



Are Muslims Collectively Responsible?

A Sentiment Analysis of the New York Times

Authors: Owais Arshad, Varun Setlur, Usaid Siddiqui

With Contributions from Jai Setlur, Di Yan and Steven Zhou



©2015 416LABS All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other non-commercial uses permitted by copyright law. For permission requests, write to the publisher, addressed "Attention: Permissions Coordinator," at the address below.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	2
Introduction.....	4
History and International Law.....	5
Western Mainstream Media and Islam	6
The Power of Words	11
Results.....	15
Conclusion.....	21
Recommendations	23
Appendix: Methodology.....	24
Bibliography	25
Acknowledgments.....	30

Executive Summary

Background

For the Muslim community 2015 was a year marked by unusually vitriolic acts of Islamophobia. Whether it was the detention of a talented 14 year old student, Ahmed Mohamed, on suspicion of inventing a bomb (it was a clock), or the anti-Muslim rhetoric espoused by Republican presidential candidates in the recent debates, Muslims were repeatedly portrayed, collectively, as being worthy of suspicion, distrust, and at best as reservoirs of latent violence ever ready to unleash havoc. This portrayal peaked with the horrific attacks in Paris on November 13th 2015, where over a 150 people were killed. The instant reaction from many was to blame Muslims, within just a few hours of the attacks. Two CNN anchors discussing the horrific attacks asserted to their Muslim guest that “accept that responsibility to prevent the bigger backlash” (Edwards, 2015). According to them the “finger of blame is pointing at the Muslim community.”

While Muslims have overwhelmingly condemned all terrorist attacks repeatedly, the news and print media largely abdicated their crucial responsibility of offering balanced coverage. Instead, too often, these organizations favored sensationalist points of view. This has resulted in an understanding of Islam that is preoccupied with terrorism, violence and security. This substitution of caricature for reality underscores the urgent need to study the portrayal of Islam in the media.

Objective

The modern discussion on terrorism is heavily focused on its relationship with Islam, to the extent that many in the West and beyond now equate it as largely an Islamic or Muslim phenomenon. Media effect theories suggest that this could lead to assignment of collective responsibility to the Islamic faith and its adherents.

Bearing this background in mind, this case study was undertaken to explore the portrayal of Islam and Muslims in Western mainstream media. The specific objective was to investigate news headlines in the New York Times (NYT).

Methodology

We carried out a quantitative analysis using a large corpus of data from the NYT covering the period 1990 - 2014. Based on NYT headlines we performed a sentiment analysis to identify the specific terms associated with Islam and Muslim, while simultaneously categorizing them as positive, negative or neutral. We benchmarked our queries with other topics of interest including Alcohol, Christianity, Cancer, Democrat, Republican and the New York Yankees. By doing so we are able to demonstrate a significant bias in the language associated with Islam and Muslims.

Results

Our results provide strong evidence that Islam/Muslims are consistently associated with negative terms in NYT headlines. Key findings include:

- 57% of the headlines containing the words Islam/Muslims were scored negatively. Only 8% of the headlines were scored positively.
- Compared to all the other benchmarked terms (Republican, Democrat, Cancer and Yankees, Christianity and Alcohol), Islam/Muslims had the highest incidents of negative terms throughout the 25 year period.
- Not once over the examined period does the aggregate negative sentiment of headlines related to Islam/Muslims go below the NYT aggregate (29%) for all headlines.
- The most frequent terms associated with Islam/Muslims include “Rebels” and “Militant”. None of the 25 most frequently occurring terms were positive.

Conclusion

We contend that the overwhelming negative sentiment associated with NYT headlines about Islam/Muslims is likely to distort perceptions. In light of media priming and framing studies, our results suggest that the average reader of the NYT is likely to assign collective responsibility to Islam/Muslims for the violent actions of a few.

The results of our study strongly support the findings of previous research and observations on the biased portrayal of Islam/Muslims.

Introduction

Do Muslims bear collective responsibility for terrorism? This question has percolated in disparate configurations across the media for years. Examining Muslim responsibility for acts of terror retains an enduring popularity (Kirkpatrick, 2015). At the heart of this query lies fear: irrational fear of the unknown - a fear that Muslims are part of a new, "Ruthless, monolithic conspiracy" that is "relentlessly" attacking the Western world much like the Soviets before 1991. This case study shall explore the mechanics underlying this fear.

The Context

Although assigning collective responsibility or guilt to groups of people is an old concept. Despite important steps undertaken by the international community to suppress such practices, collective punitive measures continue to be utilized.

The most visible manifestations of such actions include the indiscriminate targeting of civilians; for instance the blockade of the Gaza Strip by Israel (Chomsky, 2013) or economic sanctions that cripple entire economic systems without distinction. However, we contend that this is only a partial accounting; assigning collective guilt manifests itself in other important ways as well.

For example, the current conflicts and security policies adopted by Western countries in the War on Terror are often justified by citing the threats posed by Islamist militants and Jihadist forces. This is complemented by a significant effort, particularly in the media, of almost exclusively engaging with the concept of Islam, and Muslims through the lens of conflict or violence. This creates an environment that fosters and encourages negative association by blurring the distinction between ordinary Muslims and violent groups.

Media and Language

This study will demonstrate that the mainstream media portrays Islam and Muslims negatively, thereby attributing collective responsibility to Muslims and Islam. Moreover, we believe this association is not confined to a particular political or ideological spectrum.

There is compelling quantitative evidence to support this assertion. In our estimation the language used to describe Islam/Muslims, the choice of adjectives, words, the very vocabulary used when speaking of Islam in much of the media is both problematic, and selective. The media, instead of being an unbiased arbiter has often become a filter which perpetuates negative stereotypes. Our claim rests on an extensive review of more than two decades worth of headlines found in the NYT.

Supporting Research

We have, in addition, identified some of the major scholarship on this phenomenon and examined the ideological and practical considerations that have led the media to cede their role of being an agent of free and balanced inquiry. We find that this was a feature of the media that pre-dates the events of 9/11. This important work provides substantive support to the various data points

that we have uncovered during the course of our research.

The Dilemma

The words used to discuss Islam continue to propagate a distorted view of the religion and its followers. Without recognition of this, and a correction of this tendency, understanding one of the most important forces shaping modern

history will continue to elude popular understanding.

Governments in democratic societies are ultimately responsible to their electorates. If these electorates are consistently provided with a biased and opaque view of matters pertaining to critical issues, poor policy outcomes are inevitable.

History and International Law

Collective responsibility, the idea that a group of people are liable for the criminal acts of individuals, has a long and troubling chronology.

Unsurprisingly, the many historical examples of collective responsibility remain emblematic of persecution and oppression, in both a historical and modern sense.

Jews, for example, were held collectively responsible for the demise of Jesus, which resulted in centuries of anti-Semitism and pogroms across Europe. It was only during the Vatican Council of 1962 – 1965 that the Roman Catholic Church officially repudiated this particular doctrine.

Collective responsibility was also a hallmark of colonial regimes, where errant tribes and natives were often punished for the actions of their countrymen. In British India, Pashtun tribes in the North West Frontier Province (now Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa) were subject to the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR). The FCR [which continues to be enforced in Pakistan's FATA region – see for example Walsh (2008)] allowed for entire tribes to be blockaded, fined, their properties seized and demolished, or, where it was “expedient on military grounds” entire villages could be physically moved. These atrocities even had a colloquial nickname – “butcher and bolt” operations.

The conclusion of World War 1 marked one of the most fateful and dramatic examples of collective responsibility. Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles, declared that:

“The Allied and Associated Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies.”

The subsequent punitive measures imposed on Germany led to massive German resentment and, eventually, the rise of the Nazi Third Reich. Despite the vivid memories of the suffering engendered by the collective punishment imposed by the allies, the Nazis adopted the same approach and themselves attacked and liquidated entire populations without distinguishing between civilians and combatants.

The aftermath of World War 2 saw a distinct break from the ideas of collective responsibility. During the Nuremberg trials, collective responsibility was not assigned to the German population as a whole. Instead, the trials focused on the personal responsibility borne by the Nazi leadership and its collaborators.

The Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 subsequently outlawed the idea of collective responsibility altogether through Article 33 by deciding:

"No Protected person may be punished for an offence he or she has not personally committed. Collective penalties and likewise all measures of intimidation or of terrorism are prohibited."

The commentary around the convention noted that, by the introduction of Article 33, "[a] great step forward has been taken. Responsibility is

personal and it will no longer be possible to inflict penalties on persons who have themselves not committed the acts complained of."

