

**The Stereotyping of Muslims:
An Analysis of *The New York Times*' and *The
Washington Times*' Coverage of Veiling and the
Muhammad Cartoon Controversy**

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Summary:

This thesis investigates the stereotypical portrayal of Muslims in the American media. More specifically, it explores the relative importance of stereotype theory, prejudice theory and the stereotype content model in the media's remaking and reinforcing of common stereotypes of Muslims. This study argues that Muslims were stereotypically portrayed in *The New York Times*' and *The Washington Times*' coverage of the Muhammad cartoons controversy and the tradition of veiling among Muslim women. The thesis looks into the common themes and stereotypes found in the coverage of these two topics. Furthermore, the thesis argues the stereotype content model can explain how prejudice towards Muslims as an out-group varies depending on the portrayed media case and stereotype. In this sense, the variety of stereotypes found about Muslims confirms Fiske and colleague's stereotype content model, where stereotypes are mixed and vary along the dimensions of warmth and competence. Finally, the thesis shows how a variety of media tools (i.e. framing, priming, agenda setting etc.) influence the American media audience's perceptions of Muslims as an out-group.

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1 Introduction

Over the past two decades, the American media has produced a significant amount of news coverage on Islam, the Middle East and Muslim related cases. Events such as the Rushdie Affair, the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the Islamic scarf controversy, the Muhammad cartoons crisis, and violent episodes in the Middle East have intensified the media's spotlight on Muslims. Many of these media stories present the American news audiences with a variety of Muslim stereotypes, from the Muslim terrorist and martyr to the victimized veiled woman and religious fanatic. The mass media is an influential factor when it comes to determining how the average American view Muslims and the stereotypical beliefs they have about them. It is therefore important to understand that the way media portray Muslims affect the common stereotypes Americans have about them and how they relate to them on a daily basis.¹

Ever since the Middle East became dominated by Muslims and the Crusades that started in the year 1095, Islam has been seen as a spiritual and military enemy of the West.² With the Age of Enlightenment in the 17th and 18th centuries, the West's knowledge and understanding of Islam became somewhat more balanced. Due to the invention of new technology in the West and the decline of the Ottoman Empire in the East, Muslims were no longer considered a major threat. The West started promoting scientific and intellectual thought and was skeptic to fanaticism, faith, and religious traditions. For many Westerners the West came to represent development, dynamic, and enlightenment while the Middle East and Islam became synonymous with disintegration, repression, and stagnation. The stereotyping of Muslims and Islam as backward, violent, and unconstructive has been widespread ever since.³ Although the stereotyping of Muslims has been an ongoing practice for thousands of years, this view became more heavily imprinted in the minds of Americans especially after the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on September 11th, 2001. The stereotypical images of Arabs and Muslims in the United States have been persistent, and the main difference between the past and the present lies mainly in the means, reasons, degree, and content of these stereotypical images. For instance, in the past Arabs and Muslims were largely described as "erotic," "primitive," "ignorant," "slave traders," and other insulting

¹ Cesari, Jocelyne. "Securitization and Religious Divides in Europe: Muslims In Western Europe After 9/11: Why the term Islamophobia is more a predicament than an explanation," *GSRL-Paris and Harvard University Submission to the Changing Landscape of Citizenship and Security 6th PCRD of European Commission* (2006):39-41.

² Okkenhaug, Inger Marie, "Midtøstens religion og kultur i Europeiske Fremstillinger," in *Fiendebilder: historie og samtid*, eds. Per Steinar Raaen og Olav Skevik, (Verdal: Stiklestad Nasjonale Kultursenter, 2007) 73-74.

³ *Ibid.*, 77.

terms. After 9/11 terms such as “terrorist,” “fundamentalist,” and “blood-thirsty,” were more commonly ascribed to Arabs and Muslims.⁴

When asked about their views of the news media by pollsters in November and December 2001, two-thirds of Muslim Americans characterized the mainstream media as unfair in their portrayals of Muslims and Islam. In 2003, three-fourths of Muslim Americans considered the media to be unfair in this respect and just as many considered Hollywood entertainment to be unfair to Muslims and their religion.⁵ The stereotypical and negative portrayal of Muslims in the American media is often a consequence of lacking knowledge about Islam as a faith, the Quran as a Holy Scripture, and Muslim culture in general. The United States has experienced increased Muslim immigration over the last 40 years, but many Americans have little contact with Muslims on a daily basis, which results in a naive acceptance of the media’s stereotypical Muslim.⁶ Negative stereotypes and characteristics are often placed upon out-groups, and the “others” are most likely to be cultural, racial or religious minorities that stand out as different from the norm. It is not their ethnic or cultural distinction per se that creates the negative image, but explicit imagination and stereotyping about the “others.” Scarce experiences with the minority group results in that the “others” seem threatening and create a feeling of insecurity among the majority group. Social and economic issues like increased competition in the labor market and housing market as well as political safety issues can also leave room for acceptance of stereotypes.⁷

This thesis argues that Muslims were stereotypically portrayed in *The New York Times*’ and *The Washington Times*’ coverage of the Muhammad cartoons controversy and the tradition of veiling among Muslim women. The current paper integrates prejudice theory and stereotype theory as the implicit theoretical approach to investigate the stereotyping process against Muslims in the media. Furthermore, the thesis argues that the variety of stereotypes found about Muslims confirms Fiske and colleague’s stereotype content model, where stereotypes are mixed and vary along the dimensions of warmth and competence. Stereotypes are a mix of more or less socially desirable traits which elicit distinct emotions (i.e. pity, envy, admiration and contempt) within the in-group. The stereotype content model proves to be a

⁴ Ridouani, Driss, “The Representation of Arabs and Muslims in Western Media,” *Ruta: revista universitària de treballs acadèmics* 3.1 (2011): 1 – 2. <<http://ddd.uab.cat/pub/ruta/20130740n3a7.pdf>>

⁵ Nacos, Brigitte L. and Torres-Reyna, Oscar, *Fueling our Fears: Stereotyping, Media Coverage and Public Opinion of Muslim Americans*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007) 101.

⁶ Trevino, Melina, “Islam Through Editorial Lenses: How American Elite Newspapers Portrayed Muslims Before and After September 11,” *Journal of Arab & Muslim Media Research* 3.1 (2010): 3-17.

⁷ Niemi, Einar, “Fiendebilder og Norsk minoritetspolitikk,” in *Fiendebilder: historie og samtid*, eds. Per Steinar Raaen og Olav Skevik, (Verdal: Stiklestad Nasjonale Kultursenter, 2007) 37 – 38.

good model to explain and predict how Muslim stereotypes vary along the two systematic dimensions of warmth and competence. Understanding the theory requires familiarity with the key terms of warmth and competence, and will be further explained in chapter two. Most studies conducted indicate that the mass media has a tendency to portray minorities and out-groups in a negative way.⁸ Consequently, I expect that *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* will also negatively stereotype Muslims in their coverage of veiling and the Muhammad cartoon crisis. I predict that the media will predominantly negatively cover the stereotyping of Muslims, Islam and the two cases. In addition, I expect the various Muslim stereotypes found in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* will be positioned differently on the stereotype content model. The media coverage of veiling places veiled Muslims women moderately high on the warmth dimension and relatively low on the competence dimension. The Muhammad cartoon crisis was often linked to fundamentalism and terrorism, which places Muslims low on the competence dimension as well as low on the warmth dimension.

1.1 The Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into five chapters of approximately twenty pages each, with the concluding chapter somewhat shorter. Chapter one states gives a brief introduction before stating the thesis question. Furthermore, the thesis' methodology, sources and data collection will be explained. It discusses some of the methodological challenges regarding the analysis and the significance of the research. Finally, an outline of the historiographical debate and important scholars within the field will be given.

Chapter two begin with an overview of the theoretical framework for the thesis. Gordon Allport's theory of prejudice, Walter Lippmann's notion of stereotypes and the stereotype content model developed by Fiske, Xu, Cuddy, and Glick are all important theories for this paper. As this is an analysis of American newspapers' portrayal of Muslims in the light of stereotype theory, the chapter will explain its main components before elaborating on how this theory is relevant to my analysis. Subsequently, the media's role and influence on its audience will be dealt with, as well as the explanation of framing, priming and agenda setting which are essential terms for succeeding chapters. In addition, the chapter maps out common Muslim stereotypes and why Americans portray Muslims in this way. At the end of chapter

⁸ Parker, Cherie J., *Before and After 9/11: The Portrayal of Arab Americans in U.S. newspapers*, (Orlando: University of Central Florida Press, 2008) 3.

two, the media coverage of minorities and the concepts of “us” and “them” together with how we view “others” and “out-groups” will be discussed.

Chapter three and four marks a shift in focus and presents the analysis and discussing of the two cases selected for the purposed of this thesis. In chapter three, I explore how *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* stereotyped Muslim women in their coverage of veiling. The chapter is framed within the larger question of stereotypes and prejudice, which often sets the context for reading media representation as either positive or negative. Furthermore, the purpose of this chapter is to critically examine the prejudice against Muslim women and the negative stereotypes commonly found about them. I seek to answer if my findings support Fiske and colleagues’ stereotype content model or not. Important themes and subthemes found in the articles will be examined and explained. An overview will also be given on the number of stories that involved veiling over the specific time span, and the various variables will be studied to decide if the stories that can be considered as stereotypical or negative. The media’s agenda setting, framing and priming will be referred to as they are effective media tools that influence audiences and their perceptions of people and events.

Chapter four examines the stereotyping and coverage of Muslims in the case of the Muhammad cartoons controversy. The chapter looks into how the Muhammad cartoon crisis fueled stereotypical beliefs of Muslims and thus increased prejudice against Muslims and the gap between Americans and Muslims. First the chapter gives some brief background information on media caricatures and the *Jyllands-Posten* case, before moving over to an in-depth discussion and analysis of the case. The chapter will look into media tools, themes and common stereotypes found in the coverage. The analysis for chapter four will be carried out in the same manner as chapter three.

The first part of the concluding chapter will reaffirm the thesis statement, discuss the issues, and make some conclusions regarding the media’s stereotyping of Muslims from chapter three and four. Furthermore, chapter five sums up how my findings and interpretations are relevant to the stereotype content model. Finally, the conclusion will point to areas for future research regarding the media stereotyping of Muslims and the study limitations for this paper.

1.2 Methodology

This study rests upon a content analysis of news articles in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* related to the coverage of veiling and the Muhammad cartoon controversy, with the aim of examining how Muslims are stereotyped and depicted to the American public. The primary sources for chapter three were newspaper articles related to veiling from 2002 - 2012. The year 2002 was preferred, since this was when an international debate arose as European countries discussed laws that banned the wearing of veils in public. For chapter three primary sources were news articles dated back to when the Muhammad cartoon crisis began in 2006 and up to the year 2012.

Due to the extensive amount that has been written about Muslims in the media it was essential to narrow down the theme and select cases that could reveal how Muslims were stereotyped. Therefore, the cases selected for this thesis were not randomly picked, but chosen because they were controversial and have been extensively covered and debated. In addition, the two cases were picked because they are fresh enough to indicate something about the current discriminatory and prejudicial climate Muslims presently find themselves in. For the purpose of the thesis, it was important to select post 9/11 cases that were not directly related to terrorism. A terrorism case would immediately position Muslims negatively on the stereotype content model, and thus prevent the demonstration of that Muslims' position on the model fluctuate depending on the portrayed stereotype in the specific media story. In lack of more appropriate cases that were from the United States, I chose international cases with broader themes that were highly relevant for America and its citizens. Selecting international cases, instead of such a devastating event as 9/11, was positive in the sense that American journalists would have personal distance to the cases and would thus be more unbiased in their reporting.

Various types of media outlets like television, radio shows, and movies would be interesting examining as primary sources, but I chose two newspapers due to timing, accessibility and resources available. It is important to remember that most major newspapers these days are somewhat moderate in tone as a result of market competition, the pressure to increase profits and attract more readers. Therefore, one liberal and one conservative newspaper were selected to give a more nuanced view. *The New York Times* can be seen as a relatively liberal paper. It is the third largest newspapers in the United States with a daily circulation of over 1.5 million and has been accepted world wide as the number one

international newspaper.⁹ Contrary, *The Washington Times* is a more conservative paper and has an average circulation of 100,000.¹⁰ Both newspapers have gained recognition as national papers and were picked because they have broader coverage than local newspapers. In addition, they are serious papers, emphasizing the quality of the content and the nature of the public they serve. The news coverage in large newspapers also indicates which topics Americans are interested in reading about. National newspapers reach the whole population, and based on their high numbers of readers, they are more representative of what news and information the average American citizen receives regarding Muslims. Looking at the coverage of the Mohammed cartoon controversy and veiling by *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* is an ideal situation for investigating journalistic patterns, because both papers are standard American newspapers.

The portrayal of Muslims in the media as a research topic invited for a variety of research methods. A qualitative content analysis of newspaper articles was chosen as a research method, because it was most the appropriate method for my specific thesis statement. The qualitative content analysis was preferred since it allows for a more thorough interpretation of the texts' content. Additionally, it provides a better chance of discovering not only what is openly stated in the article, but also "the latent content, the hidden material that is behind or between the words."¹¹ It also gives me a better opportunity to speculate in the possible effects the text can have on its American audience. With content analysis as research method, I could scrutinize the printouts for the exact characteristics, terms and topics relevant for this thesis. As the source material was limited to around 150 articles, this type of method better assess the characteristics I was looking for. The analysis was carried out by rereading the articles several times, and afterwards each article was placed within a table with reference to its variables like angle, source, origin, theme, stereotype and headline. This was done to more efficiently interpret the data, observe the frequency of certain tendencies and give an overview of the two cases in general. This type of grounded textual analysis allowed themes to emerge from the content through multiple readings of the articles.¹² Detailed notes were written on copies of the news items and then reread as the analysis was written. This process laid the groundwork for the analytical discussions that followed in each internal chapter. The

⁹The Associated Press, "Little change in newspaper circulation numbers," *usatoday.com*, 11 April. 2013
<<http://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2012/10/30/largest-us-newspapers/1669117/>>

¹⁰The Washington Times, "Circulation falls at most top newspapers," *washingtontimes.com*, 11 April. 2013
<<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2008/apr/29/circulation-falls-at-most-top-newspapers/>>

¹¹Berger, Arthur Asa, *Media and Communication Research Methods: An Introduction to Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, (California: SAGE Publications Inc., 2000) 179.

¹²Berkowitz, Dan, and Eko, Lyombe, "Blasphemy as Sacred Rite/Right," *Journalism Studies* 8.5 (2007): 784.

examination of the two selected cases explored the news articles' theme, angle, language and headlines, in addition to sources and what stereotype it presents of Muslims. I also looked into how often the specific themes were covered over the same timeframe across the two newspapers. This analysis showed whether there was any variation in how Muslims were portrayed depending on the news case or if a monoculture exists when it came to the coverage of Muslims.

Regarding the data collection, the main focus was to collect information that could adequately shed some light on the stereotyping of Muslims. This was done by focusing on key issues and terms related to Muslims in the media. To obtain articles related to the veiling coverage the search term "veiling" was first utilized, but as the overall search resulted in 1462 hits I had to narrow my search down. In view of that problem, data collected for the veiling topic was articles where "veil," "hijab," "headscarf" or any variations of the words was part of the headline, and "Muslim" was an additional key term found in the full text. To find articles related to the coverage of Muslims in the Muhammad cartoons controversy, I used "*Jyllands-Posten*," "Muhammad," and "cartoons" as main search terms found in the full text. The analysis included 159 newspaper articles drawn from a Lexis-Nexis search with the mentioned search terms from the mentioned time period.

1.3 Methodological Challenges

The New York Times and *The Washington Times* were chosen to reflect the American media's and Americans' attitudes in general in terms of themes covered, angle, and accepted stereotypes. To enhance the validity of the research, several newspapers would have been preferable to examine. The two cases were strategically selected, and cannot be said to cover the entire aspects of how newspapers in the United States portray all cases pertaining to Muslims and Islam. A problem with choosing two controversial cases for examination is that the media coverage will have a more negative and sceptical angle than more neutral topics. Problem related cases also decrease the opportunity of finding everyday stories about Muslims where journalists are likely to be more positive. The cases were strategically chosen for the purpose of the thesis and are not valid for generalizing, though they can tell us something about the broader tendency in American news coverage. However, it does not suggest that the practices of those two large national newspapers can be generalized to all American newspapers, the vast majority of which are small-circulation. In addition to the

methodological problems, as a Norwegian I may also have biases, which could result in drawing different conclusions than an American individual would. As a non-Muslim female I might also unconsciously have a prejudicial view on veiling, as it is a tradition difficult to understand from my own personal perspective.

1.4 The Significance of the Research

American's knowledge about other nations, cultures, religions and world event are largely drawn from the media. How the media represents various social and cultural groups can both fuel or challenge racist views and stereotypes, thus exemplifying the importance of this topic.¹³ After Christianity and Judaism, representing around 1%, Muslims make up the third largest religious group in the United States, and many observers consider Islam to be one of the fastest growing religions in the United States.¹⁴ It is therefore important to address the stereotypical coverage of Muslims, because it affects public opinion as well as how Muslims come to view themselves, their identity, and place in a largely Western run world. In addition, looking at how newspapers cover certain issues and events is vital since it reveals the specific newspaper's political and attitudinal position.¹⁵ A significant amount of work has been conducted on the prejudice against Muslims and the stereotyping of them. Lacking in previous work that take on media analysis and stereotype theory is that depending on the news case and topic the media presents various types of Muslims stereotypes. This again affects how Americans come to place them on the stereotype content model, and explains why not all Muslims are met with the same amount and type of prejudice.

¹³ Lind, Rebecca, and Danowski, James, "The Representation of Arabs in U.S. Electronic Media," in *Cultural Diversity and the U.S. Media*, eds. Kamalipour and Carilly, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998) 157.

¹⁴ Read, Jen'Nan Ghaza, and Bartkowski, John P., "To Veil or Not to Veil? A Case Study of Identity Negotiation among Muslim Women in Austin, Texas," *Gender and Society* 14.3 (2000): 396.

¹⁵ Eide, Elisabeth, and Simonsen, Anne Hege, *Mistenkelige utlendinger: minoriteter i norsk presse gjennom 100 år*, (Kristiansand: Høyskoleforlaget, 2007) 14.

1.5 Historiographical Debate

Many thousands of Muslims immigrated to the United States from the Ottoman Empire and from South Asia in the time period 1880 – 1914. In the beginning, Muslim and Arab immigrants did not easily fit into the American society, and in effort to blend in many of them gave up their cultural identity in favor of assimilating. Increased Muslim immigration, wars with Islamic countries, and the civil rights movement made Muslims establish political and social organizations to maintain and protect their ethnic and religious traditions. As a result of foreign events and the creation of Muslim organizations, Muslims became more visible in the American society than they had previously been. The Muslim immigration to the U.S. increased greatly in the 20th century and the largest numbers of immigrants derived from three main sources: South Asia, Iran, and Arabic-speaking countries. The largest groups of Muslim immigrants come from Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan. They are followed by around 300,000 Iranians and 600,000 from the Arab countries.¹⁶ Recent studies show that the majority of Muslims in the United States are university graduates, belong to the American middle-class, and include immigrants from South Asia, Africa, the Middle East, as well as converted Americans. These individuals come from all various backgrounds and many enjoy high social and economic upward mobility. Despite great assimilation effort and being a rather heterogeneous group, a very negative and narrow media focus still exists. Muslims are lumped together and stereotyped in narrow terms, disregarding their diverse ethnic background, social class, and language.¹⁷

1.5.1 The Stereotyping of Muslims is not New, but the Context is

Professor of social anthropology at the University of Oslo, Thomas Hylland Eriksen, argues in *Bak fiendebildet: Islam og verden etter 11. september*, that the image of Islam as a militant and violent religion is not something new and has been a forceful rhetoric in the West since the Middle Ages. Muslims and Christians have for long periods of time defined one another as arch enemies, condemned, harassed, and criticized the other religion as less worthy, disordered, and immoral. From both sides religious differences have been exaggerated and utilized as an excuse for territorial conquests, violence, and cultural dominance. Islam and the

¹⁶ Starck, Kenneth, "Perpetuating Prejudice: Media Portrayal of Arabs and Arab Americans," in *Media, Migration, Integration: European and North American Perspectives*, eds. Rainer Geißler, Horst Pöttker, (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2009) 186.

¹⁷ Ajrouch, Kristine J. "Global contexts and the veil: Muslim integration in the United States and France," *Sociology of Religion* 68.3 (2007): 321.

West have in fact been each other's enemies intermittently for decades. Bearing in mind the Crusades and the ousting of the Moors from Spain in 1492, there is little reason Christians should be deemed any more tolerant and peaceful than Muslims.¹⁸ Hylland Eriksen adds that enemy images are always dependent upon simplified stereotypical portrayals of the "other." From an American point of view, Islam can seem "undemocratic, gender discriminating, illiberal, underdeveloped, brutal, and religiously stagnated." From a Muslim position, the United States can be seen as "individualistic, lacking in norms and rules, immoral, arrogant, and brutal." These stereotypes and enemy images are not fixed, but transform and evolve over time as the balance of power, actors, foreign policy, and political regimes changes. He further states that the current stereotyping of Muslims is new in the way it plays out in a modern context and is a result of specific issues and current events. In the present day the enemy images, categorization, and stereotyping of Muslims has nothing to do with religion, but is instead based on assumed cultural differences and raw power politics.¹⁹

According to Hylland Eriksen, the alleged culture collision between the Muslim world and the Western world has a different form than seen between two opposing world players previously. This new ideological conflict is not between socialism and capitalism, or between two competing religions like Islam and Christianity, but in reality a conflict between liberal individualism and politicized religions like Islam.²⁰ His major argument is therefore that the new stereotyping and enemy image of Islam and Muslims seen today is a cultural phenomenon in Christian or post-Christian capitalist societies in Europe and North-America; one that has a different form and serves different interests than before.²¹ In addition, Hylland Eriksen emphasizes that this constant link between Islam as a religion and certain political and cultural positions makes it increasingly harder to be a practicing Muslim in the West without having to acknowledge a long list of values.²² From his point of view, the problem of today's stereotyping is that instead of dealing with specific events, actions, persons, or cultural conventions whole categories of people, cultures, and traditions are lumped together, made into scapegoats and viewed as problematic. The idea that religion, language, culture and ethnicity create a unity has been largely accepted and is taken for granted even if experiences might suggest something else. If committed Muslims chose to wear the headscarf or refuse to

¹⁸ Eriksen, Thomas Hylland, *Bak fiendebildet*, (Gjøvik: J.W. Cappelens Forlag, 2001) 63-66.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 58-59.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 78.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

²² *Ibid.*, 50.

send their teenage daughters to prom their decisions are seen as proof of that Islamic culture and traditions cannot coexist or be integrated with American values and way of living.²³

Burak Erdenir, a Turkish political analyst, journalist and senior expert at the European Union Secretariat General of the Turkish Prime Ministry, concurs with Thomas Hylland Eriksen. He claims the clash between the West and Islam today is not due to religious factors, but it appears to be because the clash is fueled by contemporary issues expressed through a religious discourse. Issues of exclusion, segregation, prejudice, discrimination, failed integration and the problematic situation Muslims face regarding their dietary laws, clothing, and religious traditions are in reality not based on religion, but they are social issues in a Western secular system. The clash is therefore not between civilizations as the famous political scientist Samuel P. Huntington claimed, but more between diverse lifestyles. Islam might be disagreeable in a secular state, but anti-Muslim sentiments are rarely expressed through a purely religious dimension. For example the controversial issue over veiling among Muslim women is more related to cultural customs and gender equality than to Islamic law and traditions. In this sense, American anti-Muslim sentiments are not really based on religious reasons and Islam as a religion, but rooted in fears of incompatible interests, values, and terrorism. The fears emerge as a group prejudice against Muslim, or even those who are perceived as Muslims as the case was with attacks of Sikhs following the 9/11 attacks.²⁴

1.5.2 Muslims are Just like any Other Minority Group

Several scholars, Peter Gootschalk, Gabriel Greenberg and Debra Merskin among others, have argued that the stereotyping of Muslims in the media is quite similar to that of any other minority group. The media has often been accused of portraying minorities in a stereotypical and negative way. Today Muslims are perhaps the heaviest targeted out-group. However, the stereotyping of Muslims is not unique and all minority groups in the United States have struggled at some point with the media's stereotyping that has forced them into specific roles and ascribed them certain characteristics.²⁵ In the United States who is perceived as an out-group and stereotyped is an ongoing process affected by foreign and domestic forces, and has in reality little to do with the specific out-group. Previously it has been the Irish, African-

²³ Ibid., 86-88.

²⁴ Erdenir, Burak, "Islamophobia qua racial discrimination," in *Muslims in 21st Century Europe: structural and cultural perspectives*, ed. Anna Triandafyllidou, (New York: Routledge, 2010) 28 – 29.

²⁵ Gootschalk, Peter and Greenberg, Gabriel, *Islamophobia: Making Muslims the Enemy*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008) 67.

Americans, Japanese or Jews that have been among the out-groups, which have experienced negative media stereotyping and currently it is the Muslims' turn to be in the spotlight.²⁶

The stereotyping of Muslims has deep historical roots and contemporary reappearance has been triggered by the influx of Muslims immigrants, the Iranian revolution, various hijackings, hostage taking, and acts of terrorism. A long list of foreign events has made Muslims more visible in the American society, and therefore they are now facing more stereotyping than previously. At the time of the Gulf War in the 1990s American cars had bumper stickers saying "I don't brake for Iraqis" and Arab Americans or people mistaken for being Arab were beaten, insulted or threatened. Despite various discriminatory and prejudicial incidents, Muslim Americans are just among a long list of targeted minority groups that have experience in the United States. If we go back 150 years it was the Irish who were met with sign that said "No Irish need apply," similarly African-Americans were met with "We serve whites only" up to the 1960s.²⁷

Furthermore, stereotypes of a minority groups usually appear from time to time to serve a specific function. Some obvious examples of the stereotypes' function are the "lazy and ignorant black slave" that served to justify slavery, and that Asians were portrayed as the "yellow peril" to exclude Asians from entering the United States. Similarly, the negative "Jap" stereotype was used to arouse anti-Japanese emotions and to justify the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. Stereotypes and propaganda have always been used to incite certain emotion among the public and for the last forty years, Arabs and Muslims have been the latest victims of media stereotyping. In recent years, the heavy media coverage of terrorist attacks and turmoil in the Middle East has served to create public support for American military interventions and prevent Muslim foreigners from obtaining visas into the United States. Most prejudice and stereotyping against out-groups are rooted in some type of perceived threat against the in-group. The negative stereotyping of Muslims today derives heavily from the fear of terrorism, growing Islamic movements and authoritarian regimes, in addition to the alleged Muslim cultural invasion of Western countries.²⁸

²⁶ Salem Press, eds. Bankston, Carl L., and Hidalgo Danielle, "Immigration in U.S. History: Discrimination," *salempress.com*, 11 April. 2013.

