

Abstract

The purposes of this research, *Islam—Media—Violence: A Journey through Media's Construction of Islam's Violent Image*, are mainly to study the origin of Islam's violent image; to give clear and tangible picture of how such image travels through time; and to distinguish "Islam" from Muslims. Main research questions include: when and how Islam's violent image is constructed; what are the Muslims' roles in generating the distorted images; and how media narratives have disseminated such image? The present image of "Islam" results from the ways the media produced news about Muslims and violence in the world.

In the global context, most media are culturally bound to legitimize the views on Islam as an ideology that threatens "Western" culture and view Muslims as barbaric people who mostly use violence as their responses to political problems. These views result from a long tradition of studying Islam which parallels to a history of conflict and cooperation between Christians and Muslims.

In the event of 9/11, mass media in Thai society has reported such event using a frame that places Islam and the Muslims in "the Enemy" position. Besides the reason that almost all international news are translated from foreign sources, and that the media exists in a world characterized by vested interests and political power, journalists are also living in the cultural world where knowledge about Islam has been constructed by scholars in the past whose knowledge and understandings about Islam have been either weak or incomplete. They tend to rely uncritically on knowledge about "Islam" and the Muslims produced from within "the Western" contexts. This behavior, through the media, has been conducive to producing Islamophobia in Thai society. News on "Islam" and the Muslims thus appear in language that associates Islam with violence, similar to their counterpart in "the West" which finally leads to the attack on Muslims.