



GRADUATE SCHOOL  
EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

East Tennessee State University  
**Digital Commons @ East  
Tennessee State University**

---

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Student Works


---

8-2015

## Media Representation of Islam and Muslims in Southern Appalachia

Saundra K. Reynolds  
*East Tennessee State University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.etsu.edu/etd>

 Part of the [Appalachian Studies Commons](#), [Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Ethnicity in Communication Commons](#), [Journalism Studies Commons](#), [Other Religion Commons](#), [Race and Ethnicity Commons](#), and the [Social and Cultural Anthropology Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Reynolds, Saundra K., "Media Representation of Islam and Muslims in Southern Appalachia" (2015). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. Paper 2574. <https://dc.etsu.edu/etd/2574>

This Thesis - unrestricted is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Works at Digital Commons @ East Tennessee State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ East Tennessee State University. For more information, please contact [digilib@etsu.edu](mailto:digilib@etsu.edu).

# Media Representation of Islam and Muslims in Southern Appalachia

---

A thesis

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Liberal Studies

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Liberal Studies

---

by

Saundra K. Reynolds

August 2015

---

Dr. Marie Tedesco, Chair

Dr. Melvin Page

Dr. Melissa Schrift

Keywords: Islam, Muslim, Appalachia, Media, Religion, Content Analysis

## ABSTRACT

### Media Representation of Islam and Muslims in Southern Appalachia

by

Saundra K. Reynolds

Southern Appalachian attitudes about the religion of Islam and Muslim adherents are influenced largely by mass media's representations. With more than 80% of Appalachia's population following Protestant Christianity, exposure to Islam in daily life is limited. Media outlets offer the greatest exposure to information about the religion and its adherents. This thesis examined the region's media representation of Islam and Muslims to determine what images are most often portrayed. Research following a two-year span of reporting in Southern Appalachia studied substance, word frequency, imagery, and editing used in articles that focused on Islam and Muslims. Through the use of content analysis examining rural and metropolitan news circulated in the area, the study found significant use of negative words and phrases in reporting about Islam and Muslims. Newsroom editing of articles also had a considerable damaging effect on how reports represented Islam and Muslims.

## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the living spiritual force of wisdom that is my dad. To my mother, sisters, and brother, you have been a lifetime of encouragement and strength. To my children and husband, for the eternal support and devotion, you inspire me every day.

Everything good, just, and loved within me comes from these beautiful souls in my life. I will never know what one human could have done to be handed such an extraordinary gift from the gods as you for my family.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express how genuinely grateful I am for the enduring patience and support I have received from my thesis committee. My chair, Dr. Marie Tedesco, has been an endless source of wisdom and guidance. It would have never been a possibility that this thesis might be completed without her. Dr. Melissa Schrift and Dr. Melvin Page were influential in shaping the direction of my master's work and encouraging my education. The effort and dedication of all these brilliant scholars has forever changed my intellect, my worldview, and the future of my life.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	2
DEDICATION.....	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	4
LIST OF TABLES .....	7
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	8
Sources .....	12
Thesis Structure .....	14
Language Clarification .....	15
A Note on Defining Appalachia .....	16
Background .....	18
Muslims in the United States and Southern Appalachia .....	18
United States Political and Economic Relations with Countries of the Middle East .....	25
2. LITERATURE REVIEW .....	30
Religion in Appalachia .....	31
Perceptions of Islam and Muslims in the United States .....	43

Representations of Muslim Women in the United States .....	56
3. METHODOLOGY .....	68
Content Analysis .....	69
4. RESULTS .....	75
Quantitative Analysis .....	75
Article Frequency .....	75
Word Frequency .....	77
Qualitative Analysis .....	86
Description .....	86
Conceptual Analysis .....	94
Taliban Shooting Malala Yousufzai.....	94
Innocence of Muslims/Benghazi Attacks.....	99
5. CONCLUSIONS .....	119
REFERENCES .....	128
VITA .....	132

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Article Circulation Frequency .....	75
2. Article Types .....	78
3. 150 Most Frequently Used Words .....	79
4. Negative, Positive, and Neutral Word Frequency .....	85
5. 2012 Events Reported in Researched Papers .....	87
6. 2013 Events Reported in Researched Papers Ordered Chronologically .....	89



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

As a native of the Southern Appalachian region of Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia, my interest in understanding how people from my area view and form their opinions about "others" has grown throughout my graduate studies and continues in this research. I developed my understanding of how societies "other" through reading the work of Edward Said in *Orientalism*.<sup>1</sup> Othering represents the action of placing "us" against "them," with "us" being placed in the superior status. By emphasizing the assumed weaknesses of marginalized groups, argues Said, those in power, or members of the dominant group, assert that they have greater strength and authority.<sup>2</sup> My graduate research led me to study the perspectives of southern Appalachians toward religions and their adherents that are outside of the norm of Protestant Christianity. Residents in Southern Appalachia are overwhelmingly Protestant, with a mere 17% of the population claiming to practice Catholicism, Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, Hindu, no religion, or various other religions.<sup>3</sup> In the context of a majority Protestant Christian population, members of those religions making up the 17% could be seen as outside of the norm, or others. My study focuses on perceptions of the Islamic religion and Muslim adherents, the effect that mass media has on influencing beliefs, and the dissemination of information in a region where Protestant Christianity is standard and Islam is atypical. With limited opportunities for

---

<sup>1</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 204-205.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-4.

<sup>3</sup> Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey-Religious Affiliation: Diverse and Dynamic*, February 2008, 17-18. <http://www.pewforum.org/files/2013/05/report-religious-landscape-study-full.pdf>, accessed January 5, 2014.

Southern Appalachians to have daily observations of religious practices or interactions with practitioners outside of Protestant Christianity, where do prevailing perceptions about those religions begin and develop? Outside of education through a classroom environment or through individual learning, I argue that mass media is the leading "educator" for many inhabitants of Southern Appalachia. With more than 80% of the region's population identifying as Christian, and their having little interaction with Muslims on a daily basis, media outlets have the greatest opportunities for providing information to the public about Muslims and Islam.<sup>4</sup> Having a central position for providing people with news and information, how do media outlets represent Islam and Muslims, given that their audience is remarkably Christian? As such a significant social force, the potential for media's impact on shaping opinions and images is alarming. This thesis examines the representation of the Islamic religion and Muslim adherents by selected media outlets in Southern Appalachia to determine which images are most frequently publicized. The questions researched are as follows:

- How does media most frequently represent Islam?
- Are the media accounts impartial, or do they exhibit traits of Islamophobia?
- If inaccuracies appear, do they exhibit similarities, or are they exactly alike?
- Do outlets borrow from one another and repeat the same inaccuracies?
- Do the media descriptions show the ways in which the media in Southern Appalachia has an effect on perceptions about Islam and Muslims?

---

<sup>4</sup> Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey-Religious Affiliation: Diverse and Dynamic*, 17-19.

- How do the ways in which Muslims represent themselves differ from media's representations?
- Do rural media outlets have a propensity to demonize Islam and its followers, because these outlets consistently set forth Christian and conservative biases that they present as conflicting with Islam's beliefs and practices?
- If it is true that rural outlets vilify, is it the case that metropolitan ones, perhaps influenced by diversity of populations, display a nuanced understanding of Islam and respect for adherents of Islam?

In 2010, when national news focused on Middle Tennesseans' reactions to the construction of mosques and Islamic worship centers in their area, reports in national news portrayed Tennesseans as being overwhelmingly discriminatory, intolerant, and badly informed about Islam. However, when Vanderbilt University's Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions surveyed residents of that same region of Tennessee, the survey results found that national reports were misleading and inaccurate. While the national media focused on a small segment of the Middle Tennessee community that opposed the mosque construction, the reality was that the majority of the community's residents had positive or neutral feelings about the building.<sup>5</sup> The inconsistency in national opinion and news reports compared with the actual perceptions of Tennesseans led me to consider the role that media plays in shaping the opinion of Islam and its adherents in Southern Appalachia. Is the disparity between the reality of opinions and the reports indicative of media catering to the majority population?

---

<sup>5</sup> Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, *Results of January 2011 Vanderbilt Poll*, 4-5. [http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csdi/JAN\\_POLL\\_RESULTS.pdf](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csdi/JAN_POLL_RESULTS.pdf), accessed July 8, 2014.

This research evaluates newspaper reports that reach selected major metropolitan areas and those within selected rural communities of Southern Appalachia to determine the ways in which Islam and Muslims are represented. Reports and documents chosen are from years following the 2001 World Trade Center attacks. Publications, videos, and promotional literature distributed by Islamic communities describe how they differ or agree with mainstream mass media representations. How do Muslims portray themselves? What representations of their beliefs and lives do they focus on? Are there connections between the media's and their own representations?

Experiences of Muslim Americans vary greatly, contingent upon gender. Women's issues such as choices in clothing, autonomy, and women's civil and political rights, are topics frequently debated in Islamic communities. A distinct component of this research addresses current perceptions in Southern Appalachia toward women practicing Islam. Some of the questions to be considered are:

- How does media portray Muslim women?
- Do national trends that sensationalize certain characteristics of Muslim women's dress and freedoms extend to Southern Appalachia?
- The rights and freedoms of women in the religion have been controversial topics in recent years. What does media show as the status of social justice issues for Muslim women in the United States?
- Are hotly-debated topics about women's clothing, autonomy, and freedom in careers or marriages, as inflammatory in reality as they are in the mass media arena?

- Do Muslim women find navigating their daily lives to be hindered by media inaccuracies?
- Do such inaccuracies affect how they are treated in public and civic culture?

### Sources

Primary sources used in this research include major newspapers from cities in Southern Appalachia, populations of which reach 100,000 and above, as well as newspapers reaching small towns and rural areas with populations which range from 50,000 to 100,000.<sup>6</sup> The types of articles used from those newspapers are featured stories, reported news, editorials and other types of opinion pieces, and advertisements relating to Islam or Muslims. Primary source newspapers include the *Greenville News* and *Spartanburg Herald Journal* from South Carolina, the *Kingsport Times News*, *Johnson City Press*, and *Knoxville News Sentinel* from Tennessee, the *Bristol Herald Courier* from Virginia, Asheville's *Citizen Times News* from North Carolina, and the *Charleston Gazette* from West Virginia.

Another primary source used was the Association of Religion Data Archives. The archives have research listing metropolitan and micropolitan areas in the country along

---

<sup>6</sup> Paul Mackun and Steve Wilson, *Population Distribution and Change: 2000 to 2010*, 2010 Census Briefs, Washington: United States Census Bureau, March 2011, <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-01.pdf>. This research followed Census Bureau definitions for population data. Cities with a population of 100,000 or above included Knoxville, Tennessee; Charleston, West Virginia; Chattanooga, Tennessee; Asheville, North Carolina; the combined metropolitan region of Greenville and Spartanburg, South Carolina; and the collective area of Tri Cities, Tennessee/Virginia. Those areas considered small towns or rural regions had populations less than 100,000 according to the United States Census Bureau data, or they were communities far enough removed from the metropolitan regions to not be considered part of that population count. Areas where small newspapers were available for research in this category included Newport, Tennessee; Erwin, Tennessee; Avery County, North Carolina; Bland County, Virginia; Blowing Rock, North Carolina; Pulaski, Tennessee; and Wise County, Virginia.

with their number of adherents to specific religions. I accessed the data in its original format for use in the research.<sup>7</sup>

Secondary sources focused on topics of mass media's influence on Americans' views of Muslims, as well as on how those perceptions have evolved. These include scholarly articles that researched changes in public opinion before and after the September 11, 2001, World Trade Center attacks. Data and evaluation of the shifting nature of media discourse in the United States when it concerns international relations helped in understanding the articles researched. Some film and video archives were consulted that relate to the "othering" of cultures outside of a society's norms. United States Census Bureau data helped break up regions of Appalachia into exact sizes for data calculations. Polling results available from institutions of public research offered secondary information about how Muslims civil rights and as corroborative data for other findings. Selected films helped describe how Arabs have been portrayed in media and the media's effect on consumers'.<sup>8</sup>

Another set of secondary sources examines polls and surveys conducted by groups seeking to understand perceptions and representations of Islam and Muslims. Included are reports from the Pew Research Center, Baylor University, the Council of American Islamic Relations, and the Media Insight Project, among others. More detailed information will be given in individual chapters explaining and clarifying the sources.

---

<sup>7</sup> Roger Finke, Association of Religion Data Archives, <http://www.theARDA.com>, accessed April 19, 2014.

<sup>8</sup> Jack G. Shaheen, *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*, 2 ed. (New York: Olive Branch Press, 2012), 1. *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*, directed by Sut Jhally (Media Education Foundation, 2006), <http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/reel-bad-arabs/>.

## Thesis Structure

The chapters of this thesis begin with an introductory section that outlines the focus of the research and the reasons for studying media representations and perceptions of Islam. A condensed background on the West's relationships with the Middle East and Islam is included in the opening chapter, along with a brief history of Muslims in the United States and Southern Appalachia. The introductory chapter also presents the important questions being asked in the research. The second chapter consists of the literature review. Because Protestant Christianity is the majority religion in the region, it was important for this chapter to address previous scholarship about religion in Appalachia. The topics addressed in the literature review include the strong background of Protestant Christianity, as well as scholarship on religions that have been "othered" in Appalachia's history. This section of the thesis also includes a compilation of surveys and reports from organizations collecting data about Muslims in the United States, including evidence on such topics as stereotyping and media representations. The literature review includes work examining the media representations of women in Islam. Chapter Three discusses the methodology used in the research process, including details on gathering and analysis of data. This chapter explains variations in types of source data, along with essential elements used in content analysis. Chapter Four contains the findings from the analysis of the source data. The research findings report the data found in examining the newspapers articles, stories, and publications and what the trends in those findings indicate. The chapter includes any limitations found during the research, as well as departures from any expected outcomes. The final chapter gathers all the background information collected along with the research findings to

determine conclusions. This chapter incorporates surveys and reports from national studies that present how people in the country view Muslims, and how they are represented. Questions from earlier in the thesis are answered in this chapter and connections or deviations made with the research findings.

### Language Clarification

It is important to discuss language briefly, as a means of clarification. The terms "Islam," "Muslim," and "Arab" are words used as adjectives, epithets, and nouns. By their precise definitions, these terms are not interchangeable. "Islam" is defined by the *Oxford Dictionary of English* as:

The religion of the Muslims, a monotheistic faith regarded as revealed through Muhammad as the Prophet of Allah. Founded in the Arabian Peninsula in the 7th century ad, Islam is now the professed faith of more than a billion people worldwide, particularly in North Africa, the Middle East, and parts of Asia. The ritual observances and moral code of Islam were said to have been given to Muhammad as a series of revelations, which were codified in the Koran. Islam is regarded by its adherents as the last of the revealed religions, and Muhammad is seen as the last of the prophets, building on and perfecting the examples and teachings of Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. There are two major branches in Islam: Sunni and Shia.<sup>9</sup>

"Muslims," according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* are "followers of the religion of Islam."<sup>10</sup> The definition of "Arabs" in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is "a member of a Semitic people, originally from the Arabian peninsula and neighboring territories, inhabiting much of the Middle East and North Africa."<sup>11</sup> Not all Arabs are Muslim. Not

---

<sup>9</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, 3rd ed., s.v. "Islam" (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), [http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american\\_english/Islam?q=islam](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/Islam?q=islam), accessed May 15, 2014.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, [http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american\\_english/Muslim?q=muslim](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/Muslim?q=muslim), accessed May 15, 2014.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, [http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american\\_english/Arab?q=arab](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/Arab?q=arab), accessed May 15, 2014.



all Muslims are Arab. Not all actions by a person identifying as Muslim are founded in Islam's teachings. The problems arise when language and words are interchanged without regard to their original meanings, and in a way that becomes engrained in societal language. The terms lose their meanings and begin to take on altered meanings. This is particularly significant in popular culture and mass media with the terms "Islam," "Muslim," and "Arab." Because media distorted the meaning of these words, using them in ways that strengthen stereotypes and reinforces negative images, it is critical to note the consequences of language in discussions about perceptions of Islam and Muslims. It is with this distinct concern in mind that I purposefully use the terms "Muslim" and "Islam" in this thesis. The objective is to be mindful of a Muslim person, as one who practices his/her system of beliefs as an individual and to be respectful to the religion of Islam itself without connecting it to, or combining it with, the actions of individuals, groups, or states (An anecdotal example of this is when the actions of an Islamic state become legitimized by the use of "Islamic" as a descriptor for "state," which then turns all that state's actions into actions sanctioned by the religion of Islam). I am also careful not to allow ethnicity, nationality, or race to become intermingled with descriptions about Muslim adherents, or the Islamic religion, except when quoting statistics or percentages (for example in the fallacy that all Arabs are Muslim).

#### A Note on Defining Appalachia

To concentrate on Southern Appalachia, John Campbell's definitive work, *The Southern Highlander and His Homeland*, identifies the portion of Appalachia considered the southern region as: “the four western counties of Maryland; the Blue Ridge Valley, and Allegheny Ridge counties of Virginia; all of West Virginia; eastern

Tennessee; eastern Kentucky; western North Carolina; the four northwestern counties of South Carolina; northern Georgia; and northeastern Alabama.”<sup>12</sup> In contrast to Campbell's work is the Appalachian Regional Commission's (ARC) work on sub-regions in Appalachia. ARC used Federal Information Processing Standard codes to identify "contiguous regions of relatively homogeneous characteristics (topography, demographics, and economics) within Appalachia. This classification . . . provides a basis for sub-regional analysis. ARC divided the Region into smaller parts for greater analytical detail and by using current economic and transportation data.”<sup>13</sup> ARC defines Southern Appalachia as counties in northeastern Mississippi, northern Alabama and Georgia, and counties in northwestern South Carolina. Much of Campbell's Southern Appalachia is considered South Central Appalachia when compared to the defined regions of the Appalachian Regional Commission.<sup>14</sup> The goal of defining Southern Appalachia for this research was two-fold. First, I wanted to include as many large metropolitan, moderate sized cities, and small rural Southern Appalachian newspaper sources as possible. To do this effectively, I consulted the documents made available by the Executive Branch of the President of the United States. This branch appoints its Office of Management and Budget to delineate and define geographical areas for use in federal statistics. The federal guidelines define a metropolitan area as one which

---

<sup>12</sup> John C. Campbell, *The Southern Highlander and His Homeland* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1969), 10.

<sup>13</sup> Appalachian Regional Commission, *Sub regions of Appalachia* (November 2009), [http://www.arc.gov/assets/maps/related/Subregions\\_2009\\_Map.pdf](http://www.arc.gov/assets/maps/related/Subregions_2009_Map.pdf), accessed June 6, 2014.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* A conglomeration of each definition of Southern Appalachia was used for this research in order to include as many large metropolitan, moderate sized cities, and small rural southern Appalachian newspaper sources as possible. The working region included southwestern Virginia, north east Tennessee, south east Tennessee, western North Carolina, north west South Carolina, northern Georgia, and West Virginia. The goal being to compile a middle ground that fit within the Appalachian Regional Commission's definition and Campbell's definition.

"contains a core urban area of 50,000 or more in population," and a micropolitan area as one with "an urban core of at least 10,000 (but less than 50,000) population."<sup>15</sup>

Second, I wanted to reach a middle ground between the Appalachian Regional Commission's definition of Southern Appalachia, and Campbell's definition. An overlapping area that covered these guidelines as best as possible turned into the working region for my research. The working region included southwestern Virginia, the north and south eastern portions of Tennessee, western North Carolina, the northwest of South Carolina, northern Georgia, and West Virginia.

### Background

#### Muslims in the United States and Southern Appalachia

People of the Islamic faith have been migrating, relocating and settling on the North American continent for hundreds of years. In the *Encyclopedia of Muslim American History*, Edward Curtis elaborates on the early American Muslim history:

The first significant population of Muslims to arrive on American shores came as slaves, abducted from West Africa in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. Their writings in both English and Arabic are among the most important slave narratives in existence, documenting the history of the United States as a diverse, vibrant, and oppressive slave society in the 19th century. It has been estimated that at least 20,000 African American Muslim slaves gave their labor to the building of the American economy before 1865. Like other West African slaves brought to the Americas, they

---

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget (June 28, 2010), *2010 Standards for Delineating Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas*, Washington, D.C., [https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/fedreg\\_2010/06282010\\_metro\\_standards-Complete.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/fedreg_2010/06282010_metro_standards-Complete.pdf), accessed February 21, 2014.

also contributed their religious cultures, music, art, and agricultural know-how to the building of a multicultural America.<sup>16</sup>

According to Curtis, some of the earliest accounts of Muslims living in the Americas describe slaves being brought from African countries, and those who escaped from slavery to live in North and South America. In *Islam in America: From African Slaves to Malcolm X*, Thomas Tweed explains that like other West African slaves, those who practiced Islam did not land upon American shores with no background or history. They contributed their religious cultures, music, art, and agricultural knowledge to the shaping of America. Many African Muslim slaves preserved their Muslim practices regardless of the demands to discard them for the Christianity of whites. Muslim slaves were a minority in North America, with estimates ranging from 10 – 30% of the slave population. These slaves were distinctive, however, due to their education and diverse backgrounds, which gave them a higher confidence level than many of the other slaves. Their education and multi-ethnic backgrounds often found them being raised to become leaders among the U.S. slave population.<sup>17</sup>

There are a number of prominent Muslim slave narratives that offer clarification on life for a Muslim slave in the American colonies throughout North, Central, and South America.<sup>18</sup> One of the earliest known is from Job ben Sulaiman who was born in Gambia, West Africa, to a prosperous Muslim family. He was captured at the age of 29

---

<sup>16</sup> Edward Curtis, *Encyclopedia of Muslim American History* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2010), XV.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Tweed, "Islam in America: From African Slaves to Malcolm X" (Transcription of Lecture, National Humanities Center, University of North Carolina: Chapel Hill, 2004), <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/twenty/tkeyinfo/islam.htm>, accessed September 10, 2014.

<sup>18</sup> Muhammad A Al-Ahari et al., *Five Classic Muslim Slave Narratives*, (Chicago: Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2011), 7.

and taken as a slave to the coast where he was sold and shipped to work on a plantation in Maryland. Sulaiman attempted escape, but was captured again and this time imprisoned. During his incarceration, he met a lawyer who was sympathetic to his story and helped him rally his family's wealth and resources to buy his freedom. The two became friends, and later traveled to England where Sulaiman became a prominent scholar. His transcriptions of the Qur'an are still preserved in Oxford.<sup>19</sup>

Omar ibn Said was also born in West Africa to a wealthy family. He was an Islamic scholar who had spent twenty-five years studying with famous Muslim intellectuals before his capture. In 1807, he was enslaved after being taken during a battle in his city.<sup>20</sup> He was transported across the Atlantic Ocean to the United States where he became a slave in the state with the highest population of slaves at the time, South Carolina. Africans outnumbered whites in South Carolina during the early nineteenth century, so there was increased violence toward them in an attempt to control and dominate the slave population.<sup>21</sup> Said escaped from his first master in South Carolina and later wrote about how violent and cruel his master had been to him. He went to North Carolina where he was recaptured and again sold. This time, he lived out the rest of his life as a slave, dying in 1864. He is known for a many writings that are still kept in the library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Most notable is his

---

<sup>19</sup> Job ben Sulaiman, *Five Classic Muslim Slave Narratives*, 12.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>21</sup> Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996), 218.

narrative from his first slave experience in South Carolina describing his life and what it was like to be a slave in the United States.<sup>22</sup>

Outside of slavery, early immigrants varied between those coming to the United States with their families or to start families and settle here, and those just seeking work or education, but intending to return home. People of Islamic faith came to, and continue to migrate to, the United States for employment, educational opportunities, political and religious asylum, refuge from war torn or violent areas, and for travel or leisure purposes.<sup>23</sup>

The first key time period when large numbers of Muslim immigrants voluntarily came to the United States was a period of considerable migration to the country, from around 1880 through 1920. During this great migration, more than twenty million people came to the United States from throughout the world. In common with many migrants to the country during this time period, Muslims from all countries met with some resentment and opposition by citizens. Prejudice and preconceived notions about foreigners led some "native born" Americans to fear the possibility of losing jobs to outside workers. They also resented foreigners not being able to communicate in English, and engaging in cultural practices that Americans did not understand. In response to the overwhelming influx of immigrants, and in response to citizens' burgeoning xenophobia, the United States Congress began passing rules and regulations attempting to limit immigration. Some of the methods used to limit passage into the country were requiring superfluous taxes, barring criminals or those considered

---

<sup>22</sup> Omar ibn Said, *Five Classic Muslim Slave Narratives*, 5.

