



**THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
SOCIAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY OF ANKARA
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**ISLAMOPHOBIA & THE WESTERN MEDIA: A COMPARATIVE CRITICAL
DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF ANGLO-AMERICAN NEWS MEDIA'S
APPROACH TO TERROR ATTACKS TARGETING MUSLIMS AND NON-
MUSLIMS AND THE APPLIED DOUBLE STANDARDS**

Master's Thesis

**Yeşim GÜRCİ
205429004**

Master of Arts English Language and Literature

August 2022



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

(In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful)

1. "Read (Proclaim!) In the Name of your Lord Who created"
2. "Created man, out of a clot (of congealed blood)."
3. "Read (Proclaim), and your Lord is the Most Generous,"
4. "Who taught by the Pen,"
5. "Taught man that which he knew not."

(*The Qur'an*, 96:1-5)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	i
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
ÖZET	vi
ABSTRACT	vii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
LIST OF TABLES	x
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1	12
ISLAMOPHOBIA: CONCEPTUAL AND HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK.....	12
1.1 Islamophobia as a Multifaceted Concept	13
1.2 Historical Background of Islamophobia (Until the 19th Century).....	17
1.2.1 The Birth and Rapid Expansion of Islam	18
1.2.2 Prominent Theological Writings Demeaning Islam in the Medieval Period	19
1.2.3. The Crusades.....	21
1.2.4. Al-Andalus Under Islamic Rule, Convivencia, and Reconquista	23
1.2.5 The Ottoman Empire as a Great Threat to the Christian European World	25
1.2.6. European Renaissance and Reformation.....	26
1.2.7. Enlightenment and Post-Enlightenment Period	29
1.2.8. Orientalism and Its Ardent Followers	31
CHAPTER 2	35
CONTEMPORARY REASONS BEHIND ISLAMOPHOBIA AND ISLAMOPHOBIC DISCOURSE	35
2.1. The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict.....	35
2.2. The Relations Between the U.S. and Iran	39
2.3. “The Clash of Civilizations”	42
2.4. 9/11 Attacks and “The War on Terror”	43
2.5. ISIS and The Concept of Jihad.....	45
2.6. Post-9/11 Intensification of Anti-Muslim Sentiment Through Various Means	48
2.7. “The Great Replacement” and Anti-Refugee Sentiment.....	49
2.8. Institutionalized Islamophobic Practices.....	51

CHAPTER 3	54
THE REPRESENTATION OF ISLAMOPHOBIA IN NEWS DISCOURSE	54
3.1 Mass Media and News	55
3.2 Discourse, Ideology, Power, and Discourse Analysis Studies	60
3.3 News Media and (Mis) Representation of Muslims.....	66
CHAPTER 4	68
ISLAMOPHOBIA AND THE PRACTICED DOUBLE STANDARDS IN NEWS DISCOURSE: THREE CASE STUDIES OF ANGLO-AMERICAN NEWS MEDIA	68
4.1. The Methodology of the Study	68
4.1.1. The Aim of the Study	68
4.1.2. The Significance of the Study	69
4.1.3. The Limitations of the Study.....	69
4.1.4. The Universe and Sample of the Study	70
4.1.5. The Method of the Study.....	70
4.2. Case Study One: The Terrorist Attacks Targeting Muslim People.....	72
4.2.1. Christchurch Terrorist Attack	73
4.2.2. Critical Discourse Analysis of Anglo-American Newspapers Regarding Their Coverage of Christchurch Terrorist Attack.....	74
4.2.3. Finsbury Park Mosque Terrorist Attack.....	85
4.2.4. Critical Discourse Analysis of Anglo-American Newspapers Regarding Their Coverage of Finsbury Park Mosque Terrorist Attack	86
4.2.5. Conclusion	98
4.3. Case Study Two: The Terrorist Attacks Targeting Non-Muslim Population And Whose Perpetrators Are Thought To Have An Affiliation With Islam.....	100
4.3.1 Reading Terrorist Attack.....	100
4.3.2. Critical Discourse Analysis of Anglo-American Newspapers Regarding Their Coverage of Reading Stabbings	101
4.3.3. San Bernardino Terrorist Attack	112
4.3.4. Critical Discourse Analysis of Anglo-American Newspapers Regarding Their Coverage of San Bernardino Terrorist Attack.....	113
4.3.5. Conclusion	124
4.4. Case Study Three: The Terrorist Attacks Targeting Non-Muslim Population And Whose Perpetrators Are Non-Muslims	126
4.4.1. Sandy Hook Elementary School Terrorist Attack.....	126
4.4.2. Critical Discourse Analysis of Anglo-American Newspapers Regarding Their Coverage of Sandy Hook Elementary School Mass Shooting	127
4.4.3. Las Vegas Strip Terrorist Attack.....	136
4.4.4. Critical Discourse Analysis of Anglo-American Newspapers Regarding Their Coverage of Las Vegas Strip Massacre.....	137
4.4.5. Conclusion	147

4.5. General Conclusion.....	148
CONCLUSION.....	155
BIBLIOGRAPHY	162
CURRICULUM VITAE	181



ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, geniş bir kitleye ulaşma ve kamuoyunu ve eylemlerini etkileme potansiyeline sahip olan gündem belirleyici Anglo-Amerikan gazetelerinin son on yıl içerisinde Müslümanlara ve gayrimüslimlere karşı gerçekleştirilen altı yıkıcı terör saldırısını haberleştirmek için kullandıkları söylemi analiz etmektir. Bu amaç doğrultusunda, bu çalışmayı yürütmek için gerekli verileri toplamak adına Anglo-Amerikan haber medya kuruluşlarının halka açık çevrimiçi arşivleri taranmış ve bunun sonucunda amaçlı örneklem yoluyla toplam yirmi dört haber seçilmiştir. Teun van Dijk'in, başlangıçta haberlerin söylemsel özelliklerini ve bunların çıkarımlarını incelemek için geliştirilmiş nitel ve disiplinler arası Eleştirel Söylem Analizi (CDA) yönteminden yararlanarak ve Edward Said başta olmak üzere Oryantalizm ve Sömürgecilik-sonrası araştırmacılarının çalışmalarına dayanarak, seçilen haberler anlatılarında yer alan başlıklar, alt başlıklar, görseller, cümle yapıları ve retorik gibi mikro ve makro yapılar açısından hem karşılaştırmalı hem de eleştirel olarak analiz edilmiştir. Yapılan detaylı karşılaştırmalı ve eleştirel söylem analizleri sonucunda, Anglo-Amerikan haber medya kuruluşlarının hem İslam dini ve Müslümanlar hakkında yaptıkları geniş kapsamlı genellemeler hem de terör olaylarının mağdurlarının ve faillerinin dini mensubiyetlerine dayanarak sistematik olarak uyguladıkları çifte standard yoluyla özellikle 11 Eylül terör saldırılarının ardından artan ve günümüzde Hollywood filmlerinden kitle iletişim araçlarına kadar çok çeşitli platformlarda kendini gösteren İslamofobinin üretilmesinde ve güçlendirilmesinde önemli bir rol oynadığı tespit edilmiştir. Öyle ki, terörü İslam ile bağdaştırarak bir avuç teröristin eylemlerinden ötürü hem İslam dinini hem de dünyadaki tüm Müslümanları töhmet altında bırakırlarken, dini yakınlıklarından bir kez dahi bahsetmedikleri gayrimüslim faillere karşı korumacı ve insancıllaştırıcı bir tutum takınmaktadırlar.

Anahtar Kavramlar: İslamofobi, Eleştirel Söylem Analizi, İngiliz-Amerikan Haber Medyası, Terör Saldırıları, Çifte Standard, Oryantalizm

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the present study is to analyze the discourse employed by the agenda-setting Anglo-American newspapers, having a wide outreach and the potential to influence public opinion and action, to cover the six devastating terrorist attacks carried out against both Muslims and non-Muslims within the last decade. In accordance with this purpose, the publicly available online archives of Anglo-American news media outlets are searched through to gather the required data to conduct this study, in consequence of which twenty-four news reports in total are selected through purposive sampling. By drawing on Teun van Dijk's qualitative and interdisciplinary Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method, which has been initially developed to examine the discursive features of news reports and their implications, and by building on the Orientalist and post-colonial scholarship headed by Edward Said, the selected news reports are both comparatively and critically analyzed in terms of the micro and macrostructures such as the headlines, leads, visuals, sentence structures, and rhetoric embedded in their narratives. As a result of the detailed comparative and critical discourse analyses, it is determined that Anglo-American news media outlets play a pivotal role in the fabrication and amplification of Islamophobia, which has escalated specifically in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and currently manifests itself in a great variety of platforms ranging from Hollywood movies to mass media, by way of both the sweeping generalizations they make about the religion of Islam and Muslims, and double standards they systematically apply on the basis of the religious affiliation of both victims and perpetrators of the terrorist incidents. So much so that, while they associate terrorism with Islam and thus incriminating both the religion of Islam and all the Muslims around the globe for the actions of a handful of terrorists, they adopt a protectionist and humanizing stance towards the non-Muslim perpetrators whose religious affiliation they do not even mention once.

Key Words: Islamophobia, Critical Discourse Analysis, Anglo-American News Media, Terrorist Attack, Double Standards, Orientalism

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAP	Center for American Progress
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
EUMC	European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
ISIS	Iraq Sham Islamic State
NZ	New Zealand
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PBUH	Peace Be Upon Him
SUV	Sports Utility Vehicle
UN	United Nations
WWI	The First World War
WWII	The Second World War

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1: New Zealand Terrorist Brenton Tarrant's Rifle Replete with White Supremacist Symbols.....

Figure 4.2: The Tweet Posted by The Muslim Council of Britain in the Heat of The Finsbury Park Mosque Terrorist Attack.....

Figure 4.3: The Update Tweet Posted by The Council on the Day of The Finsbury Park Mosque Terrorist Attack.....



LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Christchurch Terrorist Attack and Prominent Discursive Features Employed by the Anglo-American News Media to Cover It.....

Table 4.2: Finsbury Park Mosque Terrorist Attack and Prominent Discursive Features Employed by the Anglo-American News Media to Cover It.....

Table 4.3: Reading Terrorist Attack and Prominent Discursive Features Employed by the Anglo-American News Media to Cover It.....

Table 4.4: San Bernardino Terrorist Attack and Prominent Discursive Features Employed by the Anglo-American News Media to Cover It.....

Table 4.5: Sandy Hook Elementary School Terrorist Attack and Prominent Discursive Features Employed by the Anglo-American News Media to Cover It.....

Table 4.6: Las Vegas Strip Terrorist Attack and Prominent Discursive Features Employed by the Anglo-American News Media to Cover It.....

INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to further previous studies revealing the reductionist portrayals of Muslims fueled by the Orientalist and Islamophobic mindset in the Western media by comparatively analyzing the differences in Anglo-American news media's approach to the specific terrorist attacks carried out against Muslims and non-Muslims in the last ten years by taking the portrayal of both sides into consideration. By building on the legacy of Edward Said and applying both Postcolonial and Orientalist Theories to the media studies, this study will bring the concept of Orientalism up to date and showcase its reflections in the 21st century Anglo-American news discourse loaded with the double standards regarding the portrayal of the perpetrators and the injured party. As also addressed by Caroline Mala Corbin in her article titled "Terrorists Are Always Muslim but Never White: At the Intersection of Critical Race Theory and Propaganda", there are blatant double standards in the framing of the terrorist attacks applied on the basis of the religious affiliation of both the victims and perpetrators. As will be comprehensively investigated and then revealed in this study, while the so-called Muslim perpetrators of the attacks are directly labeled as terrorists, are dehumanized, and portrayed as isolated individuals,

"even after committing heinous acts of violence, we see these white Christians depicted as human beings, not terrorist "others". The media describes their childhood and shows us their graduation photos, not their mugshots. They are shy, quiet young men or charming Southern gentlemen. At school, they sang in the choir or played varsity sports. They have favorite songs and favorite movies. (2017, pg. 467)

As the methodology of this study, Teun van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is chosen, through which the micro and macro structures of news reports will be analyzed. The originality of this work lies in the fact that it proves the Islamophobic discourse and the double standards ingrained in the Anglo-American newspapers scientifically by way of a detailed comparative and critical discourse analysis and weaves

the historical and contemporary motives and repercussions of Islamophobia together ranging from the birth of Islam to modern day terrorist attacks, recently proposed and implemented laws by the Western governments, specifically French and German governments, and humanitarian crises as in the case of Syrian refugees. Moreover, solutions proposed to cope up with the misrepresentation of Muslims in news media set this thesis apart from the existing literature.

In an age where describing and labeling supersede recognition and seeking after truth, Islamophobia takes a stand against Muslim communities perhaps as a more threatening type of virus than COVID-19. In its simplest form, Islamophobia formed by the combination of two words, namely Islam and phobia, can be defined as fear of and hatred towards the religion of Islam and its followers Muslims. Be that as it may, it should be highlighted that approaching to this very term in a critical and productive manner, by not taking it for granted due to its frequent use and by keeping its problematic nature in mind, will be influential in offering a wide perspective regarding the discrimination that Muslim people come face to face and in the process of comprehending the underlying causes of this concept, its history, and repercussions.

Coming in sight within a good many different shapes including verbal, psychological, and even physical violence, Islamophobia poses a great danger for Muslim communities all around the world. This unsound and irrational fear leads Muslims to be exposed to a systemic otherization manifesting itself in the (mis) representation of both Islam and Muslims in a reductive and prejudiced way, embodied in the Danish cartoon crisis during which hate speech was played off as freedom of speech, in the strong opposition to the construction of mosques and Islamic centers, just as in the case of Park 51, in the burning of copies of the Quran in different countries such as the USA, Sweden and Denmark, and in the verbal and physical abuses targeting Muslim men, women, and children on the streets, at schools and workplaces mostly because of Islamic attire and visible tokens (e.g. beard, burqa, and headscarf).

The roots of the contemporary animosity towards Muslims can be dated back to the birth of Islam in the 7th century, a period during which Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and the first believers of Islam were deemed a threat and that is why encountered strong opposition and atrocity in the Judeo-Christian world, and even within Mecca, where Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was born and received the first revelations of Islam in the

cave of Hira.¹ The Western world's being troubled with Islam and its rapid spread paved the way for many significant events regarding the relations between Islam and the West including the Crusades and The Reconquista, which will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

As a multifaceted concept, Islamophobia has come into prominence in the modern day in consequence of several key moments in the world history including the oil crisis of 1970s, Iran hostage crisis pursued by the Iranian Revolution, the fall of the Soviet Union, and undoubtedly the catastrophic terrorist attacks of 9/11 acting as a catalyzer and setting the ground for the proliferation of anti-Muslim sentiment and narratives in the West.² Though all these incidents are of the essence in sowing the seeds of the present-day Islamophobic attitude and thus are historicized in this study, this thesis' focal point will be the post 9/11 era loaded with a great many terrorist attacks, terrorist organizations like Daesh/ISIS, conflicts and crises, such as the plight of Syrian refugees, emerging as one of the largest displacements and greatest crimes against humanity in the world and amplifying the negative portrayals of Muslims as an inherent threat to Western civilization.

What is worth underscoring at this point is the fact that the exaggerated stereotyping of Muslim communities is reinforced in different spheres such as media outlets, TV series, Hollywood movies, computer games, and academic community through the instrument of scholars, politicians, journalists, producers, and computer programmers. To portray both Muslims and Islam in an essentializing way strongly resonates with the hegemonic ideology and discourse perpetuated by the Orientalist mindset leading to the positioning of Muslims as the Western's "Other". As also stated by Beyazıt Akman: "A monolithic perception of different cultures on semi-mythical fabrications helps Western nations define themselves in a much easier and superior way" (Akman, 2016, pg. 27) and by conflating Islam with terrorism and Muslims with terrorists, the Western news media construct a hegemonic narrative replete with Orientalist and Islamophobic tropes, as an expected consequence of which they put the whole blame on Islam and whitewash the atrocities they commit as will be demonstrated in the upcoming chapters.

¹ For more on the historical background of modern-day Islamophobia, see Kalın (2018) and Kalın (2016).

² For more on the significant moments feeding the bigotry against Muslims, see Carr (2021).

Regarded as the fourth estate following the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of a government, mass media play an active role in the propagation of a reductive image of Muslims. Being able to reach a wide range of audience specifically in this information age, mainstream media come to the foreground in shaping the public opinion as well as reaction, and in the (re)production of Islamophobic discourse. Upon the aforementioned significant events, media reportage of Muslims has mushroomed to a great extent and framed as backward, jihadist, un-democratic, atavistic, and extremist, both the words Islam and Muslim become evocative of terrorism.

Rapidly increasing media portrayal of Muslims as having features antithetical to Western world have generated a good many studies exploring the dynamics between Islam, Muslims, and the Western media. Approaching the relationship between media and Islam from the standpoint of journalism, Edward Said's *Covering Islam* (1981), following his other seminal books *Orientalism* (1978) and *The Question of Palestine* (1979), sets the framework of subsequent studies investigating the role of Western news media in disseminating the ready-made assumptions about Islam and Muslims. Updated in 1997, the book applies the Orientalist theory to the Western, predominantly American news media. Focusing on the dynamics between knowledge, power, and interpretation, Said argues that "interpretations depend very much on who the interpreter is, who he or she is addressing, what his or her purpose is, at what historical moment the interpretation takes place" (Said, 1997, p. 162). Concentrating on significant moments such as oil crisis, Iranian hostage crisis, Gulf War, and 1993 bombing of The World Trade Center, all of which act as determinants in the prejudiced portrayals of Muslims, Said investigates the ways in which the Western news media distort the reality regarding Islam and promulgate self-serving stereotypes by covering Muslim world in times of crises as if there was nothing except chaos in the Islamic societies.

In her landmark study *Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims* (2002), Elizabeth Poole narrows down the subject matter in a way that she examines only the British newspapers such as BBC and The Guardian. Conducting both quantitative content analysis of two broadsheet newspapers of the years 1995, 1996, and 1997, and a qualitative one including four newspapers' articles' coverage during the year 1997, Poole tackles with the bigotry against British Muslims as a minority group and an internal "Other". The detailed analyses of several British newspapers result in an understanding

regarding how Muslims, specifically British Muslims are framed and find themselves a place in news media. Acting as a confirmation of previous studies investigating the role of newspapers in constructing and perpetuating Islamophobia, Poole's study demonstrates in practice the fact that while the news media, being a tool of public ideology, reflect the values of society, also manufacture their own version of reality. Ending her book in an optimistic tone, Poole emphasizes the inclination of non-Muslims towards learning about Islam and widening their perspectives by deconstructing the rooted pseudo knowledge of Islam.

Penned by Halim Rane, Jacqui Ewart, and John Martinkus, *Media Framing of the Muslim World: Conflicts, Crises, and Contexts* (2014) explores the close relationship between the Western media, Muslims and Islam, public opinion, political agenda, Islamophobia, and orientalist way of thinking. The authors elaborate on pivotal topics like the framing of asylum seekers, Iraq War, Arab Spring, how journalists cover wars and conflicts, and the produced image of Muslims as terrorists. By putting emphasis on the "vast gulf between image and reality in the Western media reporting of the Muslim world" (p. 8), they investigate how the Western media frame both Islam and Muslims in a discriminatory way. Though the authors argue that to shatter the prejudiced narratives addressing Muslims, one not only has to educate himself/herself but also the "workings and impacts of the news media" (p. 186), they still appear as active agents in perpetuating false beliefs about Islam, and in deeming the Western mind superior in between the lines by claiming that the Islamic religion was "founded" (p. 1) by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), and "most Muslims believe in evolution" by not arguing against science (p. 23).

In her seminal book titled *Disinformation: How Did the Western Media See Turkey's July 15 Coup Attempt? A Discourse Analysis: Orientalism, Neo-Imperialism and Islamophobia* (2018), Filiz Barin Akman surveys the ways in which Western news media, especially the Anglo-American agenda-setting newspapers, harboring exaggerated stereotypes, unfounded allegations, reductive assumptions, and essentialist portrayals of Turks, Muslims, and Islam, operates to fuel pseudo knowledge of what really happened on the long night of 15 July 2016. Grounding her study on post-colonial and orientalism theories, Barin Akman offers a quite detailed and comprehensive discourse analysis of news reports published by the Western media (the most prominent of the news sources are The Guardian, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal,

USA Today, Fox News, Time, Yahoo News, CNBC, Reuters, The Huffington Post, The Sun, The New York Times, The Daily Mirror, Newsweek, Vox, Der Spiegel, and DW) approximately two months since the July 15 coup attempt. By not only providing a mere lexical, visual, and rhetorical analysis of how the Western media reports on one of the most watershed moments in Turkey's history but also situating these analyses in historical, cultural, and political contexts, the author follows the footsteps of Edward Said in terms of carrying out a "contrapuntal reading". What Barin Akman has spotlighted regarding the Western media's biased, manipulative, and selective coverage of the victims and perpetrators of the July 15 coup attempt shows parallelism with the adopted stance by the Anglo-American newspapers towards the non-Muslim terrorists and Muslim victims of the terrorist incidents which will be scrutinized in Chapter 4: "There was no focus on the tragedy of the people who were killed by the coup plotters and no images published showing the traitors' atrocities, even censored versions" (Barin Akman, 2018, pg. 48). Bringing the stark difference between the Turkey's reality and the Western media's (mis) representation of Turks, Muslims, and July 15 coup attempt and elaborating on the Islamophobic, orientalist, and neo-imperialist attitudes ingrained in the Western media, the book informs the understanding of both the public in Turkey and the international public regarding the manipulative power of the Western media and the significance of media literacy.

In his groundbreaking book *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People* (2009), Jack Shaheen centralizes upon the ways in which Hollywood industry demonizes the Arab people by employing certain strategies. Depicting the Arab people repeatedly as heinous, treacherous, terrorists, bandits, lustful, and backward, Hollywood movies such as *A Son of the Sahara* (1924), *Cast a Giant Shadow* (1966), *Young Sherlock Holmes* (1985), *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989), *Aladdin* (1992), *Gladiator* (2000), and *Black Hawk Down* (2002) stick in the minds of people all around the world and lead them to internalize these constructed portrayals. Based upon an Arabic proverb which is "Al tikrar biallem il hmar" meaning "by repetition even the donkey learns", Shaheen emphasizes the pivotal role that reiteration plays in molding the perception of viewers and leading them to a certain type of an ideology resulting in the conjuring up images of Arabs as "Others" (p. 27). Through a comprehensive analysis of nearly one thousand movies, Shaheen sheds lights on how Hollywood has employed reiteration as a teaching

instrument, shaping the mindsets of picturegoers, by way of repeatedly using dehumanizing depictions of Arabs in its productions (p. 28). By drawing attention to the recycling stereotypes regarding Arabs, Shaheen's book acts as an eye-opener for audiences who are lulled by the very industry.

When one looks at the growing body of literature on the close connection between anti-Muslim sentiment and the news media, it is inevitable not to encounter with scholarly articles on the newspapers reportage of terrorist attacks carried out against Muslim and non-Muslim people. Considering terrorism and Islam as equivalent as mentioned above, the Western news media inflame hatred towards Muslim communities and apply double standards in reporting the terrorist attacks by employing different discourses depending upon the religious identity of both the perpetrators and victims. To reveal the pervasiveness of discrimination against Muslims, Lale Dünder in her "The News Coverage of Christchurch Terrorist Attacks in British Media" focalizes on ten British newspapers (Daily Mail, Express, Guardian, Independent, Metro, Mirror, The Telegraph, The Sun, Financial Times, and The Times) and examines how they cover Christchurch Mosque terrorist attack, one of the deadliest terrorist attacks targeting Muslim community while they were praying on Friday both in Al Noor Mosque and Linwood Islamic Centre on March 15, 2019. Conducting a critical discourse analysis investigating editorial choices of the aforementioned daily newspapers, Dünder comes to the conclusion that "the British newspapers failed in terms of ethics and journalistic profession" (p. 78).

In another study evaluating the Norway terrorist attacks of 2011, the author linguistically analyzes some determinant elements, namely word choices, modal expressions, and implicature (Alghamdi, 2015, p. 203), embedded within a video report and a collection of news articles from Fox News, New York Times, Guardian, and The Washington Post. Findings that demonstrate both the American and British news media holding Muslims responsible for the attacks reveal the media's agency in constructing a monolithic image of Muslims.

The findings of these two scholarly articles figuring out the correlation between Islamophobia and the adopted discourse in the Western news media strongly corroborate with another salient study conducting a comparative and qualitative framing analysis of the reportage of two terrorist attacks, Ft. Hood and the Washington, D.C., Navy Yard shootings. Though these two attacks are mostly similar in terms of their targets, i.e., the

American soldiers, number of fatalities, pattern of criminality using “privately purchased guns” (Morin, 2016, p. 1), they are framed in a completely opposite way in *The Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, and *The New York Times*. While Ft. Hood attack (2009) committed by Major Nidal Malik Hasan was defined as a terrorist attack, Washington, D.C., Navy Yard shooting (2013) perpetrated by Aaron Alexis, “a Navy contractor and former Navy reservist” (p. 1) was covered as a crime. The noticeable change in the discourse employed in two identical terrorist attacks stem from the religious identity of Hasan who is thought to have an affiliation with Islam. While Aaron Alexis is portrayed as a “mentally ill individual”, Hasan is labeled as an “extremist” (p. 2), which demonstrates the power of the Western news media in reproducing Islamophobic discourse.

Elmasry and el-Nawawy (2020), in their landmark study illustrate the practiced double standards in the coverage of Las Vegas (2017) and Orlando (2016) mass shootings. Basing on framing theory and quantitative comparative content analysis of two agenda-setting newspapers which are *The New York Times* and *LA Times*, the authors explore the ways in which two terrorist attacks are framed. Being evocative of the findings of Morin’s study, Elmasry and el-Nawawy demonstrate the explicit difference in the portrayal of the two events and perpetrators, namely Stephen Paddock, a white American, and Omar Mateen, a so-called Muslim. While the news media resort to depict Paddock with humanistic terms, Omar Mateen is demonized and so is Islam even though they both are terrorists.

There are also studies (el-Nawawy and Elmasry, 2017; Powell, 2011) that carry out an analysis of multiple terrorist attacks offering readers more information and a wider framework on the news media’s prejudice against Muslims. Looking at the similarities and differences in the reportage of eleven terrorist attacks since 9/11 within the U.S. (either occurred or blocked) between the years 2001 and 2010, Powell reveals a certain pattern in the manner that “terrorist agents were quickly labeled or suspected as Muslim”, and “when a terror suspect was labeled as Muslim in news coverage, a connection to al-Qaeda was suggested” (pp. 96-97). Powell divides the differences in discourse into sub-categories such as the portrayal of victims, description of agent, future threat, and motive for act. While home-grown terrorists are protected in the given discourse by the way of personalization and humanization, international terrorists, mostly the ones thought to be

Muslims, are stigmatized, given much more coverage, and labeled as extremists, and “Islamic radicals” (p. 101).

Conducting a comparative and qualitative framing analysis, the authors el-Nawawy and Elmasry investigate The Washington Post’s portrayal of several terrorist attacks carried out in Turkey, France, Nigeria, and Belgium. Centralizing specifically on the victims, they argue that while the attacks taking place in Ankara and Nigeria, most of whose victims were Muslim people, are framed as “internal conflicts” (p.1795) and have not received widespread media coverage, the attacks mostly targeting non-Muslims in France and Belgium are depicted as terrorist attacks and their victims are humanized in a regular manner (p. 1795).

Despite the growing body of literature touching on the relationship between the Western news media and reproduction of Islamophobic narratives, specifically the ways in which terrorist attacks are framed, there are still some gaps in literature to be filled. Firstly, there are not enough studies conducted dealing with multiple terrorist attacks targeting Muslims and non-Muslims and that occurred in the last decade in detail at the same time. The lack of such a detailed study on the recent terrorist attacks which are of great importance both in revealing the reiterative nature of Islamophobia and today’s socio-political conjuncture, results in the inability to situate the key issues of our time such as the recently proposed and implemented laws by French and German governments, and Syrian refugee crisis within the big picture, leading to another gap in existing literature which is the lack of studies concentrating on how these policies and crises complicate the Islamophobic narrative even further. Finally, there is not a single study combining previous literature on anti-Muslim sentiment, modern day manifestations of Islamophobia, the double standards perpetually practiced by the Anglo-American newspapers, and solution recommendations to deal with the bigotry against Muslims employed in news media.

This work is an authentic one aiming to contribute to the academic literature through conducting a comparative and more comprehensive discourse analysis. It includes the portrayal of six terrorist incidents, namely Christchurch mosque attacks (2019), Finsbury Park mosque attack (2017), Reading stabbings (2020), San Bernardino attack (2015), Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting (2012), and Las Vegas mass shooting (2017) in specific Anglo-American newspapers (BBC, Daily Mirror, Daily Mail,

The Times, The Guardian, Sky News, The Telegraph, Fox News, Newsweek, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, New York Post, and HuffPost), which are selected regarding their significant readership on a global scale and agenda-setting roles in shaping public opinion. Through making an in-depth comparative and critical discourse analysis to investigate the striking differences regarding the terrorist attacks' coverage in the above-mentioned newspapers and offering possible solutions for the very problem of (mis) representation of Muslims in Anglo-American newspapers inherently as terrorists, homogenous, and monolithic, this thesis differentiates from the earlier studies. By bringing together the previous studies, present-day situation of anti-Muslim sentiment both in daily life and news coverage, and feasible future solutions, this work offers a panorama and sets a useful example for further studies that will be conducted within this direction.

The thesis consists of four main chapters other than introductory and concluding parts. The first chapter elaborates on the origin of the term Islamophobia and its multiple definitions in different sources including scholarly articles and reports published by organizations such as Runnymede Trust and EUMC (European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia) to offer a general perspective on the subject and provide basis for the following chapters. Based on the Orientalist and Postcolonial Theories, age-old relations between the East and West will be analyzed and a historical background covering the period from the birth and rapid expansion of the religion of Islam up to 19th century will be provided to set the tone of the following chapter. The fact that hate and fear industry run by means of different and highly effective tools including news media outlets, and some watershed moments such as the deplorable 9/11 terrorist attacks have exacerbated the rise of the contemporary Islamophobia has necessitated a distinct chapter devoted to the significant and critical issues of the post-19th century which were quite determinative in constructing the prevalent Islamophobic discourse of the 21st century. For that reason, the second chapter of the thesis will centralize on contemporary motives and pivotal moments, such as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the strained relations between the U.S. and Iran, behind anti-Muslim sentiment and the narrative fueled by this very racist mentality. Additionally, along with touching upon the close relationship between the racist theory of "The Great Replacement", being widely employed to legitimize the anti-refugee policies, and Islamophobia, Chapter 2 will address the

institutionalized Islamophobic practices, which pose a great threat to the Muslim communities all around the globe, and their complicating impacts on the existing discourse.

The third chapter of this thesis seeks to offer a conceptual framework on mass media and specifically the news media. By highlighting the undeniable role played by the news media not only in providing information but also leading the masses to adopt certain thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes in today's world dominated by information and communication technologies, the third chapter will shed light on how the news making processes and the ways in which news report significant incidents influence socio-political and socio-cultural agenda of societies. In addition to investigating the dynamics among discourse, ideology, knowledge, and power and offering a historical background of critical discourse analysis studies, this chapter will reveal news media's role in producing and then perpetuating the stigmatization and demonization of Muslims and shaping public opinion and action.

In the fourth chapter of this thesis, in the aftermath of introducing the aim, significance, limitations, universe and sample, and method of the study, twenty-four news reports from aforementioned agenda-setting Anglo-American newspapers will be analyzed regarding their coverage of six terrorist attacks occurred in the last decade through conducting a comparative critical discourse analysis by using Teun van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), an interdisciplinary and qualitative approach. In order to make these analyses much easier to comprehend, six tables will be embedded within the chapter showcasing some significant micro and macro structures of the news reports including headlines, leads, and striking photos. Categorized under three case studies, the terrorist incidents and the ways in which they are framed will be examined in a detailed manner and the applied double standards on the basis of the religious affiliation of both the terrorists and the victims will be brought to light.

CHAPTER 1

ISLAMOPHOBIA: CONCEPTUAL AND HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK

"And they ill-treated them
For no other reason than
That they believed in Allah"
(*The Qur'an*, 1991, 85:8)

Though the concept of Islamophobia is fairly new and has only been in frequent use for the last two decades, the fear of, bigotry and inimical attitudes against Muslim communities are deep-seated and date back 1400 years with the emergence of Islam in the 7th century Arabia. Thanks to the rapid expansion of Islam into different geographies, the unending rivalry between today's two largest religions, Christianity followed by about 2.3 billion people, and Islam with 1.8 billion followers has begun.³ Deeming Islam and its followers, Muslims, a theological threat coming from the East, Christian European world has developed an aggressive and defamatory attitude targeting Islam, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), and Muslims with the intention of preventing Islam from overspreading, which ultimately has sown the seeds of modern-day anti-Muslim sentiment.

Throughout history, Islamophobia has manifested itself in different ways both overtly and covertly in different places. However, contemporary experiences of the animosity against Muslims differ from the previous times due to the rapid advancements in information and communication technologies. Additionally, what has led this irrational fear to become much more prevalent in the 20th and 21st centuries are the catastrophic terrorist attacks of 9/11. Since then, Islamophobic narratives and incidents have

³ See Diamant (2019), "The countries with the 10 largest Christian populations and the 10 largest Muslim populations." *Pew Research Center*, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/04/01/the-countries-with-the-10-largest-christian-populations-and-the-10-largest-muslim-populations/>. Accessed 4 January 2022.

proliferated and turned into a commodity for modern society. Embedded in different fields including media, literature, and politics, Islamophobia has become an interdisciplinary notion upon whose origin and definition many different interpretations have been made.

To comprehend modern-day hostility against both Islam and Muslims, it is of great significance to investigate this exact term both from conceptual and historical perspectives, and that is why this chapter initially centralizes upon the origin of the word Islamophobia and its different definitions offered by different scholars. Subsequently, beginning with the birth of Islam, the key moments in the world history paving the way for the contemporary repercussions of this unfounded prejudice will be analyzed.

1.1 Islamophobia as a Multifaceted Concept

As can be easily noticed, Islamophobia is originated by the combination of the words; Islam, the last of the Abrahamic religions following Judaism and Christianity, and phobia which is etymologically derived from the word Phobos denoting the god of fear in Greek mythology (Doctor et al., 2008). In the simplest term, “phobias are irrational, persistent, unexplained fears of objects, situations, or activities that lead to avoidance of behavior” (Blumenreich and Lippman, 1994, p. 125). These unfounded fears not only result in the struggle to stay away from the fear factor but also the aggressive attitudes and violence on the purpose of eliminating what causes the dread. Even though phobias vary widely, they can be grouped under three categories, which are object-oriented such as snake phobia, situation-oriented as in the case of height phobia, and finally phenomenon-oriented ones including Islamophobia.⁴ Considered as a psychological disease that should be treated, phobias occur depending on various factors ranging from biological to political.⁵ Rather than reflecting reality, a phobia corresponds to an emotional state encapsulating “obsession” and “illusion” that continuously affects people’s daily lives. In this regard, the word phobia included in the concept of Islamophobia signifies a fabricated fear that does not stem from the religion of Islam itself (Kentel, 2012). Being a fear of both Islam and its followers Muslims, Islamophobia manifests itself in different ways both implicitly and explicitly. Taking a stand against

⁴See Karslı (2013), for more information on phobias and examples on different types of phobias.

⁵ From the chapter “‘Anti-Semitizm ve ‘Anti-İslamizm’: Benzerlikler ve Farklılıklar” Ö. Hıdır, 2007, *Batı Dünyasında İslamofobi ve Anti-İslamizm*, p. 82.

Muslim communities all around the world in the shape of verbal harassment and physical abuse in the public sphere, anti-Muslim sentiment features bullying, mocking, stigmatization, discrimination, desecration of mosques and the Qur'an, governmental policies and laws banning visible tokens of Islam such as headscarf and burqa, and a great many other actions, all of which violate basic human rights. Islamophobia, in its most basic form, is described as the hatred, antagonism, and fear of Islam and Muslims, as well as the discriminatory actions that occur as a result of these feelings (Green, 2015, p. 9). As is evident from the definition, Islamophobia is not an isolated case and is loaded with numerous other notions from animosity to violence, which consequently leads to a disagreement among scholars, experts, and reporters on a straightforward definition of the term and its origin. When the literature is reviewed in detail, it can be seen that while some scholars (Cesari, 2011:21, Green, 2015:9) hold the view that it was Etienne Dinet, an orientalist French painter who first employed the term Islamophobia in its French form as "Islamophobie" in the first half of the twentieth century, some others (Canatan, 2007:30; Koçer and Yazıcı, 2019:80) refer heavily to The Runnymede Trust report of 1997 as one of the most extensive studies on the concept of Islamophobia as it is perceived today. Complicating the picture even further, the report itself states that Islamophobia as a term was lexicalized in the late 1980s and its first use in print was in 1991 in a periodical.

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Regardless of who coined the term, where it was first employed and when, the aforementioned report titled *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All* (1997) which was released by The Runnymede Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia, describing itself as a think tank, comes to the foreground by setting the framework of the concept of Islamophobia, conducting a comprehensive study on both the nature of anti-Muslim sentiment and the condition of British Muslims, and having a formative impact on the subsequent studies in the field. By drawing attention to its similarity to the phenomena of xenophobia and Europhobia, the report defines Islamophobia as "a useful shorthand way of referring to dread or hatred of Islam- and, therefore, to fear or dislike of all or most Muslims".⁷ In addition to offering a definitional framework of the concept,

⁶ See The Runnymede Trust Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia (1997), *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All*. <https://www.runnymedetrust.org/companies/17/74/Islamophobia-A-Challenge-for-Us-All.html>, p. 1.

⁷ Ibid., p. 1.

the report divides the main characteristics of Islamophobia into eight categories by stating that they reflect the closed views of Islam:

- 1) Islam is viewed as a monolithic and static religion.
- 2) Islam is regarded as other and separate.
- 3) Islam is perceived as inferior, not different.
- 4) Instead of a partner, Islam is seen as an enemy.
- 5) Muslims are deemed manipulative.
- 6) Violence, discrimination, and racism targeting Muslim communities are defended.
- 7) When Muslims criticize the West, their criticisms are immediately dismissed.
- 8) Anti-Muslim rhetoric is seen as something normal ⁸.

While the classification offered by The Runnymede Trust report in 1997 is supported by some scholars like Tahir Abbas, and found quite relevant in today's conjuncture (Abbas, 2004), both the very term Islamophobia and its definition come in for criticism by many others in the academia. Even though for Christopher Allen the report and its approach continue to have a significant effect on the rhetoric of anti-Muslim sentiment, Islamophobia is downplayed into a perfunctory phenomenon and "defined more by the characteristics of the victims than the motivation and purpose of the perpetrators themselves" (Allen, 2010, p. 80).

According to Necdet Subaşı, there is no doubt that the word coinage is problematic, and it connotes that the religion of Islam is essentially something to be afraid of (Subaşı, 2016). In the report, it is already accepted that the term Islamophobia is not quintessential. It has come into use since there is a necessity for naming the newly occurred situation, which is the animosity toward Muslim people. ⁹ In addition to the criticisms made about both the comprehensiveness and appropriateness of the term Islamophobia, there are also questionings by some scholars of the very presence of anti-Muslim prejudice. Posing the question whether Islamophobia exists or not and remarking that the concept leads to a conflict between the bigotry against Islam and Muslims, and the legitimate criticism of Islam, Malik argues that the indictment of "Islamophobia" is mostly employed in order to suppress the critics of the religion rather than to address

⁸ Ibid., p.5.

