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**The Role of the Islamophobia Network in America in Distorting the  
Image of Islam and Muslims Post - 9/11**

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## **Dedication**

First of all, great thank to Allah for giving me help and courage to reach my first goal of success.

I dedicate my dissertation to

For his tireless assistance and support, as well as his encouragement, I dedicate this work to my dear father Nacer Eddine. My success is always due to him.

I owe a special debt of appreciation to my mother, Habiba, for her unrivaled keenness, prayers, and support.

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My lovely friends Maissa and Rayane, with whom I had such a wonderful time, thank you for your kind support.

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate my dissertation to

To my beloved parents "Djamel" and "khamssa" for your understanding and supporting morally and financially, thank you for being with me.

To my lovely sister "chirihen" for your eternal love.

To my little twin brothers "Youcef" and "Mohamed".

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## **Abstract**

Anti-Muslim sentiment witnessed a significant increase in the USA in the period that followed the September 11, 2001 attacks. Muslims living in America became subject to different forms of discrimination and violence. Sections of the mainstream population perceived the attacks as a war on the USA by hateful Muslims. Attitudes of Islam and Muslims became very negative and every US Muslim turned into a potential terrorist. However, this decreasing favorability of Islam and Muslim did not come in a totally spontaneous way in reaction to the attack on America. There is evidence that a well-organized, well-funded network of experts and scholars have launched an organized campaign exploiting the climate of fear and suspicion to distort the image of Islam and give a negative and stereotypical image of the US Muslims. This thesis sheds light on this 'Islamophobia network', its composition, funding, strategies, objectives, and activities; and most importantly examines its influence and the role it has been playing in the spread of Islamophobia in the USA in the post-9/11 era.

ملخص:

عرفت ظاهرة الكراهية ضد الإسلام تصاعدا كبيرا في الولايات المتحدة في الفترة التي أعقبت هجمات الحادي عشر من سبتمبر عام 2001، فقد أصبح مسلمو أمريكا عرضة لأشكال مختلفة من التمييز و العنف، حيث اعتبر جزءاً من الشعب الأمريكي أن هجمات سبتمبر كانت حرباً على الولايات المتحدة من طرف مسلمين حاقدين. هذا ما جعل صورة الإسلام و المسلمين سلبية للغاية فقد تحول كل مسلم إلى إرهابي محتمل. إلا أن هذا التراجع في تقبل الإسلام في أمريكا لم يكن ردة فعل تلقائية على هجمات سبتمبر كليا حيث تكونت شبكة تتشكل أساسا من خبراء و باحثين منظمة و ممولة بشكل جيد. استغلت هذه الشبكة مناخ الخوف والشك الذي ساد أمريكا بعد الحادي عشر من سبتمبر لتشويه صورة الإسلام والمسلمين. يلقي هذا البحث الضوء على شبكة الاسلاموفوبيا في الولايات المتحدة: تكوينها و تمويلها و إستراتيجيتها و نشاطها كما يدرس تأثيرها و إسهامها في انتشار الاسلاموفوبيا في

الولايات المتحدة بعد هجمات 11 سبتمبر 2001

## **List of Abbreviations**

**AAI:** Arab American Institute's

**ACCESS:** Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services

**ACT for America:** American College Testing for America

**CAIR:** Council on American Islamic Relations

**CISNA:** Council of Islamic Schools of North America

**CNN:** Cable News Network

**CSP:** Center for Security Policy

**DOJ:** Department of Justice

**FBI:** Federal Bureau of Investigation

**ISIS:** Islamic State in Iraq and Syria

**TWA:** Trans World Airlines

**WTC:** World Trade Center

**The US:** United State

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## **Introduction**

The lives of millions of Muslim Americans have completely changed in the period after the September 11, 2001 attacks. They became less safe and discrimination against them made them feel they are second-class citizens. These changing conditions were exploited by a group of individuals and organizations to lead an organized, well-funded plan to increase Islamophobia and distort the image of Islam and Muslims. A famous report published in 2011 by the Center for American Progress exposed the composition, funding, strategies, and objectives of the 'Islamophobia network in America'.

The American Islamophobia Network is a close-knit group of individuals and organizations that share an anti-Muslim worldview and collaborate to negatively impact public opinion and government policy regarding Muslims and Islam. They used to be on the periphery of the public discourse, but now they assist define federal policy and influence local governments. The Network uses dark money to promote hateful attitudes, behaviours, and policies toward a marginalized group in the country across media and political spheres.

Research revealed that there is a broad attitude of fear and resentment toward American Muslims in the post-9/11 era. American Islamophobia manifests itself in a variety of ways. It manifests itself in unscrupulous political efforts to profit from the environment of fear, as evidenced by state-level anti-Sharia legislation and far-right politicians' grandstanding. It also presents itself in institutional practices that consider American Muslims as a threat, as evidenced by FBI training manuals that characterize Islam as a violent faith.

The subject of American Islamophobia got increased attention after 2001 because it affects numerous aspects of human life and because Islamophobia became entangled with other concerns such as politics, the economy, social disputes, religious tensions, extremism, terrorism, democratic ideals, freedom of expression, and so on.

The research sheds light on the lives of Muslims in the United States in general. It delves at the origins of Islam in the United States and how it spread. It tells how Muslims from all around the world came to America. This study also looks at how Americans perceive Islam as a threat to mankind and how they feel about it.

The study explains how Americans generated the dreadful phobia of Islam and Muslims known as "Islamophobia" and how, via a variety of events and developments, they come to portray Islam as a religion of war, terror, and violence. The study outlines how Muslims have suffered and continues to suffer as a result of irrational fear and people's treatment of them since September 11, 2001.

The main focus of the study is to depict the impact of the Islamophobia network and its contribution to distorting the image of Islam and Muslims in the United States. Muslims have been subjected to psychological and physical violence, particularly in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. This work helps the reader understand who is to blame for the increase of Islamophobia against Muslims, as well as its key causes and consequences.

The first chapter provides an overview of Islam and Muslims in America. This chapter looks at the Muslim community in the United States by recounting the history of Muslim immigration to the country. It provides a demographic profile of the Muslim population in the United States, including its size, ethnic composition, and geographic dispersion.

It also discusses the socioeconomic position of this ethnically diverse minority group in the United States. This population is found to be well educated and generally have a better income than the average American, unlike many Muslim minority groups in Europe.

Chapter two is about the rise of anti-Muslim sentiment in the United States. American Muslims have suffered greatly as a result of Americans' negative perceptions of them. It traces the development of anti-Muslim sentiment and the main events and causes behind it. Muslims have been constructed as fear mongers and violent. The unfavourable perception was constantly the result of the abhorrent crimes and attacks targeting Muslims.

The final chapter focuses on the entire network and its dimensions. It is all about revealing the network's inner workings. As well as, donors and foundations who contribute to the network either financially or by distributing incorrect information since it helps the organization's ideas. It also looks at the several people who contributed to the network's climb to power.

The Islamophobia network and its members are not operating in a vacuum. They undoubtedly have a variety of tactics and methods at their disposal. For example, the most common channel for disseminating ideas is social networking sites. This chapter outlines the techniques that this organization is employing to achieve its objectives, which are also discussed in this study.

