

New Zealand Media Constructions of Islam and Muslims: An Analysis of Selected Newspapers Between 2005- 2006

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Statement of Originality

I declare that the work presented in this thesis, to the best of my knowledge and belief, is original and my own work, except as acknowledged in the text. This thesis has not been submitted either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to:

Shameema Khanom

and

Shah Muhammad Fuwad Fahiyen Kabir

Abstract

This study investigates the representation of Islam and Muslims in three New Zealand newspapers—the *Otago Daily Times (ODT)*, *The Press (Press)* and *The New Zealand Herald (NZH)*—in order to identify how Islam and Muslims are socially constructed in these newspapers’ frames. The investigation includes news and non-news items. News coverage, which is primarily sourced from international news agencies, is supportive towards Western elite agendas when framing the issue. Discursive analysis shows that the news stories appearing in these newspapers maintain uniformity towards the dominant Western elite policy in framing Islam and Muslims’ issues, and present a predominantly negative image of Islam and Muslims. However, a pluralistic frame is identified in these newspapers’ opinion items, like their editorials. The *ODT* is primarily positive in its opinion pieces when discussing and constructing Islam and Muslims’ issues. Similarly, a positive image of Islam and Muslims is predominant in the opinion pieces appearing in the *NZH*. In other words, the representation of opinion pieces appearing in the *NZH*, with a few exceptions, contradicts the international news frame. On the other hand, opinions appearing in the *Press* construct overwhelmingly negative images of Islam and Muslims. In other words, the negative stereotypical images of Islam and Muslims in the *Press* are reinforced in both news and opinion pieces.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter will provide an overview of the whole project and present the aims and objectives of this study. It will also discuss the problem under investigation, propose the research question, outline the significance of the project, and provide a chapter outline for the project.

Introduction

This study examines the representation of Islam and Muslims in three New Zealand newspapers—the *Otago Daily Times* (*ODT* [published in Dunedin]), the *Press* (*Press* [published in Christchurch]) and the *New Zealand Herald* (*NZH* [published in Auckland]). It should be mentioned that the *Press*, *NZH* and *ODT* enjoy a monopoly in their respective local regions—i.e. *ODT* in Dunedin and the Otago region (with a circulation of 38,757), the *Press* in Christchurch (has a circulation of 79,501) and *NZH* in Auckland (which has the highest circulation of 170,707) (New Zealand Audit Bureau of Circulations (Inc), 2011) (an extended discussion of New Zealand newspapers is presented later in this chapter).

All news and non-news items appearing in these newspapers will be examined. Through media representation readers or audiences can understand how a particular social institution such as media dehumanize or favour a community (Loto et al. 2006: 101). By examining news reports, it is possible to identify how a social group is perceived in a particular society, as news-texts are involved in the “diagnosing [of] social relationships, characterizing marginalized groups, and offering prescriptions for addressing social concerns” (Loto et al., 2006: 100). Furthermore, it is within these media-texts that “various concerns are shaped and reframed” for the public (p. 104).

Kim (2002: 431) argues, with reference to Tuchman (1978), that journalists construct and frame “social reality”, and therefore the way audiences perceive the world depends upon how an issue is framed in a media-text. Similarly, the editorial as “a public and political discourse” assesses and evaluates people and/or events (Lihua, 2009: 63). The editor’s position on a particular issue or social group can be identified in editorials, which can be regarded as the direct expression of the press on a certain issue (Crawford, 2009: 455). In addition, the editorial and op-ed pages of a newspaper address various agendas— political, cultural— that focus the writers’ ideological leanings (Calavita and Krumholz, 2003: 401). Op-ed writers explain their positions on certain issues in a “powerful, comprehensible and accessible” way in order to persuade the readers (Ibid, p. 404). Cartoon images construct social meaning and public opinion towards that meaning (Marsot, 1971: 2). The editorial cartoon is an ideal medium for expressing what cannot be said via the printed word. The message of cartoons is satirical and humorous but the humour used is not simple; a cartoon can be used to dehumanize a person, a group or an issue (Mazid, 2008: 435). The readers’ interpretations and constructions of the (cartoon) image and its meaning may promote negative prejudicial perceptions towards a social group (Greenberg, 2002: 181). Cartoonists provide messages on the basis of stereotyping (Gilmartin, 2001: 63) and cartoons are typically extensions of the cartoonists’ beliefs and opinions. Some scholars, including Greenberg (2002: 181), observe cartoons as “a form of visual news discourse”. Others such as Mazid (2008); Landsman (1992); Eco (2007) maintain that cartoons function as a comment which can produce “serious political discourse” (Mazid, 2008: 435). Finally, the writers of the letters to the editor create a forum for serious discussion (Buell, 1975) and some writers are politically engaged (Hart, 2001). The letters to the editor section appears in the editorial page and

provides readers with the direct voice of the letter writers. This section is “historically” recognized as a forum for the readers or public where they can express their opinion on a particular issue (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2004: 90). The publication of news and non-news is subject to the selection process of a particular newspaper and their gatekeepers (details on gatekeeping are presented in Chapter 2).

By employing discourse analysis, this study will examine how these newspapers framed issues relating to Islam and Muslims in their news and non-news items. Fowler (1991: 70) proposes that discursive meaning can be understood through the examination of the text that the social institutions such as media produce for the consumption of the society. Discursive approaches engage in systematic description of texts and identify their relations and context in a particular society (van Dijk, 2000: 35). This study is an attempt to explore the complex relationship between media coverage and the current political context across the world. In analyzing data this study borrows the analytical concept and theoretical assumption of Karim (2000). In his book *Islamic Peril: Media and Global Violence* Karim evaluates Canadian mainstream (print) media constructions of Islam and Muslims on the basis of Said’s *Orientalism* thesis— e.g. “Orientalist framing of contemporary terrorism” (p. 15). Karim empirically focuses upon how Orientalist perceptions of Muslim Othering work in constructing Islam and Muslims in ‘the West’¹. While *Orientalism* and *The Islamic Peril* have both been criticized for their limitations, some later studies such as Izadi and Saghaye-Biria (2007) use *Orientalism* in analyzing media texts following Karim’s study.

¹ In this study, ‘the West’, ‘Western’ and similar derived terms connote the nations physically located in Western Europe and some other nations outside of Europe—i.e. the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Karim (2000) argues that the image of Islam has been distorted in mainstream Western discourses due to their political relations with Muslim nations. Media join dominant discourses (Karim, 2000: 10) in distorting the Muslim image, which in turn legitimates and perpetuates ‘Western’ elites agenda (Hussain, 2007) — e.g. domination and intervention in the Middle East (Maira, 2008: 320-321). However, these media repeatedly fail to explain Muslim issues (Karim, 2000: 11; Hussein, 2007) and instead, a generalized negative image of Islam is constructed (Shaheen, 1997; Hussein, 2007) through the Othering process. For example, the struggle for identity of a particular group is framed as “Islamic” action (Karim, 2000: 9)— the struggle of Palestinian people against Israel, which originated in Palestinian identity, is identified in many cases as the action of ‘Islamic terrorism’. However, there are examples of alternative discourses in ‘the West’ that also appear in journalistic views and scholarly observations (Karim, 2000: 14). These challenging discourses argue that Islam is not synonymous with terrorism or therefore is not the ‘enemy’ of ‘the West’ (Esposito, 1999; 2000; 2011²). For example, some ‘Western’ media commentators/journalist— John Pilger³ and New Zealander Jon Stephenson; and many academic scholars clearly and regularly oppose ‘Western’ political agenda against ‘Muslim worlds’. These alternative discourses, however, are “overshadowed” by mainstream media construction (Karim, 2000: 11). In mainstream media a prejudicial negative image of Islam is dominant and legitimates the elite’s political agenda (Taylor, 1992; Achugar, 2004; Maira, 2008). Furthermore, these media outlets

² See Kallin (2011) in reference section for this reference. Kallin’s article is based on the conversation between the author and John L. Esposito.

³ For this reference, see for example, how he (Pilger) reads the Arab Spring (2011-12). See for example, his comments *The silent military coup that took over Washington* published in the *Guardian* (September 10, 2013) and many others on Bush-Iraq, US-Middle East issue. It is simply an example and his contribution in opposing elite agenda is huge. Jon Stephenson (New Zealand) is another media-figure whose contribution against the Western political elite agenda is remarkable.

cannot present strong alternative narratives (Karim, 2000: 14) of the ‘Islamic threat’ due to their dependence on Western mainstream narratives.

Islam is one of the world’s leading monotheistic religions and its tenets are articulated in the Qur’an, a text that outlines the message of God, which came through several Prophets (e.g. Adam, Abraham) and finally the Prophet Muhammad. It has been estimated that 20 per cent of the world’s population are Muslims. But Muslim, under the umbrella of ‘Islam’ is not monolithic; rather, there are many ‘Islams’ inside the umbrella (Brown, 2011: 158) and these ‘Islams’ differ culturally, in practice and in their interpretation of ‘Islamic ideology’ (Brown, 2011: 158; Kumar, 2012: 42; Hovayda, 2003: 28; Karim, 2000). However, ‘Western’ mainstream media tend to depict Islam monolithically (Kumar, 2010; 2012; Karim, 2000; Abdallah and Rane, N/D: 2; Brown, 2000: 12; Euben, 1997: 431).

Edward Said’s (1978) scholarship observes that in ‘Western’ media the perception of the Orient (i.e. “Islam”) is distorted, arguing that the cause of the distortion is: “The relationship between Occident and Orient [which] is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony [...]” (p. 3). Humphrey (2007: 10) argues that over the past twenty years Islam has been seen “as culturally incompatible” with the West, and Islam is seen primarily as “a threat” in the post-September 11, 2001 (hereafter 9/11) world. Many commentators, politicians and academics argue that the world changed irrevocably following the terrorist attack on the United States on 9/11, 2001, and scholarly attention to Islam has intensified (Villalón, 1995: 15, Ehteshami, 2005). Furthermore, Flower (2008: 409) notes that when a panel of Pacific scholars met in the days before 9/11 to discuss potential security threats, none had identified any religion, including Islam, as a threat to the

region's security. Similarly, despite periodic cultural tensions, other scholars note a low perception among strategists of national security risk associated with Islam prior to 9/11 for countries in the West (Kabir, 2005; 2006; Manning, 2006). However, other scholars— Said, 1978; Hafez, 2007; Poole, 2002; Richardson, 2004; Karim, 2000— argue that ‘Islam’ was identified as a threat to ‘the West’ in media representation long before the 9/11 incident. For example, the Orientalist Othering process is identifiable since the Greeks’ victory over Persians in fifth century (BC) (Powers, 2009: 5) and this Othering process “persists” in modern Western constructions of ‘Islam’ and the ‘non-West’ (Ibid, p. 5). Karim (2000: 1) argues that the century-long history of Orientalist construction mainly originated in political relations between Muslim and Christian rulers (Ibid, p. 3). This polarization or political agenda-related discourse of the ‘Islamic threat’ occupies many Western scholarly documents such as the writings or creations of Dante⁴ and Voltaire (Karim, 2000: 2). The ‘Western’ supremacy of Orientalist perception is also identifiable in 20th century communication scholars’ views such as that of Daniel Lerner. Writing on the relationship between the Middle East and African nations, Lerner perceives ‘the West’ as ‘modern’ and suggests and the life under ‘Islam’ is inferior to ‘the West’ (Karim, 2000: 2).

In post-9/11, some Western media intensified the representation of Muslims in a way that stereotyped Muslims as a monolithic group with some of its community members involved in terrorism, and presented Islam as a threat to the world (Hafez, 2000; Kabir, 2005, 2006; Flower, 2008;). Although the bin Laden-led al Qaeda terrorist

⁴ For example, in Dante (Alighieri)’s *Inferno* the Prophet Muhammad is placed in hell (Apter, 2004: 37) for his heresy. It constructs Muhammad [‘Maömetto’] as a false Prophet; and Muslims, including the Prophet, are constructed as the ‘enemy’ of Christianity and ‘the West’; and as a threat to civilization. See also, on Dante and other Western writers, Said (1978: 69-70); and the criticism of Said’s *Orientalism* thesis such as Varisco (2007: 219), Apter (2004) etc. Once again, the Orientalist discourse is constructed long before Dante or Voltaire. For example, Aeschylus in 472 BC in the *Persians* and Euripides in 405 BC in *Bacchae* construct the Orientalist perception of ‘non-West’ Other (Power, 2009: 5).

group is generally held to be responsible for the 9/11 attacks, in some cases Muslims in general were identified as possible terrorists after the incident. Some scholars (e.g. Poole, 2002; Hafez, 2000) argue that media have played a significant role in constructing this perception—namely, that the world “ha[s] a new enemy that requires a different kind of war” and not just a war conducted on the battlefield (Poole, 2002: 2). In addition, in some media the identification of ‘us’ and ‘them’ groups are presented in such a way that Muslims are identified and othered as ‘them’ (the issue of ‘us’ and ‘them’—the Orientalist view—is further discussed in Chapter 2). Before discussing how media narratives are constructed it is first necessary to provide a brief discussion on how society, through various social institutions and through the use of everyday language, constructs identity.

Identity and Opposition

Members living in a society shape, reshape and construct their perception through social interaction (Berger and Luckmann, 1967) with language playing an essential role in the process (1967: 37). Sapir (1949) and Whorf (1956/1941) argue that we perceive our world in terms of our own language, which we share and interact with other people—namely, what we read, what our books/texts are about, and what and how we learn and socialize. We construct the meaning of the society, which we live in (and those which we do not live in). Thus, we construct a social, religious and cultural image, which differentiates between ‘our’ culture and ‘their’ culture, or ‘our’ religion and ‘their’ religion. This ‘our’/‘their’ construction may be real or imagined. Furthermore, socio-institutional traditions such as “religion ... [are a] continuous process of negotiation, reproduction and challenge” (Beckford, 2003: 197) that passes from generation to generation. Our social institutions, groups, individuals, and various

organizations construct a particular image of religion (Beckford, 2003: 167; Addi, 1992: 120-121; Bilgili, 2011; Güllalp, 2002). There are many groups that define and defend a particular meaning of a religion or a culture (Beckford, 2003: 13; Bilgili, 2011). In addition, social power elites create an imagined social boundary—e.g. they may create ‘their religion’ politically against their ‘opponent’ and the opponent can be imagined or real. For example, in American schools Islam is taught not as a part of world civilization but in a way that preserves the agenda of the American political elite— namely, that Islam conflicts with ‘the West’ (Douglass and Dunn, 2003: 53); “Qaddafi, Hafez al-Asad, and Ayatollah Khomeini” become the representatives of Islam in American textbooks (Douglass and Dunn, 2003: 53). In these textbooks world history is equated with the history of “Greece, Rome, medieval Christendom, and modern Europe”; the history of Islam remains untold while the political “agenda” is provided to them— for example, how the ‘Islamist’ Ayatollah Khomeini worked against Judaeo-Christianity (Douglass and Dunn, 2003: 52-56)⁵. Karim (2000: 11) argues that this kind of distortion and monolithic construction also appears in ‘Western’ media descriptions. For example, the Gulf crises and many other Middle Eastern issues— such as the Iran nuclear issue— have their own context and nature. But they are “explicitly or implicitly” identified monolithically as ‘Islamic’ (Karim, 2000: 11) and in interpreting these issues Islam is constructed as a “dangerous” threat to the world (p. 12). However, this is not the case only for the US or for the West. Rather, a similar perception regarding religion can be found in other nations. For example, in Palestinian textbooks Judaism and Israel are portrayed as ‘the enemy’

⁵ The institutional properties of history are exploited through re-writing and reinterpreting of history that perpetuate elite agendas. This is not only evident in the case of Islam, Muslims and Muslim nations. For example, early American is exploited and dehumanized in its description, interpretation and representation in textbooks— in glorifying Columbus. American school textbooks describe “how he admired the gentleness and generosity” of Red Indians, but consciously leaves out his cruelty (Ransby, 1992: 80).

(Pina, 2005); in Saudi Arabia Judaism and Christianity are the enemies of Islam (Centre for Religious Freedom of Hudson Institute, 2008; the *Jerusalem Post*, 2011); in Israeli textbooks Islam and Arabs are the enemy of Israel and Judaism (Abu-Saad, 2007) and overall, in Arab textbooks ‘the West’ has a negative image (Labidi, 2010) despite the fact that Arab states receive regular counsel and suggestion from ‘the West’ for the preparation of their curricula and text books so that they (the Arabs) can avoid the allegation of teaching hate (p. 195). Textbooks are an important agent of socialization (Lee, 2002). By constructing a certain image of religion, culture and society (Pina, 2005; Lee, 2002; Labidi, 2010) this kind of teaching reflects society, as well as in media representation of a social group, which may influence members of a particular society through constructing distorted and negative images of the ‘Other’ (Douglass and Dunn, 2003: 53; Friedlander 1981; Shaheen 1980, 1988: 10).

In terms of media coverage of Islam and Muslims, the negative portrayal of Islam has been reproduced in news media. The way in which media gatekeepers frame an event or issue is closely related in media relations to other sections of society such as politics and overall media production as will be elaborated in Chapter 2. Studies— e.g. Shoemaker, Johnson, Sue and Wang, 2010; Kim 2002; Bakdikian, 1983; 2004— suggest that media maintain close relations with power elites. Lee and Lin (2006: 332) argue that the ideological leanings of journalists, including their politics, affect journalists’ professional norms. In addition, news media apply self-censorship for various reasons, including political reasons (Lee and Lin, 2006: 331). The way a journalist frames and structures his or her representation of an event plays a significant role in readers’ perception of that event (Valkenburg, Semetko and de Vreese, 1999: 550). It also plays a significant role in gaining the public’s support of a person or a group of people (Kellner, 1995: 199; 2006: 44). As a result, scholars

question journalistic practices (Kellner, 2006; Valkenburg, Semetko and de Vreese, 1999). Some scholars— e.g. Gieber, 1964; Schudson, 1989; Shoemaker, 1991; Poole, 2002— argue that media gatekeepers selectively produce items (i.e. news, opinion) that uphold dominant ideologies. Therefore, this study will explore the extent to which these newspapers maintain a monolithic conservative gatekeeping policy. In other words, it will be examined whether editorial comments, opinion pieces (op-eds), letters to the editor and news coverage provide a uniform representation of Islam and Muslims. This study will also focus on occasions that produce stories relating to Muslim communities, and how associated issues and events are constructed in these newspapers.

This study has a selective time frame— October 2005 to September 2006— four-years after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US. It is not unlikely then that the issue of 9/11 and other related components such as ‘al Qaeda’, ‘terrorism’ will appear frequently in the news coverage. Thus, it is important to provide a brief discussion on journalism in post-9/11.

Journalism in post-9/11

The 9/11 terrorist attacks have changed the “everyday context” of news production, and journalists now focus more on international affairs than previously (Zelizer and Allan, 2011: 1; Vazquez, 2013). The international news, however, in many cases appears within a narrow frame that focuses upon conflict— cultural and political— and its relations to the geopolitics of the US and the Middle East (Aufderheide, 2002: 12). The incident (9/11) is a source of rumour, uncertainly, horror and panic across the US in particular and the world in general; and the issue has affected journalists’

profession (Jones⁶/Woodruff, 2002). McChesney (2002) argues that since 9/11 journalists are engaged in “dreadful” practices, which undermine democracy through supporting militarism and providing mis-information (p. 15-16). However, there is no unified interpretation of the issue amongst citizens including professionals such as journalists. For example, although all condemn the attacks they differ in interpreting the action. Some define the 9/11 attack as a response to the US’s hegemony across the world and particularly in the Middle East (Robinson, 2009: 653). Others perceive it as a desperate terrorist act against humanity originating from ‘Islamic fundamentalism’ (Robinson, 2009: 653) and Muslims’ hatred of ‘the West’ (McChesney, 2002/2011: 93). In addition, one might see cultural differences in interpreting the issue. For example, the French and US mainstream media perceive the issue in a similar way—as originating from Muslim hatred (Robinson, 2009). In contrast, the Brazilian mainstream media perceive it as an action against US hegemony; the Uruguayan mainstream media maintain uniformity with the US media in defining the issue (Robinson, 2009: Achugar, 2004). Examining the US, British and Dutch newspapers’ construction of some terrorist events such as the London (7/7) bombings 2005, Raigrok and van Atteveldt (2007) argue that these newspapers maintain a similar pattern in reporting terrorism that they did in covering 9/11 events— a negative perception through generalization of Islam and Muslims. In addition, the cultural proximity of these nations influences journalistic perceptions in constructing the issue (Ibid, p. 69). They argue that journalists localize the issue— for example, in covering ‘Muslim terrorism’ (Raigrok and van Atteveldt, 2007: 68). Archetti’s study (2010), conducted in France, Italy, Pakistan and the US, argues that three factors— national

⁶ The article attributes the authority of Alex Jones but it is an outcome of the conversation between the author and the CNN journalist Judy Woodruff. For more information of the article please see the reference section.

interests, journalists' cultural identity and editorial policy— remain influential in post-9/11 media coverage and journalistic perception (p. 567).

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the war on terrorism policy have changed the “nature of journalism” and the subsequent pattern of media coverage (Ewart and Rane, 2011: 56; Poole, 2002)— in respect to the volume of coverage of a particular issue— ‘Islamic terrorism’— for example (Schiffer, 2011: 211). Journalists become the part of problem, providing mis-information, which “reflects the weaknesses of professional journalism” (McChesney, 2002: 17). For example, in many cases, issues relating to ‘terrorism’ appear through ideological assumption of the journalists (Navasky, 2002/2011: xiii; Ewart and Rane, 2011: 56). Media coverage contains rumors, unidentified and unauthentic sources, and personal references that sensationalize the event but challenge the objectivity and professional ethics of journalism (Kodama, Kanayama and Shim, 2007: 6). In their analysis, opinion and news report American mainstream media, did not encourage any debate on whether the nation needed to go to war; rather they constructed the ideological /perception that a “democratic”, “peace-loving” and “benevolent” nation was attacked by “insane evil terrorists” and these evil terrorists hate America (McChesney, 2002/2011: 93). This kind of assumption quickly occupied other ‘Western’ and non-Western media coverage of Islam and Muslim issues (McChesney, 2002/2011: 93).

In his post-9/11 speeches, George W. Bush, then US President urges the world to come under the umbrella of ‘us’ (i.e. the democratic world) defining ‘them’ as ‘the terrorists’ (McChesney, 2002: 14; Poole, 2002). His argument or ‘war’, he reiterated in his speech however, was not against Islam. But his definition creates huge ambiguity between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Furthermore, when the ‘them’ appears with ‘Islamic them’ — ‘Islamic terrorists’, for example, in the context of ‘war on terrorism’

people receive the image of ‘them’. The images of ‘them’ persist in public memory through repeated political speeches, general talk, talk shows and overall media construction (Kumar, 2010; 2012; Hafez, 2007; Poole, 2002; 2006). The ambiguous identification of ‘them’ appears through media construction that identifies the real villain inside ‘them’ albeit through mis-information. For example, Saddam was not an Islamist and whether he (Saddam) was supportive to terrorism such as al-Qaeda and his link with the 9/11— all are critical questions. Some scholars, including Taylor (2008) and Kellner (2005), argue that it is simply propaganda and mis-information/false information from the US office and some ‘Western media’. The rhetoric of the Saddam’s involvement in 9/11, however, has been used to justify the invasion (Taylor, 2008: 120; Kellner, 2005). In addition, soon after US President George Bush’s announcement of the ‘war on terror’ policy, some US mainstream media rejected any question that might go against the US policy of ‘war on terror’ arguing that any challenging comments of the policy would provide “aid” towards “the enemy” (Navasky, 2002/2011: xiii).

The 9/11 attacks brought Islam, Muslims and terrorism to the center of attention amongst the public through world media, as well as in the area of academic research (Ewart and Rane: 2011: 56). Media present drama and sensation in covering terrorism—‘Muslim terrorism’; conflict and war— the Iraq war— than they did previously, for example, the Vietnam War (Jameson and Entman, 2004: 38). Scholarly documents suggest that the pre- and post-9/11 terrorist events mean different things to media and journalists— the 1998 terrorist attacks in Kenya and Tanzania were perceived as a “tragedy and crime” but terrorism like the Madrid bombing is represented as a moral obligation in which everyone needs to act against ‘Muslim terrorism’ (Raigrok and Atteveldt, 2007: 69 & 73). In covering ‘Muslim

terrorism’ there is a self-ruling censorship that supports the ruling elites’ false/mis-information (McChesney, 2002; 2002/2011). Overwhelming media attention on ‘Muslim terrorism’ is also identifiable (McChesney, 2002; Ewart and Rane, 2011) through the ideological framework, which is similar to George Orwell’s warning in his *Animal Farm* (cited in McChesney, 2002: 17):

“[Un]popular ideas can be silenced, and inconvenient facts kept dark, without any need for an official ban”.

Many scholars— Poole, 2002; Sokolowasky, 2009; Schiffer, 2009 & 2011— argue that in respect to the pre- and post-9/11 media coverage of Islam and Muslims, there is no qualitative change but that the change is one of quantity (Poole, 2002; Schiffer, 2011: 211). In short, the volume on the coverage of ‘Islamic terrorism’ has rapidly increased. They maintain that in ‘the Western’ media and in ‘Western’ journalistic practices Islam is identified through the Orientalist prism of cultural clash. However, this interpretation of ‘the Western’ media coverage and journalistic perception is challenged by some— e.g. it has been mentioned before that Karim (2000) argues that there is alternative discourse of Islam in ‘the Western’ media construction. In addition, Kodama, Kanayama and Shim (2007) examining Japanese, US, UK and Brazilian mainstream TV channels— NHK (Japan), BBC (UK), Globo (Brazil) and CBS (US)— find changes in media representation in post-9/11 media coverage. They observe that journalistic perceptions of Muslim issues are, in many cases, positive. For example, they argue that while CBS maintains ‘we’ versus ‘they’ identification, BBC prefers to neutrally focus upon the issue and thus, avoid ‘we’/‘they’ coverage. NHK never uses ‘we’/‘they’ dichotomy in their news construction due to the national policy (Kodama, Kanayama and Shim, 2007: 27). Sharify-Funk (2009: 77) argues that in many cases ‘the Western journalism’ shows a prejudicial perception towards Islam

and Muslims, but that there are also many opposing voices. She observes the possibility of many voices in media depiction.

Issues relating to ‘Islam’ and ‘Muslims’ are not conceived monolithically— East versus West— at all times. For example, in an interview with *NZH* (January 2, 2012), Iraqi-born Muslim scholar Dr Zuhair Araji, claims that radical Muslims violate Islamic norms and the peaceful teaching of Islam. He urges the public to distinguish “radical Muslims from Islam”, as the majority of Muslims condemn radical Islamist ideology. Similarly, Dr Tim Behrend of the University of Auckland adds: “Historically, Islam has been the most powerful culture faced by Europe” but Europe perceived itself to be superior to the Orient. He argues that the Western perception of superiority has a “historical” root and the Orientalist perception of superiority is clearly active in current representations of Islam. Both Behrend and Araji argue that Islamic norms are violated in the practices of some Muslims, who, unfortunately, have a strong visibility in media images. Less visible in the New Zealand media are the activities and cultural practices of national Muslim communities.

Muslims in New Zealand

Muslims comprise a very small part of the New Zealand (Kiwi) population, but they have a “distinctive and high profile” in this nation (Kolig and Shepard, 2006: 1). Although Muslim immigration started in this country more than a hundred years ago, the Muslim community is still relatively smaller in comparison to other diasporic communities— e.g. the Buddhist community, with a total population 52,362. Some (e.g. Shepard, 2006) suggest that the Muslim population is a fast-growing community in this country. Others contradict this. For example, in 2001, there were 23,631

Muslims (0.7% of the total New Zealand population) and the Muslim population in New Zealand is expected to remain at less than one per cent until the year 2020 (Kettani, 2009). Furthermore, with regard to Oceania, people who identify as Muslim comprise less than half a million or almost 1.4 per cent; only 0.03 per cent of the global Muslim population lives in the Oceanic region (Kettani, 2009). In addition, this community will not surpass the present population levels in the region in the near future (Kettani, 2009).

Previous Muslim immigration was characterized by the immigration of Muslim individuals rather than of families. The current Muslim migration began in the early twentieth century and comprises “about forty nationalities” (Shepard, 2006: 9). This community contributes to several parts of New Zealand society, from schools to Parliament and from religion to politics. Muslim community members “have attained high recognition” in various fields in Kiwi society, such as medicine (Shephard, 2006: 12). Furthermore, “the appeal of Islam as a universal faith” is taking root in New Zealand society (Sulaiman-Hill, 2007). Kolig and Shepard argue that Muslims’ activities are visible everywhere (2006: 2), and maintain that this community may, in the future, “produce a New Zealand-specific form of Islam” (2006: 3). Kolig and Shepard also argue that contrary to popular opinion among most New Zealanders Muslims are not culturally monolithic both in New Zealand and worldwide (2006: 2). They assert that most New Zealanders believe Islam and the West are “fundamentally different” and therefore New Zealand Muslims necessarily diverge from New Zealand values. But this community is far from creating the so-called clash of civilizations in Kiwi society (Kolig and Shepard, 2006: 3-4). Instead, Kolig and Shepard contend that New Zealand Muslims are focused on by the media because of international events (e.g. terrorism), and that such a focus often impacts negatively on this community

when represented by the media and in public debates (p. 4-5). This unfavourable bias sometimes appears without any evidence of Muslims' involvement in the event being reported. In addition, in representations of negative events, Muslims are primarily suspected (Kolig and Shepard, 2006: 5). There is negative stereotyping in the representations of Muslims in New Zealand (Shepard, 2006: 15; Sulaiman-Hill, 2007: 2). Furthermore, the New Zealand media, which depends "heavily on overseas sources", encourages the perception that Muslims are both violent and terrorists (Shepard, 2006: 15). This negative image may influence broader New Zealand society as the Muslim community has been subjected to extra security surveillance in New Zealand since the terrorist attacks of 9/11 (Shepard, 2006: 16). However, some political leaders also perpetuate anti-Muslim rhetoric. For example, in 2005 the New Zealand First Party leader Winston Peters argued that New Zealand Muslims are harbouring terrorists (Small and Sonti, 2005; the *Pakistan Christian Post*, 2011; Taylor and Harvey, 2005).

