FROM COLONIZATION TO COMMUNICATION: MEDIA, NATIONALISM, AND MUSLIM STATES IN TRANSITION

Shafizan Mohamed[1]

[1]Department of Communication, AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia. (E-mail: shafizan@iium.edu.my)

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Abstract*: This article explores the interplay between post-colonial nationalist media and the socio-political landscapes of Muslim states in the regions of the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia. In the aftermath of colonial rule, these regions witnessed the emergence of diverse media platforms that played pivotal roles in shaping national and religious identities, narratives, and aspirations. Drawing from post-colonial studies and media theory, this study examines the evolution, challenges, and impact of these media outlets.The article navigates a terrain marked by the echoes of colonialism, Islamic identities and nationhood through case studies that illuminate the nuances and commonalities that characterize the post-colonial nationalist media landscape in these Muslim states. The study underscores the significance of media as both agents and reflections of evolving post-colonial narratives, demonstrating their far-reaching consequences on socio-political dynamics in these regions. As these regions continue to grapple with the legacy of colonialism and navigate contemporary challenges, understanding the role of post-colonial nationalist media becomes increasingly essential. This study contributes to the broader discourse on media studies, post-colonialism, and nationalism, offering valuable insights into the multifaceted relationship between media and identity in Muslim societies.*
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Keywords*: Nationalist Media, Muslim States, Postcolonialism, Middle East And North Africa, South Asia*

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Introduction

In pre-colonial times, Muslim thinkers and philosophers instigated Muslim societies with ideas of reformation and Islamic modernism, which they had seen as ways to face not only Western colonialization, but also the Muslim identity crisis, in which Muslims struggled to find their place in a changing and often modernising world. The media played a vital role in this philosophical shift by spreading reformist and Islamic modernist ideas throughout the disintegrated Muslim world.

During the onslaught of colonization, Muslims maintained their resistance, albeit in a far more radical and confrontational fashion. If reform ideas in pre-colonial times were mostly inward-looking, ideas during colonialism were often translated in direct opposition to the colonials, with calls for confrontation and fight for independence. Another distinguishing feature of

colonial Muslim societies is the enhanced supremacy of nationalism and the contradictions it brings to Islamic identities.

Following this, the late 20th and early 21st centuries bore witness to another transformative phenomenon—the emergence of post-colonial nationalist media. This intricate interplay of media, Islam, nationalism, and the legacy of colonialism unfurled with complexity and significance in the Muslim states of the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia. As a result, Muslim societies at the time were in a situation of conflict, needing to find a balance between their Islamic legacy, the wish for independence, and the comfort of modern concepts brought by Western conquerors.

By examining the historical trajectory of media within Muslim states and analyzing its transformation from a colonial instrument to a catalyst for nationalist discourse and societal transitions, this article seeks to elucidate the multifaceted relationship between media, nationalism, and societal change, offering insights into the complex dynamics identities and communication landscapes in Muslim societies.

Literature Review

This literature review aims to chart the dynamic landscape of scholarly discourse surrounding the role of media in colonial Muslim societies. From its inception as a tool of colonization to its pivotal role in fostering nationalistic sentiments and catalyzing societal transitions, the examination of media in Muslim states unveils a complex dynamic of influences, ideologies, and transformations.

Nationalism

A nation-state is described as a space reserved for its homogenized people for a unified economy, culture, and polity. Whereas a nation state is a physical territory, nationalism is defined as a sense of belonging to the state and a desire to protect it. Benedict Anderson's (1983) concept of nationhood was likely the most famous and easy to understand. Anderson portrays a nation as a socially constructed community envisioned by those who identify with that group. Anderson proposed that people can commit to being a part of a specific nation because, although they will never know, meet, or even listen to most of their fellow-members, they can imagine that communion. Community members will almost certainly never meet each other one on one; nevertheless, they may share common interests or be recognized as belonging to the same country. Members have an image of their affinity in their heads. For instance, the sense of nationhood shared with other members of your country when your "imagined community" takes part in a bigger event like the Olympic Games.

Anderson went on to say that the emergence of information technologies enabled people to gain knowledge about others while also incorporating new knowledge and ideas, making the formation of an imagined community possible. Anderson described that the emergence of vernacular publications facilitated the notion of communality among groups of people who share comparable language and culture through what he labelled "print capitalism." The availability of printing machines, for instance, enabled the publication of local papers and books that disseminated ideas and information about liberty and nationhood. Furthermore, modern socioeconomic developments like the generalization of new technology used to measure time and space, the appearance of printed media, the application of state-sponsored school systems, and rising literacy levels have all contributed to a contemporary sense of nationhood. Even though nationalism is a modern phenomenon, nationalists re-discover a nation's pre-modern

history and "traditional" signifiers, which are mobilized through the media to create a false narrative of the nation as existing from time immemorial, as both persistent and long lasting (Smith, 1986).

