

**DISSECTING CONTOURS OF THE ISLAMOPHOBIA IN
THE USA: CAUSES, INDICATORS AND
CONSEQUENCES.**



Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment for the award of the degree of

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE

in

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

By

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SCHOOL OF POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

QUAID-I-AZAM UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD

SEPTEMBER 2020

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FINAL APPROVAL LETTER

This is to certify that we have read the graduate essay submitted by Ms. Mashal Rehman and in our judgment it is up to the standard of acceptance by the Quaid-I-Azam University for the grant of the degree of BS in International Relations

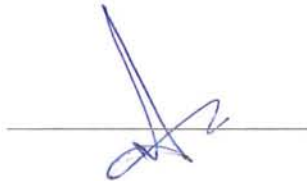
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DECLARATION

I, Mashal Rehman, student of International Relations declare that all the data present in this thesis is the result of my own work, except where due to reference is made. This particular thesis is not submitted for any other degree or diploma neither any other candidate has submitted this thesis for any other degree or diploma.

Mashal Rehman
15th September,2020

Dedicated to

My Teachers, Family and Friends

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ABSTRACT

Islamophobia is a term which is widely used in academia and public discourse but what exactly is Islamophobia and what it means in depth that would be discussed in this research paper. Moreover, this research paper will also explore that how the incident of 9/11 transformed the definition of Islamophobia and changed the lives of Muslims in the United States of America. This study will also use secondary data to highlight the role played by media and certain politicians to prove that Islam is a religion of terror and Muslims are terrorists or sympathizers of terrorists. Lastly, this study will point out the role played by Muslim scholars to clear out the misunderstanding which people of the United States had regarding the religion of Islam and it will also explain in detail that how Muslims faced discrimination, physical and verbal abuse after the incident of 9/11. This study will prove that Islamophobia is real, and Muslims are still facing discrimination because of this phenomenon.

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INTRODUCTION

On 11th September, 2001 four coordinated terrorist attacks were launched against the United States of America and al-Qaeda was held responsible for these attacks.¹ After these attacks, the lives of Muslims in the United States of America changed as part of the general public as well as some political figures started blaming them for these acts of terrorism. Some of the media outlets in the United States of America also played a very important role in convincing a part of the general public that terrorism in the United States is only carried out by the people who are olive skinned and who follow the religion of Islam which promotes violence.² So, basically these attacks became a base of the narrative which started to circulate not in the United States but beyond its border that 1.7 billion Muslims are terrorists and they want to impose Shariah Law in the United States of America.³ After these attacks some Americans started to think that every Muslim is a jihadist who is just waiting for an opportunity to bring the Western civilization down. This was just based upon the information which was provided to them by the media. So, the attacks of 9/11 gave birth to a phenomenon which came to be known as Islamophobia.

Islamophobia is not a new term. However, there is a debate that when it got introduced as a part of global discourses. It is usually pointed out that this term was popularized by a report titled *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All*. This report was published by Runnymede Trust which is a leading multiculturalism think tank in Britain in 1997.

¹ Assaf Moghadam, *The Globalization of Martyrdom: Al Qaeda, Salafi Jihad, and the Diffusion of Suicide Attacks* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 48.

² Arsalan Iftikhar and Reza Aslan, *Scapegoats: How Islamophobia Helps Our Enemies and Threatens Our Freedoms* (New York, NY: Hot Books, 2016).

³ Iftikhar and Aslan.

Robert Richardson was the one who edited this report and he found out that Islamophobia is a phenomenon which is much older and it existed through most of the twentieth century. According to Robert Richardson, French critiques used to use the term *Islamophobie* to describe how French administrators used to treat Muslim citizens. The term *Islamophobie* was also used in a book titled *La Politique Musulmane Dans l'Afrique Occidentale Francaise* which was written by Alain Quellien in 1910.⁴ In English language, the term Islamophobia was used in print media in 1985 in an article which was written by the late Palestinian academic writer Edward Said. He was the first writer who mentioned that there is a strong connection between Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism. He criticized writers, who did not recognize that "Hostility to Islam in the modern Christian West has historically gone hand-in-hand with Anti-Semitism and that this hatred of Islam has stemmed from the same source and has been nourished at the same stream of xenophobia."⁵

One thing needs to be mentioned that before 9/11 attacks, term Islamophobia was used to describe the hostility towards Muslims but after the 9/11, this term was transformed and it was used to describe an irrational fear of Muslims. Apart from the attacks of 9/11, several other incidents like the terrorist attacks in Paris in 2015, the mass shooting in San Bernardino, California and the terrorist attack in Norway (which was not carried out by a Muslim but again Muslims were blamed for this one as well) further aggravated the situation and the phenomenon of Islamophobia got further intensified in the United States. Other terrorist incidents also happened which were not carried out by Muslims but the media in the United States never labeled them as

⁴ Arsalan Iftikar, "The Sharia Bogeyman," in *Scapegoats: How Islamophobia Helps Our Enemies and Threatens Our Freedoms* (Hot Books, 2016), chap. 3.

⁵ Iftikar, 33.

terrorist attacks. There were some terrorist incidents which were carried against the Muslims by White Christians but those people were never called as terrorists and media used to call them people having some mental disorders. Moreover, this irrational fear of Islam was carried beyond the borders of the United States and some people in European states also started to label Muslims as terrorists. So, the ripple effect resulted in the globalization of Islamophobia. This study describes what exactly is Islamophobia? How did it get intensified in the United States? It will specifically highlight the role played by the US media in spreading Islamophobia. It will also mention the impact of Islamophobia on the lives of in the United States.

Key Literature

Scapegoats: How Islamophobia Helps Our Enemies and Threatens Our Freedoms written by Arsalan Iftekhhar was taken into account. In this book, Arslan Iftekhhar who is an International Human Rights lawyer has explained in detail that how after 9/11 his life has changed and how in every media show he was invited, he was asked absurd questions. How he tried to clear misconceptions that Muslims are not terrorists and Islam is not a violent religion. This book mostly deals with the consequences of the attacks of 9/11 and it does not explain much about the phenomenon of Islamophobia.

Khalid A. Beydoun's book titled *American Islamophobia: Understanding the Roots and Rise of Fear* was also taken in to account. In this book, he has discussed in detail about what is Islamophobia. He has also shed light on radicalization but what impact did it have on the lives of Muslims all across the world is not discussed.

Nathan Lean's book titled *The Islamophobia Industry: How the Right Manufactures Fear of Muslims* was also taken in to consideration. In this book, the author has

mentioned that Islamophobia is increasing in the United States and Europe and it is not a result of some incidents which happened recently. Islamophobia has increased gradually due to the actions of some politicians and right wing corps. This book mostly deals with that how these people portray Islam as a violent religion.

The Fear of Islam: An Introduction to Islamophobia in the West written by Todd H. Green was also taken in to account. In this book, Todd has actually tried to examine Islamophobia in North America and Europe. He also took in to consideration the report published by Runnymede Trust related to Islamophobia as this report clearly talks about eight central aspects of Islamophobia. In this book, Green mostly focused on the role played by media to promote Islamophobia. He mentioned that media is biased toward Muslims and media is actually playing a critical role in shaping the narrative of general public toward Muslims. General public consider the commentary of media as unbiased and then they start to view Muslims as people who are violent and dangerous.

The Politics of Islamophobia: Race, Power and Fantasy written by David Tyrer is also taken into account. The author in this book mainly focuses on the fact that Islamophobia is a form of political racism. He also mentions that the image of Muslims is shaped by some kind of liberal politicians and media. Different accounts have been mentioned where politicians like Tony Blair and David Cameron have given statements which were against Muslims and which portrayed them as dangerous others.

Islamophobia: Features of Islamophobia and Strategies against it written by Linda Edvardsson is also taken in to account. In this research paper, she mostly described

what exactly Islamophobia is and what strategies can be taken in to account in order to prevent or eliminate Islamophobia. She did not talk about the role of media and politicians. She also did not mention about state policies. Mainly she focused on strategies which can be used to prevent and eliminate Islamophobia.

The Racialization of Islam in the United States: Islamophobia, Hate Crimes, and "Flying while Brown" written by Craig Considine is also taken in to consideration. This article explores the relationship between race and Islamophobia. It also takes in to consideration the view of general public of US about Muslims and how they consider them dangerous others.

Islamophobia, "Clash of Civilizations", and Forging a Post-Cold War Order! written by Hatem Bazian is also taken in consideration. In this article he has actually related Islamophobia with Clash of Civilizations Thesis. He mentions that how Samuel P. Huntington was also of the view that Muslims will bring the Western Civilization down. He did not talk about the role played by media and politicians. Although he mentioned that nobody talks about the root cause of Islamophobia.

What is Islamophobia? An article written by Reem Bhadi and Azeezah Kanji is also taken in to consideration. This article mostly deals with what exactly the term Islamophobia means and what is its history.