New Zealand Newspapers

New Zealand daily newspapers began in the 1860s. There are currently four mainstream and big selling dailies—the *NZH*, the *Press*, the *Dominion Post* and the *ODT*—which each have a monopoly in circulation in their respective regions. The publication of New Zealand newspapers started in 1840 (Day, 1990: 12) and in the formative period (and at least until 1880) the industry had no political leanings; rather it was interested in business (Day, 1990: 4). However, this industry has gradually assumed political involvement (Day, 1990: 3) through the perception that their economic power may gain political power too and their political relations may smooth their economic power (p. 5). New Zealand newspapers came under the control of

limited ownership in 20 years. For example, Day (1990: 4) argues that by 1880 newspapers were understood as a “limited liability company”, and these companies became controllers of the New Zealand newspaper business. These controllers believe that political and social power may come through their media ownership (Day, 1990: 5). The New Zealand newspapers started to comment on politics, public issues and eventually, began to provide partisan coverage. Politically active journalism, however, “is an extension and continuation of the existing style which combined political involvement with commercial journalism” (Day, 1990: 56).

Since 1995 three companies have controlled the New Zealand media industry—APN News and Media Company (APN), John Fairfax Holdings (Fairfax) and Allied Press Ltd. The Allied Press publishes *ODT*, and is the only locally owned media corporation. The *Press* is published under the ownership of Sydney-based Fairfax. Fairfax controls 48% of New Zealand newspapers (Robie, 2008). APN is also an Australia-based media owner that publishes the *NZH* and controls 43% of newspaper circulation (Robie, 2008). This shows that New Zealand newspapers are dominated by a duopoly, based in Australia.

Ellis (2007: 33) argues that this “wholesale consolidation in ownership” in the New Zealand press, controlled by two major media corporations from Australia, made the New Zealand newspaper industry a “more competitive” but less co-operative environment. Therefore, the New Zealand media industry can be described as the world’s “most concentrated and foreign dominated” industry (Rankine et al., 2007, cited in Robie, 2008). In addition, foreign-owned corporate media reporting (i.e. APN and Fairfax) appears to cover the “[Oceanic] region through a globalized prism” based in Australia and “this often does not match a New Zealand perspective” (Robie, 2008: 3).

As previously argued, New Zealand newspapers have historically been involved with social elites, and scholarly findings have found that media support the social dominant ideology and marginalize groups who do not have social power (Louw, 2004). In terms of news production, therefore, Phelan (2009: 223) argues that New Zealand newspapers' "role of (re)producing discursive assumptions" which "alienate" ethnic groups living in New Zealand can be identified through examining media-texts. The Loto et al. (2006) study also suggests that minority groups are marginalized in New Zealand media representation. New Zealand media promote the state policy in constructing the issue (Day 1990; Phelan, 2009: 223). In addition, Phelan and Shearer (2009) argue that in crisis moments—"political crisis"—New Zealand newspapers promote mainstream ideology (p. 220) while being "antagonistic" towards minority groups (p. 221). Walker (2002: 223) contends that media in general maintain a "historically defined role of promoting oppositional discourses"—i.e. by marginalizing minority groups. This role can also be found in New Zealand newspapers (Phelan, 2009: 223).

In media depictions immigrants are identified as a threat to the host society (van Dijk, 1987, 1991; Loto et al. 2006; Khosravini, 2009). Scholarly findings argue that British mainstream newspapers perceive immigrants (including Muslim immigrants) as a "threat (a threat to cultural identity and threat to community values) and danger" (Khosravini, 2009: 493-494) to Britain (e.g. Hartley, 1992; Richardson, 2001; Khosravini, 2009) and to Australia (e.g. Kabir, 2005; Hopkins, 2008). The negative perception of immigrants in New Zealand media is also identified in scholarly findings (e.g. Loto et al., 2006). In a more recent study by Spoonley and Butcher (2009), however, they contend that there has been a shift from negative to positive representation in framing immigrants in New Zealand's media-constructions (p. 355).

Therefore, this study aims to identify how New Zealand newspapers perceive the Muslim community— i.e. a minority group in which the majority of its community members are immigrants— living in this nation and around the world.

Research Questions

This study aims to examine the representation of Islam and Muslims in New Zealand newspapers. Therefore, this study addresses a general question:

How and in what context have mainstream New Zealand newspapers represented Islam and Muslims, over the specified time frame?

This core question is divided into four questions:

1. How have issues relating to Islam, the Muslim community and Muslim nations been socially constructed?
2. How do different sections of the newspapers vary in their representation of Islam and Muslims?
3. Is Said's Orientalist frame a valid lens through which to view the representation of Islam and Muslims? Or do these media outlets initiate or confirm an 'us-them' or 'Muslim-other' identification?
4. How have these newspapers set the Western elite political agenda and is the elite agenda challenged in these newspapers' construction of Islam and Muslims?

In respect to cultural and civilizational relations— for example, 'the West' and 'non-West'— we received at least two essentialist, but influential, discursive views— 'Orientalism' and the 'clash of cultures' (both these issues will be discussed in Chapter 2). After 15 years of Said's *Orientalism* (1978) thesis Samuel Huntington (in

1993) proposes that there is a civilizational clash between East and West. In his thesis, Huntington denies any possibility of compatibility of Islam with ‘the West’; while Said proposes that there is a hegemonic, reductionist and rejectionist view in ‘the West’s’ perception of the ‘non-West’ and particularly towards Islam and Muslims. Said (1978; 1981) maintains that ‘the Western’ media are strong collaborators of the reductionist view in the wider society that collaborate with ‘Western elite’ perceptions and maintain Western superiority— cultural, ideological and political. These media construct, reconstruct, promote and legitimate ‘the West’ through a distorted image of Islam and Muslims that eventually establishes Western authority over the non-West. Said’s work was published in 1978 and therefore is dated. Therefore it is necessary to ask whether the Orientalist view is still active in ‘the Western media’ construction of Islam and Muslims and whether, these media outlets work according to Said’s observations. Since the publication of Said’s *Orientalism*, the world has changed in many ways— for example, in respect to information technology and power. Yet, we see media conglomerates operating under the ownership of just a few individuals, with the power to withhold information and knowledge. ‘The West’ however is not the only one that has a strong hold on information. Challenging Said’s *essentialist view* critics argue that there are many voices in society (Turner, 1989). Therefore, how these media outlets voice issues relating to Islam and Muslims needs to be identified. Furthermore, the questions collectively ask if the New Zealand press represents Islam and Muslims issues in reductionist frames that reinforce hegemonic discourse.

As mentioned above, this study focuses on the time four years after the 9/11 terrorist incidents and it is possible therefore that the incident of 9/11 is reflected in coverage of Islam and Muslims issues— for example, it is likely that in covering ‘Muslim

terrorism’ these newspapers might group 9/11, al Qaeda, and Osama bin Laden together. The context in which Islam and Muslims are the focus of New Zealand media attention—whether the attention is related to the context of ‘Islamic terrorism’ or not—is the concern of question three. As many scholars— e.g. Kellner (2004; 1999; 2004a); Kumar (2010; 2012); Karim (2000; 2006); Richardson (20001; 2004); Poole (2002; 2006)— have noted, ‘the mainstream Western media’ construct, re-construct and promote reductionist views against Islam and Muslims and thus produce rhetorical images of ‘Muslim terrorism’, ‘Islamism’, ‘al-Qaeda’, ‘Osama bin Laden’ etc. that legitimate ‘the Western’ intervention in ‘Muslim nations’ such as Iraq. Therefore, we need to examine whether all mainstream media outlets working in ‘the West’ were a part of the rhetorical legitimation of the Western elite’s political agenda. More specifically, it is crucial to examine the case of New Zealand newspapers— whether these newspapers legitimated the ‘West’ against ‘Muslim nations’ through the construction of a negative image of Islam and Muslims. An examination of three New Zealand mainstream newspapers— the *ODT*, the *Press* and the *NZH*, provides insights into these issues that contribute to the scholarship surrounding how Western media represent Muslim peoples and Islamic cultures.

Significance of the Study

There is considerable research conducted in and outside the West regarding Islam and Muslims (see for example, the discussion elsewhere in this thesis). New Zealand shares a similar cultural orientation with other Western nations; therefore it is important to examine whether the findings of scholars as to the negative representation of Islam and Muslims in Western media is replicated in New Zealand coverage. Despite significant research on the media in New Zealand— e.g. Ellis, 2007;

Rosenberg 2002, 2008; Williamson and DeSouza, 2006; Rahman, 2006; Shepard, 2006; Lafraie, 2006— there has been limited attention given to the representation of Islam and Muslims in New Zealand media. For example, in defining social discourse between groups and institutions, Revell's (2012) thesis underlines the prejudicial perception of 'white' New Zealanders towards 'non-white' people— citizens and non-citizens. She argues that 'white superiority' is still active in 'the white' perception that is also reflected in everyday communication. She bases her argument on interviews and does not consider (mass) media analysis. Phelan (2009) who examines New Zealand newspapers' editorials argues that in covering critical issues, such as the debate on the rights of sea-bed and foreshore, New Zealand mainstream newspapers promote the mainstream ideology but marginalize the rights of minority group such as Maori. He found an Othering or inclusion process of minority group in Kiwi society. Loto at al (2006) contribute their scholarship on how people originated in Pacific Island nations (e.g. Samoa) are perceived in New Zealand media and society. They argue that in New Zealand 'Pacific people' are subject to racial discrimination and marginalization. Scholarly work on minority groups therefore reveals racial discrimination. However, these contributions do not analyze media representation of Muslim groups. While Enright's (1982) thesis focuses upon the Palestine issue— namely New Zealand's role in the United Nations partitioning of Palestine and the creation of Israel—the question of Palestinian Muslims remain mostly untold. The media construction of the issue was beyond the scope of Enright's study. One notable exception is Musa (2005) who has examined the media representation of Muslims in New Zealand within a limited time frame. However, this reference is only available as a conference paper and has a limited readership. Once again, this suggests that despite huge media attention on Islam and Muslims across

the world and in New Zealand a comprehensive examination of the topic relating to New Zealand media is absent from scholarly attention. This study is an attempt to address this gap.

This study does not consider interview material. This is because the study examines the representation of media texts and does not focus upon media production or consumption. There are many examples in the literature in relation to media constructions of social issues in general; and media framing of Islam and Muslims in particular— e.g. Poole (2002; 2006); Richardson (2004; 2001); Karim (2000); Achughar (2004); Izadi and Saghaye-Biria (2007)— that do not consider interviews. Following these examples, this study presents its argument on the basis of newspapers texts.

Organization of the Thesis

Following on from chapter one, chapter two focuses on theoretical issues relating to news coverage, examining the concepts of framing and media hegemony. It will discuss how media shape reality through their ideological orientations and legitimate the existing power relations. It will also consider why some issues garner media attention while others do not. In addition, this chapter will introduce other key issues— namely, gatekeeping in news media, news framing, agenda setting role, Orientalism and the ‘us’/‘them’ constructions of social groups, the clash of civilization, and international news agencies—that influence media representations and the coverage of Islam and Muslim issues.

The methodology chosen in this study will be discussed in Chapter three. As mentioned previously, this study will be proceeding through discourse analysis and will examine how media frame issues relating to Muslim affairs. Therefore, this chapter will present a brief discussion on discourse analysis. This chapter will also briefly discuss quantitative and qualitative methods and explain the rationale behind why the qualitative method was chosen as a method of inquiry for this study. This chapter will also outline the sampling procedure, time frame, sample size, and unit of analysis, categorization and coding process.

Chapter four focuses on statistical analysis. It offers a general discussion of the findings from the three newspapers published in New Zealand. This statistical discussion will be presented on the basis of the output from the three dailies considered for this study. The subsequent chapters deal with the qualitative material.

Chapter five discusses the data using frame analysis of topics covered in three newspapers published in New Zealand, in order to show how Islam and Muslims are framed in these newspapers' representation. This chapter qualitatively analyses six issues, namely the Bali bombing; the aircraft terror plot in Britain; conflict in the Middle East; the 2006 Palestinian election; the Iran nuclear issue; and the controversial cartoons of Prophet Muhammad. These events were the most topical during the timeframe: this study found a consistency in the stories published on these issues in the chosen newspapers. In addition, these issues can be identified as events of suspected terrorism (e.g. suspected terrorism in London Airport); war and conflict (e.g. conflict in the Middle East), international relations (e.g. Iran nuclear issue); Islamic religious politics (e.g. the 2006 Palestinian election); and inter-religious

relation (the Muhammad cartoon controversy). This chapter will draw on the findings of earlier chapters.

The final chapter (Chapter six) provides a summary of the whole project. It will evaluate the findings, and determine how the findings of the study answer the research questions. It will also discuss limitations of the study and present suggestions for further study in this field.

Chapter 2:

Discursive Factors: Socio-cultural Apparatus Influences Media Production

Introduction

When analyzing representations of social actors or cultural/ethnic groups, and the construction of the “Other”, it is important not only to examine who is present but more importantly, who is absent from the narratives. We must also examine how and why this representation is constructed in the manner that it is. In many cases the media’s affirmation of an ideology functions by contrasting it with an opposing ideology. Consequently, in media representations we can see a clear division between two groups—‘us’ and ‘them’—with the media showing a preference for, or a rejection of, the people they represent, in accordance with the ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ structure. Media texts often create dichotomies, where one term is privileged over the other, such as ‘superior’/‘inferior’, ‘good’/‘bad’, ‘hero’/‘villain’, ‘friend’/‘enemy’ and ‘peaceful’/‘violent’. News coverage is influenced by various factors including “politics, technology and commerce” (Winter, 1997: 210). As an industrial product, news also passes through “a series of material and ideological contexts” (Winter, 1997: 210). News production models (e.g. gatekeeping) argue that every media text is the outcome of an active process of selection, with journalists deciding what and how an event will be represented as well as what will be omitted. Structural models (e.g. media hegemony) perceive “news flow as a reflection of global political, economic and cultural interaction structures” (Weber, 2010: 469). Therefore, it is important to briefly consider discursive factors from a structural point of view—for example Orientalism and the construction of social groups using ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ strategies, the

clash of civilization/cultures, and media hegemony. Additionally, we must also examine factors relating to news production including media gatekeeping, news framing, agenda setting and international news agencies. This discussion will provide the foundation for the following chapters.

The media's decision about whether to cover an event, and the way in which it is represented, depends not only on available resources (e.g. space) but also on the newspaper's and/or the journalist's ideological and cultural leaning. In addition, we create our identity inside the society we live in, and social forces and institutions are involved in "active reproduction of their meaning"; a citizen constructs his/her perceived world through individual and social interactions (Hartley, 1982: 4). Thus, one's view of the world is related to what a person "has been exposed [to] or has chosen" (Ibid, p. 4). Media texts such as newspapers or news broadcasts reflect the society in which they are produced and are not natural or innocent; they privilege certain ideas and meanings. News coverage is a discursive product of a particular society that constructs and promotes various meanings (Hartley, 1982: 7). As noted in Chapter 1, our interactions with others influence our perception of the world, while social institutions such as the media help us to construct images about the societies we either live or do not live in. For instance, one might perceive a division between the East and West, which may lead to the marginalization of one group by another and the perception of a clash between these two groups—between 'us' and 'them'. This perception (of an 'us' vs. 'them') eventually leads to the social construction of Orientalism.

Orientalism

The current 'Western' image of Islam and Muslims can be seen as one which

identifies Muslim as the post-Cold War Other. This image, however, is rooted in historical tensions and has become the dominant discourse in cultural history. As Said argues, “Orientalism”, “is a cultural and a political fact” and “is not an airy European fantasy about the Orient but a created body of theory and practice in which, for many nations, there has been a considerable material investment” (1978: 6). Furthermore, Said (1981) suggests that some Western media (e.g. the *New Yorker*) “rely” on ‘Western’ political and cultural experts (instead of Arabs or Muslims) and as a result of they maintain ‘the Western superiority— cultural, political and ideological— but in doing so they are often forced to, depend upon imagination (Ibid, p. xxvi). In this way— shaping the world through imagination— readers or audiences receive a distorted image of Islam provided by “experts” and media alike (Said, 1981: xxxi). Said (1981) goes further arguing that these two social actors—experts and media— each work to create a negative impression of Muslims.

Orientalism can be recognized “as a mechanism at work” in several fields like history, literature, music, social science and visual art (Bottici and Challand, 2006: 326). In all of these modes of communication ‘the West’ is presented as superior to the non-West, the Orient can never be equal to the Occident (Bottici and Challand, 2006: 326). The Orientalist discourse argues that throughout history ‘the West’ has had a confrontational relationship with Islam. The Orientalist narratives assign ‘the West’ a positive role while the rest of the world is assigned a negative one. This narrative constructs dichotomies—“good/bad, civilized/primitive, masculine/feminine, and so forth” (Semmerling, 2008: 209) — in which ‘the West’ (culturally and socially) is essentially and innately superior (Said, 1978: 2). According to the Orientalist view, Islam is represented within the frame of hegemonic colonialism that aims for Occidental domination over the Orient, and within this

frame the Orient is essentially an inferior Other. Said argues: “[T]he Orient and the Oriental, Arab, Islamic, Indian, Chinese, or whatever, become repetitious pseudo-incarnations of some great original (Christ, Europe, the West) they were supposed to have been imitating” (1978: 62). The publication of Said’s *Orientalism* in 1978 (and of several later editions) presented a momentous intervention in the scholarship of ‘Western’ imperialism and representations of the Middle East and, more specifically, Islam. Furthermore, it created a space for debate “about its arguments, methods and conclusions, including a range of criticism” (Poole, 2002: 29); it is therefore a vigorously debated text. Elizabeth Poole values Said’s text because it “describes historical and cultural circumstances” about the Orient and Islam (2002: 31). According to Said, these circumstances are rooted in colonial history and thus represent the Orient as culturally, politically and intellectually inferior to the Occident. The Orientalist view perceives Islam and its associated culture and values as a threat to the Occident. Muslims are represented as inherently violent (Slade, 1981; Pipes, 1983, 1990; Lewis, 1990, 2010). Said describes Orientalism as:

the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient. (1978: 3)

Islam is identified as the “Orientalist Other” who comes to the West, alters the West and turns it into a “primitive, barren, and dilapidated place” (Semmerling, 2008: 210). Said, in his wide-ranging scholarly arguments (1978, 1981 & 1997), brings to light some critical issues and debates between the East and West, and criticizes ‘the Western’ media’s role in promoting a negative image of Islam. In ‘the Western’ media, Islam is frequently represented in a descriptive framework of “backwardness, religious fanaticism, suppression, lack of liberties and even [...] terrorism” (Gündüz, 2010: 38). Orientalism becomes an instrumental system of ideas that privilege the

Occident and reinforce the image that the West is “politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively” superior (Said, 1978: 2). The Orient is generalized as inferior to ‘the West’ (Said, 1997: 4). Karim H. Karim argues that ‘the Western’ media are “ill-equipped” to cover Islam and Islamic nations and poorly represent these nations; media representations of Muslims are “replete with stereotypical generalizations and clichés” (2000: 59). The Orientalist fears that the Other—Islam—will gradually occupy the West through “attack[ing] Western justice systems, creat[ing] violence and jeopardiz[ing] social harmony” (Semmerling, 2008: 211). Furthermore, according to the Orientalist view, the Muslim population is identified as a future threat to ‘the West’ as it will transform it “from a predominantly Christian populace to a ruling Muslim infiltration” (Semmerling, 2008: 209). The process of Othering reinforces an ‘us’ and ‘them’ structure and increases the division between these two groups. According to this identification Islam and Muslims are essentially the opposite of ‘the West’. Orientalist constructions of a particular form of Otherness, which inherently contain the intention of dominating the Orient, dictate the representational framework of Islam in media and intellectual references. Any changes (or lack of change) in the Islamic world have been identified through the lens of an Orientalist view. Orientalism becomes the dominant discourse in Western relations with the Islamic world (Said, 1978, 1982; Karim, 2000). The Occidental representation of the East constructs and defines Islam and Muslims as Oriental Others—that is, as inferior and as a threat.

Despite the many critics of Said’s work on Orientalism (a critique of the Orientalist thesis and consequently the Othering process is presented later), it can be argued that his discussion of Orientalism presents one central theme—that “Islam” is a central aspect in media representation within descriptions of the Occident, yet the term

“Islam” is manipulated to mean “Islamic”, “Islamist”, “Islamic fundamentalist”, “Islamic radical”, “Islamism”, “Muslim”, “Muslim militant”, and “Islamic terrorist”. Media representations manipulate “Islam” to mean “Islamist” or “Islamic terrorism” (Karim, 2000). In addition, the media have a common tendency to present Islam and Muslims stereotypically and monolithically (Karim, 2000: 61), which promotes a negative generalization of the Muslim as Other (Bottici and Challand, 2006: 326; Slade, 1981). Turner argues that in this century the Othering process has been “increasingly associated with the political necessity to understand Islam” which eventually leads to representations of Islam and Muslims as a threat (1989: 630).

The Formation of ‘Us’ vs. ‘Them’ Narrative

Social members perceive “favourable ideas” about the group they belong to (Oktar, 2001: 319). According to this process a group defines their social identity while also constructing a boundary against other social groups, identifying these groups as *not us*. Social scientists demonstrate how society and various disciplines imagine, represent, construct and legitimate the perpetuation of Otherness (Sampson, 1993; Anderson and Collins, 1998; Ottosen, 1995). This Othering process works through ‘self’ identification which constructs an identification of inside (‘we’, ‘good’) and outside (‘they’, ‘bad’) groups as ‘us’/‘them’. In this ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ narrative Islam and Muslims are typically seen as the ‘enemy’, an image that has “roots centuries back” (Ottosen, 1995: 98). Said (1978) argues that at the core of Occidental writing about Islam and Arabs, a binary opposition is constructed between the Orient (“they”/“them”/“Other”) and the Occident (“we”/“us”/“self”). Said (1978: 45) asks:

Can one divide human reality, as indeed human reality seems to be genuinely divided, into clearly different cultures, histories, traditions, societies, and even races, and survive the consequences humanly? I mean

to ask whether there is any way of avoiding the hostility expressed by the division ... of men into 'us' (Westerners) and 'them' (Orientals).

The Other resembles those characters that "we" do not want to be. With reference to Kitzinger and Wilkinson (1996: 9), Traustadóttir (2001: 13) argues that 'we' construct the Other in order to "define ourselves"; in short, we construct a boundary between us and them, the Other. The discourse does not merely provide a simple description of 'them', but also suggests that the "norm" equates to 'us' (Inokuchi and Nozaki: 2005: 66) while 'they' are perceived as always opposing 'our' norms.

The dominant group defines itself within the Othering process. According to this process, the dominant group is superior, while the Other is subject to marginalization, stereotyping, dehumanization, and devaluation. In this process the Other becomes the subject of exclusion from the dominant social group and their discourse. The Other is represented in social discourse (e.g. in the media) as "degraded", "romanticised", "exoticised" or "glorified" [original quotation marks] and are sidelined within that society; or what is known as an "internal other" (Inokuchi and Nozaki: 2005: 62). The Other can be a particular nation or group of nations— such as Muslim nations (Karim, 2000); or even all nations outside of a particular nation; — this is called an "external Other" (Inokuchi and Nozaki: 2005: 62). Inokuchi and Nozaki argue that references to the Other define the 'Self' while simultaneously sidelining the Other (2005: 62).

Representations of the Other can be found in literature, art, history and news coverage such as language and text. The dominant social group constructs a particular subject position, which degrades the group identified as 'them', and favours 'us'. This in turn facilitates 'our' power over 'them' (Hall, 1992). Achugar (2004: 304) argues that in the post-Cold War era, 'Western' media maintain some typical references to Islam and Muslims by identifying their social position as terrorists and fundamentalists. In

the Orientalist discourse of the Other, Islam and Muslims have been seen as having a “confrontational relationship [with ‘the West’] throughout history” (Poole, 2002: 32). Turner (1989: 630) holds that the Orientalist perception of Muslim Othering constructs the Occident in positive terms; in other words, in dichotomies like ‘stagnant/changing’, ‘irrational/rational’, or ‘backward/progressive’, the former term characterizes the Muslim Other, and is always contrasted with the latter term, which characterizes the Occident. This reductionist representation maintains that the Other is a threat and cannot, or should not, be trusted. As Said argues:

Orientalism – a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient’s special place in European Western experience. The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe’s greatest, richest and oldest colony; the source of its civilization and languages, its cultural contestant and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the other. In addition, the Orient has helped to define Europe for the West as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience (1978: 7).

In fact, the Othering process reinforces a perception that contributes to a clash of civilizations (I address the clash of civilization/clash of culture later in this chapter).

In relation to the above discussion on Orientalism and the process of Othering, one could argue that the publication of *Orientalism* and other works by Said, though it provoked controversial debates, had a “great impact on the study of power relationships between cultural groups” (Karim, 2000: 60). In these debates, Said’s critics, fault him for “overestimating the hegemony of Orientalist discourse” and for not providing any alternative approaches (Karim, 2000: 60). Several scholars including Turner (1989) and Haliday (1993; 1996) have criticized Said’s thesis of Orientalism. Haliday (1993: 213-14), for example, argues that Said does not actually analyze any of the discourse of the Middle East itself. In addition, all cultures have a

tendency to create Self/Other definitions, which is something Said fails to consider (Turner, 1989). It is too “simplistic” to argue that all Western analyses of the East are “completely negative” (Turner, 1989: 634). Despite his misgivings, Turner argues that much of criticism directed at Said “ha[s] proved to be superficial” (1989: 630). Said himself observes that “*Orientalism* elicited a great deal of comment, much of it positive and instructive and yet a fair amount of it hostile and in some cases (understandably) abusive” (1985: 89). However, criticism and argument against Said’s scholarship does not invalidate the thesis. The Orientalist discourse, and the process of Othering Muslims, that Said proposes, has been criticized mainly because of its ‘essentialist view’ – that is that ‘the West’ identifies Islam as irrational, barbaric, and as an enemy or opponent. While Lewis (1982; cited in Ansari, 2011: 74) accepts *Orientalism* as “pure scholarship”, he (1982a), argues that “the tragedy” of Said’s Orientalist thesis is that “it takes a genuine problem of real importance, and reduces it to the level of political polemic and personal abuse”. John L. Esposito, another critic, “categorically rejects” the extreme boundary between civilizations such as ‘Islam versus the West’ (Kalin, 2001: 155). Furthermore, Esposito argues that Islam sits *beside* the West and therefore is not alien to the West. He rejects Said’s epistemological ‘Othering’. He contends that Islam is not an enemy but rather a “neighbour” of the West (Kalin, 2001: 156). As can be seen by the discussion above, Said’s notion of the ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ boundary between the Orient and Occident is problematic.

There are, and have been, several writers and scholarly enquiries on and about Islam at least since the creation of a “Chair of Arabic at [the University of] Cambridge in 1632” and later, in 1636 at the University of Cambridge, with the creation of the post of “Professorship in Arabic [...]” (Ansari, 2011: 75-76.) The original aim of these

posts was to spread Christianity (i.e. “to convert Muslims”) and protect the Christian faith (Ansari, 2011). But scholars gradually began to search for a “more sophisticated understandings of Islam” (p. 77). Ansari (p. 82), for example, mentions the works of Edward William Lane (1801-1876), who spent much of his life in Egypt. Lane’s works have challenged the notion that ‘the West’ is traditionally hostile towards Islam. Likewise, Antonius’ (1938) scholarship challenges British colonial rule in Palestine and strongly argues in favour of Arab nationalism. As Ansari (2011) suggests, Said’s arguments are problematic because they “...leave little room for the kind of contestation and contrasting approaches to Islam” shown by Lane and Antonius (p. 82). Furthermore, as suggested above several scholars “reject” Said’s *Orientalism* thesis due to its essentialist view and oppose the reductionist boundary of ‘Islam’ and ‘the West’ (Ansari, p. 91). It appears that “*Orientalism* divides” its readers and “itself” (Brown, 1999: 550). For example, Said prefers Muslims to be given priority and “authority over” others to explain their issues, context and content (Brown, 1999: 552). In short, there are both positive and negative critiques of Said’s *Orientalism*.

