their faith. Moreover, the erosion of social cohesion and the promotion of fear-based narratives undermine the principles of equality, respect, and understanding necessary for a harmonious and pluralistic society.

In light of these concerning developments, understanding and addressing the commercialization of Islamophobia is of paramount importance. By critically examining the actors, motives, and mechanisms involved in exploiting apprehension, we can begin to develop strategies and interventions aimed at countering Islamophobia, fostering empathy, and promoting social harmony. It is essential to recognize the complex interplay between economic interests, media influence, and political manipulation to address the root causes of the commercialization of Islamophobia effectively.

This article seeks to contribute to the academic discourse surrounding Islamophobia and its commercialization. By examining the multifaceted nature of this phenomenon, we can strive for a more informed understanding of its implications and work towards a more inclusive, tolerant, and equitable society.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a literature review approach to analyze and understand the phenomenon of the commercialization of Islamophobia and how various actors use fear and prejudice to their advantage. The literature review approach was designed to collate, review and interpret existing research, theories, concepts, and understandings. Research objectives are clearly defined to guide the collection and analyzing relevant literature. Research objectives may include understanding the commercialization of Islamophobia, the actors involved, the methods used in marketing Islamophobia-related products or services, and the impact on society. Relevant literature sources were identified through searches using academic databases, digital libraries, scholarly journals, books, articles, and related research reports. These sources were selected based on their accuracy, credibility, and relevance to the research topic.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1. *The Toxic Enterprise: Unraveling the Islamophobia Industry's Global Impact*

Extensive scholarly research has been devoted to investigating the Islamophobia industry and its profound influence on instilling fear of Muslims (Ali et al., 2022; Hopkins & Kahani-Hopkins, 2006; McLaughlin et al., 2022; Swami et al., 2018; Tahir & Safdar, 2022; Zempi & Awan, 2017). In Western societies, a significant influx of financial resources has been allocated towards cultivating an environment characterized by internal conflicts among Americans, ultimately resulting in the exclusion of Muslims from mainstream society. The Islamophobia industry has garnered considerable backing from political figures and legislation, perpetuating a distorted perception of Islam and its adherents. As a consequence of escalating societal apprehensions, there has been a surge in targeted attacks against Muslim communities. The primary source employed in this study is the scholarly work of Nathan Lean (2019), an esteemed author and researcher specializing in studying Islamophobia. Lean's conceptualization of Islamophobia centers on "prejudice and antipathy towards individuals identifying as Muslims."

According to Lean (2019), the political right in Western societies has purposefully nurtured Islamophobia as a tactical instrument to capitalize on fear for their political advantages. Consequently, this deliberate cultivation of Islamophobia has engendered irrational apprehension among numerous individuals and extends globally. The post-September 11 discourse has contributed to widespread skepticism toward Muslims (Hunt et al., 2020; van Dooremalen, 2021). On the one hand, rhetoric has emphasized Islam as the "religion of peace." On the other hand, policymakers and military leaders have frequently espoused Islamophobic rhetoric. Consequently, a perceived dichotomy has emerged, distinguishing between "good Muslims" and "bad Muslims." Moreover, Mamdani (2002,

2005) argues that American society has been conditioned to harbor skepticism towards all Muslims, even before distinguishing between the variations and complexities within the Muslim community can take place.

In the U.S. context, President Bush endeavored to establish a clear distinction between "good Muslims" and "bad Muslims," attributing the responsibility for acts of terrorism solely to the latter group (Mamdani, 2005). Simultaneously, the president aimed to assuage the concerns of the American people, assuring them that the "good Muslims" were genuinely committed to disassociating themselves from these despicable acts of wickedness and would readily support the collective struggle against the perceived adversaries. Nevertheless, the fundamental essence of this rhetoric remains evident: unless proven "good," every Muslim is automatically labeled as "bad." The categorizations of "good" and "bad" within this context pertain to the political identity of Muslims rather than their cultural or religious identity (Agbaria & Muff, 2023; Earle, 2015; Topolski, 2018). According to Lean (2019), after the Bush administration's eight-year tenure and accompanying discourse and terminology, Barack Obama sought to distance himself from such "divisive language" (Mapes et al., 2019; Solopova et al., 2021; Tarasheva, 2020). However, despite avoiding terminology explicitly associated with Islamophobia, its adverse consequences have persisted. The linking of all Muslims with extremism has become deeply ingrained, particularly during the War on Terror era, thus making it unsurprising that Islamophobic rhetoric continues to endure.