<sup>23</sup> Curtis, *Encyclopedia of Muslim American History*, Xv-Xvii.

"immoral," regulating the numbers of people who could enter from each country, and evaluating potential residents' education level or their perceived ability to function in society. For the time being, this slowed relocation into the country, as it did for many prospective immigrants from around the world, including countries in northern and eastern Europe, Japan, China, India, and many others.<sup>24</sup>

The next considerable movements of Islamic followers into the United States began after tensions in the Arab and Persian world caused displacement of populations. Throughout the early to mid-twentieth centuries, rising conflicts developed in the Middle and Near East with religious disagreements, ethnic and cultural differences, and sectarian violence, all of which helped maintain a steady emigration into Europe, and North and South America. Curtis states that "one of the consequences of the post 1965 wave of immigration was that the United States became the most religiously and ethnically diverse Muslim country in the world. In addition to South Asians and Arab Americans, the newly arrived Muslims included people from sub-Saharan Africa, Iran, Southeast Asia, southeastern Europe, and Latin America."<sup>25</sup>

The history of Islam and Muslims in the United States would not be complete without examining the movement of American-born person of African descent toward the religion and its adherents. During the early nineteen-hundreds, a number of African Americans established groups based on Islamic and Afro-centric teachings.<sup>26</sup> Mattias Gardell explains,

---

<sup>24</sup> Amadou Mahtar M'Bow and M Ali Kettani, *Islam and Muslims in the American Continent* (Beirut, Lebanon: Center of Historical, Economical and Social Studies, 2001), 103-112.

<sup>25</sup> Curtis, *Encyclopedia of Muslim American History*, Xv-Xvii.

<sup>26</sup> Tweed, "Islam in America: From African Slaves to Malcolm X."

A great number of new religious movements flourished in the African American settlements. Storefront churches were crowded together with the facilities of black Hebrews, Daddy Grace, Father Divine, the Moorish Science Temple, Ethiopian Churches, black Masons, Elks, and other fraternities. Sociologically, these organizations' appeal could be explained in part by the frame of reference they provided, through which the black experience could be understood."<sup>27</sup>

One of the earliest and most influential of these was the Islamic Moorish Science Temple of America. Its members believed that black people were of Moorish origin and that their original Muslim identity had been taken away through the consequences of the Transatlantic slave trade.<sup>28</sup> The Nation of Islam was founded by Wallace Fard Muhammed, who broke away from the Moorish Science Temple. The Nation of Islam took the idea of promoting black supremacy a bit further by viewing whites, and other ethnicities, as inferior to blacks. One of the more significant aspects of the affairs of this group was that it called attention to white supremacy practices and their harsh consequences for black people. Rather than promoting peaceful resistance, such as that encouraged later by Martin Luther King, Jr., members of the Nation of Islam promoted active, possibly violent, resistance to whites. Made famous by Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammad, the Nation of Islam's current leader, Louis Farrakhan, has toned down his once harsh rhetoric in order to appear more mainstream and welcoming, although a wide range of people still consider Nation of Islam a hate group.<sup>29</sup> Outside of organized groups, the general population of Americans of African descent who are Muslims

---

<sup>27</sup> Mattias Gardell, *In the Name of Elijah Muhammad: Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam*, C. Eric Lincoln Series On the Black Experience (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996), 49, <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/dukelibraries/doc?id=10198349>, accessed November 10, 2014.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 36-38.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 344.



continues to grow and constitutes the second largest ethnic group practicing Islam in the United States, with persons of South Central Asian descent being the largest.<sup>30</sup> The Pew Research Center studied the numbers and distribution of Muslims in the Americas in 2009 as part of its Religion and Public Life Project. The larger study, *Mapping the Global Muslim Population: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Muslim Population*, provides detailed data about Muslim populations in the United States.<sup>31</sup> It estimates that there are 2.5 million Muslims in the United States, or 0.8% of the overall population. Of these, about 65% of adult Muslims are not native to North America, but born outside of the country in African, Asian, and European countries. The 35% of native-born Islamic citizens in the United States are divided racially with 20% being African American and 80% from other ethnic or racial backgrounds. Among that 35% of Muslims who are native-born United States citizens, the greatest majority of them are converts to the faith, and less than one-third of that number were born into the religion.<sup>32</sup>

The Muslim populations in Southern Appalachia are similar demographically to Muslim populations throughout the country. Combining figures from the Pew Global Attitudes Project and the American Religious Identification Survey conducted by Trinity College's Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society and Culture, Appalachians

---

<sup>30</sup> Barry Kosmin and A. Keysar, *American Religious Identification Survey 2008: Summary Report* (March 2009), 17-18. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/metro/documents/aris030609.pdf>, Part III: Racial Composition, accessed June 21, 2014.

<sup>31</sup> Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Life, *Mapping the Global Muslim Population: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Muslim Population* (October 2009), 24, <http://www.pewforum.org/2009/10/07/mapping-the-global-muslim-population>, accessed March 7, 2015.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-25.

identify themselves as 82% Christian and 1% Muslim.<sup>33</sup> Information from The Association of Religion Data Archives for metropolitan and micropolitan regions in Southern Appalachia shows some interesting statistics about Muslim resident populations. The Tri-Cities metropolitan region, which includes Johnson City, Kingsport, and Bristol, contains 609 people of the Islamic religion. Knoxville and the Knox county area have 3,609 Muslims. Chattanooga has 2,156 adherents; however, no other cities fall under the southern Appalachia section of the state.<sup>34</sup> Other locations in Appalachia's south with metropolitan region data include Greenville, South Carolina (1,827), Asheville, North Carolina (288), Charleston, West Virginia (619), Roanoke, Virginia (6,872), Blacksburg, Virginia (3,686), Morgantown, West Virginia (308), Dalton, Georgia (762), and Huntsville, Alabama (924).<sup>35</sup>

#### United States Political and Economic Relations with Countries of the Middle East

The end of World War II left much of Europe in ruins and the United States emerging as the major international power in the West.<sup>36</sup> In regard to the Middle East, the United States had three main concerns: oil, Israel, and the Soviet Union, and these concerns have kept the U.S. involved in the affairs of the region ever since.<sup>37</sup> The first

---

<sup>33</sup> Kosmin, *American Religious Identification Survey 2008*, Part III: Racial Composition, 19.

<sup>34</sup> The Association of Religion Data Archives, *Religious Congregations and Membership Study* (Nashville: Glenmary Research Center, 2002), Section: Religious Groups: Data Sources, <http://www.thearda.com>, accessed February 21, 2015. It is important to note here that the largest populations of Muslims for the state of Tennessee reside in Nashville with over 9,000 people. Nashville, however, is not a city within the region considered southern Appalachia, so it could not be considered as an official part of the research.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Daniel Tichenor and Richard Harris, *A History of the U.S. Political System: Ideas, Interests, and Institutions* (Santa Barbara, CA, 2010), 239.

<sup>37</sup> Mike Shuster, "The Middle East and the West: The U.S. Role Grows," (August 23, 2004), *All Things Considered* Radio Podcast, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=3865983>, accessed June 10, 2014.

time the United States involved itself in political matters in the Middle East was during the 1940s when conflicts arose between Iran and the Soviet Union.<sup>38</sup> Fearing Soviet access to, or control of, oil drove policies and actions taken by the United States in Iran during the Cold War.

A continual point of contention over the years has been the United States' support for Israel. As Sheldon Richman states in his report for the Cato Institute: "It is no exaggeration to say that our relations with the entire Arab world have never recovered from the events of 1947-48 when we sided with the Jews against the Arabs and advocated a solution in Palestine which went contrary to self-determination as far as the majority population of the country was concerned."<sup>39</sup> As nationalism and independence grew in the area, the United States struggled to gain allies. As Richman explains:

When the awakening countries of the Middle East asserted control over their oil resources, the United States found ways to protect its access to the oil. Nearly everything the United States has done in the Middle East can be understood as contributing to the protection of its long-term access to Middle Eastern oil and, through that control, Washington's claim to world leadership. The U.S. build-up of Israel and Iran as powerful gendarmeries beholden to the United States, and U.S. aid given to "moderate," pro-Western Arab regimes, such as those in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Jordan, were intended to keep the region in friendly hands. That was always the meaning of the term "regional stability."<sup>40</sup>

Arabs and Muslims resented interference in their affairs by Western nations, especially the United States. Some of the political moves that caused instability were President Truman's support of bringing Turkey in as a member of NATO, President

---

<sup>38</sup> Sheldon Richman, *"Ancient History": U.S. Conduct in the Middle East Since World War II and the Folly of Intervention*: Cato Institute Policy Analysis No. 159 (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1991), 3.

<sup>39</sup> Richman, *"Ancient History,"* 8.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

Eisenhower's coup to topple Iranian parliament leader Mohammed Mossadegh, President Nixon and Ford's involvement in Israeli affairs with Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, and President Carter's Iranian hostage crisis.<sup>41</sup> The United States' actions, according to Mike Shuster, triggered the government to be "seen as being on the side of the forces of the status quo, the forces of conservatism, the forces opposing Arab unity and opposing the kinds of social change, social reform, even social revolution that many Arabs felt was necessary."<sup>42</sup> The presidencies of George H. W. Bush and his son, George W. Bush, brought deterioration in Middle East attitudes toward the United States as military campaigns into Iraq and Afghanistan caused further invasions of Middle Eastern lands, loss of life, and anger about American attempts at the "democratization" of their states.<sup>43</sup>

Global trends in trade, deteriorating international relations between eastern and western countries, and changes in how Americans perceive Muslims have led to consequences for all social and cultural groups. This is especially relevant for the history of Muslims in Southern Appalachia since the September 11, 2001, World Trade Center attacks in New York. <sup>44</sup> For decades, American citizens enjoyed comfort and safety from

---

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 19-20.

<sup>42</sup> John L. Esposito, *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 137.

<sup>43</sup> Shuster, "The Middle East and the West: The U.S. Role Grows."

<sup>44</sup> N.R. Kleinfeld, "U.S. Attacked; Hijacked Jets Destroy Twin Towers and Hit Pentagon in Day of Terror," *New York Times*, September 12, 2001, <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/12/us/us-attacked-hijacked-jets-destroy-twin-towers-and-hit-pentagon-in-day-of-terror.html>, accessed June 15, 2014. On September 11, 2001, terrorists administered coordinated attacks using hijacked airplanes to attack the two towers at the World Trade Center in New York, the Pentagon building, and another airplane which was aimed for Washington, D.C., but ended in the plane's destruction and killing of the passengers and crew members on board. The attacks killed nearly 3,000 people and were eventually linked to al Qaeda and Osama Bin Laden. The phrasing "9-11" in this thesis is meant to represent the entirety of the attacks and the repercussions surrounding them.

international terror within their borders. Since the Cold War ended with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, American citizens did not feel the anxiety and disquiet of living in a location accessible to attack from outside its borders.<sup>45</sup> The initial tremor of alarm and distress that stunned the country during the Trade Center attacks led to widespread skepticism about any ethnic or religious group seen as being responsible for, or connected to, the attacks. As information about the attacks came to light, those who carried them out were found to be of Middle Eastern descent.<sup>46</sup> The perpetrators' belongings held letters and writing that attempted to use Islam as justification for the violence, and the group al Qaeda claimed responsibility for organizing and funding the attacks.<sup>47</sup> Branded as a militant Islamic group seeking to wage a holy war against the United States, the connection of al Qaeda to the World Trade Center attacks, and its insistence that attacks against the United States were justified in the Qur'an, led Americans to be suspicious of Arabs, Muslim adherents, and the religion of Islam.<sup>48</sup> President George W. Bush's reaction to 9-11 was to start a "war on terror," with the intention of eliminating terrorist groups, particularly al Qaeda.<sup>49</sup> The results of those efforts, scholars argue, have set back America's attempts at gaining support in the region. As Jon Alterman stated during his discussions on President Bush's legacy in the Middle East, "The United States is far worse off in the Middle East than it was eight

---

<sup>45</sup> Esposito, *Unholy War*, xi-xiii.

<sup>46</sup> CNN Staff Reporter, "Hate Crime Reports up in Wake of Terrorist Attacks," *CNN Internet Archives* (September 17, 2001), under Section U.S. News, <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/16>, accessed June 15, 2014.

<sup>47</sup> Laurie Goodstein, "Scholars Call Attacks a Distortion of Islam," *New York Times* (September 30, 2001), under Section National News, <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/30/national/30ISLA.html>, accessed June 15, 2014.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> World Islamic Front, "Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders," *Federation of American Scientists*, February 23, 1998, <http://fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/980223-fatwa.htm>, accessed June 16, 2014.

years ago. There is an easy way to tell this is so: those whom the Bush Administration has most avidly sought to weaken and isolate are stronger than they were, while the United States and the secular liberals that the Bush Administration sought to nurture are weaker."<sup>50</sup>

A large number of non-Muslim citizens in the United States developed prejudices and mistrust toward people practicing Islam strengthened by the fears of additional terrorist attacks.<sup>51</sup> Like those in the rest of the country after 9-11, those in Southern Appalachia were deeply affected by the terrorist attacks, and became susceptible to the nationwide phenomena of skepticism and biased views toward Muslims.

---

<sup>50</sup> Jon Alterman, "Middle East Strategy at Harvard: The Bush Administration's Legacy in the Middle East" (Lecture Podcast), October 21, 2008, Center for Strategic and International Studies, <http://csis.org/publication/bush-administrations-legacy-middle-east>, accessed June 30, 2014.

<sup>51</sup> CNN Staff Reporter, "Hate Crime Reports up in Wake of Terrorist Attacks."

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The topic of this thesis is how media represents Islam and Muslims in Southern Appalachia. As such, a summary of relevant literature includes topics related to background and context. The topics focused on in the literature review are the religious background of Appalachia, perceptions of Islam and Muslims in the United States, and the representation of Muslim women in the United States. These three topics are important for providing a distinct backdrop to the questions raised during the thesis research. Since the thesis concerns how Islam is being 'othered' by the prevailing religion, it is critical to understand the process by which Protestant Christianity became the dominant religious approach, and how other approaches (Catholic Christianity, Judaism, Islam) were marginalized in the region. The section of this literature review pertaining to perceptions of Islam and Muslims in the United States uses surveys, reports, and polls from the Pew Research Center, Trinity College, and other prominent organizations to show prevailing opinions throughout the country. This segment also includes studies and analysis from Islamic groups, such as the Council on American-Islamic Relations, which give the experience from Muslim writers. As a means of comparison with the primary research in this thesis, this portion of the literature review includes scholarly articles about media perceptions of Islam and Muslims, and how media has affected those views. The final part of the literature review addresses western media's perceptions of the status of women in Islam and in Islamic countries. Because Muslim women confront problems marked by their gender within the religion, it was significant to address this topic in the thesis research. The previous literature available

for this segment includes work by feminist scholars, as well as surveys, polls, and essays from the Council on American-Islamic Relations and the Pew Research Center.

### Religion in Appalachia

Because Protestant Christianity is the majority religion in the region, it is important for this chapter to address previous scholarship about religion in Appalachia, as well as some scholarship on religions that have been "othered" in Appalachia's history. John Alexander Williams' book *Appalachia: A History* provides a good beginning analysis of the history of Appalachia. Using lines of travel as a means of guiding, he frames his stories and history of the region around roads, railways, pathways, rivers, valleys, and boundaries that connect Appalachia to, and separate it from, the rest of the country and the world. The history he covers ranges from stereotypes to politics, early economics of settlements and farming to complex divisions of counties for taxing purposes. Written in storytelling and oral traditions, the text is an easy read with detailed information of Appalachia from border to border. His book begins with how and where Europeans first came into the area and their contact with Native Americans. Williams relates the periods and processes that pushed Native Americans from the land from 1540 through 1840, and more importantly for this thesis, it is in this section of the book where he first mentions religion of the region in describing the Christianization of Native Americans as they attempt to survive in a society being invaded by Europeans.<sup>1</sup> It was a fruitless attempt, notes Williams, because

---

<sup>1</sup> *Appalachia: A History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 81.



from 1838 and onward "Appalachia was a white man's country, surrounded on all sides by Euro-American settlements."<sup>2</sup>

It was also during the 1800s that Bishop Francis Asbury spread the teachings of Methodists into Appalachia. The book has a long section describing Asbury's travels, the development of the religion in Appalachia, and interactions he had with representatives of other religions in the area. One unique experience Williams describes is Asbury's attending an 1801 revival in Tennessee which was east of Nashville. At this revival, speakers gathered from a variety of Christian backgrounds, including Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist. The revival, with its informal atmosphere, along with traveling preachers or circuit riders, such as Asbury, became a quick way to spread evangelical Christianity, states Williams:

Inspired by the revival movement, a relatively simple (the learned might have said simplistic) faith in redemption and salvation by grace spread through the backwoods regions of the South in the early nineteenth century, and from there throughout the nation until it was brought under control by emerging denominational structures during the 1830s. Deriving from an oral culture, the movement depended heavily on preaching, especially on 'text interpretation,' in which the stories of the Bible were retold vividly and reshaped into parables that applied to the life circumstances of the believer.<sup>3</sup>

In describing the years leading up to the Civil War, Williams focuses on political, economic, and geographic changes, but also does note that during this time "churches probably had the greatest influence on men and women alike. Religion became one of

---

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 99.

the identifying marks of Appalachian culture, but a religion that dwelt on the inevitability of sin also preached a gospel of salvation."<sup>4</sup>

After the Civil War and during the late nineteenth century period of industrialization in the United States, Williams claims that Christianity spread rapidly in Southern Appalachia. In mill villages and coal camps, churches were often company sponsored or chosen according to the owner's interests and preference. Company control of the church had a serious effect on how much influence the company had on the congregations and church leaders.<sup>5</sup> The early 1900s brought new groups of Protestants into Appalachia, which in turn, Williams explains, reinvigorated "a revival of the highly emotive, non-rational religious experience that had typified Appalachian mountain religion since colonial times."<sup>6</sup>

Historian Charles Wilson's article, "Overview: Religion and the United States South," provides an important reflection on how religions brought into the South were shaped and formed by the culture, geography, economics, and community of the region. Early Anglican Christianity was influenced by spiritual beliefs of Native Americans previously living on the land. Similarly, as Protestantism and Evangelical Christianity came to dominate the region, Wilson maintains they were influenced by other religious systems from Europe, through Baptist and Pentecostal movements, and by African spiritualism brought to the area through slavery. While accepting Christianity as their religion, African slaves held on to belief systems and ritual practices of their former cultures and those of their ancestors. These traditions blended together to create

---

<sup>4</sup> Williams, *Appalachia : A History*, 123.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 288.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

uniquely southern versions of Christianity.<sup>7</sup> Some of the progression of religions and blending that Wilson describes are similar to those that took place in the mountain South. The process of Christianization of Native Americans was significant in Appalachia. Wilson argues strength of Baptists in Appalachia and the noteworthy founding of the Church of God in in East Tennessee.

The Baptists, for example, represent the largest religious denomination in most counties of the South; but their greatest strength reaches from southern Appalachia, into the Deep South states of Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, into northern Louisiana and east Texas, and into southern Arkansas and southeastern Oklahoma—creating a Baptist domain within the US South, which is itself characterized within the national context as more Baptist than anything else. The mountains of east Tennessee were an important hearth for white Pentecostalism, giving birth to the Church of God, while the Deep South of Mississippi and nearby Memphis nurtured black Pentecostalism through the Church of God in Christ.<sup>8</sup>

One of the most important religious happenings in the mountain South occurred as part of the Second Great Awakening during a period known as the Great Revival. Wilson details the events leading up to the revival period, and notes that the 1801 Cane Ridge Camp Meeting in the frontier lands of Kentucky was instrumental in bringing evangelical Christianity to the Mountain South. The event brought 25,000 worshipers to Cane Ridge during that single summer, and evoked in followers a passion for evangelism. Wilson, in describing how the Second Great Awakening empowered Appalachians, he states: “they became the center of a more democratic religion

---

<sup>7</sup> "Overview: Religion and the US South," Section: Introduction (Mississippi: University of Mississippi, 2004), <http://www.southernspaces.org/2004/overview-religion-and-us-south>, accessed September 9, 2014.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

complementary to the politics of the early nineteenth century that empowered plain folks in the South and elsewhere.”<sup>9</sup>

Wilson discusses the effect that disagreements over slavery had on religion before and during the Civil War. Southerners supporting slavery and northerners opposing it brought disagreements in how the church dealt with policies impacted by slavery (such as whether a slave owner might hold a leading position in the church). Those disagreements created tension and eventually divided some southern congregations from their northern counterparts. Southern Baptists and Methodists withdrew from fellowship with the rest of their denominational counterparts in the country. "One group of conservative southern Presbyterians split from northerners in 1857," explains Wilson, "and after the Civil War a new Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America appeared. The Episcopalians did not formally divide, but a Confederate Episcopal church did operate during the Civil War years."<sup>10</sup> These conditions endured and created a changed identity for Christian churches in the South. As Wilson states, "the Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians of the South did not reunite with their northern coreligionists after the war, creating enduring sectional institutions that became perpetuators of a southern cultural identity."<sup>11</sup>

Wilson addresses the formation of Catholic and Jewish communities in the South prior to and during the Civil War. Both religions attempted to integrate into the region, but it was a struggle. Many Jewish and Catholic people went north when immigrating into the country, but many who stayed adopted pro-slavery stances. "Despite such

---

<sup>9</sup> Wilson, "Overview: Religion and the US South," Section: Introduction.

<sup>10</sup> Wilson, "Overview: Religion and the US South," Section: Becoming a Sectional Religion, 1830–1880.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

assimilation," Wilson argues, "intolerance of Jews was also a part of southern religious history, with Civil War frustrations leading to Jews' becoming scapegoats for other southerners."<sup>12</sup>

After the Civil War, African-American Christians found themselves in an difficult position among their fellow church members. Having attended church with white slave owners and supporters of slavery prior to the end of the Civil War, African-Americans felt the hypocrisy of preaching Christianity while enslaving blacks. Embracing churches based in the North, Wilson contends that African-Americans:

withdrew from the prewar, biracial evangelical churches in which they had once worshipped, creating their own independent churches. This occurred as a result of African American frustration with the unwillingness of white Christians to agree to a truly equal role in participation and governance of local congregations and ecclesiastical associations. The separation of white and black Christians in the South established a pattern of racially segregated worship that has long endured. Blacks now controlled their own religious destinies.<sup>13</sup>

John Inscoc's work *Appalachians and Race: The Mountain South from Slavery to Segregation* describes how the divisions in the South were mimicked among churches in the Appalachian Mountains.<sup>14</sup> Inscoc provides detailed accounts of the developments before and after the Civil War that led so many mountain communities in Appalachia to form African churches as offshoots from established churches. Some of the more

---

<sup>12</sup> Wilson, "Overview: Religion and the US South," Section: Becoming a Sectional Religion, 1830–1880.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> "Introduction," in *Appalachians and Race: The Mountain South from Slavery to Segregation* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2001), 11-12.

comprehensive narratives are in the development of the Baptist African Church, the African Zion Baptist Church, and the African Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>15</sup>

Critical to understanding current discussion of how Muslims are represented in Southern Appalachia is the concept of "the southern way of life." Wilson asserts that just after the Civil War,

whites saw their system of paternalistic white supremacy as the essence of a southern civilization, but the 'way of life' included countless specific attitudes and customs rooted in cultural beliefs and practices and reified as a constructed social identity. Religious institutions and leaders gave a spiritual gloss on the 'southern way of life,' infusing it with transcendent significance and blurring the lines between Christianity and southernism.<sup>16</sup>

The identity of a southern way of life spread into politics, the church, social groups, and all aspects of life for a person living in the South. A romanticized view of the South's history and what it meant to be southern developed during this time period, and has never truly vanished. Some progress was gained during the Civil Rights Movement, through secularization, and the modernization of the area to demythologize the southern past.

Marginalizing religions outside of the dominant Protestant Christianity continued after the Civil War and into the late nineteenth century. Catholics and Jews continued to have difficulty maintaining their identity in Appalachia. In Randall Miller's essay on Catholic identity, he contends that Catholics were subjected to a "cultural

---

<sup>15</sup> Joe William Trotter, "The Formation of Black Community in Southern West Virginia Coalfields," in *Appalachians and Race: The Mountain South from Slavery to Segregation*, ed. John C. Inscoe (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2001), 285-286.

