



From jihad to terror: Deconstructing western media discourse on Islamism groups and its implications for global Muslim identity

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ABSTRACT

Background: This research is based on the phenomenon of Islamophobia that occurs in global society until now due to the framing of Islam carried out by the Western world through its media. The purpose of this research is to reveal how the framing of Islam by Western media is constructed and to what extent that framing influences the identity of other Islamic groups as well as the identity of Islam itself in the public sphere. **Methods:** This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach using Entman's Framing Analysis method. The data collection technique is carried out through documentary study by taking news from Western media such as Fox News, New York Post, The Telegraph, The Guardian and the results of previous research researchers in the form of statistical data related to media coverage of CNN, and BBC to then be analyzed. In addition, other data is taken from social media such as Instagram and YouTube. **Findings:** The results of the study indicate that following the September 11 attacks by Al Qaeda, Western media framing expanded antagonism from Al Qaeda to broader Islamic groups, such as Hamas, and ultimately to Islam itself. This framing was disseminated not only through news media but also via entertainment and social media, generating moral legitimacy to discriminate Muslims. **Conclusion:** This study confirms that Western media framing is systematically responsible for the emergence of Islamophobia which has an impact on the confidence of Muslims to display their religion or religious identity in public. **Novelty/Originality of this article:** This study implements the Framing Analysis method to analyze news from Western media in depth by applying Entman's four main elements, namely Problem Definition, Causal Interpretation, Moral Evaluation, and Treatment Recommendations. This method is effective in exploring framing efforts in news reporting in a scientific and easy to understand manner.

KEYWORDS: framing; islamophobia; western discourse.

1. Introduction

In today's era, cases frequently occur that place Muslims in vulnerable areas for various reasons. This is true in Palestine, Xinjiang, Europe, the United States, and other regions where Muslims is a minority. This oppression has even culminated in the genocide currently being experienced by Muslims in Palestine and Xinjiang. This cruelty has not escaped the attention of the world and the media, which have closely observed the struggle for survival of Palestinian and Uyghur Muslims.

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A still current issue is the Israeli-Palestinian War that began on October 7, 2023. The war began with a Hamas attack initiative from the Gaza region called "Operation Al-Aqsa Flood". Through the Hamas media office, reporting the reasons for Operation Al-Aqsa Flood with a report entitled "Our narrative... Operation Al-Aqsa Flood" in general, the contents of the report describe the conditions of discrimination and oppression experienced by the Palestinian people, especially in the Gaza region by the Israeli army, which then create a grudge which then escalated in an armed operation as a form of achievement for what the Zionists had done to Palestine. This is reinforced by the opinion of Mike Berry, a lecturer at Cardiff University who explicitly stated that the escalation of October 7 was the impact of the Western media's double standards in reporting, which prioritized Israel and tended to rarely see Palestine.

Following the October 7th attack, the Israeli Prime Minister's office immediately issued an official statement, in which Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared: "The enemy will pay an unprecedented price". Under these conditions, the conflict transformed into a war, one that for the Palestinians was a war against an aggressor, while for the Israelis it was a war against terror. With its sophisticated combat equipment, Israel launched a devastating counterattack, calling it "Operation Iron Sword". According to a report by Scher (2025), a satellite imagery expert, he believes the Israeli attack on Gaza was one of the most devastating attacks of the 21st century due to the damage it caused.

To date, according to a report by Cornwell (2025), a Reuters reporter, there have been 1,200 Israeli casualties and over 64,000 Palestinian casualties, both civilian and military. However, it is important to note that the local health authority claims that half of the Palestinian civilian casualties were children and women. This prompted Amnesty International to condemn Israel's actions through a report titled "You Feel Like You Are Subhuman: Israel's Genocide Against Palestinians in Gaza". Not only Amnesty International, but the entire global humanitarian community also took action by collecting donations and holding demonstrations as a form of humanitarian solidarity.

Despite this, many Western media outlets still consider Palestinian resistance a form of terrorism. This is evident in the use of the term "terrorist" as a derogatory term for Hamas, as well as the pro-Israel narrative and reporting. This is evident in reports from Fox News, the New York Post, The Telegraph, The Guardian, and others. Some media outlets even openly state this in their reporting.

For example, in a report from The Guardian, reporter Helmore (2024) wrote, "On Wall Street, a grueling exhibition has opened detailing the horrific attack on the Nova music festival by Hamas terrorists on October 7, in which 364 people were murdered, many wounded, and 44 taken hostage" (para. 2). Fox News also boldly identifies Hamas as a terrorist group in numerous reports, including one by a journalist named Botbol (2025), who wrote, "Israel's security cabinet overnight Thursday approved Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's proposal to defeat Hamas, including taking control of Gaza City, after the Palestinian terror group torpedoed U.S.-mediated negotiations" (para. 1).

Not only the media, but even Western countries have designated Hamas as a terrorist organization. These countries include Israel, the United States, the European Union, the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, Australia, Argentina, Paraguay, Honduras, New Zealand, and the United Arab Emirates. This then legitimizes these media outlets' labeling of Hamas as terrorist. In addition to Hamas in Palestine, other Muslim militant groups such as the Taliban in Afghanistan, the Uyghur resistance, and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad organization are also listed as terrorist groups by the United States and European Union governments. This naturally provoked anger from these groups, which led to attempts to retaliate against the United States and the European Union for the label. This led to destructive conflicts that ultimately created a negative stigma surrounding one of the groups' identities, it is their religion, Islam.

