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Analysis of the Effects of 9/11 Attacks on American Media Representation of Islam and Muslims: A Case Study of New York Times Headlines and Articles, 1980-2009

**Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for a Master Degree in
English Literature and Civilization**

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Dedication

To the realization of this work,

We owe a great debt of gratitude and respect to our dear parents whose love and affection were very helpful for that particularly.

Great thanks to our sisters, brothers, and friends whose encouragement helped a lot.

We offer this work to all our teachers and classmates to whom we wish all the best

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Huge thanks to all our teachers who have been guiding us throughout the past five years.

Abstract

Since media coverage of Islam shapes the views of those who have limited or negative attitudes toward Muslims' religion(delete it, researchers do not judge, they are objective), falsifying and directing the potential image is urgently needed(delete it). This study analyzes the portrayal of Islam and Muslims in New York Times newspaper pre and post 11th September 2001 attacks in America. The majority of researches indicate that Muslims image has been distorted by the American media; however, the attacks of 9/11 have changed the perception of Islam in the American news media and newspapers in particular. The method used is qualitative in nature; the content and headlines on NYT newspaper pre and post 9/11 attacks between 1980-2009, have been analyzed and interpreted.

Key Terms: American media, Islam, New York Times, newspaper, 9/11 attacks.

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List of Abbreviations

9/11 : September 11th, 2001

USA : United States of America

NYT : New York Times

PBS : Public Broadcasting Service

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General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

Islam is one of the controversial religions in the media. It is strongly shaped and controlled by mass media power especially journals, discounting the existence of an international system working hand in hand in the distortion or the improvement of Islam and its Muslims supporter's image, particularly shortly after the terrific attacks of September 11th, 2001 and even before.

9/11 events have left undeniable marks in the history of Islam in America, altering the very essence of many media platforms views and behaviors about Islam, including newspapers' headlines. American media claimed that the attacks were executed by Al-Qaeda members who are Muslims and Arabic in origins, they once again propagated negative stereotypes of Muslims. Consequently, Muslims have endured prejudice, anti-Muslim sentiments, discrimination and difficulties in practicing their faith freely. The attack brought horror to the extent that Islam had become known as a threat to the western communities.

This demonstrates that media including New York Times newspaper contributed significantly in the destruction or the enhancement of Islam and Muslim Americans image in pre and post 9/11 era. Generally, stereotypes spread by influential power, including media outlets that is known as the fourth estate for instance New York times newspaper, will be magically legitimized; unfortunately in the name of freedom of speech.

2. Aim of the Study

This dissertation aims at analyzing the image of Islam and Muslims in American media, and the way they have been represented, by New York Times headlines and articles, before and after the attacks of 11th September 2001. It tackles the effect of this attack on them, in the times frame between 1980-2009.

4. Statement of the Problem

Arguably, religions including Islam are covered by media. However, after the attacks of September 11th, 2001 on New York's twin towers of world trade center and the pentagon, Islam became more newsworthy, and misrepresented. The majority of researches indicate that American news media, and newspapers in particular has witnessed a raised tendency, characterized by a rapid, exaggerated, Islamophobic rhetoric and a perpetration of negative stereotypes on Islam which convey an aggressive, hostile expressions used against Muslims such as: fundamental, racist, violent or threat, terrorist Islam. Hence, this reveals a significant yet overlooked danger to Islamic religion.

5. Research Questions:

The objective of the present study is directed by the following questions:

1. Was the representation of Muslims in New York Times newspaper negative before 9/11 attacks?
2. Has Muslim's image been distorted in New York Times newspaper after 9/11 attacks?

6. Research Hypotheses

The general hypotheses on which this study is based runs as follows:

1. The representation of Muslims was negative in New York Times before 9/11.
2. After the attacks of 9/11, Muslim's image has been distorted in New York Times newspaper.

6. Methodology

A qualitative method is used. The study is then analytical based on analyzing the nature of NYT representation of Islam before and after 9/11 events, in the time period of 1980-2009.

In order to determine how they are portrayed to the general public before and in the wake of 9/11attacks, the study analyzes the content of New York Times newspaper articles pertaining to Muslims (women or man), Arabs, or Americans Muslims and Islam in general in United States of America. The content analysis addresses the coverage of Muslim Americans from 1980 to 2009.

The population will include articles drawn from the aforementioned time period, and the variables utilized are terrorism, aggregation, fundamentalism, radical, extremists, peace, discrimination, Islamic rituals practices, Ramadan, Id Al-fitr, anti-Muslims sentiments, Arabs, stereotypes, imperialists Islam, hijackers, Muslim women, hijab, Koran religion of peace, freedom, humanity, beautiful headscarves, Muslim prayers, and violent Islam.

Data gathering tools range from books, articles, online magazine and journals, reliable websites, American newspaper articles and headlines. However, for an in-depth investigation the data for the practical analysis were derived mainly from: analyzing the contents and the

headlines of NYT newspaper that are available online including paid online journals for close and deep analysis.

7. Structure of the Study

This work is composed of three chapters. The first two chapters are theoretical while the third chapter is a case study of New York Times newspaper's articles and headlines. The first chapter discusses the history of Islam in America, and it addresses the impact of 9/11 events on American Muslims relationship to non-Muslims. It tackles the definition of media including newspapers and its importance in shaping public views. It treats also famous newspapers in America, especially New York Times newspaper and its relation to Islam.

Besides, the second chapter places the facts behind the attacks of 9/11 and its naming. Moreover, it describes the representation of Islam in New York Times newspaper in pre and post 9/11 era according to previous studies and its significant in shaping American views about Islam. Finally, the third chapter analyzes the representation of Islam and American Muslims in the United States of America, according to New York Times newspaper, before, during, and after 9/11 attacks.

Chapter One:

Definitions of Terms

Chapter One:

1. Introduction
2. Definition of Islam
3. The United States of America
4. Muslims in the United States
 - a. A brief History of Islam in the United States
 - b. Muslims in the United States
5. Digital Media
6. Definition of Newspapers
7. The History of Newspapers in the United States
8. Famous Newspapers in USA
9. New York Times Newspaper
10. New York Times and Islam
11. Newspaper: its relevance and importance in shaping people views
12. Conclusion

1. Introduction

Chapter one discusses the status of Muslims in the United States and how the event of 9/11 did influence their relationship with the Americans. It also tackles the definition of newspapers and their history in the USA. Furthermore, it presents some of the famous American newspapers and explains the relationship of Islam and one of the most popular news papers in America New York times.