<sup>16</sup> Wilson, "Overview: Religion and the US South," Section: Becoming a Sectional Religion, 1830-1880.

captivity" requiring that they go along with the culture of the South to be accepted.<sup>17</sup> Miller argues that Catholics attempted to find public acceptance by acquiescing to southern pressures and supporting southern positions on slavery.<sup>18</sup> Concerns about anti-Semitism in southern Appalachia mirror those occurring at the time in the rest of the nation's South. Deborah Weiner's book *Coalfield Jews: An Appalachian History* argues that the othering of Jews in Appalachia appeared to stem from a variety of sources. Some Jewish people believed that members of the predominant religion viewed them negatively: "anti-Semitism is more marked among upper-class Christians."<sup>19</sup> Other Jews saw the Mountain South as a closed community they did not fit into because of their religion. One coalfield Jew believed himself to be "a foreigner because [he is] Jewish. Anyone who is not a mountain person is a stranger."<sup>20</sup> Weiner notes that buried hostility toward Jews remains prevalent throughout the world, including Appalachia. "Not all labeling of the 'other' come from the Christian majority," she argues; "a cultural legacy of centuries of unease with gentiles could not be shed in one or two generations."<sup>21</sup>

The *Encyclopedia of Appalachia* is a collection of over 2,000 entries covering the Appalachian landscape, people, economy, cultural traditions, and institutions. Many articles in the encyclopedia assist in the purpose of this thesis. Deborah Vansau McCauley's entry "Old Time Religion" addresses stereotyping of religion in Appalachia.

---

<sup>17</sup> "A Church in Cultural Captivity: Some Speculations on Catholic Identity in the Old South," in *Catholics in the Old South: Essays on Church and Culture* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1983), 11.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> *Coalfield Jews: An Appalachian History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 140.

<sup>20</sup> Weiner, *Coalfield Jews: An Appalachian History*, 140.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 141.

Mary Ruth Coffman's "Catholic Communities" discusses the spread of Catholicism in Appalachia. McCauley speaks of the sensational descriptions often used to stereotype religion in Appalachia: snake-handling churches, raucous tent revivals, river baptisms, and Bible thumping, fire-and-brimstone preachers: "Their religion is deemed the product of illiteracy, anti-intellectualism, and ignorance. It is called a 'hillbilly religion,' clannishly sectarian and individualistic, prone to internal conflicts in an endless epidemic of split congregations that create even more small, peculiar, and uncooperative churches."<sup>22</sup> To the contrary, McCauley argues that serpent-handling churches and fire-and-brimstone preachers are rare, not usually affiliated with an organized denomination, and do not represent the majority of Christians in Appalachia.

Catholics have been a vital part of Appalachian communities since the early nineteenth century. Mary Ruth Coffman explains that Catholics have contributed to the advancement of education, health care, community, and the reduction of poverty. Coffman notes that leaders of the church appealed to Catholics that they involve themselves in the community religiously and secularly in ways that would help the people of Appalachia.<sup>23</sup> Her entry in the encyclopedia focuses on communities of Catholic orders in Appalachia, such as the Jesuits and Benedictines. To understand the history behind how Catholicism was spread to Appalachia, Bill Leonard's collection *Christianity in Appalachia: Profiles in Regional Pluralism* provides informative essays.<sup>24</sup> Leonard included an essay in the book by theologian Lou McNeil about the

---

<sup>22</sup> Deborah Vansau McCauley, "Old Time Religion," Rudy Abramson and Jean Haskell, eds., *Encyclopedia of Appalachia* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2006), 98.

<sup>23</sup> Mary Ruth Coffman, "Catholic Communities," 104.

<sup>24</sup> *Christianity in Appalachia: Profiles in Regional Pluralism* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999).



introduction and spread of Catholicism in Appalachia. Titled "Catholic Mission and Evangelization," McNeil's essay points to a number of early problems that made Catholicism ineffective in its early years in Appalachia, and slow to spread throughout the region. He argues that "ethnocentrism" of early Catholic institutions, and "elitism" of clergy hampered its early growth in the South.<sup>25</sup> Another contention McNeil makes is that Catholicism became identified "in Appalachia with a distinctly non-Appalachian cultural expression."<sup>26</sup> Clergy members trained only in seminary preferred urban environments with an established base of parishioners which caused difficulty for the advancement of Catholicism into rural parts of Appalachia. Relaying writing and stories from Charleston, South Carolina's first Bishop, John England, McNeil contends that it was the lack of evangelizing into the mountain South in the early 1800s that lost many Catholics to other faiths, mainly the predominate Protestantism which did offer missionary and evangelism in Appalachia.<sup>27</sup>

Another insightful work by Deborah McCauley about the history of religion in the Mountain South is her comprehensive work *Appalachian Mountain Religion: A History*. McCauley treats the subject of mountain religion and Appalachian people with respect and takes a scholarly approach to understanding the history. This approach seems intent upon carefully avoiding the stereotyping of mountain people, and attempts to reduce misconceptions about religion in Appalachia. McCauley's chapters are historical discussions about the development of religion, told through the telling of

---

<sup>25</sup> Lou McNeil, "Catholic Mission and Evangelization," in *Christianity in Appalachia: Profiles in Regional Pluralism*, Bill Leonard, editor, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 258.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 258.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 263-264.

specific people's stories. One of the ways that McCauley uses storytelling to explain an aspect of mountain religion is through discussing the evolution of Old Regular Baptists.<sup>28</sup> She begins the chapter with an explanation of how early Appalachian studies scholars from the 1960s and 1970s unintentionally led to misconceptions about religion in Appalachia. Mountain religion, McCauley contends,

was interpreted in the same terms as one of the key features of Appalachian traditionalism functioning as an internal technique of resistance to exploitation. The problem with such an analysis when applied to religious life distinctive to the mountain regions of Appalachia was that it misdirected attention away from the intrinsically religious character of worship practices and belief systems and made mountain religion a type of nativistic resistance to cultural change, a perspective that was very little improvement over the earlier portrayals of mountain religion as the result of having been locked into the past.<sup>29</sup>

Through an in-depth explanation of how Old Regular Baptists evolved, McCauley uses that history to carefully show the many layers of a single religion in Appalachia. She describes the philosophy behind Old Regular Baptists from "their Calvinist doctrinal heritage" to the influence of the "Great Revival's emphasis on subjective religious experience ('subjective experiences of grace') that is centered on the individual especially within a communal worship setting."<sup>30</sup> McCauley connects the philosophical concerns of mountain church traditions to how the people run their governments, how they socialize in their communities, and interact with their families. Far from being a simple "resistance to cultural change," or a group of people "having been locked into the past," McCauley shows a profoundly entrenched system of beliefs that guide followers'

---

<sup>28</sup> *Appalachian Mountain Religion: A History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 101.

<sup>29</sup> McCauley, *Appalachian Mountain Religion: A History*, 90-91.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

lives.<sup>31</sup> This portion of the book shows the central theme for her research: that Mountain South religious traditions are an equally fundamental part of America's religious history as Protestantism and Catholicism.

*Appalachian Mountain Religion* continues to examine and evaluate religion in the region with remarkable intensity and scholarly intent. McCauley's scholarly efforts are matched by her thorough covering of the Appalachian regions. Each chapter includes new narratives which connect real people and places to aspects of mountain church traditions, denominations, religion throughout the United States, community settings, and every aspect of how the Appalachian people relate to their religions.

In his piece for the *New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, Loyal Jones writes a summary of the status of religious groups currently in Appalachia. The piece covers scholarly research performed by Jones, Howard Dorgan, and Clifford Grammich. Appalachia, he states, has the same denominations of Protestant Christianity found throughout the rest of America, but in Appalachia there are groups of "sub-denominations" that have branched off and are typically independent.<sup>32</sup> Howard Dorgan contends The Great Awakening of the 1800s led to splits occurring within churches causing independent groups to break away or branch off into their own sub-denominations. He argues that disagreements over doctrine were the source for many of the splits. Dilemmas about salvation, predestination, education of church leaders, atonement, and mission efforts are among some of the doctrinal differences of opinion

---

<sup>31</sup> McCauley, *Appalachian Mountain Religion: A History*, 95.

<sup>32</sup> Loyal Jones, "Appalachian Religion," *New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 21.

in the "awakenings."<sup>33</sup> Sub-denominations developed out of the Methodist, Baptist, Pentecostal, and Presbyterian churches spread throughout Appalachia. Dorgan states that Germans settled into Appalachia bringing Mennonite, Lutheran, and Brethren churches and communities. While Episcopal and Catholic denominations exist in the region, he clarifies that those churches do not have the characteristic doctrinal differences found in the other Appalachian churches. He recognizes that there are some Jewish, Asian, and Middle Eastern religions growing in the area as well.<sup>34</sup>

"Appalachian Religion" addresses problems that many in Appalachia have had with outsiders coming in believing they needed to be saved or helped because of their isolation and ignorance. Mainline denominations are quick to renounce independent churches as unsupported. Loyal rejects this notion. Non-mainline churches, he asserts, provide "beleaguered people . . . a source of strength and reassurance of their worth, as havens from and strongholds against a troubled world and an economic system that has usually worked against them. No single description sufficiently explains the churches of the southern mountains. Appalachia is not homogeneous, and neither are its churches."<sup>35</sup>

### Perceptions of Islam and Muslims in the United States

There is a large amount of research available throughout the country regarding attitudes about Islam and the sources driving those opinions; however, little exists that focuses on the people of Southern Appalachia's perceptions about the religion. Most of the current research available focuses on examining viewpoints on a national level, or on

---

<sup>33</sup> Loyal Jones, "Appalachian Religion, 22.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 23.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

large metropolitan regions in the country with populations above two-million, such as New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago. As a means of comparison and understanding the current research available, this portion of the literature review is comprised of social science documents with articles that pertain to groups of people's perceptions about Islam, and how media has affected those views. The social science perspective and research provides an insight about how other persons in the country view Muslims. That information can then be compared to findings in the these research and results chapter.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), a non-profit organization whose mission is "to enhance understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding," researches and records data relating to changes in attitudes toward the Muslim community.<sup>36</sup> Their report, "The Status of Muslim Civil Rights in the United States," documents the fact that hate crimes against Muslims in the United States rose to its highest point from 2003 until 2004 with an increase of more than 50%. The report states that 80% of the crimes happened in only ten states, and only one of those states, Virginia, has portions of its state in Southern Appalachia. The incidents of increase in crime included police discrimination, religious intolerance, violence, harassment, and arson. This CAIR report "hypothesizes that the increase in anti-Muslim sentiment can be attributed to websites and radio programs whose content propagates feelings of hate."<sup>37</sup> This finding of the influence that media has on perceptions led CAIR to investigate further what propels Islamophobia.

---

<sup>36</sup> Council on American-Islamic Relations, "The Status of Muslim Civil Rights in the United States," <http://www.cair-net.org/PDF/2005CivilRightsReport.pdf>, (accessed March 15, 2014), 5.

<sup>37</sup> CAIR, "The Status of Muslim Civil Rights in the United States," 5-7.

"Same Hate, New Target: Islamophobia and its Impact in the United States," is CAIR's latest report about the problem. Citing a number of public groups and institutions as being:

At the center of pushing Islamophobia in America during the period covered by this report: Pamela Geller and Stop Islamization of America (SIOA), Robert Spencer and Jihad Watch, Brigitte Gabriel and Act! for America, Frank Gaffney and Center for Security Policy (CSP), Steven Emerson and the Investigative Project on Terrorism (IPT), Newt Gingrich and those members of Congress who called for investigation of Muslim Capital Hill interns.<sup>38</sup>

These worst offenders for spreading anti-Islam and fear inducing speech about Muslims are all very outspoken public activists, political actors, bloggers, authors, and speakers who use mass media outlets in television, radio, print, and the internet to promote their views.<sup>39</sup> To further emphasize the role that media plays on views that Americans have about Islam, CAIR documents another study by Gallup in 2009 that concludes: "Islam is not only the religion that is most frequently mentioned in television news in the United States, but also a significant share of the coverage is negative".<sup>40</sup> Gallup's report found that media coverage mentioned Islam 36% of the time when a religion was being discussed, more than any other religion, and that two-thirds of the discussion about Islam associated it with extremism. The research also found that Islam was referred to negatively 40% of the time, while Christianity was spoken of negatively half that much.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> Council on American-Islamic Relations, "Same Hate, New Target: Islamophobia and its Impact in the United States," Dec 2010, <http://cair.com/islamophobia-report-same-hate-new-target.html>, (accessed March 15, 2014), 3.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>41</sup> CAIR, "Same Hate, New Target," 23.

As a researcher in sociology, anthropology, history, and religious studies, Kambiz Bassiri-Ghanea believes much of the intolerance and misconceptions come down to the spread of mainstream inaccuracies. In *Competing Visions of Islam in the United States*, Bassiri-Ghanea states:

The media, by equating religious and national identity in its coverage of events in the Middle East, in many ways bear the responsibility for the general public's misconceptions. For example, the media has represented the conflict between Palestine and Israel as a political-religious dispute between Jews and Muslims, ignoring the fact that many Palestinians are Christian. Also, all Middle Easterners, particularly Arabs, are presented as Muslims, and implies that all Muslims are Middle Eastern.<sup>42</sup>

In, *A History of Islam in America: From the New World to the New World Order*, Bassiri-Ghanea maintains the negative impact that media outlets have had on perceptions of Islam in the United States. He also places a strengthened responsibility on the shoulders of political processes in the country for shaping the negativity. “Politically-driven discourses, external to Muslims' actual experiences, resulted in these judgments of Islam and America,” he contends.<sup>43</sup> The polarizing discourse of Islam versus the West, he argues, created a gap between the “stigmatizing context in which they were interpolated” and the truth of how Muslims actually live and worship.<sup>44</sup>

Of the sparse data available regarding perceptions of Muslims in Appalachian communities, a recent study by Vanderbilt University shows that despite some of the destructive biases shown on television, popular radio, and print, most Tennessee residents are accepting and neutral in their opinions of Muslims. The statewide poll by

---

<sup>42</sup> *Competing Visions of Islam in the United States* (Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1997), 75.

<sup>43</sup> *A History of Islam in America: From the New World to the New World Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 377.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 379.

Vanderbilt University took place in January 2011. Researchers at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions used random calling methods to speak with 1,338 residents on their home or mobile telephones. The responders answered a variety of questions covering the current political climate in the state and federal governments, immigration views, unemployment status, economic concerns, hopes for education and health care, and religious opinions. The study revealed that 58.6 percent of respondents believe Muslims should have the same rights as other groups to build houses of worship, while 35.0 percent believe local communities should be able to prohibit construction of mosques.<sup>45</sup> John Geer, a political scientist at Vanderbilt University, stated “the new findings show a more measured reality. Vocal minorities have a right to be vocal, but the people who make noise aren't necessarily representative of the typical person in the state. Public opinion looks a lot more extreme in the absence of polling data.”<sup>46</sup>

Another insightful study from the Council on American-Islamic Relations is “American Public Opinion about Islam and Muslims.”<sup>47</sup> This study’s goals were to understand Americans' current views about Muslims and the Islamic religion, to determine what could be the forces behind misunderstandings and prejudices, and to find the most effective tools for attempting to combat the misconceptions that are present.<sup>48</sup> The report found that 25% of Americans believe Islam supports violence, but

---

<sup>45</sup> Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions (CSDI), “Results of January 2011 Vanderbilt Poll,” <http://www.vanderbilt.edu> (accessed July 8, 2013), 4.

<sup>46</sup> Michael Cass, “Most Tennesseans Favor Muslims' Right to Build Houses of Worship,” *The Tennessean*, February 9, 2011, <http://www.wbir.com/rss/article/156371/2/Most-Tennesseans-favor-Muslims-right-to-build-houses-of-worship> (accessed September 15, 2013).

<sup>47</sup> Council for American-Islamic Relations, *American Public Opinion about Islam and Muslims*, (Washington, DC: CAIR, 2005), 2.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*



only 2% of those surveyed stated that they were familiar with the scriptures and beliefs set forth by Islam. A fifth of respondents reported they believed Muslims should be held to higher levels of restrictions and limitations than other Americans. The research found that those with the most biased attitudes were overwhelmingly “older, less educated, politically conservative, and Republican.”<sup>49</sup> One of the important goals was to explore ways to lessen misconceptions, and determine what might bring more Americans to understand Islam better. The findings of the study show that if Americans saw more Muslims openly denouncing violence acted out in the name of their religion that positive opinions about Islam would spread. Currently, only one-third of those responding noted that they have seen Muslim leaders condemn terror acts. The information gathered by CAIR also found that opinions would increase if Muslims showed more progressive attitudes toward women in their religion and a more positive view toward Americans in the Muslim world.<sup>50</sup>

El-Sayed El-Aswad's article, "Images of Muslims in Western Scholarship and Media After 9-11," continues to highlight the ways in which orientalism has negatively impacted the language and discourse of western cultural toward Muslims.<sup>51</sup> Expanding on Edward Said's version of orientalism, El-Aswad claims that the events of 9-11 created a new Orientalism that portrays Muslims as extremists, fanatical terrorists, oppressive with their fundamentalist readings of the Qur'an, and fascists. El-Aswad and the CAIR article "Same Hate, New Target" agree that some of the worst offenders of circulating

---

<sup>49</sup> CAIR, *American Public Opinion about Islam and Muslim*, 4.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

<sup>51</sup> "Images of Muslims in Western Scholarship and Media After 9/11," *Digest of Middle East Studies* 22, no. 1 (2013), 1.

wide-spread anti-Islam hate speech are Pamela Geller and Stop Islamization of America (SIOA), Robert Spencer and Jihad Watch, Brigitte Gabriel and Act! for America, Frank Gaffney and Center for Security Policy, and Steven Emerson with the Investigative Project on Terrorism. CAIR and el-Aswad list event after event stacking up a clear effort on the part of those media outlets to demonize Muslims, and delegitimize the religion of Islam.<sup>52</sup>

Edward Said argued that perceptions and understandings of the Arab world and Islam are artificial because they have been created by western governmental leaders with political motives toward the East. He uses the term "orientalism" to describe misconceptions about the East when "compared" to the West.<sup>53</sup> Said sees Islam and Arabs distorted in ways intent upon making them seem exotic, foreign, and strange. Americans' knowledge of Muslims, Said argued, is based on a long-lasting tradition of Eurocentric prejudices and bias critical of the Arab culture, Islam, and Muslim people.<sup>54</sup>

In his book *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, Said argued the ways the media in the West misrepresent Islam. He contends that western media filters all news about Muslims in a deliberate attempt to show only negativity. The book begins with a lengthy introduction which contextualizes Said's arguments by listing a history of accounts about Islam, Muslims, and Arabs by western and international writers and reporters. Said details event after event in which widely-read writers misrepresent, and even denigrate, the East and Muslims in favor of ideas of the West and Christians. The introduction explains that this

---

<sup>52</sup> El-Aswad, "Images of Muslims in Western Scholarship and Media After 9/11," 44-46.

<sup>53</sup> *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 13.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 39-40.

book is the third, and final, in a collection he set out to write examining affairs between Islam, the United States, European countries, and the ways that media has handled the writing and reporting of them. His first book in the collection, *Orientalism*, examined the deep colonial roots of east versus west attitudes. The other books in the collection examine the Western world's attempts at raising itself above the East, and what imagery and words were used to denigrate eastern people and cultures. Said argues that a "subtle and persistent Eurocentric prejudice against Arab-Islamic peoples and their culture" is the foundation of western thought about the East.<sup>55</sup>

In his last book of the collection, *Covering Islam*, Said examined contemporary events and, building upon the background he outlined in the previous books, scrutinized how writers reported the United States' citizens being held hostage in Iran from 1979 to 1981. The first section of the book is titled "Islam as News." Here he researched what facts are reported when a writer covers Muslims, Islam, or Arabs in national news, and most specifically, on American news outlets. He argued that the only time exposure is given to Islam, is when they can do so as a source of oil or as a source of terrorism. "It is only a slight overstatement," he stated,

to say that Muslims and Arabs are essentially covered, discussed, and apprehended either as oil suppliers or as potential terrorists. Very little of the detail, the human density, the passion of Arab-Muslim life has entered the awareness of even those people whose profession it is to report the Islamic world. What we have instead is a limited series of crude, essentialized caricatures of the Islamic world presented in such a way as, among other things, to make that world vulnerable to military aggression.<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, rev. ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), xi.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

In the eyes of American media, these two topics are the only newsworthy ones that might come out of the Arab world. Said explains that the United States media did not have the background of interactions with the East that many European outlets have, so they had no real experiences outside of terrorism and oil when they approached reporting events in the region. He contrasts American's limited knowledge of eastern countries and cultures, with that of other countries in Europe, like Britain and France, who have had centuries of familiarity.<sup>57</sup>

The second section of *Covering Islam* addresses how the media covered the circumstances surrounding the Iranian hostage crisis. Using the previous chapter's background of showing how inexperienced American media was with the East, Said built upon that by demonstrating how reporting evolved during the period. His goal was to show that these events, and the ways in which Americans reacted, were a seminal moment for shaping the United States' beliefs about Islam and Muslims.<sup>58</sup> This section of the book is significant for my thesis research. Said documents numerous examples of the largest newspapers and media outlets in America misrepresenting Islam using stereotypical language, and how that distortion led to an atmosphere of suspicion and hostility. Considering that these questions are exactly the concern that my thesis undertakes, Said's recording of the papers, stories, writers, and concerns they presented are a good insight for my methodology.

The final chapter in Said's book is "Knowledge and Power," researching the ways that knowledge can influence the power structures in the United States and the Arab

---

<sup>57</sup> Said, *Covering Islam*, 38.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

world. By manipulating what is seen and read, the media sways people into having unrealistic fears; they then take those fears to policy makers, pressuring them to act. Academicians equally influences and changes laws and legislation. Though critical of writing and reporting, as well as those academic persons claiming to be experts on Islam, Said used this chapter to encourage future scholars. He outlined ways of teaching and reporting with more knowledge and accuracy. His hope was that the future of writing about Arabs, Islam, and Muslims would become more balanced as populations of Muslims rise throughout the West, and as human interest about the East grows.<sup>59</sup>

An early perception of Islam and Muslims is found in Thomas Kidd's work "Is It Worse to Follow Mahomet than the Devil? Early American Uses of Islam." How were Muslims viewed by the earliest Americans? Kidd makes connections between modern thoughts about Islam and what early Americans believed to be true about the religion. Kidd claims that as early as the 1700s, American views and opinions about Muslims were influenced by print media and sermons.

It appears that the two main sources from which early Americans derived their impressions of Islam were the enslavement of Europeans, including North Americans, in North Africa, and widely circulated books and sermons related to Islam. Colonial North Americans, though living in a provincial society far distant from the physical residence of most African or Asian Muslims, nevertheless included them in their mental array of conflicting world religions. They were able to do this largely because of the ways that print allowed colonists to believe that they had legitimate and useful "knowledge" of Islam, knowledge that appeared regularly in the print cultures of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Anglo-America. Following Edward Said, this article sees early American uses of Islam as essentially discursive. Knowledge of Islam in early America represented a rhetorical strategy of power. Anglo-Americans used the knowledge of Islam that they produced both to reinforce the superiority of their brand of

---

<sup>59</sup> Said, *Covering Islam*, 173.