<http://salempress.com/store/samples/us_immigration_history/us_immigration_discrimination.htm>

²⁷ Merskin, Debra L., *Media, Minorities and Meaning: a Critical Introduction*, (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2011) 145 – 146.

²⁸ Ghounem, Mohamed, and Rahman, Abdur, "Has The New York Times Negatively Stereotyped Muslims for the Past Fourty Years?," *geocities.com*, 11 April. 2013

<http://www.geocities.com/m_ghounem/nyt.html>

1.5.3 The Fear of Islam has Replaced the Earlier “Red Scare”

Former professor at Columbia University, Edward W. Said stated in his famous book *Orientalism* that America needed a new global enemy after the Cold War. At this time cultural, political, educational, and media outlets were ready to put the enemy focus on Arabs and Muslims. In the 1970s and 1980s, Muslims and Arabs faced increased hardship in U.S. due to the negative media coverage of the Six-Day War, which depicted Arabs and Muslims as evil. Later in 1991, the first Gulf War provoked an ugly wave of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiments in America.²⁹ In 1995, *The New York Times* described the rise of militant Islam as a threat to world peace and security, similar to what had been warned about Nazism and Fascism in the 1930’s and Communism in the 1950’s. As various Islamic movements like the Muslim Brotherhood gained support across the entire stretch from North Africa to South East Asia, the region’s established governments and America became more aware of the Islamic threat.

John Esposito, Professor of International Affairs and Islamic Studies at Georgetown University, claims in his article “Political Islam: Beyond the Green Menace” that the fear of Islamic fundamentalism and the growing Muslim population resembles the former fear of Communism and the domino effect. He argues in *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality*, that Muslims continue to surface as the threatening cultural “other,” and the “fear of the Green Menace (i.e. green being the color of Islam) may well replace that of the Red Menace of world communism.”³⁰ Esposito further states, there has been political support for replacing the Soviet enemy and for the negative stereotyping of Muslims, and the reasons can be seen in terms of economical benefit. After the collapse of Communism the United States was left without an enemy for the first time in decades, and the creation of a new enemy created public support for large defense budgets, high arm’s production, and foreign military intervention.³¹

According to Esposito, the media presentment of the stereotypical Muslim who resembles “Iran’s Ayatollah Khomeini, Libya’s Moammar Gadhafi, or Iraq’s Saddam Hussein” has created the Muslim enemy picture in the minds of Americans.³² This way, Muslims are lumped together and American expectations of them are based upon stereotypes instead upon empirical knowledge. All too often the “coverage of Islam and the Muslim world assumes the existence of a monolithic Islam in which all Muslims are the same, believing, feeling,

²⁹ Merskin, 145 -146.

³⁰ Esposito, John, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) 3.

³¹ Esposito, John, “Political Islam: Beyond the Green Menace,” *Current History* 93.579 (1994) 19-24.

³² Esposito, 1999, 10.

thinking, and acting as one.”³³ Esposito argues that with the media focus on Islamic fundamentalism the notion of a Muslim threat has become stronger. He suggests that the selective, negative, and bias presentation of facts and news stories has made the perception of Islam as fanatic mainstream among the American media audience. In addition, the concepts of fundamentalism and terrorism have become linked in the minds of many and the distinctions between the two terms have become blurred. As a result “Islam and Islamic revivalism are easily reduced to stereotypes of Islam against the West, Islam’s war with modernity, or Muslim rage, extremism, fanaticism, terrorism.”³⁴

1.5.4 Muslims are Different and Part of a “Band of Others”

Contrary to some scholars, Kerem Ozan Kalkan, Geoffrey C. Layman and Eric M. Uslaner, from the Department of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland, argue that Muslims are a specifically targeted out-group and are different from most other minority groups in the United States. In the United States, Muslims are often considered less favorably than other religious and racial minorities in America. One explanation for this unfavorable view of Muslims is 9/11 and the following American military actions in Muslim populated countries like Iraq and Afghanistan. Although foreign conflicts, negative media coverage, and anti-Muslim comments from political and religious leaders have done little to improve the situation, the anti-Muslim sentiments we see today are part of a larger syndrome that predates 9/11. According to Kalkan, Layman, and Uslaner, Muslims are different from the Judeo-Christian mainstream, and similar to homosexuals, illegal immigrants, African-Americans, and welfare recipients in the way that Muslims are a part of a “band of others” in the minds of Americans. Furthermore, they assert Americans see two “bands of others.” The first band is composed of racial and religious groups like Jews and African-Americans, and the second band is made up of cultural minority groups which can be gays and lesbians and illegal immigrants. Americans distinguish between ethnics, racial and religious out-groups and those groups defined by behaviors, lifestyles, and values many find unusual or offensive. Concluding, Kalkan, Layman and Uslaner argue that Muslims are different from any other

³³ Esposito, 1999, 227.

³⁴Ibid., 173.

minority group in the United States because they are associated with both bands and therefore receive twice the amount of prejudice and discrimination.³⁵

1.5.5 The Stereotyping of Muslims has Changed after 9/11

Although Christians and Muslims have always stereotyped and portrayed each other as enemies, several scholars have argued that 9/11 influenced the stereotyping of Muslims we see today. In a post 9/11 environment, Muslims is the minority group that has met most discrimination, confrontation, and demands from the American society. Most of the time when Muslims are in the media it is almost exclusively in negative connections. Those few times the media write positively about Muslims it is usual about young Muslim women who have abandoned the victim role or young Muslims critical to their own religion and culture or young.³⁶ In many cover stories or articles written about Islam or Muslim the connotative words like “Osama Bin Laden,” “9/11,” “suicide bombers,” “jihad,” “veiling,” “honor killings,” “forced marriage,” and “Sharia” are overwhelmingly found in the context.³⁷ Since 9/11 two main stories have dominated the American media. The first focus of the media has been on terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism, where the Mohammed cartoon controversy is an example. Veiling is an example of the media’s second focus of how oppressive and discriminating Islamic culture and traditions are. As a result of these two dominating stories, a picture of persons with Muslim background and appearance has been painted and imprinted in the minds of Americans. Muslims are only seen as potential criminals, oppressors, oppressed, alien, and not quite like “us.”

The depiction of Muslims as a threat towards American values and freedoms has become more profound after 9/11, and this threat can be seen in connection to the parochialism and fundamentalism in the Islamic faith. American values like individual freedom, sexual freedom, gender equality, and democracy are jeopardized and challenged by “their” Muslim values. This stereotypical notion of Islamic and Muslim traditions as incompatible creates a deep gap between “us” and “them.”³⁸ As the American media has portrayed American courage, heroism and bravery in the post 9/11 era, it has also put a face

³⁵ Kalkan, Ozan Kerem, Uslaner, Eric M., and Layman, Geoff, “‘Bands of Others’? Attitudes toward Muslims in Contemporary American Society,” *Journal of Politics*, 71, (2009): 1 – 13.

³⁶ Eide and Simonsen, 211.

³⁷ Gottschalk and Greenberg, 5.

³⁸ Ezzati, Rojan, “Alle ser på oss som utlendinger uansett: Selvbilder og andre bilder av menn med muslimsk bakgrunn etter 11. september 2001,” in *Kulturell kompleksitet i det nye Norge*, eds. Thomas Hylland Eriksen and Hans Erik Næss, (Oslo: Unipub, 2011) 57 – 58.

on terror, and that face is Muslim. The political rhetoric of George W. Bush following the 9/11 attacks employed words and phrases like “us,” “them,” “they,” “evil,” “those people,” and “wanted dead or alive” to characterize people of Middle Eastern and Muslim descent. Merskin argues the American mass media have generated and sustained stereotypes of monolithic evil Arabs, and these stereotypes constructed “all Muslims as Arabs, and all Arabs as terrorists.” Furthermore, using representation and language in news, movies, and magazine stories, the mass media have participated in the construction of an evil Arab/Muslim stereotype that includes a wide variety of people, ideas, beliefs, religions, and assumptions.³⁹

However, not all agree that the stereotyping of Muslims has changed after 9/11. Brigitte L. Nacos and Oscar Torres-Reyna contradict that media coverage of Muslims have been purely negative and stereotypical. Based on their study findings, Nacos and Torres-Reyna claimed that after 9/11 the new coverage of Muslims and Arabs has become more positive. The terrorist attacks affected the news about Muslims not only in terms of volume, but also regarding themes, stereotypical references, frames, and points of views. They conducted a research that explored how the American media covered Muslim Americans over an 18-month period to see if negative biases and stereotypes originated after 9/11.⁴⁰ Combined they analysed 867 news articles in *The New York Times*, *New York Post*, *Daily News*, and *USA Today*, and all the four publications reported far more frequently on Muslim and Arab Americans in the six months after than in the six months prior to the terror attacks.⁴¹

Nacos and Torres-Reyna argued an important change occurred in the choice of topics and how they were reported. In the months following 9/11, the media addressed Muslim and Arab citizens and residents concerned with their civil liberties and rights as well as immigration issues. After 9/11, issues concerning civil rights and the violation of those rights like physical attacks, harassment, and hate crimes were the heaviest covered topics in the news media. The devastating terror attacks were often the theme of stories when reporting on or referring to American Muslims and Arabs, but many highlighted the patriotism of American Muslims and Arabs, and downplayed the stereotype of them as terrorists or fundamentalists.⁴² The more frequent use of Muslims as interviewees and sources together with an increase in thematic and the decrease of episodic news frames resulted in a more balanced presentation of the news. The events of 9/11 forced the media to cover the Muslim

³⁹ Merskin, 138.

⁴⁰ Nacos Brigitte L., and Torres-Reyna, Oscar, “Muslim Americans in the News before and after 9-11,” *Harvard Symposium Restless Searchlight: the Media and Terrorism*, (2002): 9.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 8.

minority more frequently, and the different topics combined with thematic frames gave news consumers a more comprehensive picture of Muslims and Islam. The overall conclusion was that 9/11 changed how newspapers and TV news reported about Muslims as there was less stereotypical coverage and more comprehensive and inclusive news representation after the terrorist attacks. Although this might have been a temporary phenomenon; a year later the news stories in the four newspapers seemed to be more critical in their position towards the Muslim and Arab communities.⁴³

1.5.6 Islam, Terrorism, and Fundamentalism are Falsely Linked

Fred Halliday has criticized the construction of Muslims as a homogeneous entity and argues against the stereotypes of Muslims and Arabs, by pointing out their contradiction. “The Muslim/Arab ‘other’ is stereotyped as sensual and hedonistic, militant and passive all at the same time.” He further states the West fails to make any distinction between concepts like Arab, Muslim, or Islamic fundamentalist. Halliday claims fundamentalism has emerged as “a symptom of the Otherness of the Arab world, rather than as a problem within it.” He disagrees with placing Islam as a threatening monolithic force against the West and claims the term “Muslim” has become synonymous with Islamic fundamentalism in newspapers, films, documentaries, and various other media. Media coverage of events such as 9/11, the Iraq War, and the Palestine-Israel conflict has not merely linked Islamic fundamentalism with terrorism, but also made concepts like fundamentalism, Muslim, and Islam to represent something overly anti-American. Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism has been stereotyped and represented in the context of several myths based on an old Islam/West binary. Theorists like Samuel P. Huntington has used Islamic fundamentalism to demonstrate a clash between Western and Islamic cultures, but the problem is that Islamic fundamentalism has been confused with Islam, Arab, and the Middle East in general. This idea and confusion has generated significant false myths and stereotypes about Islam, Muslims, fundamentalism and the Middle East in the media as well as among the public.⁴⁴

⁴³ Nacos and Torres-Reyna, 2007, 17 – 26.

⁴⁴ Khatib, Lina, “Nationalism and Otherness. The representation of Islamic fundamentalism in Egyptian cinema,” *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 9.1 (2006): 63-70.

1.5.7 Muslims are Visible and Invisible at the Same Time

Michael W. Suleiman, Professor of Political Science at Kansas State University, has criticized the media, and argues that Arabs and Muslims tend to be visible and invisible at the same time. They are highly visible when there is a negative context like turmoil in the Middle East, but invisible if they are achieving something positive or experiencing bias or discrimination.⁴⁵ Lind and Danowski support this, and claim there is a lack of everyday stories regarding Muslims. They claim the lack of representation of Muslims in the media result in that stereotypes become repeated and reinforced, because the average American citizen does not see Muslims as ordinary citizens with ordinary lives. In an extensive three-year study from 1993 – 1996 of the representations of Arabs in the American television and radio stations on ABS, CNN, PBS, and NPR, Lind and Danowski found very little positive coverage of Arabs and Muslims and even less of their culture. When they used the search term “Arab” alone, the average “invisible” Arab was discovered only one out of 100 times. However, they found an overwhelming association in the media between Arabs and the terms “violence,” “threats,” and “war,” which serves to foster the stereotyping of Arabs as barbaric, aggressive and fundamental. In the United States, Muslims were identified most strongly in terms of their relationship with Israel while the press ignored other aspects and characteristics of Arab or Muslim life.⁴⁶

Scholars such as Edward W. Said and Debra Merskin have argued Muslims continue to be visible in a negative context as long as the political elite and the media fuel each other’s stereotypical anti-Muslim rhetoric. Said noted that the American media and the political elite has since the Six-Day War in 1967 represented the Arab and Muslim world in a “crude, reductionist, coarsely racist way,” and portrayed Arabs as “sleazy, camel-jockeys, terrorists, and offensively wealthy sheikhs.” He argued little changed during the first Gulf War, and instead of being critical the media rallied behind President George H. W. Bush indifferent to the political, social, and cultural circumstances in the Arab world. The same thing appears to have happened with President George W. Bush’s incursion into Iraq in 2003, where the media failed to act as a guard dog in a major foreign decision. The president’s many speeches after the terrorist attacks have been accused by many of anti-Arabic and anti-Muslim rhetoric, but at the time they were little criticized by the press. Merskin found that political speeches turned popular cultural depictions of people of Arab and Middle Eastern

⁴⁵ Starck, 192.

⁴⁶ Lind and Danowski, 157-160.

descent into rhetoric that drew upon the “collective consciousness to revivify, reinforce and ratify the Arab as terrorist stereotype.” In constructing the enemy image, President Bush used such terms as “them,” “evil,” “demons,” and “wanted: dead or alive” in reference to people of Arab and Middle Eastern descent. Merskin further discovered that political influenced stereotypical characterizations of Arabs and Muslims were reproduced in a wide array of media, from news articles to magazine stories and from cartoons to movies.⁴⁷

Despite only being visible in a negative context, some claim the stereotyping of Muslims is becoming more positive. As the world is becoming more global and intertwined, and an increasing numbers of Americans meet Muslims at school, work, on the street or at the local grocery shop which can result positively for Muslims. Muslims are being integrated as we hear their voices on the radio, see them on the TV, through intermarriage or as our neighbors. As more people have direct experience with Muslims, the stereotypical portrayal of them will fade away as several gain knowledge of Islam. This does not mean the enemy image or stereotypical image disappear for good, because conflicts between the United States and the Muslim world can activate old enemy images and give them legitimacy at any time.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Starck, 191.

⁴⁸ Engebrigtsen, Ada, “Nye Fiendebilder i Norge,” in *Fiendebilder: Historie og Samtid*, eds. Per Steinar Raaen og Olav Skeivik, (Verdal: Stiklestad Nasjonale Kultursenter, 2007) 89.

2 Theoretical framework and the Media

The studies of stereotypes and related topics like prejudice and discrimination have increased substantially in recent decades, especially in the field of gender, race, and ethnic studies. Stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination are all concepts part of intergroup attitudes and relevant to this analysis of Muslims stereotypes in the American media. Although the concepts are related and sometimes overlapping they are still different concepts. Stereotypes are rigid “cognitive maps” that reflect expectations and beliefs about the characteristics of members of an out-group. They are regarded as the most cognitive component of prejudicial reactions, and are a result of cognitive sources and the in-group – out-group homogeneity effect (i.e. the assumption of greater similarity among the out-group than in-group). Prejudice represents the emotional response and is regarded as the affective component. Discrimination refers to actions carried out by an in-group towards the out-group or its members, and it is the behavioral component of prejudicial reactions.⁴⁹

2.1 Gordon Allport’s Prejudice Theory

When examining how Muslims are represented in the media it is important to take into account that these portrayals often stem from old integrated stereotypes and prejudices. Social distance decides to what extent an out-group is negatively typified; as social distance toward more dissimilar groups is greater, these groups will experience more prejudice.⁵⁰ The word prejudice refers to the judging of someone or something before knowing the facts and without further examination, and derives from the Latin word “prae” meaning before and “judicium” meaning a judgment. In 1954, Harvard psychologist Gordon Allport defined prejudice as “an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be felt or expressed. It may be directed toward a group as a whole or toward an individual because he is a member of that group.”⁵¹ In other words, prejudice commonly refers to a set of inflexible negative attitudes, beliefs or feelings towards a person simply because he or she belongs to an out-group, and is therefore believed to have certain objectionable traits ascribed to the group.⁵²

⁴⁹ Locke, Vance, and Johnston, Lucy, “Stereotyping and Prejudice: A Social Cognitive Approach,” in *Understanding Prejudice, Racism, and Social Conflict*, eds. Martha Augoustinos, and Katherine Jane Reynolds, (California: SAGE Publications Inc., 2001) 108.

⁵⁰ Tubergen, Frank von, *Immigrant Integration*, (New York: LFB scholarly publications, 2006) 14.

⁵¹ Allport, Gordon W., *The Nature of Prejudice*, (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1954) 9.

⁵² Merskin, 65.

Today racial and ethnic prejudice is considered politically incorrect and morally rejected, therefore the reproduction of prejudice requires the use of rational defensive arguments such as “I’m not prejudiced, but...” and “I’m not a racist, but...”⁵³ Prejudice theory assumes that people have a positive attitude towards their own group, a negative attitude towards out-groups, and that these attitudes can lead to negative discrimination towards members of the out-group. In addition, some out-groups are more targeted for prejudice and discrimination than others, but this can change. The prejudice against an out-group varies with the perceived threat, and whether it is a cultural, economical or security related threat. This threat is assumed to increase with the number of out-group members, their visibility, and scarcity of goods available. The variation of prejudice an out-group experiences is determined by its distinction in terms of its cultural or physical appearance, socio-economic background, and size. These factors are associated with perceived threats and result in stronger or weaker attitudes among the majority group. It also explains why prejudice against Muslims in the United States might stem from different reasons than from those in another country. In America, discrimination against and stereotyping of Muslims is often based upon security related concerns, whereas in Europe for example Muslim represents more of a cultural threat. These attitudes are conditional and can be stronger or weaker depending on the out-group and context, which can explain why hate crimes and discrimination towards Muslim rose after the September 11 attacks.⁵⁴

2.2 Stereotype Theory

Media theorists have defined the term “stereotype” in various ways, and O’Sullivan states that a stereotype is “a label which involves a process of categorization and evaluation. Although it may refer to situations or places, it is most often used in conjunction with representations of social groups.”⁵⁵ Like prejudice, stereotyping is a form of pre-judgment that is as widespread today as it was 2000 years ago. It is a social attitude that receives much attention by scholars and many theories of stereotyping have been raised. Earlier stereotypes were believed to be extreme and destructive in the context of inter-group relations. Such a view is explained by the fact that “most researchers focused initially on the study of antagonistic groups that shared

⁵³ Philomena, Essed, *Understanding Everyday Racism*, (California: SAGE publications Inc, 1991) 45.

⁵⁴ Tubergen, 26-27.

⁵⁵ O’Sullivan, T., Dutton, B. and Rayner, P., *Studying the Media: an Introduction*, (London: Edward Arnold, 1997) 126.

a past of conflict, exploitation and violence.” Although, often critical to stereotyping, more recent research has a more balanced approach and partially reject stereotypes as “purely negative, simple errors and rigid schemata.”⁵⁶

Over the years several important features of stereotypes have been highlighted, and thereby constructing a merged image of the nature, role and impact stereotypes have on social functioning and group interaction. Commonly, stereotypes are seen as a set of shared beliefs about members of a particular group and the link between group membership and certain traits. Stereotypes are generalized, stable and preconceived images, and they are a natural function of the human and cultural mind. Stereotypes are usually formed during the process of social interaction and defined by their contextual, dual, and schematic nature.⁵⁷ They are often negative, imprecise and shallow evaluation of individuals, groups, nations, or ideologies that stand out as abnormal to the majority. For centuries they have been tools providing justification, reinforcement, and maintenance of the social and symbolic order. Usually stereotypes are made up by society’s in-group to maintain the status quo by uniting some people together as an “us” and placing those who are not like “us” into a box labeled as “them.”⁵⁸

Today the term “stereotype” is often used when examining the prejudices an ethnic, religious or social group has towards another group that is different. The term first originated in the publishing industry and referred to the print block where identical prints were repeatedly produced without variation. In his famous book, *Public Opinion*, Walter Lippmann changed the meaning of the term into its current usage and stated “we notice a trait which marks a well-known type, and fill in the rest of the picture by means of the stereotype we carry about in our heads, however the pictures inside people’s heads do not automatically correspond with the world outside.” He argued that what people associate with the stereotyped group usually derives from their own society and in-group influences rather than real experiences with the out-group. Stereotypes are therefore an in-group’s descriptions of an out-group by using characteristics believed to be shared by all members and to classify them as outsiders, different, and abnormal. Stereotypes are what Walter Lippmann called “maps of the world,” and they exemplify the universal human tendency to categorize people into groups, followed by imputing the perceived characteristics of the group to those individuals.

⁵⁶ Glăveanu, Vlad. "Stereotypes Revised – Theoretical Models, Taxonomy and the Role of Stereotypes." *Europe's Journal of Psychology* [Online], 3.3 (2007): n. pag. Web. 26 Apr. 2013

⁵⁷ Ibid., n. pag.

⁵⁸ Fiebig-von Hase, Ragnhild and Lehmkuhl, Ursula, *Enemy Images in American History*, (Providence, R.I.: Berghahn, 1997) 2.

Lippmann stated that “in the great blooming, buzzing confusion of the outer world, we pick out what our culture has already defined for us, and we tend to perceive that which we have picked out in the form stereotyped for us by our culture.” Often the validity of those stereotypes serves to elevate one’s own group above another group. Through negative depictions of “them,” stereotypes often serve to define the in-group positively and not like that. For instance, when a person stereotypes another group as violent, he implies that his own group is peaceful.⁵⁹

In this modern world there is neither time nor will to revise our stereotypical beliefs, and if we encounter a Muslim it is easier to connect this information with the stereotypes we have about what sort of person a Muslim believed to be than to get to know him or her. If we are presented with TV-shows, news, or personal experiences that correspond successfully with what we anticipated, the stereotype is reinforced for the future. If the experience contradicts the stereotype we hold, Lippmann argues that one of two things can happen. First, if some powerful interest makes it inconvenient to rearranged ones stereotypes, the contradiction gets disposed as an exception that proves the rule, the witness gets discredited, or the person who experienced the contradiction finds a flaw and manages to forget it. The second scenario occurs if the person who experienced the contradiction is still curious and open-minded, and then the experience is taken into consideration, and perhaps modifies the stereotypical image. If the experience is striking enough, one might come to terms with that normally a thing is not always what it is supposed to be, and discard the stereotypical view.⁶⁰

Furthermore, stereotypes are structures in our minds and psychologists call these cognitive structures schemas. They believe that schemas help us simplify and categorize the world by telling us the basic characteristics of the things we encounter. People have schemas about objects and events, which allows us to make judgments about our environment without using too much mental effort. For instance, “our dog schema says that dogs bark, have fur, four legs, and a tail. When we see a creature with these characteristics, we do not have to examine it much further to know it is a dog, or how we should act or respond to it.” A stereotype is a schema for people we believe belongs to a specific group. Schemas help structure not only our knowledge of things, but also our expectations. When we met someone of a particular group, whether based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or occupation, the schema we have for that group tells us what features we should expect to

⁵⁹ Gottschalk and Greenberg, 63 – 75.

⁶⁰ Lippmann, Walter, *Public Opinion*, (New York: Free Press Paperbacks, 1997) 65-66.

come across. Both high- and low-prejudiced people have schemas, but it appears that only highly prejudiced individuals endorse it, while low prejudiced individuals actively try to suppress it. Studies have showed that without even being aware of it stereotypes of various groups can be activated automatically and influence how we process incoming information. Stereotypes not only tell us what people of a social group are like, but they also tell us why people are like that, and this can be dangerous.⁶¹

Stereotypes are not only harmful and erroneous, but can have some positive side effects. For example, when confronted with complex social situations stereotypes give quick and effortless answers. Positive stereotypes of the in-group and less positive ones for out-group members serve to enhance and protect our social identity as group members, and also allow us to comprehend and justify certain attitudes or conducts toward out-group members. Stereotypes go beyond the identity issue and are part of a broader cultural system that explains social practices and norms in various social contexts. Stereotypes make us feel safe by allowing us a sense of control over our social contacts, and help us reduce uncertainty and avoid risky situations, which is something that has been largely ignored by most theorists. Stereotypes are not always false, and that they occasionally contain some element of truth, and can have a valid origin.⁶² In addition, stereotypes and enemy images are not always stable and evolve as a result of changes in world affairs, the relationship between opposing groups, as well as social and economic changes in its origin country.⁶³

2.3 The Stereotype Content Model

Among other scholars, Gordon Allport and Walter Lippmann assumed that stereotypes of out-groups reflected consistent antipathy and negative attitudes. For example, Katz and Braly argued in their classic 1933 study that ethnic stereotypes were uniformly negative.⁶⁴ The new approach, the stereotype content model suggests that there is more to the stereotyping process than the one-dimensional out-group antipathy suggested in traditional models. The stereotype content model evaluates intergroup perceptions and proposes that stereotype content is systematic and response to systematic principles. By analyzing qualitatively different types of

⁶¹ Gorham, Bradley W., "Considerations of Media Effects: The Social Psychology of Stereotypes: Implications for Media Audiences," in *Beyond Blackface: Africana Images in US Media*, eds. Houston, Akil D., (Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 2010) 94-96.

⁶² Glăveanu, n. pag.

⁶³ Eriksen, 2001, 58-59.