2. Definition of Islam

According to Mahdi, Annemarie, and Rahman (2020), Islam is the second largest religion in the world after Christianity, with about 1.8 billion followers worldwide who are called Muslims. It is a great world religion promulgated by the Prophet Muhammad in Arabia in the 7th century CE. The Arabic term *Islam* literally “surrender,” illuminates the fundamental religious idea of Islam that the believer accepts surrender to the will of Allah (in Arabic, Allah: God). Allah is viewed as the sole God, creator, sustainer, and restorer of the world. In Islam Muhammad is considered the last of a series of prophets (including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Solomon, and Jesus), and his message simultaneously consummates and completes the “revelations” attributed to earlier prophets.

Malik (2008) defines Islam as: “an Arabic word which means, peace, submission and obedience. It also means acceptance and commitment to abide by the teachings and guidance of God”. Moreover, he claims that Muslims are those who freely and willingly accept the supreme power of God (Allah), and submit to the divine laws following the traditions of the prophet Muhammad peace be upon him. (p.02)

3. The United States of America

United States, officially United States of America, abbreviated U.S. or U.S.A. by name America is according to Handlin et al (2020) “a country in North America, a federal republic of 50 states, Besides the 48 conterminous states that occupy the middle latitudes of the continent. It is the fourth largest country in the world in area (after Russia, Canada, and China). The national capital is Washington, which is coextensive with the District of Columbia, the federal capital region created in 1790”.

4. Muslims in the United States

a. A Brief History of Islam in the U.S

When the first Muslims came to the United States is still unclear, yet some historians claimed that the earliest Muslims came from Senegambia region of Africa in the early 14th century. According to the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), When Columbus made his journey to the United States, it is said that he took with him a book written by Portuguese Muslims who had navigated their way to the new world in the 12th century. Other historians claimed that there was a Muslim guide named Istafan who accompanied the Spanish to the new world in the early 16th century in their conquest of Arizona and New Mexico. What is really clear is the arrival of the first wave of Muslim to the United States: African slaves of whom 10 to 15 percent were believed to be Muslims. Maintaining their religion was difficult, many of them had to practice their Islam secretly. Between 1878 to 1924, Muslim immigrants from the Middle East, particularly Syria and Lebanon arrived in large numbers seeking greater economic opportunities. During the 1930's Arab immigrants began to establish communities

and build mosques, then the United States had witnessed many and different waves of Muslim immigrants coming from all over the world.

b. Muslims in the United States

Lipka (2017) estimated that there are about 3.45 million Muslims of all ages in the USA, which represents about 1.1% of the U.S. population. This is based on an analysis of census statistics and data from a 2017 survey of U.S. Muslims. According to him Muslims will make up 2.1% of the U.S. population by the year 2050, surpassing people who identify as Jewish on the basis of religion as the second-largest faith group in the country.

A Pew Research Center survey conducted in 2017 asked Americans to rate members of nine religious groups from 0 to 100, where 0 reflects the coldest, most negative possible rating and 100 the warmest, most positive rating. Americans gave Muslims an average rating of 48 degrees, similar to atheists (50). Americans view more warmly the seven other religious groups mentioned in the survey, but views toward Muslims are now warmer than they were a few years ago; in 2014, U.S. adults gave Muslims an average rating of 40 degrees in a similar survey. Half of Muslim Americans say it has become harder to be Muslim in the U.S. in recent years. And 48% say they have experienced discrimination. But alongside these reports of discrimination, a similar share (49%) of Muslim Americans say they have been supported by Non-Muslim American, and 55% think Americans in general are friendly toward U.S. Muslims, compared with just 14% who say they are unfriendly (as cited in Lipka, 2017).

5. Digital Media

At the turn of the century, the revolution in the new mass communication technologies has significantly challenged and provided alternative source of information to reach a new and a wider audience. Accordingly, Fuchs defined social media as: “the collection of software that

enables individuals and communities to gather, communicate, and share” (2014, p. 98, Boyd, 2009; Veblen, 1965). He also and subsequently defined media as: “techno-social systems, in which information and communication technologies enable and constrain human activities that create knowledge that is produced, distributed and consumed with the help of technologies in a dynamic and reflexive process that connects technological structures and human agency”(2014, p.103).

Hence, the combination of the Audio-Visual power of print newspaper, and the interactive power of computer, extraordinarily, enabled and increased the transmission of image, news or information in real time to hundreds of millions of people worldwide, and the world is being drawn into a single technological village and culture (Ahlqvist et al., 2008).

Recently, the term media coined hand in hand with 'web' that is worldwide web applications. Similarly, O'Reilly stated that: “web is a set of economic, social and technology trends that collectively form the basis for the next generation of the internet” (as cited in Sankar & Boushard, 2009).

Media is subdivided into two major categories which are: the traditional "print media" and the "electronic media" platforms. The former includes newspaper, magazines, books, and all printed materials that reproduce, using ink, text and image on paper. The latter are all the means of sharing information via mass communication, except the print media, such as broadcast media: TV and radio, films, cinema, as well as video games; digital media such as: internet, mobile applications (Van De Dock, et al., 2004) including: email, websites, social media outlets: Facebook, Tweeter, YouTube, Instagram.

6. Definition of Newspapers

According to Collins Dictionary a newspaper is “a publication consisting of number of large sheets of folded paper, on which news, advertisements, and other information is printed”. Some of the most popular newspapers are the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post, and the New York Times. It began circulating in the 17th century.

Oxford dictionary states that a newspaper is: “a set of large printed sheets of paper containing news, articles, and advertisements; published every day or every week”.

Cambridge dictionary defines a newspaper as: “a regularly printed document consisting of large sheets of paper that are folded together, or a website, containing news reports, articles, photographs and advertisements”.