⁹ Ibid., p.4.

racism targeting Muslims. Therefore, he holds the view that “Islamophobia” may restrict the freedom of expression, an approach which is at odds with the nature of a multicultural society.¹⁰ This dilemma uttered by Malik has already been taken into account by The Runnymede Trust reporters. In order to draw a line between abusive remarks and actions directed at Muslims and legitimate criticisms of Islam as a religion, the reporters provide two distinct categories as open and closed views of Islam. While the open views of Islam enclose “legitimate disagreement and criticism, as also appreciation and respect”, “phobic dread of Islam” is a feature that appears repeatedly in the closed views.¹¹

Some of the doubts about the term Islamophobia stem from the assumption that it inaccurately attributes the fear factor to the religion of Islam itself. To draw from Fred Halliday’s (1999) articulation:

‘Islam’ as a religion *was* the enemy in the past: in the crusades or the *reconquista*. It is not the enemy now: Islam is not threatening to win large segments of western European society to its faith, as Communism did, nor is the polemic, in press, media or political statement, against the Islamic faith... The attack now is against not *Islam* as a faith but *Muslims* as a people. (p. 898)

That’s why Halliday proposes “anti-Muslimism” in the place of Islamophobia as a more appropriate term.

Launched as one of the first inclusive reports following the tragic events of 9/11, which has an undeniable impact on the proliferation of Islamophobic narratives in the West, “Summary Report on Islamophobia in the EU after 11 September 2001” that was published on behalf of the EUMC (European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia) has analyzed the racist and discriminatory attacks targeting Muslims in the fifteen European countries ranging from Belgium to Finland. The report is of importance because it adds the concepts of racism and xenophobia to the definitional framework of the term Islamophobia. The close relationship between Islamophobia and racism has also been supported by many authors (Grosfoguel, 2012; Kalin, 2011; Sajid, 2005). By highlighting the shift in the racist approaches from the ones rooted in the skin color into

¹⁰ See, Malik (February 2005), “The Islamophobia Myth,” in *Prospect* for Malik’s concern regarding the concept of Islamophobia , <https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/islamophobiamyth>

¹¹ See The Runnymede Trust Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia (1997), *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All*. <https://www.runnymedetrust.org/companies/17/74/Islamophobia-A-Challenge-for-Us-All.html> p.4.

the ones based upon the religion, culture, beliefs, and values of a group of people, they argue that Islamophobia is a new kind of racism. In this respect, it can be claimed that “the old racism based on biological inferiority resurfaces as ethnic, cultural, and religious racism” (Kalin, 2011, p.11), which leads Muslim populations to be portrayed as both religiously and culturally inferior compared to the Western civilizations.

As can be seen, there are both many different definitions of the anti-Muslim sentiment and alternative words for the term Islamophobia such as anti-Islamism, anti-Muslimism, and Muslimophobia. However, it should be noted that both the widely used term Islamophobia and its alternatives offered by the scholars fall short of reflecting the reality and that is why are misnomers and should not be taken for granted. Due to the fact that language is an artificial system, it reduces complex thoughts and realities, in this case the experiences of Muslim communities, into basic sound units. Additionally, to draw from Saussure: “The bond between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary” and therefore, any thought or reality “could be represented equally by just any other sequence” (Saussure, 2011, pp. 67-68)., which supports the idea that none of these nomenclature of bigotry against Muslims are superior to the other and they cannot represent the truth inclusively. Both the coinages offered in substitution for the contested term Islamophobia and its association with other notions such as xenophobia, racism, discrimination, and violence create a need for a detailed analysis of the historical foundations of the anti-Muslim prejudice in order to comprehend both its problematic nature and how it is related with the modern-day Islamophobic narratives and actions.

1.2 Historical Background of Islamophobia (Until the 19th Century)

In the process of the formation of contemporary Islamophobia which is shaped by the West’s presuppositions and (mis) representations of both Islam and Muslims, there lie many significant factors to be examined in detail. Though the term is “a new word for an old fear” (Sajid, 2005), it follows an age-old heritage rooted in the Orientalist mentality that divides the world into two so-called irreconcilable parts, namely the West and the Rest, or “us” versus “them”. That is why it would not be far-fetched to date the origin of the fear of and animosity towards Muslims back to the emergence of Islam 1400 years ago.

1.2.1 The Birth and Rapid Expansion of Islam

As clearly defined by John L. Esposito: “The term Islam is derived from the Arabic root s-l-m, which means ‘submission’ or ‘peace’” and “Muslims are those who surrender to God’s will or law, rendering them at peace with themselves and with God” (Esposito, 2003, p. 144). The modern-day anti-Muslim prejudice prevalent in the Western mentality resonates with the year 610 when Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), the last messenger of Allah (meaning God in Arabic) sent to the whole humanity, got the first revelation of Islam being as the ultimate circle of Abrahamic religions, through the angel Gabriel while he “journeyed to the loneliness of a cave in Mount Hira to think and pray” (Graham, 2006, p. 17) as he frequently did. Since then, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has begun to convey the divine message of Allah to humanity beginning with the closest people around him. When he first invited the people of Mecca to the Islamic faith, most of whom were idolators living in the 7th century Arabia defined as pre-Islamic days of ignorance, they deemed both the Prophet and the religion about which he was preaching a threat to their self-interests, and as an expected consequence they developed an aggressive attitude which targeted not only the early believers of Islam but also the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). When this hostility that started in the form of verbal abuse such as teasing intensified and evolved into physical assaults, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and the adherents of Islam had to migrate from Mecca to Medina in the year 622, a significant event in the history of Islam which is known as hijra (Green, 2015). The rapid expansion of Islam both during the time of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and following his death into wide geographies covering North Africa, Iraq, Iran, Syria, Afghanistan, and Anatolia catalyzed the formation of the medieval western world’s perception of Islam both as a “formidable competitor and a latecoming challenge to Christianity” (Said, 1997, p. 5). Though Islam bears a resemblance to both Judaism and Christianity in terms of their monotheistic nature and views their followers as the people of the book meaning that they “received revelations, through prophets, in the form of scriptures or revealed books from God” (Esposito, 2011, p. 5), it directs criticism at the subsequently distorted understandings and practices conducted by them. One of the most inexplicable things in the Qur’an, which is the holy book of Muslims, for Christians is that it rejects the doctrine of Trinity which is founded upon the belief that the God exists as three persons, namely Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. While Christians regard Jesus Christ (pbuh) as the Son of

God within the context of this unity, Muslims do not attribute divine qualities to him and respect Jesus Christ (pbuh) as one of the messengers sent by Allah. This fallacy of Christians in situating Jesus Christ (pbuh) as a divine figure is directly related to their misnaming Islam as Mohammedanism and Muslims as Mohammedans for centuries by thinking that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was also divinized in Islamic faith. Another issue about which Muslims and Christians do not reach a common ground is their judgments on the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ (pbuh). For Muslims, Jesus Christ (pbuh) was not crucified, but was raised to the presence of Allah, which goes completely against the Christian understanding.¹²

1.2.2 Prominent Theological Writings Demeaning Islam in the Medieval Period

On the purpose of showing reaction to the teachings of Islam and preventing people from converting to it, Christian European world produced numerous theological writings that were embedded with defamatory and derogatory discourse targeting Islam, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), and Muslims, pointing out to an enmity which still manifests itself today in many different ways. A great many figures such as Johannes Damascenus, Bede, Theodore Ebu Kurra, Peter the Venerable, Thomas Aquinas, and Riccoldo da Monte di Croce come to the foreground in their ceaseless efforts to downgrade Islam, and to achieve this aim of theirs, they got started on attacking Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) by assuming that “if he could be shown to be no prophet; the whole Islamic fabric failed” (Daniel, 2009, p. 88). Johannes Damascenus (1970), as one of the first theologians and intellectuals touching upon both the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and Qur’an in his works from a biased framework, states:

From that time to present a false prophet named Mohammed has appeared in their midst. This man, after having chanced upon the Old and New Testaments and likewise, it seems, having conversed with an Arian monk, devised his own heresy. Then, having insinuated himself into the good graces of the people by a show seeming piety, he gave out that a certain book had been sent down to him from heaven. He had set down some ridiculous compositions in this book of his and he gave it to them as an object of veneration. (p. 153)

¹²See Kalin (2018); Daniel (2009); and Esposito (2011), for more information on the differentiations between Muslim and Christian teachings.

As can be easily noticed, Johannes Damascenus deems Islam an aberration devised by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) who is portrayed as both an impostor and the author of the Qur'an, an erroneous belief that prevailed in the Middle Ages and played a significant role in shaping the discourse of subsequent works. Following the footsteps of Damascenus, Thomas Aquinas, in his work titled *Summa Contra Gentiles*, claims that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) "did...corrupt almost all the teaching of the Old and New Testaments by a narrative replete with fables" (Tolan, 2002, p. 243).

As another work reiterating the fabricated portrayal of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) during the medieval period, *Historia Ecclesiastica* penned by Hugh of Fleury can be listed. In his work in which he presents world history, Fleury refers to the fact that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was involved with trade when he was young "during which he had the opportunity to meet Christians and Jews from whom he learnt the Scriptures... and that he became a magician" (di Cesare, 2012, p. 3). Constructing a pseudo image of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) by attributing irrational and biased qualities to him and presenting him as a magician luring people around him, a self-proclaimed prophet, a man who encouraged polygamy because of his lustful nature, and who was related with the devil, the aforementioned writers set the ground for the disinformation which is still prevalent in the contemporary discourse.¹³ Being not satisfied with only targeting the character and prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), the medieval theologians and intellectuals degraded both the religion of Islam and Muslims' holy book Qur'an. While Islam was regarded as "a demonic religion of apostasy, blasphemy, and obscurity" (Said, 1997, p. 5), the Qur'an was believed to be manufactured by the Prophet Muhammad and a "haphazard collection of human documents prepared under highly disedifying circumstances" (Daniel, 2009, p. 55). Even the translation of the Qur'an into Latin by Robert of Ketton upon the commission of Peter the Venerable could not lead to the deconstruction of these false imageries. As a matter of fact, the ultimate aim of the translation was not to understand Islam and its teachings correctly, but to get to know the enemy, namely Muslims and then beat them at their own game (Kalin, 2018), a strategy which is evocative of Napoleon's invasion of Egypt epitomizing the close relationship between knowledge and power as proposed by Foucault, which will be examined in detail

¹³See Daniel (2009); Said (1997); and di Cesare (2012), for more on the distorted image of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

in the following paragraphs.

1.2.3. The Crusades

The understanding that perceives Islam as a theological and political threat, and collective efforts to demonize Islam and its adherents intensified following the victory of the Seljuks in the Battle of Manzikert against the Byzantine Empire in 1071. This hammering caused the Byzantine Empire to call Pope Urban II for help, and consequently “Urban II, in his infamous sermon at the Council of Clermont in 1095, called on Christendom to mobilize against the East, and especially the Seljuks in Anatolia.”¹⁴ Having multiple versions, the sermon by the Urban II played a crucial role in bringing Christian forces together under the banner of a holy war against Muslims and Turks, so much so that those who decided to take a firm stand against Muslims in the crusades were granted by the Pope that their sins would be absolved. The sermon, in its approach to Islam, Muslims, and Turks, replicated old myths propagated by the medieval theologians:

From the confines of Jerusalem and the city of Constantinople a horrible tale has gone forth and very frequently has been brought to our ears, namely, that a race from the Kingdom of Persians, an accursed race, a race utterly alienated from God, a generation forsooth which has not directed its heart and has not entrusted its spirit to God, has invaded the lands of those Christians and has depopulated them by the sword, pillage and fire; it has led away a part of the captives into its own country, and a part it has destroyed by cruel tortures; it has either entirely destroyed the churches of God or appropriated them for the rites of its own religion. They destroy the altars, after having defiled them with their uncleanness. They circumcise the Christians, and the blood of circumcision they either spread upon the altars or pour into the vases of the baptismal font.¹⁵

In addition to being founded upon an explicitly discriminatory and racist discourse and portraying the Turks as infidels, the sermon is at odds with the teachings of Islam and the Islamic law of war which advises keeping within bounds: “Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah loveth not transgressors” (*The Qur'an*, 1991, 1:190). According to the Islamic law of war, the destruction of properties

¹⁴ See Barin Akman (2018), p.17.

¹⁵ To analyze five different versions of the speech by the Pope Urban II, see <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/urban2-5vers.asp>.

even if they belong to the enemy is prohibited. What is more, the captives of war are required to be treated in a humane way under the Islamic law. Undoubtedly, at this point, in order to refute the Pope's false accusations replete with hatred, prejudice, and pseudo-knowledge of Islam, Muslims, and Turks, it is of great significance to quote from the orders of the first Caliph of the Islamic empire, Abu Bakr as-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) to his military commanders:

Stop, O people, that I may give you ten rules for your guidance in the battlefield. Do not commit treachery or deviate from the right path. You must not mutilate dead bodies. Neither kill a child, nor a woman, nor an aged man. Bring no harm to the trees, nor burn them with fire, especially those that are fruitful. Slay not any of the enemy's flock, save for your food. You are likely to pass by people who have devoted their lives to monastic services; leave them alone. (Aboul-Enein and Zuhur, 2004, p. 22)

What the Pope Urban II actually intended by fabricating a provocative image of the Turks, Muslims, and the religion of Islam, which even in the time of war forbids the killing of children, women, and the elderly, cares for the integrity of the environment, and has respect for a corpse even if it belongs to the enemy, came to light later: to combine Eastern and Western Christians and also to reclaim Jerusalem regarded as “the navel of the world”, the birthplace of all Christian faith and scene of Jesus' life, death and resurrection” (Asbridge, 2005, p. 35). When the Pope reached his goal and the Christian armies reclaimed Jerusalem following the first crusade in 1096, the only crusade which resulted in victory for the Christians, it caused great pain for the Muslim world. With the fall of Jerusalem into the hands of the crusaders, the Christian soldiers carried out cruel and inhuman actions such as plunders and massacres, which illustrates the fact that while they accused Muslims of being heathens and oppressors, it was them who were the real barbarians and transgressors:

Many Muslims fled towards the Temple Mount, where some rallied, putting up futile resistance. One Latin eyewitness remembered how ‘all the defenders fled along the walls and through the city, and our men went after them, killing them and cutting them down as far as Solomon's Temple, where there was such a massacre that our men were wading up to their ankles in enemy blood. (Asbridge, 2005, p. 316) When Muslims took Jerusalem back from the Crusaders under the command of Salahaddin Ayyubi in the year 1187, there mushroomed an extensive literature in the Middle Ages depicting him as a

brave, generous, and fearless hero. However, what is ironic here is that starting out with an anti-Muslim prejudice, the Western literature portrayed him as “a secret Christian knight” by thinking that Muslims could not have such positive qualities (Kalin, 2016). As can be seen, the Crusades as a significant encounter between Muslim and Christian world in medieval period had its source in the anti-Muslim propaganda made by the Catholic Church and the ignorance about the religion of Islam and Muslims, a continuous phenomenon extending to the present.

1.2.4. Al-Andalus Under Islamic Rule, Convivencia, and Reconquista

Despite the persistent negative portrayals of Islam, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), and Muslims and the violent encounters between the Christian West and Muslim East, the Middle Ages witnessed positive and productive interaction among the adherents of the three Abrahamic religions, namely Muslims, Christians, and Jews, under the Islamic rule of Al-Andalus. Between the years 711 and 1492, an undeniably rich Muslim culture flourished in today’s Southern Spain, Sicily and Portugal following the victory in one of the foremost wars fought between the Muslim armies under the command of Tariq ibn Ziyad and Visigoths commanded by the ruler of Spain, King Roderick. In the year 711, Tariq ibn Ziyad crossed what is known today as Gibraltar Bay, named after him, and stepped Iberian Peninsula, then ordered his soldiers to burn the boats that took them to the shore meaning that they would either gain a victory or die with dignity (Kalin, 2018). Getting the upper hand and naming the Southern part of Spain as Al-Andalus, meaning the land of vandals referring to the vandals who dominated over Iberian Peninsula in the 5th century (Kılınç, 2019, p. 41), Muslims lived in peace and harmony with Christians and Jews over a long period of time by constructing a common culture. Named as convivencia, this collective experience denotes “living-together” and “it incorporates a host of other beliefs, values and ideas that revolve around the embracing inter-play of racial, cultural and religious forces” (Chak, 2009, p. 567). Founded upon the essence of tolerance, Andalusian Islamic civilization allowed both Jews and Christians to worship and administer their communities according to their own religious laws... The main beneficiaries of these arrangements in the early period of al-Andalus were Jews, for whom the Muslim conquests brought release from near-pariah status under the Visigoths. Under the Cordoban caliphate, a number of Jews achieved high positions with Muslim courts as

counselors, physicians, statesmen, diplomats. (Carr, 2011, p. 26)

Al-Andalus can be regarded metaphorically as a salad bowl rather than a melting pot in that Christian and Jew populations were allowed the freedom of maintaining their cultural and religious traditions without being forced to assimilate. Thanks to the successful and just management of diversity, “while the rest of Europe was enduring a period of cultural stagnation known as the Dark Ages, al-Andalus, as the Iberian Peninsula came to be known under Muslim rule, saw the growth and development of human knowledge” (Kumar, 2012, p. 12). Both the original works and translations produced by the collaborative efforts of Muslims, Christians and Jews in many different fields including astronomy, mathematics, medicine, geography, philosophy, and history gave a shape to the European thought and even played an undeniable role in catalyzing the European Renaissance. The contribution of the Andalusian Muslim intellectuals to the Western world of thought cannot be denied. While Ibn Rushd, or Averroes as named in the medieval Christian world, through his commentaries on Aristotle which were translated into Latin reintroduced Aristotle and his teachings to the Western world, Ibn Tufayl, as one of the most well-known philosophers in Al-Andalus, with his *Hayy ibn Yaqzan* “inspired another tale of a lonely castaway and his companion on a desert isle. The book was none other than Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, published just eleven years after Ibn Tufayl’s original was translated into English in 1708” (Graham, 2006, p. 109). Ibn al-Baytar, a popular botanist and pharmacist in the Golden Age of Islam, was regarded as an influential figure in “founding of modern botany” and known mostly for his book *Kitāb al-jāmi ‘ fī-mufradāt al-adwiya wa’l-aghddhiya* or as in English *Dictionary of Simple Remedies and Food*, “a fundamental work on botany, describing 3000 simples, all listed in alphabetical order” (Zaimeche, n.d.). Focalizing on different areas ranging from anthropology to ethics, Ibn Hazm, as another influential Muslim figure, produced works on Islamic law and theology, comparative religion, the significance of logic, human affairs, and his views of some Greek philosophers.¹⁶

To draw from Zachary Lockman (2004):

Translated Arabic writings on medicine, mathematics, astronomy and other sciences were for centuries used as textbooks in medieval Europe, while the writings of Muslim

¹⁶ See Stefaniuk (2020), for more on the Ibn Hazm and his legacy.

philosophers like Ibn Sina' (980–1037, known in the West as Avicenna) and Ibn Rushd (1126–98, known as Averroes), and Jewish philosophers who wrote mainly in Arabic like Maimonides (Rabbi Moses ben Maimon, 1135–1204), were eagerly read and discussed and influenced several generations of medieval Christian philosophers and theologians. (p. 31)

All these remarkable developments and experience of coexistence in Al-Andalus for about 700 years could not prevent the tragic movement named Reconquista, meaning the reconquest of Al-Andalus by the Christians, fueled by the anti-Muslim sentiment of the Catholic monarchs Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella of Castile. Upon the fall of Granada in 1492 into the hands of the Christians, as in the case of the loss of Cordoba in 1236 and Seville in 1248, Christian kings and clergymen were extremely tough on Muslims, thousands of whom were exposed to torture, forced migration and conversion, and ethnic cleansing with the Spanish Inquisition.¹⁷ Not only Muslims but also Jews suffered from this great tragedy and came face to face with an inhuman treatment of the Christians. Unfortunately, 700 years of convivencia, which was an epitome of the harmonious coexistence of a multicultural and multi-religious civilization, came to an end.

1.2.5 The Ottoman Empire as a Great Threat to the Christian European World

Even though the Christian soldiers took the possession of Jerusalem in the first crusade which subsequently intensified the authority of the Catholic Church, they could not attain what they expected from the following wars fought in the name of God, turning everything upside and down for both the crusaders and the Catholic Church. At the end of the Medieval Period, there occurred three Muslim empires, namely “the Mughal Empire in India, the Safavid Empire in Iran, and the Ottoman Empire in Turkey” (Green, 2015, p. 54). By expanding into a vast geography covering three continents, the Ottoman Empire posed a great threat to the Christian European world, which in turn changed both the dynamics between the Ottomans and the Europeans and led to the emergence of a European literature embedded with hostile imagery. When “in 1453 Sultan Mehmed II (“the Conqueror”) finally extinguished the thousand-year-old Byzantine empire by

¹⁷See Atçeken (2009); Kamen (2014); and Şeyban (2016), to be more acknowledged on the tragedy of Reconquista.

capturing Constantinople” (Lockman, 2004, p. 40), and turned Hagia Sophia to a mosque becoming a great symbol of this conquest, it caused a great shock to the Christian Europeans. So much so that Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini who would be the future Pope Pius II articulated: “Here is a second death for Homer and for Plato too... Now Muhammad reigns amongst us. Now the Turk hangs over our very heads” (Nicolle, 2000, p. 88). What is more, Pope Pius II composed a letter with the aim of inviting the Sultan to Christianity:

An insignificant trifle can make you the greatest, the most powerful, the most famous of living mortals. You ask what it is? It is not hard to find; there is no need to go far in search of it. It can be found everywhere: a little water (*aquae pauxillum*) with which to be baptized, to be converted to Christianity, and to accept the faith of the Gospel. (Babinger, 1992, p. 200)

Not being able to get over with the conquest of Constantinople, Christian Europe could not know what to do. For İbrahim Kalın, Pope Pius II’s letter to the Sultan had a strategic purpose. By inviting Sultan Mehmed, the Conqueror to Christianity, the Pope was actually challenging the European leaders who began to lose both their religions and territories, and was trying to mobilize them against the Ottomans (Kalın, 2016, p. 202). It should not be too hard to guess how the Sultan reacted to this invitation.

1.2.6. European Renaissance and Reformation

The rapid expansion of the Ottoman borders into the other parts of Europe, the successful military campaigns, and the conquest of Belgrade under the leadership of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, triggered a shift in Christian European discourse. The conception of Muslim threat prevalent throughout the Middle Ages gave way to the Turkish threat in a way that after a point “the term ‘Turk’ became synonymous with Muslim” (Kumar, 2012, p. 18), and were used interchangeably in the works of Renaissance and Enlightenment period writers and intellectuals to demonize Islam.

As previously stated, the experience of convivencia in Al-Andalus in the Middle Ages, which enabled the development of a culturally rich civilization with all the unique and translated works covering a great many fields from philosophy to botany, had a massive impact on the flourish of European Renaissance. Dating back to the 14th century and referring to “a cultural movement that signifies a return to the sources of Greek and

Roman antiquity” (Green, 2015, p. 53), Renaissance marked significant changes in the European mentality. Not long after the Renaissance, which manifested itself in the fields of art, literature, politics, and so forth, Reformation, as a theological movement leading to the split of Western Christianity into two branches, namely Catholicism and Protestantism, took place led by Martin Luther.¹⁸ Despite these critical moments which reshaped cultural, political, and religious atmosphere of Europe, the prevalent discourse loaded with the reductionist and demeaning portrayals of Islam and Muslims circulating throughout the Middle Ages continued to be employed in the works and remarks of the Renaissance and Reformation period writers and intellectuals.

Dante Alighieri, a late medieval period Italian poet, seriously influenced the mainstream of the Renaissance period with his works, among which one of the most renowned was *The Divine Comedy*, penned at the beginning of 14th century. To briefly state, *The Divine Comedy* is a long narrative poem describing Dante’s journey into Hell (Inferno), Purgatory (Purgatorio), and Paradise (Paradiso), during which he encounters familiar faces. What turns this specific work into a perfect fit for Islamophobia studies is the fact that in the eighth circle of hell, which is reserved for the ones charged with schism, we see Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). The reason why Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was placed in the eighth circle of hell by Dante can be found in the biased perception prevailing throughout the Middle Ages regarding the Prophet (pbuh) as someone who “invented a new religion against Christianity” (Görmez and Ekineker, 2015, p. 263). Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is not the only Islamic figure severely punished by Dante in *The Divine Comedy*. In the previous parts of the narrative poem, we as readers come across Avicenna, Averroes, and Saladin who were put in the first circle of the hell, “there to suffer a minimal (and even honorable) punishment for not having had the benefit of Christian revelation. Dante, of course, admires their great virtues and accomplishments, but because they were not Christians, he must condemn them, however lightly, to Hell” (Said, 2003, p. 69), which eventually epitomizes Dante’s opinionated perception and ignorance of both Islam and Muslims.

When it comes to William Shakespeare as another influential figure whose works are included not only in the curricula of England but also of almost all countries around

¹⁸See Green (2015); and Qureshi & Sells (2003), for more on Renaissance, Reformation and how Muslims and Turks were perceived.

the world, it can be seen that, unfortunately, his view of Islam is no more positive than that of Dante's. As stated by Beyazıt Akman, "there are 34 references in total to Turks in Shakespeare's plays" and as might be expected, these references have nothing to do with a positive representation.¹⁹ To exemplify, in his play titled *Henry V*, Shakespeare becomes the voice of the Western world and laments on the loss of Constantinople to Turks in 1453. Following the conquest of France, King Henry V tries to win the heart of the French princess Katherine by uttering: "Shall not thou/ and I, between Saint Denis and Saint George, compound/ a boy, half French, half English, that shall go/ to Constantinople and take the Turk by the beard?" (Shakespeare, 1599/ 2004, 5.2, 214-217). It should be highlighted once more that by referring to Turks and manifesting an aggressive attitude towards them, Shakespeare directly targets Muslims because as noted earlier, for most of the Western world back then, the "Turk" was synonymous with "Muslim" (Akman, 2017, p. 153).

In another well-known play of his named *Othello*, Shakespeare employs discriminatory discourse in his portrayal of the Turks, and so Muslims. The protagonist Othello scolds both Montano and Cassio upon seeing that they are fighting: "Are we turned Turks, and to ourselves do that/ Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?" (Shakespeare, 1603/ 2004, 2.3, 182-183). By conflating the Turkness and being aggressive, barbaric, and vulgar, Shakespeare draws a reductionist image of both Turks and Muslims, and retells the old myths shaped around the Orientalist mentality.

German theologian Martin Luther, known as the leader of the Reformation movement in the 16th century reacting against the Catholic church and its teachings, was less ignorant of Islam and read the Qur'an from its Latin translation. However, he still could not get rid of the bigotry and hatred against Islam and its followers and was affected by the discourse created by his precursors. Deeming Turks "certainly the last and the most severe wrath of devil against Christ" (Grislis, 1974, p. 184), Luther targeted Islam in terms of its perception of Jesus Christ (pbuh) alongside of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), the Qur'an and its teachings, and the concept of marriage and condition of women in his book *On the War Against the Turk*. By remarking that Turks make a comparison and hierarchically regard Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as superior to Jesus Christ (pbuh),

¹⁹ See Akman (2017), to be more acknowledged on the negative portrayals of Muslims in Shakespeare's works.

Luther articulates:” Therefore, the Turks think their Mohammed much higher and greater than Christ, for the office of Christ has ended and Mohammed’s office is still in force” (Luther, 1529, p. 28). This statement made by Luther manifests once more the fact that the Western world perceives the terms “Turk” and “Muslim” as the same and employs them interchangeably. For Luther, “the Turk’s Koran, or creed, teaches him to destroy not only the Christian faith, but also the whole temporal government” (Luther, 1529, p. 29), and Islam is an enemy of Christianity, and a religion founded upon sheer violence. Finally, Luther claims that Koran:

permits everyone to take wives as he will. Therefore, it is customary among the Turks for one man to have ten or twenty wives and desert or sell any of them that he will, when he will, so that in Turkey women are held immeasurably cheap and are despised; they are bought and sold like cattle. (Luther, 1529, p. 34)

From all these articulations of Luther, it can be seen that his ideology stands in between the Medieval Period’s biased and inimical portrayals of Muslims and modern day Islamophobic discourse persistent in the West.

1.2.7. Enlightenment and Post-Enlightenment Period

Though the period of Enlightenment covering 17th and 18th centuries witnessed some changes regarding the look at Islam and Muslims, and “knowledge of Islam and of Arab history developed greatly though within limited circles (academic or not)” (Tolan et al., 2013, p. 244), the defamatory representations of the Islamic world could not be overcome even in a period favoring reason, truth, and knowledge. As one of the most renowned intellectuals of this period, Voltaire, being on the trail of his predecessors and contemporaries, redeployed anti-Muslim and anti-Turk sentiment in his works. In his letter to Frederick of Prussia quoted in Daniel’s *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image*, Voltaire articulates:

A merchant of camels should excite a revolt in his townlet; that, associated with some wretched Qurayshites, he should persuade them that he holds conversation with the angel Gabriel; that he should boast of being rapt to Heaven, and of having received there part of this unintelligible book which affronts common sense at every page; that he should put his own country to fire and the sword, to make this book respected; that he should cut the fathers’ throats and ravish the daughters; that he should give the

vanquished the choice between his religion and death; this certainly is what no man can excuse. (p. 311)

In addition to portraying Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as someone who was bloodthirsty, impostor, and, lascivious, his equating the Turks with the black death and thought that they should be eradicated (Qureshi and Sells, 2003, p. 229) strongly supports Özcan Hıdır's claim that what really brings most of the Medieval and Enlightenment Period authors such as Luther, Voltaire, and Dante together is their anti-Islamist perception which led them to reiterate the age-old constructed myths (Hıdır, 2007, p. 91). In the post-Enlightenment period, there occurred a shift in the Islamophobic discourse from theological to secular, which intensified with the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the Western world's colonialism project. Muslims and Turks were no longer a religious threat to the Christianity, but to the Western civilization, and that is why regarded as "others" with all their barbarity, incapacity to become civilized, and stagnancy (Şerbetçi, 2019, p. 72). In the aftermath of Reform, Renaissance, Copernican revolution, and geographical explorations, a new worldview came into existence leading Europeans to come into an understanding that there were many other places beyond Europe, which eventually set the ground for the colonial movements (Kalin, 2018, p. 136). Reaching its peak in the 19th and 20th centuries, European colonialism came to the foreground as an earthshattering practice that shaped the perception of the East, so Islamic world, in the eyes of Westerners to a great extent. Setting forth with a premise that was also propounded by Rudyard Kipling in his famous poem "The White Man's Burden", the indigenous people of the conquered lands were deemed "half devil and half child" (Kipling, 1899, line 8), inferior and in need of help of the West in order to become civilized and modern. As can be guessed, this self-proclaimed ideology, regarding the natives as a burden on the shoulders of the Western people to whom the civilizing mission was attributed, was all the Western world needed in order for justifying their "conquest, occupation, and control of another country or land" (Green, 2015, p. 68). The reductionist depictions of the people of the Orient as "atavistic, indolent, intellectually inept, and deceitful" were employed to legitimize the civilizing mission, which is grounded on the belief that by way of colonization, the alleged advanced and civilized Europeans would enlighten the so-called inferior, ignorant, and vulgar (Carr, 2021, p. 87). Previously employed theological racism since the Middle Ages evolved into a "scientific

evolutionary hierarchical civilizational' imaginary that turned the late 15th century 'people with the wrong religion' (imperial difference) into the inferior 'savages and primitives' of 'people without civilization' (colonial difference) in the 19th century" (Grosfoguel, 2012, p. 13). Consequently, Orientalism as a new discipline came into being whose origins can be dated back to 17th and 18th centuries.

1.2.8. Orientalism and Its Ardent Followers

Proposed by Edward Said in his groundbreaking book *Orientalism*, first published in 1978 and being as one of the most pivotal sources in the Postcolonial Studies, the concept of Orientalism can be succinctly defined as the ways in which the West (Occident) sees and (mis)represents the East (Orient). Primarily centralizing upon "the body of writing about or concerning the Orient, by Westerners, and the density, texture, structures, patterns, and variations of that writing" (McCarthy, 2010, p. 70), Said puts forward three definitions of Orientalism which are closely related with one another. To quote from Said: "Anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient- and this applies whether the person is an anthropologist, sociologist, historian, or philologist- either in its specific or its general aspects, is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism" (Said, 2003, p. 2). Secondly, it is "a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident'" (p. 2). And finally, it is "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (p. 3). Here, a particular point should be highlighted regarding the problematic employment of the term Orientalism in some cases. It is extremely striking that the Orientalist and hegemonic discourse of the colonial period founded upon the belief that the West, having all the power and positive qualities, had the right to colonize and fabricate an image of the East as an antithesis continued even when the West was not in a superior position, just in the case of the Ottoman Empire, which was never colonized by the West and was accepted as a great force. The tendency of the Western world indicates that for them, the main problem had always been Islam and Muslims. Therefore, whether they were in a superior or inferior position, they took every opportunity to (mis)represent and demonize Muslims. The experience of Orientalism to which Algeria or India were exposed was totally different from the one experienced by the Ottomans. As a result, this differentiation necessitates either an

alternative coinage to address the Ottoman scenario, or to be critical and attentive while employing the term.

By positioning the Orient as having all the negative qualities and as an essentialized “Other”, the West attempted to self-proclaim its superiority and authority over the Eastern world. Through conducting systematic studies, the Western intellectuals fabricated only a pseudo-image of the Orient that had nothing to do with the reality. By manipulating the truth and portraying the East as an exotic place in their travelogues, paintings, and literary works, which was waiting to be explored, the Western travelers, painters, and authors simply Orientalized the Orient.²⁰

As one of the key moments in the world history affecting not only the ways in which the Orient was perceived and portrayed but also the prevalent discourse of subsequent literature, the invasion of Egypt by Napoleon in 1798 was regarded as the initiator of a new type of an imperial and colonial project. By not taking with him only an army of soldiers, but a great many scientists, anthropologists, historians, biologists, and so forth, Napoleon made it clear that he set out with the aim of cataloging the physical, cultural, and psychological characteristics of the Eastern people in order to conquer both their identities and lands in the best possible way. This strategic move by Napoleon is evocative of the Foucauldian ideology emphasizing the close relationship between knowledge and power, which supports the view that “truth isn’t outside power, or lacking in power... Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced by virtue of multiple forms of constraint” (Foucault, 2001, p. 42). As previously stated, Napoleon’s ideology based upon the Foucauldian power-knowledge concept, strongly resonates with the mainstream of the Middle Ages in that while he tried to gain knowledge of the Orient and used it as a means of power against the interests of the Eastern people, the Qur’an was translated into Latin in the Middle Ages not to gain an objective insight about the Muslims, but to side against them. The product of the intensive works by the scientists and scholars who accompanied Napoleon on his expedition to Egypt was the book titled *Description de l’Égypte*, which can be said to set the foundation of the subsequent discourse of the studies focusing on the East, Islam, and Muslims. When it comes to Islamic studies, Silvestre de Sacy, Edward William Lane, and Ernest Renan come to foreground as the “builders of

²⁰ See Said (2003), for a more detailed explanation of the Orientalist theory, its background, and repercussions.

the field, creators of a tradition, progenitors of the Orientalist brotherhood” (Said, 2003, p. 122).

In a conference which took place in Sorbonne, 1883, Renan reflected his Orientalist mentality by essentializing Muslims and portraying them as a homogenous monolith by stating that everyone who has traveled to the East or Africa is impressed by how a sincere devotee’s intellect is severely constrained by a kind of iron hoop encircling his head, making it completely locked to learning and unable to stand open to new ideas. Since the time of his religious initiation, the Mohammedan kid, who may show some brilliance up to that point, instantaneously turns into an extremist, brimming with a senseless arrogance in having what he deems the ultimate truth, satisfied as with a benefit, with the thing creating his despicableness... The [Muslim] has the deepest contempt for learning, science, and anything that defines the European mentality. (Lockman, 2004, p. 79)

Depicting Muslims under the misnomer of “Mohammedans” as backward, an enemy of science and knowledge, and an antithesis of the Western civilization, Renan remarked that Muslims also did not have the capacity to conduct science as if it was not Ibn Sina (Avicenna), Ibn Rushd (Averroes), Al-Khwarizmi, and many countless Muslim scholars who taught the Western world science and rational thinking and brought them to light in their darkest days. Different rebuttals were written by many scholars upon Renan’s demeaning portrayal of Islam and Muslims. One such name was Namık Kemal, who in his book titled *Renan Müdafaanamesi* tried to refute presuppositions proposed by Renan by offering examples from the teachings of Islam and highlighting the fact that the religion of Islam encouraged Muslims to pursue knowledge and science for sake of both this world and afterlife, let alone prevent them:

Since Muslims believed that, apart from the pleasure they conscientiously gained as they learned science, they would also be rewarded for following the orders of Allah and Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), they sought knowledge to serve their afterlife, and even spent their mortal lives on this way of study, which was driven by piety” (Kemal, 2018, p. 55).

As is seen, fear of and hatred towards both Islam and Muslims surfaced with the birth of the religion of Islam and continued to manifest itself, though in different ways, over the course of time. During the period from the birth of Islam to the 19th century, the

existence of strong Muslim states such as the Seljuks and the Ottomans prevented both the Islamophobic attitudes and actions of the Christian West from happening the way they wanted and from establishing a physical and cultural hegemony over Muslims. Nevertheless, with the Ottoman Empire's entry into the disintegration process in the post-19th century, by reinforcing the fear and hostility towards Islam through different channels such as the media, education, and movie industry, the Western world constructed the Islamophobia industry as it is known today. Therefore, it is of great significance to scrutinize both the underlying causes and repercussions of Islamophobia and Islamophobic rhetoric of the post-19th century separately.



CHAPTER 2

CONTEMPORARY REASONS BEHIND ISLAMOPHOBIA AND ISLAMOPHOBIC DISCOURSE

It would not be possible to trace the roots of contemporary Islamophobia without mentioning some watershed moments that played a key role in giving shape to the perception of Islam and Muslims, and the prevalent discourse of the 21st century. One such significant issue that should be highlighted and concentrated upon at this point is the deep-rooted and ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine which has far-reaching implications.

2.1. The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

The dream of Zionism, which became widespread as an ideology with the First Zionist Congress held in Basel under the leadership of the Austrian Zionist Theodor Herzl in 1897, turned into a political movement and sowed the seeds of the conflict that continues violently even today. The primary aim of contemporary Zionism whose foundations were laid by Herzl was “to establish a state that the Jewish people could claim fully as their own” (Finkelstein, 2001, p. 12). Although South America and East Africa were considered as possible places to establish this Jewish state, Palestine was chosen to turn this dream of theirs into reality.

In the aftermath of the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire following the WWI, Palestine which had previously been under the Ottoman control, turned into a British mandate, and in 1917, with the Balfour Declaration, an announcement in the form of a letter, the Great Britain declared its support for the Zionist dream to establish a Jewish state in Palestine. The document, perceived by Hatem Bazian as “the original sin” inaugurated the Jewish settler colonialism and forced expulsions of native Palestinians from their own land, and acted as a catalyst in the upcoming “Catastrophe” or “Naqba” as named in Arabic.

With the end of the British mandate in Palestine in 1948, on May 14, the Jewish

National Council convened in Tel Aviv and officially declared the establishment of the state of Israel. (Yaşar et al., 2010, p. 57). Following this declaration, on May 15, Arab states of Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Transjordan waged war against Israel, which ended in defeat for the Arab coalescence. The Palestinians named this catastrophic day as Naqba upon which according to the estimates of The United Nations, 711.000 Palestinians were forced to leave their home and become refugees.

While the period following WWII witnessed decolonization movements in many countries like India and Algeria, for Palestine, the things were not quite the same. As also stated by Todd Green: “Palestinians found themselves without a state at a time when Muslims throughout North Africa and the Middle East were starting to see some light at the end of the colonial tunnel” (Green, 2015, p. 74). The Zionism whose main purpose was to create a state “in which non-Jews would figure, at best, as a superfluous presence” (Finkelstein, 2001:16) and its close relationship with the agenda of Western colonial project was also revealed by Theodor Herzl himself in his 1902 letter to Cecil Rhodes where he identifies the Zionist movement as “something colonial” (Halbrook, 1972, p. 86), a term that is also referred to by Hatem Bazian in his book titled *Palestine... It is Something Colonial* (2016).