The Psychology of Islamophobia written by Fatima Yakubova is also taken in to account. In this article she mentioned about indicators due to which Islamophobia is increasing. She also talked about the role played by media for the promotion of Islamophobia and apart from that cognitive aspects of Islamophobia are also discussed.

Muslims in Pre and Post 9/11 Contexts written by Md Abu Shahid Abdullah is taken in to account. In this article he has made a point that even before 9/11 happened, Muslims were portrayed as terrorists in different films.

General Debate on the definition of Islamophobia written by Pervin Desai, Douglas Pyper is also taken in to account. In this different definitions of Islamophobia are discussed and criticism on those definitions is also mentioned.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist written by Mohsin Hamid is also taken in to account. In this he narrates the story of a Muslim man named Changez and how his life changed in the US after 9/11. How he was humiliated on daily basis and how this impacted his thinking process.

Unequal Justice: Arabs in America and United States Antiterrorism Legislation written by Michael J. Whidden is also considered. In this he also discussed that how Arabs in the United States have to face discrimination and how they are considered to be dangerous others.

An article titled *The Effects of 9/11 on Attitudes Toward Immigration and the Moderating Role of Education* is taken in to consideration. This article is written by Simone Schuller and it explains that after 9/11 attacks, anti-immigration policies were introduced which had a profound impact on the lives of Muslims living in the United States.

Research Questions

1. What is Islamophobia?
2. How and Why did it get intensified in the United States of America

3. What impact did it have on the lives of Muslims?

Hypothesis

Islamophobia is the irrational fear of Islam and hostility towards Muslims and it got intensified due to the attacks of 9/11. Media played an important role in promoting Islamophobia and due to this the lives of Muslims changed and hate crimes against them greatly increased in number.

Theoretical Framework

This study is conducted using theory of Constructivism. Concept of Power-Knowledge nexus is also used in order to explain phenomenon at hand.

The theory of constructivism tries to elucidate that how people become aware of the things that they know. It states that people create their own understanding and are influenced by the social forces around them. On one side there are theories of International Relations like Realism and Liberalism which focus on material factors such as power but on the other side there is constructivist approach which takes into consideration the influence of ideas.⁶ Following are the main claims which are proposed by the theory of constructivism:

1. The main component of examination for International political theory are the states.
2. The main characteristics in the state systems are not material but they are inter-subjective.

⁶ John Baylis and Patricia Owens, "Social Constructivism," in *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, Fifth (Oxford University Press, 1997), 153.

3. The identity and the interests of the states are established by the social structures.⁷

Constructivists hold a view that people create their own understanding of reality. Now the question is that how people create their own understanding of reality? Constructivists answer this question by stating that people construct meanings which are actually based on their connection with the circumambient. In most extreme cases, constructivists also believe that no reality exists and whatever they construct with their own minds is the reality.

Von Glasersfeld suggested that one can only understand constructivist approach if one would consider both the Ontology and the Epistemology.⁸ Ontology is something which tries to provide answers to the questions like what is reality? One of the branches of Ontology is Idealism and according to idealism reality is something which can only be there in ideas.

Nicholas Onuf used the term of constructivism in his book, *The World of Our Making*. Different forms of constructivism exists but all of them only deal with one thing that is how ideas have the ability to shape the international structure and how this international structure in return has the capability of shaping the identities, interests and foreign policies of the states. Before the rise of constructivism, neo-realism and neo-liberalism dominated the international structure but due to four main factors the theory of constructivism became successful in making its place in international

⁷ Alexander Wendt, "Collective Identity Formation and the International State," *American Political Science Review* 88, no. 2 (June 1994): 385, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2944711>.

⁸ William R. Warrick, "Constructivism: Pre-Historical to Post-Modern," 1997, 19.

relations in 1990s.⁹ One of the most important factors was that the cold war came to an end and it ended without a bang. After the end of the cold war new debates started and states literally started to talk about ideas like national interest and identity. The main focus of constructivism is on human consciousness and what role is played by it in international life. The core focus of constructivism is that one should seriously take in to consideration the role played by ideas in world politics. Constructivists believe that actors are actually created by their cultural environment and it also takes in to consideration that how these actors are going to give meanings to their activities. Constructivists hold a belief that culture is one thing that informs the meaning that people give to their actions. One simple definition of power is the capability of one state to force another to do what it wants. Constructivists are of the view that forces of power is not only material but it can be ideational as well. Let us take in to consideration the idea of legitimacy. All states including the great powers want to make sure that their actions are legitimized. They want to make sure that whatever they are doing is actually in accordance with the rules and norms of greater international community. Moreover, states do not want that they receive shaming from human rights activists as they care about their reputation at an international level. The image of the state matters.

Constructivism states that ideas have the capability to shape international politics and then this international politics can shape identities, interests and foreign policies of the states. This is what happened after 9/11. An idea was generated that Muslims are terrorists and Islam is a religion which promotes violence and extremism. This idea

⁹ Baylis and Owens, "Social Constructivism," 153.

impacted the international politics. This impacted the interests of the United States and transformed its foreign policy as well. But the hatred toward Muslims was there in the United States of America before 9/11 but this incident intensified the hatred. Before this, the hatred was at an individual level but after 9/11 this hatred was taken to groups and state-level and some policies were introduced targeting Muslims. The crimes also increased against Muslims.

Prior knowledge also plays an important role in construction of ideas. So, one can say that Americans also had in mind their prior knowledge about Muslims. During imperialism and orientalism, a discourse was generated in which Muslims were framed negatively so, they also used that knowledge after 9/11 and constructed the identity of Muslims as terrorists and extremists.

Constructivism also states that academic discourse is more powerful in bringing a change in global affairs. So, after 9/11 Brigitte Gabriel launched ACT. The main aim of ACT was to educate general masses and policy makers to make policies which will help in countering terrorism. It creates academic discourse. Gabriel, the founder of ACT himself stated once that Muslims can never be loyal to America. In 2011, he also gave an interview to CNN and during that interview he clearly and openly stated "America has been infiltrated on all levels by radicals who wish to harm America."

Media has also played an important role in constructing this idea. After 9/11 Illhan Omer in a conference stated that some people did this and all of us are now suffering and this statement of her received really negative response by media as well as other politicians. Even New York Times took this really negatively. Different dramas and

sitcoms were also created to create this reality. The most famous one was The Citizen Khan.

Social Constructivism provides another argument and it states that academic discourse is actually more powerful in bringing a change in global affairs. Constructivists are somehow related with the ideas of Michael Foucault who stated that through discourse one can achieve success in all human and social relations, . Michael Foucault is the pioneer of generating the idea of power knowledge nexus. He notes that power has the capability to of shaping knowledge. This can be seen after 9/11. The United States is the biggest power of the system. It possessed the capability that is utilized to shape the knowledge of masses. This can be proven from that fact that when it started Global War on Terror almost all the states including the Muslim States like Pakistan stood with it. Bush at that time stated that either you are with us or against us. Almost all the states made sure that they are with the United States of America. The United States used its power to shape knowledge of not only its own people but it also used its power to shape the knowledge of the entire world. It made sure that all states stand on its side and oppose whatever it is opposing.. So, one can say that hatred was there against the Muslims in the United States but the attacks of 9/11 only intensified this hatred and the hostility between the Muslims and the West also increased. Hate crimes against Muslims increased and they were physically and verbally abused.

Cartoons of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) were also created and in Norway they burned the Holy Quran but all these incidents did not receive a response which the attacks of 9/11 received simply because Muslims states are not that much powerful and they cannot influence global politics. So, these incidents also show that some of the

Westerns are against Muslims and Islam and they believe that Islam is a religion of extremism and Muslims are terrorists.

Research Methodology

This research is carried out using mostly qualitative methods and combination of primary and secondary sources are used. Several books and articles were critically analyzed. As this research is carried out using secondary data so it was really important to make sure that the data was reliable. So, for this purpose theoretical research was carried out. Apart from that some primary data was also gathered. In order to gather primary data, interviews were conducted with some people who were in USA at that time but now they are residing in Pakistan. They shared their experiences and how their lives changed in the United States after 9/11. Some of them even shared that how they were treated differently at the airports. Muslim women were interviewed as well. They shared their experiences that how they had to face threats because they used to wear Hijab. As these people were not comfortable in disclosing their names and ethical considerations need to be taken in to account so, their names were not mentioned.

Organization of the Research

First chapter of this deals with the definitions of Islamophobia and also relates Islamophobia with the clash of civilizations thesis. Then in the next chapter the attacks of 9/11 and other attacks carried out are discussed. Then the next chapter focuses on the media attacks against Islam and Muslims. After that, those attacks are discussed which were not carried out by Muslims and were never labeled as terrorist attacks. Then the hate crimes against Muslims are discussed and how these incidents impacted

the lives of Muslims across the world. Lastly, the role played by academic writers to clear misconceptions is discussed. Recent developments are taken in to consideration as well.

