Media and New Media Representation of Islam and Muslims during the "Clash of Civilizations": Constructive Dialogue or Destructive Stereotypes?

"Medeniyetler Çatışması" Sürecinde İslam'ın ve Müslümanların Medya ve Yeni Medya Temsilleri: Yapıcı bir Diyalog mu, Yoksa Yıkıcı Kalıp Yargılar mı?

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ABSTRACT

More than 45 years have passed since E. Said published his book titled "Orientalism", where he represented and deconstructed the attitude towards the Orient. His assumptions sparked controversial debates that are still relevant today. The theory of "Clash of Civilizations" emphasizes that the conflict between Western and Islamic civilizations has been continuing for more than 1,300 years and has a deep religious context. Nevertheless, media might play a significant role encouraging cross-cultural understanding and cooperation, or, conversely, promoting destructive stereotypes. Therefore, this article examines the role of the media in shaping "social reality" in different cultural environments. The primary aim of the study is to explore the role of the media as a mediator in shaping public opinion, worldview, and perpetuating stereotypes in different cultural environments: The "Orient" and the "West". The following tasks are set: to analyze the media's role as a mediator in shaping public opinion and constructing stereotypes; to find out the connections between Orientalism and (negative) representation of ethnic, religious, social, etc. minorities in media; to analyze the concepts of Islamophobia/Muslimophobia, the theory of "Clash of Civilizations" and to discuss the emergence of negative images of Islam and Muslims in various media channels; discuss the role of media regarding social movements and outline the boundaries for further research in the context of the 2023 Israel-Hamas war.

Keywords: . Orientalism, Islamophobia, Muslimophobia, Clash of Civilizations, Media Representation, Hamas.

ÖZ

E. Said'in Doğu'ya yönelik tutumları betimlediği ve yapı söküme uğrattığı "Oryantalizm" adlı kitabını yayınlamasının üzerinden 45 yıldan fazla zaman geçmiştir. Said'in varsayımları, bugün hala güncelliğini koruyan tartışmalara yol açmaktadır. "Medeniyetler Çatışması" kuramı, Batı ve İslam medeniyetleri arasındaki çatışmanın 1.300 yılı aşkın bir süredir devam ettiğini ve derin bir dini bağlama sahip olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Bununla birlikte medya, kültürler arası anlayış ve iş birliğini teşvik eden ya da tam tersine yıkıcı stereotipleri destekleyen önemli bir rol oynayabilmektedir. Bu nedenle, bu makale medyanın farklı kültürel ortamlarda "sosyal gerçekliği" şekillendirmedeki rolünü incelemektedir. Çalışmanın temel amacı, medyanın farklı kültürel ortamlarda kamuoyunu, dünya görüşünü şekillendirmede ve kalıp yargıları sürdürmede bir aracı olarak rolünü araştırmaktır: "Doğu" ve "Batı". Bu kapsamda şu amaçlar belirlenmiştir: Medyanın kamuoyunu şekillendirmede ve stereotipler inşa etmede bir aracı olarak rolünü analiz etmek; Oryantalizm ile etnik, dini, sosyal azınlıkların medyada (olumsuz) temsili arasındaki bağlantıları bulmak; İslamofobi/Müslüman düşmanlığı kavramlarını, "Medeniyetler Çatışması" kuramını derinlemesine analiz etmek ve çeşitli medya kanallarında İslam ve Müslümanlarla ilgili olumsuz imajların ortaya çıkışını tartışmak; 2023 İsrail-Hamas savaşı bağlamında medyanın toplumsal hareketlerle ilgili rolünü tartışmak ve daha ileri araştırmalar için sınırları çerçevelendirmek.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Oryantalizm, İslamofobi, Müslüman Düşmanlığı, Medeniyetler Çatışması, Medya Temsili, Hamas.

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Introduction

In the 21st century, mass media has become an essential source of information for people to learn about the world, but Lippmann (1997) has already noticed a gap between what is depicted in the press and reality. Although in today's world, the media emphasizes its mission - to accurately inform about events, to explain current problems, to impartially present different points of view, but in the absence of an effective control mechanism, the information presented in the media is selective. It is unilaterally "decided" which stories to select, what to emphasize, how to interpret and present it to a certain audience. In this way, the media occupies a monopoly position in the formation of public opinion.

The main assumption is that the media does not just tell us the truth or the facts as they are, but functions as an intermediary that helps shape a certain worldview. The media presents images that make up our "common reality", portraying specific social groups in stereotypical ways that can influence how people think, feel and behave. Biased information is incorporated into "common knowledge" or schemas that audiences form stereotypical attitude towards certain groups (e.g. ethnic, religious, social, etc. minorities). In the mass media, messages are formulated and presented in such a way that they acquire a special meaning, therefore it can become an institutionalized tool for shaping social reality.

Social exclusion related to Muslims' minority status, loyalty, Islamophobia and their identification as "Others" has led to a re-examination of the media's power to shape public opinion. The cartoons published by Denmark's Jyllands-Posten (2005) have sparked a controversial debate, but the focus on free speech has diverted attention from the real issues of racism, Islamophobia, xenophobia and the stigmatization of Muslims in the media.

Muhammad cartoons crisis started after the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten published 12 cartoons in 2005. These caricatures depicted a prophet Muhammad, one of the most important

figures of the religion of Islam. The newspaper announced that this was an attempt to contribute to the ongoing discussions about criticism of Islam and self-censorship. Muslim groups in Denmark announced that they felt insulted, and the issue eventually turned into protests around the world, including violence and protests in some Muslim countries (Jensen, 2006).

The main object of the study: Media as the main institution of social reality construction.