At the same time, these legal developments were accompanied by general philosophical repudiations of collective responsibility. Karl Jaspers, a German philosopher and psychologist for example noted that collective responsibility was a problematic proposition as:

"One cannot make an individual out of a people. A people cannot perish heroically, cannot be a criminal, cannot act morally or immorally; only its individuals can do so. A people as a whole can be neither guilty nor innocent, neither in the criminal nor in the political (in which sense only the citizenry of a state is liable) nor in the moral sense..."

Western mainstream media and Islam

The selective reporting surrounding Islam and Muslims in the mainstream Western media is not a new phenomenon that only began in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, but a consistent feature in decades prior to the tragic events in 2001. This was also true during the Cold War period, where the alleged threat posed by the Soviet Union led to an overt and covert conflict across the global south for power and influence.

The Mainstream Media and the Cold War

Many parallels can be drawn from the language used to describe the Soviets during the Cold War and the narrative surrounding the War on Terror. Consider the following passage from a speech by Senator Joseph McCarthy on February 9, 1950:

"Karl Marx dismissed God as a hoax, and Lenin and Stalin have added in clear cut, unmistakeable language their resolve that no nation, no people who believe in a god, can exist side by side by with their communist state... Today we are engaged in a final, all-out battle between communistic atheism and Christianity. The modern champions of communism have selected this as the time, and ladies and gentlemen, the chips are down—they

are truly down" (Baker & Griffiths, 2007, p.49).

His framing of the conflict as one of god fearing Christians versus the godless Soviet Union was a deliberate attempt to capitalize on the religious convictions of the American populace. He organized a political witch-hunt against anyone suspected of being a Communist or a sympathizer of Marxism. As a result, thousands were shunned or blacklisted including celebrities such as Charlie Chaplin, whose movies were denounced as communist propaganda (Sbardellati & Shaw, 2003, p1).

Rather than question or challenge this political demagoguery the media played a crucial role in fostering a climate of paranoia and fear, an undertaking it continued even after McCarthyism receded. At times, popular US television networks such CBS and NBC actively supplemented their reporting with directives from the government at the time (Bernhard 2003, pp 57). Under constant pressure to prove their loyalty, some of these news corporations even constituted internal security apparatuses to root out pro-Soviet sentiment (Bernhard, 2003, pp 57).

In a book titled "*Critical Reflections on the Cold War: Linking Rhetoric and History*" and edited by Brand and Mendhurst (2000), author Shawn Perry Giles asserts that the mainstream media not only consented but actively participated in the government's propaganda efforts during the Cold War (Parry, 2002, p.99). For instance,

during the government attempts to pass the controversial Smith-Mundt Act, a piece of legislation that would allow the US government to broadcast its message to foreign nations, Giles notes how the NYT was praised by government officials, such as the Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs William Benton, for its favorable coverage (Parry, 2002, pp.100).

Nor was this cooperation limited to the promotion of legislation. According to Professor Frank Costigliola of the University of Connecticut, the Cold War witnessed a trend across both the media and political circles of deliberately interpreting every Soviet pronouncement as a provocation to the American government (Costigliola, 2000, pp. 45).

Costigliola's essay titled "*The Creation of Memory and Myth: Stalin's 1946 Election Speech and the Soviet Threat*", analyzes the uproar in the US related to Stalin's 1946 speech titled "The Five Year Plan". Rather than examine the content of the Soviet leader's words, exaggerated assertions were made by media outlets such as the NYT, recasting "The Five Year Plan" as a deliberate exercise in provocation. According to Costigliola "opinion-forming authorities encouraged each other in the task of mobilizing American power, emotions, and moral energy to contain the Soviet Union and construct the world" (Costigliola, 2000, pp 51).

Islam and Media Pre 9/11

Animosity towards Muslims is not a post 9/11 phenomenon. Rather, negative stereotypes of Muslims and their faith were readily observable in the decades preceding the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington.

In a book authored by the late Professor Edward Said (1980), *"Covering Islam: How The Media And The Experts Determine How We See The Rest Of The World"*; Said summarizes the media's traditional role with regards to Muslims and Arabs as the following:

"It is only a slight overstatement to say that Muslims and Arabs are essentially covered, discussed, and apprehended either as oil suppliers or as potential terrorists...What we have instead is a limited series of crude, essentialized caricatures of the Islamic world presented in such a way as, among other things, to make that world vulnerable to military aggression." (Said, 1980, pp.28)

Said demonstrates this point by showing how a handful of prolific historical events have tended to dominate American thinking towards Islam, such as the non-stop coverage of the Iran Hostage Crisis in 1979. Echoing this sentiment, a review of *Covering Islam* by Fareed Khan stated that:

"By examining a range of electronic and print media coverage of the Iran hostage crisis Said brings attention to the fact that the length of the hostages, detention in Iran caused the media to feed the American public a continuous stream of warped, confusing, or nonsensical images of Islam. Through extensive citing of print and electronic media stories, he demonstrates that these portrayals of Islam were further distorted and inflamed by coverage of the story from a "patriotic" American geopolitical perspective" (Khan 2004, p.4).

In a later edition of *Covering Islam* (1997), Said recalls a NYT piece titled *"Seeing Green-The Red Menace is Gone. But Here's Islam."* The article alluded to the "new threat" posed by Islam after the fall of the Soviet Union, which was,

Said contended, a result of the dubious conflation of Islam with the terrorist action of Muslim individuals. For Said, this was just one of many examples of media engineered fear mongering towards Islam. This was very much part of the intellectual milieu of the time, and several prominent authors published books warning of a future war of civilization with the Muslim world (Huntington, 1994, Lewis, 1992). Said characterized the political climate as one that "favors- one might even say requires – Islam to be a menace..." (Said, 1997, p.xx).

The media have also regularly found it expedient to prematurely ascribe violent acts of terror to the faith. Professor Hilal Elver (2012) in her paper *"Racializing Islam Before and After 9/11: From Melting Pot to Islamophobia"* writes how in the aftermath of the Oklahoma Bombing, journalist Steve Emerson, a controversial anti-Muslim figure, produced a PBS documentary titled *"Jihad in America"* and "ascribed the Oklahoma City bombing to Muslim terrorists..." (Hilver, 2012, pp.137).

Emerson would go on to testify at a House International Committee hearing warning that Radical Islam was the biggest threat domestically and internationally to US law enforcement agencies. For Emerson, the fact that Timothy McVeigh, the perpetrator of the bombing, had no connection to Islam was irrelevant. For the media, the aftermath of any tragedy also tends to be followed by in depth questioning of the very place of Muslims and Islam in America. After the World Trade Center bombings of 1993, Hilver points out that several editorials in the mainstream press suggested stopping immigration from Muslim nations (Hilver 2012, pp.136). She highlights poll conducted by the American Council of Muslims which showed nearly 43% of Americans saw Muslims as religious fanatics and only 24% disagreed (Hilver 2012, pp.136)

Islam and Media Post 9/11

After 9/11, the mainstream media played a critical role in bolstering then President George W. Bush's "crusade" against "Islamic Radicals". The "us versus them" mentality captured the imagination of many media personalities who advocated for American power in building their case for war against Afghanistan. Conservative commentators such as Sean Hannity questioned (FAIR, 2001):

"Are Americans afraid to face the reality that there is a significant portion of this world's population that hates America, hates what freedom represents, hates the fact that we fight for freedom worldwide, hates our prosperity, hates our way of life? Have we been unwilling to face that very difficult reality?"

According to another influential conservative pundit, Ann Coulter (FAIR, 2001), the 9/11 attacks signaled a direct confrontation with Islam rather than terrorist networks like Al-Qaeda;

"This is no time to be precious about locating the exact individuals directly involved in this particular terrorist attack.... We should invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity. We weren't punctilious about locating and punishing only Hitler and his top officers. We carpet-bombed German cities; we killed civilians. That's war. And this is war."

In the NYT, writer Thomas Friedman, opined that the War on Terror was not a war to simply defeat "terrorism" but a fight to "defeat an "ideology: religious totalitarianism" (Friedman, 2001):

"We patronize Islam, and mislead ourselves, by repeating the mantra that Islam is a faith with no serious problems

accepting the secular West, modernity and pluralism, and the only problem is a few bin Ladens...Islam has not developed a dominant religious philosophy that allows equal recognition of alternative faith communities. Bin Laden reflects the most extreme version of that exclusivity, and he hit us in the face with it on 9/11.

Christianity and Judaism struggled with this issue for centuries, but a similar internal struggle within Islam to re-examine its texts and articulate a path for how one can accept pluralism and modernity -- and still be a passionate, devout Muslim -- has not surfaced in any serious way"

Later, during the invasion of Iraq, the media (particularly cable news networks) provided uncritical backing to the government's plans to attack the country (Miller, 2003). In fact, senior Bush administration officials would often work closely with media corporations such as Disney and MGM to help align their views with government policy. It was even reported that organizations such as CNN would actually send scripts to unnamed government personnel for approval (Kumar, 2006, p.49).

