The Branding of

Arab Muslims in the U.S. after 9/11

Religion as a New Dimension of Differentiation

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Introduction

"'Islam and Freedom: Are They Destined to Clash?' (*Newsweek*). 'Muhammad Cartoon Row Intensifies' (BBC). 'Burka Makes Women Prisoners, Says President Sarkozy' (*Times* [London]). 'Universities Urged to Spy on Muslims' (*Guardian*). The headlines that scream out at us every day from front pages and television screens seem unanimous in the picture they paint of Muslims: unenlightened outsiders who, while they may live and work in the West, still have an allegiance to values different from those recognized in Europe and North America" (Yaqin and Morey 1). This quote from *Framing Muslims* by Amina Yaqin and Peter Morey summarizes the claims echoed in numerous scholarly works on the topic of how Muslim Americans are being perceived since the 9/11 attacks. It has been well documented that Muslims face challenges well-known to all ethnic groups and immigrants in their new country. However, their experience differs, as their religion and culture tend to take center stage in the public discussions on Muslim dissenting citizenship and dual loyalties.

This paper will explore how Arab Muslims are represented or branded by the U.S. media. The title of this thesis is a metaphor for the branding that is being established and promoted through media, and at the same time to the stigma that Arab Muslims receive through negative U.S. media framing. The ambiguity of the title refers thus to the art of brand management or establishment of a certain image of Arab Muslims, and to the prejudiced media framing which leaves a mark on this minority group. The wording is assigned to the African American slaves' bodily branding, which was used for identification or punishment centuries ago. It is important to acknowledge that even though media can change their brand strategy, the mark set on Arab Muslims will remain for a long time, once deeply rooted in society's consciousness.

It is essential to analyze what negative or positive attitudes are applied in crisis situations with regard to this minority group. This will yield a better understanding of public reactions to them in specific crisis situations, such as terrorist attacks. This might subsequently provide the media and government organs with information that they can use to prepare for future crisis situations. In addition, not only Muslims but also Arab Americans have been targeted by media and academia after 9/11. These terms are constantly used interchangeably by the media even though they define distinct minority groups. This suggests either subjectivity on the part of journalists or lack of knowledge regarding the groups that they are writing about.

Arabs and Muslims are minorities in America whose exact statistics are impossible to gather. In *Being and Belonging: Muslims in the United States Since 9/11*, Katherine Ewing calls compiling these statistics an ambitious and politically challenging task, due to the lack of reliable sources providing these data (3). The U.S. Census Bureau, for instance, does not gather data on religious identification, as a result of the principle of church-state separation. There is thus a huge discrepancy in these numbers. For example, according to the Pew Research Center 2016 data, 3.3 million American Muslims constitute 1% of the U.S. population and include culturally distinct groups, in contradiction to their presentation as one entity in mass media (Mohamed, par. 1). Aladdin Elaasar, on the other hand, estimates *Silent Victims: The Plight of Arab & Muslim Americans in Post 9/11 America* that there are 7 million Muslims in the United States, of whom 3.5 million Arab-Americans are concentrated in industrial states such as New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, and Michigan. Even though there are 7 million Muslims in the United States, not all Arab-Americans are Muslim. Elaasar notes that they are mostly Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant with a heritage that can be traced back to the first contacts of the Middle East with the Church (59). Furthermore, Bridges TV - American Muslim Lifestyle Network estimates that out of these few million

Muslims, 26% are South Asian, 26% are Arab American, 24% are African American, and the rest is unspecified (Muslims American Demographic Facts, par.2).

Arab and Muslim Americans are thus not one religious or ethnic minority group but consist of multiple communities with various geographical origins, languages, religions, and customs. This paper will focus on Arab Muslims in the United States, not because they are one collective group but because they have been treated as such by the media. In the aftermath of 9/11, due to extensive incidents that have discriminated against Muslims and people perceived to be Muslim (Elaasar 187), it is crucial to analyze the context in which Muslim and Arab Americans are most likely to experience 'stereotypical' attitudes toward them. These attitudes will be closely examined through textual reading, as the examined articles from newspapers may have a devastating effect on the Muslim and Arab Americans' experiences in crisis situations.

Numerous academic studies have examined the changed attitudes towards Muslim and Arab Americans after the 9/11 attacks, and this paper is set to investigate whether these assumptions also apply to the topic events in two mainstream U.S. newspapers. The *New York Times (NYT)* and the *New York Post* (*NYP*) have been chosen for this research as the former prominent newspaper represents more liberal views and the latter leans more towards conservative or neoconservative views. These two newspapers are among the most prominent in the U.S. sitting in third and fifth places on the 2014 Top Media Outlets' list and with a daily circulation of 1,897,890 and 576,711 respectively. In addition, 9/11 is central to this research and since the WTC terrorist attacks took place in New York City, local media coverage is the most important and most relevant to this paper. That is why these two newspapers were chosen for this research.

Based on a timeline provided by the Google Books Ngram Viewer, two moments in the history of Arab Muslims in the U.S. have been marked as significant, namely the Gulf

War and the 9/11 attacks. The reporting of these events will be analyzed in this paper from the viewpoint of two dimensions: religion and race. These two perspectives have been suggested by the academic literature as opposed to the ethnicity or class dimensions, which have been used historically for analysis of minority groups. There has been a clear shift in the categorization of Arab Muslims before and after the 9/11 attacks, as the coverage of the Gulf War and 9/11 will demonstrate.

To sum up, this research will only look at one element to answer the big question of changing attitudes towards a U.S. minority in crisis situations. It is a tiny part of a much larger journey that the American minority group of Arab Muslims pursue as a result of their presentation in the media. The main inquiry is to find out if the perception of Arab Muslims in the U.S. changed after 9/11 in these two mainstream U.S. newspapers and if so, whether this shift can be understood through the lenses of religion and race.

Overview of academic discussion

Many scholars argue that in the case of Muslim Americans, religion offers a dimension to differentiate them from mainstream western culture and exclude them from society. The history of the United States is filled with cases of discrimination and exclusion on the basis of race, class, ethnicity, or religion. For instance, it has been argued that a similar religious-rejection experience occurred in 1840s -1850s during large-scale anti-Catholicism movements in the U.S. (Pestana, par. 1). This thesis will briefly discuss Arab Muslims' ethnic experiences in the United States, which, as suggested by the academic literature, are the result of mass media representations of this minority group. Several academic discourses have informed this research of the role that mass media have played in the representation of Arab Muslims in America.

Yaqin and Morey state in *Framing Muslims: Stereotyping and Representation After 9/11* that Muslims in the United States have been unjustly stigmatized by the western media in order to exclude them from societal privileges. The authors reject the theory of the clash of civilizations and instead perceive the discrimination of Arab Muslims in the U.S. as a result of an encounter of two civilizations. This encounter turns into a confrontation because of the differences between the eastern and western cultures but mainly, as Yaqin and Morey argue, because of their exaggeration in the media. Also Ewing argues that western secularization often creates obstacles in the path of assimilation for Muslims, which include discrimination, prejudice, and social and political exclusion from American society (2). She claims that these obstacles are the result of media framing and not of the civilizational clash by itself.

Other scholars that support a similar perspective are Amaney Jamal and Nadine Naber. They argue in *Race and Arab Americans Before and After 9/11* that the media have framed Muslim and Arab Americans through the process of racialization. This is a unique phenomenon experienced by Arabs, and the 9/11 attacks have played a crucial role in its formation. Jamal and Naber claim that it was not until 9/11 that these minority groups became visible in discussions of race and ethnicity in America. The most striking example was that the U.S. government classified them as white, whereas numerous national discourses vigorously differentiated them from mainstream Americans by depicting them as inferior and "white but not quite" (Jamal and Naber, pp. 1-2). It is a new attempt to define a minority group in the United States that differs from the well-known U.S. categories of race. Therefore, this thesis will also analyze to which extent mainstream media have framed Muslim and Arab Americans, and which textual 'racializing' categories have been used.

Mahmood Mamdani discusses the 'good Muslim' and 'bad Muslim' dichotomy in his book *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror*. The terminology comes from the colonial period, when the 'good' Muslim label was used to

describe Muslims cooperating with foreign occupiers. On the contrary, all native Muslims resisting occupation and fighting colonial forces were labeled 'bad' Muslims (*Muslims and American Popular Culture*, volume 2, pp. 151-152). The contemporary use of 'good Muslim, bad Muslim' involves another context with similar connotations. Mamdani blames President Bush for having publicly defined 'bad Muslims' as terrorists, and 'good Muslims' as the U.S. allies fighting against terrorism. This presidential remark was quickly and widely echoed by mainstream media, and gave rise to a conviction that all 'good Muslims' are suspects and need to prove their innocence in America (Mamdani 15). This implies that unless Muslims prove to be 'good', they are all 'bad,' and Mamdani accuses mass media of using this prejudice to their advantage and influencing public opinion of Muslims in a negative way. The author exemplifies his accusation by condemning the *NYT* constant branding of good Muslims as westernized, modern, and secular civilians, and bad Muslims as 'doctrinal, anti-modern, and virulent' (24). This chasm manifests criticism of Islamic civilization and refers to Samuel Huntington's definition of the 'clash of civilizations,' or even its more rigorous version, as Mamdani argues, namely Bernard Lewis' war against the entire civilization (24). Also Edward W. Said accuses American media of framing Muslims in these two categories, who associate 'bad Muslims' with threatening terrorists aiming at destroying the West, and 'good Muslims' with individuals able to stop their 'bad' co-believers (*Muslims and American Popular Culture*, volume 2, pp. 153-154).

Negative framing of Muslims in the news often results from the lack of knowledge of journalists and sometimes from the subjective agenda set by the newspapers. Fowler, Hertzke, Olson, and den Dulk claim in *Religion and Politics in America* that the most powerful and noticeable is the shift in the perception of Arab Muslims from an ethnic and racial to a religious category. They argue that this change was caused by the 9/11 terrorist attacks, as there was little or no political commotion within American Islam before then.

Moreover, Fowler et al. also emphasize the depiction of American Muslims' devoutness as the core of their distinction from mainstream Americans. The authors refer to a survey showing that the majority of American Muslims prays daily and is concerned with Islam and Muslims in the U.S. and worldwide (61). Their piety is often negatively linked to Islamic fundamentalism, which in turn is associated with terrorism by the U.S. government and mainstream media. Strict religious adherence is also affiliated with Muslims' dual loyalties: the inner struggle between the loyalty to America and western values, and the stern Islamic traditions and law, so called Sharia.