## **Chapter one**

### **A General Overview of Islam and Muslims in America**

There is a considerable Muslim population in the United State. This population is very diverse. It gained increased importance in the area that followed the attacks of September 11, 2001. This is due to the rising profile of Islam and to the rise of Islamophobic attacks against members of the Muslims community and their facilities and houses of worship. This chapter provides an overview on the American Muslim population, its size, ethnic composition, and geographical distribution.

The chapter also sheds light on the socioeconomic status of the American Muslim population. The socioeconomic profile of this diverse minority group is generally different to their, or to other Muslim minorities in Europe for example. American Muslims are generally better educated and have better income. Many American Muslims are successful professionals and businessmen. Yet the socioeconomic status of subgroups differs largely.

#### **1.1- History of immigration**

The history of Muslims in the United States dates back more than 400 years. Although there is evidence that Muslims were on Columbus' ships, the first firmly documented entrance of Muslims in America was in the 17th century with the arrival of African slaves. According to scholars, Muslims made from a quarter to a third of the enslaved Africans imported to the United States. Many Moriscos (former Muslims from Spain and Portugal) also migrated to the Spanish colonies, which included much of what is now the United States. Despite the fact that enslaved people were prohibited religious freedom, many of them practiced their faith secretly and passed it down to their offspring. There are various Muslim slave autobiographies that have

survived from this time period, some were written by members of the Abolitionist movement who also served as Union troops during the Civil War ("American Muslims in the United States").

The discovery of America by Muslims is a topic that has received little attention. Some say it existed before Columbus' voyage. Arabic-speaking slaves who refused to consume pork and believed in Allah and Muhammad P.B.U.H. arrived around 1717, according to records. According to some estimates, Muslims may have made up as much as a quarter of all slaves brought to the Americas from Africa in the 18th and 19th centuries. A large number of them immigrated to South America. The majority of those who went to the American colonies were rapidly converted to Christianity. From this time period, only a few traces of Islam remain, such as a Qur'an that was reportedly written down from memory ("The First American Muslims").

Around 1875, Muslims from the Middle East began to move to the United States. The initial wave of refugees arrived mostly from Syria, which was eventually partitioned into Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine. The majority of the workers were migrant laborers who were uneducated, unskilled, and came from peasant backgrounds. They intended to reach a degree of financial wealth and then return to their original countries, inspired by success stories brought back from Lebanese Christians who had gone before them (Smith 52).

Many became peddlers because they couldn't communicate in English. Others found work in industries and mines, or started their own businesses as grocers or merchants. Their commitment to work hard often resulted in not just financial gain, but also a rise in social position and better living conditions. Many of those who had meant to stay only temporarily realized they would not be able to do so. Those who

did return to their homelands were often encouraged to do so by their willingness to work hard (Duran and Pipes).

The fourth wave, which began in 1967 and continues to this day, is primarily made up of educated, English-fluent, and Westernized people. They came from all over the world, including those from beyond the Middle East. These Muslims have come to settle, participate in American wealth, and receive higher education and advanced technical training for specialized career prospects, not to make a fortune and return home. Many people are also looking for freedom from oppressive beliefs in their home countries. Of course, there are outliers, such as certain Lebanese Shi'ahs and Palestinians displaced by Lebanon's strife; the majority of them are illiterate and unskilled (Duran and Pipes).

Muslim immigrants today hail from South Asia's subcontinent, including Pakistanis, Indians, and Bangladeshis. They began arriving as early as and have played a key role in the establishment of Muslim political organisations in America during the last century. Today, this group is likely to number in the millions. They are increasingly being joined by large groups from Indonesia and Malaysia (Smith 53).

## **1.2. Population, Ethnic Composition and Geographical Distribution**

The United States has a diverse population, not just Native Americans, and is home to one of the most diverse Muslim populations in the world. Muslims have immigrated to the United States from many countries for a variety of reasons. They are of all colors and races. They came from Africa, where they were the first Muslim-Americans to come to the United States, and from South Asia, Arab countries, and the Middle East (Ba-Yunus and Kone 2). Hence, the American Muslim community is composed of three major ethnic groups African Americans, South Asians, and Arabs

and Middle Eastern. The community makes up around 1 % of the country's total population, making Islam the third largest religious group in America after Christianity and Judaism ("US States by Population of Muslims").

Today, it is difficult to establish the exact number of the US Muslim community because the United State census has forbidden law from inquiring about religious views and affiliation in the US. Consequently, estimates of the total number of the US Muslims in America differ enormously. Some researchers guess that there are nearly between 3 to 6 or 7 million. According to Pew Research Center in 2011 there were 2, 6 million Muslims in the US ("Muslims and Islam in the US"). However, in 2017 Pew Research Center said there are around 3, 45 million Muslim Americans of all ages living there. Approximately, this numbers has increased over time, since Muslims has been growing rapidly (Mohamed).

Actually, the Census Bureau of the US believes that Muslims are around 1, 5 million. While, this figure is thought to be significantly lower than the actual population of Muslim Americans. According to internal polls conducted by Arab American Institute's (AAI), the number of Muslims is 3, 665, 789 which seems to be more than two times of what the Census Bureau estimate. In addition to that Hassan Jabar Executive Director of the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS)—the premier Arab American social services organization in the United States—estimates that the “true number might be closer to almost 6 million” (Beydoun 3).

The Muslim community in the United States is significantly younger than the general population of the United States. In fact, Islam is the most male-dominated religion in the United States, with nearly two men for every woman. . Indeed, there are a variety of reasons for instance, it is related to the general pattern of migration of

men who move to an area before women follow them, and also because men are more risky in terms of migration (Duran and Pipes).

According to the American Muslim Council, African Americans are more prevalent than other ethnicities, with an estimated 42 percent, 24 percent of South Asian descent, and 12 percent of Arab origin. Muslim Americans are found everywhere in every state in United State, but the majority are stationed in different American states mostly in the South and the Midwest; Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, North California, Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, and Wyoming. However, many of them prefer to live in the following states; Illinois, Iowa, and Michigan due to the presences of mosques ("US States by Population of Muslims").

According to research, Illinois has the highest rate of Muslim Americans, with around 2.8% of the population, and Montana has the lowest rate, with only 0.34 percent of the population. Many of towns have a distinct ethnic flavor to them. Iranians are very numerous in California. After Tehran, Los Angeles may have the second-largest Iranian population of any city. The majority of South Asians live in Texas. Detroit has the highest population of Arabs in the country (primarily Lebanese, Iraqis, Palestinians, and Yemenis) (Barooah).

### **1.3. Socioeconomic Status**

On average, Muslims in America do better socioeconomically than Muslims in other parts of the world, such as French or British Muslims (Chouhoud). Immigrant Muslims, have a different socioeconomic footing than native-born Muslims, and they tend to have more positive feelings about their role in America. They are both racially and ethnically diverse, and they think in different ways. The majority of Muslims



born outside of the United States are Asians, while the majority of Muslims born in the United States are black. White individuals make up a large portion of both identities, as do people who identify as Arabs racially ("Muslims in America: Immigrants and those born in U.S.").

Immigrant Muslims are, on general, better than Muslims born in the United States, according to a variety of commonly used financial well-being indicators. Arabs are also twice as likely as Muslims born in America to own a property and have a college diploma. However, black Americans are less likely than other races to have a university degree or a family income of at least \$100,000, and black Muslims account for a significantly bigger proportion of US-born Muslims than newcomers. Muslim immigrants differ from American immigrants in that they tend to earn lesser wages and are no more likely to receive a diploma than native-born Americans ("Muslims in America: Immigrants and those born in U.S.").