The main aim of the study: to find out the role of the media as a mediator in shaping public opinion, worldview and creating stereotypes in different cultural environments: The "Orient" and the "West". The following *tasks* will be set in order to reveal the main aim of the study:

1. to analyze the media's role as a mediator in shaping public opinion and constructing stereotypes;

2. to find out the connections between Orientalism and (negative) representation of ethnic, religious, social, etc. minorities in media;

3. to analyze the concepts of Islamophobia/ Muslimophobia, the theory of "Clash of Civilizations" and to discuss the emergence of negative images of Islam and Muslims in various media channels;

4. to discuss the role of the media in the context of social movements and outline the boundaries for further research in the context of the 2023 Israel–Hamas war.

Methodology

This study will use the method of literature and document analysis, which will help to clarify the concepts of Orientalism, the most important features, and the main characteristics of Islamophobia. A comparative method will also be used to show the links between Islamophobia, Muslimophobia and (negative) media representation of Islam and Muslims. A case study method is used to clarify the role of the media in presenting Huntington's theory of the "Clash

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of Civilizations" and identifying the main factors that lead to such social resistance movements as Hamas as well as their representation in the media regarding the further Israel–Hamas War of 2023.

Review of Literature

The concept of Orientalism in E. Said's book "Orientalism"

Three main paradigms of Orientalism are distinguished. First of all, Orientalism is named as a field of academic study. Scholars use Orientalism as a prism through which the Orient is seen, studied and evaluated. It is the framework used to understand the very different, mysterious and "scary" people of the Middle East, in other words a static and "undeveloped" society (Said, 1978).

The second meaning of the concept confirms that "Orientalism as a way of thinking, based on the ontological and epistemological division between "Orient" and usually "West" (Ibid). Therefore, Orientalism can be described as an ideology related to the idea of dualism between the West and Islam. For many centuries, myths, stories, descriptions about the people living in the Orient, their customs, traditions or simply their way of life have been created without any evidence or research. A certain hierarchy is constantly emphasized - the unquestioned superiority of Europe and the unfortunate "backwardness" of the Orient. Any hypothesis that this "law" generally accepted by Western society could not be confirmed or refuted is rejected. All this led to the dualism of East and West. Hay (1968) develops further the idea of European collective identity, which defines "us" Europeans, as opposed to "others", in other words, non-Europeans. This leads to the assumption that construction of European identity, inseparable from the dichotomy: "Us" and "Others". Therefore society, while constructing its own identity, creates an antagonism - an irreconcilable contradiction between 2 (or more) subjects. Orientalism is the result of long-standing interests that sought not to criticize but to affirm irreconcilable opposing identities. Orientalist knowledge arises from trying to interpret the "Other", foreign, unfamiliar reality,

but Said (1978) emphasizes that Orientalism intertwines with other political, intellectual, cultural, moral powers and various interests that condition attitudes of members of society.

One of the main features of Orientalism is the defined space in which the Orient is located. The shift in Western attitudes allowed the Orient to be seen as a geographic space that could be explored, processed or even "protected". Orientalists are given the "right" to classify the Orient, to present their observations not only to Western society, but also to help the Orient to define itself. Therefore, Orientalism is identified with the territory geographically located in the Middle East. In 19th century Europe, the Orient was identified as the Arab world, or the East in general. The main discrepancy is not that this concept did not include such regions of the world as India, China or the Far East. When analyzing links between Orientalism and Islamophobia, the most important thing is that Orientalism did not pay attention to immigrants or their communities in Europe, because in that period, it was considered as irrelevant, the world was not yet affected by globalization phenomena (Samiei, 2010). Thus, Orientalism considers the Orient to be immutable both in terms of time and space, but today the territory, as the main element of classical Orientalism, is no longer so significant.

When analyzing the features of classical orientalism, the phenomenon of fear is emphasized. Said (1978) stresses that nevertheless, Europe more often felt not respect for Islam, but fear. After the death of Muhammad in 632, the military, and then the cultural and religious hegemony of Islam increased tremendously. Islam came to symbolize terror, devastation, "demonic" powers and hordes of hated "barbarians". A preconception held by Christian thinkers who sought to understand Islam was a search for analogous phenomena. In addition, in traditional Orientalism, the state was stronger than society, and therefore despotism among Muslims was a universally accepted norm (Samiei, 2009). However, in fact, in the 19th century Orientalist discourse, the phenomenon of fear is related to the entire Orient and its culture, not to

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Islam as a religion. During that period, there was no critical discourse - the threat of Islam. There was another phenomenon - xenophobia (disfavor or hostility to foreigners, hatred of another culture or civilization). The West despises and describes the Orient as eccentric, backward and passive. It is characterized by despotism and lack of progress. Its progress and value are compared to the West, so it inevitably becomes the "other", a competitor, a rival. Such an attitude was unchanging and based exclusively on one aspect - the opposite of the modern world - the West (Said, 1978).

According to Said (2004), the West's perception of Islam is conditioned by interpretation. There is no "true" Islam or a single, indisputable "essence" of Islam that can be explained by scholars. Islam has evolved over the ages and meant different things to different people, in different places and at different times, but Orientalists often ignore this fact. Any assessment is based on bias criteria in advance. The Orientalists always stayed beyond the Orient, in whatever form of perception it took, because distance prevented them from seeing the real Orient. In addition, when talking about Islam, Said emphasizes the importance of historical continuity. Various stages of the relationship between the West and Islam are analyzed: starting from Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, the colonial period, the rise of Oriental studies in Britain and France in the 19th century, to European hegemony in the Orient after World War 2, and finally to the dominance of the United States in the region (Ibid).

To sum up, Said's conceptualization of Orientalism revolves around the notion that it constitutes a form of scholarly and cultural discourse. This discourse predominantly portrays the Eastern regions, with a particular focus on the Arab and Islamic world, as exotic, inferior, and in need of Western hegemony and intervention. This paradigm is underpinned by Eurocentrism, which inherently accentuates a Western-centric perspective where the West is positioned as superior, and the East is relegated to an "othered" status, marked by difference and perceived backwardness. Consequently, this Eurocentric viewpoint has historically served to legitimize and perpetuate Western imperialist and colonialist agendas. Said further elucidates how Orientalism employs binary oppositions, such as civilized/barbaric, rational/mystical, and modern/backward, in the discourse, effectively reinforcing the dominance of Western powers. In essence, Orientalism is deeply intertwined with imperialist ideologies and policies, playing a pivotal role in the rationalization and perpetuation of Western colonialism, especially within the Middle East.

