

Word Use and Placement Associating Arabs and Arab-Americans with Terrorism in the American Media

Siwar Bizri

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State
University in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

**Master of Arts
in
Political Science**

**Craig Leonard Brians, Chair
Antonio Y. Vazquez-Arroyo
Richard Shingles**

**November 16, 2007
Blacksburg, Virginia**

Keywords: Arab, Islam, New York Times, Stereotype, Terrorism, Word Association
Copyright 2007, Siwar Bizri

Word Use and Placement Associating Arabs and Arab-Americans with Terrorism in the American Media

Siwar Bizri

(ABSTRACT)

Terrorism and conflict is ongoing, and in today's world it appears to be increasing, however, numerous people have blamed the swell in violence on specific sources. In regards to September 11 and similar terrorist incidents, for example, it is quite easy for the media, as well as other sources, to place responsibility in the hands of a specific group or religion. In this case, Islam, Arabs or the Middle East region seems to be connected to these violent incidents. The reality of the situation may place responsibility in some sources within this region, however, an overgeneralization in regards to a diverse religion and culture may be occurring due to "overall, ideological judgments" by various entities including the news media. According to numerous perspectives, it has become possible for a few carefully chosen words within the media to trigger racially-driven prejudices and actions by agencies, institutions, and the public. Our language seems to be powerful enough to let a single phrase spin a news story into a national warning against a certain group. In other words, the power of association, in particular here between words and perceptions, allows the public to believe in their mind something that may or may not be true. In this case, various studies have shown the tendency for the public to associate Arabs with violence, particularly terrorism. The combination of negative media framing and common ethnic schemas of Arabs and Muslims have resulted in a long history of socialization and activation in the American and perhaps, wider culture. Therefore, this study will mainly focus on an assumed semantic implication of word associations in the media based on shared ideological and socially shared knowledge, rather than measure any explicit statements of racial and ethnic schemas.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	iv
INTRODUCTION.....	1
SECTION 1 The Creation of the Arab “Other”.....	8
The Terrorist Arab Frame.....	10
SECTION 2 The Power of Association.....	16
SECTION 3 In the Media.....	20
Framing the News.....	23
SECTION 4 Hypotheses.....	26
Methodology.....	27
SECTION 5 Results.....	31
Figure 1.....	33
Figure 2.....	33
CONCLUSION.....	36
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	42
APPENDIX I.....	52
Table 1.....	52
Table 2.....	53
APPENDIX II.....	54
Codebook.....	54
APPENDIX III.....	55
Code Sheet.....	55
CURRICULUM VITAE.....	56

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Percentage of Combined Word Searches.....	33
Figure 2. Occurrence of Arab or Islam in Same Paragraph as Terrorism.....	33
Table 1. Percentage of Articles Containing At Least One Reference to Terrorism and Arab/Islam.....	52
Table 2. Occurrence of Arab or Islam in Same Paragraph as Terrorism.....	53

INTRODUCTION

Within minutes of the massive blast that ripped through the Oklahoma City Federal Building on April 19, 1995, hundreds of media outlets around the country leapt to pen down their assumptions of the potential bombers. Those first crucial hours after the tragedy would help to reinforce the initial assumptions brimming in the minds of public and press alike. Media accounts immediately selected a vocabulary scattered with words and phrases alluding to Islamic and Arab fundamentalists (Nacos and Torres-Reyna 2003, 133; Shaheen 2003, 175). Middle Eastern terrorists were the first and only of those accused of the heinous act (Kuzma 2000, 95) fueling the forthcoming mental and verbal associations based merely on speculation linking a specific background to an atrocious incident (Moore 2007, 124). As time went on, news agencies and terrorism “experts” alleged that Middle Eastern fanatics seemed to be the most logical to implicate due to the similarity in their “terrorism” tactics and those used at the bomb site (Bender and Revah, 11). Many scholars thereafter believe that these immediate presumptions helped trigger a racial backlash, which some believe led to the abrupt arrest of a Jordanian-American man, as well as various other implications (Johnston 1995, 24).

Why were those of Middle Eastern origin the first implicated in the minds of the American public? The obvious answer typically evokes a simple word: terrorism. More specifically terrorism and conflict within the past few decades ravaging the majority of the Middle East, it seems, and various parts of the globe. Why, then, should one not point fingers at a group who seems to attract tension and controversy, let alone full-out

war? Because the various outlets of the media have tended to resort to a negative image of the Arab when trying to grasp the supposed reality of current world affairs (Mousa 1987, 102). The unlucky associations of Arabs and Muslims due to Orientalism, historical events, current international relations, and fringe members of the Arab community have led to an image the majority of Arabs would gladly cast aside (Said 1994, 334). Moreover, the general media is most likely gathering their information from the endless array of news and government reports describing the unending conflict of the Middle East. However, the reality of the situation, no matter how unintended or coincidental, places this ethnic group at the unlikable end of the ethnic stick.

Other explanations describing the tendency of this region, including its inhabitants and their descendents, to be prone to conflict are lacking. Several justifications, partly based on fact and partly on assumption, have surfaced to validate these assertions. An unfortunate history in that particular region of the world could be to blame, for example, however several other areas around the globe are home to revolutionary groups living in a tense, conflicted area (Hasian 2000, 47). Maybe the ending of the Cold War brought forth a new ideological enemy that seemed to threaten the democratic foundation of America (Huntington 1996; Karabell 1995, 37; Karim 2006, 117; Pintak 2006, 190). News of the actions of Islamic rebels all over the world continues to resound within the frames of our television sets and among the scripts of our newspapers. Yet the “clash of civilizations” has recently been discredited by many (Galtung 2002, 357), and to minimize such a complex and multifaceted issue to a binary problem seems ludicrous, especially in light of the numerous fresh perspectives coming

from various schools of thought on the current state of world affairs (Seib 2004, 73). Could those of Arab and Islamic descent then just be in the wrong place at a particularly bad time? In other words, is the placement of Arabs in the stigmatized “other” group nature’s way of saying, “history needs a new enemy and you meet all the qualifications?” Throughout the pages of history, numerous groups fought to the death for reasons typically surrounding the balance of power and the distribution of resources (Ross 1986, 172), although internal conflicts involving religion and ethnicity usually subjugated the actual reasons of discord. Yet, the above justifications still fall short of resolving the questions as to why all Arabs and Muslims have seemed to become associated with terrorism. What makes these groups seem more deserving of blame in the eyes of the public, press and political arena? History and circumstances may be placing these ethnicities in the way of the gun; however, is there a perpetuator of the cycle that feeds a particular image?

Specifically, the media is the most powerful tool of communication among the masses (McCombs 2004, 1; Ahmed 2006, 167; Harrison 2006, 14) therefore, is it logical to assume their partial responsibility in dispersing any information on the connections between an event and an ethnic group, in this case Middle Easterners, and terrorist events? News language, in particular, has a commanding signifying power in its representation of issues and events (Harrison 2006, 24). Has the media, then, unknowingly promoted stereotyping through implication and story framing? Or is it only the brush of history painting the image of the Arab? Moreover, is the media reflecting public opinion that helps perpetuate certain stereotypes or are they the actual instigator of

public sentiment? These are the central questions addressed in this thesis.

The extant literature suggests that it is possible for a few carefully chosen words within the media to trigger racially/ethnically-driven prejudices in public opinion. (Abraham and Appiah 2006, 184; Ottosen 1995, 98; Ramasubramanian 2005, 3; Van Dijk 1992, 100). Language seems to be powerful enough to let a single phrase spin a news story or stories into distorted, harmful national stereotyping of targeted groups (Shaheen 1985, 172). In other words, the power of association, in particular here between words and perceptions, allows the public to believe in its mind something that may or may not be true (Harb and Bessaiso 2006, 1064; Maki 2007, 320). In particular, various studies have shown the tendency for the public to associate Arabs with violence, particularly terrorism (Cainkar 2006, 251; Mousa 1987, 118; Said 1994, 285; Shaheen 2003, 176). It then becomes necessary to pinpoint the historical context of Arab associations with terrorism in order to track its progression and apex throughout history. Thus, this thesis seeks to strengthen, and resolve a generations-old question of why certain groups are stigmatized in the media in an effort to help curb or at least hamper the acceleration of stereotypes aimed at an ethnic group within America. Therefore increasing the public's understanding of Arabs and Arab-Americans, groups whom have been continuously misconstrued in public discourse, is the central objective of this study.

Building upon the question of the origin and perpetuator of Arab stereotypes, this study additionally probes the possibility of a stereotype transference. If Arabs can be stereotyped then why not their American counterparts? It seems only logical for a powerful and resilient label to transfer to its nearest relations (Shaheen 2003, 189). If

this transference is occurring then who or what is initiating this process? Is it possible that the media framing of stories could trigger an individual to believe two groups to be interchangeable in reference to certain characteristics, regardless of the extent of their assimilation? Arabs and Arab-Americans seem to have become transposable in a way that detaches each of their distinctiveness. Furthermore, for many, Islam, the Middle East and Arabs have also become interchangeable with each other as well as with the ideas of violence and terrorism (Naber 2000, 41) with this transposability tracing back to at least the Crusades in European thinking (Cainkar 2006, 260; Said 1994, xxviii). Hence, the association of Arab-Americans with Arabs who are already associated with terrorism may be leaving this American counterpart in a disagreeable position due to the possible reinforcement of racial values and attitudes by the media (Cainkar 2006, 247; Domke 1997, 1). Specifically could newspapers be a major participator in this process?