7. The History of Newspapers in the United States

The history of newspapers in America started in 1619, at the same time as the tradition began in England. In the late 17th and 18th century, notices of different events were handwritten and posted in churches and public taverns (Mc Namara, 2019). In the early years of the United States, newspapers tend to have small circulation for several reasons. First, the price excluded many common people, besides most Americans tend to be literate. Thus, there weren't a large number of readers. However, newspapers had profound influence according to McNamara (2019) “the main reason was that newspapers were often the organs of political factions, some politicians were known to be connected with some newspapers”. As the 19th century ended newspaper industry had grown enormously. Americans became addicted to newspapers. These later were read nearly in all American homes. They had enjoyed a period of great success.

8. Famous Newspapers in USA

The print journalism, generally, is in decline today. However, journalistic routine has been dramatically transformed by the rise of digital media in the late 1900s that involve changes in the what, how, and why the communication and contents are accessed (Tauris & Ltd, 2015). Consequently, Thousands of newspapers are being digitalized and placed online.

Likewise, the very first iconic American newspaper is reported as follows: The New York Times, American Morning newspaper, published in the mid 19th century with circulation of about 76.000 paper within a year; Washington Post, the Daily, the second in position newspaper which published its first issue in 1877; the Daily Dramatic chronicle which eventually became San Francisco Chronicle, the third in position, published its first issue at January 16.1865. Similarly, According(lower case) to Audi bureau of circulation (2007), the highest-circulated print newspapers in the U.S are: the USA Today (Arlington, Va.), which sold around 2.278.022 copies per day; Wall Street Journal (New York, N.Y.), by around 2.062.312 copy, twice the sales of its nearest rival, Times (New York, N.Y.) By around 1.120.420.

Another statistic shows, According to Benton (2019), The most popular print newspapers in U.S by circulation that entitled as follow are: New York Times, the top, international distributed newspaper which sold around 1.113.000 copy per day (2002) statistics, and 2.7 million digital subscribers in 2019, The Wall Street Journal, and Los Angeles Times.

The statistics, concerning the newspapers, are chronologically and dramatically varied and there is controversial increase due to technological widespread. Beside,(besides) technological advances were routinely appropriated by the newspaper industry to broaden the geographic reach of a paper's coverage. The New York Times newspaper was chosen for this study due to

its international reach and elite status for influencing the standard of coverage for other media outlets (Ashley & Olson, 1998; Haigh et al., 2006; Ross & Bantimaroudis, 2006).

9. New York Times newspaper

In the digital era, the distribution of the news range from online platforms, to a whole applications on mobile or web including social media and others. Accordingly, the Times, the American Morning, Daily Newspaper, print and seemingly became digital, published in New York City in 1851. The nicknamed, The Gray Lady (Usher, 2014), published its first digital edition in 1995. Arguably, it is the 18th worldwide and 3rd in U.S ranked newspaper with worldwide influence and readership in the United States in particular. The 127 times ' Pulitzer Prize winning was established as a paper that would avoid sensationalism and report the news in a restrained and objective fashion. It enjoyed early success as. That is liberal, unbaked, sensational, credible and reliable newspaper, (Gansinger, 2017), more than any other newspaper. Despite Its strength in its editorial excellence _and it's archaic; it has sadly never been the largest newspaper in terms of circulation, according to encyclopedia Britannica.

10. New York Times and Islam

In New York City, the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon on September, 11th 2001 have given a massive a worldwide impact on people and the institutions' views, particularly newspaper as journalism considered the fourth estate that has the so-called power which is fearful to a high extent. In the aftermath of 11/9 attacks, the perception of Islam and Muslims has dramatically changed which resulted in Islam and terrorism becoming inseparable. In the days following the 9/11 attacks, the New York Times saw their average daily circulation go up by more than 130.000 readers, reflecting an increase in the demand for

information during times of uncertainty (Sulzberger & Lewis, 2001). It is not unusual that Islam and Muslims became categorized as more newsworthy following the 9/11 attacks.

The NYT is widely considered liberal when Islam is tackled. Jamal and Naber (2008) states that Since the attacks, Muslims have been frequently represented as the "others" the marginalized entity by the us print media, and have been increasingly representing them as if they are not true member of the body politic and community ,the marginalized. In doing so, the council of American Islamic-relation have been prompted to place numerous ads in NYT in the aftermath of 11/9 with photographs of Muslims of all ethnicities and color declaring them to be Americans. Hence, theories of power had adopted by the US government in the wake of 9/11, ubiquitous across much of the Islamic world, and many Muslims are disillusioned with the ugly things done in the name of their religion.

11. Newspapers: Its Relevance and Importance in Shaping People Views

Over the past century, most people in the western world have taken newspapers as an integral part of local life in keeping a more or less watchful eye, especially on those in position of power.

In democratic countries like U.S, The propaganda' power, the presentation of news in words, is primarily and by far in the hands of academics and journalists who frequently, collect, portray, and disseminate the news of the world from all places to all other places at once. It is, however, presented to the general public in just the way which pleases them the most and feed their enthusiasm. Accordingly, the newspaper important distinctly is much less impressive in being news gatherers or a business organism than, more effectively, functions as an elaborate and almost automatic "purveyors of opinion", conduct, and entrusted to the

readers of each (Veblen, 1965; Stewart&Carruthers, 1996; Anastasio, Rose, &Chapman, 2005; Brophy, 2005; Jacobs& Townsley, 2011). Bracci again asserted that “the widespread proliferation positions media as a cultural industry, producing a set of values and aspirations for consumers to absorb” (2003, p. 126, as cited in Valdivia, 2008)

Subjectivity, racism, stereotypes, misrepresentation or misconception almost accidentally, if any, on both sides, is slightly, and undoubtedly occurs which can reveal that news media including newspapers is an extension of governmental thoughts and ideologies whether misrepresenting or defending particular issues, However, depending on whether newspapers are privately or governmentally attached, the purpose of news publishing will vary accordingly; whether to entertain, to inform, or pursuing governmental goals and strategies (Abderrahmane, 1980, Pasle, 2002). Thus, the public opinion will also be shaped accordingly. In other words, and as far as public is concerned, newspapers importance arises from not merely news reporting, but consisting partly of an international system which work for the common benefit of a particular party attached to each individual newspaper, and shed light on a particular type of news and events, targeted toward securing the general and exclusive goals, if any, of each. It is quite unsuspicious that nearly all news in every newspaper are not merely guided but also agitated in term of sensationalism which intent critically to stimulate and influence public opinion in certain direction. Hence, interests, is nearly always determined by a newspaper prevision which has on a particular subject matter and is resulted in the editorial excellence and tactic in grasping public interests (Chomsky, 1967; Wintonick, 1994; Foucault, 1980; Kamalipour, 1995; Mullen & Klaehn, 2010). It is widely accepted that what people think about, outside of a firsthand experience, is shaped by newspapers.