Similarly, the Taliban, an Islamic militant organization from Afghanistan, was formerly funded by the United States to overthrow the communist government of Afghanistan (known as Mujahideen before), thus diminishing the influence of the Soviet Union in Asia. The image of the Taliban was previously associated with the West as Mujahideen, Freedom

Fighters, and Anti-Communist Heroes, but these designations ceased with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, marking the United States' success as the sole superpower on earth.

In the post-Cold War period, the United States supported the pro-liberal Afghan government, which contradicted the core of the mujahideen's struggle against communism. Naturally, the conservative faction, dominated by the Taliban, opposed the Afghan government at the time. The United States felt this compromised its interests, and therefore intervened as peacekeepers in Afghanistan. Since then, the Taliban has been listed as a terrorist organization by the United States. It's worth remembering that before this Islamic militant group came into the spotlight, there were Islamic-labeled terror groups like Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State (IS). These groups had carried out major terrorist acts that shocked the world. One example was the September 11, 2001, attacks that destroyed the World Trade Center in the United States, carried out by Al-Qaeda. This attack gave rise to the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) movement, initiated by the United States.

Although the GWOT was considered successful, it would become the precursor to the growth of a second, more severe phase of terrorism, the Islamic State. This Islamic State then took up arms from the ruins of Iraq, which was devastated by the United States invasion, part of the GWOT, to eliminate the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) that Iraq was accused of possessing at the time. This Islamic State then became so popular that it managed to control almost all of Iraq and Syria, hence the group's name, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

ISIS's power has overwhelmed major powers like the United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom, and the group frequently carries out terrorist attacks in specific countries to further its interests. In fact, ISIS is listed as a terrorist organization in every country around the world. ISIS has inspired many communities, disguised as Muslims, to carry out terrorist acts in the name of jihad for their own interests. These terrorist groups deliberately label their movements as Islamic to gain support from Muslim communities who feel oppressed by their enemies. This is in line with Putra & Sumaryani (2021) opinion, stating that "Religion is one reason that encourages the emergence of terrorism due to the oppression that occurs in religion in a particular country" (p. 82). In this way, these terrorist groups can "brainwash" Muslims, especially those with less in-depth knowledge of religion.

According to Olsson (2024) study, terrorist attacks carried out by individuals with a Muslim background bias daily life and media coverage. The global community has generalized, assuming that Islam is a religion that obliges its adherents to kill infidels. This has undoubtedly been a disaster for Muslims. Due to the actions of a handful of individuals, the entire world views every Muslim as a terrorist. Thus, even when Muslims are oppressed, the world continues to view it as an act of terror rather than a jihad against injustice. This bias is deeply detrimental to Muslims and, on the one hand, obscures the humanity of fellow human beings due to this narrative. This is exacerbated by modern developments that facilitate the rapid spread of information worldwide.

The ubiquity of devices like smartphones and the internet, which provides global access to interconnectedness, have undoubtedly facilitated the rapid and easy spread of anti-Islam narratives. According to Zuhri & Fadil (2025), this increased internet use has also led to increased discrimination, insults, and hate speech against Islam, known as Islamophobia. Social media and online articles have become one of the most significant channels for the spread of Islamophobia and have had a significant impact on global public perception of Islam. Based on the background above, the research's problem formulation is how Western media frames the concept of "jihad" so that it shifts into "terror" in their reporting narratives, and how deconstructing this discourse can reveal the construction of meaning that influences the image of Islamic groups. This research also questions the implications of this discursive framing for Muslim identity globally, especially in the digital era, particularly in relation to stigma, stereotypes, and international public perception of Muslims.

2. Methods

2.1 Research design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to examine how Western media construct and disseminate discourse linking Islam, jihad, and terrorism. The study focused on understanding the framing mechanisms used in media narratives and their implications for the representation of Islamic groups and global Muslim identity. A qualitative approach was selected because the research emphasizes the interpretation of meanings, narratives, and symbolic representations rather than numerical measurement. According to Moleong (2005), qualitative research generates descriptive data in the form of words, texts, and images that allow researchers to understand social phenomena in depth.

2.2 Theoretical framework

This research was grounded in framing theory developed by Erving Goffman and further operationalized through Robert M. Entman's framing analysis model. Framing refers to the process through which certain aspects of reality are selected, emphasized, and presented in a way that shapes audience interpretation (Entman, 1993). According to Entman (1993), framing can be identified through four analytical elements: problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation. These elements provide a systematic framework for examining how media organizations construct particular narratives and influence public understanding of political and social issues.

Table 1. Analytical framework based on Entman's Framing Model

Framing element	Analytical focus
Problem definition	How an issue or event is defined as a problem
Causal interpretation	Identification of causes and responsible actors
Moral evaluation	Moral judgments attached to actors or events
Treatment recommendation	Solutions or actions proposed to address the problem

2.3 Data sources

The data consisted of news articles, editorials, opinion pieces, and social media content discussing Islamic groups, jihad, and terrorism. Primary data were obtained from Western media outlets including Fox News, The Guardian, The Telegraph, and the New York Post. Additional secondary data were obtained from previous studies analyzing media coverage by CNN and the BBC, as well as social media content published on digital platforms. The study primarily focused on media coverage produced after the September 11, 2001, attacks, as this event marked a significant turning point in the global discourse surrounding Islam and terrorism.