As a result, media, and communication's role in the creation of national identities and nation states has long been recognised. In differentiating between "people," "nationality," and "nation" in his classic postwar work, Nationalism and Social Communication, Karl W. Deutsch (1996) concentrated on the spread of ideas in the creation of a "people," which he identified as "a bigger group of individuals connected by... complementary habits and of communication." Famous ideologies could be both standardized, homogenized, and changed" through the press, cinema, and radio. While this increased the efficacy of mass propaganda, it also reduced its effectiveness "was nearly certainly less important than the mass media's ability to make what were essentially national symbols an aspect of everyone's life, thereby breaking down the barriers between the private local realms where most citizens normally reside and the public and national.

The media is at the heart of nationalist movements, and when the media is playing its critical role of spreading nationalist sentiments, whether that be through publications, broadcast, or perhaps even new media technologies, it is referred to as nationalist media (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983). Nationalist media spread and encourage nationalist agendas by emphasising the people's histories, cultural and social bonds, and accomplishments within the supposed nation. Nationalist media will manipulate people's emotions by remembering them of their histories and convincing them to accept a common national identity. The media's coverage is constrained to a specific geographical and cultural territory. This implies that the nationalist media concentrated on issues and stories affecting only a small group of people who live together and share a common cultural heritage.

Nationalism and Islam

Political Islam has always been founded on the concept of the Muslim ummah. This was the motivation behind the emergence of Muslim empires and civilizations. In the late 1900s, it was also promoted by modernist and reformist movements in their efforts to protect Muslim empires. The notion that Muslims are one and must be governed as one ummah by a caliphate was later interpreted as pan-Islamic sentiments, with reformist Muslim activists advocating for Muslim cooperation under an Islamic government. Nevertheless, the colonial onslaught, which relied on a divide and govern strategy, undermined the possibility of a pan-Islamic polity, primarily because Muslims were considerably divided by their various colonial experiences (Arjomand, 1984). Most nationalist movements that were powerful in the Muslim world towards the end of Western colonialism were scarcely Islamic, but instead more secular in the way that they were more motivated by the wish to construct independent nation states instead of by the desire to achieve a broader pan-Islamic governance that would place most, if not all, of the Muslim world underneath one polity (Tibi, 1997). As a result, there has been claims indicating that the mere notion of nations and acts of nationalism is fundamentally un-Islamic. Such arguments were made based on a strict interpretation of Islam's role in the quest for independence by Muslim societies. By merely claiming that the notion of nation states is un-Islamic, Islam and Muslims' dependence on their belief in their quest for liberation are robbed. Because of the essence of colonial power, Muslims had to make do with what they had, and the concept of states proved to be the most feasible. The role of Islam in many nationalist movements must be recognized in the same way that Islam was regarded as a part of the fight. While the concept of a unified Muslim ummah under a unified government was no longer central, Muslim societies under various colonial powers had always positioned Islam and the

need to defend and preserve their faith as part of their freedom. Thus, this should be recognised as a form of Islamic nationalism. The right to become a Muslim and practise the Islamic faith without interference from colonial powers has been a demand of Muslim societies in their quest to establish independent nation states.

When seen along this line, nationalist movements in most of the Muslim world were not secular and clearly had a solid Islamic bent. The Islamic bias at the time may not have been in aspects of the movement toward realizing the pan-Islamic agenda, but instead in the manner Islam stays part of the Muslim identity, whereby, despite the various circumstances that drove or contained a specific nationalist movement, Muslim societies were steadfast to have Islam as part of the aspired independent nation state.

Furthermore, most of the nationalist movements that arose from the Muslim world during the decolonization era were inspired by the prior modernist Islamic ideologies of Al-Afghani, Abduh, and Syed Ahmad, which proposed reconciling traditional interpretations of Islam with changing times. While modernist Islam was concerned with the revitalization of a united Muslim Ummah, nationalist Islam whittled down the concept of modernist Islam to further their nationalist agenda. While the goals of nationalists and Islamic modernists varies, they both share the common goal of situating Islam within the context and demands of the time.