12. Conclusion

Historical facts have proved that Islam is so old and has existed for a long time in America. It is considered as one of the major religions in the USA nowadays. Muslims in America represent the second largest faith group in the country. Despite these facts, the event of september11, 2001 brought major changes in the American and Muslims relationship.

Newspapers on the other hand have played an important role in representing Muslims in USA during and after the event of 9/11, and thus shaping their relationship with the Americans. New York Times is among the famous American newspapers which saw an increase in the daily circulation and was considered as a source of information during the time of uncertainty.

Chapter Two:

**The representation of Muslims in New York Times newspaper in the pre
and post 9/11 era**

Chapter Two

1. Introduction
2. The Representation of Islam in New York Times Newspaper in the pre 9/11 era
3. The Event of 9/11
4. September 11, 2001 and its impact on the American Muslims
- 5 .USA Newspapers Headlines on 9/11
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7. The Facts of 9/11
8. The Representation of Islam in New York Times Newspaper in the post 9/11 era
9. The Role of USA Newspapers in shaping American views about Islam
10. Conclusion

1. Introduction

The second chapter discusses the event of 9/11 and how it was tackled in the USA newspapers as well as the origins of its naming. It also deals with the representation of Islam in New York Times in the pre and post 9/11 era. Finally, it discussed the role of newspapers in shaping the American views about Muslims

2. The Representation of Islam in New York Times Newspaper in the pre 9/11 Era

In the American newspapers Muslims and Arabs have often been portrayed as wealthy, barbaric, violent, corrupt, dishonest, religious fanatics, ignorant and abusers of women. This stereotype is the result of the inheritance and embellishment of Europe's pre-existing image of Arabs (Parker, 2008). In addition, a study was conducted in 2018 by Bleich, Souffrant, Stabler and Maurits to investigate the news coverage of Muslims in the United States. They analysed 800,000 articles published between 1996 and 2016 by doing data base searches for the root words "Muslims" and "Islam" in dozens of newspapers from the United States. Interestingly, they found no significant differences before and after the 9/11 attacks. Overall, 78% of all articles mentioning Muslims or Islam have a negative tone. Mishra (2007) said that before the attacks of 9/11 New York Times was unfavourable in its representation of Islam with common themes of Muslims being radicals and fundamentalists (as cited in Ahmed & Matthes, 2016, p.231). Brigitte, Torres-Reyna and Nacos (2002) claimed that New York Times have published less stories about Islam and American Muslims before 9/11, these stories were more negative and less positive. Parker (2008, p. 21) said that: "the dominant theme of pre 9/11 era stories was of Arab American resisting stereotypes". Moreover, Wilkins (1995) did a qualitative and quantitative analysis of photographs published in New York Times between 1991 and 1993. The author concluded that the images of Middle Eastern

women during the period under study, constructed these women as passive, distant, and impersonal (as cited in Semaan, 2014, p.18). Artz and Pollock (1995) stated that New York Times employed culturally accepted anti-Arab images to promote the American offensive in the first Persian Gulf War.

3. The Event of 9/11

Four coordinated attacks were carried out by a group of extremists occurred on the morning of September 11, 2001. Nineteen men hijacked four commercial airplanes and crashed two of the planes into the upper floors of the north and south towers of the World Trade Center complex, and a third plane into the Pentagon in Arlington Virginia. The Twin Towers ultimately collapsed because of the attacks and the resulting fire. The fourth plane was crashed into an empty field in western Pennsylvania.



Figure 1 The Routes of the Four USA Planes Hijacked during 9/11 attacks

According to Bergen (2020), 2,750 people were killed in New York, 184 at the Pentagon, and 40 in Pennsylvania (where one of the planes crashed after the passengers attempted to

retake the plane). Police and fire departments in New York were especially hard-hit: more than 400 police officers and fire-fighters were killed.

Soon after the attacks, the world started questioning: who were the hijackers? According to the American authorities, the hijackers were Islamic terrorists from Saudi Arabia and several other Arab nations. They were financed by el Qaeda terrorist organization. The attacks were participated because Osama Bin Laden, the leader of el Qaeda, held negative beliefs about the USA. He believed that the USA was weak (Bergen, 2020). The key operational planner of the attacks was Khalid Sheikh Mohammed (referred to as KSM). Bergen stated that:

Khalid Sheikh Mohammed presented a proposal for an operation that would involve training the pilots who would crash planes into buildings in the USA and bin laden wove the attacks on New York and Washington into a larger strategic framework of attacking the far enemy (2020).

The 9/11 plot confirmed that el Qaeda was an organization of global reach. The plot was carried out across the world with meeting in different countries and by suicide operative from many countries.

4. September 11, 2001 and its Impact on the American Muslims

The attacks of September 11, 2001, were a turning point in the history of Islam in America. It was the largest attack on since the bombing of Pearl Harbour in 194. It had been carried out by a group of people who were acting in the name of Islam. It changed the nature of Muslim relations in the United States. Many Americans began to distrust, and even hate their Muslim neighbours. For their part, Muslim Americans tried to reassure their fellow Americans that they were as peaceful as any other Americans. They sought to educate their non-Muslim neighbours about Islam and reassure the public about their loyalty to the United States and

their love of the American dream. The 9/11 attacks, as well as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, also bred American interest in Islam and the Middle East, including in academia and government. Millions of Americans became educated about the religion, people, and traditions of Islam. Curtis (as cited in Williams, 2017).

5. USA Newspapers Headlines on 9/11

Many people considered 9/11 attacks to be the biggest and the most horrifying news story in their lifetime. Almost all people who experienced it recall when news around the world captured the terror and sadness people felt. Headlines screamed that this was “America’s Darkest Day” and that “Our Nation Saw Evil”. Most newspapers headlines on that day were turning to war as the major theme. The front pages of these newspapers contained headlines like: “Act of War”, “It’s War”, and “War on America”. On the other hand, New York Times newspaper underscored the impact the attacks had on the American psyche (Abadi, 2019).