⁶⁴ Katz, D., & Braly, K., "Racial stereotypes of one hundred college students," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 28, (1933): 280-290.

prejudice, Fiske et al. argue stereotypes are often ambivalent and vary along the two dimensions of warmth and competence. In addition, they argue positive stereotypes on one dimension often consist with unflattering stereotypes on the other dimension.⁶⁵

The first and most important dimension has been labeled warmth and reflects a basic assessment of the out-groups' intentions, in other terms if they will compete with or benefit the in-group. This dimension determines whether an out-group is a threat or whether the in-group can safely interact with it. "Goal compatibility" and intentions are important concepts in the stereotyping of out-groups, and a group with different goals than the in-group is perceived as more threatening and less warm. The warmth dimension assesses the other's perceived intent in the social context and comprises traits like morality, trustworthiness, sincerity, kindness, and friendliness. The centrality of warmth emerges in some of the earliest studies of person perception, and the qualities of warmth or coldness is of special importance for peoples' notion of a person. For example, in a study conducted by Fiske et al., two individuals were perceived quite differently in a study, differing only in whether they were "warm" or "cold" and otherwise described using identical adjectives. Motivationally, warmth represents an accommodating orientation that profits others more than the self. The second dimension of stereotyping is linked to the relative status and power of the out-group and has been labeled "competence." Competence assesses the out-group's abilities and how capable or effective they are in reaching their goals. Competence is like warmth also relevant when evaluating how another person or group may affect the in-group's position, access to common goods or life quality. Competence connotes their ability to act on their goals, and includes traits such as intelligence, skill, efficacy, capability, confidence, and creativity.⁶⁶

The notions of competition and status respectively predict warmth and competence. According to the stereotype content model, out-groups viewed as competitors by the in-group are judged as lacking warmth, whereas groups who do not compete with the in-group for the same resources group will be perceived as warm and less threatening allies. Successful socio-economic groups are considered competent, while lower status and less powerful groups are judged as less competent. Both the warmth and competence dimension have evaluative components. For example, it is better to be warm, trustworthy, and helpful than not, and it is better to be competent and skilled than not. A group can be strong and warm or weak and

⁶⁵ Fiske, Susan T., Cuddy, Amy J. C., Glick, Peter, Xu, Jun, "A Model of (Often Mixed) Stereotype Content: Competence and Warmth Respectively Follow From Perceived Status and Competition," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 82.6 (2002): 878-880.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 878-886.

warm, and the same for competence. Evidence suggests that trait perceptions fall along these dimensions of warmth and competence; different combinations of traits were associated with groups of different ethnic and national origin. As groups within each of the four combinations of high and low levels of warmth and competence bring out distinct emotions among the in-group members, the model explains why some out-groups are admired but disliked while others are liked but disrespected. Groups perceived as being low on both competence and warmth, such as the homeless and drug addicts, elicit contempt because their negative positions are viewed as something to be avoided. Groups perceived with both high competence and warmth elicits admiration. The elderly and disabled are often perceived as having low competence and high warmth, and tend to elicit pity as they have no control over their situation. People perceived as at fault for their conditions elicit more negative emotion and discrimination, whereas those whose outcomes are perceived as uncontrollable receive more pity and help. Groups that are portrayed as competing with mainstream society, such as Asian and Jewish people and female professionals, are perceived with high competence and low warmth. They are thus viewed as worthy of respect, but can bring out jealousy and even hostility among the in-group.⁶⁷

The stereotype content model has been validated by studies confirming that the evaluations of the competence of different groups were positively correlated with their evaluations of these groups' statuses, and their evaluations of warmth were negatively correlated with perceived competition with that group. The stereotype content model offers insight into the feelings and behaviors that different groups elicit. One of the important predictors of categorizations is controllability. What predicts perceptions of controllability depends on the group. Research suggests that warmth and competence are reliably universal determinants of social judgment. Perceptions of out-groups on these dimensions depend on prevailing social structural patterns, but it also rely upon established patterns of intergroup relations and media coverage that often reflects those patterns.⁶⁸

The stereotype content model is an interesting approach to use when examining how media stereotyping of Muslims affect how the American in-group view them. The consistency of stereotypical media congruent messages is believed by theorists to be a key factor in shaping public opinion. Stereotypes result from interpersonal and intergroup interactions, but

⁶⁷ Ibid., 878-886.

⁶⁸ Fiske, Susan T., Cuddy, Amy J. C., Glick, "Warmth and Competence As Universal Dimensions of Social Perception: The Stereotype Content Model and the BIAS Map," *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 40 (2008): 61-149.

media coverage can also influence where different out-groups fall on the dimensions of warmth and competence. To many Americans, especially if they do not have any Muslim acquaintances, Arabs and Muslims are considered to lack warmth and sometimes also competence. Muslims are often stereotyped by the media as threatening and violent, which places them low on the warmth dimension. Additionally, they are often placed in the cold category of “enemy,” because many believe their goals to be incompatible with the goals of Americans.

Many Americans are influenced by what they see on television from the Middle East, consequently they will place Muslims relatively low on the competence dimension and see them as less practical, skillful, intelligent, and educated. The Islamic world and Muslims has for centuries been stereotyped as insufficiently rational and intellectual weak and this affect how Muslims are viewed in terms of competence.⁶⁹ Former assistant professor at Harvard University, Martin Peretz, wrote in regards to Arab countries, “Alas, these are societies which cannot make a brick let alone a microchip.”⁷⁰ If scholars, politicians or media outlets send out this type of message there is reason to believe it affects the mass public’s opinion and attitude towards Muslims. On the contrary, Muslims are also portrayed as somewhat competent, at least when Americans have Muslim-American immigrants in mind. In terms of socio-economic power, Muslims in America have enjoyed great upward mobility, and they are often favored over Hispanic immigrant groups. The frequent incidents of Muslim violence and their common portrayal as villains advocate their power, but can also have a negative effect on the warmth dimension. For instance, the “wealthy sheik” is a common stereotype of Arabs and suggests a certain status and power that impoverished would not have, but this stereotype is also seen as cold on the warmth dimension.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Gross, Kimberly, and Sides, John, “Stereotypes of Muslims and Support for the War on Terror,” George Washington University (2011):4 -8 <<http://home.gwu.edu/~jsides/muslims.pdf>>

⁷⁰ Said, Edward W., *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1997) xxiv.

⁷¹ Gross and Sides, 4-8.

2.4 The Media's Influence on the Stereotyping Process

Since the press arose as a consequence of the industrialization in the 1700s and 1800s, it has been an important prerequisite for the modern nationalism in the Western world. In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson, Professor Emeritus of International Studies at Cornell University, claimed that newspapers were of great importance for the forming of the so-called “imagined community” or the association of people who had never met but still agreed they belonged to a “we.” A consequence of the press and the imagined community is that minority groups stand out as different because “they” are not a part of “we,” thus the press has been a crucial factor in creating and maintaining in-groups and out-groups. The media at the same time reinforces the imagination of a “we” by focusing on the “others” only in cases where they are different. In reference to news portrayals of Muslims, this “we” must be seen as an ethnic white-American category, because even if the view on race and ethnicity changes over time the press functions as an ethnic border patrol that will always portray some groups as the “others.”⁷² By reinforcing the notion of “us” and “them,” the media is one of the largest carriers of stereotypes in society today. Stereotype theory is therefore closely linked to media in the sense that the media reinforces society’s dominant attitudes and behavior toward minorities by perpetuating rigid and often negative portrayals of them. The media repeatedly present portrayals of various categories of people such as the elderly, women, and different minority groups. In 1979, Dyer suggested that stereotypes are always about power. Those with power stereotype those with less power, hence it is more common to see stereotypes of gay men, minority groups, the working-class and women than white, middle-class, and heterosexual men.⁷³

Although most of the newspaper reading audiences can take in and critically evaluate the news, minority coverage stands out because most people lack clear correctives to the media picture they are being served. If a person does not know an Arab, immigrant or veiled Muslim woman, it is easier to accept the stereotypes the media often projects. A common problem is that the media is mostly conflict oriented and does not portray everyday life as we know it, but leaves more space for the dramatic, controversial, and unusual.⁷⁴ The media typically portrays members of diverse cultural groups within specific content categories like crime, entertainment, and sports, but hardly ever within the categories of business, education and health. When the majority of Americans only see pictures of criminals, entertainers, and

⁷² Eide and Simonsen, 13 – 17.

⁷³ Gorham, 94-96.

⁷⁴ Eide and Simonsen, 13 – 17.

sports heroes, they forget that the vast majority of minorities live ordinary lives with the same hopes and fears as the rest. The absence of everyday stories becomes a problem if the media is only interested in minorities in cases where they are different than “us,” because then the media contribute with creating and increasing the gap between the majority “we” and the minority “they.”⁷⁵

These stereotypic portrayals in the media provide meaning, information, and also influence the audience’s perception of the world and consequently their behavior. The audience incorporates the information presented into their minds as relatively inflexible schemata that they use when thinking about any individual of a portrayed group, without considering their actual personal characteristics. It is important to note that the media does not invent stereotypes, but by repeatedly using them, media can be accused of reinforcing certain values and assumptions. In addition, it is not the media’s use of stereotypes that is problematic, but the audience’s assumption that this representation can be applied to all members of a particular group.⁷⁶ There is much evidence that the media perpetuate stereotypical images, and stereotypes can influence our understanding of media messages even when we are unaware of it. Regardless if we agree with the portrayed stereotype or not, the brain processes information in a way that we might automatically make interpretations of news stories that fit the stereotype. Stereotypes are so pervasive in the media and in our everyday contact with others, that they become very well learned. Therefore when we meet someone of a particular group, the stereotype for that group is primed and activated, and thus influence how we respond to and behave towards that person.⁷⁷ When negative stereotypes are primed in a news story about a minority person, people make conclusion about why the person behaved that way, and their subsequent evaluations of him or her suggests that the behavior in the story was caused by certain characteristics unique to that minority group. As a result, media priming especially affects our images of minority groups and stereotypes can lead to “message processing that supports the ultimate attribution error.”⁷⁸

The media often frames issues like immigration with a specific group in mind, and this can activate relevant stereotypes among the audience just because the issue is so frequently linked to a minority. The media’s use of stereotypes to certain issues and especially political

⁷⁵ Lester, Paul M., and Ross, Susan D., *Images that Injure: Pictorial Stereotypes in the Media* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2003) 3.

⁷⁶ Shahzad, Ali, “US print media and portrayal of Muslim world. A case study of Newsweek and Times (1991-2001),” PhD thesis, (Multan: Bahauddin Zakariya University, 2009) <<http://pr.hec.gov.pk/Thesis/465S.pdf>>

⁷⁷ Gorham, 100.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 97.

ones tend to hurt minority groups; the overall cumulative effect is immense because we consume so much media information on a daily basis. That news frames affect how people link certain characteristics of minority groups and specific political issues is a concern, because it suggests that how the media report an issue can influence whether people use stereotypes to understand it, even when they do not endorse the stereotypes. If people use stereotypes to understand an issue, the decisions they make regarding that matter may have negative consequences for the stereotyped group. A lot of prejudice-congruent messages are being taken in if media audiences interpret media images and stories in ways that subtly support stereotypes. As a result, prejudice and racism remains a large problem because unconscious processing of media information gets even low prejudiced people to make stereotype congruent interpretations. The media is increasing prejudice and discrimination if the images of groups in the media reinforce our stereotypical interpretation of information.⁷⁹

2.5 Media Tools and the Media's Subtle Influence on Us

Eighty years ago, Lippmann claimed that people's impressions of other cultures and countries were mostly a result of second-hand knowledge received through channels of mass communication. What is new today is that people are even less involved in community life than earlier, and are therefore more vulnerable to the media's influence on "the pictures in our head" about the external world. Another new factor is the wide range of various media outlets that previously were absent. Social media like Facebook, worldwide distribution of movies, and online news reaches all corners of the world with their message. The downside of this trend is that people usually have little time to read more than the headline before they press the "like" button or turn the page. Therefore negative as well as positive portrayals of issues, people, and events are usually very shallow and can enhance stereotypical portrayals of the "other."⁸⁰ Dependency on information has increased substantially to the satellite communication and millions of people are absorbing world events through the eyes of the media. The media's influence is proven as several studies have demonstrated that people often communicate in the language used by their favorite television channel. They respond accordingly to the media reports, and only think of issues provided to them by the media.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Gorham, 100.

⁸⁰ Nacos and Torres-Reyna, 2007, 1.

⁸¹ Mughees-uddin, "Editorial Treatment of US Foreign Policy in The New York Times: The Case of Pakistan (1980-90)," *Pakistan Horizon* 50.3 (1997): 51-73.

Stereotypes themselves are media tools because they are a simple way of condensing complex and detailed information into a single character or type who is easily recognized and simple to deal with. An example of this can be James Bond, where the stereotyping of his characteristics makes it easier for the audience to understand the character and his role in the text. Television commercials and sitcoms are genres that are more prone to the use of stereotypes, but stereotypes are also used by journalist to provide an easy “point of contact” when the topic needs to reach readers without too many references.⁸² By using stereotypes as a reference point, the media conglomerates play a large role within the making, reinforcing, and distorting the images we have of other nations, societies, as well as various religious, racial, and ethnic groups. Stereotyping in the news media can be seen in the choice of topics, catchy headlines, caricatures, and photographs. Furthermore, the media’s influence is often subtle due to factors like negative connotations, source selections, agenda setting, priming, and framing.⁸³

Language is another important media tool, and journalists have the power to describe the outside world in their own way of choice. The way language is used in a text is vital, because words change and have a different meaning depending on who you ask; according to Lippmann “words are turned over and over again, to evoke one set of images today, another tomorrow.”⁸⁴ There are many tricks in language that can be used as a tool to evoke a certain set of images and interpretation by the readers. A journalist can use snarling words or labels that bring out negative reaction like “fanatics, barbaric, extremist and terrorist,” or he or she can use labels that have positive or warm overtones like “freedom fighters, security reforms and democratic cultures.” The journalists generally attach these words or labels to clarify the motive within certain individual or groups or how the reader should interpret them.⁸⁵

Another subtle tool that influences our world view is the agenda setting. It refers to the idea that there is a strong correlation between the emphasis the mass media place on certain issues and the public awareness around these issues. The agenda setting function creates a link between media and the public ordering of priorities. The media’s agenda setting tells us what topics, events, and individuals to think about, and sometimes also what to think about the information we are given. Agenda setting usually follow news of political importance, but is also relevant to other issues like religion. A well-known example of agenda

⁸² Gorham, 94-96.

⁸³ Mughees-uddin, 51-73.

⁸⁴ Merskin, 5 – 7.

⁸⁵ Cohen Bernard, C., *The Press and Foreign Policy*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963) 19.

setting is how the media's focus on certain political issues influence what voters consider as vital issues in election campaigns. The media reporting on specific topics can be very intense, thus making it almost impossible to ignore, and such aggressive reporting thus creates an audience of people at least temporarily interested in the issue.⁸⁶

Priming is often understood as an extension of agenda setting, and it refers to how the activation of one thought may trigger related thoughts. Priming occurs when news content suggests that news audiences should use specific issues as points of references for future evaluations and thus setting the stage for the audience understanding. People's perceptions of events are further impacted by the historical context in which they are familiar. When one schema is activated or primed, associated schemas are set in motion among the audiences. Priming tends to alter our interpretations of things to what fits our schema, and this is especially true when the schema is something we meet often through repeated and consistent exposure. If we are presented with something that activates a schema, related concepts tend to be triggered, and we are more likely to expect them than to unrelated concepts. A primed concept is thought to be more accessible to our consciousness and influences how we perceive succeeding information. Since we are looking for the primed concepts, we are more likely to perceive incoming stimuli as containing the traits and features our schema have taught us to expect.⁸⁷

Framing affects the news in ways like choice of topics, sources, language, and photographs. The media tend to report the news along explanatory frames that makes the audience put events, issues, problems, and people into contextual frameworks of reference. The media can shape the view of the public about particular issues by presenting stories within a particular interpretive frame that provides context and suggest how to feel about an issue. According to Michael Parenti, the most lethal and effective propaganda device related to distortion of images relies on framing rather than dishonesty. With this Parenti believes that by "twisting the facts, or bending the truth rather than breaking it, using emphasis, and other auxiliary embellishments, media practitioner can create a desired impression without departing too far from the appearance of objectivity."⁸⁸ By framing the news along the lines of the traditional attitudes and prejudices of society's predominant groups, the news media convey stereotypes that affect a broad range of public perceptions, among them how people

⁸⁶ Teichman, Bar-Tal, *Stereotypes and Prejudice in Conflict*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 126.

⁸⁷ Gorham, 95.

⁸⁸ Parenti, Michael, "Monopoly Media Manipulation,"(2003) www.michaelparenti.org, 9 May 2013. <<http://www.michaelparenti.org/MonopolyMedia.html>>

think about race, ethnicity, and religion. Framing is significant when examining how the media portrays an out-group, because by framing the news along the lines of the attitudes and prejudices held by the majority group the media exaggerate differences and increase antagonisms between groups.⁸⁹

The media producers are perhaps the most important media tool, because they decide what information that gets reported on and reaches the public. Through the media we are presented with the versions of reality held by journalists, photographers, and editors. This version of reality becomes internally censored at every level of information exchange. The press' construction of the reality is a result of the journalists and editors' view on what is a news case, what the market wants, press organs position, and their role in society. The media does not only reflect the world outside, but also attitudes, values, and beliefs of the media conglomerate.⁹⁰ All of the mentioned factors are important for choice of news cases, their angle, use of sources, language use and so on. This does not mean that we are presented with false representations of the world, but anyone who reports news and world events actively construct the reality. As Lippmann viewed it, "one must distinguish between news and truth. Not that reporting is necessarily poor or biased, but even the best reporting cannot cover all aspects of a given topic."⁹¹ According to Debra Merskin, the pictures we are being served by the media are further distorted since artificial censorship limits people's access to facts. Artificial censorship points to the problem where politicians and the media selectively represent some facts and issues and leave out other vital information.⁹² The media often depend on information from official sources, and in these cases politicians and other actors may try to affect the reporting to promote their policies or views. Here the media is not a watchdog, but an instrument for politicians and policy makers. In this way, the media is used to achieve American domestic and foreign policy goals, and to manufacture consent within the population to endorse political decisions.⁹³

⁸⁹ Nacos and Torres-Reyna, 2002, 2.

⁹⁰ Lindstad, Merete and Fjelstad Øivind, *Pressen og de Fremmede*, (Otta: Ij-forlaget, 1999) 16 – 17.

⁹¹ Nacos and Torres-Reyna, 2002, 2.

⁹² Merskin, 5 – 7.

⁹³ Herman, Edward S., and Chomsky, Noam, *Manufacturing Consent*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988) 46.

2.6 Minority Coverage in the Media

The American media usually covers minority related issues from the perspective of “us” versus “them,” but “they” usually do not appear in the media before the minority group is perceived as a threat to the existing social order. In the United States, Native-Americans were the first to attract negative attention due to their uneasy relationship to white settlers. Similarly have African-Americans, Irish immigrants, Chinese laborers, and Mexican immigrant workers received lots of media attention at times when their presence was problematic in relation to white-Americans’ values and goals. The first media coverage of a minority group is aimed at making the public aware of the minority “threat,” then later the media moves on to neutralizing the majority’s fear while accommodating ethnic presence. Informational items that conform to existing white attitudes toward minorities are then selected for inclusion in the news media and given repeated emphasis until they reach thematic proportions. Examples include news stories that appear to be favorable to the minorities as is the case of “success stories.” Although many times these success stories include or fulfill the stereotypical image of certain minority groups even if it might be irrelevant for the news case. Other types of thematic stories also appear during the stereotypical selection phase of news coverage and often they are far more numerous than the success stories. Recent thematic stories often emphasize ethnic minorities on welfare, who live in bad neighborhoods, lack of educational skills, job skills, and basic language skills.⁹⁴

The preponderance of such reporting has led some observers to say the news media have offered an image of minorities as a problem people, which means they are projected as people who either have problems or cause problems for society. The media coverage thus leads to the majority audience seeing minorities as a social burden and the “us” versus “them” pattern is carried to a more crucial dimension.⁹⁵ Media portrayals do not give us “the whole picture” of a group; instead they give us a highly edited and distorted image that tends to support the way they are treated in society. Stereotypes of minority groups tend to reflect the biases and the histories of the majority, and only a few stereotypical characteristics that are socially relevant for understanding that group’s place in society are applied. In this way stereotypes maintains a view of that world that works in favor of the majority. We may not approve of these stereotypes, but without our awareness we are “seeing the world through prejudicial lenses.”⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Wilson, Clint C., and Gutierrez, Felix, *Minorities and Media: Diversity and End of Mass Communication*, (Beverly Hills, SAGE publications, Inc: 1985) 136 – 139.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 136 – 139.

⁹⁶ Gorham, 98.

2.7 The Stereotyping of Muslims in the Media

In modern days media seem to have become obsessed with Muslims and in an endless discourse about them. In the West themes like integration, terrorism, honor, sexism, undemocratic thinking, rape, and fundamentalism are all given a Muslim angle. Every one of these issues are accompanied, fueled, and reinforced by a wide range of stereotypical portrays of Islam and Muslims.⁹⁷ Most of what Americans know about Muslims has come to them through words and images produced by the media over the last 50 years. Today fictional and non-fictional sources remain among the strongest influences for distorting the image of Islam in the minds of the American audience. The entertainment industry, news telecast, radio shows, movies, children's TV programs, and even commercials all have long dwelled on stereotypical portrayals of Arabs and Muslims. The same stereotyping is often seen in the newspapers, because popular culture, social media and news reporting is affected by each other and feed on one another.⁹⁸ The media stand out as such an influential source because people's idea of Islam highly draws from journalistic coverage and most readers or viewers do not bother to read the Quran or seek other sources to see if the story they are presented with is genuine. Reports, feature articles, editorials, headlines, photographs, and cartoons together sum up Islam and all Muslims for the majority of the public. Since we have limited time available there is little time to contemplate assumptions or presumptions about those who are somehow different from us, hence the result is that we trust and rely on the media too much.⁹⁹

In the media we find patterns that may contribute to the perception that Muslims are threatening; one of these patterns is the overwhelming focus on covering stories about Muslims that often involves crises, war, and conflict. Many of these narratives include terms such as "fundamentalist," "militant," "terrorist," "radical," or "extremist," and tend to refer to Muslims in collective way rather than separating them out after nationality or other identity marks. In articles written about Islam or Muslims the connotative words like "Osama Bin Laden," "9/11," "suicide bombers," "Jihad," "veiling," "honor killings," "forced marriage," "Islamic Law," and "Sharia" are often overwhelmingly found in the context.¹⁰⁰ In addition

⁹⁷ Otterbeck, Jonas, "Sweden: Cooperation and conflict," *Muslims in 21st Century Europe: structural and cultural perspectives*, ed. Anna Triandafyllidou, (New York: Routledge, 2010) 103.

⁹⁸ Nacos and Torres-Reyna, 2007, 1.

⁹⁹ Brusted, Howard, "Contested representations in historical perspective; Images of Islam and Australian Press 1950 – 2000," in *Muslims and Media Images News versus Views*, ed. Ather Farouqui, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009) 58.

¹⁰⁰ Gottschalk and Greenberg, 5.

negative “buzz” words and phrases are constantly applied to or associated with the broader Islamic world, leaving the impression that all Muslim countries are rough states populated by Islamic fundamentalists or terrorists. Examples of such phrases are: “Pakistan backed Muslim rebels,” “Islamic terrorist training camp,” “Taliban are the pawn of Pakistan Intelligence Agencies,” “Pakistan maintained links with terrorists in the region,” “Libya supports terrorists,” “Iranian or Palestinian terrorist groups,” and “Pan Arab fanaticism.” These negative terms are typically used when referring to Islamic countries that are American enemies. Contrastingly, more positive words and phrases are used to describe news stories related to American friendly countries like Jordan, Turkey, Egypt and Saudi Arabia.¹⁰¹

The United States’ media coverage of Islam and Muslims post 9/11 can be classified into the five categories of informative, appreciative, accusative, provocative and offensive. Informative articles are objective and give information about Muslims, and Islam related cases and issues. Appreciative articles primarily focused on Muslim people, groups and institutions that are successful, educated, and Westernized. In these articles the source often questions Islamic traditions and condemn fundamentalism, terrorism, or violence. These stories are few but are more likely to portray Islam in a somewhat positive manner. It can be said that articles in the last three categories (i.e. accusative, provocative, offensive) have proved more controversial and questionable. The remaining three types of articles are negative in their reference to Islam. The accusative articles basically focused on raising doubts about the real intention of Islam and Muslims. Provocative articles focused on intellectual challenges Muslims face in defining and interpreting their religion in the present world. In this category Islam’s so called incompatibility with democratic system, human rights, and equality of gender, are often the subject of the articles. Offensive articles are not that common but often pronounce the writer’s negative opinion about Islam as inherently incapable of adapting modernity and civility.¹⁰²

In the United States and in many European countries the media debate over Muslims and immigrants has in general gone through a redefinition. Earlier the main focal point was on discrimination and on the job- and housing market; today media’s focus is often on fundamental religious traditions, forced marriage, terrorism, and hijab.¹⁰³ Previously when the media covered a story related to Islam or Islamic countries they emphasized their nationality like Pakistani or Bosnian, but after the Iranian revolution in 1979 and the Gulf War in 1991

¹⁰¹ Shahzad, 53.

¹⁰² Ibid., 33.

¹⁰³ Eide and Simonsen, 204-205.

there was an increasing tendency to use religious labels about people of Muslim or Arabic origin. Since the terrorist attacks on American soil in 2001 the main trend among the media has been to emphasize Islamic culture and religion as the problem in Muslim related issues. Islam as a problematic religion has entered the spotlight, as culture and religion have become the explanation for practices such as forced marriage, abuse of women, violence and terrorist cells.¹⁰⁴

Media outlets consistently overlook everyday stories and moderate voices among the Muslim majority, so to not risk losing popularity, ratings, and commercial success. In the aftermath of the violence that occurred in 2006 over the Mohammad cartoons, American newspapers hardly reported the condemnation of violence issued from moderate Muslims or from American Muslim organizations.¹⁰⁵ In addition the media coverage of Muslims often illustrates two extremes and nothing in between. On one hand Muslims are represented as the threatening “other,” where their culture, crime and religion appear as a problem for “our” security and stability. On the other hand Muslims are represented as the good “other,” where Muslim represents a victim or model minority; this is often Muslim women liberating themselves from negative immigrant environments, abusive and fundamentalist, patriarchal traditions.¹⁰⁶

In addition, the news media are quick to tell if the person is Muslim or not, because news about Muslim and Middle-Eastern problems sell. Negative Muslim topics sell well and occur frequently, because the interest in this is produced and reproduced in correspondence to what the public wants. News that Al-Qaida is recruiting among European Muslim sells and reinforces Islamophobia because it reminds us the enemies is still among us, which again leads to a suspicion and monitoring of Muslims.¹⁰⁷ As a result of this tendency, stories about discrimination and hate crimes against Muslims often fail to get prominent news coverage. In 2004, 1500 cases of harassment and anti-Muslim violence were documented. It showed 141 cases of hate crimes, compared to about 1000 such cases and 93 identified hate crimes in the earlier year of 2003. Despite how important discrimination and hate crimes are, the media failed to report them since they do not attract more readers or viewers.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Integrerings- og mangfoldsdirektoratet, *Innvandrere i norske medier: Medieskapt islamfrykt og usynlig hverdagsliv: årsrapport 2009*, (Oslo: Integrerings- og mangfoldsdirektoratet, 2009) 48.