A main issue of this study, then, is not the problem of Arabs being associated with terrorism, which is another concern of this study, but the possible transfer of this disagreeable image to Arab-Americans and the role of the media in fostering the transference by failing to distinguish between the two when speaking of “Arabs”. Arab-Americans, although ethnically identical to their international counterparts, differ not only in their nationality, but also in their various beliefs, identities, values, and opinions (Naber 2000, 43; Salaita 2005, 150). This diverse American group then may have to answer to accusations that they should be as accountable for as their fellow American citizens. Furthermore, the difference between violence and terrorism becomes apparent, particular when agreeing upon a definition of each. In this case, the association of Arabs

with terrorism will be the focal point, due to the greater flexibility and difficulty in defining violence under various circumstances. Terrorism, however, can be agreed upon in its applicability to Arabs in the extended coverage of the Middle East and other international news.

It is essential to make clear at this point what this research study is not concentrating on and prematurely stifle whatever implications that may arise. The impending research, although focusing on the problem with the possible association of Arab-Americans to terrorism, in no way demeans the obvious difficulty all minority groups, such as Arabs in general, face when dealing with debasing stereotypes. The scope of the current research project only includes Arab Americans due to limitations of time and resources, although literature about other prejudiced minorities will inform this study. By focusing on a smaller component of a larger ethnic group, however, this study hopes to contribute to the larger field of minority research which aims to help stem the rise of stereotypes and simultaneously increase accurate information of misunderstood groups. Moreover, the study of Arabs and terrorism, as opposed to Islam and terrorism also is due to the limitations of time. Although connections of Islam and Arabs in general to terrorism will be analyzed in the New York Times, an extensive analysis of the entire religious and ethnic groups will not be undertaken.

Furthermore, this study is not an attack of the current state of media affairs. The general media, and in particular the news media, is treasured for its relatively objective and accurate reporting of important issues and events in a timely manner. Associations based on generalizations or speculation cannot be blamed on any one institution or group.

Much of the problem with inaccurate associations is based on historical contingencies. Furthermore, the unique nature in which the human mind works may create associations based on various factors, with the media playing only a minor part. This research study, therefore, aims merely to find the possibility of an unpleasant association between the images of “terrorism,” Arabs and Arab-Americans. There is no attempt to empirically establish the causes of the associations.

Section 1 will discuss the historical image of Arab and Arab-Americans and the possibility of a negative association with terrorism. **Section 2** will address the idea of cognitive association between words and perceptions and their formation. **Section 3** will cover the responsibility of the media in diffusing the associations between Arabs, Arab Americans and terrorism. **Section 4** discusses the research design utilized to analyze the New York Times articles pertaining to terrorism for the period before and after 9/11 in order to assess the amount of negative cognitive association in a major newspaper. **Section 5** will discuss the results of the research analysis. **Finally, the concluding remarks** will refer to the limitations and recommendations of this study whilst also providing an overview of the research.

This research project is designed with a goal of open debate and discussion to contribute to further needed research in the area of minority group studies, particularly Arab-Americans, and the effects of negative cognitive association on the targeted groups within the media. Although the scope of this project is not fully comprehensive in terms of the number of media agencies covered, the research generated attempts to analyze the designated measures through objective and exhaustive indicators.

The Creation of the Arab “Other”

The association of Arabs with terrorism is not a new phenomenon, specifically in the European world. One has only to go back centuries into history to understand the formations of enduring attitudes towards Arabs and the majority religion among Arabs, Islam (Ottosen 1995, 98).

The year is 1099 A.D. and the temples of Jerusalem are burning (Maalouf 1984, xiv). The crossroads of the world’s three major religions become the battlegrounds over land rights, religious supremacy and intolerance (Inayatullah and Blaney 2004, 204). Those who witnessed the actual events of the Crusader era cannot begin to grasp its far-reaching implications into the corners of history. The deep wounds will reverberate in history as victory to some, defeat to others and an endless well of hatred, stereotypes, and even a global shift in thinking in generations to come (Maalouf 1984, 264). Historically, the Crusades are believed to be based on a fundamental religious agenda, though in reality research supports the war’s basis in political and strategic reasons. In the era of the Crusades, the people of the Levantine, which included Christians, Jews and Muslims, fought the occupying forces of Western Christianity. And yet Islam and Christianity in their entirety seem to begin and never end in their struggle against one another. And although the Crusades are but one of a multitude of encounters between the followers of the two religions, it has subjugated almost all other perspectives, understandings, and feelings that otherwise may have flourished within each generation (Keyman 2004, 162; Maalouf 1984, 265). At this time, Arabs become even more intertwined with their Islamic counterparts, regardless of religious or ethnic diversity within each respective

group, more than ever before. However, any stereotypes of Islam that have been formed, good or bad, have become forever etched in the minds of the Western world as coinciding with those of Arabs. Any long lasting negative association on the part of Arabs with Islam and vice versa seems to have begun in this time and have lasted into the 21st century (Naber 2000, 52). Therefore, until today one can witness the tensions between the European and Arab ancestry. This emotive product was then shipped over in European ships to the shores of America by European immigrants where similar perspectives from the time of the Crusades have persisted until today. What are these perspectives that sprang from the conflicts of the Crusades and grew into giants in mostly the Western world? In the Arab and Muslim World, those feelings of suspicion, hostility, defensiveness, and persecution flourished and persisted until modern times; weaknesses were exposed that contradicted the Arab civilization's apex in the seventh century, leading them down the path of obscurantism. From the Arab and Islamic civilizations, the Western world acquired invaluable knowledge in various domains from agriculture and architecture to mathematics and chemistry (Maalouf 1984, 264). Western culture first learned and then improved upon these multiple domains at a stage where the Arabs stopped their progression. "Modernity" became the realm of the Western world where decline and decay became associated with the new empire of the "other", instilling within the Western world the image of an anti-modern, non-secular entity in direct opposition to its own development (Naber 2000, 52). At this point, we see the many problems and difficulties that still plague much of the Arab world to this day and the creation of a schism between two worlds. Furthermore, the Arab world became representative of

everything that was not modern, a non-Western “other” (Keyman 2004, 162). Therefore, by emphasizing a form of neutral criteria, such as international law and standards of human rights, which then can be upheld by authoritative news sources, conflicting parties may finally overcome ingrained perspectives that have haunted them for centuries (Friel and Falk 2007, 4).

The Terrorist Arab Frame

Before the conflicts in Iraq and the increasing fear of terrorist attacks, Arabs had to continually deal with the conflicted nature of their region (Pintak 2006, 190). The Middle East has had an extended history of war, conflict, and general tension for centuries, understandably contributing to the sense of fear many individuals feel when confronted with issues regarding Arabs and their region (Karabell 1995, 39; Said 1994, xxii). Therefore, it seems almost second nature for someone to associate this particular ethnic group with terrorism, conflict, and simply danger (Van Buren 2006, 549). However, as many know, conflict is seldom contingent upon any single ethnicity or religion, and is more a combination of several factors, including but not limited to history, colonialism, economic and power structures, and sheer coincidence, as apparent in the Middle East and its relationship with the United States (Galtung 1990, 291; Ross 1986, 175; Salaita 2005, 157). Furthermore, conflict does not have a particular preference in choosing certain areas over others and will bear its ugly head in any region of the world. Therefore, when a certain ethnicity is continuously associated with violence, there tends to be a another variable amplifying this routine association that

seems to form in so many minds, and that variable may be the mass media (Shaheen 1985, 173).

Terrorism and conflict is ongoing, and in today's world it appears to be increasing, however, numerous people have blamed the swell in violence on specific sources, such as extreme religious or revolutionary groups. In regards to September 11 and similar terrorist incidents, for example, it is quite easy for the media, as well as other sources, to place responsibility in the hands of a specific group or religion (Karim 2006, 118). In this case, the generalized group of Islam, Arabs and/or the Middle East region are in the public mind connected to these violent incidents (Harb and Bessaiso 2006, 1066). The reality of the situation may place responsibility in some sources within this region, however, an overgeneralization in regards to a diverse religion and culture may be occurring due to "overall, ideological judgments" made by various entities including the news media and other influential industries (Ramasubramanian 2005, 10; Van Dijk 1995, 277).

During WWII, for example, Japanese-Americans faced scrutiny over their perceived connection to their homeland immediately after the Pearl Harbor bombings (Abreu et al. 2003, 694). The resulting internment of hundreds of thousands of Japanese-Americans was installed in hopes of strengthening national security. Just as the immediate association of Arab connections to the Oklahoma City Bombing, as previously mentioned, generated a racial backlash against an unconnected group, so too were Japanese-Americans wrongly accused. Today, many argue that the extremes measures used in the Pearl Harbor incident and the convincing accusations streaming out in the

aftermath of the Oklahoma City Bombing were unnecessary, especially when based on a perceived rather than an actual connection (Cainkar 2006, 254; Salaita 2005, 159; Shaheen 1985, 172). Yet, is it possible that associations based on speculation and historical incidents are still occurring, although in a more muted and covert fashion?

In a study done by Teun A. Van Dijk, 176 articles of the New York Times and the Washington Post were analyzed to assess the amount of overall ideological influences from society and discourse. The word terrorist appeared 355 times of which virtually all references were to Arabs (1995, 278). According to Van Dijk, these labels are not purely descriptive or informative but ideological descriptors, representative of a larger Western discourse applied through the selection of word meaning (1995, 276). These covert ideologies mostly evolve in discourse and emerge in repetitive news articles and other societal influences (Van Dijk 1992, 115).