The portrayal of Palestine as “a land without a people for a people without a land” (Elmessiri, 1977, p. 120) by ignoring the very presence of Palestinians, the premise that they are the oldest inhabitants of the region, which is negated by Edward Said who utters: “(...) the Palestinian Arabs were on the land. Read through any eighteenth- or nineteenth-century account of travels in the Orient- Chateaubriand, Mark Twain, Lamartine, Nerval, Disraeli- and you will find chronicled there accounts of Arab inhabitants on the land of Palestine” (Said, 1980, p. 9), and the ethnic cleansing they were exposed to under Hitler’s anti-Semitic Nazi regime, known as the Holocaust, were employed by the Zionists to legitimate their settler-colonialism, forced expulsion of Palestinians, and the systematic eradication of Palestinian identity. Though Palestinians and Muslims in general are not ignorant of the Holocaust and though it was actually the Western world causing this traumatic and inhumane sufferings of Jewish population, Palestinians became the victims of the victims and paid and are still paying the price of the Western anti-Semitism. Behind this problematic situation lies the fact that “Organized American Jewry has exploited the Nazi holocaust to deflect criticism of Israel’s and its own morally indefensible policies”

(Finkelstein, 2003, p. 149).

As articulated by Yosef Gorny: “The Second World War, the Holocaust, and the establishment of Israel with all the subsequent events, transformed the Jewish-Arab conflict in Palestine into the basic national problem of the two peoples” (Gorny, 1987, p. 6). Among the wars between Israel and the Arab states coming out as a reverberation of the declaration of Israel as a state in Palestinian lands, Six-Day War of 1967, fought between Israel and Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, appears as one of the turning points for Israel through which it extended its boundaries by occupying “the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights” (Green, 2015, p. 78). And the subsequent October War of 1973 between Israel and the coalition of Arab states including Egypt, Tunisia, and Algeria, resulted in victory for Israel with the supports of the United States, even though initially the Arab coalition forces made significant progress. One of the vital repercussions of this confrontation is the OPEC’s petroleum embargo imposed on the United States, which will be touched upon in the following paragraphs.

What should be emphasized at this point is that it would not have been possible for the Zionists to annex the lands of Palestinians without conducting Islamophobic propaganda on a global scale and as an expected result of this, in order to maintain and intensify the international sympathy and to get support for its occupation and settlement policy, Israel reinforced and still does reinforce the Islamophobic rhetoric by various means. Behind the establishment of Israel as a state grounded on the Zionist ideology, and the aftermath conflict between Israel and Palestine leading two million Palestinian people to live in the world’s largest open-air prison lie the Orientalist, Islamophobic, and racist sentiments, an ideology remarked also by Said; Arabs are the people of the Orient, making them lack dignity and humanness compared to the Europeans and Zionists; they are dishonest, depraved and so forth. Most significantly, despite the fact that their numerical superiority might seem to suggest the other way round, they are not worthy of owning a land (1980, p. 28). That is why, it would not be wrong to claim that the so-called conflict is not only between Israel and Palestine but also Islam and the West. Just as Israel was “a device for holding Islam (...) at bay” according to Said (Said, 1980, p. 29), for Hatem Bazian, it appears as “a project that was incubated, nurtured and supported into implementation by the major powers” (Bazian, 2018) and Islamophobia enables Israel to

penalize the people of Palestine while arguing that it commits such atrocities to defend the Western civilization (Bazian, 2016).

In the creation of a network of hate and anti-Islamic narratives, a great many figures, groups, organizations, and outlets voluntarily take part, among whom pro-Israel “funders, producers, organizers, and distributors” (Bazian, 2015, p. 1057) blaze the trail. Hollywood industry which is widely known to be founded by the Jewish contractors, systematically misrepresent Arabs and Muslims with its movie productions embedded with the negative stereotypes targeting the Muslim world.

When it comes to news media, it can be seen that just like the Hollywood industry, the agenda-setting news outlets including CNN, The New York Times, and BBC are largely motivated by the Zionist ideologies and have an undeniable role in controlling and shaping public opinion regarding Islam and Muslims by adopting certain strategies such as the coverage of Muslims as backward, terrorists, jihadists, villains, and extremists that should be dealt with. To draw from Edward Said: “The American press, with only a few exceptions, has paid very little attention to what Israel said and what it was doing on the West Bank, and this may be one of the most scandalous omissions in the history of journalism” (Said, 1980, p. 205), which eventually reveals the Islamophobic rhetoric behind the Israel-Palestine conflict.

In addition to Hollywood industry and news media, pro-Israel groups produce high-quality documentaries such as *Obsession: Radical Islam’s War Against the West* (2008) which was produced and funded by the Clairon Fund and distributed by The New York Times aiming basically to construct anti-Muslim discourse and vilify Islam, Muslims, and Islamic organizations such as CAIR (Council on American-Islamic Relations). The documentary’s link to Israel was revealed by Omid Safi in his article titled “Who Put Hate in My Sunday Paper?: Uncovering the Israeli- Republican- Evangelical Networks behind the “Obsession” DVD” in a detailed manner.

The alleged financial ties between Zionism and Islamophobia, and the premise that “the pro-Israel camp provides some of the most vocal proponents of Islamophobia” (Kalmar and Ramadan, 2016, p. 367) were solidified by a report published in 2011 by CAP (Center for American Progress) which is titled “Fear Inc.: The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America”. In the report, top seven foundations providing financial support into the anti-Islamic groups were listed: Donors Capital Fund, Richard

Mellon Scaife foundations, Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, Newton D. & Rochelle F. Becker foundations and charitable trust, Russell Berrie Foundation, Anchorage Charitable Fund and William Rosenwald Family Fund, and finally Fairbrook Foundation (Ali et al, 2011, p. 3). Among these seven organizations, three of them (Newton D. & Rochelle F. Becker foundations and charitable trust, Russell Berrie Foundation, and Anchorage Charitable Fund and William Rosenwald Family Fund) are closely tied to Israel, which again reveals the bigger picture regarding the close relationship between Zionism and Islamophobia.

In addition to “injecting eye-popping cash flows into the accounts of various fear campaigns” (Lean, 2012, p. 133) to fabricate a pseudo image of Islam, pro-Israel identities and organizations play an effective role in leading and shaping the Western world politics. These groups are referred to as the “Israel lobby” denominating the disorderly alliance of people and institutions ardently struggling to structure the American foreign policy in a way to support Israel (Mearsheimer and Walt, 2007, p. 112). The lobby comes to the forefront as an influential determinant of the policies adopted by the U.S. specifically in the Middle East (Buhari, 2019, p. 112). as is evident in the U.S.’s “War on Terror”, the military campaign under which devastative wars waged against Afghanistan and Iraq. The 2012 Aljazeera documentary named The Lobby reveals Israel’s vast network in the United States and how it affects the political dynamics regarding Muslim communities.

2.2. The Relations Between the U.S. and Iran

Following the WWII, the U.S. made an appearance as the new power in the imperial project by taking over the previously colonized lands by the European colonizers. As mentioned above, when twelve Arab countries in the OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) imposed an oil embargo on the U.S. and ceased to sell oil in 1973 following the declaration by the U.S. that it would support the military forces of Israel, it came as a great shock to the American people, and “the dislocating effects on Western societies of inflation and dramatically expensive fuel bills” (Said, 1997, p. I) led to the solidification of the stereotype of the Muslim Middle East as oil suppliers (Semati, 2010). It did not take long for the Western media to spotlight Muslims on a frequent basis through which the Western viewers were made familiar with Islam from a certain ideological framework, obviously not a positive one. In addition to the widespread media

coverage of Muslims on television, radio, and newspaper, there had been a proliferation in the representation of Arabs in the cartoons in which the cartoonists “used male figures to represent groups of Arabs, commonly arming them with knives, guns, cannon, or that pervasive symbol of Arab/Muslim militancy, the scimitar” (Gottschalk and Greenberg, 2011, p.199).²¹

Another pivotal moment having a significant impact on both the Middle East and its relationship with the Western world was the Iranian Revolution of 1979, which broke out in consequence of a strong displeasure of the members of the society ranging from students to peasants about Shah Reza Pahlavi’s secularization and Westernization of Iran through making reforms in a great many fields such as economy and social life. To exemplify, “the shah replaced the Islamic calendar with a royal calendar that dated from the reign of Cyrus the Great” (Cleveland and Bunton, 2009, p. 424). The Revolution resulted in both the fall of the monarchy of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi who was supported by the U.S. and the rise of an Islamic rule led by Ayatollah Khomeini, which without any doubt went against the interests of the U.S.²²

The criticisms raised against the Shah led him to develop an aggressive attitude which resulted in “dissent, arresting, torturing, exiling, and sometimes executing his opponents” (Green, 2015, p. 108). This is the exact point where Ayatollah Khomeini steps into the picture. As one of the opponents of the Shah and his regime, Khomeini was in exile for more than fifteen years until the year 1979 when he returned to Iran. In 1979, tables turned and this time it was the Shah who was in exile and Khomeini as the new leader taking the control and leading the revolution. As a result of this key moment, “the United States not only lost one of its staunchest allies in the Middle East, it also found itself facing an anti-American, Islamist government with a leader who referred to America as the ‘Great Satan’” (Green, 2015, p. 109). All these unfolding events triggered a backlash in the United States and intensified the already negative image of the Muslim world. So much so that, George W. Bush added Iran to his list titled “axis of evil” in 2002 which also included Iraq and North Korea (Cleveland and Bunton, 2009).

After a short time following the revolution in Iran, on November 4th, 1979, a group

²¹ See Gottschalk and Greenberg (2011), in order to view some of the caricatures and cartoons portraying Muslims.

²² See Kumar (2012); Cleveland and Bunton (2009); and January (2008), for more information on the developmental stages and repercussions of the Iranian Revolution of 1979.

of Iranian students captured the U.S. Embassy situated in Tehran and took a great many American citizens hostage, which was engraved in the minds of people as hostage crisis that did not come to an end until 444 days had passed. The underlying reason for such a huge-impact diplomatic crisis between Iran and the United States was the fact that the deposed Shah was accepted by the U.S. government for a medical treatment. In the aftermath of both Iranian Revolution and hostage crisis, not only the relations between Iran and the U.S. deteriorated in an irreconcilable way, but also both Islam and its adherent Muslims were spotlighted in media, leading the Western public to an understanding that their civilization was face to face with the Islamic threat. What the Western news media did during these critical times was repetitively “showing frightening images of the tense scene filtered in to Americans through their television sets” which eventually led to the emergence of a new monster threatening the Western civilization’s “values and liberty” (Lean, 2012, p. 36). What is more, as stated by Said, new stereotypes came into use depicting Muslims “as oil suppliers, as terrorists, and more recently, as bloodthirsty mobs” (Said, 1997, p. 6).

Ayatollah Khomeini’s issued fatwa ordering the assassination of Salman Rushdie upon his publication of the book *The Satanic Verses* in 1988 made the already problematic relationship and narratives even worse. Labeled as the “Rushdie Affair”, the fatwa paved the way for “discussions of freedom of speech, blasphemy laws, and the protection of non-Christian religions in Britain” (Abbas, 2004, p. 32). Muslims reacted against the novel by remarking that it misrepresented and demonized Islam. The novel propagated the ideology of the Middle Ages questioning the prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and portraying the Muslims’ holy book Qur’an as a devilish product coming out of the collaboration of the Satan and Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Rushdie’s authorial choice to employ the name “Mahound”, which was a term used by the Medieval Christians to defame the Prophet (pbuh) as an impostor, in place of Muhammad intensified the Muslims’ reactions. Conflating the names of Prophet Muhammad’s (pbuh) wives and prostitutes in a brothel, and the city Mecca with “Jahilia”, Rushdie became the target of Muslim world’s criticism²³, leading the Western world to deem Muslims incapable of accepting and tolerating free speech.

²³ See, Green (2015).

2.3. “The Clash of Civilizations”

The great rivalry between the United States, favoring democracy and liberalism, and the Soviet Union, supporting the communist regime, continuing throughout the Cold War period ceased to exist upon the dissolution of the Union in 1989. In the place of the communism, Islam was chosen as the new enemy, an ideology that manifested itself in nearly every field in the post-Cold War era. In other words, the mechanism for fabricating a green peril emerged as the red evil empire drew to an end, in a way that supports Huntington’s ‘Clash of Civilizations’ theory, which supplied the necessary change and the application of culture-based racism for enmity and discrimination (Bazian, 2018, p. 282). The newly fabricated monster was given an ideological form by scholars who abandoned themselves to the Orientalist mentality like Samuel Huntington. It was actually Bernard Lewis who initially introduced the term clash of civilizations in his 1990 article titled “The Roots of Muslim Rage” where he states:

we are facing a mood and a movement far transcending the level of issues and policies and the governments that pursue them. This is no less than a clash of civilizations- the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both. (p. 60)

Deeming the religion of Islam an “other” alongside of the Western civilization, Lewis claims that in this modern period, Muslims are full of hostility and hatred towards the West because Muslims are irritated upon the Western world’s success in the fields of technology, politics and military, and that is why put the blame of their own failures on the West (Rane et al, 2014, p. 136).

Huntington, doing his best to popularize the concept in his article called “The Clash of Civilizations?”, published in 1993, developed a racist attitude following Lewis’s lead towards some specific cultures including the Islamic culture as well. Huntington supported the view that in the aftermath of the Cold War, international disputes will stem from the cultural and civilizational dissimilarities, inclusive of the religious ones, and not the economic and ideological discrepancies (Green, 90). According to Huntington: “Western ideas of individualism, liberalism, constitutionalism, human rights, equality, liberty, the rule of law, democracy, free markets, the separation of church and state, often have little resonance in Islamic, Confucian, Japanese, Hindu, Buddhist or Orthodox cultures” (Huntington, 1993, p. 40). Huntington lays bare the hegemonic and

discriminatory discourse that he supports and encourages an anti-Islamic portrayal by positioning Islam as essentially incapable of keeping up with the high values of the West.

Such a strict division between Islam and the West, and the demeaning depictions of both Islam and Muslims as having qualities prone to have conflict with the so-called civilized West had been a focus of criticism by many scholars, one of whom was unsurprisingly Edward Said. Finding the thesis proposed by Huntington “aggressive” and “chauvinistic”, Said remarks in his rebuttal titled “The Clash of Definitions” that what Huntington did was not only making the Cold War keep going but also expanding its scope by positioning the world in an Orientalist framework that put the West and the rest in an eternal conflict.²⁴ Touching upon the attitude of Bernard Lewis in his aforementioned article, Said states that what Lewis is after is all about “lazy generalizations, the reckless distortions of history, the wholesale demotion of civilizations into categories like irrational and enraged” (p. 572). Viewing Huntington as the successor of Lewis in redeploying the same old myths regarding other civilizations and in portraying them from a monolithic perspective, Said proposes that both Lewis’s and Huntington’s writings are far from objectivity and neutrality. (p. 573)

As can be seen, the thesis of clash of civilizations proposed by Lewis and developed and popularized by Huntington played an active role in giving a shape to the prevalent discourse of the following years, and the collective propaganda and demonization targeting Muslims as one homogenous unit without any diversity and fluidity. At this point, the traumatic terrorist attacks of 9/11 gave what the Western Orientalists psychologically needed on a silver platter, which was the victimization of an “Other” to construct their own identity. The attacks not only led to the “promotion of chauvinistic, xenophobic propaganda against the Orient, Islam, the Arabs” but also the presentation of Islam as “a threat to the security of the West”²⁵

2.4. 9/11 Attacks and “The War on Terror”

The catastrophic terrorist attacks of 9/11, 2001, inaugurated a completely new era loaded with intense fear and conflict. On September 11, 2001, nineteen terrorists thought to be the members of Al-Qaeda, the militant extremist group, hijacked four American

²⁴ See Said (2000), The Clash of Definitions in *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*.

²⁵ To access the article penned by Eugenio Chahuan, visit <https://pij.org/articles/346/an-eastwest-dichotomy-islamophobia>.

airplanes and committed suicide attacks targeting the United States. While two of the planes hit the World Trade Center, the third one hit the Pentagon, and the final one headed to Washington D.C. crashed in a field in Pennsylvania. Leading to the death of more than two thousand people, the calamity acted as a catalyst in the intensification of anti-Muslim sentiment whose long-term ramifications can still be witnessed today. In response to the world's deadliest terrorist attacks, the U.S. President George W. Bush declared a "War on Terror", which he described as a crusade: "This is a new kind of -- a new kind of evil. And we understand. And the American people are beginning to understand. This crusade, this war on terrorism is going to take a while. And the American people must be patient. I'm going to be patient."²⁶ Bush's naming the military mission as a crusade definitely is meaningful in terms of its similarity with the mentality of the Crusades of the Middle Ages which has been previously examined. As seen in both the political and military strategies practiced by the U.S. government, it made the decision to concentrate on the global terrorism threat as a whole rather than just Al-Qaeda. What is more, in addition to lethal nonstate actors, it also attacked the governments that protected and housed them. It used incarceration, rendition, and in some instances persecution to obtain useful information (Leffler, 2011, p. 34)

By using the "War on Terror" as an excuse, the United States and its allies started to bomb first Afghanistan and then Iraq as a result of which the lives of both Afghan and Iraqi people changed in an irrevocable way as reflected in a report published in 2020 by Brown University. According to the report's cautious assessment, 37 million individuals at least have left their homes since the global war on terror launched by Bush. What is more, this number can go up as high as 59 million pointing to the miserable situation to which these people had been exposed, which eventually had a serious role in shaping today's anti-Muslim and anti-refugee stance in the West.²⁷ As stated by Yel, through this "War on Terror", "Muslim countries which were already exploited and enfeebled by the way of colonialism turned into an open target. And on the excuse of security issues, their most confidential units were transgressed" (Yel, 2018, p. 11).

The "War on Terror" not only led to massive displacement of people from

²⁶ To read the remarks by Bush (2001), visit <https://georgewbushwhitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010916-2.html>.

²⁷ See Vine et al (2020).

Afghanistan and Iraq but also the emergence and rise of the world's maybe the most dangerous terrorist organization, namely ISIS/Daesh, "a group that have served, or have been utilized, to further amplify negative characterizations of Muslim communities as 'suspect communities' (Carr, 2021, p. 87). Being aware of both the existence of such a radical and extremist group and the substantial damages it causes not only to innocent people but also the very nature of the concept of jihad in Islam necessitates a detailed look at ISIS and the ways in which it exploits the Islamic understanding of jihad to legitimize the atrocities it commits.

2.5. ISIS and The Concept of Jihad

ISIS, which is undeniably a terrorist group, has become a global threat by not limiting its brutal actions ranging from beheadings to massacres to Syria and Iraq, where it initially emerged. Behind the emergence of this radical and extremist organization and its specifically ensnaring Muslim youth lies a certain historicization. The occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq under the name of "War on Terror", the catastrophic terrorist attacks of 9/11, the world playing three monkeys in the face of Palestine-Israel conflict, and the sufferings within the Islamic world, the young people who were not able to get a proper education under those harsh circumstances, the policies implemented, and the thousands of people who were displaced from their homes can be cited as some of the most prominent factors that eventually paved the way for ISIS to surface. (Diyanet, 2018, p.11) Undoubtedly, ISIS, just like the other terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda and Boko Haram, is a product of global power struggles and acts as a puppet. Considering both the formation and expansion of ISIS and the inhumane attacks it performed under the banner of jihad, it can be articulated that what actually is going on is something colonial and this has turned the religion of Islam and its adherents into usual suspects in the eyes of the Western world as the supporters of terrorism. In order not to fall prey to the fabricated image of "Islamic jihad" operating to conflate Islam with terrorism, and to curb its deep-rooted impacts, it is more than crucial to comprehend what Islam really says about jihad. Otherwise, the Western understanding, which was highly impacted by the Crusaders' idea of 'holy war' will continue to deem jihad an Islamic war waged against the non-Muslims (Mamdani, 2005, p. 50).

It goes without saying that what ISIS really does is to lead people, who are

ignorant of Islam or who look for an opportunity to defame Islam, to falsely associate the concept of jihad with what Crusaders named “holy war”, under whose name they massacred people indiscriminately and cruelly, as touched upon in a detailed way in the previous chapter. Jihad, which is not referred to as a “holy war” anywhere in the Qur’an, basically means “‘to strive or struggle’ to exert oneself to realize God’s will, to lead a virtuous life” (Esposito and Mogahed, 2008, p. 17). Further to that, contrary to a widely held belief viewing jihad nothing more than a war, jihad pertains to all a person can do both to fight against temptation and combat irrational urges in them or in the community they live in and to uphold moral principles and to work to improve not only their own lives but also the world around them (Ramadan, 2017, “Jihad,” para. 1). Among all these forms of jihad, which can be waged against a great many things ranging from arrogance to Islamophobia, and can be waged for education, cooperation, and a greener world, war is only a kind of it and referred by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) to as “the lesser jihad” in contrast with the “greater jihad” indicating the battle against “ego, selfishness, greed, and evil” (Esposito and Mogahed, 2008, p. 21).

What is worth highlighting at this point is that no matter for or against what jihad is waged, it has to be carried out within the framework of just and ethical codes specified in the Islamic law. Along with the legitimization of the just war through the Ayat: “To those against whom, War is made, permission is given (to fight), because They are wronged” (The Qur’an, 1991, 22:39), upon the Meccans’ never-ending attacks that continued even after Hijra, Islamic laws of war, including not attacking the communities that do not cause any harm and avoid fighting, not using force to convert a non-Muslim, and taking a peaceful stance towards the enemy if he inclines to peace, are expressed explicitly in the Qur’an: “Fight in the cause of Allah, Those who fight you, But do not transgress limits, For Allah loveth not transgressors” (The Qur’an, 1991, 2:190), and “But if the enemy, Incline towards peace, Do thou (also) incline, Towards peace” (The Qur’an, 1991, 8:61). When the understanding of jihad in Islam and what it encompasses are closely investigated in the light of The Qur’an and Hadith, it is clearly understood that the crusade and jihad are not really the same thing. That is, jihad is an ideology of spiritual struggle, of which military activity is but one potential embodiment (Mastnak, 2002, p. 65), and what ISIS and related terrorist organizations, who proclaim themselves as jihadists and what they do as jihad, do is undoubtedly savagery and they have nothing to do with Islam.

By not truly knowing what jihad is yet still naming it as their motivation lying behind their actions, such terrorist organizations not only exploit the true nature of Islamic jihad but also reinforce what Mahmood Mamdani (2005) calls “Culture Talk” about Islam, the association of the act of terrorism with Islamic culture, becoming prevalent especially in the aftermath of 9/11.

At this juncture, one of the best answers to the Islamophobic mindset that (mis)represents both the religion of Islam and the notion of jihad as favoring the forced conversion of the infidels, ransacking, and sheer violence towards non-Muslims, would absolutely be to take a look at the ways in which non-Muslims were treated under the Islamic law. Muslims, who are the followers of a religion that advises to keep within bounds and to act fairly even on a battlefield, as has been showcased through the orders of Abu Bakr as-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him), have secured the rights of non-Muslims in times of peace.

In the aftermath of the great conquest of the Constantinople, which earned Sultan Mehmed II the title of “Conqueror”, the “dhimmis”, connoting the “People of the Book”, namely Jews and Christians living under the protection of Islamic law, were allowed to keep their traditions alive by way of speaking their mother tongue and practicing their own religion. So much so that, Mehmed the Conqueror appointed Gennadios, one of the religious leaders of the city, as Patriarch and declared that whatever rights they had had until the conquest would be ensured. Additionally, the Chief Rabbi, the leader of the Jews, were granted similar rights (Akman, 2017, p. 49).

The Ottomans also allowed Jews and Christians “to form semi-autonomous communities” (Alkhateeb, 2017, p. 202), which is called “millet system”, an indication of the significance given to religious and cultural pluralism by the Ottoman Empire. Viewing these different cultures and religions within the empire as valuable, the Ottomans were not after assimilating the non-Muslims or forcing them to become Muslims, because the Qur’an says: “Let there be no compulsion in religion” (1991, 2:256). Along with the right to communicate in their mother-tongue, these people had the right to designate their civic lives in accordance with their own (primarily religious) law, to practice their own religion and beliefs without interference, to establish charitable institutions, and to make educational arrangements for themselves (Aral, 2004, p. 475), which highly resonates with the conditions of Christians and Jews living under the Islamic

law in Jerusalem and Al-Andalusia. The source of the unprecedented tolerance shown towards the non-Muslims by the Ottoman Empire can be seen in the Ayat: “Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) Faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them” (1991, 60:8).

Beginning with the emergence of Islam, neither Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) nor the rulers like Mehmed the Conqueror, prioritizing human rights, dignity, and justice in the light of Islamic law, could escape from being labeled as barbarian, violence prone, and backward by the Islamophobes struggling to nullify Islam. To distinguish the real barbarians from those who stand against oppression, it will suffice to look at the Crusaders who slaughtered a great many people regardless of whether they were children, women, or elderly, the Inquisition established in the heart of Europe, the collective consciousness of Western Europe which showed no tolerance for the “Other” and burned Muslims, Jews, and the ones whom they thought deviated from Catholicism alive, and the massacres, ethnic cleansings, and inhumane practices in Palestine, Bosnia, East Turkestan, Kashmir, Rwanda and many other places under oppression.

2.6. Post-9/11 Intensification of Anti-Muslim Sentiment Through Various Means

In the aftermath of the catastrophic terrorist attacks of 9/11, the Western news media with its authorial and editorial choices constructed a monolithic image of Muslims as terrorists targeting the Western civilization and all of its components, and then propagated this stereotype which largely affected the ways in which the Western public perceived Muslims. Through certain strategies developed by the media, the public was continuously bombarded with a certain ideology and concepts such as jihad, al-Qaeda, Islamist terrorism, and Islamist extremism that they had never heard before. Viewing Islamophobia as an industry, Nathan Lean explains that in fact, a close-knit network of right-wing fear mongers is to blame for the long-lasting Islamophobia that rumbled through the Americans. Ever since the Twin Towers were hit by the planes, they have worked tirelessly to persuade their fellow citizens that Muslim community is beginning to have a perilous impact on the Western world. An industry, namely Islamophobia industry, comprised of narrow-minded, xenophobic, and fanatic politicians, members of clergy, social media users, congressmen, Western news media experts, and Zionists comes into existence. (p. 10)

Due to the collective efforts of journalists, political leaders, scholars, social media users, authors, and a whole lot more Islamophobes to fabricate and disseminate Islamophobic narratives which mushroomed to a great extent upon 9/11, Muslim people and the ones who were thought to be adherents of Islam turned into a fear object and open target of bigotry, hatred, and violence. According to a report published by FBI, “hate crimes against Arabs and Muslims multiplied by 1,600 percent from 2000 to 2001” (Alsultany, 2013, p. 161). Muslims were exposed to systematic otherization by the way of demeaning depictions of their faith and identity, the Islamophobic attacks at workplaces, airports, and schools, and desecration of mosques and the holy book of Muslims, Qur’an. To exemplify, the cartoon crises of both 2005 and 2012 triggered by the cartoons, published in the Danish Jyllands-Posten and French Charlie Hebdo magazines, depicting Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in derogatory and defamatory ways sparked intense reactions from Muslims all around the world. Not retrieving the controversial cartoons, Charlie Hebdo magazine became the target of a terrorist attack undertaken by Daesh, an event which resulted in the intensification of anti-Muslim sentiment across Europe.

In the meantime, the movie industry in the West also supported the Islamophobic discourse. The trailer of the short movie “Innocence of Muslims” released in 2012 depicted Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as a “clown, seducer, homosexual, pedophile, and a bloodthirsty and sadistic thief” (Demant, 2015, p. 21), igniting heavy criticism and protests in the Muslim world.

2.7. “The Great Replacement” and Anti-Refugee Sentiment

The deadly terrorist attacks carried out by the racist Anders Behring Breivik in both Oslo and Utøya causing the death of 77 people are of vital importance in terms of both their Islamophobic and anti-multicultural nature. Getting the idea that “Muslims are gaining power and dominance over the Christian West” (Richards, 2014, p. 43) and the Norwegian government is incapable of making provisions against them, Breivik’s white nationalist and supremacist ideology and published manifesto had an impact on one of the deadliest Islamophobic terrorist attacks carried out in New Zealand by Brenton Tarrant, who titled his own manifesto as “The Great Replacement”, which will be analyzed in detail in Chapter 4. Denoting a conspiracy theory, “The Great Replacement”

was popularized by the French author Renaud Camus through his book *Le Grand Remplacement* published in 2001. The concept supports the idea that “the ‘arrival’ of the Muslim subject into the heart of the ‘Western world’ is foretelling an impending collapse” (Bazian, 2019). As a widely deployed term nowadays, the thesis of “Great Replacement” was founded upon the racist and discriminatory ideology of far-right white supremacists and is “obsessed with the idea that non-white Muslim people will one day ‘replace’ white people in countries like New Zealand by becoming a larger percentage of the population” (Iftikhar, 2021, “Open Your Eyes!” para. 5). As a result, this extremely racist conspiracy theory was and is being used to legitimize the terrorist attacks targeting Muslim populations and the advocacy of remigration referring to “the forced deportations of migrant communities to create an ethnically and culturally homogenous society” (Davey and Ebner, 2019, p. 4).

Because “a high proportion of refugees and people seeking asylum are Muslims” from the countries like Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, and Myanmar, “demonization of refugees is therefore frequently a coded attack on Muslims, for the words ‘Muslim’, ‘asylum-seeker’, ‘refugee’, and ‘immigrant’ become synonymous and interchangeable in the popular imagination” (Sajid, 2005). What is more, the intensified fear of and hatred towards Muslim people following 9/11, and the Islamophobic discourse reflecting them as bloodthirsty terrorists, extremists, and jihadist led the Muslim immigrants not to be welcomed in the West as in the case of the 2013 announcement by Michael Spindelegger, the secretary of foreign affairs of Austria back then, that “he would welcome 500 refugees from Syria- but would ‘prefer women, children, and Christians” (Hafez, 2015, p. 19). These Islamophobic and anti-immigrant sentiments widespread in the Western mind not only led to the reluctance in welcoming the refugees living under difficult conditions and extreme violence imposed on them but also governmental laws and policies aiming to deter Muslim populations already living in the Western countries from being a part of the society and to hinder a healthy integration.

These unwelcoming and Islamophobic attitudes can be clearly seen in the Western world’s reactions against the refugees who were displaced, forced to flee their homes due to multiple reasons such as invasions, wars, and conflicts as in the case of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq under the banner of “War on Terror”, and more recently both during and in the aftermath of Syrian civil war in 2011, which turned into the world’s

most devastating humanitarian crisis, leading more than 6.6 Syrian men, women, and children to become refugees according to the estimations of the United Nations.²⁸

The West's hostile stance against these people desperately in need is closely related with the Islamophobic myths and narratives that they have been perpetuating for great many years. What we have here is the redeployment of the Orientalist mentality within the contexts of refugee-crisis debates. As stated by Hafez, some of the Islamophobic discourses

propose, in a culturalist, neo-racist way, to exclude Muslims based on the assumption of an imagined Christian Europe they want to purify. Others legitimate their Islamophobic positions by referring to conspiracy theories of an alleged 'Islamization of the West and link the threat of terrorism to the current challenge of the refugee crisis. (p. 25)

2.8. Institutionalized Islamophobic Practices

When it comes to the Muslims already settled and living in the Western countries such as the U.S., the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Belgium, they suffered and continue to suffer greatly because of their religious identity and were deemed a threat both to the security and purity of the so-called Western civilization. Today, they encounter not only person-based physical attacks but also institutionalized Islamophobia by the way of laws, policies, and bills of laws which legitimize anti-Muslim sentiment and make the lives of Muslim people in the West even more difficult. Obviously, Muslim women attract much more attention in public than Muslim men. because of the headscarves they wear. And this turns them into an open target of Islamophobic hate crimes, discourses, and governmental policies as in the case of a bid by French Senate supporting the view that girls under eighteen should be banned from wearing hijab in public sphere ("Law against Islam", 2021). The proposed legislation led to a storm of criticism on social media with the hashtag #Handsoffmyhijab. Again, in France, another Islamophobic bill became the target of harsh criticism.

The bill would ban mothers from wearing hijabs (headscarves) while accompanying their children on school trips, prohibit the wearing of coverup burkinis (full-body swimwear) in public pools, and ban minor girls from concealing their face or wearing

²⁸Visit, <https://news.un.org/en/focus/syria>., to be more acknowledged on the Syria refugee crisis.

religious symbols in the public space. (Doğru, 2021)

The opponents of the bill, mostly French Muslim women, made their voices heard on social media by initiating a movement titled “don’t touch my hijab”. Such racist debates and restrictions imposed to control the visible tokens of Muslim identity, to name a few, hijab, niqab, and burqa, in public realm are generally portrayed as precautions taken primarily with the aim of nourishing governmental safety and state objectivity (Bakali, 2019, p. 14), and though France made its name in the debates of imposing restrictions on the ways Muslim women dress in public place, many other countries like Germany, Denmark, and Netherlands follow the footsteps of France in Islamophobic regulations.²⁹ It is quite ironic and meaningful that while banning hijab, veil, burqa, and other visual significations of Muslimness due to the so-called national security issues, nearly all the Western countries imposed laws making it compulsory to wear face masks because of Covid-19, which reveals a lot about the hypocrisy of the West. Further to that, the double standards applied against Muslim women can be clearly seen in the Western countries’ treatment of women from other religions like Catholic nuns who are not subjected to the same limitations regarding their way of dressing (Green, 2015, p. 23).

Eric Zemmour, a far-right writer, political journalist, and recently a candidate for the French presidency, has perpetuated the Islamophobic discourse embedded within France and the Western countries for quite a long time by proposing a need for a ban on Muslim names such as Muhammad. Zemmour, reacting strictly against a multicultural society and supporting the assimilation of Muslim people living in France, amplifies Islamophobia:

I think that we have to make French people again. Previous generations of immigrants changed their names (to adopt French ones). There is no reason why the new ones should not do the same. What upsets me is that after three generations, people are still calling their children Muhammad. (“French writer calls for ban”, 2021)

The initiatives and bills loaded with anti-Muslim prejudice not only target Muslims and their religious preferences but also mosques and Islamic organizations on

²⁹Visit, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/new-bill-could-ban-headscarf-for-public-employees-in-germany/2232991>, <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/06/27/europe/netherlands-partial-burqa-ban-intl/index.html> and <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/may/31/denmark-passes-law-banning-burqa-and-niqab>, to read about the xenophobic and Islamophobic bans targeting Muslim women in Germany, Denmark, and Netherlands.

the grounds that they could be home for what they call radical Islam. Therefore, in countries such as France and Austria the governments shut down the mosques if they observe something suspicious. While France has closed down “one third of 89 inspected mosques since November 2020” (Özcan, 2021)., Austria, in the aftermath of the terrorist attack in Vienna on November 2020, has promised to close mosques which “it deems a threat to national security” (Austria closes mosque”, 2020).

All these discriminatory, racist and Islamophobic bills, laws, and actions proposed and practiced under the banner of national security serve nothing but one ultimate purpose; that is to frustrate Muslim people living in the West and then eradicate their presence from the so-called civilized West. Recycling the age-old stereotypes, binary oppositions, and Orientalist framework, the West tries to shape their civilization as a melting pot, rather than a salad bowl, in which differences are not welcomed and regarded as a threat to the well-being of the nation.

As can be clearly perceived, the bigotry targeting both Islam and Muslims is not a new phenomenon and dates to the 7th century, to the emergence of Islam. Though through times it takes on different definitions and shapes, the fear, hatred, and violence directed at Muslims are still prevalent. Expressed in today’s world in a great many ways and spheres including movies, social media, TV series, music videos, the remarks of modern-day Islamophobes such as Pamela Geller, Daniel Pipes and Steve Emerson, the Israel lobby functioning as constructing and perpetuating Islamophobic discourse, the limits imposed on the very human rights, and terrorist attacks, Islamophobia makes the world a difficult place for Muslims to live, and that is why necessitates more serious and collective endeavors to deal with this fabricated monster.

CHAPTER 3

THE REPRESENTATION OF ISLAMOPHOBIA IN NEWS DISCOURSE

“If you aren’t careful, the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed and loving the people who are doing the oppressing.”³⁰

Malcolm X

In an age marked by the rapid advancements in communication and information technologies, mass media, specifically news media, comes to the forefront as a powerful tool both in informing public about the world and shaping their perceptions and actions, which reveals its high potential to lead and manipulate.

Though named as the fourth estate and thought by many to employ an objective stance, news media lends itself to a discourse constructed by the subjective presuppositions and ideologies of different media outlets, governments, and journalists, causing public to obtain either inaccurate or inadequate information about the real nature of the incidents and situations happening all around the world. Therefore, the ways in which news portrays and covers significant events and people from different racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds become more of an issue when its crucial role in determining socio-political and socio-cultural agenda of societies taken into account.

Following a conceptual framework of mass media and news, this chapter centralizes upon news making processes, the close relationship between discourse and ideology in news, historical background and main characteristics of discourse analysis studies, and the discrepancy between representation and reality. In the remainder of this chapter, the undeniable impact of news media in perpetuating Islamophobic myths and narratives, and

³⁰ See Breitman (1965), pg. 93.

how it nudges the public mood towards developing anti-Muslim sentiment will be analyzed.

3.1 Mass Media and News

As suggested by the very word “mass”, mass media has the ability to reach millions of people concurrently, a characteristic which turns it into a highly effective tool in modern world. Thanks to the developments in communication technology, the sphere of influence of the mass media, whose primary function is to disseminate information, has expanded significantly and regions that are physically miles away from one another have become much closer. Through the diverse array of mass media tools such as TV, radio, internet, newspapers, magazines, and many more different print and digital sources, the audience gets entertained and informed about current affairs in the world. Not only “serving as a system for communicating messages and symbols to the general populace” (Herman and Chomsky, 1988, p. 1) but also as an effective tool of systematic propaganda, the mass media invades both our minds and world with TV, appealing to millions of people, with newspapers for those who do not watch TV, with magazines for the ones who are not interested in newspapers, and radio for the audience not following magazines (Somuncu, 1994, p. 21). With its manipulative tendency and perception as the fourth estate, after legislation, execution, and jurisdiction, mass media or “mess media” as it may also be named, with its created contents, can persuade people and change the dynamics within a society. As also articulated by Taylor and Willis (1999):

The more commonly known strand of the effects tradition argues that media have effects which in turn have the power to influence the thoughts of individual audience members to such an extent that they might ‘act out’ the ideas and activities that the media have exposed them to. (qtd. in Burton, 2002, p. 257).

The fact that the media does not essentially and straightforwardly report occasions which actually harbor newsworthiness in themselves (Hall et al, 1978, p. 53) and does not reveal truth to the public, and provide people with honest, neutral and innocuous information (Yıldız, 1994, p. 3) leads it, and most especially news media, to be categorized as a form of narrative, which is founded upon the different ways of representations of the same event by different agents.

The term news is an acronym derived from the initial letters of the four cardinal

directions, namely, North, East, West, and South (Girgin and Özay, 2013, p. 3), pointing to the fact that news has a wide spectrum and includes the events happening all around the world. Though, theoretically, six principles have been put forward for a journalist to follow in order to make objective news, which are:

- 1) A balanced and impartial approach
- 2) Conformity to accuracy and reality
- 3) To present all the main points in the news
- 4) To distinguish between interpretation and facts
- 5) To avoid personal opinion, attitude, and comment
- 6) To avoid bias, irregularity, and emotional response (Tokgöz, 1994, p. 280)

news is shaped according to the structure and ideological stance of media outlets in practical terms. The definition of news offered by Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary as “a report of recent events”³¹ clearly indicates the widely accepted belief that the newsworthiness of incidents we are exposed to in newspapers does not emanate from their own nature. Rather, it is a report and an end product of the ideological interests and power struggles of influential individuals, organizations, and industries, which eventually corroborates the narrative quality of news which “is not a value-free reflection of ‘facts’” (Fowler, 1991, p. 4). Going under a process of selection, also referred to as news-values, the real events are moulded into news based on a series of factors. In their well-known study, Galtung and Ruge (1973) enumerate twelve prevailing news-values, which determine whether an event is suitable for turning into news or not, as follows:

- 1) Frequency
- 2) Threshold
- 3) Unambiguity
- 4) Meaningfulness
- 5) Consonance
- 6) Unexpectedness
- 7) Continuity
- 8) Composition,
- 9) Reference to élite nations

³¹ Visit, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/news>.