Anne R. Richards and Iraj Omidvar describe this sense of duality as a new predicament which Muslims do not face in their countries of origin (*Muslims and American Popular Culture* 292). For example, the *hijab,* covering the head of Muslim women, or *burqa,* covering the full-body, are visual symbols, common in orthodox Islam. The authors find that Muslim women in the United States face a decision whether to adopt American culture or to maintain their religious identity and cover themselves (292). This is just one of examples of how challenging it is for Muslim Americans to assimilate into modern America. Scholars like Richards and Omidvar try to defend the traditional concept of America by rejecting customs of the 'unknown' Islamic religion and culture. However, it is important to acknowledge that societies constantly develop. Cultures are in a state of perpetual development and minorities can enrich the majority, if given a chance. Not only do minorities have to adapt to their new country, but also the local majority has to adjust some of their customs and find a compromise to reach a balanced and harmonious nation.

Similarly, Richards and Omidvar add that the image of Muslims and Arabs has changed since 9/11. Oriental stereotypes of Arab Muslims, depicted as *Cassablanca*'s and *Alladin*'s "flying carpets, deserts, harems, genii, camels, Bedouins, queer despots, wily souk merchants, tiny monkeys, and pirates," changed into an Islamic threat (Richards and Omidvar

xiv). They claim that the fear of Islam is now predominant, along with curiosity about the Muslim religion and its followers. The authors argue that most Americans associate Islam with the terrorist attacks of 9/11, which places the religion in a very negative light (xiv). They underline this by referring to the theory that some Muslims immigrated to the U.S. in order to remodel the country through terrorism (xiv). This statement creates a sense of fear for Muslim immigrants in the U.S. Richards and Omidvar summarize this prevailing stereotype as the claim that Muslim men are 'sexist and violent' and Muslim women are 'passive and oppressed' (xvii).

In addition, it is important to establish if representations by the media are prejudicial or whether there are other factors stimulating the news reporting from a specific angle. Prominent sociologist Gordon Allport developed a theory on prejudice in the context of race and democracy, which is relevant to this paper. He argues in *The Nature of Prejudice* that it is an inborn capability of every human being to create and think in categories throughout their lives. Categorizing, however, can become negative and lead to prejudice or even discrimination of a certain group to protect the individual or collective national values (Allport xi). He explains predicaments such as the clash between Muslims and the United States, representing the West, by stating that "ethnic conflict" is an unavoidable result of democracy (478). This theory would explain news framing as 'unintentional categorizing' of Muslim Americans by journalists in their subjective news reporting, caused by inborn prejudiced categorizing. It would thus justify their individual subjectivity as inborn and not as set by agenda.

Huntington formulated the famous term of 'clash of civilizations' which means that spiritual, religious, and ethnic identities are the main cause of conflict since the Cold War (*Clash of Civilizations* 139). His theory recognizes the universal social need of defining the 'Other' in order to classify the 'Self,' as the classic theory of Said's *Orientalism* has

suggested. This would imply that Muslims will remain visible subjects in the West because their religion offers a contrast with western values and culture.

Recent academic literature suggests the term *Islamophobia* to describe the fear and discrimination of Muslims. John. L. Esposito and Ibrahim Kalin argue in their book *Islamophobia: The Challenge of Pluralism in the 21st Century*, that Islamophobia is expressed through media as the nation's reaction to the crisis that is caused by Muslim fundamentalists. It is common in crisis situations for media to search for guilty perpetrators and speculate about the identity and motives of these suspects.

To sum up, the ongoing academic debate about Arab Muslims in America suggests that mass media have branded them as an inferior, hostile, and backward 'enemy within.' Scholars also highlight the fact that the media influence the whole society through choosing what and how to communicate. Donald L. Shaw and Maxwell E. McCombs argue that the process of news framing or agenda-setting in the media is extremely influential in triggering a cognitive change among individuals in order to 'structure their thinking' (*The Emergence of American Political Issues* 5). Therefore, mainstream media have tremendous power. The authors conclude that U.S. Muslims have provoked the media to depict them negatively through their sudden political activism and visibility. That would justify media framing of all U.S. Muslims as a threat. Therefore, this thesis will try to explore the media framing mechanisms in the coverage of Arab Muslims in the U.S.

Research question

Even though the framing of Arab Muslims in America has been a frequent topic in western media in the last 15 years, insufficient attention has been paid to the effect of mass media on the changing perception of this minority group after 9/11. This thesis argues that mainstream media representation of Arab Muslims in America has contributed to their categorizing, and

consequently to the formation of an American society. Several recent studies on United States' Arab Muslims will be discussed shortly in the following chapters of this paper.

It is remarkable that most secondary works discussing Muslims and Islam in the West describe 9/11 as a shift in reporting on U.S. Muslims and Arabs. There are two implicit but clear angles the authors take when writing about this topic; namely they use lenses of race and religion. For instance, in *Race and Arab Americans Before and After 9/11: From Invisible Citizens to Visible Subjects*, Jamal and Naber argue that 9/11 was not the beginning of, but a turning point in, the history of American Muslims and Arabs, despite the fact that the mainstream media started singling them out exclusively from that date on. Their book argues that after 9/11, wealthy sheikhs turned into terrorists and Islamic fundamentalists (Jamal and Naber, pp. 4-5). The authors add that such prejudice must have been deeply planted before the attacks, as other terrorists such as Timothy McVeigh (the Oklahoma City bomber, 1995) or the members of the Irish Republican Army, have not been branded as representatives of their "entire race, religion, or civilization"(Jamal and Naber 60). In addition, the writers point out that the inclusion of new and often contradictory lenses through which Arab Muslims are being depicted, activated discussions about the seriousness of the concept of 'race' in Arab American studies and their position within the racial judicial system in America (Jamal and Naber, pp. 4-5). Jamal and Naber strongly argue that media used the dimension of race to frame this minority group.

Another dimension important to this research, and argued thoroughly by Yaqin and Morey, is religion, and specifically Islam. Numerous scholars depict Islamic culture and civilization as contradicting western civilization by Islam's hostility and backwardness. Stephen Sheehi also supports this view and presents his critique of mass media's creation of the clash of civilizations in his book *Islamophobia: The Ideological Campaign Against Muslims*.

The main question that this thesis aims to answer is to what extent the U.S. media have influenced shifting attitudes towards religion as a dimension of differentiation of Muslim Arabs in the United States. In order to answer this question, this paper will analyze the framing mechanisms that have been used by *NYT* and *NYP* when reporting on the religious identity of Arab Muslims in the United States by identifying it as a category of differentiation. In this way, it is possible to determine what textual attitudes these newspapers express towards the Muslim religion, as well as its constructed connection to the minority group of Arab Muslims. The second sub-question is to determine if the *NYT* and *NYP* style of reporting on Arab Muslims has changed throughout the last few decades through the process of 'racialization,' one of the elements of Islamophobia. Both chapters 2 and 3 will focus on the terminology associated with religion and race.

This research will examine possible shifts in media presentation of Arab Muslims in America in the period from the Gulf War (August 1990) to the present. The purpose is to establish whether an ethnic categorization of those minority groups has been replaced by race and religion as categories. This study will establish attitudes towards the American Muslim minority group of Arabs within the context of prejudicial orientation and clash of civilizations, through the analysis of the *NYT* and the *NYP*'s coverage.

Methodology

To find answers to the main inquiry, relevant articles from the *NYT* and the *NYP* covering two specific and earlier described marked moments in the history of Arab Muslims will be selected. Through thorough textual analysis of relevant articles, the discursive processes and methods will be documented in which the journalists differentiate Arab Muslims from Americans. Media representation of this minority group through two lenses: religion and race is thus central to finding out to what extent religion has been used in the media to differentiate

Arab and Muslim Americans from other Americans.

For each of these two dimensions, the same key words will be used to find articles on the Gulf War and 9/11. Out of the found results, articles with religious references will be selected for the analysis in chapters 2 and 3. Here, search terms: 'religion,' 'Islam,' 'Muslim,' and 'Arab' will be used to determine whether these articles are subjectively referring to religion as a category to replace ethnicity when depicting Muslim Arabs. The first chapter will introduce the phenomenon of Islamophobia, and the following two chapters will focus on textual analysis of the chosen articles within the framework of Islamophobia.

LexisNexis will be utilized to find relevant articles of the liberal *NYT* and conservative *NYP*. This research will be conducted by analyzing the titles of articles and determining whether they justly imply what they cover. Moreover, the following elements will be checked: terminology used, potential subjectivity of the journalists implied by lack of supporting evidence, volume of articles written on a particular news item and the choice of checked facts as opposed to assumptions included in the coverage. This method will reveal whether two marked historic moments have been framed by these articles and if they have, in what way, and how they have influenced the societal attitudes towards Arab Muslims in the United States. The used articles were selected by means of search terms related to Islam and therefore include religious references. This means that they are not representative of the full media coverage of these newspapers, as this thesis will focus on the manner in which religious terms are used in reference to Arab Muslims in America.

CHAPTER 1

Islamophobia

This chapter will attempt to determine whether the media are a reliable or a prejudiced source of information on Islam and Muslims in America. It will provide a context in which the concept of Arab Muslims has been constructed by U.S. media through the introduction of and emphasis on Islamophobia. A brief background of religion and Islam in the U.S. will enable a better understanding of the shift in societal position of this minority group in the U.S.

Religion in the U.S.

The United States is well known for its separation of church and state and the freedom of religion, granted by the First Amendment. Despite this separation, religion is deeply woven into American cultural identity. In contrast to Europe, religion in America is present in various national institutions. The country struggles with accommodating numerous religious minorities, especially when it involves non-Christian religions. Fowler et al. point at the complexity of providing such a freedom, and call the U.S. the most 'complex and pluralistic mix of religions' within one nation. They also highlight America's Christian roots with the largest denominations being Catholics and Protestants. The Pew Research confirms this claim by estimating that approximately 71% of Americans are Christians.

Although America is a Christian nation today, some of Christian minorities were perceived as a threat in the past. In 1840s, for example, Catholics were persecuted due to their religion and treated as a danger to the American way of life (Pestana, par. 1). This minority rejection has been compared by some scholars to the 21st-century discriminations against

Muslims in America. However, this chapter will partly demonstrate that it is an incorrect observation.

Moreover, Fowler et al. argue that religious minorities are bound to each other through the fact that they are essential for the existence of a society (Fowler et al. 55). Nevertheless, they make an interesting point about minorities' diasporic belonging, which has been frequently mentioned by the U.S. media as minorities' dual loyalties. Minorities are a part of the nation of their origin, and at the same time they are a part of their new society, and these two are not always compatible in their values and norms.

In addition, minorities change and help to re-form a society and therefore the country's policies are established mainly to create balance between its majority and minorities. The more fragile the minority, the more complex the policies pertaining to them are. As a result, some policies are established to protect the majority and impede the influx of minorities, and according to many scholarly works, this is what American Muslims have experienced since 9/11.

Islam in the U.S.