Although all journalistic news values, such as accuracy and timeliness, are prioritized in news reporting, some receive more attention than others based on convention or popularity. One of the traditional values that seem to be upheld in various media outlets is any form of conflict (Harrison 2006, 55; Mencher 2000, 74). The ability of conflict to attract widespread attention is unmistakable and news reporters have taken full advantage of this opportunity. Most studies done on the presence of negativity in the news media deal with the coverage of presidential and political candidates; however, every type of news media has a tendency to lead toward negative reporting (Comstock and Sharrer 2005, 107; Lasorsa and Dia 2007, 284). Knowing this it is easy for one to assume that international and domestic regions with any amount of conflict will receive

higher amounts of coverage. One such area extensively covered for its conflict is the Middle East.

The high amount of reporting emanating from this region may lead a media-informed public to certain conclusions (Downings and Husband 2005, 86; Poole and Richardson 2006, 2). One such observation, central to this study, may be the association of differing races and ethnicities or, specifically here, those of Middle-Eastern origin with conflict and violence (Graber 2007, 27; Merskin 2004, 165; Poole 2006, 90). Differing from traditional forms of racism based on biology and phenotype, this is a political racism based more on ancient and persistent religious and national conflicts rather than the “inferiority” of a people (Naber 2000, 42). Accordingly, political events connected to Arabs and Muslims become generalized to their descendents through association. Therefore, a reinforced image may emerge connecting all Arabs, even within America, with violence or terrorism (Cainkar 2006, 247; Merskin 2004, 165). Specifically the post-September 11 world “created circumstances in which [Middle-Eastern and Muslim Americans] were called upon to account for themselves in ways they had not been required to before” (Marvasti and McKinney 2004, 77). In other words, where Arabs and Muslims were already negatively associated with terrorism before September 11, its occurrence drastically increased these associations. The repetition of certain us-them dichotomies, such as they (Arabs) are terrorists coming to get us (America, the West), colored with certain depictions and connotations, such as violence or terrorism, may be influencing a large amount of the American public (Altheide 1997, 665; Cainkar 2006, 270; Downings and Husband 2005, 116; Graber 2007, 28; Harb and Bessaiso 2006, 1065;

Larson 2006, 82; Pintak 2006, 190; Said 1994, 332; Seib 2004, 72; Van Dijk 1995, 280) as it shaped the European perception in the post-Enlightenment period (Keyman 2004, 162). These repetitions than find their way into all areas of society, including the media, public policy, political organizations, academia and popular culture (Cainkar 2006, 246) which further continue the cycle of association. Furthermore, if Arab Americans are associated with violence or terrorism, this consequentially may be justified with calls to national security due to the assumed connection with the Middle East (Brennen and Duffy 2003, 13; Salaita 2005, 159). By automatically associating those of the Islamic faith or Arab culture with a certain ethnicity, region, or conflict, the media may be overlooking the intricacies of a politically and religiously diverse group (Karim 2006, 117; Naber 2000, 50) consequentially affecting audience awareness (Ramsubramanian 2005, 10).

Furthermore, many newspapers may be lacking in their coverage of certain groups or regions within the Middle East, which would lead to a more balanced understanding. For example, according to Matt Viser, when the New York Times and Ha'aretz, an Israeli publication, were assessed for their portrayals of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, it was found that both newspapers were more favorable towards the Israelis, while the Palestinians received less coverage (2003, 118). These observations may help understand the possibility of a misrepresentation due either to a lack of coverage or an imbalance in reporting (Friel and Falk 2007, 9). Finding an association between Arabs, Arab Americans and terrorism in this newspaper study will entail results consisting of several referrals to Arabs and Arab Americans being associated with terrorism either implicitly

or explicitly.

The question of a perceived vs. actual threat may incite strong debate from differing ideologies and groups, however, the categorization of a group of people based on a perception is considered problematic according to various scholars. In regards to the recent rise of incidents and reporting of terrorism, the perceived threat of Arab-Americans and their ambiguous connection to terrorism will be investigated.

The Power of Association

Scholars and laypeople alike find the area of cognitive psychology fascinating and yet still so perplexing. The power and understanding of cognition, though well studied, is still quite elusive and research covering implicit behaviors and the cognitive perceptions leading to them is still considered lacking. (Amodio and Devine 2006, 652; Ramasubramanian 2007, 250). However, the fields of sociology and psychology have been the most dynamic in their research endeavors to better comprehend the cognitive and mental processes involved in virtually every aspect of human life. Therefore, since the association of an abstract idea, terrorism, with a group, Arab Americans, tends to form in the mind after exposure to a concrete stimulus such as a newspaper article, much of the research in this study originates from the studies of psychology and the role of the media in shaping psychology: cognitions and emotions.

Research shows that the repetitive association of certain words and images with an accompanying idea may result in cognitively associating two otherwise separate ideas due to constant exposure to this repetition (Abreu et al. 2003, 692; Graber 2007, 28; Lasorsa and Dia 2007, 282; Ramasubramanian 2005, 9; Shaheen 2003, 172; Van Dijk 1995, 261). For example, when violent regions or violence in general is shown continually accompanying a certain race or ethnic group in the media, the public may begin to cognitively associate the idea of violence with this group (Downings and Husband 2005, 87; Mousa 1987, 101). This is similar to the way stereotyping takes place when an idea forms of a particular group that is continually referred to or discussed in a way conducive to the stereotype (Abraham and Appiah 2006, 190). Stereotypes

themselves refer to the wholesale attribution of characteristics towards *all* members of a given group, which may be positive or negative, but are typically the latter towards groups other than one's own (Amodio and Devine 2006, 652). Furthermore, a detrimental element of negative stereotyping is its persistence over time (Garcia-Marques, Santos and Mackie 2006, 814; Shaheen 1985, 161).

Existing research has shown that the cognitive processing of news media may occur at a subconscious level (Abreu et al. 2003, 702; Berkowitz 1984, 411; Devine 2001, 757; Ramasubramanian 2007, 250) including the absorption of stereotypes, otherwise known as automaticity (Lasorsa and Dia 2007, 281). Therefore, any underlying bias within the media may actually be unnoticeable to the American public, as well as to the journalists themselves, whom otherwise might eschew any apparent prejudices or stereotypes with which they are confronted (Larson 2006, 2; Ottosen 1995, 100; Van Dijk 1992, 89). The above point makes it necessary to also make clear the level at which the effects of the media occur, whether individual, group, or societal. This research study, then, attempts to decipher the individual level effects of the media on cognition, which manifests itself in individual opinion and belief but may become an expression of the larger society (Domke 1997, 5; Graber 2007, 20). Previous studies have supported the idea of associations forming from exposure to certain racial/ethnic triggers such as particular photographs, images or ideas (Abraham and Appiah 2006, 189; Ram Subramanian 2007, 250).

In regards to the current study, by continually referring to a negatively-connotated event, word, idea, or group, the media may influence the formation of mental associations

that link these negative expressions with Arabs and Arab Americans (Abouchedid and Nasser 2006, 204; Entman 2007, 313; Shaheen 1985, 166). In a case study done by Robert M. Entman, it was found that exactly this was happening in news media regarding the nuclear freeze movement of the 1980's (2007, 313). The media maintained an unfavorable frame of the movement, which indicated that ordinary citizens were not in favor of the nuclear freeze policy when in actuality the majority was. Entman found public opinion and the mental associations that formed to be contingent upon the unfavorable media framing that was occurring at the time. Moreover, acting elites found themselves less pressured to act upon the favors of the nuclear freeze movement with the unfavorable media framing helping to reduce the priority of this particular policy on the public agenda (Entman 2007, 314). Regarding Arab-Americans, then, unfavorable media framing may also decrease any pressure on elites to reduce the negative images of Arabs and Arab-Americans, which in turn could also delegitimize the importance of this issue in the eyes of the public.

In addition to the current maintenance of stereotypical imagery, the combination of negative media framing and common ethnic schemas of Arabs and Muslims have resulted in a long history of socialization and activation in the American and perhaps, wider world culture (Cainkar 2006, 259). This is similar to the activation of racial schemas in regards to African Americans which has placed them in an unfavorable light in reference to particular social issues (Abraham and Appiah 2006, 199; Ramasubramanian 2005, 6). Negative perceptions of most ethnic groups, however, has tended to digress from overt forms of racism, such as institutional practices or claims of

inferiority, instead replaced by implicit verbal and visual associations in the media which activate particular stereotypes maintained within the culture (Van Dijk 1995, 276; 1992, 95). Explicit forms of racism, usually in the form of negative perceptions towards an entire group, have increasingly become replaced by a more subtle form of racism towards specific characteristics of an ethnic group (Ramasubramanian 2005, 6; Van Dijk 1992, 90). A negative judgment towards specific actions or characteristics of a group may be more warranted than blatant forms of racism, therefore are more difficult to label as racist (Van Dijk 1992, 93). In reference to Arabs and Muslims, the action of terrorism has become synonymous with this religious/ethnic group, therefore justifying subtle forms of discrimination and stereotyping (Ottosen 1995, 109). This study, then, will mainly focus on assumed semantic implications of word associations in the media based on shared ideological and socially shared knowledge (Van Dijk 1995, 270), rather than measure any explicit statements of racial and ethnic schemas.

In the Media

Although cognitive psychology is at the forefront of gaining a fuller understanding of the complicated processes of the human mind (Downings and Husband 2005, 2), the areas of communications and media research have specifically since become interested in the effects of the media on public opinion and the psychological processes underlying this, beginning with efforts to examine the effects of propaganda during the First World War.

Bestowed with the responsibilities of informing a population of millions daily, the news media is considered a powerful tool in the shaping of the nation's issues, attitudes, and opinions (Domke 1997, 3; Hardt and Negri 2000, 322) and even broad areas of American politics, such as foreign policy (Entman 2007, 307; Heffernan 2007, 294). By selectively organizing each day's stories into a clear and concise format, news agencies enhance the salience of particular issues, which in turn contribute to the "construction of reality" (Comstock and Sharrer 2005, 78; Domke 2001, 776; Graber 2007, 26; Harrison 2006, 142; Riffe, Lacy and Fico 1998, 7).

