Discourses on Islam and Muslims in Australia

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Abstract

This study attempts to present a summary of the research conducted on representation of Islam and Muslims in Australian media particularly and in Western media generally. The research aims to present a review on the findings along with theoretical and methodological approaches employed in different studies to analyze the discourses being generated by the news media regarding Islam and Muslims. Drawing on various approaches and methodologies like Fairclough's Intertextuality, Foucault's approach of power and knowledge, Said's Orientalism, critical discourse analysis, and Van Dijk's ideological square, earlier research provides an evidence of frequent production of discourses regarding Islam and Muslims as inferior, terrorism, threat, exotic, and as negative Other.

Key Words: Muslims, Islam, Other, Representation, Discourse, Ideological Square

Introduction

> Today new forms of Orientalism flourish in the hands of those who Equate revivalism, fundamentalism, or Islamic movements solely with radical revolutionaries and focus on a radicalized minority rather than the vast majority of Islamically committed Muslims who belong to the moderate mainstream of society (Esposito, 1992: 261)

Mass media have played a key part in the production, reproduction, and in distributing ideologies and cultural knowledge (Poole, 2002; Hall, 1990; Gitlin, 1980). News media perform a key function in producing and then upholding a particular discourse that affects our daily life and create an environment where we make our perceptions about ourselves and the world around us. Therefore, the mass media reflect, manifest and corroborate (Karin, 2008) different contending political and societal discourses which have impact on the meaning construction and the evolution of the society as a whole. A discourse is a set of successive statements that offers a language to stand for a specific form of knowledge about a topic (Hall, 1992). Within a particular discourse when statements are made about a specific theme, the discourse helps to construct the theme in a specific way limiting any other possible ways to construct the theme. A discourse is not a static entity rather in interaction with other discourses produces webs of meaning (Hall 1992, 291-292).

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Clash between Islam and the West is an historical (Nurullah, 2010) phenomenon. For long the West has looked down upon Islam and Muslims. Due to the involvement of Muslim named individuals in violent and terrorist acts around the world the Muslims have been historicized instead of being understood. International media immediately links any violent and terrorist act to Islam and Muslims on the basis of preconceived stereotypes (Nurullah, 2010).

Islam and the Western world relations have been edgy for many decades before 9/11 attacks in America. Since the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and Gulf War 1991 Islam and Muslims have attained a considerable attention of the Western media who have covered Islam and Muslims in the form of stereotypically hostile, negative and traumatic news (Rane, 2008; Said, 1997). However, this type of media portrayal of Islam and Muslims has been worsened since 9/11 attacks. During all those eras, many studies have proved that the depiction of Islam and Muslims has been prejudiced and pejorative (Rane, 2008). Since the media's general tendency is to focus on unusual and sensationalism, therefore majority of the media coverage about Islam and Muslims contained negative incidents including terrorist and violent acts. Consequently, the people relying only on news media as means of information perceive Islam and Muslims as shown by the media. In western countries like Australia, where wider society cannot have direct contact with Muslims due to their small number of population, people are forced to have a mediated-image of Islam and Muslims. Media have made Islam 'known' to them (Said, 1997).

Islam and Muslims gained prominent visibility in media and public discourse and in academic research since 1990s with predominantly negative connotation though (Mertens and Smaele, 2016 p. ix). The visibility enhanced to an unprecedented level after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in America. Afterwards, 7/7 London bombings, Bali attacks, Madrid bombings, Mumbai attacks, Brussels shootings, Charlie Hebdo shootings etc brought debates about Islam and Muslims under limelight and gave unprecedented negative and unwelcoming visibility to Islam and Muslims in Europe (Tsagarousianou, 2016).

Muslims community in Australia is as diverse as at international level. According to a media release on June 27, 2017 regarding census 2016, the Australian Bureau of Statistics reveals that Islam has become the second largest religion in Australia with 2.6% population after Christianity (52%) and took over Buddhism (2.4%), (Australian Bureau of Statistics-Census, 2016). Recent statistics show that Muslim population in Australia has increased over 604,000 (2.6%) from 300,000 in 2006 (2%)-a 77% increase in the Muslims population since last decade (Tolj, B. 2017). They have descended from more than 120 countries around the world, mainly from Lebanon and Turkey. A sizable Muslim population is from Asia including; Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, and the Arab countries, and also from America and Europe. Converts are a very small population in Australia. Muslims migrate to

Australia for variety of reasons including; family joining, to seek shelter from war and conflict in their home countries, employment and advancement etc (IDa, 2007).