Samuel P. Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" Theory

Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" theory is a hypothesis first presented in 1993 (in his article "The Clash of Civilizations?" published in the journal Foreign Affairs) (Huntington, 1993). Subsequently, this theory was further developed and introduced in his 1996 book, "The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order" (Huntington, 2002). This theory provides valuable insights into the post-Cold War world and potential sources of future conflicts.

Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" theory reformulated the dualism between the West and Islam. It is mentioned that after the end of the Cold War, the most important differences between people became not ideological, political or economic, but cultural. People define themselves based on cultural factors: religion, language, history, values, customs, institutions, etc. Therefore, culture is the main factor causing the new division of the world into two parts. Huntington argues that there is an imminent and dangerous clash between the West and Islam that will be far more dangerous than the Cold War, because states are incapable of solving problems related to cultural differences. The most important challenge to the West is not Islamic fundamentalism, but Islam itself, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the superiority of their culture. Meanwhile, the biggest issue for the East is the West, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the universality of their culture and their irreplaceable hegemony in the world (Huntington, 2002).

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Most attention is given to the new phenomenon of globalization. The "shrinking" of the world has not only positive but also negative consequences. "Reduced" geographical distances become the reason for new global confrontations - "clash of civilizations". These clashes of different civilizational paradigms are caused by the phenomenon of migration (people of one culture moving to the territory of another culture). Nowadays Islam is seen as the source of nuclear weapons, terrorism, unwanted immigrants, etc. Western ideas related to individualism, liberalism, constitutionalism, human rights, democracy, free market, separation between state and church (or religion in general) do not correspond to the values of Islamic civilization. Western efforts to spread such ideas encourage a backlash against Western universalism, manifested through Islamic fundamentalist movements that have close social, cultural and political networks. In addition, since the Cold War period, Muslims have become more aware of what separates them from non-Muslims, and opposition to the West has intensified. It is forgotten that values important in the West might be less important in other cultures. When these principles are attempted to be applied in non-Western societies, it often becomes the new tool of Western colonialism (Huntington, 1993).

The conflict between Western and Islamic civilizations has persisted for over 1,300 years, deeply rooted in religious contexts. As early as the 8th century, Christianity viewed Islam as a highly perilous religion in the Western world. The primary disparities revolve around the interplay of religion and politics, individualism, and the emergence of secular societies. Following the Cold War, these differences culminated in a cultural division marked by opposition and antagonism (Wallace, 2006). Insufficient understanding and the perpetuation of ingrained stereotypes about Muslims within both scholarly research and media have fueled this conflict between the West and Muslims. Islam is often portrayed as expansive, associated with violence, and as the cornerstone of Islamic civilization. Europeans have traditionally regarded Islam as barbaric and uncivilized. These stereotypes

persist despite changes in time, space, and history. Nevertheless, in the 21st century, the perception of the Islamic world as the "Other", an entirely "alien" entity, can be linked to the contemporary concept of Islamophobia, intensified by the identification of Muslims following the events of 9/11 (Lane, 2009).

Huntington's theory, known as the "Clash of Civilizations", has been the subject of debate and criticism in academic and political areas. One significant criticism is that it tends to oversimplify the dynamics of global relations. Said has critiqued Huntington's depiction of the "West vs. the Rest" narrative in his book "Culture and Imperialism" (Said, 1994). He argues that explaining international interactions as clashes between a limited number of civilizations overlooks the nuanced and multifaceted nature of conflicts. Furthermore, Huntington's theory has been accused of distinguishing cultures, implying that entire civilizations share uniform beliefs and values. It is an oversimplification that can reinforce further stereotypes and misunderstandings (Ibid). Another point of criticism is the theory's potential to be developed in order to justify exclusionary policies, such as immigration restrictions or religious discrimination. Fukuyama (1989) challenged its predictions in his essay "The End of History?". Huntington's theory frames conflicts as inevitable outcomes of cultural differences. Scholars and policymakers also contend that the theory is overly deterministic, overlooking the diversity of opinions and interests within civilizations and underestimating the opportunities for dialogue and cooperation between them (Ibid).

In conclusion, it can be said that according to Huntington's theory the incompatibility of civilizations is one of the main features of the modern world. Cultural differences (values and beliefs) are considered as the main source of conflict. The most important principle demarcating the boundary between civilizations is not a sense of commonality, but of enmity, based on a religious context. Western liberal values are incompatible with the principles of the Islamic world. Therefore, in this "new" world, the main

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conflicts do not arise between social classes, but between people belonging to different cultures. However critics have pointed out that Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" theory has been accused of suggesting that entire civilizations uniformly possess identical beliefs and values, potentially reinforcing harmful stereotypes. Moreover, concerns have arisen that it could be employed to legitimize exclusionary policies, such as immigration restrictions or religious discrimination. These criticisms highlight the need for a more balanced understanding of global relations that considers the diversity of perspectives within civilizations and avoids oversimplification.

Islamophobia or Muslimophobia - New Concepts for an Old Phenomenon?

The current history of the term Islamophobia begins in the United Kingdom in the 20th century. In the 1990s, the term came into use to describe discrimination against the Muslim population in the West. However, when the Runnymede Trust (1997) published its report "Islamophobia: A Challenge For Us All", and especially after the events of 9/11, the concept became a widely debated object in the public sphere, not only in the UK, but also throughout Europe. There is disagreement not only about the adequacy of the concept, but also about the existence of the phenomenon itself (Ibid). Some authors have tried to discredit this concept by pointing out that it was created by Islamists to condemn any criticism related to Islam. Meanwhile, the authors who advocated this concept could not adequately explain what it was supposed to describe (Lopez, 2011). The main problem remains to this day - it is difficult to answer the question why Muslims are discriminated against - because of their ethnic origin, skin color, religion, or perhaps other reasons. For example, professor in Sociology Modood (1997) described the term as "somewhat misleading", saying that discrimination against Muslims is more "racism than an expression of religious intolerance", although it could be better described as an expression of cultural racism, acknowledging the fact that Muslims are identified as not Europeans and non-representatives of this (Western) culture.