As far as Islamic education is concerned, there has been a considerable increase in the number of Islamic schools over the last decades. As the Muslim community in the United States continues to grow, Islamic schools are springing up all throughout the country. Because their children are in American schools, Muslim parents are concerned about keeping their children away from their religion; they send their children to public schools and provide religious education in the afternoons or on weekends. Many Islamic schools were founded by Muslim Americans, but following the September 11th attacks, Americans were concerned about what was being taught behind closed doors, and therefore their activity was curtailed (Senzai et al.).

The sister Clara Muhammad schools are part of the Council of Islamic Schools of North America (CISNA), in which it helps to teach poor African Americans that they

have been torn from their ancestral culture and country .It provides African American students with a worldview that emphasizes self-awareness, self-reliance, and self-discipline, all of which are absent in public schools in the United States (Rashid and Muhammad).

According to the Pew Research Center, Muslims who have recently migrated to the United States are well educated, ranking in the third place behind Hindus and Jews. Hindus are the most educated group in the United States, with 96 percent having earned a college diploma. Jews came in second place with 75%, followed by 54 percent of college-educated Muslims in the United States, in comparison to the US national average with 39 % for all Americans. Only 36 % of Christians in United State have a diploma (Gjelten).

According to a study conducted by the Bureau of International Operations, 25 percent of Iranian Americans hold a Master's or doctoral degree, making them one of the most educated groups in the United States. Asians are also noted for being exceptionally intellectual, particularly Chinese Americans, who have a college degree at a rate of 51 percent. Despite the fact that Nigerian Americans are a minority in the United States, they are better educated than Native Americans. As Chron, 58 percent of this ethnic group has a college diploma. Of those who have a college diploma, 37 percent have a bachelor's degree, 17 percent have a master's degree, and 1 percent has a doctorate degree (K. Muhammad).

In reality, because there is a high association between education and income, individuals who are well educated are far better off than those who are not. According to a study conducted by the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU),

American Muslims is suffering a number of economic challenges, despite their high-profile and high-income positions (Meyer).

Financially, Muslims are about as probably as the rest of the population to have a household income of \$100,000 or more. On the other hand, other they earn less than \$30, 00, and Muslims are three times more likely to be unemployed than other Americans. Whereas this figure contradicts conventional notions of Muslim as middle-class, upwardly mobile, or rich, it does correspond to the US legal poverty line (US Muslims Concerned about their Place in Society).

According to a 2018 ISPU survey titled "What's the Hidden Story behind American Muslim Poverty," Black Muslim families live in poverty at the highest rate of any other demographic. Muslims from other ethnic groups, on the other hand, who arrive in America with low resources quickly, become great earners. Additionally, ISPU poll stated that Muslims in the United States donate to domestic charities that support underprivileged ethnic groups. Aside from charitable initiatives, there is a need for more economic collaboration among Muslims of all socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds (Chouhoud).

Despite accounting for only 2.75 percent of Michigan's overall population, the organization released a report in 2017 titled "An Impact Report on Muslim Contributions to Michigan," which found that Michigan Muslims "contribute a tremendous amount across issue areas to the success of the entire - state and the health, happiness, and well-being of their fellow Americans." Despite their small numbers, Muslims account for more than 15 percent of the state's medical doctors, as well as 4.18 percent of all small company owners in Michigan. In the United States,

Muslims are more likely than the general population to have a job, with 70% having a job compared to 64 percent for the entire population (Meyer).

In fact, Muslims have been migrating to America since antiquity for a variety of reasons, from prehistoric times to the present; there have been waves of migration. As a result, Islamic society in America varies and diversifies in terms of color and age. Because the proportions varied from one source to another, experts have come up with a variety of estimations for the exact number of American Muslims in the United States, as well as, percentages differ between subgroups. Therefore we discover that African Muslim groups are the most numerous, followed by Asians. They settled in a variety of locations across the United States.

In general, diversity is one important characteristics of the US Muslim community. While the community at large is better than the average American community in education and income, subgroups of the Muslim community have diverse economic profiles.

## **Chapter two**

### **The Evolution of Anti-Muslim Sentiment in America**

One of the biggest challenges faced by the American Muslim population relate to their perception by the mainstream American population. Historically the perception of Islam and Muslims in the US has been influenced by the historical completion between Islam and Christianity and by the confrontations between the western world and the Islamic world from the crusades to the post 9\11 an American invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Consequently, the perception of Islam and Muslims has always been negative.

This chapter explores the rise and evolution of Anti-Muslim sentiment in America and refers to the major factors, events, and developments which contributed to the rise and increase of Islamophobia.

#### **2.1- Perception of Muslims in United State**

Islamophobia is a hostile attitude or behavior toward Muslims, scholars disagree over its identification; each has their own point of view. The Runnymede Trust defines Islamophobia as “a useful shorthand way of referring to dread or hatred of Islam—and, therefore, a fear or dislike of all, or most, Muslims”. Islamophobia, according to Gottschalk and Greenberg is “a social anxiety toward Islam and Muslim cultures.” As well as Shryock defines the phrase as a fear of Islam and Muslims in general. According to Ramarajan and Runell Islamophobia is directed not only at Muslims and Islam, but also at anyone "who appears to be Muslim" (Hossain 35).

Although anti-Muslim prejudice has been on the rise since the 1980s, the Stockholm International Forum on Combating Intolerance officially acknowledged the phrase in January 2001. In the same year, the United Nations criticized rising

anti-Muslim prejudice and anti-Islamic bigotry, describing it as "as despicable as anti-Semitism" (Ciftci 2).

The rise of Islamophobia in the West has alarmed academics and policymakers. While the mainstream media and some political leaders associate Islam with violence, prominent organizations' reports focus on a general anti-Muslim sentiment.

An initial examination of the descriptive numbers found that Western citizens have a variety of Islamophobic sentiments, ranging from a general dislike of Muslims to the belief that Muslims support terrorist organizations. Furthermore, citizens' attitudes varied significantly across five Western countries. Muslims are considered with the greatest hostility in Spain and Germany. When asked if Muslims in Spain and the United States support al Qaeda, 68 percent of Spaniards and 54 percent of Americans say yes. West and North African Muslim refugees use Spain as a transit point, and the number of illegal immigrants has increased since the country joined the European Union. The effect of 9/11 and the politicization of the "War on Terror" may account for some of the perceptions. Muslims are viewed as terrorists in the United States (Ciftci 15).

The 9/11 attacks have been described as a watershed moment in American history, when "everything changed," including people's perceptions of the world and their surroundings, as well as their relationship to and understanding of a larger political geography. Religion was, and continues to be, a fundamental marker of this post-9/11 paradigm change. Considering religiosity levels and what it means to hold a certain religious outlook or identity in the United States.

According to some American Muslims, 9/11 ushered in a new era of increased distrust of Islam and Muslims among non-Muslim neighbors, coworkers, classmates, and acquaintances. Others claimed that law enforcement officials, elected politicians,

and others were initially suspicious. Over the last few years, homeland security personnel have become more systematic, and in some cases, ruthless. Muslim and Muslim community's geography is being scrutinized in an extralegal manner.