¹⁰⁵ Gottschalk and Greenberg, 8.

¹⁰⁶ Eide and Simonsen, 175.

¹⁰⁷ Ezzati, 61-62.

¹⁰⁸ Nacos and Torres-Reyna, 2007, 31.

Stereotypical images and offensive labels in the media have accompanied Muslims since the establishment of the first Arab-American communities. For the first Muslim immigrants door-to-door selling was a popular way to support them, therefore the stereotype of early Arab immigrants was that of peddlers, and this image quickly stamped itself into the mainstream mind. Their skin color resulted in nicknames like “dago” and “sheeny,” although later slurs turned ethnic with terms as “camel jockey,” “dirty Syrian,” and “Turk.” Such labels were to multiply and become even more derogatory over time. Later attitudes and prejudice towards Muslims and Arabs were often affected by events beyond their control like the creation of Israel, the subsequent disorder in the Middle East, the attacks on 9/11, and events that followed. As a result many claim Arabs and Muslims were never completely accepted as part of the American “melting pot.”¹⁰⁹ For that reason, many American think of Muslims solely as “bearded mullahs, shady sheikhs in their harems, bombers, backward Bedouin, belly dancers, harem maidens, and submissive housewives.” In this respect Muslims fail to be hyphenated Americans. In all negative surroundings they are Muslim, and if they accomplish something positive they are solely American.¹¹⁰

Muslim men have often been stereotyped as perverse lunatics, while today the Muslim world often accuse European women of being sexually incontrollable and promiscuous. In the Middle Ages Christians accused Muslim of being hedonistic and enjoying life too much, Muslims on the other hand viewed Christians as dirty, culturally retarded and joyless. Interestingly, the situation is reverse today.¹¹¹ Currently Muslim men are depicted as bearded and mustached, wearing a kaffiyeh or turban, and brown skinned.¹¹² In a study of more than 900 films Shaheen found in 2001 that Arabs were presented as “Public enemy #1 – brutal, heartless, uncivilized, religious fanatics, and money mad cultural others bent on terrorizing the civilized westerners.” Other stereotypical representations were “brute murderers, sleazy rapists, religious fanatics, oil rich dimwits and abusers of women”, as well as “camel jockeys, towel heads, sand niggers, genie, sheiks, greasy merchants, ruthless, violent, treacherous, barbaric, all Arabs as Muslims and all Muslims as Arabs.”¹¹³

There are many reasons behind the stereotyping of Muslims America and why it is so accepted by the media audiences. It has been claimed that Islam and Muslims serve as the enemy of America simply to legitimize modern American dominance and interference in their

¹⁰⁹ Starck, 186.

¹¹⁰ Ridouani, 4.

¹¹¹ Eriksen, 2001, 75.

¹¹² Gottschalk and Greenberg, 67.

¹¹³ Merskin, 145.

region. The United States is a close ally of the European countries, and their troubled history with Muslims also shapes America's negative perception of Islam. In addition, oil has played a crucial role in the American stereotyping of Muslims and especially Arabs. The world's oil reserves lie mostly on Muslim territories, and controlling and maintaining the supply of Middle Eastern oil has been an essential goal of U.S. foreign policy. In addition, as Israel and America are close friends, Zionism and Israel have also played a part in the stereotyping of Islam and the Muslims. Palestinians and Arabs, who resist Israeli occupation and suppression, are often described in the American media as terrorists and militants. Islamic resurgence is also a factor behind the stereotyping. Islam is emerging as the ideological rallying point for many Muslims who oppose American global interference. Some political elites and policy makers fear this Islamic resurgence, and thus respond in a way that affect how Muslims are stereotyped in the media. Finally, the stereotyping and prejudice can to some extent also be explained by that many Americans blame Muslims, in general for various attacks that have cost American lives, both on and off American soil.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ Muzaffer, Chandra, "Dominant Western Perceptions of Islam and the Muslims," *newdawnmagazine.com*, 12 April. 2013, <<http://www.newdawnmagazine.com/Articles/Dominant%20Perceptions%20of%20Islam%20and%20the%20Muslims.html>>

3 Stereotyping in the Coverage of “Veiling”

“She hates wearing the black veil known as the chador,” “All women were forced to wear garments that cover their heads and hide the shape of their bodies,”¹¹⁵ “She was kept veiled and, much of the time, indoors,”¹¹⁶ “The heavy outfits cause hair loss, skin rashes and even depression in their children.”¹¹⁷ These quotes are all examples from *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times*, and descriptions of veiling like these are not infrequent in today’s media. Americans are now familiar with images and news stories of veiled Muslim women because of their constant reappearance in the American media. The burqa, veil, hijab, and niqab worn by many Muslim women are now famous, especially after the many American media reports and images during the war on Afghanistan, war in Iraq, and veil ban debate in Europe.

For the last decade or two veiling among Muslim women has become a hotly debated topic among Western politicians, journalists, and societies. Veiling has emerged as a symbol of a deeper issue of Islam’s incompatibility and clash with modern Western values and way of life. Veiling is claimed to be an example of how Islamic traditions discriminate its women and hinder their ability to fully participate in the society.¹¹⁸ With the intense focus on Islamic fundamentalism, the oppression of women and the violence of the Middle East, the media is from the Muslim community and various scholars accused of anti-Muslim bias and scaremongering. The extensive media attention on veiling by *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* among other newspapers shows there is an increasing interest also among the American public to read about Islamic religious practices and Muslim immigrants’ integration process. Unfortunately, the veil often disproportionately dominates the popular images of Muslim women that other characteristics or topics are barely covered or paid any attention to.¹¹⁹

Though Muslim women are a rather heterogeneous group, we still witness a narrow media focus, and they have become the target of uncomplimentary stereotypes. Caricatures that portray Islamic women as submissive and conventional are still persistent. The media’s focus

¹¹⁵ Sciolino, Elaine, “Daughter of the Revolution Fights the Veil,” *The New York Times*, 2 Apr. 2003 late ed. Print.

¹¹⁶ Simons, Marlise, “Behind the Veil: A Muslim Woman Speaks Out,” *The New York Times*, 9 Nov. 2002 late ed. Print.

¹¹⁷ Reuters, “Middle East: Iran: The First Veil Falls,” *The New York Times*, 2 Aug. 2002. Late ed. Print.

¹¹⁸ Ajrouch, 321.

¹¹⁹ Todd, Sharon, “Veiling the “Other” Unveiling our “selves” reading media images of the hijab,” *Canadian Journal of Education*, 23.4 (1999): 438 – 439.

on the victimization of Muslim women is stereotypical because they are all lumped together and defined by passivity, oppression and silence, disregarding diverse ethnic background, social class or language.¹²⁰ The media coverage of veiling has gone far beyond the actual piece of clothing; articles and editorials discuss what is to be tolerated in a Western society, question what the veil indicates, and why some wear it. Media coverage of Muslim women is sometimes racist in tone and only portrays certain forms of stereotypes. It is important to highlight how the media stereotype these women, as images used in the media affects people's attitudes and creates a sense of "us" and "them."¹²¹

3.1 The Historical Context of the Veil

To understand why the stereotyping of Muslim women and veiling is so widespread a brief review of the veil, its history, and representation in the West is necessary. In Islam both Muslim men and women are expected to follow certain guidelines that Americans often find restrictive. In order to maintain the honor of their family and society both sexes are expected to dress modestly and avoid tempting situations with the opposite sex. Since women are considered to be the more attractive and vulnerable of the sexes, they are expected to cover their hair as to not attract men. The veil itself refers to a piece of clothing which covers the body from head to ankles, with the exception of the face, hands and feet. In recent times the most frequent form of veiling is a long loosely fitted dress and a scarf wrapped around the head to cover the hair.¹²² The hijab is the most moderate veil, and is only a scarf that covers the hair, ears, and neck. Quite opposite, the niqab on is very conservative, and is a full veil covering the whole of the body with a thin slit for the eyes. The chador is a traditional garment, and is a full-length semicircle of fabric open down the front, which is thrown over the head with no hand openings. The burqa refers to the full veil, and this all-encompassing garb covers the entire head and body with a mesh for the eyes.¹²³

The Islamic veil can be considered as both a religious and political symbol, much like the Christian cross during the Inquisition. The veil being considered a political symbol is nothing new; from the Algerian war of independence in the 1950s to today's Hamas in

¹²⁰ Ajrouch, 321.

¹²¹ Todd, 438 – 439.

¹²² Hoodfar, Homa, "The veil in Their Minds and on our Heads: The Persistence of Colonial Images of Muslim Women," *Resources for Feminist Research*, 22, No. ¾, (1992): 7.

¹²³ BBC News, "In Graphics: Muslim veils" *bbc.co.uk*, 15 Apr. 2013.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/pop_ups/05/europe_muslim_veils/html/4.stm>

Palestine, the veil has carried enormous political weight as a symbol of defiance.¹²⁴ Although veiling among Muslim women has received growing attention in America after the September 11 attacks, it was already a matter of public debate as early as in the 19th century, when Islamic practices especially those in relation to its women became a part of the Western rhetoric of Islam. In the 19th century with colonialism and rising feminism in the West the veil played a heavier role in this rhetoric and in the belief that Islam suppressed its women. Since then the veil has for many Westerners come to represent the tyranny and backwardness of Islam, while Muslims have seen the veil as a symbol of resistance against Western colonialism, attack and cultural influence.¹²⁵

In the 20th century, unveiling emerged as a symbol of modernity, gender equality, and progression in the West. At this point unveiling did not essentially mean secularism, but the Western meanings of the veil inspired the secular movement. In many Muslim countries counter-movements like the Muslim Brotherhood developed which sought a renewal of Islamic values and a repudiation of Western imperialism and influence. Many expected the veil to disappear as modern values replaced traditional practices and the world became more intertwined. Instead of a decline in veil usage a resurgence of the Islamic veil's increased power, meaning, and practice can be seen all over the world.¹²⁶ The veiling and revealing movement must also be understood not only in the context of imperialism and colonial images, but also in the new forms of open and hidden prejudice against Muslims in a post-Cold War period where Islam has become the new archenemy.¹²⁷ Although Islamic and Arabic discourses have changed superficially over time, the media have largely continued to portray Muslims and veiling in a negative light. After 9/11 there was an increase in the media coverage on Muslims, but essential stereotypes are still being reinforced to the American media audience. The media have produced more coverage of Muslim women since 9/11, as the fascination of veiling and women's place in Islam appears to have grown during the war in Afghanistan and Iraq. Despite greater attention around veiling and Muslim women, the overarching discourse is no more complex than they were during the 1979 revolution in Iran.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Todd, 445.

¹²⁵ Ahmad, Imtiaz, "Why is the Veil such a Contentious Issue?," *Economic and Political Weekly* 41.49 (2006): 537.

¹²⁶ Ahmed, Leila, *A Quiet Revolution: The Veil's Resurgence, from the Middle East to America*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011) 117.

¹²⁷ Hoodfar, 13.

¹²⁸ Hirji, Faiza, "Through the looking Glass: Muslim Women on Television," *Global media journal*, 4.2 (2011): 33.

3.2 The Journalistic Angle on Islam and Voices

In my analysis of *The New York Times*' and *The Washington Times*' coverage of veiling, an alarming finding was that only seven of the 63 articles could be considered to portray a positive view of Islam, whereas 26 had a neutral, and 30 had a negative angle on Islam. The increased negative coverage of Islamic cultures and traditions has made the Muslim community, scholars, and journalists alarmed by how Muslim related issues and stories related are portrayed. Not all coverage on veiling and Muslim women was negative, and it is also important to allow for Islam-critical voices to be heard. Some Muslim women are forced to wear the veil, and some are perhaps oppressed by their male counterparts or in violent relationships, but that is not because of Islam as a faith. The increase in media coverage of topics surrounding Islamic culture and tradition in relation to women is positive, as long as it is objective and accurate and does not result in more prejudice and stereotypes.

Another discovery was that overwhelming 47 of the journalists were of non-Muslim background, as indicated by traditional Western surnames, which most likely could result in some bias towards their coverage of veiling. Furthermore these journalists allotted significantly more space for non-Muslim voices to be heard, quoted, or interviewed than Muslim voices. This finding supports the study by Pierre Tévanian, which demonstrated that the media primes the tradition of veiling as something problematic by personally selecting which voices to include in the news piece. He further argued that social scientists, feminists, teachers, and politicians who favor the veil are often excluded as sources. This way the media creates a debate where only "bearded foreign religious men defend the Muslim head scarf against women who have rejected the hijab, often supported by natives or emancipated male intellectuals."¹²⁹ This way the American media audience will quickly favor those opposing the veil, as those sources are often closest to the in-group. My analysis of the media coverage of veiling shows that the American media has a long way to go in using Muslims as sources and as reporters. A good way of improving current coverage would be to encourage journalism as a profession for Muslim women. Dr. Tayyibah Taylor, Editor of *Azizah Magazine* stated that, "without Muslim women working in the media, both behind the scenes

¹²⁹Cecari, Jocelyne, "Islamophobia in the West: A Comparison between Europe and the United States," in *Islamophobia: The Challenge of Pluralism in the 21st Century*, eds. John L. Esposito and Ibrahim Kali, (New York: Oxford Univeristy Press, 2011) 34.

and in front, and without accurate representations of Muslim women in the media, the public will continue to think of Muslim women as someone to pity, shun, or fear.”¹³⁰

In the United States non-Muslims media producers outnumber Muslim media producers, which can result in that the media on a daily basis reinforce old stereotypes by using inaccurate references and not interviewing Muslims about the relevant topic or issue. The usage of non-Muslim sources is problematic, because the media often portray veiling as something forced, traditional, and deeply religious, and thus fail to explain why some choose to veil even when residing in America. Bias and shallow media coverage becomes a problem since most of American’s view and knowledge of Muslim women is largely formed by the mass media unless their social circle includes Muslim friends, co-workers or acquaintances. The lack of Muslim women as media sources reinforces the veiled Muslim stereotype. In the relatively few articles where the journalists had corresponded with Muslim women, many of them revealed that they felt threatened, judged, and scrutinized if they wore hijabs or veils outside, due to the kind of media stereotypes and connotations with people who wear Muslim clothing.

The negative angle on the veil and the exclusion of Muslim women as sources affects her position on the stereotype content model. As long as her own views and decisions regarding the veil are omitted in the media articles, she is likely to be pitied like the elderly and disabled. The reason why she will be placed in the pitied out-group is much because she is deemed to be helpless in her own situation and forced to veil. An article in *The New York Times* emphasized this problem and quoted the source saying: “We are thought of as being submissive and given in marriage to big, bearded men, while the reality is that a majority of Muslim women are creative, funny, intelligent and opinionated.”¹³¹ In addition the journalist included that the woman, Ms. Mattu, was an international development consultant. Unfortunately, there were very few articles that included any voiced that contradicted the common pitied stereotype.

¹³⁰ Munro, Mara, “Sensationalism Veils: The Portrayal of Muslim Women in Western News Media,” *Magazine Intercultures*, 2.3 (2011): n. pag. <<http://www.international.gc.ca/cfsi-icse/cil-cai/magazine/v02n03/1-4-eng.asp>>

¹³¹ MacFarquhar, Neil, “Lifting Veil On Love And Islam,” *The New York Times*, 24 Jan. 2012 late ed. Print.

3.3 Media Tools: Language, Words and Headings

The New York Times and *The Washington Times* shape the American audience's view on veiling, by presenting stories within a particular interpretive frame. Many of the headlines framed the news story in a way that suggested how the reader should feel about the veil and veiled women already before reading the piece. Headings such as "Clash over Hijab Ban," "Your Veil is a Battleground," "Tearing Away the Veil," "Behind the Veil," "Daughter of the Revolution Fights the Veil," all have connotation to the veil as something negative. In relation to the veil coverage almost all of the stories had negative connotations of some sort, and were often placed within a contextual framework. Veiling was framed within the context of legal disputes, fundamental rights, violence, or various types of disagreements; this reinforces the traditional attitudes and prejudices of the American in-group, as the news media convey stories about veiled women as something negative and problematic. Edward Said and John Esposito claim the fear of Communism has been replaced with the fear of Islam. The connection to communism was not frequently found when reporting on veiling. However, both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* used earlier terms for Soviet union and communism, with primed headlines such as "Behind the Veil," "Iran: The first Veil Falls," "Where the Evil Empire Is Us and the Veil Liberation." These headlines activate the readers' thoughts and further triggers other thoughts connected to what they read. In this way, the veil can for the American audience carry the same heavy meaning and ideology as the Communist's hammer and sickle.

In view of the agenda setting function in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times*, the massive emphasis on contentious issues like the veil ban in Europe, integration issues, and the culture clash influence how the American audience come to deem these issues as vital. The media's agenda setting of these topics tell the audience what to think of, and also what to think about the information presented with. The veiling related themes prime related thoughts like the oppression or victimization of Muslim women, the backwardness or radicalization of Islam, and fundamental differences between the American and Islamic cultural traditions. Examples of priming could be when the American journalist writes in "Fitness Tailored to a Hijab" that "Muslim women are often limited in their choice of activity, as well. Some believe that certain yoga poses, for example, are forbidden. For the sake of modesty, working out around men is discouraged."¹³² Primed thoughts are an extension of the agenda setting,

¹³² Ellin, Abby, "Fitness Tailored to a Hijab," *The New York Times*, September 10, 2009. late ed. Print.

and will fuel the alleged gap between the American in-group and Muslims as an out-group, as well as reinforce old prejudicial attitudes and stereotypes.

In terms of language and vocabulary few negative words were used with specific reference to Muslim women, but the veil itself was often described with oppressive terms, which can affect the reader's perception of the veil, Muslim women, and Islam in general. In *The New York Times* article "Behind the Veil," the American female journalist tries on a burqa, and writes "For those few moments under the burqa, I glimpsed a life in which both air and vision were so restricted that I was overwhelmed by claustrophobia. It was suffocating, emotionally as well as physically." She also quotes a young Muslim girl on the burqa "This isn't clothing; it's a jail cell."¹³³ In the article "The French, the Veil and the Look", the journalist describes the burqa as a "garment functions like a body tent, with an eye screen to allow some vision."¹³⁴ By describing the veil in these ways the journalists frames the story from the very beginning and the average reader will most likely pity these women. The media audiences might also feel antipathy towards Islam as a religion for enforcing its women to wear something that restricts not only their sight but also their way of life.

Sarcastic and pessimistic undertone was often found when writing about those morals in reference to veiling among Muslim. For instance, the journalist writes, "the fact that people are prohibited from strolling down Fifth Avenue in the nude does not constitute an attack on the fundamental rights of nudists," and "how can you establish a relationship with a person who, by hiding a smile or a glance - those universal signs of our common humanity - refuses to exist in the eyes of others?" In "Egypt, A New Battle Begins Over the Veil," the same sarcasm can be seen where the journalist writes in reference to the veil debate, "FORGET about widespread poverty, dilapidated schools, chronic unemployment or public anger over police brutality. What brings Egyptian officials to their feet, what makes them shouting mad, what inspires a minister's resignation?"¹³⁵ This tells media audiences how unreasonably important Muslims believe a small piece of garment is and that Muslims are sometimes too demanding in the accommodation of their religious traditions. In "Zanzibar Bans Driving in Veils," we are told the police "banned women from driving while wearing the face veil known as a niqab, saying it has caused accidents."¹³⁶ The journalist further states, "their vision is not accurate," which is a subtle way of framing the story. It suggests that the overall

¹³³ Hilton, Isabel, "Behind the Veil," *The New York Times*, 28 Apr. 2002 late ed. Print

¹³⁴ Sciolino, Elaine, "The French, The Veil and the Look," *The New York Times*, 17 Apr., 2011 late ed. print

¹³⁵ Slackman, Michael, "Egypt, A New Battle Begins Over the Veil," *The New York Times*, 28 Jan. 2007 late ed. Print.

¹³⁶ Associated Press, "Zanzibar Bans Driving in Veils," *The New York Times*, 3 Feb. 2007 late ed. Print.

the whole idea of covering everything up is a rather foolish idea, and a proof of that Islamic traditions and practices are not always very practical and cannot be accommodated in a modern society.

3.4 Themes

In the majority of the news articles, veiling was framed within a larger context and served as a symbol of a more complex theme, and most of the themes were problem oriented. An important finding from this research was that the American media often covered veiling in two different ways. On one hand, veiling was covered as a symbol of fundamentalism, where themes like Islamic hatred of the West and the oppression of women are prevalent. On the other hand veiling was covered as a practice among Muslim women that is clashing with Western way of life. In the latter, integration, immigration, and assimilation of Muslims in Western countries were often dominating themes and subthemes. Both approaches were negatively covered by *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times*, and were presented to the audience as problematic aspects of the Islamic faith.

3.4.1 The Lack of Everyday Stories and how Muslim Women Must Choose

A common problem is that the media does not portray everyday life as we know it, but rather portrays what is new, unusual, dramatic, and controversial. Therefore the media often contribute with creating or increasing the gap between the out-group and in-group since the in-group does not see the “them” as people living ordinary lives. The portrayals and stories found in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* had little to do with the real life of Muslim women; the reason behind this is that media stories are often exaggerated to attract more readers or for political purposes.¹³⁷ Successful Muslim woman or everyday stories was almost invisible in the coverage of veiling, because it does not result in higher sales numbers. *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* among other papers thus fail to reflect the complexity of the identities and lives of Muslim women, much like Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and other scholars have claimed.

Muslims are increasingly becoming more visible and accepted citizens in the America society; instead of focusing on this tendency *The New York Times* and *The Washington*

¹³⁷ Eide and Simonsen, 13.

Times only made Muslim women visible with regards to problematic cultural issues, religious disputes, or unenthusiastic episodes. With an overrepresentation of stereotypical new stories, there was a lack of focus on the achievements of Muslim women, especially of those who do not fit the veiled and victimized stereotype. Reasons for this type of representations of Muslim women in the media are not merely due to integrated prejudice among journalists, but also deadline pressures, length requirements, and popularity among readers. These variables force news stories to be short and under-examined, which often result in stereotypical stories. Kathy Gannon, a journalist who reported from Afghanistan and Pakistan, believed the reason for stereotypical coverage and lack of everyday stories was that “in the West, we tend to have relatively limited attention spans and we need things in simple, broad strokes. We also like symbols in the West, and the burqa is a strong symbol. But it is a hugely black and white approach, or a good vs. evil approach.”¹³⁸

My analysis supports the argument above, as almost all of the articles examined for this paper had negative connotations to violence, cultural clash, political issues or some type of legal dispute. Shockingly only three of the articles were related to everyday life stories, and they were on the subject of sport, love, and culture. This means that 60 of the articles gave the readers information and stories about Muslim women that they could not relate to. Noteworthy is that those articles about sports or everyday incidents had subthemes of how difficult it was to be a Muslim woman in a modern society. The article “Rules Board to Consider Ending Ban on Hijabs” is about whether Muslim female soccer players should be allowed to wear headscarves in games. The subtheme is about how Muslim women must choose between the restrictive Islamic life and the playful American life. One of the soccer players is quoted saying, “Either we take it off or we don’t play, and obviously no one will take it off.”¹³⁹ This quote shows how Muslim women miss out on what life has to offer just because of their decision to veil, and illustrates to the media audiences their dissimilarity from the American female in-group. American women have the freedom to choose both religion and sports. American women can have it all, while Muslim women are pitied since they are more unfortunate.

In reference to the stereotype content model, focusing on how troublesome it is to choose veiling will most likely put her relatively high on the warmth dimension and low on the competence dimension. Muslim women who chose to unveil can be just as warm and

¹³⁸ Munro, n. pag.

¹³⁹ Singh, Vijai, “Rules Board to Consider Ending Ban on Hijabs,” *The New York Times*, 3 Mar. 2012 late ed. Print.

competent as American women. If they chose to veil they will have face constraints and prejudice, and never be able to reach the admired in-group like the middle-class and black professionals. The only way Muslim women can reach the level of both high competence and high warmth is through unveiling and becoming more Americanized. Even if veiled Muslim women might already have the traits needed, the in-group will usually not accept veiled women as one of them simply because the veil itself is such a strong symbol of the otherness. Although visible different, black professionals have reached the box of admired in-group, and so can veiled women, but they will have to work twice as hard as whites with the same educational or occupational background.

3.4.2 Security, Terrorism, and Fundamentalism

The articles pertaining to veiling were often linked to themes of security and fundamentalism in a many ways. In “Tearing Away the Veil,” the audience read that “by prohibiting the burqa, France would stigmatize Muslims, thereby aiding extremists worldwide,” and “the visibility of the face in the public sphere, is essential to our security, and is a condition for living together.”¹⁴⁰ There are many connotations like these, even though the articles themselves had nothing to do with extremism or terrorism in the first place. In “Somali Police Seizing Veils,” the story of veiling is primed to terrorism as the source is quoted saying, “every policeman and government soldier has orders to confiscate veils from veiled women, as various recent attacks had been carried out by people in disguise.”¹⁴¹ “Britain Proposes Allowing Schools to Forbid Full-Face Muslim Veils” is about banning of the veil, but the journalist still find it necessary to add that the “Islamic dress made headlines in Britain for another reason recently, when a trial of terrorism suspects included surveillance television footage of a male suspect at a bus station as he fled London in what appeared to be an all-covering burqa-style dress.”¹⁴² Further in “Tearing Away the Veil” the American audience can read the journalist’s description of a veiled woman, “she is no longer identifiable; she is a shadow among others, lacking individuality, avoiding responsibility.”¹⁴³ In “Egypt, A New Battle Begins Over the Veil,” the veil is described as a sign of the Muslim brotherhood and Islamism and the journalist writes “The Egyptian authorities have begun to see this dress as a

¹⁴⁰ Cope, Jean-Francois, “Tearing Away the Veil,” *The New York Times*, 5 May 2010 late ed. Print.

¹⁴¹ Reuters, “Somali Police Seizing Veils,” *The New York Times*, 10 May 2007 late ed. Print.