Opposition to the Iraq war was often met with harsh criticism. In the lead up to the conflict, MSNBC fired one of their most respected news anchors, Phil Donahue, for criticizing the upcoming military engagement. A memo

circulated by media executives noted that during a time of war, they could not afford to have a dissenting voice (FAIR, 2003).

While there was no credible evidence that Iraq was developing weapons of mass destruction government officials such as Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Vice President Dick Cheney maintained the claim that Al-Qaeda had a presence in Iraq around the time of 9/11.

While this allegation was never substantiated it remained a constant theme of news talk shows across the mainstream press. This erroneous linkage between the Iraqi regime and “Islamic” extremists was critical to promoting the war as being fundamentally connected to the atrocities of 9/11. Writing on this strange fiction construed as fact, Professor Mohammed Nimer wrote:

“Justification of violence is made via ideology based views of history and world affairs, assigning responsibility for events not by relating actors to actions but by selectively mixing geopolitical analyses and visions with ethnic, religious, and /or national affiliations. In other words, Bin Laden’s stretching the line of logic beyond reason and fact in blaming America is clearly anti-American, just as the Bush’s justification of the War in Iraq on grounds of 9/11 is Islamophobic.” (Nimer, 2011 pp.86).

In many studies conducted on Islamophobia after 9/11, it has been asserted that some of the strongest proponents of anti-Muslim rhetoric and action has emanated from what is commonly referred to as the conservative right, with the likes of Hannity and Coulter being at the helm of the anti-Islam tirade (Lean, 2012; Affi and Affi, 2014).

However, while the liberal media has been more nuanced in its portrayal, it has ultimately

adhered to the same convention that portrays Muslims as the “other”. In her book “Islamophobia and the politics of Empire”, Deepa Kumar writes that while there is little difference between liberal and conservative Islamophobia, although the former is more nuanced rhetorically, at least in its criticism of Muslims (Kumar, 2012). According to Kumar, liberals recognize that there are good and moderate Muslims and even have equal rights as all other Americans.

The so called “Ground Zero Mosque” controversy is emblematic of this dichotomy. In 2010, a nationwide controversy erupted when a Muslim community center was under construction near the site of the 9/11 attacks. Many conservative politicians and media figure decried the move, calling it insensitive and an insult to the memories of those who died on that fateful day.

Liberal commentators however had exhibited support for the project, justifying the move in the name of equal opportunity and the freedom of religion. Daily Show host Jon Stewart and MSNBC stalwart Keith Olbermann severely denounced the move by far right elements to create a false controversy and to foster a culture of Islamophobia (Kumar, 2012, pp 168). Time magazine, a prominent liberal publication, even published an issue titled “Is America Islamophobic?” with a picture of a star and crescent wrapped in an American flag underneath.

Despite this, Kumar points out that in the case of Time magazine, two weeks earlier prior to its “Is America Islamophobic?” issue, Time had on its cover a picture of an Afghan woman with her nose cut off with headline reading “What if We Left Afghanistan”. According to her this reinforced “the connection between Islam and violence against women and recycling the old “white man’s burden” argument” (Kumar, 2012, pp.168).

The Power of Words

Words have power and, over time, the language used in any particular discourse will subtly shape and sway opinion. This (mis)use of language to shape discourse and its relationship to authority is not a new observation and is particularly evident in modern media systems. The French philosopher Michel Foucault developed an entire branch of study, nowadays called Foucauldian discourse analysis to discuss the interplay between language and authority.

Other notable observers include the author George Orwell, who had a keen appreciation for the complicit role of language in the prosecution of aggressive policy agendas. In his 1946 essay on “Politics and the English Language”, Orwell also concluded that, “political language has to consist largely of euphemism”, or “vagueness” in order to justify actions which would be “too brutal for most people to face”. For example, “Defenceless villages are bombarded from the air, the inhabitants driven out into the countryside, the cattle machine-gunned, the huts set on fire with incendiary bullets: this is called pacification”.

This essay was a continuation of the theme that Orwell first touched upon in the unpublished preface to *Animal Farm* in 1945. Here Orwell noted how the “English Intelligentsia” had willfully suppressed any meaningful dissent of the Soviet Union and Stalin. By recalling a number of glaring examples, he noted how, “Anyone who challenges the prevailing orthodoxy finds himself silenced with surprising effectiveness” and that, “A genuinely unfashionable opinion is almost never given a fair hearing, either in the popular press or in the highbrow periodicals.”

Across the Atlantic, Edward Bernays, the “founder” of the public relations industry, and a nephew of Sigmund Freud was even more

blunt in his assessment. In his 1928 book, “Propaganda” (Bernays & Miller, 2005) he noted the very term propaganda had a very broad definition, and included all efforts to “influence the relations of the public to an enterprise, idea or group”. Bernays asserted that this impulse was “very common”, and that “Virtually no important undertaking is now carried on without it”, that it is “continuous” and its key success has been “regimenting the public mind every bit as much as an army regiments the bodies of its soldiers”.

The tribulations of the 20th century serve as stark reminders of the demonization and collective punishment that different populations have faced as a result of concentrated efforts of propaganda; echoing the sentiments of Bernays and Orwell.

Just over 70 years ago, in the aftermath of the Japanese army’s attack on Pearl Harbor, thousands of Japanese Americans were sent to internment camps merely because of their ethnicity. In the lead up to internment, media and political propaganda were committed to such policies. In the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 1942, US press correspondent Henry McLemore wrote (Ancheta, 2006, pp.68-69):

I am for the complete removal of every Japanese on the West Coast to a point deep in the interior... Herd 'em up, pack

'em off and give 'em the inside room in the badlands... Personally, I hate the Japanese. And that goes for all of them."

McLemore's words were not a fringe opinion but a reflection of the popular media. Posters and movies portraying Japanese Americans as the enemy within and why internment was best for them started to appear regularly to rationalize the decision to intern Japanese Americans. The infamous film "Japanese Relocation" produced by the US war relocation authority (Atlantic, 2011) highlighted the supposed humanity of the internment camps which, in reality, were less than desirable.

Media Priming and Media Framing

Numerous studies have shown that the choice of words in media reporting have an effect on the reader's opinion and real life decisions.

One of the main frameworks for analyzing media effects is priming. Briefly, priming can be defined as "the effect of some preceding stimulus or event on how we react, broadly defined, to some [other] stimulus" (Roskos Ewoldsen et.al, 2009, pp. 74). For example, an individual given the word "body" will be more likely to anticipate the word "heart" than something unrelated, such as the word "trick" (Hoey 2005, pp 8).

According to Roskos Ewoldesen et.al (2009), priming in terms of the press "refers to the effects of the content of the media on people's later behavior or judgements related to the content that was processed" (pp. 74-75). Media priming has been studied in differing contexts such as political coverage and stereotyping (Iyengar & Kinder 1987, Mendeelson 1999, Pan and Kosicki, 1997). For example, studies such as the one by Krosnick and Kinder (1990) showed that President Ronald Reagan's popularity was negatively impacted (based on face to face interviews of over a thousand US participants) by an increase in news coverage

of the controversial CONTRA affair (Krosnick and Kinder 1990).

In a study by Blood and Phillips (1997) on media effects, the authors sought to explore the relationship between economic news coverage, consumer sentiment, the state of the economy and presidential popularity by using headlines related to the state of the economy from the NYT. Using a time-series analysis, the authors showed that an increase in negative economic headlines had "sub periods of priming effects" when it came to observing changes in presidential popularity (Blood and Phillips, 1997, pp.111). This means that during a certain point in the period of investigation, consequences of priming were observed.

In recent years, an increasing number of studies have been conducted on the media effect of stereotypes. Using newsletters, a study by Power et.al (1996) demonstrated that the negative exposure or stereotyping of African Americans increases the likelihood of individuals blaming African Americans collectively for violent incidents.

Similar findings were derived by Power et.al in the same paper when the group in question was women. Participants were asked to rate the credibility of Anita Hill, the attorney and academic who accused the US Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas of sexual harassment in 1991. Depending on the type of information presented to participants, the perception of Hill's credibility varied greatly, with stereotypical information resulting in more negative perceptions. However when the participants were presented with counter-stereotypical portrayal of women, they rated Hill with higher credibility in regards to her case against Thomas. Counter stereotypes are defined as notions that directly contradict the cultural stereotype that one has of a group (Power et.al, 1996; pp38).

The way a situation is presented, or "framed" also has a significant impact on individuals. An

influential study by Tversky & Kahneman (1981) demonstrated that “seemingly inconsequential changes in the formulation of choice problems caused significant shifts of preference”. In the paper, a series of examples show that the exact same choice, presented in different ways resulted in radically different outcomes.