The role of Islam and *Syariah* laws in the state's institutions and constitution demonstrate the degree of Islam adopted in a particular Muslim state. Some Muslim countries, such as Turkey and Bangladesh, became secular, while others, such as Saudi Arabia and some gulf states, strictly adhered to Syariah, while many Muslim countries, such as Malaysia, Pakistan, and Egypt, practiced a modern blend of Islamic and Western laws. Resistance to western colonialism, and complicated cultural, societal, and experiential interactions among Muslims in that specific nation, and their relations with the Islamic sentiments that were widespread at the time, were all part of the process of reaching the destination at these distinctively founded systems.

This vibrant interaction of the complex systems of religion, culture, geography, colonialism, and being Muslim can be viewed in the differing ways Muslim societies used media in their struggle for independence. While the aim of the nationalist media is to spread the nationalist agenda, the ways in which it has uniquely delineated and represented ideas of nationhood have impacted the formation of varied Muslim nations that are linked by their Muslim legacy and identity but divided by territorial, socio-political, economic, and cultural systems. The variety of nationalist media in pre-independent Muslim states can also be viewed in how they position Islam in nationalist narratives.

Case studies
Nationalist movements during the decolonization of the Middle East, North Africa, and the Indian Subcontinent demonstrate how Muslim societies utilized the media to approach Islam, nationalism, and independence in different ways.

Arab Nationalist media in Middle East and North Africa
The role of nationalist media in the Arab world's decolonization process is the consequence of a complex interplay between colonial experience, decolonization period, and the geo-cultural and religious tendencies of distinct Arab societies. While the Arab world is geographically located in the Middle East and North Africa, the Arab peoples share histories, beliefs, and

cultures that sometimes transcend continent boundaries. As a result, the Arab world can also be grouped according to geo-cultural classifications based on physical regions and shared cultures. In this context, the Arab world can be separated according to the traditional Arabic categories of *Masyriq* and *Maghrib*.

The Mashriq

The term Mashriq refers to the Arab world's eastern side region, which includes Western Asia and eastern North Africa. Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen are among the Arab countries represented. The majority of Masyriq's regions were under Ottoman control before falling into British hands. As a result, even during their time under Turkish Ottoman reign, they experienced some type of Arab nationalism. At the time, it was the cultural clash between Arabs and Ottoman Turks that was the source of contention, not Islam. Thus, Arab nationalism in the Mashriq was based on a cultural mix of Arab identity, which was initially created to contrast the Ottomans' Turkish identity. As a result, some scholars argue that Arab nationalist movements in the Masyriq were more concerned with Arab identity, of which Islam is a subset. Following the first world war, the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire created new political rules in the Masyriq, creating a new demand for the press. The Muslim centre of power was no longer in Istanbul, but in Cairo, Baghdad, Damascus, Beirut, Amman, Mecca, and San'a. Governments in these countries started to rule in new ways, having shared authority with foreign forces—Britain in Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, and Jordan, France in Syria and Lebanon. These foreign powers had the final word in most significant matters under the new and fluctuating terms of reference, and their connections with local governments thus included rivalry as well as cooperation. Swift technological developments were also a main factor in the development of the media during this period, most notably the emergence of radio, which became a crucial complementary type of media in some locations from the 1930s onwards.

Egypt's geographical position is one of the most contentious geographical distinctions between the contemporary Arab world and the traditional Arab world. Egypt is a state in Africa according to modern geography. Egypt's colonial history and culture, on the other hand, bare more similarity to Arab societies in the Middle East. As such, it is not surprising that it was initially classified as a Masyriq. Egypt is important in the Mashriq nationalist movements because it experienced contemporary nationalism before the other Arab states and was the first to gain independence. As a result, Egypt created a precedent for Masyriq nationalist movements (Yoyo, Putra, Manshur & Setiawati, 2012).

The press activity in Egypt and elsewhere were defined by Arab journalism. The political essay, or the *maqal*, remained superior to *khabar*, or news reporting. As a result, the press became the primary battleground, and journalists enlisted as soldiers in what they saw as a national conflict. Many of the new papers that emerged between 1900 and 1914, the great majority in Cairo, bore names like *al-Jihad* (Holy War), *al-Hurriyya* (Liberty), *al-Nahda* (Renaissance), *al-Istiqlal* (Independence), *al- Indhar* (Warning), and *al-Ahrar* (The Freemen).

These papers were created solely to draw readers' attention to the needs of the struggle. Newspapers used to put an editorial as well as other political essays on the front page, while news was relegated to the back. The encounter with Europe, and the plethora of cultural questions it raised, exacerbated by the absence of the caliphate, urged writers to delve even more deeply into problems of identity and orientation (Ayalon, 1995).