New York Times front page headline was: “HIJACKED JETS DESTROY TWIN TOWERS AND HIT PENTAGON IN DAY OF TERROR”. Thus, it focused more on the concept of terror rather than war.



Figure 2 New York Times Front Page on 11/9.

6. The Naming of 9/11

On September 11 itself, the attacks needed no other names, it was sufficient to use “the planes” or “the towers” or even the “hijackers” to refer to the attacks. Soon enough, on the next morning the language used to talk about the attacks changed. New York Times veteran Bill Keller used for the first time the term 9/11. He published an op-ed piece on September 12, 2001 titled: “America’s Emergency Line: 9/11”. When he was asked about the naming he said: “The dual meaning of 9/11 was so obvious and inevitable that I’d never presume to take credit for it” (Lafrance, 2015).

Bonanos (2011) highlighted that in the early weeks of coverage the term appeared more in quotes than in newspapers own prose. He added: “that first month in the Times, the shorthand “September11” showed up just once, and 9/11 did not appear again”.

On September 18, William Safire published in the Times a quote that may mark the moment when 9/11 began to slip into the vernacular. He wrote: “No one in our city remains untouched. September 11- 9/11 has marked us forever”. (as cited in Bonanos, 2011)

In the next 19 years, 9/11 has become so infused with the cultural, historical, and political meaning that it is hard to unpack.

7. The Facts of 9/11

The world considered 9/11 as a central event in the history with many stories and numerous players. The facts below are taken from different media.

Spring 2001: “military and government documents are released that seek to legitimize the use of US military force in pursuit of oil. One article explicitly urges painting over the US’s actual reasons for warfare as a necessary for mobilizing public support for conflict”. (Sydney Morning Herald, 12/26/02)

May 2001: Secretary of state Powel gives 43\$ million in aid to the Taliban government. This follows 114\$ million given in 2000. (State Dept. Fact Sheet, 12/11/01) during the same month the US introduces ‘ Visa Express’ program to allow any Saudi Arabian to obtain visas from their travel agencies without the need to appear at a consulate in person. As a result, five hijackers use Visa Express to enter the USA. (Congressional Intelligence Committee, 9/02/02). Some of the hijackers made at least six trips to Las Vegas; they drink alcohol, frequent strip clubs and smoke hashish. (San Francisco Chronicle, 10/4/01, Newsweek, 10/15/01)

June 2001: Condoleezza Rice wrote a letter for the national security advisor saying: “it is highly likely that a significant el Qaeda attack is in the near future, within several weeks.” Rice will later claim that everyone was surprised by the 9/11 attack (Washington Post, 17/05/2002).

July 2001 by: Bin Laden received a kidney treatment at the American hospital in Dubai. During his stay, he was visited by one or two CIA officers. (Guardian, 11/1/01).

July 2001: A Phoenix FBI agent sent warning about Arabian men taking flight lessons. He suspected Bin Laden's followers and recommended a national program to check visas of suspicious flight-school students, but no action was taken. (New York Times, 5/21/02) The FBI and CIA have also ignored warnings from the Taliban foreign minister that Bin Laden is planning a huge attack on US soil. They failed to take seriously the warning about fundamentalists who are enrolling in American flight schools. (Independent, 9/7/02)

September 2001: A particularly urgent warning may have been received the night before the attacks, causing some top Pentagon brass to cancel a trip "a group of Pentagon officials suddenly concealed travel plans for the next morning, apparently for security reasons" (Newsweek, 9/13/01).

September 11, 2001: Illegal transfer of over 500\$ million may have been made through some WTC computer systems immediately before and during the attacks (CNN, 12/20/01). Moreover the entire USA was defended by only seven air bases and 14 military jets (CNN, 3/11/05).

December 2001: The congress approves a measure to allow the president to designate September 11 as a Patriot Day on each anniversary of the attacks. (CNN, 19/12/2019)

8. The Representation of Islam in New York Times in Post 9/11 Era

A study conducted in 2002 at Columbia University analyzed the largest newspapers in USA. The New York Times was among the newspapers analyzed in the study. The study focused on the portrayal of Muslims and covered the period from 2001 to 2002. The researcher found that New York Times published as nearly eleven times as many stories and articles about Arabs and Muslims in the six month after 9/11 than in the six month before the

attacks. These articles portrayed Muslims in more positive and less negative image following the event of 9/11 (Parker, 2008, p.20)

Weston (2003) determined that: “Muslims were depicted sympathetically as victims, loyal patriotic members of the society and as targets of government detentions”. He argued that New York Times articles failed to depict the richness of Arab Muslims culture (as cited in Parker, 2008).

Mishra (2006) analyzed the representation of Muslim men and women in the New York Times articles between 2001 and 2003. He found that The New York Times highlighted acts of hatred and violence committed against Muslims women living in the USA after 9/11 attacks. However, New York Times coverage of Muslim men frequently included stories about violence, terrorism, Islamic resurgence and illegal immigration. He claimed that New York Times articles pointed out that Muslims were facing a “quiet but persistent discrimination against them in their everyday social transactions”. Eltantawy (2007) argued that not all articles tend to portray Muslim women as victims and oppressed entities, there are other articles which introduce readers to independent and self-reliant Muslim women who have active role in the society and who are trying to help other women be successful (p.363). He concluded that the New York Times attempted to calm a shocked and confused community after 9/11.

Semaan (2014, p.26) explains that New York Times articles shed light on the actions of USA Muslims after 9/11, and they were trying to “accommodate and strategically adapt to embrace their American identity”.

Bleich et al. (2018) stated that New York Times cover Muslims devotion positively not negatively; they discussed their faith in a neutral or positive way. On the other hand, they found that journalists use the highest negative language in articles when they report news

about security concerns or foreign stories of Muslims that are likely to focus on violence and war.

Furthermore, Karim (2002), claimed that “several articles in New York Times on the post 9/11 era tend to quote hate speech by Muslim religious leaders and extremists without contestation” (as cited in Mishra, 2006). He added that many articles focused on the making of terrorists; meetings and active cells, recruitment and training.