10) Reference to élite persons

11) Personalization

12) Negativity.³²

While the first eight conditions refer to a much more general news-values, the remaining ones are highlighted by Galtung and Ruge as of great significance in western news media. To explain some of them briefly, frequency denotes the duration of an event; that is while a car accident happens abruptly and does not take much time, some events surface after a period of time, eventually leading the car accident to be chosen as a perfect fit for news. Unambiguity refers to the explicitness of an event. Therefore, for an event to turn into news, it is necessary for it to be explained in a clear and straightforward manner. The final news-value, that is negativity, is grounded upon the idea that the worse the news is, the better, which is evocative of the mentality of overall media industry: If it bleeds, it leads. As also stated by Roger Fowler, stories that demonstrate the negative sentiments and actions considered to be typical of 'them' are more newsworthy than regular stories about regular people, that is why, the news media outlets publish news reports about deceit, massacres, and riots of 'the other' instead of 'the recognizable' (p. 53)

Favoring some events over others on the basis of general parameters, namely the news-values, paves the way for the news making process through which media outlets and journalists can actually turn any event into news by considering the ready-made news-values and strategies. Holding the power of narrative in their hands, journalists can be likened to the cutting-edge story tellers of our time thanks to their news reports embedded with specific point of view contrary to the commonly held and widely accepted belief of the news consumers that the news accounts with which they systematically come face to face in their daily lives are "faithful representations of reality" (Allan, 2004, p. 77).

Fabricated and shaped by the strategic employment of specific narrative styles and techniques according to the interests of powerful individuals and institutions, news can be perceived both as a practice (Fowler, 1991, p. 2) and what Berger and Luckmann (1966) proposed "the social construction of reality" in their book of the same name. The fact that news accounts vary a great deal from one news media outlet to another even if they report the same event is an indication of the constructed nature of news, not

³² See Hartley (1982), pg. 76-79, for a detailed explanation of each news-value.

transparently offering the reality but only a transformed version of it.

At this point, it is essential to touch upon the concept of “news as entertainment”. It should be highlighted that the boundary between news media as a source of information and as a part of the entertainment industry has been demolished and consequently, news and entertainment industries have become intertwined, especially in the United States. As remarked by Bob Franklin: “news media have increasingly become part of the entertainment industry instead of providing forum for informed debate of key issue of public concern” and

journalism’s priorities have changed. Entertainment has superseded the provision of information; human interest has supplanted the public interest; measured judgment has succumbed to sensationalism; the trivial has triumphed over the weighty; the intimate relationships of celebrities, from soap operas, the world of sport or the royal family, are judged more ‘newsworthy’ than the reporting of significant issues and events of international consequence. Traditional news values have been undermined by new values; ‘infotainment’ is rampant. (Thussu, 2007, p. 5)

When we critically approach to the Western, and most especially the American news media outlets such as Fox News, CNN, and The New York Times, it can be seen that they are entertainment-oriented and motivated by the mission of manipulating thoughts and beliefs of the public, though they are deemed by many the sources of truthful and objective information. American society is lulled by being continuously exposed to the incessant flood of entertainment contents disguised as news and the people are intentionally aimed to be kept under control, stagnant, and at an infantile state behind which lies meticulously planned strategies.

By not adequately and appropriately covering what really is going on globally, and presenting the public only what they need to know by filtering information according to the interests of the government, American news media are not “selling news but an entertainment product, one that hooks audiences on rhetorical and conspiratorial energy” (Taibbi, 2019). To give the impression that everything is perfect and there are no real problems to ponder on, news media “diverts the public from politics and generates a political apathy that is helpful to preservation of the status-quo” (Herman and Chomsky, 1988, p. XVIII).

Just in the case of the adult cartoons such as The Simpsons and Family Guy, which

may be categorized under what the members of The Frankfurt School Horkheimer and Adorno called the culture industry³³ serving the capitalist ideology by making people laugh and entertained, which are designed to divert the attention of the audiences to cover up the graveness of the present situation, and which act like an anesthetic drawing an iron curtain to the eyes of the American society, American news media distracts its own people from the serious incidents happening all around the world including ethnic cleansings and mass slaughters of millions of innocent people in Palestine, Syria, Rwanda and so forth. The ignorance and lack of knowledge of the Americans about the outer world brought about by the news that has nothing to do with a truthful portrayal is also touched upon by Edward Said:

(...) the world-view promulgated by the media is quite exact. (...) most of what counts about foreign societies is compressed into thirty-second items, 'sound-bites' and into the question of whether they are pro- or anti-America, freedom, capitalism, democracy. Most Americans today know and discuss sports with greater skill than they do their own government's behavior in Africa, Indochina, or Latin America; a recent poll showed that 89 percent of high school juniors believed that Toronto was in Italy. (1994, p. 323)

To hide what is unpleasant and incompatible with the government's interests, the news media loaded with the entertainment contents, appears as one of the primary tools in conditioning the American audience culturally, as a result of which individuals internalize both the overt and covert ideologies of the powerful decision-making mechanisms and act accordingly. Each and every stimulus to which we are exposed "affect the ways our consciousness works and plays, as well as shape the mechanisms that determine whether we lose our minds and ourselves" (Cottle, 1993, p. 285). In order to comprehend how and in what ways the consciousness, opinions, and actions of the audiences are manipulated and are directed towards a certain point of view by the news

³³ In their book of social criticism titled *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947), Horkheimer and Adorno propose the term culture industry that they coined and argue that the capitalist system through magazines, radio programs, movies etc. all of which seem different pieces of works but are loaded with sameness in reality, perpetually functions with the aim of controlling, manipulating, pacifying, and deceiving the masses, whose capacity to think critically and question what is going on is depleted, in order to maintain and reinforce the status quo, revealing the power of entertainment industry controlled by the capitalism to distract the masses and lead them into certain kind of ideology. See Horkheimer and Adorno (2002), for more information about the culture industry.

media outlets, it is highly essential to examine discourse and discourse studies, and the significance of power and ideology in the news making process in an all-inclusive manner.

3.2 Discourse, Ideology, Power, and Discourse Analysis Studies

In order to unfold the characteristics and hidden meanings of news reports, it is of prime importance to delve into discourse and its extremely close relationship with ideology and power. Touched upon by many scholars, discourses, in its simplest form, “are ways of referring to or constructing knowledge about a particular topic of practice” (Hall, 1997, p. 6). As one of the salient figures studying discourse and practices of language, Foucault grounded his theory of discourse on the dynamics of power within a society. As articulated by Chris Weedon:

Discourses, in Foucault’s works, are ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and the relations between them. Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the ‘nature’ of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects which they seek to govern. Neither the body nor thoughts and feelings have meaning outside their discursive articulation, but the ways in which discourse constitutes the minds and bodies of individuals is always a part of a wider network of power relations, often with institutional bases. (1987, p. 108)

The Foucauldian treatment of discourse as something closely knitted with the society, institutions, and power relations is corroborated by the definition offered by Roger Fowler: “All discourse is a social product and a social practice” (1991, p. 8) and “Discourse, in the present usage, is socially and institutionally originating ideology, encoded in language” (p. 42). Viewing discourse as a social and institutional phenomenon, Fowler attracts attention to its manipulable nature. Based upon the Foucauldian discourse theory, Gunther Kress defines discourse as follows:

Discourses are systematically-organized sets of statements which give expression to the meanings and values of an institution. Beyond that, they define, describe and delimit what it is possible to say and not possible to say (and by extension- what is possible to do or not to do) with respect to the area of concern of that institution,

whether marginally or centrally. (Fowler, 1991, p. 42)

As can be clearly seen, discourses are far from being innocent and random utterances. On the contrary, they are deliberately and meticulously constructed, and that is why cannot be thought isolated from the interests and values of institutions. Not only having a determinant role in inclusion or omission of certain linguistic features, but also courses of action, discourse requires a careful and detailed study along with the “social, political, and historical conditions of its production and consumption” (Hartley, 1982, p. 6), because at the end of the day these factors will have an impact on the things it says, how it evolves, the people who are exposed to it, how it is employed and so forth (p. 6). Having centralized on the conceptual framework of discourse, it would be highly relevant to state that news emerges as a subcategory of discourse constructed according to specific determinants including subjectivity, strategic choices, values, and interests of institutions holding the power in their hands.

The formative role of language, linguistics, and semiotics in causing both discourses and differentiation in discourses cannot be denied. Basically, while language is an ever-evolving system shaped by the cultural and social aspects, discourse is the ways in which language is employed. Therefore, it would not be wrong to position language as the building block of discourse. Enabling to communicate, express ideas and feelings, establish relationships, and create a sense of belonging, language “is a signifying practice” (Hall, 1997, p .5), which takes an active part in the creation and dissemination of meaning. The fact that language has a vital significance in human life and relationships, giving meaning to the world and conveying one’s understanding of it has turned it into a concept to be studied in detail by linguists, which has led to the foundation of semiotics as a science of signs. Ferdinand de Saussure, a Swiss linguist of the early twentieth century, thanks to whose great contributions language is accepted as a system, developed the basis of semiotics. For him, each and every sign consists of two elements, the signifier and the signified, and the relationship between them is not casual, but an arbitrary one. Therefore, “the meaning of a sign is based on social traditions and culture” (Devran, 2010, p. 31). Just as there is no causality between the signifier and the signified, the relationship between language and reality is arbitrary. (Devran, 2010, p. 32). It should be highlighted that because language is socially constructed and can also be strategically employed to promote certain thoughts and beliefs, it falls short of reflecting the truth and that is why,

there is a wide gap between representation and reality, a view also supported by Jean Baudrillard, a French philosopher. Baudrillard focalizes in his well-known article titled “The Precession of Simulacra” on the concepts of simulacra and simulations and claims that people in the postmodern period do not have a direct contact with reality. According to him, what we have are copies without originals, because “referents and signifiers are no longer logically linked; rather duplications represent the ‘real’” (Durham and Kellner, 2006, p. 448). By applying this theory of his, advocating the irreconcilability of image and truth, to the media studies, Baudrillard puts forward: “The media and the official *news service* are only there to maintain the illusion of an actuality, of the reality of the stakes, of the objectivity of facts” (2006, p. 478). The use of language in news accounts in a way to create a discourse for the needs and interests of powerful individuals and groups is closely related with the concept of ideology. Thought to be coined by the German philosophers Marx and Engels in the 1840s, in order to express “the dominant ideas and representations in a given social order” (Durham and Kellner, 2006, p. xiv), ideology has been touched upon and defined by different scholars. While for van Dijk ideologies are “systems of ideas of social groups and movements” (van Dijk, 2020, p. 17), Devran defines it as “a system of encoding reality” and “the semantic system used to produce the message” (Devran, 2010, p. 26). Just as ideologies have a great role in the construction of discourses, the significance of discourses in reinforcing and perpetuating certain ideologies cannot be denied, and therefore, they are in a constant and mutual interaction. As articulated by van Dijk, the majority of our ideological views come from reading and listening to other members of our group, starting with our parents and peers. Afterwards, we come to know ideologies through watching TV, reading school textbooks, advertisements, newspapers, novels, and engaging in ordinary interactions with friends and co-workers, in addition to a variety of other types of conversation and written text (van Dijk, 2020, p. 19). The creation of the discourses of mass media tools, especially newspapers, within the framework of certain ideologies has led them to be perceived as the ideological state apparatuses, a term put forward by Louis Althusser, a French philosopher, signifying the fact that they serve to the state in producing and disseminating ideologies and cause the constant interpellation (also known as “hailing”) of the audience. Althusser explains the notion of interpellation through the metaphor of a police officer shouting out “Hey, you there!” in a public sphere. Following this exclamation, an

individual turns around and “with this simple 180-degree physical conversion, he becomes *a subject*.” (Althusser, 2004, p. 264). What Althusser really tries to stress is the effective role of media and language in giving people the impression that they are “individual subjects” (Fiske, 2004, p. 1268) by addressing them within a certain framework and through the continuous perpetuation of ideology.

Althusser’s theory of interpellation, denoting constant exertion of power of the dominant groups over individuals, is echoed in the concept “public idiom” proposed by Stuart Hall. What Hall tries to convey with this notion is closely related with the ways in which ideologies function and penetrate into news discourse: The language that the news media outlets employ to speak to their consumers is one that they regard intimate and recognizable, one that they are able to associate with their own world of regular communication and struggle, and which in turn serves to define their perception of reality. A public language both fosters a soothing feeling of belonging, giving the audience the impression that the newspaper is addressing straightly to them, and it validates the accuracy of widely held beliefs and ideals (Fulton, 2005, p. 247)

By transmitting current news using a language in a way that the public can relate to, newspapers serve the readymade ideologies of powerful and dominant groups, which eventually leads to the interpellation of the masses and the reinforcement of hegemonic relationships within a society. The repercussions of the employment of public idiom as a strategy to lead the audience to a certain point of view cannot be denied. As articulated by Helen Fulton, in addition to being drawn to news items whose agendas coincide with their own, newsreaders are also prone to base their own agendas of important matters on the publications to which they are exposed (2005, pp. 223-224). The ability of news to manipulate newsreaders and the strategies implemented by news media outlets cause the consumers to turn into products. Reiterating the argument by Noam Chomsky that “the audience is the product” (Chomsky, 1997), Roger Fowler claims

the product, in a commercial sense, is not news or newspapers (though both are clearly *made*), but rather *readers*- the profit, if any, coming from advertising revenue- or even *votes*, if the aim of the owners of newspapers is to maintain a government which will favour their other commercial ventures. (1991, p. 20)

As can be seen, the only function of the news media is not to report the events taking place in the world as thought by many. Rather, it is an industry that serves specific

ideologies as part of the hegemonic system, and this problematic nature of it has required a critical analysis of newspapers and their discourse to see the hidden meanings embedded in news accounts and to comprehend the dynamics between power, ideology, and discourse.

Though the interest in texts, linguistics, and discourse dates back to the times of Aristotle, when “classical rhetoric (...) has always been concerned with the (persuasive) properties of discourse, and the sophistication of its analysis of rhetorical operations” (van Dijk, 1983, p. 21), the modern-day critical discourse analysis (CDA) studies was shaped in the early 1990s upon the meeting of several prominent scholars such as Teun van Dijk, Norman Fairclough, Gunther Kress, Ruth Wodak, and Theo Van Leeuwen in a symposium organized in Amsterdam. Appearing as a multidisciplinary approach covering the fields of

anthropology, ethnography, microsociology, cognitive and social psychology, poetics, rhetoric, stylistics, linguistics, semiotics, and other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences interested in the systematic study of the structures, functions, and processing of text and talk. (van Dijk, 1991, p. 108)

critical discourse analysis aims to analyze both the written and spoken discourses and reveals both explicit and implicit ideologies invested within them. Scholars conducting discourse analysis devote all their attention to the investigation of formal and thematic structures of all types of written texts and verbal interactions of people ranging from simple and natural daily talks to highly sophisticated speeches with the aim of understanding the ways in which power is reproduced through language.

Norman Fairclough, one of the founders of CDA, viewed discourse as a three-part structure namely “social practice, discursal practice (text production, distribution and consumption), and text” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 74). So far as Fairclough is concerned, the primary aim of critical discourse analysis is “to establish connections between properties of texts, features of discourse practice (...), and wider sociocultural practice” (p. 87). In addition to centralizing on the relationship between language, power, discourse, and ideology, he in his studies underlined the significance of CDA in “disclosing the discursive nature of much contemporary social and cultural change” (Wodak and Meyer, 2001, p. 6). In the later years, Fairclough in company with Ruth Wodak, who stressed the importance of interdisciplinary endeavors of linguists, semioticians, and discourse

analysts who are engaged in CDA in examining the complex relationship between language and society (Wodak and Meyer, 2001, p. 8), offered the main characteristics of CDA as follows:

- 1) CDA addresses social problems.
- 2) Power relations are discursive.
- 3) Discourse constitutes society and culture.
- 4) Discourse does ideological work.
- 5) Discourse is historical.
- 6) The link between text and society is mediated.
- 7) Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory.
- 8) Discourse is a form of social action. (van Dijk, 2015, p. 467)

In the formation of these eight features through which the main lines of the CDA are reflected, Gunther Kress, as another pioneer in CDA studies, played a great role. Regarding critical discourse analysis as “a distinct theory of language, a radically different kind of linguistics” (Wodak and Meyer, 2001, p. 5), Kress specified some basic criteria of CDA, which later developed by Fairclough and Wodak as listed above and established the backbone of contemporary CDA theory:

- language is a social phenomenon;
- not only individuals, but also institutions and social groupings have specific meanings and values, that are expressed in language in systematic ways;
- texts are the relevant units of language in communication;
- readers /hearers are not passive recipients in their relationship to texts;
- there are similarities between the language of science and the language of institutions, and so on. (Wodak and Meyer, 2001, p. 6).

While Theo van Leeuwen focalizes on the relationship between “the verbal and visual in texts and discourse, as well as on the meaning of images” (Wodak and Meyer, 2001, p. 8), Teun van Dijk, developed CDA employed in media studies. Grounding his understanding of critical discourse analysis on Foucauldian theory of discourse, van Dijk remarks that “CDA focuses on the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of *power abuse (dominance)* in society” and the ways in which powerful groups dominate language, discourse, and the minds of people (van Dijk, 2015, p. 467).

The majority of van Dijk's works, which give a special place to the analysis of news discourse, consists of ethnic prejudice and racism issues promoted through the discursive techniques and strategies adopted by the European press in the 1980s. Listing four main tenets which he named as "ideological square":

- 1) Emphasize positive things about Us.
- 2) Emphasize negative things about Them.
- 3) De-emphasize negative things about Us.
- 4) De-emphasize positive things about Them. (van Dijk, 2020, p. 53)

van Dijk emphasized the role of media outlets, reporters, and journalists who adhere to a certain ideology in manufacturing and then reproducing us versus them polarization in societies. And this strategy implemented by the powerful groups with the aim of both dominating discourse and as a natural result of it controlling the minds of masses is a relatively obvious manifestation of the biased, reductive, and essentialist coverage of Muslim communities in the Western news media.

3.3 News Media and (Mis) Representation of Muslims

The news media, specifically the American and European journalism, fed by the Orientalist and Islamophobic mentality promoting the discrimination and marginalization of Muslim communities have condemned both Muslims and the religion of Islam to which they adhere to certain categories, with the discourse they have created and redeployed especially since 9/11, and portray them as backward, anti-modernist, jihadist, atavistic, terrorist, and overall, as a homogenous monolith. The fact that "much of what is known about Islam and Muslims in Western societies is derived from the mass media" (Rane et al., 2014, p. 29) reveals once more its role in generating anti-Muslim sentiment and Islamophobic hate crimes. The Western world's self-proclaimed superiority over the East and Islamic societies is continuously reiterated by means of consciously adopted discursive strategies in news coverage. To draw from Roger Fowler: "The power of discourse in facilitating and maintaining discrimination against 'members' of 'groups' is tremendous" (Fowler, 1991, p. 94). With the large and powerful resources at their disposal, the Western news media "set the framework in which everyone else operates" (Chomsky, 1997) and create a discourse dominated by the prejudiced portrayals of Muslims. So much so that, the Muslim identity is being reconstructed over and over again

in a way that has nothing to do with the reality, as a result of the vigorous efforts of Western news media outlets. The power dynamics, interest values, and editorial choices of the Western newspapers such as The Guardian, Fox News, Daily Mirror, and The New York Times have a determinant role in setting the agenda, in distorting the truth, and in leading the public to a certain ideology perceiving Muslims both as “Others” and a threat to the so-called modern and democratic Western civilization. The already negative image of Islam and Muslims in the West deteriorated following the events of 9/11 and turned into the modern day “fear industry bent on scaring the public about Islam” (Lean, 2012, p. 13) as rightfully suggested by Nathan Lean. The stereotypical and simplistic framing of Islam in news discourse as “oppressive, outmoded, anti-intellectual, restrictive, extremist, backward, dangerous, and causing conflict” (Baker et al., 2013, p. 17), as Edward Said has stated in his ground-breaking book *Covering Islam: How the Media and Experts How We See the Rest of the World* centralizing on the ways in which Islam and Muslims are covered in Western news media, has manifested itself in the 2021 survey titled “Islamophobia, Muslim Safety, and Violence Survey”. Conducted by Dr. Hatem Bazian and Rania Awaad, the survey highlights that “negative media coverage and association of Islam and violence are persistent concerns for Muslims” (Bazian and Awaad, 2021, p. 11) living in the West. Additionally, 88.36% of the respondents “disagree or strongly disagree that media coverage of attacks directed at Muslims is covered fairly and equally” (Bazian and Awaad, 2021, p. 11) pointing to the applied double standards that while both positive situations about Muslims and racist and Islamophobic hate crimes directed at Muslim communities are hardly covered or underreported in Western newspapers, attacks and terrorist incidents such as 9/11, the 7/7 London bombings, and the knife attack of 2020 in France whose perpetrators are thought to be Muslims are devoted a relatively wide coverage. And at the end of the day, all these deliberate and collective efforts of powerful and dominant groups reinforce the pseudo knowledge and fear of Islam, bigotry against Muslims, contribute to the hate crimes stemming from racist and anti-Muslim sentiments as discussed in the previous chapter, and reveal the fact that “nothing in history, has threatened Muslims as much as the Western media: neither the gunpowder in the Middle Ages, nor the trains and telephones, nor even the planes they learned to use in order to establish their own national airlines” (Ahmed, 1994, p. 14).

CHAPTER 4

ISLAMOPHOBIA AND THE PRACTICED DOUBLE STANDARDS IN NEWS DISCOURSE: THREE CASE STUDIES OF ANGLO- AMERICAN NEWS MEDIA

“(...) whoever killed a human being- except as a punishment
for murder or spreading corruption in the land- shall be
regarded as having killed all mankind, and that
whoever saved a human life shall be regarded
as having saved all mankind “
(*The Qur'an*, 2009, 5:32)

4.1. The Methodology of the Study

In this part of the study, the type of discourse which is employed by the Anglo-American news media to cover the terrorist attacks targeting both Muslims and non-Muslims, the Islamophobic attitude in the news, and the double standards practiced on the basis of the religious identity of victims and perpetrators will be analyzed comparatively through using van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method which has been developed initially to examine the discourse of news. By focalizing on the CDA method proposed by van Dijk, numerous parameters such as the headlines, leads, photographs, rhetoric of the news chosen for this study will be evaluated and along with the ways in which anti-Muslim sentiment is reiterated, the substantially different coverages of the terrorist incidents, though they are mostly similar in nature, will be revealed.

4.1.1. The Aim of the Study

In constructing and reproducing the fear of and hostility towards Islam and Muslims, which have spread and turned into an industry specifically in the aftermath of the catastrophic 9/11 terrorist attacks, the role of the news, an effective tool of written

media and is followed by nearly everyone worldwide, is undeniable. From the 7th century, when Muslims began to be deemed a fear factor, until today, when they are mostly being described as terrorists and jihadists, the Western world has developed a great many strategies with the intention of preventing the spread of Islam and degrading Muslim communities into reductionist and essentialist stereotypes as backward, vile, unprogressive, and so forth. And in modern period, to implement these strategies, the news media come to fore thanks to its agenda-setting and mind-shaping characteristics. The aim of this study is to demonstrate how Anglo-American news media, by adopting certain strategies, fuels anti-Muslim sentiment and how it applies double standards regarding Muslims and non-Muslims, in a way that does not comply with the ethics of journalism, by conducting a comparative critical discourse analysis of the specific terrorist incidents.

4.1.2. The Significance of the Study

Though there have been multiple studies investigating the close relationship between media and the perpetuation of Islamophobia, this thesis is an authentic one in that it conducts an all-encompassing comparative and critical discourse analysis along with revealing the double standards practiced by the Anglo-American news media in reporting terrorist attacks carried out against Muslims and non-Muslims. The thesis initially offers both a conceptual framework and historical roots of Islamophobia, then a theoretical background of media, news, and discourse studies followed by a comparative critical discourse analysis by centralizing on the certain terrorist attacks performed within the last ten years and the differences in the ways in which they are covered by the Anglo-American newspapers, and finally provides some alternative solutions to deal with the Anglo-American newspapers' (mis)representation of Muslims and the stereotypical portrayals of Muslim people who are perpetually situated in the negative side of the binary opposition as inherently terrorists, extremists, unmodern, and jihadists.

4.1.3. The Limitations of the Study

The study is limited to the specific Anglo-American newspapers, namely BBC, Daily Mirror, Daily Mail, The Times, The Guardian, Sky News, The Telegraph, Fox News, Newsweek, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, New York Post, and HuffPost, on the purpose of reflecting the entrenched Islamophobic attitude of the

Western world. For this thesis, six terrorist incidents that took place in the last ten years will be analyzed. Furthermore, the news reports covering these six attacks are chosen according to the purposive sampling method, frequently adopted in qualitative research, meaning that out of a data set elicited from the online databases of the Western news media outlets, some specific samples, which will best reflect the purpose and context of the study, are selected.

4.1.4. The Universe and Sample of the Study

The universe of this study is the Anglo-American news media. However, by making some limitations at this point, a wide variety of newspapers, previously mentioned, have been selected as the most effective ones in reaching the masses and influencing the public opinion not only in the UK and the U.S. but also on a global scale. The reason that lies behind this selection is to reveal the readymade and previously established patterns adopted by the Anglo-American newspapers regarding the Muslim communities. The sample of the study consists of twenty-four news articles published upon the specific terrorist attacks that occurred within the last ten years, namely;

- 1) Christchurch mosque attacks of 2019
- 2) Finsbury Park mosque attack of 2017
- 3) Reading Stabbings of 2020
- 4) San Bernardino attack of 2015
- 5) Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting of 2012
- 6) Las Vegas mass shooting of 2017

The chosen news is accessed through the websites of the relevant broadcasting organizations and is analyzed in detail according to van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis method.

4.1.5. The Method of the Study

In this study, Teun van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis, a qualitative research method, will be used. CDA method, which is an interdisciplinary approach and can be applied to a great variety of fields from literature to media studies, has been employed by van Dijk to examine the place of the concepts of racism and prejudice, which were prevalent in the 1980s European media, in news discourse and it specifically investigates "the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and

resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (van Dijk, 2015, p. 466). Teun van Dijk, giving CDA method prominence in revealing the close relationship between discourse and power, emphasizes that language can be used to construct pre-planned meanings in order to serve certain ideologies, and thus has a critical role in shaping and determining the public opinion and action.

van Dijk explains both the overt and covert ideologies embedded within news discourse through macro and microstructures. Dividing the macrostructure into two subheadings, namely thematic and schematic analysis, van Dijk focalizes on the title, headlines, initial and final summaries, background, and context knowledge, and leads of news for thematic analysis and states that the headline “will typically express the most important macroproposition” (van Dijk, 1983, p. 34). Additionally, to reflect the material impact of macrostructures in news on the audience, he articulates:

For the processing of news discourse, the headlines, the lead, or the first thematical sentences are crucial for various reasons: they organize (“attract”) attention for specific articles; they allow one to decide whether or not to read the rest of the discourse; they give the main theme, even without further reading; ; they activate the relevant knowledge from memory that is needed in order to understand the rest of the text; and, last but not least, they form a macrostructure that will serve as an important strategic cue in controlling the local understanding of the subsequent text. (p. 35)

The schematic analysis, being the other category of the macrostructure, consists of two sub-sections, which are the situation and the comment. While in the situation part the main event, the background information, context, and consequences are analyzed, the comment section focuses on the statements and verbal reactions of both the actors and eyewitnesses of the main event who are described as news sources (Şeker, 2009, p. 98). When it comes to the microanalysis, it can be said that it is divided into four distinct categories, namely the syntactic analysis, local coherence, word choices, and finally news rhetoric. In syntactic analysis, along with the sentence structures, whether the sentences are active or passive and complex or simple examined. To exemplify, as reflected by Yusuf Devran, in the discourses of “The government increased the oil prices” and “The oil prices were adjusted”, there is an ideological difference between the first sentence positioning the government as the active agent and the second sentence that narrates the same event with a passive voice (2010, p. 66).

In the part of the local coherence, it is analyzed whether the sentences that make up the news text and follow each other establish a casual, functional, and referential relationship with one another. In the casual relationship, whether the sentences have casual links between them, in the functional relationship, whether a sentence containing a general statement is explained in the sentence that follows it, and finally in the referential relationship, whether there is a link between a concept that is used in a particular sentence and the sentence following it are investigated.

When it comes to word choices, the reasons for choosing some specific words in the news coverage and the underlying ideological meanings revealed by this deliberate choice are analyzed. To draw from Devran, even using the word “guerilla” instead of “terrorist” (p. 65) reflects the ideology of many figures and institutions from the editorial board to news organizations.

In the final category of microstructures that is news rhetoric, van Dijk tackles with the elements that are both persuasive and strengthen the discourse of news. The testimonies of witnesses, photographs, and the expressions of exaggeration, mockery, comparison and so forth that are embedded in news articles with the aim of reinforcing news rhetoric are analyzed to unveil the operating power structures.³⁴

Considering both the macrostructures and microstructures introduced and developed by van Dijk, the discourse adopted by the Anglo-American news media in covering the terrorist attacks carried out against both Muslims and non-Muslims will be analyzed in detail, and then the differences between them will be revealed.

4.2. Case Study One: The Terrorist Attacks Targeting Muslim People

In this part of the study, two terrorist attacks targeting Muslim population, namely the Christchurch terrorist attacks of 2019 and Finsbury Park mosque terrorist attack of 2017 will be critically analyzed regarding the ways in which they are covered in Anglo-American news media. First, the background information of the incidents will be provided, and this will be followed by the critical discourse analysis of the eight news reports in total, four for each event.

³⁴ To be more acknowledged on van Dijk’s CDA method, macrostructures and microstructures in news discourse, see Özer and Dağtaş (2012); van Dijk (1988); and van Dijk (1993).

4.2.1. Christchurch Terrorist Attack

The Christchurch terrorist attacks of 15 March 2019, targeting Muslim population living in New Zealand, demonstrate the fact that Islamophobia, which has manifested itself in different ways as of the birth of the religion of Islam and has made life seriously difficult for Muslim communities all around the world, is not only prevalent in Western countries, but is a reality that exists all over the world. Looking at the modern history of New Zealand, it can be seen that no attack as deadly as the Christchurch terrorist attacks took place. The Australian-born terrorist Brenton Tarrant slaughtered 51 and seriously injured 49 Muslims, who gathered for Friday prayers, in the successive attacks he organized on the Al Noor Mosque and Linwood Islamic Centre situated in the city of Christchurch on Friday, March 15, 2019. Being a white supremacist and anti-Islamic, Tarrant “self-filmed and live-streamed the attack using a body cam and, in advance, highlighted the location of the live-stream (live-feed) within the manifesto and online” (Hutchinson, 2019, p. 20).

In his 74-pages manifesto, “which he posted online and distributed in advance to media outlets and to New Zealand Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern’s office” (Hanif, 2020, p. 120), the terrorist, in addition to expressing his far-right, Islamophobic, and anti-immigrant ideology, made it clear that he was influenced by The Great Replacement conspiracy theory mentioned earlier in this study. Tarrant, who stated in his manifesto that he was inspired by the Norwegian terrorist Anders Breivik and described himself as “regular white man” remarks: “We must crush immigration and deport those invaders already living on our soil” (McBride, 2019), which denominates his motivation behind these traumatic and inhumane attacks. Expressing his discomfort with the immigrants living in Europe and the increase in the Muslim population in his manifesto, Tarrant defined Muslims as invaders occupying European lands. What is more, by announcing his hatred of Turks whom he labeled as “roaches” and “orders them to ‘flee to your own lands, while you still have the chance’” (McBride, 2019).

In addition to his manifesto, the inscriptions and symbols painted on his weapons show the extent of the terrorist’s hostility towards Turks and Muslims. Some of the specific names and dates inscribed onto his weapons and their connotations can be viewed in the photo below.

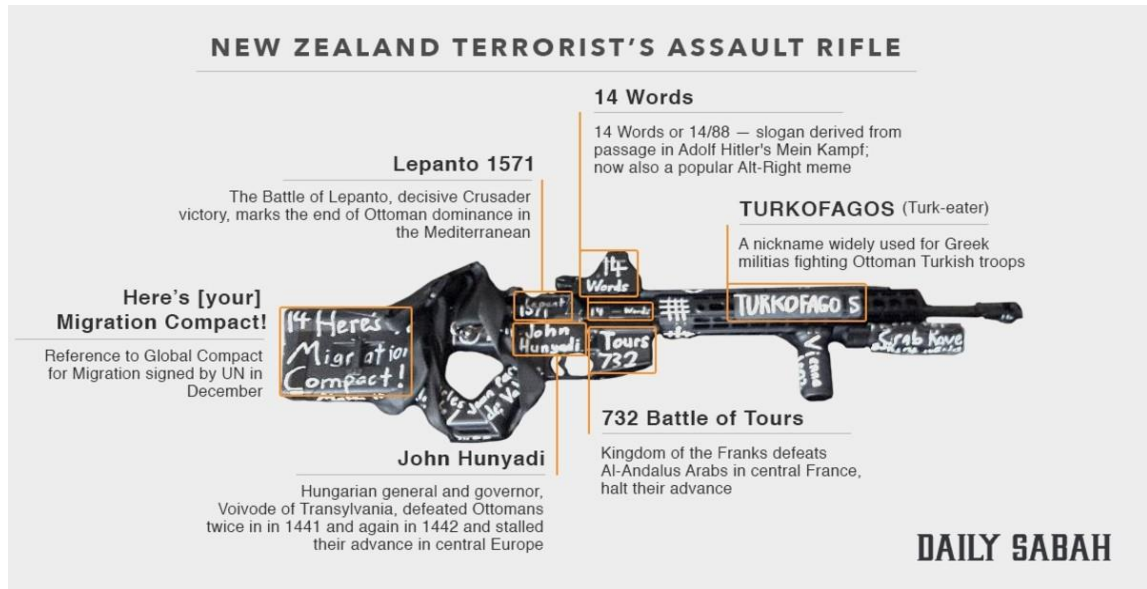


Figure 4.1: New Zealand Terrorist Brenton Tarrant's Rifle Replete with White Supremacist Symbols ³⁵

In this part, the discourse employed by the Daily Mirror, Fox News, Daily Mail, and finally The Guardian to report the Christchurch terrorist attacks, the deadliest one in the history of New Zealand, will be analyzed in a critical and detailed manner.

4.2.2. Critical Discourse Analysis of Anglo-American Newspapers Regarding Their Coverage of Christchurch Terrorist Attack

Table 4.1: Christchurch Terrorist Attack and Prominent Discursive Features Employed by the Anglo-American News Media to Cover It

Newspaper	Headline	Lead	Date	Striking Photo
Daily Mirror	"Boy who grew into evil far-right mass killer as 49 murdered at prayers"	"After Australian Brenton Tarrant, 28, shot dead 49 Muslims at two mosques in New Zealand, one pal said: "I think something must have changed during his years travelling"	15 March 2019	

³⁵ To be more acknowledged on the numbers and letters that Tarrant painted on his semi-automatic weapons and their implications, visit <https://www.dailysabah.com/asia/2019/03/15/new-zealand-mosque-shooter-names-his-idols-on-weapons-he-used-in-massacre>.

Daily Mail	“From a bullied school boy to NZ’s worst mass murderer: Christchurch mosque shooter was ‘badly picked on as a child because he was chubby’”	-“ Brenton Tarrant, 28, grew up in the north-eastern NSW town of Grafton - Childhood friends still living there said Tarrant was a loner for most of his life - Daniel Tuite played rugby league for the Grafton Ghosts with Tarrant in 2005 - Mr Tuite said Tarrant was 'picked on pretty badly' for being 'useless on the field’”	17 March 2019	
Fox News	“New Zealand mosque shooting suspect ‘changed completely’ after traveling to Europe, other countries, family says”	X	17 March 2019	
The Guardian	“Christchurch attack: suspect had white-supremacist symbols on weapons”	“Man to appear in court charged with murder after 49 people shot dead at two mosques”	15 March 2019	X

To begin with the first news coverage on the Table 1, it can be seen that it was published on 15 March 2019 with a headline “Boy who grew into evil far-right mass killer as 49 murdered at prayers”. When we have a look at the headline, which can be deemed the most significant and striking thematic element of the macrostructure, it is obvious that the information that the murdered people are Muslims is not mentioned and Brenton Tarrant is portrayed as a boy who later in his life turns into a mass murderer, instead of being framed directly as a terrorist. Additionally, when analyzed syntactically, the usage of passive voice in “murdered” in the headline serves the purpose of avoiding describing Tarrant as the perpetrator of these horrific attacks. In the lead part of the news, it is stated that the victims are 49 Muslim people, however, the fact that these attacks carried out by Tarrant are based on Islamophobic grounds is not included in a way that does not reflect

the real background and context of the issue. Through inserting a comment of a friend of Tarrant's to the narrative, the reason lying behind the incident is implied as the terrorist's overseas travels and by that way the severity of the attacks organized by Tarrant is mitigated and Tarrant is presented as not that responsible for what happened.

In the continuation of the news, the information that Brenton Tarrant broadcast the attack live on social media, that he was inspired by Anders Breivik and Charleston Church killer Dylann Roof, and how he defined both himself and the attack he organized in his 74-pages manifesto is included. With the excerpts from his manifesto, it is aimed to reinforce the idea that Tarrant is an ordinary person from a normal family and that his attacks were carried out in order to avenge "thousands of deaths caused by foreign invaders", and this discourse eventually leads Tarrant to turn into a rightful and sympathetic figure in the eyes of the audience. The news report also features comments from Tarrant's ex-colleague, who describes him as "a likeable and dedicated personal trainer running free athletic programmes for kids" emphasizing that the years he spent traveling overseas may have had an impact on his becoming, which shifts the focal point from the horrific attacks and their Muslim victims to Tarrant's private life and friend relationships. Further to that, as a result of including the knowledge that Tarrant's father passed away due to an illness when Tarrant was in the secondary school and he has a living mother and sister into the news discourse, the terrorist is tried to be portrayed as a family member, and it is implied that one of the psychological reasons that made him such a person might be the death of his father, through which it is intended to arouse sympathy for the terrorist and justify his actions.

In the news discourse, narrative structures that dramatize the situation of Muslims and reflect the horror of the incident are also featured. In his statement, one of the Muslim worshippers Ramzan Ali articulates: "He just came in and was shooting" and "The blood was splashing on me and I thought 'Oh my God, what's going to happen to me now?'" , which elucidates the suddenness of the attacks and the fear and panic felt by the Muslim community.

While New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Arden's description of the attacks as "one of New Zealand's darkest days" is included in the news discourse, how Theresa May, Jeremy Corbyn, the Queen, and Donald Trump reacted to the incident is not specified separately and is passed over with a general sentence that they all condemned

the attacks. Despite the fact that the attacks were committed for Islamophobic reasons, the background and context information fail to satisfy the truthful representation of what happened and the reason behind the attacks is reflected in a general framework as Tarrant's anti-immigrant and racist views.

Various photographs showing the grieving families of the Muslims who lost their lives in the attacks, the survivor Ramzan Ali, the members of media gathering in front of the court, a vigil for the victims of the attacks, Brenton Tarrant pictured in Pakistan in 2018, and a video of an interview with a witness are used to consolidate the news rhetoric. However, the most striking one among them is undoubtedly the childhood photograph of Tarrant in his father's arms situated right before the headline. The reason why such a photo is included in the news coverage becomes clear in the following paragraphs where Tarrant is described as "an angelic boy" in his father's arms. According to the report "How the British Media Reports on Terrorism": "This narrative implies that firstly, the perpetrator was once "pure" and has diverged from his true state. Second, is the humanising intention behind the description "angelic"" (2020, p. 41).

Looking at the word choices made both to describe Tarrant and his attacks on the two mosques, it is seen that it is perseveringly avoided to name the attacks as a terrorist incident and Tarrant as a terrorist. So much so that, while throughout the news report Tarrant is referred to as "angelic boy, far-right maniac, the killer, sick Tarrant, a likeable and dedicated personal trainer", the attacks he carried out are named as "murderous mosque rampage, gruesome attack, cowardly attack, horrific murders" without mentioning any "T" word, which at the end of the day demonstrates the veracity of van Dijk's claim: "The analysis of the 'unsaid' is sometimes more revealing than the study of what is actually expressed in the text" (van Dijk, 1991, p. 114).