The cultural, political, and media centre relocated to Cairo in the late 1930s, where it thrived under British rule. The weekly *Ruz al Yusuf*, which started in the 1920s, was joined by other daily newspapers that took diverse approaches to local politics, such as *Al-Wafd* and, later, *Al-Aharam*, which became the Egyptian press's flagship. In the late 1940s, the Egyptian press became anti-British, which was followed by presses in the neighbouring Masyriq states, leading to increased nationalism and demands for independence. By the early 1950s, the colonial powers began to withdraw from their Middle Eastern strongholds, as the new nation states began to handle their own affairs, some as conservative monarchies like Saudi Arabia and Jordan or, as secular revolutionary republics operate by military juntas such as Egypt and Syria (Ayalon, 1995).

These changes were prevalent throughout the area, but not everywhere. The Arabian Peninsula, where the war also ended Ottoman rule, was not under European rule. Yemen, the Hashemite kingdom in the Hejaz, and the Saudi kingdom all arose as independent states. These were nations with little or no journalistic tradition and a cultural, educational, and technological environment that is much less conducive to the growth of the press than in other Arab countries. The newspapers that emerged in these states between the wars were embryonic experiments in comparison to the Egyptian or Lebanese press at the time, or even the Syrian press, but they were an important first step toward establishing a tradition for a nationalist press.

The region's division into separate states with defined boundaries and individual governments did not result in a press that was solely restricted to separate national lands. On the other hand, the region's long-standing tradition as a single communication hub has been preserved and even expanded, thanks to improved transportation. Newspapers from one country were routinely read by readers from other countries, and they were frequently written with an international readership in mind. Newspapers from Egypt, which had a richer press tradition and the biggest concentration of talent in the area, were in high demand among the educated Arab population who read the major Egyptian dailies and literary magazines widely.

In Iraq, some Lebanese and Syrian newspapers were read on a regular basis. Major political issues like the battle against foreign dominance and opposition to Zionism elicited similar emotions in many parts of the region, resulting in a spirited intraregional press debate. Thus, nationalist media in the Masyriq was transnational, spreading nationalist ideals throughout state lines (Ayalon, 1995).

Radio was able to further unite the region's countries in terms of communication, as it could cross borders more easily than written texts. Colonel Gamal Abdul Nasser, Egypt's charismatic leader, was so conscious of the media's propagandistic potential that he organised an Arab nationalist media campaign throughout the Masyriq in the 1950s to promote his idea of a Pan-Islamic polity. He made vast use of radio and the entertainment industry to entice Arabs to support his cause. Despite the media campaign, local Arab rulers saw Nasser's version of Arab Nationalism as a danger to their own autonomy and started censoring Egyptian content. This demonstrated that, while nationalist media in the Masyriq originally shared common objectives and aspirations, they were primarily motivated by territorial demands. When faced with a common adversary such as the colonials, there was cooperation, but when lands were threatened, even by fellow Arab states, the media would go on the defensive. Therefore, during the Arab world's decolonization age, the nationalist media in Masyriq were far more inspired by the holiness of nation states than by shared cooperation among states (Tibi, 1997).

The Maghrib

The Maghrib, also identified as Northwest Africa or the Arab Maghrib, is the western part of North Africa and the Arab World. The traditional definition of the Maghrib, which included only the Atlas Mountains and the coastal plains of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania, and Libya, was enlarged in recent time to include Mauritania and the disputed areas of Western Sahara. Europeans referred to the Maghrib's occupants — the Muslim Berbers, or Maghribi — as "Moors." When Arab identity and sense of belonging were defined according to territorial lines drawn up during Western colonization of the Middle East and North Africa, the differences between the Masyriq and the Maghrib became more apparent (Burke, 1998).

The relationship between religion and nationalism in the Mashriq differs from that in the Maghrib. In the Masyriq, nationalism was more restricted to the Arab cultural superiority that had been cultivated much prior when the country was under Ottoman reign. On the other hand, the French invasion, which began in 1830, was a major driver of nationalism in the Maghrib. As a result, getting rid of Ottoman political influences was not a problem for Maghribian countries to attain their own national consciousness. In the face of Catholic missionaries and French republican political ideals, Islam stayed the central source of inspiration for Maghribian nationalism. Unlike Mashriq countries, the Maghrib owed its decolonization to Islam rather than Arab nationalism (Tibi, 1997).