In concluding remarks, Lean (2019) asserts that the Islamophobia industry operates as a rapidly expanding business entity, adept at comprehending the detrimental influence fear exerts on society and capitalizing on its propagation. Despite constituting a relatively small faction, their endeavors' expansive reach and ramifications fuel the proliferation of anti-Muslim or anti-Syariah hate within vulnerable segments of society. These communities, having been subjected to such propaganda, often align themselves with the proponents of Islamophobia. Lean (2019) astutely acknowledges the peril Islamophobia poses to communities, characterizing it as a "toxic substance," Western politicians and media utilize Islamophobia to rationalize their political and economic agendas, exploiting its effects for their strategic purposes. Amidst the continual discourse from the conservative political faction, an increasing number of individuals are susceptible to this poisonous influence, perpetuating the growth of the Islamophobia industry by reinforcing the fear it directly engenders. Framing Islamophobia as an "industry," a "company," or a marketable commodity highlights its commercial and profit-driven nature, overshadowing any moral or ethical implications in the purported war on Islam.

The final assertion made in the book effectively encapsulates the dominant political atmosphere, as Lean (2019) concludes his examination by offering a projection of the current political terrain. Lean cautions against the "danger of escalation" and sheds light on the deep-seated biases perpetuated by the pervasive "Islamophobia industry." Lean's observations remain highly pertinent to the circumstances exemplified by Donald Trump's presidential campaign, which heavily relied on fear and xenophobia (Huang & Liu, 2020; Mukhammadsidiqov, 2021; Olonisakin & Adebayo, 2021; Reny & Barreto, 2022; White, 2020). Significantly, Trump espoused a comprehensive ban on individuals identifying as Muslims from entering the United States, accompanied by proposals requiring registration or identification cards for Muslims already residing there. Exploiting instances of terrorism and the existence of organizations such as ISIL, the Trump campaign opportunistically utilized these occurrences to stigmatize the Muslim community, thereby instilling greater apprehension and unease towards Muslims and the Islamic faith. In combating Islamophobia, Lean asserts that collective efforts are necessary to dismantle the "fear factories" responsible for generating and perpetuating Islamophobic sentiments.

John L. Esposito, an esteemed authority on contemporary Islamophobia, has authored many scholarly works that delve into the predicaments Muslims encounter in the Western world and the complex obstacles Islam encounters in the contemporary era of the 21st century (J. L. Esposito, 2018). In his article, Esposito asserts that in contemporary times, Islam and the Middle East garner significant attention in mainstream news outlets, albeit typically portrayed negatively (J. L. Esposito, 2019). Notwithstanding Islam's position as the second-largest global religion and the integral presence of Muslims across the contemporary 21st-century landscape, the occurrence of terrorist acts over the past three decades has engendered a surge in Islamophobia. Esposito further contends that Islam and Muslims are frequently subjected to a presumption of guilt, thereby inverting the principles of innocence upheld by the common legal system. Esposito's depiction of Islamophobia corresponds with unfounded and irrational apprehension, engenders prejudice, discriminatory practices, hate speech, and acts of violence. He critiques the media's role in perpetuating Islamophobia through their discourse, disseminated to a vast audience, illustrated by their inclination to categorize Muslims as terrorists while refraining from applying the same framework when a white or non-Muslim individual commits a comparable offense.