9. The Role of USA Newspapers in Shaping Americans Views about Muslims

American’s understanding of other cultures and nations is impacted by the mass media. Mass media is comprised of newspapers, magazines ...etc. as a result most Americans are not familiar with the international issues and are generally more interested in national issues (Ghareeb, 1993). Lyengar and McGuine (1993) claimed that most American perception is highly influenced by newspapers. Many Americans have little knowledge about the Middle East or Arabs in general and most of the knowledge they have is from newspapers. Said (1997) argues that: “The image of Islam in the USA media has always been influenced by a framework of politics and hidden interests and is therefore laden with expression of unrestrained ethnocentrism, cultural and even racial hatred”. He characterized the image as involving “highly exaggerated stereotypes”.

Pintak (2006) added that after the attacks of 9/11, “USA media immediately fell back on the prevailing and stereotyped narrative about Arabs and Muslims” (p.39). Consequently the image the American have confirms inaccurate stereotypes of Muslims. One example is that Americans believe the terms Arabs and Muslims are interchangeably. Additionally, Americans are not aware of the Muslims contributions to their society throughout history (Suleiman, 1983).

Parker stated that: “An individual perception and the process by which the individual’s perception is influenced by newspapers greatly affect the views and attitudes toward Muslims and Arabs” (2008, p.19). Fadel (2002) conducted a content analysis of American newspapers in the three months following the event of 9/11; he found that the two top subjects mentioned in relation to Muslims were terrorism, Islamic fundamentalism, and extremism (p.451). Gomaa (2002, p.239) added that USA newspapers linked terrorism with the Arab and Muslim world 96% of the time; they indirectly declared that Muslim countries are a safe haven for terrorism and they are spreading a culture of violence all over the world.

Chomsky (2001, p.69) asserted that the newspapers in the USA constituted a well run propaganda systems with the capacity to drive people to irrational murderous behaviours. Thus he urged citizens to resist the notion of responding to terrorist crimes (as cited in Abdulla, 2007, p 1067).

10. Conclusion

September 9, 2001 is the never to be forgotten day by the Americans and also many Muslims around the world. This horrible and shocking event was reported by all newspapers which were trying to capture the terror and sadness people felt on that day. Some researchers have argued that this event has great impact on newspapers representation of Islam and Muslims.

Taking New York Times newspaper as an example since it is one the most popular newspapers in the USA, it represented Islam and Muslims in a negative tone before 9/11. However, after 9/11 New York Times articles tend to be less negative. They, according to many researchers, represent Muslims as victims specially women.

Chapter three:

Analysis of NYT Representation of Islam pre and post 9/11

Chapter three

1. Introduction

2. An Analysis of the representation of Islam in New York Times newspaper in the pre 9/11 era

3. An Analysis of the representation of Islam in New York Times newspaper in the post 9/11 era

4. The Findings

5. Discussion of the Findings

6. Conclusion

1. Introduction

The third chapter analyzes New York Times representation of Islam and Muslims in the pre and post 9/11 era. To do so we used a qualitative method in which we analysed New York Times' headlines from 1980 to 2009. New York Times Newspaper has been chosen for many reasons. It is considered as one of the three largest print newspapers in the United States, it has a national audience and a significant impact on the opinion of policy makers (Bleich, Nizar & Abdelhamid, 2003, p13). furthermore, karim stated that The NYT is not just a publication but also a major company that controls eighteen other newspapers throughout the United States , eight network television stations , two New York radio stations and over forty news related websites (as cited in Mc Cafferty,2005). The New York Times thus is influential for other newspapers. In addition, New York Times headlines have an echo in the web; they are followed by more than nine millions readers across the world which means that they have a great impact on news consumers.

2. An Analysis of the Representation of Islam in New York Times in the pre 9/11 era

Muslims in the USA suffered discrimination since the early waves of immigration. This was partly because of the negative and ugly stereotypes spread by the USA media. Shaheen (1983, p.328) explained how the American media negative stereotype of Muslims accompany a child from his early years to graduating from college. Many researchers have analysed the representation of Muslims in the USA before 9/11, most of them have found that Muslims were presented in a negative way even before the attacks of 9/11. Hashem (1995) did a content analysis of articles published in New York Times and he concluded that Muslims were portrayed as lacking democracy and modernity in addition to being fundamentalists (as cited in Semaan, 2014, p.14). Thus, New York Times is among the American newspapers that presented Muslims in a negative way; mainly as fundamentalists, radicals, extremists, and imperialists who threaten the American nation.

New York Times newspaper published many articles about Islam before the event of 9/11. One of these articles was published in February 2, 1981 by Beer. The article was entitled “Imperialist Islam”. In his article William claimed that: “Islam is widespread because it is fundamentally imperialist in nature: it did not convert the world from Spain to India by gentle persuasion but by the sword...” (p.18)

From this article we can see that William thinks of Muslims more in terms of fundamentalists and imperialists who used the power of sword to spread their religion all over the world. This stereotype of Muslims was mainly dominant at that time. There were many events before 9/11 that made the American think of Muslims as imperialists. William listed in his article some of these events:

...More recently, one need only cite the annexation of Chad by Moslem Libya and the oppression of Berbers on North Africa and the Kurds by Moslem Turks, Iraqis and

Iranians to demonstrate that Moslems can be just as colonialist as any European power ever... (p.18)

By listing these events, William was trying to convince people that Islam is imperialist even though only a minority group of Muslims who were behind these terrorist acts. He took these events and generalised the idea that Muslims are imperialists. Moreover, he compared Muslims to the European colonialists saying that there is no difference between them.

The same image of Muslims being fundamentalists was published in New York Times in August 6, 1985 by Augustus R. Norton. His article was entitled “Coping With Islamic Fundamentalism”. From the title we can see that Norton also describes Islam as being fundamentalist religion in his article he stated that:

...Spurred by the need to render complex events comprehensible, many scholars and policy makers have grossly simplified Islamic fundamentalism. Relying on demonology rather than analysis, such people frequently assume that the fundamentalists’ *raison d’être* is fighting the United States (p.23)

Norton assumed that the main reason behind the existence of Islamic fundamentalists is to fight the United States. By doing so, he supported the idea that Islam is a threat to the USA. He also believed that Islamic movements are another mysterious product of the in-scrutable East.