This paper is set to provide a summary of the research literature regarding Islam and Muslims in the Australian media in particular and in Western media in general. This 'literature review', which is a part of the researcher's PhD thesis, will present an overview of the findings along with the theoretical and methodological approaches employed to analyze the discourses being generated by the news media regarding Islam and Muslims. Predominant discourses identified by the reviewed studies will be presented as preliminary conclusion at the end.

Islam and Muslims in the Western Media

Edward Said's 'Covering Islam' is considered as the first and pioneer systematic study conducted on Muslims' portrayal in Western media. Said provides an insight on misrepresentations of Islam and Muslims in media. He argues that the Western domination on East, especially on Islam and Muslims, is not only political and economic but cultural also. In this context, he maintains, Islam is regarded as backward and uncivilized. Islam is considered and portrayed as a symbol of barbarism, terrorism, demonic and devastation. He asserts that most of the content in Western media about Islam and Muslims represents Islam as an aggressive religion. Through this one-sided coverage of Islam, without knowing its true nature and because of racial and cultural hostility, Western media have drawn a line between *US* and *THEM*. With such continuous representation of *Other* as inferior and barbaric, the Western audience has accepted that terrorism originates from Islam (Said, 1981).

Many scholars believe that among many information sources that contribute to distort Islam and Muslims' image in Westerners' minds, media is the most influential one. This phenomenon of prejudiced, negative and biased representation and propaganda against Islam and Muslims by Western media is not a new one. Many studies in the field of media and political discourse have determined that Western Media, at large, portray Islam and Muslims in an unfavorable, stereotypical, and discriminatory way. Image of Islam and Muslims as negative 'Other' is a strong attribution of Western media portrayal of Islam and Muslims. Tone of the media allegations on Islam and Muslims varies 'from a simple suspicion to an explicit accusation' (Alghamdi, 2015).

Western media, particularly the British and the US, can be considered as responsible for cultivating prejudice, irrationality, and distorted image of Islam and Muslims in the minds of Westerners (Alghamdi, 2015; Nurullah, 2010). The media is continuously labeling Islam as a religion that breeds terrorism and violence and Muslims as terrorists. Any terrorist incident around the world is immediately attributed to the Muslims by media. For example, consider the media coverage of Oklahoma City terrorist incident and Norway terrorist attacks in 2011 where media

immediately blamed Muslims for the attacks while both the claims turned out to be false. After investigations two fundamentalist Christians were convicted for Oklahoma attacks and a 32 year old Norwegian for the Oslo incident. As a consequence of such hurried and unauthentic media coverage and malicious propaganda against Muslims, violent and racial attacks and offences have been increased against Muslims living in Western world (Alghamdi, 2015).

Jay Reid (2015) seems to be failed in distinguishing between Muslims and terrorists. In his study, at multiple stages, he uses terms; 'Muslim terrorists', 'Muslim antagonists', 'Muslim fundamentalists', etc, as one concept. He conducted this study to examine discourses on 'Muslims Terrorism' during pre and post 9/11 era. His whole discussion, right from the title, revolves around an attempt to establish a pre-conceived, a misconception, idea i.e. 'Muslim terrorism'. In this paper, the researcher attempts to examine how and up to what extent 'Muslim terrorists' were represented as 'sympathetic' and 'un-sympathetic' 'Muslim antagonists' during pre and post 9/11. He concludes that the Hollywood movies produced discourses about 'Muslim terrorists' as sympathetic individuals motivated by 'Islamic fundamentalists' to carry out violent activities. Discourses about such individuals, he adds, changed after 2007 where were shown as willing participants in terrorist attacks, so, the un-sympathetic individuals (Reid, 2015).

Ghareeb (1983), studying portrayal of Arabs in American media regarding Arab-Israel conflict, argues that the Western journalists portrayed Arabs as malevolence and Israelis as virtuous. He states that Western media depicted Arabs as dishonest, oversexed, dirty and corrupt with attributions like; fanatic terrorists, scheming and backward. Ghareeb adds that the media could not cover Middle East objectively and fairly. He proposes five main reasons for this failure; the Israeli lobby, think-alike environment within media, media ignorance, cultural bias, and the conflict between Arab and Israel (Ghareeb, 1983). Similarly, Suleiman (1988) examining various American magazines finds out that most of the news coverage of the Arab-Israel conflict attributed 'bad guys' to Arabs and 'democratic and West-like' to Israelis. He concludes that overall coverage of the conflict was biased against the Arabs (Suleiman, 1988).