¹⁴² Cowel, Alan, “Britain Proposes Allowing Schools to Forbid Full-Face Muslim Veils,” *The New York Times*, 21 Mar. 2007 late ed. Print.

¹⁴³ Cope, Jean-Francois, “Tearing Away the Veil,” *The New York Times*, 5 May 2010 late ed. Print.

security threat, because it hides the face, and because it is perceived as a political statement, a rejection of the state in favor of a strict Islamic system.”¹⁴⁴ These articles are just some examples of how usual it has become to see the veil in connection to terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism. When journalists frequently use terms linked to terrorism, they prime the story and the audience some to think of terrorism when they read about or see a woman wearing the Islamic veil.

3.4.3 The Veil Ban and Religious Freedom and Rights

An overwhelming majority of the articles examined for this paper was related to the debate over the banning of the veil in public places especially in European countries. Out of 63 articles analyzed, 30 were written in reference to the veil banning. The subthemes of these articles were primarily related to civil rights, religious freedom and the barriers in integrating different cultural religious immigrant groups into Western societies. One third of the articles were written with religious freedom and rights as themes. In “Tearing Away the Veil,” the journalist refers to Amnesty International which “condemned the Belgian law as an attack on religious freedom,”¹⁴⁵ before he goes into a deeper discussion of fundamental rights. Americans value their rights and liberties above anything else, and this might be what kept veiling salient for the American media. Out of the 63 articles, 53 of them were news coverage from other countries than the United States, which reveals that veiling among Muslim-American women is not considered a major issue within the America society that needs media attention. Americans do not seem to find veiling among Muslim women as such a profound threat to their secular values and integration as Europeans does. Regarding the articles about the veil debate in Europe, many American journalists did a reasonable good job in clarifying that it is not religion in itself or the veil that is the problem, but the failed integration in Europe. The problem with viewing the veil as a symbol of failed integration is that many read Huntington’s Clash of Civilizations theory into it. One journalist enlightens that “the real debate should be about the failure of European governments to address the sources of immigrant discontent - which include high unemployment and discrimination - and about the failure of Muslim leaders in the West to counter the rise of extremism in their communities.”¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Slackman, Michael, “Egypt, A New Battle Begins Over the Veil,” *The New York Times*, 28 Jan. 2007 late ed. Print.

¹⁴⁵ Cope, Jean-Francois, “Tearing Away the Veil,” *The New York Times*, May 5, 2010 late ed. Print.

¹⁴⁶ Editorial, “Behind the Veil,” *The New York Times*, October 19, 2006 late ed. Print.

Most of the articles related to the veil banning were about France, but some also from Turkey, Egypt, and Italy. Turkey, a country where the majority of its population belongs to the Islamic faith, has banned veiling in public institutions. In the 2005 the European Court of Human Rights held that Turkey was justified in its decision to ban women's headscarves from Turkish universities, because of the nation's constitutional principles of secularism and gender equality.¹⁴⁷ A large sample of the articles analyzed for this paper was from 2004 when France approved a law that banned religious dress and symbols in public secondary schools. The law did not explicitly mention the Islamic headscarf, but many argued it specifically targeted the Muslim population, and it dominated French and international media for several months. These laws and the media coverage of them show a trend towards higher interference with religious freedom in secular countries and that the veil as a symbol of oppression and backwardness is as relevant as ever.¹⁴⁸

All of the articles examined from *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* indicates that the Americans view veiling quite differently than Europeans, but the negative stereotyping of veiled women still occur. In the United States as in Europe only a minority of Muslim women wears full-length gowns (jilbabs) and face veils (niqabs), but headscarves (hijabs) are common. Regardless of this tendency, Muslim women who wear the any forms of veils or headscarves are still subjects to discrimination and negative comments from all corners of society. The United States has not issued any formal ban on veiling, although many have strong views on how a Muslim should properly dress to be considered a true American. From an American point of view the veil is an example of Islam as an unchanging, traditional, and highly patriarchal religion, but it is unlikely that veils, yarmulkes, crosses or other religious dress could ever be banned in the United States. The Establishment Clause of the First Amendment states the basic separation of church and state in the United States, but there is no similar concept of secularism comparable to the concept in France or Turkey. In the United States it is stated that, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion," but religion is still accepted and visible in the public sphere. Without a principle of secularism like the one in France or Turkey religious freedom stands stronger in the United States, and perhaps fewer Americans than Europeans would jeopardize this to ban veiling.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Westerfield, Jennifer M., "Behind the Veil: An American Legal Perspective on the European Headscarf Debate," *The American Journal of Comparative Law* 54.3(2006): 637.

¹⁴⁸ Westerfield, 640.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 660-661.

Body-Gendrot, argues that, “because of The First Amendment in the United States the veil controversy is a matter of religious freedom, whereas in European countries it is more a matter of integration and assimilation.” She explains that the “United States legally recognizes differences by ethnicity and race whereas many European countries, emphasize a national character rather than ethnic differences.” One example of this can be seen with France and the United States where the understandings of secularity are very different, and thus shape the outlook the average citizen and politician have on veiling. In France, secularity means removing any sign of religion from public areas, whereas in the United States secularity allows more room to practice religion.¹⁵⁰ Although the media often concentrates on the supposedly oppressive character of Islamic law and the veil in particular, the American press talks more about individual choice and the freedom of religious expression than European papers seem to do. In “Veiling the “Other,” Unveiling Our “Selves:” Reading Media Images of the Hijab Psychoanalytically to Move beyond Tolerance,” Sharon Todd gives credit to the American press and argues Anglo-American papers are more concerned about “liberal notions of rights, freedoms and responsibilities rather than the interpretation of sign and symbol oriented discussion that characterized the French media.”¹⁵¹

3.5 Stereotyping in the Media’s Portrayal of Veiling

The examination of *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* revealed many common stereotypical descriptions of veiled Muslim women thus reinforcing them as an out-group. According to stereotype theory, these characteristics are thus believed by the media audience to be shared by all members, and thereby all veiled women are classified as a different out-group. When the American media define veiling among Muslim women as backward and discriminating, they are depicting the American in-group as modern and gender equal by not veiling and hiding their women.¹⁵² Stereotypes of out-groups have always been present, and since they are not stable or fixed the ones we see today differ from those a century ago. One example is how Muslim women today are portrayed as repressed, submissive and weak, but earlier in Victorian time she was portrayed as erotic, seductive and mystical. This alteration is most likely due to social changes and increased feminism in Western countries where we now see strong, sexually liberated and independent women as the role models. In order to justify

¹⁵⁰ Ajrouch, 322-323.

¹⁵¹ Todd, 445.

¹⁵² Gottschalk and Greenberg, 63 – 75.

and come to terms with Western women's new role, clothing style, and increased power cultures with different gender-roles come to be stereotyped in a negative way.¹⁵³

Many Americans pity Muslim women and view them as being victimized. According to prejudice theory, the visibility of the out-group in terms of physical and cultural appearance determines the degree of prejudice. Veiled Muslim women stand out from their unveiled sisters, because the veil itself makes them a visible and easy target of stereotyping and prejudice. Veiled Muslim women are portrayed as weak, uneducated, passives that hold no real authority over their own lives. It is easier for people to discriminate against veiled Muslim women than some other minority groups, because the veil reveals that she is part of the Muslim out-group. Despite the visibility of the veil itself, Muslim women have become invisible in many aspects of American civil life. Because of their status as invisible Muslim women are especially easy targets for stereotyping, pitying and prejudice in this modern world where women are increasingly valued according to their perfect bodies, newly blow-dried hair and the latest designer fashion. Western women flaunt their status and what they have accomplished by showing themselves off, while Muslim women on the other hand are stereotyped as passive, incompetent and in desperate need of saving.¹⁵⁴

3.5.1 The Submissive Victim

Muslim women are often described as “wearing a black veil from head to toe and following several paces behind abusive sheikhs, with their heads lowered, as mute, uneducated, unattractive, enslaved beings, solely attending men.”¹⁵⁵ The veil is a significant part of the prejudice and stereotypes Americans have about Muslim women because it has been integrated in the Western imaginary as the material sign of gender-repression and anti-liberalism, while American female fashion has been the symbol of democracy and freedom. The usual role of women in Muslim stereotypes is that of an oppressed veiled woman who upholds the family honor by being pure, traditional, silent and modest.¹⁵⁶ In *The Washington Times*’ “French fashion; the hijab’s place in society,” the journalist writes, “Muslims regard

¹⁵³ Eriksen, 2001, 58-59.

¹⁵⁴ Bindi, Tasnuva, “Feminism and Islam: The Problems with Applying Western Feminist Values to Non-Western Cultures,” *feminars.wordpress.com*, 17 Apr. 2013, <http://feminars.wordpress.com/2012/10/28/feminism-and-islam-the-problems-with-applying-western-feminist-values-to-non-western-cultures/>

¹⁵⁵ Ridouani, 4.

¹⁵⁶ Lorber, Judith, “Heroes, Warriors and Burqas: A Feminist Sociologist’s Reflections on September 11,” *Sociological Forum*, 17.3 (2002): 388.

the veil as a functional means of safeguarding young girls and women from the untrammelled sexual impulses of men. This belies a fairly unevolved set of manners and mores that reflects the culturally entrenched repression and abuse of women in Islamic society.”¹⁵⁷ According to my analysis this is a fairly common attitude among most journalists, and is reflected in the various articles examined as 10 of the 63 portrayed the veiled woman as a repressed victim.

Where the out-groups fall on the dimension on the stereotype content model is a result of shared public views and as the American public pity the Muslim woman for being a victim, she will often be placed within the pitied out-group. In relation to the stereotype content model many of the articles suggests that veiled Muslim women are a pitied out-group, and the reason for this is the emphasis on how the veil closes so many opportunities for women. In articles like “A Veil Closes France’s Door To Citizenship and Driver’s Licenses and the Veil,” Muslim women are disadvantaging when wearing the veil in everything from education and jobs, to citizenship and sports. In some of the news stories about veiled Muslim women, references to America were made, and this supports the claim of how Americans believes they should save Muslim women from the tyranny of the veil. In “Your Veil Is a Battleground,” the journalist writes “behind closed doors, these women act very much like their American friends - dating, singing, studying ballet and even swimming.”¹⁵⁸ In the same article we find that “everything that is banned by the government is being practiced, but the generation is exposed to the West through satellite and Internet so much that they don’t let the restrictions stop them.”¹⁵⁹ That many of the articles focused on the veiled woman as a victim is not surprising as stereotyping tends to be negative, imprecise, and shallow evaluation of the “others.”

The white American in-group has types of schemas about the Arab/Muslim veiled out-group. In these types of schemas Muslim women are all perceived to share certain characteristics like weak, submissive, motherly, domestic, traditional, and chastity. These characteristics were commonly found in my analysis, and some of them are similar to those traits important on the warmth dimension on the stereotype content model. This schema or stereotype is challenged when a member of the in-group is presented with veiled a Muslim woman who perhaps speak English fluently, is on a shopping spree with her friends at the mall or has an impressive occupational position. If contradicting episodes like these occur the

¹⁵⁷West, Diana, French fashion?; “The hijab’s place in society,” *The Washington Times*, 16 Jan. 2004 final ed. Print

¹⁵⁸ Estrin, James, “Your Veil Is a Battleground,” *The New York Times Blog*, 29 May 2012. Web.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

in-group most modify the stereotypical image they have about the veiled out-group, much like Walter Lippmann stated. But if the media hardly ever pays any attention to educated, strong, and modern Muslim women, our stereotype of her will never be challenged, but instead reinforced by the media.

3.5.2 The Veiled Terrorist

Most Arab and Muslim costumes have been connected to terrorism at some point, and the veil does not escape this linkage in the media either. By connecting the two, the veil can be seen as a mask worn by terrorists in order not to be recognized. In this way, the Islamic veil is removed from its religious and cultural meaning, and Muslim women are thought to be concealing their identity behind their veil, and associated with terrorists.¹⁶⁰ Muslim women are sometimes believed to honor martyrs by veiling and official slogans and graffiti in Islamic countries often say, “My sister, your hijab is your martyrdom.”¹⁶¹ The media pick up on this, and today we see an increase in the media of portraying Muslim women as female martyrs, which is predominantly a new stereotype. In the article “Florida Court Bars Veil in License Photo,” the reason why a Muslim woman cannot wear a veil in her driver’s license photo is because “the practice might help terrorists conceal their identities.”¹⁶²

The stereotype of the veiled Muslim woman as a terrorist entered the news after the first Palestinian woman suicide bombing occurred, and it portrayed veiled women as aggressive and fundamental as Muslim men.¹⁶³ This stereotype was earlier only found among their male counterparts, but as context changes so do stereotypes. The Muslim terrorist stereotype is the greatest American enemy, and is described as brutal, heartless, uncivilized, and religiously fundamental. Based on the American public’s perception of a terrorist it can be alarmingly damaging for the image of Muslim women if the media start portraying them as terrorists too.¹⁶⁴ Although Muslim women are not usually portrayed as terrorist the linkage between the veil and terrorism was evident in several articles. For instance, in “Muslims’ Veils Test Limits of Britain’s Tolerance,” it is indicated that legal bans on veiling is justified

¹⁶⁰ Ridouani, 3.

¹⁶¹ Lorber, 388.

¹⁶² Associated Press, “Florida Court Bars Veil in License Photo,” *The New York Times*, 7 Jun. 2003 late ed. Print.

¹⁶³ Lorber, 388.

¹⁶⁴ Merskin, 145.

on security grounds, as an anti-terrorism measure. The journalist also includes that British Prime Minister Tony Blair described the veil as a “mark of separation”¹⁶⁵

Although this paper did not explore the media coverage of terrorism and martyrs, some conclusions can be drawn from the examination of the data collected. Of the 63 articles examined six of them portrayed Muslim women as activists fighting for their beliefs, and an additional eight articles portrayed them as fundamental in their religious beliefs in negative terms. Only one article portrayed the Muslim woman as an enemy or terrorist, which illustrates that it is still rare for the American media to depict veiled women as a martyrs or terrorists. Although, infrequent to portray veiled Muslim women as terrorists, the linkage to Al-Qaeda, security and terrorism was often found in the context. For instance, “Note to terrorists: Next time, wear a hijab. The Department of Homeland Security reportedly is giving special exemptions to their “enhanced pat-down” policy to Muslim women wearing the hijab or other form-concealing garments.”¹⁶⁶ Some journalists are aware of this false link, and one writes that “perhaps more dangerous stereotype placed upon women in the veil, is that by wearing the veil and being Muslim, they are associated with terrorism.” The journalist also give voice to a Muslim women who says women wearing veils in the United States were “impacted by hate crimes and harassment on the street more than any other group of people,” she also added that she knew of people that had been called “Sister of Saddam,” or “Daughter of Osama” in their classrooms.¹⁶⁷

Fred Halliday claims that the media has portrayed terrorism and fundamentalism as an exclusively “Middle Eastern” or “Islamic” problem. According to him, much of this is a result of 9/11, and falsely connects Islam to various acts of terror.¹⁶⁸ Veiled women are not commonly linked to terrorism, but the veil itself is increasingly used in the media as a symbol of fundamentalism and terrorism. In this respect veiled women can for future references be seen as terrorists or fundamentalists, just because they choose to wear such a symbolic garment. On the stereotype content model a terrorist could be portrayed as somewhat competent in terms of his or hers capabilities in reaching their goals. A terrorist could also be placed fairly low on skills and intelligence, since they use suicide-bombing as a means of

¹⁶⁵ Perlez, Jane, “Muslims’ Veils Test Limits of Britain’s Tolerance,” *The New York Times*, 22 Jun. 2007 late ed. Print.

¹⁶⁶ Editorial, “Terrorists hiding in hijabs; Muslims seek special treatment to elude TSA groping,” *The Washington Times*, 18 Nov. 2010. Print.

¹⁶⁷ Hildreth, Christina “Wrapped With Modesty” *The Michigan Daily*, 31 Mar. 2005, <<http://www.michigandaily.com/content/wrapped-modesty>>

¹⁶⁸ Open Democracy, Halliday, Fred, “Terrorism in historical perspective,” 2011, OpenDemocracy.net, 29. Apr. 2013 <http://www.opendemocracy.net/conflict/article_1865.jsp>

reaching their goals. A terrorist would be deemed as cold and lacking traits such as morality, sincerity, and friendliness, which are important on the warmth dimension. These factors would contribute with placing the Muslim terrorist stereotype between the despised out-group and envied out-group, but predominantly as a low-low group. Few of the articles portrayed the veiled woman as terrorists or characterized her as cold on the warmth dimension. Therefore she would usually not be part of this low-low group, unless she was depicted as a martyr or terrorist. A terrorist or a martyr is something threatening, and the veiled Muslim woman is per se not deemed to be threatening to the in-group, therefore she to most Americans do not fit this placement on the stereotype content model.

3.5.3 The Backwards Muslim Woman

The conception that Muslim women cannot be both veiled and modern at the same time is connected to the idea of binary oppositions in Western feminism. Feminists have constructed a one-dimensional model of liberated women that has enforced a double construction upon Muslim women. This feminist perception of a liberated and equal woman is further composed of absolutes. Oppressed Muslim women are seen as opposite to liberated American women; passive Muslim women are placed up against independent, strong American women. The Muslim women are seen as backwards and traditional in a context where American women are seen as modern. In this sense “Feminism is disarticulated: the othering of Muslim women.”¹⁶⁹ In this type of schemas Muslims women who are fashionable, educated, and progressive, are believed to look and think like American women, and thus part of the constructed feminist “we.” Muslim women who are traditional in terms of dress and occupation are deemed to be imprisoned in their cultural traditions, and are in an out-group compared to middle-class American females.¹⁷⁰ The problem with the majority of the articles concerning the veil is that it does not leave any room for a nuanced view on the issue. In thirteen of the articles examined, Muslim women who wore the veil were portrayed as part of a traditional, oppressed, and deeply religious out-group. In contrast, unveiled Muslim women were described as modern and Americanized, often with an emphasis on their educational background.

¹⁶⁹ Scharff, C., “Disarticulating Feminism: Individualization, neoliberalism and the othering of Muslim women,” *European Journal of Women’s Studies* 18.2 (2011): 6.

¹⁷⁰ Haideh, Moghissi, and Halleh, Ghorashi, *Muslim Diaspora in the West: Negotiating Gender, Home and Belonging*, (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010) 30.

The article “In Jeans or Veils” provides a good illustration of how Muslim women are often stereotyped to be either veiled and religious or unveiled and modern, but in rare cases they are both. In the article, the Muslim women who were fighting for women’s rights were described as “three dozen women in Western-style business suits,” while the women who wore “black abayas, the garments that cover a woman’s body from head to foot” wanted larger aspects of Islamic law included in Iraq’s legal code.¹⁷¹ The stereotyping of the veiled Muslim woman as traditional and backward is perhaps the concept that fits best into the “us” and “them” conception. Earlier it was common for both Jewish and Christian women to sometimes cover parts of their hair and dress modestly, but in recent times this has been regarded as too conservative. For some it is seen as a sign of setback for feminism and patriarchal enforcement when Muslim women choose to veil as a sign of religious commitment. Most Western women do not consider themselves less religious if they wear a short dress in the summer, thus the full-length black veil can only be seen as a disadvantage and negative custom for most women. This separates the modern unveiled in-group from “those” who chose to veil their femininity, accept their position as invisible, and gender inequality. The common media portrayal of the characteristics and descriptions of the backwards, veiled women is quite similar to that of the victimized Muslim woman. The backwards or traditional Muslim woman might be seen as somewhat more intelligent and competent if the journalist leaves room for explaining the reasons behind the choice to veil.

3.5.4 The Fundamental Veiled Muslim Woman

Devoted Christians, Jewish or Catholics are often considered as committed to their religion or conservative if they chose to incorporate religious doctrines into their daily lives, whereas Muslims are considered to be fundamentalist if they do the same. It has been claimed that the media extensively misuse the term “fundamentalist” to refer to terrorists who happen to be Muslim, or who are anti-American. This term is often used by the media as a “snarl” word that is intended to denigrate a religious group, implying that they are intolerant or prone to violence.¹⁷² The use by the media of the term “fundamental” is a way of framing the story and the people it is about in a negative context. In “Parliament Moves France Closer to a Ban on

¹⁷¹ Worth, Robert F., “In Jeans or Veils, Iraqi Women Are Split on New Political Power,” *The New York Times*, 13 Apr. 2005 late ed. Print.

¹⁷² Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance, “Religious Terminology: Fundamentalism in Christianity & Islam,” *religioustolerance.org*, 16. Apr. 2013, <http://www.religioustolerance.org/reac_ter9.htm>

Facial Veils,”¹⁷³ an interviewee says it would be a “priceless gift to the fundamentalists we all oppose,” to not approve the law. For the average American media audience the word “fundamentalism” in connection to Islam means something negative, different, and abnormal compared to when used in reference to the in-groups’ religion. Several of the articles portray the veiled women as rather fundamental in their interpretation of Islam. In “Italian Woman’s Veil Stirs More Than Fashion Feud,” a Muslim veiled woman is fined because of Italian laws that prohibit people appearing in public with a concealed face. The article mention that the “Association of Muslim Women, says Islam does not require covering the whole face, and that Ms. Varroni should consider a less extreme veil.”¹⁷⁴ When the journalist includes that even a Muslim organization believes veiling to be too extreme, then the average American reader will characterize the veiled women as fundamental, too. Muslim veiled women are portrayed as fundamentalists because as noted by *The New York Times* journalist, “the full veil is seen as a sign of a more fundamentalist Islam.”¹⁷⁵

Fundamental religious Muslims are believed to have different goals than Americans, and are relatively low in group status. However, they can be seen as competitive in the way that fundamental Islam is threatening American Judeo-Christian values. According to a study conducted by Sides and Gross, white-American tends to feel warmly toward two other religious groups, Jews and Catholics, but less warmly toward Christian Fundamentalists. Overall, Americans felt much more coolly toward Muslims, and only homosexuals and illegal immigrants were liked less. Combining both fundamentalism and Islam together will thus place Muslim fundamentalist very low on the warmth dimension.¹⁷⁶ If veiled women are considered to be fundamentalist they will most likely be placed low on the warmth dimension, and relatively low on the competence dimension. As the stereotype content model proposes that it is only four kinds of people existing in the world for the in-group, those with “us” or those against “us”, and those capable or incapable in reaching their goals. As fundamental Islam is considered to be a problem for America in general, fundamental religious Muslim women will be seen as “part of the problem and not part of the solution.”¹⁷⁷ The journalists

¹⁷³Erlanger, Steven, “Parliament Moves France Closer to a Ban on Facial Veils,” *The New York Times*, 14 Jul. 2010 final ed. Print.

¹⁷⁴ Fisher, Ian, “Italian Woman’s Veil Stirs More Than Fashion Feud,” *The New York Times*, 15 Oct. 2004 late ed. Print.

¹⁷⁵ Erlanger, Steven, “Sarkozy Says He Supports Bill Banning Full Veils,” *The New York Times*, 22 Apr. 2010 late ed. Print.

¹⁷⁶ Sides and Gross, 11.

¹⁷⁷Fiske, Susan T., “Universal Dimensions of Inequality: Why Warmth and Competence Matter to Social Work,” *Columbia.edu*, 9 Apr. 2013.

described the fundamental Muslim women as somewhat simple-minded, only preoccupied with adhering to religious practices and doctrines. With these characteristics fundamental Muslims will be deemed as low in terms of status, competence skills and intelligence.

3.6 The Media Fails to Explain why Women Choose to Veil

The Washington Times' and *The New York Times*' interest in the veil reveals how important Islam and controversies surrounding Islamic traditions are in America. Although well covered, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* often fell short in explaining the different reasons for veiling. Only five of the 63 articles analyzed depicted the Muslim woman as reflected, independent, and modern clear of her choice of either veiling or unveiling; however the remaining did not explain or give any background information on the matter of veiling. The other articles did not blatantly depict the Muslim woman as forced to veil, but many readers will have this impression since they do not understand why she would want to veil. Missing in the two papers' portrayal of veiling are explanatory frames, and reasons for why veiling is an important and personal choice for many Muslim women.

From an American point of view the veil stands for the oppression of women, resistance to democratic principles of liberty and equality, as well as radical Islam and religious fanaticism. To many Muslims it is only a way of dressing, a sign of cultural and religious respect. Some Muslim women also see the veil as a symbol of feminism, when certain governments like France seek to ban the veil they are fighting for their right to wear it just as they would fight for their right not to wear it.¹⁷⁸ Some women have chosen to veil as a way of signifying their religious commitments, while others acknowledge they have been pressured. In the articles a few were stereotyped as activists with a political agenda; for them the veil is often seen as a way of rejecting American power and influence, as well as maintaining their religious beliefs and traditions.¹⁷⁹ The veil can also be a way of combining traditional family customs with urbanization, education and careers, here veiling is a way of protecting educated and urbanized young women. Among Muslim immigrants many women chose to veil to show their religious identity, feel community belonging, and to avoid unwanted sexual attention from men. Their unveiled Muslim counterparts often claim veiling

<[http://www.columbia.edu/cu/ssw/ocit/media/mediafiles/Susan Fiske Presentation at Columbia School of Social Work.pdf](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/ssw/ocit/media/mediafiles/Susan_Fiske_Presentation_at_Columbia_School_of_Social_Work.pdf)>

¹⁷⁸ Westerfield, 637.

¹⁷⁹ Ahmed, 118.

is an imposition of patriarchal control, and a way of controlling the sexual purity of Muslim women. Regardless if the media explains why a Muslim woman wears the veil, the media's agenda-setting of veiling increases a gap between "us" and "them," and stereotype veiled women as different from "us." If they were considered to be like "us" there would be no focus on the veil as problematic, mere as a traditional way of dressing.¹⁸⁰

National context of the host society for Muslim immigrants is also an influential variable that shapes the explanations and motivations for veiling.¹⁸¹ Body-Gendrot, Professor of Political Science at the Sorbonne, and Caitlin Killian, Associate Professor of Sociology at Drew, both argue that the context of the host country as well as the links between ethnic affiliation, gender, and identity are important for veiling. The reasons for veiling can be different in the United States, compared to the reasons found in another country. According to Body-Gendrot and Killian, the media and the general American public fail to understand that the veil represents an expression of an American identity. As one young Muslim woman explained in an editorial letter to *The New York Times*; "I, as a Muslim American, appreciate America's tradition of proudly protecting and promoting the right to practice and display one's religion however one chooses. It makes me proud to be an American."¹⁸² For many Muslims America stands for freedom of religion and expression, which informs and influences young Muslim women's veiling choices where the veil can be seen as one way of developing an American Islam. Some Muslim-American women wear the veil as a strategy to announce an American Islamic identity that is seen as very important; this is especially in the environment after 9/11 when the veil became more threatening and was linked Islam as a religion of terrorists. What we see today is a surge in veiling among the second generation, who wear it as a way to cope with post-9/11 tensions in the United States, and embracing the American value of religious freedom by choosing to veil.¹⁸³

The media has been accused of not explaining why Muslim women wear the veil but in the article "The French, The Veil and the Look," the journalist clarifies that "some of these women may be rebels, demanding control over their bodies and recognition within a Western culture whose social values they reject. Some may have been forced into covering their faces by domineering men; others may believe they are better Muslims because they hide their faces in public. Some are French converts from Christianity. It can be used in a kind of cat-

¹⁸⁰ Lorber, 389.