Table 2. Research Data Sources

Data source	Type of data	Purpose
Fox news	News articles	Framing analysis
The guardian	News articles	Framing analysis
The telegraph	News articles	Framing analysis
New York post	News articles	Framing analysis
CNN	Statistical coverage data	Supporting evidence
BBC	Statistical coverage data	Supporting evidence
Instagram (@idf)	Social media content	Digital framing analysis

2.4 Data collection and data analysis

Data were collected using documentary study techniques. According to Sugiyono (2018), documentation is a method of collecting information through written records, archives, reports, images, and other documented materials relevant to the research topic. The researcher systematically identified and selected media content containing explicit references to Islamic groups, jihad, militancy, terrorism, and related issues. News articles and media reports were collected through publicly accessible online archives and official media platforms. Social media content was also reviewed to examine the dissemination of framing narratives in digital environments.

The collected data were analyzed using Robert M. Entman's framing analysis model. Each media text was examined through the four framing elements: problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation. The analysis was conducted in several stages. First, selected articles were read intensively to identify recurring themes and narratives. Second, framing elements were coded according to Entman's framework. Third, similarities and differences in framing patterns among media outlets were compared. Finally, the findings were interpreted to understand how Western media discourse contributes to the construction of perceptions regarding Islam, jihad, and Muslim identity in the global public sphere.

3. Results and Discussion

Historically, global polarization during the Cold War is one of the keys to the emergence and popularity of framing. According to Entman (2007), the United States frequently employed framing during the Cold War to strengthen its position as the leader of the Western Bloc in the face of communist influence. This framing was intended to shape the mindset of countries perceived as threatened and rejecting communism, leading them to view their communist enemies as heroes. Before delving deeper into this framing, it's important to first understand the Cold War era, how it emerged and the polarization it caused, so we can draw insights into its impact on the present. Wilbur and Zhang (2014) argue that "The Cold War began shortly after World War II and ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991" (p. 561). Therefore, we can conclude that the Soviet Union, the largest and most powerful nation at the time, played a key role in that era.

After World War II, the collapse of the fascist regime, known for its authoritarian rule and the concept of "translatio submission," total submission to authority, according to Marcellus of Padua's theory, became a propaganda tool that drove world nations to oppose the Axis bloc at that time. This is especially true considering the Allied bloc, which at the time was already polarized based on ideology: the United States and Britain with their liberalism and the Soviet Union with its communism, which, despite their differences, shared the same ideal of freedom. From this event, it can be seen that the seeds of framing had begun to emerge.

After the implementation of the Iron Curtain policy, which divided Europe into two parts: West and East, the concepts of the Western and Eastern blocs became known. The Western bloc, led by the United States, with its liberal ideology, formed a defense pact later known as NATO, primarily to counter the influence of the Soviet Union. In response, the Soviet Union and its satellite states formed a defense pact later known as the Warsaw Pact, which included all Soviet satellite states, but not all of communist countries. These two blocs subsequently created a polarization in the world, the effects of which are still felt today.

It's important to understand that during the Cold War, the world was consumed by the race to develop and acquire nuclear weapons, often referred to as Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). This was evident in the events of Hiroshima on August 6th and Nagasaki on August 9th, where atomic bombs were dropped, causing enormous casualties and devastating consequences. Therefore, according to Avey (2019), both sides refrained from using nuclear weapons due to concerns about each other's nuclear capabilities, which could cause massive destruction.

Based on this reality, both countries sought alternatives to undermine each other's influence. Therefore, the term propaganda is often used to influence world opinion regarding a country. According to Sproule (1994, as cited in Malhan et al., 2020), "Propaganda represents the work of large organizations or groups to win over the public for special interests through a massive orchestration of attractive conclusions packaged to conceal both their persuasive purpose and lack of sound supporting reasons" (p. 3). From this definition, it can be understood that the goal of this propaganda is to win the public's heart for a particular interest. However, it is important to understand that at that time, this propaganda was not very effective in moving public opinion due to the increasing openness of global information, as well as innovations such as television, radio, and mass media.

Considering this, the United States prefers a more subtle approach to influencing opinion: framing. This aligns with Volkmer's (2009) opinion, which states that this framing method emerged in the United States in the 1970s through Erving Goffman's Framing Theory. Specifically, according to Calvert (2011), the American media framed Olympic athletes from the Soviet Union as dangerous because they adhered to communist ideology. Ethically, this reporting was not wrong, given the fact that they came from and represented a communist country. However, the reporting added a narrative that Communism was dangerous, which served as the subtle influence on opinion, or framing.

Thus, it is possible to understand how framing works. According to Wang et al. (2025), framing refers to how information is presented, highlighting information that is perceived as advantageous or disadvantageous to a particular party from a subjective perspective. This is reinforced by the statement that "Framing is very powerful in the text and visual presentation of media news coverage, as it organizes news story writing so that an event is well understood through a particular lens" (Hoon, 2021, p. 163). This statement emphasizes that framing, particularly in news media, can conceal the main meaning by packaging the news as if it were ordinary news. Therefore, according to Danielle (2025), framing is significantly successful in influencing public opinion on a matter.