Protestantism over its challengers such as Deism or Catholicism, and to de-legitimize Islam and Muslims religiously, morally, and racially.<sup>60</sup>

Using publications from as early as the 1600s, Kidd shows some early portrayals of Islam as wicked, and a religion only for the ignorant and barbarian, as opposed to the depiction of Christianity as good and moral.<sup>61</sup> As a means of providing the context for a long history of Americans' bias against Muslims and their religion, Kidd's article investigates important thinkers and religious leaders from early America. Kidd's conclusions are based on the extensive scholarly works of eighteenth-century Protestant theologian Jonathan Edwards, politician Benjamin Franklin, Puritan minister Cotton Mather, and many other early writers. Considered to be one of the nation's first and most influential philosophers, Jonathan Edwards was renowned for his ability to influence American beliefs. Living through the first part of the 1700s, Edwards participated in the first revivals, and wrote many works still used today. According to Kidd,

Jonathan Edwards gave a great deal of attention to non-Christian religions, including Islam. Edwards' thoughts on Islam were not unique but only more developed than most commentators'. Edwards' interest in Islam had primarily to do with its place in eschatology, its inferiority to Christianity as a religious system, and its role in the ongoing debates with the Deists. He made Muslims prominent in his millennial theology, arguing that as the millennium approached they would be destroyed. In the "Notes on the Apocalypse," Edwards argued that Satan's earthly kingdom was made up of three parts: the false Christian kingdom (Roman Catholicism), the Islamic kingdom, which he called 'the kingdom of the false prophet,' and the heathen kingdom.<sup>62</sup>

Interestingly, Edwards' comment demonstrates the earliest bias against Islam, but also shows that Protestants viewed Catholics as corrupt as pagan. He preached that Muslims spread ignorance, darkness, and weakness, while Protestants brought truth,

---

<sup>60</sup> *Church History* 72, no. 4 (December 2003), 766.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 785.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 766.

light, and reason. Using Islam as the evil comparison to Christianity's good was a common practice in early America. Kidd tells of many prominent writers, Benjamin Franklin among them, engaging in this practice. Describing his writing as "the most famous in eighteenth-century America," Kidd explains that Franklin used the imagery of Muslims supporting slavery to influence readers into understanding readers into understanding his antislavery view.<sup>63</sup> By putting the words of proslavery supporters from the United States into the mouth of a Muslim, Franklin showed the evil side of slavery. Kidd's research offers a compelling look into the origin of early viewpoints about Islam, and their widespread acceptance as truth.<sup>64</sup> The accounts he gives could easily be seen in some of today's conservative writers and speakers, particularly since the terrorism of September 11th. As Kidd notes, "one can see still the dynamic tension between the religious use of Islam as eschatological enemy and the political use of Islam as a source of tyranny."<sup>65</sup>

Scholarly work done in southern Appalachia researching perceptions of Islam is found in the film *Muslims in Appalachia*. This installment is one film in a series of documentary films titled *Islam in Exile*.<sup>66</sup> The filmmakers provide research, historical background, and interviews of Muslims throughout Appalachia. The focus is to show how Muslims practice their religion and live their lives according to their faith while living in a region that is predominately Christian. The film does not focus exclusively on

---

<sup>63</sup> Kidd, "Is It Worse to Follow Mahomet than the Devil?", 766.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 767.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> *Muslims in Appalachia: Islam in Exile*, DVD, directed by Steven Martin, Michael Pinner, and Richard Schreiber (2003; Princeton, NJ: Films for the Humanities & Sciences).

problems that Muslims have within Appalachia, but rather on the overall struggles of being in the religious minority and integrating into the community.<sup>67</sup>

Christopher Bail's article "The Fringe Effect: Civil Society Organizations and the Evolution of Media Discourse about Islam Since the September 11th Attacks," researches current popular media discourse about Islam. Bail wanted to answer the questions about how organizations create changes in the culture and minds of people after a major historical event. From the years from 2001 through 2008, he examined messages presented by mainstream and fringe organizations about the 9-11 attacks. Using quantitative data, he found that while the majority of mainstream organizations publicized pro-Muslim language immediately following the September attacks and for a number of years thereafter, fringe organizations promoted anti-Muslim viewpoints by capitalizing on fear and anger of Americans. The sensationalist nature of fear and anger was captivating which led to repeated coverage by mainstream outlets. He explains:

Institutional amplification of this emotional energy not only makes fringe organizations visible but also creates a gravitational pull on the mainstream that restructures inter-organizational networks as well as the contours of discursive fields themselves. My theory of this fringe effect thus addresses longstanding questions about how discursive fields settle and opens new lines of inquiry about the ecological and evolutionary dynamics of collective behavior and cultural change within the public sphere.<sup>68</sup>

His research covered press releases from 120 civil society organizations, articles from *USA Today* and the *Washington Times*, and transcripts from three mainstream television networks: CBS, CNN, and FOX. He used plagiarism software to compare the

---

<sup>67</sup> *Muslims in Appalachia: Islam in Exile*.

<sup>68</sup> *American Sociological Review* 77, no. 6 (2012): 856.



data collected for trigger words and repetition, and then he created sociological models using probability and statistics methods to achieve his results. The models enabled him to watch the progression and evolution of the discourse.<sup>69</sup>

Bail's research methods are complex and thorough and offer this thesis a model to reach for in the analysis of the data collected about Southern Appalachian media. While his objectives for the research do not mimic exactly the ones for my research, he does find the ways in which media can be influenced while influencing itself. "My analysis," he concludes,

Indicates that public institutions such as the media play a key role in these processes by communicating the contours of the field back to the actors who inhabit it. These selective portraits of the playing field change the very nature of the game... media coverage may also enable fringe organizations to accomplish their political agendas. Similarly, media coverage may help fringe organizations shape public opinion...media enables us to imagine ourselves as part of vast communities—the entirety of which we can never meet in person. The media are particularly instrumental in the present case because of the immense geographic and linguistic divides that separate most Muslims and non-Muslims. These chasms are particularly deep in the United States, where a majority of people have never met a Muslim—even though Islam is among the fastest growing religions in the country. Although media effects are not always direct, the emotional resonance of fringe organizations may have a particularly powerful effect on public opinion because of the emotional bias of individual and collective memory.<sup>70</sup>

### Representations of Muslim Women in the United States

Experiences of Muslim Americans vary greatly depending upon gender. Male Muslims do not face the same issues as do females. Women's problems arguably are the most strongly debated topics of social justice in Islam. The rights and freedoms of

---

<sup>69</sup> Bail, "The Fringe Effect," 857.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 871-2.

women in the religion have been controversial topics in recent years. Believing they are following the word of God and presenting themselves as respectable women, many Muslim women wear coverings on their faces and heads known as hijab or burqa. The coverings have caused debate throughout the world, initiating regulations banning or governing them.

"Visible through the Veil: The Regulation of Islam in American Law," by Kathleen Moore examines current concerns surrounding public opinion about Islamic women's clothing choices.<sup>71</sup> The argument focuses on whether the First Amendment right to freedom of speech applies to Islamic women's choice of clothing. Using examples of cases that have been in United States' courts in the past, the article examines how the legal system handles religious matters in the civil system. Previous cases involving prayer in schools, posting the Ten Commandments in public places, and references to God on national currency or in national pledges, set the stage for examining Muslim rights to freedom of speech in their religion. For Muslim American women, these regulations become a concern when they are forced to choose between representing their religious faith through their clothing or following rules such as dress codes in schools or offices. The most interesting aspect of the article considers ways the courts can approach the line between upholding the constitution and keeping church and state separated, while not violating citizen rights.<sup>72</sup> As Moore notes, the public discourse has brought Muslim women's concerns into the public realm, allowing for more discussions

---

<sup>71</sup> "Sociology of Religion" 68, no. 3 (October 15, 2007), <http://socrel.oxfordjournals.org/content/68/3/237.full.pdf>, 246.

<sup>72</sup> Moore, "Visible through the Veil," 248.

and understanding. Moore emphasizes the importance of the position women's Islamic dress holds for the Muslim community:

As constitutional restrictions on accommodation of religion in the public sphere are loosened, the practice of hijab places Muslim women in the forefront of an effort to make Islam more visible, promoting a public Islam in a concrete and visible way via the circulation of Islamic symbols... The conception of a Muslim communitarian feeling, represented by the Muslim hijab, becomes deeply embedded in contests over the public/private divide, even in the face of sharply divergent and highly differentiated views as to the very meaning of veiling. While most Muslim women in the United States choose not to wear the hijab, the visibility of it as a focal point for controversy influences American perceptions about what constitutes Islam. The practice of wearing hijab and how it is understood in North America are contingent on the construction of a Muslim identity in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society in which secularism is a basic feature.<sup>73</sup>

The Council on American-Islamic Relations' report, "The Status of Muslim Civil Rights in the United States," also tackles women's concerns. Describing Muslim women practicing their faith, the report notes that some of the most common concerns women deal with are acts of discrimination due to their wearing clothing that identifies their religion. Describing which factors prompt discrimination against Muslims, the study shows that the third highest is women's Islamic dress. This CAIR report "hypothesizes that the increase in anti-Muslim sentiment can be attributed to websites and radio programs whose content propagates feelings of hate."<sup>74</sup>

In 2011, CAIR established a special division of research, the Center for Race and Gender (CRG). The center focuses on exploring problems faced by Muslims in America due to their religion or gender, and documents incidents of civil rights violations that

---

<sup>73</sup> Moore, "Visible through the Veil," 248-249.

<sup>74</sup> CAIR, "The Status of Muslim Civil Rights in the United States," 5-7.

occur to Muslim women. Each year's documentation shows that women are most often discriminated against because their clothing identifies them as being Muslim. When Muslim women have been fired from jobs, denied positions, or harassed, the studies show that 53% of the time, it is their form of Islamic dress which led to those actions.<sup>75</sup>

The Pew Research Center published an article titled, “Muslim Americans: No Signs of Growth in Alienation or Support for Extremism, Mainstream and Moderate Attitudes,” which covers demographics of Muslim Americans, their religious beliefs and practices, how Muslim Americans maintain identity, and how they assimilate into communities.<sup>76</sup> The report references polls and surveys about Muslim Americans' political opinions, social values, the challenges and concerns they face, and finally their views of extremism within their religion. The Pew Research Center study describes the sampling size and methodology used for these surveys as being able to:

complete interviews with 1,033 Muslim American adults 18 years old and older from a probability sample consisting of three sampling frames. Interviews were conducted by telephone between April 14 and July 22, 2011 by the research firm of SRBI. Interviews were conducted in English, Arabic, Farsi and Urdu. After taking into account the complex sample design, the average margin of sampling error on the 1,033 completed interviews with Muslims is +/- 5.0 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence.<sup>77</sup>

One facet of the research details responses by Muslim Americans on women's concerns, such as whether or not they should pray alongside men in mosques, if women should work outside of the home, and how often they should wear head coverings.

Interestingly, the surveys found that 45% of Muslim women, as well as 51% of Muslim

---

<sup>75</sup> Council on American-Islamic Relations, “Unveiling Justice,” <http://cair.com/civil-rights/civil-rights-reports/1997.html>, accessed October 7, 2013.

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.people-press.org/files/legacy-pdf/Muslim-American-Report.pdf>, 11-12.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

men, believed that women should pray separately from men when attending events at mosques.<sup>78</sup> The researchers found that "views on how women's prayer spaces should be organized also are related to views on the role of women in society more broadly."<sup>79</sup> There is a correlation between the progressive Muslims who believe that women should pray alongside men, and those Muslims who believe women should be allowed to work outside of the home. As stated in the research: "Among people who believe that women should pray in an area alongside men, 82% completely agree that women should be able to work outside the home."<sup>80</sup> The more conservative Muslims, however, are in direct contradiction. Those who answered that they believed women and men should worship separately, also answered that fewer women should work outside of the home, 64% compared to 82%.

The study goes on to examine Muslim Americans' feelings about assimilating into American society and whether or not they view modernity as an attack on the Islamic faith. "More than six-in-ten American Muslims (63%) see no conflict between being a devout Muslim and living in a modern society."<sup>81</sup> This could account for the data regarding Muslim women wearing scarves or head coverings. "About a third of Muslim American women (36%)," states the research, "report always wearing the head cover or hijab whenever they are out in public, and an additional 24% say they wear the hijab most or some of the time. Four-in-ten (40%) say they never wear the head cover."<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> Pew, "Muslim Americans: No Signs of Growth," 30.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 31.

Attitudes regarding gender appear to be very positive in light of this study. "Compared with Muslims elsewhere," it states, "Muslim Americans are more supportive of the role of women in society. Virtually all Muslim Americans (90%) agree that women should be able to work outside of the home. Most (68%) also think that there is no difference between men and women political leaders. These are not the prevailing views of Muslims in most predominantly Muslim countries surveyed by the Pew Global Attitudes Project."<sup>83</sup>

Dress distinguishing women within a particular religious group is not unique to Muslims. Women in Catholic religious orders often wear clothing that marks them as members of a religious order. These women similarly have faced opposition that resulted, in particular, from their dress. In their book *Mountain Sisters, From Convent to Community in Appalachia*, Helen Lewis and Monica Appleby detail the events surrounding a community of nuns who came to Appalachian to be active in rural renewal for the economically poor and socially isolated people in the region. The Glenmary Sisters' community was formed to reach the poor "in rural regions and to help rural people survive and maintain rural values so they might reinvigorate the church."<sup>84</sup> The most striking point to consider about the story of the Glenmary Sisters is in the unfair attitudes toward the women, when compared to those about Muslim women's dress. When the nuns wore the traditional habit, many respected them more for their devotion to God, but when they chose to alter or remove the habit, many, among them male members of the Catholic hierarchy, other nuns, and some community members,

---

<sup>83</sup> Pew, "Muslim Americans: No Signs of Growth," 7.

<sup>84</sup> Helen M. Lewis and Monica Appleby, *Mountain Sisters, From Convent to Community in Appalachia* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2003), xix-xx.

criticized them. Islamic dress for women is treated with an entirely contradictory view. When a Muslim woman wears the traditional veil or hijab, the community eyes her with suspicion and negativity. She is not given the immediate acknowledgment of having devotion to God, and respect and humility for herself, as are the Catholic women. The opposite occurs among Muslim women with employers, public places, and some cities requesting that they refrain from Islamic dress. It was more important to the nuns that they be able to continue helping the people of Appalachia, even if it meant without the official connection to the Catholic Church. Their religious clothing did not determine their identity in the community or their devotion to doing what they believed to be God's work. Muslim women, however, who choose to cover with anything from a scarf to full burqa are viewed by outsiders as oppressed, suspicious, or extreme fundamentalist members of the religion.<sup>85</sup> When choosing to wear dress which marks one as the member of a religious group, why do some regard Catholic women differently than Muslim? It is arguable that to American eyes, the dress of Catholic women is seen as marking her as special in her devotion to God, while the Muslim women's dress symbolizes oppression and inferiority to men.

*Muslim Women in America: The Challenge of Islamic Identity Today*, shows the persisting misconceptions that Muslim women face in the United States. The book traces images of Arab (and Muslim) females from 1888 to 1988, identifying several consistent themes, "from the dancing girl or prostitute to the anonymous, veiled, and

---

<sup>85</sup> Some Muslim women choose to wear clothing that covers their faces, heads, and bodies. There are a variety of options and styles Muslim women might decide to wear depending upon the occasion for the dress, the group of people they will be with, and their location. Islamic dress also varies from one country to the next. In the United States, the most regularly seen Islamic dress for women are: simple scarves covering their head and hair, a hijab which is a veil that covers the head and chest, and the less commonly seen burqa, which is an outer garment that covers the body from head to toe.

'primitive' woman. These representations differentiate the 'exoticized Eastern' female, marking her as essentially 'other' than the rest of the women in the world."<sup>86</sup> In clarifying the role western media plays in depicting women in the Islamic faith, the authors state:

Many times women have been the focal point of Western efforts to understand the Islamic faith, and yet Western images of Muslim women all too often have been distorted or incomplete. In popular Western media, such as movies and television, Muslim women are depicted as passive victims of masculine dominance, either fully shrouded and demeaned or semi-naked and kept in harems for the fulfillment of male sexual fantasies. Thus representations of Eastern women become objects of the West's "Orientalizing gaze," as scholar Edward Said puts it. Western perspectives on Muslim women historically have been based on portrayals ranging from sexualized women with bared breasts but cloaked faces, or wearing scanty harem pajamas and diaphanous scarves, to silent images of oppressed victims of male brutality. These accounts of the Muslim female have as much to do with defining the West through its opposition to the Orient—the West is democratic, modern, and a place where women are liberated—as it does with describing the Orient, which is defined as primitive, barbaric, and despotic.<sup>87</sup>

The authors argue that modern Muslims must battle through this skewed viewpoint when seeking to establish their own identity. Additionally, the book contends, a number of people in the United States see the veiled woman as being subjugated when compared to the "liberated" western woman.<sup>88</sup>

Possibly the biased viewpoint held about women in Islam comes from attempting to understand them through a Western, womanist scrutiny. In, *Creative Conformity*,

---

<sup>86</sup> New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, 21.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 22-23.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.



Elizabeth Bucar presents a new study for women in religion and gender studies.<sup>89</sup> Bucar, professor of religious studies at the University of North Carolina in Greensboro and scholar of religious ethics, gender, sexuality, and Islamic studies, advances feminist scholarship at the outset by admitting to lacking in her early attempts at research. She found that previous discussions in feminism fail to take into account that each individual woman has a perspective uniquely her own that cannot be covered by a singular feminist outlook. Even worse, traditional feminist viewpoints could be mirroring the viewer's beliefs onto the woman's experiences. Attempting to view another through our own belief system can consequently lead to misinterpreting that person's world. "Other scholars have argued for the danger of [western] feminist agendas," stated Bucar, "that seek to 'save' Muslim or Catholic women from their men and from their religion, and how this is grounded in imperial assumptions about the superiority of some forms of secular life over all others."<sup>90</sup> Bucar stated that in her fixed ideas of what a modern woman should want for her life, she missed the importance of understanding what each individual woman actually wants for herself.<sup>91</sup> By viewing the action of wearing a veil as oppressive, outsiders assume the view that it must be oppressive for those inside the religion. "I am trying to redefine feminist studies of religion," she states, "so that it is not based on some universal concept of woman or feminism."<sup>92</sup>

---

<sup>89</sup> *Creative Conformity: The Feminist Politics of U.S. Catholic and Iranian Shi'i Women* (Moral Traditions Series) (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2011), xiii-xv.

<sup>90</sup> Ehsan Abedi, "Shii and Catholicism Are Not Anti-Women: An interview with Elizabeth Bucar on the challenges Iranian and American women face," *Tehran Review*, June 2011, under "Culture Section," <http://tehranreview.net/articles/8787>.

<sup>91</sup> Bucar, *Creative Conformity*, xiii.

<sup>92</sup> L. Reznik, Bucar, E., K. Skerrett, and D. Whitehead, "Negotiating Feminist and Gender Studies: Roundtable Response," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 26, no. 1 (2010): 124.

Judith Butler touches on this problem in feminism, as well. Her work *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, approaches the inability to create a single identity for women on the whole: "Apart from the foundationalist fictions that support the notion of the subject, however, there is the political problem that feminism encounters in the assumption that the term woman denotes a common identity."<sup>93</sup> Although arguing for a feminist view that is free of gender typing, her arguments easily can speak to the struggles of Muslim women in the West.

The political assumption that there must be a universal basis for feminism, one which must be found in an identity assumed to exist cross-culturally, often accompanies the notion that the oppression of women has some singular form discernible in the universal or hegemonic structure of patriarchy or masculine domination. The notion of a universal patriarchy has been widely criticized in recent years for its failure to account for the workings of gender oppression in the concrete cultural contexts in which it exists. Where those various contexts have been consulted within such theories, it has been to find "examples" or "illustrations" of a universal principle that is assumed from the start. That form of feminist theorizing has come under criticism for its efforts to colonize and appropriate non-Western cultures to support highly Western notions of oppression, but because they tend as well to construct a "Third World" or even an "Orient" in which gender oppression is subtly explained as symptomatic of an essential, non-Western barbarism.<sup>94</sup>

Elizabeth Bucar continues her examination of women's freedoms and rights by focusing on the single issue of veiling as a perceived form of oppression.<sup>95</sup> She claims that only by seeing the veil through the eyes of those women wearing it and their personal agendas, can one truly understand what it means for that woman to be veiled. Rather than approaching Islamic dress for women in the traditional manner, that is,

---

<sup>93</sup> Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 6-7.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> *The Islamic Veil: A Beginner's Guide*, Beginner's Guides (Oxford, England: Oneworld, 2012), 153.

from "assumptions about women's constrained freedom under conditions of patriarchy," Bucar suggests feminist description and feminist explanation. Feminist description advocates understanding what Islamic ways of dress mean to Muslim women. What situations prompt a Muslim woman to wear a veil, hijab, or full burqa? Does she alter her styles for work, worship, or casual events? Answers to these questions give an understanding of Muslim women's dress that an outsider might not previously be aware of, offering an ability to identify with the woman. Feminist explanation relates to the individual through asking questions that clarify how she sees her decision to veil. Why does she wear the veil or full burqa? Does she feel oppressed by it or is it a form of freedom for her, or pride? Rather than the traditional method of feminist politics, which Bucar calls "critique and reform," she believes this more in-depth form of feminist study is required for understanding the decision to veil or not.<sup>96</sup>

Bucar's arguments ring true for feminist scholars studying whiteness. Viewing Muslim women through a "white lens," that is a western lens, and without a sufficient education about Islamic society, makes it impossible for the outside viewer to understand what it is to be Muslim. Feminist scholar Cynthia Levine-Rasky argues that whiteness is a structural problem in western cultures. The problem, she contends, is a fundamental part of how western societies formed. Their development was, and remains, dominated by whiteness. This foundation in the culture creates inequities that must be worked through and approached with a serious mind toward overcoming them.<sup>97</sup> Discussions of how Islam and Muslims are represented and perceived cannot be

---

<sup>96</sup> Bucar, *The Islamic Veil*, 153-154.

<sup>97</sup> *Working through Whiteness: International Perspectives*, Suny Series, Interruptions--border Testimony and Critical Discourse (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 2-3, accessed January 4, 2015.

complete without understanding the cultural context of a society dominated by whiteness.

The topic of this thesis is how media represents Islam and Muslims in Southern Appalachia. This literature review summarized the relevant research available about how media represents Islam and Muslims. A lot of the literature available about media representation focuses on national studies, rather than homing in a Southern Appalachian view. The national views, however, offer a lot of insight into media representations on the whole in the United States, and help with gleaning out some of the problems and concerns this thesis has researched. The portions of the review concerning perceptions of Islam and Muslims in the United States covered some of the largest surveys and polls to give an accurate understanding of what Americans believe. The religious background of Appalachia was a good starting point for understanding Southern Appalachia in context, before taking on the questions raised by the thesis. Since the thesis concerns how Islam is being 'othered' by the prevailing religion, it is critical to understand the process by which Protestant Christianity became the dominant religious approach, and how other approaches (Catholic Christianity, Judaism, Islam) were marginalized in the region. These topics were important for providing a distinct backdrop to the questions raised during the thesis research.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

For examining the ways that Muslims are represented in Southern Appalachia, this research focused on print media and television news as primary sources. From 2012 until 2014, three respected organizations, the Gallup Polling Division, the American Press Institute, and Pew Research's Center for the People and the Press, have surveyed Americans to determine the main sources they reference for current national and international news.<sup>1</sup> All three surveys found that Americans choose to get their news first from watching news programs on television, second through online or mobile news sites, and finally from radio programs, or print sources (radio and print media nearly tied for third and fourth places in all three surveys, with one surpassing the other by the slightest points).<sup>2</sup> Pew Research Center clarifies the trends in news consumption:

Television continues to be the public's top daily news source. In the current survey, 55% say they watched the news or a news program on television yesterday. That is little changed from recent news consumption surveys. In the 1990s, however, far more Americans said they watched television news yesterday. The percentages saying they listened to radio news and read a newspaper yesterday have steadily declined over the past two decades. Currently, 33% say they listened to radio news, while 29% say they read a newspaper yesterday. Nearly four-in-ten (39%) got news online or on a mobile device yesterday, including cell phones and tablets. In 2010, 34% got news online; this did not include those who got news on

---

<sup>1</sup> Lydia Saad, *TV Is Americans' Main Source of News* (New Jersey: Gallup Polling Division, 2013), accessed May 17, 2014, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/163412/americans-main-source-news.aspx>. Media Insight Project, *The Personal News Cycle: How Americans Choose to Get Their News* (University of Chicago: American Press Institute, 2014), accessed June 1, 2014, [http://www.americanpressinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/The\\_Media\\_Insight\\_Project\\_The\\_Personal\\_News\\_Cycle\\_Final.pdf](http://www.americanpressinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/The_Media_Insight_Project_The_Personal_News_Cycle_Final.pdf), 1. Pew Research Center, *In Changing News Landscape, Even Television Is Vulnerable: Trends in News Consumption: 1991-2012* (Washington, D.C.: The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 2012), accessed May 21, 2014, <http://www.people-press.org/2012/09/27/in-changing-news-landscape-even-television-is-vulnerable/>.

<sup>2</sup> Data derived from polls and surveys at the above mentioned sites: Gallup, Media Insight Project, and the Pew Research Center.

a mobile device. In 2004, just 24% said they got news online during the previous day.<sup>3</sup>

Given the above knowledge of the sources from which Americans receive their news, and as a means for having a realistic scope for the thesis, print media and television news seem the best focus for determining how media represents Muslims and shapes the perception of Southern Appalachians.<sup>4</sup>

### Content Analysis

This research used content analysis for examining local and regional media sources. Content analysis is a scientific research tool used to establish assumptions and conclusions from texts. Social sciences use this method of research to examine mass media content to find how individuals perceive or understand particular topics or problems. To be valid, content analysis must be defensible and able to be reproduced.<sup>5</sup> Klaus Krippendorf, language and communications scholar at the University of Pennsylvania, maintains that the following questions must be answered for strong content analysis: What data is being examined? Where is the data taken from? How is the information classified? What is the context of the information? Are their research limitations? Finally, what is being inferred from the data?<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Pew Research Center, *Even Television Is Vulnerable*, 9.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Klaus Krippendorf, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2004), 18.