Esposito (2018, 2019) exposes a significant challenge encountered within media, the absence of factual evidence or substantiated information presented by commentators when discussing matters related to Islam. This absence of knowledge perpetuated a recurring pattern of unawareness and preconceived notions that intensified Islamophobia. In his influential publication, Esposito delves into the transformative shifts in the interpretations of Islam and investigates the underlying factors contributing to the prevalent unfavorable depictions of the religious faith. To counter these unfavorable narratives, Esposito offers profound insights into Islam and Muslims that transcend these detrimental stereotypes. In his writing, he emphasizes the enduring importance of understanding the intricate relationship between religion and extremism, both domestically and internationally, as a pressing topic in the 21st century. Esposito highlights the significance of recognizing that the fundamental origins of worldwide terrorism, namely socio-political and socioeconomic grievances, are frequently co-opted by extremist groups manipulating expressions and representations of religious discourse and symbolism. Arguing for the necessity of differentiation, Esposito contends that Western media and society must discern between "radicalized extremists" and regular Muslims who diligently adhere to their religious beliefs while vehemently denouncing violence and disavowing the deeds of organizations such as ISIL.

Reza Aslan (Kasiyarno, 2022; Mothes, 2022) is prominent in his field. Aslan extensively explores the genesis and progression of Islam over time, elucidating its significant role on the global stage, particularly in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11. Within this piece, Aslan articulates that critics of religion often demonstrate an inherent incapacity to comprehend religion beyond an absolutist framework. Their analysis uses sacred texts to implicate religion in acts of atrocity while indiscriminately grouping diverse religions as the root cause of oppression worldwide.

Aslan (Kasiyarno, 2022; Mothes, 2022) expounds on how commentators may have valid grounds for denouncing religious rituals or observances that infringe upon or contravene human rights. However, it is imperative to acknowledge that religion constitutes an integral component of culture, and attributing violence or radicalism directly to religion can present certain complexities and challenges. Additionally, Aslan challenges the prevailing notion that religion directly influences terrorist behavior. He asserts that perceiving a direct nexus between religious convictions and behavior may appear self-evident to those less acquainted with religious studies. Nonetheless, he highlights that social scientists have criticized this perspective, underscoring that "Beliefs do not inherently serve as causal explanations for behavior" and emphasizing that behavior arises from a multifaceted interplay among societal, political, cultural, ethical, emotional, and religious elements, encompassing a comprehensive range of influence.

Aslan has assumed the role of a prominent commentator across various media platforms, including CNN, where he has significantly contributed to comprehending the intricate dynamics of Islamophobia while actively countering unfavorable depictions of individuals practicing the Islamic faith and the religion itself (Aslan, 2005)s. Through his endeavors, Aslan confronts the narratives propagated by the Islamophobia industry, which tend to stigmatize Muslims as an object of fear. A notable instance of his influential presence occurred during an interview on CNN, wherein he was asked whether Islam is an inherently violent religion. In response, Aslan asserted that religion itself is not inherently violent. Instead, individuals exploit religion as a justification for acts of violence.

Consequently, Aslan contends that it is erroneous to generalize all religions as sources of violence while acknowledging that specific individuals may adopt interpretations of their religion that endorse violence. By assuming this stance, Aslan fundamentally challenges the ideological underpinnings that perpetuate bigotry against Muslims, providing a compelling response and elucidation regarding the issue of violent extremism. He emphatically asserts that most Muslims do not support the violent acts perpetrated by groups like ISIL, highlighting the incompatibility of such acts with the teachings of Islam.

Idliby (2014) analyses the portrayal of Muslims and Islam in the news media of the United States, shedding light on the perpetuation of negative stereotypes. In her examination, Idliby underscores the importance of media practitioners being mindful of their choice of language to avoid perpetuating Islamophobia, which lies at the core of the Islamophobia industry, and preventing the cultivation of fear. Drawing attention to incidents such as the Boston Marathon bombing and the Fort Hood shooting, Idliby highlights the necessity of American news commentators for responsible language usage. For instance, she critiques Mike Huckabee's characterization of Muslims and Islam as being associated with violence and referred to as "mindless animals." Idliby argues that it would have been more appropriate for Huckabee to acknowledge that violence exists within specific interpretations of Islam rather than attributing it to all Muslims. She emphasizes that most individuals identifying as Muslims refrain from participating in acts of violence.