Because of its ability and superiority, framing successfully became an intangible weapon for the United States in its efforts to eradicate the influence of communism worldwide. This was evidenced by the fear of communism, with the term "Red Terror" coined by the United States as a form of framing that then seemingly established that communism was bad and liberalism was good. One famous slogan embodying this concept was coined by the 35th President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, with the phrase "Better Dead than Red". The success of this framing subsequently shaped the world's perception of communism, which tended to have negative or undesirable connotations.

The post-Cold War era, marked by the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, marked the success of the United States and the Western bloc in surviving and emerging victorious for the third time after World War I and World War II. The legacy of the Cold War remains palpable even after the Cold War ended. However, it is important to understand that the United States' military power and influence will remain useless and damaged if the United States does not re-antagonize certain groups so that they can restart their main military industries. This is based on the opinion of Nicolas (2016), who emphasized that the United States needs to be constantly prepared and maintain the stability of its industry, especially after the collapse of its greatest enemy. Therefore, the United States is again looking for other enemies that can be framed so that the United States' interests are maintained.

The upheaval that erupted in the Middle East, particularly in Persia, where the Persian Empire under Shah Reza Pahlavi, an authoritarian and Westernized regime that had been a regional ally of the United States, was overthrown by the 1979 revolution in Iran, led to the collapse of U.S. dominance in the region. The United States certainly attempted to antagonize the Iranian Revolution as an extremist revolution and even intervened in it. However, U.S. efforts to frame the Islamic Republic of Iran failed to change the world's perception, as Shah Reza Pahlavi's government was fundamentally authoritarian and unpopular. Supported by Kaval and Izol (2024), Shah Reza Pahlavi's authoritarian and Westernized spirit was the catalyst for the Iranian revolution.

It is important to understand that U.S. interest in the Middle East led to U.S. intervention in several issues within the region. According to Jerbi (2023), U.S. intervention, particularly in the separation of Palestine and Israel, was the beginning of Arab and Muslim hatred toward the United States. The United States' bias, particularly in the Arab-Israeli war, when it openly channeled military equipment to Israel to defend its territory, drew global scrutiny. Even the oil embargo from Arab countries, which led to the U.S. oil crisis, failed to persuade the U.S. to reverse its policy. The Arab defeat, which led to Israel's occupation of Palestine and the Golan Heights in Syria, became the seed that would later become a time bomb for the United States.

The inability of Arabs and Muslims to restore the dignity of the holy land of Al-Aqsa became an opportunity for certain groups to appear to oppose the dominance of the United States and its allies, thus being considered heroes and carrying out jihad. This was exemplified by the events of September 11, 2001, in New York, where the World Trade Center was destroyed by a hijacked plane crash by a group calling itself Al-Qaeda. This left the American public wondering why the United States was attacked. In The 9/11 Commission Report (2004), bin Laden and Al Qaeda responded, "To the first, they say that America had attacked Islam; America is responsible for all conflicts involving Muslims" (p. 52). Thus, Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda are considered heroes to the layperson who is unaware of this.

The United States and its allies exploited this situation to reframe the situation, condemning not only Al Qaeda but also its inherent characteristics, namely Islam, thus generalizing the concept of jihad as the same concept as Al Qaeda. This is supported by Powell's (2011, as cited in Powell, 2018) statement: "Given the limited knowledge of Islam and Muslim countries, the U.S. public has consumed media that framed Islam from abroad as the major terrorism threat" (pp. 8). Furthermore, Powell (2018) also argues that the media deliberately exploited the situation of this terrorist act to create a dramatic and sensational scene, increasing public concern about terrorism and spreading the perception that Islam is constructed through the framing of a radical religion that justifies terrorism, as practiced by Al Qaeda.

It is important to understand that framing can only occur if a particular state or elite has an agenda and utilizes the mass media to drive it. This aligns with the theory of state-driven framing, an explanation that states are capable of framing without being clearly visible. According to Herman and Chomsky (1988), the state can incorporate framing elements into news delivered to the public by guiding them ideologically. This statement implies the need to understand the state's conditions, especially ideologically, and therefore meet these needs by tailoring news coverage to align with the state's interests.

Therefore, this discussion focuses on countries like the United States and certain Western countries because the United States is the primary actor in the framing process that constructs the perception of Islam as a terrorist state. This is supported by Edward Said (2002) in his book, "Covering Islam". He argued that the Western world is responsible for creating the perception of Islam as a religion of terror. It is undeniable that the narrative constructed by the Western world has led the public to experience a logical fallacy, creating the perception that Western culture brings progress and Islamic culture brings decline.

Regarding Al Qaeda and the militants in Afghanistan, it is important to remember that the United States was their primary backer, particularly during the Soviet-Afghan War, known to Muslims as the "Afghan Jihad". A United States Department of State report (1979, Doc 76) explicitly explains U.S. intervention in the rebellion that occurred in Afghanistan in the 20th century, especially when Afghanistan was still under the grip of the communist regime. According to Hayden (2021), the United States provided US\$3 billion in aid to Afghan fighters fighting the Soviet Union and the Afghan Communist regime. One of the most famous fighters on the Afghan battlefield was Osama bin Laden himself. This illustrates the double standards of the United States, which once supported the concept of "jihad" and even supported the mujahideen, but now opposes it.