All societies have boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’; and the ‘us’ and ‘them’ boundary creates the imagined ‘Other’ (Turner, 1989). This thesis will discuss how ‘Western’ media represent Muslims as the ‘Other’. Conversely, in some Muslim nations’ media, ‘the West’ and ‘Western’ leaders are identified as the ‘enemy’ of Islam. For example, Iranian newspapers use “Islam” as a propaganda device in which ‘the West’ is represented as an opponent of Islam (Kattan, N/D). Some Muslims nations’ newspapers’ cartoons also depict the US as a “giant, or a well-equipped (but often stupid, blind or mislead) soldier [...]” and marginalize the West (Diamond, 2002: 270-271). However, this study aims to identify how and whether New Zealand newspapers use an ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ strategy in their representation of Islam. Alatom

(1997 [cited in Saghaye-Biriana and Izadi, 2007: 149 & 153]) observes eight categories of Orientalist depictions —‘inferiority’, ‘backwardness’, ‘irrationality’, ‘submissiveness’, ‘Islam as a threat’, ‘Jews vs. Arabs’, ‘strangeness’ and ‘untrustworthiness’; and later, Kumar (2010; 2012: 42-60) proposes “five myths” of Orientalism —Islam as a ‘monolithic religion’, as a ‘uniquely sexist religion’, as ‘incapable of reason and rationality’, as an ‘inherently violent religion’ and as ‘incapable of democracy’. This study will examine whether these elements and “myths” are also represented in these newspapers’ frame.

“Clash of Culture/Clash of Civilizations” and News Media

The “political myth” (Bottici and Challand, 2006: 322) of the “clash of civilizations” (Huntington, 1996; 1993) promotes the idea that there is a clash between Islam and ‘the West’, and that this clash began because of Islam (Bremner, 2004). Not long after Samuel P Huntington published his 1993 article *The Clash of Civilizations?* it was “soundly trashed” in scholarly debate (Abrahamian, 2003: 530). Huntington’s book⁷, published in 1996, however became a bestseller after the 9/11 attacks in the US (Abrahamian, 2003). The media played a central role in reinforcing the perception that there is a clash between Islam and ‘the West’ and thus contributed to the success of Huntington’s book (Bottici and Challand, 2006: 322). Scholars, including Bottici and Challand, argue that this perceived clash between civilizations “work[s] to a great extent” for the benefit of ‘Western’ politics as a “powerful image” that helps people not only to think but also “act within it [that is, within this image]” (2006: 322). News media have perpetuated the myth of a clash of civilizations when covering world

⁷ Huntington’s article— *The Clash of Civilizations?*— was published in 1993; and the book— *The Clash of Civilizations*— was published in 1996. Both have similar titles but in the book title, the question mark is omitted.

news (Seib, 2004: 71). During the Cold War era, the Soviet Union, or more generally the Communist Bloc, was identified as the ‘enemy’ and journalists found it convenient to see a pattern of ‘us’/‘them’ in favour of the West, with the Soviet Union depicted as the Other or ‘them’. After the fall of the Soviet Union, the ‘Western’ media and politicians alike soon constructed Islam and Muslims as a new ‘them’, as part of “new ways to approach international coverage” (Seib: 2004: 72). The media of the day believed the conflict between the superpowers was over and thus depicting the Communist Bloc as an ‘enemy’ was no longer attractive (Seib, 2004). Islam became a replacement for the Cold War enemy, under the perception of a clash of cultures or clash of civilizations (Seib, 2004).

For the purposes of news framing, media prefer to construct narratives that feature an enemy. This enemy can be real or perceived (Seib, 2004). Immediately after the 9/11 attacks some Western media outlets found a new “enemy”—Islam (Seib, 2004). The ‘clash of civilizations’ was a central theme in the media representations of Islam. The US media have been central figures in representing this perceived civilizational clash (Abrahamian, 2003). Other media frame Muslim images according to the perceived civilizational clash, which maintains that there is conflict between Islam and the West, and that Western civilization is “threatened by the [Muslim] Other” (Abrahamian, 2003: 531). Abrahamian (2003: 531-32) cites some news examples – “This *is* a religious war”, “Dreams of holy war”, “Yes, this is about Islam”, “Barbarians at the gates”, “The deep intellectual roots of Islamic rage” etc. [original quotation marks]—and holds that these headlines were a “triumph” for Huntington, who represented Islam negatively. Post 9/11 media coverage suggests that ‘the West’ is under threat from the Middle East, Muslim terrorists and Islam (Kellner, 2004). ‘Western’ news coverage not only identifies ‘the threat of Islam’ but also indicates

what to say and how to talk about this ‘threat’ (Seib, 2004). As gatekeepers, media professionals have constructed a hegemonic narrative which represents Islam as the enemy and frames them as a threat.

Media personnel drew heavily on Huntington’s work. As Huntington argues in his article, “[T]he major civilizations in human history have been closely identified with the world’s great religions” (1993: 42) such as Islam or Hinduism. However, Huntington’s thesis of a civilizational clash is problematic. For example, when Huntington proposes a clash between civilizations, it divides the ‘East’ and the ‘West’ or what Said would refer to as an Orientalist boundary (Fox, 2002: 415-16). In his book Huntington also proposes that in the post-Cold War era, there will be a clash between the East and the West, with the West depicted as democratic, liberal and progressive. Mariam Said (2011), Edward Said’s widow, argues that Huntington proposes an essentialist view of the Orient because he suggests that freedom and democracy are ‘Western’ values that conflict with non-Western beliefs.

Huntington argues that in future the world will experience a gradual clash between ‘the West’ and “Islamic and Sinic/Confucian civilizations” (Fox, 2002: 416). Crucially however, he fails to acknowledge that in many cases both of these civilizations—the East and West—speak in a similar voice and have many voices within them. As a result, his thesis leads to serious misunderstanding while also suffering from an essentialist perspective.

Hegemony: Domination of the Ruling Elites

The idea of ‘hegemony’ was introduced by the Italian theorist Antonio Gramsci (1971) who explains why and how the media as an institution articulate content within their ideological framework (Clark and Hoover, 1997: 23). Using the theory of

hegemony, it is possible to explain how the mass media perceive and construct the social reality in favour of ruling elites and how intellectuals or civil society work for the status quo (Said, 1992; Hilley, 2001: 279). Gramsci (1971) defines hegemony as:

the “spontaneous” consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is “historically” caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production. (p. 12)

He argues that hegemony is “embedded in the complementary relationship between the noun ‘leadership’ and the infinitive ‘to lead’” (1971: 57). Thus, Gramsci (1937: 57-58) argues:

A social group dominates antagonistic groups, which it tends to ‘liquidate’, or to subjugate perhaps even by armed force; it leads kindred and allied groups. A social group can, and indeed must, already exercise ‘leadership’ before winning governmental power (this indeed is one of the principal conditions for the winning of such power); it subsequently becomes dominant when it exercises power, but even if it holds it firmly in its grasp it must continue to ‘lead’ as well.

To establish a hegemonic ideology, economic, political and intellectual supports are required. The intellectual class, civil society and mass media work together to establish the hegemonic power of the elite (Hilley, 2001: 10-11; Huang and McAdams, 2000: 59). The media, therefore, do not challenge the ruling ideology (Gitlin, 1980: 253). Hegemony determines the dominance of one social class over others. This domination exists not only in terms of political and economic power but also in all possible ways of domination, in order to project and protect the dominant class’s own ideology. Under the process of domination, the world of reality and social

systems— e.g. beliefs, norms, values— are created “not by coercion, but rather by creating consent”, which legitimate the existing distribution of power (Huang and McAdams, 2000: 60). Public consent is important in order to gain authority over society. The consent comes through “common sense” (Gramsci, 1971: 419) defined by Gramsci as a “conception of the world which is uncritically absorbed by the various social and cultural environments in which the moral individuality of the average man is developed” (1971: 419). Due to common sense nature of hegemony subordinate groups in society find it hard to challenge the ruling elite. As suggested earlier, individuals internalize a particular view of the world, which incorporates rules and social norms that inevitably favour the ruling class (Gramsci, 1971: 423). Gitlin elaborates on the effects of false consciousness through which social consent is obtained: “the truth of wish, the truth of illusion that is embraced with a quiet passion made possible, even necessary, by actual frustration and subordination” (Gitlin 2003/1987: 258). In addition to control over the economy and other available resources, a “community’s self-understanding” is important in order to gain authority over society. This understanding is important as argued above. The power elite often controls the flow of information and knowledge in addition to social institutions (Maggard, 1983: 67). This process of control is significant easier if and when can be social institutions such as the media perpetuate elite interests. The power elite of society use social institutions in all possible ways— e.g. representing an issue in media— that promote the elite’s interests by shaping the “reality” (Ibid, p. 67). In addition, social institution may come to support the ruling elites without any influence of the latter group (McChesney, 2002; Maggard, 1993). Gramsci argues that cultural domination is important in obtaining social power. Through leadership and dominating the cultural apparatus of a society, the control of social production (e.g.

media images) can automatically be achieved. Cox (1989: 39; cited in Bieler and Morton: 2004: 89), defining the term “production”, argues:

Production...is to be understood in the broadest sense. It is not confined to the production of physical goods used or consumed. It covers the production and reproduction of knowledge and of the social relations, morals and institutions that are prerequisites to the production of physical goods.

Control over knowledge is one of the elite’s main devices of control the authority and has been practiced for centuries (Bekdikian, 2003; Bennett, 1988). The media, as a social institution, produce and reproduce knowledge and social meaning under the mask of social responsibility, perpetuating the domination of the social elite (Gitlin, 2003; Richardson, 2006: 115). The media serve the interests of the cultural elite; through various mechanisms, the cultural elites subordinate the media to their own interest and control the flow of information (McNair, 1998). In representing the interests of the ruling elite, the media fail to present a diversity of knowledge, which is essential for the preservation of democracy (Choi, 2009: 527). By bolstering their authority, the social elites attempt to influence other segments of society so that they (i.e. the ruling elites) will be accepted without question (Richardson, 2006: 35). The ruling elite identifies the “interests” and “tendencies” of various social groups, and then seeks, through various means, to dominate them (Gramsci, 1971: 161). Media images play a central role in facilitating the dominance of the ruling establishment (Hartley, 1982: 5). We follow media-made images, perceive the world through images: in many cases our interpretation of ‘the world’ appears equivalent to the media representation of a particular event (Hartley, 1982: 5). The media therefore not only plays a central role in constructing society but also are persuasive, which can be used to reflect the interests of the ruling elite.

The concept of media hegemony underlines the ideological and social effects of media in favour of the ruling class' interests. Altheide notes that media legitimates the status quo through representing the social world from a particular angle (1985: 484). Hence, Gramsci argues that media, as a counterpart of the status quo, will not produce any images that might challenge the social elite. It is fair to say then that 'Western' media texts typically reinforce ideas around 'Western' superiority (Berger, 1995; Louw, 2004). The symbols, images, and ideas produced in 'Western' media are sold in the world-media market but preserve their sense of ('Western') ideological and cultural superiority. Some— e.g. Sepstorp, 2005; Louw, 2004— argue that the media impose their cultural values, norms and ideology on consumer society. For example, Louw (2004) argues that Western journalists usually carry their cultural bias when they cover foreign news and other culture; in short, they “assume” their “values to be universally valid and uncontestable” (2004: 154). Western journalistic “dealings” with other cultures can be perceived as what Said calls Orientalism: “dealing with [the Orient] by making statements about it, authorizing views of it [...]” (Said, 1978: 3). Hegemony enters people's everyday lives and influences what they think and do (Gitlin, 1980: 10), and through the routine work of reporting the news, journalists “decisively” frame an event and structure the news using their own point of view (Gitlin, 1980: 11-12). Media scholars criticize media coverage delivered about 'Third World' countries as it is often biased and covers these countries in a negative way. Bennett (1996; 1988; 2005) suggests that when reporting international news, the media select and highlight certain aspects of reality, often favouring the voices of the governments in the countries they are covering. Media often promote their own national interest and legitimate their cultural and ideological proximate groups' authority over others but in the process they (re)produce prejudicial negative images

of cultures or nations (Altheide, 1985: 65). Even in a peaceful situation, where mass media do not support the power elite's policies when covering foreign news, they do not attempt to challenge the establishment (Hallin, 1987).

In *Orientalism*, Said maintains:

[I]n any society not totalitarian, then, certain cultural forms predominate over others, just as certain ideas are more influential than others; the form of this cultural leadership is what Gramsci has identified as hegemony, an indispensable concept for any understanding of cultural life in the industrial West (1978: 7).

If the elite policy goes against the majority, then “consent has to be manufactured” by framing the media image (Goeddertz and Kraidy, 2003: 80) in order to gain public support. In addition, the idea of ‘domination’ that Gramsci proposes is not necessarily controlled or dominated by a single institution such as political party. It may be supported or maintained by subordinate groups and/or ancillary institutions such as media through the domination by consent. For example, in a democratic society the ruling class allows a degree of flexibility in their policies in order to provide freedom to the society they rule (Jones, 2006: 3). This freedom is allowed within a frame through which the ruling class aims to captivate the “mind” of the “subordinates” (Jones, 2006: 4). Moreover, freedom of expression or freedom of choice will be given in a way that “appears to be a free expression of their [the subordinates’] own interests and desires” (Ibid, p. 4) but in reality, are in fact the interests and desires of the ruling class. People are thus seduced by the ‘freedom’ given by the ruling class. This ‘freedom’ eventually provides public consent to the ruling class to maintain power over their subordinates.

In terms of media production, Altheide (1984: 476) argues that media hegemony concerns: “(1) the socialization and ideology of journalists, (2) the tendency of

journalists and their reports to support and perpetuate the status quo, and (3) the negative character of foreign news coverage, especially Third World countries”. He observes, however, that the concept of media hegemony is not empirically adequate (1984: 476). Altheide argues that most journalists hold liberal or non-conservative views about the world (Ibid, 477). He states that in many cases journalist do not agree with the dominant ideological view of the society (p. 477), and more over that it is not the journalists’ job to uphold the dominant ideology through media representation — journalists are in many cases critical of the Western elite (Altheide, 1984: 477). For instance, in respect to the, Arab uprising of 2011-2012, Western media supported the community’s protests against the Arab authoritarian rulers (Dadush and Dunne, 2011: 131) despite the fact that these leaders had close relationships with some Western nations including the US, UK and France (Dadush and Dunne, 2011: 131; Jenkins, 2012; Allen, 2012; Korepin and Sharan, 2011: 2 & 7). Journalists therefore supported the call for social change. Linger (1993: 4) observes that discussions about the common sense nature of hegemony in political studies are provocative but that they fail to acknowledge the social aspects of it. For example, Linger holds that in Gramscian thought people cannot think about social revolution because of the “common sense [nature] of power” (Linger, 1993: 17). In other words, although power “provides a conceptual and emotional basis for rebellious”, it never allows them to take action or unite against the ruling elites (Linger, 1993: 17). There are, however, examples of the ways in which common sense can unite citizens against the ruling elites. For example, during the São Luís rebellion of 1984-86, Brazilian people showed unity in protesting and rejecting the social elites (Linger, 1993: 3). These people protested the economic hardship they were experiencing. Not only did they vote against the existing power elite but they also held violent demonstrations in the

streets. Thus, the Gramscian conception of common sense—namely, that common sense makes people passive to rebellion—is problematic. As we have seen, in many cases, common sense encourages and integrates people against existing ruling power (Linger, 1993: 4). Although the media often represent the dominant interests, at times they may take the role of spokesperson for the wider community – for example, they may ask national leaders and experts to account for their behaviours and thus promote social change (Livingstone and Lunt, 1994: 5). The ruling class does not have absolute power in controlling the subordinate class nor does it completely dictate the media. On many occasions, the media’s agenda setting plays a supportive role in challenging the dominant ideology (Livingstone and Lunt, 1994: 6). Scholars thus contest the role ascribed to media by Gramsci, which favours the dominant ideology, and argue that in many cases media hold the ruling class accountable to the society.

This study, aims to identify how and whether New Zealand newspapers play a hegemonic role in supporting the social elite and/or the dominant ideology when covering issues relating to Islam and Muslims. The media’s role in promoting the dominant ideology is related to the selection process in which gatekeepers play an active role. This study will therefore examine the decisions made by media gatekeepers in New Zealand in relation to newspaper coverage of Islam and Muslims issues.

Gatekeeping in Media

The media gatekeeping model describes the process by which media professionals select news/images, or draw the public’s attention to a particular issue. Lewin’s (1947, 1951) well-explored theory of gatekeeping “traditionally analyse[s] why and how” a news item is covered in a specific news media outlet and the reasons behind

the disappearance of some events from news coverage (Shoemaker, Johnson, Seo and Wang, 2010: 56). Lewin (1947) argues that gates are controlled by gatekeepers, who decide what will be included or omitted (Okigbo, 1990: 3). White's (1950) study of newspapers (wire) services analyses how "Mr. Gate"—that is, media professionals acting as gatekeepers—apply their gatekeeping skills to determine what is selected. These gatekeepers, as "the representative of culture", allow only believable news stories to pass through (Okigbo, 1990: 4). Gatekeepers select information and construct the "political and social reality" of the culture of which they are a part (Williams and Carpini, 2000: 63). In constructing 'reality', gatekeepers use some "schemes" in their decision making process when "deciding what news is and [what] is not" (Berkowitz, 1990: 57). As a result of this process, information turned into 'news' for social consumption (Shoemaker and Vos, 2009: 22). Therefore, no event can be 'news' unless "Mr Gate" recognizes it as newsworthy. Lewin (1947: 146) notes the importance of understanding the "psychology" of gatekeepers—in other words, the factors at work in the selection process (Clayman and Reisner, 1998: 179) such as the cultural and political orientation of the journalists. News is a "cognitive construction" of events (Shoemaker and Vos, 2009: 25), which determines what needs to be presented for the public's attention. Gatekeepers shape the image of the world through their selection process. Under the active selection process some events receive major coverage while some events are discarded (Christensen, 2004). Preference is given to those nations who share "a geographical, political or cultural affinity" with the media (Nossek, 2004: 347). Culturally identical nations are represented more positively while those that are different tend to be depicted in a more negative manner (Rosengren, 1974; Chang and Lee, 1992; Nossek, 2004: 347). Cultural identity is a strong factor in shaping the news; and in shaping the news

gatekeepers preserve the status quo (Nossek, 2004: 347). Through cultural filtering media construct social reality, thus “creat[ing] a false impression” for their readers (Adoni and Mane, 1984: 336). News is a “product” of “cultural values and beliefs” (Berkowitz 1997: xii) that is framed for the audience’s attention. In addition, the gatekeepers’ ideology is influential in constructing media meaning (Shoemaker and Vos, 2009: 101). Audiences perceive the world through the gatekeepers’ perception of reality. Consequently, scholarly findings question the media’s claim of objectivity (Huang and McAdams, 2000: 59; Tuchman, 1972), as their representation of reality may not have any basis in the facts or in the event itself (Epstein, 1973; Tuchman, 1978; Altheide, 1974; Nossek, 2004).

The media control information and present “events-as-news” within the media’s own context and interests in shaping the world (Altheide, 1974: 24), thus preserving the agenda of the social elite through constructing, controlling and limiting information. In Bagdikian’s view (2004), the news media plays a powerful role in legitimating the power of social elites. The control over information is central to controlling social power. In this process, the media help social elites in controlling information as gatekeepers actively select and decide what is or is not news, what will be included, and how. Media gatekeepers play an information-controlling role, and through controlling information they shape the “picture of the world in our minds” (Rosengren, 1974: 145). In the selection process, gatekeepers work as part of other social and political institutions (Shoemaker 1991). All actors including the organizations they work for, and their numerous involvements in society, “can [not] escape the fact that [they are] tied to and draw [...] sustenance from the social system” (Shoemaker 1991: 75). Moreover, when selecting foreign news, gatekeepers’ “broader cultural-domestic environment” influence the news selection process that

shapes the ‘reality’ through the news (Nossek, 2004: 346). By shaping information and by creating ‘reality’, gatekeepers create news based on their own judgments; and readers see the world through the perception of others.

Gatekeepers consider ‘news value’ in order to judge the newsworthiness of an event. The main four factors of news value—proximity, importance, timeliness and prominence—are arbitrary criteria (Croteau and Hoynes, 2000: 126-127; Hall et al. 1979: 59). While three factors—importance, timeliness, and prominence—are significant, ‘proximity’ plays a greater role (Weber, 2010: 471) than the others in the gatekeeping process, especially with respect to ideology and culture. The ideological priorities and preferences of the gatekeeper regarding an event’s coverage—that is, why an event is focused on, or why the issue is considered newsworthy—can be better understood through news selection (Tuchman, 1976). For example, prominence will be given to an event that supports the gatekeepers’ ideological or cultural interests; thus citizens will read the events deemed important by gatekeepers in their society. The selection of newsworthiness or the judging of news value in many cases can be recognized as a judgment to uphold one group of people while marginalizing others— in short, gatekeepers can be “biased” in judging the news value of (and attributing newsworthiness to) an issue (Turner, 2007). In addition, when an individual, group or culture is identified as ‘distant’— i.e. ideologically, politically and culturally—to the gatekeepers, it is possible that there will be negatively “biased” coverage (Cuthbert and Sparkes, 1978). The newsworthiness and the attribution of ‘news value’ do not occur in isolation— the definition and decisions relating to news value may differ due to the producers’ cultural orientation and perception (Rohn, 2011: 632; Horvit, 2006: 428). It is an interrelated process involving various social

actors, including media gatekeepers of a particular media outlet (McNair, 1998; Croteau and Hoynes, 2000; Manning, 2001).

In considering news production, “the term ‘gatekeeper’ [...] provides a handy, if not altogether appropriate, metaphor for the relation of news organizations to news products” (Schudson, 1989: 265). Schudson (1989) describes news as a “form of knowledge” (p. 264), and argues that this knowledge “reinforces certain assumptions about [the] political world” that conform to the dominant ideology (Schudson, 1982: 99). Gatekeepers “institutionalize the journalists’ view”, reject some stories in the first place (identifying them as ideologically conflicting e.g. “too Red”) but accept other stories that ideologically ‘fit’ (Schudson, 1982: 99). The gatekeeper, however, also considers other issues such as media-marketing and institutional bureaucracy (Gieber, 1964: 175; Schudson, 1989). Drawing attention to the power of media production (i.e. of texts), Schudson observes how gatekeepers “make culturally consonant messages readable and culturally dissonant messages unsayable” (1982: 98). With regard to news production, it is worth mentioning Bruce’s observations (1989: 114-116; also, cited in Cottle [1995: 278]):

Newspaper writing consists of various types of narratives and formats, which follow different rules and conventions of compositions and subject treatment ... The different formats can be ordered by their proximity to the discourse of the established powers on the following continuum: news briefs, news reports, editorials, features, backgrounders, columns, editorial cartoons, and letters to the editor ... Differences in the discursive processing of events can thus be demonstrated to be related to formal elements in the production of daily newspapers. In other words, the symbolic reproduction of the dominant structures has to take place through the specific logics of media production that are associated with news formats.

While upholding the dominant ideology, media regularly construct the meaning of the world through the image they produce for society's consumption (Poole, 2000: 23). Consequently, "[r]epresentation is not then a transparent process of re-presenting an objective reality" (p. 23). The reality represented is, in fact, a reality from the viewpoint of media that are closely linked with the social elites (Gieber, 1964: 173; Tariq and Moody, 2009). Media filter reality when representing its meaning. Media meaning can be understood from two angles: the first view upholds the meaning of dominant social ideologies while the second constructs its own meaning in relation to society (Poole, 2000). This study argues that the way New Zealand newspapers produce meaning for a cultural group can also be understood through examining newspaper-texts—both visual and verbal.

When discussing gatekeeping and agenda setting it is important to remember the reader. Numerous scholarly findings (e.g. Shaw, 1979) argue that newspaper "readers", and media-audiences more generally, are not passive (Thompson, 1988: 375). Scholars have shown that audiences are skeptical and that they will not accept misinformation. The meaning that a particular media outlet aims to produce and promote within a certain cultural context is not consumed passively; and, the meaning of the text will vary due to the social context and experience of the readers (Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes & Sasson, 1992: 375). Audiences exchange information and knowledge with other audiences and thus supplement the information provided by and received from media (Ibid, p. 375). Readers may also differ in their reception of the news or opinion presented in a particular newspaper and therefore decode the text in an alternative way.

Many scholars reject theories which see the media as all powerful (see for example the Media Bullet or Hypodermic Needle Theories) but still acknowledge that the

media has the ability to persuade readers (Noelle-Numann, 1973; Kellner, 2001). For example, scholarly findings argue that media have the power to mis-inform, propagate and provide false information to their audience (Kellner, 2003). In the propagation process media can be a counterpart of the state (Kellner, 1992) in capturing public opinion and influencing them in favour of the social elite through the media's repeated messages (Kellner, 2001: xi; Kellner, 1995: 199). This proves the media is in fact persuasive, even though they are not as powerful as the Hypodermic Needle Theory would like to suggest⁸. For example, during the 2000 election campaign in the US, citizens were seduced by media images — many of them accepted misinformation about a leader (Kellner, 2001: 166). Gatekeeping can also be examined from a different perspective. While Epstein (1973) argues that “the pictures of society that are shown [...in news media] are largely—though not entirely—performed and shaped by organizational considerations”, i.e. through the process of gatekeeping, it needs to be acknowledged that gatekeeping is a universal fact in the media world. In the selection process media (e.g. newspapers) have to consider many different factors, for example, media cannot accommodate all news items in their limited news space. It is also evident in scholarly findings that news selection and coverage patterns differ from nation to nation (Westerståhl and Johansson, 1994) and newspaper to newspaper (Fahmy, 2005). In the age of new media, the traditional concept of gatekeeping faces new challenges. For example, the Internet provides its readers with enormous opportunities to gain information about an event. Referencing Fulton (1996) and Singer (1998), Deuze (2004: 146) contends that in the age of new media the journalistic profession of gatekeeping is challenged and that gatekeepers can no longer decide what the audiences will read, watch and listen to. Despite numerous

⁸ This model argues that audiences are passive and blindly trust the information they receive.

criticisms of traditional media it can be argued that while the Internet provides an alternative and non-conventional platform where multiple stories and voices can be heard, traditional media (e.g. newspapers) remain influential (Sharify-Funk, 2009: 74). The power of traditional media is still evident in our society (Sharify-Funk, 2009; Kellner, 2005). As mentioned previously, gatekeeping is a universal practice for traditional print media, a practice, which this study aims to examine— more specifically, with regard to how New Zealand newspapers’ gatekeepers carry out their role in selecting news and non-news items.

Agenda Setting

Numerous scholars have employed the agenda setting model since McComb and Shaw introduced it in 1972 to understand the role of media and their relationship to society. This model tells us what the issue of the day is and how to think about that issue. Media agendas draw “attention to a certain issue” (Lang and Lang, 1966, cited in McComb and Shaw, 1972: 177). The agenda setting model argues that media have the ability to influence people (McComb and Shaw, 1972; Entman, 2007; Sheafer, 2007: 22) and they can change public’s attitude towards an individual or a group (Sheafer, 2007: 22 & 24) by shaping their “perceptions of reality” (Weaver, McCombs and Spellman, 1975: 459). Mass media “determine” what issues will be covered (Wilke, 1995: 64) and political elites start setting their agenda through mass media since they understand the power of media (Lang and Lang, 1984: 130; Kiouisis, 2005: 3). The attitudinal change of the public towards an issue occurs through media repetition, sensationalism and salience (Kiouisis, 2005: 6). Most of the information that people receive about their ‘world’ is created by someone working with media (McComb and Shaw, 1972: 176). In many cases, media not only shape audiences’

perceived world by defining reality but also present the information in a way that tells the audience “what [they] should think about and what [they] should talk about” (Shaw, 1977: 230). As a result, while some issues or aspects of an event are emphasized, others disappear in media construction (Manheim and Albriton, 1982: 643). When setting an agenda media reduce social discourse that may downplay or marginalize an individual or a cultural group. In addition, media privilege the social elites (Evans and Pearson-Merkowitz, 2012: 1027), examining what they do and how they talk about a particular issue (Entman, 2007: 164). In privileging the social elites, media gatekeepers disadvantage other groups in society. This study aims to analyze how New Zealand newspapers set the elite agenda when framing Islam and Muslim issues.

Framing the News

Through frame analysis researchers identify the relationship between media, society, politics and ideology. The way in which the media represent a social group can be identified using this form of analysis (Gans, 1979; Gabrielson, 2005). Framing helps to identify how media define the relevance of an issue to a particular group or individual. The media’s mode of interpretation shapes the reality of an event, and a reader perceives an event within the frame imposed by media (Entman, 2004). Entman defines framing as “selecting and highlighting some facets or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution” (2004: 5). Media representation can uphold a group while downplaying others. It depends however on the particular media outlet as to how the ‘message’ will be presented. Media frame issues according to their policy, and readers buy the framed information as a commodity (Park, 1999: 12; Boorstin, 1999: 16).