The 1930s saw the emergence of the Muslim and nationalist press in the Maghrib, which began to advocate for more reforms, democratic rights, and independence. However, the French invasion met these demands with vehement opposition, repression, and harsh measures such as the boycott of journalists and the closure of newspapers. As a result, journalists had to work clandestinely until the 1950s, when the liberation movement began to battle for independence and the restoration of national sovereignty. In response, the nationalist press arose as an option to defy and challenge colonialism's repressive rule. In Morocco, for example, Islamic nationalist Mohammed Hassan al Wazzani wrote in the socialist journal *L'Action du Peuple* (People's Action) on the need for Moroccan Muslims to fight for their independence. To circumvent France's tight control over Islamic sentiments, he had to conceal his Islamic calls by collaborating with the socialist press. In 1944, two newspapers, *Al Alam* (The World) and *L'Opinion* (Opinion), began publishing anti-colonial articles promoting the right to independence. Radio was also utilised by Islamists, like religious scholar Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din bin Abdil-Qadir Al-Hilali, who became a radio announcer in Radio Berlin while in banishment in Germany. Being abroad provided Hilali with the opportunity to speak openly about the importance of Islamic nationalism in facing Western imperialism, particularly French imperialism in Morocco. While his radio programme had a small listenership due to the exclusivity of radio ownership at the time, his words journeyed from the tiny listeners to the bigger Maghrib nations (Spadola, 2018).

Al Raid Al Tunisia was one of the few Arabic-language newspapers in Tunisia that directed to communicate with local populace and inform them about the difficulties of the French existence, even while it was still a protectorate. The French invasion of Morocco ended in 1956, followed by Tunisia two years later. The two events had a positive effect on the Algerian revolution's continuation (Mabrouki, 2020), Algeria has the longest colonial ties to France. Since the French arrived in 1830, there has been opposition against French colonials. The ideas of reformists like Al-Afghani and Abduh reached Algerian Muslims, who engaged in a long battle against the French colonialists as well. After publishing the Declaration of 1 November 1954, written by journalist Mohamed Aïchaoui, the Algerian National Liberation Front (ANLF)

declared war on the French colonials. The ideology of the ANLF) was mainly Algerian nationalist, fully grasped as a movement within a broader Arab nationalism as well as pan-Arab solidarity. It derived its political self-legitimization primarily from Arab nationalism and Islamism, which served as the primary base for national consciousness and were critical in strengthening Algerian identity as distinct from that of the French colonists, who were mostly European Christians (Watanabe, 2020).

The ANLF's organ was the newspaper *L'Algerie libre* (Free Algeria), whose acronym stands for "By the people and for the people," *La République Algérienne* (The Algerian Republic) was the mouthpiece of the Democratic Union for Algerian Truth, and *Al Bacair* was published by the Algerian Muslim Ulama Association. In the mid-1950s, prolific and respected Algerian journalists such as Redha Malek, Mustapha Lachref, and Mohamed El Mili conceived and published the very first editions of *Al Moudjahid* in both Arabic and French. Through their work, those journalists started to feel morally, personally, and ethically connected to the revolution (Watanabe, 2020).

The ANLF decided to run its own radio station La *Voix de l'Algérie Libre et Combattante* (Voice of Algerian Freedom and Liberation) in 1956. "Here is the radio station of free and fighting Algeria, the voice of the Liberation Front addresses you from the heart of Algeria," the station's first message said. A message that would be listened to every day for the next few years by listeners of this radio station, which broadcast on shortwave for two hours a day. Their data was essentially propaganda for the National Liberation Front. They discussed what was going on at the time, but with a clear ideological bias that could be seen, for instance, in the distribution of patriotic songs or religious sermons (Asseraf, 2019).

The Algerian war took place at a time when most of the world's decolonization processes were nearing completion. Simultaneously, media technologies were spreading around the world, making international news travel easier. As a result, the plight of Algerians seeking independence was widely publicized in the international media, and most of the world rallied behind them. Egyption radio was said to have covered the Algerian war widely in support of their Arab and Muslim brethren's liberation. Even anti-colonialist socialist media in France rallied to the Algerians' cause. Due to local and international stresses, the French government held a referendum in 1962, which was accepted by more than 90 percent of votes supporting independence. On July 5, 1962, Algeria obtained independence from France after 132 years of rule (Scales, 2010).