¹⁸¹ Ahmed, 119.

¹⁸² Hussain, Azhar, Letter. "The French Ban on Wearing a Full-Face Veil in Public," *The New York Times*, 18 Apr. 2011. Print.

¹⁸³ Ajrouch, 322-323.

and-mouse game with strangers. She can see out, but no one can see in.”¹⁸⁴ The problem then is if only one out of 20 or 100 articles give a somewhat positive explanation to the veil usage, there are small odds that the average American will understand the reasons behind veiling. Mostly only those negative to veiling are quoted in the articles, and from them we are constantly being told it is repressive to women. Those few pro-veil sources say it is a voluntary expression of their faith and that a veil ban would deny Muslim women freedom of expression and stigmatize them.

3.7 Conclusion on the Coverage of Veiling

This chapter has sought to examine the stereotyping of Muslim women and how the tradition of veiling is covered by *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times*. Most importantly, I found that old integrated stereotypes and prejudices are still commonly found in the two newspapers, though a few portrayed the Muslim woman as a strong, modern immigrant who chose to veil based on personal beliefs. Overall, the veil is still seen as the symbol of Muslim backwardness, gender-repression and anti-liberalism, in opposition to progression, democracy and freedom. In one way, the veil is seen as a negative symbol of Islam, as if it represents everything negative associated with Islam. Furthermore, this current media fixation on the veil leads to a narrow understanding of Muslims. Most of the coverage was about European countries where the banning of the full-faced veil turned into a heated debate. For that reason, this paper concludes that veiling is not seen as a great barrier to integration and assimilation in America, but is more an issue of religious freedom and security. Muslim women are still stereotyped in American newspapers, by excluding everyday aspects of their lives and more objective in dept articles. Some concluding remarks can be made about *The New York Time*’ and *The Washington Times*’ coverage of the Islamic veil and the women wearing it. First of all, these Muslim women were often seen as submissive and deprived of their free will. Secondly, the context and history that give meaning to the tradition of veiling was often ignored by the press. Finally, the media increased the gap between Western women and women of Islamic background, and made one look free and modern and the other oppressed and backwards.

The analysis of the coverage of veiling was placed in the larger theoretical framework of the stereotype content model. According to Fiske et al., groups’ status and competence

¹⁸⁴ Sciolino, Elaine, “The French, The Veil and the Look,” *The New York Times*, 17 Apr. 2011 late ed. Print.

predict how they fall on the dimensions of warmth and competence. Most of the media stereotyping of Muslim veiled women fit the stereotype content model's description of subordinate, non-competitive groups. Muslim veiled women, like subordinate, non-competitive groups, are perceived as warm with low competence, to maintain the advantage of the American in-group. The veil is the most visible symbol of female Muslim identity, and is often interpreted solely as a sign of gender inequality. As a result, veiled Muslim women are usually placed in the pitied and paternalistic stereotyped group. They perceive pity by the in-group because of their alleged disadvantage and deserving of help. This sometimes carries overtones of compassion, sympathy and even tenderness under the right conditions. According to the stereotype content model and how veiled women are usually portrayed white American men and women will see her as warm. The veiled woman's intentions are harmless to the in-group and since she is perceived as good-natured and friendly she will be relatively high up on the warmth dimension. As traits of competence are defined by the American in-group, the Muslim woman will be seen as lacking capability, ambitions, and intelligence. Veiled Muslim women were often portrayed as backwards and traditional, thus they are not seen as competent outside the home. Overall, veiled women are seen as warm and nice as long as they do not compete with the in-group. Albeit, most Muslim women are competent and intelligent, most American will not have this impression, since the media does not show her competence in any of the news articles.

4 Stereotyping in the Coverage of the Muhammad Cartoon Controversy

Caricatures have always played a central role in the American media landscape, and many newspaper editors and publishers have hired editorial cartoonists to increase distribution, sales numbers, and reputation. The New York City Tammany Hall boss, William Tweed, summarized the editorial cartoon's power by saying: "Let's stop them damned pictures. I don't care what the papers write about me - my constituents can't read; but damn it, they can see pictures!"¹⁸⁵ Because of the cartoons' influence, politicians tried to suppress cartoonists, and in the late 19th century and the early 20th century, several American states considered anti-cartoon bills.¹⁸⁶ In this respect it is not new that targeted politicians, people and groups have tried to silence editorial cartoonists. For many Americans who consider freedom of speech as one of the greatest components of democracy, it seems odd that not all speech should be tolerated and that current cartoons can still cause such controversy. One would not suspect that the Muhammad cartoon would receive as much attention as it did in the United States. However, this is likely because the cartoon came in conflict with the aspect of freedom of religion, racism, and blasphemy.¹⁸⁷

The Muhammad cartoons refer to 12 commissioned caricatures depicting the Prophet Muhammad, and they were originally printed in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* in 2005. The Muhammad cartoons received press coverage in the United States because it touched on American core values like freedom of speech and freedom of religion, but also since the issue was connected to security and internationally-related themes like the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism. Among the dozen cartoons that appeared in *Jyllands-Posten*, several of them linked Islam to violence, terrorism, and fundamentalism. One cartoon depicted the prophet greeting suicide bombers in heaven with the caption, "Stop, stop, we have run out of virgins," and another one depicted Muhammad wearing a turban containing a bomb. Although the drawings were meant to be provocative and satirical, they still stereotyped Islam in a crude manner and fueled stereotypes about Muslims as angry, fanatic, and violent.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁵ Paine, Albert. B., *Thomas Nast: His Period and his Pictures*, (London: MacMillian & Company Ltd., 1904) 179.

¹⁸⁶ Lamb, Chris, "Drawing Power," *Journalism Studies* 8.5 (2007): 720.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 715.

¹⁸⁸ Bernard, Ariane, "Trial Over Muhammad Cartoons Begins in France," *The New York Times*, 8 Feb. 2007 late ed. Print.

Religiously satirical cartoons and printing of caricatures that could be considered offensive to Muslims were not new to Americans. After a series of suicide bombings in Israel committed by Islamic extremists in 2002, the American cartoonist Doug Marlette drew a controversial cartoon. He played on the Christian phrase criticizing big SUVs, “What Would Jesus Drive?” and drew a Ryder truck driven by a turban-wearing Muslim, hauling a nuclear bomb. The cartoon’s caption was: “What would Mohammad drive?” He thus managed to anger both Muslims, who were offended by the invocation of Muhammad, and Christians, who were offended by the play on the “What Would Jesus Drive?” campaign. Marlette’s newspaper, *The Tallahassee Democrat*, refused to apologize despite receiving thousands of angry e-mails from Muslims and various Muslim organizations. The reaction to the cartoon drawn by Marlette differs from the reactions to the cartoons in *Jyllands-Posten*, primarily because Marlette’s cartoon did not depict the Prophet Mohammad himself, which would have been considered blasphemous for Muslims.¹⁸⁹

4.1 The Cartoons’ Intentions and Responses

The *Jyllands-Posten* published the satirical Muhammad caricatures to stir a debate around Danish journalistic self-censorship when it came to news stories and topics that could offend Muslims. The cartoon controversy firstly focused on the freedom of the press versus respect for religion. When politicians, international journalists and various non-governmental organizations entered the debate, the cartoon controversy became linked to broader topics like Islamic fundamentalism, cultural clashes, integration, immigration and multiculturalism. The dispute was heavily associated with a series of earlier confrontations. One common association was the death sentence declared in 1989 on the British author Salman Rushdie, by Ayatollah Khomeini, after the publication of *The Satanic Verses*. Another link was the murder of the Dutch filmmaker, Theo van Gogh in 2004 after he made his film called *Submission*, which dealt with violence against women in Muslim societies.¹⁹⁰

The publications of the cartoons received little international attention before several other European newspapers republished them in defense of freedom of the press and in solidarity with the original publishers. The world news media began to increasingly cover the issue, as boycotts of Danish goods and major demonstrations took place in several countries.

¹⁸⁹ Lamb, 716-717.

¹⁹⁰ Cowell, Alan, “More European Papers Print Cartoons of Muhammad, Fueling Dispute With Muslims,” *The New York Times*, 2 Feb. 2006 late ed. Print.

The protesters were offended and deemed the cartoons to be blasphemous and racist, and cartoon, by the Danish cartoonist Kurt Westergaard, proved particularly insulting. Westergaard's cartoon showed the prophet Muhammad, "looking angry and somewhat menacing, with heavy, dark eyebrows and whiskers, wearing a turban in the shape of a bomb, with a lit fuse burning." Some American journalists emphasized that Islamic militant groups used the cartoons as a justification for violent attacks on Western targets and plotted to kill Westergaard, who at "one point had a \$1 million ransom posted on his head on a militant Web site."¹⁹¹ The publishing and republishing of the Muhammad caricatures resulted in widespread outcries and violent demonstrations that left at least 50 people dead in different countries.¹⁹² The two-sided reaction to the cartoons demonstrated according to many an important distinction between the Muslim world and the West on the issue of free speech and how the tradition of free speech makes the West generally more tolerant of satire.¹⁹³ Worldwide, many protested peacefully and diplomatically, but the violent protests greatly overshadowed the non-violent demonstrations. This trend was also clear in my analysis, as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* often focused on brutal attacks, threats, and terrorists plots carried out by Islamic fundamentalists. In this way many of the news articles can be considered to have presented its American audiences with a stereotypic portrayal of Muslims by only focusing on the dramatic and violent side of the issue.

The Muhammad cartoon crisis was foreign news, with a modest connection to American media values, but the issue's link to the Middle East kept it relevant for the American mainstream media. Taken as a whole, *The New York Times'* and *The Washington Times'* coverage of the cartoon controversy appeared as "a disinterested spectator: it was their news, not ours."¹⁹⁴ While many European papers republished the cartoons, major papers in the United States did not follow suit, and some prominent public officials called the drawings insulting. For example, state department official, Janelle Hironimus, specifically called for "tolerance and respect for religious beliefs," and Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice said, "[she] found the cartoons personally offensive." While American newspapers refrained from printing the cartoons, some spoke out in favor of publishing the cartoons. President Bush stated that free speech was principally important, but encouraged sensitivity to religious

¹⁹¹Burns, John, F., "Cartoonist In Denmark Calls Attack 'Really Close'," *The New York Times*, 3 Jan. 2010 late ed. Print.

¹⁹² Mekhennet, Souad, "Eight Arrests In Bomb Plot In Denmark," *The New York Times*, 5 Sept. 2007 late ed. Print.

¹⁹³ Lamb, 716-717.

¹⁹⁴ Berkowitz and Eko, 788.

beliefs. The division and disagreement between politicians and media moguls in the United States shows how the Muhammad caricatures also was a multifaceted issue to Americans and the American press.¹⁹⁵

4.2 The Journalistic Angle on Islam and Voices

To discuss whether or not the media coverage of the Muhammad caricature controversy can be considered stereotypical, it is important to look at the overall media angle on Islam. The journalistic angle was measured by establishing the articles' general tendency as positive, negative, or neutral. In public discussions and in the current atmosphere of Western "xenophobia, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and national chauvinism," there is usually little space for balanced media coverage about non-Christian faiths like Islam. Centralist and left wing media often try to cover major issues related to Islam in a sober and neutral way, but even impartial and intellectual journalists are affected by historical baggage and biases which affect the overall angle in Islam in their writing.¹⁹⁶

Of the 86 articles analyzed for this chapter, 57 of them contained a generally negative angle on Islam, while over one fourth of the articles were neutral in their reference to Islam. Even in the large liberal newspaper *The New York Times*, few of the articles were positive to Islam as a faith and the Muslim response to the caricatures. That most of the articles can be considered negative, is also due to this particular news story's special character. What is troublesome is that the newspapers did not just have a negative angle on the specific violent episode carried out by a minority, but also of Islam in general. For instance, this type of negative references to Islam can be seen in *The Washington Times*, where the journalists write, "In the era of globalization, when cultures increasingly collide and tolerance is an important watchword, Muslim countries and mobs are demonstrating they aren't ready for prime time."¹⁹⁷ The journalist is referring to a Danish Muslim activist, but instead focus on the whole Muslim world and Islam as problematic and to blame for the activist's actions.

In *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times*, few prominent Muslims, Islamic representatives, academics or Muslim were used as sources or quoted in the coverage of the

¹⁹⁵Saloom, Rachel, "You Dropped a Bomb on Me, Denmark-A Legal Examination of the Cartoon Controversy and Response as It Relates to the Prophet Muhammad and Islamic Law," *Rutgers Journal of Law and Religion* 8.7 (2006): 2.

¹⁹⁶ Bashy Quraishy. "Islamophobia and the Western Media," *mediawatch.com*, 9 May 2013. <http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/pdf/speech_unesco_01_07.pdf>

¹⁹⁷ Editorial, "Build the Ground Zero Mosque, or else...; Muslim nations despise America no matter how much we pander," *The Washington Times*, 14 Sept. 2010. Print.

Muhammad caricature crisis. When media audiences are not presented with those who speak favorably of Islam in a reflected way, it often reflects negatively on Islam and Muslims as a whole. It reflects positively on peoples' stereotypical beliefs about Islam, when a Muslim is quoted saying, he wanted "a chance to defend my prophet and show the Danish people why we get upset, and try to find a solution for the problem."¹⁹⁸ It is also positive when accepted leaders like Abu Laban, a Danish Imam, explains why Muslims were offended and described the cartoons as an attempt to "insult" and "degrade" the prophet, as "there was no point but mere mockery."¹⁹⁹ It is helpful when the journalists include views like these, but unfortunately they appear far less in the media than fundamental or angry voices. Both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* devoted large editorial space for the violence in the aftermath of the cartoons. Unfortunately, the newspapers left little space for those Muslims who condemned the violent methods employed by many demonstrators.

The New York Times referred to an editorial by the Yemen journalist, Muhammad al-Assadi, where he condemned the way many Muslims reacted to the cartoons, and said that "Muslims had an opportunity to educate the world about the merits of the Prophet Muhammad and the peacefulness of the religion he had come with. "He further added that Muslims should "be rational, [and] think before [they] go into the streets." Muhammad al-Assadi also emphasized that, "Who harms Islam more? This European guy who paints Muhammad or the real Muslim guy who cuts a hostage's head off and says Allah Akbar? Who insults our religion, this guy or the European guy?"²⁰⁰ The problem is that when the American journalists did quote those opposing the violence and terrorism they were often portrayed as unique and one of "us," as opposed to the rest of the presumed oppressed and uninformed Muslim world.

Quotes from liberal Muslims were often placed within the context that they were facing repercussions from the broader Muslim community because they were seen as too Western or for betraying Islam. In this way, American journalists unconsciously reinforce stereotypes about Muslims and widen the gap between "us" and "them." Those Muslims who were portrayed favorably, but were still offended by the caricatures were often portrayed as successful immigrants. *The New York Times* journalist described one of his sources, Rushy

¹⁹⁸ Mekhennet, Souad, "Muslims Express Anger and Hope at Danish Conference," *The New York Times*, 11 Mar. 2006 late ed. Print.

¹⁹⁹ The Associated Press, "Ahmad Abu Laban, 60, Leading Danish Imam," *The New York Times*, 4 Feb. 2007 late ed. Print.

²⁰⁰ Slackman, Michael, and Fattah, Hassan, M., "Furor Over Cartoons Pits Muslim Against Muslim," *The New York Times*, 22 Feb. 2006 late ed. Print.

Rashid, as “a Danish citizen of Pakistani descent, a one time television anchor and now a prominent author married to a Dane.”²⁰¹ Muslims like her are often considered one of “us,” since she is moderate in tone of voice, educated and assimilated by intermarriage with a Dane. Often these second and third generations of immigrant voices were pitted against more traditional Muslims, and they were not seen as problematic since they had become westernized. This type of media representation, reinforce the belief that “we” need to save these “other” uneducated and fundamental Muslims so they can become more like the modern immigrant population, and thus more like “us.”

The increasing intensity of the cartoons debate generated a hardening of extremist sides that left little room for moderation in the media. The coverage of the extreme sides of the issue and the dramatic supports Lind, Danowski and Suleiman’s claim that Muslims are visible and invisible at the same time. The media focus on fundamentalism, integrations issues, and ties to extremist organization heightened Muslims’ media visibility since the dramatic often sells and the media usually only cover Muslims in negative related cases. The two papers analyzed seldom focused positively on Muslims or those who were more moderate, thus they were invisible in a positive context. In this sense, the American media made the cartoon controversy into a debate between freedom and Islamic fundamentalism, and forgot the “99.9 percent” of moderate Muslims who were offended by the cartoons but who did not riot.²⁰² Tabish Khair, Professor at the University of Aarhus, emphasized this problem in *The New York Times* and said “the moderate Muslim has again been effectively silenced.”²⁰³

4.3 Media Tools: Language, Words and Headings

“Terror Attacks,” “Bomb Plot,” “Muslim Outrage,” “Islamic Protests,” “Culture War,” and “Threat from al Qaeda” are all headline examples from *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times*. When most of the headlines have a negative connotation to brutality or a disagreement of some sort, the media frames the stories within a violent context from the outset. By using catchy phrases and headlines the journalists help fuel a stereotypical image

²⁰¹ Cowell, Alan, “Cartoons Force Danish Muslims to Examine Loyalties,” *The New York Times*, 4 Feb. 2006 late ed. Print.

²⁰² Sands, David R., “Danes move on after cartoon flap; Conflict with radical Islam strengthens governing coalition,” *The Washington Times*, 4 June 2006. Print.

²⁰³ Cowell, Alan, “West Coming to Grasp Wide Islamic Protests As Sign of Deep Gulf,” *The New York Times*, 8 Feb. 2006 late ed. Print.

of Muslims as violent and extreme in their beliefs. Although many of the protests around the Danish cartoon crisis were aggressive, the reportage of lethally and brutal protests from the Muslim world was emphasized and outnumbered the coverage of peaceful demonstrations. This phenomenon can also be a result of the media's bias of sensationalism rather than bias towards Muslims. In this sense, regardless of who demonstrates, the media is more likely to focus on the violent demonstrations than peaceful ones.²⁰⁴

The usage of negatively loaded phrases and terms can be seen as one way of priming the story. These words and connotations suggest how the reader should feel about the topic presented and used as references for further reading and for absorbing additional features to the schema already given. Except from five of the articles, all of the headlines had unfavorable words in them, and thus the reader is from the very first moment looking for primed concepts that fit the headline and their schemas about Muslims. The term "terror" or any variation of it had 70 occurrences in *The Washington Times* and appeared over 90 times in *The New York Times*. The various forms of the term "attack" occurred 127 times in *The New York Times* and 71 times in *The Washington Times*. Other frequent words used were "clash," "bomb," "violent," "protests," and "kill." These words are often associated with Muslims, and an exaggeration of these terms primes the story and influences how the average media audience perceives Muslims and Islam. By placing the Muhammad cartoon controversy on the agenda, the readers come to view the topic as important, but they also only see one side and aspect of the story, thereby prioritizing who they support or not. Some of the articles had a sarcastic or ironic undertone when referring to how Muslims responded to the cartoons. Sarcasm can often go unnoticed, but after analyzing the articles several times, it is evident that many of the journalists framed the story by giving away some of their own opinions camouflaged under irony or sarcasm. From the respective analysis examples of this was phrases like, "These same Muslim faithfully approve of Islamist terrorist leaders who promise brainwashed volunteer suicide bombers the reward offered by the prophet - the keys to paradise and 72 virgins to keep them busy for a while, if not eternity,"²⁰⁵ or "Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahri, and their Islamist terrorist fan club the world over."²⁰⁶ One American journalist's quoted, Robert Menard, the secretary general of Reporters Without Borders, saying, "I understand that it may shock Muslims, but being

²⁰⁴ Rogers, Tony, "Jon Stewart Blasts Sensationalism in the News Media, but is it Really So Bad?," *journalism.about.com*, 8 May 2013. <<http://journalism.about.com/od/trends/a/Jon-Stewart-Blasts-Sensationalism-In-The-News-Media-But-Is-It-Really-So-Bad.htm>>

²⁰⁵ Borchgrave, Arnaud de., "Cartoon war or global intifada?," *The Washington Times*, 11 Feb. 2006. Print.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

shocked is part of the price of being informed.”²⁰⁷ Implied here is the prejudicial belief that all Muslims who were offended by the cartoons are uninformed people. This can also be seen as a way of reinforcing inflexible prejudicial attitudes and beliefs about Muslims to the media audiences. Some American readers might resonate that all Muslims offended share the objectionable characteristic of being unintelligent.

4.4 Themes

Some themes stood out in the coverage, and most of them reflected only an indirect effort at paradigm upholding. In the article, “A Fundamentalist Islamic Threat to the West,” Clarence J. Bouchat said, “the greatest mania Westerners hold is the fear of a united fundamentalist Islamic force systematically organized against them.”²⁰⁸ This view is apparent in almost all of the articles where the focus was on themes like the Clash of Civilizations, Islamophobia, immigration, integration, and the incompatibility between freedom of speech and strict adherence to Islam. What is striking is that all of the repetitive themes were topics that reinforce the gap between Westerners and Muslims, and stereotype “us” as not like “them.” Both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* played on the notion that where “we” value diplomacy and dialogue, “they” turn to violence and plot revenge. “We” value the freedom of speech and democracy, while “they” are only concerned about fundamental religious traditions. In this way of thinking, offended Muslims are thought to be too suppressed, pious or uneducated to notice the difference between racism and anti-Islamism on one hand and satire and critical thinking on the other hand.

4.4.1 The Sanctity of Freedom of Speech

In solidarity with the Danish newspaper many European newspapers reprinted the cartoon to make a statement about freedom of expression, but American newspapers did not. European newspapers claimed the United States showed political and journalistic ambivalence, and that the cartoons had not been published in America for strategic and political reasons rather than for reasons of principle.²⁰⁹ Reprinted or not, both *The New York Times* and *The Washington*

²⁰⁷ Cowell, Alan, “More European Papers Print Cartoons of Muhammad, Fueling Dispute With Muslims,” *The New York Times* 2 Feb. 2006 late ed. Print.

²⁰⁸ Bouchat, Clarence J., “A Fundamentalists Islamic Threat to the West,” *Studies in Conflicts and Terrorism* 19.4 (2002): 339-352.

²⁰⁹ Berkowitz and Eko, 788.

Times seemed to be most concerned about the theme of freedom of speech, compared to any other themes, thus placing freedom of speech as the most important topic in the debate on the agenda. In almost 50 of the 86 articles examined, freedom of the press was a central theme, while a subthemes included racial discrimination and double standards by the Danish and larger European press.

The freedom of the press theme was occasionally linked to Huntington's idea of Clash of Civilizations in the way that Islam seems destined to undermine freedom of speech. It has been argued that the intent behind the publications was to test free speech and self censorship through a controversial topic, with no real interest in Islam as a religion or integration. Regardless of its original intention, free speech was pitted against Muslim sensitivities and dogmas. Journalists have a unique position and power to assume a "didactic posture" when journalistic ideologies and paradigms come under attack, and this is exactly what most American journalist did on this issue. Assault on free speech presents journalists with an opportunity to educate audiences on journalistic values, regardless if the attack comes from Muslims, politicians, or others. This is perhaps why many American journalists maintained a negative angle on Islam; not because they object to of Islam as a religion, but because its practices can seem threatening to personally held beliefs about freedom of speech and the importance of a free press. The Muhammad cartoon controversy presented an opportunity for journalists to claim their freedoms and rights and would have received less American coverage if the case did not touch on fundamental journalistic cornerstones.²¹⁰

Those who supported the publications of the Muhammad cartoons often claimed that it was neither a case of racism nor anti-Islamism, but a "one-time provocation on the question of free expression."²¹¹ Newspapers do not usually mock Islam or the Muslim prophet, and one American journalist included that "it won't do for [offended Muslims] to act as if they do. There is nothing they say they demand in terms of respect for Islam that the liberal, tolerant, culturally sensitive Western world doesn't routinely provide."²¹² In contrast, those offended by the caricatures claimed that "freedom of speech shouldn't be absolute and that many European countries do not allow anti-Semitic speech."²¹³ The cartoon controversy highlighted for many American readers the large differences between the U.S. and many

²¹⁰ Ibid., 783.

²¹¹ Lindberg, Tod, "Prophetic power; Cartoon imbroglio not about religion," *The Washington Times*, 14 Feb. 2006. Print.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Mekhennet, Souad, "Muslims Express Anger and Hope at Danish Conference," *The New York Times*, 11 Mar. 2006 late ed. Print.

countries in the Muslim world in how it relates to freedom of the press. Both newspapers analyzed usually only let those Muslims who oppose the publication to be heard, and this can fuel the stereotypical belief that Islamic societies are against free press, suppressive and autocratic, as few Muslims who accepted the publications were heard. For many Americans all speech, no matter how controversial, should be allowed to flourish in an open and free democracy. By focusing on this theme the journalists prime the story, thus suggesting how the reader should feel and what to deem as the correct response. Our schemas and stereotypes tell us that those who support democracy, freedom of speech and press are like “us”; thereby those who opposed these publications are automatically placed in the “other” box. In this debate Muslims can only enter the “us” box, if they ground their disagreement with racism, religious mockery and Islamophobia, which are all concepts “we” agree is wrong.

4.4.2 Self-censorship

The theme of freedom of the press was framed within the larger context of the media’s self-censorship practice with regards to Muslim issues, because journalists and editors were afraid of Muslim reprisals or for being accused of racism. The publication of the cartoons was a result after the Danish author, Kare Bluitgen, complained about difficulties finding artists to illustrate Muhammad, in a children’s book about religion, due to fears of reprisals by extremist Muslims.²¹⁴ It was claimed that self-censorship had taken over after the Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh was murdered by a Muslim radical for criticizing Islam, and it was necessary to test Europe’s free speech norms.²¹⁵ Several European newspapers later printed all 12 of the cartoons in question and declared: “No religious dogma can impose its view on a democratic and secular society.”²¹⁶ The two American newspapers analyzed emphasized that the media sometimes chose to give in to the unspoken demands of Muslim extremists and impose blunt self-censorship. This is evident as one American journalist titled his article, “Yale has run up the white flag to terrorism,” after the Yale President prohibited the University from publishing the planned illustrations in “The Cartoons That Shook the World,” an academic report of the caricatures of Muhammad. The American journalist called it “Yale’s pre-emptive surrender to religious extremism,” and included that Cary Nelson,

²¹⁴ Fattah, Hassan M., “At Mecca Meeting, Cartoon Outrage Crystallized,” *The New York Times*, 9 Feb. 2006 late ed. Print.