Moreover “news decontextualizes an event – removes it from the context in which it occurs” (Altheide, 1974: 24). Media may present an issue superficially and shape reality to maintain the social elite’s interests (Gouldner, 1976: 123). Thus, what is not published is just as important as what is published. Unfortunately readers or audiences are not allowed to know what is not presented to them, or the manner in which information is either presented or not presented. According to Gitlin, framing is defined as “persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis and exclusion by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse” (1980: 7). Through framing, issues are presented for public attention by “highlighting some aspects of situations” and by “promot[ing] a particular interpretation” (Entman, 2008: 90). As indicated earlier however, media reduce and downplay other aspects of the issue (Ibid, p. 90). The image that a social group is given through a particular frame and a particular interpretation, however, favours ideologically and culturally proximate groups while marginalizing others (Entman, 2008, 1993; Louw, 2004; Giltin, 1980). The frame identifies what the event is and “predict[s] [its] likely effects” in society, and in this way media may influence public opinion (Entman, 1993: 52). In other words, media define social problems and reality. Frames privilege a particular ideology or the ideologies of a certain cultural/social group or individual by focusing on an issue in a specific way that sidelines other issue/s.

Bernard Berelson and Paul Lazarsfeld are central to discussions of ‘frame’ analysis; they raised the issue of sixty years ago (Callaghan and Schnell, 2005: xi). It was however Goffman (1974) who introduced the framing approach; although Goffman maintains that Bateson (1972) should be given credit for coining the term (Reese, 2001: 7). The concept of the frame describes what is the issue of the day, who (e.g. a

person, a group, an institution) is important, what is being discussed about whom, why they are important, and how. Framing varies from one media outlet to another, and the interpretation of the event can also change (Hertog and McLeod, 2001: 142-143). The media interpretation may influence political discourse (Kinder and Nelson, 2005: 103-104) as media manipulate public opinion by producing an “emotionally compelling frame [for] the public” (Entman, 2003: 416). For example, prior to the start of the ‘war on terror’, American media framed the invasion in Afghanistan and Iraq as a “war” against “evil” and proposed that this “war” was important to save their nation (Entman, 2003: 416-417).

Media-images may play a deceitful role by fabricating, colouring and downplaying information. Manipulation of information happens more frequently when media establishes a social crisis (Wasburn, 2002: 42) within a particular frame. In doing so, media highlight the problem of this social crisis, identify the problem creators and advocate ways to solve the problem. However, by defining social problems media avoid questioning the legitimacy or authority of social elites. In contrast, they become allies of the power elites through representing and reducing an issue (Wasburn, 2002:15). Entman (2004: 2) argues that both media and power elites work together. When representing various social issues—including cultural and religious issues—media frames help audiences to conceptualize an issue from a particular angle (Gabrielson, 2005: 76), an angle by which a group/s of people can be identified as anti-social. In addition, media framing “powerful[ly]” affects the public via “political persuasion” (Gabrielson, 2005: 76). Therefore, the relationship between media and the elite might be seen as a kind of two-way-cooperation. Some scholars (e.g. Tankard, 2001: 96) note that media can uphold a group or individual without showing apparent bias towards them. In framing an issue, media design and determine the

structure of an issue; stress the importance of it; and modify and colour the event for public attention, which might not otherwise be considered important (Gabrielson, 2005; Entman, 2004; Tankard, 2001).

The media frame is a “socially shared” principle that reflects the judgment of media professionals and their various understandings of social meaning, through which they evaluate the ideology they own and the cultures they do or do not live in (Reese, 2001: 11). Reese argues that journalists’ professional norms and social perceptions “work *symbolically* to meaningfully *structure* the social world” in a way that often works to create social meaning for the audience living in a certain society (2001: 11 [original italic]). The audience is provided with several viewpoints; the frame is not necessarily one-sided—rather, the frame has a pluralistic form per se— but one argumentative frame is highlighted to support a particular group or individual (Schonell and Callaghan, 2005: 125). Reese proposes two main foci in framing: cognitive and cultural (2001: 12). Cognitive framing allows one to understand “social phenomena in a certain way, often by appealing to basic psychological biases” (Reese, 2001: 12). Cultural framing invites the reader to go “beyond the immediate information” (Reese, 2001: 12). In the framing process the presenters, interest groups, information providers (e.g. news sources) and their culture all together explain, construct and reconstruct the meaning of ‘the world’ that is presented in a frame by using media texts— visual, verbal and aural (Reese, 2001: 11). Entman argues that a successful frame focuses upon an “event, issue and actor” and that the media’s manipulation of the image/s benefits one group by sidelining others (2003: 417).

This discussion argues that the media frame upholds certain issues while downplaying others, and that they select what events will be presented for public attention. This study aims to identify how New Zealand newspapers socially construct Islam and

Muslims' issues through their frame. It is first necessary however to conceptualize the news flow of international news agencies.

International News Agencies

As will become clear in chapter four New Zealand newspapers are heavily reliant on international news feeds (e.g. news agencies). Thus, it is important to discuss international news agencies in order to understand the nature and pattern of news covered by the agencies. Since last century, international news agencies “have been the main sources” of global news (Camaj, 2010: 636) and are seen as institutional “agents of globalization” (Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen, 1998: 15) who promote elite interests (Moses, 2012). These “wholesalers of [global] news” (Giffard and Van Leuven, 2005: 3) have served power elites since their birth (Bartram, 2003: 387). Through analyzing the information they provide, one can understand what is the issue and why the issue is framed in a certain way as the international news agencies promote a particular issue prominently and from a certain angle (Camaj, 2010: 636). Agencies also play various agenda-setting roles (Boyd-Barrett, 1980; Camaj, 2010) that often legitimate elite interests. Reinforcing the argument that international news agencies set agendas and frame issues, some scholars including Giffard and Van Leuven (2005) contend that news agencies frame the elite agenda through determining the issue and angle— thus, they determine what will be focused upon, who will be given priority and how the issue will be framed (p. 4). While providing information about any event, these news providers in fact reinforce socio-political, economic and ideological power through their content (Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen, 1998: 3; Peterson, 2006). For example, international news in developed nations’ media mainly centers on their national interests (Hester, 1971; Rauch, 2003). Hester

(1971: 43) argues that the events originating in the Middle East occupy the AP (Associated Press) coverage in the US media. He explains that these news contributions mainly represent “military-defense” issues (p. 40), while an edited UNESCO report (Sreberny-Mohammadi et al, 1985) argues that there is a tendency towards “frequent reporting of terrorism and military actions” in the big four news agencies—AP (Associate Press), AFP (Agence France-Presse), Reuters and UPI (United Press International). While UPI is no longer active, the current ‘big three’ still dominate the world news (Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen, 1998) along with some non-agency services, like the BBC. The UNESCO workshop report, prepared by Boyd-Barrett (2001), identifies some competition among news agencies across the world and finds that news agencies, politics, and media and corporate owners influence the journalistic profession in news coverage (p. 2). In addition, the ‘Third World’ is “typically” covered in the context of negative incidents such as violence and conflict (Rauch, 2003: 90) which arguably constructs a negative image of these nations (Rauch, 2003: 90; Choi, 2009), while neglecting important issues such as health, culture, and other social problems (Choi, 2009: 527). Some Western mainstream news agencies such as AP cover events that preserve the US interests towards other nations, which marginalize ‘Third World’ nations (Rauch, 2003: 87). As statistical findings in Chapter 4 will show, the new and the top ranking news agency—the *Bloomberg*⁹ (Moses, 2012; Bartram, 2003)—is not popular with New Zealand newspapers but its rival—Reuters (Bartram, 2003)—is.

In a more recent study, Peterson (2006) argues that stories provided through news agencies, which could challenge the elite ideology, are rare. News agencies help in

⁹ The Reuters is an England based and the Bloomberg is a US based news agency. Reuters has of more than 150 years of serving news; whereas the Bloomberg’s news servicing history is about 20 years. But the character and nature of the Bloomberg in covering the world is similar to other international news agencies such as Reuters—serving elite agenda (Bartram, 2003; Moses, 2012).

setting an elite ideological agenda and the agenda of international news agencies appears to establish the dominance of culturally and ideologically proximate groups (Peterson, 2006). They set the agenda, frame the event from a particular angle that marginalize and ignore those groups which they identify as *not-identical-to-them*, thus promoting a specific group's interests. International news agencies provide stories to media outlets that cannot provide one of their own 'on-the-spot' correspondents. The content that is supplied by international news feeds however "represents a strong influence on Western readers' knowledge" toward global events and issues (Rauch, 2003: 87). These news agencies, which include news media, "present a packaged version" of world events for their audience's consumption (Harris, 1976: 149). This package is "condensed", in the sense that some issues are highlighted while others are sidelined or ignored (Harris, 1976: 149) due to the news-market and ideological leanings. Additionally, scholarly findings (e.g. Rauch, 2003; Horvit, 2006) suggest that international news agencies are biased towards Western culture and national interests. Western news agencies frame world news in favour of a particular nation (Horvit, 2006: 429) and set a predetermined agenda that inevitably dehumanizes other nations and cultures (Camaj, 2010; Horvit, 2006).

As mentioned previously, this study will show that New Zealand newspapers are hugely dependent on international news feeds (presented in Chapter 4). Thus, the coverage pattern of events may not be the responsibility of New Zealand newspapers per se (Rosenberg, 2008)—they do not have correspondents stationed outside of New Zealand - and instead receive stories from international news feeds. Therefore, with regards to international news agencies and New Zealand newspapers' coverage of international news, it is important to remember Rosenberg's (2008: 24) assertion:

Though not directly owners of the New Zealand news media, the international news agencies are owners of our news in the wider sense. All

our mainstream news media depend on them – often to the exclusion of wider sources of information and viewpoints – for their international news. [...] it is important to be aware of our often invisible dependence on them for our view of the rest of the world.

With regards to this, NZPA (New Zealand Press Association) is the only national news agency working inside the nation, which operated for 128 years as a “co-operative news gathering service”. Unfortunately the co-operative was closed in January 2006 (Hannis, 2008: 47). During co-operation and at least up to the end of the 20th century, NZPA supplied all international news to all major New Zealand newspapers. However, at the end of the 20th century this agency’s supply had reduced to 140-160 copies per day mainly because co-operation had ceased (Hannis, 2008) and local newspapers relied on larger agencies for international news. Before this, international news was sold through NZPA as it had an agreement with international agencies (e.g. Reuters, AFP), which allowed it to maintain its monopoly over international news (Ellis, 2003: 36). The co-operation ended for other reasons— the supplementary fee was not competitive and local newspapers were gradually able to receive international news from other (online) channels (Hannis, 2008; Ellis, 2003). The NZPA’s monopoly was gradually challenged. The ownership of New Zealand papers, which were held by a small group of individuals, also contributed to the downfall of the NZPA. This monopoly of ownership is considered bad for the “news agencies” and “for the general public” both in terms of news supply or news access and for new media organizations who are unable to enter the market. Furthermore, it leads to the homogenization of media products and limits the public access to information (Boyd-Barrett, 2000: 7). NZPA’s contribution to local newspapers was reduced drastically after the collapse of the co-operation on December 31, 2005 (Ellis,

2003).

This study also shows (in Chapter 4) that NZPA had an insignificant contribution to New Zealand newspapers. Therefore, this study aims to identify how New Zealand newspapers, which depend heavily upon international news agencies, frame issues relating to Islam and Muslims and whether these newspapers' own opinion stories (e.g. editorial) use a parallel schema to frame stories received from outside. It also aims to examine the role of international news agencies in supplying news and whether domestic and international news frames construct Muslim affairs in a similar way.

Summary

This chapter discusses four news models—media gatekeeping, agenda setting, news framing, and international news agencies—and also presents the arguments of Orientalism, the clash of civilizations, and media hegemony. It also discusses how these discursive factors work together in media coverage and, more specifically, how these factors influence coverage of Islam in 'Western' news media.

The following chapter (chapter three) will discuss the methodology that has been used in this study. It will initially discuss the argument generated in qualitative and quantitative analysis, and later provide a discussion on categorization, units of analysis and other relevant concepts.

Chapter 3:

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter aims to explain the approach and method of this study. This study uses a qualitative approach and employs discourse analysis as the primary technique. The qualitative approach is a flexible and open-ended method (Hakim, 1987) that allows a researcher to explain data broadly to describe contexts and diverse interactions associated with data, which cannot be identified through quantitative methods alone (Altheide, 1996). Discourse analysis is an interpretive and descriptive method that involves identifying the meaning of a text—whether written or spoken (Cooper, 1983)—in which text or language is a product of a group of people or individuals living in a particular society (van Dijk, 1988; 1996; 1998; 2006). This study aims to understand the power of texts in regards to Islam and Muslims' issues appearing in three New Zealand newspapers—the *ODT*, the *Press* and the *NZH*.

Once dominant themes are identified this analysis will incorporate qualitative methods to analyze how issues are socially constructed. In order to identify dominant themes across the study period for a closer analysis of the discourses, a quantitative approach to the data is also incorporated. This chapter will elaborate on the qualitative theory and methods used in this study. In addition, it will present the time frame, unit of analysis, categorization, selection of newspapers, and the coding process used in this study.

Quantitative Method

The quantitative method places emphasis on “numeric values” and shows their relationship with an event (Riffe et al., 1998: 20). In quantitative analysis, researchers observe various phenomena such as the frequency and intensity of a specific event and explain them through “statistical testing” (Keyton, 2001: 39). Others— e.g. Keyton, 2006; Wimmer and Dominick, 2003; Berelson, 1952—argue that, although quantitative analysis focuses mainly upon numerical values, it is not a simple recording; rather, it explains the numerical values identified in the data. Poole (2006: 89) notes that quantitative analysis mainly deals with frequencies which researchers use to explain their data.

Some scholars, including Frey et al. (2000: 239), hold that quantitative “analysis is a systematic, step-by-step procedure used to answer research questions and test hypotheses”, which is distinguished from qualitative analysis and has a unique application in the field of social science. Perry (2002: 101) states that in content analysis the quantitative technique is not a simply reading the sample rather explaining data on the basis of statistical findings— that makes this technique different from qualitative analysis. Perry (2002: 101) prefers quantitative research over qualitative analysis because of its non-replicable nature of analysis.

From the above discussion, it can be said that some scholars perceive quantitative analysis as a systematic method. However, this method cannot answer all of the questions posed by a problem (Altheide, 1996; Keyton, 2006). For example, some scholars including Billig (1989: 206) argue that quantitative analysis can quantify or provide numerical values—for example, the number of words appearing in a document or text—but this method cannot be used to interpret those values, and in

some cases, this kind of investigation misleads researchers when reaching conclusions. The relationship between quantitative analysis and some multi-disciplinary fields such as linguistics are “tenuous” (Markoff, Shapiro and Weitman, 1974: 8). Numerous scholars (e.g. Altheide, 1996; Keyton, 2006; 2001) prefer qualitative analysis, arguing that this approach is appropriate for research in the field of social science, as it explains the relations between an event and society. Quantitative research “count[s] only certain things [and] not everything” (Berger, 2000: 13) and it is “too narrow” in the sense that it is unable to answer all the questions that are important to a researcher (Berger, 2000: 13). While qualitative research is theoretical and interpretive, and identifies “aesthetics in text” and evaluates data; quantitative analysis only counts frequency (Berger, 2000: 14). Therefore, quantitative research is not open-ended. In addition, Lule (2002: 276) argues that content analyses “miss the social [and] symbolic power” of the language that media use. Thus, this study employs qualitative analysis because it overcomes the limitations of quantitative analysis (Keyton, 2006: 63). As mentioned in Chapter 1 that this study borrows the analytical assumption of Said’s *Orientalism* and Karim’s *Islamic Peril* in presenting arguments. In addition, when analyzing data, this study employ the approach used by Richardson (2007: 20), namely, of summarizing a cumulative snapshot by asking the question *what*. In this case of this study, this means a summary of what these newspapers write about Islam. It will then advance to an in-depth study based on information gained by asking the question *how*— i.e. how these newspapers write about Islam and Muslims (Ibid, p. 20). However, before discussing qualitative analysis, this study will first explain content analysis.

Content Analysis

Content analysis is employed in social and human sciences like politics and psychology (Holsti, 1969). Content analysis was popular in the field of communication and cultural studies decades' earlier (Deacon, Pickering, Golding and Murdock, 1999: 116). The technique has gained recognition ever since Bernard Berelson (1952) introduced his book, *Content Analysis in Communication Research*, which offered various "tool[s]" for content analysis (Wimmer and Dominick, 2003: 140). The technique provides "replicable and valid references from data from their context" (p. 141) and can measure variables despite some other limitations (Berger, 2000). This method provides 'structure' or a 'format' to understand information, which allows analysis in various fields (Chelimsky, 1989: 1). It engages in quantification, uncovering the salient and manifest features of a large amount of content selected for examination (Deacon, Pickering, Golding and Murdock, 1999: 116). Therefore, content analysis has been used in various fields of studies. For example, since television was introduced in the 1950s, researchers have become interested in examining the portrayal of television images, identifying issues such as the representation of women. Since then content analysis has gained a new dimension in the field of mass communication and social science (Macnamara, N/D, p. 1). In short, content analysis provides "quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (Berelson, 1952: 263) and it is *quantitative* by representing the frequency of data (Wimmer and Dominick, 2003: 141 [original italic]). It also simplifies large amounts of data (Reinard, 2008: 303).

The main problem with content analysis, however, is that researchers may reach a variety of conclusions despite working within a similar data set (Wimmer and Dominick, 2000: 144). As mentioned in Chapter 2, it is important to discuss what is

not focused upon in media texts. Content analysis cannot address what is not presented and the reasons behind this disappearance. For example, it can indicate how many times television commercials focus upon Asian-American people, but cannot show why a particular type of portrayal is produced; and if no Asian-Americans featured in commercials it would also fail to explain why this particular group of people are absent from these portrayals. In addition, content analysis “assumes” that meaning does not change amongst readers and that the intended meaning of the producer of a text will be similar to the meaning perceived by readers (Richardson, 2007: 17). Thus, Richardson (2007: 21) argues that discourse analysis is “particularly well suited” for identifying the problems that content analysis alone cannot identify.

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative approaches search for the social construction of meaning (Lindlof, 1991). Within an interpretative approach it helps to identify the relationships between society, the actors and the meaning a society constructs (Keyton, 2006: 63). Therefore, a qualitative approach often begins with an examination of the way communication is achieved, and engages in exploring the everyday contexts of the actions investigated—in other words, how an event is symbolized with regard to a particular social group (Anderson, 1996: 47). Qualitative analysis aims to identify the power of a media text, or, on a more general level, the power of the language used by a social group or a social institution when engaging with other social groups (Richardson, 2007: 10-14). The text is not a simple production of a particular media outlet as it carries the producer’s ideological, social and cultural views of reality. The meaning of the text is not an outcome of simple reading (Richardson, 2007: 15). Rather, it focuses upon the various interactions between the product— media text: the consumer—

audience; the producer— a particular media outlet; and the society in which the texts are produced and consumed (Ibid, p. 15).

Using a qualitative approach, researchers examine media images produced in a particular media narrative or contained in a text (Quine 1980; Roth 1987). While quantitative analysis codes or categorizes data, qualitative analysis attempts to identify “definitions, meanings, process and types” of data (Altheide, 1996: 26-27). In qualitative research one is able to find the meaning of the text and examine the ways in which a particular social group is represented (Altheide, 1996: 32). Using descriptive explanations, qualitative research (Altheide, 1996: 27), can also be used to discuss what a particular text or a symbol means (Frey, Botan and Kreps, 2000: 83). Analysts, however, should be open-minded and must not be compromised by personal interpretations. Rather, the goal is to identify the meaning within the texts selected for study. Recognizing all of these scholarly arguments, this study aims to employ qualitative analysis in explaining data.

The central focus of this study is the representation of Islam and Muslims’ issues in three New Zealand newspapers, as determined through qualitative research—e.g. examining frames through discourse analysis.

Discourse Analysis

In analyzing ideology and cultural or political proximity, discourse analysis is important as it can focus on the way we perceive other cultures, societies, and people, and how our perceived world is constructed through language and/or text(s). Discourse analysis describes the various interactions between social groups (Titscher

et al. 2000: 147; Richardson, 2007: 26). Following Wodak's argument (1996), discourse analysis engages in identifying "a relationship between the text... its social conditions, ideologies and power-relations" (cited in Richardson, 2007: 27). In other words, discourse analysis aims to identify how an individual or a group of people uses language, about whom it is used, the ways in which it is used and why. It offers "*interpretations* of the meanings of text" and tries to explain how the meaning is "*constructed*" inside various social interactions (Richardson, 2007: 14 [original italic]). This study aims to examine how Islam and Muslims are represented and perceived, and what meanings the media produce through their images about this religion and community. Through discursive explanation, it is possible to identify how various social institutions such as media construct Others in their representation of a social group, specifically a minority group (van Dijk, 1994; 1994a, 1998). Van Dijk (1998: 2) argues that media texts such as news reports are the outcome of various social interaction that promote ideological, cultural and overall cognitive perceptions of 'self' and 'others'; and media analyses of discourse is important when identifying this perception.

Discourse analysis focuses on the analysis of particular texts in context and addresses ideology, power and identity issues (Phelan, 2009: 219). This approach is popular in multidisciplinary fields such as linguistics and in mass media studies, which focuses on the role of media in the social construction of meaning (Pankov, Mihelj and Bajt, 2011: 1047; Jackson, 2007: 395; Fairclough, 1985). Discourse analysis introduces the concept of discursive practices of a community (Fairclough, 1995: 55)—in other words, how people or an institution use language and about whom. The way we construct our perceived world around a social group can be understood through our language or through the images we produce. Discourse analysis helps one to identify

the ideology and the process of legitimization of a certain social group's ideology. Ideology can control social discourses (van Dijk, 1995x: 246). Hence, ideology is the “fundamental social cognition” (van Dijk, 1995x: 223) that is shared by other members or institutions living and working in a particular society (van Dijk, 1995x: 244-245). However, it is not only the dominant social group that has their ideology; rather, the dominated group also shares and owns their own group's ideology, this is the case for any social group, including professionals (e.g. journalists) (van Dijk, 1995x: 245). The question of identity lies mainly within the question of who belongs to ‘us’ (indicating a process of inclusion) and who does not belong, thus indicating a process of exclusion, which creates a social boundary against ‘them’ (van Dijk, 1995x: 249). ‘We’ maintain this discursive boundary through language and various images including media texts.

Social groups like journalists produce the discursive perception of the Other. For example, the “semantic polarization” of Othering can be found in the elite discourse when representing “*our* good things and *their* bad things” (van Dijk, 2005: 68 [original italic]), a representation which eventually dehumanizes the Other—whether the ‘Other’ is a person, a group or community, or a culture (van Dijk, 2005). Under this process ‘our’ ideological superiority is legitimated over ‘them’ and the ideological legitimacy can be identified through ‘our’ discursive choice of certain elements of language, including “speech acts, style, lexical selection, formats, rhetoric, [and] semantic strategies” (van Dijk, 2005: 69). Thus, discourse analysis is important for examining the social actors— e.g. the speakers; and explaining the reason of their speech, the metaphor they use; and to whom they are speaking with and about whom (van Dijk, 2005: 68). This explains the social power of one group over other/s, as well as the way a group legitimates their power.

We can also explain the social and institutional relations of journalists working in a particular society (Thetela, 2001: 349). In media, producers create a commodity (i.e. a text) which audiences consume. However, the “producers exercise power over consumers” (Fairclough, 1989: 50) as the producers have the “sole” power to determine what will be published or not, and how (Fairclough, 1989: 50). Media maintain their control over the public by constructing and re-constructing social meaning that legitimate one group’s authority over others (van Dijk, 1997: 23). Consequently, media produce a cultural boundary between ‘our’ and ‘their’ culture in a society (Miller, 2008: 3) that once again promotes the Othering process within a particular society.

Journalists construct social meaning that is often influenced by their ideological and cultural perceptions. For example, the news gathering process “involves [the] beliefs, opinion, hopes and aspirations” of the writer, and thus his/her ideological assumptions can be traced in the interpretation of the media-text (Verschueren, 1985: 3). Hence in reporting an issue a journalist produces his/her ideological leaning, which can be identified through the use of journalists’ language (Fang, 1994: 464). The “power, hierarchy and compassion” of a social group over/for others and the marginalization processes of social institutions such as media can be understood through discourse analysis (Joye, 2010: 587). The images media-texts provide to an audience construct the ideological affiliations of a social institution such as newspaper (Fairclough, 1995: 55). Therefore, a discursive approach provides us the explanation about how a social group discursively constructs an image of other through language (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 2; Fairclough, 1995: 55). Therefore, it is necessary to critically examine language (Fowler, 1990; Fang, 1994: 464). For example, it is important to investigate the way an institution uses language to establish their ideology and power.

An institution's choice of language and, the symbols and metaphors it uses, need to be understood within a discursive explanation—i.e. why that institution uses particular adjectives in its everyday use of language. Any text—verbal, visual, aural—is simultaneously constitutive of three social phenomena: “social identities”, “social relations” and a “system of knowledge and belief” (Fairclough, 1995: 55). Fairclough (1995: 56) argues that discourse is closely and “broadly” related to “knowledge and knowledge construction” (p. 56). Knowledge is discursively produced, constructed and promoted on the basis of the producer's ideology (Fairclough, 1992: 23) and thus, it can be identified in media representation through discourse analysis. The ideological leanings of the producers are also identifiable by examining how/why an issue is framed in a particular way (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 2); the way their script/text communicates; their choice of language; and through the “attitude” of a group towards an issue (van Dijk, 1988: 147). Furthermore, ideology is not an isolated phenomenon; it is related to power (Fairclough, 1989: 2) and works with various social institutions in establishing the authority of dominant ideology (Ibid, p. 36). Therefore, the social construction of an institution needs to be considered—that is, “discourse and communication should be studied in their social, cultural and political context” (van Dijk, 1994: 435). However, some scholars, including Ibrahim (2003: 89), note that, besides the ideological leaning of a particular media outlet, some other “extra-media” factors—for example, corporate and political pressure groups—also need to be considered in order to understand the power of media texts. Ibrahim argues that these factors are important when attempting to identify “a complete picture of what determines media content” (2003: 89). Using discourse analysis, this study examines the media frames evident in newspaper coverage and identifies these newspapers' ideological perceptions towards a specific cultural group.

With regards to culture, discourse and media framing, it is important to take note of Fisher's observations (1997; also cited in Downs, 2002: 46):

1. They [i.e. media frames] are part of the discourse which develops in any given culture, and people learn these frames as they learn to competently participate in that culture.
2. They highlight some aspects of an event or an issue to which people apply a frame, while hiding others.
3. They organize experiences, values, and beliefs of all members of a culture in a systematic and coherent way.
4. They are accessible and useful to people in the same culture who ascribe to a wide array of ideologies.

It is possible to identify how media discursively frame a cultural issue and, ideologically speaking, how they uphold social discourses when covering a particular cultural group. Media texts play a vital role in constructing social and cultural discourses that can be identified in various social groups (Hodge, 1979; Dunmire, 1997: 223). Through discourse analysis, this study aims to examine the frames that New Zealand newspapers constructed through their coverage of Islam and Muslims.

Time Frame

This study explores all of the relevant news stories that appeared in the newspapers selected for analysis between October 3, 2005 and September 30, 2006. October 3, 2005 was selected in order to examine the representation of the Bali bombing, which can be considered as an example of destructive incidents taking place outside of the West. This time frame finishes with the July-August 2006 Hezbollah-Israel conflict and the possible terrorist attack in Heathrow Airport in August 2006. Both of these issues were covered until the end of September 2006. This study will examine the relevant news content of newspapers up until September 30, 2006, in an attempt to examine one year of coverage.

Selection of the Newspapers

This study examines only quality newspapers (the *ODT*, the *Press* and the *NZH*) and does not include popular newspapers such as tabloids, as these do not fulfill the “quality-role” of reputable newspapers in society (Hirsch and Gordon, 1975). Furthermore, “it is the quality newspapers that provide informed discussion of public issues, political affairs, business, and the arts.... They attract journalists of high skill and intellectual integrity” (Hirsch and Gordon, 1975: 15). All issues of these three newspapers within the time frame—i.e. October 3, 2005 to September 30, 2005—have been considered. Data has been collected from hard copies of the selected newspapers.

This study argues that print media or newspapers play a powerful role within our society. Despite the huge popularity of electronic media; print media has not lost its position in terms of popularity and “power” within society (Bens and Østbye, 1998: 20; Tunstall, 1996: 427). This study therefore concentrates only on newspaper coverage.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis is important in data analysis and a proper set of units is required in research. Some scholars (e.g. Altheide, 1996: 25) note that individual stories can be the unit of analysis in most cases. The unit can also be a particular page (e.g. editorial), individual articles, or even a paragraph. A unit is the “basis” of content on which a “relevant aspect of content” can be identified (Berelson, 1952: 135). This unit can be large (e.g. a story) or small (e.g. a paragraph or a sentence) but in all cases “a certain standard subdivision” of units must be maintained (Berelson, 1952: 135). These subdivisions are the units of analysis. Thus analysis of an issue might be

determined in terms of the amount of space, number of columns, number of articles, number of paragraphs, number of sentences, or number of key terms used in a story. Furthermore, Wimmer and Dominick (2006:158) emphasize “a single word or symbol, a theme (a single assertion about one subject), or an entire article or story” and hold that in data analysis, it is essential to take the proper care when selecting a unit.