Furthermore, Idliby (2014) parallels the Islamophobia prevalent in news coverage and historical bigotry against other minority groups, such as Jews and blacks. She elucidates how these groups are dehumanized and reduced to a homogenous entity devoid of individual beliefs, characteristics, qualities, personalities, emotions, and inclinations. This dehumanization paves the way to justify any crime, hatred, or accusation against them. Idliby emphasizes that stripping Muslims of their humanity harms and disregards the essence of humanity itself. Consequently, Muslims have been dehumanized, becoming objects of prejudice and discrimination due to the pervasive impact of Islamophobia.

3.2. Ramifications of Stereotypes Associated with Islam and the Muslim Community

In their scholarly work, Gottschalk and Greenberg (2008, 2013, 2019) critically examine the prevalent stereotyping of Muslims and Islam within Western society. The authors highlight that Muslim men are often subjected to stereotypes based on physical attributes such as beards, mustaches, kaffiyehs or turbans, and brown skin. They further note that in the immediate aftermath of the September 11 tragedy, Muslim men have been subjected to frequent police arrests and public harassment across various regions of the United States. These incidents, as documented by Gottschalk and Greenberg (2008, 2019), reveal the harmful consequences of visual stereotypes portrayed in the media, particularly concerning the appearance of Muslim men. These stereotypes fuel fear and facilitate hate crimes by promoting a limited and biased perception of what a Muslim should look like. It is essential to recognize that Muslims encompass a diverse range of appearances, and singling out the perpetuation of Islamophobia and fear ensues from categorizing individuals according to their physical characteristics. Tragically, this has resulted in the tragic killing of Sikhs mistakenly identified as "turbaned" Muslim terrorists, as reinforced by the media's portrayal of stereotypes.

Another instance illustrating the perpetuation of Islam-related stereotypes involves the false portrayal of the Prophet. Muslims vehemently express disapproval towards the utilization of images or drawings depicting the Prophet due to religious reasons. Within certain interpretations of Islam, representing revered figures such as the Prophet is prohibited to prevent idolatry and the worship of anything other than God. Concerning this, Gottschalk and Greenberg (2019) draw attention to the controversy in 2006 surrounding the dissemination of illustrated satirical content featuring the Prophet, initially initiated by a Danish newspaper and subsequently replicated by various media organizations. Of particular note is the cartoon that sparked the scandal—a depiction of the Prophet wearing a turban with a bomb. While some may perceive this cartoon as a caricature rather than a stereotype, the authors argue that if the same image depicted Osama bin Laden, it would be interpreted as a caricature.

Nevertheless, in Western societies, Muhammad is acknowledged as a symbolic figure representing the Islamic faith. The implication arises that this caricature insinuates inherent violence within all Muslims. According to Gottschalk and Greenberg (2019), this episode exemplifies disrespectfully portraying an essential Islamic symbol, breaching Islamic teachings by visually representing the Prophet's face and associating him with a bomb. Consequently, such instances are perceived as offensive by Muslims and serve as evidence reinforcing the portrayal of Islam as synonymous with violence. Another incident that exemplifies this phenomenon is the assault on the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, which transpired on January 7, 2015.

The attack was executed by two assailants who had pledged their loyalty to the Yemeni branch of Al Qaeda, intending to impede the creation of visual representations of the Prophet. Reza Aslan provides a comprehensive analysis of the unfavorable depiction of the Prophet, examining the notion of Islam as a "warrior religion." Aslan (2005) delves into the historical context of the Crusades and reveals the transformation of the categorization of Islam as an inherently violent and ruthless faith in Western society. Rather than depicting Muslim armies as adversaries during the Crusades, the contemporary image portrays "Armed with explosives, individuals identifying as Islamic terrorists are prepared to sacrifice their lives for their religious beliefs, aiming to inflict harm upon innocent individuals to the greatest extent possible." Aslan emphasizes the consistent element in the stereotyping of Islam, wherein numerous individuals perceive Muslims as followers of a religion that consistently pursues holy warfare or jihad. Furthermore, Aslan elucidates that contemporary terrorists have deviated from the true essence of jihad, which should involve a personal struggle to avoid transgressions that would distance individuals from their connection with God. The formation of stereotypes related to war, violence, and jihad has substantially influenced the perception of Islam and Muslims within Western societies.