CHAPTER 1

HISTORY AND DEFINITION OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

1.1 History of Islamophobia

No scholar is sure when exactly the term of Islamophobia did get introduced in the global lexicon and the debate is still going on. Some scholars are of the view that the term Islamophobia first time appeared in a report titled *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us* which was published in November 1997 by Runnymede Trust. It was considered to be one of the main multiculturalism think-tank of Britain. This report was actually written by Jack Straw who at that time was the British Home Secretary¹⁰. It was edited by Robin Richardson who stated that actually the term Islamophobia was much older than this report. He further argued that in the twentieth century French writers used the term *Islamophobie* in order to describe that how French rulers used to treat Muslim colonized subjects. In print media, the term *Islamophobie* was first time used in 1910 when a book named *La Politique Musulmane Dans l' Afrique Occidentale Francaise* written by Alain Quellien was published in Paris. In this book, the author described the policy used by French towards people of West Africa which were colonized by them. In English language, the term Islamophobia was introduced in an article which was written by a Palestinian Academic writer Edward Said in 1985. In this article, he mentioned that there is a strong connection between Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism. Edward Said actually criticized those authors who do not recognize this fact that "Hostility to Islam in the modern Christian West has

¹⁰ Iftikar, "The Sharia Bogeyman," 33.

historically gone hand-in-hand with anti-Semitism and that this hatred of Islam has stemmed from the same source and been nourished at the same stream of xenophobia.”¹¹

After 1985, in 1991 an American Journal with the name of Insight used the term Islamophobia in order to describe the hostile policies of Russian Government towards its Muslim subjects. Author Nathan Lean argued that: “Islamophobia also accounts for Moscow’s reluctance to relinquish its position in Afghanistan, despite the estimated \$300 million it takes to keep the Kabul regime going.”¹²

He further stated that in the past the term Islamophobia was actually used to describe the hatred towards Muslim community and it was not confused with irrational fear of Islam. Things changed and now Islamophobia refers to the irrational fear of Islam and Muslims. How things changed and what triggered this change would be discussed in later chapters.

1.2 Definitions of Islamophobia

In simplest words, Islamophobia can be defined as hatred towards Muslim community or irrational Fear of Islam. However, different sources have defined Islamophobia differently. For instance, the report published by Runnymede Trust in 1997 titled Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us defined Islamophobia in the following words:

“Islamophobia refers to unfounded hostility towards Islam. It refers also to the practical consequences of such hostility in unfair discrimination against Muslim

¹¹ Iftikar, chap. 3.

¹² Iftikar, 34.

individuals and communities, and to the exclusion of Muslims from mainstream political and social affairs. The term is not, admittedly, ideal. Critics of it consider that its use panders to what they call political correctness, that it stifles legitimate criticism of Islam, and that it demonizes and stigmatizes anyone who wishes to engage in such criticism.”¹³

Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research also defined Islamophobia in the following words: “Islamophobia operates by constructing a static ‘Muslim’ identity, which is attributed in negative terms and generalized for all Muslims.”¹⁴

1.3 Khaled Beydoun`s Definition of Islamophobia

Khalid Beydoun proposed a definition of Islamophobia after taking into consideration the conditions and circumstances which were prevailing in the United States. He observed that the definitions of Islamophobia which right now exist in the lexicon of American politics equate Islamophobia with irrational fear of Islam and hatred towards Muslim community. So, he defined Islamophobia in the following words: “The presumption that Islam is inherently violent, alien, and inassimilable. Combined with this is the belief that expressions of Muslim identity are correlative with a propensity for terrorism. It argues that Islamophobia is rooted in understandings of Islam as civilization’s antithesis and perpetuated by Government structures and private citizens. Finally, this piece asserts that Islamophobia is also a process---namely, the dialectic by which state policies targeting Muslims endorse prevailing stereotypes and, in turn, embolden private animus toward Muslim subjects.”

¹³ Nasreen Rehman et al., “The Runnymede Trust Publication Order Form,” 1997, 2.

¹⁴ Rehman et al.

From this definition, one thing becomes clear that in the United States there is a form of Islamophobia which can be classified as private Islamophobia. Now the question is what is private Islamophobia? Private Islamophobia can be defined as hatred or prejudice faced by Muslims at the hands of individuals or other private actors. This can also include hate crimes against Muslims or the discrimination they face at workplace or schools, shopping malls etc. Most of the times, scholars just focus on this aspect of Islamophobia. However, Khaled Beydoun has made an important point that actually private Islamophobia is a product of state policies and state is responsible for creating this type of Islamophobia. Not only state, media also plays a critical role in strengthening this form of Islamophobia. The fact which needs to be mentioned here is that only a less than half Americans stated that they directly know a Muslim. Majority of the people actually depend on media and media is actually shaping their views and opinions about Muslims.¹⁵ FBI did a survey and according to that survey there is a more probability that Americans may die due to faulty furniture than they may be killed by a terrorist Muslim jihadi.¹⁶

1.4 Islamophobia and the Clash of Civilizations Thesis

Samuel P. Huntington in his book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* also stated that for West the main problem is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is actually Islam and the followers of this religion. Muslims are of the view that their values and culture is superior. The main issue of Muslims is not the CIA or the US department of Defense. Their main problem is the West which they

¹⁵ Reza Aslan, "Foreword," in *Scapegoats: How Islamophobia Helps Our Enemies and Threatens Our Freedoms* (Hot Books, 2016), 160.

¹⁶ Aslan.

consider is a different civilization. So, he was also of the view that the next conflict that will emerge will be between the West and Islam.¹⁷ Samuel P. Huntington wrote this book in 1996 so it means that from that time academic scholars in the United States considered Muslims as a threat. They used to be considered as others who cannot actually become a part of the American society. Later on, this perspective changed in to a notion that Muslims want to impose Shariah Law in the United States and they are not loyal citizens. One thing needs to be mentioned here is that this perspective is even older than 1996. In 1957, Bernard Lewis delivered a speech at Johns Hopkins University. In his speech he also stated that Islam and West are completely different from each other and their values are also different. He went on to say that this difference can only be resolved through a conflict.¹⁸ So, one can say that it would be wrong to conclude that Islamophobia is a new concept. It was very much there Omar ibn Said was an African Muslim who was forcibly brought to the United States to be enslaved along with thousand others. His story further proves that from the beginning Islamophobia existed in the American society. He wrote his journey in a fifteen page manuscript. "Wicked men took me by violence and sold me," he wrote.

"We sailed a month and a half on the great sea to the place called Charleston in the Christian land. I fell into the hands of a small, weak and wicked man, who feared not God at all."¹⁹

¹⁷ Hatem Bazian, "Islamophobia, 'Clash of Civilizations', and Forging a Post-Cold War Order!," *Religions* 9, no. 9 (September 19, 2018): 282, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel9090282>.

¹⁸ Bazian.

¹⁹ Khaled Beydoun, How Islamophobia was ingrained in America's Legal System long before the war on terror., May 6, 2018, <https://theintercept.com/2018/05/06/american-islamophobia-khaled-beydoun-interview/>.

He was even forced to convert to Christianity. However, he continued to follow Islam. He used to pretend that he had become Christian just to save himself from punishment. This shows that from the beginning there was a concept of Islamophobia in the United States but in the past it was silent.

There is much evidence which proves that Islamophobia is real and that Muslims are actually suffering because of this phenomenon. Still there are some people and some organizations which do not believe in the concept of Islamophobia. The National Review Journal stated that Islamophobia is nothing but it is just a myth. Sam Harris stated that Islamophobia is: "A word created by fascists, and used by cowards, to manipulate morons."²⁰

So, the question is that if Islamophobia is a myth then why there are certain laws which are actually trying to curtail the freedom and rights of Muslims? Why those parties are winning elections which openly use anti-Muslim sentiment? Why hate crimes against Muslims are increasing day by day?

There are a lot of evidences to prove that Islamophobia is real and it has transformed in irrational fear of Islam after certain incidents. Just like one cannot deny holocaust and denying holocaust is considered as a prosecutable crime in Europe. Similarly scholars should not claim that Islamophobia is a myth because it is real. Muslims are suffering and they have been labeled as Others by some groups in the Western Society. Islam is considered as a threat and as a violent religion by certain group of people in the Western Society. In the next chapter, those incidents would be discussed in detail which intensified the concept of Islamophobia or one could say that which

²⁰ Aslan, "Foreword."

actually transformed the concept of Islamophobia from hatred towards Muslim community to irrational fear of Islam. After those incidents, Muslims were considered as dangerous species who can cause harm to Westerns as they hate them and their freedom.