Modern scholars use the concept of Islamophobia to characterize the specific social reality in Western liberal democracies. It is a new concept in the social sciences, described as a negative attitude towards Muslims and Islam, but primarily associated with Muslim communities in the West. The Runnymede Trust (1997) defined Islamophobia as fear, hatred, hostility towards Islam and Muslims, conditioned by a narrow "understanding" which has formed negative stereotypes and beliefs about Muslims. Eventually, the concept was narrowed down to mean fear for all or majority of Muslims (Bleich, 2011). Islamophobia is defined as an ideology that is related or even intertwined with racism or other similar phenomenon. Most importantly, it supports a negative attitude towards Muslims and Islam. While this may have historical continuity, more emphasis is placed on new social interactions that shape public perceptions and attitudes. Islamophobia might be considered as a tool that shapes and constructs the attitude towards Muslims and Islam as the "Other", the complete opposite and more important as a hostile object (Kayaoğlu, 2009). A divide between "Us" and "Them" is emerging, in which the West plays a significant role as the main "voice" which is allowed to shape the image of this religious minority (in the West).

One of the main features of previously described phenomenon is that Islamophobia is exceptionally related to Muslim communities in the West. According to Halliday (1999), the negative attitude is directed not at Islam as a faith, but at Muslims as people, especially immigrants in the West. Islamophobia is a modern phenomenon that appeared in the public sphere due to the complex integration of Muslim immigrants. It became especially apparent after the events of 9/11. The concept began to be used more often by the media and by Muslim organizations, when the integration strategies used in many European countries in order to create Muslim "loyalty" to the national identity of the country, common values, etc. have failed. In addition, the social and economic problems experienced by Muslim communities in the West have become more visible. One of the

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main tasks has become the effort to maintain their "loyalty" to the state, and at the same time to the society in which they live, rather than to create universal principles of justice and equality that could cross national borders (Ibid).

The absence of democracy in the Middle East also contributes to a strained relationship with the West. Despite the fundamental democratic value of religious freedom, openly expressing one's faith in the public sphere is deemed unacceptable. Consequently, Islamophobia is intertwined with the modern concept of secularism, which advocates for the complete separation of religion and the state. In secular Europe, Islam is viewed unfavorably because the Islamic world tightly intertwines politics and religion, emphasizing a strong connection. In fact, political leadership in this context often underscores that politics is inseparable from religion. This perspective contradicts the principle of individualism, as no aspect of social or political life can be relegated to the private sphere (Sajid, 2005). As a result, religiosity remains a central component of Muslim identity, while in the Western world, religion diminishes in significance, relegated to the private realm of the individual. Consequently, there is a prevalent negative sentiment towards Islam and its adherents, who are seen as opposing liberal Western values. In essence, Islam and its followers are often perceived as standing against "modernity" and "democracy" (Ibid).

Considering the current forms, Islamophobia has evolved into one of the manifestations of racism, as it incites hatred against a specific group of people based on their religious beliefs, cultural traditions, ethnicity, etc. The increased hatred and discrimination against Muslims were conditioned by negative stereotypes and images created by the media. In this case, racism includes not only race, but also ethnicity, language, culture, religion, etc. Therefore, Islamophobia is not completely separated from race, but usually real racism is based on biological factors (ethnicity is emphasized). Meanwhile, in the case of Islamophobia, words such as uncivilized, barbaric, violent, authoritarian are used to describe Muslim religious beliefs and cultural practices. In this sense, "racial inferiority" is gradually replaced by the concept of "religious inferiority" (Esposito & Mogahed, 2007). As a result, distinguishing Islamophobia from ethnic and racial hatred becomes increasingly challenging, given their interconnected nature and overlap in manifestations.

Results and Discussion

The Role of the Media in the Context of Islamophobia/Muslimophobia

The expression of Islamophobia has intensified due to the rapid changes and insecurity caused by globalization. Therefore, another important factor of the analyzed phenomenon that proves its modernity and denies its historical continuity is the increased role of the media. It is a tool for public awareness that not only reflects reality, but also creates it. The media has become the main channel for the spread of Islamophobia by forming negative attitudes towards Muslims and Islam. The main features are irresponsibility and one-sidedness, when negative stereotypes are created and presented as a universally acceptable norm (this is especially evident while analyzing political discussions) (Esposito & Kalin, 2011). Before and after the events of 9/11, many Muslim scholars, intellectuals, politicians and public figures condemned the terrorist attack and called for peaceful solutions to violent conflicts, but they could hardly compete with the massive influence and "success" of the media in shaping negative attitudes for the Western society. Nowadays the established stereotype of 2 groups ("Us" and "Them") still remains attractive for many people in the West. Above all, Muslims are represented as cruel, irrational, barbaric and alien, while the West is presented as modern, progressive, rational, civilized, humane and liberal (Ibid). It is assumed that creating and maintaining this dichotomy provides a "moral advantage" in the political, economic and social spheres.

One of the factors that which has influenced the phenomenon of Islamophobia and is closely

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related to the increased role of the media is the emergence of anti-Western Islamist movements that took a dominant position in power (in countries such as Iran, Sudan, Afghanistan, etc.) or at least strongly influenced government policy (e.g. Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, etc.). People mistakenly believe (due to the influence of mass media) that many Muslims are Islamists, but in fact Islamist movements only express a minority position. The most important factor in shaping today's wave of Islamophobia remains the media's tendency to attribute terrorism to Islamists (for example, the events of 9/11) (Sajid, 2005). A recurring phrase in the Western media - "fundamentalism", - also creates hostility toward Islam and Muslims. Although in fact, the concept itself was created by representatives of Christianity and only much later began to be used to criticize various aspects of Islam (Ibid).