Work done on framing in media is based on early works of Canadian sociologist Erving Goffman (Goffman 1974). In a brief description, Diane Elizabeth Kendall (2007) describes framing as the “process by which sense is made of events” (Kendall 2007, pp.7). Framing in the media can be loosely seen as an attempt by a journalist of the news agency/corporation to characterize an issue as he sees fit while simultaneously influencing the perception of the intended audience. While scholars have debated the application of framing theory across different disciplines, i.e Psychology and Sociology, (Scheufele, 1999), the general consensus maintains that the framing of stories has an impact on audience perception.

Sokoto Iyengar’s work on the effect of television on poverty is a seminal study (Iyengar 1990, 1994) in the field of media framing. Iyengar shows that participants exposed to “episodic” framing – media reports concentrating on “particular victims” rather than issue at large – leads to attributing less responsibility on the state and more the individual (Iyengar, 1990, pp.21). Similarly, “thematic” framing, where poverty was shown as a “collective outcome” and portrayed in a general abstract manner (e.g. poverty rates), the participants in the study were more likely to hold the government responsible for poverty related outcomes. Other framing analysis studies on high value issues such as abortion (Simon and Jerit, 2007), and government spending (Jacoby, 2000) have shown that the presentation of an issue has an impact on the public or an individual reading a story.

Similarly, in a study by Domke et.al (1999), the authors showed that media framing of the US immigration issue had a strong correlation with the participant’s evaluation of Hispanics. In the study, attribution of racial stereotypes to Hispanics was hardly found when the issue of immigration in newspaper articles was framed as an issue of human rights. In contrast, a material frame that portrayed immigration as being linked to a worsening US economy or increasing crime or poverty led to Hispanics being viewed as violent (Domke et.al, 1999, pp.585, 587, 590).

Sentiment Analysis

At the heart of our quantitative analysis lies the concept that words can have attributes in addition to their definition - the “sentiment” associated with a word. This is a natural phenomenon and readily understood by anyone who can appreciate the malleability of language. For instance, a phrase such as “stock market plunge causes devastating losses and panic” is clearly contextually more negative than the phrase “stock index decreases as a result of market correction”. While both phrases address the same subject, a reader would be able to clearly discern that the former is far more emotive and laden with negative sentiment than the latter.

Hence, sentiments can range from being “negative”, “neutral” and even “positive” and a dictionary has been developed to assign such values. This enables one to apply “sentiment analysis” to a piece of text by attributing a particular value to words.

Sentiment analysis is an established methodology for examining the tone of a given text. While it is usually deployed by marketers or companies to understand product reception or reputational risk (Bort, 2012), it has also been used to analyze sentiment in news (Schumaker, Zhang, Huang & Chen, 2012). Increasingly it has being applied to social media platforms such as Twitter to detect

influence (Bae & Lee, 2012). Traditionally, this was often a laborious, manual exercise, requiring a review of a limited amount of textual information by hand. However, in recent years the ability to source large data sets and run queries on these sets have improved considerably – allowing for richer textual analysis spread over much larger volumes of data.

Results

Premise

This paper began with an assumption: news within the western mainstream media contains an ideological discourse; a systematic bias that shapes the narrative around Islam and Muslims with violence, and holds both collectively responsible for it. In order to investigate this bias, we decided to examine the nature of news headlines in a leading western media outlet. For reasons elaborated in greater detail below, we selected the New York Times to explore this observation.

We believe the best way to answer the question of association was by undertaking a quantitative analysis. What follows is an explanation of the corpus used for our enquiry; the general sentiment of the content in which the words Islam and Muslim are mentioned, and finally an exploration of the words that were most frequently used in conjunction with Islam/Muslim in NYT headlines.

The Corpus

Our database consists of 2,667,700 articles published in the NYT print and online editions between January 1st 1990 and December 31st 2014. This large body of data covers more than two decades worth of news reporting and includes articles written by the NYT, but also the Associated Press, Reuters and many other news organizations. We obtained the data via the NYT's open Article Search API protocol which provides metadata for all its articles. The content specifically analyzed was headlines. Headlines have been shown in several studies to leave a strong impression on the reader (Geer and Kahn, 1993). Considering the space taken by news headlines, they tend to play an important part in the framing of news items in order to create meaning and perception for the audience (Van Dijk, 1988).

There are a number of reasons that the NYT was selected as a proxy for western mainstream media as whole; foremost among them is the fact that the NYT is the only news

organization to provide their information openly. If the Wall Street Journal or Washington Post did the same, we would have included their content in our analysis as well. That being said, the openness of the NYT is reflective of why they are considered the United States' premier "newspaper of record".

In its role as the "newspaper of record", the NYT is often viewed as an authoritative source of analysis and commentary, fulfilling its mission of publishing, "All the news that's fit to print". The choice of the stories published by the NYT, its editorials, the opinions selected for publication by the paper are reflective of the most influential spectrum of American political debate; such as the views held by government officials, as well as other political and business elites (see for example, Golan, 2006).

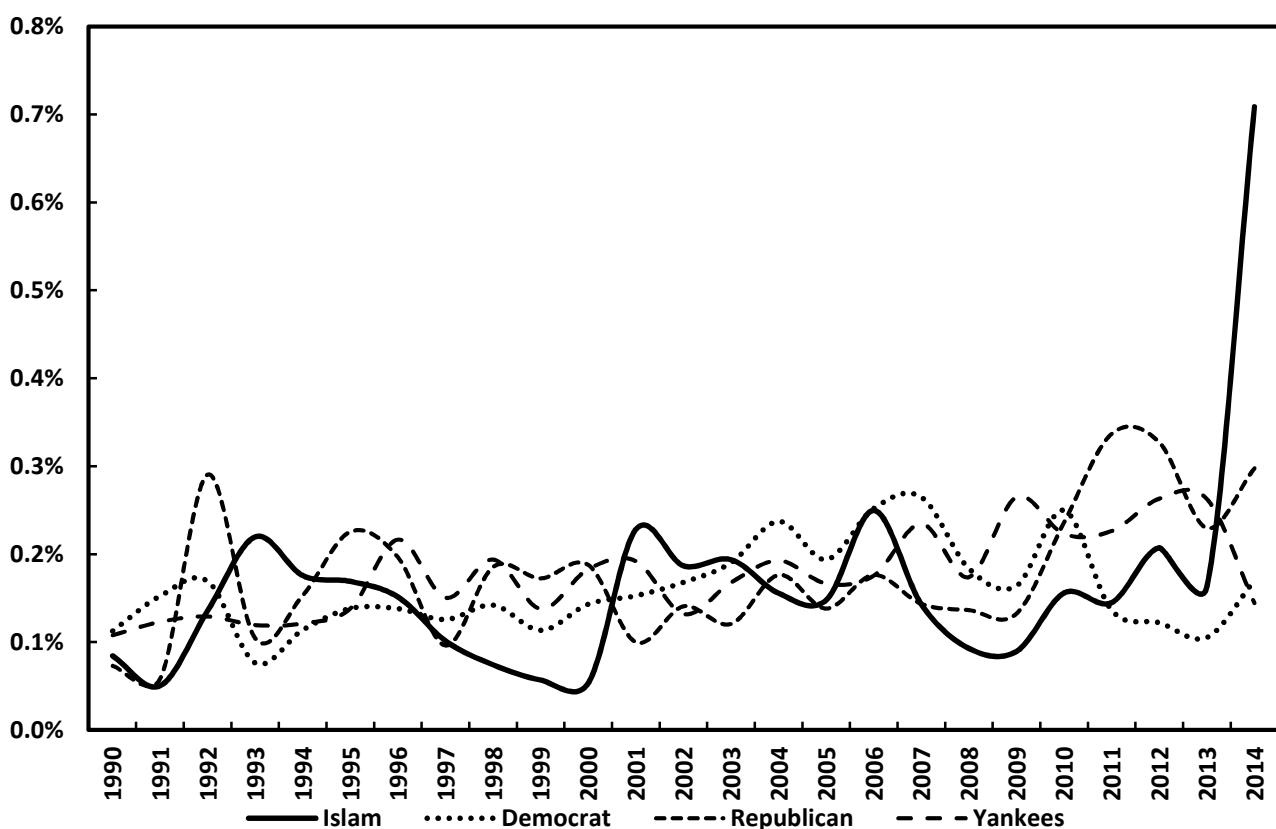
Although it is also published internationally, in the context of the United States, the NYT is a leading newspaper in terms of circulation. According to its annual 10-K disclosures to the Securities and Exchange Commission (2015): "The Times had the largest daily and Sunday

circulation of all seven-day newspapers in the United States for the six-month period ended September 30, 2014, according to data collected by the Alliance for Audited Media ('AAM'), an independent agency that audits circulation of most U.S. newspapers and magazines."