The rise in security authorities' antipathy against Islam and Muslims appears to be having a direct impact on Islamic faith and practice in the United States, including interpretations of the faith's doctrines and texts, and the establishment of Muslim communities. Americans' sense of self-identity, as well as the emphasis on volunteerism and civic participation, for many Muslims and non-Muslims, Islam in America has experienced substantial modifications since 9/11, according to those who study the religion. Islamophobia did not emerge from nowhere. Anti-Muslim and anti-Islam sentiment has a long history in the United States. Culture of the West, with the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, the academic community became more conscious of Islamophobia as a social problem in the United States and Western Europe. Said did not use the term "Islamophobia," but he did lay the framework for a broader understanding of the phenomena. This phenomenon has gotten worse since 9/11, as evidenced by the increasing number of new books on the subject and on Islam in America (Haddad and Harb 478).

Rebecca Johnson in her report *a Theoretical Framework for Anti-Muslims Prejudice* mentioned that even if only one or two Muslim terrorists were involved for a specific incident, people are more likely to seek retaliation against Muslims in general if Muslims are seen as highly enitiative. Since many popular hypotheses regarding the roots of "Islamophobia" link anti-Muslim prejudice and fear to terrorist incidents like 9/11, the London bombings in July 2005, or the Boston Marathon bombings, Understanding the process by which individuals assign collective

responsibility and seek vicarious retribution against Muslims is a major issue for Palestinian suicide bombers (Johnson53).

Newheiser, Tausch, Dovidio, and Jewstone (2009) discovered that anti-Muslim prejudice predicts the level of entitativity participants assign to Muslims, implying that having prejudicial attitudes toward a group may come before categorizing it as a cohesive unit. However, the researchers emphasize the importance of more experimental research to determine the causal link between prejudice and entitativity.

Understanding how these terrorists are seen is crucial since anti-Muslim prejudice may stem from generalizations of religiously motivated terrorist acts to the entire religious group. In previous research, Pronin et al. (2006) identified two distinct perceptions of terrorists. The first is that terrorists are irrational fanatics seeking vengeance, symbolic immortality, and the death penalty. In the hereafter, there is a promise of paradise. As a result of this, Terrorist acts are perceived as prejudiced from a certain point of view, by irrational hatred, extremist ideology, and an ex-convict. There is a lot of pressure to conform to the group's values. The Terrorists are rational, according to the second perception. Soldiers who are battling for a cause they believe in specific objectives in mind from this standpoint, their Actions are seen as being based on an objective assessment of their situation and the options they believe they have (Johnson 54).

In that context, the theory of Orientalism by Edward said focuses on Middle Eastern imagery through the eyes of Western eyes. As well as he tried to mention in his book the objectives and the views Western world about the Islamic World and the East in general.

Edward described himself as a Palestinian Christian academic, a fiery literary critic, and a brave political activist. He advocated for the Palestinian people's social



and political rights, as well as the rights of Arabs in general. Said is best known for his work *Orientalism*, which is his most important work (1978). By illustrating the relationship between the Enlightenment and Colonialism, Said's *Orientalism* altered the path of numerous fields. The word *Orientalism* was described by Edward Said and other scholars as "a style of thought based on an ontological and epistemological contrast created between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident'" (Said 2).

*Orientalism* is a term that refers to the 19th-century construction of the Orient by European colonial powers, as well as a Western strategy for dominating and gaining dominance over the East. However, according to Said, the term "Thinking" or "Thoughts" is based on an "ontological" and "epistemological" division between the East and the West. He illustrates how this kind of thought formed the image of Eastern societies, such as the Middle East and Islam, in literature and academic research as a scary inferior and underdeveloped "other" (Koefoed and Haldrup).

In his book, Edward Said explains how anti-Muslim sentiment began in European countries, stating that "the Orient was essentially a European construct". The East is like the source of Europe's language, civilization, and culture because it is next to Europe and also has Europe's greatest, richest, and oldest colonies. The American knowledge of the Orient, on the other hand, will appear to be lot less sophisticated. Furthermore, the United States' rapidly rising political and economic clout in the Middle East puts a premium on our understanding of the region. On the basis of ontological and epistemological contrasts, Said defined the term as an ideology that distinguishes between the Orient and the Occident. According to Said, there are various definitions of *Orientalism*, but he thought that the most effective one was based on the late eighteenth century as a very tightly defined beginning point, which he refers to as "Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate

institution with the Orient-dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing it, by teaching it, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating it, by teaching it, settling it, sluing over it in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating restructuring and having authority over the Orient” (1-2).

According to Said, *Orientalism* is a blatantly political fabrication whose objective is to "invert the gaze" of the discourse in order to evaluate it from the perspective of disciplines or to expound exhaustively on the historical or cultural foundations of Orientalism. The core of Said's work is power and knowledge; he was inspired by Prime Minister Arthur Balfour's defense of Britain's dominance of Egypt in 1910, when he declared that "we know the civilization of Egypt better than we know any other country," by which he meant that knowledge for him does not mean wiping out civilization, but rather actively creating it.

According to Said, in the early twentieth century, Orientalism used two key tactics to convey the Orient to the West in the early twentieth century. "One was by means of the disseminative capacities of modern learning, its diffusive apparatus in the learned professions, the universities, the professional societies, the exploration and geographical organizations, the publishing industry", he stated. The second path, on the other hand, was via a large confluence (221).

In Said's book the latest phase of *Orientalism*, when America begins to play a part in these concept he write that "France and Britain no longer occupy center stage in world politics; the American emporium has displaced them". Arab Muslims have become a figure in the policy planner's world, as well as in world business, after WWII, and particularly after the Arab-Israeli wars. The portrayal of Muslims by Westerners and Americans has an impact on the image of Arabs (285).

As an example of how Americans perceive Muslims and Islam, he asserted that” Most of the pictures represent mass rage and misery, or irrational (hence haplessly eccentric) gestures. Lurking behind all of these images is the menace of Jihad. Consequence: a fear that Muslims (or Arabs) will take over the world”. As well as a number of works written by Americans who portray Islam in a negative light and disparage Arabs. For example, in one book, the prophet's image is distorted “The Moslem religion, called Islam, began in the seventh century. It was started by a wealthy businessman of Arabia called Mohammed. He claimed that he was a prophet. He found followers among other Arabs; he told them that they were picked to rule the world” (287).

Following WWII, the United States became more concerned with the East in order to prepare for the future. Its fascination with Cairo, Tahrán, and North Africa was astonishing, given how crucial they were for warfare, oil extraction, and people resources (Said 293-295). All of these initiatives, according to Said, are for political reasons, as he stated in his book “At bottom such a view of Islam as political, not even euphemistically impartial”. He also made it clear in his speech that all of these derogatory depictions are intended to exact retribution on Islam and Muslims for refusing to submit to Western policy: “Since Islam has never easily been encompassed by the west politically-and certainly since World War two Arab nationalism has been a movement openly declaring its hostility to Western imperialism-the desire to assert intellectually satisfying things about Islam in retaliation increase” (299).

To sum up, Edward Said's work is a study of the "Orient" and its various dimensions. He looks at the historical, cultural, and political perspectives of the East in the West, as well as how and where they arose. He concentrated on the various

perspectives in Eastern societies, particularly during the period of European and British control, and how Orientalism will be formed in the future by Americans. Following World War II, the United States intervened in these beliefs and how they helped shape Orientalism. On Said's primary arguments, the link between Orientalism and Islamophobia is presented. According to Said, Eastern journalists were unable to defend themselves in Western journals because Muslims are given little or no space to express themselves (Wolf 6).