This section aims at exploring whether Islam is a new and homogeneous religion in America, and whether it is correctly presented by the U.S. media. A clear depiction of Islam in America and the West will follow to demonstrate how media representation of Islam in America compares to the reality.

The first mentions of Islam in America date back to the late ninth century. Kambiz GhaneaBassiri argues in *A History of Islam in America* that Muslims did not come in masses to America nor did they colonize the Americas. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, however, Muslims played an important role in politics and were commercially significant in the formation of the states surrounding the Atlantic Ocean, a region dominated by Muslim

empires at the time, but attractive for European traders (GhaneaBassiri 1-2). Once the Americas were colonized by Europe, Muslims from North and West Africa became part of the economic and imperial plans of the American and European powers, and consequently, most of them became slaves in America (GhaneaBassiri, pp. 1-2).

It is important to acknowledge that there are various forms of Islam and that Muslims constitute a heterogeneous population. Today, American Muslims make up the most diverse Muslim population of the world accommodated in one country. Fowler et al. confirm that the U.S. Muslims come from various corners of the world and have diverse ethnic and parochial backgrounds. In addition, they were joined by other ethnic groups who converted to Islam (1). The authors point out that U.S. Islam distinguishes itself by having developed some new religious movements such as the Moorish Science Temple or the Nation of Islam, as explained by GhaneaBassiri (pp. 1-2). Islam has various teachings which have resulted in splitting Muslim communities into even smaller religious groups, such as Sunni and Shi'a. Fowler et al. explain that both traditions vary principally over the identity of the authentic successor to the Prophet Muhammad (61). It is estimated that Sunni Muslims are a majority both among American Muslims and globally.

Another Muslim community consists of American converts to Islam, who, as Richards and Omidvar contend, need to find a balance between the traditions of Islamic civilization and American culture in order to establish their new Muslim identity (292). The authors call this process a negotiation and point at the difficulties the converts have to undergo, due to the lack of 'American Islam.' By this statement the authors indicate the necessity of creating a new form of Islam which differs from the old form practiced for example in Saudi Arabia, as they suggest (292). This is necessary as, according to the authors, there are "some unspecified cultural practices connected with Islam," which contradict American norms and values, and therefore do not fit in the modern United States. Richards and Omidvar adopt an interesting

approach according to which Islam needs to assimilate and adjust to western values. Instead of pointing at the need to acquaint oneself with various forms of Islam and choosing one, or finding a balance between being an American and being a Muslim, the authors choose to target religion as the core problem. Moreover, American converts are set in a higher category than other Muslims, and the authors give them the right to adjust Islam to their needs and to fit within American culture. Therefore, also in the case of American converts, the Muslim religion is perceived as problematic.

In contradiction to all the different types of Islam and all the differences between Muslims, western media categorize Muslims as belonging solely to two groups of 'bad Muslims,' and 'good Muslims.' By using this method, media place all Muslims in one homogenous group with only two variations. This positions Muslims as a threat to the West and a predicament to the Westerners, who have to be watchful and alert to catch 'bad Muslims.'

Such negative categorization of Muslims has reigned in various mainstream media in the aftermath of 9/11. The media presentation of Muslims as one group of terrorists practicing one and the same religion, and preserving their brutal culture has left a mark on all Americans and certainly increased the phenomenon of Islamophobia. It is important to learn from Muslim minorities in the U.S. how they protect themselves and advance their values, but an even more important task is to investigate the sources that promote discrimination and prejudice against them. The identification of such sources will indicate the power tools, which in the end, are used to form American attitudes, through influencing public opinion and societal attitudes towards minorities.

Islamophobia

"These people [Arabs and Muslims] need to be forcibly converted to Christianity. …

It's the only thing that can probably turn them into human beings."

-Michael Savage, syndicated talk-radio host

This part will look into the phenomenon of Islamophobia, its forms and presence in the media. It will try to establish whether post-9/11 news reporting in America has been branded solely by Islamophobia.

Although the phenomenon of Islamophobia is not new, one can argue that, its presence has increased enormously in the West since the 9/11 attacks. There are many connotations to the term, but Richards and Omidvar provide the clear and simple definition that will be used in the following chapters: "*Islamophobia* is the fear and/or hatred of Islam, Muslims, or Islamic culture. Islamophobia feeds on spreading fear of Islam and designating Muslims as the enemy" (vol. 1, p. 237). There are several elements of Islamophobia that can be found in western media and politics. The most prominent are: fear of Islam and its followers due to the threat caused by the unknown, hostile religion and culture promoting terrorism, hatred of Muslims because they endanger the nation's western values and norms, and bigotry against Islam nourished by nationalist sentiments of superiority. These three elements will be identified in the *NYT* and *NYP* articles in order to determine whether these categories were used to report on Muslims in America.

The argument that 9/11 spread Islamophobia in the West is widely defended in numerous scholarly works. Due to the results of a 2010 survey conveyed by the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), Islamophobia scored 6.4 out of ten. The report shows that the people surveyed were clearly influenced by media's demonization of Islam (Nina Markowic, Samina Yasmeen, *Muslim Citizens in the West,* 2). In addition, Sheehi argues in

Islamophobia: The Ideological Campaign Against Muslims that after 9/11, hate-speeches against Arabs and Muslims suddenly became acceptable (29). Another example is provided by the statement made on September 13, 2001 by Ann Coulter, a conservative social and political commentator, who was allowed to publish "We should invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity," without being censored by editors.

Furthermore, Sheehi accuses the media of promoting Islamophobia through their emphasizing and justifying of the killing of Muslims abroad, which was followed by using uncensored and negative statements about Arab Muslims and Islam. The author argues that in the post-9/11 era, 'Muslims, Arabs, Iranians, and Islam itself' became targets in published media (Sheehi 30). He adds that especially in the direct aftermath of these tragic events, media focused on presenting the Islamic fundamentalists' acts such as "honor killings, female circumcision, not allowing women to drive … [saying] Jews are monkeys, pigs" (30). The discussion of Islam's intolerance of Jews will be continued in the third chapter.
In addition, the author points out that even media discussions of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, the nuclear threat of Iran, and oil and energy are filtered through the hatred and fear of Islam and Muslims (31). These signs of Islamophobia have dangerous effect on Muslims in America and around the world. It is argued that Muslims in the Arab world are anti-American, due to the U.S. meddling in their domestic affairs and their oil politics. This association, when depicted in media, increases the sense of national vulnerability and therefore the sense of fear and the need to defend oneself.

Sheehi takes this discussion even one step further by stating that Islamophobia has become part of American culture, and affects American Arab Muslims in various areas (141). This statement is supported in practice, for example, by the establishment of the U.S. PATRIOT Act, which has been widely described as racial and discriminatory of all Muslims and Arabs in America. Sheehi also suggests that America has been changed through

Islamophobia and that it has become a deeply rooted part of American culture with little chance of its retreat. This is supported by the implementation of special registration, FBI investigations and even the presidential campaign of Barack Obama. The latter is unambiguous evidence of prevailing Islamophobia in the U.S., as it includes the extraordinary reaction of the electoral campaign spokesperson Robert Gibbs to accusations of Obama being a Muslim. He proclaimed that 'Senator Obama has never been a Muslim, was not raised as a Muslim, and is a committed Christian'; a statement which was aimed at distancing Obama from his father's Islamic heritage (Richards and Omidvar, *Muslims and American Popular Culture*, xvi).

Another argument made by numerous scholars is that Islamophobia is one of the expressions of racism. This school of thought, as S. Sayyid claims in *Thinking Through Islamophobia*, is often rejected because of the fact that Muslims are not a race, and also due to the common acceptance of Islamophobia being justified by "the 'realities' of Islam or Islamicate cultural practices" (12). Nevertheless, racialization has never been purely based on biological characteristics. The process has involved the religious, cultural, historical and territorial aspects which needed to be defended by the dominant mainstream inhabitants. In addition, Sayyid argues that such a stance also excludes the possibility of re-structuring one's culture by choice of another culture in a different context (13). It is an illogical theory, as immigrants around the world are faced with such a choice every day. Moreover, Sayyid argues that the process of racialization relies on "the construction of collective identities as a product of social processes. It does not follow that just because Muslims are not a 'race,' or there is yet no Muslim gene, their subjugation is not racism." (Sayyid, 14).

Said also acknowledges the media framing by which "Muslims and Arabs are essentially covered, discussed, and apprehended either as suppliers of oil or as potential terrorists" (Covering Islam, pp. x-xi). Said proclaims that unequipped and incompetent

reporters place the Muslim world within negative connotations instead of mentioning their rich culture and Muslims' passion for life. Indeed, the attention of western media in the last decades has been directed towards negative events caused by Islamist terrorists. However, in the context of intensified terrorist attacks, journalists must try to determine the reasons and motives behind the criminals' deeds. The fact that there is, at first, little known about the terrorists, except for that they are Islamic jihadists, influences the paths of investigation of these journalists. That can be the reason why they often pay more attention to the terms of Islam and jihadist during their coverage. It can be argued that they speculate instead of providing evidence to the readers and spectators. Their negative presentations of Muslims and Islam cannot be justified by their lack of background information, but it would be abnormal to focus instead on, for example, the rich culture of the Middle East in this context, as suggested by Said.

Conclusion

There is a thin line between discriminatory speculations and objective reporting, and most scholars accuse the western media of implementing Islamophobia in their reporting on Muslims and Islam. This predicament is difficult to solve in the context of increasing terrorism and the constant threat posed by Islamic jihadists. Nevertheless, it is certain that there has been a clear shift not only between the pre- and post-9/11 news reporting, but also in reporting on Muslim terrorism in relation to non-Muslim terrorism. Muslim terrorists are depicted in the role of representatives of a whole religious or cultural group, whereas non-Muslim bombers or mass shooters are seen as individuals with mental problems. The following two chapters will try to reveal to what extent Arab Muslims were framed in the *NYT* and *NYP* coverage of the Gulf War and 9/11 via the aspects of religion and race.

CHAPTER 2
The Gulf War Coverage

This chapter will investigate which branding processes were used by the *NYT* and *NYP* in reporting on Arab Muslims in the U.S. in the articles on the Gulf War. The following sections include a short introduction to the Gulf War and a thorough analysis of its coverage in relevant articles of the above-mentioned newspapers.

The Gulf War and Arab Muslims

The Gulf War was chosen for the analysis because this particular historical moment has been the most extensively described in secondary sources in comparison to other pre-9/11 events when searching for articles on Arab Muslims. This chapter aims to analyze the pre-9/11 *NYT* and *NYP* coverage of the Gulf War fought between 2 August 1990 and 28 February 1991.