CHAPTER 2

INCIDENTS INTENSIFYING ISLAMOPHOBIA

As mentioned in the previous chapter that certain events took place which intensified the phenomenon of Islamophobia in the United States. The most important, tragic and traumatic event which provided an extreme boost to the phenomenon of Islamophobia was that of September 11 attacks also referred to as 9/11. September 11 attacks changed the lives of Muslims in the United States and certain group of people started considering them as terrorists or as people who sympathize with terrorists. What happened during 9/11 and how it changed the lives of Muslims and what role did media play that would be discussed later. One thing which needs to be mentioned here is that even before 9/11 happened, some of the media outlets in the United States used to portray Muslims as negative people and in some Hollywood movies they were even labeled as terrorists. So, one cannot say that before 9/11 there was no concept of Islamophobia in the United States of America because it was very much there. It is just that after 9/11 and some other incidents it just got intensified.

2.1 Muslims Shown as Terrorists in Pre 9/11 Films

A film named True Lies was released in 1994 which was directed by James Cameron and actor Arnold Schwarzenegger performed the role of main male lead. In this film, Arabs were shown as exploding the nuclear bomb inside the United States.²¹ The Arabs who were shown as exploding the nuclear bomb inside the United States were actually Palestinians and Cameron gave this terrorist group a name of "Crimson Jihad". Crimson actually means red and the color red is used to denote blood. He has

²¹ "Muslims in Pre- and Post-9/11 Contexts," *International Journal of Comparative Literature and Translation Studies* 3, no. 3 (July 31, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijclts.v.3n.3p.52>.

also used the word Jihad in a wrong sense as he has associated Jihād with violence. Although Jihad in Islam is actually a struggle and this struggle can be against any wrong doing. The Arab characters in the film were not only shown as wild but they were also portrayed as people who lacked sense and who were irrational. They did not even know why there exploded a bomb in the United States of America and they were shown as people who just hate everything which was associated with America.

Arnold was given the name of Harry in this film and as he was the main character so, he was actually given the responsibility to safe American cities from these terrorists. He was shown as a kind of person who can go to any extent to safe his country and for that he killed Arabs without even thinking twice. There was a scene in this film in which Harry's wife Helen asked him, "Have you ever killed anyone?" Harry replied, "Yeah, but they were all bad."²² From this conversation, it becomes crystal clear that even before 9/11 Arabs were considered as bad people. This movie can be seen as an attempt to promote racism against Muslims as it shows that Muslims are the kind of people who promotes violence. After watching this movie, there was a man named Casey Kasem who was actually associated with radio. He wrote a letter to the director of this film, James Cameron and to actor Arnold that this film had actually promoted the concept of racism against Muslims and it had actually insulted them as well but unfortunately nobody paid any attention and he never received any response.

Another film named "The Siege" was released in 1998. In this film, Muslims were again shown as violent and aggressive people and they had only one mission. FBI had arrested their Sheikh and they wanted that he must be released no matter what. In

²² "Muslims in Pre- and Post-9/11 Contexts."

order to fulfill their mission, Muslim terrorists took children and elderly people as hostages in a bus. Danzel Washington played the role of FBI Agent in this film. In the film, it had been shown that he tried to negotiate with them but they did not listen to him and they blew the bus. It is a kind of suicide bombing and in the film Muslims are depicted as suicide bombers. In the same film, Muslims also bombed a crowded Broadway Theater and in this bombing cultural leaders of the city also lost the battle of their lives. They even tried to bomb a school. Moreover, in this film Arabs also attacked FBI headquarters and in that attack two hundred people were killed. After this attack, the US chief of staff stated that the Arab Muslims were “attacking way of our life.”²³ Martial law was imposed and the army started to search for twenty men who were behind this attack but all fifteen thousand Arabs and Muslims were suspected who lived in Brooklyn. This further explains that attack was carried out by twenty men but because of that all Muslims came under limelight and they all had to bear the consequences even in the film. Army arrested Muslim men between ages fourteen to thirty and they were put in detention camps. Another thing which was shown in this movie and which was very disturbing was that the FBI Agent who was living in the United States from past twenty years and who was serving in FBI from past ten years also found his twenty years old son in detention camp just because they were Shite and they were also suspected. So, this movie clearly showed that if something would happen in the United States and some fraction of population would be responsible for this then everyone would be suspected. Everyone has to bear the consequences even if that person is not involved in it. At that time the only thing that

²³ “Muslims in Pre- and Post-9/11 Contexts.”

will matter would be that a person is an Arab whether he has been living in the United States from past twenty years or past two years.

Another really interesting thing which was shown in this film was the role of CIA. It showed how CIA was responsible for making Muslims terrorists and when those Muslims fulfill its mission after that it used to leave them.

Arab Muslims did not like this that how Muslims were portrayed in this movie and they requested the director of this movie to modify the plot by replacing 'militiamen' for 'Islamic fundamentalists'. However, the director of this movie did not pay any attention to the request of the Muslims and it was released in its actual form. In an interview with HBO Special, the director of this movie gave a very controversial statement. He said that this movie was "based on truth rather than fiction thriller."²⁴ The main character of this film, Denzel Washington gave an interview in which having a conversation with CNN Reporter he openly stated that "This is not a stereotypical view of any group of people, by any means. Unfortunately, we are imitating life."²⁵

Moreover, in this film the director showed different Islamic practices like the recitation of the Holy Quran, performing ablution etc and he associated all these practices with that of terrorism. In this film, whenever someone performed ablution in order to perform his daily prayers something violent used to happen. So, the director actually tried to portray that ablution is a violent act although everyone knows that it is just a way of cleaning body from any kind of dirt so that one can perform prayer. So,

²⁴ "Muslims in Pre- and Post-9/11 Contexts."

²⁵ "Muslims in Pre- and Post-9/11 Contexts."

this was actually a kind of humiliation for the entire Muslim community as their religious practices which they consider sacred were linked with violence and terrorism.

So, from this it becomes really clear that even before 9/11 Muslims were treated as others and they were even shown as terrorists in some of the Hollywood movies. This further proves that even before the incident of 9/11 Islamophobia was very much there in the United States of America.

Now it would be discussed that what happened on 11th September, 2001 and certain other events would be discussed due to which the phenomenon of Islamophobia did get intensified in the United States. So, let's begin with 9/11.

2.2 September 11 Attacks

On 11th September, 2001 an extremely unusual and surprising incident happened in the history of the United States. There were four passenger planes which were supposed to reach California were hijacked by nineteen al-Qaeda terrorists. Among these four planes, two of them crashed in to the North and South towers of the World Trade Center. The third one crashed in to Pentagon and the fourth one missed its target. These planes were actually supposed to flew towards Washington DC but instead of that they crashed and fell in to a field in Stonycreek Township, Pennsylvania. So, to make a long story short September 9/11 attacks which are commonly known as 9/11 were actually a chain of four synchronized terrorist attacks by al-Qaeda against the United States.²⁶ In these terrorist attacks, almost two thousand nine hundred and seventy seven people lost the battle of their lives. Many people got

²⁶ Moghadam, *The Globalization of Martyrdom*, 48.

injured and there was also a loss of around 10 billion dollars as infrastructure got damaged.²⁷ The United States stated that these attacks were carried out by al-Qaeda under the leadership of Osama Bin Laden. Osama Bin Laden however denied his involvement in these attacks. On 16th September, 2001 on Al-Jazeera the statement of Bin Laden was shown and he stated, "I stress that I have not carried out this act, which appears to have been carried out by individuals with their own motivation."²⁸

After that in November 2001, from a demolished house in Jalalabad, Afghanistan the US forces found a videotape in which Osama Bin Laden was talking to Khaled al-Harbi and he was actually accepting the fact that he was the master mind behind these attacks. Up till now Osama Bin Laden did not publicly accept that he was behind these attacks. He actually issued a taped statement in order to publicly accept that he was behind these terrorist attacks. He provided a reason that why they attacked the World Trade Center and Pentagon. He stated, "We are free..... and want to regain freedom for our nation. As you undermine our security, we undermine yours".²⁹

The September 11 attacks completely changed the lives of Muslims in the United States and immediately they were labeled as terrorists and media played a really important role in portraying Muslims as terrorists. After 9/11 hate crimes against Muslims greatly increased not only in the United States but also in other European states in which Muslims were in minority. What role did media play and what impact this event had on the lives of Muslims all around the globe would be discussed later

²⁷ Matthew J. Morgan, ed., *The Impact of 9/11 on Politics and War*, 1st ed, The Day That Changed Everything?, 1st v (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009).

²⁸ Morgan.

²⁹ "Bin Laden on Tape: Attacks Benefitted Islam Greatly," <https://web.archive.org/web/20071227125232/http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/12/13/ret.bin.laden.vid.eotape/>.

on. So, one can say that after 9/11 the phenomenon of Islamophobia intensified not only in the United States of America but in almost every part of the world where Muslims were in minority.