## **2.2. Rise of the Islamophobia in the US**

The negative perception of Islam and Muslims in the United States is very old. But there have been many developments and events throughout the history of the Muslim presence in America which led to the increase in anti-Muslim sentiment. Some domestic policies and some events at home and abroad have contributed in many different ways to increase of Islamophobia in the country. One major event that had a significant impact on the perception of Islam and Muslims worldwide and in the United States in particular is the Iranian revolution of 1979.

The Iranian revolution of 1979 was a sequence of huge popular civil uprisings that would end in ruling regime being overthrown. It was a set of rebellions and uprisings against the American government and Western ideas that Mohammed Reza Shah and his group adopted and tried to introduce into Iranian society. In support of this, author Michael Eisenstadt stated in his book *Iran's Islamic Revolution: Lessons for the Arab Spring of 2011* that “roots of the Islamic Revolution can be traced to developments that long predated it (2). In 1963, the Shah initiated his “White Revolution,” a series of far-reaching reforms intended to modernize and Westernize Iran” (Zunes 2).

The Iranian revolution used a variety of nonviolent insurgent tactics. According to Dr. Stephen Zunes, the revolution started when exiled opposition leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini called for strikes, boycotts, tax refusals, and other types of noncooperation with the Shah's regime in that year. In response to such defiance, the authorities reacted with harsh repression (4).

Since then a series of attacks on American interests locally and internationally carried out by Muslim individuals or groups further distorted the image of Islam and Muslims in America. One of these events took place on Friday, June 14, 1985 when two members of Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad, Mohammed Ali Hammadi and Hasan Izz al-Din hijacked Trans World Airlines (TWA) aircraft 847, an American plane which was planed from Athens to Rome and was carrying a group of Americans with 139 passengers and eight person crew. The incident was considered as a catalyst for a rise in terrorist attacks, as well as one of the most dangerous actions. The Hijackers asked for the liberation of 700 Shi'ite Muslims held by Israel. The kidnapping was brutal with people being harassed and beaten, in addition to the death of Navy diver Robert Stethem, who was murdered. The flight's route was changer to Beirut, where they released some people there, and other were left in Algeria (Rather).

In 1990, the Gulf war complicated the relationship between America and the Islamic world and Islam in general. In fact, its content was the absolute refusal of the United State and other major economic powers for any regional power to interfere directly and indirectly in Gulf oil (Gause 1). The conflict has been divided into two periods, the first of which began with a combat between Iraq and Kuwait, or, to be more precise, Iraqi aggression against Kuwait. The second stage, which began shortly after, quickly evolved into a conflict between the US and Iraq (Mabro 11). Saddam Hussein planned the invasion and occupation of Kuwait with the stated goal of

obtaining Kuwait's vast oil reserves, repaying a substantial debt Iraq owed Kuwait, and increasing Iraqi authority in the gulf. After that, The United States intervened at Saudi Arabia's request to safeguard it from possible Iraqi assault. The US then issued a strong protest of the invasion and annexation of Kuwait, as well as a military prohibition (Mabro 11).

Finally, the coalition forces, which included 34 countries, liberated Kuwait and forced Iraqi forces to retreat. The Gulf war increased the animosity between America and the Islamic world and increased the interest of the American public and government in Islamic affairs. The Americans develop the perception of Islamic world which was not much positive.

Some terrorist attacks that targeted the United States, during the 1990s and associated with Muslim individuals or groups have caused reactions against the Muslim community of United States and led to increased hate crimes against them, such as the World Trade Center attack (February 26, 1993), the Oklahoma City bombing (April 19, 1995). These two events in particular have left an indelible impact on the American mind (Kuzma 1). The aftermath of Oklahoma City Bombings showed the existence of high level of Islamophobia in the US.

The bombing of the World Trade Center in New York City in February 1993 signaled the start of a new brutal age of terrorism (Parashini 1). The bomb occurred in a World Trade Center parking garage in New York City; it created a massive crater and caused several steel concrete floors in the region to fall. The WTC bombers were revealed to be a team of New Jersey males who had been accused of crimes for more than a year. Yousef Ramzi, was the leader and strategist of the WTC bombing and his

disciple and bumbler Mohammad Salameh in addition to other player Ahmed Ajaj (Parashini 187).

Parashini claimed that the attackers probably chose the World Trade Center as an objective since destroying the twin towers would allow them to cause a significant amount of casualties, not because it was a symbol of Western ideas or the accumulated wealth of America (189).

On April 19, 1995, Terrorism attacked Oklahoma City when an explosion happened in front of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building. The device was discovered inside a Ryder rental truck that was 24 feet long. The Federal Building, that had housed 15 federal agencies, many Department of Defense departments, and a day care center, was reduced to a broken building. The blast killed 168 individuals and injured over 700 others (Pollilas 1).

Only a few hours after the explosion, American media sources stated that the attackers were Muslim males with oriental features and no logical shadows. As a result, American Muslims have faced discrimination and physical assault around the country. According to CAIR, rising anti-Muslim prejudice has led to an increase in Muslim isolation, as well as multiple acts of anti-Muslim violence directed at highly visible Muslim institutions and easily identifiable Muslims, such as mosques and women wearing the customary Islamic headscarf ("A Rush to Judgment").

### **2.3. Burst of Islamophobia after 9/11 Attacks**

September 11, 2001 marked the beginning of new stage in the history of Muslim presence in America and in the development of Islamophobia in this country.

A group of individuals from Muslim-majority countries hijacked American planes and attacked the World Trade Center in New York and other American cities.

The activities of tiny cells of terrorists were linked to the entire Muslim community in this tragedy. As a result, a phobia grew, and Americans began to see all Muslims through the same prism of terrorism. Islamophobia is the term used to describe this anti-Muslim feeling. Unfortunately, Islamophobia is spreading so fast due to widespread misconceptions and misunderstandings about Muslims, which drive people to be prejudiced against Muslims and lead to an increase in hate crimes against them. Islamophobia is a type of bigotry and intolerance inspired by fear, mistrust, and hatred towards Islam and its believers. Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, this phenomenon grew in popularity, particularly in the United States (Ali 181).

Following the events of September 11, Muslims faced prejudice in the form of FBI raids on religious organizations, mosque damage, business vandalism, verbal abuse, and physical violence. Over 1,700 acts of hate violence against Muslims, primarily Arabs and Asians were reported. During this time, citizenship issues in predominantly Muslim ethnic enclaves in the United States arose as a result of changed government policies and stricter immigration rules (Baboolal 3).

Many Muslims have been victimized by Islamophobia and have lost their rights as a result. The 9/11 terrorist attacks were the catalyst for the West's hatred of Islam and Muslims. Following 9/11, there were a slew of unpleasant incidents in America, the majority of which were directed at Muslims. Following the collapse of the twin towers, Islamophobia spiked. Many innocent people were falsely accused of being terrorists and sentenced to prison. In fact, when certain issues become instinctive, people act on them without thinking about the consequences, even if it



harms innocent people. In America, hatred of Muslims has become natural; parents encourage their children to despise Islam and Muslims (Ali et al. 181-182).