In (1990) with the emergence of Islamic parties in the Arab world, New York Times newspaper published an article written by Ibrahim. The article was entitled “Islamic Fundamentalism Is Winning Votes”. In his article Ibrahim talked about the Islamic forces in Algeria, Egypt and Jordan who have secured footholds on power at the ballot box. He repeatedly emphasised that Islamic parties are fundamentalist and they threaten democracy in these countries. He also described the USA fears from the elections’ results. He said:

... among the many unanswered questions, however, are how effectively the fundamentalists would govern if they were elected to full national power, and whether they would preserve democracy, given that their basic demand is for a guarantee that the country be run by their religious rules. (p. 05)

By asking such questions, Ibrahim doubted the ability and willingness of Islamic parties to preserve democracy. For him, running the country with Islamic rules means the collapse of democracy. Thus, he again emphasised the idea of Islam being undemocratic and fundamentalist. He also claimed that Islamic parties are famous with breaking their promises giving the example of Islamic party in Iran. He said: “what the fundamentalists share is a dream: to break with secularism and install Islamic regimes” (p.05)

Another article was published in (1996) by Sciolino. It was entitled “Seeing Green; The Red Menace Is Gone. But here’s Islam”. In her prolonged article, Elaine declared that America is lately confronting a common threat; that of the Soviet Union, the vanished communist system, and Islam as a newly born enemy. She claimed that when talking about the world’s safety Americans consider the end of the cold war. However, for her another threat has appeared which is: the Islamic holy war. She insistently makes a comparison between the red menace which has gone with the communist party and Islam depicting it as a threat and a danger to the western world. Islam, in her article, is negatively and violently depicted as a green menace, a fundamentalist in origin. It is equated to terrorism, extremism, and even aggressiveness, declaring that as soon as, the communist party, has collapsed by the end of the cold war; a new hysteria to United States has emerged. It is therefore as violent as the communist party, the nicknamed the red menace. Historically, the term red denotes the Soviet Union national flag, and menace refers to the communist and Islamic evil. She continuously reported the work of said Steven Emerson who believed in the “global Islamic conspiracy

against America". Furthermore, Elaine mentioned that some "French schools prohibited girls from wearing head scarves" and some countries refused to give Muslims the right of "citizenship" because they were said to be anti-American. She also said describing a Muslim sheik in her article: "... is he the emissary of global threat to America and its allies, or just another opportunist with a claim to God's truth, a band of followers and not much of future?..." (p.01)

The author mentioned also the Islamic movements that were happening at that time in Algeria and Pakistan and to what extent they are dangerous movements that threat the world's peace and challenge the western allies with these countries. He added that: "...The greatest danger to peace between Israel and Palestinians remains the Islamic radical of Hamas. And Iran has tried repeatedly to export its revolution..." (p.01).The author of this article thus emphasises the idea that Islam is a threat and is just as dangerous as the red menace.

In 2000, another article was published in New York Times; it was entitled "For Muslim Americans, Influence in Politics Still Hard to Come By". It was written by Murphy. In his article, the author attempted to remind Muslims that they can't be part of American political life because of their radical religious ideas. He accused them of condoning terrorism against Israel and of supporting Palestinian case. Muslims around the United States were reminded of how difficult it remains for them to make inroads into American politics and how dispute remarks about other parts of the world can derail the acceptance of Muslim Americans.

3. An Analysis of The representation of Islam in New York Times newspaper in post 9/11 era

After the event of 9/11 Americans discovered the attacks were planned and executed by several members of el Qaeda. The majority of them were Muslims. As a result, many Muslims suffered discrimination and assault.

The USA newspapers produced significant coverage of the events of 9/11. Moreover, many stories and news about Muslims were published in the post9/11 era. The coverage of events since 9/11 was colored by the attacks of that day. Beliefs about Islam and misconceptions about Muslims have been propagated in the United States via newspapers. According to Parker (2016) New York Times published as nearly eleven times as many stories and articles about Arabs and Muslims in the six month after 9/11 than in the six month before the attacks.

In the next morning after the attacks, New York Times published an articles that covers the 9/11 attacks, it was entitled “. U.S. Attacked; Hijackers Jets Destroy Twin Towers and Hit Pentagon in Day of Terror” written by Kleinfeld. New York Times did not mention the religion or the origins of the hijackers. It kept neutral on that day. The main aim was to report the terror and sadness felt by people on that day. The writer of the article successfully described the scene of the attack and the reaction of people who witnessed it. Thus, the first article published about 9/11 did not mention Islam.

In November 20, 2001, Petritsch published an article in New York Times which is entitled: “Islam is Part of the West, too”. The article was mainly about the debate that was according to him between them, the civilized west, and the dangerous suspect Muslims. The author called for rapid solution to close this debate. He said: “There must be a corresponding effort to close the rapidly widening gap between us and them, exclusion and alienation would only breed fundamentalist ideas” (p.09). He asked the west to accept Islam as part of their world and he stated that peaceful coexistence of Islam and Christianity is possible; it needs only the government’s support.

In December 15, 2001, Hammad wrote an article that is entitled “Muslim Women Are the First Victims of Islamic Extremists”. In this article Aleaya portrayed Muslim women as being the first victims of the attacks. She also explained that Islam is not responsible for the terrorist attacks; she stated:

Since the attacks of September 11, there has been a conscious or unconscious link in the minds of many that these acts were performed in the name of Islam. But this is not what Islam is all about... (p.04)

She blamed the Americans for accusing Muslims of the terroristic attacks. She described Islam as the religion of tolerance, and declared that misinterpretations of the Koran led to the spread of negative ideas about Islam which gave people the impression that Islam had never existed before. She called Muslims especially women To unite their struggle for peace, since with unity comes strength, and to install in their boys and girls respect for each other, tolerance, and the constant search for the truth through education and a culture of peace, so that history will be written through their eyes. Thus, this article gave a new image about Islam which is the one of good and tolerant religion opposing to the old beliefs that mainly described Islam as radical and fundamentalist.

Richard W. Stevenson, an editor in NYT, reported that Islam -like most religions- is a faith of ease, mercy, simplicity, harmonious in nature, and love in his article entitled “Treats And Responses: The White House”. As Ramadan Draws to close, Bush Praised Muslims for their spirit of tolerance, On December 6, 2002, just one year after the September 11 attacks. He literally proved that ,George W. Bush ,The president of United States himself, confessed his deepest, optimistic picture on Muslims and Islamic spiritual teachings in general.