Muslim societies in the Maghrib faced strict colonial rule under the French. Because of the discrimination they faced as Muslims, nationalist sentiment in the Maghrib was more Islamic than in Masyriq. Muslims in the Maghrib had to battle for their Islamic identity, whereas Muslims in the Mayriq saw Islam as inherent in their Arab identity. This is not to say that nationalist movements in the Maghrib and Masyriq are diametrically opposed. They both serve the same purpose: to spread nationalistic ideals. The journalistic styles of Masyriqian nationalists, who had been involved in revolutions and decolonization before their Maghribian counterparts, had a powerful influence on the Maghribian nationalist media. One benefit the Maghribian nationalist media had was the progression of broadcast, which allowed it to garner global support, which was not available to the earlier Masyriqian nationalist movement.

Nationalist Media in South Asia

The two-nation theory is a religious nationalism ideology that had a significant impact on the South Asian Muslims leading to their independence from the British Crown. According to this theory, Muslims and Hindus are two different peoples with their own customs, religion, and traditions; thus, from a social and moral standpoint, Muslims should be able to have their own independent homeland outside of Hindu-majority India, where Islam is the main religion. The All India Muslim League's (AIML) two-nation theory was the guiding principle of the Pakistan Movement following the partition of India in 1947. Muhammad Ali Jinnah initiated the ideology that religion is the determining major consideration in delineating the nationality of Indian Muslims, which he referred to as the awakening of Muslims for the establishment of Pakistan (Malik, 2012).

While the two-nation theory and the ideal separation of Hindus and Muslims can be dated back to pre-colonial periods, particularly during the downturn of the Mughals and Islamic political power in India, numerous modernists favour to attribute the idea to modernist scholar Syed Ahmad Khan (1817–1898), who pioneered a modernist interpretation of Islam and encouraged ideas of Islamic nationalism in India. Syed Ahmad Khan was friendly with British colonials during his lifetime because he believed in a conciliatory relationship in which Muslims would be shielded as minorities in the colony. However, as nationalist movements in the British Crown became more strenuous, religious differences between Muslims and Hindus became more apparent.

Hence, Muslim societies in India encountered a unique nationalism wherein they fought not only for freedom from the British, but also for independence from India and the establishment of their own Muslim state. As a result, the English Indian Empire was partitioned, and its Muslim-majority areas were granted independent statehood in 1947, with the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Pakistan

Colonial India's media was up to date and plentiful. Nationalist media was particularly popular, and it was frequently supervised by the British to safeguard colonial power. Even after the establishment of the All-India Muslim League (AIML) in 1906, Muslim point of view was less well served, even though Muslims had their own newspapers. The majority of the relevant newspapers were owned by Hindus, with a few run by British. It was extremely difficult for Muslims to communicate their political beliefs to the people of India. The Hindu press and news agencies were completely opposed to even brief coverage of Muslim-related news, especially the Muslim League and anything related to the Muslim's demands for independence.

From the start, the Muslim press, especially in Urdu, was overwhelmingly supportive of the Muslim League. *Anjaam, Jang,* and *Manshoor* were among the Urdu names available in Delhi. Inqilab, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, and Zamindar were all produced in Lahore (Sabir, 2011).

However, it was not until the publication of "Dawn" that the League had a means of straightforwardly expressing the party's views, elevating the image of its officials, most notably it's 'Great Leader,' Mohammad Ali Jinnah (1876-1948), and mobilizing Muslims for political action. "Dawn" was founded in New Delhi as a weekly publication. Under Jinnah's direction, it became the official organ of the AIML in Delhi, as well as the Muslims League's sole English-language voice, reflecting and advocating for Pakistan's formation. Dawn was able to mobilize Indian Muslims to encourage the Muslim nationalist movement by establishing an independent

Muslim state in an era before television and limited radio transmission. The newspaper became such a sign of identification with the League that holding it became a statement in and of itself, and it was used, particularly by students and youngsters, to announce to others that they encouraged the demand for Pakistan. Its news pages, editorials, and invited articles were used to publicize, advocate for, and protect the demand for Pakistan against British, Indian National Congress, and other religious demands (Long, 2009).

AIML's nationalist campaign was well-planned, as it was backed by Aligarh Muslim University's intellectuals and students. Sir Syed Ahmad founded the university to promote modernist Islamist views of the world by pioneering English education among British Indian Muslims, which resulted in the formation of a new politically aware middle class and a new generation of leaders in science, politics, and the arts.