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, jihad itself means a struggle or meritorious endeavor. Although the context of jihad can mean jihad against lust, the focus in this

discussion is more on the concept of jihad against oppression. According to Ritonga (2016), jihad against oppression in Islam is called "jihad fi-Sabilillah". In the history of Islam itself, jihad has been used since the time of the Prophet Muhammad, such as the Battle of Badr, the first war of Muslims against the oppression of the Quraysh. This concept is what the world has misunderstood due to Al Qaeda's actions, which they claim are a form of "jihad fi-sabilillah," reinforced by how Western countries such as the United States use the word to define what Al Qaeda does to the world, thus shifting the meaning of jihad from originally fighting oppression to terrorizing infidels.

Before examining how this framing creates a negative image of Muslims, it's important to understand how framing works, according to Erving Goffman. According to Goffman (as cited in Volkmer, 2009), framing operates through the following stages: Selection & Salience, Contextualization, and Public Reaction. These stages are holistic, so each component must be given the utmost attention.

In the Selection & Salience stage, the focus of the information or news provided is filtered. This filtering is intended to free the news from information that distracts the public from the primary meaning intended by the framer. Afterward, the prioritized information is emphasized by adding a narrative that captures the public's attention. Then, in the Contextualization stage, the contextual meaning of the information or news is added. This is intended to help readers or recipients understand the context in which the news or information emerged. Thus, the focus of the information is not only on what is reported, but also on how it is reported.

By examining the substance and context of the news, the audience is more likely to understand the content from the perspective of the author or provider. Therefore, the public's mindset will be indirectly shaped to align with what the news conveys. This is the Public Reaction stage. Based on Goffman's argument, we can take the direct example of Al Qaeda, a terrorist group that claims to carry out terror in the name of Islam. After the events of September 11, 2001, the entire world immediately looked to the collapsed World Trade Center. News published three weeks after the event, quoted from a Wired article on October 2, 2001, explicitly stated that the September 11 attacks were carried out by Al Qaeda Islamic militants.

From this sentence, it is clear that the Selection & Salience stage has been implemented. The prominence of the word "Islam" is not actually necessary in the news, but it is part of the framing. Then, the Contextualization stage begins, where the news adds elements of implicit hatred and revenge against Al Qaeda Islamic militants. As a result of these previous stages, this builds a public perception that Islam is radical and loves destruction. Goffman's theory was later refined through the Framing Analysis method by Robert M. Entman (1993). Entman outlined four main elements for analyzing framing: Problem Definition, Causal Interpretation, Moral Evaluation, and Treatment Recommendation. These stages allow for a more detailed and scientific analysis of framing.

Briefly, these four components can be defined as follows: Problem Definition focuses on defining an issue or event as a specific problem. Causal Interpretation prioritizes the actors or causes of the problem, Moral Evaluation focuses on the moral values attached to the event and the causal parties, and Treatment Recommendation refers to solutions to resolve the problem.

Analyzing the Wired article through Entman's analysis, the elements he provides can be identified as follows: The Problem Definition is that Islamic militants attacked the United States and threatened the sovereignty of Western nations. The Causal Interpretation is that the Islamic militant group Al Qaeda was the primary actor, as reported in the 9/11 Commission Report (2004). The Moral Evaluation of the event is that it was barbaric, demonic, and uncivilized. Ultimately, the Treatment Recommendation for the event is the Global War on Terror (GWOT).

This framing is so powerful that it extends to other Islamic militant groups, which, in essence, do not engage in acts of terrorism like Al Qaeda. A good example is Hamas, a Palestinian militant group based in Gaza. This group emerged in response to the repression of the Zionist Israeli regime against Palestine, particularly in Gaza, a region isolated from

the central Palestinian territory of the West Bank. This is evidenced by the absence of terrorist acts like those carried out by Al Qaeda or ISIS, such as suicide bombings, in Western countries.

This demonstrates Hamas's focus on fighting for its homeland. According to Idrus et al. (2024), the Hamas movement emerged out of a desire to resist the Israeli occupation of Palestine. Of course, upon analysis, Hamas cannot be simply classified as a terrorist group simply because it is fighting an occupier in its own homeland. Therefore, according to Jamal (2014), "Since Hamas has never targeted the West, this designation is largely influenced by Israel's perception of the movement" (p. 46).

Israel's influence on the Western world is undeniably powerful. This is due to the concept of Judeo-Christian values, which became popular after World War II. According to Mart (2018), the concept of Judeo-Christian Values emerged as a result of the influence of Christianity, which explicitly states in the Bible, Deuteronomy 14:2, that the Israelites were God's chosen people. According to Jacobs (2011), this has led to socio-cultural influences in the Western world, particularly the perception that God's chosen people must be protected.

This is the reason why Western countries, such as the United States, the European Union, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, joined Israel in designating Hamas as a terrorist organization. This impacted the perception of the country, resulting in Hamas's attacks as a form of resistance, such as those on October 7, 2023, being labeled a Major Terror Action. Furthermore, the country turned a blind eye when Israel carried out repressive actions, such as Operation Iron Sword, against Gaza, which killed hundreds of thousands of people.