This study employed the individual story as a unit of analysis and also considers all images (e.g. editorial cartoon) as a unit. It examines all news and non-news items and images (e.g. photograph) and identified them individually as a unit. To study the distinctions and contrasts between newspapers coverage of Islam and Muslims on the quantitative level, measurements such as number of articles and placement of news stories are employed. After identifying the unit, a process of categorization and coding was undertaken.

Categorization and Coding Process

Categorization is important for any research project. Categories were identified and marked while reading of units was conducted. Later, units were grouped under a specific variable. Categories form the primary structure of any analysis and this study employed 72 categories under 18 variables (see appendix). The coding procedure identified and recorded the placement of the news stories, the treatment of news (for example, whether it was a lead story), the types of news (e.g. hard news), the news source, the news agency, and the origin of the story.

Stories are coded into nations experiencing the event. Therefore, data is primarily categorized as either a local or an international story. They were then categorized more specifically on the basis of the story’s geographical origin (i.e. the region) and whether they originated from Muslim or non-Muslim nations. For example, when a

story regarding the Iranian nuclear issue originated from Iran, it was placed in the category of ‘the Middle East’ and then further categorized according to its region of origin, the nation of Iran. Then US President George W. Bush’s statement on Iran’s nuclear program is one example. This story was categorized as originating from the region of North America and, more specifically, from the nation of the United States. This study also maintains that the US is a non-Muslim nation while Iran is a Muslim nation. All 57 nations of the Organization of Islamic Co-operation (OIC), including the Palestine Authority¹⁰ and Bosnia-Herzegovina¹¹ are considered to be OIC/Muslim nations. In addition, stories were coded into regions in order to indicate which regions were significantly represented in the depiction of Islam and Muslim affairs. This study argues that we cannot define or confine ‘proximity’ within a geographic boundary. Rather, the proximity factor in many cases was appropriated in relation to belonging— e.g. cultural identity, political leaning and ideological interests. Therefore, we see a newspaper’s attention on a nation despite its geographic distance (Huxford, 2007). For example, a New Zealand newspaper may cover more stories occurring in the US or in UK¹² rather than Samoa¹³. For the same reason— cultural, ideological and political interest— a Middle Eastern nation such as Iran might be covered due to some Western nations’ involvement in the region and the nation Iran. In addition, we may see the sense of belonging in another way— e.g. ‘our’ people are victimized— in covering an event. For example, in covering a particular event (e.g. an accident), readers may see that ‘our’ people have received more attention than ‘them’. However, location (i.e. geographic) should not be ignored (Morton and Warren, 1992). The categorization of a nation and region can focus upon whether geographic

¹⁰ Palestine is not an independent state but a member of OIC.

¹¹ It is an independent nation but not a member of OIC. It is an observer of OIC.

¹² A culturally similar but geographically distant nation to New Zealand.

¹³ A geographically closer but culturally dissimilar nation to New Zealand.

location played a central role in the news selection process or whether ideological/cultural proximity was important. Stories have also been categorized according to who contributed to the coverage (e.g. staff correspondents, foreign newspapers, AFP), the news source (e.g. officials, politicians), events (e.g. terrorism, education) and types of images (e.g. cartoon, photograph). Stories are also coded according to whether they included photographs or not, and, if photographs were included, what type of photograph it was (e.g. conflict scene, state leader). Stories are coded in the following order: date of publication, name of newspaper, headline, page, photograph, source, and type of story. Further information about the categorization process can be found in the Appendix of this thesis. I will now explain why categorization is important for the present study.

Newspapers often depend upon other agencies for information. It is important to examine where newspapers receive their news from; whether they are Western agencies or non-Western agencies. As international news agencies set the agenda (discussed in Chapter 2), then who contributes to set the agenda or whose agenda is represented in these newspapers need to be understood. Availability is a key issue here. For example, a Reuters service may be available to these newspapers while a Middle Eastern service may not be. For example, newspapers do not have unlimited budgets and therefore must choose which news agencies they use. But this argument is invalid if these newspapers use ‘Western newspapers’ as a source of their coverage while ‘non-Western’ newspapers are repeatedly ignored. Once again, as mentioned in Chapter 2, in the age of new media, there are various options available through Internet— one can read today’s newspapers published from elsewhere. Therefore, we must ask, who is allowed to set the agenda – ‘Western’ news agencies/sources or ‘non-Western’ ones? Through examining the news flow one can identify how a

particular agenda is framed to maintain the interests of a particular group. For example, in covering the Iranian nuclear issue the Western news agencies, newspapers and political leaders often dehumanize Iran not only through ideological bias but also through imagination (Rasidi and Rasti, 2012: 4). This question— who sets the agenda for whom— is also important in questing the activity of source that arguably establishes its priority— for example, political interest.

Who is allowed to speak about an issue is an important question in journalistic practice as news sources play a significant role in making an event as news (Gieber, 1960: 77; Norton, 1985: 634; Nossec, 2004). Newspapers/media sources include various actors such as politicians; through examining a newspaper's sources we can determine the ideological bias of a media outlet (Rasidi and Rasti, 2012).

Through examining the coverage of an issue, one can understand the interest of a particular newspaper— what issues interest a media outlet (Poole, 2002). For example, 'terrorism' is an issue that may interest a newspaper. But when this issue is linked to a particular cultural group such as Muslims, our interests may reinforce towards how this group is framed with terrorism and why. Many scholars— e.g. Beck and Miner (2013); Jackson (2005); Oliverio (1998) — argue that the defining criteria of 'terrorist' or 'terrorist group' is a "subject [of] manipulations of language and symbols by the powerful" (Beck and Minor, 2013: 838). This argument once again helps us to understand how language constructs the social image and how the Othering process begins through language. It also can be seen the ways in which the elite agenda is paralleled in the construction of media. For example, through their lexical choices and images, the media constructs one group as 'terrorists' and the other as a defender of democracy and peace (van Dijk, 1995b: 259; Jaworska and Krishnamurthy, 2012: 405) due to their cultural and other (e.g. political) interest

based relations. This discussion is closely related to other categories— references to Islam and Muslims— that are considered for this study. In this category, this study maintains variables such as Muslim individual, Muslim group, and Muslim in a certain nation (see Appendix). Through categorization one can understand whether Muslims as a cultural or religious group receives attention or a person who has an Islamic religious background receives media attention. Both the group and individual may appear with lexical choice. For example, a person may be identified as ‘tyrannical’ and the group as ‘terrorist’ in relation to the other culture and their interests. This depiction may lead to the dehumanization, generalization and manipulation of images. In some cases, we may see an apparently neutral “lexicalisation” (van Dijk, 1995) of a person. For example, a Muslim nation’s President can be called “this man”— e.g. ‘the Iranian regime under this man’; but in covering a ‘Western friendly nation’s President they might consistently use ‘President’—the Pakistani President and his government, for example. Consequently, the ideological leaning can be understood through lexical choice in terming a group or an individual.

This study also identified stories according to the events covered—e.g. terrorism, Islamic politics, civil politics, crime, religious and cultural events etc (see Appendix). These categorizations help us to understand the types of occasions that interest these newspapers. In other words, in what occasions Islam and Muslims become important to these newspapers and what issue appears to be the dominant one. Framing can be understood through the lexical choice, metaphor, visual and graphic images (van Gorp, 2005: 486). Tankard (2001) argues that we must consider news headline, caption, graphic images, news placement, news lead etc. to examine frame analysis. This study considers the categorization of visual images— photographs; and

placement of the news— front page, international page. Importance can be understood through the placement of a story— for example, a news item appearing on the local news page or on the front page. When a news item appears on the front page under a banner headline the reader of the newspaper can easily understand what the main news of the day is. If an image is include on the front page, this adds to its significance. The placement of the news— for example, a front-page item; the visual image— for example, a photograph; the treatment of the story— for example, a lead item—are important in the construction of the readers' memories (van Dijk, 2006: 365). This study considers these elements in its categorization and frame analysis. All items were divided into two sections—crisis events and non-crisis events. These divisions are employed primarily to understand whether these newspapers coverage mainly focus upon crisis event or non-crisis events. Terrorism is considered a crisis event while education is not. This helps us to build a picture of the media framing in relation to a community's issues.

Through frame analysis it is possible to identify how stories are framed in a particular newspaper and why. An examination of news frames is interested in identifying the meaning associated with a story or a topic. In addition, identifying which metaphors or adjectives are used to describe an event and the people involved in that event can be useful in ascertaining the ideological position of a specific media outlet. This analysis is employed in order to comprehend the qualitative dimension of a news story and overall coverage of the newspaper. As mentioned in Chapter 2, various components of a particular item appearing in a newspaper (e.g. the headline) can be useful when analyzing the text and media frame. All these components will be considered in the discussion of the media frame.

This study will discuss six prominent topics. All six topics present various social, cultural and political aspects. For example, terrorism and civil conflict were framed prominently in the context of the Middle East. The framing relates to various issues such as the Western policy towards the Middle East, the political future of the Middle East, and sectarian conflict. This study qualitatively discusses the Middle East crisis. The Iranian nuclear issue is one of the major topics in the field of international politics. This study examines the Iranian nuclear issue in order to show how an individual nation's issue relates to Islam and the Muslim community as a whole. The Palestinian election of 2006 has been selected as a case study, to illustrate how newspapers framed Islamic politics and how they perceived the policy and ideology of 'the West' in relation to a Muslim nation. Both local and international reactions towards the Muhammad cartoon controversy were covered prominently and both Muslim and non-Muslim citizens participated in the debate. Thus, the controversial cartoon issue will also be discussed. The topic of 'suspected Islamic/Muslim terrorists' is a common one in some media outlets, as mentioned elsewhere, and these phrases were prominent in the context of a 'possible terrorist attack' on Heathrow Airport in London in 2006. This issue focuses on the way a critical issue relates to the Muslim community as a whole, and how an event identifies 'Muslim terrorists' before identifying the criminals. Therefore, this event will also be discussed. The 2005 Bali bombing is selected on the basis that this is an incident that occurred within a Muslim nation (Indonesia), a geographically neighbouring nation of New Zealand, and because this incident caused the deaths of 27 people, including three Australian citizens. In addition, Australia and New Zealand share a similar cultural identity and they are neighbouring nations—that is, Australia and New Zealand are culturally and geographically proximate. Therefore, coverage of this event is selected in order to

identify how cultural proximity overlaps with the factor of geographic proximity and thus relates to Orientalist perceptions.

Summary

Media texts produce social discourse and they also discursively manipulate social meanings. In addition, we construct our perceived world through our language. It is also argued that media meaning can be better understood through qualitative analysis (rather than through quantitative analysis). This chapter presents its rationale for using discourse analysis. However, it has also presented the discussion on quantitative analysis and has addressed the limitations of the quantitative approach. It also establishes the time frame, coding process, and unit analyzing devices and presents the topics that will be discussed in Chapter 5.

The next chapter (Chapter 4) will present the quantitative data and address the relations between newspaper coverage and the frequency of data in a specific newspaper.

Chapter 4:

Covering Islam and Muslims in New Zealand Newspapers: Statistical Findings

This chapter discusses the statistical findings of this study relating to the representation of Islam and Muslims in three New Zealand newspapers—*The Otago Daily Times (ODT)*, the *Press (Press)* and the *New Zealand Herald (NZH)*—within the time frame of October 3, 2005 to September 30, 2006. The discussion will illustrate that there is extensive coverage on terrorism in New Zealand. In crisis events such as conflict and terrorism, whether these events are perceived or real, media “reproduce traditions of cultural representation” (Griffin, 2010: 7); that is, they produce the notion of ‘our’ culture being separate from ‘their’ culture, which legitimates ‘our’ authority over ‘them’ and constructs the perception of ideological superiority (Griffin, 2010). Becker (1967: 241) argues that in any culture the powerful group defines or takes for granted their right to define the problems of society—indeed, this group assumes that they have the “moral quality” to define such social problems. This powerful group, which includes the media, judges society and its members, and can even cast out certain groups and determine the future of that society (Becker, 1967). In short, they can redefine reality. This definition of reality is complicated as “judgments of who has a right to define the nature of reality . . . become matters of argument” (Becker 1967: 244). However, the social power of media lies mainly in its power to define reality and more particularly, in defining social problems. Given this aspect of the media, the focus of this study is the way New Zealand newspapers define social problems with regard to Islam and Muslims. This discussion will identify the ways in which stories concerning Islam and Muslims are considered to be newsworthy—in other words, it asks what issues cause this

community or religious group and the religion itself to be considered newsworthy? Some other aspects associated with this question will also be discussed, such as: who is given importance in news and non-news in a newspaper's coverage of Islam; how actors were identified in these newspapers' coverage; who is identified as competent to talk about the issue; and, as implicated by the previous aspect, who is allowed to speak about Islam and Muslims. Using quantitative analysis, this chapter will identify the six dominant themes that will be the focus of qualitative attention for the remainder of this thesis.

The subject of Islam and Muslims accounted for a total of 4050 items across three newspapers—a number which combines news stories, opinion pieces and images. This figure only includes stories in which Islam, Muslims and Muslim nations were clearly mentioned. It can be argued that the number of stories appearing in a particular newspaper on a particular community indicates the (media) house policy and the interests of that newspaper. Therefore, a specific person, institution, community or group and country may be seen as particularly important to a specific newspaper, while others are ignored or removed from public attention. This coverage can clearly indicate who is important and why. This argument is reinforced when an issue appears that presents the opinion of the editor (as expressed in an editorial) while also allowing other opinion writers to suggest their position on that particular issue. Conversely, the position of an individual newspaper or media in general is also revealed when an issue regarding a certain group or community disappears from that newspaper or media outlet's coverage. In other words, what is absent is just as important as what is presented. Nevertheless, the high number of stories, which mention Islam and Muslims found in this study, implies that these newspapers are interested in Islam and Muslims' affairs. All three of the selected New Zealand

newspapers are broadsheet and quality newspapers. Therefore, one can expect that this study will present a comprehensive picture of current interests of New Zealand newspapers in Islam and Muslims.

The Muslim community has received much attention in world media since 9/11 and this issue has had a direct and indirect influence on the timeframe selected for this study. In other words, the 9/11 terrorist attacks were a phenomenon that influenced the coverage of Islam and Muslims in New Zealand newspapers within this time frame. For example, in the context of the Bali bombing in October 2005 and the suspected terrorist attack in Heathrow Airport in 2006, some media commentators and politicians alike suggested the interlinking of al Qaeda, Osama bin Laden's terrorist training and the possible attack in England and the people involved in these issues. These politicians and commentators found that there was a link between the July 7, 2005 London bombing and the Bali bombing, since in both cases the perpetrators were Muslims. Furthermore, other prominent issues that occurred within the timeframe of study included the democratic process in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Palestine, and political negotiations in Bangladesh (between the two main political parties, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party [BNP] and the Bangladesh Awami League [BAL]) and in Pakistan (between the military dictator Pervez Musharraf and other political leaders). The construction of Islam and Muslims in these newspapers, during this timeframe, will therefore provide a comprehensive picture of a particular historical moment with respect to Muslim nations. The links between these issues also suggest that media coverage of Islam and Muslims revolves around terrorism and civil conflict, corruption, social and political turmoil, and disasters (especially man-made). This study will also suggest that in order to accommodate terrorism or civil

conflict some important issues—for example, the political negotiation in Pakistan and Bangladesh— were absent from media coverage.

Discussion

Number of Stories

The statistical findings of this study suggest that the total coverage of the *ODT*, the *Press* and the *NZH* is not similar, although the coverage of the *ODT* and the *Press* are more similar to each other than that of the *NZH*. The *ODT* covers relatively less news stories, while the *NZH* covers the highest number of stories. It seems that the highest circulated newspaper publishes the highest number of items and the lowest circulated newspaper presents the lowest number of items to their readers. This statement can be seen in statistical data, compiled in Table 1, and graphically, in Figure 1, as presented below:

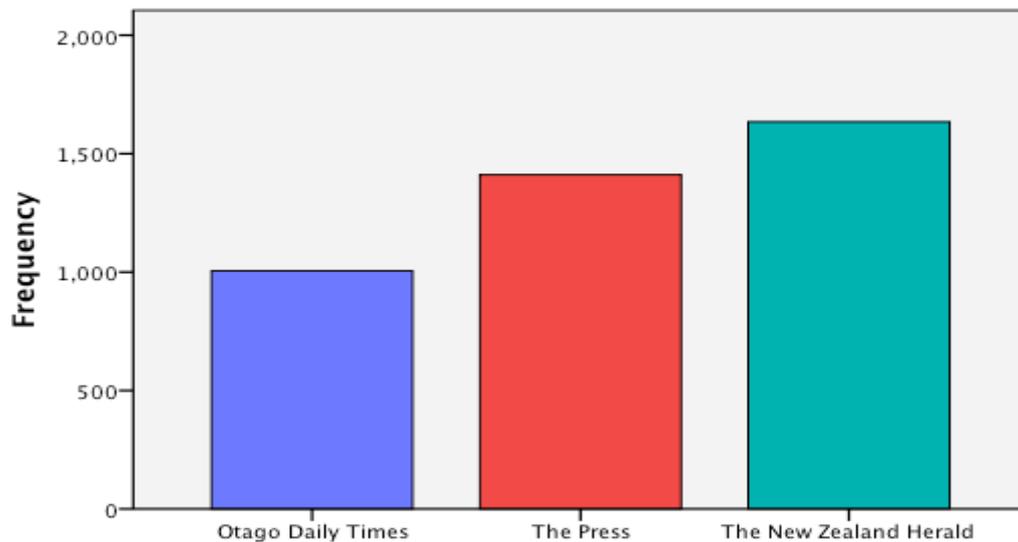
Table 1: Items Appearing in New Zealand Newspapers

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
ODT	1005	24.8	24.8	24.8
Press	1411	34.8	34.8	59.7
NZH	1634	40.3	40.3	100.0
Total	4050	100.0	100.0	

The statistical findings presented above in Table 1 nonetheless suggest that the coverage is extensive. It shows that 1005 stories appearing in the *ODT* (24.8%) revolve around the issue of Islam or Muslims, compared to 1411 stories in the *Press* (34.8%) and 1634 stories in the *NZH* (40.3%). This huge coverage indicates that news

and non-news relating to Islam and Muslims receive extensive interest and reportage in these newspapers. Figure 1 also shows these findings at a glance:

Figure 1: Items appearing in New Zealand newspapers



The coverage of Islam and Muslims is not just dependent on the issue itself or upon current events, but also on the differing news value of the individual newspaper—e.g. how a media outlet perceives an issue. The number of stories, the issues, the themes, and the storytelling patterns therefore vary from paper to paper. It must be mentioned that New Zealand was not a colonial power in the Middle East nor in any Muslim nation. It rarely comments on some Middle East nations' issues that are also not frequently covered in the media of some other Western nations' such as the US, UK and France. Furthermore, it did not support the US invasion of Iraq. New Zealand also decided not to take part in the US-proposed war against terror. In addition, the New Zealand Muslim community is not large (mentioned in Chapter 1). Surprisingly then, the coverage of Islam and Muslims in New Zealand newspapers is significant. This may be because of the international channels that extensively cover some specific issues and on which New Zealand's newspapers are dependent (this is discussed

later). Some Western elite nations’ involvement in issues that were covered extensively through these channels—e.g. some Western nations’ presence in Iraq—made some events important to these newspapers. For example, the Iraq crisis can be identified as one of the most covered crises in media across the world. It was a complex issue and covered issues such as the presence of foreign troops, the future of the Middle East, the future of the political history of Iraq, sectarian relationships inside Iraq society, among other factors. In addition, the 9/11 attacks, the war on terror policy, the Iraq invasion, and the conflict between Hezbollah and Israel made events from Muslim nations and Muslim communities newsworthy.

All of these international issues occupied the newspapers’ coverage. The volume of international coverage is high. However, despite the huge coverage of Islam and Muslim issues in New Zealand newspapers, the local contribution to this coverage is not significant. A cross-table (Table 2) provides more detail with regard to the local and international contributions made by these newspapers. It also allows for a better understanding of the later discussion.

Table 2: Origin of Story in New Zealand Newspapers

Contribution	New Zealand newspapers			Total
	<i>ODT</i>	<i>Press</i>	<i>NZH</i>	
Local	122	229	256	607
International	883	1182	1378	3443
Total	1005	1411	1634	4050

Table 2 shows the extent of coverage of Islam- and Muslim-associated events appearing in these newspapers. The total contribution of local channels is 607 items (14.99%). The *ODT* provides the lowest number of stories both in terms of national (122) and international (883) contributions. The *Press* presents 229 locally sourced

items, while *NZH* presents 256 locally sourced items. An item that came through a local channel—for example, via a staff correspondent, cartoonist, and letter writer—is identified as a local contribution. News reports originating within New Zealand are also considered local news reports—for example, a story about the academic achievement of a student at a New Zealand university. Local contributions include letters to the editor, op-eds, editorials and editorial cartoons as well as news reports. As previously mentioned, issues relating to Islam and Muslims do not receive prominent coverage in local contributions. This lack of prominence is because of their relative news value and their non-threatening position in this country—in other words, the lack of a perception of a terrorist threat in the New Zealand Muslim community—this makes this community seem unexceptional in local news coverage. Local contributions, however, are also combined with international events. For example, an editorial or an editorial cartoon is a local contribution but may provide an opinion about international events—e.g. expressing an opinion about the Iraq crisis or challenging the US-led war on terror policy. It needs to be said that only 291 items (7.2%) of the local contributions focus upon local events, and this number combines the 54 items in the *ODT* with the 160 items in the *Press* and 77 items in the *NZH*. International events (92.8%) are the major foci in the overall coverage of these newspapers, compared with only 7.2% of stories appearing in these newspapers with regard to local events linked to Islam and Muslims. This indicates that local coverage of Islam and Muslim issues is relatively insignificant and that Islam and Muslim issues carry significant value in global events.

The data presented proves that the Muslim community as a whole is nevertheless considered important in news coverage. This also demonstrates that these newspapers continue to publish stories on Islam and Muslim issues because of some global events

and because of the international supply of information, which is centered on some geographical ‘hot spot’ and issues (this is discussed later). In addition, there were no New Zealand newspaper correspondents stationed overseas for the purpose of covering international issues. Items coming through international channels were very prominent in these newspapers—for example, in most cases stories come through Western news agencies, a fact which I consider later in further detail.

Western Nations’ Involvement

As previously mentioned, local items about Muslims and Islam made up only 14.99% of New Zealand newspapers’ total coverage. The location of these events (discussed later) suggests that all these newspapers are, most of the time, spot news oriented. However, the spots were chosen on the basis of Western nations’ involvement in certain issues. Therefore, some specific geographical locations, for example, the Middle East, receive more attention than others. Some Muslim nations do not receive any coverage at all. It seems that what some Western elite nations do and say with regard to Muslim nations or Muslim communities is important to these newspapers. Media coverage indicates the specific interest of any news media (Park and Kosicki, 1995; McComb, 2004; Nossek, 2004). Therefore, not all issues or locations are covered in a specific newspaper and some are given preference. The question of why newspapers privilege certain events over others is discussed in Chapter two, however it is fair to say that it sells events¹⁴ as well upholds ‘our’ interests and ideologies. Some issues are discarded, or receive insignificant coverage in a particular medium. In other words, media select their preference for an issue and location of an event and

¹⁴ That is, as specifically argued in Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, and Shapiro (2011), media sell fear, hence their book title *Selling Fear*. This study found that terrorism and conflict are the most covered issues (discussed later) appearing in these newspapers.

through adopting this preference media focus upon and sell these issues. This preference, however, poses certain questions: ‘where’, ‘what’ and ‘who’/‘whom’.

The questions proposed in the above statement —that media show preferences for particular issues and that some issues are neglected/or ignored, and that media think according to their interest in ‘who’ will be covered, on ‘what’ issue and ‘how’—will be addressed further below. However, for the moment, the answers to the questions ‘where’ and ‘who’ can be seen in the table, presented below:

Table 3: 10 Most Covered OIC Nations

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Iraq	688	30.9	30.9	30.9
Lebanon	317	14.3	14.3	45.2
Iran	246	11.1	11.1	56.3
Indonesia	222	10.0	10.0	66.3
Palestine	316	14.2	14.2	80.5
Afghanistan	159	7.2	7.2	87.6
Pakistan	144	6.5	6.5	94.1
Turkey	57	2.6	2.6	96.7
Egypt	37	1.7	1.7	98.3
Sudan	37	1.7	1.7	100.0
Total	2223	100.0	100.0	

The table above clearly shows which countries received the most attention from the newspapers studied. As a statistical explanation it does not provide the direct answer to the questions ‘why’ and ‘how’, but rather answers the question of ‘who’ is covered by these newspapers. Table three indicates that the countries that received prominent coverage are those suffering from crises with regard to the historical presence of ‘the West’ and/or are countries with whom ‘the West’ is directly involved. The table also

shows that only five nations¹⁵—Iraq, Lebanon, Iran, Indonesia and Palestine—received 80.5%¹⁶ of the total coverage of the top 10 Muslim nations. Of these five nations only Indonesia is located outside of the Middle East. However, this nation’s continued presence in the top five covered Muslim nations may be because it is a neighbouring nation of New Zealand. Furthermore, as suggested above, the October 2005 Bali bombing killed three Australians and injured numerous other Australians. Australia is also a Western and neighbouring nation of New Zealand. All of these factors once again suggest that a specific newspaper’s choice of location (that is, ‘who’/‘where’) and events (that is, ‘what’) can be explained through the news flow of information and news selection process—that is, that “news media select which people, issues and events are especially deserving of public attention” (Althaus and Tewksbury, 2002: 180). Furthermore, before 9/11 international media attention focused on conflicts in Algeria, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bangladesh etc. (Poole, 2002: 57). This finding therefore suggests that media attention has changed slightly (at least in the case of these newspapers) in the current world context. For example, the long-running civil conflicts in Algeria are now largely ignored and were covered in only five news stories in three New Zealand newspapers. This also gives the impression that, although some Muslim nations—for example, Bangladesh—are suffering from continuous crises, these crises were not considered salient and received very little attention from these newspapers. Figure two may be useful in understanding this statement:

¹⁵ This study includes Palestine as a Muslim nation.

¹⁶ See cumulative percent in Table 3.

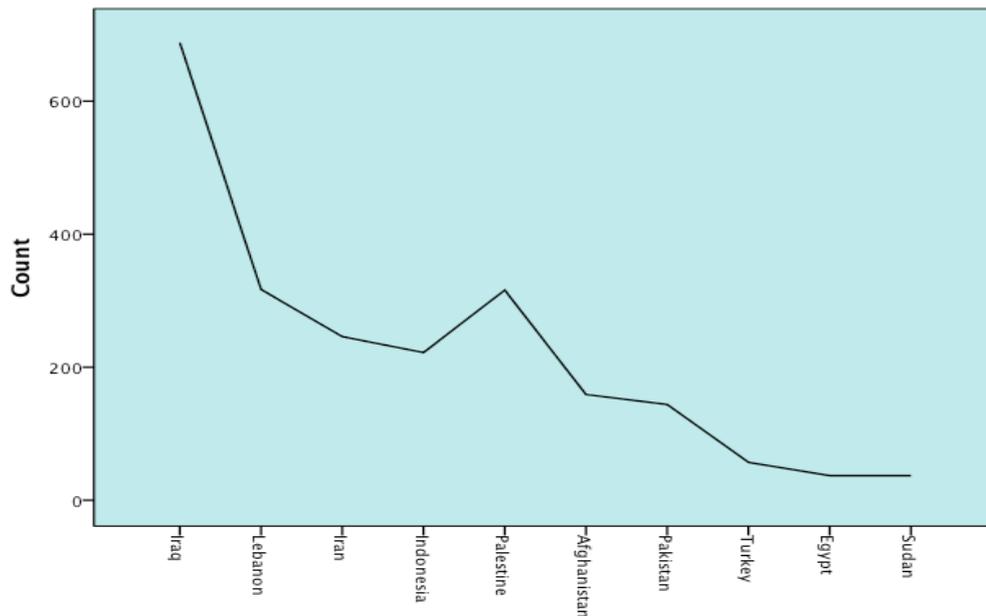


Figure 2: Top covered OIC nations in New Zealand newspapers

Figure 2 and Table 3 suggest that a mere 10 OIC nations have received more than half of the total coverage (2223 out of 4050 stories). This study suggests that only 39 Muslim nations have received attention¹⁷, although there are 58 Muslim nations across the world. Furthermore, their main foci are Iraq, Iran, Palestine, Lebanon and Indonesia, while some nations received very little coverage. The long-running conflict in Darfur (Sudan), Somalia and Algeria, the human rights abuses that have dehumanized general citizens and political, the corporate and bureaucratic corruption in Bangladesh, political suppression in Bangladesh, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, the civil conflict in Uganda, Sierra Leone and other African nations where political turmoil, natural disasters, man-made disasters, terrorism and civil conflict have been major issues for decades, are almost all ignored.

¹⁷ These 39 countries appeared at least once in these newspapers' coverage.