Therefore, Islamist movements are often associated with the threat of terrorism. The word "terrorism" gained great importance in the international arena only after the events of 9/11 in 2001. During this period the phenomenon of terrorism began to be identified with the word Muslims and Islamic fundamentalism at the same time. The famous Irish political scientist Halliday (2003) in his book "Islam and the Myth of Confrontation" states that the only thing confirmed and proved by the events of 9/11 was "the clash of civilizations", described and published by Huntington in 1993. These events rejected his argument that the confrontation between the Muslim and non-Muslim worlds was just a myth. Thus, in the 21st century, the word "terrorism" is increasingly identified with Muslims, despite the fact that the majority of Muslims completely condemn terrorist attacks by Islamist groups and consider them as violation of Islamic laws.

However, the main problem with this group identity is that it is based on religious commonality. Muslim communities based in the West have become an influential force. Their lives in democratic societies have raised many questions related to Western liberalism. It has become difficult for nation-states to find a common ground regarding the problems associated with "non-liberal" groups but it is strongly believed that societies in which Muslim communities are integrating perhaps could reduce existing opposition to Islamic culture. Frequent contact with Muslims diminishes the meaning of the dualistic ("Us" and "Them") division. This is the result of the Contact theory described by B. Erdenir (2010), according to which direct contact with Muslims reduces hostility and increases knowledge due to enlarged information capacity of another culture. It is assumed that personal contact reduces or even eliminates prejudice against certain immigrant groups. However, it can also lead to the opposite phenomenon, when members of society start to fear not religious differences, but people who profess that religion (Ibid).

Mass Media as an "Architect" in Shaping Societal Constructs

The fundamental inquiry at hand pertains to whether mass media act as architects in shaping societal constructs or as agents contributing to their disintegration. Specifically, it raises questions concerning the media's role in either perpetuating structures of dominance or fostering genuine democratic ideals, encompassing facets such as ethnic, cultural, social, economic, political, etc. diversity. A central consideration is whether media entities fall into a conventional pattern of contradictions (van Dijk, 1991). Upon close examination of available evidence, there is limited cause for optimism. While mainstream media outlets typically denounce extremism, violence, and overt discrimination concerning ethnic conflicts and racism, aligning themselves with the officially advocated principles of tolerance and equality as stipulated by national constitutions and international charters, their actual impact at local levels tends to condition less favorable outcomes. It is well-documented that certain media platforms, often under the influence or control of political and social elites, exacerbate ethnicism and racism, thereby contributing to the exclusion and marginalization of particular groups (Ibid).

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This phenomenon extends to depiction of "Others" in regions such as the South (East, Middle East). Prevailing media discourse predominantly portrays these regions in a manner characterized by narratives centered on crime, violence, terrorism, ethnic conflicts, fundamentalism, and other facets associated with perceived "uncivilized backwardness". This portrayal encompasses areas such as the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, and large areas of Asia (van Dijk, 1995).

Media and New Media Role Representation of Islam and Muslims

The analysis helps to understand the reproduction of stereotypes in the (new) media. It shows that certain established attitudes have an influence on evaluating representatives from other cultures. The construction of identity in any society is inseparable from power and the desire to dominate. The distinction between the minority and the majority occupies an important role in domestic and foreign policy. The struggle between these two opposites (i.e. East and West) is reflected in the role of the (new) media in the 21st century (Mutman, 2019). In response to the dominance of media by supporting stereotypes, there is a criticism of the representation of Islam and Muslims created and developed in the Western world.

The Internet and (new) media are the two main actors of this century in shaping the "new" image of the Orient. With the help of modern technologies, people in different civilizations are closer to each other than ever before, which facilitates further cultural exchange. Many of the discussions raised in cyberspace could be easily accessed in different parts of the world. Said (1997) presented study in which he critically deconstructed the role of the Western media and the ways in which the real Islam was "hidden" in the book "Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World". At that time, the emergence of the Internet led to the development of global communication networks and resulted in huge information flows. It was a tool for the dissemination of information that could provide objective and unbiased information, but this

opportunity has not been applied. The media, editors, media owners, etc. selectively decided what the West should "know" about Islam and what should be hidden. Therefore nowadays Islam continues to be portrayed as "unmodern", "despotic", "backward", "hostile" to Western culture.

Tuastad (2003) refers to the new tendency of Western media to represent Arab and Muslim violence as "the new barbarism". Violence is portrayed as a central feature of local cultures (emphasizing a major feature of Muslims), regardless of context. The author claims that the "new barbarism" is intertwined with neo-Orientalism, where a clear cultural dualism between Islam and the West is emphasized. These trends of "new barbarism" and neo-Orientalism are considered hegemonic strategies, where the creation of images of the "enemy" helps legitimize the economic and political projects of colonialism. In other words, it might be considered an obvious effort of the USA as a global hegemony to artificially create an "enemy" and prove its superiority by eliminating it. Therefore, "the myth of the enemy" serves the interests of powerful states in order to maintain dominant positions in the world or during the "Clash of Civilizations".

Globalization has caused another negative aspect of global terror networks which have strengthened the hostility and fear of the Orient, and at the same time of Islam, although such extremist tendencies do not represent Islam. Lewis (2001) made the assumption that when a large group of Muslims are willing to give approval, and only a few of them agree to apply this extremist interpretation of their religion, unfortunately terrorism requires only a few. The negative images of such terrorist networks are used by the West to justify its imperialist ambitions, further promote dualism and a negative attitude towards the East. Most importantly, neo-Orientalism ignores the local and specific characteristics of regional movements and instead attempts to portray a "unified" or homogeneous Islamist / terrorist "enemy". In this model, Al-Qaeda is almost no different from Hamas, Hezbollah, or

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the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. First of all, they are considered enemies of the civilized world. Such an illustration can be found to create a negative image of "Islamic" terrorists, whose main problem may be rooted in psychological disorders, but not based on rational logic related to social, political, religious, etc. features or factors.