Taking one example of media outlets labeling Hamas as terrorists, The Guardian published a report titled "We are showing the world what people do: grim relics of Hamas attack go on display in New York" (Helmore, 2024). This news report contained elements of framing intended to sway public opinion toward hatred of Hamas. This can be demonstrated using the Framing Analysis method described above.

Table 3. Framing analysis of the guardian article

Entman element	Findings
Problem definition	Hamas attack on Nova Festival framed as brutal terrorist violence
Causal interpretation	Hamas identified as the sole cause of violence
Moral evaluation	Hamas portrayed as barbaric and inhumane
Treatment recommendation	Public exhibition used to reinforce awareness of Hamas violence

Regarding the problem definition of the news, it was found that the problem being defined was the brutal attack by Hamas on the Nova music festival in Israel. The article states that "a grueling exhibition has opened detailing the horrific attack on the Nova music festival by Hamas terrorists on October 7, in which 364 people were murdered, many wounded, and 44 taken hostage" (pp. 2). This sentence emphasizes not only "attack", but rather "terrorist attack" by the terrorist group that haunted Israel, especially during the Nova music concert.

In its Causal Interpretation, the news report explicitly names "Hamas terrorists" as the cause of the brutal attack, which consequently forced the Israeli Army (IDF) to launch an attack on Gaza. The sentence reads "Hamas terrorists on October 7" (pp. 2). Therefore, this news report narrates that the Israeli aggression occurred because Hamas attacked earlier, ignoring the facts of Israel's repression during its occupation of the Palestinian territories.

In its Moral Evaluation, the news report emphasizes that the festival attendees were innocent but victims of Hamas's own crimes. For them, this Hamas terror act is baseless because the audience there were not soldiers and did not participate in politics. This is evidenced by the sentence "These people weren't soldiers: they had come to dance" (pp. 9), and "The festival had nothing to do with politics" (pp. 10). Then, an additional framing is mentioned through the sentence "Hundreds of people from all over the world, DJs from Brazil, Europe, and America, came to celebrate love, peace, and brotherhood" (pp. 9). This seems to immediately build a larger framing that Hamas is an aggressor and barbarian.

The treatment recommendation implemented by this news item is through publication. This is intended to inform the world and lead them to believe that Hamas is brutal, a "fact" that their supporters try to deny. They state, "We made a decision to show the world what people can do" (pp. 16). The solution adopted refers to an exhibition held in New York. The exhibition displayed items from the attack at the concert and added a horrific atmosphere to make the audience feel the editorial's narrative.

Furthermore, it can be compared to a Fox News report, which also framed the Islamist group Hamas through its report, titled "Hamas endgame is 'long-term' and is playing out for all to see as Israel pushes deeper into Gaza" (Botbol, 2025). This report was intended to explain to the world that Hamas is a "cancer" that is difficult to eradicate, and therefore a long-term policy is needed to eliminate Hamas from Palestine. The framing of this news item is clearly evident even in the headline. This can also be proven using Entman's method.

In the Problem Definition, the problem is defined as Hamas's vision of eliminating the Zionist regime from the world. This is evident in the sentence, "Hamas is an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood. It is a radical jihadi organization with a written and spoken goal to annihilate the State of Israel and replace it with a Sharia-based regime" (pp. 3). The news report then highlights Operation Al-Aqsa Flood as part of achieving this vision. "They operate according to that aim and objective. Hamas's October 7 terror attack was part of how they planned to fulfill that goal—defeating Israel, killing all the Jews, and taking control of the area" (pp. 4) as evidence for this statement.

It should be noted that while the quote is indeed a statement from an Israeli army spokesperson, the news is packaged in a narrative that justifies the Israeli army's actions. This will continue with the Moral Evaluation, which examines how the news subtly focuses on Israel, rather than taking a neutral position. A casual interpretation of the news article suggests that Hamas' ideology, which seeks to eliminate Israel, ultimately leads to Israel's elimination. The article then describes Hamas' use of starvation tactics, which has led to international pressure on Israel, forcing Israel to halt its attacks on Gaza. This is evident in the sentence, "For example, Hamas' 'starvation' campaign generated significant international pressure on Israel, leading to steps such as the IDF announcing tactical pauses in fighting and facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip in coordination with international partners" (pp. 6).

From a moral evaluation perspective, the article assesses Hamas as a terrorist organization, sadistic, and strategic. Thus, Hamas' victims are framed as innocent. The article states, "They are strategic, calculated, and extremely cynical—but definitely not suicidal," it adds. "They may employ suicidal tactics, but their strategic aim is long-term and deliberate." (pp. 5). This sentence demonstrates Hamas's strategic and calculated approach to slowly destroying Israel.

This news article, even from the first paragraph, emphasizes that Hamas is a terrorist organization, without using quotes from others, but rather from the original editorial. The sentence reads, "Israel's security cabinet overnight Thursday approved Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's proposal to defeat Hamas, including taking control of Gaza City, after the Palestinian terror group torpedoed U.S.-mediated negotiations" (pp. 1). The use of the phrase "Palestinian terror group" explicitly indicates the editorial's position on the conflict. Furthermore, sentences like "...senior Hamas terror leader Ghazi Hamad said..." (pp. 8) strongly support this. Therefore, this is what is actually formed as a result of the Moral Evaluation contained in the news.