The medium of mass communication is the most powerful method of reaching the public and all other forms of institution, including governments and corporations (Comstock and Sharrer 2005, 63; Larson 2006, 14; Putnam 2007, 66). Media outlets which come in the form of entertainment, television, and newspapers, all carry the responsibility of instantly dispersing all forms of information to the public to foster knowledge and opinions (Comstock and Sharrer 2005, 72; Larson 2006, 16). News agencies, which have been endowed with the power of distributing information,

particularly hold a great responsibility in communicating objective and accurate information to the masses (Harrison 2006, 24). However, many studies also refer to the dispersal of misinformation that may be informing the public, contributing to a skewed understanding of certain realities (Friel and Falk 2004, 12; Van Dijk 1992, 88).

According to Carmines and Stimson, issues evolve through a unique historical process that entails its surrounding political environment (1989, 4). What issues come to light may be highly contingent upon certain politicians, political parties, and events. However, issues dealing with war, depression, terrorism, and other crises, will more than frequently come to the forefront of political issues (Carmines and Stimson 1989, 7; Harrison 2006, 32). Those issues, for example, revolving around the recent War on Terrorism, and its related subjects have received an additional amount of attention (Craft and Wanta 2004, 456; Noakes and Wilkins 2002, 667). Only certain issues, however, are picked up by the news media as significant enough to be added to the public record (Comstock and Shrarrer 2005, 169; Graber 2007, 28). Institutions that carry the responsibility to disperse information feel obligated to cover these important and popular issues. Thus the news media simultaneously becomes the beneficiary and provider of the nation's issues (Riffe, Lacy, and Fico 1998, 7).

With the news media engaging in an ongoing effort to inform the public and present concise and up-to-date news of important events and issues, one of the most significant influences journalists have on their audience is defining the meanings of events (Harrison 2006, 152; Moody-Hall 2005, 3). The media helps the audience understand the facts and significance of daily issues (Althaus and Teskbury 2002, 180;

Golan and Wanta 2004, 73) consequently influencing citizens' judgments and attitudes. Despite this amount of influence, it is highly possible for the media to fail to notice a flaw in their reporting when having to concentrate on thousands of issues. This may be particularly true when dealing with sensitive or little understood topics that may receive considerably less attention (Noakes and Wilkins 2002, 665). More importantly is the effect any misconstrued information may possibly have on the public's knowledge and perceptions of these issues, specifically when the public's primary source of news comes from these agencies (Abreu et al. 2003, 692; Kull, Ramsey, and Lewis 2007, 118). As established, scholars have long been aware of the powerful influence the media has on public institutions and public opinion (Graber 2007, 5; Rogers and Dearing 2007, 80). Nevertheless, misperceptions due to negative mental associations based on news reports may be occurring in a public primarily informed by the media (Abouchedid and Nasser 2006, 210; Ramasubramanian 2007, 258; Rogers and Dearing 2007, 90; Van Dijk 1995, 262). In regards to racial groups, discourse within the press, including misperceptions, helps to shape the public's values and attitudes through "the selection and framing of language, news, opinion, and perceptions" (Domke 1997, 4; Ramasubramanian 2005, 8; Van Dijk 1992, 115).

Since the establishment of agencies of mass communication, the media industry has come under criticism regarding its means of collecting and dispersing information about domestic and international issues. However, news reporting increasingly relies upon only a few prerequisites to maintain interest, such as conflict and sensationalism, which easily finds its way to the front page (Comstock and Shrarrer 2005, 60). Stories

covering conflicts, murders, violence, terrorism and unusual events appear to have been augmented in the past few decades, although the history of news sensationalism can be traced back to the beginning of many civilizations (Comstock and Sharrer 2005, 96-97; Hardt and Negri 2000, 323). Popular sentiment gives the impression that this sort of reporting is far from being discarded. However, with the ongoing emphasis on conflict in the news media, many groups have had to face increasing attention in regards to violent incidents.

Framing the News

It has been argued that media owners may possess an immense amount of control when filtering types of news stories (Chomsky 2006, 1; Golan and Wanta 2004, 72; Rogers and Dearing 2007, 83; Shaheen 1985, 169); however, certain journalistic news values or standards that have become tradition are the more accepted and acknowledged forms of filtration (Comstock and Sharrer 2005, 76; Harrison 2006, 136). Pressure to adhere to a particular set of values and routines comes from many sides (Lippmann 2007, 50); therefore, a form of standardization has been applied to the field of news reporting in order to present information to the broadest audience with the least amount of resistance, while also ensuring newsworthiness (Mencher 2000, 68). Furthermore, these standards are used to reduce the level of subjectivity when determining what is news. According to Melvin Mencher, a set of criteria, referred to as “news values,” is applied to sift through the multitude of news stories (2000, 72). Following the standards set by these eight news values allows newspapers to not only meet the high standards of journalism, but

also to present information widely accepted by the general public; information that is timely, widely significant, or impacting the largest amount of people, geographically or emotionally proximate, involving some form of conflict, unusual, current, and/or necessary to report (Harrison 2006, 141; Mencher 2000, 68). Journalists engage in structuring the stories of the day within these journalistic standards of routine, values, and practice (Riffe, Lucy, and Fico 1998, 7). Information involving Arabs, Muslims and terrorism easily falls into many of these categories. These include conflict, currency, proximity, impact and significance to the American public, with their relevance particularly expanding after 9/11.

Although these applied values within the news are rarely discarded, other forms of structuring the news are employed in order to construct the news. Presenting an idea in a certain light can be accomplished through the careful choosing of words, phrases, and themes (Domke 2001, 776; Larson 2006, 81; Van Dijk 1995, 263). When applied in mass media, numerous scholars refer to this process as framing. Framing refers to the process utilized by journalists to organize, mold, and contextualize news information within a particular referenced framework (Moody-Hall, 5; Putnam 2007, 67). Agenda setting, second-level agenda setting, and priming are a few of the terms also used to describe a similar but slightly different process (Domke 2001, 776). More specifically, agenda setting refers to the priority the news media gives to certain issues over others (Domke 1997, 3; Graber 2007, 28; McCombs 2004, 1). All of these processes, however, could simply refer to the careful selection and exclusion of an object, either visual, written, or cognitive which then help to form certain perspectives or conclusions in the

public mind. All news reporting in some way is organized and structured from the very outset, therefore constructing its meaning (Mencher 2000, 137). However, framing also refers to the scope of significance attributed to an issue or object. By augmenting or diluting selective ideas or phrases, framing can adjust the significance the public attributes to certain issues (Moody-Hall 2005, 28; Comstock and Sharrer 2005, 171). The ability to decipher and understand issue framing is essential when it has been shown to influence public opinion and perception of various issues, people, and institutions, as well as the policy agenda (Comstock and Sharrer 2005, 172; Moody-Hall 2005, 4; Rogers and Dearing 2007, 85).

Hypotheses

Negative cognitive association can be particularly evident when analyzing newspaper articles reporting on violent regions such as the Middle East as well as those of Middle Eastern origin connected to violence. This specific region is prone to these forms of “violent” associations due to the continual reports of violence and terrorism in the media emanating from this area. Ethnic groups from this region are then placed in categories associated with violence and terrorism due to their proximity in the media and in the region to violence.

Therefore, three hypotheses will accompany this study: (1) articles mentioning terrorism in the New York Times will be more likely to mention Arabs than any other specific group; (2) articles mentioning terrorism in the New York Times will be more likely to mention Arab-Americans than any other specific entity; and (3) articles mentioning Arabs in the New York Times are more likely to mention Arab-Americans over other entities. (4) Furthermore, it is believed that the number of incidences of the words Arab and terrorism will be positively correlated. It is also assumed that these words would be positively associated in people’s minds as well, when exposed to newspaper articles that show this correlation.

Methodology

Using the Lexis Nexis Academic database, news stories in a 15-year time interval in the New York Times were examined to locate the dominant frame by identifying key words and themes emphasized. Coding was conducted by trained graduate students. The keywords in an article were the primary unit of analysis. Newspaper article content with references to Arabs, Arab-Americans, Islam and the words and synonyms for terrorism were analyzed, with proximity of any of these two words a priority due to proximity increasing the possibility of a mental association perceiving any of these groups as terrorists in the public. In this study, proximity refers to the presence of any two keywords within the same paragraph. When analyzing each article, the likelihood that the word Arab or Islam would show up in the same paragraph as terrorism was investigated. A sampling of articles every ten days for a 15 year interval was taken from the total number of articles returned under the search “terror!.” This Boolean search included all terror-related words including terrorism, terrorist, terrorized, and terror-stricken. Articles fewer than 150 words and those dealing with anything other than political or general news, such as book reviews and sports, were excluded.

This research study focuses upon Arabs and Arab-Americans within this context. Islam will also be searched for its connection to terrorism as a corollary to the current research in order to expand upon the idea that Arabs, Islam, and Arab Americans have become interchangeable in discourse and specifically in print news, as represented by the NYT, as well as being connected to terrorism.

Furthermore, through the review of literature, two other related hypotheses which

include Arabs connection to terrorism through connection to Islam and Islam's connection to Arab-Americans through connection to Arabs will be tested. These two ideas bare on a third hypothesis assuming that Arab-Americans are connected to terrorism through connection to Arabs. The final idea's manifestation will be searched within newspaper articles with the assumption that Arabs and Arab-Americans are already connected or interchangeable, therefore proximal references to Arab-Americans and terrorism will cognitively associate the two words in the public's individual and collective conscious, particularly with repetitive exposure.