Aligarh Muslim University, as well as its faculty and students, were pivotal figures in the Pakistan Movement by providing them with intellectual credentials. As a result, Aligarh could offer intellectual assistance to the League in its claim for a separate nation for South Asian Muslims. Aligarh provided the League with enthusiastic campaign employees at the time of the expected general elections following the war's conclusion. Aligarh gave the League a cadre of skilled propagandists as the AIML's intelligentsia. A Committee of AIML Writers was formed to propagate the League's ideas, defend the demand for Pakistan, and create the League's Islamic credentials. Dawn supported the Committee's publications and fully publicised the Committee's activities. The Committee developed a "complete plan of literature" to be released under a wide range of headings by the Committee. They were titled: 'Fundamentals of Islam,' 'Expansion of Islam,' 'Muslim Personages,' 'Survey of Muslim Contributions to India,' 'Why and wherefore of Pakistan?', 'Survey of Eastern and Western Pakistan,' 'Muslims and Hindustan,' 'Muslims and Post-War Reconstruction Problems,' and 'Current Affairs.' The first focus would be on contemporary issues under the headings 'Islamic Polity,' 'Islamic Economy,' and 'Islamic Society.' It was also decided that all League branches would be co-opted to recruit writers and promote the Committee's publications (Hasan & Qadri,1985).

AIML's cautious and calculated propaganda proved to be effective when Indian Muslims voted for the establishment of Pakistan in the 1946 election. As a result, in March 1947, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan declared independence. The Muslim nationalist movement in Pakistan is an exemplar of a nationalist movement that was fundamentally based on the establishment of a nation based on common belief in the Islamic faith. Unlike the Arab experiences, where ideals of Arabism and Pan-Islamism were fiercely contested, Pakistan was successful in establishing a Muslim state.

Nationalist movements seeking an independent nation state involving Muslim societies in the Indian subcontinent did not end with the creation of Pakistan. The Muslims were again embroiled in radical revolution a few decades later with the liberation of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh
India's partition in 1947 resulted in the formation of two nations: Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan. East Pakistan, today Bangladesh, is 1,500 miles away and encircled on three sides by India, but it was incorporated into Pakistan due to its Muslim-majority population. However, when the West Pakistani ruling elite ignored Bengal/East Pakistan politically and economically, dissatisfaction started to brew. Bengalis, who constitute majority of the inhabitants, revolted after Urdu was declared the nation's lingua franca in 1948. Several

people were killed during the Language Movement in February 1952. Bangla was eventually designated as one of the state languages, together with Urdu, in 1956, but the fight for autonomy persisted and grew.

The Pakistan Awami Muslim League was formed as a Bengali option to the Muslim League's dominance in Pakistan and the government's over-centralization. It was established in 1949 in Dhaka, the capital of Pakistan's East Bengal province, by Bengali nationalists such as Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, Shawkat Ali, Yar Mohammad Khan, and Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, who later became Pakistan's Prime Minister. The party rapidly obtained huge popular support in East Bengal, later renamed East Pakistan, and eventually led the troops of Bengali nationalism against West Pakistan's military and political formation. The Awami Muslim League and its student wing were instrumental in the Bengali Language Movement in 1952, when Pakistani security forces shot on thousands of student protesters demanding that Bengali be declared an official language of Pakistan. Events of 1952 was a watershed moment in the history of Pakistan and the Bengali people, as they marked the beginning of the Bengali nationalist fight that culminated in the establishment of Bangladesh in 1971 (Haque, 1975).
The party, led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Bangladesh's founding father, led the fight for independence, first by huge populist and civil disobedience movements, and then through the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971. Pakistan's first national elections, held in 1970, saw the Awami League, led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, won the majority in the National Assembly, however the West Pakistani military–bureaucratic elite declined to hand over control to the East Pakistani leadership. Bangladesh declared independence from Pakistan in March 1971 as an act of defiance. The Pakistani regime fought back by launching military operations against Bangladesh. During the nine-month-long 'Bangladeshi Liberation War,' two groups of Muslims of similar Indian descent fought and killed each other (Islam & Islam, 2018).

During the Awami League's non-cooperation movement against the Pakistani military junta in March 1971, the newspapers of then-East Pakistan were rather vocal in support of Bangali liberation. As a result, the offices and printing presses of leading daily newspapers in Dhaka were destructed by mortar attacks. *'Dainik Ittefaq', 'Sangbad'*, and '*The People'* were among them. During the non-cooperation movement, the country's journalist community took a significant risk by prominently covering it in newspapers such as *Ittefaq, Purbodesh, Sangbad, Azad, Morning News* and *Pakistan Observer*. It was a clear display of patriotism and unwavering belief in Bangali nationalism (Islam, 1981).