Huntington calls the Gulf War the first civilizational war, as it evolved into part of the Cold War due to the Soviet Union's will to sustain a satellite regime in Afghanistan. As a result, the U.S. became engaged in the Afghan War which turned into a civilizational war because of such perception by anti-Soviet Muslims. The fact that the West became involved militarily in a Muslim conflict sparked the conviction among Muslims that it was a western imperialist encroachment, and subsequently a war against all Muslims (*Clash of Civilizations*, 247). In the context of the American militant presence in Muslim countries, the contact between the two cultures restored the discussion of differences between the glorious Western values and the backward Middle-Eastern religion and Muslim traditions. Consequently, the western media has been accused by Said of diminishing the Islamic culture by depicting Islam in ancient and contrasting terms, as a means of distinguishing Muslims and The Orient from

the West. The further sections of this chapter will examine relevant articles of liberal and conservative U.S. newspapers to determine whether this allegation is correct.

In order to find out which framing mechanisms have been used in these articles, four themes have been identified for a framework, out of which three belong to Islamophobic views and one leans more to the imperialistic school of thought. These elements of Islamophobia include hatred against Muslims, the threat of Islam and its followers, and bigotry against Islam. The remaining imperialistic view emphasizes the superiority of the U.S., by diminishing the significance of Islam and the Arab world. Therefore, it actually refers to bigotry against Islam, a common element of Islamophobia used by media. The following sections will use this framework to find the framing tactics used by the *NYT* and *NYP*.

The Gulf War Coverage in *New York Times* and *New York Post*

Of 802 *NYT'* articles on 'Gulf War,' 29 include religious references to 'Islam,' 'Muslim,' 'Arab' and 'religion.' Nine of them were written after the 9/11 attacks, so were excluded from this research. The three most relevant of these, with their religious connotations, are analyzed below.

In the case of *NYP,* the same search resulted in 743 articles on the Gulf War, wherein 20 mentioned terms of 'Muslim,' 'Islam,' 'Arab,' and 'religion.' From this selection, 11 articles were written before September 11, 2001. These 11 articles were written by 6 journalists, from whom 2 distinguish themselves: Niles Lathem who wrote four of the found articles and Patrick J. Buchanan, who wrote three of them. For the purposes of this paper, two articles written by Buchanan were chosen as most relevant, as they indicate the discussion of

America's superiority and its interest in the Middle East. They also add terrorist motives to the news reporting, whereas Lathem reports in a more diplomatic manner on the political events without using religious references.

It is evident that both newspapers' pre-9/11 coverage of the Gulf War strongly focuses on depicting the U.S. as the superpower with its superior politics and culture. The examined articles show that this is the most prevailing common theme, mirroring the Islamophobic attitudes held by their authors.

The Superpower and Arab Muslims

During the Cold War (1947-91), as Huntington argues, two superpowers construed their identities by ideologies, such as, liberalism, socialism, communism, conservatism, nationalism, and Christian democracy (*Clash of Civilizations*, 53). These ideologies were perceived to be the hall of the West. Many scholars argue that nowadays democracy, freedom of choice, human rights, and Christianity create the biggest challenge in the encounters of the West with the Arab Muslim world. This challenge is also present in the U.S., the biggest promotor of these political values.

Three *NYT* articles in the period 1991-1992 refer to the superiority of the U.S. by contrasting the Arab world's instability with America's harmonious and high position on the global pedestal. The first article from April 28, 1991, by Thomas L. Friedman, titled "After the War: Murk of Politics Obscures Baker's Path to Peace in the Middle East" is an example of such positioning. The title implies the difficulties of reaching peace in the Middle East. The article reports on the Gulf War fought in 1990 and 1991. Friedman describes the meetings between the Secretary of State James A. Baker and the Soviet Foreign Minister Aleksandr A. Bessmertnykh from 1991, and concentrates on the foreign political significance of the war. The journalist demonstrates his belief in the dominance of America by calling U.S. 'the

savior' of Kuwait and Arab states. The only reference to religious groups is in the context of foreign affairs of Kuwait, Saudi and other Arab states, who harass all Muslim communities allying with the U.S. against Iraq. In this article, Muslims are presented as a remote religious group but able to co-operate with America. Muslims are depicted as the inhabitants of the far Middle East without any mention of their American minority.

A similar comparison is made by Paul Lewis in his article from May 6, 1991, titled "After the War: Iraq Christian Minority Begins to Look for Door." As the title suggests, the journalist describes the Gulf War aftermath by focusing on the Iraqi Christian minority. He describes an encounter with three middle-aged Arab women covered in black burqas and willing to move to America, where they can freely practice their Christianity. Through this example, Lewis refers to the Iraqi 800,000-member Christian minority, who is able to finally leave Iraq, as the 9-year emigration ban was lifted. In this article, Christians in Iraq are a religious minority that is presented not as an 'enemy within' but as 'victims within.' He writes that they have been persecuted by Iraqi Muslims as crusaders and allies of America and blamed for the Gulf War. Although Muslims are presented in a negative light by being accused of oppressing the Christian minority, Lewis does not analyze Islamic culture or religion; he simply refers to them as a majority in Iraq. By doing so, America is pointed out as being superior due to one of its glories: freedom of religion. It is a country that oppressed Christian minorities from Iraq can escape to. In short, the journalist highlights an important western value to indicate a better system and country to live in. He also reminds the readers of the Christian roots of the West, and therefore depicts the contrast between Arab states and the West.

A slightly different aspect is introduced in the *NYT* article published on January 5, 1992, within a year of Friedman's and Lewis' articles being written on the aftermath of the Gulf War. Youssef M. Ibrahim's piece, "The World: The Arab World Comes to the End of

Illusions," enumerates the consequences of the Gulf War in the Arab World. Correspondingly, it implies the superiority of American values and ideologies as opposed to the Arab world's religion and politics. The title refers to the political plans and 'illusions' of the Arab world of uniting through Islam. The journalist points to Muslims' rejection of western development due to their suspicions of falling into the trap of western Crusades. He summarizes the aftermath as the collapse of 'the Arab system.' He argues that even though the Arab states do not follow western developments and cannot be called democratic, they have already provided their citizens with personal, entrepreneurial and political liberties, even though they are limited. This way, the journalist adduces the impossible brotherhood of the Arab states, each extremely different from the other. For example, he indicates the impossibility of Saudi Arabia's economical interaction with poor third-world countries like Algeria and Egypt. Through this tactic, the article highlights the superiority of America and the impossibility of reaching unity between Arab states through Islam. Undermining the power and significance of Islam also entails a suggestion that this religion is too weak in comparison with the West and its Christian roots. The positioning of America as a superpower is also present through the journalist's questioning of the place of the Arab world within the new world order. He criticizes their attitude toward democratic civil rights and calls it their biggest failure. The journalist doubts the Arabs' progress due to an increasing pressure from Islamic fundamentalists to prohibit the freedom of choice for the rest. This statement places the Arab world also in the context of the clash of civilizations, as democracy is one of the main priorities and principles of the West with its greatest promotor, America.

In addition, by presenting Islam as a religion failing to unite the Arab states, the journalist underlines the dominance of the Christian roots of the West, which are known as the foundations of western values. This method diminishes Islam and its followers by locating them on a much lower pedestal than Christianity and America.

In comparison, the *NYP*'s reporting also describes America in superlatives, and paints the country as the dominant global agent. However, some articles mention the West's decline and question America's ability to bring back order and peace in the Middle East. The *NYP*'s political commentator, Patrick Joseph Buchanan (born in 1938) is an influential personage in American politics and his pieces are therefore also influential. He was a senior advisor to the Presidents Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan. He was also a host on CNN's *Crossfire* and ran several times in presidential elections.

In an article from January 14, 1998, titled "Détente in the Gulf?" Patrick Buchanan refers mainly to the plans of America's imperialism and its dominant global position. Through the title, Buchanan questions whether there has been an agreement or the restoration of harmony in the Gulf by using the word 'détente' and a question mark at the end. The title refers to his doubts on Iran's acceptance of America's help, which is seen by the journalist as the only act leading to peace in the Middle East. American superiority is expressed here through the use of wording: 'America's help,' and later through naming the U.S. a 'pacifier and policeman of the Near East.' He also relates to the power of Iran, whose nuclear, political, and regional dominance can influence relations between the West and its neighbors: India, Pakistan and Iraq. The journalist argues that simply through Iran's opening to what America has to offer, a 'better life for millions' will be granted in the Arab world. He remarks that it is a realistic objective, as both countries differ solely in their ideologies. Thus, once Iran follows American values, everyone will benefit. Buchanan adds America's independence to its superiority by stating that "[o]f all the great powers, the United States is the farthest removed from the Gulf and the least vulnerable to an oil embargo." Therefore, the cultural guidelines of this independent and powerful country should be followed, as this is the only way for the Middle East to benefit, make progress and reach peace.

Also in "The Giant Superpower Bluff" from June 6, 1998, Buchanan places America on the pedestal of world's politics and questions its position by calling it a bluff. The title suggests the content of the article which is explicitly accusative of America's bluffing about its supremacy. The journalist exemplifies this constant exaggeration by providing a few statements, such as the one made after Desert Storm, when the U.S. was 'the world's last superpower,' and the U.S. president's declaration that after the American victories in the Gulf and Cold Wars, the establishment of a 'new world order' was their next responsibility. Moreover, Buchanan states that America was also obliged to impede whenever another 'regional power' would try to take its place on the global scene. The U.S. authorities clearly present America as the superpower deciding on the world order and the fate of the world, including the Arab states. That image is ridiculed by Buchanan, who just six months earlier was an eager proponent of this notion. It is noticeable that his attitude towards the superiority of the U.S. changed, and that was caused supposedly by the decline of the West's global influence. The journalist describes America's diminishing power and influence on a global scale in the spirit of Huntington's theory of the decline of the West. He justifies it by exemplifying several countries' refusal of cooperation with the U.S. in the Gulf. Thus, even though the U.S. was the biggest economic and military power at that time, its political influence had clearly started to decline. One of the reasons lies in its materialism and corruptive nature, as the journalist argues. He concludes with a remark that everyone realizes that U.S. is abrupt, and contemplates that despite American ambitions of setting the new world order, other nations will follow their own dreams, even if they entail future hegemony. The future does not depend on the U.S. any more.

Conclusion

To sum up, many prominent scholars have accused mainstream media of framing Arab Muslims in America, and this chapter has looked into this allegation presented by two newspapers in articles on the Gulf War through the lens of religion and race. Framing or agenda-setting is an important aspect in media communication, as it has an enormous effect on the receivers of the message spread. The impact is even bigger if the author spreading the message is active in politics and therefore influential. That is certainly the case of the *NYP* with its politician Buchanan. Moreover, it has been confirmed numerous times that media affects national politics, and consequently a society and its attitudes to minorities.