Muslims all around the world condemned these attacks and famous personalities also gave statements against these attacks. For instance, Ayatollah Syed Ali Khamenei denounced these attacks in the following words:

“Killing of people, in any place and with any kind of weapons, including atomic bombs, long-range missiles, biological or chemical weapons, passenger or war planes, carried out by any organization, country or individuals is condemned. It makes no difference whether such massacres happen in Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Qana, Sabra, Shatila, Deir Yassin, Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq or in New York and Washington.”³⁰

Muslims all around the globe castigated these attacks but still in the United States after the attacks of September 11 they became dangerous “Others”. The Muslim population was blamed for these attacks. The religion of Islam transformed into a violent religion. A narrative was established that Muslims actually want to impose Sharia law in the United States. This was actually the most absurd thing because everyone knows that there is a Supremacy Clause which states that “The Constitution and the laws of the United States [are] the supreme law of the land”³¹.

This statement makes it clear that no law including Sharia Law can replace the laws of the United States. Still this narrative became so strong that the legislators in more than

³⁰ “Leader Condemns Massacre of Defensesless People.,” *Islamic Republic News Agency IRNA*, September 17, 2001.
<http://web.archive.org/web/20010920073203/http://www.irna.com/en/hphoto/010916000000.ehp.shtml>.

³¹ Iftikar, “The Sharia Bogeyman,” chap. 3.

thirty American states actually introduced anti-Sharia legislation. This proves that the incident of 9/11 changed the lives of Muslims in the United States. They were now known as terrorists who were disloyal.

2.3 Paris Attacks 2015

9/11 was not the only incident which changed the lives of Muslims in the United States. There were other incidents as well. One of those was that of Paris Attacks which occurred on 13th November, 2015. Paris Attacks were also a series of harmonized attacks. These attacks occurred on 13th November but Paris was high on alert from the start of the year. In January there were attacks on Charlie Hebdo Offices and an attack was also launched on Jewish Supermarket in Paris. In this attack, seventeen people lost the battle of their lives and almost twenty people got severely injured. But Paris Attacks of November were the deadliest and in these attacks almost one hundred and thirty people got killed and four hundred and thirteen people got injured.³² After these attacks, The Islamic State of Iraq and Levant also referred to as ISIL stated that it was behind the execution of these attacks. It stated that these attacks was a reaction against the French air strikes on ISIL targets in Iraq and Syria.³³ One interesting fact which needs to be mentioned here is that Paris attacks were actually compared with that of Mumbai Attacks which occurred in 2008 in India. Even Michael Leiter, who was the former director of the United States National Counter Terrorism Center stated, "The attacks demonstrated a sophistication not seen in a city

³² Simon Valmary, "More than 120 People Killed in Paris Terrorist Attacks" (Yahoo News..).

³³ Jessica Elgot, "Paris Attacks: Islamic State Says Killings Were Response to Syria Strikes." November 19, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2015/nov/14/paris-terror-attacks-attackers-dead-mass-killing-live-updates>.

attack since the 2008 Mumbai Attacks and that it would change how the West regards the threat.”³⁴

So, from this statement it becomes clear that although these attacks occurred in Paris but it changed the perspective of the Western community which included the United States of America as well. So, these attacks again created a hype and due to these attacks also the lives of the Muslims changed drastically not only in the United States of America but also all around the world. Actually the enemy was the same and the enemy was Islam and Muslims. After these attacks also the phenomenon of Islamophobia did get intensified and again Muslims came in limelight. They were regarded as dangerous Others who are violent and who wants to impose Sharia law.

2.4 San Bernardino Shooting

Apart from Paris Attacks, there was another incident also which created a lot of problems in the lives of Muslims living in the United States and that was the incident of mass shooting in San Bernardino, California. In December 2015, a Muslim couple named Syed Rizwan and Tashfeen Malik killed fourteen people during a holiday party which was happening for the San Bernardino County Health Department. An amazing fact which needs to be mentioned here is that the husband, Syed Rizwan used to work for the San Bernardino County Health Department.³⁵

As this mass shooting was carried out by a Muslim couple so again some of the people in the United States got an opportunity to blame all the Muslims and they became sure that Muslims actually were disloyal and their religion Islam promotes violence. Some

³⁴ “Modeled on Mumbai? Why the 2008 India Attack Is the Best Way to Understand Paris,”

³⁵ Iftikhar and Aslan, *Scapegoats*.

of the media also used this incident to promote hatred against Muslim community. Although after sometime it was found out that the male shooter whose name was Rizwan Farook had stopped going to the mosque two years before he carried out this mass shooting. Moreover, it was also revealed that he did not only kill Westerns during that mass shooting but he also killed his Muslim female colleague who used to go to the same mosque as he once used to go. Lastly, it was also revealed that Rizwan's brother named Raheel used to work in US Navy who had received several awards like National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal and Global War on Terrorism Service Medal.³⁶ So, if all Muslims are terrorists and they all want to kill Westerns then why Rizwan's brother was not a terrorist? Why did he serve in US Navy? If they are disloyal why Rizwan's brother was so loyal that he was awarded medals? If they just want to kill Westerns and if they hate them then why Rizwan killed his female colleague who used to attend the same mosque as Rizwan? These questions deserve an answer and I think nobody in the United States is even now ready to give answer to these questions. They still think that Muslims are terrorists and Islam is a religion of violence.

There was another terrorist attack in Norway on 22nd July, 2011 and it was the worst terrorist attack. For this attack, again Muslims were blamed and some of the media outlets in US without getting any proper incident started reporting also that it was the work of Muslim terrorists. Although, it was later found out that it was not carried out by Muslims. How media used this incident to defame Muslims and what role media has played in promoting Islamophobia in the United States of America and its biased

³⁶ Iftikhar and Aslan.

role in not labeling incidents carried out by Christians as acts of terrorist would be discussed in the next chapter. The role of media will actually highlight that how the phenomenon of Islamophobia did get intensified in the United States and how this phenomenon was utilized to achieve personal goals. The role of media will actually answer the question that how the idea was established that Muslims are terrorists and Islam is a religion of violence and how it was imprinted on the minds of people living in the United States of America.

CHAPTER 3

MEDIA COVERAGE AGAINST MUSLIMS AND WHITE TERRORISM

As mentioned in the previous chapters that after 9/11 media played a critical role in shaping the image of the Muslims in the United States of America. It was due to the role played by media that majority of the people in America started to view Muslims as terrorists or as people who sympathize with terrorists. One thing which needs to be mentioned here is that media alone cannot be held responsible for this because after 9/11 some of the political leaders in the United States came on media and gave statements against Muslim citizens. Their statements also created a sense of hatred for Muslims among Americans and they started to view them as people who promote terrorism. So, one can say that some of the political leaders used the platform of entertainment industry to promote that Muslims are actually disloyal and their religion promotes violence. They cannot be a part of America. Muslim scholars like Arslan Iftkhar and others tried to clear this misconception that Islam does not promote violence and Muslims are not terrorists but unfortunately they failed to clear this misunderstanding.

After Charlie Hebdo, Arslan Iftkhar who is a renowned Human Rights Lawyer and who grew up in Chicago was invited for an interview on CNN with Don Lemon. Don Lemon is a notorious media personality mainly because he used to ask bizarre questions from guests who used to appear on his show. For instance, once an alleged Bill Cosby rape victim appeared on his show and he without any shame stated that she should had chomped down the rapist penis while he was trying to force himself on her.

He crossed all the limits when he gave a shameful advice to the woman stating that “there are ways not to perform oral sex if you did not want to do it.”³⁷ So, obviously if he could ask this type of a question from a rape victim so it would be really naïve if one will expect that he would have forgiven Arsalan Iftikar. Moreover, one must keep in mind that Arsalan Iftikhar is a Muslim and he appeared in his show at the time when Muslims were considered to be terrorists. At that time even if you were born and brought up in America it did not matter. The only thing that mattered was that you were a Muslim and Muslims cannot be loyal to America. Although when Arsalan Iftikhar appeared on his show, he condemned Paris attacks and stated that the Paris terrorists were “Irreligious criminals committing acts of mass murder” and that the bloodshed they perpetrated was a “crime against humanity.”³⁸

Still this much condemnation and rebuking was not enough for Don Lemon and he shamelessly asked Arsalan that “Do you support ISIS?” Now imagine that Arsalan Iftikahr is a human rights lawyer who dedicated his entire life to fight for humans who are suffering and now on National Television a person is asking him that Do you support ISIS? Obviously Arsalan Iftikhar also became extremely angry after Don Lemon asked this question and he responded by saying “Wait”, “Did you just ask if I support ISIS?”

Although after this incident, intellectuals and scholars gave statements against Don Lemon. For instance, Dave Zirin of The Nation magazine stated that:“Asking Arsalan-- author of the book *Islamic Pacifism*---if supports ISIS is like confusing Angela

³⁷ Arsalan Iftikar, “When Life Gives You A (DON) Lemon,” in *Scapegoats: How Islamophobia Helps Our Enemies and Threatens Our Freedoms*. (Hot Books, 2016), chap. 1.

³⁸ Iftikar, 5.