²¹⁵ Bilefsky, Dan, “Denmark Is Unlikely Front in Islam-West Culture War,” *The New York Times*, 8 Jan. 2006 late ed. Print.

²¹⁶ Cowell, Alan, “More European Papers Print Cartoons of Muhammad, Fueling Dispute With Muslims,” *The New York Times*, 2 Feb. 2006 late ed. Print.

president of the American Association of University Professors, condemned the move as an attack on “academic freedom, a blow to the reputation of the press and the university, and potential encouragement to broader censorship of speech by faculty members or other authors.”²¹⁷

As a whole, the American journalists did not seem, pleased with the response the caricature issue got in the United States. This dissatisfaction can be seen as one journalists said, “We have watched the Muslim meltdown with shocked attention, but there is little recognition that its poisonous fallout is fear. Fear in the State Department, which, like Islam, called the cartoons unacceptable. Fear in the Whitehall, which did the same. Fear in the Vatican, which did the same. And fear in the media, which have failed, with few exceptions, to reprint or show the images. We have seen the proud Western tradition of a free press bow its head and submit to an Islamic law against depictions of Muhammad. These questions may not seem so outlandish if we assess the extent to which encroaching Shariah has already changed the Western way. Calling these cartoons ‘unacceptable,’ and censoring ourselves ‘in respect’ to Islam brings the West into compliance with a central statute of Shariah. As *Jyllands-Posten*’s Flemming Rose has noted, ‘that’s not respect, that’s submission.’”²¹⁸ Essential here is the suggestion of the Islamic peril and that Westerns are being increasingly suppressed by Islamic law, or as an American journalists explained it: “What should have been just a completely unremarkable sheet of cartoons in a relatively small newspaper in a rather small country way far away, became a world-shaking event that revealed the extent to which free speech in the West is in thrall to Islamic law.”²¹⁹

Lurking behind almost all of the articles is the fear of that the Muslim demands for religious respect hides another agenda, namely the threat that everyone must adjust to the rules of Islam. Several journalists emphasized that this fear has made politicians and journalist alike ready to promote self-censorship when dealing with Islamic sensitive topics to avert further terrorist attacks. In this way, “Islam is protected by an invisible blasphemy law. It is called fear.”²²⁰ The focus on the fear that the public, journalists, and politicians are succumbing to Islamic practices and will become just as oppressed like people in Islamic authoritarian regimes supports Edward Said and John Esposito argument that Islam is

²¹⁷ Editorials, “Muhammad and man at Yale; Political correctness leads to censorship in the ivory tower,” *The Washington Times*, 31 Aug. 2009. Print.

²¹⁸ West, Diana, “Cartoon rage; Islamists target free speech,” *The Washington Times*, 10 Feb. 2006. Print.

²¹⁹ Barron, James, “Artist Who Set Off Muslim Fury Visits City,” *The New York Times*, 30 Sept. 2009 late ed. Print.

²²⁰ Cowell, Alan, “West Coming to Grasp Wide Islamic Protests As Sign of Deep Gulf,” *The New York Times*, 8 Feb. 2006

replacing the earlier Soviet enemy. The post-Cold War fear is the unification of all Muslims gathered under one leader and Islamic law, an Islamic movement seeking to expand its territories and power with ideology combined with explosives as main weapon.²²¹ A modest number of the articles focused on the radicalization of young immigrant Muslims drawn to extremist groups. This creates a fear much like that of Communism, where readers are convinced that the enemy could be anyone among us. The media analysis of *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* shows how the media plays on this fear similar to seen with Communism. In the *Washington Times* the American audience read that, “The cartoon war could be seen as a limbering exercise for a global intifada, which means world chaos, death and destruction, before a new era of world peace under Islamic rule.”²²² Phrases like the one above primes the story and can influence some readers to think that Islamic fundamentalism has come to replace communism as the main threat to American values and democracy.²²³

4.4.3 The Clash of Civilizations

The cartoons fueled the debate over freedom and faith, pitting the West against the Muslim world in a no-win debate over fundamental values. In five of the articles analyzed, the central topic was about the inevitable culture clash between the Muslims and the West, and an additional twelve articles suggested that cultural differences were the main reason for the caricature crisis. By emphasizing or referring to the clash between Islamic culture and Western culture the news story is framed within the larger context of Samuel P. Huntington’s much debated theory on the Clash of Civilizations, where people’s cultural and religious identities will be the primary source of conflict in the post-Cold War world.²²⁴ Once a reporter writes that “Denmark, a country of five million known for its tolerance, again finds itself on the front line of the culture clashes between Islam and the West,” he implies that Muslim societies are not tolerant like Western societies.²²⁵ Furthermore, when the culture editor of *Jyllands-Posten*, called the dispute a “clash of civilizations between secular Western democracies and Islamic societies,” the underlying theme is that Muslim traditions and values

²²¹ Bilefsky, Dan, “Denmark Is Unlikely Front in Islam-West Culture War,” *The New York Times*, 8 Jan. 2006. Print.

²²² Borchgrave, Arnaud de, “Cartoon war or global intifada?,” *The Washington Times*, 11 Feb. 2006. Print.

²²³ Hasian, Marouf, “Mass-Mediated Realities and the Persian Gulf War: Inventing the Arab Enemy,” in *Cultural Diversity and the U.S. Media*. Eds. Yahya Kamalipour and Theresa Carilly, (Albany: State University of New York Press: 1998) 206.

²²⁴ Huntington, Samuel P., “*The Clash of Civilizations*,” *Foreign Affairs*, (1993): 22-49.

²²⁵ Bilefsky, Dan, “3 Arrested in Denmark in Plot to Kill Muhammad Cartoonist,” *The New York Times*, 13 Feb. 2008 late ed. Print.

are unable to coexist with Western ones.²²⁶ The Danish Prime Minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen stated that, “unfortunately, there are in Denmark groups of extremists that do not accept and respect the basic principles on which the Danish democracy has been built.”²²⁷ By emphasizing quotes like this, the American newspapers recognized the clash between liberal-democratic and illiberal religious values, giving credit to seeing the caricature controversy as a part of the clash between the two cultures.

In total, seventeen of the 86 articles examined focused on the alleged cultural clash as a theme. The theme pitted freedom of expression and multiculturalism as two sets of values up against one another. On the one hand, starkly stand the secular culture and liberal democracies, where freedom of expression reigns, including the right to caricature religion; Christianity and Islam alike. On the other hand, we have the Muslim world’s outrage at any insult to the prophet Muhammad, which has now been fanned by radical forces into a violent frenzy.²²⁸ Having experienced art works like Andres Seranno’s “Piss Christ,” and Max Ernst’s painting of Mary spanking the infant Jesus, Americans are not unfamiliar with the phenomenon of offense caused to religious sensibilities in the name of freedom of expression. *The Washington Times* heightened this difference between Muslims as an out-group and Americans as an in-group, and also made reference to the fact that unlike the West the Muslim world has no tradition of, or tolerance for, religious irony in its art.²²⁹ Both freedom of expression and multiculturalism are values important to the American press and my findings supports Hylland Eriksen who asserts that the stereotyping of Muslims have little to do with religion, but are instead based on assumed cultural differences and a conflict between liberal individualism and politicized religions.²³⁰

4.4.4 Immigration and Integration

The New York Times and *The Washington Times* focused equally on immigration and integration as themes when covering the crisis. Many anti-immigration voices were included, giving the American reader the impression that Muslim immigrants were not respectful to European gender equalities, democracy, and freedom. People were quoted saying “the crisis

²²⁶ Cowell, Alan, “More European Papers Print Cartoons of Muhammad, Fueling Dispute With Muslims,” *The New York Times*, 2 Feb. 2006. Print.

²²⁷ Bilefsky, Dan, “3 Arrested in Denmark in Plot to Kill Muhammad Cartoonist,” *The New York Times*, 13 Feb. 2008 late ed. Print.

²²⁸ Dale, Helle, “Clash of the titans; Civilization must prevail by all means,” *The Washington Times*, 8 Feb. 2006. Print.

²²⁹ Kimmelman, Michael, “A Startling New Lesson in the Power of Imagery,” *The New York Times*, 8 Feb. 2006 late ed. Print.

²³⁰ Eriksen, 2001, 78.

over the cartoons has been an eye-opener and has shown that the culture clash we have been predicting for 10 years had come to pass,” and “these people we welcomed into our country have betrayed us.”²³¹ Connecting the cartoons to the failed integration and clash between secular Western democracies and Islamic societies fueled the discussion of how Islam was built on age-old societal traditions and that Muslim immigrants refused to compromise, integrate, or change for their European host-society. In the coverage of the Muhammad cartoon controversy, Muslim immigrants were often portrayed as too pious, unwilling to modify their traditions and backward. According to Ole Weaver, a professor of International Relations at the University of Copenhagen, the Muhammad cartoon crisis forced the extreme sides of both the anti-immigrant and Islamist groups to become more deeply entrenched in their positions.²³²

In the cases where immigration and integration were themes, most of the coverage focused on the unpleasant realities about Europe’s failed experiment with multiculturalism. Dalil Boubakeur, a prominent Muslim, said the cartoons was a “provocation” and “the publication of the cartoons can only revive tensions in Europe and the world at a time when we are trying to unite people.”²³³ On the contrary, the culture editor of *Jyllands-Posten* said “Muslims should be treated just like all Europeans - including being subject to satire.” He argued that publishing the caricatures was an act of “inclusion, not exclusion.”²³⁴ Although the journalist left room for both voices, the average American citizen might have the impression that Muslim cannot or will not integrate in a Western society. American readers will question how compatible Islam is with a modern secular society and how much the receiving European culture has to compromise to accommodate its Muslim immigrant population.²³⁵ When journalists note that, “most Westerners favor immigration, but refuse to surrender the equality of men and women and freedom of speech which are important achievements of their society,”²³⁶ they confirm to the American audience that Muslims are different both in terms of cultural, political, and religious traditions. The emphasizing of other

²³¹ Bilefsky, Dan, “Cartoon Dispute Prompts Identity Crisis for Liberal Denmark,” *The New York Times*, 12 Feb. 2006. Print.

²³² Lyall, Sarah, “Attack on Cartoonist Has Danes, Again, Studying Ties With Muslims,” *The New York Times*, 7 Jan. 2010 late ed. Print.

²³³ Cowell, Alan, “More European Papers Print Cartoons of Muhammad, Fueling Dispute With Muslims,” *The New York Times*, 2 Feb. 2006. Print.

²³⁴ Flemming, Rose, “Why I Published the Muhammad Cartoons,” *The New York Times*, May 31, 2006. Web.

²³⁵ Cowell, Alan, “More European Papers Print Cartoons of Muhammad, Fueling Dispute With Muslims,” *The New York Times*, 2 Feb. 2006. Print.

²³⁶ Tagliaube, John, “Denmark’s Unabashed Lightning Rod on Immigration,” *The New York Times*, 10 Nov. 2007 late ed. Print.

differences than merely religious ones supports Kalkan and Layman's theory that Muslims are different from any other minority group in the United States, because they are part of both minority bands and therefore receive twice the amount of prejudice and discrimination. Some journalists were aware of the increasing anti-Muslim sentiments and linked the Muhammad cartoon crisis to the concept of Islamophobia and racism. Some of the articles, mostly in *The New York Times*, included that the cartoons were accused of being xenophobic and Islampohobic in nature and feared Muslims were being used as scapegoats for European anti-immigrant political right.

4.4.5 The Media's Double Standard

Muslim clerics and politicians have accused the Western press of hypocrisy in refraining from lampooning Jews while denigrating Islam.²³⁷ Muslims offended by the cartoons of the prophet Muhammad said the European press indulged in double standards, as it "is very sensitive about anything that touches on the Jewish religion."²³⁸ *Jyllands-Posten* was further accused of being hypocritical after it refused to publish cartoons satirizing the resurrection of Jesus because it feared the reactions of Christians. In this case the editor who rejected those drawings, Jens Kaiser, dismissed comparisons with the Muhammad cartoons, saying the paper had never asked for the cartoons of Jesus. On the other hand, Muslims were accused of double standards by some journalists, noting that media in several Arab countries continued to broadcast and publish references to "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion," a notorious 20th century anti-Semitic hoax about the Zionist plan for Jewish world conquest.²³⁹ Some American journalist suggested that the protests from Muslims would have been taken more seriously if they were less hypocritical, and made references to "when Syrian television showed drama documentaries in prime time depicting rabbis as cannibals,"²⁴⁰ and that Iran's top-selling newspaper announced a competition for cartoons about the Holocaust as payback to the Muhammad drawings.²⁴¹ In addition, the Arab press has several times attacked the White House administration's Middle East policies and made "personal insults and racial

²³⁷ Crossland, David, "Holocaust denier's trial resumes amid cartoon protests," *The Washington Times*, 10 Feb. 2006. Print.

²³⁸ Berkowitz and Eko, 787.

²³⁹ Smith, Craig, and Fisher, Ian, "Temperatures Rise Over Cartoons Mocking Muhammad," *The New York Times*, 3 Feb. 2006 late ed. Print.

²⁴⁰ Cowell, Alan, "More European Papers Print Cartoons of Muhammad, Fueling Dispute With Muslims," *The New York Times*, 2 Feb. 2006.

²⁴¹ Crossland, David, "Holocaust denier's trial resumes amid cartoon protests," *The Washington Times*, 10 Feb. 2006.

slurs aimed at Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, with one cartoon depicting her pregnant with an armed monkey.”²⁴² Given the history of anti-Semitic and anti-American cartoons published in Muslim mainstream press in most Arab countries, it was not surprising that *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* did not support the majority of Muslims in their disproportionate reply to the Danish cartoon.²⁴³

On the subject of the press’ double standard, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* focused greatly on the fact that all religions, not only Islam, are subjects to provocations and will be subjects to the “rough and tumble” of life in liberal democracies. Thus supporting many scholars who claim Muslims are not a unique group, and that all groups in the United States have struggled at some point with the media’s mockery, critical lens, and stereotyping. For some American journalists, Islam is merely being subjected to forms of mockery that have been directed on Christian targets for a long time. In the United States, religious icons like Jesus, the Pope, God Himself and other sacred topics have been made fun of and criticized in cartoons, songs, TV-shows and other media.²⁴⁴ The press’ focus on this supports scholars who have argued that Muslims are not special, and the stereotyping of Muslims in the media is quite similar to that of any other group. It is not blasphemy, but equal treatment of various groups exposed to the art form of cartoons. The Comedy Central showed a cartoon series called *JC*, which featured Jesus Christ as a teenage boy as he goes to New York to “escape his father’s enormous shadow.” The *South Park* creators were also behind *The Book of Mormon*, which is a Broadway musical comedy.²⁴⁵

4.4.6 Terrorism

The New York Times and *The Washington Times* equally used the terrorism frame along with portraying Muslim people as the “others” articles related to terrorism as a theme, and as many as 15 of the articles analyzed had terrorism as a theme. In the Lexis-Nexis search completed for this thesis, the terms “fundamentalism,” “terrorism,” “radicalism,” “extremism,” “fanaticism,” “militant,” and “violent” were frequently found thus linking these negative terms with the respective topic, people, and religion. The media reports concerning terrorism and fundamentalism usually described most Muslim as extremists and jihadists, and often

²⁴²Lyall, Sarah, “Attack on Cartoonist Has Danes, Again, Studying Ties With Muslims,” *The New York Times*, 7 Jan. 2010.

²⁴³Wolf, Daniel, Letter. “Images That Offend,” *The New York Times*, 2 Feb. 2006 late ed. Print.

²⁴⁴Levey, Geoffrey B., and Modood, Tariq, “The Muhammad Cartoons and Multicultural Democracies,” *Ethnicities* 9.3 (2009): 437.

²⁴⁵Harper, Jennifer, “Inside the Beltway,” *The Washington Times*, 7 May 2010. Print.

included that they were praying or shouting “Allah Akbar” during demonstrations. This intense activation of terror related thoughts triggers how the audiences come to interpret the news story they, and accordingly how they link Muslims to terrorism.²⁴⁶

This placed terrorism on the agenda, and also primed the Muhammad caricatures articles in a way that made the reader connect Muslims to terrorism, violence, and fundamentalism. Presumably, the American readers will think negatively of Muslims and blame them for the dispute, while removing *Jyllands-Posten*'s actions from question. One element of this terrorist theme centered on the assaults on Danish and European buildings in the Middle East. Most of these articles characterized Muslims as fanatic, violent, and primitive. Regarding the depiction of violence and terrorism, many of the articles reinforced the portrayal of the Middle East as a chaotic and aggressive region, thus making the American audience believe Muslims are not like “us.” The terrorist related articles analyzed for this thesis, often involved references to death threats, bomb threats, and violent attacks. My analysis support Berkowitz, and Eko, who discovered that these the elements of terrorism were at times presented in “juxtaposition with the cartoon with Muhammad wearing a bomb as turban or mention of a Dutch film producer killed after making a movie critical of Islamic society.”²⁴⁷ In sum, the effect of *The New York Times*' and *The Washington Times*' focus on terrorism as a theme was that Islam and Muslims appeared unreasonable, brutal and undiplomatic in their responses to the cartoons.

The Muhammad cartoon controversy was from the beginning linked to terrorism, as the *Jyllands-Posten* directly connected Islam, terrorism, and suicide bombing together in some of the cartoons. By doing so the newspaper perhaps betrayed its journalistic mission of drawing cartoons that reflect an exaggeration of the truth to make the news more understandable, rather than “fabrication of facts.”²⁴⁸ Neither *The New York Times* nor *The Washington Times* brought up the confusion between Islam and the Islamist terrorism, that nearly all Muslims reject, as a problem, but instead fueled this conviction by solely focusing on violent reactions. This paper's analysis supports Fred Halliday who claimed that Muslim, Islam, terrorism and fundamentalism are repeatedly wrongly linked in the media to attract more audiences. To link contemporary terrorism to the prophet Muhammad who died 14 centuries ago is highly “anachronous,” and by doing this the media has removed the concept

²⁴⁶ Mirza, Wael Sabri. *Factor Analysis of the Impact of Mass Media on Viewers*. Discourses on Power and Violence, PhD dissertation, McGill University, Montreal, (1996): 538-539.

²⁴⁷ Berkowitz and Eko, 790-791.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 787.

of terrorism from its historical constraints. Halliday argues that terrorism has become a tool that can be applied to and used against Islam no matter the circumstances. Terrorism as a theme is so popular that the media sometimes sacrifices its journalistic mission of unbiased informing to satisfy an audience that is pleased with the misrepresentation of facts that confirm their stereotypical view of Islam. This way, *The New York Times*' and *The Washington Times*' coverage of the Muhammad caricatures provided a discourse and picture of Muslim terrorism as important on the agenda, and finally present it to an audience whose "long-cherished target and wish is to promote its preconception of demonization of Muslims altogether."²⁴⁹

It is important to remember that there are a few hundred terrorists who call themselves Muslims out of a population of 1,200 million worldwide. However, there are also Christian terrorists in the United States and Christian criminals everywhere, but no other religion than Islam has become so linked to terrorism. Depicting Islam as a threat to world peace or national security on account of events such as the power politics of Saddam Hussein or the World Trade Center attack is commonly done, but still wrong. Religion should not be blamed entirely for all such acts because minority of dissident voices generally responsible for such heinous acts.²⁵⁰ A few times the American journalists gave voice to those skeptical of the false linkage, but often another indirect connection was found that primed terrorist related thoughts among the readers. For instance, Ahmed Abu Laban, of the radical Danish Islamic Community, was leaving Denmark for the Palestinian territories and was quoted saying "I no longer want to be the object of [press] manipulation all the time and to be linked to terrorism while I am working day and night and with much sincerity for the well-being of this country." The fact that he was leaving Denmark for Palestine, will elicit negative feelings among many American, as they often connect Palestine to terrorism, while supporting Israel. Also included in the article is that he helped fuel the Arab and Muslim fury over the cartoons, and this will confirm the readers' stereotypical beliefs of Muslims as eager to fight.²⁵¹

²⁴⁹ Ridouani, 10.

²⁵⁰ Vyver, Johan D. van der., "Religious Fundamentalism and Human Rights," *Journal of International Affairs* 50.1 (1996): 21-40.

²⁵¹ Sands, David R., "Danes move on after cartoon flap; Conflict with radical Islam strengthens governing coalition," *The Washington Times*, 4 June 2006.

4.5 Stereotyping in the Muhammad Cartoon Controversy

The caricatures of Muhammad can be seen as a violation of a religious norm in the representation of Muhammad, as an attack on Islam as a religion, and as an attack on Muslims as a group. The cartoon itself is stereotypical in its suggestion of Islam as a violent and dangerous religious conviction. Even the cartoons were meant as an artistic expression some of the Muhammad caricatures were still stereotyping and demonization Muslims. The features of Muhammad, Muslims and Islam were exaggerated in ridiculous ways in the cartoons to make a point in the space of a picture.²⁵² Many of these features and characteristic were also found in the American coverage of the cartoon crisis, thus *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* reinforced a variety of familiar stereotypes commonly held about Muslims to its American audience.

4.5.1 The Violent Muslim and the Terrorist

In *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times*, their coverage of the Muhammad caricature controversy led to a disproportionate portrayal of Muslims as violent and eager to fight. If we combine all the articles where Muslims were described as terrorists, activists, anti-Western or violent, the violent stereotype was found in approximately 50 of the 86 articles. The violent turmoil over the Danish cartoons that satirized Muhammad continued to make American newspaper headlines, but headlines about Muslims who opposed any type of violent response were unseen. The two newspapers seemed to focus on that Muslim protesters exaggerated the issue and that the caricatures were used as an excuse to bash out against Western embassies, companies, and people. For instance, one *Washington Times* journalist explained that the protests were not “a spontaneous cry of outrage among people who have been offended by what they came across in their morning paper. This is an orchestrated campaign, a whipped-up frenzy.”²⁵³

In *The New York Times*, Americans could read that protests turned “violent in Afghanistan, where at least five protesters died, and more than a dozen police officers and protesters were wounded. Crowds in the Iranian capital, Tehran, set fire to the Danish Embassy and broke the windows of the embassy of Austria. Syria has failed to protect a diplomatic mission, as the security people turned their backs after the attack on the Danish

²⁵² Levey and Modood, 440.

²⁵³ Lindberg, Tod, “Prophetic power; Cartoon imbroglio not about religion,” *The Washington Times*, 14 Feb. 2006. Print.

embassy in Syria.”²⁵⁴ Another article referred to the attempted attack on the cartoonist Mr. Westergaard and wrote “the attacker - armed with an ax and a knife [shouted] ‘Revenge!’ and ‘Blood!’ - [as he] tried to smash through the door.”²⁵⁵ With these types of descriptions, the reporters fuels the stereotypical belief of Muslims as eager to fight and violent by nature. When presented with these descriptions, the characteristics of violent Muslims are attributed, by the media audience, on other Muslims individuals, who then face prejudice and discrimination from the in-group members, much like Walter Lippmann argued. America holds diplomatic means high and the failure of Muslim regimes to seek a diplomatic solution instead of accepting the violence fits well into stereotype theory where the in-group is placed above other out-groups, in this case Muslims in the Middle East. Through negative depictions of Muslims as violent and undiplomatic, it serves to define the in-group positively and not like in that. The Council on American-Islamic Relations, well aware of this type of stereotypical media coverage, spoke strongly against the violent response in protest because they knew it would only perpetuate negative stereotypes of Muslims. The organization stated, “Everyone has the right to peacefully protest defamatory attacks on their religious figures, but protesters should not reinforce existing stereotypes by resorting to violence or inflammatory rhetoric.”²⁵⁶

As previously mentioned, the cartoons were criticized for being racist and for perpetuating the stereotype of all Muslims as terrorists. *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* reinforced this idea by depicting Muslims as terrorists in 30 of the 86 articles studied. A research conducted by John L. Martin in 1985 showed that the press used the term terrorism when describing action, events, and people they disapproved of, but when describing the same acts carried out by non-Muslims the media was more neutral and unprejudiced.²⁵⁷ The two American newspapers often focused on the link between Muslim activists and larger terrorist organizations like al Qaeda. The journalists were able to connect the two, even in articles unrelated to extremist groups or terrorism. For instance, one source was quoted saying, “keeping his mouth shut like that is straight out of the al Qaeda counter interrogation manual,” when referring to a European Muslim who was plotting a

²⁵⁴ Gall, Carlotta, and Smith, Craig S., “Muslim Protests Against Cartoons Spread,” *The New York Times*, 7 Feb. 2006 late ed. Print.

²⁵⁵ Burns, John, F., “Cartoonist In Denmark Calls Attack 'Really Close',” *The New York Times*, 3 Jan. 2010 late ed. Print

²⁵⁶ Council on American-Islamic Relations, “U.S. Muslims Reject Violent Response to Cartoon Controversy,” *ca.cair.com*, 16 Mar. 2013,

<http://ca.cair.com/losangeles/news/u.s._muslims_reject_violent_response_to_cartoon_controversy>

²⁵⁷ Merskin, 146.

counterattack against *Jyllands-Posten*.²⁵⁸ Under the terrorist stereotype lurks the Muslim double agent, who can blend in and attack when you least expect it. In one case from the U.S., the media intensely focused on that Mr. Headley, who was arrested from terror actions, lived double lives in America. *The New York Times* journalist described him as “an Islamic fundamentalist who once liked to get high. He has a traditional Pakistani wife, who lives with their children in Chicago, but also an American girlfriend. Depending on the setting, he alternates between the name he adopted in the United States, David Headley, and the Urdu one he was given at birth, Daood Gilani. Even his eyes - one brown, the other green - hint at roots in two places.”²⁵⁹

In terms of characteristics important to how out-groups are viewed, the violent Muslim and Muslim terrorist stereotypes are somewhat similar and share many of the same traits. In the first place, to associate Muslims with terrorism or violence for that matter is to classify them as enemies for the very beginning. In both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* references to terrorism and terrorist organization were being made in the coverage of the Muhammad cartoon controversy. References like; “Osama bin Laden denounced the cartoons as part of ‘a crusade’ against Islam, and other al Qaeda officials called on Muslims to make Denmark a target of their fury,”²⁶⁰ will elicit contempt among the American in-group and Muslims terrorists will be seen as cold and inhuman. Making references to Osama bin Laden place Muslims in the despised out-group on the stereotype content model, as he represent everything feared, hated, despised and threatening to American’s goals. According to the stereotype content model, terrorist can neither be seen as friendly, trustworthy nor sincere about their intention, thus this connection place Muslim in the cold box on the warmth dimension. In addition, terrorists are an out-group that compete with the in-group for the same resources, and are therefore also perceived as cold. Usually terrorists are seen as having low socio-economic status, and they are thus perceived as lacking competence. In some cases where terrorists have the abilities and skills to reach their goals, (i.e. goals that will harm the American in-group) they have some competence. Although terrorist might be capable in reaching their goals, they are closer to the despised out-group than the envied out-group. The reason for this is that terrorists use means that are unaccepted by the in-group, and will thus

²⁵⁸ Waterman, Shaun, “Suspect in bombing masks ID; Danish police see newspaper as target of attack,” *The Washington Times*, September 20, 2010. Print.