<sup>6</sup> Krippendorf, *Content Analysis*, 412-413.

The purpose of the research is to understand representations of Muslims and Islam in Southern Appalachia. To reach this end, I use Joan Reitz's definition of content analysis as:

Close analysis of a work or body of communicated information to determine its meaning and account for the effect it has on its audience. Researchers classify, quantify, analyze, and evaluate the important words, concepts, symbols, and themes in a text, or set of texts, as a basis for inferences about the explicit and implicit messages it contains, the writer, the audience, and the culture and time period of which it is a part.<sup>7</sup>

The decision to use content analysis for this thesis came from the need to describe characteristics of the data's content, to pinpoint the critical aspects of the articles, to find the intentions or focus of the article writers, and to examine trends in the texts.

It is essential to recognize the territory that makes up Southern Appalachia is equally comprised of rural and urban landscapes. To examine fairly the population mixture in the region, one must research large circulating urban publications and smaller rural publications. The data produced stem from examination of articles from both rural and urban areas. Those sources used in this research include major newspapers from metropolitan cities in Southern Appalachia whose populations reaches 100,00 and above: Greenville, South Carolina's *The Greenville News*, Knoxville, Tennessee's the *Knoxville News Sentinel*, Charleston, West Virginia's *Charleston Gazette*, and Asheville, North Carolina's *The Citizen-Times News*. Newspapers from smaller regions whose populations range from 50,000 to 100,000 are: Johnson City, Tennessee; Bristol, Virginia and Bristol, Tennessee; Lewisburg, West Virginia; and Blue

---

<sup>7</sup> Joan M. Reitz, *Dictionary for Library and Information Science* (Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2004), 1.

Ridge, Georgia.<sup>8</sup> The types, or classifications, of articles used from those newspapers are featured stories, reported news, editorials, opinion pieces, and any guides or advertisements relating to Islam or Muslims. I accessed newspaper content through the Lexis Nexis Academic Database, through online subscriptions to the paper's full print-edition content, via search of printed copies available in East Tennessee State University's Sherrod Library, through the Associated Press archives, and through the publicly accessible online content. Occasionally, the only public document available for a requested article was an abbreviated online edition. In those instances, I noted this as the case, because the information is very limited through those versions when compared to the original full print sources or the Lexis Nexis database.

The study period analyzed in this research is the period of January 1, 2012 until January 1, 2014. The primary reason for limiting the research data to a two-year period is to make the data size manageable. This length of time should offer an adequate sampling of media reports to accommodate the questions asked in the research. This time frame includes a number of critical events involving Muslims and Islam covered by national and local news outlets. Some of the most newsworthy included the Boston Marathon bombings in April 2013 and the following manhunts, the rise of bombings and attacks by the Islamic State of Iraq in 2012, the 2012 Benghazi attack on the United States consulate, the 2013 Westgate shopping mall attack in Kenya by Islamist group al-Shabaab, the 2014 Borno State massacre perpetrated by Boko Haram, the 2012 Taliban shooting of 14-year-old Pakistani girl Malala Yousufzai for her activism, 2012's anti-Islam film that provoked riots in the Near and Middle East, the 2014 conviction in New

---

<sup>8</sup>A complete list of cities and towns with their papers can be found in the tables of Chapter 4: Results.



York of London Imam Abu Hamza al-Masri on terrorism charges, and many other isolated or large scale attacks throughout the time period.

I analyzed the content by categorizing articles into two types: matching well-known events for which there were many articles, and smaller unique events that attracted little attention. Primary terms used for finding the articles were “Islam” and “Muslim.” Then, as a means of assessment, I placed the articles into one of the two categories: 1. reports about the same event, and 2. reports about a unique event. Three factors led to choosing an article or report for inclusion in the research: the report had considerable exposure in the news media, the incidents occurred within the set out time period, and the event's overt use of Islam or Muslims is an essential component of the report. The next step in analyzing the newspaper articles was to develop word-frequency lists.<sup>9</sup> By examining the most frequently used words in articles descriptive of Islam and Muslims, I developed a list of factors determining the focus of the articles and tone of the writing. The types of words used with most frequency and found throughout the articles were ones such as militant, terrorist, extremist, barbaric, ultra conservative, threat, anger, fear, attack, fight, trigger, and violence. This portion of the content analysis provides a quantitative analysis of the article data.<sup>10</sup>

The second portion of analyzing the data takes a qualitative approach to examining the content.<sup>11</sup> To realize the ways in which media represents Islam and Muslims, conceptual analysis of the text seems the best way to extricate overall

---

<sup>9</sup> Robert Philip Weber, *Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences: Basic Content Analysis* (Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, 1990), 131.

<sup>10</sup> Weber, *Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences*, 144.

<sup>11</sup> Krippendorff, *Content Analysis*, iv.

concepts.<sup>12</sup> Rather than focusing on the specific words, I used concept analysis here to search for common statements and how they connected to a larger meaning in the article. Conceptual analysis allows one to look at all content related to this concept or theme, tally the frequency of its occurrence and draw meaning from that.<sup>13</sup> The questions I asked of each article were: Are negative stereotypes being communicated in the text? Are Muslims being described or labeled by their religion? What can be inferred by the articles use of language such as inflammatory adjectives or words? Are Muslims or Islam shown as in opposition to western thinking, democratic systems, or social equality? Are the words Muslim and Islam being used properly? Does the writer try to connect Islam or Muslims with terror? After completing the conceptual analysis, I found recurring themes in the articles and reports. I used that information to go a bit further with a relational analysis.<sup>14</sup> My use of relational analysis tries to find important relationships between the concepts and themes with comparisons, correlations, and suppositions.

The second collection of source data I gathered from Appalachians' most frequently watched television news programs. As noted earlier, television is Americans' primary source for news and information; therefore, understanding how televised news communicates is essential. Examining some of the most frequently watched broadcasts and their content shows how Muslims or Islam are represented to the populace. The

---

<sup>12</sup> Kathy Charmaz, "Grounded Theory Methods in Social Justice Research," in *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3rd edition, Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds., (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2005), 361.

<sup>13</sup> Krippendorff, *Content Analysis*, 13.

<sup>14</sup> Norman Denzin, "Locating the Field," in *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3rd edition, Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds., (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2005), 26.

surveys conducted by the Gallup Polling Division, American Press Institute, and Pew Research's Center for the People and the Press cited the most watched television news sources as: 48% local TV news, 34% cable news, and 27% nightly network news.<sup>15</sup> Collecting data for this portion of the study involved downloading transcripts of the programs from their websites, downloading transcripts of the programs from Lexis Nexis, viewing, or recording local and regional news programs, as well as select cable news and major station nightly news shows. The local and regional news programs watched were: the Tri-Cities television station WCYB, and Charleston, West Virginia's WSAZ. The cable news programs watched were CNN's United States edition of Breaking News, and FOX's prime time edition of Special Report. These two are included in the research because they were the highest ranked cable news programs that people noted watching when they answered Gallup's polling questions.<sup>16</sup> Another factor for choosing these broadcasts was that each often presented two opposing political positions, which offered a slightly more inclusive set of views. The precise methods of qualitative and quantitative content analysis used with the print media were used for the broadcast television media. The final reports of the collected data, including precise word counts and themes, are found in the analysis and research of this thesis, as well as in the tables found in the appendices.

---

<sup>15</sup> Saad, *TV Is Americans' Main Source of News*. Media Insight Project, *The Personal News Cycle*, 7. Pew Research Center, *Even Television Is Vulnerable*, 3.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### Quantitative Analysis

##### Article Frequency

The sources the data was gathered from varied drastically according to the location and sizes of the newspapers. Circulation frequency and numbers do not necessarily indicate a higher number of stories about Islam or Muslims. For those papers-with circulations below 10,000, the frequency of relevant articles drops significantly.<sup>1</sup> The smaller circulation is likely due to fewer articles and the papers distributions are weekly or biweekly when compared to larger newspapers. Newspapers above the 10,000 circulation line printed considerably higher numbers of stories about Islam and Muslims. Similarly, a contributing factor to the increased circulation and article numbers is likely that papers are daily publications with expanded Sunday versions. Table 1 illustrates these findings.

Table 1

##### Article Circulation Frequency

Newspaper	Frequency	Percentage	Circulation	Print
-----------	-----------	------------	-------------	-------

---

<sup>1</sup> The terms "frequency" and "percentage" used in this thesis are meant to represent the traditional method of word counting in content analysis. In this instance, frequency refers to the number of articles that contain Muslim and Islam references. Therefore, any location where frequency occurs is meant to state the rate at which the word "Islam" or "Muslim" is repeated over these particular samples. The same is true for the entire thesis. A word's listed frequency denotes its occurrence rate in numbers. Percentage refers to what portion this account is in relation to the whole. For example, if there are 100 articles total referencing Islam and 50 of those articles occur in *ABC Newspaper*, the frequency for *ABC Newspaper* will be 50 and the percentage will be 50%. The label "N" in the tables refers to the total numbers being calculated for that table's column. In this case, N indicates the total number of articles in those papers over the time period studied that directly refer to Islam or Muslims.

Table 1 (Continued)

<i>The Charleston Gazette</i>	676	17.32%	40,671 Daily 68,940 Sunday	Daily
<i>Chattanooga Times Free Press</i>	649	16.63%	73,080 Daily 101,355 Sunday	Daily
<i>The Johnson City Press</i>	620	15.89%	26,286 Daily 28,270 Sunday	Daily
<i>The Bristol Herald Courier</i>	594	15.22%	39,000 average	Daily
<i>The Kingsport Times News</i>	552	14.15%	43,145 Daily 42,917 Sunday	Daily
<i>The Knoxville News Sentinel</i>	344	8.82%	119,172 Daily 150,147 Sunday	Daily
<i>The Citizen Times Asheville</i>	326	8.36%	27,372 Daily 41,505 Sunday	Daily
<i>The Blowing Rock</i>	36	0.92%	3,500 average	Weekly
<i>The Erwin Record</i>	23	0.59%	5,000 average	Weekly
<i>The Pulaski Citizen</i>	21	0.54%	8,200 average	Weekly
<i>Newport's Plain Talk</i>	19	0.49%	6,265 Daily 7,371 Sunday	Sun, Tues- Friday
<i>Bland County Messenger</i>	17	0.44%	1,305 average	Weekly
<i>The Coalfield Progress</i>	14	0.36%	6,565 average	Weekly
<i>The Avery Journal Times</i>	11	0.28%	3,700 average	Weekly

N: 3,902

As the data show, the largest circulating papers, Tennessee's *Knoxville News Sentinel* and *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, did not carry the highest number of

articles related to Islam and Muslims. The *Charleston Gazette*, based in Charleston, West Virginia, and distributing nearly half the number of those papers, actually ranked highest in the percentage of articles printed. Similarly, the paper with the lowest average circulation, Wytheville, Virginia's *Bland County Messenger*, did not rank lowest in the frequency of articles on Muslims and Islam.

The majority of the articles gathered for this research came from syndicated news sources. The syndicated groups used in these stories were: The Associated Press, New York Times News Service, Washington Post Writer's Group, Universal Press Syndicate, Creators Syndicate, and Reuters.

### Word Frequency

In order to analyze the print data effectively, all articles had to be separated into two categories: 1. syndicated services reports that repeated throughout the papers and 2. unique articles with specific authors distinct from syndicated writers. The next step in analyzing the newspaper articles was to develop word-frequency lists.<sup>2</sup> Three factors led to choosing an article or report for inclusion in the word-frequency counts. The report had substantial exposure in the news media (such as those distributed by the syndicated news groups), the incidents occurred within the set time period, and the event's overt use of Islam or Muslims was an essential component of the report. Of the total number of articles found (total numbers are denoted with the label: N), 582 of those matched the above criteria for inclusion in the word frequency study.<sup>3</sup> Temporarily, I set aside a

---

<sup>2</sup> Robert Philip Weber, *Sage University Papers Series. Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences*, second ed., *Basic Content Analysis* (Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, 1990), 131.

<sup>3</sup> Refer to Table 1.

portion of those collected articles so that the word frequency study would be a genuine, undiluted sample. These articles return for deeper study in the later portions of this results chapter. The weeding out process for word frequency testing followed these guidelines: Initially, I categorized all found articles as either "Entertainment" or "Factual News" items. The entertainment category included opinion pieces, editorials, community announcements, and the like. The factual news category included all of those stories that represented reporting of a news event in an attempt to convey facts and evidence. Just for this section of the analysis, I removed the opinion and editorial pieces. These pieces were small and scattered among the papers. Their exposure was limited to the single newspaper where they printed, and did not hold factual information. Second, I removed the community announcements and leisure or entertainment category of stories. This category offered few insights that might aid in a simple word frequency evaluation. The next step was to take away those articles that did not include Islam or Muslims as an essential component. These articles only mentioned Islam or Muslims in a perfunctory way. Finally, I accumulated all the stories that had significant coverage in multiple papers. I chose those articles that appeared in at least five out of the seven major newspapers studied. For example, there were many instances when an Associated Press piece ran throughout all the major newspapers I studied, as well as in many of the smaller papers. These articles were prime candidates for running word frequency tests. Table 2 illustrates the results of the process described.

Table 2

Article Types

Entertainment Articles	Frequency	Percentage
------------------------	-----------	------------

Table 2 (Continued)

Editorial or Opinion	1297	33.24%
Community or Leisure Category	231	5.92%
Factual News Articles	Frequency	Percentage
Topic was Secondary	663	16.99%
Met Coverage Requirement	582	14.92%
Did Not Meet Coverage Requirement	1,129	28.93%

Examining the words used with the most frequency in these articles, revealed the focus of the articles and tone of the writing. Content analysis for this section provides a quantitative aspect of the article data.<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that the parameters of the word frequency list have exclusion words to minimize distraction by articles, function words, unrelated prepositions, and the like. The exclusion of words was careful to avoid any consequences to the validity of the research. Reviewing the repetitive words that appear throughout these articles provides a broad view of the language used in journalistic writing about Muslims and Islam. Table 3 documents the 150 most frequently occurring words found in the articles.

Table 3  
150 Most Frequently Used Words

Rank	Word	Frequency	Percentage	Rank	Word	Frequency	Percentage
1	terror	744	2.46%	76	criminal	138	.46%

<sup>4</sup> Weber, *Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences*, 144.



Table 3 (Continued)

2	attack	736	2.43%	77	women	138	.46%
3	extremist	639	2.11%	78	revenge	137	.45%
4	radical	632	2.08%	79	controversy	136	.45%
5	hurt harm	578	1.91%	80	church	135	.45%
6	conflict	549	1.81%	81	enemy	135	.45%
7	war	523	1.73%	82	execute	135	.45%
8	death	522	1.72%	83	racial	132	.44%
9	follow	492	1.63%	84	suspicion	132	.44%
10	anti	478	1.58%	85	force	132	.44%
11	students	462	1.53%	86	opposition	132	.44%
12	hate	459	1.52%	87	lost	131	.43%
13	hostile	445	1.47%	88	jihad	130	.43%
14	Christ	444	1.47%	89	destroy	122	.40%
15	military	443	1.46%	90	crisis	121	.40%
16	anger	442	1.46%	91	protest	119	.39%
17	violent	442	1.46%	92	limits	119	.39%
18	brotherhood	436	1.44%	93	worry	118	.39%
19	religion	435	1.44%	94	suspect	116	.38%
20	freedom	434	1.43%	95	disgust	113	.37%
21	human	434	1.43%	96	liberal	111	.37%
22	informer	431	1.42%	97	ideology	111	.37%
23	investigate	426	1.41%	98	worship	109	.36%
24	kill	425	1.40%	99	viewpoints	101	.33%

Table 3 (Continued)

25	rights	389	1.29%	100	discrimination	99	.33%
26	power	388	1.28%	101	alleged	98	.32%
27	like	343	1.13%	102	revoke	98	.32%
28	incite	334	1.10%	103	secular	97	.32%
29	believe	328	1.08%	104	confront	95	.31%
30	security	322	1.06%	105	poor	95	.31%
31	militant	311	1.03%	106	pray	95	.31%
32	wrong	293	.97%	107	republicans	95	.31%
33	Islamophobia	279	.92%	108	conspirators	94	.31%
34	community	279	.92%	109	create	92	.30%
35	denigrate	278	.92%	110	affiliated	91	.30%
36	outrage	274	.91%	111	concern	91	.30%
37	bad	269	.89%	112	Taliban	89	.29%
38	imam	254	.84%	113	prophet	88	.29%
39	clashes	243	.80%	114	accept	88	.29%
40	bombing	242	.80%	115	brutal	87	.29%
41	world	238	.79%	116	family	81	.27%
42	mosque	237	.78%	117	capture	81	.27%
43	vote	237	.78%	118	devout	81	.27%
44	American	233	.77%	119	differences	81	.27%
45	tension	232	.77%	120	moderate	78	.26%
46	assault	229	.76%	121	safe	78	.26%
47	values	229	.76%	122	Sharia	77	.25%

Table 3 (Continued)

48	western	219	.72%	123	inflammatory	77	.25%
49	fight	207	.68%	124	justice	77	.25%
50	god	201	.66%	125	foreign	77	.25%
51	intelligence	199	.66%	126	idea	76	.25%
52	malign	198	.65%	127	arsenal	76	.25%
53	politic	198	.65%	128	infiltrate	73	.24%
54	monitor	197	.65%	129	Ramadan	72	.24%
55	target	189	.62%	130	influence	72	.24%
56	Arab	187	.62%	131	academic	71	.23%
57	implicate	178	.59%	132	Koran	71	.23%
58	charge	173	.57%	133	rage	69	.22%
59	surveillance	172	.57%	134	riot	69	.22%
60	shock	171	.57%	135	resurgence	68	.22%
61	fear	168	.56%	136	barbarian	68	.22%
62	danger	166	.55%	137	abroad	66	.22%
63	accused	165	.55%	138	Allah	66	.22%
64	children	165	.55%	139	gunmen	66	.22%
65	condemn	165	.55%	140	liberty	66	.22%
66	dark	165	.55%	141	weak	66	.22%
67	victim	159	.53%	142	white	65	.21%
68	innocent	157	.52%	143	demolish	65	.21%
69	threat	156	.52%	144	ethnic	62	.20%
70	prosecute	142	.47%	145	honest	62	.20%

Table 3 (Continued)

71	defend	141	.47%	146	black	61	.20%
72	reason	141	.47%	147	calm	61	.20%
73	recruit	141	.47%	148	battle	60	.19%
74	arrested	141	.47%	149	cooperate	59	.19%
75	support	140	.46%	150	alarm	58	.19%

N: 30,264

Analyzing the highest frequency words found in the articles resulted in the identification of themes in the writing. Among the top ten most commonly used words, all but one are negative: "terror," "attack," "extremist," "radical," "hurt/harm," "conflict," "war," "death," "follow," and "anti." Closely following the top ten in frequency of appearances are the next group of words: "students," "hate," "hostile," "Christ," "military," "anger," "violent," "brotherhood," "religion," and "freedom." The theme and tone prevalent in the twenty most frequently used words have little variance. When writing about Islam or Muslims, many authors used words that overwhelmingly focus on negativity. In reviewing the word frequency chart, it can be argued that media in Southern Appalachia portrays Islam and Muslims largely in pessimistic and unfavorable imagery through the use of negative words. The perception of terror, attacks, extremism, radicalism, harm, conflict, war, and death appear between nearly 500 and 750 times in the articles. There are thirty-nine verbs among the top recurring one-hundred words, and only eight, among them "believe," "follow," and "like," suggest the potential for positive actions. The remaining thirty-one words: such as "attack," "hate," "kill,"

"malign," "destroy," and "threat," imply distinctly harmful and violent allusions. The nouns or subjects among the most frequently occurring words continue the trend of being primarily dark terms: "extremist," "war," "military," "violence," "fight," "criminal," "victim," "enemy," "jihad," and "bomb."

Interestingly, the subjects among the words also show a development toward two secondary themes about religion and politics. The only two religions referenced in these word groups are Christianity and Islam, with the subject words "Christ," "Allah," "mosque," "church," "imam," "religion," "jihad," "brotherhood," "ideology," and "God." It can be hypothesized from these words that a relationship might exist between Islam and Christianity in these articles. There is so rarely mention of any other religions, including Judaism, for example, within the word frequencies, that no reference to other religions appear in the top used one-hundred and fifty words. Political themes form through the frequent use of the words "politics," "world," "rights," "power," "ideology," "protest," "freedom," "military," "vote," "values," "republicans," and "liberal."

With the purpose of the research being to understand representations of Muslims and Islam in Southern Appalachia, examining the type of recurring words shows the reporters' perspectives. I used Joan Reitz's definition of content analysis as:

close analysis of a work or body of communicated information to determine its meaning and account for the effect it has on its audience. Researchers classify, quantify, analyze, and evaluate the important words, concepts, symbols, and themes in a text, or set of texts, as a basis for inferences about the explicit and implicit messages it contains, the writer, the audience, and the culture and time period of which it is a part.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> *Dictionary for Library and Information Science* (Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2004), 1.

To infer explicit and implicit messages from these groups of words, one can analyze the qualities of the words for how they make a person feel, or their emotional impact. What words do the writers of the articles use to draw out emotions and which sentiments do they appear to aim for? Words of fear and alarm outweigh words that are neutral, or ones which are calming and affable in the frequency lists. Out of the one-hundred and fifty recurring words, eighty-two (54%) are words of threat or fear. These words, in most all contexts, will cause the brain to feel anger, sadness, or fear: "rage," "arsenal," "riot," "death," "brutal," "disgust," "execute," "threat," "danger," and "malign." Forty-one (27%) of the frequent words can be considered neutral, or without an ability to provoke emotion: "white," "academic," "moderate," "secular," "women," "children," "vote," "politics," "world," "human," and "students." Calming words, and those terms that might cause positive reactions and peacefulness, occur only 18% of the time (twenty-seven words): "freedom," "safe," "community," "like," "values," "innocent," "cooperate," "worship," "pray," "family," "justice," "liberty," "honest," and "calm." Based upon the need to describe characteristics of the data's content, the word frequency lists provided insights identifying critical aspects of the articles, such as the way negativity surpasses optimism in the writing. Examining these trends in the text, although it is impossible to deduce if intentions or focus of the article writers is to incite fear, what clearly comes across in the writing is a representation of alarm, anxiety, concern, and unease. Table 4 demonstrates the negative, positive, and neutral word frequencies.

Table 4

---

Negative, Positive, and Neutral Word Frequency

---

Sentiment	Frequency	Percentage
-----------	-----------	------------

Table 4 (Continued)

Negative	82	54%
Neutral	41	27%
Positive	27	18%

---

N: 150

### Qualitative Analysis

#### Description

I used conceptual analysis to examine the content for this portion of the data.<sup>6</sup> Given the knowledge found by examining the word frequencies, and as a means for finding the ways media represents Islam and Muslims, conceptual analysis of the text was the best way to determine overall themes.<sup>7</sup> I returned here to the entire collection of research data found (See Table 1), and used concept analysis to search for common statements and how they connected to a overall meaning in the article. Conceptual analysis allowed me to dig deeper into the research. By looking at all the content available that was related to a concept or theme, and then add the number of times words occurred, I was able to draw meaning from that.<sup>8</sup>

Starting out, I found it was critical to organize my researched articles by date and event. For purposes of comparison and evaluation, I assembled them into collections of

---

<sup>6</sup> Krippendorff, *Content Analysis*, iv.

<sup>7</sup> Denzin and Lincoln, *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3-4.