Davis with Condi Rice.... If Don Lemon had interviewed Nelson Mandela, he would have demanded to know where he stood on Iggy Azalea.”³⁹

One thing which needs to be mentioned here is that after September 11 attacks and then after Paris Attacks, Muslim scholars and intellectuals were invited on national television and it was expected that they must condemn these acts. On the other hand and it was also pointed out by Arsalan Iftikhar on the same show that Christians also commit acts which come under the definition of terrorism but nobody had ever asked a priest or a pastor to come on National Television and give an explanation about these acts. But the case was different for Muslim scholars and intellectuals. Moreover, US media never labeled a Christian as terrorist even if they performed such acts. For example, Dylan Roof was a twenty one year old boy who was responsible for killing African American in Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston South Carolina. He even killed Clementa Pinckney who was the senator of the state of South Carolina. Before shooting them, Dylan said to these people, “I have to do it.... You rape our women and you are taking over our country.”⁴⁰

When his friends were inquired about his personality they mentioned that he was a kind of a person who used to make racist comments on daily basis. Moreover, his roommate also admitted that Dylan was planning this kind of a thing from past six months and he actually wanted to start a “race war”. This incident happened on 17th June, 2015. Paris Attacks also occurred in 2015. Media labeled Paris Attacks as an act of terrorism and Muslims were labeled as terrorists but the act of Dylan Roof was not considered as terrorism and he was not labeled as a terrorist just because he was a

³⁹ Iftikhar, 6.

⁴⁰ Iftikhar and Aslan, *Scapegoats*.

Christian and not a Muslim. In fact it had been reported also that when he was arrested by police, he was treated really nicely. He complained that he was starving and the police took him to Burger King so that he could be fed. Now one can imagine that if this mass shooting was carried out by a person who was olive skinned or in other words by a Muslim then reaction was going to be really very different. Similarly, another incident also took place which further proved that media was actually playing a double role and it only labeled Muslims as terrorists and there was no concept of Christian or American terrorism. Robert Dear was another Christian man who made a plan and then in Colorado he shot up the Planned Parenthood Clinic.⁴¹ He also executed his plan during the same time when Paris Attacks and San Bernardino shooting took place. He had really strong beliefs related to Christianity. Once his ex-wife gave a statement in court that he claims to be a Christian and is extremely evangelistic He says that as long as he believes he will be saved, he can do whatever he pleases.⁴² As mentioned before, this incident also happened at the same time when Paris Attacks and San Bernardino shooting took place but media did not label these acts as terrorism. Moreover, media personalities did not call Christian religious leaders on their shows and did not ask them absurd questions. They did not ask them to prove that Christianity does not promote violence. So, one can simply say that the US media used the term of terrorism only for those acts of violence for which Muslims were responsible.

Another fact which needs to be mentioned here is that this happens not only in the United States of America. It happens almost everywhere. Recently in March 2019, a

⁴¹ Arsalan Ifikar, "Introduction," in *Scapegoats: How Islamophobia Helps Our Enemies and Threatens Our Freedoms*. (Hot Books, 2016), 160.

⁴² Ifikar.

person named Brenton Tarrant carried out mass shooting in two mosques in New Zealand and Muslims were attacked. When police arrested Brenton, he was not charged with terrorism but he was charged with murder. Even after this incident where Muslims were directly attacked and evidence was found as well as when Brenton entered in the mosque and started this mass shooting he live streamed this on face book but no media house called any priest on the show to condemn this attack. Nobody called him a terrorist. A professor named Juan Cole also mentioned about the dual role played by some of the media outlets and the some of the political figures. He stated “[Oklahoma City bombers] Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nicholas would never be called ‘Christian terrorists’ even though they were in close contact with the Christian Identity Movement. No one would speak of Christo-fascism or Judeo-fascism as the Republican[s]...speak of ‘Islamofascism.’ [In fact, it was] persons of Christian heritage [who] invented fascism, not Muslims.”

As mentioned before, this incident also happened at the same time when Paris Attacks and San Bernardino shooting took place but media did not label these acts as terrorism. Moreover, media personalities did not call Christian religious leaders on their shows and did not ask them absurd questions. They did not ask them to prove that Christianity does not promote violence. So, one can simply say that the US media used the term of terrorism only for those acts of violence for which Muslims were responsible.

Moreover, after September 11 attacks and then especially after Paris attacks some of the political figures in the United States also used the platform of media to promote the notion of Islamophobia. They appeared on shows and gave ridiculous statements

about Islam and about Muslims. They did not even realize that these bizarre statements which they were giving against Islam on National Television will only help the terrorist groups like al-Qaeda and ISIS. These terrorist groups will actually use these statements to target young Muslims and will say to them that look Western World hates us and then they will use these Muslim individuals to carry out acts of violence. This was also mentioned by a novelist named Mohsin Hamid in his novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. It is a fiction novel but it is based on how the lives of Muslims changed after September 11 Attacks. In this novel, he narrated the story of a Pakistani Muslim named Changez who was residing in the United States. After September 11 attacks, his life drastically changed as he had to face discrimination and hate crimes. He was attacked by a random guy who called him fucking Arab. At Airport, he had to face discrimination as he was separated from his fellow prophet for checking. These events really perturbed him and he returned to his homeland. He then became anti-American because he was convinced that the Westerns hate Muslims and they cannot tolerate them as a part of their society. So, Mohsin Hamid also through his novel and especially with the help of the main character Changez tried to show that how these statements which these politicians and other public figures were giving openly were creating a sense of discrimination among Muslims. They started to think that America was no longer their home. This obviously will help those who want to spread terror and they can recruit these individuals to carry out these shameful acts. Unfortunately, American politicians and public figures did not pay any heed to it.

After September 11 Attacks, in November 2001 Franklin Graham who is the son of Reverend Billy Graham was invited on NBC Nightly News with Tom Brokaw. On this

show he openly used derogatory language against Islam and God.⁴³ Then again in 2005 he was invited for an interview by Anderson Cooper who at that time was a host on CNN. During that interview again he gave absurd statement about Muslims and said that there is only one way for Muslims to gain redemption and that is to die in a holy war. Then he was again invited for an interview on the same channel (CNN) and again he did not have anything good to say about Muslims. He again rebuked and ridiculed Muslims.

Graham did not stop here. In lower Manhattan, Park 51 Community Center was about to be constructed and he was the one who openly protested against its construction. When he was questioned that why he was against the construction of it, he stated that “Muslims will claim now that World Trade Center property is Islamic land.”⁴⁴

In October 2010, an event with the name of ABC town hall was held and during that event Graham stated: “American Muslims want to build as many mosques and cultural centers as they possibly can so they can convert as many Americans as they can to Islam.”⁴⁵

From this statement, it becomes further clear that after the September 11 attacks this notion was constructed and implanted in the minds of general masses that Muslims actually want to impose Sharia law in the United States of America and in order to do this they can go to any extent and they can become terrorists as well. Graham never stated that he was sorry for saying such absurd things about a religion which is almost followed by one fifth of the world’s population. Although his father, Billy Graham

⁴³ Arsalan Iftikar, “The Media Crusade Against Islam,” in *Scapegoats: How Islamophobia Helps Our Enemies and Threatens Our Freedoms* (Hot Books, 2016), chap. 2.

⁴⁴ Iftikar, chap. 2.

⁴⁵ Iftikar, chap. 2.

was not convinced with his son's Islamophobic ideology and he also gave an interview in which he stated that he had a lot of friends which were Muslims and they all are really nice people.

Apart from Franklin Graham, another popular personality who promoted the phenomenon of Islamophobia at that time was Reverend Pat Robertson. He was also the founder of Christian Coalition and he promoted Islamophobia through his Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) television. He sued to do a show on his CBN television with the name of The 700 Club. He once used highly derogatory language against Islam.⁴⁶

He was also invited on a show named This Week with George Stephanopoulos on ABC News. During this show he openly said that Muslims along with Hindus should not be given top positions in American government or judiciary. He also gave another really pressing statement against Muslims and Islam on his television. He stated that he is allowed to persecute Muslims because, "Islam is not a religion as such.... [It] is actually a political system that is bent on dominating you and killing you."⁴⁷ Ann Coulter also joined the league of Franklin Graham and Reverend Pat Robertson when she stated openly that: "we should invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity."⁴⁸

So, one can see that these people were actually against Muslims and labeled them terrorists because they were of the view that Muslims were trying to convert Americans to Islam. On the other hand it was perfectly okay and justified for them to

⁴⁸ Iftikar, "The Media Crusade Against Islam," chap. 2.

convert them to Christianity. They were also doing the same thing but they were righteous and nobody had the audacity to call them terrorists just because they were powerful. Ann Coulter used to give hurtful statements against Islam and Muslims on daily basis and television channels like FOX News gave her a platform to carry out her absurd speech. Ann Coulter also stated that all Muslims must be deported from America.