Furthermore, Islamophobia has various forms, and it has been proved in the above analysis that these newspapers use bigotry against Islam, which is implied by the positioning of the Arab and Muslim world as inferior next to the superpower U.S. This inferiority is highlighted by creating a physical and cultural distance between two worlds: the feeble Arab states and the distant, economically and militarily independent powerful U.S. Additionally, all of the articles on the Gulf War depict Muslims from the Middle East and do not mention American minorities. This seems to confirm the theory of Jamal and Naber, who argue that Arab Muslims in America were invisible citizens before 9/11 and turned to visible subjects in its aftermath. This invisibility also suggests their absence from mainstream American society or at least their invisibility. Subsequently, it implies that Arab Muslims are excluded from mainstream America by being presented and discussed solely as inhabitants of the Middle East, the only part of the world they were entitled to inhabit.

The analyzed articles from the pre-9/11 period contain the admiration and emphasis of America's global superiority. They depict American ideologies and culture as superior to the Islamic civilization. For example, Friedman's depiction of America has imperialistic connotations, where he chooses the U.S. to play the role of a policeman and to decide on the

order in both the Arab world and globally. The *NYT* and *NYP* articles position the U.S. and its policies as admirable and prevailing, and suggest that the Middle East should follow the U.S. developments.

Moreover, one of the articles suggests that the western decline would be followed by the revolution of Arab states. This hypothesis mirrors Huntington's claim that Western decay has given rise to the anti-western movements (52). These statements introduce a fear of a rising but not yet present threat posed by Muslims.

In both newspapers, articles mention the Muslim and Arab world, but do not contain deep religious references and direct indication of Islam as an upcoming and threatening superpower. The presentation of America as a global superpower was clearly visible in articles until 1998, where, the last analyzed article questions the exceptional position of the U.S. This shift is an interesting finding of this research, and the next chapter will explore which methods were used by the same newspapers in the period after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. It will examine whether the newspapers still refer to America as a superpower and to the Arab states as inferior.

CHAPTER 3

9/11 Coverage Through the Lens of Religion

Media and 9/11

"Washington, Sept. 11 — Today's devastating and astonishingly well-coordinated attacks on the World Trade Center towers in New York and on the Pentagon outside of Washington plunged the nation into a warlike struggle against an enemy that will be hard to identify with certainty and hard to punish with precision." *New York Times* 2001 by R.W. Apple

This very first reaction of the *NYT* to the events of 9/11, published on September 12th and titled "U.S. Attacked," proclaimed that it would be difficult to find the responsible ones and to punish them in the right way. This initial diagnosis has turned out to be correct, and has been echoed in the following decades by various journalists and reporters. Media have tried to identify the enemy by pointing more often at the terrorists' religious implications. Richards and Omidvar state in *Muslims and American Popular Culture* that American Muslims became targets and were doomed to a collective punishment for deeds conducted by individuals motivated by a conviction that their deeds are justified by Islam's teachings (4). Roger Streitmatter also confirms in *Mightier than the Sword: How the News Media Have Shaped American History* that the media emphasis on these generalized religious connotations led to the national acceptation and justification of targeting all Muslims as 'the enemy within' (190). Therefore, as far as the media is concerned, the Muslim religion is at the core of terrorism; which subsequently justified reasons for open discrimination against American Arab Muslims.

The post-9/11 academic discourses on Arab Muslims in America started to concentrate much more on Islam as a religion, distinguishing them from western Christians. This shift is examined in this paper through the *NYP* and *NYT* coverage of the Gulf War and the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The events of 9/11 have been chosen due to the strong emphasis, by numerous scholarly works, on September 11, 2001 as a turning point in the history of Muslims in America. It is also argued that by promoting certain attitudes towards minority groups, the media influences the forming of society, as their agenda is set by governments. Yaqin and Morey also claim in *Framing Muslims* that authorities seek 'tried and tested vehicles of imagined communities,' such as TV and press, to create a stable framework for their agenda (3).

This chapter aims to analyze the framing mechanisms used by both newspapers to brand Arab Muslims, and to show whether they have been religiously branded in the U.S. media after September 11, 2001. It will also explore whether the articles include Islamophobic reporting, and if so, which elements were chosen to emphasize religion as a category of differentiation.

Analysis of 9/11 Coverage in *NYT* and *NYP*

The articles examined in this chapter were chosen through Lexis Nexis by selecting '9/11' and successively using four search terms: 'religion,' 'Muslim,' 'Arab,' and 'Islam.' As a result, LexisNexis showed more than 1000 articles on '9/11' published solely by *NYT*. The number was narrowed down to 738 after selecting 'the United States' under 'Geography.' Of these 738 articles written between 2001 and 2016, 31 articles include discussion of the terms chosen for the search. Out of these, six were written by Thomas L. Friedman, an American Jew, born in 1953, a widely recognized author and columnist, and a journalist respected by

American and international politicians. Four of his articles are most relevant to this paper's questions and that is why they were chosen for further analysis.

Similarly, the *NYP*, the second largest conservative newspaper in the U.S., published more than 1000 articles covering the terrorist attacks of 9/11; however in the U.S. solely, Lexis Nexis found that there are 667 articles written on 9/11. Among them, seven articles include all of the search terms of 'religion,' 'Islam,' 'Muslim,' and 'Arab.' Three were chosen for the analysis due to their high relevancy.

This paper argues that some elements of Islamophobia have been intensified in these newspapers after 9/11, and this section chose three of them for the thematic textual analysis. They consist of the threat of Islam, hatred against Muslims and bigotry against Islam.

Threat of Islam in the West

This section will pursue a close examination of articles posing Arab Muslims as a threat to America. The following analysis will try to reveal which tactics were used by journalists to spread this particular element of Islamophobia in their news reporting.

Creating fear of Islam through the claim that they are the 'enemy within' leads to hostility, prejudice, violence and discrimination in a society. Media's role in spreading such fear is extremely important, as it has been proven that they influence readers' attitudes through news reporting. Samina Yasmeen and Nina Markovic underline in *Muslim Citizens in the West* that after 9/11, media created a sense of urgency in 'uncovering, contesting and repackaging Muslim identity' by setting it in the context of violent terrorism, ethnicity and gender and the clash of civilizations (71). They add that in achieving this goal, media used the sudden need of examination of the 'soul of Islam', as opposed to the 'soul of America.' Therefore, the superior American society became challenged by numerous scholars in order to

redefine their Americanness (71). By focusing on national sentiments, immigrants and other minority groups that seem un-American often become excluded from the majority.

In the first analyzed article: "War of Ideas," published in *NYT* on 2 June 2002, Friedman not only defines the Muslim world as enemies, but also implies that there were signs that 9/11 would happen through constant hateful plots against America and teachings in mosques and Muslim schools. He suggests that to prevent such catastrophes, it is necessary not only to be suspicious of them but also to fight Islamic traditional teachings in public. In this way, the journalist creates a sense of fear of the unknown, of what happens behind 'our' backs in the Muslim world or communities. This fear leads to suspicion, and therefore, to mistrust of Muslims. This context is well captured by Huntington's theory that the post-Cold War world is governed by a 'civilization-based world order' with the prevailing dichotomy of 'the West' and 'the rest' (20). Friedman defines 'the rest' as a hostile and conspiring Muslim world, a representation thoroughly described in Said's *Orientalism* from 1979. By suggesting that war within Islam is what Muslims need, the journalist contradicts another Orientalist claim made by Said. Namely, the author states that through studying Arab Muslims, 'we' can learn their way of life and understand their reasoning. His essential point is that Muslims' true image can be created only by themselves and therefore, they should be given a voice to speak for themselves (Orientalism 293). Thus, any presentation of 'the Other' by someone from a mainstream newspaper is false.

Identifying all Muslims as violent terrorists, who kill in the name of Islam and are enemies of the West, is also common in U.S. media presentations. The theory of 'bad Muslims' and 'good Muslims' exemplifies this stance. The categorization of all Muslims as bad, associates them with terrorists and places them as suspicious neighbors in America who must be constantly watched. In "War of Ideas," Friedman specifies the real enemy, Wahhabism, which is "[an] austere and intolerant brand of Islam" spread by Muslim leaders

through using their oil wealth. Although by pointing to this intolerant stream of Islam, he tries to omit Islam's generalization, he directs readers' attention to the religion as a source of terrorism.

Friedman adds positively that there are enough people within Islam, who support America in introducing modernization and tolerance to Islam. Here, he uses the dichotomy of 'us' and 'them' to depict Muslims as inferior by assuming that 'they' want the U.S. to intervene. He then claims to have received a letter from a Saudi woman with a cry for help to stop religious authorities from paralyzing their lives. Friedman's accusations against Muslims imply that Islam needs to be modernized and westernized. This is a very interesting point already coined by Huntington, who explains that Islam does not necessary need to be westernized to be modernized and that only the most extreme fundamentalists reject both (73). Friedman's reporting, therefore, represents a typical western perception which diminishes Islam and its culture and promotes the process of westernization.

The *NYP* also contains some elements of Islamophobia. In the article titled "Menace of 9/11 Myths," and published on September 26, 2010, Michael Goodwin condemns the 9/11 myths, which deny Muslims' responsibility for the attacks of September 11, 2001. The title suggests that the 9/11 myths are a real peril. In the article, Goodwin presents a few examples of such myths in a ludicrous way to persuade his readers of these theories' ridiculousness and their dangerous consequences to America and the West. He states that these conspiracy theories "[deflect] Muslim guilt and [inflame] a new generation of jihadists, many of them living in the West." Such deflection of Muslim guilt leads thus to the exacerbation of jihadists, as watchfulness of the West diminishes in these circumstances and gives jihadists the opportunity to grow in power.

The journalist is mainly concerned with the wide acceptance of such myths by the West, a development which enables the threat of the Muslim world to grow. He argues that

the terrorists' motives and capabilities feed on the theory that Islam is being victimized by the West. He accuses Muslims of exaggeration in victimizing themselves. As an example, he states that even the objection of New Yorkers to the Ground Zero mosque is seen by Muslims as more evidence of that theory, whereas the local New Yorkers simply wanted something else built on that place. This victimization narrative has been examined and described by many scholars cited in this paper, and this conservative journalist clearly opposes such discourse.

Goodwin exemplifies his point with the allegation of Tony Blair, the former British prime minister, who stated that "the wide acceptance of the victimization narrative [is] a major factor fueling terrorism." Also here, the journalist not only penalizes Muslims with the collective guilt for the 9/11 attacks, but he also alleges non-Muslim acceptation of the victimization theory. These allegations call indirectly for proactive hostile attitudes towards Muslims in America. Goodwin argues that this narrative challenges and threatens the foundations of 'politics, security and religion' in the U.S. This misguided theory, as he calls it, has enormous consequences, and he suggests that its wide acceptance will lead to other tragedies like 9/11. This conviction parallels the argument made by Yasmeen and Markowic, which suggests that Muslims exclude themselves from the majority through the process of victimization. The authors argue that a minority chooses to exclude the majority in order to change the society (pp.2-3). This strand accuses Muslims of taking part in a global conspiracy against the West through distracting western authorities and non-Muslim citizens from being alert, so that they can plan other terrorist attacks.