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, heralded the beginning of a new era for Muslims in the United States. Following the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon by al-Qaida, many Muslims and other Arab Americans became targets of rage and hatred. According to congressional testimony from the Southern Poverty Law Center in 2011, mosques were torched or demolished, and many Muslims faced death threats and harassment in the weeks after the attacks. According to the organization, several victims were beaten, assaulted, or held at gunpoint simply because they were Muslim. According to the FBI, hate crimes against Muslims increased 1617 percent from 2000 to 2001, representing some of the greatest numbers of Islamophobic hate crimes ever recorded in the United States (Alfonseca).

But, according to the Pew Research Center, bigotry against Muslims has not abated as the country has moved on from the attacks and the Muslim American population has grown. On Sept. 17, 2001, then-President George W. Bush spoke at the Islamic Center of Washington, D.C., denouncing anti-Muslim prejudice as part of his pledge to "fight the war on terrorism" in the Middle East. ("Terrorism's face is not the actual Islamic faith," Bush stated.) "This isn't what Islam is about." Islam is the religion of peace. These terrorists are not peacemakers. They are symbols of evil and war". 40 percent of respondents believed that the terrorists were motivated at least in part by religion. Those who did not like Muslims, on the other hand, went on the attack. Reports of bomb threats, arson, and assaults against Muslims made headlines around the country (Alfonseca).

"We created all these new opportunities to surveil citizens, harass citizens, and even entrap citizens in our desire to fight terrorism in the post-9/11 period because

there was a lot of fear about Muslims and terrorism in the United States," said Sally Howell, director of the Center for Arab American Studies at the University of Michigan-Dearborn".

In 2006, CAIR processed a total of 2,467 civil rights complaints, compared to 1,972 cases reported to CAIR in 2005. This constitutes a 25.1 percent increase in the total number of complaints from 2005. CAIR received 167 reports of anti-Muslim hate crimes, a 9.2 percent increase from the 153 complaints received in 2005. Overall, 10 states accounted for almost 81 percent of all civil rights complaints to CAIR in 2006. These states include (in descending order): California (29 percent), Illinois (13 percent), District of Columbia (7 percent), Florida (7 percent), Texas (6 percent), New York (5 percent), Virginia (4 percent), Michigan (3 percent), New Jersey (3 percent) and Ohio (3 percent). One of the most notable increases was in the category dealing with government agencies, which jumped from 19.22 percent in 2005 to 36.32 percent in 2006. This rise was mostly due to an increase in the number of cases involving severe immigration difficulties including citizenship and naturalization delays (Cair 5).

Because of the falsehoods and misperceptions disseminated by the West, Western society has had a negative attitude toward Muslims from ancient times. The term "terrorism" has come to be associated with Muslims. As a result, all terrorist-related events and problems in the world are attributed solely to Muslims. And as the number of events increased, so did the idea of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiment, with the 9/11 attacks serving as a focal point for the expansion of these ideas.

Islamophobia is a deep- rooted phenomenon in the United States. However the above mentioned events and developments caused spikes in anti-Muslim hatred. The

single event that caused the biggest surge in Islamophobic attacks against American Muslims is the attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

## **Chapter Three**

### **The Rise of the Islamophobia Network and Its Impact**

The increasingly negative perception of Islam and Muslims and the big rise in Islamophobic and hate crimes against Muslim Americans in the period after the attacks of September 11, 2001 becomes one of the main problems. Some politicians, scholars, and journalists contributed to distorting the image of Islam and decreasing the favorability of Muslims among Americans. An in-depth investigation conducted in America by the Center for American Progress in 2011 revealed that a small network of misinformation experts have contributed largely to the rise of Islamophobia and hate attacks against Muslims.

This chapter sheds light on this Islamophobia network whose efforts are focused on distorting the image of Islam and Muslims in America by spreading lies and misinformation. It provides information about the Islamophobia network and tries to investigate its composition, functioning and objectives.

#### **3.1. Exposing the Network**

In 2011, the Center for American Progress published the findings of a detailed investigation about the big increase of Islamophobia in America in a report titled “Fear, Inc.: The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America” in order to identify and expose the experts, scholars, activists and organizations comprising a tightly linked network that spread misinformation and hateful propaganda about American Muslims and Islam. The report found that seven charitable foundations spent \$42.6

million between 2001 and 2009 to support the spread of anti-Muslim rhetoric (Duss et al. 1).

The efforts of a small cadre of funders and misinformation experts were amplified by Islamophobes and preachers of hate like the religious right, conservative media, grassroots organizations, and politicians who sought to introduce a fringe perspective on American Muslims into the public discourse (Duss et Al. 1).

“The American Islamophobia Network is a close - knit family of individuals and organizations that share an ideology of extreme anti - Muslim animus and work with one another to negatively influence public opinion and government policy about Muslims and Islam”(Arain and Barzegare 2). Over the years, its ability to organize, coordinate, and communicate its ideology through community movements has expanded substantially (Ali et al. 3).

The Islamophobia network is made up of several hate groups with distinct objectives. It was actually organized into three sections, each with its own set of responsibilities and activities. The American Islamophobe Database, according to Cair, is made up of groups and individuals who were active since years and then categorized to one of three categories.

The first group is the network's inner core, which includes organizations and individuals whose primary objective is to disseminate prejudice towards the Islamic world, and whose actions frequently include Islamophobic themes. The second group was the outer core, whose goal was to display or promote Islamophobic ideas instead of the prior group's goal. The last one is characterized as a source of concern since it includes organizations and individuals who espouse Islamophobic themes in the United States. All of these categories are interrelated and work together to serve one another (Saylor 3).

Obviously, this network and its member organizations cannot function without the financial support of a group of financiers. According to Ali et al., the Islamophobia network in America is fueled by a tiny group of conservative foundations and rich donors. They fund a slew of right-wing think tanks and misinformation experts who peddle hate and fear of Muslims and Islam in the form of books, reports, websites, blogs, and carefully crafted talking points, which are used as propaganda by dedicated anti-Islam grassroots organizations and some right-wing religious groups. Anti-Islam grassroots groups receive direct support from these foundations and rich benefactors (13).

### **3.2. Composition of the Network**

A tightly networked group of misinformation experts promote lies to millions of Americans through effective advocates, media partners and grassroots organizing. This promotion of hate and misconceptions primarily starts with 6 key people and their organizations. The network is made up of a group of professionals who are attempting to propagate anti-Islamic ideologies, particularly through the media (Lewandowsky and Yesilada 4).

According to the report of the Center for American Progress, there are five scholars who lead five prominent think tanks, and their main goal is to organize the bulk of anti-Islam propaganda. This organization's mission is to propagate anti-Sharia views as a totalitarian ideology, legal theory, and military strategy aimed at eliminating the West. This small band includes five experts among of them Frank Gaffney, David Yerushalmi, Daniel Pipes, Robert Spencer, and Steven Emerson. Frank Gaffney is the founding director of the Center for Security Policy (CSP), a "national security" think-tank that has promoted false assertions about Muslims. CSP is classified as an anti-Muslim hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center (28).