Thanks to the efforts of Franklin Graham, Reverend Pat Robertson and Ann Coulter, politicians like Donald Trump and Ben Carson also became confident and started to give hateful statements against Muslims openly. They knew that now they would not be questioned. As mentioned earlier that Paris attacks made the situation worse for Muslims in America as after these attacks Ben Carson compared Muslims to rabid dogs without any shame or fear. He stated, "If there is a rabid dog running around in your neighborhood, you are probably not going to assume something good about that dog."⁴⁹

Everyone knows what he meant as nobody is naïve, and every single person knows that how a rabid dog is treated. Actually, some of the politicians in America from the beginning were not very fond of Muslims and used to think that they were disloyal and at some point they would definitely do something which would be really against the American societal norms. September 11 attacks actually changed their doubts and speculations in to reality. How they responded to it and what policies were carried against Muslims would be discussed in the next chapter.

⁴⁹ Iftikar, chap. 2.

Another media personality who openly promoted the phenomenon of Islamophobia was Bill Maher. He did a show on HBO and the name of the show was Real Time. This show was really famous and he used this show to promote the phenomenon of Islamophobia. He once stated on his show that “Islam is one religion in the world that kills you when you disagree with them.”⁵⁰

Once he invited Richard Dawkins who was also someone who used to hate Muslims on his show. They discussed about Islam and Dawkins easily said that Islamic traditions had failed to achieve anything. His actual words were, “To hell with their culture.”⁵¹ . On another occasion he invited another personality named Sam Harris on his show who also hated Muslims. On the same day along with Sam Harris, Ben Affleck was also a guest on his show. Bill Maher who on daily used to rebuke Islam on that day also compared Islam with “mafia” and stated that if you will say or do something which according to it is not correct then you would get killed. Sam Harris also joined him and called Islam as “the mother lode of bad ideas.”⁵² Usually all the guests used to agree with the comments of Bill Maher but on this particular episode the tables got turned when Ben Affleck stated that the comments of Bill Maher and Sam Harris were actually gross and he also stated that they were making racist generalizations about Islam. When Ben Affleck took the lead after that some other scholars also came on front and criticized the comments which were openly made by Bill Maher.

⁵⁰ Iftikar, chap. 2.

⁵¹ Iftikar, chap. 2.

⁵² Iftikar, chap. 2.

Nicholas Kristof who is a New York Times columnist also stated that the comments made by Bill Maher had “a tinge of how white racists talk about African Americans and define blacks.”⁵³ Fareed Zakriya also tried to knock some sense in Bill Maher’s mind when he appeared on his show in April 2015. He stated that Bill Maher must show some respect towards the religion of Islam as he was talking about a religion which is the second largest in the world. He had no authority to mock an entire religion. When Fareed Zakriya tried to do that Bill Maher became angry and he went to say that the comments given by Fareed Zakriya on his show were actually insulting for him. He used to insult an entire religion and when somebody who in reality is a scholar and an intellectual person who is far more knowledgeable than him he became offended.

Apart from this, some shows and movies were also made which rebuked Muslims and ridiculed Islam. For instance, sitcom Citizen Khan was a show which was actually directed by a Muslim Adil Ray but this show also mocked the religion of Islam. When it was aired on BBC after its first episode it was found out that BBC received around one hundred and eighty five complaints against this show. One of the viewers who complained about this show said that: “We feel though as if this show has crossed the line and we expected a comedy show but now we have witnessed a mocking show.”⁵⁴

Another movie with the name of American Sniper was made and Bradley Cooper played the character of the main lead of the movie. This film was made in 2014. It was

⁵³ Iftikar, chap. 2.

⁵⁴ “Sitcom Citizen Khan Prompts 185 Complaints to the BBC,” 29th August, <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-19395994>.

again a movie which was Anti-Muslim as in this movie killing of Iraqi men, women and children was praised.

After the attacks of September 11 whenever something used to happen, some of the media outlets used to blame Muslims for that without even carrying out an investigation. The same thing happened when an attack was launched on Norway on 22nd July 2011. This attack was actually carried out by a man named Andres Breivik. He first planted a bomb in a car which exploded and killed about eight people. After that he went to the island of Utoya and started shooting people. His targets were actually teenage boys and girls who were actually attending a Labor Party youth camp. He did not stop until he ran out of bullets and once he was done then he surrendered himself to the SWAT team. Now the question is why did he carry out this heinous act? It was found out that he carried out this attack as he used to call himself a modern day crusader against Islam. He gave a statement that it was necessary to carry out this attack so that Norway can be prevented from becoming a colony of Muslims. Moreover, he was of the view that Labor Party in Norway was trying to promote multiculturalism as they welcomed Muslim immigrants. This was his mind set.

After this attack again, some of the media outlets in the United States displayed its double standard and without even carrying out an investigation they started to blame Muslims for this act. Even The New York Times and The Washington Post also started to link this attack with Jihadi Muslims. Laura Ingraham also stated that this attack was actually a work of Muslim Jihadis while she was hosting a show The O'Reilly Factor. Although when she went on air there were already some news which were taking rounds that the person who was arrested for carrying out this attack was

not a Muslim but he was actually a European Christian. Pamela Geller who hated Muslims also did not waste this opportunity and as soon as she came to know about this attack she wrote on her website “Jihad in Norway?” Later on things became really different when it was found out that the person who carried out this attack was actually a European Christian and he used to admire Pamela Geller.⁵⁵ This incident did not even stop Pamela Geller and in 2012 she bought some famous advertising spaces in New York City subway stations and on those spaces she exhibited her memorandum. Her ads promoted: “A panorama of the sky the moment the World Trade Center burst into flames [on September 11], accompanied by a quote from the Quran that reads ‘Soon shall We cast terror into the hearts of the Unbelievers.’”⁵⁶

This attack was never referred to as terrorism and Andres was never called a terrorist by the US media. From this incident it becomes crystal clear that terrorism was only linked with Muslims and some of the media outlets actually played a really critical role in building this perspective that only Muslims are terrorists and only they can carry out terrorism. Although even at that time Christians and others also used to kill people and they used to promote violence but they were not labeled as terrorists neither Christianity was called as a religion which promotes violence.⁵⁷

This will be wrong to say that before the attacks of September 11 Muslims were not shown as negative figures by media as even before 9/11 some of the media outlets were against Muslims. Muslim scholars like Arsalan Iftikhar and Fareed Zakriya tried

⁵⁵ Arsalan Iftikhar, “The White Terror,” in *Scapegoats: How Islamophobia Helps Our Enemies and Threatens Our Freedoms*. (Hot Books, 2016), chap. 4.

⁵⁶ Iftikhar, “The Sharia Bogeyman.” chap. 3.

⁵⁷ Iftikhar and Aslan, *Scapegoats*.

to clear the misunderstanding, but it did not help and hate crimes increased against Muslims. They had to face discrimination and they became the dangerous OTHERS. What they faced and what role did some of the politicians play and certain policies which were carried out against them would be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

HATE CRIMES AGAINST MUSLIMS

As mentioned in the previous chapter that after the September 11 attacks, hate crimes against Muslims increased drastically not only in the United States of America but also in European states where Muslims were in minority. After the attacks of 9/11, life of Muslims in the United States changed as they were now viewed as terrorists or sympathizers of terrorists who want to impose Sharia law in America. One thing needs to be mentioned here is that after 9/11 Muslims alone did not become targets of hate crime. Sikhs also suffered from it just because they used to wear a turban and they used to have long beards so some of the Americans used to confuse them with Muslims. They used to think that these Sikhs were also practitioners of Islam. One would be surprised to know that the first person who became target of these hate crimes post 9/11 was not a Muslim or an Arab. He was a Sikh. His name was Balbir Singh Sodi and he was an Indian American businessman. He was forty nine years old when he was murdered in Arizona at a gas station. He was not doing anything wrong. He was not bothering anyone neither he was carrying out any illegal activity. He was murdered just because of the color of his skin and because at that he was wearing a turban so people who killed them actually got confused and thought he was a Muslim. He was murdered on 15th September 2001.

On the same day, an Egyptian with the name of Adel Karas was also murdered. He was also not a Muslim. He was an Orthodox Coptic Christian. He was killed in Los Angeles and he lost the battle of his life just because he resembled with Muslims. Then in Texas three people were murdered by a white Christian. One of them was a

Pakistani who was an owner of a grocery store. The other one was Hindu who owned a gas station and the third man was a Bangladeshi. That white man killed them because he was of the view that these people were responsible for 9/11 although they had nothing to do with it.⁵⁸ Even their places of worship including temples, mosques and gurdawars also became target of violence. For instance, on 5th August 2012 a white supremacist with the name of Wade Michael Page entered in a Sikh temple on Oak Creek ,Wisconsin with a nine millimeter handgun and he killed six people. Again the media in the United States did not recognize this act as an act of terrorism because a white man killed people who had olive skins.