This translates into a weekday circulation of approximately 648,900, and Sunday circulation of 1,185,400. Digital only subscriptions stood at 910,000, while it was estimated that the NYTimes.com website received 31 million unique visitors a month in the United States.

Volume and Sentiment of Articles Mentioning "Islam" or "Muslim"

Figure 1 – Volume of mentions as a percentage of total articles for Islam/Muslims, compared to mentions of "Democrats", "Republicans" and the "Yankees" within the headlines of the NYT:

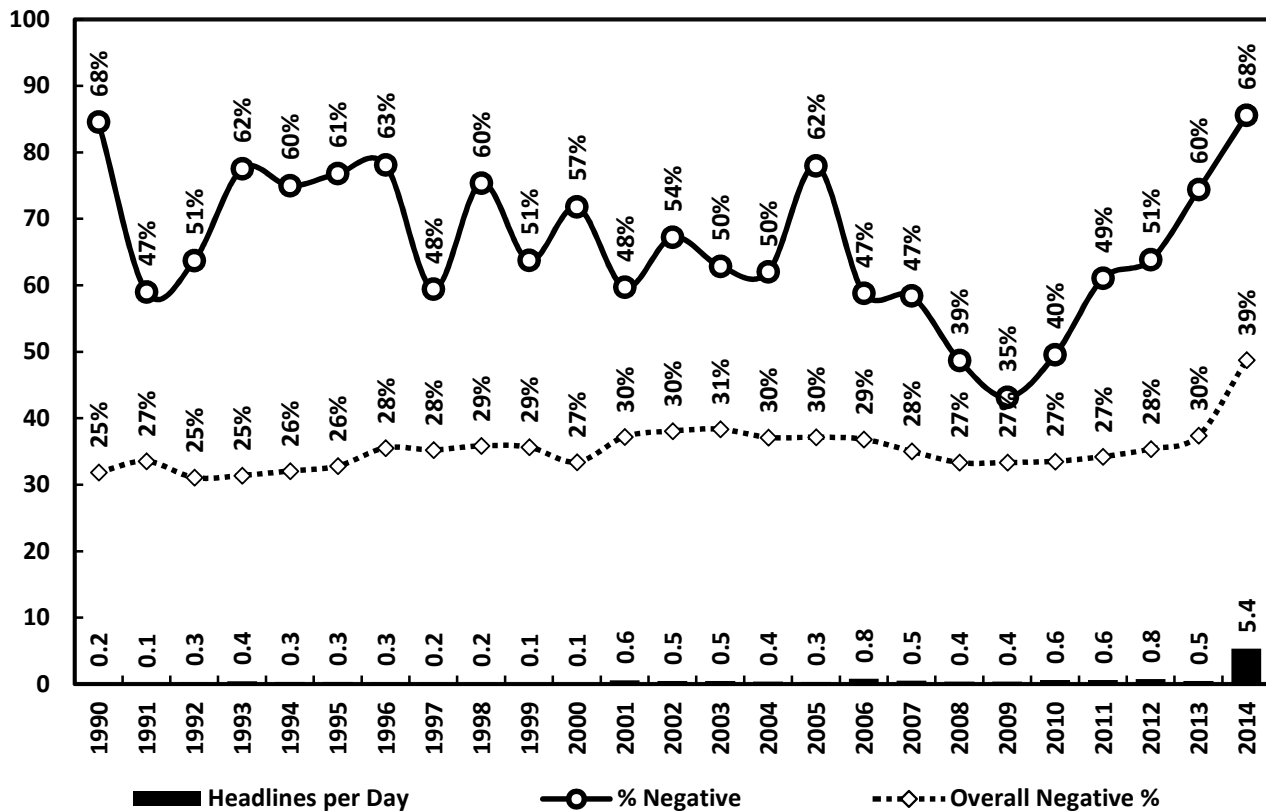


Based on the figure, Islam/Muslims is mentioned with the same general frequency as one of the most popular sports teams in New York (the Yankees) as well as the two main political parties in the American political system, the Republicans and Democrats. As

such, our data demonstrates that the word Islam, Muslim and its derivatives appear with reasonable regularity in the context of news headlines, and that it is not a topic which is underrepresented in the corpus.

The Prevalence of Negative Language

Figure 2 – Percentage of negative headlines containing the words Islam/Muslim and its derivatives.



In analyzing the data contained within the NYT database, a list of 7,259 words was drawn up using a list of positive and negative words derived from a list used to analyse web-based user opinions. This list was then paired with a “Violence Vocabulary” (Violence Vocabulary, 2015). The subsequent process of refining and tailoring the list towards specifically classifying newspaper headlines was undertaken manually.

Queries were subsequently run to identify what was the percentage of “negative” language associated with the word Islam or Muslims in a particular headline; how this contrasted with the overall “negative” word sentiment found in the NYT in general; and the

number of headlines that were associated with Islam on a daily basis.

The results are striking. In the Figure 2, not once during the entire period under review did the negative sentiment associated with Islam dip below the aggregate negative sentiment for all headlines in the paper - it remained substantially higher. In fact, the negativity associated with Islam has remained consistent, and has been increasing markedly after a lull in the 2008 – 2009 period.

Over the same period of time, in Figure 2, Islam also went from appearing in a NYT headlines once every five days in 1990, to about once every two days after September 11th. This can be seen in the black bars in figure 2. Notably,

since 9/11 the increase in headlines per day has been enduring and pronounced, and has increased in 2014 owing likely to the massive coverage associated with Daesh, the so called “Islamic State” in Syria and Iraq. While the average sentiment exhibits some oscillation, probably in response to changing political dynamics, it remains well above the NYT average in all years.

Benchmarking

To put the sentiment results of Islam into context, we applied the same analysis to a

multitude of nouns. The likes of “Christian” and “Judaism” were included to serve as religious equivalents; while others such as “Democrat”, “Republican”, “Liberal” and “Conservative” represent concepts and groups of people with a political connotation. A noun like the Yankees was included since it represents a beloved baseball team hailing from the same city as the NYT. Lastly, “Alcohol”, “Cancer” and “Cocaine” represent things that are objectively destructive and therefore should have a high negative sentiment.

Figure 3 – Percentage headlines with an overall positive score

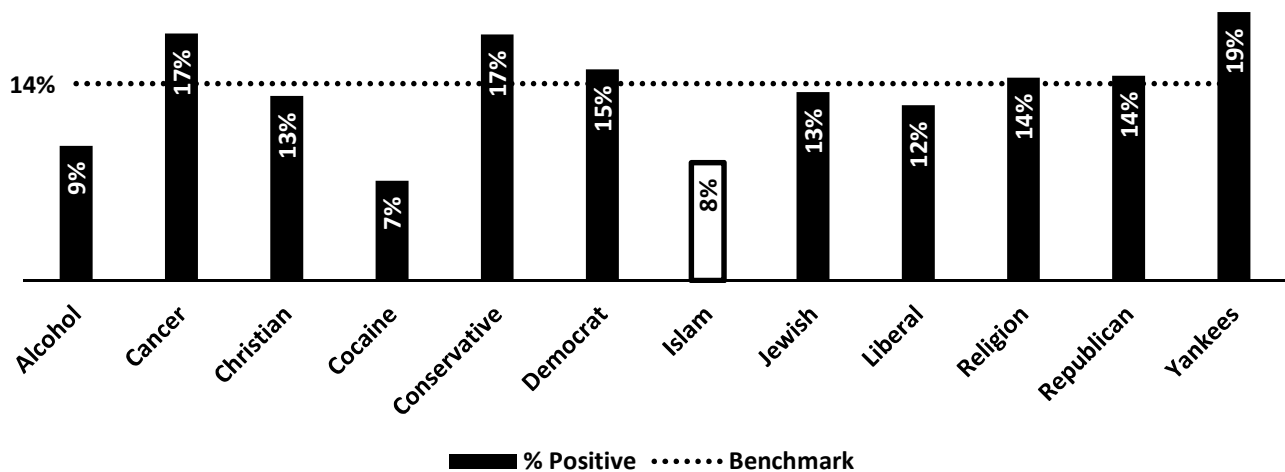
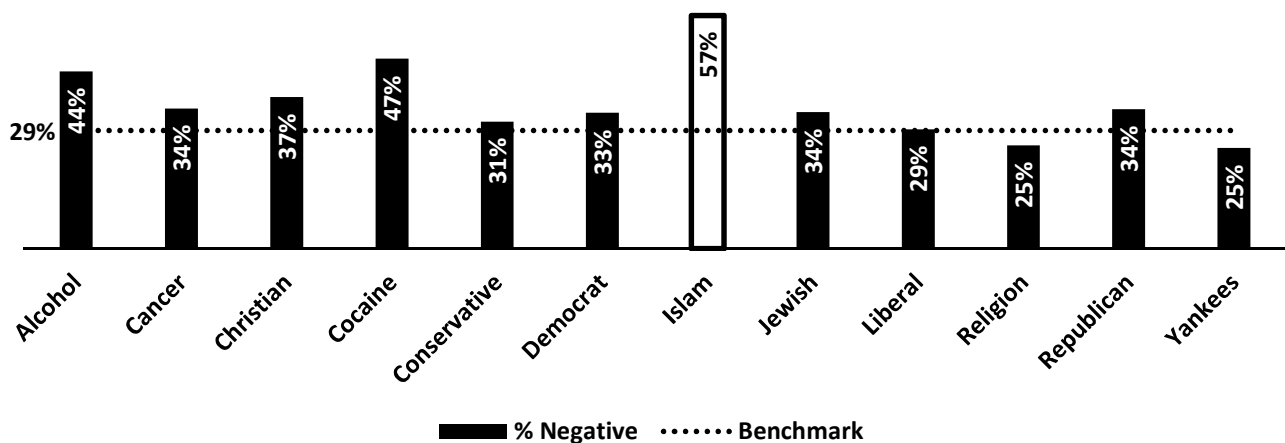