Two days after the attacks, the British Daily Mail reported the incident with the headline "From a bullied school boy to NZ's worst mass murderer: Christchurch mosque shooter was 'badly picked on as a child because he was chubby'". When the headline is analyzed, though it is stated that the attacks targeted the two mosques in Christchurch, it is implied that the reason lying behind Tarrant's transformation into a mass murderer is his being bullied at school because of his weight.

In the lead part, given in the form of four separate sentences one under the other, no insight is given into the inhumane terrorist attacks that Tarrant carried out against the

Muslim community, and in addition to the information about the age of Tarrant, the town where he grew up, and his loneliness, the comment of Daniel Tuite, who was in the same rugby league with Tarrant in 2005, is included that Tarrant was subjected to ill treatment of his friends on the grounds that he was useless on the field. And all these omissions and additions, give readers an idea about the ideology behind the news discourse.

In the first paragraph of the news composed of only one sentence, Tarrant is labeled as a terrorist and the information that he “shot and killed 50 people” in the attacks targeting two mosques in Christchurch is conveyed with an active sentence structure. Be that as it may, in the rest of the sentence, as if to excuse the terrorist attacks, the information that Tarrant was bullied because he was an overweight child is embedded into the news discourse through the comments of his friends whose names are not specifically mentioned.

The information that Brenton Tarrant broadcast the attacks live on social media, which is also covered by Daily Mirror, is included in the discourse of the news. In the third paragraph, contrary to the mentioned active sentence structure in the first paragraph situating Tarrant as the responsible active agent of the catastrophic attacks, it is stated that “fifty people have died” and by that way a misperception has been created as if those Muslims have died on their own. In the remainder of the news, literally no information is offered about the attacks and their Islamophobic motives, the identity of Tarrant as a terrorist, and the Muslim victims. Instead, Tarrant’s hometown, his friends and their comments, the peer bullying to which he was exposed, and his being an overweight child are given wide coverage.

In addition to the comments of Mr. Tuite saying that Tarrant “suffered a knee injury, leading him to spend more time lifting weights at gyms” and “Something just changed and he got really serious about exercise and got himself in shape”, Tracy Gray, who owns the Big River Gym where Tarrant once worked, is quoted as expressing how dedicated Tarrant was to his training, which actually have nothing to do with the terrorist attacks and lead the audience to be diverged from the main issue by not realistically and adequately conveying the background knowledge and consequences of the incident. Indeed, when looked at the overall news discourse, it is not that hard to see that the sentences following one another do not have a local coherence among them, meaning that they are not linked to one another casually, functionally, and referentially, and they do

not follow a chronological order. And that is why, the news stands just like a cubist painting composed of bits and pieces taken from here and there.

In the news report, Tarrant's grandmother Mrs. Fitzgerald, referring to Tarrant's fondness for computers and video games in his youth, comments: "The media is saying he has planned it for a long time, so he is obviously not of sound mind", which implies that Tarrant may have some psychological or mental problems and that is the reason why he could organize such an attack, though she cannot name the terrorist attack as it is, but uses the pronoun "it", which is a brief yet telling detail in the discourse. Along with the comments of the grandmother, the statements of the terrorist's cousin Donna Cox that Tarrant came from an esteemed family and was not raised that way are inserted into the news and by that way the discourse constructed and perpetuated throughout the news coverage is intensified. As also touched upon by Daily Mirror, here by mentioning Tarrant's mother, sister, his father's death from cancer in 2010, and his travels to Europe in the aftermath of his father's decease, Tarrant is portrayed as a part of a family leading him to be humanized and the reason for his excessive hatred towards non-white immigrants is attributed to his father's passing.

To strengthen the news rhetoric, a good many elements are employed in the news discourse. In addition to the childhood photo of Tarrant in his father's arms, six more photographs depicting Tarrant's grandmother, uncle, cousin, the house he grew up in, and his adolescence are involved in the news report. In the photo that can be seen on the Table 1, which had to be cropped due to space issues, Tarrant poses with his rugby team friends. This photo plays a significant role in reinforcing the discourse that is founded from the very beginning of the news, that is Tarrant as an overweight child leading him to be bullied.

Along with the photos, a video showing the moment when Tarrant appears in court is presented to the audience. While in the video Tarrant's face is blurred, the white supremacist symbol that he made with his fingers is placed at the focal point of the video, which leads the message of Tarrant to be conveyed effectively and Tarrant to be reflected as a powerful figure in the news discourse as being compatible with the interests of the power structures.

The table placed at the end of the news report, which gives the timeline of the terrorist attacks, on the one hand strengthens the rhetoric, on the other hand, allows

readers to grasp what is going on more easily. It is quite telling that the news does not include any photographs or videos that reflect the graveness of the attacks and that there are not any statements or photographs of any Muslim witnesses or relatives.

Considering the word choice, Tarrant is referred to as “bullied schoolboy, worst mass murderer, mosque shooter, chubby, loner, white supremacist terrorist, overweight child alleged mass murderer, and a 28-year-old Australian man” and the attacks are named as “brutal onslaught, Christchurch massacre, disgusting attack” as perfectly serving the purpose of downplaying both the terrorist and the terror attacks.

In the news it published two days after the incident, the American Fox News used the headline: “New Zealand mosque shooting suspect ‘changed completely’ after traveling to Europe, other countries, family says”. Looking at the discourse constructed at the headline, it can be more or less predicted around which ideology the rest of the narrative will be framed. The headline, in which the terrorist is mentioned as a “suspect”, presents the view of his family that the terrorist has completely changed as a result of his travels to Europe as well as other countries, which is also touched upon in the two previously analyzed news. Rather than offering a factual information that the attacks targeted Muslim community and resulted from the terrorist’s anti-Islamic sentiments, the headline has been constructed with a discourse that shows Tarrant as an innocent man and puts the blame for the terror attacks, which he carried out, on the countries he has visited before.

In the first paragraph of the news that does not have a lead, the discourse created in the headline is reiterated, and the death of Tarrant’s father in 2010 is presented as the underlying cause of his travels to both Europe and other countries. In the following paragraph, while Tarrant is once more mentioned as a “suspect”, Fox News expresses that it chooses not to name him throughout the discourse, and this, in addition to being quite meaningful, serves to keep both Tarrant and the brutal attacks he committed in the background by deliberately shifting the focus to insignificant details. Later in the same paragraph, it is reported that Tarrant went to court on Saturday for “a murder charge” leading both the effects of the terrorist attacks to be alleviated and the background information of the reason why he appeared in court not to be provided truthfully.

When analyzed syntactically, even though the information that Tarrant killed fifty people is given with active sentence structure, the word “suspected” placed right before the word

“killing” creates the perception that he is not guilty well proven, and as might be expected, this word choice reflects the ideology embedded within the news discourse in no uncertain terms.

The comment of Tarrant’s grandmother in which she states that she reunited with him a year before the attacks and felt no sign of danger in him is given in the same sentence reflecting the investigators’ view that these attacks had been planned for two years, which positions the grandmother’s observation as more persuasive than that of the investigators, since she is a family member. In the following part of the news, by quoting what the grandmother told 9News that Tarrant was in a normal condition, they had a talk and dined together” to celebrate that occasion”, Tarrant is portrayed as a normal figure who has a family and comes together with them in daily life. However, the reason for celebration is not included in the news discourse leading to misinformation.

The information that Tarrant was deeply affected by the loss of his father, he traveled to different countries, and came back as a totally different person from these travels is once again included in the discourse indirectly, this time as the grandmother’s comment, which at the end of the day reinforces the news rhetoric, draws attention to the perception that Tarrant was a normal person before his travels, and finally serves to arouse sympathy for him through the death of his father. In addition to the grandmother’s comments about Tarrant, his uncle’s statement that they are sorry for the families of the dead and wounded and they are in a devastated state is incorporated into the news discourse. This expression appears in the middle of the news and strikingly no serious information has been given about the victims of the attacks up to that point.

In the news discourse, it is conveyed through the comments of Tracey Gray, who recruited Tarrant at the gym, that he left the job in 2012 to globetrot, that “he was professional, he was punctual, reliable” and did not display any extremist behavior or thoughts, which leads Tarrant, whose name is not even mentioned in the news, to be diverged from his terrorist identity.

It is reported that Tarrant, who is once again identified as a suspect, in his 74-page manifesto states that he earned his travel money from bitcoin investments, and that he self-describes himself as “a white supremacist” whose aim is to “avenge the attacks in Europe perpetrated by Muslims”. The attention-grabbing and critical point in this discourse is that the word Muslim is not used throughout the news report to refer to the

people Tarrant hated and brutally murdered. Instead, it is employed to describe the alleged perpetrators of attacks that are stated to have been committed in Europe and that are not specifically named, as a result of which Muslims are portrayed as aggressor, not the victims, and both Tarrant's anger and the terrorist attacks are justified.

At one point in the news, based on the comments of the authorities, who are not identified, it is reported that Tarrant had traveled to Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary before the attacks and he had studied the wars between the Ottoman Empire and the Christians. Furthermore, according to the information stated to be obtained from Reuters, it is expressed that Tarrant had visited France, Spain, and Portugal in 2017. Immediately afterwards, Bulgarian Foreign Minister Elaterid Zazhariah is quoted articulating Tarrant had a "very serious knowledge of the Balkan history in details I would say even few people in the Balkans know". In the following paragraph, it is stated that the suspect visited Turkey twice in 2016, specifying the date ranges, and that he had traveled to Pakistan the previous year. Although his visits to both Turkey and Pakistan took place in the same years as his visits to many countries mentioned before, these two countries are included in the news discourse separately, and for Turkey in a detailed way, and in this way, it is implied that his visits to these two countries with a large Muslim population caused Tarrant's personality to change, clearly resonating with the Western world's Orientalist and Islamophobic mentality that deems Muslims terrorists and the source of evil.

While the information that fifty people died in the attacks is given as "the death toll" in the last two paragraphs of the news discourse, it is defined as "the deadliest shooting" in New Zealand's modern history, and Jacinda Ardern's comment that several funerals will be delivered to families. All these details, as if they were unimportant, are placed at the end of the news, which perfectly reveals what goes on behind the scenes and why.

To reinforce the news rhetoric, the comments of Tarrant's family members, Jacinda Ardern, and the Bulgarian Foreign Minister are embedded within the news discourse. However, not a single comment or a verbal reaction of eyewitnesses of the attacks and family or friends of the Muslim victims is included. What is more, even the fact that the attacks targeted Muslims is left out of the discourse.

With a video at the beginning of the news report that includes the reactions of

religious leaders to the terrorist attacks, four photographs are given depicting Tarrant in court, his grandmother and uncle, people weeping for their missing friend, and the flowers people placed near the Al-Noor Mosque. The most striking of these images is the photograph of Tarrant taken in the court. In the photograph, his face is blurred, and his two hands, which are clenched into fists, are placed at the focal point of the image, and by that way, he is depicted as a powerful figure. Additionally, the white color of his dress symbolizing innocence, purity, and cleanliness is quite meaningful regarding the message to be delivered.

Tarrant, whose name is not even mentioned once throughout the news discourse, is referred to as “the Australian man, mosque shooting suspect, the 28-year-old suspect, accused gunman, suspected gunman, the suspect” as if it was not evident that he is the terrorist, not alleged or suspected, carrying out the deadliest terror attacks in New Zealand’s history. And the attacks are portrayed as “the Friday’s attack, mosque shooting, the massacre, mosque massacres” which follows the same patterns with the two previously analyzed news coverages.

In the news it published on the day of the incident, The Guardian used the headline: “Christchurch attack: suspect had white-supremacist symbols on weapons”. When the headline as one of the most significant parts of the macrostructure is analyzed in depth, it is seen that the attacks are not framed as terrorist incidents, the terrorist is mentioned as a suspect, and the background knowledge of the attacks is not reflected truthfully as a result of the omission of the information that the symbols painted on the terrorist’s weapons are heavily Islamophobic, and the perception is created as if the attacks were committed only because of racism.

In the lead part of the news report, it is stated that the terrorist who is defined only as a “man” will appear in court and be accused of murder because of the forty-nine people who were shot and killed at two mosques. In the lead, just like in the headline, the name of the terrorist is not given and by qualifying him only as a man, the horrific crime he committed is endeavored to be mitigated and normalized. The lead part in which the passive sentence structure is employed when talking about the victims of the attacks, in which Tarrant is not portrayed as the perpetrator of the attacks, and the information that the victims were Muslim people is omitted from the news discourse, does not mention the crucial points that should be emphasized about the incident and by that way, proves

once again that journalism is not based on objectively covering what actually happens around the world.

In the first paragraph of the news, the terrorist's name is still not given, and he is referred to as the "suspected perpetrator". Additionally, it is expressed that the attacks during which the terrorist exhibited white-supremacist symbols killed forty-nine people and through this discourse, both the religious identity of the victims is not offered, and the real perpetrator of the attacks is left aside as a result of the sentence structure constructed as if the thing that caused the death of these people was the attacks.

The news stating that the attacks carried out are the worst in the history of New Zealand, names the incident as global terrorism, and reports that it deconstructed the perception that New Zealand is a country where such attacks do not occur. In addition to the information that the attacks were broadcast live on social media, Jacinda Ardern's comment, describing the attacks as one of New Zealand's "darkest days" and "an extraordinary and unprecedented act of terrorism", and stating that the gun laws of New Zealand will change, is included in the news discourse. The discourse that is frequently reiterated in the news report, that security measures have been increased at mosques around the world and that the mosques both in New Zealand and other countries should be cautious, causes mosques to evoke negative images on the minds of people and leads them to be perceived as places that should be abstained.

In the following paragraphs of the news, though the comment of António Guterres, the UN secretary general, that Islamophobia should be dealt with as soon as possible is embedded in the news report, the information that the attacks were committed due to the hostility towards Islam is not included in the discourse and is passed over as if it were an insignificant detail. It is reported that the police did not name the attacker, however, a 28-year-old Australian man named Brenton Tarrant identified himself as the perpetrator of the attacks. It is stated in the news report that both the emergency services, for their slowness in reaching the crime scenes, and social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter, for hosting photos and videos containing crime scene footage, came in for criticism.

As an example of the symbols on the terrorist's weapons, which are stated to be white supremacist, only the names of a Swedish child killed in a truck attack in 2017 and a man who is stated to have been praised for defeating Muslims in a battle are given. And

as a result, Muslims, the main target of the terrorist, are kept in the background. The information that Tarrant expressed in his 74-page manifesto shared online, that he desired to create “an atmosphere of fear” for Muslim community is presented as a trivial detail. What is more, Sadiq Khan, Angela Merkel, and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, whom Tarrant stated in his manifesto as the names he thought should be killed, are lightly quoted as the names Tarrant “calls for targeting” in the news discourse.

In addition to the comments by the eyewitnesses and survivors of the attacks reflecting how the incident unfolded, reinforcing the news rhetoric, how the world leaders including Donald Trump, Pope Francis, and Theresa May reacted to the attacks is included in the news discourse, and it is quite meaningful that in their comments, none of them mentioned the Islamic world, Muslims, and the reality of Islamophobia. When examined in a detailed manner, it can be seen that Donald Trump, in his comments included in the news discourse, states that the U.S. is with the people of New Zealand by not specifically naming the Muslim victims, and in his Twitter post, articulates “innocent people have so senselessly died” as if those people had not been mercilessly murdered by a terrorist motivated by Islamophobia. And this discourse not only excludes Muslims from the narrative but also downplays Tarrant’s vicious crime.

In the news report, which does not include any photographs, the news rhetoric is consolidated through two videos; one containing Ardern’s speech after the attacks and the other giving information about the incident. Tarrant, whose name is mentioned three times in the news coverage, is referred to as “the suspect, the suspected perpetrator, a man in his 20s, the gunman” while the attacks are named as “massacre, deadly assault, the attack, the carnage, the shootings”, which goes hand in hand with the discourses of three previously analyzed news reports of Daily Mirror, Daily Mail, and Fox News.

4.2.3. Finsbury Park Mosque Terrorist Attack

On June 17, 2017, by deliberately driving into the crowds of Muslims near the Finsbury Park mosque in London with his white pickup truck which he was driving at high speed, Darren Osborne killed a 51-year-old man named Makram Ali, and injured at least 9 others. According to the statement of one of the eyewitnesses of the terrorist attack,

Osborne “was shouting: ‘All Muslims, I want to kill all Muslims.’”³⁶ Having watched a show on TV, Osborne is also reported as having deluded himself to the belief that Muslims are “extremists or rapists in pedophile gangs”³⁷, which displays the highly Orientalist and Islamophobic mentality, that make life difficult for Muslim communities each passing day, of the terrorist targeting Muslim worshippers attending Ramadan prayers, known as tarawih.

In this part of the thesis, how the Anglo-American news media, namely BBC, The Times, The New York Times, and Newsweek, reported on this anti-Islamic terrorist attack, what kind of discourse they employed in their coverage and its implications will be analyzed.

4.2.4. Critical Discourse Analysis of Anglo-American Newspapers Regarding Their Coverage of Finsbury Park Mosque Terrorist Attack

Table 4.2: Finsbury Park Mosque Terrorist Attack and Prominent Discursive Features Employed by the Anglo-American News Media to Cover It

Newspaper	Headline	Lead	Date	Striking Photo
BBC	Finsbury Park: What led Darren Osborne to kill?”	“Darren Osborne has been convicted of the murder of 51-year-old Makram Ali by driving a van into a crowd outside a Finsbury Park mosque.”	1 February 2018	
Newsweek	“London Vehicle Collision Near Mosque: 1 Arrest, Multiple Casualties”	X	18 June 2017 ³⁸	

³⁶ To view this specific statement and many others, see <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/6/19/muslims-targeted-in-attack-near-finsbury-park-mosque>. Accessed 24 January 2022.

³⁷ <https://www.trtworld.com/europe/the-five-bloodiest-far-right-terrorist-attacks-in-europe-33965>. Accessed 24 January 2022.

³⁸ Though the terrorist attack took place on 19 June, 2017, it was reported in Newsweek on June 18 due to the time lag between the UK and the US.

The Times	“Jobless ‘lone wolf’ Darren Osborne held over attack on Finsbury Park mosque”	“Father of four had suffered mental health problems, say family”	20 June 2017	
HuffPost	“Who Is Darren Osborne? Here’s What We Know About Finsbury Park Terror Attack Suspect”	“47-year-old father-of- four lived in Cardiff”	19 June 2017	

As the headline of the news, published by BBC eight months after the incident, “Finsbury Park: What led Darren Osborne to kill?” was used. When we analyze the headline, which has a significant place in news discourse and is included in the macrostructure, one of the categories to dwell upon in the discourse analysis of news as suggested by van Dijk, it is seen that no information is given regarding the nature of the incident and its victims, namely Muslims, and this demonstrates the fact that the headline fails to meet the expectation to reflect the main theme of the event in an inclusive and truthful way. The headline, in which the terrorist’s name is given and is expressed that the reasons behind Osborne’s killing, though it is not offered who he killed, will be focused on, implies that Osborne is actually an innocent man, but becomes this way due to some factors, and by that way invites readers to empathize with him.

Even though in the lead part of the news report the information that Osborne is accused of murder, the name of the Muslim man he killed, and that he targeted the people outside the mosque is given with the active sentence structure, the sentence that follows it begins with the conjunction “but”, and by questioning Osborne’s motive for doing such a thing, mitigates his crime. In addition, in the lead part, the fact that the attacks targeted the Muslim community is not given and Osborne is not identified in any way, let alone a terrorist.

In the following paragraphs, it is stated that one ultimate reason for the attack

cannot be identified, however, many of the features included in the “22 vulnerabilities” list, which are put forwarded by the experts and indicate the common points of individuals who are prone to violence, are found in Osborne. According to the news report, the most important factor behind the attack might be Osborne’s mental state and his coming to a parting of the ways. In addition to these, the information that he has been unemployed for years, has an alcoholism history, has anxiety, has turned into a lonely man over time, has been prescribed anti-depressants, and is a “ticking time bomb” is included in the news discourse through his partner’s comments. Furthermore, by reporting that Osborne contemplated suicide because he considered himself to be worthless, and had been overly resentful lately, it is implied that he had mental health issues, and by that way, Osborne is portrayed as a sick and innocent man.

It is stated in the news coverage that Osborne had become haunted by the documentary *Three Girls*, covering the Rochdale scandal, where the majority of the victims were white and most of the criminals were men of Pakistani descent. And through the comment of Commander Dean Hayden, “the head of counter-terrorism at the Metropolitan Police”, that the program broadcast by BBC had a stimulating role on Osborne, the discourse shaped around the alternative factors leading Osborne to kill is reinforced. While the focal point of the news discourse should have been the Islamophobic terrorist attack carried out by Osborne, the seriousness of the incident is ignored in the news report highlighting the documentary in which Muslims were portrayed as aggressors. It is also included in the news discourse that following this documentary, Osborne took a stand against Muslims by thinking that they are rapists and pedophiles, and that he had an argument with his partner because he had never been “openly” racist and aggressive towards Muslim people. The very word openly in the statement is quite ironic because it suggests that being latently Islamophobic does not pose a problem.

As another factor in Osborne’s radicalization, the significance of online platforms such as Twitter, through which he was exposed to the posts of far-right groups like Britain First, is emphasized and it is reported that an e-mail was sent to Osborne containing the warning that an “Islamic nation within a nation” started to emerge in the UK, which is highly evocative of The Great Replacement theory, and this time the focus of the news was shifted to the social media and online platforms. The news report, stating that

Osborne left a letter in his pickup truck referring to the attacks in London and Manchester in 2017, does not centralize upon the real incident and justifies the attack by Osborne as a retaliation against Muslims both by talking about the van in an extremely neutral way as if it had not been the vehicle that Osborne drove into a crowd of Muslims and by shifting the focus to the terrorist attacks carried out by the alleged Muslim perpetrators. To make the situation even worse, questioning in the following paragraphs how Osborne could turn from “a troubled, angry, and unpredictably violent alcoholic” to a murderer in such a short time, the news report refers to the man named Brusthom Ziamani, who was “arrested carrying a hammer, knife, and Islamic flag” in order to copycat the murder of the soldier Fusilier Lee Rigby after falling under the influence of the preacher Anjem Choudary to explain Osborne’s rapid transformation. As a result, by emphasizing the attacks carried out by terrorists who are described as Muslims, an Islamophobic discourse is created.

In order to reinforce the news rhetoric, in addition to two videos, displaying the moments right before Osborne drove the van into the crowd and showing Osborne at a pub two days before the terrorist attack, three photos are included in the news discourse revealing the van, showing Osborne hiring the van, and finally an obviously cropped photo with Osborne in focus. The most striking photo among these is the one which is placed right after the headline and depicts Osborne, though it is cropped, possibly with his friends or family due to the fact that the photo draws the attention to Osborne and serves to the purpose of distancing Osborne from the terrorist identity and reflecting him as a normal being in the flow of life.

Though the news report contains comments by Osborne’s partner, there were neither remarks nor photographs of eyewitnesses, Makram Ali’s family and friends, and the survivors of the attack, which is quite meaningful. While the terrorist is referred to as only by his name and “the killer” throughout the discourse, the terrorist incident is labeled only as “the attacks”, as a result of which the fact that the incident was an Islamophobia-motivated terrorist attack, and that Darren Osborne was an anti-Islamic terrorist is omitted from the narrative deliberately.

Newsweek, an American news magazine that publishes weekly and has wide readership, reported the terrorist attack with the headline “London Vehicle Collision Near Mosque: 1 Arrest, Multiple Casualties”. One of the significant points to touch upon in the

headline is that with the word choice “vehicle collision”, the terrorist incident is conveyed as if it had been a traffic accident and Osborne is portrayed as though he had lost the control of the van, as a result of which, it is implied that he is not responsible for what happened. Though it is stated in the headline that the incident took place near the mosque, the fact that it specifically targeted the Muslim community is not included in the news discourse.

In the first paragraph of the news, which does not have a lead, it is reported that one person died and eight people were injured following the collision of a pickup truck with pedestrians in an area with a dense Muslim population in London. In the sentence where the perpetrator is not actively positioned as the subject of the incident, no background information is given related with the attack and the deceased and the injured are portrayed as if they had not been subjected to an Islamophobic hate crime but had had a car accident. In the next sentence, the terrorist attack is again simply described as a “collision” and it is reported that the police defined the collision as “a major incident”. Information given by London’s Metropolitan Police reflecting the consequences of the incident that one person was arrested, one person died at the crime scene, and eight people were taken to three different hospitals in London is included in the news discourse. However, the fact that the victims were Muslims is not mentioned. In addition to the information that the police did not give the name of the van driver, it is remarked that he was forty-eight years old was detained by the public until the police arrived at the scene and was taken to the hospital where he would undergo a mental health test. The fact that Osborne is not called a terrorist, anti-Islamic, or attacker and is instead represented only as a van driver is quite telling considering the ideology adopted in the news discourse. Further to that, just as in the previous news that has been analyzed, the concept of mental health is emphasized and thereby with the implication that Osborne might have psychological problems, his guilt is legitimized.

The information that the incident took place near the Finsbury Park mosque and Muslim Welfare House is conveyed through the comments of the Muslim Council of Britain. The tweet, “We have been informed that a van has run over worshippers as they left #FinsburyPark Mosque.” which was posted by the Council following the attack is quoted in the news report. However, it is stated in the following sentence that the Council updated its tweet by reporting that the attack occurred far from the Finsbury Park mosque.

When the official Twitter account of the Muslim Council of Britain is examined, it can be observed that the tweet quoted in the news report was posted at 3:18 a.m. on the day of the attack:



Figure 4.2: The Tweet Posted by The Muslim Council of Britain in the Heat of The Finsbury Park Mosque Terrorist Attack ³⁹

However, looking at the update tweet posted by the Council at 4:59 a.m. again on the day of the incident, it can be seen that unlike what is reported in the news report, that the Council stated that the attack took place at a point far from the mosque, the Council actually reported that the attack happened outside of the Muslim Welfare House which is close to the Finsbury Park mosque, and this reveals both the inconsistency and disinformation in the news discourse. More significantly, it would not be wrong to claim that by expressing that the incident took place in a place far from the mosque, the news report tried to avoid portraying Muslims as victims and to conceal the Islamophobic nature of the attack. The information that the incident was based on Islamophobia targeting the Muslim worshippers is not delivered by the news report directly, but through the statements of Harun Khan, the Council's secretary general.



Figure 4.3: The Update Tweet Posted by The Council on the Day of The Finsbury Park Mosque Terrorist

³⁹ <https://twitter.com/MuslimCouncil/status/876595067808567298>. Accessed 25 January 2022.

In the following parts of the news, the incident is once again characterized as a “vehicle collision” and it is stated that a few hours before the attack, the Finsbury Park mosque shared a post on its Facebook page referring to the killing of the politician Jo Cox and urging the communities to stand up against discrimination and racism. At the end of the news report, it is remarked that the real motive of the incident is still unknown, and the focus of the news discourse is shifted away from the Islamophobic terrorist incident to the other terrorist attacks carried out against non-Muslims in London and Manchester.

Along with the comments of the police, which serve to reinforce the news rhetoric in the news discourse, statements made by the Muslim Council of Britain and Harun Khan are also included. However, no comments of the survivors of the attack and the victims’ family and friends are given in the news report and by that way, the Muslim identity is erased from the discourse.

While the news report does not contain any video related with the incident, a photograph of the police officers at the focal point is placed right after the headline. It can be observed that the photograph does not evoke any understanding of the location of the attack, its background, consequences, victims, eyewitnesses, and the perpetrator, presenting a neutral image of several policemen that the audience can associate with any event.

Even though the incidents occurred in London and Manchester targeting non-Muslims are referred to as “attacks” several times, this Islamophobic hate crime is not defined as an attack, not even once, let alone a terrorist incident. Instead, it is portrayed as “the incident”, “the collision”, “the vehicle collision” and “van collision”. When it comes to Darren Osborne, whose name is not released, he is labeled as “the driver of the van”, “the person”, “a 48-year-old man”, and “the driver”, which goes hand in hand with the protectionist discourse of the previously analyzed news report.

The English newspaper The Times used the headline “Jobless ‘lone wolf’ Darren Osborne held over attack on Finsbury Park mosque” in the news it published one day after the incident. When the headline is analyzed, it can be seen that Osborne is represented as both unemployed and lone wolf referring to “a person who acts on his or her own without orders from- or even connections to- an organization” (Burton and

⁴⁰ <https://twitter.com/MuslimCouncil/status/876620413274656768>. Accessed 25 January 2022.

Stewart, 2008). As a result, the reasons lying behind the attack are hinted in a way, and by emphasizing that Osborne does not have any sense of belonging to any group or organization, the crime committed by him is personalized. In the headline, the incident is portrayed as an attack and neither the Muslim victims of the attack nor the Islamophobic background of it are mentioned.

Looking at the lead of the news, the reason for the attack carried out by Osborne is attributed to his mental health issues, as in the case of previously analyzed news reports. What is more, by reporting that this information is taken from his family, the credibility of the statement that Osborne had mental problems is enhanced. Subsequently, Osborne is situated as a family member by being described as a father of four and thereby the severity of the attack is mitigated.

In the initial paragraph of the news report, despite being proven guilty, Osborne is defined as a “suspected terrorist” and the information that he ran over the Muslims is conveyed with an active sentence structure. Osborne is reidentified as a lone wolf and the impression that Osborne was psychologically unwell is reinforced by the information that he had recently broken up with his partner and was kicked out of the bar the day before the attack for his ill-mannered behavior.

Remarked in the headline and the lead, the information that Osborne is unemployed and has four children is also reiterated in the following paragraph and it is stated that the reason for his being dismissed from the pub is that he allegedly abused his neighbor’s child racially. However, in the following sentence, through his family’s comment that Osborne had mental health problems and he was not racist, Osborne is humanized, and the abuse is legitimized.

The news report conveying that the pickup truck used in the attack was rented from a place close to Osborne’s house with the passive sentence structure does not reflect Osborne as the active agent of the attack. Furthermore, the information that the Finsbury Park mosque was notorious at one time for its ties to jihadists is included in the news discourse, as a result of which the impression that mosques are dangerous places is given, the concept of jihad, falsely constructed and perpetuated by the Orientalist and Islamophobic mentality that Muslims fight against the West by following the doctrine of Jihad in Islam, is redeployed, and it is implied that the Muslims who were the victims of the attack deserved it and so the attack is legitimated.

In the following paragraph, Osborne's name is prefixed with the title of respect Mr., implying that he carried out a highly respectable job. By giving the information that Osborne was living in a tent, it is aimed to arouse empathy. Further to that, though the fact that he drove the van towards the worshippers is given with the active sentence structure, with the word "allegedly" added to the beginning of the sentence, the seriousness of the crime is mitigated. The statement of an eyewitness named Abdul Rahman given to the BBC articulating that the attacker shouted that he wanted to "kill all Muslims." is included in the news discourse. It is stated in the following paragraph that Osborne was detained by the crowd present at the crime scene, and an imam intervened and told them that Osborne should be handed over to the police.

By stating that Osborne was the first so-called right-wing terrorist to apply the Islamic State's "vehicle-ramming methods", as in the London Bridge attack, the news report presents the word Islam in the context of Islamic State, which does practice inhumane attacks that have nothing to do with Islam, and perpetuates the Islamophobic mentality that conflates Islam with terrorism. The information that the 51-year-old Makram Ali died after the incident is given again without citing Osborne as the perpetrator of the attack. What is more, it is remarked that Makram Ali "was already receiving first aid after slipping outside the Muslim Welfare House" and it is stated with a dramatic narrative structure that he died in his daughter's arms. Though the news rhetoric is reinforced through the comment of Ali's daughter that "her father was conscious when the van 'ran over his legs'", with the information given before that Ali slipped and fell, it is implied that his death could not only be attributed to the terrorist attack.

In the following part of the news discourse, Osborne is re-identified as a lone wolf and it is stated that he is not thought to have been on the police and security radars which is an implication of the fact that the attack is not framed as a terrorist incident. In addition, it is reported that Osborne was arrested on charges of "attempted murder" and "terrorism including murder" and not surprisingly, the attack is trivialized by employing terms that do not reveal the explicit nature of the incident.

Instead of being directly conveyed by the news report, the fact that the incident is an Islamophobic hate crime targeting Muslim worshippers is given through the comments of Theresa May and Cressida Dick, the Metropolitan Police commissioner. In the news,

it is stated that the incident occurred after the London Bridge attack carried out by “three Islamist fanatics” and Manchester Arena bomb attack, and through this discourse, the West’s collective conscious that deems Islam synonymous with terrorism has resurfaced and the terrorist attack performed by Osborne, whose Christian identity is not mentioned even for once, is reflected as a revenge and so legitimized.

In the penultimate paragraph of the news, it is reported that the supporters of ISIS are using this attack to inflame hatred against the West, and by quoting a post that they shared on a Telegram channel called Ummah News inviting Muslims to gather themselves together and warning that a war has just begun, which is totally incompatible with the teachings of Islam, Islam is portrayed as a religion fueled by hatred and the already fragile relationship between Islam and the West has been made worse.

When the final paragraph is analyzed, it can be viewed that Osborne is again referred to as Mr., and the information is given that the imam of the Islamic center named Mohammed Mahmoud was acclaimed as a hero after he prevented the crowd from wailing on Osborne. Though it may appear that an imam as an Islamic figure is praised in the news discourse, the reason why he was hailed as a hero is meaningfully the fact that he saved Osborne from being terribly beaten.

Along with a video featuring the community gathering together in the aftermath of the attack, two photos; one of which shows Osborne with his family/friends, also adopted by the BBC, and the other displays how the attack unfolded through a map, which is helpful for the audience to visualize. In the image focalizing on Osborne, he is supposedly portrayed with his friends or family members, which shifts the focus to his role in the society, and this serves to the purpose of distancing him from his terrorist identity.

Throughout the news discourse, Osborne is defined as “lone-wolf”, “jobless”, “father of four”, “the suspected terrorist”, “Mr. Osborne”, “the driver”, “the attacker”, and “the unemployed father of four”. The terrorist incident is named “the attack” and “the van rampage” without truthfully reflecting the nature of the attack.

The American news aggregator website The Huffington Post which changed its name after 2017 as HuffPost used the headline “Who Is Darren Osborne? Here’s What We Know About Finsbury Park Terror Attack Suspect” in the news it published on the day of the incident. When the headline is analyzed, it can be seen that even though the

terrorist is named and the incident is portrayed as a terrorist attack, Osborne is described as a suspect. Further to that, the word mosque is omitted from the discourse, and it is reported with a neutral and secular tone that the incident took place in the Finsbury Park, as a result of which the Islamophobic motivation of the attack is ignored. With the phrase “we” employed in the headline, where it is made obvious that the news content will focalize on Osborne, an attempt is made to establish a rapport with the audience.

In the lead of the news report composed of one sentence, the age of Osborne, where he lived, and that he has four children are given. As is obvious, with no information provided about the attack and its Muslim victims, the news discourse is centered around the private life of Osborne representing him as a normal individual living within a community and alleviating the seriousness of the attack that he carried out.

In the first paragraph of the news report, it is stated that the incident is a mosque attack, but this time it is not defined as a terrorist event. The discourse in the lead that describes Osborne as a father and a man living in Cardiff is reiterated here as well and he is identified as a suspect though he is pleaded guilty.

It is reported in an active but a short sentence that the reason for Osborne’s arrest is that he drove a white pickup truck into the Muslims leaving the mosque. The news report states that according to many media outlets, Osborne was living in a seaside town called Weston-Super-Mare before moving to Cardiff and as claimed by the unconfirmed sources, he was kicked out of the house by his partner named Sarah Andrews and therefore was living in a tent. The employment of such a discourse leads to the dramatization of the life of Osborne and the implication that the attack took place because he was going through hard times.

The news rhetoric is reinforced and dramatized by the comments of Osborne’s mother, Christine stating that she confirmed that the perpetrator was her son and “This is every mother’s worst nightmare.” Along with the comment by the witnesses at the crime scene that Osborne shouted that he wanted to kill all Muslims, the information that he drove towards the people on the sidewalk is given in an active sentence structure. However, the Muslim identity of the victims is not mentioned, and the casualty toll is presented without addressing Osborne as the perpetrator.

It is stated that Osborne was arrested after the terrorist attack referred to as “collision”, and by reporting that the reason for his arrest was “suspicion of attempted

murder” and “alleged terror offences”, the crime committed by him is mitigated. Through the comment of the Security minister Ben Wallace that Osborne did not have a record in the authorities related to extremism, the incident is distracted from the terrorism frame and Osborne is portrayed as a man who normally does not display improper thoughts and actions. Expressing that Osborne is believed to have carried out the attack alone, it is implied that he is a lone-wolf attacker and has no affiliation with any terrorist groups, as a result of which his crime is individualized.

According to the information stated to have been received from The Guardian, it is reported that Osborne was born in Singapore and his family members live in Weston, through which the focal point of the news discourse is shifted away from the terrorist attack to Osborne’s private life. Through the comment of Osborne’s 52-year-old neighbor named Dave Ashford, reported from The Guardian again, who expresses his bewilderment upon learning that it was Osborne who performed the attack, the impression is given that Osborne is actually a normal person and for those who know him, his attack comes as a great shock. The comment of 48-year-old Pauline Tibbs that she was shocked and though she never spoke to Osborne, he appeared as a relatively normal person, perpetuates the news rhetoric that humanizes and normalizes Osborne. In another neighbor’s comment that is stated to be given to Daily Mail, the information that Osborne broke up with his partner six months ago, but he has been coming home to take care of the children, that he has a lot of vehicles and that is why he may be a mechanic is provided, and by that way, Osborne is shown as a good father figure, and it is implied that his psychological problems are behind the attack.

The post shared by the Labour MP Jo Stevens on her Twitter page is included in the news discourse in the form of a photo. When the post is analyzed, the most striking thing is that Osborne is described as “the alleged perpetrator” and casualty numbers are conveyed in the passive sentence structure.

In the following paragraph, another of Osborne’s neighbors named Khadijeh Sherizi’s comment that she was shocked upon seeing him on the news, and that he was singing with his children in their kitchen as recently as yesterday is provided in the news report intensifying the caring father image as the aforementioned comments do. By informing that Osborne is not related to the South Wales National Front, a far-right group, which is stated to be active where he rented the van, Osborne’s lone-wolf image is

perpetuated.

With the remark of Osborne's 50-year-old sister that she is so sorry for what happened, that Osborne is not a political man, and he would not even know the name of the Prime Minister, Osborne is portrayed as an idiot, and he is tried to be shown as innocent by the implication that it was almost impossible for a man like him to carry out such an attack. Despite the comment by Cressida Dick at the end of the news report that this terrorist attack was clearly aimed at Muslim worshippers, and they treat the incident as a terrorist attack, it can be said that the news report fails to provide a comprehensive background and consequence knowledge of the incident.

Four photographs displaying Osborne after the attack, a police officer standing in front of a house stated to be situated in Cardiff, Jo Stevens' Twitter post, and police cars behind a house in Cardiff, are included in the news discourse. Looking at the photo taken after the incident with Osborne in focus, it can be clearly stated that it reinforces his troubled and psychopathic image, and this, giving the impression that psychological and mental health problems underlie the incident, justifies both Osborne and the terrorist attack he committed.

4.2.5. Conclusion

Looking at the ways in which the Christchurch terrorist attack of 2019 and the Finsbury Park mosque terrorist attack of 2017 are covered in the Anglo-American news media, namely Daily Mirror, Daily Mail, The Guardian, BBC, The Times, Fox News, Newsweek, and HuffPost, it can be observed that they follow the same pattern. In almost none of the analyzed news reports, the attacks are directly included in the scope of the terrorism. Instead, they are referred to with words that downplay the severity of the attacks as mosque rampage, mass murder, mosque shooting, and attacks. When it comes to the perpetrators of the attacks, they are mostly called the gunman, lone-wolf, attacker, suspect, and alleged terrorist, and the impression is created that they have psychological and mental health problems, and thus, the crime they committed is whitewashed. It is observed that both in the headlines and leads of the eight news analyzed above, expressions reflecting the Islamophobic background of the attacks are mostly avoided. Further to that, this discourse is also adopted in the overall news reports and the focus is shifted from the anti-Islamic motives behind the attacks and their Muslim victims.