**Frank Gaffney**

Frank Gaffney is a leading anti-Muslim activist in the USA. He is the founding director of the Center for Security Policy (CSP), a "national security" think-tank that has promoted false assertions about Muslims. CSP is classified as an anti-Muslim hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center (Frank Gaffney 1). He has called for congressional hearings to expose Muslim conspiracies, claiming that a shadowy "Muslim Brotherhood" existed. He claimed that the Muslim Brotherhood wanted to infiltrate all levels of government and warned that Sharia and the Islamic faith represented a threat to American democracy ("Frank Gaffney").

**David Yerushalmi**

David Yerushalmi is a significant participant in the anti-Muslim hate movement in the United States, serving as legal counsel to groups and people. He is also the author of model anti-Sharia legislation that has been proposed in state legislatures around the US. According Ali et al., Yerushalmi received \$274,883 from CSP for consulting services, in order to spend in disseminating incorrect notions that misrepresent Islam or to commit destructive activities aimed at distorting Islam. For example he developed the "Mapping Sharia in America: Knowing the Enemy" effort to find out what kind of Sharia was being practiced in every mosque and promoted by Muslim American religious institutions (38-39).

**Daniel Pipes**

Another influential expert in the Islamophobia network is Daniel Pipes. He established the Middle East Forum, an independent non-profit organization, in 1990. In 2009, the Forum made over \$3 million in income. Through publications, research, media outreach, and public education, its declared aim is to "promote American interests." However, it is a main funder of the most Islamophobic organizations in the

country. It funds Campus Watch, Islamist Watch, the Legal Project, and the Washington Project, and publishes the Middle East Quarterly. For Pipes, 9/11 was a national tragedy; it was a long-awaited chance to make the case that "a state of war exists" between Islam and the West. It was a long-awaited chance to make the case that "a state of war exists" between Islam and the West. He was seeking to terrify Americans about Islam's presence. . Over the last decade, he and his think tank have received millions of dollars in funding from large donations like Donors Capital Fund (\$2,300,000), the Bradley Foundation (\$305,000), the Russell Berrie Foundation (\$273,000), the Becker Foundation (\$355,000), and the Anchorage Fund and William Rosenwald Family Fund (\$2,320,299) (Ali et al. 41- 42).

### **Robert Spencer**

One of the most active self-proclaimed scholars who devote their time and effort to attack Islam and Muslims in the USA is Robert Spence. He is one of the most outspoken anti-Muslim figures in America. He is a tireless blogger, author, and activist who promote fallacies that Islam is intrinsically violent and that terrorists are only following its most true expression (" Robert Spencer").

Spencer is the founder and director of Jihad Watch, a David Horowitz Freedom Center organization. The center's declared purpose is to defend the values of individual freedom, the rule of law, private property, and limited government. Jihad Watch is a subsidiary of the Freedom Center, and its main goal is to "monitor radical Islam's attempts to undermine Western society" (Ali et al. 45).

### **Steven Emerson**

Steven Emerson directed and investigative a Project on Terrorism, he claims to be "one of the world's greatest storehouses of archive data and intelligence on Islamic and Middle Eastern terrorist groups." Emerson portrays Islamic values as



being fundamentally violent and adversarial, and he has a history of falsifying evidence to support conspiracy theories about radical Islam infiltrating America via Muslim civil rights and advocacy groups ("Steven Emerson").

The Bridge Initiative describes Steven Emerson as a "misinformation expert," who "creates misleading data and documents used mostly by politicians, grassroots parties, and the media." Emerson is the writer or founder of several books on terrorism and national security, including *The American House of Saud: The Secret Petrodollar Connection* (1985) and *Secret Warriors: Inside the Covert Military Operations of the Reagan Era* (1988) (1).

### **The Organizations**

The Islamophobia Network is comprised of more than 37 entities, according to CAIR. Eleven of these organizations have a mostly local impact. Americans against Hate, Citizens for National Security, Counter Terrorism Operations Center, Florida Family Association, and The United West are five of the local organizations established in Florida. ACT for America's offices is also in Florida (Saylor 101-102).

Owing to their scaremongering, the Islamophobia network's muscle—are seeing an increase in fundraising. They are also recruiting seasoned political operatives to profit from the fear and hatred they spread. According to many researchers, there are many organizations serving Islamophobia network. ACT for America, is one of the largest grassroots anti-Muslim organizations in the United States (Ali et al. 64).

ACT for America was launched in 2007 by Brigitte Gabriel. According to Bridge Initiative report, it is the biggest anti-Muslim group in the United States; it has led attempts to prohibit the alleged Sharia law. ACT for America boasts to have 750,000 members and hundreds of branches around the country, making it the biggest

anti-Muslim organization in the country. ACT appears to be an activist for national security and the fight against radical Islam, but it actively encourages conspiracy theories about all Muslims, including the 3.3 million Muslims in the United States ("Act for America").

According to the report, it pursues a multipronged strategy for building its activist base. The organization hosts a series of meetings to bring interested activists together and train them with best practices. Its most high-profile event is an annual conference to gather speakers from the anti-Muslim movement's think tank core. However, The Stop Sharia Now project, launched in 2009 to raise public awareness of the fabricated threat of Sharia invading America, has been ACT most effective endeavor to date (67- 86).

### **3.3. Objectives and Strategies of the Network**

The U.S. Islamophobia Network is a powerful, multibillion-dollar network of institutions and individuals in the United States that erroneously portray Islam and Muslims as a malicious existential danger and deliberately advocate bigotry, discrimination, and oppression against the faith and its practitioners ("Islamophobia Fact Sheet 1").

The Islamophobia network spends millions of dollars with the principle aim of promoting negative views of Islam and Muslims. They use media, political rhetoric and scholarship to raise concerns among the general public about the growth of the Muslim population and about the application of Sharia law in the USA. This serves some political and ideological purposes.

Islamophobia is even exploited to serve American foreign policy objectives. The United States routinely uses Islamophobia to defend its foreign policies in Muslim-majority countries. Consider the failure of President George W. Bush's War on Terror,

which ravaged Iraq. The policy was sold to the American people as necessary for freedom and security (Elsheikh et Al. 6).

To distort the image of Islam and to demonize Muslims, the network uses various strategies. The council on American-Islamic relations pointed some strategies used to spread Islamophobia. One main tool for spreading Islamophobia is through negative media portrayal. The American media exaggerates negative coverage and news about Muslims and Islam, resulting in an inflated sense of threat and, as a result, fear and hatred. According to a study published in *The Washington Post*, 12 percent of domestic attacks carried out by Muslims received 449 percent more media coverage on average than 88 percent of attacks carried out by others over a four-year period (Cair 5).

Political rhetoric is another important strategy utilized by the Islamophobia network in America to attack Islam and Muslims. When it benefits their political objectives, politicians play on people's emotions and exploit their fear to actively foment Islamophobia (Cair).

Since 9/11, there have been two major shifts in Islamophobia in the United States: the first one is that Islamophobia became the operational zing tool for singling out Muslims and Islam based on the actions of a few deviants, shifting the blame from a few to all Muslims collectively; and the other one is a shift from lone-wolf or individual acts of anti-Muslim sentiment and actions to organized Islamophobia and anti-Muslim efforts, giving rise to groups that organize people around anti-Muslim sentiment and actions. Islamophobes are organized (within national and international networks) to institutionalize overtly anti-Muslim/Islam public policies and legal regimes, which are led by organizations, think tanks, institutions, hired anti-Muslim activists, grassroots organizing efforts, and so on (Elsheikh et al. 6).