Idliby (2014) brings attention to the pernicious impact of the most detrimental stereotype associated with Islam, which asserts that the religion itself is inherently violent. Even though 1.6 billion Muslims worldwide abstain from acts of violence, skepticism and uncertainty endure within Western societies concerning Muslims and the Islamic faith (Idliby, 2014). Furthermore, Idliby contends that any religious tradition can be linked to violence if its adherents interpret their faith violently. By citing the example of Christian extremists who have committed violence against

doctors performing abortions, Idliby argues that the issue lies in the tendency to attribute inherent violence to Islam when an individual Muslim is involved in such actions. This biased perception fails to recognize that violence is not an inherent characteristic of the religion itself. Raymond William Baker (2015) observes that disseminating the fallacious belief regarding the inherent violence of Islam is among the most detrimental falsehoods propagated about the religion. The media has constructed and propagated this myth to sustain discourse characterized by Islamophobic tendencies.

Alsultany (Arghavan, 2020; Rana et al., 2020) interests encompass the domains of Islamophobia, cultural and racial politics, media representations, and the experiences of Arab and Muslim. Alsultany (Rana et al., 2020) explores the reasons behind the challenges faced by individuals when interacting with Muslims who have established their residence in the United States for an extended period and identify themselves as part of the broader American fabric. She observes that in the aftermath of terrorist attacks, there is a tendency for people to develop a sense of alienation towards their fellow citizens, perceiving them as distinct and divergent. Alsultany asks, "Despite society's notable progress in refusing to endorse racism and detrimental stereotypes, why do Arabs and Muslims still encounter prejudice and unfavorable perceptions?". Central to Alsultany's inquiry is an examination of how negative stereotypes, prominently disseminated through media, particularly in television programs and films, perpetuate the persistence of Islamophobia. Ultimately, her work proposes prospective remedies to address the problem of Islamophobia.

Sardar and Davies (2010) present a perspective that rejects violence as a viable solution for combating escalating violence. Sardar and Davies (2010) have closely observed the rise of violence perpetrated by individuals purporting to be followers of Islam. This phenomenon has gained prominence since the tragic events of September 11. Poignantly, he recounts, "I have personally witnessed the catastrophic events of September 11, July 7, the Madrid bombings, the Mumbai attacks, the Charlie Hebdo incident, and the Paris attacks. I have experienced profound and unrestrained grief in response to the devastation inflicted upon Iraq, and Afghanistan, the drone strikes in Pakistan, and the profound ruin witnessed throughout the Arab world as an outcome of the "war on terror" that has been not only terrifying but also futile, breeding nothing but further terror" (Sardar & Davies, 2010). Sardar and Davies (2010) highlight that the ongoing violence perpetrated against Islam has engendered the emergence of militant groups such as ISIL, Boko Haram, and the Taliban, for instance, who claim adherence to Islam. However, he laments that this violent backlash has overshadowed genuine dialogue for fostering understanding and peace.

Esposito (2010) concurs with Sardar's proposition for addressing Islamophobia. He agrees that Muslims should adopt a more inclusive approach that bridges historical interpretations of Islam with contemporary ones. Undertaking such a complex task is impeded by certain groups who distort the religion through their particular interpretation of Islam. Nevertheless, for Muslims who embrace their faith as a means to advance the well-being of humanity, a proactive disposition is imperative to ensure that Islam can effectively respond to contemporary challenges and benefit future generations.

3.3. Relationship between the Power of Media and Authorities in the Issue of Radicalism in the Indonesian Context

In social practice, especially at the situational level, the discourse of radicalism represented by the media is carried out to continue the political policy of war on terrorism, which has later developed into a war on radicalism. This strategy began when the world was shocked by the WTC tragedy on September 11, 2001. The world then blasphemed the perpetrators and social actors behind the tragedy. Shortly after that incident, the United States, through its president, declared war on terrorism. In subsequent developments, the issue of terrorism has developed into something more general, which is radicalism.

The coverage around radicalism cannot be separated from the increasingly vibrant situation of Indonesian society and is identical to the efforts to formalize Islamic law in the form of a state. The coverage around radicalism is not monolithic. The socio-cultural and political climate can influence its presence in Indonesian society.