As the Pakistani invasion army remained in place, most of the the country's newspapers and periodicals ceased publication. Many journalists fled to India and began publishing new periodicals. The periodicals which were then published from Mujibnagar, the seat of the government-in-exile, and numerous towns in India provided information on the war front and the resistance in inhabited Bangladesh. Most of these publications were issued without formal declarations, and that many lacked their own establishments. These periodicals would include *Joy Bangla, Banglar Bani* (Bangla Words), *Biplobi Bangladesh* (Revolutionary Bangladesh), *Sangrami Bangla* (Struggling Bangla), *Shashwata Bangla* (Eternal Bangla), *Obhijan* (Expedition), *Saptahik Bangla* (Weekly Bangla), *Durjoy Bangla* (Invincible Bangla), *Janmabhumi* (Homeland), *Jagrata Bangla* (Awake Bangla), *Ekota* (One), *Swadhin Bangladesh* (Independent Bangladesh) and others. Periodicals published by numerous political parties also include *Muktijuddha* (Liberation War), by the Bangladesh Communist Party and *Notun Bangla* (New Bangla) by the National Awami Party. These nationalist presses emphasised the spirit of

the liberation war as well as people's aspirations and provided moral support and motivation to the citizenry as they faced war (Uddin, 2020).

The *Swadhin Bangla Betar* (Free Bengal Radio Centre) was the radio broadcasting centre for Bengali nationalist forces. This station was crucial in the liberation struggle by broadcasting the Declaration of Independence and conducting propaganda campaigns. They broadcast patriotic music as well as talk shows. The war-time broadcasting station played an important role in uniting the Bengali in their support of the local forces. It provided war news updates via *Chorom Potro* (Extreme Letter). It represented the Bangladesh government in banishment during a time when radio was the only media reaching the farthest reaches of Bangladesh. Furthermore, the Bangladeshi nationalist movement took place at a time when the media was becoming more modern and accessible. As a result, the liberation war was widely covered in the international media, particularly in the Western media. As a result, the Bangladeshi movement gained worldwide support and sympathy. As a result, the international community put pressure on Pakistan to halt its attacks and comply with Bengali demands. The 9-month-long bloodbath that ravaged Bangladesh and its citizens while also tainting Pakistan's image as a Muslim state ended in December 1971, when Pakistan finally agreed to end the attacks and recognize the independence of Bangladesh (Hossain & Onyebadi, 2019)

The war undoubtedly left a schism in Indian subcontinent Muslim societies. If the majority of Indian Muslims rallied around a nationalist agenda for a unified Muslim state during the nationalist struggle for Pakistan, power struggles during the formation of Bangladesh had seen Muslim societies diverge into distinct ideals. When Bengalis joined Muslims from other parts of the subcontinent to create Pakistan in the 1940s, Islamic sentiments fuelled the meaning of nationhood. They imagined a society based on Islamic principles, first identifying themselves as Muslims. Nevertheless, by the early 1970s, the Bengalis had become more influenced by regional sentiments, defining themselves first and foremost as Bengalis before Muslims (Rashiduzzaman, 1994). While Islam remained a part of faith and culture, it was no longer used to shape national identity. Bangladesh was especially determined to create a state distinguishable from Pakistan, one founded on western principles such as secularism and democracy.

Conclusion
This exploration into the realm of post-colonial nationalist media in Muslim-majority states across the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia unravelled the intricacies of media's role in shaping national identities and shed light on its profound impact on Muslim identities within these diverse regions. Rooted in post-colonial theory, cultural studies, and media studies, the article revealed that post-colonial nationalist media have emerged as significant architects of Muslim identities. They have contributed to the construction and consolidation of identities that resonate with both religious and national elements. These media outlets have played a vital role in defining what it means to be a Muslim within the context of a nation-state. Within the purview of post-colonial nationalist media, Muslim identities have found diverse expressions. Whether reflecting the cultural pluralism of South Asia, the Arab-Islamic heritage of the Middle East, or the synthesis of indigenous and Islamic elements in North Africa, these media have celebrated the multifaceted nature of Muslim identity.

In fact, Muslim identities within post-colonial nationalist media have not remained static. Instead, they have been sites of contestation, negotiation, and adaptation. These media outlets have engaged with and responded to external influences, redefining Muslim identities in

response to evolving global and regional dynamics. They also played a pivotal role in mediating religious discourse. They have shaped the narratives surrounding Islamic practices, values, and beliefs, often in alignment with the objectives of the nation-state.

As these regions continue to navigate contemporary challenges, from geopolitical shifts to cultural transformations, understanding the role of media in shaping Muslim identities remains critical. The narratives and legacies explored in this study not only provide insights into the past but also offer valuable lessons for understanding the complexities of Muslim identities in the present and future.

Acknowledgement

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