<sup>8</sup> Krippendorff, *Content Analysis*, 13.

articles that detailed the same incident for comparing and evaluating with one another, then creating tables organizing them chronologically. The results of that process are outlined in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5

2012 Events Reported in Researched Papers

---

Date	Topic
1/5/2012	Boko Haram kill 37 Christians in Nigeria
1/14/2012	Suicide bomber kills 53 injures 130 in Iraq
1/20/2012	Boko Haram kills 183 in Kano
1/28/2012	Bombing attacks in Nigeria kills 200
2/2/2012	Protests over US soldiers' burning of Qur'an at Afghan Air Base
2/25/2012	Al Qaeda suicide bombing in Yemen
3/11/2012	US soldier kills Afghanistan civilians
3/20/2012	Wave of terror attacks across 10 Iraqi cities
4/4/2012	Somalia's National Theatre bombed kills members of Olympic Committee and Football Federation
4/8/2012	Kaduna, Nigeria, church bombings by Boko Haram
4/15/2012	Insurgent attack allows 400 Islamist militants escape Pakistani prison
5/7/2012	NATO air strike kills injures civilians in Afghanistan
5/21/2012	Suicide bomb in Yemen
6/4/2012	US drone attack kills militants in Pakistan and high ranking al-Qaeda official Abu Yahya al-Libi
6/8/2012	Bus bomb in Pakistan kills 18 and injures 35
6/19/2012	Man beheaded for witchcraft and sorcery in Saudi Arabia



Table 5 (Continued)

6/24/2012	Morsi of Muslim Brotherhood elected President of Egypt
7/3/2012	Truck bomb kills 25 injures 40 in Iraq
7/6/2012	Gunmen kill 18 in Pakistan
7/11/2012	Yemen suicide bombing at police academy
7/22/2012	Iraq car bombs kill 20 injures 80
7/26/2012	Insurgent attack kills 19 Iraq
8/2/2012	Explosions in fruit market Pakistan
8/4/2012	45 killed suicide bombing in Yemen
8/5/2012	Gunman attacks Sikh temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin
8/16/2012	Series of attacks across Iraq kills 120 injures 200
8/18/2012	Al-Qaeda militants kill 14 Yemen
8/18/2012	NATO air strikes kills militants in Afghanistan
8/26/2012	Villagers in Afghanistan beheaded
9/1/2012	<i>Innocence of Muslims</i> film uploaded early Sept caused violence and riots throughout world
9/1/2012	Suicide bombs at NATO base in Afghanistan
9/1/2012	US drone strike Pakistan
9/2/2012	Ban on veiled female TV presenters is lifted Egypt
9/8/2012	Taliban suicide bomb in Kabul
9/9/2012	Wave of attacks across Iraq kill 120 injure 350
9/11/2012	Al-Shabaab fighters killed in conflict with Somali army
9/11/2012	US consulate in Benghazi stormed, looted, burned, killing ambassador and soldiers
9/12/2012	Rebel car bomb in Syria kills 18 soldiers
9/28/2012	Nigeria suspends Saudi Arabian flights b/c hundreds of women travel male escorts

Table 5 (Continued)

10/1/2012	NATO soldiers and Afghan police killed by a suicide bombing
10/9/2012	Malala Yousafzai shot by Taliban gunman in Pakistan
10/12/2012	UN Security Council approves troops oust Islamic militants Mali
10/19/2012	Car bomb in Beirut
11/1/2012	Pakistan honor killing acid poured on girl by her parents after being seen talking to man
11/27/12 -	60 killed and 250 wounded in combined car bombs and
11/29/2012	attacks in two day period in Iraq
12/6/2012	Egyptian protests turn violent killing 7 injuring near 800
12/17/2012	Market bombings Pakistan
12/25/2012	Militants for Boko Haram target and kill 27 Christians
12/28/2012	Boko Haram kill 15 Christians in Nigerian village
12/29/2012	Pakistan Taliban kill security personnel

Table 6

2013 Events Reported in Researched Papers Ordered Chronologically

---

Date	Topic
1/1/2013	Boko Haram members killed by Nigerian military
1/3/2013	Shiite pilgrims killed/injured by suicide bombing Iraq
1/17/2013	33 killed in bombings across Iraq
1/22/2013	Baghdad car bombings kill 17
1/23/2013	Iraq mosque suicide bombing kills many
1/25/2013	Egyptian protests kill 7 and injure near 500

Table 6 (Continued)

1/26/2013	Protests in Egypt kill 30
1/26/2013	Suicide bomb in Afghanistan kills/injures many
1/27/2013	Bomb attacks in Kandahar kill 20 police
1/27/2013	Egyptian protests kill 6 injure near 600
2/1/2013	Nigerian army attacks Boko Haram camps
2/2/2013	Militants attack army base in Pakistan killing/injuring
2/3/2013	Major suicide bombings in Iraq lasting two days
2/8/2013	Bombings in Iraq and Pakistan
2/8/2013	Boko Haram kills polio vaccinators
2/13/2013	Attack in Thailand kills Muslim insurgents
2/17/2013	Baghdad car bombings kill 37 injures hundreds
2/27/2013	Taliban insurgents attack in Andar
2/28/2013	Baghdad bombings kills injures
3/3/2013	Blast in Pakistan kills 45
3/9/13 until	Suicide and car bombs kill and injury throughout
3/18/2013	Iraq and Afghanistan
3/18/2013	Boko Haram bombs bus killing 65 Nigeria
3/21/2013	Mosque bombing in Damascus kills 45 injures 85
3/29/2013	Blast outside US Consulate Pakistan
4/1/2013	Iraq suicide bombing aimed at Christians
4/6/2013	Election campaign bombing in Iraq kills 25 injures 60
4/12/2013	Multiple mosque attacks in Iraq killing injuring
4/15/2013	Boston Marathon bombings and related shootings and attacks
4/16/2013	Baga massacre between Boko Haram and Nigerian military

Table 6 (Continued)

4/17/2013	US drone attacks kill in Pakistan
4/19/2013	Boston suspects killed and captured
4/21/2013	Islamic extremists and Nigerian military conflict killing near 200
4/28/2013	Taliban attacks elections in Pakistan
5/1/2013	Sons of Iraq attacked in Iraq
5/4/2013	US soldiers killed in Afghanistan bombings
5/6/2013	Bomb attacks at political rally in Pakistan
6/5/2013	Pakistan Prime Minister Sharif takes offices
6/9/2013	Children and teachers killed by Boko Haram Nigeria
6/10/2013	Al Qaeda Bombing kills 70 in Iraq
6/14/2013	President of Iran elected Rouhani
6/23/2013	Pakistan Taliban kill 10 climbers and a tour guide as retaliation for US drone strikes
7/1/2013	15 million demonstrate across Egypt calling for Morsi resignation
7/2/2013	Protest clashes against Morsi kill and injure many at Cairo University
7/3/2013	Egypt president Morsi deposed by military
7/6/2013	Boko Haram Islamists attack boarding school in Nigeria kill 42
7/12/2013	Malala Yousafzai addresses United Nations
7/21/2013	Muslim families clash in Philippines killing 20
7/27/2013	Egypt protests kill 100 and injure 1500
7/29/2013	Taliban attacks in Pakistan and 300 prisoners freed
7/30/2013	President Hussein elected in Pakistan
8/3/2013	Suicide bombers in Afghanistan kill 10 children
8/12/2013	Boko Haram kills 56 at African mosque
8/14/2013	Violent clashes across Egypt kill 650

Table 6 (Continued)

8/20/2013	Russian police kill Islamist militants
9/3/2013	Egyptian army kill militants in Sinai
9/6/2013	Islamic militants attack Nigerian villages
9/12/2013	Boko Haram ambushes Nigerian troops killing 40
9/20/2013	Yemen army is attacked by extremists killing 46
9/21/2013	Islamist militants attack Kenya shopping mall killing 67 injure 175
9/27/2013	Bus bombing in Pakistan
9/29/2013	Boko Haram attacks college kills 50
10/6/2013	Egyptian clashes kill 53
10/17/2013	Shia Muslims attacked in Iraq
10/21/2013	Canada gives citizenship to Malala Yousafzai
10/22/2013	100 Boko Haram militants killed in air and ground strikes
10/29/2013	Boko Haram attacks Damaturu 128 killed
11/19/2013	Suicide bombings on Iranian Embassy in Lebanon kills 23
11/25/2013	Café bombing in Baghdad
12/5/2013	Militant attack on Defense Ministry compound in Yemen, kills 52 injure 170

These tables include only those news events reported in the Southern Appalachian newspapers studied. Having browsed through the Associated Press online archives, I found dozens of events occurred that never made it into regional newspaper reporting. For example, in June 2013, world news outlets were reporting that violence in Iraq had risen to the highest levels seen since 2008 with nearly 2,000 people dying from

April 2013 until June 2013.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, in May 2013, a series of attacks occurred over a seven day period from May 15 -May 21 that ultimately killed nearly 450 people and injured more than 700 at mosques, outdoor markets, and public places in Iraq. These events scarcely reached regional news. While the articles gathered from regional newspapers do show an increase of stories about the violence in Iraq during 2013, it is not remotely close to covering them all, or even a majority. This would be a good opportunity for further study into the topic of how news media in Southern Appalachia covers world events. A comprehensive report of the actual events that happened in a region, such as Iraq or Pakistan, compared to what eventually makes it into news reports would offer considerable insights.

The majority of reports in this research period clustered around a few critical events in the United States and the world involving Muslims and Islam. These decisive moments in history, covered by national and local news outlets, many of which obtained identical reports from syndicated news services, had recurring coverage for days, weeks, or sometimes months. Some of these included:

- Boston Marathon bombings April 2013
- Rise of bombings and attacks by the Islamic State of Iraq
- 2012 Benghazi attack on the United States consulate
- 2013 Westgate shopping mall attack in Kenya by Islamist group al-Shabaab
- Taliban shooting of 14-year-old Pakistani girl Malala Yousufzai for her activism

---

<sup>9</sup> Sinan Salaheddin, "Series of Attacks Kills across Iraq," *Cleveland Times*, June 16, 2013, [http://www.cleveland.com/world/index.ssf/2013/06/bombings\\_attacks\\_kill\\_51\\_peopl.html](http://www.cleveland.com/world/index.ssf/2013/06/bombings_attacks_kill_51_peopl.html).

- The *Innocence of Muslims* film that provoked violence and riots in the Near and Middle East
- The rise of Boko Haram terror in Nigeria
- Upheaval, protests, and violence in Egypt during presidential and politic changes throughout 2012 and 2013

Because qualitative analysis needs to be exhaustive of the text, I chose the events cited most frequently of these for conceptual analysis. The questions I asked of each article were: Are negative stereotypes being communicated in the text? Are Muslims being described or labeled by their religion? What can be inferred by the articles use of language such as inflammatory adjectives or words? Are Muslims or Islam shown as opposing western thinking, democratic systems, or social equality? Are the words Muslim and Islam being used appropriately? Does the writer try to connect Islam or Muslims with terror?

### Conceptual Analysis

#### Taliban Shooting Malala Yousufzai

On October 9, 2012, Pakistani student and women's rights activist Malala Yousufzai was shot by the Taliban while boarding a school bus. Her story, survival, and subsequent rise to fame became international news. It is in the reporting of this story that one of the critical problems with journalism in Southern Appalachia comes to light: lack of reporting. Malala is world-renown for her good works and the changes that occurred because of her activism. She is the youngest-ever Nobel Prize laureate, and the United Nations fought for education rights in her name. Her shooting led Pakistan to ratify its first ever education rights bill. *Time* magazine named Malala one of "The 100

Most Influential People in the World." She has been interviewed about her experiences around the world, including *Forbes* and on *The Jon Stewart Show*. Finally, there are documentaries and books about her life; yet, the only articles one will find in moderate sized regional newspapers are minor mentions in the "Briefs" and "Faith" section. The listing of small newspapers studied had no stories or reports about the shooting.

The brief reports about Yousufzai's attack that ran in the moderate sized papers mislead in devious ways, or use the story as a platform for expressing personal views. A number of times, the writings imply that the Taliban's targeting of the girl was due to her "western thinking" being in opposition to Islam.<sup>10</sup> Leaders of the Taliban have confessed to targeting the girl because of her criticism of *their* practices. It is they who viewed her as opposing their interpretation of Islam. The wording of the reports carefully builds up the girl, while covertly holding responsible the religion, her country, and social problems in her country. The article does not disconnect the Taliban from the religion of Islam, or place sole blame upon the group rather than the religion.

Another example of the covert use of the story to communicate personal opinions is in a widely circulated Associated Press clipping. Rather than run the full version of the syndicated release, a large percentage of the papers in the study ran a summarized version. In this instance, the original release, "Thousands Rally for Pakistani Girl Shot by Taliban," ran throughout the country.<sup>11</sup> The original version was a lengthy article that provided considerable background information on the shooting, discussed extensively

---

<sup>10</sup> Associated Press, "Pakistani Police Make Arrests in Shooting of Girl," *Johnson City Press*, October 13, 2012, under "Section C Faith," <http://www.jcpress.com/archives>, accessed March 17, 2014.

<sup>11</sup> Adil Jawad and Sebastian Abbot, "Thousands Rally for Pakistani Girl Shot by Taliban," *The Denver Post*, October 15, 2012, [http://www.denverpost.com/ci\\_21773021/tens-thousands-rally-pakistani-girl-shot-by-taliban](http://www.denverpost.com/ci_21773021/tens-thousands-rally-pakistani-girl-shot-by-taliban), accessed February 3, 2015.



political party problems within Pakistan, and clearly defined the differences between the terror that the Taliban produces and the goals of Islam. The full version ran in places such as Denver, San Diego, New York, and Boston. When printed regionally, however, it was clipped down to a five sentence version, and was no longer credited to the Associated Press. This one held the basic information, but the last sentences alter the intent of the story. Reading the original article, it is obvious that the author attempted to explain how notable the protests were considering the dangers posed by the Taliban and extremists in the country. The altered version of the article reads: "But protests against the shooting have been relatively small until now, usually attracting no more than a few hundred people. That response pales in comparison to the tens of thousands of people who held violent protests in Pakistan last month against a film produced in the United States that denigrated Islam's Prophet Muhammad."<sup>12</sup> This version of the article quickly dismisses the positive support for the girl, then immediately turns attention to previous violent protests that were aimed at the United States. The end result suggests that only a few citizens will show up for encouragement or support of good causes, while the masses appear for hostility. These sources repeat many of the negative terms associated with Islam and Muslims, among them, "militants," "radical Islam," "terrorist groups," and "Muslim country." Reports about Malala also use many of the 'fear' words found at the top of the word frequency lists in Table 3. But, one encouraging aspect of these moderate sized regional papers was found in the few opinion and faith commentaries posted about the Taliban shootings. Some individuals in Southern Appalachia seemed motivated to speak out about the tragedy in letters and comments about the stories.

---

<sup>12</sup> Adil Jawad and Sebastian Abbot, "Thousands Rally for Pakistani Girl Shot by Taliban," *The Johnson City Press*, October 15, 2012, <http://www.jcpress.com/archives>, accessed November 12, 2014.

In contrast, the *Charleston Gazette* ran nine stories in the days immediately following Malala's attack which were in their full original formats. Those stories that ran in the *Gazette*, in fact, were instructive and uplifting when compared to those found in the other sources. "Malala Joins Fight for Truth," written by Leonard Pitts for the *Miami Herald*, was distributed around the nation. Pitts' article is only partially a retelling of the facts behind the attack, but more a denouncing of the Taliban for attempting to use Islam as its reasoning for the violence. He states: "The group has said that if Malala survives, it will come for her again. It says her death is required under Islamic law. But make no mistake: Islam is not their religion. It is their excuse."<sup>13</sup> He goes on to compare fundamentalists in Pakistan with fundamentalists in the United States. This specific piece is similar to an editorial, because it includes opinions and beliefs rather than a simple factual detailing of an event. It is unique that the *Gazette* chose to include it when other regional papers do not.

The Charleston paper continued to print articles about the shooting that were enlightening and informative. One article quotes a Pakistan native and scholar: "People think 'Western values' is wearing jeans and sipping pop. Malala was doing none of that," said Murtaza Haider, a Pakistan native and the associate dean of research and graduate programs at the Ted Rogers School of Management at Toronto's Ryerson University. All she said was: 'Would you be kind enough to reopen my school?' This is what the Taliban thinks is a 'Western value.' This is not a Western value. This is a universal value."<sup>14</sup> This

---

<sup>13</sup> Leonard Pitts, "Malala Joins Fight for Truth," *The Charleston Gazette*, October 14, 2012, <http://www.wvgazette.com/archives>, accessed June 17, 2014.

<sup>14</sup> Scott Gold, Wounded Pakistani Girl Malala has become an Icon for Education," *The Charleston Gazette*, October 16, 2012, <http://www.wvgazette.com/archives>, accessed June 17, 2014.

is a nice comparison to the earlier article printed by the smaller regional papers that demoted Pakistan citizens to nothing more than a mob waiting for any excuse to start violent protests. This statement shows an intellectual, successful native commenting reasonably and positively. The reports told about the background of the region before Taliban militants arrived there, and what changed after them. Another writer aptly described actions of the Taliban as "militants (who) have sought to impose their harshly fundamentalist interpretation of Islam."<sup>15</sup> This simple sentence rolls quickly past until it is unpacked. The Taliban themselves are being described as militants, instead of connecting the word 'militant' to the religion of Islam. The religion is disconnected from the Taliban in this sentence and the "harshly fundamental" action is being performed by the men, not by the religion. Finally, this wording accurately describes what the men are doing with the religion through the words: "their interpretation of Islam." It would ordinarily be a minor sentence in the middle of thousands of articles printed, but in this context it is a refreshingly truthful use of the words. These articles avoid the use of negative stereotypes about Muslims, which is a unique feature among the other groups of articles collected.

The *Asheville Citizen Times* and *Greenville News* ran the Leonard Pitts article described above, and the complete version of "Thousands Rally for Pakistani Girl Shot by Taliban."<sup>16</sup> These two papers had a number of positive opinion pieces from local writers which were supportive and not disparaging.

---

<sup>15</sup> Henry Chu, "Pakistani Girl Shot by Taliban Will Rise Again," *The Charleston Gazette*, October 27, 2012, <http://www.wvgazette.com/archives>, accessed March 1, 2015.

<sup>16</sup> Jawad Abbot, "Thousands Rally for Pakistani Girl Shot by Taliban."

## Innocence of Muslims/Benghazi Attacks

In September 2012, a video with anti-Islam content and imagery that mocked the prophet Muhammad was anonymously uploaded to the internet. Produced in the United States, then dubbed with offensive scenes and language, the video became known by the title *Innocence of Muslims*. Muslims were deeply insulted by the film and protests broke out throughout the Middle East and the rest of the world.<sup>17</sup> The protests started in Egypt at the United States Embassy, and then spread to other U.S. diplomatic locations, embassies, and consulates throughout the world.<sup>18</sup>

On September 11, 2012, militants attacked the United States diplomatic consulate in Benghazi, Libya. The United States Ambassador Chris Stevens, along with other members of staff, was killed during the attack.<sup>19</sup> The embassy was burned and many others were injured. In the first days and hours of the embassy's attack, it appeared as if the incident arose from demonstrations condemning the anti-Islam film. The first reports describe protesting that simply turned violent. Later, reports found that trained militants had coordinated and carefully planned the attack.<sup>20</sup> This group of articles is linked because in many cases, the first news reports saw them as a single story. In most of the Southern Appalachian articles, the two events are inseparable.

---

<sup>17</sup> David Kirkpatrick, "Libya Attack Brings Challenges for the US," *New York Times*, September 12, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/13/world/middleeast/us-envoy-to-libya-is-reported-killed.html>, accessed February 19, 2015.

<sup>18</sup> Robin Pomeroy, "Western Embassies on Alert as Muslim Anger Simmers over Film," *Reuters*, September 16, 2012, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/09/16/us-protests-embassies-idUSBRE88F06W20120916>, accessed February 18, 2015.

<sup>19</sup> Kirkpatrick, "Libya Attack Brings Challenges for the US."

<sup>20</sup> Kirkpatrick, "Libya Attack Brings Challenges for the US."

The singular article reprinted most often is "Anti-Islam Film Sparks Protests at U.S. Missions in Libya, Egypt; 1 American Killed." The piece written by Bradley Klapper, a Washington correspondent, ran on September 11, 2012, as an Associated Press article.<sup>21</sup> It was picked up on September 11, 2012, by most of the papers researched for this thesis, and subsequently throughout the following week in many of the others. Inflammatory words or phrases used in this article were "ultra-conservative Islamist," "extreme anti-Muslim," "Islam is inherently oppressive," "ultra-conservative clerics," "angry Islamists," and "they don't know dialogue." Fear words and phrases used in this story were "riots," "kill," "anger," "fired gunshots," "assault," "turmoil," "uprising," "attack," "inflammatory," "vicious behavior," "violent," "denigrate," "gunmen," "grenades," "explosions," "retribution," "al-Qaeda," "massacre," "extremist," "furious," and "incite." It is difficult to fault this writing's use of fear words, and in a few places, even the inflammatory phrases, because it is largely just detailing actual events. That is to say, if one fires a gun, then the description of that action will unquestionably involve the terms "gun" and "fire." The different uses of the words "Muslim" and "Islam" occasionally are misplaced, but not in such an overt way as to increase the negative tone of the writing. It is interesting to note that when describing the male and female protesters, this writer falls back upon stereotypical descriptions of what Americans expect to see. He writes: "A group of women in black veils and robes that left only their eyes exposed chanted," and "This is a very simple reaction to harming our prophet, said

---

<sup>21</sup> *Greenville News*, September 11, 2012, <http://sjweb.ny.atl.publicus.com/article/20120911/WIRE/120919899?Title=Anti-Islam-film-sparks-protests-at-US-missions-in-Libya-Egypt-1-American-killed->, accessed October 9, 2014.

another, bearded young protester."<sup>22</sup> It is widely known that women cover themselves in hijab and men wear beards in the conservative movements of Islam, but that dress varies greatly from country to country, with each individual, and in each circumstance. Islamic dress is worn by men and as a show of respect for God, or as a symbol of modesty. The imagery, however, has been turned into a distinguishing characteristic for non-Muslims who have far right beliefs about Islam. The writer might have pointed to a less conservatively dressed male or female. He could have pinpointed Muslims dressed in clothes resembling western wear, or even women wearing hijab in a liberal style. Instead, he chose to use the stereotypical imagery that conveys negative oppressive ideas of Islam. Regardless of these problems, this article does a reasonable job of reporting the story without straying too far into misinformation. It was widely circulated throughout nearly all of the major and moderate newspapers in Southern Appalachia.

Days and weeks of reporting the Benghazi attack and film riots showed Americans image after image of angry Middle Easterners screaming out against the United States. We saw American flags burned, heard chanting of "Death to America," and watched anti-Islamic sentiments in our country grow.<sup>23</sup> We cannot forget the blazing Islamophobia printed on the infamous cover of *Newsweek* showing furious Moroccan men clad in traditional Islamic dress, veins popping from their necks, tears leaking from their eyes, and fists clenched in passion while the fully capitalized poster

---

<sup>22</sup> Klapper, "Anti-Islam Film Sparks Protests at US Missions in Libya, Egypt; 1 American Killed."

<sup>23</sup> Holly Williams, "Violence Spreads at Protests over Anti-Muslim Film," *The Kingsport Times News*, September 15, 2012, [http://gn4.timesnews.net/archives/9-15 prophet film.htm](http://gn4.timesnews.net/archives/9-15%20prophet%20film.htm), accessed May 15, 2014.

font above their heads read "MUSLIM RAGE!"<sup>24</sup> It appears to be a clear intention of the *Newsweek* cover to impress this image upon the minds' of readers. There is no basis to argue that regional newspapers did not cover the events, and thereby under represented Islam or Muslims. Instead, they latched on to the "Muslim Rage" mantra and carried it through months of reporting. The story "Violence Spreads at Protests over Anti-Muslim Film," was printed in over half of Southern Appalachian newspapers I researched.<sup>25</sup> Overtly vilifying the nature of the protests, the article contains line after line of frightening imagery. The very first word of the story is "fury," and as the article's words and images are tallied up, it gets serious. "Anti-Islam," "deadly," "clashes," "attacked," "kill," "wound," "violent," and "anti-American" appear just in the first three sentences of the report.<sup>26</sup> The continual use of words and descriptions that invoke anxiety was the most obvious aspect of the much-circulated story. It is the small omissions that cause real damage to how media represents Islam and Muslims in Appalachia. The *Kingsport Times News* is one of the moderate sized papers that ran the story regionally. The piece covered half of an entire broadsheet in a Saturday run. This is the same for most of the researched papers. The article contains nearly sixteen-hundred words about the protests and embassy attacks, so it is hard to focus on a few crucial words that might have changed reader's viewpoints about the events, if the writer had been inclined to do so. Early in the report, briefly, the author states about the riots: "most were peaceful."<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Ben Armbruster, "Newsweek Publishes Islamophobic 'Muslim Rage' Cover In Response To Embassy Attacks," *Think Progress*, September 17, 2012, <http://thinkprogress.org/security/2012/09/17/857611/newsweek-muslim-rage-islamophobic>, accessed February 8, 2015.

<sup>25</sup> Holly Williams, "Violence Spreads at Protests over Anti-Muslim Film."