Media has failed to distinguish between Islam and Muslims (Nurullah, 2010). Taking a small amount of terrorist attacks perpetrated by individuals with Muslim name, media has labeled all Muslims as terrorists. This is a serious question on the objectivity of the media. There is a huge difference between teachings of Islam and how its followers behave. Individuals with Muslim names are not necessarily true followers of Islamic principles. This is an utter failure of media for considering Osama Bin Laden as a representative of billions of Muslims in the world (Nurullah, 2010) and labeling all of them as terrorists. Clear and vast majority of Arabs and Muslims love peace, deplore and condemn all forms of violence. Nurullah (2010)

asserts that Islam as a religion must not be blamed for the violence and terrorism but the followers who actually failed to understand and follow the real teachings of Islam.

While covering the terrorism, media presents Muslims and Arabs in an oversimplified way considering them as one same group. Research has proved it that almost every single act of violence is immediately attributed to Muslims or Arabs which has resulted in sever 'Othering' of Islam, Muslims and Arabs (Nurullah, 2010).

Due to terrorist attacks in America the negative treatment of Islam and Muslims in Western media has been intensified. During post 9/11 era, Muslims have been labeled as terrorists and Islam has publicly and explicitly been associated with terrorism. There is a plethora of media content including TV talk shows, news coverage, dramas, movies, cartoons, and TV serials etc in which Muslims have been depicted as terrorists, militants, barbaric, radicals, anti-democratic, uncivilized, fundamentalists, anti-modern, and anti-Western (Nurullah, 2010). Any individual extremist act or any violent movement is immediately conflated to Muslims by the media in West (Nurullah, 2010).

Islam and Muslims in the Australian Media

Samina Yasmeen in her study, 'Muslim Women as Citizens in Australia: Diverse Notions and Practices' (2007), states that increasing Muslim militancy has impelled Australian Muslim women to live an active life. Such an emerging activism gave rise to two different opinions: some women preferred orthodox interpretation of Islamic way of life while others supported more moderate and liberal life style to be an Australian citizen (Yasmeen, 2007).

Samina Yasmeen (2007) discussing post 9/11 situation in Australia adds that attacks on World Trade Centre, 2005 London bombings, 2004 Madrid attacks and 2002 bombings in Bali changed the discourse about Muslims as Australian citizens. Muslims were started to be considered as potential source of 'home grown' terrorism. The Australian government played a pivotal role in the evolution of this discourse. For instance, the then Defense Minister, Reith, claimed that Muslims in Australia can facilitate terrorism in and outside Australia using Australian soil. Such statements and references implied to link Islam and terrorism reinforced negative image and previously held biases against Islam in Australians' minds. She adds that the incidents of abuse and discrimination against Muslims in Australia increased after 9/11. Also, because of the negative construction of Muslims and Islam, a sense of alienation and 'not belonging' increased among Australian Muslims (Yasmeen, 2007).

In an article, *Islam and the Media,* Barry Lowe (1995) asserted that while reporting on Islam and Muslims the Australian media seemed to be hostile or curious but not sensitive. Individual Muslims were reported in such a way that influenced public

associating all Muslims with it. So, a report of violent act by any individual Muslim would portray all Muslim community in Australia as negative. Lowe argued that such a traditional Western attitude towards Muslims worsened due to the political upheaval in the Middle East. Since then, it had been a common feature of Australian media while reporting Islam and Muslims that there was 'a little of Gaddafi in every Muslim' (Lowe, 1995 p. 57). Lowe maintained that such a negative reporting of Muslims by the Australian media resulted in prejudiced and negative treatment of Muslim community in Australia (Lowe, 1995).

Susskind (2002) argued that the Australian print media adopted a critical, harsh and derogatory stance towards Australian Muslims by portraying them as disloyal, terrorists, and by associating all Muslims together. Such a news coverage trend led a distorted image of Islam, Muslims and Muslim community in Australia. Susskind asserted that during the Gulf War the Australian newspapers maintained overwhelmingly negative and biased stance towards Islam and Muslims instead of presenting an unbiased, balanced and accurate view (Susskind, 2002).

A survey report (2015), published in *The Guardian* by Michael Safi and Nick Evershed, revealed that a clear majority of the Muslims in Australia believed that anti terror laws passed by the Australian government unfairly targeted Muslims. The three quarters of the Muslims who were surveyed said that the terrorist groups distorted the image and meaning of Islam. The study revealed that the Muslims in Australia had to change their dressing, outlook, worship place and the rout to work place to avoid any scrutiny by police following the counter terror laws enforced by the government. Majority of the Muslims believed that the Australian media treated them unfairly and that they felt under siege by the police (Safi and Evershed, 2015).

