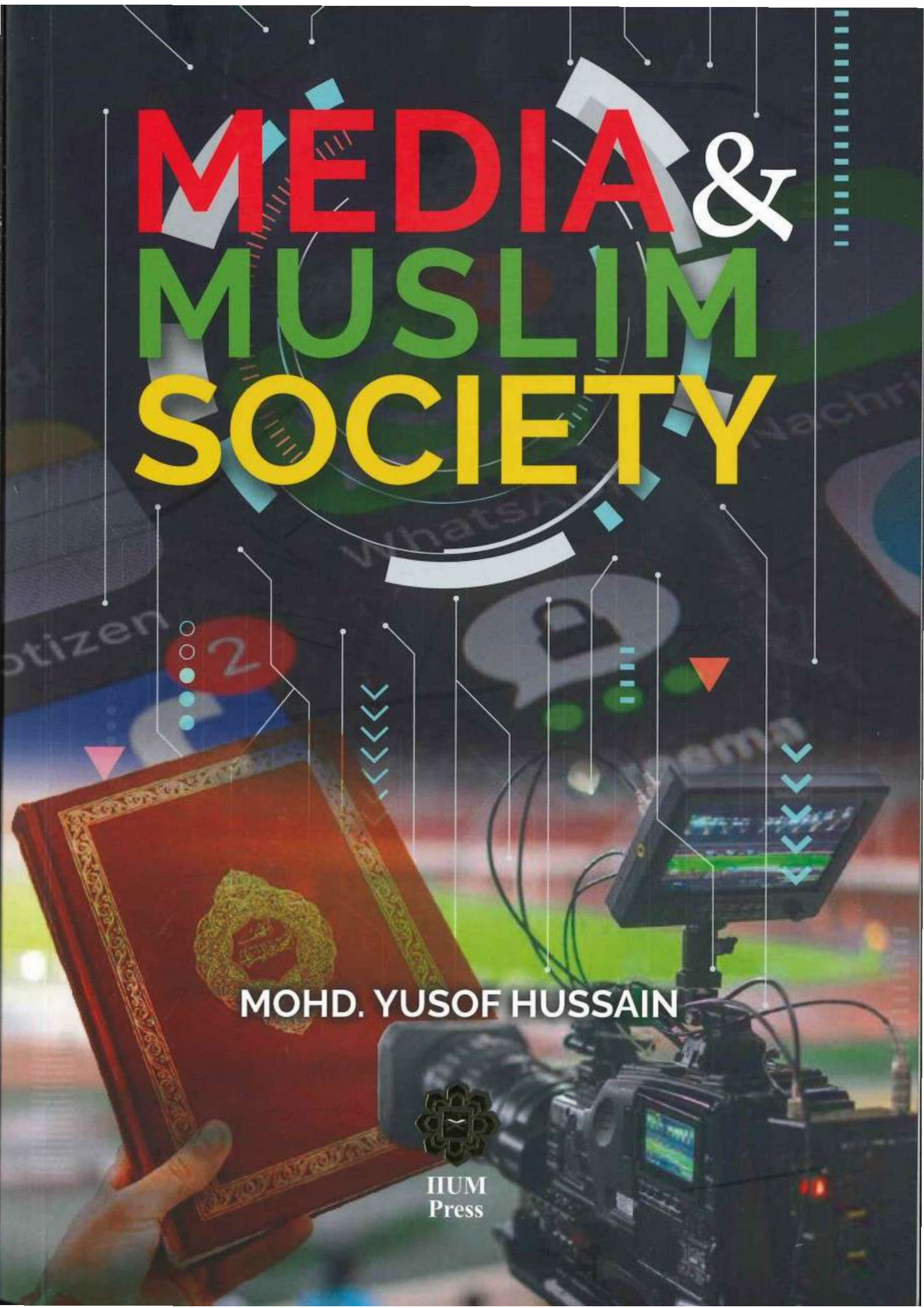
MEDIA & MUSLIM SOCIETY



MOHD. YUSOF HUSSAIN

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Chapter Twelve

Media Effects on Muslim Society

Saodah Wok

Introduction

Mass media have differential effects on the society, depending on the degree of exposure to the mass media by the viewers concerned. The effects vary from the change in knowledge, to the change of attitude, to the change of behaviour, depending on the coverage and the type of programmes that the viewers are exposed to. Besides that, the types of viewers are affected differently, according to gender, religion, and ethnicity of the viewers. This is further based on the level of exposure and to what extent they are involved in the whole process of learning, feeling, and acting in response to the programmes disseminated.

Among the mass media that have the most effect on the Muslim society is television (TV), followed by new communication technologies, radio and the newspaper. The effect is very much due to the fact the TV requires more senses in order to understand the message. Involvement of the TV viewers is more compared to the involvement of audience of other types of media.

Religion has some bearing as to the limit of being influenced blindly by the media. Social reality to a certain extent has made the Muslim society believe in what is acceptably right and acceptable to the Muslim society as a whole. Religion is the guiding principle and the degree to which believability is pronounced.

Many theories have been formulated to help explain the occurrence of the societal behaviour. These theories have different effects on different people.

Mass Media Roles

Mass media have many roles. Among the roles are:

1. To inform the Muslim viewers the development around the world especially the development in other Muslim countries.
2. To create awareness about the status of the Muslims around the world and the treatment that they are getting from others around them.
3. To educate and to improve the knowledge level of the Muslims around the world about Islam and its teaching through forums, talks, dialogues and the like.
4. To share the experiences of other Muslims around the world and to create the sense of belongingness to one *ummah* in their fight for survival, thus creating a caring Muslim society.
5. As a surveillance of the changes in the natural occurrence at different times of the seasons around the world and the disaster that are taking place, thus making the Muslims more prepared to face any disaster if it happens.
6. To entertain the Muslims after a hard day's work through programmes that are acceptable.

Types of Mass Media

The types of media that the Muslims are exposed to can be classified as the electronic media and the print media. The electronic media are made up of the established media like radio, television, film and movies, besides the computer-mediate communication technologies. The new communication technologies are equipped with a lot of accessories that are comparable to the established media because the Internet-accessed computer are connected to the electronic media. Currently, we can get news through e-newspaper, e-television, e-radio, besides the webpage of certain news agencies like *Bernama*, the news agency of Malaysia and *Antara*, the news agency of Indonesia.

The Print Media

The print media is the earliest to be discovered and explored. The print media encompass newspapers, magazines, journals, leaflets,

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MEDIA & MUSLIM SOCIETY

The book contains twelve essays on topics related to the subject "Media and Muslim Society." It is compiled as a textbook for students taking the course of the same title at the International Islamic Universiti Malaysia. Thus, the topics selected are those covered in the course. The topics include media at various stages in the development of a Muslim society, the role of communication in a Muslim society, media control, media effects on Muslim society and the roles of *ulamas* in influencing the media. A special topic on Muslim society is also included at the beginning of the book. The contributors of these essays are experts in their field. They have also helped developed and taught the course. In this first edition, most of the examples and discussions are based on two Muslim societies, i.e., Peninsular Malaysia and Indonesia. This is understandable because most of the writers in this first edition are from the Malay world. We hope to include examples from other Muslim societies in the next edition when we get contribution from writers from other parts of the Muslim world. Finally we welcome criticisms and suggestions to improve this book from our readers. We shall certainly consider these criticisms and suggestions in the next edition.

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