²⁵⁹ Thompson, Ginger, “A Terror Suspect With Feet in East and West,” *The New York Times*, 22 Nov. 2009 late ed. Print.

²⁶⁰ Lyall, Sarah, “Attack on Cartoonist Has Danes, Again, Studying Ties With Muslims,” *The New York Times*, 7 Jan. 2010 late ed. Print.

be close to a Low-Low group. The Muslim terrorist stereotype fit the Low-Low group, as this group elicit contempt out-group and is seen as exploitative and for having negative intentions towards the society. This group competes not for status, but for resources in a zero-sum allocation of resources. Despite the fact that Muslim terrorist are portrayed as having low competence, they still compete for resources and have other goals. Terrorist and violent Muslims are in one sense competitive and cold, but still neither warm nor competent.

4.5.2 The Religious Fundamentalist

Of the articles analyzed, twelve of them stereotyped Muslims as religious fundamentalists. These articles focused on how Muslims fundamentalists placed Islam and religion above all other fundamental rights and freedoms. Islamic fundamentalism is often deemed to be in conflict with Western values like freedom from religious police, gender equality, separation of religion and state, freedom of speech and freedom of religion.²⁶¹ This makes fundamental Muslims seem primitive and extreme compared to Americans who often keep their religion within the private sphere, and accept that religion must sometimes yield for the greater good in a liberal democratic society. By emphasizing that Muslims are excessively fundamental in their religious convictions, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* framed the news story, and suggested for the American readers that most Muslims are too sensitive and take too dramatic measures when it comes to defending their religion. Both newspapers often mentioned Jihad, thus implying that some Muslims fundamentalists are violent because Islam itself is stereotyped as a violent religion that accepts violent means. Connecting the Muhammad cartoon controversy to Islamic fundamentalists and violence was sometimes done by priming the story through including that the attacker was shouting “Allah Akbar” or similar expressions. An example of this type of framing and priming can be found in *The New York Times*: “[s]everal hundred Iranians attacked the Danish Embassy in Tehran, hurling firebombs and chanting, ‘God is great,’ and ‘Death to Israel,’ while the police watched. As the facade of the building burned and young men managed to climb around the razor wire protecting the diplomatic compound, a voice broadcast by loudspeaker told the crowd that the cartoons were a Zionist conspiracy, orchestrated by those ‘afraid of our fundamentalism.’”

²⁶¹ Dennis, Anthony J., *The Rise of the Islamic Empire and the Threat of the West*, (Ohio: Wyndham Hall Press, 1996) 36–56.

Peaceful protests continued Monday in Turkey, though a Catholic priest was shot dead by a young man shouting, ‘God is great!’”²⁶²

The analysis of the coverage of the Muhammad cartoon crisis supports Johan D. van der Vyver who claimed in his article “Religious Fundamentalism & Human Rights,” that fundamentalism in matter of religion (i.e. Islam) has become a negative connotation.²⁶³ The Western media seldom focus on Christian and Jewish fundamentalism and more particularly what is called “Christian Zionism.” It seems that fundamentalism is entirely related and even restricted to Islam and Muslims. When fundamentalism is applied or related to Muslims, fundamentalism as a term is stripped from its literal meaning and granted a pejorative one, connoting mainly extremism and terrorism.²⁶⁴

In *The New York Times*’ and *The Washington Times*’ coverage of the Muhammad cartoons controversy, the stereotype of the Muslim fundamentalist was often portrayed as a threat to Western safety and culture. Fundamentalism was often found together with indications of violence of some sort. For instance, “blasphemy laws have been used by fundamentalists to attack Christians and Hindus”²⁶⁵, and “a group of fundamentalist clerics flew to the Middle East to arouse indignation and anger among other radical imams and mullahs.”²⁶⁶ The focus on that Islamic fundamentalism is prone to violence and terrorism will usually place the fundamental stereotype low on the warmth dimension. The stereotype of the religious fundamentalist is similar to the female one in the chapter on veiling, although violent and aggressive characteristics were more often ground in the coverage of the Muhammad cartoon controversy. Most likely this is a result of that most Muslim men were described as violent fundamentalists in the Muhammad crisis, thus Muslim fundamentalist men will elicit more contempt than Muslim fundamental women. Muslim men are often perceived as more capable in reaching their goals than Muslim women, thus they will appear more threatening in regards to the safety and well-being of the American in-group.

²⁶² Gall, Carlotta, and Smith, Craig S., “Muslim Protests Against Cartoons Spread,” *The New York Times*, February 7, 2006

²⁶³ Vyver, 21-40.

²⁶⁴ Ridouani, 2.

²⁶⁵ Qureshi, Emran, “The Islam the Riots Drowned Out,” *The New York Times*, February 12, 2006. late ed. Print.

²⁶⁶ Borchgrave, Arnaud de., “Cartoon war or global intifada?,” *The Washington Times*, February 11, 2006. Print.

4.5.3 The Victim of Islamophobia in Europe

In the coverage of the Muhammad cartoon crisis the stereotyping of Muslims as victims were found in ten of the articles. This stereotyping is different from the stereotyping of victimized Muslim women in the veiling debate. Here Muslims are seen as victims of the growing Islamophobia, whereas in the veiling debate, Muslim women were not victims as a result of anti-Muslim prejudice. *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* did pay substantial attention to Muslims who felt they were in an anti-immigrant climate that stigmatized minorities. This interest might reflect the broader interest in the United States on how Europe is failing with integrating its Muslim population, whereas there is no sign of this in the United States. The focus on that European anti-Muslim sentiments result in radicalization of young Muslims and culture clash is one way of portraying the Americans in-group as better than the European out-group. When portraying the Muslim victim, the American journalists often focused on that the anti-Muslim sentiments in Europe were part of other forms of discrimination, xenophobia, anti-immigration policies, and rejection of cultural differences. In the stereotyping of the Muslims as victims, Islam is not seen as a threat to Americans in a way that it is threatening to Europeans (i.e. their national identity, welfare system and culture). Although, anti-immigrant sentiment is common both in United States and in Europe, the American journalists rarely focused on Muslim-American immigrants as a threat. Since immigration became an issue in Europe, racist and anti-immigrant rhetoric has turned heavily anti-Muslim. The same connection between Muslim and immigration as problematic cannot be seen in the United States. However, interestingly none of the journalists linked the Muslim victims of Islamophobia to how the American media and anti-immigration forces often negatively target Latino immigrants.²⁶⁷

This victimized stereotype is placed somewhat lukewarm on the warmth dimension, as the in-group pity Muslims for not being given the opportunity to be a part of the broader community and for harming them with discriminatory actions. The Muslim victim stereotype might also elicit some coldness on the warmth dimension, as the American in-group might fear that Muslim goals are incompatible with their goals. In addition, Americans might deem Islamophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment as inevitable consequences after 9/11. Besides, Americans might think certain precautions towards Muslims are justified, since terrorist cells are recruiting among the young Muslim immigrant population. In this category, the articles also focused on the resentment among some Muslims because they are treated as second-class

²⁶⁷ Cesari, 24-25.

citizens and potential terrorists in countries that deny the importance of their faith.²⁶⁸ If explained by the American journalists, the false linkage to terrorism and religious fundamentalism would place this victim group in the pitied out-group, as they are in a somewhat helpless situation.

Sometimes this victimized Muslim out-group can be seen as competent, but they are prevented from utilizing their skills, intelligence and creativity. However, they are usually regarded low on the competence dimension, since they lack relative status and power to achieve their goals. The stereotyping of Muslims as victims is difficult to place on the stereotype content model, because it depends on how the American in-group perceives the immigrant victim's goals and competence depending on the context. It can fluctuate between cold and warm on both dimensions. On one hand, the Muslim victim can be somewhat warm since they do not compete with the in-group, because of low-status on the competence dimension. In addition, Muslims can be seen as having the same goals and intentions as the American in-group, in the context where they are struggling immigrants trying to make a better life for themselves and their family. On the other hand, this out-group can be seen as low on the warmth dimension if it is "undercover" Muslims who are secretly trying to Islamize Western countries. Here the Muslim victim is in all essence not a victim, but a clever person who can outsmart the in-group, thus placing them in the enemy box on the stereotype content model.

4.6 Chapter Conclusion and the Stereotype Content Model

As seen in the coverage of the Muhammad cartoon controversy, Muslims' position on the stereotype content model varies depending on the portrayed stereotype in the media. In *The New York Times*' and *The Washington Times*' coverage of the Muhammad cartoon controversy, the violent Muslim, the terrorist, and the religious fundamentalist were the predominant stereotypes found. None of these portrayed stereotypes can be deemed as sweet, harmless, tolerant, conciliatory, trustworthy, good-natured, and friendly. As out-groups are disliked for lack of warmth, this will most likely result in negative emotions and prejudice towards Muslims among the American in-group. According to Fiske et al., stereotyping of groups serve a fundamental purpose of preserving the in-groups safety and well-being. People make inferences about persons and groups in terms of attributes and how these persons and

²⁶⁸ Cowell, Alan, "West Coming to Grasp Wide Islamic Protests As Sign of Deep Gulf," *The New York Times*, 8 Feb. 2006

groups will affect us and our position in society. Given the frequency with which Muslims were depicted as a threat to Western way of life or often in terms of violent acts, the low placement on the warmth dimension was obvious.

Stereotypes of competence have been claimed to be less one-sided, and appear less frequently in the media than do stereotypes related to warmth.²⁶⁹ I found this accurate, as it was more difficult to pin point how Muslims in the coverage was seen in reference to the competence dimension. In one way the terrorist could be seen as somewhat competent and clever in the way the use all means in reaching their goals. In *The Washington Times*, terrorists are posted as a threat for their abilities: “Al Qaeda’s expertise with digital technology drew a warning from Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld yesterday that the United States is falling behind the terrorists in the information age. He said, al Qaeda and other Islamic extremist groups have poisoned the Muslim public’s view of the United States through deft use of the Internet and other modern communications methods that the American government has failed to master.”²⁷⁰ Contrastingly, in *The New York Times*, Muslims were indirectly portrayed as less intelligent: “In Nablus, on the West Bank, two masked gunmen kidnapped a German from a hotel, thinking he was French or Danish, Agence France-Presse reported. They turned him over to the police once they realized their mistake.”²⁷¹ and “They’ve spread worldwide via the Web, exacerbating Muslim outrage while leading many non-Muslims to scratch their heads over how such banal and idiotic pictures could ever be given a thought in the first place.”²⁷² With descriptions like these the American media portray Muslims as less ambitious, confident, practical, skillful, all traits important on the competence dimension. The stereotypical portrayals of Muslims as un-intellectual, primitive, or backwards are equal to the intelligent/unintelligent trait dimension that is important on the competence dimension of the stereotype content model.²⁷³

²⁶⁹ Sides and Gross, 7.

²⁷⁰ Doyle, Neil, “Digital gap seen in war on terror; Extremists use Web ‘skillfully’,” *The Washington Times*, 18 Feb. 2006. Print.

²⁷¹ Smith, Craig, and Fisher, Ian, “Temperatures Rise Over Cartoons Mocking Muhammad,” *The New York Times*, 3 Feb. 2006.

²⁷² Flemming, Rose, “Why I Published the Muhammad Cartoons,” *The New York Times*, 31 May 2006.

²⁷³ Fiske et al., 2002, 878-880.

5 Conclusion

The main concern of the paper has been to shed some light over the distorted images, prejudice and overgeneralizations which typically characterize American media's representation of Muslims. This thesis argued that Muslims were stereotypically portrayed in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* with reference to two particular incidents; predominantly the Muhammad cartoons controversy and the tradition of veiling among Muslim women. With the intention of examining how Muslims were stereotypically portrayed in the light of stereotype theory, I chose to examine two heavily controversial topics that could reflect an overall tendency among American newspapers. The paper integrated the theoretical discussion of media influence, as well as prejudice and stereotype theory in reference to the stereotyping of Muslims. Further, the thesis argued that the Muslim out-group's position on Fiske and colleague's stereotype content model varies depending on the portrayed Muslim stereotype. In doing so, the study relied upon analyzing the different Muslim stereotypes that occurred in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times*.

The paper mapped out some of the major historical, cultural and political causes of prejudice and stereotyping against Muslims and how this is still relevant today. The thesis has contributed to the knowledge that American stereotyping of Muslims and Islam is a very complex phenomenon, and varies depending on the given context and topic. As the paper demonstrated, the portrayal of Muslims varied between different types of stereotypes, some of them more negatively perceived than others by the American in-group. While the majority of the news coverage had a negative outlook on Muslims, the level of animosity varied depending on the specific news piece, topic, journalist, source etc. For that reason, the thesis cannot draw the conclusion that absolutely all media coverage of Muslims is negative or stereotypical. However, there is a certain stereotypical tendency, especially in the coverage of contentious topics. The thesis supports scholars that argue political, social, economic, and personal conditions affect prejudice and stereotyping against Muslims. For example, if certain conditions improve, Americans may no longer perceive Muslims as an enemy, which can result in less stereotypical media coverage. Similarly, when the media quit stereotyping Muslims, Americans may view Muslims more positively on the stereotype content model.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁴ CAIR, "American Public Opinion about Islam and Muslims 2006," *sun.cair.com*, 1 Mai 2013 <http://sun.cair.com/Portals/0/pdf/american_public_opinion_on_muslims_islam_2006.pdf>

This paper supports the claim that the media is a significant influence on peoples' prejudicial attitudes and stereotypes about minority groups. The media remakes stereotypes by reporting the news along explanatory frames that make the reader place events, issues and people into contextual frameworks of reference. Stereotyping in the media can be seen in the choice of topics, sources, language, and photographs. A century ago, Herbert Gans found that "the news reflects the white male social order," while contemporary newsrooms are more diverse today, prejudice and stereotypical perception have not disappeared.²⁷⁵ The two topics proved to be an excellent way of showing how the media pass on stereotypes that affect public perceptions about race, ethnicity, and religion, by framing the news along the lines of the attitudes and prejudices held by the majority in-group. The thesis concludes that the stereotypical coverage of the Muhammad cartoons controversy and the tradition of veiling can exaggerate difference and by doing so also increase the antagonism between groups.²⁷⁶ To the extent that the mass media is Americans' primary source of information about Islam and Muslims, many will be unable to distinguish between the way of life embraced by most Muslims, and the version of Islam presented by the media on the basis of repeated focus on violence, terrorism, backwardness, and the suppression of women.

What is written in the newspapers often gets reflected in the society's general attitudes and beliefs. Through agenda setting, priming and framing, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* remade and reinforced stereotypes about Muslims as an out-group. My analysis found that, by frequently placing Islam and Muslim related causes in a negative frame and prime it to certain topics like terrorism, gender oppression and violence, the media increased the gap between the American "us" and the Muslim "them." Sometimes unintended, the way particular media tools were used in the coverage of the two cases indirectly stereotyped Muslims. Content analysis of the two newspapers revealed patterns that contribute to the perception that Muslims fit old stereotypes. For instance, Most of the stories had a negative angle, and many of these stories also included derogatory terms such as, "fundamentalist," "militant," "terrorist," "radical," "extremist," "face-concealing," "repressing," "oppressing," and "violating." The journalist did not always directly apply negative terms in reference to Islam or Muslim, but the undertone of the news story, topic, or phrase was often negative. Although the stereotyping and prejudice was not always as overt, indirect stereotypical references were being made repetitively. Indirect stereotypical coverage

²⁷⁵ Nacos and Torres-Reyna, 2007, 4-5.

²⁷⁶ Nacos and Torres-Reyna, 2002, 2.

was seen in choice of words, headlines, connotations, sources etc. The lack of everyday stories showed that what is/ is not newsworthy has ensured a narrow image of Islam and Muslims.

5.1 Conclusions in Light of the Stereotype Content Model

The results found indicate that most of the articles were negative in their coverage of Islam and Muslims in general. Additionally, the media left little room for focusing on individuals and their stories, and instead labeled the entire Muslim group as an entity with shared opinions, beliefs and traits. Out of the total articles examined, many of the articles applied unfavorable traits in their characteristic labeling of Muslims, Islamic tradition and acts carried out by Muslims. In addition, my analysis found that Muslims were often portrayed as violent, fanatic, excessively pious, disrespectful of women, and unable to live in a Western country. The most common stereotypes found were: the submissive victim, the traditional veiled woman, the terrorist, the religious fundamentalist, and the immigrant. As a result of these stereotypical portrayals, not all Muslims are positioned at the same place on the stereotype content model. Both research from social psychology and intergroup relations argue the tendency to stereotype happen automatically, but the content of the stereotypes themselves varies widely depending on the out-group.²⁷⁷ My findings suggest that stereotype content we have about Muslims also depend upon what topic is being covered by the media. In addition, different types of Muslim stereotypes and issues presented by the media will elicit different feelings among the American in-group. There is reason to believe that the news coverage of topics like the Muhammad cartoons controversy and the tradition of veiling among Muslim women will influence the American in-groups' perception of Muslims as an out-group. Ultimately, news information and stereotypical coverage about Muslims affect how Americans come to consider Muslims in terms of warmth, competence and their placement on the stereotype content model.

According to a stereotype content model study, Americans usually stereotype Muslims negatively on the warmth dimension, as threatening, violent, etc. This was found to be mostly accurate in the analysis of the Muhammad cartoon controversy, but not in the media coverage of veiling. Unless veiled Muslim women were placed within a larger framework of the

²⁷⁷ Messick, David M., and Mackie, Diane M., "Intergroup Relations," *Annual Review of Psychology* 40.45 (1989): 50.

“Islamic peril” or fundamentalism, their goals and intentions would not be considered threatening to the American in-group. In the media coverage of veiling, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* largely portrayed the Muslim woman as traditional, religious, backwards, submissive and ignorant. Although many negative characteristics were applied to the veiled Muslim woman traits such as kind and domestic were also found, thus she will be seen as predominantly warm. In this manner, one can say the media helped Muslim women to be perceived as warm. The common characteristics of Muslims in the Muhammad cartoon controversy were less positive. This qualitative content analysis of the coverage of the Muhammad cartoons controversy showed that the association of Islam with terrorism was relatively common. However, the strong relation between the concepts of Islam/Muslims to terrorism can in some part be explained by the nature of the specific case. In the Muhammad cartoon controversy, Muslims were stereotyped as violent, fundamentalists and terrorists. Consequently, Americans have little reason to perceive that their goals and those of many Muslims who were portrayed in the Muhammad cartoon controversy are compatible, thus these Muslims, often men, would be perceived as cold on the stereotype content model.

The media’s stereotyping of Muslims in both cases was as relatively low in competence, as insufficiently rational or capable. The only diverging from this stereotype was if Muslims, often of immigrant background, were interviewed and then often characterized as educated, reflected, and progressive. Stereotypes of competence have been claimed to be more complex and dimensional, and appear less frequently in the media than stereotypes related to warmth.²⁷⁸ My analysis of the Muhammad cartoon controversy supports this, as the depictions of Muslims were often easier to map out and more consistently negative with regard to warmth than with regard to competence. Furthermore, stereotypes of Muslims proved to have specific content and involved the sense that Muslims had certain negative characteristics. Muslims in the Muhammad cartoon controversy tended to be characterized as violent and untrustworthy, but veiled women were not, thus placing them differently in the stereotype content model. Interestingly, veiled Muslim women were in some sense not stereotyped as Muslims, but as weak women oppressed by Muslim men. With regards to competence, not all media coverage of Muslims was negative. Muslims in neither cases were portrayed as lazy and unintelligent by nature, but more often as backwards and ignorant of progressive developments as a result of religion.

²⁷⁸ Sides and Gross, 7.

5.2 Concluding Remarks

The American media's representation of Muslims is not a recent fabrication but has become more operational and deep-rooted in American's conceptualization since 9/11. My thesis supports the claim that the American media preserve a persisting conceptualization of the Arabs and Muslims as an alien "other" or "enemy," though both the means of communication and ascribing terminologies have changed.²⁷⁹ Muslim are prejudiced against and widely stereotyped in America. This claim is supported by a number of studies, polls and surveys tracking public opinions in the United States. As it was discussed earlier in the thesis, Muslims have been viewed by plurality of Americans as a monolithic group despite all the racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, and socioeconomic diversity shaping every aspect of Muslim's lives, which result in naïve acceptance of the media's stereotyping of them as an out-group.²⁸⁰ This thesis' findings are thus more or less in line with previous research on the topic. This thesis has proven that particular stereotypes found in the coverage of veiling and the Muhammad controversy demonstrate that prejudice and stereotypical attitudes against Muslims is well alive.

Many have argued that the accusations against the media's stereotyping of Muslims is taken out of context and exaggerated. Prejudice against minority groups like Muslims is a normal cultural phenomenon and an integral part of the American way of life. For example, Americans continue to judge others on the basis of their race, ethnicity, gender, religion and social class. In particular, Americans value whites over non-whites and favor those with northwestern European backgrounds over others. Thus, prejudice against Muslims might not be seen as more than a normal expression of negative sentiments against an out- group for the majority in-group. In this sense, Muslims are not any different than Jews, Blacks, Hispanics, or Asians. However, that Muslims are just part of a long list of other out-groups that receive negative media coverage does not make it acceptable or any less important for Muslims and their quality of life in America.²⁸¹

²⁷⁹ Ridouani, 1.

²⁸⁰ Alibeli, Madalla A., and Abdulfattah Yaghi, "Theories of Prejudice and Attitudes toward Muslims in the United States," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 2.1 (2012): 24-25.

<http://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol_2_No_1_January_2012/2.pdf>

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 26.

5.3 Recommendation for Future Research

The results of the current study point the way to future research. The comparison of several American media outlets rather than just two newspapers, would give a richer picture of the stereotyping of Muslims, and would either give legitimacy to the claims of this thesis, or discover that the findings have different explanations. With the aim of obtaining a more nuanced look, future research exploring media stereotyping of Muslims may also benefit from expanding the number of topics and cases to examine. Another recommendation would be to select cases pertaining to Muslims that are less controversial. Such news stories can be within the topics of education, business, domestic politics, and sports. In this way, succeeding research may gain from reviewing news stories that actually have a more positive view on Muslims. The current study examined topics that from the outset were rather negatively framed within the American society. Even though the topics were expected to have a negative angle, this should not imply that the overall angle on Muslims and Islam had to be negative. Therefore, this current thesis still proves the American media's prejudicial attitudes and stereotyping regarding Muslims. Another topic of interest for further research would be a comparative study between European and American newspapers' coverage of the Muhammad cartoons controversy and the tradition of veiling. A comparative study would be interesting, since the two topics seem to be more heavily and negatively covered in Europe than in the United States. It would also be valuable to explore whether the common stereotypes found about Muslim in the two cases remain stable over time, or whether they change as political conditions and agenda-setting changes. Additionally, research on further media coverage on veiling and the stereotyping of Muslim women should also attend to the broader problems of patriarchy and racism that shape the lives of Muslim women both in Muslim countries and in America.

Another promising direction for future research would be to explore to what degree Americans and the media make distinctions in their stereotyping of and attitudes towards Muslims, depending on the context, topic or individual presented. Possible follow-up studies can explore more in-depth the influence of media exposure on Americans positive and negative attitudes toward Muslims. This way we can see if real life attitudes towards Muslims reflect the specific stereotype found in specific news topics. It is important to remember that indirect and direct media stereotyping of out-groups increase the approval of stereotypes and the perceived gap between groups. Frequent negative and biased information about Islam and Muslims makes the audiences perceive Islam and Muslims as a threat and something

negative. For that reason, what is needed is more research that reach out to Americans with the message that Islam is a “heterogeneous composition of individual believers rather than a homogeneous entity in which all believers are viewed as a monolithic block.”²⁸² Despite commonly held stereotypical beliefs, Muslims are not all the same with fixed traits, but unique individuals, capable of change and adapt to new situations. Thus, research designed to encourage a new perception of Islam in general may be a good way of changing anti-Muslim sentiments and the acceptance of the media’s stereotypical portrayals.

5.4 Limitation of the Study

The current research can only indicate how the American newspaper reading audiences come to view Muslims. Young American adults and other media audiences, who use TV, internet and other media channels as their source of information, might stereotype Muslims differently. As it is assumed that media exposure shape public attitudes, this thesis cannot say how other media sources affect Americans and their stereotyping of Muslims. However, most media outlets reflect each other’s reportage and covering, and will perhaps have the same angle and stereotypical portrayal of Muslims and Islam. Another limitation of this study is its selection of controversial cases. The Muhammad cartoon controversy had in nature a violent and controversial aftermath and this may have reinforced the endorsement of common stereotypes. The media’s characterizing of Muslim males as violent, terrorists and fundamental was more likely to happen, because of the very nature of the specific case selected. It must be noted that, if I had analyzed less explicit controversial content, Muslims might have been placed differently on the stereotype content model. However, my intention was to prove that the specific topic and stereotype presented was reflected in the stereotype content model, which was suitably done with the selection of a controversial case. In addition, a longitudinal study of several cases is necessary to further explore the real affect of the media’s stereotyping of Muslims in reference to the stereotype content model. However, the current results may direct future research in choosing which cases and media channels to analyze in a longitudinal context. In sum, possible improvements include examining several newspapers and broader more neutral topics. Although the two cases and newspapers selected can tell something about how newspapers stereotype Muslims in largely controversial topics.

²⁸² Dekker, Henk, and Noll, Jolanda van der, “Islamophobia and Its Origin,” *Paper prepared for presentation at the fourth ECPR Conference, Pisa, 6-8 September 2007*, 1. Mai 2013
<http://www.uu.nl/SiteCollectionDocuments/SW/Ercomer/digital%20publications/dekker_pisa07.pdf>

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