The Emergence and Core Principles of Social Movements: The Case of Hamas

Social movements, frequently described as collective endeavors driven by shared objectives and social cohesion, entail ongoing interactions with elites, adversaries and governing bodies. These movements are widely recognized for their pivotal roles in bringing about social and political changes (Tarrow, 1998).

Structuralists have underscored the influence of overarching structural shifts that modify the political environment's opportunities and limitations. In contrast, resource mobilization theorists have highlighted the importance of resource accessibility and the role of tightly woven social networks in shaping activists' capacity to effectively utilize those resources (McAdam & Paulsen, 1993). These combined perspectives have contributed to the development of a diverse research exploring individual motivations, organizational mechanisms and the formation of a shared collective identity among members of social movements. Meanwhile, Political Process Theory (PPT) regards social movements as a form of political engagement and action distinct from conventional political processes. It considers various factors, including political opportunity mechanisms, mobilization structures, collective identity processes, and, notably for our current discussion, the concept of collective action frames (Tilly, 2002).

Social movements must effectively tap into the shared perception of injustice and the collective determination to address the perceived issue. Additionally, individuals within these movements must experience a sense of both grievance regarding some aspects of their lives and optimism

that, through collective action, they can bring about a resolution to the problem (McAdam, et al., 1996). A particular "frame" is perceived as a lens or interpretative guide that simplifies and organizes the external world for better understanding. "Framing" is the strategic process of shaping or crafting this "handbook". It assists the public in interpreting specific events by emphasizing certain elements while subtly downplaying or omitting others, guiding the perception and interpretation of these events (Snow & Benford, 1988).

A frame acts as a cognitive pathway, helping identify and diagnose societal or political issues, attributing responsibility and proposing viable solutions. The effectiveness of a frame in encouraging individual participation in a movement is significantly influenced by its resonance with personal experiences, communal beliefs and prevalent media narratives. Organizations looking to grow and engage their membership often craft their messages to reflect popular opinions and common beliefs. This strategy ensures that their ideas blend well within existing community conversations and cultural norms. The media has a prominent role in this process. By aligning messages with prevailing media discourses, organizations can navigate through and actively participate in broader societal discussions, making their messages more impactful and relatable to a larger audience (McCammon et al., 2007). In doing so, organizations become more adaptable and responsive to the key issues and sentiments represented in the wider community and media landscapes.

Scholars argue that cultural context is important while determining the success or failure of social movements. Koopmans & Statham (1999) introduced the concept of "discursive opportunities", highlighting the importance of societal and media influences beyond political and institutional factors. They suggest that the success of social movements is influenced by prevailing cultural norms and media narratives that dictate what ideas are seen as reasonable or legitimate at a certain time. Therefore, the effectiveness of social movements can vary based on the alignment of

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their messages with media representation and cultural acceptance (based on norms, values, beliefs, etc.), even if they lack direct access to political institutions.

Hamas (officially the Islamic Resistance Movement) is a Sunni Islamist political and military organization governing the Gaza Strip of the Palestinian territories. It is considered an Islamist organization that has been a significant player in the so-called Israeli-Palestinian conflict (beginning in the mid-20th century). Founded in 1987 during the First Intifada (Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation was taking place at the time), Hamas has developed into a multifaceted political and military entity (Lopez et al., 2020). Nowadays Hamas is broadly recognized as the prevailing political entity exerting significant influence within the territories inhabited by the Palestinian population. Its objectives include the establishment of an independent state in the territories of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, with Jerusalem as the capital (Mishal & Sela, 2000).

In examining the present state of the Israel-Hamas conflict, it is essential to employ language that accurately characterizes the complex nature of the situation without unfairly attributing responsibility to the entire Palestinian population. By designating the conflict as the 2023 Israel–Hamas conflict (or 2023 Israel–Hamas war), this terminology is employed to emphasize the specificity of the current tensions and seeks to avoid implicating the broader Palestinian community indiscriminately. This research is committed to dissecting the intricate dynamics of the ongoing conflict while upholding a nuanced and inclusive perspective that acknowledges the diverse experiences within the Palestinian population.

Therefore, in order to avoid any violations related to the ethics of the research, as well as in order to present the events that are happening today in the international arena in a non-discriminatory and impartial manner (without including or stereotypically representing the Palestinian

community as it is often misrepresented in the media), it was decided to continue using concepts such as - Israel–Hamas War of 2023, 2023 Israel–Hamas conflict or 2023 Israel–Hamas war.

Hamas gained substantial support through its social services and resistance activities against Israeli forces. Its armed wing, known as the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, has been involved in both armed conflict with Israel and acts of terrorism. The organization's charter, which includes anti-Israel rhetoric and a call for the destruction of Israel, has drawn significant international attention (Hroub, 2000). Hamas's role in the Palestinian territories and its impact on the Israel-Hamas conflict have been subjects of extensive research and analysis. Various scholarly works provide insights into the organization's history, ideology, tactics and the challenges it poses to peace efforts in the region (Roy, 2011).

Recently, in Israel, the conflict between the Israeli government and Hamas has taken new turns, with media playing an unprecedented role in shaping the perceptions and narratives surrounding the ongoing tensions. In various instances, media outlets have been main players in highlighting the complexities of the crisis, navigating through a maze of political, social and humanitarian considerations (Al Jazeera, 2023). The media's portrayal, often reflecting global viewpoints and biases, has been influential in driving public opinion and international stances, sometimes acting as a catalyst for diplomatic and humanitarian interventions. Through compelling storytelling and diverse representation of perspectives, the media has magnified the voices of the unheard, fostering debates and discussions aimed at navigating pathways to peace and stability.

It is emphasized that future studies focusing on the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas are essential for a nuanced understanding of its dynamics and implications. It is important that such research emphasizes the role of media, considering its significant influence in shaping global perceptions and narratives surrounding

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the events, such as bombings, terrorist attacks, deaths of people, etc. Particularly, the media's representation of the two conflicting sides - Israel and Hamas (officially the Islamic Resistance Movement) - requires a complex analysis. This is to explore how different media outlets frame the actions and experiences of each party and how these frames might contribute to or alleviate further tensions and conflicts in the region.