Looking at the verbal reactions, which have an undeniable role in reinforcing the news rhetoric, it is seen that the comments of the eyewitnesses, the families and relatives of the victims, and the Muslims who survived the attacks are not given an adequate coverage. However, the remarks of the terrorists' families, relatives, colleagues, and neighbors are given broad coverage, which leads the perpetrators to be portrayed as members of a family and community, and to be humanized. As also underscored by Housseem Ben Lazreg in the online news article he penned down in the aftermath of the devastating Christchurch mosque terrorist attack: "When white individuals commit horrendous acts, it seems news outlets portray them as people deserving of humanity. They are portrayed with complicated personalities: the little 'angel' who went astray even after being revealed as a vicious and violent racist" (Lazreg, 2019). When the visuals, which are another effective tool in reinforcing the news rhetoric, are examined, it can be seen that instead of showing the victims or the seriousness of the attacks, they represent Tarrant and Osborne as either a baby and teenager or an ordinary person belonging to a community. When analyzed syntactically, it can be viewed that the analyzed news, most of the time, adopt passive sentence structures while informing about the casualties and does not address the perpetrators as the active agents of the terrorist attacks. All these patterns in the news reports reveal a lot about the dynamics between knowledge and power, and the anti-Islamic ideology adopted and reproduced by the Anglo-American news media outlets.

Key Discursive Features of Case Study One:

- 1) Inadequate news reporting of verbal reactions of the eyewitnesses, Muslim survivors of the attacks, their families, and friends versus wide coverage devoted to Tarrant's and Osborne's families, friends, and neighbors' comments justifying their actions
- 2) Neutral word choice omitting any "T" words to describe both the incidents and perpetrators
- 3) Overemphasis on the mental/psychological problems of the terrorists
- 4) Visuals showing the terrorists in a humanizing manner as a baby, teenager, or an ordinary person
- 5) Passive voice employed to inform about the attacks and the casualties

4.3. Case Study Two: The Terrorist Attacks Targeting Non-Muslim Population And Whose Perpetrators Are Thought To Have An Affiliation With Islam

In this part of the thesis, the discourse adopted by the Anglo-American news media to cover the two terrorist attacks, namely the Reading stabbings of 2020 and San Bernardino terrorist attack of 2015, targeting non-Muslims will be examined. To reveal that the way the terrorist attacks targeting non-Muslims are portrayed in the Anglo-American news media varies depending on whether the perpetrator is related to Islam or not, the terrorist incidents carried out against non-Muslims will be divided into two parts; the ones whose perpetrators are thought to be Muslims, and the others committed by non-Muslim attackers. As in the previous part focalizing on the terrorist incidents whose targets were Muslims, the background knowledge of the attacks will be given first, and then the ways in which they are covered will be analyzed using van Dijk's CDA method.

4.3.1 Reading Terrorist Attack

On 20 June 2020, the 25-year-old terrorist named Khairi Saadallah attacked the groups of people relaxing in the Forbury Gardens park situated in the town of Reading, the United Kingdom and killed three people, James Furlong, David Wails, and Joe Ritchie-Bennett, while severely injuring Stephen Young, Patrick Edwards, and Nishit Nisudan. Reported to be Libyan-born, Saadallah was detained shortly after the fatal knife attack and arrested for the charges of both murder and attempted murder.⁴¹ Thought to have ties with the religion of Islam, the terrorist is reported to have shouted "Allahu Akhbar" while stabbing the people to death, which at the end of the day reveals the Islamophobic discourse which "has conflated the phrase with acts of violence and assigned an ordinary Islamic phrase a negative connotation" (Hanif, 2020, p. 90).

In this part of the study, how the Anglo-American news media, specifically The Telegraph, Sky News, Daily Mirror, and New York Post covered this terrorist attack, whose perpetrator is thought to be related with Islam, the discourse they employed, and its ideological implications will be investigated comprehensively.

⁴¹ <https://www.trtworld.com/europe/suspect-charged-with-murder-of-three-in-june-20-uk-stabbing-37665>. Accessed 30 January 2022.

4.3.2. Critical Discourse Analysis of Anglo-American Newspapers Regarding Their Coverage of Reading Stabbings

Table 4.3: Reading Terrorist Attack and Prominent Discursive Features Employed by the Anglo-American News Media to Cover It

Newspaper	Headline	Lead	Date	Striking Photo
New York Post	“Terrorist gets life in prison for fatally stabbing three in UK park”	X	12 January 2021	
Daily Mirror	“Terrorist ‘stabbed 3 people to death and injured 3 more in park in less than a minute’”	“Khairi Saadallah, 26, shouted ‘Allahu Akhbar’ as he stabbed three people to death and tried to kill another three in Reading in a carefully planned violent attack”	5 January 2021	
The Telegraph	“Reading terror attacker handed whole life sentence as judge dismisses mental illness defence”	“Khairi Saadallah, 26, shouted ‘Allahu akhbar’ as he stabbed James Furlong, 36, Dr David Wails, 49, and Joseph Ritchie-Bennett, 39, in June”	11 January 2021	
Sky News	“Khairi Saadallah: Terrorist who murdered three in 'brutal' Reading attack gets whole life sentence”	“Khairi Saadallah 'executed' each man with a single knife blow to the back of the head in less than 30 seconds, a court heard.”	11 January 2021	

New York Post used the headline “Terrorist gets life in prison for fatally stabbing three in UK park” in the news it published seven months⁴² after the incident. When the headline is elaborated on, it can be seen that the perpetrator of the attack is portrayed as a “terrorist”. Additionally, the act of stabbing is given with the active sentence structure and Saadallah is positioned as the active agent of the event.

In the first paragraph of the news, which does not have a lead, the discourse constructed in the headline is redeployed and Saadallah is labeled as a terrorist and the information that he fatally stabbed three friends who were having a picnic is conveyed with an active sentence structure. With the statement that Saadallah is sentenced to life imprisonment, the consequence knowledge of the event is included in the news discourse. In the second paragraph, where Saadallah’s name is revealed, it is reported according to the information stated to be obtained from BBC that the terrorist was known to the British intelligence services, but despite this, he was not deported. Through this discourse, it is provided that Saadallah is a refugee, and it is implied that the attack took place because of the negligence of the British authorities. What is more, the seriousness of the incident is reflected through the statement that following the attack, which is described as “ruthless and brutal”, Saadallah was sentenced to life imprisonment, which is stated to be an uncommon punishment.

In the following paragraph, it is included in the news report that Saadallah shouted “Allahu akbar”, meaning “God is great” in Arabic, as he murdered James Furlong, David Wails, and Joseph Ritchie-Bennett. When this paragraph is analyzed, several points stand out. One of them is that the terrorist attack is given with a powerful word like “slaughter” and the active sentence structure, leading Saadallah to be portrayed as the perpetrator of the incident. Another point is that the information that one of the victims, Joseph Ritchie-Bennett, is American, is given in red font, which draws the attention to him. Lastly and perhaps most significantly, the information that the terrorist shouted “Allahu akbar” while carrying out the attack implies that the incident is related to Islam and serves both the Orientalist and Islamophobic mentality which constructs and perpetuates the myth that

⁴²There is a marked difference between the discourse of the news published by the Anglo-American newspapers in the heat of this very terrorist attack and that of the news reports published seven months after the incident, (while in the former the attack is not treated as a case of terrorism, the latter names the incident as a terrorist attack and the perpetrator as jihadist, terrorist, and a Muslim extremist), which is quite telling about both the manipulative and selective power of the Anglo-American news media outlets whose coverage of the same event varies from period to period.

Islam is essentially a religion favoring terrorism.

In the following paragraph, while it is reported with the passive sentence structure that three people were injured, the information that the terrorist used an 8-inch knife to perform the attack, which is stated to have not lasted even a minute, is given with the active sentence structure. The news rhetoric reflecting the brutality of the terrorist attack is reinforced through the comments of a witness stating that Saadallah looked as if he had dipped his hands in a large bucket of red paint, and of the Judge Nigel Sweeney that the attack happened so quickly that the victims did not even have the time to react.

Through Sweeney's remark that Saadallah put the knowledge he learned while fighting for the Islamist militia organization of Libya named Ansar Al-Sharia into practice in the knife attack and that his aim was to kill, both the terrorist and the terrorist attack are associated with Islam, and Islam is portrayed both as the underlying cause of the attack and as a religion that supports violence and murder of innocent people. The severity of the attack is emphasized once more with the comment of the Judge describing the incident as "a rare and exceptional case" and therefore Saadallah should be sentenced to life imprisonment.

It is reported that the terrorist was charged with murder and attempted murder, however, he denied having performed the attack on the grounds of terrorism. It is stated in the following sentence that Saadallah blamed mental health, but this justification was not accepted by the Judge, and the focus of the news report is shifted to Islam again with the Judge's remark that the terrorist was aiming something "political, religious or ideological" with the attack. With the statement that the mental health of the terrorist did not play a role in the attack, it is implied that Saadallah carried out the attack intentionally while he was in his right mind.

With the statement that Saadallah downloaded the photo of the ISIS flag to his phone before the attack, it is implied that the terrorist attack was carried out because of ISIS, which has nothing to do with the religion of Islam. Furthermore, Islam is portrayed as the motivation of the attack and by that way the Western world's Islamophobic collective conscious is perpetuated. This reductionist and prejudiced understanding of Islam also resurfaces in the comment of Kath Barnes, the Detective Chief Superintendent, that Saadallah was "a committed jihadist" and he intended to kill as many people as possible, which gives a false impression that jihad in Islam is a teaching that condones

killing innocent people.

In the following paragraph, through the BBC's report that Saadallah came to England in 2012, he was known by MI5, admitted that he was affiliated with the banned Libyan group, and he had plans to go to Syria, it is emphasized that MI5 did not do its part, that Saadallah was not a homegrown and lone wolf terrorist, and therefore the attack was a large-scale terrorist incident. The image of Saadallah as a problematic person is reinforced through the statement that he had been imprisoned before, had made death threats, and had a criminal record for attacking the police, and by that way it is reiterated that the British authorities could not fulfill their duties properly.

With the comment of his friend named Anthony Bloomfield, who was in the same prison at the time, that Saadallah talked about jihad before the attack and stated that he "wanted to rape Britain", the concept of jihad in Islam is completely misrepresented and as a result, the anti-Islamic discourse of the news is solidified. At the end of the news report, the role of the British authorities in the attack is once again questioned with the statement that Saadallah, who had such a troubled past and personality, was not deported and was allowed to live in England legally.

Functioning to reinforce the news rhetoric, a video in which Kath Barnes gives her comments on the terrorist attack and two photos showing Saadallah and the forensic officers examining the crime scene are included in the news discourse. Elaborating on the photo of Saadallah, it can be seen that it is in the form of a mug shot, and this close up strengthens the terrorist profile of Saadallah. It is also significant that the news report does not include any images of the victims, their families, or friends, Saadallah's family members, and the eyewitnesses of the terrorist attack.

Considering the comments, which play a significant role in the news rhetoric, while the comments of the Judge, Detective, a fellow inmate, and witnesses that consolidate the severity of the attack and the terrorist profile of Saadallah are included, no comments by Saadallah's family, relatives, friends, or neighbors are given a coverage in the news discourse unlike the news in the previous category. And this leads him to be isolated from his identity as a family member, a friend, or a neighbor, and to be positioned as a mere terrorist, which highly resonates with what Powell has articulated: "Terrorists who are Muslim are not portrayed as being a member of a family, are not personalized but rather, are part of a larger, evil threat" (Powell, 2011, p. 108).

When the word choice in the news report is examined, it can be seen that Saadallah is referred to as a “terrorist”, “the killer”, and “a committed jihadist”. When it comes to the incident, it is portrayed as “a ruthless and brutal attack”, “the attack”, “terror attack”, and “the slaughter”, all of which help to construct a discourse treating the perpetrator directly as a terrorist and the incident as a terrorist attack as it should be.

Daily Mirror, in the news it published seven months after the incident, reported the terrorist attack with the headline “Terrorist 'stabbed 3 people to death and injured 3 more in park in less than a minute’”. When the headline is analyzed, it is observed that Saadallah is defined as a terrorist, and the actions of wounding and killing are given with the active sentence structure through which Saadallah is positioned as the perpetrator of the attack. Additionally, by stating how quickly the attack took place, the severity of the incident is emphasized.

In the lead, where the name of the terrorist is mentioned, it is provided again with the active sentence structure that Saadallah murdered three people and attempted to murder three more in the attack he meticulously organized. The information that Saadallah, stated to be at 26 years old, shouted “Allahu Akhbar” while carrying out the attack is embedded in the lead of the news report which is one of the most significant elements of the macrostructure and offers key points of the news to the audience, and by that way the focus is drawn to Islam, and it is implied as the underlying cause of the terrorist attack.

In the first paragraph of the news report, Saadallah is labeled as a terrorist once again, and described as “ruthlessly efficient”. The information that he killed three people and wounded three more with a knife is given with the active sentence structure, as a result of which Saadallah is portrayed as the active agent of the terrorist attack and the attention is drawn to the innocent victims of the attack. The statement given in the lead that 26-year-old Saadallah shouted “Allahu Akhbar” during the assault is reiterated in the news content, and by this means, the perception that Islam is behind the incident is reinforced, and the reductionist Orientalist and Islamophobic attitude, equating Islam with terrorism, has resurfaced.

In the following paragraph, the consequences of the incident are presented to the audience with the statement that Saadallah was charged with murder and attempted murder and appeared at the criminal court named Old Bailey on Tuesday. By including

the comment of the prosecutor named Alison Morgan, that Saadallah is from Tripoli, Libya, and that he aimed to murder as many people as possible under the banner of “violent jihad”, both the understanding of jihad in Islam is shown as a doctrine that commands violence and murdering innocents, and the perception is constructed that immigrants, specifically the Muslim immigrants, are internally evil and terrorists. It is reported in the news that Saadallah carried out the attack in Forbury Gardens in Reading, where many people were having a good time in a summer evening at a time when the quarantine restrictions in England were eased, and the information that James Furlong, 36, who was a history teacher, David Wails, 49, a scientist, and Joseph Ritchie-Bennett, 39, an American citizen, were stabbed to death and their friends named Stephen Young, Patrick Edwards, and Nishit Nisudan were wounded is given with the passive sentence structure.

In the subsequent paragraph, by the way of Alison Morgan’s remark in the court that Saadallah shouted “Allahu Akhbar” while carrying out the attack, that he used a knife as the crime tool, and killed three people, whose names are mentioned above, very suddenly before they could even react, the suddenness of the incident is emphasized, Saadallah is portrayed as the perpetrator of the attack, and the mentality that associates Islam with terrorism adopted in the previous paragraphs is redeployed. It is stated again through the comments of Morgan that the assailant, identified as the defendant, stabbed, and seriously injured Young, Edwards, and Nisudan as mentioned earlier. Continuing with Morgan’s statements at the court, it is stated in the news discourse that the attack was meticulously organized and committed with determination, and it is emphasized that behind the attack was an extreme ideology that Saadallah believed for a while, that is, the more people he murders, the more committed he would be to the “religious jihad”. It would not be wrong to claim at this point that the concept of jihad in Islam is misrepresented as if it was a teaching that encourages violence, and this misrepresentation, stemming from the Islamophobic mentality, triggers the fear of and hostility towards both the religion of Islam and its followers Muslims.

At the end of the news report, it is stated that Saadallah was an asylum seeker who came to England in 2012 following the civil war in Libya, and by emphasizing Saadallah’s immigrant identity and his relationship with Islam, both immigrants and Muslims are portrayed as people who are dangerous, prone to violence and whom should

be avoided, and this, along with the anti-immigrant and anti-Islamic ideology, reinforces the discourse favoring The Great Replacement theory.

In the news report, which does not contain any verbal reactions from the survivors of the attack, the family and friends of the victims, eyewitnesses, and the family members and friends of Saadallah, unlike the news reports in the previous category, along with a video informing about how the terrorist attack unfolded, a photo showing Saadallah, a drawing depicting the terrorist in court, and finally a photo showing the flowers placed for the victims are included. Looking at the photograph of Saadallah taken from a close distance, it can be seen that, just like the photo used in the previously analyzed news report, it reinforces the criminal, dangerous, and terrorist profile of Saadallah and by that way, it conforms with the discourse of the news report portraying Saadallah as an international terrorist having Libyan origins and affiliations with Islam. What lies behind the continuous mentioning of Saadallah and his being a Libyan immigrant can be best explained through what Faisal Hanif has noted: “The ethnicity of the perpetrator is enough for some and in many cases is the most vital detail for editors and reporters when determining whether the tag of terror should be applied” (2020, p. 147).

The Telegraph used the headline “Reading terror attacker handed whole life sentence as judge dismisses mental illness defence” in the news it published seven months after the incident. When the headline is analyzed, it is seen that Saadallah is described as a “terror attacker” and the consequence of the attack, that is, he was sentenced to life imprisonment, is included in the news discourse. Furthermore, by stating through the judge’s decision that Saadallah did not have a mental health problem, the news report emphasizes that Saadallah was in his right mind while carrying out the attack and thus, portrays him as the perpetrator of the incident.

In the lead, it is included in the news discourse that Saadallah shouted “Allahu akhbar” while performing the attack in which he stabbed Furlong, Wails, and Ritchie-Bennett. The action of stabbing is used in the active sentence structure and Saadallah is shown as the perpetrator of the incident, and the Islamophobic mentality that deems Islam a religion of terror and Muslims as terrorists is reinforced with the information that he shouted “Allahu akhbar”.

In the first paragraph of the news report, Saadallah is defined as a “terror attacker” once again and the severity of the incident is emphasized by providing the information

that he murdered three people in the park with the verb “execute”. Additionally, the consequence information offered in the headline is presented to the audience once more with the statement that Saadallah was sentenced to life imprisonment following the attack defined as a “knife attack” which is described as “swift, ruthless, and brutal”.

In the following sentence, the information that is given in the lead that 26-year-old Saadallah shouted “Allahu akhbar” while performing the attack in which he stabbed three people to death is reiterated and by that way, both the criminal profile of Saadallah is consolidated and the perception that the attack was carried out in the name of Islam is reinforced. In the news report, the information that three people named Stephen Young, Patrick Edwards, and Nishit Nisudan were wounded by Saadallah is given with the passive sentence structure, and with the statement that Saadallah fled in the aftermath of the attack by throwing away the 8-inch knife, which was the crime tool, the details of the incident are elaborated and thus, the graveness of the terrorist attack is emphasized. The discourse that holds Islam responsible for the attack in the previous paragraphs is softened a bit with the comment of a Muslim member of the society that Saadallah had nothing to do with Islam.

In the subsequent paragraph, the information that Saadallah is a Libyan immigrant and he carried out the attack on a summer evening while people were having a good time in the Forbury Gardens at a time when the lockdown restrictions were eased is presented in an active sentence structure. The discourse highlighting Saadallah’s immigrant identity implies that the asylum seekers pose a danger for the Western societies and thus serves for the ideology of the Great Replacement, which can be described as a discriminatory conspiracy theory, as also analyzed in the previous news report.

It is stated that Saadallah was charged with both murder and attempted murder and was sentenced to life imprisonment with the decision announced by Mr Justice Sweeney, who describes the attack as “rare and exceptional”. With the judge’s comment that the victims did nothing but sit in the gardens, they were killed with a single blow of a knife and did not even have time to react to such a sudden and brutal attack, the innocent victims and merciless Saadallah are confronted as two opposite poles and the severity of the terrorist attack is revealed. The statement of the judge that Saadallah, defined as the defendant, planned the attack carefully and using his previous war experiences attacked places where he could kill his victims in a single move is included in the news report.

What is more, with the judge's comment that Saadallah was pursuing "a political, religious, or ideological" goal and shouting: "God is the greatest" and "God accept my jihad" in Arabic, the underlying reason of the attack is shown as Islam and the Islamophobic mentality that views jihad as murdering innocent people resurfaces. At the end of the news report, the information that Saadallah did not have a mental problem while performing the attack is redeployed, and by that way, it is implied that he carried out the terrorist attack deliberately and consciously, as a result of which, the age-old understanding that perceives each and every Muslim as essentially terrorists is perpetuated.

Except for the comments of the judge and a Muslim public member, the news report does not include any verbal reactions from the eyewitnesses, the relatives of the victims, the survivors of the terrorist attack, or family or friends of Saadallah. In the news, in which no video is provided, eleven photos are included to reinforce the news rhetoric. While the three of the photos depict the three victims of the attack, the flowers placed in memory of the victims, and the forensic tents in the crime scene, the remaining eight show Saadallah both before and after the knife attack including his escape and his arrest. The photograph, which is not stated when and where it was taken and is placed right after the lead of the news, portrays Saadallah with a rifle in his hand and therefore, highlights the criminal and terrorist profile of him, unlike the visuals employed in the news reports of Case Study One, and in this sense, accords with the overall discourse of the news report. Sky News reported the terrorist attack with the headline "Khairi Saadallah: Terrorist who murdered three in 'brutal' Reading attack gets whole life sentence". When the headline is closely examined, it is noteworthy that Saadallah is called a terrorist and the information that he killed three people is conveyed with an active sentence structure. With the statement that Saadallah was sentenced to life imprisonment as a result of the attack described as "brutal", the consequence of the incident is provided in the discourse.

In the lead of the news report, while conveying the information that Saadallah killed his victims "with a single knife blow to the back of the head" in a time that does not last even thirty seconds, both the active sentence structure and the verb "execute" which has a strong effect are employed. Additionally, by addressing the details of how the attack took place, the news discourse contributes to the reinforcing the seriousness of the terrorist attack.

In the first paragraph of the news, Saadallah is called a terrorist once again, properly representing who he is, and the information that he killed three people by stabbing in a park in Reading is given with the active sentence structure, and by that way, he is reflected as the perpetrator of the terrorist attack. Emphasizing again that Saadallah was sentenced to life imprisonment, it is stated that the reason for him to carry out the attack is that he thought the coronavirus is the harbinger of the end of the world, which reveals that Saadallah cannot think rationally. By informing that Saadallah killed three people named James Furlong, David Wails, and Joseph Ritchie-Bennett with the active sentence structure as it should be, and that he wounded three others named Stephen Young, Patrick Edwards, and Nishit Nisudan with the passive sentence structure, it is reported that he was accused of both murder and attempted murder.

The news report stating that Saadallah is a Libyan asylum seeker encourages the ideology that perceives immigrants as a threat to the peace and unity of the Western societies and therefore argues that discriminatory measures should be taken against them. The detail mentioned in the lead of the news report that Saadallah executed his victims with a single knife blow to the back of their heads in a relatively short time is also reiterated in the content of the news, and thus, both the terrorist profile of Saadallah is consolidated and the extent of the brutality of the attack is revealed to the audience.

Along with the statement that Saadallah had been released from the prison two weeks before the incident, where he spent seventeen months for fighting and beating an emergency service worker, the comment of the home secretary that the deportation of Saadallah would be for the benefit of the society is included in the news discourse, but it is reported that this did not happen due to some legal obstacles. With the knowledge that Saadallah had been found guilty of several crimes before the terrorist incident and his deportation would have a positive impact on the country's wellbeing, Saadallah's problematic profile is consolidated.

With the comment of Gary Furlong, speaking on behalf of the Furlong family, that there are questions to be answered about how Saadallah was able to perform such an attack, and the verbal reactions of David Wails' brother and Joseph Ritchie-Bennett's brother-in-law that nothing will be the same as before in the aftermath of the terrorist attack, both the attack and its repercussions are presented with a dramatic narrative structure. According to the statements of many eyewitnesses and a Muslim passerby, it is

reported that Saadallah shouted “Allahu Akbar” and “God accept my jihad” in Arabic while carrying out the attack. Furthermore, with the statement that Saadallah, after his arrest, told the police that the people he murdered deserved this and because of his jihad, he would go to heaven, not only the understanding of jihad in Islam is misrepresented, but also Islam is introduced as a religion of terror. The Islamophobic collective conscious regarding Islam as a terror religion is perpetuated with the statement that as a result of the police investigations, the photos of Twin Towers and IS flag, and the links to the YouTube videos of Jihadi John, a well-known executioner, were accessed on the phone of Saadallah.

In the subsequent paragraph, with the statement that Saadallah, in the court, denied that he acted with a religious motive and tried to portray himself as having a mental illness, it is implied that he was in his right mind while performing the attack. In addition to Mr Justice Sweeney’s comment that Saadallah was trained to fight for the Ansar al Sharia, an extremist group in Libya, and that he lied about his ties to this group when he applied for refuge in the UK, it is stated that the knife used in the terrorist attack was chosen carefully by making sure that it has the ability to inflict as much damage as possible, Saadallah is portrayed as part of a grand plan, and it is implied that he was in his right mind to plan such an elaborate attack. Saadallah’s criminal and terrorist profile is reinforced with the statement that he had been convicted of nineteen crimes before, had been sent to prison four times, and had been influenced by the “notorious radical preacher” Omar Brooks, as known as Abu Izzadeen, while in prison.

In addition to the information that Saadallah searched on the internet whether the corona is an indication of the end of the world or not, and looked at photos of people sitting in Forbury Gardens, it is stated that Saadallah called the mental health services and talked about the things under his bed and his thought that he was haunted, thus leading him to be portrayed as obsessive, troubled, and psychotic, which shows incongruity with the discourse of the previous paragraphs reporting that Saadallah pretended to be mentally unstable. By including the statement that the police had gone to Saadallah’s house and remarked that he displayed normal behaviors upon Saadallah’s brother’s concerns before the terrorist attack, the perception that Saadallah is sane is reinforced through the observation of a strong authority like the police.

With the comment of the prosecutor Alison Morgan, who identifies Saadallah as

the defendant, that Saadallah killed three people shouting “Allahu Akbar” before they could even react or defend themselves, Saadallah is portrayed as the cruel and ruthless perpetrator of the terrorist incident and Islam is once again reflected in a way that does not accord with its true nature. Through Morgan’s interpretation that Saadallah carried out the attack with great determination and speed, and he believed that he was following the doctrines of “religious jihad”, the concept of jihad in Islam is conflated with murdering innocent people and the long-standing reductionist Islamophobic mentality is redeployed.

The comments by the witnesses, the relatives of the victims and Saadallah, the judge Mr Justice Sweeney and prosecutor Alison Morgan are included in the news discourse to reinforce the news rhetoric. What is more, five photos depicting the forensic tents in the crime scene, the three victims, two close-ups of Saadallah, and the flowers placed in memory of James Furlong, who was a teacher at the Holt School are embedded within the news report. One of the close-ups of Saadallah, placed right after the lead, depicting him wearing a backwards hat accentuates his facial features and reinforces the emotionless criminal and terrorist profile of him, which goes hand in hand with the constructed discourse of the news report.

4.3.3. San Bernardino Terrorist Attack

On December 2, 2015, around 11.00 a.m., the married couple Syed Rizwan Farook and Tashfeen Malik launched a mass shooting at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, California, where the employees of San Bernardino County Public Health gathered for a training event and a holiday party (Straub et al., 2017, p. 2). Syed Rizwan Farook, as one of the employees, left the meeting early and then came back with his wife armed with semi-automatic weapons and “dark tactical military-style gear” (Brazier et al., 2016, p. 1), and began shooting his co-workers indiscriminately. In the catastrophic mass shooting that lasted about two or three minutes, the terrorists claimed the lives of fourteen people and severely wounded twenty-two, which turns this terrorist attack to the nation’s deadliest mass shooting since the Sandy Hook Elementary School slaughter that took place in 2012⁴³. Fleeing the crime scene after the massacre with an SUV, the

⁴³ <https://www.economist.com/united-states/2015/12/03/americas-deadliest-mass-shooting-since-newtown-claims-14-lives>. Accessed 8 February 2022.

terrorists were chased by the police and were killed in a shootout in the afternoon.

In this part of the study, the discourse employed by the Anglo-American news media to cover the terrorist attack, whose perpetrators are portrayed as the followers of Islam, and the implications of this discourse will be closely examined. Further to that, whether the coverage shows similar patterns with that of Reading terrorist attack regarding the portrayal of the perpetrators, the terrorist incident, and both the visuals and comments included to reinforce the news rhetoric will be investigated.

4.3.4. Critical Discourse Analysis of Anglo-American Newspapers Regarding Their Coverage of San Bernardino Terrorist Attack

Table 4.4: San Bernardino Terrorist Attack and Prominent Discursive Features Employed by the Anglo-American News Media to Cover It

Newspaper	Headline	Lead	Date	Striking Photo
New York Post	“‘He married a terrorist’: Wife led the charge in California massacre”	X	6 December 2015	
The Wall Street Journal	“Tashfeen Malik Studied at Conservative Religious School in Pakistan”	“Woman at center of San Bernardino, Calif., shooting spree took classes on the Quran for about a year”	7 December 2015	
Fox News	“Neighbor to family of San Bernardino terrorist couple purportedly saw but didn’t report ‘suspicious activity’”	X	5 December 2015	X

Daily Mail	“From Westernized daughter of a rich family to burka-wearing jihadi bride: Split from relatives preceded Tashfeen Malik’s transformation into a ‘radicalized’ killer who swore allegiance to ISIS as she murdered 14”	“-ISIS announced on radio that the couple were followers of the terror group -Photos and details about the woman behind the San Bernardino massacre, Tashfeen Malik, 27, shed more light about what happened before shooting -It was revealed she wore a burka and didn't speak to male relatives -Family members in native Pakistan said she used to wear Western dress, but switched to conservative clothing after going to university -Relatives said she also began posting extremist material on Facebook and spoke in Arabic to a mystery caller late at night -Other said family were influential and were known to have extremist links -Investigators say Malik, 27, left a post on a Facebook page using an alias pledging allegiance to ISIS and its leader al-Baghdadi -President Obama insisted today that the US 'will not be terrorized'”	5 December 2015	
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New York Post used the headline “‘He married a terrorist’: Wife led the charge in California massacre” in the news it published four days after the incident. When the headline is elaborated on, it can be seen that Tashfeen Malik is labelled as a terrorist and the statement that Syed Rizwan Farook married to a terrorist is given in quotation marks. The names of the perpetrators are not provided in the headline and in the attack, defined as a massacre, it is reported that Malik, who is described as a wife, took the lead, and by

that way, Farook's role in carrying out the terrorist attack is downplayed.

Tashfeen Malik, whose name is given in the first paragraph of the news which does not have a lead, is identified as the "terrorist housewife" and according to the statements of the eyewitnesses, the information that it was Malik who led the charge in shooting the workers who came together around a Christmas tree is given with the active sentence structure and so, Farook is omitted from the news discourse. With the statement that the attack was inspired by ISIS, the religion of Islam is associated with a terrorist organization that performs deeds that have nothing to do with the true nature of Islam.

The subsequent paragraph also centralizes on Malik, and the information that the bullets from the weapons of Malik, who is defined as "the female jihadist" this time, hit the victims wounding and killing them, and that meanwhile, the Christmas tree tumbled down is presented with a dramatic narrative structure. The discourse, as in the previous paragraph, does not name Farook as one of the perpetrators of the incident, and by defining Malik as "the female jihadist", it both misrepresents the doctrine of jihad in Islam and perpetuates the mentality that equates Islam with terrorism.

In the next paragraph, it is reported according to the information obtained from the Times that Farook, who is included in the news discourse as Malik's husband, appeared to be hesitant to pull the trigger on his colleagues, and this may be either because he was afraid or was looking for specific person to shoot. Farook is portrayed only as Malik's husband as if he did not play an active role in the terrorist attack, he is not defined as a jihadist or a terrorist as Malik is defined, and all the blame for the attack is put on Malik. It is stated by taking the view of the Times into consideration that Farook may have tried to spot Nicholas Thalasinis, who is defined as "a Messianic Jew and ardent Zionist" and with whom Farook had discussed about his Muslim faith, during the course of the attack, and by that way, both the religion of Islam and being a Muslim are reflected in the news discourse with negative connotations. The information that Thalasinis was among the fourteen people murdered and that twenty-one people were injured is given with the passive sentence structure.

It is informed that after the training session, Farook left the building half an hour before the party started and then came with Malik, and while Malik went to the right of the door, Farook was positioned on the left side, and they aimed their weapons at the employees at the party. With the statement that in the aftermath of the terrorist attack,

Farook stepped over the wounded and dead and placed a remote-controlled bomb, which did not explode, on the table where he had been sitting before the attack, the brutality of the terrorists and the severity of the incident are reflected.

It is reported that Malik and Farook, who are stated to have a six-month-old baby, were killed in the shoot-out with the police four hours after the attack, and by that way, both the consequence of the incident is presented to the audience and the terrorists are portrayed as a mother and a father, which emphasizes the unpredictability of the mass shooting. It is also stated that there were antidepressant drugs in the terrorist couple's home, implying that Malik and Farook may not have been in their right minds while performing the attack.

The information that the authorities are suspicious that Malik, who is stated to have praised the leader of ISIS named Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi on Facebook before the terrorist attack, acted as a catalyst in the relationship and she is responsible for the radicalization of Farook and his sympathetic and extremist thoughts regarding jihad is included in the news report. The understanding of Islam and jihad is reflected once again through a terrorist organization that has nothing to do with the religion of Islam, and despite the fact that Farook played an active role in the mass shooting, Malik is reported as if she was the sole perpetrator of the attack. Furthermore, with an official's comment that the radicalization of Farook did not take place in a short time but covered a wide period during which Malik placed her "sick and twisted" views into Farook's mind, Farook is represented as a defenseless child while Malik is portrayed as a femme fatale.

Through a comment by Farook's ex-colleague that he realized a change in Farook's character following his wedding to Malik in 2014 in Saudi Arabia and he thought that "he married a terrorist", Farook is portrayed as an innocent man once again and Saudi Arabia as a breeder of evil. By informing that Farook was born in Illinois and Malik was born and grew up in Pakistan before she moved to Saudi Arabia, the East and West binaries perpetuated by the Orientalist mindset is reconstructed through Illinois versus Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. According to the information given by one of Malik's relatives to the Los Angeles Times, it is stated that after Malik went to the United States, she started to share messages that can be described as "extremist" on Facebook, which made her family uneasy, and as a result of this statement, it is implied that all people from the East bear hostility towards the Western world. Including another comment by the

same relative that Malik was once “a modern girl”, but when she went to college, she internalized Islamic faith and began to advise the women both in her family and her neighborhood to become good Muslims, Islam is shown as the cause of the mass shooting, it is implied that it has a nature incompatible with the modernity, and the deeply rooted Orientalist and Islamophobic categorizations are reiterated.

Through the statement of Farook’s father, describing his son as “very religious”, that his son supported ISIS, al-Baghdadi’s views, and the idea of establishing an Islamic State, and was obsessed with the idea of fighting against Israel, the news discourse focalizes on Islam once again and Islam is projected as a religion that blindfolds people leading them to slaughter innocent people, and by portraying Islam as the grounds for Farook’s radicalization, the Islamophobic mindset is inserted in the news report.

Along with the verbal reactions from the eyewitnesses, authorities, Farook’s ex-colleague, Malik’s relative, and Farook’s father, all of which function to reinforce the news rhetoric, four photos depicting the terrorist couple, the weapons they used in the mass shooting, the SUV with which they fled the crime scene, and the prayer beads and a copy of Qur’an found in the home of terrorists are included in the news report. The photo in which the prayer beads and the Qur’an are placed at the focal point, strengthens the perception that the terrorists have an affiliation with Islam, contributes to the portrayal of Islam as the underlying reason for the terrorist attack, and accords with the prejudiced ideology that conflates Islam with terrorism and Muslims with terrorists.

In the news report published by The Wall Street Journal five days after the terrorist attack, the headline “Tashfeen Malik Studied at Conservative Religious School in Pakistan” was used. When the headline is examined, it can be seen that the content of the news will be about Tashfeen Malik, one of the perpetrators of the mass shooting, and the education she received in Pakistan. Furthermore, the school where Malik studied in Pakistan is described as both “conservative” and “religious”, implying that the religion of Islam as the catalyst for the terrorist incident.

In the lead of the news, the terrorist attack that took place in California is defined as the “shooting spree” and it is reported that Malik, who is described as the woman at the center of this attack, took Qur’an lessons for about a year. The knowledge that Malik took courses on the Qur’an shifts the focus of the news discourse away from the terrorist attack, serves the Islamophobic mentality that equates both Islam and its teachings with

terrorism, and contributes to the misrepresentation of Islam as the main reason for the attack.

In the first paragraph of the news report, the role played by Malik and her husband in the attack described as the “deadly shooting spree” is given with the active sentence structure and the terrorist couple is portrayed as the perpetrators of the incident, a discourse accurately representing the active agents of the attack. With the inclusion of the information that Malik attended a “conservative Islamic religious school” after college which attracts the attention of the educated and wealthy women, Malik’s Islamic education is brought to the fore and it is implied that the religion of Islam, which is more often than not associated with terrorism, is the underlying reason for her to perform one of the deadliest mass shootings in the nation.

The comment of the officials of the school named Al-Huda International that Malik took Qur’an lessons for almost one year until 2014, two months before she moved to America and married an American-Pakistani man called Syed Rizwan Farook, is included in the news discourse, and with that, it is implied that Malik was radicalized before she went to the United States and this change in her occurred as a result of the education she received on Qur’an. What is more, both the religion of Islam and the Qur’an, the holy book of the Muslims, are portrayed with an Islamophobic attitude as if they indoctrinated murdering innocent people. With the comment of some of Malik’s college friends that they did not know about the fact that Malik had been taking courses at Al-Huda, the perception that Malik was after some clandestine activities. Through the comment of the spokeswoman, Farrukh Choudhry, of the school that Malik was a “very loving and very obedient” girl, and no one would have thought that she would do such a thing, the shock of those who knew Malik in the face of the events is reflected and the unpredictability of the situation is emphasized. Though with the inclusion of the statement of the school in the news report that the school cannot be blamed for what one of the students did and that Al-Huda is against “extremism, violence, and acts of terrorism” it is revealed that Islam is a religion that has nothing to do with killing innocent people, in the subsequent paragraph, it is reported that Malik, on the same day she and Farook murdered fourteen people and wounded twenty-one others, shared a message on Facebook declaring her devotion to the Islamic State, and by that way, the name of Islam is associated with a terrorist organization that performs things incompatible with Islam’s nature and

teachings, and the perception that Islam is a religion favoring terrorism is reinforced.

With the comment of the U.S. officials that Malik may have radicalized the U.S. born Farook, Malik, who was born and raised in Pakistan and then moved to Saudi Arabia, and Farook, who was born, grew up, and worked in the U.S. are presented as the two opposite poles, and as advocated by the Orientalist ideology, it is implied that Farook, representing the West symbolizing the development and modernity, came under the influence of Malik, representing the East which symbolizes the backwardness and bigotry, and by that way, Farook's crime is mitigated.

Through the statements of the professors of Malik, who is addressed as "Ms.", that she looked religious even when she started the university in 2007, and was wearing a garment called the niqab, exposing the eyes only, the news discourse centralizes on the style of clothing that has nothing to do with the mass shooting and is not made obligatory in Islam, but preferred by some Muslim women, and the religion of Islam is portrayed both as oppressive and the underlying reason behind the incident perpetuating the Islamophobic mentality.

To reinforce the news rhetoric, along with a video featuring how the attack unfolded and the schools at which Malik had studied, one photograph depicting the terrorist couple and an image showing the weapons used in the mass shooting are included in the news report. The photograph of Malik and Farook in the form of a mugshot, stated to be accessed from the Associated Press and depicting Malik with her hijab and Farook with a blank expression on his face, strengthens the criminal and terrorist Muslim profile of the couple, and contributes to the news discourse constructed around anti-Islamic sentiment.

The headline "From Westernized daughter of a rich family to burka-wearing jihadi bride: Split from relatives preceded Tashfeen Malik's transformation into a 'radicalized' killer who swore allegiance to ISIS as she murdered 14" was used in the news report, which is longer than the previously analyzed news, published by the Daily Mail three days after the incident. When the headline is analyzed, it is seen that she is portrayed as a radicalized murderer who turns from a Westernized daughter of a wealthy family into a jihadist wearing burka, it is reported that she declared her devotion to ISIS, and the information that she killed fourteen people is presented with the active sentence structure. The Orientalist and Islamophobic mindset promoting binary oppositions between the

East, and so the religion of Islam and the West, which is adopted in the previously analyzed news report is reiterated in this headline and it is implied that the burka, a garment preferred by some Muslim women, is incompatible with the Western values, and is a symbol of backwardness, bigotry, and the Islamic jihad which is seen as equal with terrorism. With the implication that being Western means prosperity and a style of dressing that does not oppress women, Islam is portrayed as a religion that both restricts women, favors terrorism with its doctrine of jihad, and the catalyst of the mass shooting. What is more, this same anti-Islamic attitude is redeployed in the following sentence and with the statement that Malik declared her devotion to ISIS, a terrorist organization that has nothing to do with Islam, Islam is equated with terrorism. The information that Malik killed fourteen people is given with the active sentence structure and though she carried out the mass shooting with her husband, she is portrayed as if she was the only perpetrator of the terrorist attack.