In an article, published in the Australian Journal of Social Issues (AJSI) in 2007, Dr. Danielle Celermajer tries to find out the construction of 'Western Political Identity' through the construction of 'Political Islam' by tracing political discourses that vilify Islam. The article entitled, 'If Islam is our Other, Who are 'We'?', suggests that the Australian media represent Islam as a threat to the liberal and modern polity in Australia. It is not simply the religion as a threat to the Australian liberalism nut Islam in particular. Analyzing and reading through political discourses, the author tries to unveil which political secularisms motivated the contemporary 'radical Othering of Islam' (Celermajer, 2007).

Celermajer (2007) quotes an editorial from 'Sydney Morning Herald, 2005' where Muslims are represented as a danger living within 'Us' in the form of an electrician, a painter, and a butcher, who hate and ready to attack 'Us'. Pointing out such extremely negative political rhetoric against Islam and Muslims, the author quotes some reports and international politicians like; Angela Merkel-the then German Chancellor, who claims immigrating Muslims as a security and cultural threat to the European life.

The author states that such an intentionally constructed political rhetoric and narrative; where the word Islam is conflated with 'terrorism' and 'women oppression', and where Muslims are portrayed as 'aliens' and 'enemy within'. The author adds that there is no doubt that violence in the name of Islam has created fear in most of the European countries but, still, equating Islam with terrorism occludes a significant part of the picture (Celermajer, 2007).

In a news story *Portrayal of Muslims 'tainted by racism'* published in *The Age* on March 18, 2006, Ian Munro quoted a known Australian journalist and Professor of Journalism Peter Manning who said that the coverage of Muslims and Arabs in Australian press was tainted by racism. He said that the Australian media portrayed Muslims and Arabs as 'tricky', 'sexual', 'sleazy' and 'untrustworthy' and that the media associated all Muslims with violence and terrorism in more than 89 per cent articles published in two major newspapers of Sydney after 9/11 attacks (Munro, 2006).

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC, 2004) research identified main themes implicit in Muslim vilification as experienced by the Australian Muslims. Such themes included; Arab and Muslims in Australia were seen responsible for the attacks and potential terrorists, increase in blatant attacks against Muslims, increase in discrimination, no place for Arabs and Muslims in Australia, Muslims were supposed to abandon their dress code, language and cultural practices, unwarranted police attacks, and biased and unfriendly representations by media (HREOC, 2004).

Halim Rane (2008) in a study entitled, 'Knowing one another: An antidote for mass media Islam', presenting the findings of his analysis on *the representation of Islam and Muslims in the Australian press* argued that the Australian media offered a distorted version of Islam to the Australians. The version of Islam presented to the Australians by the media was based on misrepresentation of reality and stereotypes which perpetuated misunderstandings and hostile relationships between Muslims and the wider society. Rane (2008) termed such version of Islam as *Mass Media Islam* and stressed that to neutralize its negative impacts on Muslims and on the whole Australian society; the Australians and the Muslims had to interact with each other so that they could know each other in an *unmediated way* (Rane, 2008).

Halim Rane (2000), in another study *the Australian Press Coverage of Islam,* conducted content analysis of the news regarding 'Islam', 'Muslims' and 'Moslems' in three major newspapers of Australia; *Sydney Morning Herald, The Australian,* and *The West Australian*. He found out that the newspapers while reporting Islam and Muslims mostly focused on the news related to war, conflict, crisis and violence. Muslims were shown as aggressors and mostly fighting against Christians. Most of the news contents related Islam and Muslims contained derogatory words and

expressions like; terrorists, militant, fundamentalists, or extremists (Rane, 2000). Similarly, Shahram Akberzadeh and Bianca Smith in their study, *The Representation of Islam and Muslims in the Media,* examined *The Age* and *The Herald Sun* and found out that the news contents contained significantly negative impression regarding Islam and Muslims (Akbarzadeh and Smith, 2005).

Quayle and Sonn (2009) in their study, *The construction of Muslims as Other in mainstream Australia's print media: An analysis of discourse*, argued that Muslims as minorities in most of the Western countries have faced intensive Othering since twin tower attacks in America. In Australia racial attacks on Muslims and on those having Middle-Eastern-Appearance have increased dramatically (Quayle and Sonn, 2009).

Discourses on Islam and Muslims

Othering

Edward Said (1978/2003) argues that the Western media through misrepresenting the East has created the Orient as it's 'Other'. He further stresses that the 'Orientalism' is a doctrine used by the West with political intentions where the Orient is not understood and represented in its true nature rather on the basis of western European experience about the orient while the westerners believe it objective representation. Such representations turned in to stereotypes and the latest media technology has solidified and accelerated the process (Said, 1978/2003).