The content analysis was done to analyze the percentage of terrorism mentions as well as related words in order to compare each to the amount of Arab or Arab-American mentions. By reviewing articles within the New York Times between the years 1992 and 2006 and searching for keywords it was expected that there will be an association between Arab and terrorism in newspaper coverage found, but more importantly between Arab Americans and terrorism.

The New York Times was chosen due its large audience and self-reported international coverage. Trust in an authoritative source of news, such as the New York Times, is an important factor in determining attitudes and values that are derived from the media (Friel and Falk 2004, 2; Graber 2007, 28). The newspaper was accessed using the Lexis Nexis Academic full-text database.

Coverage of major international events connected to the Middle East or Arabs from the year 1992 until 2006 was explored to examine an association between reported terrorism from the Middle East and Arabs and Arab Americans. Additionally, coverage

of Arabs and Arab-Americans before and after September 11 was compared to detect any change in framing between the period before and after the attack on the Twin Towers. Using a timeline of events from the 15-year interval, it is expected that an increase of association between Arab-Americans and terrorism will be detected due to the increase of association between Arabs and terrorism and Islam and terrorism based on the occurrence of major events. Islam is also believed to be associated with Arabs and terrorism in print media. Furthermore, it is expected that an association existed *before* 9/11, but the attack and the resulting events and news coverage of that event would result in a significantly higher association following 9/11.

The association of Arabs and violence may be found due to the expected findings of major conflicts/incidents emanating from the Middle East. Furthermore, any reports covering violent incidents and their connection with Middle Easterners may also intensify Arab American's association with violence. However, if an association is found between terrorism and Arab Americans, then it may be assumed that the lumping of an unrelated group is occurring. The implications of this become clear when looking at past minority groups, such as African Americans, that have fallen into an inaccurate association with violence based on generalizations or misreporting (Abraham and Appiah 2006, 184; Ramasubramanian 2007, 249). Minority groups that are inaccurately represented may in turn suffer from negative stereotyping (Larson 2006, 3; Ramasubramanian 2005, 9; Van Dijk 1992, 100). A connection with violence is especially troubling with the public's fear and revocation of anything associated with potential conflict (Comstock and Sharrer 2005, 61; Larson 2006, 3).

Most research attempts to pinpoint the cause of a problem and then measure the effect. This research study, however, is limited to an attempt to measure the amount of a certain frame in the media that is believed to trigger the reported effects on public opinion. Previous literature will be examined to find content on public opinion affected by the major events analyzed and any associations relating Arab Americans and other minority groups. This is in order to understand the influence the media has on public opinion and perceptions of various issues.

Results

Before the final content analysis was taken, a preliminary word search was conducted using Lexis Nexis to gain an understanding of the amount of times Arab, Islam, and Arab American show up in the same article as well as in the same paragraph at least once. Table 1 in Appendix I sums up the percentages of Arab and terrorism and Islam and terrorism in the same article and then in the same paragraph.

The results for total number of terrorism articles varied for each year. Once the total number of terrorism articles was documented, a word search was done for the association between the words terrorism and Arab and once again for terrorism and Islam. An additional search was also run for Arab and then Islam within the same paragraph as terrorism. The number of results for the combined search was placed over the total number of terrorism articles to get a percentage. Figure 1 shows the percentages of the combined word searches over the total number of terrorism articles. The highest percentages come from the association of Arab and Islam in articles referring to terrorism and related words. There is a higher percentage of the words Arab or Islam and terrorism in the entire article in comparison to these words appearing in the same paragraph as terrorism. These results demonstrate that in all articles that mention terrorism, Arab and Islam have a good chance to show up in the article, as well as in the same paragraph. For example, in the year 2000, 23% of all terror related articles mention Islam at least once. That same year, Islam was mentioned 17% of the time in the same paragraph. This is an interesting point in light of the September 11 terrorist attacks one year later, which according to the chart, the percentage of the words Arab and Islam associated with the

word terrorism drop. Higher percentages in certain years can also be explained by the occurrence of major events. For example, the Iraq war was under way in the year 1993 as well as by the year 2003, which would explain the rise in percentage of Arab and Islam associations with terrorism.

The second content analysis attempted to find whether newspaper articles mentioning terrorism differed in the amount of times Arabs, Arab Americans, and Islam were mentioned in the same paragraph as terrorism. In order to analyze the amount of times the words Arab and Arab-American show up when terrorism and related words are mentioned, all articles that mentioned the word Arab, Arab-American, or Islam in the same paragraph as terrorism were documented.

The content analysis sampled every 10-day intervals of all terrorism articles of the years 1992 to 2006. Five hundred and thirty articles were compiled of which each was closely read and analyzed for the occurrence of the words Arab (Arabic, Arabs), Islam (Islamic, Muslim), and Arab American (Arab ancestry) in the same paragraph as the word terrorism (e.g., terror, terrorist, terrorized). Figure 2 shows the results of this analysis.

Figure 1. Percentage of Combined Word Searches

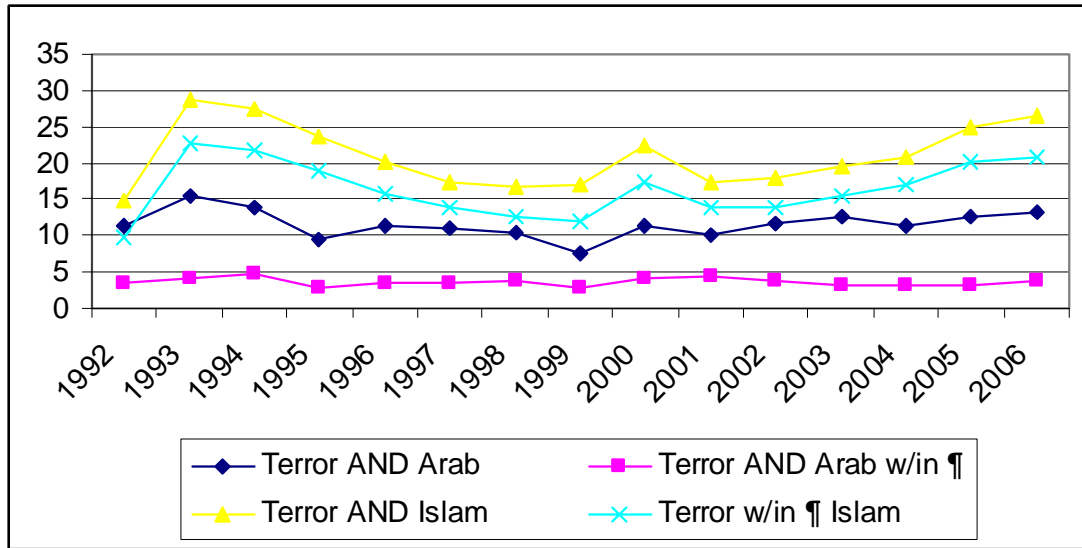
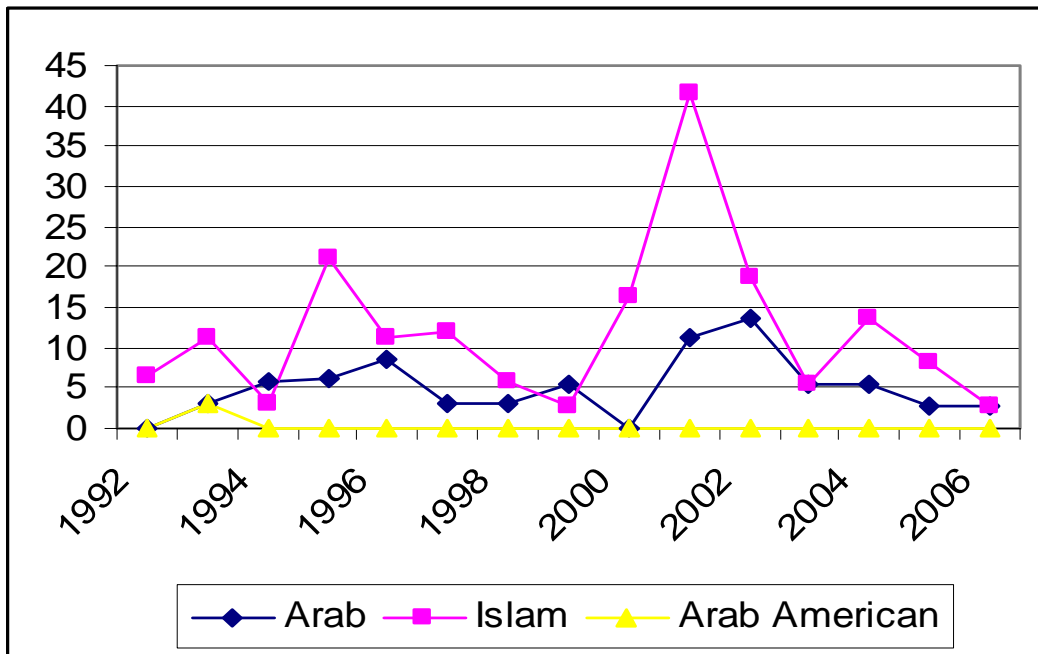


Figure 2. Occurrence of Arab or Islam in Same Paragraph as Terrorism



In comparison to Figure 1, Figure 2 shows a dramatic spike for Islam and less so for Arab for the year 2001. Precisely 42% of all terrorism articles that were sampled for the year 2001 mentioned Islam in the same paragraph while 11% of articles mentioned Arab. The year 1995 also shows an increase in the percentage of Islam mentions with terrorism, 21%, which would be explained by the Oklahoma City bombings and the subsequent accusations of Islamic and Arab terrorists. Due to the decreased amount of articles for each year, around 31-37, the option of generalizing is risky in comparison with the preliminary analysis. However, the smaller sample allows one to read the articles more carefully to exclude those that do not apply to the research design. For example, certain articles may be included in Table 1 that although referring to terrorism and Arab may not be mentioning or associating them in a negative way. In table 2 there are a smaller amount of articles search, however they were able to be carefully analyzed and therefore exclude irrelevant associations.