Figure 4 – Percentage headlines with an overall negative score



The benchmark of 29% seen in figure 4 represents the aggregate percentage of negative sentiment for headlines in the entire NYT corpus. While most of the terms float slightly above the benchmark, Islam stands out as the term with the highest negative sentiment among the group; beating out both alcohol and cocaine (Figure 4). Similarly, Islam is second from the bottom (with an 8% average positive sentiment rating) in headlines with positive sentiment (Figure 3). Only cocaine has a lower positive sentiment percentage at 7%.

In effect, the results demonstrate that any NYT headline focusing on Islam or Muslims will have an overwhelming tendency to be negative, in spite of the fact that both terms should be more akin to other “political” nouns such as Democrat or Republican. Instead, they exhibit more negative sentiment than cancer and cocaine – terms often associated with health risks, disease, poverty or drug related violence.

The Words Associated with Islam in the Headlines

In addition to examining the sentiment associated with Islam we also examined the actual frequency of the words that were found with it in headlines. The results for the top 25 terms are as follows:

- As a result of the rise of the Daesh (Islamic State in Syria and Iraq), the word “state” has become the most common term associated with Islam.
- Also noteworthy is the prevalence of the word “militants”. Essentially, 1 out of 25 headlines with Islam/Muslims contains the word militant. The two terms appear together 70 times more than what random statistical probability would dictate-the “lift”.
- The majority of the words associated with Islam exhibit the following – either they have overtly political connotations

(State, Group, Rebels); are linked to the Middle East (Egypt, Syria, Turkey); or have associations with violence (militants, attack, strike).

Table 1 – Top 25 words associated with Islam & Muslim

Word	Score	Frequency	Confidence	Lift
State	0	985	18%	NA
Against	0	248	5%	NA
Group	0	239	4%	NA
Militants	-1	237	4%	69.5
With	0	221	4%	NA
World	0	220	4%	NA
Says	0	218	4%	NA
Egypt	0	195	4%	NA
Syria	0	194	4%	NA
From	0	183	3%	NA
Iraq	0	176	3%	NA
Over	0	152	3%	NA
Leader	0	151	3%	NA
Briefing	0	137	3%	NA
Fight	-1	134	2%	7.7
Anti	-1	128	2%	18.2
Killed	-1	114	2%	6.5
Obama	0	110	2%	NA
Police	0	109	2%	NA
Turkey	0	108	2%	NA
Attack	-1	105	2%	7.9
After	0	105	2%	NA
Strikes	-1	98	2%	20.5
Rebels	-1	93	2%	14.6
Attacks	-1	93	2%	12.1

Tying It All Together

The negative sentiment dispersion seen in figure 4 and the list of terms associated with Islam/Muslims in table 1 can be examined in the context of recent history. As previously

discussed, during the period under review and particularly after September 11, 2001 the United States has been deeply engaged with the Muslim world in the form of military conflicts; the latest being the Global War on Terror. However, the underlying complexities of these wars are often difficult to summarize leading to a particular reliance on tropes of violence and conflict to convey a simplified analysis in the format of news.

The danger is that this becomes a circular process whereby political conflicts continue to define the perceptions of Islam and Muslims. By eliminating nuance, legitimate threats will always be misdiagnosed as existential threats and conflated as the same as Muslims in general – for instance that all or most, Muslims are Daesh sympathizers and therefore pose a unique threat to the West.

This can even lead to poor policy decisions as was noted by John Mueller and Mark G. Stewart (2010). Writing in *Foreign Affairs*, the authors write how the actual fatalities associated with terrorism in the United States are quite low, particularly when measured by the large sums dedicated to national security.

The authors contextualize this utilizing US law, where an actual legally defined threshold exists for determining the acceptable rate of fatalities. This is the chance per year that someone would die due to causes such as vapor inhalation and is set at 1 in 40,000; which originates from a 1980 Supreme Court decision. Fatalities above this limit are deemed “de manifestis”, meaning “of obvious or evident concern”.

The authors concluded that, “As a hazard to human life in the United States, or in virtually any country outside of a war zone, terrorism under present conditions presents a threat that is hardly existential”. Indeed, they calculate that the rate of terrorism would have to increase astronomically, by 35 fold, in the

United States to meet the minimum threshold of being considered an “unacceptable risk” under current risk metrics.

Mueller and Stewart point out that in order to claim that the reason the rate is so low is due to the success of costly security policies, it would need to be demonstrated that the casualties of such plots would have exceeded the 1 in 40,000 threshold. Based on the nature of the plots disrupted, they would not have met the criteria of being deemed unacceptable by “conventional standards”.

Table 2 – Fatality rates

Cause	Deaths per 100,000
Cancer	91.1
Alcohol	1.5
Drug Abuse	1.3
Violent Acts by Self-identified Jihadist groups	0.1

This same point can be derived by reviewing a select list of major causes of fatality (table 2). Despite causing more fatalities than violent acts by Jihadist groups, the negative sentiment for alcohol and cancer remains significantly below (figure 4) the sentiment shown in headlines for Islam and Muslims (seen in figure 4).

This is particularly striking when one considers that the fatalities classified as being associated with Jihadist groups in the Global Terrorism Database are highly contentious. Scholars in the field of religion (Cavanaugh, 2009) and in other academic areas (Pape, 2005) have repeatedly made the case that Islam as a religion has little to do with the justification for violence, which tend to be mainly political. Arguably, therefore, the rate of 0.1 deaths per 100,000 is an exaggeration.

Conclusion

The idea that the mainstream media portrays Islam in a negative light is not new and has been observed in other studies (Akbarzadeh and Smith, 2005; Rababah, 2015). However, our study is unique in terms of both the sheer volume of data that has been analyzed and the period that is covered by our data (over two decades).

In using the NYT (one of the most widely read newspapers in the United States) as a proxy for the wider media, our study suggests that the tendency to utilize negative language to discuss Islam and Muslims is likely to distort public opinion. This is not to say that the NYT intentionally associates Islam and Muslim with negative language; however, such language does tend to promote the idea that Islam and its adherents are culpable for the violent actions of a few. This, we argue, leads to an ahistorical understanding of critical events by substituting complex historical processes with simple narratives rooted in conflict and violence.

This sentiment was recently echoed by some Western governments (Martison, 2015; Taylor, 2014) regarding the media's use of the term "Islamic State". It was feared that by using this term it would give legitimacy to the terror group and affirm their contention that they were both Islamic and a state. 120 members of the UK parliament submitted a petition to the BBC to withdraw the use of the term, a plea the news service rejected.

With the concurrent rise in invasions of Muslim countries and drone campaigns following in the aftermath, it is of little surprise that the press continues to cover Islam through the lens of "militants" and "strikes", some of the most common words associated with Islam, as indicated in this study (see table 1). The media's role in cooperating with the government during times of war is likely to

contribute to the negative associations one finds with Muslims and Islam in the NYT.

The negative language employed with respect to Muslims and Islam has tangible policy implications, potentially helping promote policies that would be normally rejected by the electorate. In a study by Anderson, Brinson and Stohl (2012) on media and Muslims, that used priming techniques, showed that negative news about Muslims was more likely to get the participants in the study to approve restrictions on civil liberties for Muslims.