Regional Attention

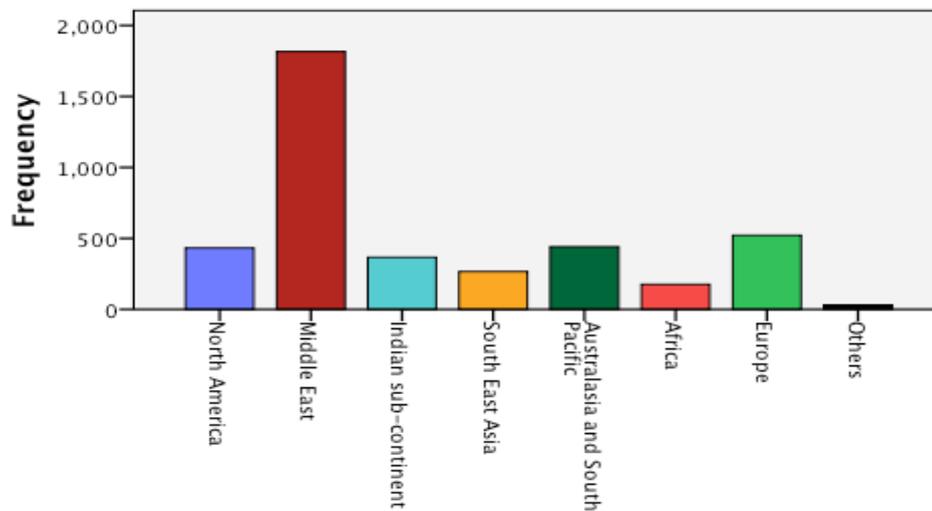
The findings suggest that prominent attention is given to some regions, for example, the Middle East¹⁸. As mentioned previously, these newspapers have shown preference for issues that have some Western nations' involvement. Some locations or regions are absent from their coverage. This seems to be due to the newspapers' need to accommodate major coverage of some specific regions, while which leads to a neglect of coverage about other regions. The statistical evidence in Table 4 and its graphic representation in Figure 3 help to illustrate the regional coverage:

Table 4: Regions Appearing in New Zealand Newspapers

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
North America	432	10.7	10.7	10.7
Middle East	1816	44.8	44.8	55.5
Indian sub-continent	367	9.1	9.1	64.6
South East Asia	265	6.5	6.5	71.1
Australasia and South Pacific	441	10.9	10.9	82.0
Africa	177	4.4	4.4	86.4
Europe	522	12.9	12.9	99.3
Others	30	.7	.7	100.0
Total	4050	100.0	100.0	

¹⁸ In this study, African nations are not considered part of the Middle East. For example, Egypt is considered to be an African nation.

Figure 3: Regions covered in the New Zealand newspapers



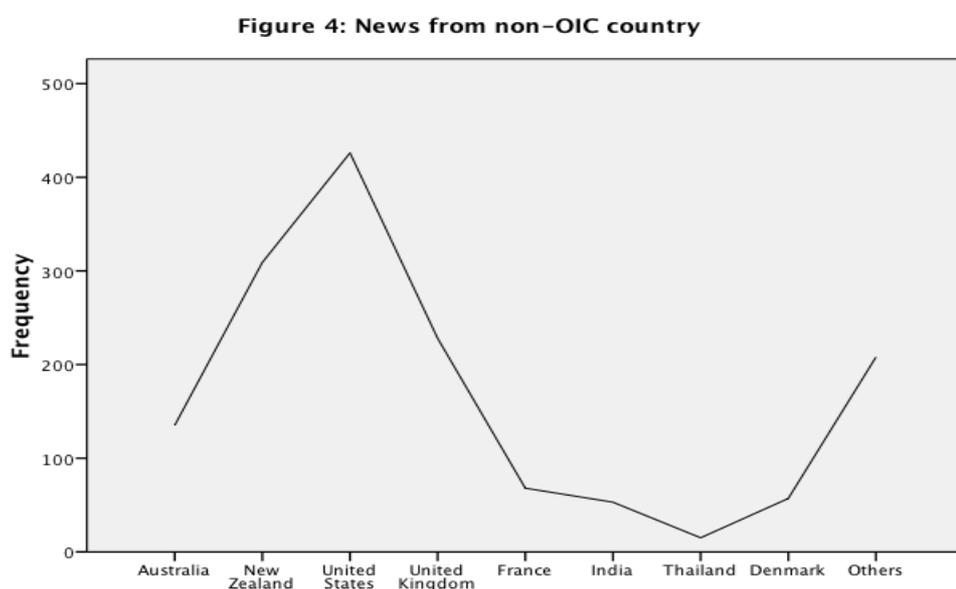
Both the figure and table show that the most prominent focus of these newspapers is the Middle East, which comprises almost 45% of all coverage. Europe scores second with 12.9%, followed by Australasia and South Pacific (10.9%), with North America accounting for only 10.7% of the total coverage. These figures suggest that while the Middle East received the highest coverage, no other region came close to the Middle East—they maintain a distant second or third highest in relation to coverage. The high world media interest in the Middle East is probably because of special issues in the region, like the Iraq war, as well as historical events in this region, for example the Palestine-Israel issue. The third main focus is the Australasia and South Pacific region. There are some issues relating to the Muslim community living both inside and outside of Australasia, which have brought this community under extensive focus, like the 2005 terrorist attack in Bali that killed Australian citizens. Other issues originating from Australia, like the suspected terrorist attacks in Sydney and racial conflict between Middle Eastern-Australian and white Australian citizens, also received attention from these newspapers. In this case, cultural and geographic proximity seems to have been influential in covering this region. This finding also

suggests that the degree of coverage depends on links and interest between a group, community, nation and a particular newspaper. The coverage of Australasia and the South Pacific region is a reminder of how the small Muslim community living in this region becomes important in these newspapers. In the context of international events, some other non-Muslim regions are relatively important. For example, Europe is the second most covered region and North America received 10.7% of total coverage. These figures indicate that, with regard to Islam and Muslims issues, non-Muslim nations are also significant to these newspapers.

Nevertheless, the statistical findings suggest that Africa receives relatively little attention (with a total of 177 stories, or 4.4%). Furthermore, the coverage of the Indian sub-continent (9.1%) is more significant than that of Africa. The Indian sub-continent is considered important because of ‘the Western’ presence in Afghanistan, the Taliban/al Qaeda link in the sub-continent and India-Pakistan relations in which ‘Western’ involvement is also identifiable, given the US’ support of Pakistan in combating terrorism. President Bush’s visit to India and Pakistan during this timeframe also makes this region important. In addition, Europe and North America constitute a significant proportion of coverage because the leaders in these regions (e.g. British Prime Minister Tony Blair) frequently commented on Muslims and Muslim nations’ issues (e.g. the Afghanistan crisis). The involvement of ‘the West’ in Muslims affairs means that Muslims affairs become important to non-Muslim leaders, and non-Muslim leaders become important in covering Islam. Furthermore, there were some events in non-Muslim nations involving the Muslim community, like the suspected terrorist attack at Heathrow Airport in England, that received extended coverage—that is, they were covered on front, international and opinion pages.

Muslim and non-Muslim Nations are both Important

Figure 2 illustrates that only a few Muslim nations received prominent attention from these newspapers. This study shows that ‘Western’ involvement in an issue is an important factor in the media’s assessment of newsworthiness. The findings also showed country-based preferences and culturally proximate groups are privileged. Therefore it is necessary to examine which non-Muslim countries receive prominent attention from these newspapers. This study indicates that in terms of covering Muslim issues, some Western nations such as the US, UK and Australia receive more attention than others, indicating that cultural proximity is active in the coverage of an event. Altogether, non-Muslim nations receive 37% of total coverage. In this context, a graphic presentation (Figure 4) offers a quick overview of the coverage of non-Muslim nations in the context of Islam and Muslims’ issues.



The above figures suggest that non-Muslim nations receive 37% of the total coverage, while Muslim nations receive 63%. This diagram also illustrates that Muslim community living inside non-Islamic nations remains important to these newspapers.

Furthermore, the data indicates that these newspapers preferred to cover stories originating from the United States, which comprised the highest percentage of coverage (10.5%), in terms of covering non-Muslim nations, followed by New Zealand (7.2%), the United Kingdom (5.6%) and Australia (3.3%). This shows that it is not geographic proximity but cultural proximity that influences coverage in New Zealand newspapers. The pattern of coverage implies that ‘the Western’ involvement in an issue is important in covering the issue. For example, as mentioned in Chapter 2 ‘the Western’ media follow a uniform journalistic view in covering an issue outside ‘the West’ and journalists maintain ‘Western’ political interests and cultural superiority. It is evident in this study that ‘Western’ agencies contributed almost all the items covering international events, which appeared in these newspapers (see Table 6 presented later in this chapter). Nonetheless, it is significant that no stories originated from China with regard to the Muslim community in these newspapers, where more than 20 million Muslims live (Wai-Yip, 2009), they remain the subjects of suppression and discrimination (Smith, 2002: 158; DuBois, 2010: 350-351).

Terrorism is the Main Issue

Muslim-related terrorism received quick and extensive media coverage. This coverage has political uses, as politicians and government officials employ an issue like ‘Muslim terrorism’ to advance their own interests (Nacos, Bloch-Elkon and Shapiro, 2007: 106). Media frame the ‘Muslim terrorism’ issue in a way that furthers a politician’s interest but marginalizes Muslim communities. For example, media provided a ‘good versus bad’ moral judgmental frame that furthered public support for invading a Muslim nation in the war on terrorism (Lewis and Reese, 2009: 86). It will be evident in the following discussion that coverage of terrorism is also

prominent in New Zealand newspapers. The majority of these newspapers' coverage concerns crisis events, and the salient issues focused upon in these newspapers are terrorism and civil conflict. In order to understand the nature of the content of New Zealand newspapers, this study has selected some categories¹⁹. This selection is important for understanding what else is referred to in the treatment of a particular topic and how extensive the topic is. The topical and presentational treatments of these subjects indicate the newspapers' concerns and agenda. These agendas and concerns, nonetheless, relate to newspaper professionals and may impact the readers and (majority and minority) groups living in a society (Cohen 1963: 13; McComb and Shaw, 1972; McComb, 2004). Due to media market competition, professional limitations and the special attention paid to specific issues, some other issues are marginalized, downplayed, or even excluded (Severin and Tankard, 2001: 219; Green 1994: 64; Rachlin, 1988). This is the way media set their agendas— i.e. by highlighting an issue, while downplaying or even ignoring others. The extensive coverage of an issue combined with news and non-news items promotes the impression that an issue in a particular social context is important to a particular media outlet. Their coverage pattern can also suggest the angle of an issue. Additionally, the coverage can tell its readers *what* the issue is and *who* it is linked with. Thus, the repeated focus on an issue in media indicates what they want their readers to focus their attention upon.

This study also examines whether a crisis event appearing in a story is emphasized as a primary event, a secondary event, or if the issue was prominent throughout the whole story. This study codifies all (crisis and non-crisis) events appearing in the first three paragraphs as a 'primary event', while the rest of the story is classified as a

¹⁹ Mentioned in Chapter 3 that this study maintains 72 categories to understand the nature and pattern of coverage of these newspapers.

‘secondary event’. This finding identifies what subject areas become salient in these newspapers. For example, accidents and civil politics may not be of interest while terrorism and civil conflict is.

Islam and Muslims were covered in relation to a restricted range of issues within which some topics were salient. The statistical findings show that terrorism and civil conflict were the most prominent topics in the representation of Islam and Muslims; no other issue receives such a high level of coverage. This issue is the most prominent topic for both primary and secondary coverage. Statistically, the issue of terrorism and civil conflict produced 2923 (72.2%) stories in primary coverage and 3979 (76.0%) stories in secondary coverage, a finding that also indicates that this issue was the main topic for a whole story in most cases. The issue of terrorism has possibly received such prominent attention because of the consequences of 9/11, the war on terror, suspected Muslim terrorism and a “pre-emptive attack against Iran”, hinted at by the media, in the context of its controversial nuclear power plant (Kamalipour, 2007: 10) and Iran’s link to terrorism. This finding establishes another argument that, since 9/11, Muslims are perceived as a “suspect community” which means that Muslims are Othered. This perception is constructed “via official and popular discourse” (Mathur, 2006: 31), including media representation. For example, ‘Muslim terrorism’ has been a repeated phrase since 9/11 in media representations and in the statements of politicians and government officials (Mathur, 2006: 33). It will also be evident in the following analysis that ‘terrorism’ is also prominent in New Zealand newspapers’ coverage. The issue of terrorism is followed in frequency by domestic crime (with 313 primary stories and 277 secondary stories). The categorization of topics according to primary and secondary coverage also indicates how the topic of terrorism and civil conflict is important to these newspapers and how other issues are

marginalized, downplayed and ignored in order to accommodate and report on this issue significantly.

However, it cannot be said that when a crisis event occurs somewhere in the world, a newspaper or press would not cover it simply because of its location or topic. Rather, this study suggests that there are some important and critical issues such as the torture of opposition members in Tajikistan—which do not receive any attention. But these newspapers instead emphasize the terrorism angle when reporting on a nation. For example, a report on terrorism was considered important in the case of Pakistan, but the political conflict and negotiation between President Pervez Musharraf and other political leaders were ignored. Pakistan's terrorist issues generally appear in association with Muslim militancy and the conflicting relationship between India and Pakistan. In the same manner, stories relating to the Shia-Sunni and Kurds in Iraq appear in the context of their involvement in terrorism. The issue of terrorism was also linked with Islamic religious politics. For example, when an 'Islamist' group attempted to participate in a democratic process like an election, the terrorism issue was frequently focused upon. This may be because of the group's political identity and history, which shows that such groups (e.g. Hamas) maintain militant wings; thus these newspapers framed their activities within the issue of 'terrorism' in order to attract the readers' attention. This use of the terrorism angle consequently means that Muslim nations are seen to lack liberal and democratic development. Yet again, these discussions establish the argument that media choose the issues, emphasize them and make certain issues appear more pertinent to their audience. In this way media indirectly affect the audiences' perception (McLeod, Becker and Byrnes: 1974: 133). For example, the public perceive "irrational fears of Islam and Muslims" in American society through the Muslim terrorism frame presented in news media (Woods, 2011:

200). However, it must be argued that the prominent coverage of terrorism in New Zealand newspapers is a legacy of their dependence on international news flow (discussed in Chapter two). New Zealand newspapers receive international items through international channels, in most cases receiving them from Australia. Through using these stories, New Zealand implicitly accepts what Australian or other foreign channels identify as important across the world. The coverage pattern—that is, the storytelling form and structures, choice of language and overall representation—in many cases is a view that comes from abroad. These newspapers produce an apparently important and newsworthy issue whose importance or newsworthiness has not been selected by these local newspapers per se.

Identifying Islamic Groups

This section addresses the question of ‘who’ receives New Zealand newspapers’ attention in coverage of an event. The reason for examining the type of ‘references to Islam or Muslims’ is to assess how different stories appearing in these newspapers represent Muslim people—i.e. as individuals, a group or the whole religious community. As has been mentioned above, ‘terrorism’ and some specific regions are the main focus of these newspapers. However, *who* is referred to in a report is also important. In relation to this aspect of reporting, the findings suggest that Muslim groups receive the highest attention (37.2% primary and 46.4% secondary), followed by Muslims in certain nations (36.1% primary and 33.7% secondary).

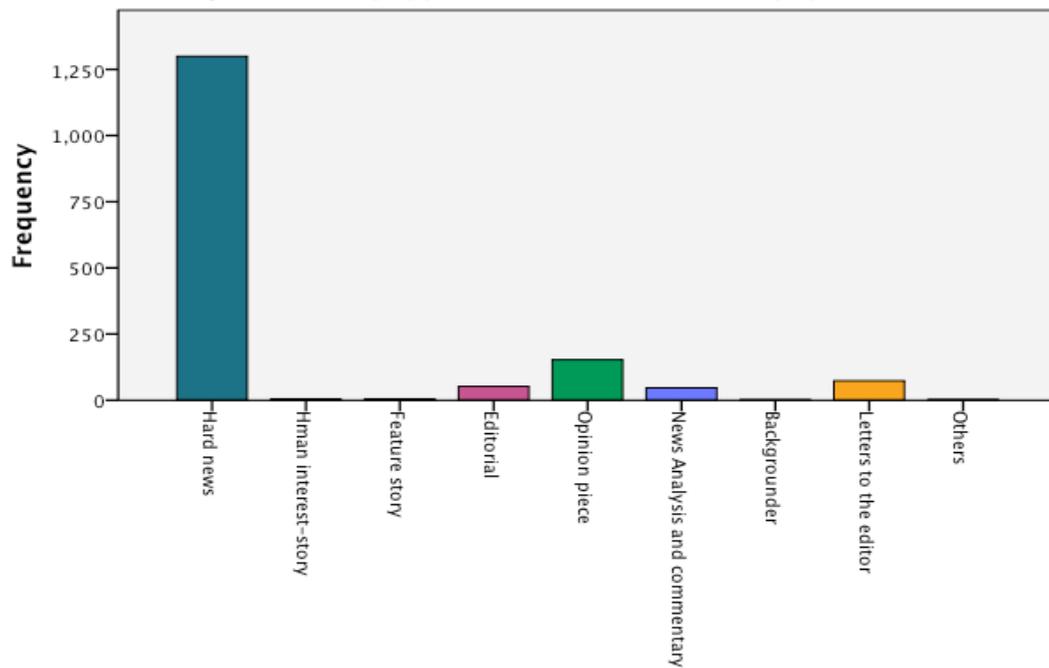
As noted above, terrorism and civil conflict is the most prominent feature in these newspapers. These newspapers identified that (Islamist) groups are active globally. However, items relating to Islamic groups were not covered only in the context of conflict or terrorism but also in the context of Islamic religious politics—for example,

the 2006 Palestine election in which Hamas participated. The data also reinforce the perception that Muslims living in certain nations are significant in these newspapers. For example, in the case of the suspected terrorist attack on Heathrow Airport in England, Muslims living in England became the focus of much attention. In contrast, Muslim individuals, such as Saddam Hussein, were largely neglected in terms of media coverage (11.6% primary and 6.2% secondary). Islam as a religion is also a relatively less identified issue (7.7% primary and 7.7% secondary). This indicates that Muslim groups' involvement in an event was more prominent than Muslim individuals and Islam as a religion.

Hard News and Soft News

In relation to the above discussion, it is important to discuss the nature and types of stories appearing in these newspapers—that is, what type of news these newspapers covered. Tuchman (1972) argues that news is divided into two categories—hard news and soft news—in which hard news demands immediate publication and is identified as very important news (Bonner and McKay, 2007: 642). In other words, hard news has high 'newsworthiness'. Soft news, in contrast, does not demand quick publication and does not contain the value of immediacy (Hujanen, 2008). Thus, it is necessary to identify what types of stories these newspapers covered. The following figure (Figure 5) illustrates the different types of stories appearing in New Zealand newspapers.

Figure 5: Story type in New Zealand newspapers



As crisis events are the most prominent feature in the coverage, it can therefore be assumed that hard news will be the most significant type of news. Hard news can provide the main points of information of a story within one or two sentences and as the nucleus of any daily newspaper, hard news appears in coverage of critical events, and in providing instant and direct information to the reader. Furthermore, hard news provides and summarizes the main points of the event in the lead or introduction of a story (Rich, 2000: 35). Journalists select the most important climax of the story in the summary-lead (MacDougal, 1987). Features and human-interest stories receive less attention in daily newspapers because of the nature of a news-introduction—which is, in most cases, the first/introductory paragraph of a news item—and the necessity of providing instant information. Furthermore, daily newspapers across the world routinely cover hard news and this kind of news occupies most, or the entire front, international and local pages. This is an indication that the main pages of any newspaper are constituted at least in part from hard news²⁰, while features and

²⁰ In this case, in New Zealand newspapers 79.2% of total coverage consisted of hard news.

human-interest news irregularly appear in news media²¹.

All types of opinions, including letters to the editor and cartoons, appear to focus on issues such as conflict and terrorism, international relations and inter-religious issues. However, opinions primarily focused upon international events. In total, opinion items appearing in these newspapers constituted about one-fifth (19.9%) of the total coverage. This is an indication that these newspapers prefer or encourage people's opinions on issues (regardless of whether they are experts or the general public). All newspapers also prefer to provide their own position (in an editorial) to their readers with regard to the issues appearing in their newspapers. There were 95 editorial pieces (2.3%), 93 cartoon images (2.3%), 404 general opinion pieces (10%) and 197 letters to the editor (4.9%) appearing in these newspapers that were about Islam and Muslims. News commentary and analysis constituted 2.5%. These newspapers therefore provided extensive news coverage of Islam and Muslims affairs in combination with opinion pieces. However, the majority of opinion pieces focused on international news/events, and on the Middle East in particular.

Graphic Content: Non-Muslim Leaders Preferred

Graphic content—that is, photographs—as a text uphold the producers' cultural, ideological and judgmental values (Sultze, 2003: 277). In most cases, the photograph's caption reveals the producer's view and captures the essence of the story. In short, graphic images can show us how an issue is both culturally and politically constructed (Sultze, 2003; 278) and who is given preference from the producer's ideological view. This study examined whether stories included graphic text and what the content of these graphics texts was. This study found that these

²¹ In this case, features (0.6%) and human-interest stories (0.4%) occupied only 1.0% of total coverage.

newspapers published 1988 stories with graphic content; that is, about half (49.1%) of the items in question appeared with graphic text, for example, photographs. These statistical findings are presented in Table 5 below. This table helps to illustrate what received attention in the graphic content of stories covering Islam and Muslims issues.

Table 5: Graphic Content Appearing in the New Zealand Press

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
General Muslim leaders	187	4.6	4.6	4.6
Specific Muslim group leaders	96	2.4	2.4	7.0
Non-Muslim leaders	251	6.2	6.2	13.2
Muslim women	72	1.8	1.8	15.0
Muslim children	23	.6	.6	15.5
People not specific	637	15.7	15.7	31.3
Conflict scene	417	10.3	10.3	41.6
Others	305	7.5	7.5	49.1
Not applicable	2062	50.9	50.9	100.0
Total	4050	100.0	100.0	

The above table indicates that general Muslim leaders (4.6% of total graphic content) were relatively less important than non-Muslim leaders (appearing in 6.2% of stories), since general Muslim leaders were not shown in graphic content as often as non-Muslim leaders. Leaders of specific Muslim groups appeared in 2.4% of graphic content that appeared alongside the stories. In this study, al Qaeda, Jemaah Islamiyah, Hamas etc. are each coded as a specific Muslim group and their leaders as specific Muslim group leaders. All of these groups are not classified as just generic “Muslim groups” as they are actually politically involved and aspire to have a significant role in national democracy. ‘People not specific’ were pictured with 15.7% of stories and

conflict scenes appeared in 10.3% of stories. In any critical event such as war and conflict, natural disaster and man-made disasters, non-specified people are the main sufferers. Therefore, unspecified people were prominent in graphic content in these newspapers. Conflict and terrorism is the main focus in these newspapers' coverage and, since the verbal text (e.g. news story) is frequently accompanied with visual text (e.g. graphic) while covering events, graphic content showing 'people not specific' is consequently the most prominent category in the reportage. Non-Muslim leaders were more important in visual texts than general Muslim leaders. During the timeframe, there was an election held in Palestine in which Hamas participated for the first time in Palestinian history. In addition, conflict between Hezbollah and Israel and between Hamas and Israel, the 2005 Bali bombing, and terrorism or 'possible terrorism' highlighted these 'specific Muslim group leaders'. However, this study implies that non-Muslim leaders' appearances were more important to these newspapers than Muslim leaders.

News Sources: Official Voices are Preferred

The question of who to consult for a given story plays an important role in how an event is constructed an event. Journalists decide who is qualified to talk about an issue and discard others who are considered unsuitable (Fishman, 1980: 93). The voice of a source may also influence audiences' assumptions about an issue (White, 1998: 3; Stenvall, 2008: 230). Once again, readers cannot hear all voices potentially on offer to journalists, as journalists privilege some voices while keeping silent about others, omitting these from public attention. When covering stories in news media, reporters or journalists decide who is important for the news, which influences their decision to talk to the people considered to be relevant. Furthermore, by upholding a particular

voice, media bypass the in-depth arguments about an issue. In some cases, media only provide the position of the actor(s) involved in the issue, but do not say anything about why that position is valid or reliable. For example, when covering the war on terror, the US media framed the issue in such a way that suggested what the President George Bush was talking about but never framed the issue in such a way as to indicate why his policy was important and “empirically accurate” (Lewis and Reese, 2009: 88). Journalists arguably decide who will be focused upon in their stories (Shehata, 2007) and, as mentioned in Chapter 2, journalists prefer to uphold their own political, ideological and cultural groups. The media also maintain a close relationship with politics, not just in relation to collecting information but also because journalists uphold political leaders’ interests (Lewis and Reese, 2009). This study also found that politicians were the main source covered first in these newspapers’ stories. Figure 6 below shows the importance of the sources appearing in these newspapers:

Figure 6: Sources cited in story

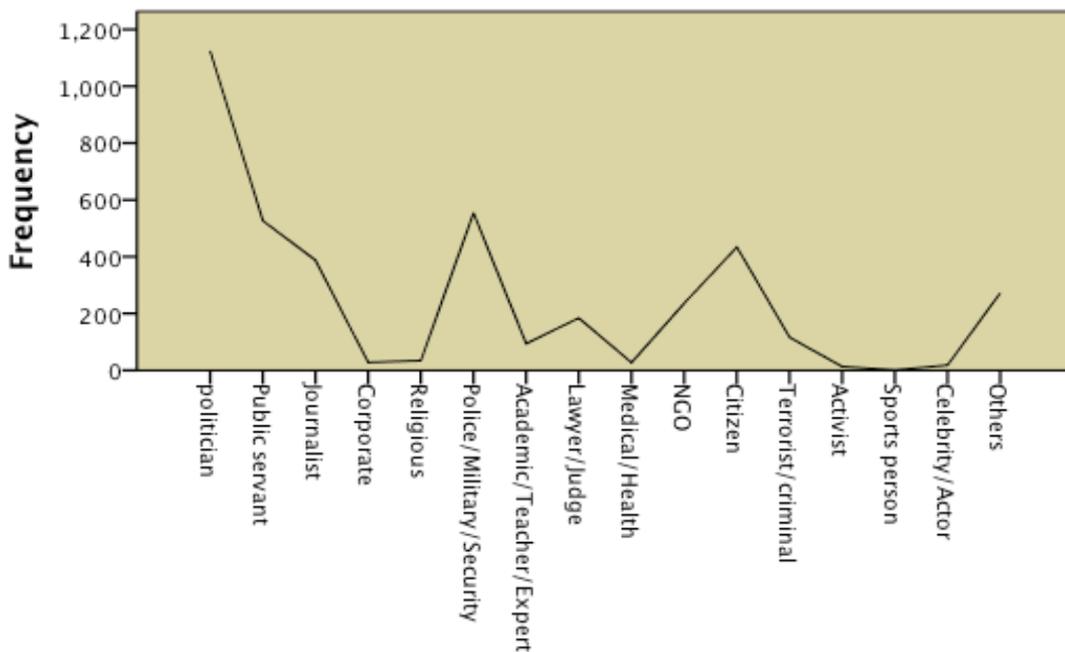


Figure 6 shows that politicians were cited the most often, thus occupying the top position in these newspapers. They were the preferred sources/voices about Islam and Muslims' affairs (27.8%). Police, military and security occupy second position (13.7%), followed by public servants (13.0%). This table shows the strong dependence of journalists on political sources—the second category of sources is less than half of the 'politician' category. In many cases journalists have a tendency to focus upon the voice of the elite, upholding that voice by repeating politicians' views (Hujanen, 2008: 187). Politicians have also received prominent attention in New Zealand newspapers. Politicians can focus upon a particular interpretation of an event (as explained in Chapter 2 & 3), which reinforces the elite view.

Context and Topic of the Coverage of Islam and Muslims

Front-Page Coverage

The placement of stories indicates the importance of the events those stories report on and implies the relative attention paid to that specific issue by a newspaper. For example, front-page stories focus on elite individuals and the most important event(s) of the day. Therefore, the topic, the group, the community or the person appearing on the front page can be considered to be of particular significance to a certain newspaper.

A total of 81 Islam- or Muslim-related news stories (2.0%) appeared on the front-page of New Zealand newspapers during the timeframe of October 3, 2005 to September 30, 2006. The *ODT* covered 14 stories, the *Press* 25 stories and the *NZH* covered 42 stories on the front page. The *ODT* covered the fewest while the *NZH* covered the

highest number of stories on the front page. All of the stories appearing on the front page covered the Bali bombing (Indonesia), the possible terrorist attack in Sydney and Melbourne (Australia), the Muhammad cartoon controversy, the abduction of a Kiwi permanent resident (Harmeet Sooden) in Iraq, the Hezbollah-Israel conflict, and the possible attack on flights from Heathrow Airport (London). The stories covering the Bali bombing focused primarily on Islamist groups (Jemaah Islamiyah [JI]) and finally turned to the issue of Islamic terrorism worldwide, and Islamist groups' plans to establish a 'pan-Islamic fundamentalist state' in the Southeast Asian region, reaching from the Philippines to Singapore. The Bali bombing issue includes some elaborate themes that reinforce the idea that the Bali bombers are linked with 'terrorists' active in Mindanao (Philippines), and that Mindanao is a stronghold for al Qaeda-linked terrorists. The Muhammad cartoon also gives a similar impression that this is an issue of 'Islamic fundamentalists' and 'Muslim terrorists' taking a political stance against 'the West', and that these people are irrational killers. In short, the front-page stories appearing in these newspapers focus only on terrorism and civil conflict. As a result of such stories, Muslim communities become the object of much scrutiny.