In both analyses, the hypothesis that Arab Americans would be associated with terrorism based on their connection to Arabs was not supported. A serious methodological problem is the lack of distinction between Arabs and their American counterparts; that is many may use the word "Arab" to refer to anyone of Arab ancestry, not just foreigners. In articles referring to Arabs, there seemed to be a generalization in referring to this group, with several distinguishing qualities lacking. Furthermore, many of the articles that discussed terrorist incidents or trials indirectly mentioned Arab or Muslim Americans, although the percentage of articles mentioning Arabs or Muslims in

general was dramatically higher. The third hypothesis, that references to Arab-Americans would increase when references to Arabs were made, was also not supported. This, however, could be explained by the overall lack of reference to Arab-Americans in general, which again, could be misleading to the extent the media and public opinion conflate Arabs with Arab-American. The first hypothesis, on the other hand, was supported. Articles mentioning terrorism were more likely to mention Arabs. Those articles mentioning terrorism were also more likely to mention Islam. It is safe to say then that there is a high percentage of terrorism articles mentioning Arabs and Islam overall in the years 1992- 2006 and therefore, the association of these groups with terrorism may be occurring based on their widespread presence in the mass media due to the reporting of dramatic news about terrorists acts.

Conclusion

Many minority groups throughout the years have been labeled with stereotypes and broad generalizations. African-Americans, Jewish-Americans, Japanese-Americans, and even Irish Americans have all faced issues of discrimination and stereotyping (Shaheen 2003, 174). Several of these groups eventually shed their stereotypes through various means, including activism, public relations, media awareness, and assimilation over generations. However, more than a few minority groups have faced difficulty detaching themselves from the damaging labels, including those persons with apparent differences, such as skin color, traditional dress, and ethnic names. African Americans, for example, are still stereotyped or pictured as violent, although reports of violent incidents emerge from every group within America (Abraham and Appiah 2006, 196; Ramasubramanian 2005, 3).

Another group that has faced a similar generalization more recently are Arab-Americans. Specifically in regards to the Middle East, Arabs and Arab-Americans tend to be regarded as somehow connected to violent incidents and heavily stereotyped based on this connection and communal history in relation to the Middle East. With the ongoing war on terrorism and the reported rise of Islamic extremism, Arabs and Arab-Americans continually face significant stereotyping from many directions (Pintak 2006, 193; Salaita 2005, 151). This also takes into account the interchangeability of Islam and Arabs in the mind of America (Cainkar 2006, 244; Salaita 2005, 163). This is especially prevalent within the media where reports of violence from the Middle East are gathered and dispersed.

Based on the considerable consumption of media outlets from the public, it is expected that public opinion will be particularly affected from the stream of reports about Arabs, Islam, and the Middle East. Frequently, as stated before, these three subjects are interchanged, further reducing any chance of correctly depicting Arab-Americans (Naber 2000, 42). Therefore, it seems that the American press may be unknowingly and possibly directly contributing to the distortions of Arabs and Arab Americans through lack of historical context and unambiguous explanations (Larson 2006, 84). Although their distortions may partially arise from public opinion and government reports, the media and the public engage in an exchange of ideas which produce a perpetual cycle (Ramasubramanian 2005,9). No one institution or entity is to blame, however, the distortions are there and the media has a large amount of influence in contributing to these negative associations.

In the initial articles reviewed, it was found that there have been numerous occasions of associations between Arab Americans and violence or conflict, as well as fundamentalist tendencies. These connections can easily lead to the cognitive association shown in this study of NYT articles. Merskin, for example, found that continuous reports of violence coming from the Middle East region has fostered a general association in the press and the public between Arabs and violence (2004, 165). Furthermore, they found that this led to an increased tendency to lump Arab Americans into this association, regardless of its accuracy. Similar studies have also shown the tendency of the media to portray Arabs as violent or radical (Noakes and Wilkins 2002, 665). This effect has also been found in parts of the media, entertainment industry, and political rhetoric that had

been reviewed by several scholars.

The results of reported in this thesis, however, failed to show any connection between Arab-Americans and terrorism. Arab-Americans were rarely mentioned in any articles, except when discussing Arab-American organizations or trials in which potential Arab-American terrorists were accused. Otherwise, the distinction between Arab-American and Arab was blurred, possibly leading readers to believe the interchangeability of these two groups – something that cannot be determined with these data. The research generated in this study supports the proposition that Arabs and Islam are associated in the NYT, at least implicitly, with terrorism. However, this study may have underestimated the strength of association between Arabs and terrorism due to other words being associated with either terrorism or Arabs, which may be influential. Therefore, future studies may look at the use of other words such as fundamentalist, extremist, Middle Eastern, and ethnic names, to name a few, which may activate an association between terrorism and Arabs.

Overall, the association of Arab or Islam with terrorism in the New York Times tends to fluctuate based on foreign policy, national and international events, public policies and social issues. When looking at Figure 1 and Figure 2, and based on the knowledge of current affairs each year, one can see that associations of Arab or Islam with terrorism respond to the waves of yearly discourse and policy. For example, Figure 1 shows a spike in the year 1993 in terrorism and Arab/Islam associations, the same year as the first World Trade Center bombing. Additionally, the launching of the war against Iraq begins in the year 2002 where associations begin to rise and continue through 2006.

Figure 2 then shows spikes in the years 1993, 1995, 2001, and 2004 obviously explained by the occurrence of major events. Associations may then be partly explained by the automatic representations formed based on the reality of current events. Each person's reality, however, is constructed of several avenues, one of which includes exposure to the news. Therefore, news content plays a part in the associations that may be forming in the public conscious.

The Times being a prestigious and elite newspaper, the possibility of the newspapers transference of news and story framing to other publications becomes possible (Shaheen 1985, 169). Thus, the power of the mass media to reach a broad audience lies within the interdependence of media outlets whom rehash parallel ideas and perspectives to the larger society. Therefore, the influence of the media in creating and maintaining racial and ethnic schemas through the use and placement of key words becomes clear (Noakes and Wilkins 2002, 649; Van Dijk 1995, 261) and as it has been established in the extent literature.

Future research may be needed to address a larger component of the American media in regards to Arab Americans and violence and may be necessary to utilize other key words such as Islam, terrorism, fundamentalism, and fanaticism. For example, many studies compared different newspapers in order to assess the amount of bias based on similar reports. However, it may be more conducive to compare regional and national newspapers for news slant in order to better measure public opinion based on local and national data.

Future studies could examine other associations using different groups and

keywords. This may help to find a linkage with public opinion by measuring the effect media misrepresentations has on the public. Public opinion and its influence also need to be further explored in order to claim any effect from news reporting. This research has additionally not addressed associations of Arabs in general with violence in relation to reports of conflict stemming from various locations around the world. This would need to be studied in order to find if large amounts of coverage about Middle East conflict is unbalanced compared to other areas of conflict.

Although only one small minority group was studied for negative associations within the newspaper media, this research will help shed light on inaccurate depictions of other groups while simultaneously improving the media's accuracy in reporting. Inaccurate and rash assumptions based on select words in the media may lead to harmful effects as experienced in previous events, such as Oklahoma City Bombing and Japanese Americans. Justice has endlessly been a top priority of the American public and its institutions, therefore the media outlets have a responsibility to uphold this standard and lifestyle.

Although the current state of world affairs informs a negative viewpoint of all Arabs and Muslims due to the actions of extreme factions engaging in terrorism, it is necessary to bring to light any misconstructions of general groups the media may be informing. This includes adding an historical context to understand the meaning of events to avoid over-generalizations. Sensitive issues dealing with the Middle East due to tense relations with certain Arab countries may have affected the amount and tone of reporting coming from that region. Therefore, multiple studies of this type of analysis

will further improve the quality of journalism and may bring about an increased awareness of Arab Americans and the Middle East.

If there is an effect on public opinion and the media reporters are influencing an inaccurate association, it is essential to help the media realize this misinterpretation. By adopting a more accurate framework when reporting the news, news reporters may more readily meet their high standards of journalism while ensuring the presentation of accurate and objective information. Additionally, by recognizing a specific misconception, newspapers and the broader media may be able to search for and avoid any further and future misrepresentations.

Bibliography

- Abreu, Jose M., Estrella Ramirez, Bryan S. K. Kim, and Chris Haddy. 2003. "Automatic Activation of Yellow Peril Asian American Stereotypes: Effects on Social Impression Formation." *The Journal of Social Psychology* 143: 691-706.
- Abouchedid, Kamal and Ramzi Nasser. 2006. "Info-Bias Mechanism and American College Students' Attitudes Towards Arabs." *International Studies Perspectives* 7: 204-212.
- Abraham, Linus and Osei Appiah. 2006. "Framing News Stories: The Role of Visual Imagery in Priming Racial Stereotypes." *The Howard Journal of Communications* 17: 183-203.
- Aday, Sean, Steven Livingston, and Maeve Hebert. 2005. "Embedding the Truth: A Cross Cultural Analysis of Objectivity and Television Coverage of the Iraq War." *Press/Politics* 10: 3-21.
- Ahmed, Sameera. 2006. "The Media Consumption of Young British Muslims." In *Muslims and the News Media*, eds. Elizabeth Poole and John E. Richardson. New York: I.B. Tauris.
- Althaus, Scott L. and David Teskbury. 2002. "Agenda-Setting and the 'New' News: Patterns of Issue Importance Among Readers of the Paper and Online Versions of the New York Times." *Communication Research* 29: 180-207.
- Altheide, David L. 1997. "The News Media, the Problem Frame, and the Production of Fear." *The Sociological Quarterly* 38: 647-668.