For this news story, the consequences of Hamas' actions mean Israel must eliminate Hamas in order to maintain its national existence. The sentence "Israel's security cabinet overnight Thursday approved Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's proposal to defeat Hamas, including taking control of Gaza City, after the Palestinian terror group torpedoed U.S.-mediated negotiations" (pp. 1) seems to imply that Israel must attack Hamas, defeat it, and take control of Gaza City. This is a deliberate justification that blinds the public to other factors underlying Israel's conquest of Gaza.

These two articles serve as clear and explicit examples of how framing works, particularly in efforts to antagonize the Islamist group Hamas. The two articles differ in their

framing methods: the first focuses more on the victims of the Hamas attack on the Nova music festival, while the second emphasizes Hamas's strategic efforts to eliminate Israel. However, both consistently scapegoat Hamas as a terrorist, cruel, and sadistic group.

Table 4. Comparative framing of Hamas across western media

Media Outlet	Dominant Frame	Main Narrative	Representation of Hamas
The Guardian	Victim-centered frame	Focus on suffering of Israeli civilians	Terrorist actor
Fox News	Security frame	Hamas as existential threat to Israel	Radical terrorist organization
New York Post	Human-interest frame	Emotional portrayal of Israeli victims	Violent militant group
The Telegraph	Strategic-threat frame	Hamas manipulating Western opinion	Terrorist organization
BBC	Indirect security frame	Frequent association with violence and conflict	Militant/Terror-related actor
CNN	Conflict frame	Repeated linkage between Hamas and terrorism discourse	Militant/Terror actor

Additionally, there are other news stories, such as those from the New York Post, headlined "'We are being slaughtered': Israelis cry for help as Hamas militants break into homes" (Kennedy & Sedacca, 2023), and "Hamas carries out public executions — just hours after peace treaty signing" (Blair, 2025), which are very similar to the first article, which focuses on Israeli casualties caused by Hamas. The Telegraph also explicitly declares Hamas as terrorists, as in articles titled "Hamas terrorists have stopped dressing as women. They'll soon have to start again" (Kemp, 2025) and "Hamas terrorists are playing the West for fools" (Coughlin, 2024). These articles are more similar to the second article, as they focus on Hamas's strategy against Israel.

These articles are the findings of media outlets that boldly position themselves directly on Israel's side. If more pay attention, major Western media outlets like CNN and the BBC prefer to be cautious so as not to tarnish their image. According to the Counter Extremism Project (2025), although the BBC doesn't explicitly call Hamas terrorists, they do extensively document Hamas's attacks and refusal to renounce violence. Interpreted, the Counter Extremism Project is trying to emphasize the BBC's position, which is actually rejecting Hamas but "playing it safe" to avoid controversy.

In addition, according to a statistical study by Masry et al. (2025), this study shows how major Western media, especially CNN and BBC, responded and reported on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict after the October 7 incident by paying attention to the keywords of the articles published by these media. According to her, the BBC after the October 7 incident showed an increase in the number of articles with an average of nine articles published on October 8 to October 9, 2025. The frequency of keywords highlighted from various articles showed that the keyword "Israel" was used 6,927 times, "Hamas" 3,491 times, "Terrorist" 560 times and "Militant" 488 times. Focusing on the keywords "Terrorist" and "Militant" suggests that news coverage focuses on equating Hamas with "Terrorist" rather than "Militant," regardless of whether the news is intended as clickbait to attract audiences or indeed as such.

Turning to CNN, CNN found that in early October, CNN's coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict reached approximately 100 to 120 news stories posted per day. In terms of keyword frequency, "Israel" was mentioned 21,748 times, "Hamas" 9,127 times, "Militant" 1,583 times, and "Terrorist" 1,242 times. While these figures indicate a higher frequency of use for the word "Militant," they do not exclude the use of the keyword "Terrorist" in CNN news.

Turning to Henarni's (2024) statistical study, which used Nvivo 12 Plus to analyze 150 news stories, divided into 75 Western and 75 Eastern news stories, The study focused on

news coverage of the Islamic group Hamas. Focusing on Western media outlets sampled by the BBC, CNN, and The Guardian, it was found that Hamas was viewed as cruel by 40%, terrorist by 36%, humane by 16%, and heroic by 8%. This demonstrates the Western media's attempts to frame Islamic groups, attempting to equate all Islamic groups with the terrorist group Al Qaeda.

This framing appears not only in articles; in this digital age, much of the framing is disseminated on social media. More concretely, see Instagram accounts managed by the Israeli government, such as @idf, @stateofisrael, and the most popular through X. Not only the Israeli government, but Israeli politicians and even Western politicians are also actively trying to sway public opinion to blame Hamas.

Taking one of the Reels videos from Instagram @idf on October 28, 2025, a one-minute video shows footage of several Hamas soldiers digging in Gaza. The footage is captioned "Hamas are lying about our hostages, here's the proof," and then explains that Hamas is removing and reburying the bodies of the hostages they killed. The footage, captured by an Israeli drone, has been viewed 576,000 times and garnered 3,211 comments, many of which are supportive and anti-Israel.