Moreover, after the September 11 attacks some of the white Americans started to target Muslims deliberately. For instance, a man named Craig Stephen Hicks who was forty six years old deliberately killed three young Muslim college students in their own flat at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill in February 2015. When police arrested him and an investigation was carried out then it was found out that he did not have any strong reason for that. He just killed them over a small parking dispute. After sometime it was also found out that he was an enemy of religion of Islam. He once stated, “If your religion [Islam] kept its big mouth shut, so would I,”⁵⁹ So, after all these incidents one cannot deny the fact that after the September 11 attacks the phenomenon of Islamophobia grew in the United States of America and it was real it was not a myth.

⁵⁸ Arsalan Iftikar, “When Islamophobia Wears a Badge,” in *Scapegoats: How Islamophobia Helps Our Enemies and Threatens Our Freedoms* (Hot Books, 2016), chap. 5.

⁵⁹ Iftikar, chap. 5.

One fact which needs to be mentioned here is that people in the United States at that time were not being killed only by Muslims but the main issue was that they were not ready to accept this fact. Moreover, some of the media houses exploited this narrative and they used it as an opportunity to blame Muslims for all these killings. For instance, Southern Poverty Law Centre published a report in which it was clearly mentioned that a white supremacist Dylan Roof alone murdered more people in one night than “Islamic terrorists have killed on US soil in total between 2011 and 2014.”⁶⁰ Even these facts did not change anything for Muslims and still they had to face suspicion. After 9/11 the New York Police Department started to spy on American Muslim community throughout New York (unconstitutionally) and it was actually revealed by Associated Press Reporters Matt Appuzo and Adam Goldman. They both also won Pulitzer Prize in 2012 for revealing this. It was also found out that these police officials used to send undercover agents to Ivy League Colleges like the University of Pennsylvania and Yale University. These undercover agents used to spy on Muslim students and then they used to give reports to New York Police Department. Apart from this, it also sent undercover agents known as “rakers” into Muslim neighborhoods. They used to sit with Muslims and used to interact with them in places like internet cafes, restaurants, halal meat shops and hookah bars. It was also found out that New York Police Department also used to recruit Muslims for carrying out spying activities. How they used recruit Muslims for this is the real question. Actually Muslims who used to get arrested for small crimes like a traffic violation they used to separate them from other criminals and then they were asked to become

⁶⁰ Iftikar, chap. 5.

their spies. Those who used to agree they were given cash rewards. For example, an American Muslim named Shaimur Rahman who was at that time nineteen years old was arrested. After that he was forced to become an undercover agent and his task was to instigate Muslims to give pejorative comments. He used to provide pictures of mosques and he used to make lists with the names of Muslims who used to attend religious study groups. Actually a strategy was made by New York Police Department with the name of “create and capture”. According to this strategy, the task of Rahman was to initiate a conversation with Muslims about jihad and terrorism. Then he used to gather their comments and used to give a report to New York Police Department. For carrying out this task he was rewarded with a cash prize of about \$1000a month. He himself stated that New York Police Department said to him, “We need you to pretend to be one of them.”⁶¹ The activities of New York Police Department actually legitimized Islamophobia in the United States of America. Even though Muslim officials used to cooperate with them but it did not even spare them. For instance, there was an imam in New York with the name of Reda Shata who used to fully cooperate with the law enforcement agencies. He used to invite police officials for break fasts and dinners in his mosque. He even invited Mayor Michael Bloomberg for dining in in his mosque but still New York Police Department did not forgive him and he was also spied on continuously. So, this spying by New York Police Department was unconstitutional and it was a serious violation of religious freedom. One can say that it was actually a kind of psychological warfare which was initiated against Muslims after September 11 attacks because they started to suspect fellow worshippers. New York Police Department carried out these activities till January

⁶¹ Iftikar, chap. 5.

2016. After that a law suit was filed against it and the decision came which forbid it to carry out investigations on the basis of race, religion or ethnicity.

After 9/11 the hatred of some of the US politicians towards Muslims also increased and they openly started to give statements against them. For instance, after 9/11 the then Republican Congressman Saxby Chambliss held a meeting with emergency responders at Valdosta, Georgia. During that meeting he stated that we should “turn the sheriff loose and arrest every Muslim that crosses the state line.”⁶² Then another Republican Congressman named John Cooksey was invited for an interview at a radio channel and he was asked about racial profiling. He stated without even thinking for a second, “If I see someone that comes in that has a diaper on his head, that guy needs to be pulled over.”⁶³ Another Congressman Peter King also gave a bizarre statement. He said, “We have too many mosques in this country and that extremists lead 80 to 85 percent of American mosques.”⁶⁴

This hatred was so strong that even President Barrack Obama had to face it. He was also made awkward sometimes just because he was considered to be a Black Muslim. Due to this reason, Barrack Obama visited a mosque during the last year of his tenure. The statements given by these politicians had a strong impact on American people. This can be seen from the fact that in 2011 a public opinion poll was carried out by the Public Religion Research Institute. The results of this public poll showed that thirty

⁶² Iftikar, chap. 5.

⁶³ Iftikar, chap. 5.

⁶⁴ Iftikar, chap. 5.

percent of the American people were of the view that Muslims wanted to impose Sharia law in the United States of America.⁶⁵

President Donald Trump also used hatred against Muslims as an opportunity to gain votes when he was running his Presidential campaign in 2016. He organized a Rally in New Hampshire and during that someone asked him a question in the following words: “We have a problem in this country called Muslims. We know our current president is one [a Muslim]. You know he is not even an American. But anyway, we have training camps growing where they [Muslims] want to kill us. That is my question: When can we get rid of them [Muslims in America]?”⁶⁶ This was a racist remark and Trump should have challenged this but he responded in a similar manner and stated, “We are going to be looking at a lot of different things and you know, a lot of people are saying that [Obama is a Muslim]and a lot of people are saying that bad things are happening and we are going to be looking at that and plenty of other things.”⁶⁷ After becoming President, he also introduced immigration ban on Muslims which again was a racist policy.

After 9/1, some of the Republicans turned against Muslims and their hatred towards them increased. Several polls were carried out which showed that some of the republicans were suspicious about Muslims. In 2015 a study was carried out and it revealed that less than half of republicans were of the view that the religion of Islam should even be legal in the United States. This was the impact of September 11 attacks and this is how it changed the lives of Muslims in the United States. September 11

⁶⁵ Iftikar, “The Sharia Bogeyman,” chap. 3.

⁶⁶Iftikar, chap. 3.

⁶⁷Iftikar, “When Islamophobia Wears a Badge,” chap. 5.

attacks not only changed the lives of Muslims in the United States but in other European states their lives also changed. Hate crimes increased against them not only in the United States of America but also in Europe and in other parts of the world. For instance a poll was carried out in France in 2016 in which around forty six percent of French respondents stated that they are afraid of refugees especially from those which will come from Muslim majority areas as they will carry out terrorist activities.⁶⁸ So, after 9/11 the narrative about Muslims changed not only in the United States of America but also in other European countries.

⁶⁸ Engy Abdelkader, "A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF EUROPEAN ISLAMOPHOBIA: FRANCE, UK, GERMANY, NETHERLANDS AND SWEDEN," , 62.

CONCLUSION

From above discussion, it becomes clear that Islamophobia is not a myth, but it is a reality. The narrative of Islamophobia was created by the United States of America and then it used different tools especially media to intensify this phenomenon. The phenomenon of Islamophobia got intensified after September 11 attacks but even before these attacks Islamophobia were very much there. After these attacks, Muslims were openly declared as dangerous others but Muslims were not the first people who had suffered this. Before Muslims, Jews were also considered to be dangerous others and what happened with them is a different story. Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism are more or less the same thing. One is hatred towards Islam and the other one is hatred towards Jews but different steps are now being taken in order to prevent Anti-Semitism. Same needs to be done with Islamophobia. There is a dire need to introduce steps which would curb growing Islamophobia as it is increasing day by day. Organization of Islamic Cooperation must need to come up with a policy and it must take steps so that prevent growing of Islamophobia. Islamophobia is real and it is growing and it is impacting the lives of Muslims as well. It impacted the lives of Muslims in the United States of America and in Europe and recently one can see wave of Islamophobic policies in India as well. So, nobody can deny the fact that Islamophobia does not exist and it is a myth. It is real and it is increasing day by day. It is widely accepted phenomenon and all around the globe Muslims are considered as terrorist because of the fact that the United States of America is a hegemon and whatever discourse it will create will be accepted no matter what and this argument is supported by the power knowledge nexus theory as well. Nobody calls a white

supremacist as a terrorist even if they carry out mass shootings. So, one can say that Islamophobia is another form of racism and in the United States of America minorities are suffering due to this racism. Not only Muslims but even black people are also suffering and the murder of George Floyd actually proves this fact. So one can say that in the United States of America there is not only Islamophobia but actually there is Minority phobia and that is why they are persecuted.

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