An exploration into the portrayal of the humanitarian aspects, political strategies and responses from the international community in the media might be instrumental. Further studies could unveil biases, enhance the objectivity and fairness of media reports and promote a balanced understanding of the complexities involved in the Israel-Hamas conflict, ultimately contributing to informed global discourse and policy-making.

Conclusion

1. The examination of scholarly literature concerning Orientalism as a phenomenon and the construction of social reality underscores the pivotal role played by representations in shaping narratives, biases and stereotypes. In the contemporary landscape, it is evident that the media has supplanted academic discourse in influencing perceptions, particularly in relation to Islam and Muslims. This transformation in representation is marked by the portrayal of Islam and Muslims through a negative lens, where acts of terrorism are frequently labeled as manifestations of "anti-Western" Islamist movements. This media-driven narrative contributes significantly to the perpetuation of Islamophobia, shaping public opinion and attitudes toward Islam and its confessors. Therefore, the main factor refuting the links between classical Orientalism and Islamophobia is the phenomenon of globalization.

2. Classical Orientalism is identified with the territory geographically located in the Middle East, without giving attention to immigrants or their communities in the West. Meanwhile, after the end of the Cold War (in the period of neo-Orientalism),

the negative attitude is directed not at Islam as a religion but at Muslims as people. The main object of fear is Muslims as immigrants in the West, not Islam as a religion, therefore Islamophobia/Muslimophobia (denoting the social dimension) is a modern phenomenon of the 21st century that appeared in the public space due to the complex integration of Muslim immigrants.

The phenomenon is rooted in a complex relation of historical, social, political and cultural factors, often encouraged by misconceptions, stereotypes and fears associated with Islam and its confessors. Academic discourse on Islamophobia and Muslimophobia deepens into the examination of their origins, manifestations, impact on various dimensions of society, including politics, media, education, interpersonal relations, etc. Researchers investigate the mechanisms through which these stereotypes or prejudices are perpetuated, analyzing the role of media, politics, societal structures in shaping and reinforcing such attitudes.

3. Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" theory emphasizes that global conflicts in the post-Cold War period are primarily shaped by cultural and civilizational differences rather than ideological or economic factors. The theory's insights into a potential clash between the Islamic world and the West have sometimes led to selective and arbitrary conflation of terrorism with other violent events. This confusion can result in the portrayal of Islamic terrorism as a threat capable of undermining Western democracy. Consequently, these perceptions have contributed to increased hostility within Western societies toward Islam and Muslims. In addition, it is believed that media representations, influenced by the "Clash of Civilizations" narrative, can reinforce and perpetuate these negative views, further entrenching prejudices and fears associated with Islam and its followers.

4. In conclusion, research underscores the integral role of cultural context in influencing the

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trajectories of social movements. The emergence of "discursive opportunities" delineates the significant impact of societal perceptions and media portrayals, extending beyond mere political and institutional dimensions. This suggests that the resonance of social movements is intricately tied to the prevailing cultural norms and media narratives, which steer societal validations of what is deemed reasonable or legitimate. Therefore, the effectiveness of social movements is nuanced by their alignment with predominant media representations and cultural acceptances - rooted in societal norms, values, beliefs, etc. The ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas has seen significant shifts recently, with the media playing a crucial role in shaping public understanding and perspectives. Media outlets have become key contributors in bringing attention to the multifaceted nature of the crisis, adequately exploring its political, social and humanitarian aspects.

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Genişletilmiş Özet

E. Said'in Doğu'ya yönelik tutumu temsil ettiği ve yapı söküme uğrattığı "Oryantalizm" başlıklı kitabını yayınlamasının üzerinden 45 yıldan fazla zaman geçmiştir. Said'in varsayımları bugün hala geçerliliğini koruyan tartışmalara yol açmaktadır. "Medeniyetler Çatışması" kuramı, Batı ve İslam medeniyetleri arasındaki çatışmanın 1.300 yılı aşkın bir süredir devam ettiğini ve derin bir dini bağlama sahip olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Bununla birlikte medya, kültürler arası anlayış ve iş birliğini teşvik eden ya da tam tersine yıkıcı stereotipleri destekleyen önemli bir rol oynayabilmektedir. Bu nedenle, bu makale medyanın farklı kültürel ortamlarda "sosyal gerçekliği" şekillendirmedeki rolünü incelemektedir.

Çalışmanın temel amacı, farklı kültürel ortamlarda kamuoyunun, dünya görüşünün şekillendirilmesinde ve stereotiplerin sürdürülmesinde bir aracı olarak medyanın rolünü araştırmaktır: "Doğu" ve "Batı". Bu amaçla şu amaçlar belirlenmiştir: Medyanın kamuoyunu şekillendirmede ve stereotipler inşa etmede bir aracı olarak rolünü analiz etmek; Oryantalizm ile etnik, dini, sosyal azınlıkların medyada (olumsuz) temsili arasındaki bağlantıları bulmak; İslamofobi/Müslümanofobi kavramlarını, "Medeniyetler Çatışması" teorisini analiz etmek ve çeşitli medya kanallarında İslam ve Müslümanların olumsuz imajlarının ortaya çıkışını tartışmak; Medyanın toplumsal hareketlerle ilgili rolünü tartışmak ve 2023 İsrail-Hamas Savaşı bağlamında daha ileri araştırmalar için sınırları belirlemek. Bir olgu olarak Oryantalizm ve sosyal gerçekliğin inşasına ilişkin bilimsel literatürün incelenmesinin, temsillerin anlatıları, önyargıları ve stereotipleri şekillendirmede oynadığı önemli rolün altını çizdiği varsayılmaktadır. Son zamanlarda İsrail'de, İsrail hükümeti ile Hamas hareketi arasındaki çatışma yeni bir hal almıştır ve medya, devam eden gerilimleri çevreleyen algıları ve anlatıları şekillendirmede benzeri görülmemiş bir rol oynamaktadır.