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Holly Williams, "Violence Spreads at Protests over Anti-Muslim Film."

*Most of the riots were peaceful?* It was only after months of reading, then re-reading this content, running word frequency analyses, and comparing each paper's substance that I began to see this phrase repeated, only once here and there: "most were peaceful." It was a shocking discovery, in fact. It was these events that caused me to believe the Arab Spring progress of 2011 had been undermined. So, had most of the riots truly been peaceful? If this is the case, why do the majority of the stories begin with the title word "violence?" Although this research did not, and could not possibly, research all events connected to the Benghazi attack and the *Innocence of Muslims* protests, it was significant enough a discrepancy in information to warrant research of some media watchdog groups for perspective. Oddly, I found that perspective through two watchdog sources pointing toward an article in *Christian Science Monitor*. In the feature "Quantifying Muslim Rage," Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting recommended a piece by Middle East journalist Dan Murphy and stated:

This is a simple reminder that media choose to cover stories, and choose the ways in which they cover them. In so doing, they help form the impression that we have about the world we live in. As has been often noted, local TV news focuses so much on violent crime that you'd think it's dangerous to walk out your front door. And now, not the first time, Muslims the world over are in a violent rage about a religious insult. It's not that people don't learn anything from watching television; they learn a lot. And what they learn is often completely wrong, and dangerous.<sup>28</sup>

Murphy's article titled "Is the Islamocalypse Really Upon Us?" questions the widespread descriptions of what was happening with the protests. He worked for *Bloomberg News*, the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, and the *Christian Science Monitor*, with his journalism specializing on the Middle East and Southeast Asia where

---

<sup>28</sup> Peter Hart, "Quantifying Muslim Rage," FAIR Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, September 20, 2012, <http://fair.org/blog/2012/09/20/quantifying-muslim-rage/>, accessed February 9, 2015.



he covered the Iraq war between 2003 and 2008, and the 2011 uprisings in Egypt and Libya.<sup>29</sup> In the article, he addressed misconceptions about the protests and about Middle Eastern reactions. About the protests he states:

While sensational headlines have played up the story, the cumulative total of protesters so far in about 30 countries appears well under 100,000. At Tahrir Square on Friday, wide angle overhead shots (rather than the tight, ground shots favored by TV news producers) showed a sparse group reminiscent of Mubarak-era political protests (when people ran a major risk of going to jail for simply shouting slogans) and not the hundreds of thousands that have routinely come out to protest against their own government in the past year-and-a-half.<sup>30</sup>

Murphy's comments, if true, change the reading of not only those articles in the Southern Appalachia news sources, but of those for the entire nation. The speculation it leaves behind is: Does Southern Appalachian journalism have a flaw in its representation of Islam and Muslims in the news, or does that defect extend throughout the country? Another possibility for concentrated study into this topic would be an in-depth analysis between the United States' newspaper reports about the protesting compared to actual recorded protest facts in the countries participating, and the reported facts in their native newspapers.

FAIR's report connected with Dan Murphy's viewpoints struck a chord which, I believe, gets to the root of the journalistic weakness in Southern Appalachia. Peter Hart's quote stating that "this is a simple reminder that media choose to cover stories, and choose the ways in which they cover them. In so doing, they help form the impression that we have about the world we live in" is the essence of what is missing in

---

<sup>29</sup> Dan Murphy, "Is the Islamocalypse Really upon Us?" Christian Science Monitor, September 17, 2012, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Security-Watch/Backchannels/2012/0917/Is-the-Islamocalypse-really-upon-us>, accessed May 17, 2014.

<sup>30</sup> Murphy, "Is the Islamocalypse Really upon Us?"

some of the regional news reports.<sup>31</sup> The reader has an obligation to read knowing that media is choosing the way in which it covers these stories. Media is obligated to honor its position of power in forming the way its community views the world.

This media obligation did not always stand up to that test. As shown in the findings about Malala Yousafzai, a title can change or the content can be shortened and manipulated to change the original writer's intention with the piece.<sup>32</sup> The editing process of news stories to be worked into the physical space of newsprint takes its toll. Cataloguing the reports by topic and chronology effectively proved that two factors come into play in the news editing process of reporting. Article titles are often changed to reflect sentiments of those on staff. Also, how much of the original story gets shared reveals aims at representing an account as positive or negative. *Charleston Gazette* was the most prolific offender of title modification. A story written by Osama Alfitory titled "Libyans Heed Call to Hand over Arms," became "Many Libyans Hand over Their Weapons" in the *Gazette*.<sup>33</sup> <sup>34</sup> An Associated Press release titled "Protests against Anti-Islam Film Erupt across Muslim World," containing about 1,500 words, became a 600 word "Rioting against America Spreads-Muslims Infuriated by Anti-Islam Film."<sup>35</sup> <sup>36</sup> In

---

<sup>31</sup> Peter Hart, "Quantifying Muslim Rage."

<sup>32</sup> Associated Press, "Pakistani Police Make Arrests in Shooting of Girl," *Johnson City Press*, October 13, 2012, under "Section C Faith," <http://www.jcpress.com/archives>, accessed March 17, 2014.

<sup>33</sup> Osama Alfitory, "Libyans Heed Call to Hand over Arms," *Columbia Tribune*, September 30, 2012, [http://www.columbiatribune.com/wire/libyans-heed-call-to-hand-over-arms/article\\_cc558edc-658d-5822-bd8e-176bc9e55f9d.html](http://www.columbiatribune.com/wire/libyans-heed-call-to-hand-over-arms/article_cc558edc-658d-5822-bd8e-176bc9e55f9d.html), accessed December 22, 2014.

<sup>34</sup> Osama Alfitory, "Many Libyans Hand over Weapons," *Charleston Gazette*, September 30, 2012, <http://library.cnpapers.com/texis/>, accessed December 22, 2014.

<sup>35</sup> Associated Press, "Protests Against Anti-Islam Film Erupt across Muslim World," *New York Daily News*, September 15, 2012, <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/world/protests-film-spread-muslim-world-article-1.1159601>, accessed March 21, 2014.

most situations, it appeared as if the *Gazette* made no real changes to the position or viewpoint of the original document. The modifications looked as if they were logistical. Logistical changes for space or formatting, however, does not answer the question of why a word such as "protests," is changed to a the more violent term "rioting."<sup>37</sup>

Another good example of how significant edits such as these can be in shaping the impressions of a community are found in the *Johnson City Press* during coverage of the Benghazi uprisings. On September 23, 2012, in the small left-hand corner of page five in section B sat an insignificant six line report.<sup>38</sup> The title of the report "Benghazi Residents Warn of Revolution" was located between a massive advertisement for mattresses, the paper's newsroom contact information along with photos of the staff, and several other seemingly minor news stories from around the world. The title brings to mind more of the same news events coming out of the Middle East at the time, unless the reader paid attention to one line: "Residents of Libya's second largest city warned on Saturday of a 'revolution' to get rid of militias and Islamic extremists after protests against the armed groups, spurred in part by the killing of the U.S. ambassador, left at least four dead in an unprecedented eruption of public frustration."<sup>39</sup> This article points to the other root of what is missing in reporting in Southern Appalachian newspapers. There is a consistent lack in reporting with enthusiasm the encouraging developments occurring in the "Muslim World." For nearly two weeks up to this story, eager reporting

---

<sup>36</sup> Associated Press, "Rioting Against American Spreads-Muslims Infuriated by Anti-Islam Film," *Charleston Gazette*, September 15, 2012, [http:// http://library.cnpapers.com/texis/](http://http://library.cnpapers.com/texis/), accessed February 12, 2015.

<sup>37</sup> Associated Press, "Pakistani Police Make Arrests in Shooting of Girl," *Johnson City Press*, October 13, 2012, under "Section C Faith," <http://www.jcpress.com/archives>, accessed March 17, 2014.

<sup>38</sup> Associated Press, "Benghazi Residents Warn of Revolution," *Johnson City Press*, September 23, 2012, <http://www.jcpress.com/archives>, accessed January 10, 2015.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

of the riots, clashes, and fury made front page headlines. In this piece, a story showing Muslim citizens coming together in brave attempts to oust extremists goes barely noticed. The larger newspapers researched covered positive developments a bit better. The *Chattanooga Times Free Press* covered these developments in Libya with stories such as "Anti-Militia Protests Show Frailty of Libyan State,"<sup>40</sup> "Attack on U.S. in Libya Fuels Anti-Militia Backlash,"<sup>41</sup> among others. *The Greenville News* included the same stories as the *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, as well as stories about the same form of protesting in Tripoli: "Libyan Militia Swept out of Benghazi Bases,"<sup>42</sup> "30,000 Libyans March to Protest Militias Thought Behind Attack that Killed U.S. Ambassador,"<sup>43</sup> and other stories.

The uplifting stories of change in Libya provide an opening for further research in the future. Having browsed global newspaper collections for similar stories to compare with the coverage seen in Appalachia, I found a multitude of images and stories that I had never seen or heard. One that stood out as extraordinary was a piece in *The Atlantic* from Washington, D.C., titled "This Does Not Represent Us: Moving Photos of Pro-

---

<sup>40</sup> Associated Press, "Anti-Militia Protests Show Frailty of Libyan State," *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, September 22, 2012, <http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/local/story/2012/sep/22/anti-militia-protests-show-frailty-libyan-state/88682/>, accessed November 29, 2014.

<sup>41</sup> Associated Press, "Attack on U.S. in Libya Fuels Anti-Militia Backlash," *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, September 21, 2012, <http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/local/story/2012/sep/21/2fattack-us-libya-fuels-anti-militia-backlash>, accessed January 2, 2015.

<sup>42</sup> Peter Graff, "Libyan Militia Swept out of Benghazi Bases," *The Greenville News*, September 21, 2012, <http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/greenvilleonline/>, accessed December 29, 2014.

<sup>43</sup> Asmaa Waguih, "30,000 Libyans March to Protest Militias Thought Behind Attack that Killed U.S. Ambassador," *The Greenville News*, September 21, 2012, <http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/greenvilleonline/>, accessed December 29, 2014.

American Rallies in Libya."<sup>44</sup> The photos and stories were indeed moving and stunning. The report shows images of children marching with their national flag, smiling and holding hands with their parents. One boy holds up a sign written in English that reads: "Sorry people of America this not the Pehavior of our ISLAM and profit."<sup>45</sup> A man held a sign that read: "Chris Stevens was a friend to Libya."<sup>46</sup> Some people simply stated that they oppose terror and violence.<sup>47</sup> The stories were encouraging, and the images show the exact opposite of those inflammatory, rage-filled images that were being plastered across the nation. This report represented one single piece of information that I had not seen in many years of reading and research about Islam and Muslims. The opportunity for expanded research here would be to collect the many positive stories, reports of progress, and movements showing Muslims standing up against extremism, then compare them to those same type of stories in Southern Appalachian news reports. It would be an indispensable study to show exactly how much or how little the region sees about positive, ordinary people--who happen to be Muslims-- opposed to terror and violence.

*The Asheville Citizen Times, The Greenville News, and Chattanooga Times Free Press* were the most likely to print a story word for word, including the original titles

---

<sup>44</sup> Elspeth Reeve, "This Does Not Represent Us': Moving Photos of Pro-American Rallies in Libya," *The Atlantic Monthly*, September 12, 2012, <http://www.thewire.com/politics/2012/09/does-not-represent-us-moving-photos-pro-american-rallies-libya/56803>, accessed July 12, 2014.

<sup>45</sup> Elspeth Reeve, "This Does Not Represent Us': Moving Photos of Pro-American Rallies in Libya," September 12, 2012, [http://cdn.thewire.com/media/old\\_wire/img/upload/2012/09/12/beng3/lead\\_large.jpeg](http://cdn.thewire.com/media/old_wire/img/upload/2012/09/12/beng3/lead_large.jpeg), accessed July 12, 2014.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

and length. Found repeatedly in the research, and specifically in the study of the Benghazi attacks and *Innocence of Muslims*, examples of reports include:

- "U.S. Files Criminal Charges over Benghazi Attack" William Melch<sup>48</sup> <sup>49</sup>
- "Officials say Benghazi Suspects under Surveillance," Kimberly Dozier<sup>50</sup> <sup>51</sup>
- "Anti-Militia Protests Show Frailty of Libyan State," Associated Press<sup>52</sup> <sup>53</sup>
- "Free Speech, Religion Clash over Anti-Muslim Film," Gillian Flaccus<sup>54</sup> <sup>55</sup>

Many of the reports in the study's small regional newspapers are provided by mass distributed syndicated sources. There are many, many duplicates of pieces contained in the large and moderate sized metropolitan papers. No staff writers from the regional newspapers were involved in the writing of stories printed verbatim.

Analysis of each specific article again is an unnecessary repeat of the information listed in the above pages of analysis.

A set of articles, commentaries, and editorials from the smaller newspapers, however, does set-forth unique positions. This writing is significant because it is by

---

<sup>48</sup> William Melch and Kevin Johnson, "U.S. Files Criminal Charges over Benghazi Attack," *USA Today*, August 6, 2013, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2013/08/06/charges-in-benghazi-attack/2625135/>, accessed April 8, 2014.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Kimberly Dozier, "Officials say Benghazi Suspects under Surveillance," *Associated Press* Release, May 22, 2013, <http://news.yahoo.com/officials-benghazi-suspects-under-surveillance-070856121.html>, accessed January 9, 2015.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Associated Press, "Anti-Militia Protests Show Frailty of Libyan State," *Politico*, September 21, 2012, <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0912/81549.html>, accessed November 29, 2014.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Gillian Flaccus, "Free Speech, Religion Clash over Anti-Muslim Film," *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, September 18, 2012, <http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/local/story/2012/sep/18/free-speech-religion-clash-over-anti-muslim-film/88232/>, accessed October 30, 2014.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

regional writers. They provide a distinctive view of what local readers see. Bristol, Tennessee/Virginia's *Bristol Herald Courier* is a widely distributed paper that reaches not only the cities of Bristol, Tennessee, and Bristol, Virginia, but which has a sizeable base of readers throughout Southwest Virginia and Northeast Tennessee. The paper ran a piece titled "16-year-old Malala Yousafzai Has a Brave Heart," on July 19, 2013, written by Cal Thomas. This writer's articles are prolific, printed weekly, or biweekly, and posted in the online version of the *Johnson City Press*, which is connected to Kingsport, Tennessee's *Kingsport Times News* as a cooperative online electronic edition of their papers. Another piece written by him titled "Islamic Fundamentalists Encouraged by President's U.N. Speech" ran on September 27, 2013. This article is a prime example of his blatantly inflammatory and biased writing bias that one could argue he is the extremist. He often makes assumptions and claims with little support for them. In his article about Malala Yousafzai, he at once praises her strength, while refuting her statements about Islam: "She accused terrorists of misusing the name of Islam and Pashtun society for their own personal benefits. While her claim Islam is a religion of peace is debatable, given how it is often practiced by many radicals who assert they are the true disciples of Mohammed."<sup>56</sup>

In an article that appeared shortly after the Boston Marathon bombings, Thomas ranted:

One thing the U.S. government should decide is whether or not to allow people into America from countries where radical Islam and "jihad" are taught. The hope has been that letting them live here would lead them to become more like us, more accepting of our way of life. In fact, their stay

---

<sup>56</sup> Cal Thomas, "16-year-old Malala Yousafzai Has a Brave Heart," *Bristol Herald Courier*, July 19, 2013, [http://www.heraldcourier.com/news/opinion\\_columns/article\\_064f089a-efc-11e2-8e8e-001a4bcf6878.html](http://www.heraldcourier.com/news/opinion_columns/article_064f089a-efc-11e2-8e8e-001a4bcf6878.html), accessed June 4, 2014.

in America seems to have reinforced a radical brand of religion and its worldview that are intended to destroy countries like America whose freedoms and "libertinism" they despise. More must also be done to curtail the admission of radical imams and the construction of mosques and Islamic schools where hatred of America, Jews and Christians is preached and taught. How many sleeper cells are there in America? They must be found and dismantled. As offensive as this might be to some sensibilities, it is either that, or the offense of more terrorist attacks by people who hate us and are willing to die in the pursuit of goals they believe are dictated by their god.<sup>57</sup>

All mosques and Islamic schools should be stopped because they teach hatred of America? It is easy to see the inciting nature of his words, and how unfounded his claims are. Despite this, when following his articles in an online format, one finds a great number of supporters in the Appalachian region who openly discuss his views as compelling. Thomas is a nationally syndicated writer, so his articles can be found throughout the country, making them not unique to Southern Appalachia.

There are other opinion articles from regular contributors printed in the regional papers of Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia. The writers generally express their opinions on political and world events they find compelling enough to write about in a public forum. A good example of the type of pieces printed during the protests over *Innocence of Muslims* is one from a regular contributor titled "We Must Realize That There is a Deep Vein of Violence within Islam." The writer's name is Bob Arrington and he appeared to send in his opinions at that time on a near biweekly basis. Printed on October 8, 2012, in the *Kingsport Times News*, Arrington's commentary discusses the film *The Innocence of Muslims*, and the protests in Egypt and Libya:

---

<sup>57</sup> Cal Thomas, "Osama bin Laden is Likely Pleased about the Way America is Going," *Kingsport Times News*, April 23, 2013, [http://www.heraldcourier.com/news/opinion\\_columns/osama-bin-laden-is-likely-pleased-about-the-way-america/article\\_caa498d6-ac68-11e2-ad04-001a4bcf6878.html](http://www.heraldcourier.com/news/opinion_columns/osama-bin-laden-is-likely-pleased-about-the-way-america/article_caa498d6-ac68-11e2-ad04-001a4bcf6878.html), accessed June 4, 2014.



The film did not start the violence it was just an excuse for the violent to do what they internally want to do anyway. We must accept that there is a deep vein of violence within Islam, and much support within its theology for constant war against, and suppression of, those who embrace other faiths, or no faith. These impulses find support within the mainstream of Islamic thought, and not just on the radical fringes. This tendency to violence is by no means a characteristic of all Muslims, or even of all Islamic theologians. But it appeals to enough that the problem won't be solved by either apology or by asking everyone to clam up.<sup>58</sup>

Arrington's comments are interesting, because they set forth almost contradictory views. If Islam does not contain a vein of violence, then what accounts for the violent acts committed by many in the name of Islam? Is the complexity of analysis what is missing? And must one admit that for some adherents of Islam the religion does condone violent acts—as it does for some adherents of Christianity?

The online version of Arrington's opinion piece had pages of comments in support of his views, with few pages that contained dissenting comments. Those who denied that his comments promoted his own version of hate were quickly overwhelmed by angry supporters of Arrington's viewpoint. During the research time period, Arrington posted opinions and commentaries in the local papers with biased and inciting language.

The discussion of negative commentary expressed by regional readers is not meant to imply that no positive events or community friendly announcements are contained in these papers. Each local region of Southern Appalachia has Muslim community members who are interested in community events and announcement. Printing and accessing those topics, however, was not always readily available and were difficult, or impossible, to locate. Also, a number of local and regional commentators had progressive opinions and viewpoints on world events. Investigation into writings of

---

<sup>58</sup> October 8, 2012, <http://www.tricitiesonline.com/Eedition/>, accessed February 3, 2014.

Muslims in Southern Appalachian communities may be a topic of interest for future research.

In contrast, the moderate sized metropolitan newspapers of Southern Appalachia offered not only original reporting in some cases, but also press releases about local and community events focused on Islamic issues. The *Greenville News* and the *Spartanburg Herald Journal* ran regular community awareness events, including Muslim services. One such story ran August 3, 2012, "Worth the Wait: Spartanburg Muslims Observing Ramadan," written by Dustin Wyatt, it presents a good example of the language, tone, and aim of stories in larger papers of Southern Appalachia. It is an optimistic story explaining how Muslims observe Ramadan and what it means to them. He also offers a practical daily look at how a person living in Appalachia and practicing Islam lives and worships. "During Ramadan — a month long time of Islamic fasting and prayer — even the simplest tasks such as brushing teeth can be a challenge. Many Muslims brush their teeth with a miswak stick — described as a “flavored branch” — to avoid accidentally swallowing toothpaste." Wyatt explains that this is because nothing can go past your throat when observing Ramadan.<sup>59</sup> Interviewing Kamal Desor before a worship service at the Masjid, a Muslim place of prayer, Wyatt asks Desor to explain about the observances. "Ramadan is observed during the ninth month of the Islamic calendar by those who have reached puberty," Desor said, "children between the ages of 6 and 8 can fast for half the day, gradually increasing the duration until old enough to fully observe

---

<sup>59</sup> <http://gannettonline.com/archives/>, accessed December 13, 2013.

the fast."<sup>60</sup> What is distinctive about this report is its commonplace tone in reporting the experiences of a local Muslim.

*Greenville News* has similar reporting, including information about The Islamic Medical Association hosting a health fair in the isolated and rural area of Greer, South Carolina.<sup>61</sup> The printed press releases about an arts exhibit that focused on Iranian poster art.<sup>62</sup> A story ran about local South Carolina students creating a documentary of a female Islamic preacher traveling in Syria as she educated and guided girls about gender and religion.<sup>63</sup> The paper also included fair reporting of violence against Muslims in the area.<sup>64</sup> One story stood out as an exceptional representation of a story that might incite anger or fear among rural residents in Southern Appalachia, but was met positively and reported fairly. *Greenville News* reporter Drew Brooks wrote "Converse Student Finds New Interest in Saudi Culture," in July of 2013 about a rural student who was encouraged to go on a college trip to the Middle East.<sup>65</sup> The student explained her fear and skepticism, which Brooks conveyed in a way that helped the reader identify with her. The article goes on to tell of how the adventure changed her life: "a trip overseas helped the 21-year-old Boalt find a new love with a new culture. And this summer, the Greer-native is living in New York City at her own expense to help Arab people become

---

<sup>60</sup>-Wyatt, "Worth the Wait."

<sup>61</sup> Editor, "Islamic Center Hosts Health Fair," *Greenville News*, November 30, 2012.

<sup>62</sup> Staff Reports, "Iranian Poster Art Exhibit Opening in Asheville," *Greenville News*, October 14, 2013.

<sup>63</sup> Staff Reports, "Filmmakers Meltz, Nix to Discuss 'Light in Her Eyes'," *Greenville News*, September 27, 2013.

<sup>64</sup> John McFadden, "York Man Charged After Shots Fired Near Islamville," *Greenville News*, December 13, 2013.

<sup>65</sup> Drew Brooks, "Converse Student Finds New Interest in Saudi Culture," *Greenville News*, July 14, 2013.

U.S. citizens."<sup>66</sup> He explained that Boalt has lived at a YMCA in Manhattan while taking night classes and working part time at the Arab-American Family Support Center in Brooklyn. Her efforts included teaching English as a second language to immigrants and tutoring Arab men and women to prepare them for their U.S. citizenship tests. It is work that Boalt hardly would have considered when she arrived on Converse's campus. Her love of the Middle East began when she was convinced to join Converse's Model Arab League. The story included images of Boalt in a full burqa and commenting, "You think you know Southern hospitality?" she said. "But Arabs . . . they're such a gracious and generous people. It was fantastic."<sup>67</sup> When she returned, she wrote an article on terrorist attitudes and anti-Americanism for a newsletter for the Carolinas Committee on U.S.-Arab Relations. The report avoids any impressions or tones of negativity, focusing solely on the positive and lasting effect a first-hand experience with a culture had on the life of the student.

The *Charleston Gazette* also includes optimistic portrayals of Muslims and Islam with reports found showing a number of academic lecture series and Muslim "town hall" style meetings. The articles showed an insight to civic and academic matters for Charleston Muslims. "Pondering Freedom of Religion," written by James Haught printed in March 23, 2013, and provides a good example of those community reports.<sup>68</sup> It advertised for a public symposium where attendees discussed the separation of church and state, religion in civic matters, and the history of governments tackling that

---

<sup>66</sup> Brooks, "Converse Student Finds New Interest in Saudi Culture."

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> James Haught, "Pondering freedom of religion," *Charleston Gazette*, March 23, 2013, <http://www.sundaygazette.com/Opinion/JamesAHaught/>, accessed August 3, 2014.

problem. The wording was adamant about including as many viewpoints as possible, and did so in a respectful tone. Haught stated that the organizer wanted to "emphasize the importance of including scholars alongside the areas religious leaders in Islam, Catholicism, Judaism, Protestantism, Unitarian, and Buddhist. The speakers will address critical issues between religions in an environment of calm and mutual respect: the centuries old battle between Muslims and Christians, the struggle to include religion in government by some and to keep separation of church and state strong by others."<sup>69</sup> This article is an ideal example of what the community and regional section of the *Gazette* was doing to promote events in Muslim community, as well as to support open discussion of sensitive topics that equally respect and inform.