In framing a cultural group, government officials, politicians and media work together "conscientiously" which can limit social discourses towards a group (Griffin (2010: 8). Various social institutions, including media, construct a cultural group (e.g. as "fundamentalist") in a way that furthers elites' interests (Allen, 2010: 39). Nonetheless, both media and other social establishments aim to censor some images from the public but present some images in such a way that audiences will approve of the media frame used (Griffin, 2010: 8). This may also be the case for New Zealand newspapers—i.e. that newspapers tend to imply, rather than explicitly state that

Muslims are linked to terrorism across the world.

Crisis Events in Hard News

Media selection of crisis events and the way in which such events are represented has a “tremendous” impact on public perception (Gerner and Schrodt, 1998). These kinds of events “demand a swift response” (Olsson, 2010: 87) from society to resolve the issue. Such events gain public attention almost immediately. However, crisis news events “can challenge existing routines” (Olsson, 2010: 90). Journalists apply past experience when covering a crisis event (Olsson, 2010: 91), and when drawing on these earlier experiences they prefer to use a similar pattern of coverage. For example, current ‘Muslim terrorist’ attacks should be framed in the same way as ‘Muslim terrorist’ events in the past. Media try to incorporate a “surprise” in their representations of crisis events (Olsson, 2010: 92), which is provided by reporting on a particular group’s actions and how serious they are in attempting to cause harm to others. Media define how catastrophic this group could be to a particular society. In addition, media set the public agenda, “defining” the nature of a particular social problem and provide solutions for how to tackle the problem (Adoni and Mane, 1984: 331; Olsson, 2010). Furthermore, different social problems need to compete for newspapers’ attention and space (Hilgartner and Bosk, 1988). When presenting an event, gatekeepers think about how and whether an event will receive public attention; however,

If a situation becomes defined as a social problem, it does not necessarily mean that objective conditions have worsened. Similarly, if a problem disappears from public discourses, it does not necessarily imply that the situation has improved. (Hilgartner and Bosk, 1988: 58)

The representation or lack of representation of an event in the news media does not

always reflect reality, because media select an issue to represent and frame for public attention (Oliver and Maney, 2000: 464). This selective framing varies from newspaper to newspaper and not all media outlets focus upon an issue in a similar manner. However, the main defining factor of news is the ‘choice’/‘selection’ of the editor or the journalist, which once again shows that the perception of newsworthiness or news value differs from newspaper to newspaper. The discursive determinants of news value—e.g. timeliness, proximity, importance and consequence—are evident in the factor of ‘choice’. Increased coverage of an issue or focus on an individual, office or a group implies media attention towards an event and the source

The earthquake in Pakistan, India and Afghanistan received coverage that contributed to a mixed perception of the issue. The earthquake in Pakistan was covered extensively because this country was severely affected, with 40,000 fatalities recorded. This natural disaster was covered primarily from a humanitarian perspective. Nonetheless, this event later became associated with issues of hostility between “two nuclear neighbours”—namely, India and Pakistan—and “Islamic militancy” in Kashmir. This common perception appears in all newspapers examined in this study. Likewise, the Iranian nuclear program was not initially an issue of conflict but later became one when the UK and US began to discuss possible nuclear strikes in and from Iran. From the outset, however, this issue has been identified in relation to Islamism and its threat to the world, as well as an issue indicating Iran’s opposition to world civilization and support of terrorism. The frame produced in the coverage of the issue is that Iran should not be allowed to pursue a nuclear project. In the same manner, the Muhammad cartoon controversy was initially perceived as a ‘cultural clash’ but was later linked with ‘Muslim terrorism’.

Major events such as the 2005 Bali bombing, and the possible terrorist attacks on the

Heathrow Airport in London appeared on the front page, international pages and editorial/opinion pages. ‘The West’ is involved in these issues—e.g. via the presence of their soldiers, their historical involvement with the issue, or the deaths of their citizens—but other issues were ignored, which do not have any relevance to Western agendas. In short, ‘the West and Western’ involvement in an event associated with Islam and Muslims’ affairs was necessary in order to gain significant attention. This fact suggests that cultural proximity can be a defining factor in selecting stories. Thus, as Christensen (2004: 27) suggests:

[C]ulturally “proximate” regions (a result of geo-cultural pressures) is related to organizational and political economic factors: stories on proximate regions are more likely to be within the professional and cultural “universe” of the journalist and/or editor (organizational pressures), and are also likely to be cheaper to cover and more attractive to domestic audiences (political economic pressures).

This study also argues, on the basis of the above discussion, that in covering an issue media define the problem in a way that benefits their culture—culturally proximate groups receive favour (Neiger, 2007: 309-311).

Relying on Western Agencies

In many cases, Western media prefer to source or cite items from dominant Western news services such as AP and Reuters (Boyd-Barrett and Terhi Rantanen, 1998). However, some Western-based alternative agencies, like IPS (Inter Press Service), that provide a more positive image of ‘Third World’ nations (Rauch, 2003: 87) are not popular in Western media. In addition, news agencies such as AP maintain a perception of Western ideological and cultural superiority, but IPS provides an alternative view (Rauch, 2003). AFP, AP and Reuters are evidently dominant in

international news flow. When selecting stories, New Zealand newspapers do not rely on newspapers or news agencies originating outside of ‘the West’ or any alternative agencies such as IPS. Table 6, which shows the international contribution of stories, supports this claim:

Table 6: Contribution of International Agencies

Agencies	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Reuters	906	26.3	26.3	26.3
Foreign newspapers	857	24.9	24.9	51.2
AP	675	19.6	19.6	70.8
AFP	220	6.4	6.4	77.2
International journalist	81	2.4	2.4	79.6
Multiple	208	6.0	6.0	85.6
Telegraph Group Ltd	92	2.7	2.7	88.3
Non-specific	87	2.5	2.5	90.8
AAP	105	3.0	3.0	93.8
Bloomberg	3	.1	.1	93.9
Xinhua	2	.1	.1	94.0
Others	207	6.0	6.0	100.0
Total	3443	100.0	100.0	

The above statistical evidence suggests that ‘Western’ news channels—i.e. news agencies, newspapers and journalists—occupied almost the entire proportion of coverage. It is notable that the only news agency originating outside ‘the West’, Xinhua, contributed only two items. Reuters was the most sourced news channel, followed by foreign newspapers (e.g. the *New York Times*) and other news agencies such as AFP. This validates Chapters two and three’s claim, that proximate groups and their organizations’ voices are preferred when covering an issue (Christensen, 2004; Neiger, 2007). These findings support Howkins’ (2009) and Louw’s claims (2004), that Western media outlets prefer to hear or use the work of their counterparts in Europe and America. The findings also establish another argument, addressed in

Chapter one, that the three big international news agencies—i.e. Reuters, AP and AFP—dominate world news. However, it is also evident that other Western agencies are also emerging in coverage of international events. For example, the Telegraph Group Ltd provided 92 items or 2.7% of total international contribution. The Australian news agency AAP contributed 105 items (3%). But as mentioned in Chapter 2, the Bloomberg news agency clearly remains unpopular in these newspapers and covers only three items (see Table 6).

These newspapers almost completely ignored Muslim nations' newspapers²² or news agencies, despite the fact the events relate to Islam, Muslims and Muslim nations. More importantly, when covering the Middle East, no Middle Eastern newspapers²³ or agencies were used and no Middle Eastern scholars were invited to speak about the issue. The scholars/experts these newspapers preferred to talk to, in most cases, were stationed in 'the West'. However, in the case of the Bali bombing, there was only one exception, namely Indonesia-based 'expert' Ken Conboy²⁴, who was frequently mentioned in these newspapers. Otherwise all of the 'experts' quoted by the media came from Western nations. For example, in relation to the Bali bombing, experts were provided from Australia, New Zealand, the US and the UK, including 'some experts' who were not further specified, and unnamed 'analysts' and 'terrorism experts'. In other cases 'experts' from the US and UK were commonly presented. However, this tendency to quote 'Western' voices when covering Islam and Muslims may be because of the dependency on Western news services, from which New Zealand newspapers receive copies. In addition, as mentioned in Chapter 1, international news agencies 'own' New Zealand news stories in a broader sense

²² These newspapers retrieved three editorials from three Muslim nations' newspapers—the *Iran News*, the *Arab News* and the *Jordan Times*.

²³ Except the above mentioned three editorials.

²⁴ However he is also a Western 'expert'.

(Rosenberg, 2008: 24). The issues focused upon in New Zealand newspapers are actually selected abroad. However, it is not only the Muslims' issues that come through overseas channels. Rather, coverage of any international event is reported through international agencies (Rosenberg, 2008). As a result, alternative views on a particular issue are absent from New Zealand news coverage (Rosenberg, 2008: 24). The non-news items—particularly editorials, letters to the editor and cartoon images (discussed in following sections)—can represent the local voice. In most cases, op-ed stories provide a constructive voice on Islam and Muslims' issues but as with news stories, these stories come directly from foreign services—that is, foreign newspapers and agencies.

Opinion Pieces

Letters to the editor serve a dual purpose: on the one hand they reflect readers' perceptions on a particular topic; on the other, they provide a "forum" through which an issue can be discussed (Perrin and Vaisey, 2008: 786). The opinion column can also cover the same purposes. All opinion pieces are the reflection of the position of the readers, writers and the newspaper itself. The editorial, however, gives the stance or position of a newspaper on an issue. It is the voice of a specific newspaper. The arguments we receive through an editorial not only relate to general citizens but also to the power elites (van Dijk, 1989: 232). The ideological leaning of a particular newspaper can be understood by examining the editorial content (Le, 2002: 373). Furthermore, the editorial does not appear to provide its position or opinion only, but will also "attack, defend, or give advice to the authorities" (van Dijk, 1989: 232). The writers of the editorial may set various agendas— social, political and cultural (Le, 2002: 374) through content and language. The three chosen newspapers provide an

indication of their position with regard to Islam and Muslims through their editorials. Table 7 provides a summary of the coverage of editorials and other opinion stories. In addition to the table, a graphic presentation (Figure 7) indicates the level of coverage of an individual newspaper:

Table 7: Opinion Stories

Opinion stories	Newspapers			Total
	<i>ODT</i>	<i>Press</i>	<i>NZH</i>	
Editorial	10	33	52	95
Op-ed	103	148	153	404
Letters to the editor	25	99	73	197
Total	138	280	278	696

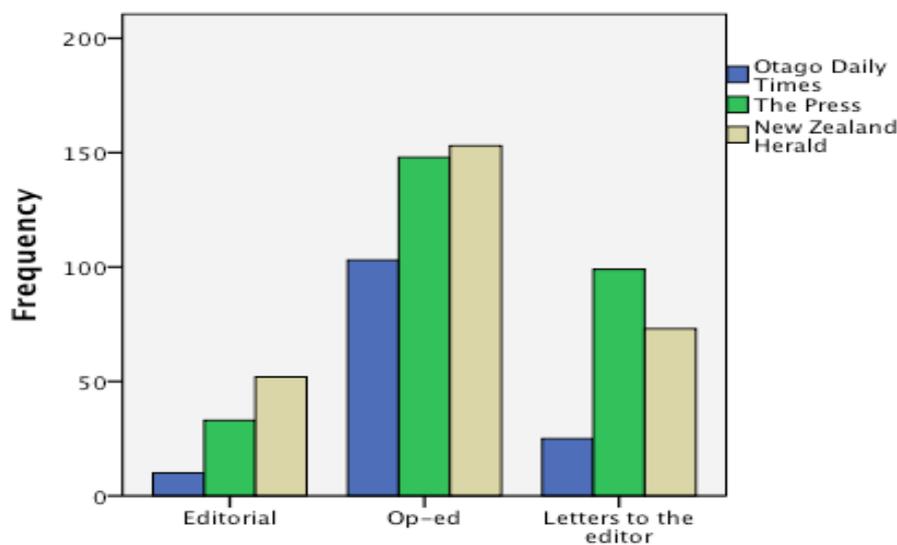


Figure 7: Opinion stories

The table and the figure show that the *ODT* published 10 editorials, while the *Press* published 33, and the *NZH* published 52. Editorials are the explicit evaluation of a specific event by the publisher and/or editor of a newspaper (Ohlström, 1966: 75; van Dijk, 1996; Le, 2002). In terms of presenting a particular newspaper's position, the editorial page is the most significant in respect to a newspaper's stand. Editorials appearing in New Zealand newspapers include reflections on terrorism and civil

conflict in Iraq and elsewhere, the Muhammad cartoon controversy, the Middle East peace process, the future of Afghanistan and the position of then US President George W. Bush in relation to Muslim nations. New Zealand newspapers publish a significant number of opinion stories on Islam and Muslims' affairs; a total of 95 editorials were published. In addition, the three New Zealand newspapers studied published 404 opinion pieces and 197 letters to the editor.

The *ODT* published only 10 editorials. This newspaper is published and distributed in Dunedin, where the Muslim community is small in terms of overall population. The insignificant appearance of Muslims in this region is reflected in the relative lack of editorial coverage. The letters (to the editor) also support this assessment. Those letters that did appear in the *ODT* were generally responding to the controversy surrounding the cartoons of Muhammad, the Iraq crisis, Bush's position in Iraq, and the Middle East and Islamic terrorism.

The *Press* published 33 editorials, 148 opinion pieces and 99 letters to the editor, while the *NZH* published 52 editorials, 153 opinion pieces and 73 letters to the editor. The *ODT*, the *Press* and the *NZH* opinion pieces have similarities in some cases in the coverage relating to Islam and Muslims. In addition, the *Press* and the *NZH* both publish some foreign newspapers' editorials. The *NZH* published 22 foreign newspapers' editorials and the *Press* published eight foreign newspapers' editorials. The *Press* therefore provided 25 editorials and the *NZH* provided 30 editorials of their own.

The *Press* comments on some diverse issues relating to Islam and Muslims although this daily publishes fewer editorials than the *NZH*. For example, in the context of the French 'riots' in 2005, the *Press* published an editorial, in which it argued that the five million Muslims living in France were subjected to racial discrimination. In the

context of the Muhammad cartoon controversy, letter writers maintain diversity by presenting their own perceptions of the issue—some questioned Muslim norms, values and clothes etc. but in most cases they questioned the controversial cartoon images and the reproduction of the images in New Zealand newspapers. In addition, many argued that ‘Western’ media should respect other cultures. Letters to the editor, in general, opposed then US President Bush and his policies towards the Middle East and Afghanistan. This is also the case for the editorials appearing in other New Zealand newspapers—that is, these editorials also rejected ‘Western’ interference in Muslim nations and thus President Bush’s policies towards the Middle East and the war on terror.

Editorial Cartoons

This study recognizes that as the “purest artifacts of popular culture” (Fischer, 1996: 122) an editorial cartoon provides an opinion about a person or a group, through satire (Mazid, 2008: 435). Editorial cartoons have the highest readership on editorial pages and have a “significant role in shaping public opinion” (Abel and Filak, 2005: 161). Therefore, editorial cartoons are not simply funny illustrations, but can also influence public opinion. This section will identify the nature of the editorial cartoons appearing in the New Zealand newspapers studied. All newspapers publish editorial cartoons on their editorial page on a regular basis. The *ODT* published 29 editorial cartoons; the *Press* published 30 and the *NZH* published 34 editorial cartoons in the editorial pages. A statistical chart (Table 8) illustrates these findings.

Table 8: Editorial Cartoons

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<i>ODT</i>	29	31.2	31.2	31.2
<i>Press</i>	30	32.3	32.3	63.4
<i>NZH</i>	34	36.6	36.6	100.0
Total	93	100.0	100.0	

The table above shows that the number of cartoons published in the *ODT*, the *Press* and the *NZH* is almost the same. In the *ODT* cartoons featuring world politicians receive prominent coverage. More specifically, non-Muslim leaders were pictured in 16 cartoons and received extensive attention in these caricatures. Muslim leaders appeared twice, terrorists appeared once, unspecified people appeared in seven cartoons and figures belonging to the “others” category appeared in five cartoons. Then US President George Bush was the main figure represented in the editorial cartoons of the *ODT*, as his caricatures appeared in 12 cartoons. His name “Bush” is also specifically mentioned in another cartoon (as a main signifier). This means that Bush appears in 13 cartoons. The Australian Prime Minister John Howard appeared once and Saddam Hussein appeared twice in these caricatures. Issues directly relating to Islam and Muslims, like the Prophet Muhammad cartoon controversy, appeared in two cartoons in the *ODT*.

The textual representation—both visual and verbal—of editorial cartoons appearing in the *Press* resembled that of the *ODT*. The *Press* published 30 editorial cartoons, showing the same textual (visual and verbal) themes and images as those found in the *ODT*. This may be because the main cartoonist for both of these newspapers is the same cartoonist, Garrick Tremain. The *NZH* published 34 editorial cartoons during the timeframe studied. Cartoons appearing in this newspaper represented (as the main

figure) general Muslim leaders once (namely, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad), specific terrorist leaders (for example, of al Qaeda) three times, non-Muslim leaders (for example, then US President Bush) in 10 cartoons, unspecified people in 14 cartoons, and other images in six cartoons.

In the context of the New Zealand newspapers under study, both the *ODT* and the *Press* focused on the issue of the Middle East in relation to then US President Bush. In other words, Bush and Iraq were the main focus of these cartoons. The *NZH* also prominently shows President Bush but rather in relation to Iran's nuclear program. The subject matter of the New Zealand newspapers' editorial cartoons is similar, continually focusing on politics and policy. These newspapers focus upon the idea that Muslim terrorists are active around the world. Cartoons appearing in the context of the Muhammad cartoon controversy promote the perception that Muslims are radicals and that they do not know how to respect freedom of expression. This is also the case for then US President Bush—he was depicted as being against democracy and using terrorism for his own political purposes. This analysis indicates that these newspapers are critical of President Bush. The cartoons appearing in these newspapers can be regarded as a useful source of rhetorical images depicting President Bush as an enemy of the world during this timeframe. Bush is depicted as a warmonger, sick, angry, a fraud, a liar, greedy for oil, and a threat to world peace and democratic norms. The cartoon images also suggest that both Bush and Howard are using 'terrorism' for their political interest. In addition, what Bush is saying against Iran is unsubstantiated while the Iranian President continues to gain importance within his own nation and around the world. This study illustrated above that news coverage is heavily reliant on international agencies. The representation of the cartoon images can thus be identified as a local construction of issues relating to Islam,

Muslims and Muslim nations. The negative image that international news maintains is, in most cases, opposed to the local construction of events covered. This fact proves the argument that the construction of an issue provided to New Zealand newspapers through international channels is not necessarily the local perception of that issue.

Local News in New Zealand

Local news involving Muslims was covered less frequently in the New Zealand newspapers than in international ones (See Table 2 and consequent discussions on page 6 of this chapter). The lack of coverage of local Muslim-associated news may be due to the low levels of visibility of the Muslim population in New Zealand. In terms of news value, local coverage is insignificant.

The *ODT* covered 54 local stories, the *Press* covered 160 stories, and the *NZH* covered 77 stories on local events; this statistical finding combines news and non-news items. Two major issues covered in the New Zealand newspapers were the Muhammad cartoon controversy and the abduction of Harmeet Sooden (a permanent resident in New Zealand and citizen of Canada) in Iraq. Both of these issues had direct links with international events. The 2005 Bali bombing is an event that was covered locally in these newspapers, but once again this coverage provided local reactions in relation to the Indonesian terrorist bombing—for example, what then New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark said about the issue and how it might affect travel agencies in New Zealand. However, while the other two newspapers provided a positive perception of New Zealand Muslims, the *Press* is not always uncritical towards the local Muslim community. For example, the *Press* reports, in a front-page news story:

Although Islamic radicals setting off bombs in New Zealand may seem unlikely, damage to the economy from bioterrorist threats could become very real. (*Govt bid detect terror threat*: May 24, 2006)

In addition, the *Press* published another report on its front page—*MP Slams Muslims and Gays* (August 27-28, 2006). In this report the National Party MP Bob Clarkson talked about “Islam religious-type people” [original quotation marks] and said that those “who wore burqas could be crooks hiding guns”. The newspaper reports: “He [Mr Clarkson] was tolerant of all religions, but Muslims who wore burqas because of deeply held beliefs should “go back to Islam or Iraq””. However, this kind of coverage is rare in New Zealand newspapers. For example, this news was not reported in other newspapers and there was no follow-up story in the *Press* on these issues.

Kurdish student Shiba Basharathi’s achievements were the focus of the New Zealand newspapers studied. Two Muslim students’ involvement in the peace process in New Zealand in order to bridge inter-religious and inter-ethnic relations, and Muslims’ festival— for example, observing Ramadan and Eid— were also covered. It can therefore be suggested that some kind of feature and/or human-interest story were the main foci of these newspapers’ coverage of local Muslim-associated events. The cartoon controversy was also a major issue but was covered mainly as an international event that comprised of local reaction towards the re-publication of these cartoons. The vandalization of a Jewish prayer hall by “suspected Muslims” in Christchurch did not receive much attention, since it was only covered in two stories (one in the *Press* and one in the *ODT*), and this comparative lack of coverage may be because the criminals were unidentified. Overall, local events receive relatively little attention.

Freedom of Expression: The Controversial Cartoon Affair

The question of freedom of expression was raised especially in respect to the reproduction of the controversial cartoons of Prophet Muhammad. All New Zealand newspapers published news about this event on their front, international, local and opinion pages. This issue, to some extent, symbolized the debate about freedom of expression and has also been related to the global Muslim community, Islamic terrorism, Islamic fundamentalism and Islamic intolerance. Muslims were judged as extreme, although it was sometimes argued that the cartoon issue became an issue of Islamic terrorists and not an issue concerning the whole community. Stories also included debate on blasphemy, Muslims' culture and their cultural position—e.g. the debate concerning their religious clothing—in the West, and their presence in the West. This issue was more prominent in the *Press* and the *NZH* than it was in the *ODT*. The *Press* highlighted this issue by reproducing two of these controversial cartoons in its front pages. In their editorial cartoons and hard news all three of the newspapers maintained that the cartoon controversy was an issue for 'Islamic terrorists' and argued that Muslims are intolerant. However, this construction is overturned in some editorials and op-ed articles. For example, the editorials appearing in the *ODT* and *NZH* propose that the Western press should respect Islamic religious values. However, the *Press* continued to present the 'intolerant Muslim' frame in their editorials, and, op-eds predominantly maintained the perception of a clash of civilizations. Letter writers also challenged these controversial cartoon images. 'Freedom of expression became a prominent theme in the news coverage. However, these newspapers' coverage failed to perceive that the caricature of Prophet Muhammad, shows Danish "disrespect to Muslim religious beliefs" and the Danish newspaper's—*Jyllands-Posten*— construction of Muslims: a "dangerous" threat to

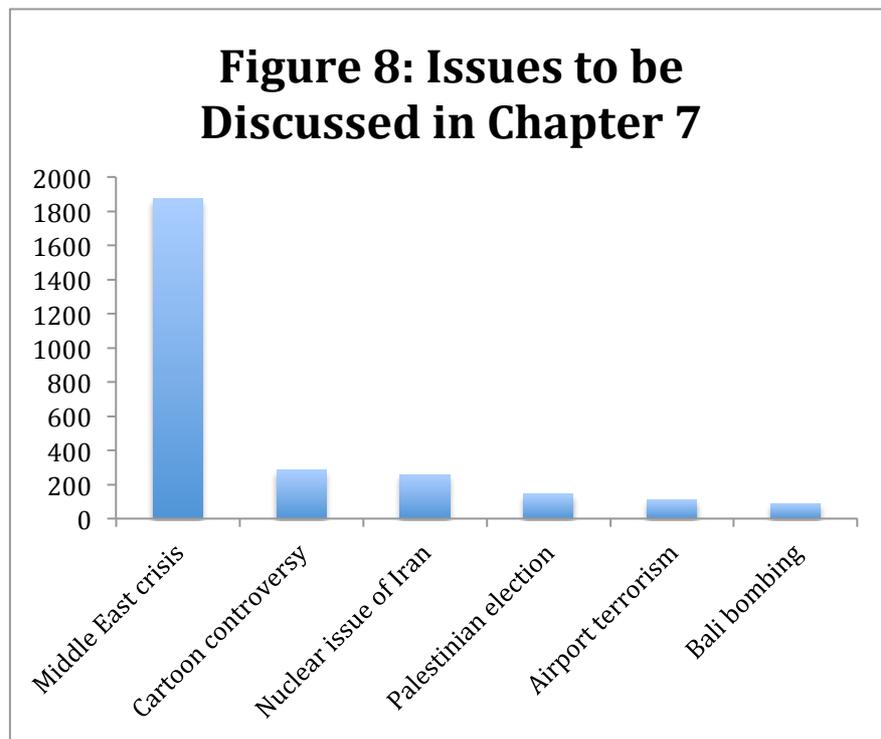
‘the West’ (Müller and Özcan, 2007: 290). Islam was identified as an enemy of Danish society long before the 9/11 terrorist attacks (Ibid, p. 290) and some Western media failed to understand the context (Müller and Özcan, 2007). However, these newspapers showed solidarity with the Danish newspaper.

In news stories, Muslims are continuously portrayed as fundamentalists and intolerant. They are also presented as irrational and as a considerable threat to liberal values and democracy. The cartoon controversy was also an ongoing topic as some Islamic nations boycotted products manufactured in ‘the West’ or products that originated in ‘the West’. Some people in some Muslim nations, for example, in Malaysia and Jordan, vandalized ‘Western’ offices and businesses. The boycotting issue, however, once again affected relations between some Muslim nations and ‘the West’. For example, the Danish embassy was closed in Malaysia. Finally, some commented that if Muslims are not compatible with Western values and if this group cannot tolerate (and/or understand) Western values, Muslims living in the West need to go back to Muslim nations. Thus, international media exacerbated this issue by suggesting that Muslims are against freedom of speech and ‘the West’ (Hussain, 2007: 125). However, both international mainstream media and Muslims failed to understand the “essence” of the issue (Ibid, p. 125). For example, Muslims did not understand that one Danish newspaper does not and cannot represent ‘the West’ as a whole; whilst some Western newspapers failed to consider the Danish newspaper’s reasons for publishing the controversial images (this issue will be discussed further in the following chapter).

The Six Dominant Issues

In Chapter 5 the six most covered and prominent issues will be discussed— i.e. the

Bali bombing of 2005; the Middle East crisis²⁵; the Iranian nuclear issue; the Palestinian election of 2005; the Muhammad cartoon controversy; and the possible terrorist attack in Heathrow Airport in England. Figure 8 demonstrates visually how prominently these issues were covered in the chosen newspapers.



The Middle East crisis, which only includes the Iraqi crisis and the Palestine-Israel and Hezbollah-Israel conflicts, occupied the major portion of coverage by appearing in 1872 items (46.22% of total coverage); the Muhammad cartoon controversy appeared in 283 items (6.98%); the Iranian nuclear issue appeared in 257 items (6.35%); the 2006 Palestinian election appeared in 144 items (3.6%); the suspected terrorist attack in the Heathrow Airport in England appeared in 109 items (2.69%) and the 2005 Bali bombing appeared in 89 items (2.2%). Two issues—the Middle East crisis and the Iranian nuclear issue—appeared continuously throughout the time frame.

²⁵ In this case the Middle East crisis denotes the Iraqi crisis, and the Palestine-Israel and Hezbollah-Israel conflicts.

Summary

The discussion above might give one the impression that throughout the coverage of three New Zealand mainstream newspapers, Islam and Muslims are identified as Others and the coverage is overwhelmingly negative. Many scholarly observations—e.g. Huang and Leung, 2005; Fursich, 2002; Lawson, 1998; Li and Liu, 1996—show that non-Western nations and their cultures are marginalized in ‘Western’ media representation. For example, Huang and Leung, (2005: 303 [original italic]) argue that “Western mainstream media contribute to the marginalization and denigration of *others*” in representing non-Western nations, their people and their culture. This Other is predominant in ‘Western’ media coverage (Ibid, p. 303). In addition to the cultural and ideological bias of corporate media, media have long been criticized for inaccurate cultural, political and social knowledge about the society they are reporting about and thus, for the way they stereotype the Other (Huang and Leung, 2005: 304). Thus, it is not unusual in this case that Islam as a culture and some Muslim nations as members of the ‘Third World’ will be perceived negatively. However, it is also documented in scholarly arguments (e.g. Lerner, 2010) that in some cases there is a shift in Western media representation. For example, as has been noted in Chapter 2, there are examples that challenge the Orientalist view of Muslim Othering. The reflection of this representational change is also manifested in most cases in non-news appearing in these newspapers. However, the negative image of Islam and Muslims represented by these newspapers is in fact a legacy of foreign news flow in New Zealand newspapers (demonstrated in Table 2) as well as extensive dependence on Western news agencies and newspapers (presented in Table 6). Therefore, these newspapers are trapped inside the Orientalist news flow and the boundary of East and West that is prominently visible in these newspapers’ coverage. In addition, the

owners of the New Zealand newspapers are foreigners which could also be a factor controlling New Zealand newspapers' views. It is also possible that these news suppliers failed to understand the New Zealand perspectives towards the Muslim community. The only exception regarding ownership—the *ODT*—is nevertheless, like the overseas-owned newspapers, dependent on foreign news agencies. Any item appearing in a New Zealand newspaper is a reflection of the perception of foreign gatekeepers, and is thus dependent on how these foreign gatekeepers frame the agenda. Coverage of Islam and Muslims, however, is highly significant in New Zealand newspapers. Muslim issues, in general, are represented in a restricted framework—New Zealand newspapers focus primarily on the issue of terrorism. This reflects the way in which the media have the ability to frame a group or community before presenting an issue to their readers. Only a few topics become covered in any detail, while others are ignored or receive insignificant coverage. Media provide a fragmented image of a community and meaning relating to a group or culture. With respect to international news, the selection of an issue and stories, which includes the choice of language, is in fact selected overseas—either in Australia or in other Western nations such as the United Kingdom. Therefore, the agenda they set, the frame they provide, and the language or image they present is reflected in New Zealand media due to their dependence on international news agencies. As discussed in Chapter 1 and 2, the fact that international news agencies can produce a specific agenda towards an issue in regards to a community is also evident in the New Zealand newspapers' coverage. These newspapers' frequent coverage of 'Muslim terrorism' arguably suggests that our society is suffering from terrorism and that members of the Muslim community are involved in terrorist activities despite the fact that these news items came through foreign channels.