This use of negative language deserves to be critiqued. Muslims constitute a diverse population stretching from Morocco to Indonesia and beyond. The Muslim experience is not limited to stories of violence but one that has a long history of contribution to all facets of human civilization. In continuing to report Muslims and Islam with issues such as militancy or wars, the media helps foster a mindset that holds Muslims collectively responsible for the actions of a few. This has understandably increased anxiety among Muslim citizens of the West, who are themselves now routinely subject to increased scrutiny including racial profiling and unlawful arrest (Amer and Hovey, 2012).

Similarly, American led wars in Muslim nations have helped to trivialize the basic human dignity of Muslims abroad. The Obama establishment's drone operations have often been referred to as a campaign against militants and terrorists in areas where civilians

have been reported to be the main casualties of these strikes. It is telling that close to 65% of Americans support the drone campaigns, revealing the success of the government in winning support for its cause, (Gallup 2013). The mainstream media has done little to challenge these assertions, even mirroring the language utilized by “official” government sources (Intercept, 2014).

Limitations and future research

While our study provides strong evidence for the problematic portrayal of Islam and Muslims in the mainstream media, our work is not without limitations. Our study’s research was restricted to one publication, the New York Times. A more diverse set of publications would have helped us test if sentiment with respect to Islam varies by region, or even country.

Our findings can be further reinforced by field experiments [that includes non-Muslim participants, similar to Andersen et.al, (2011)]. Such studies could explore whether mainstream news items on Islam/Muslims help promote attribution of responsibility to the religion and its adherents.

A longstanding contention of academics and analysts of the media bias towards Islam and Muslims is the racialization of Muslims in the mainstream press (Joseph and Wong, 2008). Research has shown that often Muslims are conflated with their racial identities, thereby increasing the ostracization of certain racial groups. The relationship between language and this process of racialization could be a fruitful avenue of further inquiry.

Recommendations

Going forward, we suggest a number of steps that could potentially help represent Islam/Muslims in a more accurate way. These mainly concern media organizations, educators and Muslim organizations.

Media organizations can take steps to educate their reporters and editors on Muslim sensitivities and make them more aware of a wide range of research conducted on issues concerning Islam/Muslim domestically and abroad. Sources from local and foreign Muslim communities should be given priority to give a more grassroots understanding of the issues at hand. Hiring Muslims in areas of reporting, editing and opinion making when discussing Islam related topics could prove useful.

Changes in the classroom at the high school and university level could help better educate students on Islam/Muslims. This can include more diverse media sources in the curriculum to see how different countries and journalists of different background report on the topics related to Muslims. Students can be encouraged to research multiple perspectives, positive and negative, to help widen the debate surrounding Islam and Muslims. Students should also be taught the relationship that the mainstream press has with world events and how news framing of events occurs.

Muslim organizations can also play an important role in combating the way Muslims

are framed in the mainstream media. This can include media outreach initiatives such as inviting media personalities to make them aware of the work being done at the grassroots level related to Muslims domestically and abroad.

Steps can also be taken to highlight the problems with the language associated with Muslims and Islam in the mainstream press; how the choice of words can be corrected to reflect a more accurate portrayal as it relates to a group or event.

Muslim organizations can also take steps to better educate their own media teams on how to best tackle media stereotypes. This could include counter arguments or viewpoints that are based on good research and evidence gathered from within Muslim communities.

In light of the previous recommendation, Muslims organizations can help endorse or initiate more research based projects that counter some of the popular opinions that come across in the media about Muslims and Islam as well making an effort to publically disseminate any findings.

Appendix: Methodology

Sentiment Analysis

Each word within a headline was scored for positive or negative sentiment against a dictionary of 7,259 words. This dictionary was compiled using a list of positive and negative words that was assembled by Professors Minqing Hu and Bing Liu at the University of Illinois (Liu, B., Hu, M., & Cheng, J., 2005). It was then paired with a "Violence Vocabulary" (Violence Vocabulary, 2015) that was specifically added to include adjectives describing violence not found in the original list. The subsequent process of refining and tailoring the list towards specifically classifying newspaper headlines was undertaken manually.

The overall sentiment of a headline was determined by the aggregate score, if the words in a headline added up to below zero, it was deemed negative while aggregates above zero were positive and equal to zero were neutral. It is important to note that words with three characters or below were discounted from the scoring, this was done in order to efficiently run queries since the inclusion of words such as "a", "and", "as" and "the" represent the bulk of words used.

Below is an example of a NYT headline and how its sentiment score would be calculated:

Example Headline

"An Evening Prayer as Muslims Celebrate Ramadan" (An Evening Prayer, 1992)

The words "an" and "as" are eliminated and each remaining word is isolated like so:

- Evening
- Prayer
- Muslims
- Celebrate
- Ramadan

The sentiment dictionary is then referenced for each word in the list. If a word is not found, it is assigned a zero value.

- Evening = Not found, 0
- Prayer = Not found, 0
- Muslims = Not found, 0
- Celebrate = Found, +1
- Ramadan = Not found, 0

The scores for each word are then summed up in order to assign a sentiment to the entire headline.

$0 + 0 + 0 + 1 + 0 = 1$, Positive

The method of scoring each word in isolation is more effective for newspaper headlines than popular speech and email / social media, due to the directness of language and the lack of sarcasm and slang. This is because sentiment analysis calculations fail to detect and incorporate the effect of sarcasm or slang.

Bibliography

1. "An Evening Prayer as Muslims Celebrate Ramadan" (1992). NYT. Retrieved November 13, 2015 from <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/03/13/world/an-evening-prayer-as-muslims-celebrate-ramadan.html>
2. Akbarzadeh, S., & Smith, B. (2005). The representation of Islam and Muslims in the media. *School of Political and Social Inquiry*.
3. Amer, M. M., & Hovey, J. D. (2012). Anxiety and depression in a post-September 11 sample of Arabs in the USA. *Social psychiatry and psychiatric epidemiology*, 47(3), 409-418.
4. Ancheta, A. N. (2006). *Race, Rights, and the Asian American Experience: Race, Rights, and the Asian American Experience*. Rutgers University Press.
5. Andersen, N. C., Brinson, M., & Stohl, M. (2012). On-screen Muslims: Media priming and consequences for public policy. *Journal of Arab & Muslim Media Research*, 4(2-3), 203-221.
6. Bae, Y., & Lee, H. (2012). Sentiment analysis of Twitter audiences: Measuring the positive or negative influence of popular twitterers. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 63(12), 2521-2535.
7. Bernays, E., & Miller, M. (2005). *Propaganda*. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Ig Pub.
8. Blood, D. J., & Phillips, P. C. (1997). Economic headline news on the agenda: New approaches to understanding causes and effects. *Communication and democracy: Exploring the intellectual frontiers in agenda-setting theory*, 97-113.
9. Bort, J. (2012). "How Starbucks And Other Companies Use Complex Math Algorithms To Read Your Feelings Online". *Business Insider*. Retrieved November 17, 2015 from <http://www.businessinsider.com/twitter-facebook-monitoring-2012-11>
10. Cavanaugh, W. T. (2009). *The myth of religious violence: Secular ideology and the roots of modern conflict*. Oxford University Press.
11. Chesterman, S. (2001). *Just war or just peace?* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
12. Chomsky, N. (2013). "Noam Chomsky: My Visit to Gaza, the World's Largest Open-Air Prison". *Truthout*. Retrieved September 23rd 2015. <http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/12635-noam-chomsky-my-visit-to-gaza-the-worlds-largest-open-air-prison>
13. Costigliola, F. (2000). The Creation of Memory and Myth: Stalin's 1946 Election Speech and the Soviet Threat." In M.Medhurst and H.Brand (Eds.), *Critical Reflections on the Cold War: Linking Rhetoric and History* (pp.38-54). College Station: Texas A&M Press
14. Domke, D., McCoy, K., & Torres, M. (1999). News media, racial perceptions, and political cognition. *Communication Research*, 26(5), 570-607.
15. Edawrds, D. (2015). "WATCH: CNN anchors berate innocent Paris Muslim because he won't 'accept responsibility' for attack". Raw Story. Retrieved November 17, 2015, from