Edward Said's Orientalism (2003) is an attractive perspective to understand power relationship between the East and the West. It explores historically rooted ideas in the Western culture, that rationalize imperialism i.e. the West is superior to the East. Said (2003) presents three main claims about the Orientalism. Firstly, he believes that the Orientalism is a set of ideas with political objectives. Such ideas provided ideological justification for the Western control over the oriental lands. Second, Said explains how have Europe defined its own image with the help of such tools and established, and sustained others and opposites. Based on the self defined image of its own and the others, Europe has given its culture superiority over the Islamic culture. Third, Said draws attention to the fact that Orientalism has shaped false image of Islamic cultures (Said, 2003).

Rune Ottosen (1995) notes that drawing a line between *Us* and the *Other* is sociopsychological process that occurs in almost all human relations, in their neighborhood, community and society. People include some and exclude others on the basis of variety of characteristics, criteria and differences. He suggests that Carl Schmitt is among the pioneers of the *We* versus *Others* thought in modern political discourses who believe that, in a political perspective, the authority of the ruling elite

would be challenged if it is failed to keep the division alive between 'we' and the 'other' (Ottosen, 1995).

Various studies have determined that media hold the power to produce specific discourses about the minority groups by representing and misrepresenting them. Generally, in the U.S. media, the Muslims are portrayed as 'alien Other' through stereotype coverage in movies, cartoons, TV shows, and other media contents. Such misrepresentation has roots in the cultural representations of the 'Other' (Cottle, 2006; Nurullah, 2010; Saeed, 2007).

In a study, analyzing a Hollywood movie, 'The Kingdom (2007)', the author argues that Hollywood embodied Muslim men as dangerous, uncivilized, pre-modern, and scripted as lecherous. The author finds out that in this movie racial and gendered discourses are tried to be produced about Muslims. The author argues that her analyses elucidated that the discourses produced in the movies marked Muslim women and their communities as the 'quintessential different Other' (Aguato, 2009).

Studying American broadcast media coverage of Arabs, Shaheen (1984) points out that in American television contents four basic myths are repeatedly attributed to Arabs that is they are barbaric, sex maniacs, extremely wealthy, and terrorists. Similarly, analyzing *Time* and *Newsweek*, Manan (2008) argues that after 9/11 attacks media opted a negative-Other policy towards Islam and Muslims. He points out that Islam and Muslims were represented as anti-modern, evil, volatile and deviant (Manan, 2008).

In a study entitled, 'Review of studies on Media Portrayal of Islam, Muslims and Iran', in 2014, Jahedi, Abdullah and Mukundan provide an overview of the research conducted on media representations of Islam, Muslims and Iran. In this study, along with the findings on Islam and Muslims' treatment by mass media, theoretical and methodological approaches employed to media discussions are also presented. The authors find out that the review of previous studies showed a dominant trend in mass media misrepresenting Islam and Muslims and marginalizing the 'other'. The findings suggest that such a negative portrayal was intensified after 9/11 attacks in America. This review study finds out that majority of the research conducted to map out Islam and Muslims' representation in Western media followed approaches like; Orientalism, Framing analysis, Critical Discourse analysis, Ideological Square, and Constructive Theory of representation (Jahedi, Abdullah, and Mukundan, 2014).

Karin (2008) conducted a study, *The Othering of Islam in a European context*, to map out discourses on Islam produced in Swedish language newspapers of Finland. He says a myth about Islam as a backward and aggressive religion is widely present in Western media material. Karin distinguishes four prominent Othering discourses; Clash of Civilization discourse, violence, colonialist and secularization. According to

the author, the use of terminologies like; terrorism and political violence have been increased in the media coverage of Islam and Muslims after 9/11. Some historical of events have been presented in such a way so that an impression could be created that there is a tendency of violence in Islam. Religionization is a central concept in this situation where Islam is being presented as an explanation of violence. Karin points out that in the discourse of violence the dichotomy between 'US' and 'Them' is very much clear. For the Muslims, who were protesting peacefully against the publication of blasphemous caricatures of Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H, the Western Media used terminologies like; 'mob', 'rabble' and words like; 'threat' and 'violence' were used attached with Muslims. 'Sharia' was always portrayed in a negative and demeaning context.

In the 'Colonialist discourse', the author points out that Islam is constructed as a backward religion in a socio-cultural context and Muslims are depicted as individuals who cannot manage themselves. Karin maintains that this discourse contains an impression as if Islam needs to be reformed and Muslims to be enlightened. In the discourse of 'Secularization', he suggests, Islam has been presented as a 'problem' in the ideological premises and the 'secularized West' is seen to have solution of this problem in its norms and vales. In the colonialist discourse where Islam is seen as 'harmless but backward', this discourse presents even more threatening picture of Islam and West as two antipodes (Karin, 2008).