Therefore, "Menace of 9/11 Myths" reverts the proclaimed media promotion of the tolerance towards Muslims through their accusation of Muslims for the terrorist attacks of 9/11. This form of Islamophobia advocates hatred against this minority group and sets the article in a very prejudicial light.

A similar strand is present in Michael Starr's "'Muslim' show takes on 9/11," published in *NYP* on 30 December 2011. The title of this article is ambiguous as the author indicates a show that is being prepared for the 10th anniversary of 9/11, and at the same time he refers to the emotional and fake show, that is put by Muslims in expressing exaggerated sentiments of their being victims of the 9/11 aftermath. He even places 'Muslim' in reverted commas to question whether this show is performed by real Muslims, as they are Americans and have other backgrounds than Muslims from the Arab world. The TV show is called "All-American Muslim" through which the journalist emphasizes a different kind of Muslim.

Throughout the article, Starr uses a mocking style in reporting on the American-Muslim interviews where they claim that terrorists 'hijacked' their religion, and now they have to deal with the bitter consequences. It is an implied tone and objection to the acceptance of the theory of victimization of Muslims after 9/11. There is no reference to academic works, just Starr's subjective opinion expressed in his article.

The last two articles, analyzed above, are written in an extremely prejudicial tone, derogatory towards Muslims and blaming them for the 9/11 attacks. The journalists condemn the acceptance of the victimization narrative and call Americans to be alert for Muslims, as they pose a threat.

Islam's Dunces, Bigotry Against Muslims

This section will focus on another form of Islamophobia found in the analyzed articles, namely the bigotry against Muslims through mocking Islam's backwardness. Here, the examination will try to reveal how journalists construct Muslims' image as dunces.

At first sight an innocent discussion on the need of modernizing an old Islamic religion turns into bigotry against Muslims, as it leads the believers of this notion to various forms of prejudice against Islam and the rejection of Muslim values. By stating that Islam

needs to be reformed and modernized, many prominent writers suggest that the West is much further developed and superior to the backward Muslims.

Friedman is one of the *NYT* journalists who promotes this notion, and who sees it as a victory over terrorism. He calls it the 'war of ideas' in most of his articles. The title of the article "War of Ideas" sets the aggressive and combative tone of the whole piece. 'War' is associated with military maneuvers or combat, whereas 'ideas' refer to an intellectual capacity. Its concept, reminiscent of Joseph Nye's soft power used by America during the Cold War, is Friedman's attempt to convince the readers and perhaps even all Muslims that Islam needs to undergo a 'war of ideas.' The term was officially defined 6 years after the article was published, because of the co-existence of two schools of thought on how the U.S. coalition should win the existing war of ideas against al-Qaeda and their partners. The first underlines the power of public diplomacy and the second calls on treating it as a real war aiming at eradicating the opponents and their legacy (Antulio J. Echevarria II, "Wars of Ideas and *The* War of Ideas," June 2008). Friedman clearly leans towards the second definition and calls Muslims for action to change Islam.

The only way to win the ongoing war on terror, Friedman states, is to change it to a conflict among Muslims who need to challenge their outdated teachings and modernize their religion. However, he clarifies that this war is not religious, but rather it is "a war between the future and the past, between development and underdevelopment, of authors of crazy conspiracy theories versus those espousing rationality." He continues his call to Arabs and Muslims for action by arguing that only they can win it, of course with the U.S. encouragement of the progressives. Friedman's barbed criticism of Islam is evident in this proclamation. To strengthen his point, he refers to the Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn, who argued that Islam missed 'the Enlightenment or the Reformation,' the processes necessary for the church-state separation and for the implementation of 'modernity, democracy and

tolerance' into societal and political systems. This is a clear message that Islam is both an undeveloped religion and a system which needs reformation in order to be assimilated in the American context, and in the West.

To summarize Friedman's stance, Islam is depicted as backward, old, and in need of modernization. There is no plea to fellow American citizens who are Muslim but there is 'us' and 'them;' and if 'they' cooperate, the West will win and modernize Islam to solve the problem of terrorism. Friedman uses the Orientalist tone and dichotomy, excoriated by Said and other academics already in 1979, which places 'us' as good and 'them' as worse (Orientalism 54). It is ironic, as by distancing himself from the inferior and backward Islam, it is Friedman's reporting that needs modernization.

A similar strand is taken by Friedman in his next article called "Death to Dictators," published on December 15, 2002, where the concept of the war of ideas returns to the discussion. Already in the title "Death to Dictators," the reporter personalizes the subject of the Iranian students' protest from the article, which is originally a dictatorship. The journalist uses 'dictators' as he aims at specific persons and not the system. In this way, he singles out dictators instead of aiming at something too abstract to kill. Therefore, he presents an easier problem to solve, as dictators can be killed but the system, even if abolished, leaves its believers behind throughout generations. His articles on Islam usually have an aggressive tone and this one is no different.

Friedman writes about the Iranian students' protest and expresses his astonishment at their change of cries from 'Death to America' and 'Death to the Great Satan' to 'Death to Dictatorship.' The journalist's subjectivity is evident throughout the whole article, as he explains to the readers that it is a great accomplishment that Iranian students finally have "identified their real problem as their own bad mullahs, not outsiders - and their real solution as true democracy, not some rigged Islamic version." He pleads to other Arab Muslims to

understand that "it is their own autocrats, religious fanatics and education systems that are holding them back, not America." Realizing that, will 'cure the madness of 9/11,' as he calls it. It is thus necessary for Muslims and Arabs to understand that it is their own fault that they are held 'back.' Such offensive allegations directed at Islam's teachings originate in Friedman's view of Islam as one religion with the same old and backward teachings. Friedman is undoubtedly painting a negative and prejudiced image of Arab Muslims in his reporting.

In addition, the concept of the 'war of ideas' is also employed in the claim that 9/11 triggered 'the conversation' among Arabs Muslims. He believes that such a movement has existed for years but just recently, more courageous Muslims started to call for a change of Islam in public. By mentioning the anonymous calls for "Death to the old lies," the journalist implies that Islamic religion spreads old and backward teachings filled with lies. To support his claim, he chooses an example of a similar accusation made by a Saudi columnist Abdullah Abu Sameh in *Okaz* directed at Muslim extremists who are blamed in the article for poisoning their youth with lies and wrong interpretations of Jihad. This columnist pleads for the re-education of the Muslim youth, a plea present in all of Friedman's articles analyzed in this research. By giving a voice to a local columnist, his stance is strengthened and the urgency of re-education or modernization of Islam is emphasized.

Friedman can be called the representative of *NYT* in reporting on Muslims, due to his numerous pieces on this topic. However, as a journalist, he acts unprofessionally by exhibiting so much of his personal intolerance and bigotry against Islam. This article clearly shows signs of Islamophobia.

Friedman demonstrates the same prejudice against Islam in the article published on March 3, 2005 and titled "Brave, Young and Muslim," where he re-claims that both the Muslim religion and culture are in need of modernization. The article's title implies the

anomaly of putting these three attributes next to each other through the usage of the conjunction 'and,' which creates a distance between 'Muslim,' and 'Brave' and 'Young.' Instead of using the title of "Young and Brave Muslims,' Friedman suggests that it is unusual for Muslims to be Muslim and young and brave at the same time. He further defines 'brave' as speaking against the traditional and fundamental Islamists and trying to modernize Islam in line with American values. The title thus underlines the challenge of being all three of these connotations at the same time, and the disbelief in such a paradox. This division resembles Mamdani's separation of Muslims into 'bad Muslim' and 'good Muslim.' Brave Muslims are depicted as 'good Muslims' in this article because they try to fight against terrorism by challenging backward Islam through the call for its modernization. Moreover, the journalist calls Muslim youth 'brave' if they fight for democracy, a system widely promoted by the West for decades. 'Bad Muslims' are not specified in the article but the journalist implies their relations with the non-brave Muslims.

Friedman's example of a young and brave Muslim is Ms. Manji, a young Canadian Muslim woman who was courageous enough to write a book titled *The Trouble With Islam Today*. Friedman admires her public call for "reopening [of] the gates of independent thinking" among Muslims, which will lead to Islam updated for the 21st century. Here, Friedman refers to the concept of the 'war of ideas.' In this piece, not only does he create the dichotomy of 'we' and 'them,' but he also implies that 'we,' as in America, must 'help them,' Muslims, in creating room for the reformation of Islam. Democracy and Americans are being presented as superior agents who need to help Arabs and Muslims in achieving their full potential.

Friedman asserts his conviction that Arab Muslim youth begin to challenge their religion 'out back,' and more and more of them are demanding to have these discussions 'out front.' The choice of the wording 'out back' is used as a reference to unofficial, underground

conversations which one day will become 'out front,' meaning that it will affect mainstream Islam in the near future. In addition, it is remarkable that the journalist constantly makes a distinction between the U.S. and Muslims' 'part of the world.' By doing so, he excludes Muslims living in the West. He refers solely to the Middle East, as if this is the only part of the world Muslims may 'own' and rule with their 'backward' religious convictions.

The whole article is very subjective, as the story is based on personal encounters of Friedman with Arab-Muslim youth who are in the need of westernization. He points out that this development is a significant turning point in history, as until 9/11, all America "cared about was that their pumps were open and their prices low, and that they be nice to the Israelis." Moreover, he states that as long as this agreement was in place, Muslim Arabs "could treat their women however they wanted, they could write about America in their newspapers however they wanted, and they could preach intolerance of other religions all they wanted." This negative depiction of Muslims emphasizes, as suggested by the journalist, the urgency of a change within 'their world,' within Islam and their culture. The relations between the U.S. and Middle East were peaceful in the past due to the two-sided oil and political benefits. This claim is also confirmed by Mamdani, who states that the U.S. closely cooperated with Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan in the period of the Cold War, and their policy was to collaborate 'by all means necessary' (13). By adding this fact to the article, Friedman points not only to the wrongdoings of the U.S. foreign policy, but also to the long history of the hostile customs of Islam which, according to him, need to be urgently altered and modernized. In this way he paints a very negative image of the Islamic states, their religion and laws.

Friedman's concluding warning is that if Americans do not provide Arab Muslims with an opportunity to freely discuss the possible transformation of Islam, they are asking for another 9/11. This statement is an ideal example of the orientalist and even imperious

demeanor that numerous historians have described in their works. The belief in the superiority of the West and in the necessity of helping the inferior natives in modernizing their lives, has been the main catalyst for the processes of imperialism and colonization.