- Amodio, David M., and Patricia G. Devine. 2006. "Stereotyping and Evaluation in Implicit Race Bias: Evidence for Independent Constructs and Unique Effects on Behavior." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 91: 652-661.
- Bender Penny, and Susan Revah. 1995. "Jumping to Conclusions in Oklahoma City?" *American Journalism Review* 17: 11-12.
- Berkowitz, Leonard. 1984. "Some Effects of Thoughts on Anti- and Prosocial Influences of Media Events: A Cognitive-Neoassociation Analysis." *Psychological Bulletin* 95: 410-427.
- Bogart, Leo. 2001. "The Public's Use and Perception of Newspapers." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 48: 709-719.
- Brennen, Bonnie and Margaret Duffy. 2003. "'If a Problem Cannot be Solved, Enlarge It': an Ideological Critique of the 'Other' in Pearl Harbor and September 11 New York Times Coverage." *Journalism Studies* 4(1): 3-14.
- Bullet, Richard W. 2003. "Rhetoric, Discourse and the Future of Hope." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 588: 10-17.
- Cainkar, Louise. 2006. "The Social Construction of Difference and the Arab American Experience." *Journal of American Ethnic History* 244-278.
- Carmines, E. G. and Stimson, J. A. 1989. *Issue Evolution: Race and the Transformation of American Politics*. Princeton University Press: New Jersey.
- Christensen, Christen. 2005. "Pocketbooks or Prayer Beads? U.S. /U.K. Newspaper Coverage of the 2002 Turkish Elections." *Press/Politics* 10(1): 109-128.

- Chomsky, Daniel. 2006. "'An Interested Reader': Measuring Ownership Control at the New York Times." *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 23(1): 1-18.
- Claussen, Dane S. 2004. "Cognitive Dissonance, Media Illiteracy, and Public Opinion on News Media." *American Behavioral Scientist* 48: 212-218.
- Comstock, George and Erica Schrarrer. 2005. *The Psychology of Media and Politics*. Amsterdam: Elsevier Academic Press.
- Craft, Stephanie and Wayne Wanta. 2004. "U.S. Public Concerns in the Aftermath of 9-11: A Test of Second-Level Agenda Setting." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 16: 456-463.
- Devine, Patricia G. 2001. Implicit Prejudice and Stereotyping: How Automatic Are They? Introduction to the Special Section." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 81: 757-759.
- Domke, David. 2001. "Racial Cues and Political Ideology: An Examination of Associative Priming." *Communication Research* 28: 772-801
- Domke, David, Phillip Garland, Andre Billeaudeau, and John Hutcheson. 2003. "Insights into U.S. Racial Hierarchy: Racial Profiling, News Sources, and September 11." *Journal of Communication* 53(4): 606-623.
- Entman, Robert M. 2007. "Mediating the Public's Influence on Foreign Policy." In *Media Power in Politics*, ed. Doris A. Graber. Washington, DC: Congressional Press.
- Fiske, Susan T. 2004. "Intent and Ordinary Bias: Unintended Thought and Social Motivation Create Casual Prejudice." *Social Justice Research* 17: 117-127.

- Friel, Howard and Richard Falk. 2007. *Israel-Palestine on Record: How the New York Times Misreports Conflict in the Middle East*. London: Verso.
- Friel, Howard and Richard Falk. 2004. *The Record of the Paper: How the New York Times Misreports US Foreign Policy*. London: Verso.
- Galtung, Johan. 2002. "USA, the West, and the Rest after September 11/October 7, 2001+: A Midterm Report." *New Political Science* 24: 349-369.
- Galtung, Johan. 1990. "Cultural Violence." *Journal of Peace Research* 27: 291-305.
- Garcia-Marques, Leonel, A. Sofia C. Santos and Diane M. Mackie. 2006. "Stereotypes: Static Abstractions or Dynamic Knowledge Structures." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 91: 814-831.
- Gavrilos, Dina. 2002. "Arab Americans in a Nation's Imagined Community: How News Constructed Arab American Reactions to the Gulf War." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 26(4): 426-445.
- Gerges, Fawaz A. 2003. "Islam and Muslim in the Minds of America." *The Annals of the American Academy* 588: 73-89.
- Golan, Guy and Wayne Wanta. 2004. "Guest Columns Add Diversity to NY Times' Op-Ed Pages." *Newspaper Research Journal* 25: 70-82.
- Graber, Doris A, ed. 2007. *Media Power in Politics*. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.
- Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck. 2004. *Not Quite American? The Shaping of Arab and Muslim Identity in the United States*. Texas: Baylor University Press.
- Hagopian, Elaine C. 2004. *Civil Right in Peril: the Targeting of Arabs and*

- Muslims*. Chicago: Haymarket Books.
- Harb, Zahera and Ehab Bessaiso. 2006. "British Arab Muslim Audiences and Television after September 11." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 32: 1063-1076.
- Hardt, Michael and Antonio Negri. 2000. *Empire*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Harrison, Jackie. 2006. *News*. New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.
- Hasian, Jr., Marouf. 2000. "The Siege and Cinematic Representations of 'Arab' Terrorism." *World Communication* 29: 36-52.
- Heffernan, Patrick O. 2007. "Mass Media Roles in Foreign Policy." In *Media Power in Politics*, ed. Doris A. Graber. Washington DC: Congressional Press.
- Huntington, Samuel. 1996. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Touchstone.
- Inayatullah, Naeem and David L. Blaney. 2004. *International Relations and the Problem of Difference*. New York: Routledge.
- Johnston, David. "Terror in Oklahoma: The Investigation; A Piece of a Rented Truck Offers a Clue to 2 Suspects." *The New York Times*, 20 April.
- Karabell, Zachary. 1995. "The Wrong Threat: The United States and Islamic Fundamentalism." *World Policy Journal* 12: 37-49.
- Karim, Karim H. 2006. "American Media's Coverage of Muslims: the Historical Roots of Contemporary Portrayals." In *Muslims and the News Media*, eds. Elizabeth Poole and John E. Richardson. New York: I.B. Tauris.
- Keyman, E. Fuat. 2004. *Globalization, State, Identity/Difference: Toward a Critical Social Theory of International Relations*. New York: Humanity Books.

- Kull, Steven, Clay Ramsey, and Evan Lewis. "Misperceptions, the Media, and the Iraq War." In *Media Power in Politics*, ed. Doris A. Graber. Washington DC: Congressional Press.
- Kuzma, Lynn M. 2000. "The Polls-Trends: Terrorism in the United States." *Public Opinion Quarterly*. 64: 90-105.
- Larson, Stephanie G. 2006. *Media and Minorities: The Politics of Race in News and Entertainment*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Lasorsa, Dominic and Jia Dai. 2007. "When News Reporters Deceive: The Production of Stereotypes." *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 84: 281-298.
- Lippmann, Walter. 2007. "Newspapers." In *Media Power in Politics*, ed. Doris A. Graber. Washington, DC: Congressional Press.
- Maalouf, Amin. 1984. *The Crusades Through Arab Eyes*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Maki, William S. 2007. "Judgments of Associative Memory." *Cognitive Psychology* 54: 319-353.
- Marvasti, Amir and Karyn D. McKinney. 2004. *Middle Eastern Lives in America*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- McCombs, Maxwell. 2004. *Setting the Agenda: The Mass Media and Public Opinion*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Mencher, Melvin. 2000. *News Reporting and Writing*. McGraw Hill: New York.
- Merskin, Debra. 2004. "The Construction of Arabs as Enemies: Post-September 11 Discourse of George W. Bush." *Mass Communication & Society*

- 7(2): 157-175.
- Moody-Hall, Mia. 2005. "The Tables Turned: A Study of Black vs. Mainstream Press' Framing of Racial Profiling Pre and Post Sept. 11" presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, New York.
- Moore, Katherine M. 2007. "Muslims in the United States: Pluralism Under Exceptional Circumstances." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 612: 116-132.
- Mousa, Issam Suleiman. 1987. "The Arab Image: The New York Times, 1916-1948." *Gazette* 40: 101-120.
- Muscati, Sina Ali. 2002. "Arab/Muslim 'Otherness': The Role of Racial Constructions in the Gulf War and the Continuing Crisis with Iraq." *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 22(1): 131-148.
- Naber, Nadine. 2000. "Ambiguous Insiders: An Investigation of Arab American Invisibility." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 23: 37-61.
- Nacos, Brigitte L. and Oscar Torres-Reyna. 2003. "Framing Muslim-Americans Before and After 9/11." In *Framing Terrorism: The News Media, the Government, and the Public*, eds. Pippa Norris, Kern Montague and Marion Just. New York: Routledge.
- Noakes, John A. and Karin Gwinn Wilkins. 2002. "Shifting Frames of the Palestinian Movement in US News." *Media, Culture and Society* 24: 649-671.
- Norris, Pippa, Kern Montague, and Marion Just, eds. 2003. *Framing Terrorism: The News Media, the Government, and the Public*. New York: Routledge.