This is just one example of the video; if analyze it closely, there are many more videos with views not below 40,000. This demonstrates how framing has spread to the world of social media, which is highly accessed by the global population. According to López-Rabadán (2024), social media is an effective platform for framing.

Naturally, with this framing, the West attempts to diminish the significance of the struggle against oppression into acts of terror similar to those carried out by Al Qaeda or ISIS. As a result, the world's perception of the word "jihad" has become increasingly distant from its true meaning, and words like "jihad," "Allahu akbar," and other Arab-Islamic related words have become increasingly taboo worldwide. This is supported by Aziz and Saadia (2022), who argue that as a result of the phenomenal events of September 11, the connotations of sacred Islamic words have become closely associated with negative connotations.

Furthermore, it's worth noting that terrorist groups like Al Qaeda and ISIS often wear long clothing with turbans or head coverings, much like Arabs in general. While this is more reminiscent of Arab culture, because Islam originated and developed within the Arab community, it often becomes a symbol of the Islamic faith. According to Centner (2003), terrorists' use of traditional clothing and rejection of Western styles are also linked to a consistent level of piety. For them, by dressing like the Sahabah (close friends of the Prophet) and the Salaf (followers of the Prophet in the early Hijri), it shows that they are as pious as the Salaf.

Thus, according to Bazian (2015, as cited in Istriyani & Yuliatun, 2016), this has given rise to a pragmatic construct within society, leading them to assume that terrorists are synonymous with people with thick beards, caps, and thawb or robes. This is also inseparable from the role of Western media, which frame Islam by displaying Islamic attributes, which then connote terrorism. According to Temel (2023), his study, which drew on data from several pro-Western media outlets in Turkey, showed that Islamic attributes were featured 163 times, which were then connoted as terrorism.

Furthermore, through entertainment media, the Western film industry has also participated in framing Muslims and their attributes. Films such as *The Kingdom* (2007), *Body of Lies* (2008), *The Siege* (1998), *Traitor* (2008), and *Four Lions* (2010) explicitly depict Arabs, or Muslims, with Islamic attributes as terrorists and enemies that must be eradicated. Furthermore, satirical comedies like *The Dictator* (2012) portray Arab leader (connoting Islam) as anti-Israel, destructive, cruel, and authoritarian. In line with this notion, Ramji (2016) emphasized that Western film media consistently portrays Muslim characters as extremists or potential terrorists.

This trend extends to social media, where much creative content is created. A YouTube channel called Jalals, which became a trend in 2016, actively created prank content that discredited Islamic attributes. In the content, an actor wearing a robe and turban, carrying a black bag, approaches someone and throws the bag while saying "Allahu akbar". This

implied that the black bag contained a bomb. This naturally caused their targets to panic and run away from the bag.

Ironically, this received a positive response from the public, with some finding it entertaining and providing another content idea for content creators across social media platforms. The sophistication of the digital age even includes animated GIF video features, such as animated stickers. Several GIF videos depicting people in Islamic attire holding bombs, as well as several clips from Jalals, can be found there.

Thus, it is clear that the framing employed not only impacts Islamic groups but also permeates the characteristics of Islam itself. Increasingly sophisticated technology has not only become a medium to brainwash the general public regarding the reality of Islam as a peaceful religion, but has also become a powerful tool for the West to frame this to advance its agenda. This has had a severe impact on the identity of Muslims worldwide. According to Ameline et al. (2019), this consistent framing, creates a negative representation of Muslims and legitimizes discrimination against them. Snaman (2016) even found that Americans support stricter restrictions on their Muslim population due to the normalization of the concept that "Islam is terrorism". This concept has become known as Islamophobia, or hatred of Islam, including its adherents.

Consequently, this impacts the psyche of Muslims, who are afraid to reveal their true identities in public due to the negative perceptions they have developed. According to a study by Uddin et al. (2022), being visible as a Muslim can invite discrimination, which then impacts one's confidence in declaring themselves part of the religion. Therefore, according to Tuzer (2024), Muslims in the United States prefer to conceal their identities in everyday social interactions to avoid such discrimination.

4. Conclusion

Based on the study's findings, it can be concluded that the Western media's framing methods, whether in the form of news, entertainment, or even social media, have successfully created negative perceptions of Islam, giving rise to the phenomenon of Islamophobia. The framing of Al Qaeda's actions as part of an Islamic group has negatively impacted the reputation of other Islamic groups that truly practice the principle of "jihad fi-sabilillah" and has also affected the reputation of Islam itself, tarnishing it.

An analysis of Western media framing patterns of Islamic groups using Entman's method and understanding through Framing Theory has proven to be able to thoroughly examine how framing works and the hidden intentions behind it. Through dissecting news from Fox News, the New York Post, The Telegraph, The Guardian, as well as statistical reports from CNN, BBC, and The Guardian, it was discovered how the meaning of "jihad" shifted to "terror," which then became a generalization for all jihadist efforts by Islamic groups. This finding is also causally related to Muslim identity, where public perception negatively impacts Islam, not only in terms of its substance but also its adherents and attributes. This, in turn, affects the psyche of Muslim adherents, making them reluctant to display their religious identity in public to avoid negative perceptions of themselves.

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