At the situational level, the escalation of the discourse of radicalism in Indonesia especially occurred after the Islam Defence Action (the action to defend Islam), which had attracted a lot of political attention, not only in Indonesia but also on the global stage. The condition was further exacerbated by the hectic discourse of "Rejection for a Kafir Leader," which was alleged to be one of the causes of the escalated contestation for the Jakarta Regional Head Election in 2017. These incidents finally culminated after issuing Government Regulation instead of Law (PERPPU) Number 2 of 2017 as an amendment to the Law Number 17 of 2013 concerning mass organizations in Indonesia. After this incident, various issues of radicalism became more prevalent, such as the issue that occurred in the Indonesian National Army (TNI) cadet Enzo Zens Allie and the prevalence of radicalism within State Civil Apparatus (ASN).

From the series of events, the discourse of radicalism, represented negatively by the media, is aimed at giving psychological effects, especially fear, to the public by identifying radicalism with Islamic teachings and representing it as frightening, dangerous, and threatening the country's integrity. This fear-based linguistic strategy is a form of scaremongering; namely, fear built massively and structurally, individually and collectively, to create moral panic. This strategy is a psychological threat to protect those who spread the discourse. Furthermore, this strategy is carried out to get the sympathy of the masses so that they are willing to voluntarily follow the wishes and desires of the discourse maker (Leeuwen, 2015).

In the institutional context, the discourse of radicalism cannot be separated from the institutional background of the media as the party that produces the discourse in the form of coverage. Most online media today are often used as media for maintaining power by the authorities. The political involvement of the media crew has led to a prevalence of information bias in information and coverage of the public. For example, historically, Kompas (which became one of the media used as the source of this research data) was founded in 1960. PK Ojong, the initial founder of Kompas, had a fairly close relationship with Ivan Kats, a CIA agent involved in Congres For Cultural, which was based in France. The Congres For Cultural aims to mobilize anti-communist movements and spread the ideology of secularism, liberalism, and pluralism (Herlambang, 2015). In subsequent developments, Kompas established many subsidiary companies. One of them is the Tribun. Regarding alignments, Tribun, a subsidiary of Kompas, is definitely in line with Kompas' alignment in coverage.

In the majority, the institutional backgrounds of the media in Indonesia are dominated by figures that are parts of the government coalition. Erick Thohir leads Republika; Okezone and Inews, which are under the MNC Group company, are led by Hary Tanoesoedibjo; and other media are almost all within the circle of a government coalition. Therefore, it is not surprising that the coverage and strategies of the discourse are always oriented toward taking sides with the ideology of the authorities.

In such contexts, Foucault proposed a theory of language and power. According to him, communication practices, human relations, institutions, and power are intertwined in a main relationship that contains one's efforts to direct and dominate the behavior of others (Dosi, 2012). The media's institutional background, closely related to the authorities' interests, is seen as a strategic practice of power aimed at perpetuating the hegemony of the authorities (Powers, 2015).

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the extensive scholarly research presented in this article highlights the profound influence of the Islamophobia industry on instilling fear of Muslims and its role in fostering exclusion and targeted attacks against Muslim communities. The deliberate cultivation of Islamophobia by political figures and media outlets has perpetuated a distorted perception of Islam and its adherents, leading to the harmful categorization of Muslims as "good" or "bad" based on their political identity rather than their religious or cultural identity. The consequences of these stereotypes and biases have been far-reaching, resulting in the dehumanization and marginalization of Muslims within Western societies. The portrayal of Islam as inherently violent has led to a surge in apprehension and discrimination against Muslims, perpetuating a cycle of fear and hate. However, insightful scholars like Nathan Lean, Reza Aslan, and others have challenged these stereotypes and emphasized the need for nuanced understandings of Islam and its adherents.

To combat Islamophobia, collective efforts are essential in dismantling the "fear factories" responsible for generating and perpetuating such sentiments. Responsible media representation, education, and open dialogue are crucial in dispelling misconceptions and fostering empathy and understanding between communities. Society needs to recognize that violent extremism is not inherent to any religion, including Islam, and that associating acts of violence with an entire religious community only fuels hatred and division.

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