- Ottosen, Rune. 1995. "Enemy Images and the Journalistic Process." *Journal of Peace Research* 32: 97-112.
- Page, Benjamin I., Robert Y. Shapiro, and Glenn R. Dempsey. 2007. "What Moves Public Opinion." In *Media Power in Politics*, ed. Doris A. Graber. Washington, DC: Congressional Press.
- Pintak, Lawrence. 2006. "Framing the Other: Worldview, Rhetoric and Media Dissonance since 9/11." In *Muslims and the News Media*, eds. Elizabeth Poole and John E. Richardson. New York: I.B. Tauris.
- Poole, Elizabeth and John E. Richardson, eds. 2006. *Muslims and the News Media*. New York: I.B. Tauris.
- Poole, Elizabeth. 2006. "The Effects of September 11 and the War in Iraq on British Newspaper Coverage." In *Muslims and the News Media*, eds. Elizabeth Poole and John E. Richardson. New York: I.B. Tauris.
- Putnam, Linda L. 2007. "News Coverage of Environmental Issues." In *Media Power in Politics*, ed. Doris A. Graber. Washington, DC: Congressional Press.
- Ramasubramanian, Srividya. 2007. "Media-Based Strategies to Reduce Racial Stereotypes Activated by News Stories." *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 84: 249-264.
- Ramasubramanian, Srividya. 2005. "Comparative Media Stereotyping: How Media Content About One Group Influences Prejudicial Feelings Towards Another Group." presented at the 55th Annual Conference of the International Communication Association, New York.

- Riffe, Daniel, Stephen Lacy, and Frederick G. Fico. 1998. *Analyzing Media Messages: Using Quantitative Content Analysis in Research*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Rogers, M. Everett and James W. Dearing. 2007. "Agenda-Setting Research: Where Has it Been, Where is it Going?" In *Media Power in Politics*, ed. Doris A. Graber. Washington, DC: Congressional Press.
- Ross, Marc. 1986. "The Limits to Social Structure: Social Structural and PsychoCultural Explanations for Political Conflict and Violence." *Anthropological Quarterly* 59: 171-204.
- Said, Edward. 1994. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Salaita, Steven. 2005. "Ethnic Identity and Imperative Patriotism: Arab Americans Before and After 9/11." *College Literature* 32: 146-168.
- Seib, Philip. 2004. "The News Media and the 'Clash of Civilizations'." *Parameter* : 71-83.
- Shaheen, Jack. 1985. "Media Coverage of the Middle East: Perception and Foreign Policy." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 482: 160-175.
- Shaheen, Jack. 2003. "Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 588: 171-193.
- Van Buren, Cassandra. 2006. "Critical Analysis of Racist Post 9/11 Web Animations." *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* 50: 537-554.
- Van Dijk, Teun A. 1995. "Discourse Semantics and Ideology." *Discourse and Society* 6:

243-289.

Van Dijk, Teun A. 1992. "Discourse and the Denial of Racism." *Discourse and Society* 3:
87-118.

Viser, Matt. 2003. "Attempted Objectivity: An analysis of the New York Times and
Ha'aretz and their Portrayals of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict." *Press/Politics* 8:
114-120.

Appendix I.

TABLE 1.

Percentage of Articles Containing At Least One Reference to Terrorism and Arab/Islam

Year	Terror AND Arab	Terror AND Arab w/in ¶	Terror AND Islam	Terror w/in ¶ Islam	n
1992	11.5	3.4	14.7	9.8	1952
1993	15.5	4.2	28.6	22.8	2571
1994	13.8	4.7	27.4	21.7	2116
1995	9.4	2.9	23.7	19.0	3137
1996	11.3	3.6	20.3	15.9	3247
1997	10.9	3.5	17.5	14.0	2758
1998	10.5	3.8	16.7	12.7	2718
1999	7.5	2.7	17.1	12.1	2747
2000	11.3	4.1	22.5	17.4	2211
2001	10.2	4.3	17.3	13.9	14956
2002	11.8	3.8	18.0	13.8	14090
2003	12.6	3.1	19.7	15.5	11610
2004	11.3	3.0	20.9	16.9	11213
2005	12.7	3.3	25.0	20.1	7491
2006	13.4	3.8	26.4	20.8	7287

NOTE: Terror searches returned articles containing terrorism, terrorist, terrorized, terror-stricken, and related words. Arab searches returned Arabic and Arabs. Islam searches returned Islamic, and Muslim. Total number of articles varied based on number of articles that contained at least one reference to terror. Percentages have been rounded off.

TABLE 2.

Occurrence of Arab or Islam in Same Paragraph as Terrorism

	Arab %	Islam %	Arab American%	n
1992	0	6.5	0	31
1993	2.9	11.4	2.9	35
1994	5.7	2.9	0	35
1995	6.1	21.2	0	33
1996	8.6	11.4	0	35
1997	2.9	11.8	0	34
1998	2.9	5.9	0	34
1999	5.6	2.8	0	36
2000	0	16.2	0	37
2001	11.1	41.7	0	36
2002	13.5	18.9	0	37
2003	5.6	5.6	0	36
2004	5.4	13.5	0	37
2005	2.8	8.3	0	36
2006	2.7	2.7	0	37

NOTE: Articles were chosen every ten days. Missing articles on certain days resulted in fewer articles per year. Percentages have been rounded off.

Appendix II.

CODEBOOK

Case ID: Coders will print here the 3-digit or 4-digit Case ID provided at the top of the article. For example 0123.

Coder ID: Coders will choose their name from the survey tool option. In this case Siwar or Dana.

Story Date: Coders will indicate the eight-digit date of the story in the space provided. For example, November 25, 2006 as 11/25/2006.

Story Headline: Coders will provide the full text of the story headline in the space provided.

Presence or Absence of Key Words: Coders will indicate the presence or absence of the following list of key words within the article and if they fall within the same paragraph as the word terrorism. Articles analyzed were chosen from a random sample of articles that were returned under the search terrorism and related words.

Key words:

Arab or Arabs or Arabic
Islam or Islamic or Muslim
Terror or Terrorist or Terrorism or Terror-Stricken or Terrorized

Appendix III.

CODESHEET

1. Article ID Number: _ _ _ _

2. Coder ID: [] Siwar [] Dana

3. Story Date: _ _ / _ _ / _ _ _ _
mm/dd/yyyy

4. Story Headline: _____

5. Key Words

	Present/Absent	W/in same paragraph as terror?
Arab/Arabic/Arabs		
Islam/Islamic/Muslim		

CURRICULUM VITAE

Siwar Bizri

Email: sbizri@vt.edu

Cell Phone: 540-525-4114

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Knowledge of international issues with emphasis on the Middle East
- Command of interdisciplinary research in psychology, politics, history and religion.
- Involved in numerous public speaking events
- Exceptional oral and written communication skills.
- Experience in video and photo editing.

EDUCATION

Virginia Polytechnic and State University, Blacksburg, Va
Masters, Political Science, December 2007

Thesis: Word Use and Placement Associating Arabs and Arab-Americans with Terrorism in the New York Times Using Content Analysis

West Virginia University, Morgantown

Bachelor of Arts, Psychology, Minor: Political Science, May 2004

Cum Laude Graduate

Honors Scholar

EMPLOYMENT

Eastern Montgomery High School, Shawsville, Va

Adjunct Professor, Jan. 2007 - May 2007

Taught a college-level government and politics class to senior high school students. Prepared administered lessons and tests. Used audiovisual teaching aids to present subject matter to class.

Virginia Polytechnic and State University, Blacksburg, Va

Graduate Teaching Assistant, Jan. 2006 - May 2006

Instructed a political science research methods class. Designed and implemented lessons involving multimedia. Illustrated complex statistical methods used in political science.

Virginia Polytechnic and State University, Blacksburg, Va

Graduate Teaching Assistant, Sep. 2005 - Dec. 2006

Instructed a Nations and Nationalities political science class. Demonstrated ability in simplifying and presenting complicated political theories and ideas.

Bridgewater Medical Clinic, Princeton, WV
Office Financial Worker, Mar. 2004 - Aug. 2004

Arranged and labeled medical files. Administered various accounting functions, including billing, payroll, accounts receivable, deposits, intermediate tax filings and financial statements. Compared data on claim applications with policy statements and other company records to ascertain completeness and validity of claim.

ADC, Washington, DC
Assistant to the Committee President, Jun. 2003 - Aug. 2003

Interned at one of the largest political action committees in the United States. Attended meetings on Capitol Hill as well as congressional briefings and hearings on various topics. Tracked, researched and reported on legislative and political affairs including new legislation. Participated in the set up and panel discussions of the annual ADC convention consisting of members of congress, senate, as well as the current presidential administration.

West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV
College Teaching Assistant, Aug. 2002 - Dec. 2002

Organized and wrote class syllabus and lesson plans for students. Administered and corrected tests. Created and instructed class sessions on college life and requirements. Supervised all class outings, and activities pertaining to class topics.

Winterplace Ski Resort, Ghent, WV
Ski Instructor, Sep. 1999 - Mar. 2000

Instructed individuals of all age groups on skiing techniques, equipment, and developing skills. Monitored ski slopes for crowd control, ski lift safety, and activity.

AFFILIATIONS

- Honors Student - University Honors Program, West Virginia University, Sep. 2000 - May 2004. Completed the required courses for the honors program.
- President - International Student Organization, West Virginia University, Sep. 2000 - May 2003. Organized and coordinated international dinners and festivals including entertainment, menu, agenda, and meetings.
- West Virginia Junior Miss 2000 title - America's Junior Miss, Mar. 2000 - Mar. 2001. Awarded West Virginia Junior Miss title along with the top scholastic award.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Arabic
Limited French