First, Bush personally expressed his deepest sympathy, as he said “act of kindness and generosity” by Islamic faith in Ramadan (p.08). Additionally, the NYT journalist unquestionably manifested that the American president “warmly praised Muslims on their sacred_month of Ramadan and Id al-Fitr as well (p.18). He once again reported Mr. Bush statement which, “stressed that Islam has rich and peaceful history and many Muslims who live in United States make contributions throughout society” (p.18). Thus, in here he is urgently displaying the positive image of Islam.

It is, likewise, a peaceful religion that teaches tolerance not hatred, no doubt. Although misrepresented by extremists whom only so-called Muslims by name. Furthermore, Bush stated that Id al-fitr “is a reminder that Islam brings hope and comfort” (p.18). It even more confirms that Islam remains a religion of peace and tranquillity.

Moreover, despite the discrimination that Muslims have endured since 9/11, especially in America, Islam remains simply an innocent, ethical, and compatible religion, after all. The president himself often shows his sympathy by neglecting the concepts of extremism, terrorism, violence, and illegal things in Islam and its Muslims supporters. Bush ,then ,totally rejects that “Islam is intently militaristic”p.18 as well as he denied the radicalization in the name of Muslims ;by stating that Islam is a religion of humanity and freedom ,as it “affirms God's justice and insists on man's moral responsibilities”(p.18)

Another salient example is that of “The Freedom of the Hijab” reported on (July 13, 2002), by Nursat. In which she, first and foremost, constantly admitted that there are far greater challenges in the world and in her own culture that often show disrespect for a veiled Muslim women, such as injustice, discrimination, or hostility.

Nursat, in NYT journal, dreamed for implementing Islamic ritual practices at ease in the American society and elsewhere. Accordingly, she stated that head-scarved Muslim women have the right to protect themselves in a world that often stands over and again against Islamic practices in a way or another. Besides, Hijab is a symbol of respect to God, and a stunning sense of belonging to Islam. That is, a personal choice between Muslim women and her God. She continued her discussion about Muslim women stating that neither the way they look like nor their faith can define them.

Liberating Muslim women from anti-Muslim sentiments is also a concern. First, she rejected that hijab or a headscarf could be either fundamentalist, or conveying violence.

Similarly, the American journalist declared that “my hijab liberates me”; I see hijab as the freedom to regard my body as my own concern”; for protecting her personal liberty in a world that is immersed with sexuality. Next, Muslim women were prompted to strive for their own rights in order to clear the misconception that they are enduring.

Despite, she noted, the custom of covering one's head is practiced in many varied religions; Muslim women then could keep their beautiful headscarves which seem unfair in some western societies whom she did not care about at all. In fact, in order “to protect my femininity”, she said, “I control what you see in my body”; as, according to Nursat, it is a personal right and freedom that Islam has totally saved. She indeed encouraged Muslim women to break all stereotypes, oppression, barriers and prejudices that are irrationally associated with.

Eight years after September 11, 2001 an article was published by Ralph Blumenthal and Sharaf Mowjood in December 8, 2009. The article was entitled “Muslim Prayers and Renewal near Ground Zero”. The journalist describes how Muslims built a prayer space near to zero ground where the attacks of 9/11 took place. He stated that the building has no sign that hints at its use as a Muslim prayer space but according to him: “these modest beginnings point to a far grander vision: an Islamic building center near the city’s most hallowed piece of land that would stand as one of ground zero’s more unexpected and striking neighbours”. The journalist declared that this building sends the opposite statement to what happened in 9/11. He added that: “New York Muslims have as much of a commitment to rebuilding New York as anybody”. He also suggested that this idea of building a cultural center would strengthen ties between Muslims and other people of all faiths. Moreover, the journalist reported how the imam Feisal had helped agents to reach out to the Muslim population after September 11 and describes his efforts as being noble.

This article, thus, shows how American ideas about Muslims started to change and how they were being accepted as active members of the USA society, and how Muslims were

raising their voices and trying hard to fight the negative image and islamophobia by acts of kindness.

4. Conclusion

To conclude, New York Times representation about Islam have changed to the positive after the attacks of 9/11. The old Muslim stereotype is no longer present in the New York Times articles. 9/11 attacks, thus, had a positive impact on Muslims representation in New York Times newspaper.

General Conclusion

a. The Findings

Muslims have been presented negatively in New York Times before the event of 9/11. They have been always described as fundamentalists, terrorist, and radicals. New York Times at that time adopted the stereotype image of Islam. Almost no article published about Muslims in the pre9/11 era without the inclusion of words such as: fundamentalist, imperialist, terrorist, radicals, violent. Thus, the first hypothesis proved correct

After the event of 9/11, New York Times presented Muslims in a positive way. First, it reported the event in a neutral way, without linking them to Muslims. Its aim was not to pinpoint who the hijackers were, but to report the terror of that day and describe the scene. Few months after the attacks, articles published in New York Times about Muslims attempted to show Sympathy and acceptance of Muslims as members of the USA society. They were often described as being victims of the attacks too, since they were suffering from discrimination and prejudgement. New York Times in many of the articles that were published after 9/11, tried to report the difficulties faced by Muslim Americans, and the effort made by Muslims to fight the negative stereotype about them. Hence, the second hypothesis proved wrong. The 9/11 attacks' memory is positive turning point in the history of Muslims and Islam representation in NYT newspaper, by supporting freedom of worshipping, showing a positive image of Islamic issue, and declaring Muslims to be Americans as well.

b. Discussion of the Findings

New York Times presented Muslims in negative way long before 9/11 attacks. In fact Muslims have been suffering from discrimination since the first waves of immigration;

because of many events and terrorist attacks that happened in the years before 9/11. At that time the majority of Muslims did not defend themselves.

After 9/11 attacks, many Americans blamed the Muslims for the attacks; as a result Muslims have been suffering discrimination and hate crimes. In fact, Muslims were the victims of these attacks too; thus, they have organized themselves in groups to defend themselves and to show that Islam is innocent. They became active members of the USA society; and they have contributed a lot in the development of the USA. Moreover, some Americans became eager to learn about Islam, and they defended the freedom of religions and supported Muslims. As a result; newspapers such as New York Times which is known for its credibility published stories about the difficulties faced by American Muslims and their contribution in the USA society. It represented Muslims for the first time in positive way.

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