A direct mockery of Muslims is expressed also in "Dubai and Dunces," a piece written on March 15, 2006 and continuing Friedman's epilogue on the necessity of the 'war of ideas' within Islam. Its title, "Dubai and Dunces" forecasts the negative tone of the article with regard to the Muslim-Arab world by calling them explicitly 'dunces.' The title splits the subjects into two groups: Dubai, representative of modern and progressive Muslim-Arabs, and dunces, the backward rest. It is a very strong and direct attack on all Muslims, who in the eyes of the journalist, do not want to modernize, and therefore westernize, the Islamic religion.

Throughout the article, Muslim civilization is painted as "falling deeper and deeper into the grip of crackpot clerics, tin-pot dictators, violent mobs and madmen like bin Laden and Saddam." Friedman also reminisces on the theory of the clash of civilizations through quoting an Arab-American psychiatrist, Dr. Wafa Sultan who proclaims in an interview with Al Jazeera that the current clash is between 'two eras,' between modernity and Middle Ages, between 'the civilized and the primitive.' This clash is further summarized as a clash between ideologies of liberties and despotism. The use of the term 'clash' and the denial of its definition as a clash of religions or a clash of civilizations, is a reaction to the ongoing academic debate initiated by Albert Camus in 1946, later examined by Bernard Lewis in 1990, and elaborated by Huntington in his book *Clash of Civilizations* from 1996.

Friedman assures the readers of the existence of the clash within Islam, by clarifying what an Arab-American professional described as the existence of the clash between western values and the old and ignorant Islamic teachings. In his strident criticism, Friedman disputes that many Muslims are aware of the fact that their Islamic civilization also does not follow global developments in disciplines such as 'science, education, industry and innovation.' He

calls Dubai, an optimistic bridge, as Dubaians build their future 'on butter not guns,' and engage in stable and fruitful international relationships instead of terror networks. Moreover, the society of Dubai "nurtures success, not suicide," as he states. Muslims and Arabs are thus one and the same group from which Dubaians are a better and an exemplary kind. In Friedman's eyes, all Arabs and Muslims should follow this example and embrace the future, which equates with cooperation with the U.S. It is a very short-sighted and opinionated tone with which the journalist chose to persuade readers of his convictions.

To conclude, all analyzed articles from this section demonstrate the journalists' prejudiced attitude towards Islam and Muslims. Their reporting on 9/11 related issues is filled with contradictions of the superior and further developed America, as opposed to the ignorant, uneducated and backward dunces of Islam. It is a harsh and subjective criticism, which should never have been published. It demonstrates the unprofessional writings of the biased journalists.

Hatred Against Muslims

The last theme analyzed in this chapter is the hatred against Muslims. This section will examine through which methods, the *NYT* and *NYP* journalists implement this element of Islamophobia in their reporting on Arab Muslims.

The first analyzed article from the *NYP*, titled "Save the 9/11 Museum," written by the columnist Adam Brodsky and published on May 14 2006, laments that the 9/11 Museum must be built because the majority of the American youth does not know what 9/11 entails. It is remarkable that the journalist compares the lack of remembrance of 9/11 with the circumstances of the Holocaust, which remains unrecognized by many Arabs, as he claims. He expresses his wrath at the fact that multifarious Jews and historians spent time and efforts

on writing on the Holocaust so that the world remembers it. He is annoyed that still, "many folks have doubts, especially in the Arab world." According to Mamdani, the genocides of the Holocaust often became involved in post-9/11 discussions in America (*Good Muslim, Bad Muslim* 11). For an outside observer, this comparison seems extreme and outlandish. However, Mamdani mentions in his book that both of the events were aimed at civilians. Moreover, American media compares Osama bin Laden's vile character with the ailing personage of Adolf Hitler. The fate of the 9/11 victims is also presented as resembling the unthinkable genocide of Jews, conducted between 1933 and 1945. Brodsky is clearly influenced by the ongoing American discourse on the Holocaust narrative. Nevertheless, by echoing the 9/11-Holocaust comparison, Brodsky evokes associations of the Arab Muslim world with religious intolerance of Jews and a serious threat to non-Muslims. This type of Islamophobia is extremely dangerous and can lead to physical violence and discrimination against Muslims in America. The journalist's comparison of 9/11 to the Holocaust, and the mention of its repudiation among most Arabs and Muslims, is constructed on an implied emphasis on the inferiority and abomination of Islam.

The journalist's belief that most Muslims do not recognize the Holocaust and therefore are intolerant of Jews is contradicted by numerous scholars preceding Brodsy's article. Sayyid, for example, argues in *Thinking through Islamophobia* that antisemitism is a product of the West and not of Islam or Middle East. He claims that Muslims have always lived in harmony with Jews and other religious representatives. He adds that "we have had despotism and dictatorship, but never had fascism or Nazism" (5). Moreover, according to the author antisemitism is a tool in the hands of anti-Muslim authorities, who express Nazism and fascism in the form of Islamophobia (5). This notion insinuates that the western media are led by an agenda-setting conspiracy, and therefore everything that is published is fueled by lies.

Furthermore, Brodsky sees the 9/11 museum as a representative of 'clear memories' and 'honest history,' as a motivator for America's domestic sharpness and aggressiveness abroad. In addition, he argues that "any move that allows that memory to fade will help administer sleeping pills to Americans and undermine our [the U.S.] defense." He sees the 9/11 museum as a symbol of American memory and defense against terrorism within the country and abroad. This suggests the need of constantly being awake as an American and paying attention to the abnormal behavior of terrorist suspects, identified as Arabs and Muslims in America. Brodsky clearly supports the concept of building the 9/11 Museum at Ground Zero and by his choice of metaphors, he places a negative light on the Arab world and Muslims. He emphasizes that Americans are persistent in their 'Never again' attitude. This statement is directed at all readers, but the Arabs and Muslims are certainly distinguished and addressed in particular.

Hatred against Muslims is expressed in this article through various means. The most striking is the implication suggesting that most Muslims do not recognize the Holocaust, and therefore do not mourn its victims and are unable to draw conclusions from this tragedy. Such ignorance creates a sense of dislike and distance between the readers and described subjects. In addition, Brodsky creates a correlation of Muslims' rejection of the Holocaust narrative with their supposed intolerance of Jews and other religious minorities. Most American readers of this article will certainly become angered at Muslims presented in this Jihadist way. The last mechanism used for this theme is an attempt to convince the readers that Americans should be watchful as they are united in the decision of 'Never again.' This calls on the national non-Muslim unity and on their alert suspicion of all Muslims. This article demonstrates the worst form of Islamophobia, as it implies the need of active and public discrimination, based on one's religious connotations.

Conclusion

The analysis of *NYT* and *NYP* demonstrates the use of Islamophobic elements in the news reporting on Arab Muslims after 9/11. All three elements of Islamophobia: the fear of and threat posed by Muslims, hatred and bigotry against Islam and its followers, are present in the articles. The theme of hatred was found, surprisingly, only in the conservative newspaper, whereas the liberal journalists focused on the threat and ridiculing of Islam.

It is also remarkable in the *NYT* what a difference there is in Friedman's reporting on the Muslim world in the context of the Gulf war and 9/11. It is clear that for the journalist, before 9/11, Muslims were just a religious minority group. Whereas in the post-9/11 context, Muslims became backward, evil and an inferior enemy of the West. Friedman's coverage places Muslims and Islam in a negative light, by calling them mainly backward and in need of enlightenment and modernity. He attests the concept of 'war of ideas' which was echoed by numerous journalists in their reporting on terrorism ever since 9/11. He also implements a few personal political and religious statements into his articles, which have been mirrored in academic discourses in the last few decades. These parallels prove that Friedman is acquainted with the academic discussions on the topics of Arabs, Muslims and Islam. Nevertheless, his personal criticism is highlighted throughout all of the articles by using terms of bigotry against Islam. This form of Islamophobia in the *NYT* places Arabs and Muslims in the lowest societal class and labels them as backward dunces unwilling to modernize. This news framing is a vicious method of branding Muslim Arabs through their religion.

In the case of Arab Muslims in America, media framing or branding through the lens of religion has been used by both the *NYP* and *NYT* in the articles on the 9/11 attacks. In these articles, religion is the core category of differentiation of Arab Muslims in America.

Conclusion

Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past.

–George Orwell

This thesis argues that media influence and form a society. By choosing two U.S. newspapers, and two critical moments in Arab Muslim history, only a small part of the Muslim and Arab American journey has been covered. Nevertheless, it is a tiny representation of the methods the media use in reporting on minority groups and their impact on the lives of millions of people. Although there are limitations to the choice of primary and secondary sources used for this paper, it also needs to be acknowledged that through the use of search terms in order to find primary sources, not all articles written on the topic have been analyzed. The method chosen for this research is selective. Still, it offers an analysis of relevant articles on Muslims and Arabs in the context of 9/11 and Gulf War, and provides informative and objective insights. Nevertheless, the conclusion of this thesis is based on the selected articles and does not aim to generalize the results. It relies however on these articles and newspapers as qualitative representatives of the U.S. media.

The analysis of both conservative and liberal newspapers proved that both *NYT* and *NYP* use the main elements of Islamophobia. In the articles on the Gulf War, branding Islam and Muslims is identified through its comparison with the global power of America and the West. The examined articles show that through the discussion of American supremacy and its Christian roots, the U.S. is illustrated as a highly-developed, modern country, which sets an example to the inferior Arab states. Even in the last analyzed article from 1998 on the Gulf War, where the decline of the West is being predicted, the newspaper underlines the superiority of the U.S. without indicating a rise of a new one, such as the often suggested

Islamic radicalism. The latter is argued and introduced in the articles from the post-9/11 era. In the 9/11 coverage of *NYT* and *NYP*, the journalists change their brand strategy and mark Muslims as a threat, and Islam as backward and in urgent need of modernization.

Moreover, the *NYP* introduces the theory of Muslims' victimization into the discussion. Arguments that Muslims create a real threat by acting as victims contradict multifarious scholars who argue that because of the media promotion of Islamophobia, American society will suffer great losses, such as the lack of domestic harmony. The *NYP* journalists contradict Said's indication of Islam as a scapegoat in the post-Cold War unsatisfactory and distressing political, social, and financial world order (Covering Islam xv). There are clearly two schools of thought, and the *NYP* uses the accusative-of-Muslims conviction to spread a threat of Islam among its American readers.

On the other hand, the victimization narrative has been defended by other scholars. Peter Bergen, for instance, agrees in *United States of Jihad: Investigating America's Homegrown Terrorists* with these accusations and claims that the American government is spreading an 'endemic paranoia' and is terrorizing Muslims based on their appearance and religion. Also Mamdani argues that 'bad Muslims' are blamed by the media of terrorism and that 'good Muslims' are expected to "clear their names and consciences of this horrible crime" (*Race and Arab Americans*, pp. 2-3). This leads to the conviction that such terrorizing is justified. Examples of this categorization include many cases of discrimination against Arab Muslims, which have been recorded in the 9/11 backlash and described extensively by Yvonne Haddad (Haddad, *Muslims in the West: From Sojourners to Citizens*, 174). The analyzed articles attempt to turn this complex discourse into a one-sided accusation of Arab Muslims as a threat to America and the West.