The concept of the 'Clash of Civilization' discourse is primarily based on the thoughts of Samuel P. Huntington presented in his book, 'The Clash of Civilization (1996)', where he emphasized that in future main nature of the conflict between nations would be cultural. Karin says that in this type of discourse Islam is portrayed as a threatening and ideological antipode (Karin, 2008).

Karin (2008) adds that Islam, in the debates he analyzed, was labeled as violent and/or backward religion. He maintains that such perceptions were not only available in media discourses but they were also essential elements of broader tradition of Othering Islam. He adds that such misconceptions have paved the way of typical stereotyping of Muslims for centuries (Karin, 2008).

Us versus *Them* or the process of 'Othering' is widely reflected in the news media discourses. Usually the distinction between *Us* and *Them* is created by emphasizing on the differing attributes and characters such as religion, ethnicity and race (Nurullah, 2010).

Nurullah (2010), drawing on Edward Said's concept of Orientalism, analyzed portrayal of Arabs and Muslims in an American television serial '24' and determined that the media depiction were negative and stereotypical which worsen the 'Othering Process'. He argued that there was a need to distinguish between Muslims and

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terrorists. He asserted that the portrayal of Arabs, Muslims or Arab-Muslims by U.S. media as stereotypical crazy terrorists, non-trustworthy and insufficiently patriotic was questionable and condemnable.

Nurullah (2010) maintained that it was wrong on the part of U.S. media that it depicted all Muslims as terrorists by linking them with the Muslim-named perpetuators of terrorist attacks. He further added that this was the ignorance on the part of media that it equated Arabs with Muslims whereas Arabs constitute only a very small proportion of the whole Muslim world. He concluded that Muslims' representation by media could be explained as;

Muslims=Arabs=Fundamentalists=Terrorists=Muslims (Nurullah, 2010).

Representation strategies

Elisabeth Poole (2002), analyzing the Muslim representation strategies in the UK press during pre and post 9/11 era, claims that the Muslims are being excluded from the European identity and culture, and they are denied the citizenship and equality. European Muslims and their life style are represented as inferior, 'partial, incomplete, and belated as compared to the European modernity'. European Muslims are portrayed as threatening, 'so different', and associated with religious and political intolerance, and as having allegiance with external religious and political centers. She points out that the British press represented the Muslims as a security threat, and as cultural threat provoking problems in interpersonal relations (Pool, 2002 p. 84). She further argues that such representations have conflated Islam and Muslims with an extremist minority, and have refused to translate between 'us' and 'them' to understand other's point of view before judging them. She concluded that there is a clear evidence that the UK press reproduced anti-Muslim racism in prior to 9/11. An Islamification discourse is clearly evident in the UK press's representation of Muslims (Pool, 2002 in Mertens and Smaele, 2016 p. 23-26).

Poole (2016) identifies three prominent elements or strategies in the UK press coverage of Islam and Muslims; *Categorization*, *Decontextualization*, and *the Process of Othering*. She maintains that findings have revealed that the UK press most frequently *categorized* Islam and Muslims as; terror, extremism, militancy, extremist, terrorist, suicide bomber, Islamist, and militant. In terms of *decontextualization,* she explains that the UK press reporting clearly linked the acts of terrorism to Islamic belief without providing any political or historical contexts. The Muslimness of the perpetrators has been emphasized and belief has been perceived as the motivating element behind the violent behavior. She further adds that the UK press reporting linked terrorism and violence to the 'extreme religious and murderous ideology' (p. 29) and 'Othered' it by locating it outside the UK and by individualizing the perpetrators from the broader Muslim community in the United Kingdom (Pool, 2016 in Mertens and Smaele, 2016 p. 29).

John Richardson's study *(Mis)representing Islam: The racism and rhetoric of British broadsheet newspapers* is another attempt to explore the depiction of (Global) Islam in the UK broadsheet newspapers. Richardson (2004) used Critical Discourse Analysis to expose the ideological meanings in the press discourse regarding Islam. He found out that Islam was associated with four major themes; as a security threat, extremist or terrorist threat, threat to democratic steadiness in their native countries, and as a threat to women (p. 232). He argued that the UK press, while representing Islam, engaged in three-part process i.e. separation, differentiation, and negativization (Richardson, 2004).