- <http://www.rawstory.com/2015/11/watch-cnn-anchors-berate-innocent-paris-muslim-because-he-wont-accept-responsibility-for-attack/>
16. FAIR (2003). "Some Critical Media Voices Face Censorship". Retrieved 27 June 2015, from <http://fair.org/press-release/some-critical-media-voices-face-censorship/>
 17. Friedman, T. (2001). "Foreign Affairs; The Real War". *The New York Times*. Retrieved 26 June 2015, from <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/11/27/opinion/foreign-affairs-the-real-war.html>
 18. Geer, J. G., & Kahn, K. F. (1993). Grabbing attention: An experimental investigation of headlines during campaigns. *Political Communication*, 10(2), 175-191.
 19. Gilovich, T., Griffin, D., & Kahneman, D. (2002). *Heuristics and biases*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press. pp. 49-81.
 20. Golan, G. (2006). Inter-media agenda setting and global news coverage. *Journalism Studies*, 7(2), 323-333. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14616700500533643>
 21. Greenwald, G (2014). "On Media Outlets That Continue to Describe Unknown Drone Victims As "Militants"". *The Intercept*. Retrieved 23 September 2015.
'<https://theintercept.com/2014/11/18/media-outlets-continue-describe-unknown-drone-victims-militants/>
 22. Griffith, R. (2007). *Cram 101 textbook outlines to accompany, Major problems in American history since 1945, Griffith & Baker, 2nd edition*. Ventura, CA: Academic Internet.
 23. Elver, H. (2012). Racializing Islam before and After 9/11: From Melting Pot to Islamophobia. *Transnat'l L. & Contemp. Probs.*, 21, 119-174.
 24. Hoey, M. (2005). *Lexical priming*. London: Routledge.
 25. Iyengar, S. (1990). Framing responsibility for political issues: The case of poverty. *Political behavior*, 12(1), 19-40.
 26. Iyengar, S., & Kinder, D. (1987). *News that matters: Television and public opinion*. Chicago: University of Chicago.
 27. Jacoby, W. G. (2000). Issue framing and public opinion on government spending. *American Journal of Political Science*, 750-767.
 28. Khan, FW., (2004). "Covering Islam: How The Media And The Experts Determine How We See The Rest Of The World - A Critical Review (Fareed Khan)". *Academia*. Retrieved November 18, 2015 from http://www.academia.edu/4382940/Covering_Islam_How_The_Media_And_The_Experts_Determine_How_We_See_The_Rest_Of_The_World_-_A_Critical_Review_Fareed_Khan_
 29. Kendall, D. E. (2011). *Framing class: Media representations of wealth and poverty in America*. Rowman & Littlefield.
 30. Kirkpatrick, D. (2015). "Raising Questions Within Islam After France Shooting". *The New York Times*. Retrieved 23 September 2015, from

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/09/world/europe/raising-questions-within-islam-after-france-shooting.html? r=0>

31. Krosnick, J. A., & Kinder, D. R. (1990). Altering the foundations of support for the president through priming. *American Political Science Review*, 84(02), 497-512.
32. Kumar, D. (2006). Media, War, and Propaganda: Strategies of Information Management During the 2003 Iraq War. *Communication And Critical/Cultural Studies*, 3(1), 48-69.
33. Kumar, D. (2012). *Islamophobia and the politics of empire*. Chicago, Ill.: Haymarket Books.
34. Lean, N. C. (2012). *The Islamophobia industry: how the right manufactures fear of Muslims*. Pluto Press.
35. Liu, B., Hu, M., & Cheng, J. (2005, May). Opinion observer: analyzing and comparing opinions on the web. In *Proceedings of the 14th international conference on World Wide Web* (pp. 342-351). ACM.
36. Martison, J (2015). "BBC To Review Use of Islamic State After MPs Protest Against Term". *Gaurdian*. Retrieved November 13th 2015 from <http://www.theguardian.com/media/2015/jun/29/bbc-to-review-use-of-islamic-state-after-mps-protest-against-term>
37. "Media March to War" (2001). *FAIR*. Retrieved 26 June 2015, from <http://fair.org/press-release/media-march-to-war/>
38. Mendelsohn, M. (1994). The media's persuasive effects: The priming of leadership in the 1988 Canadian election. *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique*, 27(1), 81-97.
39. Miller, D. (2003). *Tell me lies: Propaganda and media distortion in the attack on Iraq*. Pluto Press.
40. Mueller, J., & Stewart, M. G. (2010). Hardly Existential: Thinking Rationally About Terrorism. *Foreign Affairs*.
41. Newport, F ; Brown, A (2013). "In U.S., 65% Support Drone Attacks on Terrorists Abroad". *Gallup* .Retrived 23 September 2015. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/161474/support-drone-attacks-terrorists-abroad.aspx>
42. Orwell, G. (2015). "George Orwell: Politics and the English Language". *Orwell.ru*. Retrieved 23 September 2015, from http://www.orwell.ru/library/essays/politics/english/e_polit/
43. Pan, Z., & Kosicki, G. M. (1997). Priming and media impact on the evaluations of the president's performance. *Communication Research*, 24(1), 3-30.
44. Pape, R. (2005). Dying to win: The strategic logic of suicide terrorism. *Random House*.
45. Parry-Giles, Shawn J. (2002) "Militarizing America's Propaganda Program, 1945-1955." In M.Medhurst and H. Brands. *Critical Reflections on the Cold War: Linking Rhetoric and History*" (pp. 95-133). College Station: Texas A&M Press.

46. Power, J. G., Murphy, S. T., & Coover, G. (1996). Priming Prejudice How Stereotypes and Counter-Stereotypes Influence Attribution of Responsibility and Credibility among Ingroups and Outgroups. *Human communication research*, 23(1), 36-58.
47. Rababah, A. (2015). Corpus Linguistic Analysis of the Connotative Meaning of Some Terms Used in the Context of 'The War on Terror'. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 5(1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v5n1p113>
48. Roskos-Ewoldsen, D. R., Roskos-Ewoldsen, B., & Carpentier, F. R. D. (2009). Media priming: An Updated Synthesis. In *Media effects: Advances in theory and research*, 3rd edition, 74-93.
49. Sbardellati, J., & Shaw, T. (2003). Booting a Tramp: Charlie Chaplin, the FBI, and the Construction of the Subversive Image in Red Scare America. *Pacific Historical Review*, 72(4), 495-530.
50. Scheufele, D. A. (1999). Framing as a theory of media effects. *Journal of communication*, 49(1), 103-122.
51. Schumaker, R. P., Zhang, Y., Huang, C. N., & Chen, H. (2012). Evaluating sentiment in financial news articles. *Decision Support Systems*, 53(3), 458-464.
52. Securities and Exchange Commission (2015). "2014 Form 10-K". Retrieved 23 September 2015, from <http://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/71691/000007169115000004/a2014form10-k.htm>
53. Taylor, A. (2014). "France is ditching the Islamic State Name and replacing it with a label the group Hates". *Washington Post*. Retrieved November 13th 2015 from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2014/09/17/france-is-ditching-the-islamic-state-name-and-replacing-it-with-a-label-the-group-hates/>
54. "Violence Vocabulary". *My Vocabulary*. Retrieved November 13th 2015, <https://www.myvocabulary.com/word-list/violence-vocabulary/>
55. Von Baldegg, Kasia Cieplak-Mayr (2011). "WWII: U.S. Office of War Information Explains 'Japanese Relocation' (1943)". *Atlantic*. Retrieved November 13th 2015, <http://www.theatlantic.com/video/archive/2011/08/wwii-us-office-of-war-information-explains-japanese-relocation-1943/243900/>
56. Walsh, D. (2008). "Demolished by the Pakistan army: the frontier village punished for harbouring the Taliban". *The Guardian*. Retrieved 23 September 2015, from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/may/20/pakistan>
57. Wheeler, M., & Fiske, S. (2005). Controlling Racial Prejudice. *Psychological Science*, 16(1), 61. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.0956-7976.2005.00780.x>

Acknowledgments

This study would not have been completed without the generous support and expertise of some of the most foremost scholars, activists and journalists whose opinion and feedback was crucial, as well as our friends and family. We would like to thank Karine Walther, Professor at Georgetown University at the Doha campus in Qatar, whose feedback was exceptionally helpful in crafting this paper. We are also grateful to Imraan Siddiqi of the Council of American Islamic Relations (CAIR) – Arizona, Corey Saylor of CAIR Washington D.C and Hassan Shibly's of CAIR Florida for their generous advice and friendship throughout this process. Naheed Mustafa, a renowned Canadian journalist, provided us with comments and criticism that were crucial in helping us strengthen our paper further.

This case study would not be possible if it wasn't for Jai Setlur's immense skill and effort in creating the program used to extract all the data that we have analyzed in this paper. We can't thank Di Yan enough for his massive efforts in helping us make our paper marketable. Di was responsible for creating all the materials required for marketing our findings for which we are greatly indebted. Maryam Siddiqui's efforts at editing the paper and thorough review of our paper are greatly appreciated. For Quratul Ain Malick's generous

efforts in helping us create the logo for our website we are very grateful. We would also like to thank Hira Tahir for all her patience, tolerance and endless support throughout writing of this paper.

Finally, if it wasn't for the New York Times and its open data policy, this paper would have had no viable purpose. For this, and many other reasons, the New York Times is rightly hailed to be the "Newspaper of Record".