Another example of the misrepresentation of Muslims, found in the articles which have been analyzed, is the presentation of Islam as a homogenous religion, which also

represents its followers. The journalists imply that Islam is one religion with the same teachings around the world. Their presentation confirms essential elements of the concept of Islamophobia discussed by Said, for example. According to him, Islam is used and described as a 'single thing,' and therefore it has become 'part fiction, part ideological label, part minimal designation of a religion called Islam' (Covering Islam x). Such depiction of *NYT* and *NYP* supports the claim that the majority of Americans misunderstand what Islam really entails. That is why the complexity of this religion needs to be recognized and acknowledged in order to achieve a societal harmony between mainstream Americans and Muslims, a plea argued by Fowler et al. (62). Jamal and Naber have described such simplification of Islam as the cause of racialization of Arab Muslims, which in turn is linked to American racism, and in the case of Arab Muslims to Islamophobia. This correlation leads to a conclusion, that all of the analyzed articles have used the main elements of Islamophobia, as none of them makes a distinction between certain types of Muslims and Islam.

Numerous scholars argue that the process of racialization of Arab Muslims correlates to the phenomenon of Islamophobia. In this context, knowing that the United States is a country constructed on racial conscience, every discussion of minority group will include the discussion of race. Nevertheless, as Jamal and Naber point out in *Race and Arab Americans Before and After 9/11*, Arab Americans arrived in the country which never created a new racial category for them. They are placed with the choice of being "white," "black" or "other" on the immigration forms, and also forms provided to them by employers and schools, for example. The writers also claim that the fact that there is no separate racial category box for them, is symbolical for their exclusion from American society (80). In this context, all of the analyzed articles include the elements of racialization, and therefore of Islamophobia. The oblivious reporting of the *NYT* and *NYP* journalists, can also be interpreted as their lack of

knowledge on the issues of Islam. Such incompetent reporting leads to dangerous social reactions and results in targeting Arab Muslims in America.

In addition, the media have been criticized by academics for their coverage of Islam even before the 9/11 attacks. Although, American Arab Muslims were perceived as invisible in the pre-9/11 media coverage, Huntington indicates in *Clash of Civilizations* that after the decline of the Soviet Union, Islam became perceived as the main enemy of the West. By some authorities and media, Islam was seen as the upcoming superpower, which tried to replace America's high status. This theory of the rising power of Islam is absent in any Gulf War coverage analyzed in this thesis, but is clearly present in articles on 9/11. In addition, American Muslims are excluded from pre-9/11 reporting but became the main focus with their religion in the 9/11 coverage. This shift from invisible citizens to visible targets also demonstrates the changing strategy of both newspapers after September 11, 2001.

In the 9/11 aftermath, U.S. media have discussed Islamophobia on a daily basis. This sudden visibility of Muslims in the media has been used to highlight their victimization and present them in a negative way. America and the West are promotors of democracy, equality and freedom, and that is why the issues of minorities are so complex to solve. For mainstream white Americans, as called by Elaasar, the phenomenon of this increased Muslim visibility and victimization resembles overly exaggerated reactions and sensitivity of Muslims to the fact of being a minority, and not of being treated as such. It may be news framing, but it can also indicate an opportunity to discuss these issues. According to the analyzed media presentation, it is the case of Muslims willing to change the western values' system and adjust the West to the Islamic traditional culture.

Another theme found in the articles is creating a sense of threat of Muslims. This theme has been discussed by Brian Bowe, Shahira Fahmy and Wayne Wanta, who state that some constructed links of Muslims to "crime, terrorism, danger, and risk" underline terrorism

and consequently endanger American civil rights and security ("Missing religion: Second level agenda setting and Islam in American newspapers" 638). Bowe et al. argue that despite Muslims' repudiation of terrorism and the context of domestic terrorist attacks, Muslims are still singled out and seen as a prevailing danger to national security (638). Richards and Omidvar add that the most dangerous consequence of spreading such a notion is that Americans have become afraid of their neighbors, who through an Arabic or Muslim appearance are automatically labeled as suspects full of hatred and violence against the West (226). Therefore, such media presentation of Muslims works as fuel to fire the hatred against Arab Muslims in America.

Richards and Omidvar correlate Muslims with a threat and being backward, and argue that the discourse accusing Arab Muslims for being enemies of the West, presents them as "culturally and psychologically primitive prisoners of their emotions, trapped in a patriarchal vise, and locked into jihad (interpreted as sanctifying bloodthirsty violence against all westerners)" (*Muslims and American Popular Culture*, 221). This notion therefore connects the lack of knowledge and education with crimes and has been supported by journalists of the analyzed articles. In some cases it is true but making such generalizations of Islam and Muslims illustrates the pure prejudice of the journalists.

Furthermore, the binary opposition of East/West, described by Said, has also been visible in the post-9/11 coverage. This is also exemplified by President George W. Bush's division of the world into two camps: 'you are either with or against us' (news conference on November 6, 2001). President Bush's public statements on terrorists only accelerated the spread of Islamophobia in America. In one of his speeches, he accused Islamic fundamentalists of using terror "as a weapon to try to shake the conscience of the free world" (Richards and Omidvar 221). The President's statement was echoed in media, and as a result most Americans associate Islam with 'despotism, sexism, and oppression' and see this

religion as contradicting western values. Analyzed articles argue a belief of the majority of non-Muslim Americans that no Muslim country can practice democracy and therefore cannot be modernized. Muslims' rejection of modernization is seen by Paul Saba as a revolt, and it is compared with an Islamic revolution aiming at establishing a societal system based in traditional Islamic culture. Saba argues that their main goal is to ban Western values because the West is believed to have brought the Muslim world into decline. He continues that such a movement has met with success in the Middle East and as an example, Iran's revolution against the Shah and American imperialism was possible due to Islamic unity (Saba, par. 8-9). The conviction that Islam can unify the Arab world is quickly dismissed in one of the analyzed articles on the Gulf War from the *NYP*. Here the theory is contradicted by the journalist through his claim that the Muslim religion is too weak in comparison to the West's power.

To summarize, the newspapers report on the Gulf War in a political way. The journalists mainly focus on U.S. foreign affairs, rather than on the religious group of Arab Muslims. This shows that there has been a shift, post 9/11, in the categorization of Arab Muslims in America, which moves them from being an invisible ethnic and perhaps even class group in America to being a religious, hostile and inferior Middle Eastern minority group. This change is noticeable in articles, where Islamophobia was used to convince readers of the differentiation of Arab Muslims from the rest of Americans. Therefore, the right for their discrimination or exclusion from the American society and its benefits is implied. The Gulf War articles represent an interesting phenomenon: they confirm the theory of invisibility of Muslims on the media agenda before 9/11. "After the War: Murk of Politics Obscures Baker's Path to Peace in the Middle East" is an excellent example of the journalist's shift in reporting on Islamic religion, as there are barely any religious references in this article in comparison to the pieces written by the same author after 9/11.

In the aftermath of 9/11, news stories of terrorist attacks, on Osama bin Laden and Muslims' complots on the WTC gave a rise to stigmatization of Arab Muslims in America through the processes of Islamophobia, including their racialization. One of the strong commonalities of the *NYT* articles on 9/11 is the belief in the need of Islam's reformation as a solution against terrorism. Friedman has written numerous times on the 'war of ideas,' which, he argues, has replaced the war on terror. This term was picked up by more journalists from *NYT* and describes the 'ideological war within Islam' (Richard A. Clarke in April 25, 2004 Sunday article, "The Wrong Debate on Terrorism").

In the *NYP*, on the other hand, the articles focus mostly on the 'enemy within' and direct their coverage to the threat, and even hatred, of Muslims. Friedman clearly shares the views of Richards and Omidvar, who claim that the "Islamic world has been marked by a long period of backwardness and comparative powerlessness (…) and it has fallen out of step with contemporary global culture, an uncomfortable situation for both sides" (221).

Said's summary of the media's attitude towards Islam confirms that the right depicts it as 'barbarism' and the left as 'medieval theocracy' (Covering Islam xv). This theory was confirmed by this research. Indeed, the analyzed conservative articles present Islam as a barbarian, hostile religion and culture with customs of oppressing their women. The liberal newspapers, on the other hand, depict the Muslim religion mainly as a backward and antique church-state system.

It can be concluded that Islam is presented in the U.S. media in the form of an allegory to backwardness, leading to crimes and which needs a life lesson to become modern and co-exist in peace in the West. Moreover, in these two newspapers, Muslims are generally described as less educated, unemployed and terrorists. The main metaphors used in association with the Muslim world refer to the Middle East as 'out back,' and to the 'war of ideas.' 'War of ideas' in this context is actually a hyperbole indicating the movement within

Islam but in a negative and aggressive way. The denouement of most pieces is that the solution to the problem of terrorism is the modernization and therefore westernization of Islam, followed by constant watchfulness of suspicious Arab Muslims.

The analysis of the U.S. media, represented in this paper by selected articles of the *NYT* and *NYP*, has demonstrated a clear shift in reporting on Arab Muslims in the pre- and post-9/11 period. This change is marked by the use of several core elements of Islamophobia, and therefore, defines religion as a differentiation category of this minority group. To answer the main research question of this paper, Muslim religion has certainly become a new dimension of differentiation of Arab Muslims.

Although this research paper cannot change the way media frame news stories, it is certainly a valuable source of information on what influence and possible consequences mass media have on a particular society and its minority groups. The case study of Arab Muslims, analysed in this paper, provides an overview of a probable social view construction based on information gathered from the mass media coverage. Additionally, it should be seen as an instructive set of guidelines for journalists and communicators, which demonstrates how a society is being formed by constructing news stories, and indirectly by the social perception of a particular news subject. Literary research also shows that there is a strong relationship between media coverage and creating opinions of the readers. Through being cautious with the tone of an article, the positioning of the story in the newspaper and the frequency and volume of the news coverage, one can easily draw a conclusion on the journalist's intentions and political stand.

Hopefully, readers look further than just at one source of information, and compare what several media angles have to report on a particular subject, in order to create one's own opinion instead of copying a journalist's one. In the spirit of Thomas Hardy's claim, "[t]here is a condition worse than blindness, and that is, seeing something that isn't there," one should

realize that there are always more than one side to a story. Moreover, America is a multicultural country and every decade will bring social changes either due to political or cultural circumstances. The true art lies in being as well informed as possible in order to draw "correct" conclusions and create a truth-worthy opinion.

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