It can be seen that the lead of the news report, consisting of eight separate sentences one after the other, supports the Islamophobic discourse constructed in the headline. Along with the statement of the ISIS that Malik and Farook are the supporters of the terrorist organization and Obama's declaration following the terrorist incident that the U.S. "will not be terrorized", the information that Malik wore a burka and did not talk to her male relatives, after she went to university, she abandoned her normally Western style of clothing and started to wear more modest clothes, that she shared "extremist" posts on her Facebook account, talked to an unknown person in Arabic on phone at nights, and announced her allegiance to ISIS leader al-Baghdadi on Facebook are included in the news discourse and by that way, Islam is denigrated and misrepresented as a religion associated with terrorism, the Western style of clothing is valued above the modest dressing, it is implied that being a Muslim paves the way for radicalization, and the mass shooting is cited as an act of terrorism through the statement of a powerful authority like Obama.

The same discourse is reiterated in the news report, and it is reported that Malik was radicalized after her university education, and that she declared her relationship with the terrorist group ISIS. In addition, with the comments of Malik's relatives that she was alienated from her wealthy family living in Saudi Arabia and changed her Western style dressing with more conservative clothes such as burka which covers the whole body,

Malik's Islamic style of dressing is brought to the fore once again and Islam is shown as the underlying cause of the mass shooting. With the inclusion of the comments by Malik's relatives that she started to post "extremist" messages on her Facebook page two years after she started university in 2007 and this situation made her family uneasy, and that she attended religious activities and advised the women around her to become good Muslims, it is implied that Malik had been essentially a good person but radicalized after she started to concern herself with Islam and its teachings.

By including the comment of Dr. Nisar Hussain, who was the professor of Malik at Bahauddin Zakariya University, that Malik was very intelligent, religious but not extremist, did not try to influence her classmates religiously, and wore a veil while coming to the classes, the news report while highlighting Malik's style of dressing, states that she apparently did not have the potential to carry out such a deadly attack. According to other interpretations, it is reported that Malik's family is known to have ties with the "extremist Islam". As a natural consequence of the combination of the words Islam and extremism, the perception that Islam is a belief that essentially poses danger is created and it is implied that her family may have had a share in the transformation of Malik.

It is reported that it is still unknown what might have contributed to the terrorist couple's performing such an attack, but some believe that Malik played a great role in influencing her husband Farook, as a result of which, Farook's role in the mass shooting is mitigated and the full responsibility of the attack is placed on Malik. With the comment of the lawyers of Malik and Farook's families that Malik wore a burka, did not speak to her male relatives and did not show her face, and did not speak appropriate English, Malik is represented as a female figure who is suppressed by the teachings of Islam and by referring to her broken English, it is emphasized that she is an immigrant and by that way, it is implied that a true Westerner would not carry out such a terrorist attack. In addition to the FBI chief's statement that Malik may have radicalized American Farook, though he is not sure, it is reported that Farook was born and grew up in the U.S., and by that way, Farook and Malik, who was born and raised in Pakistan, are presented as opposite poles. What is more, with the implication that Farook, stated to be American, would not have performed such an attack unless there was an external factor triggering him to do so, all the blame is put on Malik.

With the comment of Nizaam Ali, an acquaintance of Farook, depicting Farook

as “a sweet young man” and Malik as a woman who always wore niqab, Malik is portrayed as a monster once again possessing the innocent and defenseless Farook. Further to that, this discourse is reiterated by the comment of a colleague of Farook named Christian Nwadike claiming that Farook “married a terrorist”.

In the investigation carried out in the house of the terrorist couple, it is stated that there were family photos, toys, ammunition boxes along with the Qur’an and some other Islamic books, and thus, the focus of the news discourse is directed back to Islam, and it is reflected as a religion that supports terrorism. With the inclusion of the comment by Chesley, one of the lawyers of the family, stating that the media do not touch upon terrorists’ religious beliefs when a Christian or a Catholic perform such an attack, the double standards practiced by the news media when covering terrorist attacks are revealed.

In order to reinforce the news rhetoric, forty-seven visuals consisting of photos depicting Malik and Farook, the vigils, the weapons used in the mass shooting, al-Baghdadi, the family photos found in the terrorists’ house, Farook’s brother, the SUV with which the terrorist couple fled the scene, Farook’s business card and university ID, the house of the terrorists, Farook’s sister and brother-in-law, the extremist cleric of Pakistan’s Red Mosque, and a sticker on which it is written “Praise be to Allah Who relieved me from the suffering and gave me relief” and videos featuring the vigils, the statements of San Bernardino police, FBI, and Farook’s lawyers, the home of the terrorist couple, Farook’s father, and a survivor of the mass shooting are included in the news report. The anti-Islamic ideology, which is reiterated from the very beginning to the end of the news report, is reinforced with the inclusion of the photograph focalizing on the sticker on which it is written “Praise be to Allah Who relieved me from the suffering and gave me relief”, and Islam is defamed over the terrorists who carried out a terrorist attack which is totally incompatible with the teachings of Islam, and the common perception deeming Islam a religion of terror is strengthened.

Fox News reported the terrorist attack that took place on 2 December 2015 with the headline “Neighbor to family of San Bernardino terrorist couple purportedly saw but didn’t report ‘suspicious activity’”. When the headline is examined, it is seen that Malik and Farook are referred to as the “terrorist couple”, as they should be, and that the news discourse will be based on a neighbor’s statement.

In the first paragraph of the news report which does not have a lead, both the statement that a woman, whose name is not given, realized “suspicious activity” at a house which is associated with one of the terrorists who are portrayed as “Muslim terrorists”, and the questioning about how all the ammo boxes and explosives could have gone unnoticed by the family members are included, and by that way, it is implied that family members may have known about such a deadly attack, and by bringing the words Muslim and terrorist together, the Islamophobic mindset is perpetuated and all Muslims are brought under suspicion due to a terrorist attack that has nothing to do with Islam. With the comment of a man named Aaron Elswick that a neighbor realized a good many packages being transported to the house who is registered to Farook’s mother in a short span of time, it is emphasized once again that the family members were aware of the planning of such a fatal terrorist attack. The information that Farook, with his wife Malik murdered fourteen people and injured many others is given with the active sentence structure, and thus, they are portrayed as the perpetrators of the mass shooting.

It is reported that Malik purportedly entered the U.S. with a “fiancé visa” containing incorrect or fallacious information about her address, and with the statement that Malik was influenced by the Islamic State, the religion of Islam is conflated with a terrorist organization that acts against the nature and teachings of Islam, and Islam is represented as a religion that favors murdering innocent people. The premise that the family of the terrorist couple, at least Farook’s mother, had knowledge about the mass shooting is consolidated with the commentary of by the then Republican candidate Donald Trump:” I think his mother knew. I think anybody who walked into that apartment knew.”

Through the comment of Farook’s mother’s and three siblings’ lawyers describing Malik as a housewife who was reserved just like her husband and who was a rigorous follower of the Islamic tradition, Muslims are portrayed as if they were all the sympathizers of terrorism and Islam is identified as the underlying cause of the terrorist attack. It is stated in the news report that San Bernardino terrorist attack became America’s deadliest mass shooting since the attack that took place in Newtown causing the death of twenty-six children and adults, and by that way, the severity of the attack is revealed.

Noting that questions arose about how Malik was able to enter to the U.S. and the

“vetting processes” for the immigrants who were and are accepted to the country, and that there are concerns that the Middle East terrorists could be easily entering into the country, the news report created a perception as if all terrorists are from the Middle East and all the people from the Middle East are essentially terrorists, and thus constructed an us versus them dichotomy as promoted by both the Orientalist and anti-Islamic ideology. According to the information that is stated to be received from Reuters, it is reported that with the statement made by the Islamic State radio, it is revealed that the San Bernardino attack was carried out by the two followers of the terrorist organization. However, it is also stated that ISIS did not make any statements claiming the responsibility of the attack. As can be seen, the Islamophobic discourse is reiterated as Islam is once again associated with a terrorist group that is in no way compatible with the true nature of it.

By the inclusion of the comment by the maid of the house where Malik lived in Pakistan that Malik’s style of dressing became more conservative during her time in Multan, a Pakistani city where she also studied at university, the news discourse centralizes upon Malik’s modest clothing as in the previously analyzed news report, and it is implied that Islam had influence over Malik and her radicalization.

Along with the comments by Farook’s brothers Nizaam Ali and Raheeman Ali that Farook was a “devout Muslim”, memorized the Qur’an recently, stopped going to the mosque all of a sudden, and they have never witnessed the violent side of him, the comments by Farook’s colleagues that he was introverted and had recently grown his beard, stated to be a reflection of devotedness among Muslims, are included in the news report, and thus, the news discourse focalizes on Islam and Muslims once again and it is implied that Islam and its teachings are behind both Farook’s radicalization and the terrorist mass shooting he performed with his wife.

In the news report, no visuals such as photographs, and videos are employed. The news rhetoric is reinforced with the comments of the family members, friends, and neighbors of Malik and Farook, and with the statements of powerful figures and organizations including FBI, Donald Trump, and the lawyers of the family.

4.3.5. Conclusion

When the news discourse constructed by the Anglo-American news media, specifically New York Post, Daily Mirror, The Telegraph, Sky News, The Wall Street

Journal, Daily Mail, and Fox News, in order to cover the Reading Stabbings of 2020 and San Bernardino terrorist attack of 2015, carried out by the so-called Muslims and targeting non-Muslims, is analyzed, it can be observed that both the stabbings and the mass shooting are mostly referred to as terrorist attacks, as what they truly are. When it comes to the perpetrators, namely Khairi Saadallah, Syed Rizwan Farook and Tashfeen Malik, they are labeled terrorists and terrorist attackers, words that truly indicate who they are. In addition to that, in the news reports, both the religious and ethnic identity of these three terrorists, whose names are mentioned above, are given a wide coverage, they are labeled as Muslim terrorists, jihadists, Islamic State followers, and immigrants, and the information that they shouted Allahu Akhbar⁴⁴ while performing the attack, they preferred to wear conservative clothes such as burka and niqab, they grew beard as a sign of their devotion to Islamic religion, they memorized the Qur'an, and they were educated in Islamic schools is included leading Islam to be reflected as a religion of terror, Muslims all around the world as essentially terrorists, and immigrants as a potential threat to the well-being of the Western society. Further to that, while it is implied that it was their commitment to Islam and its teachings, and their allegiance to the terrorist organization ISIS that led them to carry out such deadly attacks, the mental health issues or family problems are not touched upon in the news reports. As Powell also highlighted in her study in which she scrutinized the reportage of eleven terrorist incidents performed on the U.S. soil between 2001 and 2010: "Non-Muslim perpetrators were framed as mentally ill persons who committed isolated acts of violence, whereas Muslim perpetrators were framed as radical, fanatic, infuriated and belonging to international terrorist organizations" (Elmasry & El-Nawawy, 2020, p. 866). With the inclusion of the verbal reactions and announcements of eyewitnesses and the authoritative figures such as the FBI, the prosecutors, the judges, Barack Obama and Donald Trump, the fact that the attacks are terrorism-related is reinforced. Looking at the visuals embedded within the news reports, both the close-ups and mugshots that consolidate the criminal and terrorist profile of the perpetrators and the photos depicting the copy of the Qur'an and prayer

⁴⁴ The accuracy of the provided and perpetually reiterated information in the news reports that the terrorists shouted Allahu Akhbar while carrying out the attacks is something that cannot be known with certainty. Even if they did so, it is totally unacceptable to put a constant emphasis on this detail and to implicate the entire religion of Islam and its adherents for the brutal attacks performed by a handful of terrorists.

beads found in the home of the terrorists that lead the terrorist attacks to be associated with Islam draw attention. When analyzed syntactically, it is seen that active sentence structure is used in almost all the discourses of the news reports, and by that way, the terrorists are reflected as the active agents of the attacks, as they should be.

Key Discursive Features of Case Study Two:

- 1) Comments and announcements made by both eyewitnesses and authoritative figures consolidating the fact that the attacks are terrorist incidents
- 2) Extensively employed “T” words to define both the attacks and the perpetrators
- 3) No mention of psychological/mental problems suffered by the terrorists
- 4) Visuals in the form of close-ups and mugshots portraying the terrorists and photos showing Muslims’ Holy Book Qur’an and prayer beads
- 5) Active voice used to inform about the attacks and the casualties
- 6) Overemphasis on the terrorists’ affiliations with Islam and their Muslim identity

4.4. Case Study Three: The Terrorist Attacks Targeting Non-Muslim Population And Whose Perpetrators Are Non-Muslims

In this part of the study, the ways in which the Anglo-American news media reported the two terrorist attacks, namely the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting of 2012 and the Las Vegas Strip massacre of 2017, will be analyzed by employing van Dijk’s Critical Discourse Analysis method. As a continuation of the previous section focalizing on the terrorist incidents whose targets are non-Muslims and attackers are thought to be Muslims, this part of the thesis will be dealing with the coverage of the terrorist attacks in which the targets are non-Muslims again, but the perpetrators were non-Muslims. Upon providing the background knowledge of the attacks, how these terrorist events were covered in the Anglo-American news media will be examined with great extent of scope.

4.4.1. Sandy Hook Elementary School Terrorist Attack

On the morning of December 14, 2012, the terrorist named Adam Lanza, who was twenty years old back then, carried out the terrorist attack which went down as the deadliest mass shooting occurred in an elementary school and the second-deadliest mass shooting in the nation’s history since the Virginia Tech massacre of 2007 causing the

death of thirty-two people.⁴⁵ The deadly rampage that took place in Sandy Hook Elementary School situated in Newtown, Connecticut, claimed the lives of twenty-seven people among which there were children, the staff of the school, and Lanza's mother whom he had murdered at home before setting out to launch the shooting spree. Heavily armed, Adam Lanza, having shot a great many people including the principal and the psychologist of the school dead, took his own life in one of the classrooms.

This part of the thesis will centralize upon the discourse employed by the Anglo-American news media to report the mass shooting, whose perpetrator is non-Muslim targeting non-Muslims. Additionally, by conducting a critical discourse analysis focusing on the portrayal of both the perpetrator and the victims, the verbal reactions in the aftermath of the attack, word choices, syntactical features, and the visuals embedded in the news discourse, the editorial choice and its implications in each and every news report will be analyzed in a detailed manner.

4.4.2. Critical Discourse Analysis of Anglo-American Newspapers Regarding Their Coverage of Sandy Hook Elementary School Mass Shooting

Table 4.5: Sandy Hook Elementary School Terrorist Attack and Prominent Discursive Features Employed by the Anglo-American News Media to Cover It

Newspaper	Headline	Lead	Date	Striking Photo
The Guardian	"Adam Lanza: the quiet, friendless boy whom no one knew"	"High school year book had no photograph of Adam Lanza, only the words 'camera shy'"	16 December 2012	X

⁴⁵ <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/gunman-kills-students-and-adults-at-newtown-connecticut-elementary-school>. Accessed 13 February 2022.

Sky News	“Newtown Shooting: Gunman Was Honours Student”	“Family and friends say the gunman was intelligent but remote, as authorities reveal he may have had a personality disorder”	15 December 2012	
Fox News	“Sandy Hook killer Adam Lanza’s turbulent home life with mother revealed”	X	24 October 2017	
The Wall Street Journal	“Dozens killed in Conn. School Shooting”	X	17 December 2012	X

The Guardian used the headline “Adam Lanza: the quiet, friendless boy whom no one knew” in the news it published two days after the mass shooting. When the headline is examined, it would not be far-fetched to claim that it seems as if the news report will focalize on an aggrieved child rather than a terrorist attack. In the headline, which does not contain any piece of information related to the incident, the terrorist Lanza is described as someone who is silent, does not have any friends, and about whom no one is aware of, and thus, he is humanized.

In the lead of the news report, it is stated that in the high school yearbook, there were no photos of Lanza and that he was described only as “camera shy”. The discourse constructed in the headline, which depicts Lanza as lonely, reserved, and quiet, is redeployed in the lead which does not mention the deadly attack committed by Lanza and claimed the lives of a great many people, and by that way, Lanza’s role in the mass shooting is whitewashed.

The information that Lanza went to school situated in Connecticut on Friday and killed twenty children is given with the active sentence structure. It is reported that in the first place, the police announced that the attacker was Ryan Lanza, the brother of Adam Lanza, which led to a chaos for Ryan's part, and that he posted a reproachful message targeting CNN on his Facebook account, as a result of which, the concepts of journalism ethics and disinformation are brought into the forefront. The information that the man who had killed Nancy Lanza and then drove to Sandy Hook Elementary School and killed twenty children and six adults before committing suicide was Adam Lanza is given with the active sentence structure leading him to be portrayed as the perpetrator of the mass shooting.

The statement that the yearbook did not have any photos of Lanza, but only the words "camera shy" provided in the lead is reiterated in the news report and additionally, with the information that Lanza was an honors student, was slim, weird but smart, and appeared as "socially uncomfortable", the perception that Lanza was actually a normal boy is created, and thus, the horrific attack that Lanza performed is covered up. What is more, by providing the comment of Lanza's former classmates that he might have autism and Asperger's syndrome, and the statement that Lanza had no criminal records and some of his classmates had difficulty in remembering anything about Lanza, the terrorist is reflected as someone suffering from health issues, who did not pose any danger, and who was innocuous, and it is implied that he carried out such a deadly attack due to health problems. Along with the comment of Joshua Milas, who graduated from Newtown high school, that Lanza was a happy person most of the time, they would spend time together, and that he was possibly one of the brightest boys he had ever met, it is reported that Lanza was a hardworking, smart but shy person, that he hardly spoke at school, and he did not have a Facebook account. It is stated that Lanza's mother Nancy, and father, Peter, separated in 2006 and divorced three years later, and his father later married someone else, and with the comment of a neighbor, who claimed to have taken care of Lanza when he was a baby, that his parents' divorce had a profound effect on Lanza, the discourse constructed throughout the news report is consolidated and it is implied that the trauma that Lanza went through and his psychological problems are the triggers of the mass shooting and by that way, the shooting spree is tried to be legitimized.

In the news report that does not include any photos, in addition to a video featuring

Richard Novia, the former security director of the school, talking about the mass shooting and depicting Lanza as a child with mental problems, the verbal reactions of Lanza's former classmates describing him with generally neutral and positive remarks are employed. Therefore, it is implied that it is shocking for Lanza to perform the mass shooting and that if he carried out such an inhumane attack, there were legitimate reasons such as his health, mental, and psychological problems. To be more precise, Lanza is portrayed not as a terrorist but as someone who was both neurologically and psychologically traumatized, and the biggest indicator of this is that the "t" word is not used even once throughout the news report.

Sky News reported the mass shooting, which was one of the most horrific acts of terrorism in nation's history, with the headline "Newtown Shooting: Gunman Was Honours Student" one day after the attack. In the headline describing the terrorist attack as "Newtown shooting", the information that the attack actually targeted an elementary school is not given, and the unnamed Lanza is referred to as the "gunman". Moreover, with the inclusion of the knowledge that Lanza was an honors student in the news discourse, Lanza is distanced from the attack he performed and the perception that it was unpredictable for such a prospering student to carry out such an attack is created, as a result of which the terrorist's crime is mitigated.

It is stated in the lead of the news report, where Lanza is not named and described as a gunman once again, that for Lanza's family and friends, he was smart but lonely, and according to the authorities, he may have suffered from a personality disorder. With the comments of his family and friends, and the authorities, the perception that Lanza was a troubled boy is bolstered, and thus, it is implied that he was not in his right minds while carrying out the attack leading him to be excused.

Although Lanza, who is still not named in the first paragraph of the news report, is portrayed as the gunman who performed the attack in a school situated in Connecticut, through the information that he was an honors student and was living with his mother in a rich neighborhood, he is shown as a hardworking boy and a family member, and thus, is humanized. In the continuation of the news report, the information that 20-year-old Adam Lanza had murdered both his mother and then twenty children and six adults at Sandy Hook Elementary School before he committed suicide is given with the active sentence structure, and by that way, Lanza is reflected as the active agent of the shooting

spree. With the knowledge that the authorities did not talk about the possible trigger for Lanza to perform the attack and that Lanza had no criminal record, Lanza is portrayed as someone who did not pose danger.

The premise articulated by the authorities that Lanza, who is described as a gunman once more, may have had personality disorders is consolidated with the statement that Ryan Lanza, Adam's brother, also shared the same opinion. Additionally, it is reported that Lanza's mother and father filed for divorce in 2008 according to the records, through which it is implied that both health problems and traumatic experiences that Lanza had gone through are the underlying reasons for the mass shooting.

With the interpretation of Lanza's aunt named Marsha that he had kind and protective parents, if Lanza had had a problem, his family would definitely have provided the necessary help, that Nancy was a good mother, and if Lanza had needed a counselling, Nancy would have taken care of the situation, it is implied that Lanza had no problem and this, contradicts the comments made by Lanza's brother and the authorities dwelling upon the issue of personality disorder. In addition to the comment of Catherine Urso, a mother of a university-age boy, that her son recognized Adam Lanza and he described Lanza as slim, secluded, and as "one of the goths", the remark made by Joshua Milas, who graduated from Newtown High School, that Lanza was happy most of the time, he was good and intelligent, and maybe was one of the most intelligent kids that he knew, the perception that Lanza was a quiet, inoffensive, and smart boy is reinforced and by that way, it is implied that it is almost impossible for him to perform such a devastating attack. What's more, along with the statement of Rhonda Cullens depicting Lanza's mother Nancy as "a very nice lady" and "just a regular person", the comment made by another neighbor named Sandeep Kapur that he and his family had not felt any disturbance from the Lanzas, it is implied that the terrorist attack was something quite unexpected from Lanza family, who are mostly described as good and decent people who do not cause troubles throughout the news report.

In the news, where the "T" word is not employed again, in addition to the two videos featuring the governor of Connecticut talking about the incident and containing the information and images related to the attack, two photos depicting Lanza alone and also with his friends from the Tech Club of the school are included. The photo portraying Lanza with his friends, whose faces are blurred except him, displays the thinness of Lanza

and his blank face reflecting his weirdness, and reinforces the discourse reiterated from the very beginning to the end of the news report depicting Lanza as someone who was very thin, lonely, and had a personality disorder.

Fox News, in the news report it published five years after the terrorist attack, used the headline “Sandy Hook killer Adam Lanza’s turbulent home life with mother revealed”. Examining the headline closely, it can be seen that Lanza is referred to as a “killer” and positioned as the perpetrator of the mass shooting. Additionally, with the statement that he did not have an idyllic life at home, the perception that he had had psychological problems is created, and thus, the severity of the terrorist attack carried out by Lanza is downplayed.

In the news report which does not have a lead, it is stated that more than 1,500 pages of documents were published by FBI about the attack that took place at Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012, and that these were helpful to reveal the relationship between Adam Lanza, who is named as the “gunman”, and his mother Nancy before the deadly attack. What’s more, it is reported that these files consist of many reports about the mass shooting that caused the deaths of twenty children and six educators, and the link through which the files can be accessed, and which was posted on the Twitter account of FBI Records Vault is included in the news discourse.

It is stated that in an interview with the FBI, an unnamed person commented that Lanza’s mother Nancy said a month before the attack that she had had concerns about her son, that Lanza had not left the house for three months, and although they shared the same house, she could only communicate with him via email. Thanks to this comment, the problematic relationship between the mother and son is revealed, it is emphasized that Lanza was a troubled boy, and by that way, his psychological condition is given as the trigger of the deadly attack, and he is humanized. From the comment of another unnamed individual stating that Nancy rejected the marriage proposal from a man she had been dating just because she could not leave her son, it can be understood that Nancy would not be able to take Adam with her if she got married, which reinforces the news discourse highlighting the awkwardness of Adam and his dysfunctional relationship with his mother.

In addition to the comments from several neighbors that Adam went crazy after the Hurricane Sandy and because he refused to stay in a hotel, Nancy had to stay with

him at their home for a couple of days without electricity, the verbal reaction of another person stating that Lanza had hacked the computer system of a government is included in the news discourse, as a result of which, it is emphasized that Adam Lanza was not in a good psychological condition and was a strange boy. Along with the comments of the other interviewed individuals that Lanza, who had been vegetarian before, was vegan and was bullied at school, though not in an extreme way, because of his “social awkwardness” and “physical gait”, it is reported that Lanza had Asperger’s Syndrome, a type of autism. However, it is stated that the report published by the Connecticut Child Advocate in 2014 informs that neither autism nor the other psychiatric problems from which Lanza suffered directly leads to the mass shooting. Furthermore, it is stated that the same report also reveals the fact that Nancy turned a deaf ear to the Yale psychologists recommending Lanza to be medicated and treated when he was a child for “anxiety and other conditions” and that both Lanza’s family and educators played a role in the seclusion of Lanza. Through the comments of both neighbors and the people with whom FBI interviewed, the discourse constructed in the previous news reports drawing attention to the awkwardness and psychological problems of Lanza is redeployed in the news published by Fox News, but, according to the information conveyed by the report, it is emphasized that Nancy, who was murdered by her son in her sleep, was not a good, nurturing, and caring mother as stated in the previously analyzed news, leading Lanza to be portrayed both as the injured party and neglected child.

In the news report, where no “T” word is employed to describe neither the attack nor Adam Lanza, along with the three videos featuring the mother of one of the victims of the attack, the teacher who protected the students, and the images from Lanza’s room and the terror-stricken Sandy Hook Elementary School, a combined photo of Adam and Nancy, which is stated to be received from Facebook and Reuters and placed right after the headline, is provided. The photograph, evidently taken in a joyous moment of Nancy, contrasts with what appears to be a headshot depicting Adam with his buggy eyes and bolstering Adam’s psychologically troubled profile. What’s more, these two photos, combined and given as one, reinforce the discourse of the problematic relationship between a mother and her son, who look totally different from one another, while serving the perception that Adam’s physical and psychological problems led him to carry out such a deadly mass shooting.

The Wall Street Journal reported the massacre with the headline “Dozens Killed in Conn. School Shooting” in the news it published three days after the attack. In the headline of the news report, the information that people were murdered is conveyed in the passive sentence structure and Lanza, the perpetrator of the mass shooting, is not included in the news discourse. It is not specifically stated that the attack, defined as the “shooting”, took place at Sandy Hook Elementary School, and this causes the headline, the most striking component of a news report, to remain incapable of providing the audience with the necessary knowledge related to the incident.

In the first paragraph of the news report, which does not have a lead, the information that Adam Lanza, whose name is not mentioned and is referred to as “a man”, was armed with heavy weapons and murdered twenty children at the elementary school, which is again not named, is given with the active sentence structure, and Lanza is portrayed as the active agent of the terrorist incident. The severity of the attack is emphasized with the inclusion of the information that the shooting took the lives of twenty-seven people, left one person wounded, and Lanza committed suicide in the aftermath of the event.

Though the information that a twenty-year old man named Adam Lanza went to the Sandy Hook Elementary School and opened fire is given with the active sentence structure once again and Lanza is portrayed as the perpetrator of the attack, with the statement that the police describe Lanza as “the suspect”, Lanza, who obviously carried out a terrorist attack, is identified as if he was not responsible and his role in the mass shooting is mitigated. It is stated that no motive for the attack is specified by the authorities and as if he had performed a respectable job, the title Mr. is used just before the name of Lanza whose mother’s body is reported to be found at their home.

Through the comment of the school’s therapist Diane Day that on the day of the incident, they first heard children shouting and then gunshots, the school principal and psychologist dashed out without a second thought, and a teacher, who was shot in the attack, tried to keep the door closed by “pressing her body against the door” and was a hero, the agility, fearlessness, and self-sacrifice of the school staff is highlighted and the gravity of the attack that affected a great many people is revealed. It is reported that following the attack, all children were brought to the nearby firehouse, where the anxious families of the students gathered, and the verbal reaction of Joe Wasik, whose daughter

named Alexis was at school during the mass shooting, that he went to school as soon as he heard about the incident, there were cars everywhere, and he found his daughter, who hid in a closet during the attack, crying, is given with a dramatic narrative structure and the horror of the event and the chaos it created is emphasized.

In addition to the statement “Evil visited this community today” of Dannel Malloy, the governor of Connecticut, the reaction of President Barack Obama stating that he was speaking as the father of two daughters, the attack was a “heinous crime”, and the lives, birthdays, weddings, and their own kids were taken away from the murdered children who were at the ages of five to ten is included in the news report, and by that way, the dramatic discourse constructed in the previous paragraphs is bolstered. Although Obama states that the necessary measures will be taken to prevent the attacks of the same style, it is meaningful that he does not share any statements containing anger towards the perpetrator of the mass shooting and that he does not name the incident as a terrorist attack.

Through the comment of Lt. J. Paul Vance that the police did not fire upon arriving at the school and that he cannot make any definitive judgment about how Lanza, described as “the alleged gunman”, died, Lanza, who is known to have carried out the attack, is represented once again with a soft expression as “the suspected”. Along with the information that Lanza’s parents, Nancy and Peter, got divorced in 2009 and Lanza, who is referred to as “the suspected gunman” again, was an honor student at Newtown Highschool, the comment of their neighbor Beth Israel, whose daughter went to the same primary school as Lanza, that Lanza was “socially awkward”, and “kind of a loner and shy” who could not make an eye contact is included in the news report, and thus, the terrorist is portrayed both as smart and as a troubled boy deeply affected by his parents’ divorce leading the stimulation of sympathy towards him. With the inclusion of the information that Lanza did not appear in his high school yearbook, the neighbors stated that the Lanza family was living a quiet life, and his classmate named Louis Belanger described Lanza as “quiet, shy, fond of wearing sweaters with hoods”, the perception that there is nothing suspicious both Adam Lanza and his family and Lanza is portrayed as a normal member of an ordinary family. Following the terrorist attack targeting Sandy Hook Elementary School, which is named as the second deadliest mass shooting in the nation’s history since the 2007 Virginia Tech massacre that resulted in the death of thirty-

three people including the attacker, it is stated that security measures have been increased in schools across the country, teachers and employees have been trained about the moments of crisis, and metal detectors have been placed in schools, all of which reveals the anxiety and fear triggered by the deadly attack.

In the news report, where the “T” words such as terror, terrorism, and terrorist are not employed, along with three videos displaying President Barack Obama reacting to the terrorist attack, Lauren Kenney, the manager of bereavement services, commenting about the incident and how to cope up with the grief, and Dr. John Walkup sharing his insights on children and their way of dealing with traumatic events, an image of a map showing the place where the attack took place and making it easy for the readers to visualize the crime scene, is included.

4.4.3. Las Vegas Strip Terrorist Attack

On the night of October 1, 2017, the 64-year-old terrorist named Stephen Paddock opened fire on the crowd enjoying the Route 91 Harvest, a country music festival organized in the United States. Beginning to indiscriminately shoot the concertgoers attending the festival from the 32nd floor of the Mandalay Bay Hotel situated on the Las Vegas strip,⁴⁶ Paddock had claimed the lives of 58 people and wounded hundreds before he took his own life, leading the attack to become the deadliest mass shooting in the nation’s history.⁴⁷

This part of the study will scrutinize the discourse constructed by the Anglo-American news media to cover the terrorist attack which was carried out by a non-Muslim and targeted non-Muslims. Further to that, by conducting a critical discourse analysis dwelling on the macrostructures such as the headlines and leads and microstructures including the photos, statements of eyewitnesses, expressions of comparison, exaggeration, and mockery, proposed by van Dijk, both the overt and covert ideologies embedded in the news reports will be revealed.

⁴⁶ <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/2017-las-vegas-shooting>. Accessed 17 February 2022.

⁴⁷ <https://www.trtworld.com/americas/major-shootings-in-us-history-11016>. Accessed 17 February 2022.

4.4.4. Critical Discourse Analysis of Anglo-American Newspapers Regarding Their Coverage of Las Vegas Strip Massacre

Table 4.6: Las Vegas Strip Terrorist Attack and Prominent Discursive Features Employed by the Anglo-American News Media to Cover It

Newspaper	Headline	Lead	Date	Striking Photo
BBC	“Stephen Paddock: Vegas suspect a high-roller and ‘psychopath’”	“Las Vegas concert gunman Stephen Paddock was a wealthy former accountant and high-stakes gambler who appeared to be living in quiet retirement with his girlfriend in a desert community.”	5 October 2017	
The New York Times	“Stephen Paddock, Las Vegas Suspect, Was a Gambler Who Drew Little Attention”	X	2 October 2017	
Daily Mirror	“Las Vegas killer Stephen Paddock ‘may have had a severe undiagnosed mental illness’”	“Investigators remain largely in the dark about what drove retired real estate investor and high-stakes gambler to carry out the deadliest mass shooting in modern US history”	8 October 2017	
Daily Mail	“Stephen Paddock was prescribed anti-anxiety medication Valium which can trigger aggressive behavior four months before Las Vegas massacre”	“-Stephen Paddock was prescribed anti-anxiety medication in June, records show -He was taking tablets of diazepam- or Valium- which can trigger aggression -It is not known why he was prescribed the drug or whether he had anger issues -Former neighbors said Paddock was a reclusive weirdo, while coffee shop workers said he was often rude to girlfriend Marliou Danley”	4 October 2017	

BBC used the headline “Stephen Paddock: Vegas suspect a high-roller and ‘psychopath’” in the news report it published four days after the massacre. Looking at the headline of the news, in which the name of the terrorist is provided, it is seen that although Stephen Paddock was identified as the perpetrator of the mass shooting, he is still defined as the “suspect”. Moreover, referred to as a gambler placing a bet with large sums of money and a psychopath, Paddock is portrayed as an ardent gambler and as someone who was mentally unstable, and thus, he is humanized, and it is implied that he was not in his right minds performing the attack. As Ibrahim Hooper, the spokesperson for the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) expressed in an interview with the HuffPost: “If the Las Vegas shooter were a Muslim, the shooting would be instantly called an act of domestic or even international terrorism, it wouldn’t be individualized, but collectivized to the entire Muslim community or faith of Islam” (Ruiz-Grossman, 2017).

In the lead of the news report, the information that Paddock, who is described as a “gunman”, was rich, a former accountant, a wagerer gambling with sheer amount of money, and that he was living a tranquil retirement life with his girlfriend within a quiet neighborhood is included in the news discourse, and by that way, he is represented as an ordinary man and is distanced away from the nation’s deadliest mass shooting that he carried out. With the statement that Paddock, who was sixty-four years old and from Nevada, had the pilot’s and hunting certificates of approval and had no criminal record, he is presented both as a reliable and lively man, and is stripped from his terrorist identity.

The discourse constructed by one of the neighbors’ interpretations that Paddock was a strange person who had been divorced twice, and which evokes the perception that there was something abnormal in him is deconstructed in the following sentence in which it is reported that Paddock’s brother, a family member who knows him closely, describes Paddock as a decent man enjoying “playing video poker, live music, and eating burritos”. With the comment of his brother, who has a more say than an ordinary neighbor regarding Paddock, the terrorist is given as a normal individual as if he had not murdered and wounded a great many concertgoers and is humanized by way of the things from which he took pleasure.

The information that Paddock was identified by the police as the perpetrator of the attack, which was recorded as the worst mass shooting in modern America history,

and that he massacred 58 people and injured nearly 500 others with the fire he opened from the Mandalay Bay Hotel and Casino, given with the active sentence structure, and eventually aimed the gun at himself is included in the news discourse, and thus, the severity of the attack, the way it was performed, and its consequence knowledge are conveyed. In the paragraph following this part, in which Paddock is portrayed as the active agent of the incident, with the statement that Paddock had a turbulent childhood, his father, who constantly inflicted violence on him, was “once on the FBI’s 10 Most Wanted list” and a bank robber, and that his mother worked hard to raise both Paddock and his three siblings, it is emphasized that he did not have a functional family and did not have a happy childhood, and thus, sympathy is aroused towards Paddock, it is implied that both his traumatic childhood experiences and the genes of his father, who was also a notorious criminal, play a vital role in the transformation of Paddock into a mass murderer, and the blame of the massacre performed by him is put on heredity and physical conditions.

Stephen Paddock’s brother Eric Paddock’s comment depicting the terrorist as a person enjoying playing video poker, sending cookies to his mother, and going on cruises, shows contradiction with the information that is provided in the following paragraph that the police found twenty-three weapons in the hotel room he hired along with the explosive in his car. Under the title of “Stephen Paddock” written in bold, information on where Paddock had previously worked, the university he had attended, his relationship with his brothers, his marriages and childlessness are listed, and by that way, the perception that Paddock actually had had a normal life before the massacre is created.

In addition to the comment of the police that they could not find anything related to why Paddock carried out the mass shooting, the statement “I can’t get into the mind of a psychopath at this point.” made by Sheriff Joseph Lombardo is included in the news report, and thus, he is described as a psychopath, implying that the mental and psychological problems trigger the attack, and his crime is whitewashed. It is reported that the FBI could not find a link between Paddock and any international terrorist organization, but the Islamic State referred to Paddock as a “soldier of the caliphate”. The religion of Islam is conflated with a terrorist group that performs actions which are in no way compatible with the Islamic doctrine, and the perception that Paddock, who is not affiliated with Islam, is not a home-grown terrorist, as a result of which all the blame is

laid on Islam, which symbolizes the backward, primitive, and chaotic part of the binary opposition constructed and perpetuated by the Orientalist and Islamophobic mindset, and the fact that Paddock was a home-grown, American, and white terrorist is tried to be swept under the carpet.

Eric Paddock's comment at the press conference that Stephen was "intelligent", "successful", caring, and helpful towards the people he loved contrasts with his neighbors' description of Paddock as "surly, unfriendly, and standoffish". Be that as it may, in the following parts of the news report, with the inclusion of the verbal reactions of people living close to Paddock's home situated in Florida describing him as "very friendly", Paddock's profile as a friendly and easygoing neighbor is consolidated.

In the news report, in which Paddock is not named as a terrorist, and the mass shooting is not called an act of terrorism, along with the five videos featuring the weapons used in the attack, eyewitnesses commenting on the massacre, Donald Trump reacting to the mass shooting, Eric Paddock commenting on his brother, and the footage of how the attack unfolded, four photographs showing Marilou Danley, the girlfriend of Paddock, the locations of Mandalay Bay Hotel, Las Vegas Strip, Music Festival, and Luxor Hotel & Casino, the timeline of the terrorist attack, and finally Stephen Paddock in a white T-shirt and smiling to the camera are employed to reinforce the news rhetoric. The photograph stated to be received from CBS News and placed right after the headline of the news report, bolsters the perception constantly reiterated in the news that Paddock was an ordinary, friendly, and helpful man and portraying Paddock in the randomness of daily life, distances him from his terrorist profile and humanizes him.

The New York Times used the headline "Stephen Paddock, Las Vegas Suspect, Was a Gambler Who Drew Little Attention" in the news report it published the day after the massacre. When the headline, in which the name of the terrorist given, is analyzed, it can be seen that no information is provided regarding the attack and Paddock is described as the suspect, though he was identified as the perpetrator of the attack. Further to that, with the inclusion of the information that Paddock was a gambler not compelling much attention, it is implied that he was a man who did not pose a problem and his terrorist profile is whitewashed.