Us versus Them discourse

Izadi and Saghaye-Biria (2007) employing Van Dijk's ideological square and Said's Orientalism analyzed the US press editorial treatment of Iran in the context of its nuclear program and pointed out how the selected newspapers constructed in-and-out-group identities. The researchers analyzed the 'argumentative structures' and 'lexical choices' of the editorials and determined 6 different Orientalistic discourses constructing the West as *Us* and Iran as *Them*. The themes consisted of, 'Islam as Threat', 'Oriental Inferiority', 'Oriental Submissiveness', 'Oriental Irrationality', 'Oriental Untrustworthiness' and 'Jews versus Muslims' (Izadi and Saghaye-Biria, 2007). Similarly, comparing British and Iranian newspapers' coverage of Iran's nuclear program, Behnam and Moshtaghi (2008) pointed out that the British newspapers portrayed Iran in the context of nuclear program in a negative and biased way. Using 'Transitivity System', the researchers determined an underlying dichotomy of EU as *Us* and Iran as *Them* (Behnam and Moshtaghi Zenouz, 2008).

In a study entitled, 'A Critical Study of News Discourse: Iran's Nuclear Issue in the British Newspapers', in 2005, Koosha and Shamas investigated how the UK press transmitted particular ideologies through their headlines during coverage of the Iran's nuclear program. They pointed out a prominent discursive dichotomy in news texts constructing EU as a savior i.e. *Us* versus Iran i.e. *Them.* Koosha and Shamas (2005) concluded that dominant themes found in news texts regarding Iran were; crisis, danger, defiance and so on, while 'crisis-solving', 'power' and 'world-protector' were the themes associated with the EU (Koosha and Shamas, 2005).

'Essential European Cultural Problem' (Islam and Muslims as foreign threat and domestic other)

Elisabeth Poole in her study, *The United Kingdom's Reporting of Islam and Muslims; Reviewing the Field* published in *Representations of Islam in the News* (2016), claims that the volume of the Islam and Muslims' coverage in the UK press after 9/11 was manifold. The coverage of Islam and Muslims by *The Guardian* and *The Times* during September 12 to October 25, 2001 was equivalent to their annual coverage during

previous year (Pool, 2002 in Mertens and Smaele, 2016 p. 28). Studies have revealed that there is a clear difference between the type and volume of the coverage related to the national (internal) Islam and the foreign (external/global) Islam. Poole (2016) identifies a prominent increase in the UK press coverage of Islam and Muslims at home as compared to the Islam and Muslims abroad. She argues that although the coverage about British Muslims has been increased but the focus remains on the foreign Islam (Poole, 2016). Many other studies in the USA, Netherlands, Germany, and France have revealed the same trend that the local press contains a clear difference in the type of coverage extended towards the 'foreign threat' and the 'domestic other'. Foreign (External) Islam and Muslims are viewed as a 'greater threat' and comparatively more dominated and entrenched with violence as compared to the domestic (national or internal) Islam and Muslims (Alsultany, 2012 in Mertens and Smaele, 2016 p. 64; d'Haenens and Bink 2007; Drunen, 2103; Ibrahim, 2010)

Poole (2016) argues that the major shift in the post 9/11 coverage of the 'British Muslims' was the association with terrorism. Pre 9/11 coverage did not conflate British Muslims with terrorism directly rather it was the image of global Islam and Muslims. The Muslims in Britain, who were asylum seekers, dissidents, and exiles, were categorized as terrorists. The change in coverage regarding British Muslims appeared immediately after the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the attention shifted to 'terrorism', 'counter terrorism measures' and 'discrimination towards Muslims' (p. 28). The interpretation and the representation of the internal 'Other' as source of threat and terror strengthened after the 7/7 London bombings. She further argues that the conservative press in the UK paid more attention to Islam as compared to the liberal and tabloid newspapers focused more on the domestic issues as compared to the broadsheets who covered international issues related to Islam. Tabloids, despite their lesser coverage, associated Islam with negative terms as compared to the broadsheet newspapers. Overall, the right wing press associated Islam and Muslims with terrorism, conflict, violence and cultural difference more that the left wing press (Poole, 2016 p.27).

Alazzany (2008) found that in *The NYT* news discourse the themes such as evil, violence, and threat were dominant which cemented the depiction of Islam and Muslims as a challenge to the global security. He maintained that *The NYT* news discourse contained ideologically significant strategies of selection and generalization to represent Islam and Muslims in a biased way. Representing Islam and Muslims the newspaper emphasized on negative and chaotic incidents and ignored positive aspects of Muslim world. The newspaper deliberately constructed dichotomies of internal Muslims versus external Muslims and moderate versus extremist Muslims by portraying American Muslims peace loving and moderate people while external Muslims as violent and terrorists (Alazzany, 2008).