Metodolojiyi tanıtırken, bu çalışmanın Oryantalizm kavramlarını, en önemli özelliklerini ve İslamofobinin temel özelliklerini netleştirmeye yardımcı olan literatür ve doküman analizi yöntemini kullandığını vurgulamak gerekmektedir. İslamofobi, Müslümanofobi ve İslam ve Müslümanların (olumsuz) medya temsili arasındaki bağlantıları göstermek için karşılaştırmalı bir yöntem de kullanılmıştır. Huntington'ın "Medeniyetler Çatışması" teorisinin sunulmasında medyanın

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rolünü açıklığa kavuşturmak ve Hamas gibi toplumsal direniş hareketlerine yol açan ana faktörleri ve bunların 2023 İsrail-Hamas Savaşı'na ilişkin medyadaki temsilini belirlemek için bir vaka çalışması yöntemi uygulanmıştır.

Oryantalizm, neo-Oryantalizm, İslamofobi ve Medeniyetler Çatışması Teorisi ile ilgili akademik çalışmaların incelenmesinde Huntington (1993; 2002), Said (1978; 1994; 1997; 2004), Lewis (2001), Halliday (1999; 2003), Sajid (2005), Tuastad (2003) gibi yazarların araştırma katkılarından yararlanılmaktadır. Medyanın mevcut toplumsal rolünün, toplumsal hareketler içindeki işlevlerinin ve küresel örgütleri ağlarının gelişimi üzerindeki etkisinin analizinde, Van Dijk (1991; 1995), Snow & Benford (1988), Hroub (2000), McAdam & Paulsen (1993), McCammon, Muse, Newman & Terrell (2007) gibi yazarların araştırma katkılarına dayanmaktadır.

Bir olgu olarak Oryantalizm ve sosyal gerçekliğin inşasına ilişkin akademik literatürün incelenmesi, (yeni) medyada stereotiplerin sürdürülmesine ilişkin değerli bilgiler sağlamaktadır. Günümüz dünyasında medyanın, özellikle İslam ve Müslümanlarla ilgili algıları etkilemede akademik söylemin yerini aldığı açıktır. Temsildeki bu dönüşüm, terör eylemlerinin sıklıkla "Batı karşıtı" İslamcı hareketlerin tezahürleri olarak etiketlendiği, İslam ve Müslümanların olumsuz bir mercekle tasvir edilmesiyle belirginleşmektedir. Medyanın yönlendirdiği bu anlatı, İslamofobinin sürdürülmesine önemli ölçüde katkıda bulunmakta, kamuoyunu ve İslam'a ve onu kabul edenlere yönelik tutumları şekillendirmektedir. Dolayısıyla, klasik Oryantalizm ile İslamofobi arasındaki bağlantıları çürüten temel faktör küreselleşme olgusudur.

İnternet ve (yeni) medya, Doğu'nun "yeni" imajının şekillenmesinde bu yüzyılın iki ana aktörüdür. Modern teknolojilerin yardımıyla farklı medeniyetlerden insanlar birbirlerine her zamankinden daha yakındır ve bu da kültürel alışverişi daha da kolaylaştırmaktadır. Siber uzayda gündeme gelen tartışmaların birçoğuna dünyanın farklı yerlerinden kolayca erişilebilmektedir. Bu durum ayrıca, İslam'a karşı düşmanlığı ve korkuyu güçlendiren küresel terör ağlarının gelişimine neden olmuştur. Bu tür grupların ve ağlarının olumsuz imajları Batı tarafından emperyalist emellerini haklı çıkarmak için kullanılmakta, düalizmi ve Doğu'ya karşı olumsuz bir tutumu daha da teşvik etmektedir. En önemlisi, neo-Oryantalizm bölgesel hareketlerin yerel ve spesifik özelliklerini göz ardı etmekte ve bunun yerine yanlış bir şekilde "birleşik" veya homojen bir İslamcı/terörist "düşman" tasvir etmeye çalışmaktadır. Bu modele göre El-Kaide'nin Hamas, Hizbullah ya da Moro İslami Kurtuluş Cephesi'nden neredeyse hiçbir farkı yoktur. Dolayısıyla 2023 İsrail-Hamas çatışmasının (ya da 2023 İsrail-Hamas savaşının) mevcut durumunu incelerken, sorumluluğu haksız bir şekilde tüm Filistin nüfusuna yüklemeden, durumun karmaşık doğasını doğru bir şekilde nitelendiren bir dil kullanmak çok önemlidir.

Çalışmanın sonuçları, kültürel bağlamın toplumsal hareketlerin yörüngelerini etkilemedeki ayrılmaz rolünü ortaya koymuştur. "Söylemsel fırsatların" ortaya çıkması, toplumsal algıların ve medya tasvirlerinin, salt siyasi ve kurumsal boyutların ötesine uzanan önemli etkisini tanımlamaktadır. Bu, toplumsal hareketlerin yankı bulmasının, neyin makul veya meşru kabul edildiğine dair toplumsal onayları yönlendiren hakim kültürel normlara ve medya anlatılarına karmaşık bir şekilde bağlı olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu nedenle, toplumsal hareketlerin etkinliği, baskın medya temsilleri ve kültürel kabullerle - kökleri toplumsal normlar, değerler, inançlar vb. İsrail ve Hamas arasında süregelen çatışma son zamanlarda önemli değişimlere sahne olmuş, medya halkın anlayışını ve bakış açısını şekillendirmede önemli bir rol oynamıştır. Medya kuruluşları, krizin çok yönlü doğasına dikkat çekerek siyasi, sosyal ve insani boyutlarını yeterince irdeleyen kilit katkı sağlayıcılar haline gelmiştir.

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Çıkar Çatışması

Conflict of Interest

Herhangi bir çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır. None

Kaynak Göstermek İçin

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