The summation is that the data shows Southern Appalachia's largest circulating papers did not necessarily carry the highest number of articles related to Islam and Muslims. Similarly, the paper with the lowest circulations did not rank lowest in the frequency of articles on Muslims and Islam. The majority of the articles found in this research were from syndicated news sources. The syndicated groups used in these stories were: The Associated Press, New York Times News Service, Washington Post Writer's Group, Universal Press Syndicate, Creators Syndicate, and Reuters. There are repeated replicas of the exact syndicate pieces contained in the large and moderate sized metropolitan papers.

The theme and tone common in the most frequently used words have little variation from focusing on cynicism. When writing about Islam or Muslims, many authors used words that spotlight negativity. It can be argued that media in Southern

---

<sup>69</sup> James Haught, "Pondering freedom of religion."

Appalachia portrays Islam and Muslims largely in pessimistic and unfavorable imagery through the consistent use of negative words. The perception of terror, attacks, extremism, radicalism, harm, conflict, war, and death appear between nearly 500 and 750 times in the articles. The subjects among the words show secondary themes about religion and politics. It can be hypothesized that a relationship exists between Islam and Christianity in these articles. Words of fear and alarm outweigh words that are neutral, or ones which are calming and affable in the frequency lists. Out of the one-hundred and fifty recurring words, eighty-two (54%) are words of threat or fear. Content analysis shows that authors covertly hold responsible the religion of Islam, Arab countries, and social problems within those countries for violent events. Many of the largest Appalachian papers, compared to the smaller ones examined, printed articles that were enlightening and informative. The largest circulating papers had positive opinion pieces from local writers which were supportive and not disparaging.

The continual use of words and descriptions that invoke anxiety, however, was the most obvious aspect of articles that caused harm in the representation of Islam and Muslims. The small omissions caused real damage to how media represents Islam and Muslims in Appalachia. The editing process of news stories takes a significant toll on what readers eventually see. Whether the editing is for logistical reasons of working an article into the physical space of newsprint, or for the intended end of editing the content, it caused break downs in the ultimate news reported. The root of the journalistic weakness in Southern Appalachia is one that appears to occur throughout American journalism. Peter Hart's quote stating that "this is a simple reminder that media choose to cover stories, and choose the ways in which they cover them. In so

doing, they help form the impression that we have about the world we live in" is the essence of what is missing in some of the regional, and arguably national, news reports.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS

As with the rest of the United States, the Information Age in Appalachia brought an intensification of linkages to other parts of the nation and the world. Southern Appalachian residents are better connected to events and people around the world through the communications revolution, and the accelerated merger and acquisition activities of many companies. Whether it is through cable networks broadcasting Europe's number one talk show, or social media instantaneously sharing the Egyptian revolution and Arab Spring, many Appalachians are directly experiencing and becoming involved with the world. People living in Appalachia have the ability to immediately connect to news and events on their smart phones, laptops, and tablets; as well as instantly interact with people of other cultures. The need to understand how we relate to others is critical in a time when media has the swiftness, capability, and desire to send news straight to the hands of readers, regardless of its accuracy. Studying attitudes of residents in Southern Appalachia toward marginalized religions, and how media has contributed to shaping those opinions, helps this understanding.

I started this research with a brief background on Muslims in the United States, those who immigrated from foreign lands, and those who found the religion through its growth here. That was followed by a description of the religious setting in Appalachia, describing how it came to be predominately Protestant Christianity, and how other religions play into that background. Perhaps, as that research suggests, the religion predisposes many media outlets to view Islam in a negative light. Part of the review of existing literature included documents examining the perceptions of Americans about



Islam and Muslims, as well as media throughout the country's representations. The vital next step was to examine how specific southern Appalachian media outlets represent the Islamic religion and Muslim adherents to understand how they might affect peoples' viewpoints. My study focused on perceptions of the Islamic religion and Muslim adherents, the effect that mass media has on influencing beliefs, and the dissemination of information in a region where Protestant Christianity is the norm and Islam is atypical.

Mass media coverage regularly scrutinizes the religion of Islam and the actions of Muslims in the public sphere. They are often represented with a long-standing tradition of stereotypes and negativity. From small rural newspapers to large metropolitan ones, national and international headlines are largely reproduced reports from mass syndicated press agencies. In the reproducing, the same verbiage, stereotypes, and misconceptions are repeated over and over. Media accounts might intend to be impartial, but through repeated mass production of the same stories, regular use of identical words to describe Islam and Muslims, and catch phrases that incite fear, the objectivity becomes murky. As Fawaz Gerges notes, "although the religious and intellectual challenge of Islam continues to seize the imagination of many people in the United States, it is the security and strategic implications of the mass politics of Islam that resonates in the minds of Americans."<sup>1</sup>

Traces of Islamophobia are in the researched newspaper articles. When writing the stories, the pieces often used words that were inflammatory, alarming, and frightening. The word frequency counts showed the most commonly found

---

<sup>1</sup> "Islam and Muslims in the Mind of America," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 588 (July 2003): 77.

inflammatory words were: "terror," "attack," "extremist," "radical," "harm," "conflict," "death," and "war."<sup>2</sup> Words that are stereotyping and negative associated to Islam and Muslims were: "militant," "terrorist," "extremist," "violent," and "radical."<sup>3</sup> Using these terms as descriptive of Islam and Muslim, they do so incorrectly and interchangeably as if the religion equals the actions of one human, and the one human represents the whole of the religion. Newspapers make direct connections to Islam and terror, and the war on terror, in their reporting through the use of the terms: "Islamic militants," "extremist Islamist," "radical Islam," and "radical Muslim." Branding catchphrases further propagate stereotypes and induce fear: "Muslim world," "terrorist training," "radical movements," "eradicate terrorism," and "terrorist groups."<sup>4</sup>

Mainstream Western media often represent Islam as being opposed to democracy, while representing democracy as ultimately righteous.<sup>5</sup> With relentless reporting of West versus Islam, the dialogue transforms easily to us versus them, then right against wrong. The reports reviewed showed opposition to the West and democracy through the terminology "pro-West," "promoting western culture," "Muslim world," "western thinking," "anti-Islam," "radical movements," and "anti-West."

The dominant theme and tone in the most frequently used words do not vary much from one article to the next. When writing about Islam or Muslims, the most commonly used words overwhelmingly leave a negative impression. Reviewing the word

---

<sup>2</sup> See Table 3 "150 Most Frequently Used Words" in Chapter 4 Results.

<sup>3</sup> See Table 3.

<sup>4</sup> See Table 3.

<sup>5</sup> el-Sayed el-Aswad, "Images of Muslims in Western Scholarship and Media After 9/11," *Digest of Middle East Studies* 22, no. 1 (2013): 45.

frequency chart shows media in Southern Appalachia portrays Islam and Muslims largely with pessimistic and unfavorable words.

The researched reports regularly connect the religion of Islam to the identities of people, groups, and states. This connection is only made when the religion is Islam, one does not see such descriptors for Protestants. The only exclusion to that rule is if the report has a specific need to mention the characteristic of a human, such as his/her religion, gender, age, or ethnicity. This appears to be different for Muslims. In the eyes of reporters, it is important to establish that the person is Muslim, first and foremost, before the person is anything else.

The greatest concern with these media inaccuracies is that they are standardized on a national level. Southern Appalachian media outlets are no less guilty than are those throughout the nation. The small rural newspapers have a propensity to run the same national news stories, or a brief synopsis of the story. Compared to outlets in larger towns and cities, they have fewer postings of Muslim community events or Islamic organizations in their papers. According to the census and polling collections gathered in this research, the existence of a predominately Protestant Christian population is a contributing factor. The population demographics undoubtedly affect opinions, and strengthen reliance upon news reports to convey information about a minority religion and its adherents. As stated by el-Aswad, "the lack of direct contact and reliance on second-hand information go hand in hand" with misunderstandings, lack of tolerance, and the acceptance of mass media stereotypes as valid.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> El-Sayed El-Aswad, "Images of Muslims in Western Scholarship and Media After 9/11," *Digest of Middle East Studies* 22, no. 1 (2013): 38.

The larger to moderate sized metropolitan newspapers, perhaps influenced by diversity of populations, display a willingness to write about those events in their community, regardless of the religion. It should be emphasized that not all reporting is negative, as noted in the community pieces and those articles attempting to enlighten their readers on Islamic principles. The optimistic articles, however, are in large part presented in metropolitan area papers. If the population census and the types of articles printed are linked, it is possible that a contributory factor to that linkage lies within a readership consisting of enough Muslims to influence the newspaper's subject matter. It is also possible that persons living in larger cities are more multi-ethnic than those living in smaller towns.

Another concern found in moderate newspapers that did not occur in the larger metropolitan papers was significant editing of content. I became concerned about the editing of content when I first saw important stories turned into two or three paragraph version in some of the regional newspapers. Initially, it appeared as if the content was edited for space and logistical concerns. In many cases, it is true that logistics brought about the edits. It was while reviewing edits made on the shooting of Malala Yousafzai when I encountered content editing that changed the intention of the original article. After finding that story, I reviewed all the work I had previously done, and looked at the articles with that new information in mind. The only way to determine if such editing took place was to find the original articles to see what, if any, editing had taken place. In the smaller papers, a staff writer or editor often appeared to have summarized extensively the report. Much of the editing was likely for logistical concerns; however, there were a few examples where the editing of the piece manipulated the content and

intention of the original story. There were no articles found in the large metropolitan newspapers where such drastic revisions took place.

The problem is not with news articles about Muslims and Islam, but rather it is with the tone of writing and biased content of the articles. It is a problem that is society-wide and rooted in decades of reporting from a western viewpoint. All of these reporting methods and the terminology used show the proliferation of stereotypes. Southern Appalachian residents and reporters for media outlets have simply responded to the trends along with the rest of the nation. Christopher Basil argues this point: "Discursive fields may be shaped not only by the collective actors who inhabit them and the media that describe them, but also by the broader public that consumes media messages. Journalists may be influenced by their audiences' views, and these audiences may also provide civil society organizations with the resources necessary to publicize their frames."<sup>7</sup>

Another interesting finding resulting from the word research was a connection between two secondary themes about religion and politics. The only two religions referenced contained in the most frequent words lists were Christianity and Islam. An equal number of words were rooted in political topics. The findings of the word study support el-Aswad's contentions about western media.

The role of Western media in depicting or creating reality is crucial in the formation of public opinion. On the one hand, Western media creates the idea that Muslims are 'coming back' to Islam. This is not true in most cases, because most Muslims have never deserted Islam in the first place. Islam has always been a core measurement or component of their lives. On the other hand, Western media has repeatedly stressed the reality of bomb blasts, flag burning, and the misconduct of Muslims, especially imams or

---

<sup>7</sup> Basil, "The Fringe Effect," 870.

men of religious learning accused of politically mobilizing Muslim people. Moreover, Muslims have been repeatedly caricatured in Western media. The representation of the violent Muslim does not only serve Western propaganda but also generates good profits. The utility of presenting Muslims in stereotypical ways has been exploited extensively by producers of films, television dramas, comics, and advertising.<sup>8</sup>

The news reports in the research also substantiate that claim. As noted in the results chapter, a considerable number of news reports about events occurring in the Middle East were not reported regionally. While it is unreasonable to believe that every incident around the world can be reported, it is an interesting point to consider what choices they make and what are the consequences of those choices. What drives their choices? What are the consequences of those choices? Thorough study into the topic of what news media in southern Appalachia chooses to cover of world events would complement and enrich this research. A comprehensive report of the actual events that happened in a region during a set time period, such as Iraq during 2012, compared to what makes it into news reports would offer considerable insights. It may be the case that the communications revolution fosters a form of yellow journalism that encourages media to make choices that focus on sensationalist events and ignore other types of events, much as late 19th and early 20th century newspaper and magazine reporting in the United States did by focusing on the violence of feuding among mountaineers. A comparison between the ways Appalachians have been stereotyped, and the ways Muslims are stereotyped could be a consideration for further study.

Continuing the topic of consequences discarded news reports have on the representation of Islam, the research found that the number of stories were limited about positive developments in the "Muslim world." Digging around to find the

---

<sup>8</sup> El-Aswad, "Images of Muslims in Western Scholarship and Media After 9/11," 46.

supporting data behind a reference, the trail led to an abundance of encouraging stories about Muslims and Middle Eastern people published in large national news outlets. Although this research was not focused on cataloguing stories omitted from print in Appalachian sources, it was easy to determine that many of uplifting articles read in national news had not printed regionally. Does Southern Appalachia have a failing in its representation of Islam and Muslims in the news, or does that defect extend throughout the country? Because this thesis determined that the largest number of articles about Muslims came from syndicated news sources, the likely answer is that it is a structural problem. Our society has slowly developed a structure we use when writing about Muslims and Islam, that has seeped into news outlets throughout the nation. Concentrated study into this topic would be an in-depth analysis between the United States' newspaper reports about a region or event, compared to recorded facts from native newspapers about that region or event. Another field to be expanded upon would be a similar comparison that involves an American city with a substantial Muslim population. It would also be beneficial to collect the many positive stories and movements showing Muslims standing up against extremism, and then compare them to those same type of stories in southern Appalachian news reports. It would be an indispensable study to show exactly how much or how little the region sees about positive, ordinary people, who happen to be Muslim.

Given the significant influence mass media has on perceptions of Islam, one possible result of this research may be a renewed effort at careful reporting that is mindful of the impact it has on religious dialogue and interactions. Reprocessing syndicated mass produced news articles might be the cheapest route for newspapers,

but it could also hold the key for alleviating language dilemmas. A starting point would be for the largest print syndicated reporters to choose their wording with awareness in order to inform the public in ways that educate. Delicate issues and populations should be treated with care and professionalism in news reports. The Muslim community and the religion of Islam are particularly susceptible at this point in world history. Peter Hart asserts "that media choose to cover stories, and choose the ways in which they cover them. In so doing, they help form the impression that we have about the world we live in."<sup>9</sup> This is the essence of what is missing in some of the regional news reports. The reader has an obligation to read knowing that media chooses which stories to cover, and whether or not to edit those reports. The media has an obligation to honor its position of power in forming the way its community views the world. With the knowledge that they can be such a powerful influence, it is the duty of reporting outlets to provide educating, accurate information. An effort at avoiding stereotypes, negative language, and clichéd, repetitive catch phrases would significantly alter the discourse about Islam, and over time, the perceptions many persons have about Muslims.

---

<sup>9</sup> Peter Hart, "Quantifying Muslim Rage."



## REFERENCES

- Abramson, Rudy, and Jean Haskell, eds. *Encyclopedia of Appalachia*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2006.
- Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, M Ali Kettani. *Islam and Muslims in the American Continent*. Beirut, Lebanon: Center of Historical, Economical and Social Studies, 2001.
- Association of Religion Data Archives. "Religious Congregations and Membership Study, 2000." The Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA). Nashville: Glenmary Research Center. 2002. Retrieved April 19, 2014, <http://www.thearda.com/Archive/Files/Descriptions/RCMSCY.asp>.
- Basil, Christopher. "The Fringe Effect: Civil Society Organizations and the Evolution of Media Discourse About Islam Since the September 11th Attacks." *American Sociological Review* 77, no. 6 (2012): 855-79.
- Bassiri-Ghanea, Kambiz. *A History of Islam in America: From the New World to the New World Order*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Bassiri-Ghanea, Kambiz. *Competing Visions of Islam in the United States*. Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1997.
- Baylor University. 2007. *The Baylor Religion Survey, Wave II*. Waco, TX: Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion [producer].
- Britt, Thomas, Tunagur, Usame. "Business as Usual: Exploring the Other from Arabia to Appalachia." *Americana: The Journal of American Popular Culture 1900 to Present*. 6, no. 2. Fall 2007.
- Bucar, Elizabeth M. *The Islamic Veil: A Beginner's Guide*. Oxford, England: Oneworld, 2012.
- Bucar, Elizabeth M. *Creative Conformity: the Feminist Politics of U.S. Catholic and Iranian Shi'i Women* (Moral Traditions Series) Georgetown University Press, 2011.
- Campbell, John C. *The Southern Highlander and His Homeland*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, with a new forward by Rupert B. Vance and An Introduction by Henry D. Shapiro. 1921, 1969.
- Cass, Michael. "Most Tennesseans Favor Muslims' Right to Build Houses of Worship." *The Tennessean*. February 9, 2011. Retrieved September 15, 2013, [http://wardheernews.com/News\\_2011/Feb/10\\_Most\\_Tennesseans\\_favor\\_Muslims\\_right\\_to\\_build\\_houses\\_of\\_worship.html](http://wardheernews.com/News_2011/Feb/10_Most_Tennesseans_favor_Muslims_right_to_build_houses_of_worship.html).
- Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions (CSDI). *Results of January 2011 Vanderbilt Poll*. Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions. January 2011. Retrieved February 14, 2011, [http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csdi/JAN\\_POLL\\_RESULTS.pdf](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csdi/JAN_POLL_RESULTS.pdf)

- Council of American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). *American Public Opinion about Islam and Muslims*. Council on American-Islamic Relations: Reports and Surveys. (Washington, DC: CAIR, 2005). Retrieved July 8, 2013, [https://www.cair.com/images/pdf/american\\_public\\_opinion\\_on\\_muslims\\_islam\\_2006.pdf](https://www.cair.com/images/pdf/american_public_opinion_on_muslims_islam_2006.pdf).
- Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). *The Status of Muslim Civil Rights in the United States*. Council on American-Islamic Relations: Reports and Surveys. Winter 2005. Retrieved January 15, 2015, <http://ca.cair.com/sfba/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/2014-CAIR-CA-CR-Report-WEB.pdf>.
- Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). *Same Hate, New Target: Islamophobia and its Impact in the United States*. Council on American-Islamic Relations: Reports and Surveys. Winter 2010. Retrieved March 15, 2014, <http://www.cair.com/images/pdf/2010-Islamophobia-Report.pdf>.
- Curtis, Edward. *Encyclopedia of Muslim American History* Vol 1. New York: Infobase Publishing, 2010.
- Ehsan Abedi, "Shii and Catholicism Are Not Anti-Women: An interview with Elizabeth Bucar on the challenges Iranian and American women face," *Tehran Review*, June 2011, under "Culture Section," Retrieved July 1, 2011, <http://tehranreview.net/articles/8787>.
- el-Aswad, el-Sayed. "Images of Muslims in Western Scholarship and Media After 9/11." *Digest of Middle East Studies* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 39-56.
- Federal, Register. "2010 Standards for Delineating Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas." Notice presented by the Office of Management and Budget, Washington, D.C., June 28, 2010. Retrieved March 15, 2014, [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/fedreg\\_2010/06282010\\_metro\\_standards-Complete.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/fedreg_2010/06282010_metro_standards-Complete.pdf).
- Gardell, Mattias. *In the Name of Elijah Muhammad: Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam*. C. Eric Lincoln Series On the Black Experience. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996.
- Gerges, Fawaz. "Islam and Muslims in the Mind of America." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. Islam: Enduring Myths and Changing Realities, 588, no. 2 (July 2003): 73-89.
- Gerges, Fawaz. "Islam and Muslims in the Mind of America: Influences On the Making of U. S. Policy." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 26, no. 2 (Winter 1997): 68-80.
- Goddard, Hugh. *A History of Christian-Muslim Relations*. Chicago, Ill.: New Amsterdam Books, 2000.
- Karim, Jamillah Ashira. *American Muslim Women: Negotiating Race, Class, and Gender Within the Ummah*. Religion, Race, and Ethnicity Series. New York: New York University Press, 2009.
- Kidd, Thomas. "Is It Worse to Follow Mahomet than the Devil?' Early American Uses of Islam." *Church History* 72, no. 4 (December 2003): 766-90.

- Kosmin, Barry and Keysar, A. *American Religious Identification Survey 2008: Summary Report*. American Religious Identification Survey. Connecticut: Trinity College. March 2009. Retrieved July 9, 2013, [http://commons.trincoll.edu/aris/files/2011/08/ARIS\\_Report\\_2008.pdf](http://commons.trincoll.edu/aris/files/2011/08/ARIS_Report_2008.pdf).
- Lewis, Helen and Monica Appleby. *Mountain Sisters: From Convent to Community in Appalachia*. Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2003.
- Mackun, Paul and Wilson, Steve. "Population Distribution and Change: 2000 to 2010." 2010 Census Briefs. Washington: United States Census Bureau. March 2011. Retrieved October 2, 2012, <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-01.pdf>.
- Media Insight Project. *The Personal News Cycle: How Americans Choose to Get Their News*. University of Chicago: American Press Institute, 2014. Retrieved June 1, 2014, [http://www.americanpressinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/The\\_Media\\_Insight\\_Project\\_The\\_Personal\\_News\\_Cycle\\_Final.pdf](http://www.americanpressinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/The_Media_Insight_Project_The_Personal_News_Cycle_Final.pdf).
- Moore, Kathleen. "Visible through the Veil: The Regulation of Islam in American Law." *Sociology of Religion* 68, no. 3. (October 2007): 237-251.
- Muslims in Appalachia: Islam in Exile*. Directed by Steven, Michael Pinner, and Richard Schreiber Martin. Princeton, NJ: Films for the Humanities and Sciences; 2003.
- Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey-Religious Affiliation: Diverse and Dynamic*. Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. February 2008. Retrieved January 5, 2014, <http://www.pewforum.org/files/2013/05/report-religious-landscape-study-full.pdf>.
- Pew Research Center. Mapping the Global Muslim Population: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Muslim Population. Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. Washington, D.C.: Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. 2009. Retrieved October 19, 2014, <http://www.pewforum.org/2009/10/07/mapping-the-global-muslim-population/>.
- Pew Research Center. "Trends in News Consumption: 1991-2012: In Changing News Landscape, Even Television is Vulnerable." Pew Center for the People and the Press. Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center. 2012. Retrieved March 4, 2015. <http://www.people-press.org/files/legacy-pdf/2012%20News%20Consumption%20Report.pdf>.
- Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*. Directed by Sut Jhally. Media Education Foundation, 2006. Retrieved December 28, 2013, <http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/reel-bad-arabs>.
- Saad, Lydia. *TV Is Americans' Main Source of News*. New Jersey: Gallup Polling Division, 2013. Retrieved May 17, 2014, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/163412/americans-main-source-news.aspx>.
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.

Schimmel, Annemarie. *And Muhammad Is His Messenger: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety*. Studies in Religion. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985.

Schimmel, Annemarie. *Islam: An Introduction*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992.

Shaheen, Jack G. *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*. 2 ed. New York: Olive Branch Press, 2012.

Tweed, Thomas. "Islam in America: From African Slaves to Malcolm X," (Transcription of Lecture). Lecture, National Humanities Center, University of North Carolina: Chapel Hill, 2004. Retrieved September 10, 2014, <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/twenty/tkeyinfo/islam.htm>.

VITA

SAUNDRA K. REYNOLDS

- Education: M.A. Liberal Studies, Focus: Liberal Studies,  
Sociology, East Tennessee State University,  
Johnson City, Tennessee 2015
- B.S. Interdisciplinary Study, Focus: Anthropology,  
Philosophy, East Tennessee State University,  
Johnson City, Tennessee 2007
- Public Schools, Blountville, Tennessee  
Public Schools, St. Simon's Island, Georgia
- Professional Experience: Department Assistant, Liberal Studies, East  
Tennessee State University 2012-2014
- Executive Assistant and Office Manager, Appalachian  
Surgery Center and Family Practice, Johnson  
City, Tennessee 2008-present
- Executive Director, Chairman of Music and  
Marketing, Bristol's Rhythm and Roots  
Reunion, Bristol, Tennessee/Virginia 2001-  
2007
- Information Technology Department, Bechtel  
Corporation, Kingsport, Tennessee 1996-2001
- Honors and Awards: Northeast Tennessee Tourism Pinnacle Awards for  
cultural and heritage tourism and marketing of  
the Rhythm and Roots Reunion, Bristol,  
Tennessee/Virginia, 2002, 2003, 2005, and  
2006
- President's Volunteer Service Award, Gold Level for  
volunteerism in cultural and heritage groups  
for Bristol, Tennessee including Arts Alliance  
of the Mountain Empire, Convention and  
Visitors Bureau, and the Rhythm and Roots  
Reunion, 2005 and 2006
- Heart Award from the cities of Bristol, Tennessee and  
Bristol, Virginia for outstanding volunteer

service in the cultural heritage of the city  
through the Rhythm and Roots Reunion, 2006.