In a study, *Muslims in Public and Media Discourse in Western Europe* published in *Representations of Islam in the News* (2016), Roza Tsagarousianou has explained the discourses and problematics related to the Muslims as an essential European cultural minority. She argues that over the last two decades Islam has been associated with religious and cultural fundamentalism, extremism and terrorism. This has resulted in positioning the European Muslims as antagonists to European culture and values which is holding back their integration in European societies. The situation has given rise to the discourses defining Muslim immigration as problem and distinguishing them as 'manageable' and 'unmanageable' population. This 'unmanageable' community, due to its adherence to Islam and Muslim identity, is seen as threat to the European secular character and to the social cohesion in France, the UK and in Europe overall. The Muslim identity in Europe has been perceived as a deficiency that has to be rectified through becoming accustomed to the European way of life or to be restricted through a variety of forms of exclusion. Through this construction as societal insecurity, Islam and Muslims in Europe have been facing the brunt of condemnation and public security (Tsagarousianou 2016, in Mertens and Smaele, 2016 p. 4-5)

Exotic Islam to Threatening Islam

Roza Tsagarousianou (2016) in her study *Muslims in Public and Media Discourse in Western Europe* scrutinizes the dominant media and public discourses regarding Islam and Muslims in the UK, Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands, and Spain. She explains that there is a gradual change in the discourse regarding Islam from the 'exotic Islam' to a 'threatening Islam' which threatens the European way of life and the safety. She refers to this transformation as 'Securitization of Islam' discourse (Tsagarousianou, 2016 p. ix, 3). She illustrates that the murder of the Charlie Hebdo editorial team in 2015 is the last incident among a list of such incident where the representation of Islam and Muslims appeared to be a problematic in Europe. Subsequent reporting of the incident portrayed Charlie Hebdo as a symbol of freedom and Islam as religion and the Muslims, who follow it, as an increasing threat to the value (p. 3).

Tsagarousianou (2016) maintains that this invocation of the 'threat' is instrumental in the construction of 'Europe' itself. As Said (1993) implied that associating Islam with fundamentalism is an implicit effort to position 'Europe' central to the 'vaguely designated Western ethos'. This construction of a 'Europe' is predominantly defined through the antagonistic relationship to its Muslims 'other' (Tsagarousianou, 2016 p. 15).

She (2016) claims that the contemporary discourse on European Muslims and Islam is not just a means of talking and representing them but a way of 'constructing' them, 'treating' their presence and making a sense of them (Tsagarousianou, 2016 p. 11).

Through this contemporary discourse about Muslims in Europe are constructed not only as 'culturally different' but also as a significant 'security threat' that is required to be 'administered' and monitored and whose presence needs to be questioned, conditioned and regulated (p.11). Cesari (2009) asserts that the securitization discourse on Islam and Muslims in Europe permeates such policy making and has an impact on variety of fields ranging from minority laws, immigration rules, their schooling, security measures, health policies, and on broader process of inclusion.

Political Parallelism

Stefan Mertens in his study, *European Media Coverage of Islam in a Globalizing World,* published in *Representations of Islam in the News* (2016), investigated the influence of the 'ideological biases' (left versus right) in the coverage of Islam and Muslims by the western European press. He claims that various studies have revealed that 'politically conservative' newspapers viewed Muslims in a more negative way as compared to the 'liberals'. He found out a clear thematic distinction between the coverage of external and internal Islam. Foreign Islam was more conflated with female underrepresentation and violence as compared to the national Islam. Secondly, the findings evidenced that the left-wing press showed less violence as compared to the newspapers of right-wing and the right-wing press remained more institutional (Mertens 2016, in Mertens and Smaele, 2016 p. 65, 73).

Mertens and Smaele (2016) argue that the ideological differences are evident in the national contexts. Mostly there is a clear distinction between the coverage of national and foreign Islam with the latter encircling the negative representation (Mertens and Smaele, 2016 p. xi).

Preliminary Conclusion

Considering this detailed literature review, it can be concluded that the representation, depiction and construction of Islam and Muslims in the Western and Australian media is problematic. Islam and Muslims are portrayed and constructed stereotypically by the media. The Australian and the Western media contain Orientalist themes, *Us versus Them* categorization, and 'Othering' discourses in their reporting on Islam and Muslims. Recent studies are evident that in the western media coverage of Islam and Muslims, there is a prominent shift in the discourse regarding Islam from an 'exotic Islam' to a 'threatening Islam' and regarding Muslims, being followers of the 'murderous ideology', as a threat to the European cultural identity. Studies conducted in America and in most of the European countries suggest that the political ideology of the newspapers plays a key role in their coverage of Islam and Muslims. Also, there is a clear distinction between their stance regarding Islam and Muslims within and outside their national boundaries, representing the foreign Islam as a 'greater threat' as compared to the national Islam.

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