The Islamophobia network's efforts to target American Muslim communities remain significant and continue to weaken America's essential ideals of religious tolerance, civil rights, and social inclusion, despite the fact that the American public mostly dismisses such biased ideas (" The Islamophobia Network's Efforts to Manufacture Hate in America").

The development of ISIS, or the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, provides the Islamophobia network with a new opportunity to use unconnected geopolitical events to caricature Islam, incite public fear, and advocate discriminatory laws against American Muslims. The Islamophobia Network's latest attempt to link mainstream American Muslims to the warped type of Islam advocated by ISIS is a reminder of the necessity for continued vigilance in combating the anti-Muslim fringe (" The Islamophobia Network's Efforts to Manufacture Hate in America").

### **3.4. Impact of the Network on Muslim Americans**

Undoubtedly, the emergence and spread of Islamophobia had a profound impact on the Muslim population in the United States. This phenomenon poses a threat to their lives, as well as disrupting Muslim Americans' identity and way of life, particularly in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks. Additionally, Muslims' lives have been impacted as a result of the misinformation spread by the network.

Associating Islam with terrorism, intolerance, and violence resulted in the deterioration of the life conditions of Muslims. Attacks on Muslims and discrimination against them increased a lot. According to the Council on American-Islamic Relations (Cair), in 2017, hate crimes against Muslim Americans increased by 91%. White supremacist groups carried out more assaults than any other domestic extremist group in the previous, according to the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security, and were expected to carry out more attacks in the future (27).

According to Areeza Ali, the impact of Islamophobia on the Muslim American community is huge. Muslims suffered massive discrimination, bullying, dehumanization, and disempowerment, which have been triggered by the media and government policies in the United States. Politicians exploited the rising Islamophobia to promote their policies. President Donald Trump for example prohibited many Muslims from entering the United States, citing that Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen are considered to be terrorist-infested countries (1).

In fact, the impact of the network and its organizations varies depending on the type. For instance, Muslim men and women are racialized in different ways, according on their gender. Men are more likely to be considered as disloyal and a national security threat than women. Because the hijab symbolizes foreignness and misogyny to their fellow private citizens, women who wear it are routinely questioned about their nationality and cultural values (Tariq 6).

In addition, according to a report on the Civil Rights Division's Post-9/11 Civil Rights Summit ,over 800 acts of violence, threats, vandalism, and arson against people considered to be Muslim or of Arab, Middle Eastern, or South Asian descent were examined by the Department in the first six years after 9/11 (2). In 2015, Scholars alleged that hate crimes against Muslims in the United States have escalated, including mosque arsons, assaults, shootings, and threats of violence (Lichtblau).

Anti-Muslim hatred also took the form of verbal and physical attacks on Muslims and their mosques, prevalent and habitual stereotypes in the media, and employment discrimination. In the six months following the 9/11 attacks, the Council on American-Islamic Relations recorded hate crimes and civil rights complaints against Muslims. Fear and hatred among Americans have had a considerable impact

on current political discourse around Islam and Muslim Americans, leading to negative caricatures of Muslims as "terrorists" and "anti-Americans" (Ali 6).

According to Areeza Ali, research revealed big psychological problems among Muslim Americans, including anxiety and depression rates (18). The hate attacks on members of the US Muslim community and their mosques and properties became a daily routine. The Activities of the Islamophobia network in America made the lives of American Muslims much worse.

The Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice (DOJ) investigated 800 cases of violence, threats, vandalism, and arson against minority populations in the six years following 9/11(2). Years after 9/11, one would anticipate that rash blaming of minorities would wane, resulting in a drop in the number of events. Minority community organizations, on the other hand, are facing an upsurge in threats and violence against their communities as a result of the perceived growth in homegrown violent extremism and anti-immigrant discourse in the United States and Europe. The Pew Research Center analyzed FBI statistics and discovered a 67 percent spike in anti-Muslim hate crimes from 2014 to 2015. Furthermore, according to the most recent Pew study, taken in January 2017, Americans continue to hold the least favorable views of Muslims of any religious organization (Kishi).

Muslims have been attacked physically and verbally all across the world, and have been the focus of discrimination, hate speeches, stigmatization, name-calling, abuse, vilification, psychological trauma, unfavorable stereotypes, harassment, and hostility, either directly or indirectly. Anti-Muslim hostility, religious intolerance, racism, xenophobia, the rise of far-right or right-wing extremist movements, and high-profile terrorist incidents are all factors, according to this study. Many people, including family members, relatives, and loved ones, as well as their property, have

perished as a result of melee or vehicular attacks, shooting, stabbing, kidnapping, arson, vandalism, and bombing. Mosques, Islamic centers, the sacred symbols and scripture of Islam, as well as Muslim cemeteries, are all targeted.

Similarly, the promotion of fear, prejudice, and intolerance towards Islam and its adherents has posed a challenge to Muslims' fundamental human rights and dignity, as well as mutual collaboration, trust, diversity, and harmonic and peaceful coexistence around the world. As a result of the attacks, Muslims and non-Muslims have grown increasingly fearful of instability and distrustful of one other.

## Conclusion

In the immediate aftermath of the September 11, 2001 (9/11) incident in New York City, Americans rallied together as a nation to condemn the attackers, yet some Americans became outcasts and targets of hatred and misunderstanding. Those who looked like the attackers and worshipped the same faith as them were immediately suspected, leading to a rash of violent occurrences across the country.

The American Muslim community which comprises a small percentage of the total American population faced a new harsh experience after the terrorist attacks of 2001. The life conditions the Muslims population in America which is a very diverse population used to be good in general. Muslims enjoyed the advantages of the American life and freedoms. Their socioeconomic profile was also good compared to Muslim minorities in other countries. Within the US Muslim community, however, there are big differences between Arab Muslims and African American Muslims who tend to have less income and educational achievements for example.

After 9/11 everything changed for the US Muslims. It becomes very hard to be a Muslim in America after 2001. This was mainly due to the rise of Islamophobia and the deteriorating image of Islam and Muslims in the country. This research found that the rising Islamophobia was intensified by an organized effort to distort the image of Islam in the country.

This well-organized effort was led by the Islamophobia network in America, a network of experts, activists, and scholars who use huge funds to carry out their job of demonizing Islam and Muslims. The experts of the network used the media, political discourses and scholarship to incite fear and hatred against Islam and Muslims.

The activities of this network contributed largely to the suffering of Muslims in the country. Islamophobia fueled abuse and bigotry which have a variety of negative



consequences for American Muslims, including psychological anguish, lower levels of satisfaction, and worse health. Islamophobia, in fact, has been linked to decreased self-esteem and increased anxiety.

Islamophobia has a harmful impact on Muslims' life, particularly for Muslims who grew up in the midst of painful anti-Muslim feelings in the aftermath of the attacks. In the event of a terrorist attack, all eyes were directed toward Muslims. As a result of the rise in hate crimes, Muslims have faced interpersonal and institutionalized forms of Islamophobia, including street harassment, physical and verbal attacks, discrimination in schools and workplaces, as well as government surveillance and profiling.

Muslims endure a tremendous lot of abuse on the streets, including verbal and physical attacks. Muslim women have been insulted in public and at work because of their dress and headscarves. In short, the Islamophobia network contributed to making the lives of Muslims more difficult after the 9/11 attacks by associating their faith with everything negative.

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