In the first paragraph of the news report that does not contain a lead, it is stated that Stephen Paddock, who is referred to as "the man", lived a tranquil retirement life in

Nevada and the information that he murdered the people attending the festival on Sunday is given with the active sentence structure, and thus, he is portrayed as the perpetrator of the mass shooting. Along with the comment of Paddock's relatives and neighbors that Paddock and his girlfriend did not attract much attention, the information that Paddock, stated to be at 64 years old and defined as "the gunman", lived with 62-year-old Marilou Danley, Paddock's girlfriend, and was a retired man enjoying gambling is included in the news report, as a result of which, Paddock is represented as a man who was lively, who had hobbies, and was not a troublemaker. What's more, through the comment of his relatives, who describe the terrorist as "Mr. Paddock", that they did not witness any indication of extreme "political or ideological beliefs" in Paddock, the terrorist, who claimed the lives of quite a few innocent people, is reflected as if he had performed a task which should be respected and shown as someone with moderate views. Even though Paddock is portrayed as the active agent of the massacre through the information given with the active sentence structure that he murdered 60 people and wounded at least 500 more in the mass shooting he carried out on Sunday, he is referred to as "Mr. Paddock" by the news report and humanized. In the following paragraph, where the terrorist is defined with the title of respect once again, the information that he took his own life in the aftermath of the massacre and his body was found in the hotel room hired by him is included in the news discourse and thus, the consequence knowledge of the incident is provided.

With the comment of Sheriff Lombardo describing the terrorist as a "lone-wolf" and stating, "I can't get into the mind of a psychopath at this point", Paddock is both portrayed as a psychopath leading to the implication that he suffered from some mental or psychological problems, and is reflected as a lone-wolf, as a result of which the act of terrorism he performed is individualized. With the inclusion of the verbal reaction of Paddock's brother, Eric Paddock, that their family was shocked by what had happened, that he was thinking about where Paddock could have gotten all these automatic weapons, and that Stephen was worried about his mother in the aftermath of the Hurricane Irma and sent her a walker, Paddock is reflected as a man who would not normally perform such a deadly attack, led an ordinary life, and took care of his family.

Through the comment of Christopher Sullivan, the general manager of a gun shop situated in Mesquite, describing Paddock as "a normal fellow, a normal guy- nothing out

of ordinary”, and stating that he did not have a criminal history, the perception that Paddock was an ordinary man who did not pose a threat is reinforced. In addition to the information that the Islamic State terrorist group announced that Paddock was one of the followers of the organization, but no evidence could be found verifying this claim, the remark of Paddock’s brother that Stephen was not affiliated with any religious or political groups to the best of his belief, Paddock’s lone-wolf image is consolidated, curiosity is aroused regarding the motive of the attack, and Islam, which has nothing to do with terrorism, is associated with a terrorist organization and misrepresented as a religion favoring terror. With the inclusion of the announcement of the spokesman of Mesquite Police Department that there was nothing unusual in the home of perpetrator, who is referred to as “Mr. Paddock” once again, Paddock is portrayed as a man with an inconspicuous and ordinary life and with the implication that he would not have performed such a deadly attack under normal circumstances, his crime is downplayed. The knowledge that the terrorist, who is defined as “Mr. Paddock once more, had the pilot’s license and “two small single-engine planes registered in his name”, did not have children, was a rich man enjoying playing video poker and going on cruises is provided in the news report and by that way, the discourse, by diverging from the deadliest mass shooting in America’s modern history and its serious repercussions, humanizes Stephen Paddock by centralizing on his private life and hobbies.

Along with the comment of the police spokesman named Lt. Brian Parrish that Paddock did not have a criminal record and was not known to them, the remark of the neighbor of the perpetrator, described as “Mr. Paddock”, referring to the terrorist as “a normal man” is provided in the news report and Paddock is distanced away from his criminal profile and is portrayed as a regular man not posing any threat. In the following paragraphs of the news, Paddock’s being a gambler, the institutions he had worked for, the properties he owned, and his girlfriend are touched upon, the comments of the neighbors of the terrorist, who is named as “Mr. Paddock” again, stating that they were shocked upon the mass shooting are included in the news as a result of which, Paddock is shown as a naturally good guy and it is emphasized that it is something quite unexpected for him to carry out such an attack.

In the final paragraphs of the news report, the knowledge that Paddock’s father, named Benjamin Patrick Paddock, was a notorious criminal, was a serial bank robber,

was convicted of “confidence game” and “auto theft”, was once in the FBI’s “Top Ten most wanted list”, was suicidal, and diagnosed with psychopathy is included, and thus, it is emphasized that the terrorist was a member of a dysfunctional family, and with the implication that he could have taken his father’s genes, the blame of the deadliest mass shooting performed by Paddock is put on family structure and heredity as in the previously analyzed news report, and Paddock is justified.

In the news report, in which no “T” word is employed to refer both to Stephen Paddock and the mass shooting, four photographs showing the police in front of the Mandalay Bay Hotel, a graphic including the locations that had significance in the incident, the shattered windows of the hotel, and Stephen Paddock are provided to reinforce the news rhetoric. The photograph of Paddock stated to be provided by Eric Paddock and also employed in the previously examined news report, displays the terrorist smiling and in a white outfit symbolizing the innocence and purity, and by that way, Paddock is reflected in a way that cannot be associated with the deadly massacre he performed, and his criminal profile is whitewashed.

Daily Mirror covered the massacre carried out by Stephen Paddock with the headline “Las Vegas killer Stephen Paddock ‘may have had a severe undiagnosed mental illness’” in the news report it published a week after the incident. Examining the headline, it can be seen that the name of the terrorist is provided, Paddock is described as a “killer”, and the consequence knowledge of the bloodiest mass shooting that occurred on American soils is not given. What is more striking is that with the inclusion of the possibility of a mental problem in the news discourse, it is implied that the terrorist performed the attack while he was not in his right minds, and thus, the violence inflicted by him is justified. In the lead of the news, even though the incident is named as “the deadliest mass shooting” and Paddock is portrayed as the perpetrator of the attack, the terrorist is described as a “retired real estate investor” and “high-stakes gambler”, as a result of which, he is normalized and distanced from his criminal profile.

In the first paragraph of the news report, with the inclusion of the statement made by the investigators that Paddock may have suffered from a serious mental illness, the discourse constructed in the lead is bolstered and Paddock is portrayed as if he had carried out the massacre unconsciously. The information that Paddock opened fire on the concertgoers is given with the active sentence structure, it is stated that as a result of the

incident, 58 people died and almost 500 were wounded, and the information that “FBI profilers and behavioral scientists” have been working on to understand Paddock’s motivation for performing such a deadly attack are included in the news report, and thus, the perception that the incident was an exceptional and mysterious one is created.

Along with the statement, which is stated to be received from ABC News, that in the aftermath of the interviews with a great many people, it is revealed that Paddock was a man who had difficulty in communicating with people, the information, taken from an unnamed source, that 64-year-old Paddock was spending his time gambling, a distant man who could not establish and maintain healthy relationships, and displaying antisocial behaviors as was the case for the previous mass killers is provided in the news report and by that way, the reserved and troubled profile of Paddock is reinforced. In addition to the statement made by Kevin McMahon, the Undersheriff of Clark County, that the investigators still could not discover what might have triggered Stephen Paddock, described as “a retired real estate investor” and “high-stakes gambler” once again, to carry out this attack, the comment, made again by McMahon, that they examined everything related to the social, political, and economic life of Paddock, who is named as the “suspect” though his crime was justified, and that Islamic State constantly claimed responsibility for the mass shooting, but no affiliation could be found between Paddock and the terrorist organization is included in the news report, and thus, Paddock is normalized and Islam is associated with a terrorist group that has nothing to do with Islam and its teachings, leading the Islamophobic mentality to resurface.

The consequence knowledge of the incident is provided with the information that 64-year-old Paddock fired bullets onto the concert crowd from his room on the 32nd floor of the hotel, and then took his own life. It is reported, without mentioning the perpetrator of the incident, that 58 people died and almost 500 others were injured because of both the gunfire and the ensuing chaos as if they had died and had been wounded by themselves. In addition to the statement that the police, by considering the weapons and explosives found in Paddock’s home, car, and hotel room, suspect that he may have received help before the mass shooting, the information that the investigators know for certain that Paddock carried out the attack alone is provided in the news report, and thus, Paddock is portrayed as a lone-wolf perpetrator and his crime is individualized.

In the news report, in which no “T” words are employed to refer to both Paddock

and the bloody attack he performed, a video featuring Las Vegas Police's statements regarding the incident, and four photos showing the smashed windows of the Mandalay Bay Hotel, the candles placed in memory of the victims, Stephen Paddock, and the FBI investigating outside the festival area are included to consolidate the news rhetoric. The photo, stated to be received from Twitter, showing Paddock eyes closed and smiling slightly, and with someone whose face is blurred, possibly in a restaurant or a bar, moves Paddock away from his criminal and terrorist profile and in this respect, supports the discourse employed in the news report.

Daily Mail used the headline "Stephen Paddock was prescribed anti-anxiety medication Valium which can trigger aggressive behavior four months before Las Vegas massacre" in the news report it published three days after the attack. In the headline, where the terrorist's name is offered, the information that Paddock had been prescribed an anti-anxiety drug, which has the ability to excite anger in the users, before the deadly mass shooting is provided, as a result of which, it is implied that the terrorist had mental and psychological problems and that he carried out the attack while he was under the influence of Valium, leading the violence inflicted by Paddock to be justified.

In the lead of the news report consisting of four separate sentences, the information that Paddock was using the medication called Valium which can stimulate anger, and that it is not known why he was prescribed that exact medication and whether Paddock suffered from anger problems, the comment of the terrorist's former neighbors describing Paddock as a secluded and strange man, and the statement made by the coffee shop staff that Paddock was rude to Marliou Danley, Paddock's girlfriend, are provided. The discourse constructed in the headline is reiterated in the lead of the news report, through which the troubled profile of Paddock is consolidated, it is emphasized that the drug that was prescribed played an effective role in the mass shooting, and a sympathy is aroused for the perpetrator.

Even though in the first paragraph of the news report, the information that Paddock murdered 58 people and injured more than 500 others is given with the active sentence structure and Paddock is shown as the perpetrator of the attack, it is emphasized once again that Paddock, referred to as a "killer", was given "anti-anxiety medication" before the attack, and the perception that Paddock was not in his right minds while performing the massacre is reinforced. According to the information stated to be received

from Las Vegas Review-Journal, it is reported that a doctor named Steven Winkler prescribed Paddock “50 10 diazepam tablets”, described as “a sedative-hypnotic” medication which, as shown by several studies, can lead to aggression in the users who already suffer from behavioral problems, and thus, the medication that the terrorist used is shown as the stimulator of the massacre. With the comment of people who knew the terrorist closely, including his brother named Eric, that he did not show any signs of aggression and did not seem like someone who would perform such an attack, Paddock is represented as a calm and an ordinary man. However, in the following paragraphs, it is stated that the studies conducted in Finland, Australia, and New Zealand found that the drugs such as diazepam are associated with the “increased instances of aggressive behavior” and the news report focalizes once again on the medication that Paddock used, and it is implied that it might have triggered the nation’s deadliest mass shooting. What’s more, with the statement that Kirstie Alley, an American actress and “scientologist”, posted tweets in the aftermath of the massacre suggesting that in the cases of mass shootings, the usage of psychiatric drugs come to the forefront, along with the guns, as the “common denominator”, the news discourse is distanced once more from the terrorist attack that Paddock carried out and its traumatic repercussions, and thus, Paddock is shown as a victim of psychiatric medications.

In addition to the comment of the employees of Starbucks, situated in the neighborhood where Paddock lived with his girlfriend, that Paddock was very rude to Marliou Danley, the verbal reaction of Stephen Paddock’s former neighbor describing the terrorist as secluded, awkward, “very unfriendly and strange” and as someone who hardly interacts with people, are included in the news discourse, and by that way, the troubled and introverted image of Paddock is bolstered. The information that during the attack, referred to as “America’s worst ever mass shooting”, Paddock rained bullets on the concertgoers attending the festival from his room on the 32nd floor of the Mandalay Bay Hotel, massacred 58 people and injured 527 others, and shot himself to dead is given with the active sentence structure, through which both the consequence knowledge of the incident is provided and Paddock is portrayed as the active agent of the massacre. In the final paragraph of the news report, it is reported that the motive of the attack could not be found and although ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack, there was no evidence showing that Paddock was affiliated with any international terrorist group, and thus, Islam

is associated with a terrorist organization and misrepresented as if it was a religion favoring murdering innocent people.

In the news report, in which no “T” word is used neither to describe Paddock nor the massacre he carried out, along with two videos showing the neighborhood and home where Paddock had lived, and the insights about Paddock, his girlfriend, and the mass shooting, six photos showing Paddock, his girlfriend, the police in front of the Mandalay Bay Hotel, the hotel room hired by the terrorist, and an explanatory note on the side-effects of Valium are employed to reinforce the news rhetoric. Looking at Paddock’s passport-like photograph taken with a blue background, the terrorist’s blank face and sunken eyes attract attention, and this, both strengthens the profile of Paddock who was using anti-anxiety drug and had mental and psychological problems, and supports the discourse constructed and reiterated throughout the news report.

4.4.5. Conclusion

Analyzing the ways in which both the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting of 2012 and the Las Vegas Strip massacre of 2017 were covered by the Anglo-American news media, namely The Guardian, Sky News, BBC, Daily Mirror, Daily Mail, Fox News, The Wall Street Journal, and The New York Times, some common denominators draw attention. In the news reports, both Adam Lanza and Stephen Paddock, who carried out deadly terrorist attacks targeting non-Muslims, are declared to be lone-wolf perpetrators and by that way, shown as not a part of a bigger plan of a terrorist organization, leading the attacks to be individualized. When it comes to the word choice, it can be observed that not a single “T” word is employed to refer to Lanza and Paddock and the attacks they launched. While the perpetrators are mostly called gunman, the suspect, the shooter, and the killer, the incidents are named as the shooting, massacre, and mass murder. Both terrorists are described as weird, troubled, and displaying anti-social behaviors, and while Lanza is stated to have suffered from Asperger’s syndrome, a type of autism, and had a turbulent life at home with his mother, Paddock is reported to be a secluded and awkward man who loves gambling and taking care of his loved ones, who was prescribed Valium, an anti-anxiety medication, and who had a father, who was a habitual offender, through which the violence inflicted by the terrorists is justified and they are distanced from their criminal and terrorist profile. The photographs provided in

the news reports bolster Lanza's and Paddock's images as having mental-psychological problems and Paddock's being an ordinary man as described by his brother Eric Paddock. While the comments and verbal reactions of people knowing the terrorists are included in the news reports, the voice of the eyewitnesses, survivors, and the families and friends of the victims is erased from the news discourse constructed to report the two deadly terrorist incidents. When syntactically examined, though both Lanza and Paddock are portrayed as the perpetrators of the attacks through the employment of the active sentence structure, the severity of the attacks, their repercussions, and the role played by Lanza and Paddock are downplayed by way of the word choice mentioned above, all of which are quite telling details about the power structures and the ideologies tried to be implemented.

Key Discursive Features of Case Study Three

- 1) Wide coverage devoted to the terrorists' acquaintances' comments humanizing the perpetrators and justifying their actions
- 2) Neutral word choice omitting any "T" words to refer both to the attacks and the perpetrators
- 3) Overemphasis on psychological/mental problems suffered by the terrorists
- 4) Visuals portraying the terrorists mostly as troubled and weird individuals
- 5) Active voice employed to inform about how the attacks unfolded and the casualties

4.5. General Conclusion

The overall analysis of the twenty-four news reports published by the Anglo-American agenda-setting news media, namely Daily Mirror, Daily Mail, BBC, The Guardian, The Times, Sky News, The Telegraph, Fox News, Newsweek, HuffPost, New York Post, The New York Times, and The Wall Street Journal, regarding their coverage of six devastating terrorist attacks, which are Christchurch terrorist attack, Finsbury Park mosque terrorist attack, Reading stabbings, San Bernardino mass shooting, Sandy Hook Elementary School mass shooting, and Las Vegas Strip massacre, that took place within the last ten years, not only reveals some distressing facts about journalism which is deemed a reliable medium providing objective knowledge, news media outlets as primary sources of information, and the dynamics between the concepts of knowledge, power, and ideology but also lays bare the double standards practiced by the mainstream news media regarding their reportage of the terrorist attacks targeting Muslims and the ones whose

victims are non-Muslims. Though there are a great many different ways to define terrorism, the definition offered by different governments, institutions, and organizations contain more or less the same characteristics. As defined by The United Nations General Assembly, terrorism is “criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes.” (OHCHR, 2008, p. 6). Despite the fact that the terrorist incidents examined in this study are similar in nature in terms of creating an atmosphere of chaos, fear, and agitation and claiming the lives of innocent individuals, the ways in which they were given coverage differ greatly, something evocative of the power structures operating behind the scenes. Having analyzed the types of discourse constructed by the Anglo-American news media to cover both the Christchurch terrorist attack of 2019 and Finsbury Park mosque terrorist incident of 2017, it is brought to light that when the victims are Muslims, the Anglo-American news media mould a narrative which does not treat the events from the frame of terrorism. To be more precise, upon the comprehensive critical discourse analysis of eight news reports published to report these two deadly attacks, it is observed that almost all of them follow the same pattern in that they do not call what happened as acts of terrorism, but employ the words such as mosque shooting, attack, mass murder, and mosque rampage leading both the severity and the traumatic effects of the attacks to be mitigated. It is worth underscoring at this point that even if the news reports refer to the incidents as terrorist attacks, which happens quite rarely, they shift the focus from the terrorism frame by employing rather mild expressions to portray the perpetrators. As also aptly written in the report titled “How The British Media Reports On Terrorism”: “terror is often a difficult word to utter when the victims are Muslims or immigrants and the attackers are not” (p. 145). In addition to the naming of both Brenton Tarrant and Darren Osborne with the words like gunman, suspect, alleged terrorist, and lone-wolf, the perception that they were essentially good people but something extraordinary, be it psychological-mental health problems or the years spent on travelling, acted as a catalyst for them to carry out such inhumane attacks is created, as a result of which, the violence inflicted by these terrorists is justified and it is implied that for regular white American/European men to perform such attacks, they either had to suffer from health problems or had a turbulent life. The discourse employed in the news reports focalizing on the health issues, outside factors, and the characteristics of the terrorists is bolstered through the

remarks and verbal reactions of the terrorists' family members, relatives, friends, colleagues, and neighbors, which are given a wide coverage and lead both Tarrant and Osborne to be reflected as troubled individuals, the members of a family and a community, and thus, to be empathized, humanized, and justified. This created profile of both Tarrant and Osborne is reinforced by the photographs employed in the news reports. While Tarrant is displayed as "an angelic boy" in his father's arms, an overweight boy who is exposed to bullying, or in the courtroom with his blurred face, Osborne is portrayed in his daily life and as a man who suffered from mental instability. Through the visuals which play an undeniable role in supporting the news discourse, the terrorists are distanced away from their criminal profiles and the perception that once they were innocent babies who through time and as a result of harsh conditions turned into killers is strengthened, and the monstrous attacks that they performed are legitimized. Upon the syntactical analysis of eight news reports, it is seen that passive sentence structure is preferred mostly to report the casualties and death tolls, and by that way, Tarrant and Osborne are not portrayed as the active agents of the terrorist attacks. All these common characteristics of the news reports appear as an epitome of the anti-Muslim sentiment internalized by the Anglo-American news media outlets.

The discourse adopted to cover the terrorist attacks targeting Muslim communities differs greatly from that of the attacks carried out against non-Muslims and whose perpetrators are thought to be the adherents of the religion of Islam. Reading stabbings of 2020 and San Bernardino terrorist attack of 2015 are mostly framed as terrorist incidents by the Anglo- American news media unlike the attacks whose victims are Muslim people. When it comes to the perpetrators, who are Khairi Saadallah and the couple Tashfeen Malik and Syed Rizwan Farook, of these two terrorist events, it is observed that they are generally labeled as terrorist or terrorist attackers, as they should be. What is worth emphasizing is that both the religious and ethnic identity of the terrorists are centralized on, and they are devoted a wide coverage. Along with their direct representation as terrorists, the expressions such as Muslim terrorists, jihadists, immigrants, Islamic State followers, and the statements that Saadallah was heard shouting Allahu Akhbar while performing the attack, Tashfeen Malik took an Islamic education and wore conservative garments like burqa, and Syed Rizwan Farook grew beard and memorized the Qur'an are included in the news reports, as a result of which, a distorted perception of Muslims all

around the world is constructed, negative image of Islam as a religion favoring terror is created, and Islamic world is portrayed as the breeding ground of terrorism. While both for Tarrant and Osborne the religious affiliation is not something to be touched upon in the news reports and they are not categorized with the phrases such as Christian terrorists, the terrorists following Christianity, or the terrorists at whose house the copies of Bible are discovered, the perpetrators who are thought to be affiliated with Islam are portrayed in a way that Islam is brought to forefront as a scapegoat and as if it was a religion indoctrinating violence and terror, and by that way, both Islam and Muslims are brought under suspicion and being a Muslim becomes equal with being a terrorist. Further to that, the possible motives such as psychological problems and a turbulent life which may have triggered the attacks are not mentioned as is the case for both Tarrant and Osborne, and the three attackers are directly named as terrorists because of their so-called adherence to Islam, which is highly evocative of what Caroline Mala Corbin has stated: “With non-Muslims, the media bends over backwards to identify some psychological traits that may have pushed them over the edge. Whereas if it’s a Muslim, the assumption is they must have done it because of their religion” (Corbin, 2017, pg. 468). With the comments and verbal reactions of powerful figures including Barack Obama, Donald Trump, the FBI, and the prosecutors, the discourse treating the attacks as the acts of terrorism is consolidated, and unlike Tarrant and Osborne, the three terrorists are shown as the active agents of the terrorist events through the employment of active sentence structure to inform about the casualties. Complicating the picture even further, the applied double standards in reporting display themselves also in the photographs embedded within the news reports. Saadallah, Malik, and Farook are shown in close-ups and mugshots, or portrayed with the weapons in their hands, as Saadallah is, which differ greatly from the visuals depicting Tarrant and Osborne in their daily lives as a baby, chubby teenager, a member of a family and community and which consolidate the criminal and terrorist profile of the perpetrators. What’s more, the photograph displaying the copy of Qur’an and prayer beads found in the home of San Bernardino terrorists supports the news discourse founded on the anti-Islamic sentiment and draws attention to the lack of any visuals showing a copy of Bible or a cross in the homes of Tarrant and Osborne.

In the other scenario of the terrorist attacks targeting non-Muslims but whose perpetrators are also non-Muslims this time, the discourse adopted by the Anglo-

American news media to cover Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting of 2012 and Las Vegas Strip massacre of 2017 shows stark differences from the ways in which Reading terrorist attack and San Bernardino terrorist incident are reported. Even though the attacks targeting non-Muslims and which were performed by the so-called Muslims are framed within the context of terrorism and the perpetrators are directly labeled as terrorists, jihadists, and Muslim terrorists, it is quite meaningful that not a single “T” word is employed to refer to the incidents and Adam Lanza and Stephen Paddock, the non-Muslim terrorists of the attacks. Instead, while the incidents are mostly named as the shooting, mass murder, and massacre, Lanza and Paddock are declared to be lone-wolf attacker, gunman, killer, the suspect, and thus, both the terrorists and attacks are individualized unlike the ones who were committed by the so-called Muslims who are linked to the Islamic State terrorist organization, and this marked difference in the word choice is also corroborated by what Houssein Ben Lazreg has stated: “Terrorist is a label that jumps easily into headlines and news reports when the perpetrator is Muslim, but is often handled with caution or tossed out entirely when the perpetrator is white” (Lazreg, 2019). While it is emphasized that Adam Lanza suffered from a type of autism, called Asperger’s syndrome, Stephen Paddock is reported to be the son of a habitual offender and to have been prescribed anti-anxiety medication called Valium before the shooting spree, as a result of which, it is implied that these white, American, non-Muslim men would not carry out such attacks under normal conditions, and that’s why something unusual like a mental health issue, traumatic experience, or evil genes taken from the parents might have triggered them, which shows a direct contrast with the portrayal of the terrorists who are thought to be Muslims and that’s why essentially evil and terrorists. The visuals included in the news reports reinforce the protectionist attitude of the Anglo-American news media towards the non-Muslim terrorists. The photos are far from being headshots as is the case for the so-called Muslim perpetrators, and they either support the news discourse founded on the psychological- mental problems of the terrorists or show them in their daily lives, and thus, distance them from their criminal profile. Though in the most news reports the terrorists are portrayed as the perpetrators of the attacks thanks to the active sentence structure, the level of chaos and its repercussions are downplayed by the inclusion of the comments of people who know the terrorists and indicate to the turbulent life and health problems from which they suffered, and because of the omissions

of the verbal reactions of authoritative figures reacting strongly to what happened, naming of the incidents as acts of terrorism and the perpetrators as the terrorists.

Some Prominent Comparative Conclusions Drawn from the Case Studies One, Two, and Three

1) While mental/psychological problems and traumatic experiences are cited as the possible motives for non-Muslim terrorists to carry out the attacks, the so-called Muslim terrorists' motives for committing the attacks are based on their adherence to the religion of Islam, and by that way, their essentially flawed characters prone to violence.

2) While the terms terror, terrorism, and terrorist are exclusively reserved for the so-called Muslim perpetrators, the words gunman, killer, lone-wolf attacker, mass murder, rampage, and shooting are employed to refer both to non-Muslim perpetrators and the attacks carried out by them.

3) While for the non-Muslim terrorists there is a humanizing attempt bolstered by the verbal reactions of their acquaintances, for the terrorists who are thought to be the followers of Islamic religion, a discourse treating the attacks launched by them as the incidents of terrorism is created and then reinforced through the comments of authoritative figures such as FBI, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump.

4) While for the non-Muslim terrorists, visuals portraying them as a baby, an overweight teenager, a family member, and psychologically abnormal person are embedded in the news discourse, the so-called Muslim terrorists are shown in mugshots and with weapons in their hands.

5) While the non-Muslim terrorists' religious affiliations are not given a coverage and they are not referred to as Christian terrorists who got religious education and at whose house a copy of Bible is found, and so their crimes are individualized, the whole blame for the terrorist attacks performed by the so-called Muslim terrorists are put on Islam and its followers all around the world by way of expressions such as Muslim terrorists and jihadists, and statements that they were heard shouting Allahu Akhbar, had copies of Qur'an at their house, and wore conservative garments.

As manifested by the comparative critical discourse analysis of twenty-four news reports published by the influential Anglo-American news media outlets regarding the terrorist attacks targeting Muslims, non-Muslims and whose perpetrators are thought to

be Muslims, and non-Muslims whose perpetrators are also non-Muslims, the agenda-setting newspapers do not follow ethical journalism and discriminate between terrorist incidents which are similar in nature in terms of their targeting innocent people. This double standardization practiced by the news media is predicated on the Western collective subconscious deeming Islam a religion of terror and Muslims potential terrorists. So much so that, the discourse constructed to report the terrorist attacks whose victims are Muslims is loaded with humanizing motive and legitimization of the terrorists and the monstrous attacks they carried out. When it comes to the incidents targeting non-Muslims, the ways in which they are covered vary greatly depending on the religious affiliation of the perpetrators. If the terrorists are thought to have some kind of a relationship with Islam, they are directly labeled as what they are; terrorists, and not a trivial effort to stimulate empathy towards them and to justify the horrific crimes they committed is made, and the blame of the violence inflicted by these terrorists is put on the whole Muslims and the religion of Islam, which does not encourage terrorizing innocent people in any way. However, when the perpetrators of the terrorist incidents are understood as not related to Islam, the religious identity of the victims does not matter for the Anglo-American news media and they directly develop a protectionist attitude towards the terrorists, construct a discourse centralizing on the health problems, childhood traumas, hobbies, and the medication they used, and the non-Muslimness of the terrorists offer them the privilege of being humanized, normalized, and justified, and offer the religion of Christianity and the Christian community the privilege of not being villainized. As also rightly articulated by Caroline Mala Corbin: “The dehumanization of the Muslim perpetrator happens in an instant. The white Christian perpetrator, on the other hand, always retains his humanity” (Corbin, 2017, pg. 467). The ways in which both Islam and its adherents are turned into scapegoats are quite telling about the stereotypical reporting, the pervasiveness of the Islamophobic mentality demonizing anyone and anything related with Islam systematically, the power structures nudging the public mood towards anti-Islamic sentiment, and the deeply seated Islamophobic ideology dating back to the birth of Islam.

CONCLUSION

Formed by the combination of the words Islam and phobia and basically meaning the fear of and hatred towards the religion of Islam, the final Abrahamic monotheistic religion, and its adherents Muslims, Islamophobia appears as a widely circulating phenomenon in the current discourse and as a concern never losing its relevancy since the birth of the religion in the 7th century, manifests itself through various means ranging from verbal abuse to discriminatory bans on wearing burqa, building minarets, and naming the new-born children with Islamic names imposed by the governments and institutions.

Though triggered and reinforced by some watershed moments throughout history including the rapid expansion of Islam, the Oil Crisis of 1973, Iranian Revolution, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the anti-Muslim sentiment that carries with itself the sweeping generalizations and readymade assumptions about Islam and Muslims, vilification of the religion and its followers, and a collective endeavor with the aim of eradicating Muslim presence around the globe, but specifically in the West, has been exacerbated, turned into a vexed issue, and been engraved in the minds of the Western people in the aftermath of the catastrophic terrorist attacks of 9/11. This being the case, Islamophobia with all its historical background and repercussions has become a research topic addressed by a great many researchers in many different fields- religion, history, international relations to name but a few.

The fact that media, and specifically the news media, functions as an effective tool in constructing and then disseminating Islamophobic discourse and fueling this very racist and discriminatory attitude has paved the way for numerous academic studies dealing with the close relationship between Islamophobia and news media. Though the issue of news media and its discriminatory stance towards Muslims is something that is highly touched upon both within society and academia, it is scientifically proven for the first time in a comparative manner with this thesis, revealing the double standards in news coverage at play. When the literature is reviewed, it is seen that there is a lack of studies

conducted dealing with Islamophobia through a comparative and critical discourse analysis of agenda-setting Anglo-American newspapers and the double standards practiced in the coverage of terrorist attacks targeting both Muslims and non-Muslims. That is why, for this study, which has been conducted to fill this gap in the existing literature, six terrorist incidents, namely Christchurch mosque attacks, Finsbury Park mosque attack, Reding Stabbings, San Bernardino massacre, Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, and Las Vegas mass shooting are chosen and then grouped into three distinct categories regarding the discourse employed by the Anglo-American news media on the basis of religious affiliations of both the victims and the perpetrators. By limiting the study to the specific agenda-setting Anglo-American newspapers, namely BBC, Daily Mirror, Daily Mail, The Times, The Guardian, Sky News, The Telegraph, Fox News, Newsweek, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, New York Post, and HuffPost, all of which play an undeniable role in reaching the masses and shaping not only their opinion but also attitudes, twenty-four news reports published by these news media outlets upon the above-mentioned terrorist attacks have been critically, comparatively, and comprehensively analyzed.

When the two terrorist attacks, Christchurch Mosque shootings and Finsbury Park mosque shooting, which were carried out against Muslim people and are grouped as the Case Study One have been investigated regarding the discourse employed by the Anglo-American newspapers, it has been seen that some discursive patterns draw attention. As previously listed, as for the word choice, neither the attacks nor the perpetrators Tarrant and Osborne are situated within the scope of terrorism and no “T” words are used to refer to them, something which does not do justice to reality. The neutral discourse whitewashing the true identity of the perpetrators as terrorists is reinforced thanks to the constant reiteration of the mental/psychological problems suffered by Tarrant and Osborne, implying that while they were performing these deadly attacks, they were not in their right minds. The protectionist attitude which is incapable of showing the terrorists as the responsible subjects for the attacks they carried out reveals itself once more through the passive sentence structure dominating the news reports while informing the readers about the attacks and casualties. By employing phrases such as “people shot dead” and “49 murdered at prayers” to give account of the death tolls, the impression that these people died without any external influence is created and the terrorists as the active agents

are erased from the discourse of the news. What's more, both the humanizing and protectionist attitude towards the terrorists manifest themselves through the disproportionate coverage of verbal reactions embedded in the news reports. While the comments of the Muslim survivors, their families and friends are not devoted adequate coverage, a wide coverage is given to the terrorists' families and acquaintances consolidating the constructed discourse. Last but not least, when the visuals chosen for the news reports have been explored, it has been seen that Tarrant and Osborne are given as a baby, a chubby teenager, or an ordinary person highly contributing to the discourse portraying the terrorists in a humanizing motive.

When it comes to the analysis of the reportage of the terrorist attacks targeting non-Muslim people, it has been seen that the discourse employed in the news articles varies greatly according to the religious affiliation of the perpetrators, and that's why the terrorist incidents have been grouped into two distinct categories as Case Study Two titled as "The Terrorist Attacks Targeting Non-Muslim Population and Whose Perpetrators Are Thought to Have an Affiliation with Islam" and Case Study Three titled as "The Terrorist Attacks Targeting Non-Muslim Population and Whose Perpetrators are Non-Muslims". When the terrorist incidents Reading Stabbings and San Bernardino mass shooting which are included in the Case Study Two have been closely examined according to the ways in which they are reported, some significant characteristics come to the forefront. As a fair representation, "T" words such as terrorism and terrorist are extensively used to refer to both the incidents and perpetrators, and the fact that these attacks are terrorism-related is reinforced by way of the announcements and comments made by the eyewitnesses and authoritative figures. Psychological or mental issues are not mentioned as a possible reason lying behind the deadly attacks and it is implied that the terrorists performed the attacks deliberately and their agency is consolidated through the active sentence structure employed to inform on what happened and the casualties. Additionally, the terrorists' affiliations with the religion of Islam and their so-called Muslimness are overly emphasized throughout the news reports and their relationship with Islam is given as a motive triggering the terrorist attacks, (mis) representing the religion as the breeding ground for terrorism. When it comes to the visuals which are mostly in the form of mugshots and close-ups and showing the Qur'an and prayer beads, not surprisingly, they intensify the constructed discourse describing the perpetrators as terrorists and

emphasizing their connection to Islam.

When it comes to the findings of the analysis of the ways in which the terrorist attacks Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting and Las Vegas Strip massacre which are included in the Case Study Three are reported in news articles, it has been seen that they show a high similarity with the discourse employed to cover the terrorist incidents of Case Study One. Even though mostly active sentence structure is used to inform about how the attacks unfolded and the casualties, in describing both the terrorists Lanza and Paddock and the attacks committed by them, no “T” words are used and by that way the criminal profile of the perpetrators and the graveness of the attacks are swept under the rug. What’s more, the terrorists are humanized, and their horrific actions are justified through the overemphasis made on psychological/ mental/ family issues of the terrorists, the photos showing both mostly as individuals with weird characteristics and having psychological problems, and finally the comments of the terrorists’ acquaintances depicting them as troubled, having a turbulent home life, prescribed anti-anxiety medication, and genetically prone to violence.

When all these case studies have been analyzed comparatively, the unsettling fact that the news media and the narrative it offers are shaped in the hands of those who have authority and power and according to their interests and ideology has revealed itself. Though the six incidents included in this study are all terrorist attacks in terms of their creating an atmosphere of chaos and fear, and being triggered mostly by political and ideological motives, they are treated in different manners in the Anglo-American news media, showcasing the double standards practiced in news coverage and the failure of ethical journalism. While non-Muslim terrorists’ behaviors are highly attributed to their traumatic experiences and mental/psychological problems, the underlying reason for the so-called Muslim terrorists to perform the attacks is given as their relationship with Islam and their flawed nature essentially prone to violence, which demonstrates both the Orientalist and Islamophobic mentality ingrained in the consciousness of the Western world. Complicating the picture even further, in the news reports, not a single word is uttered regarding non-Muslim terrorists’ religious affiliations and by that way their crimes are individualized unlike the case for the so-called Muslim terrorists who are continuously defined as Muslim terrorists, jihadists, and referred to as shouting Allahu Akhbar, having copies of Qur’an at their house, and having got religious education, all of

which serve for the deeply seated Islamophobic mindset, aggravate the already unflattering portrayals of Muslim communities around the world and bring them under ever-lasting suspicion for the things they strongly condemn due to Islamic teaching. The double standardization also manifests itself in the words and phrases used to depict the attacks and the perpetrators. While both the so-called Muslim perpetrators and the attacks they performed are defined exclusively through the “T” words, as it should be, this same word choice does not apply to the non-Muslim perpetrators and the attacks carried out by them, which are mostly portrayed with the words like gunman, lone-wolf, shooting, and mass murder. As mentioned earlier, the announcements, verbal reactions, and comments employed in the news reports differ from one another to a great extent. While the protectionist discourse constructed for the non-Muslim terrorists is reinforced through their families, friends, and neighbors’ comments humanizing the terrorists and justifying their actions, for the so-called Muslim terrorists the comments of authoritative figures such as FBI and Obama stating that they are treating the attacks as terrorist incidents are embedded within the news reports. This double standardization is corroborated through the visuals employed in the discourse of the news. While photos portraying non-Muslim terrorists as an innocent baby, an overweight teenager, a regular person, and mentally disturbed individuals are used and by that way they are distanced away from their terrorist profile, the so-called Muslim terrorists are given either in headshots and with weapons in their hands, consolidating their “essentially” evil profile and directly situating them and their attacks within the scope of terrorism.

As can be vividly seen, the double standards applied in the news reportage and nourished by the Orientalist and Islamophobic mentality reveal the pervasiveness of stereotypes dominating the ways in which Islam and Muslims are perceived, nudge the public mood towards developing unwelcoming and even hostile attitude towards Muslim communities, and manifest the effective role played by the news discourse operating to fuel anti-Muslim sentiment.

As an ever-evolving phenomenon turning the lives of Muslims, who are not treated equally and continuously scapegoated, into a nightmare, Islamophobia, and to narrow it down Islamophobic news discourse prevalent in the Anglo-American newspapers having a wide outreach appears as a critical problem which requires both collective and constant endeavors of governments, institutions, and public to deal with.

Tackling this very problem obviously will not be easy, but that does not necessarily mean that it is impossible. First and foremost, to react against the stigmatization of Muslims through age-old prejudices reiterated in the news discourse, it is of utmost necessity to inform not only non-Muslims but also Muslims about the graveness of the situation, its historical background and repercussions, the close relationship between Islamophobia and news media, certain strategies deployed by news media outlets to construct a hegemonic narrative, and possible effective methods to cope up with it by way of different platforms such as social media and informative conferences.

As another way to deal with this fabricated monster and to prevent both the perpetuation and internalization of anti-Muslim sentiment, which is extensively ingrained in the Anglo-American news media, it is of vital significance for Muslim communities not to develop an apologetic attitude towards and feel guilty about the terrorist attacks which have nothing to do with Islam and being a Muslim. Additionally, they should not share apologetic posts on their social media accounts; otherwise, they will be taking an active part in consolidating the collective subconsciousness of the Western world conflating Islam with terrorism, and Muslims with terrorists.

Last but not least, it makes a great sense to beat the Islamophobes, who are extensively and systematically using news media outlets to disseminate Islamophobic content, at their own game. Considering the fact that news media acts as a double-edged sword through which it is possible both to intensify the Islamophobic rhetoric and counter the reductionist (mis) representations of Islam and Muslims, it is crucial for Muslims to create alternative news media outlets which will be highly influential in rectifying the Islamophobic narrative, recovering the Muslims' voices tried to be muted and missing in the mainstream news media, and amplifying them. It is worth underscoring at this point that all the above-mentioned recommended methods to dismantle Islamophobic discourse and mentality and then construct a counter-hegemonic narrative will serve a useful purpose and reverse the flow only if there is a collective awareness along with the steady and systematic action.

This thesis examining how Islamophobia is produced and perpetuated in Anglo-American news media and revealing the practiced double standards in news coverage of the terrorist attacks aims to set a useful example for future studies that will be conducted within this direction. For further research, surveys and/or interviews can be used to

observe how the Islamophobic discourse disseminated by the Western news media is perceived by both Muslim and non-Muslim public, and whether the ways in which the employed discursive strategies affect public opinion in terms of their perception of Islam and attitudes towards Muslim people or not.

As another suggestion for further studies, the attitudes of Muslims against the Islamophobic sentiment, which is created and reinforced through various means such as movies, TV series, social media, and news media, how they find resilience to try to cope with it, or whether they feel inferiority complex and internalize the discourse, which portrays Islam and Muslims as a monolithic unit and which is reiterated over and over again by the joint efforts of the Islamophobia industry, can be delved into.



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