



# Representations of Islam in the News: A Cross-Cultural Analysis (Communication, Globalization, and Cultural Identity)

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**Representations of Islam in the News: A Cross-Cultural Analysis (Communication, Globalization, and Cultural Identity)** From Lexington Books

The representation of Islam is unquestionably a critical test for comparing journalistic reporting across countries and cultures. The Islamic religion has weight in international reporting (defining what we termed “foreign Islam”), but it is also the religion of numerically important minority groups residing in Europe (“national Islam”). The first part of the book is “setting the scene.” Three chapters provide insights in dominant patterns of the representation of Islam as detected by various authors and studies involved with Islam representation in Europe. Part two, the core section of the book, contributes to the development of the field of comparative journalism studies by comparing several countries and six media systems in Western Europe: the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium (Flanders), the French-speaking part of Belgium (Wallonia), the Netherlands, France, Germany, and the U.K. Part three of this book presents two reception studies, one qualitative and the other quantitative. Equally important, as the bulk of attention goes to Western Europe, is the extension towards the representation of Muslims and Islam outside Western Europe. Part four of the book is devoted to the representation of Islam in some of the so-called BRICs-countries: Russia, China, and India.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

Given the continued politicization of religion and the exclusion of Muslims in many European countries and beyond, studying media representations of Islam is of great importance. This well-structured edited collection, based on an international project funded by the Research Foundation, Flanders, gathers a range of empirically grounded studies investigating the media portrayal of Muslims and Islam across a variety of cultural and political contexts and from different perspectives.... Although each chapter can be read as a stand-alone study, the book as a whole also advances a number of more general arguments about the factors that influence and help explain the patterns found in the news coverage. These include the difference between the coverage of internal or domestic Islam and external or foreign Islam, differences rooted in the political orientations of news outlets and specificities stemming from national contexts. Together, this valuable collection thus brings not only an important descriptive analysis of representations of Islam but also helps us understand why these representations are as they are. (*European Journal Of Communication*)

In these current times of increasing politicization of religion, the representation of Islam is a topic of great importance. Analyzing the media discourses in Europe, this volume offers a careful account of the patterns and contradictions in news coverage relating to Islam. In so doing, the authors adopt a cross-cultural approach. In a highly sophisticated way they convey an understanding of representing Islam as a transcultural phenomenon in Europe. (Andreas Hepp, University of Bremen)

This book successfully brings the research results of a comparative European study on media representations of Muslims and Islam into conversation with research on the same topic in the context of India, China, and Russia. In addition, it is a relevant reading for anyone interested in combining the methodologies of comparative content analysis and audience reception studies. (Karina Horsti, University of Jyväskylä)

Mertens and de Smaele have assembled a well-rounded and thought-provoking volume on representations of Islam in the news. Combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, it offers insights into a wide number of countries within and beyond Europe. Its contributions provide a deeper and truly comparative understanding of media portrayals of Islam that will serve as a model and a reference point for future research. (Erik Bleich, Middlebury College)

This is an extremely ambitious volume. It offers readers the opportunity to learn about the specific cultural contexts and cultural politics around Islam in multiple countries, revealing an overwhelming tendency to produce polarizing discourses about Islam that contribute to justifying Muslims' political exclusion from many European countries. (Evelyn Alsultany, University of Michigan)

#### About the Author

**Stefan Mertens** is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Leuven.

**Hedwig de Smaele** is coordinator of the master's program in journalism at the University of Leuven.

### Users Review

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**Aaron Jack:**

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