According to the dataset, the main significance and focus on Islam is global but the coverage pattern is concentrated mainly on a few specific regions. Furthermore, some specific issues dominate the coverage. The coverage on war, terrorism and civil conflict can be an indication that Muslims are primarily identified as a group that might be involved in some kind of terrorism or in other negative activities. In other words, the extensive coverage of the issue of terrorism begs the question of whether this community is inherently negative and whether this might potentially influence the greater society. In terms of news reporting, this study found that coverage was overwhelmingly and uniformly negative towards Islam and Muslims. However, diversity was found in non-news.

Nonetheless, in terms of letters to the editor, in which writers produce their own opinions on the issues relating to Islam and Muslims, writers' responses were overwhelmingly supportive of community. Thus, from a narrow²⁶ observation, it can be said that Kiwi letter writers, maintain a constructive perception towards Islam. The *ODT* maintains a significant positive stance towards Islam and the Muslim community in their opinion, with a few exceptions. The *NZH* was balanced in most cases. However, the *Press*' non-news items (including those presented in their editorials) were in most cases critical of Islam and Muslims. It is interesting to find that the news framing pattern evident in these newspapers produce a uniform perception—that is, an Orientalist view of Othering—in which Muslims are seen as violent, untrustworthy with Islam depicted as a threat. The framing of non-news, however, opposes this dominant frame, in which we see a constructive view of Islam and Muslims and Muslim nations. For example, with regards to the invasion of Iraq, the image presented of Western superiority and innocence is identified in news

²⁶ Narrow, as this study did not study people's perceptions towards the Muslim community and is attributing its assessment on the basis of letter writers only.

coverage, but this image is challenged, questioned, illegitimated and rejected in non-news in almost all cases. The authors of these items challenge the essentialist view of a civilizational clash between Islam and the West. The Orientalist view that appeared through overseas gatekeepers, thus, is challenged in local constructions appearing in non-news items, particularly in cartoon images, editorials and letters to the editor.

Chapter 7 will discuss the qualitative analysis of the New Zealand newspapers' representation, with regard to Islam or Muslims and with particular reference to the six dominant issues identified in the quantitative analysis. In order to better understand how Islam and Muslims issues are socially constructed some selected issues will be discussed. By discussing these issues, this study will attempt to explore the complex relationship between coverage and the current political context.

Chapter 5:

Framing Islam and Muslims in Three New Zealand Newspapers

Introduction

In this chapter the qualitative representation of Islam and Muslims in three New Zealand newspapers— the *ODT*, the *Press*, and the *NZH*— will be discussed. This chapter presents the topical frames of these newspapers and discusses six selected issues, namely: the Middle East military conflict (which includes the Iraq crisis, Palestine-Israel and Hezbollah-Israel conflicts [46.22% of total coverage]); the controversial cartoons of Prophet Muhammad (6.98%); the Iran nuclear issue (6.35%); the 2006 Palestinian election (3.6%); the aircraft terror plot in Heathrow in Britain (2.69%); and the 2005 Bali bombing (2.2%). These issues were prominent and occupied considerable news space in the three New Zealand newspapers. As argued in Chapter 4, New Zealand newspapers are heavily dependent on foreign news agencies for their international news coverage; there were no New Zealand correspondents stationed in international locations to cover these issues. The international news coverage and consequently the pattern of news framing is, in fact, the responsibility of international news agencies. However, these newspapers provided local reports/items in relation to international events—for example, when covering the reaction of New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark in regards to Iraq. Furthermore, in the context of the Middle East crisis, the newspapers covered 152 (8.12% of the total coverage of this issue) items²⁷; in the controversial cartoon issue 206 (72.79%) items²⁸ were

²⁷ This includes 51 news reports, 17 op-eds, 26 editorials, 49 editorial cartoons and nine letters to the editor.

covered; the Iran nuclear issue generated 27 (10.51%) items²⁹; the 2006 Palestinian Parliamentary election contributed 12 (8.33%) items³⁰; the aircraft terror plot in Heathrow in Britain provided 12 (11%) items³¹; and regarding the 2005 Bali bombing 29 (32.58%) items³² were covered by local channels—for example, via staff reporters or the NZPA. The coverage includes all news and non-news items. This discussion demonstrates how international news that comes through the filtering of the international news agencies frame the elite agenda, and how the elite agenda is challenged or paralleled in these newspapers’ own voice—that is, their editorials. This chapter addresses the six most prominent issues, examining how the coverage is similar and different in each of the newspapers. This discussion includes the qualitative findings of news and non-news items that appear within the time frame for this study.

News is not a simple presentation or description of an event because media or journalists’ views about an issue is reflected in the representation, and we can identify how reality is constructed in media texts (O’Shaughnessy, 1999: 31) through examining media language (Shoemaker, 2006, 1991; Entman, 2004; 1993; Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1995; Richardson, 2007). However, both news and non-news carry the producer’s ideology—but they do not necessarily carry the same values. For example, immediacy is important for news, but it is not necessary for non-news.

As discussed in Chapter 2 Alatham (1996) observes eight categories while Kumar (2012) proposes five “myths” of Orientalism that ‘the West’ applies when representing Islam/the non-Western ‘Other’. This chapter addresses whether the

²⁸ This includes 15 news reports, 21 op-eds, seven editorials, 16 editorial cartoons and 147 letters to the editor.

²⁹ One news report, four op-eds, six editorials, seven editorial cartoons and nine letters to the editor.

³⁰ Three op-eds, six editorials, two editorial cartoons and two letters to the editor.

³¹ News reports.

³² Eighteen news reports, two op-eds, five editorials, three editorial cartoons and one letter to the editor.

Orientalist view is produced in the news and non-news items appearing in these newspapers and, if so, how Orientalist elements are reproduced. This chapter also identifies how several actors are represented and to what extent the texts, as a production and reproduction of a particular social group, differentiate between other groups, according to the ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ dichotomy. As suggested above, these newspapers depend on international news feeds (e.g. agencies) for international coverage. Local news stories mainly come from their own reporters. Opinion pieces (op-ed), in most cases, are also contributed by outside writers. Editorials, arguably, are the voice of the newspaper, representing the newspaper’s stand on a specific issue (Ohlström, 1966: 75). Therefore, this chapter will address how these media outlets’ own voices parallel news framing—that is, to what extent these media outlets played a gate-keeping role.

The temporal focus for this study is October 2005 to September 2006—a one-year period that allows for a comparison between three New Zealand newspapers. Specifically, it focuses on stories about ‘Islamic terrorism’; freedom of expression; conflict in Iraq and in the wider Middle East; and religious politics. The major topics are discussed below.

1. The Middle East Military Conflicts

The media coverage of crises like war and terrorism reveals the relationships between media and politics (Griffin, 2010: 8). Media often appear as an “active agent” and “often [perform a] protagonist” role inside the story (Liebes and Kampf, 2009: 240). In addition, ‘the Western’ mainstream media “usually” uphold the elite ideology in any crisis event such as war and conflict (Karim, 2000: 24), this is also the case for the Middle East. Furthermore, scholarly findings have suggested that media follows

the state policy when covering news events (Kurspahic, 2003; Kim, 2000; Nacos, 1994: 16-47; Gaber, Seymour and Thomas, 2009: 239-240). Others (e.g. Iyengar, 1987; Wolfsfeld, 2002 & 2004; Kellner, 2004) argue that the news media are the major sources of public information on political processes that help to organize public opinion, However, the sources can be misleading because of media' various involvements with the power elites. Critical issues such as war and conflict present the biggest challenges to the press' values and professional practices (Ravi, 2007: 45). This section explores how the Middle East crises—which include conflict in Iraq, the Palestine-Israel conflict and the Hezbollah-Israel conflict—have been framed in representations found in three New Zealand newspapers. These issues were examined not only in New Zealand newspapers but also in world media.

a. Iraq: Local Villains and Heroic Invaders as Saviour

During and after the two Gulf wars 'Western' corporate media supported military intervention in Iraq and the presence of their troops in the Middle East, namely Saudi Arabia (Kellner, 2004a: 37; Kamioka, 2001: 66). A similar framing pattern has been found in 'Western' mainstream media's earlier coverage of the invasion of Afghanistan, Panama and during the Falklands war in the 1980s. In these cases some Western media appeared as "the instrument of propaganda" (Kellner, 2004a: 37). During the pre-invasion period in Iraq, some Western media following the US mainstream media—e.g. the *New York Times*—supported the US official policy (Groshek, 2008: 315-316). Similarly, official US sources also encouraged the media to support the invasion (Groshek, 2008: 316) in order to influence citizens. Scholarly findings suggest that official sources are successful in influencing media representation, which in turn influences public understanding (Cappella and Jamieson,

1997; Entman, 2004; Groshek, 2008) towards their policies. The US troops involved in the invasion and continued occupation of Iraq were framed as saviours struggling against evil (Kellner, 2004: 41; Karim, 2000). In addition, some mainstream Western media legitimated the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan by arguing that the invasions were important for humanity (Kellner, 2004; Gerstenzang and Getter, 2001; Entman, 2004). The frame that their troops would work for the good of the world constructed a positive image of the troops (Chan-Malik, 2011: 116-117; Gerstenzang and Getter, 2001). Support towards the ‘Western domination’ could be seen through the influence, collaboration and co-operation of and from media towards the Western elite agenda. New Zealand criticized the invasion and was not a partner of the US-led war on terror policy. As New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark explained: “[M]y concern was that intervention would make the world less safe from terrorism, rather than more safe, and Iraq was not a haven for terrorists prior to the war there. It certainly is now”³³ The international news agencies, however, were supportive of the invasion. For example, the news reports appearing in New Zealand newspapers construct the impression that US troops are active in Iraq in order to secure people’s safety and that they are risking their lives for this purpose. This image is repeatedly represented therefore, framing the foreign troops in a positive manner. A few examples demonstrate how these newspapers’ reports construct the image of the foreign troops. The *ODT* reports:

US marines said they killed 10 extremists on Saturday in villages near the Syrian border, where US Air Force jets blasted a suspected militant safe house the previous day (*Truck Blast in Iraq Village Kills 26*, October 31, 2005).

Likewise, The *Press*’s report states:

³³ For this reference, see news report: *Clark Disputes Gains Since 9/11*: September 12, 2006 (*Press*).

US fighter jets and attack helicopters killed around 70 suspected militants in a series of air strikes in and near the western Iraqi city of Ramadi yesterday, a military statement said (*World Hails Referendum*: October 18, 2005).

The *NZH* reports state:

Suicide bombers in Iraq infiltrated a line of police recruits and a crowd of Shiite pilgrims yesterday as insurgents killed 125 civilians and seven United States soldiers (*132 Die in Upsurge of Bloodshed*: January 7, 2006).

To explain the above excerpts, it is important to discuss some other issues. For example, media offer a particular angle on every event, in framing the issue and through their story-telling style readers may be misinformed (Wiegand, 2000: 235; Slade, 1981). Media can construct a distorted image of a specific society or events and the members of a particular group (Byng, 2008: 659-660). For example, since the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq the US repeatedly promotes the cause of ‘why we fight’ (Taylor, 2008: 119 [original quotation mark])— the world needs to be liberated from the terrorists (Chan-Malik, 2011: 116-117) and ‘axis of evil’ (Taylor, 2008). Some Western elite nations’ leaders relate 9/11, Saddam Hussein and the Iraq war 2003 together (Taylor, 2008: 120), reinforcing an Iraqi link with 9/11 and the controversial image of Saddam Hussein. Some Western mainstream media reiterate this message and thus perpetuate the elite agenda (Kellner, 2004; Taylor, 2008). In the context of Iraq invasion both corporate media and power elites construct the image that the invasion is important to liberate Iraqi people and they (i.e. the power elite and elite-supportive media) also construct that Saddam has hands in 9/11 (Taylor, 2008: Kellner, 2001; 2004). After the fall of Saddam some Western leaders and elite-supportive media suggested that Iraq had become a hub of ‘al-Qaeda’ or ‘Muslim terrorists’ and that these ‘terrorists’ were killing their people. However, these leaders

and media alike carefully avoided including information about ‘Western’ atrocities and their mass killings in Iraq (Kellner, 2004; 2005; Taylor, 2008). This can be seen as an attempt to omit their atrocities from public discourse. Media narrate and construct the history through its texts (Ransby, 1992: 80). The history of the foreign occupation of Iraq favours ‘our’ ideological and cultural group. This kind of distortion, however, has been practiced in ‘the West’ for centuries (Said, 1978, 1981,1997; Karim, 2000; Poole, 2002, 2006; Halliday, 2006; Haynes-Clark, 2010)—the narrative effectively constructs Iraq as the victim of its own people. It seems that this ‘practice’ is still active. For example, the above excerpts imply that, when covering Iraqi news, the *ODT*, the *Press* and the *NZH* present a similar image in which US and other foreign soldiers are actively protecting Iraq from “militants”. They are also working towards a free, democratic environment in Iraq, to make things better for Iraqis so that they can vote and debate their rights. Such reports construct a dutiful image in which US soldiers are simply looking out for humanity. In addition, the above examples imply that these “insurgents” are not only killing their own people but also US troops. The US troops are depicted as taking action against “radicals”, “terrorists” and instigating an “offensive against al Qaeda” terrorists³⁴. Such reports suggest that these actions were taken in order to save the lives of innocent Iraqis and to improve human rights in Iraq. These newspapers’ reports present a similar pattern that maintains a ‘good’ image of foreign troops. The invasion is justified and legitimated in these newspapers’ narratives through ‘our’ moral superiority over ‘evil’/‘them’ which is associated with the killers—that is, Muslims/Islamists.

³⁴ E.g.: *US Widens Border Offensive*: October 4, 2005 (*NZH*); *Offensive Targets Tiny Border Village*: October 3, 2005 (*Press*); *Little Resistance to US-led Offensive*, November 2, 2005 (*ODT*).

In contrast, these newspapers' reports portray Iraqis as guilty of killing their own people. We can see this in a few illustrative excerpts. As the *ODT* reports say:

Suicide bombers infiltrated a line of police recruits and a crowd of Shia pilgrims on Thursday as insurgents killed 125 civilians and five US soldiers, escalating their fight as political groups worked to forge a coalition government (*Attacks in Iraq Claim 125 Civilian Lives*: January 6-7, 2006).

Similarly the *Press* reports:

Thirty people were killed and 42 wounded in a suicide truck bomb attack on the small Shiite Muslim town of Howaider north of Baghdad [...] (*30 Die in Blast*: October 31, 2005).

The *NZH* report maintains:

Yesterday a roadside bomb [...] killed five US marines, while more than 50 people died in suicide attacks [...] (*Dirty War of Wolves in Police Clothing*: November 21, 2005).

The media construction reinforces the aspiration of the power elite who set the political agenda (Kellner, 2004; Rashidi and Rasti, 2012; Jackson, 2007; Slade, 1981) that construct Orientalist view of Othering. The Orientalist perception “historically” depicted the Other as “barbaric” [original quotation mark] and imposed a negative image of Arabs and the Middle East, eventually perpetuating ‘Western’ authority (Maira, 2008: 320-321). The establishment of the elite authority through cultural and ideological superiority can be identified by the lexical choice and the overall image attributed to ‘them’ (Jinadu, 1976: 603; Jørgensen, and Phillips, 2002: 1)— ‘terrorists’; ‘Muslim militants’ (Jackson, 2007: 401). These newspapers reports maintain that Iraqis not only kill their own people but also dutiful/benevolent US troops (these troops are represented as working for humanity). The image produces Muslim hypocrisy (Hussain, 2007; Shaheen, 2001)— in other words, it suggests that Muslims are cruel and could not tolerate the support that ‘the West’ is providing for

them. This discursive image has been promoted since pre-colonial history (Halliday, 2006; Haynes-Clark, 2010) through various media such as drama, painting, music, and movies (Powers, 2009; Hussain, 2007: 120; Shaheen, 1997; Said, 1978: 63) and is repeated (Hussain, 2007: 120; Kumar, 2011; 2012). Halliday (2006) argues that in dominant media narratives a generalized Muslim image (e.g. of the Muslim terrorist) is presented. He argues that this depiction is a consequence of the political relations between the media and state that constructs a negative image of Islam and produces racial attitudes towards Muslims. The continuous depiction of ‘the West’ as ‘good’ is seen through the media’s lexical choice and a particular interpretation that ideologically and culturally contrast it with the ‘Muslim Other’ (Husseini, 2007). For example, no story argues that the US army is responsible for killing innocents; thus, no story ever challenges the ‘Western’ elite policy or questions the legitimacy of the troops’ presence. However, these newspapers’ reports repeatedly provide information about the deaths of American and other foreign troops. This guides readers not only to believe that foreign troops are sacrificing their lives for a Muslim nation, but that the citizens of this nation are cruel and uncaring. Thus, ‘our’ ideological superiority over ‘them’ is established in media constructions. The Orientalist view of ‘saviour’ and ‘evil’ upholds ‘our’ superiority. The two categorical images— ‘saviour’ and ‘evil’— distort Iraqis’ rights but perpetuate ‘invaders’ authority.

b. Israel Kills Palestinian Militants

In the context of war and conflict, media work for the power elites (Kellner, 2004) while governments traditionally control media images (Fahmi, 2010: 3). This censoring and control downplays one group but favours others. In the context of Israel-Palestine relations, some Western media follow a similar frame—ignoring or

downplaying Palestinian concerns (Handley, 2008: 140). Furthermore, Palestinian people living in Israel are identified as a security threat by both the government and most Jewish Israeli citizens (Handley, 2008: 144). In addition, the dominant ‘Western’ media narrative about terrorism in Israel is that Palestinians kill Israelis and Israelis retaliate against Palestinian ‘terrorists’ (Philo & Berry, 2004). New Zealand newspapers, in general, construct a similar frame when covering the Palestine-Israel conflict. This argument is demonstrated by the following excerpts:

Israel killed the top bomb-maker for Islamic Jihad and another top gunman in an air raid in Gaza City yesterday, hours after an Israeli and three other militants died separately in a fresh surge of Middle East violence (*Israel Kills Two Key Militants*: February 7, 2006 [ODT]).

(The same passage is quoted in two other articles in the *NZH* [*Militants Killed in Israeli Missile Attacks*: February 7, 2006] and the *Press* [*Air Strike Kills Bomb Maker*: February 7, 2006]).

Palestinian factions have fired rockets at Israel in retaliation for deadly raids against militants that in turn followed a suicide bombing that killed five Israelis on December 5 (*Israeli Planes Pound Gaza to Stop Rockets*: December 19, 2005 [the *Press*]).

Israel killed seven Palestinians, most of them militant, in the Gaza Strip yesterday (*Iran Faces Heat over Threat to Israel*: October 29, 2005 [*NZH*]).

Media construct social perception through cultural meaning (Hoover, 2003: 12), which legitimates social power and elite interests (Gavrilos, 2002: 339-341)— that is that, ‘our’ action is acceptable while ‘their’ action is unjustified. For example, the above excerpts assert that Israel kills only “militants” or “jihadists”. A similar construction was also found in the case of the Iraq crisis (mentioned above). This framing legitimates Israel’s strikes against Palestine. The reports say that Palestinians are responsible for killing people in Israel. News angle and news values often

decontextualize the issue and people. For example, while the report does not spell out whether the victims are citizens rather than soldiers the image of ‘suicide bombs’ suggests that the attacks indiscriminate and destructive. In response to the “militant” action, Israel kills Palestinian “terrorists”. The image of Muslim killers, who are intolerant and anti-peace reinforces the dominant picture of Muslim Others (John L. Esposito; cited in Shaheen, 1997: 2). Journalists draw on and reproduce meanings that are communicated through particular narrative structures. They present media narratives of an event using a storytelling form and by bring images and symbols of an event to an audience (Ismail, 2010: 89)— ‘action against Militant’ versus ‘action of Militant’. This storytelling form can increase or even construct the “understanding” of an audience towards a culture or a community (Ibid, p. 89) that legitimates one group but dehumanizes and rejects the rights of other groups.

The construction of the peace negotiations between Palestine and Israel deserve further attention here. These newspapers’ reports state that the peace talks with the Palestinian Authority failed because “an Islamic Jihad suicide bomber killed five people in Israel on Wednesday” (*Palestinians Urged to Halt Rocket Fire: December 29, 2005 [ODT]*).³⁵ The construction of the frame can be understood through lexical choice. For example, the choice of the words ‘suicide bomber’ and ‘five Israelis’ are significant here. The statement contrasts two lines of action— suicide bombing; the effect— killing of Israelis; and the consequence— the collapse of peace negotiations. Lewis’s scholarship (1993: 174) focuses upon how the ‘Other’ is constructed in language and images— the ‘Other’ appears in many forms but they are somewhat equivalent to an enemy (Lewis, 1993). The ‘enemy’ may not be spelled out but the categorization and characterization of the ‘Other’ regularly maintains that ‘they’

³⁵ A similar pattern can be identified in the reports appearing in the *NZH* (e.g. *Suicide Bomber Kills Five at Israeli Mall: December 6, 2005*) and the *Press* (e.g. *Israeli strike kills seven: October 29, 2005*).

reject attempts of peace-making (Karim, 2000; Poole, 2002). For example, the above excerpt implies that Israel is both cordial and willing to offer peace to Palestine but that it is the “Palestinians” who are hindering the peace process. In sidelining their inaction both the US and Israel blame the “spoilers” (Pearlman, 2008/09: 79)— ‘Palestinian terrorists’—stating that as a result of the ‘terrorist attack’ negotiations cannot continue (Ibid, p. 79). Pearlman (2008/09: 79) argues that these nations will never succeed in establishing peace due to their perception that a settlement will interrupt their interests and they commonly blame the spoilers— ‘Muslim terrorists’ (Ibid, p. 99). The Israeli position on the Palestine’s boundary is legitimated by the newspapers’ assertion that the Palestinians have blocked this process. Hussein (2007: 119) argues that since the establishment of Israel, both Palestinians and Muslims are depicted as anti-peace. The Israeli interference in the Palestine’s boundary conflict is accepted in media construction because it is suggested that the Palestinians blocked the peace process. The pro-Israeli interests are maintained through these newspapers’ frame within the discursive dichotomy of ‘violent’ and ‘peaceful’.

Op-ed and Others

This study will examine how the Oriental construction of international news agenda is, in many cases, opposed in the newspapers op-eds. We will see ‘many voices’ inside ‘the West’ in coverage of Muslims issues. For example, in all cases the op-eds appearing in the *ODT* and *NZH* argue that the US has failed in Iraq, and that Bush lied on this issue. In contrast, the *Press* states that the US President Bush has been successful in Iraq. The position of the op-eds appearing in these newspapers can be identified in the discussion presented below.

As stated above, New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clarke did not accept the war on terror policy and instead blamed the US for the invasion and death of innocent victims in Iraq. Many scholars including Kellner (2004; 2005) and Taylor (2008) argue that ‘the Western’ mainstream media played a hegemonic role in promoting the US invasion of Iraq and manipulated public opinion in favour of the ‘Western’ political elites. They argue that these media outlets construct an Orientalist perception by encouraging fear of ‘Muslim terrorism’, which eventually justified the invasion. However, in the case of the *ODT* and *NZH* op-eds, the readers can perceive an oppositional voice that counters the Orientalist perception. For example, the *ODT* op-ed argues that the Iraq invasion of 2003 and the war on terror were the result of the “foolish” involvement of politicians in corporate advocacy (*Corporate initiative driving US in Iraq*: October 4, 2005). The op-ed constructs the impression that Iraq is facing a crisis because of the US-led invasion. The *ODT* op-eds also argue that Britain has ‘played’ the Arabs’ throughout history (*For Arabs, All the History is Bad*: May 30, 2006 [*ODT*]) and that the US has similar policies to those of the UK, and has played a decisive role in the Middle East (*For Arabs, All the History is Bad*: May 30, 2006 [*ODT*]). Thus, the op-eds challenge the dominant ideology by opposing and questioning the Western elite policy towards the Middle East. The reason behind the rejection of the Iraq invasion may be due to New Zealand state policy, which opposes the Iraq invasion. Scholarly documents including Entman (2004) and Kellner, (2004) argue that state policy about an international issue influences media coverage. It must be noted here that there are some Western media exceptions (Kallin, 2001) to apparent Orientalist constructions of Othering and thus the monolithic view is challenged in many ‘Western’ narrations. In other words, there are many voices on this particular issue. Thus, we— the readers— can argue that there is no monolithic

culture such as ‘the West’ and ‘the East’ as there are always competing voices within cultures (Esposito, 2001 cited in Kallin, 2001).

Opposing voices can be seen in the *NZH*—opposing Britain. For example, the *NZH* op-ed focuses upon the British government’s perception of Muslims. It implies that Muslims are uncivilized, but that Britain itself is not civilized. However, Britain is not aware that it should change its attitudes towards civility (*Protesters Ignore Real Brutality*: February 14, 2006). This newspaper’s op-ed argues: “The reality is that our armed presence in Iraq is destroying an entire people” and “the occupation powers tell awesome lies” (*Bloodbath in Wake of Folly’s March*: March 21, 2006 [*NZH*]). The responsibility through lexical choice — ‘our presence’ and our ‘occupation’— can be understood as opposing the ‘self’— the West. The op-eds of these newspapers— the *ODT* and *NZH*—challenge the legitimacy of invading groups, their presence, their killing, and the overall misrule across the Middle East, and, question the invader’s moral authority to interfere in the region.

As mentioned above, ‘the West’ has many voices: both positive and negative perception can be identified in relation to a particular issue. We can identify an Orientalist perception in New Zealand newspapers that reinforce narratives about invading Muslim nations and which in turn legitimates the invading elite authority— this is also the argument of Kellner (1995; 2004; 2005; 2007). Kellner makes a similar point, observing that the Iraq invasion of 2003 was pre-planned under the Bush administration (2007: 133)³⁶ and grounded on the “Big Lie” of US politics (Ibid, p. 133). However, in the context of the Iraq invasion/Gulf War Western corporate media supported the Western elite political agenda (Kellner, 2004). For example, the *Press* op-eds presents the success of the foreign troops and identifies the “loss and sacrifice”

³⁶ Kellner maintains: “by July 2002, 8 months before the bombing of Iraq [the US] officially started the Iraq war” (2007: 133). In this article, Kellner mentions Downing Street Memos that reports that “intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy” (Ibid, p. 133 [original quotation marks]).

of these troops, thus providing a contrast to the *ODT* and *NZH* op-eds. This identification infers moral legitimacy through the good motives of the invading soldiers. The op-ed (*Strongest Impact Felt in America*: June 10-11, 2006) reinforces the image that the allied soldiers did not invade Iraq; rather they were in Iraq for the “toppling of Saddam Hussein”—described as a “dictator” and a tyrant— ‘our’ good motive against the ‘evil’ Other is thus upheld. The *Press* op-ed argues that Iraq “turned into the front line between militant Islam and the West” (*How Junior Partner in Global Jihad Found his Truly Murderous Calling*: June 10, 2006 [*Press*]) and maintains that ‘the West’ is involved in establishing a democratic society that these “Muslim militants” oppose. The lexical choice: ‘the West’ versus ‘Militant Islam’— ‘Islam’ versus ‘the West’—presents two contrasting positions and reiterates the clash of civilization thesis. The op-ed implies an ideological superiority in which ‘the West’ is working for democracy while the Iraqis oppose it. This story implies that “jihadist” individuals kill their own citizens and provides the perception that the foreign troops in Iraq are fighting these “Islamist terrorists”. The report images of ‘our goodness’, where we are dutiful and working for a nation and the people (of the nation) are ‘terrorists’ and ‘Islamic’. The authority of invasion remains unchallenged and thus, the elite policy is legitimated.

Letters to the Editor

The Orientalist perception of civilizational clash is challenged in the letter writers’ perception, which appear in these three New Zealand newspapers. In addition, Sharify-Funk accepts that not all representations of Muslims in Western media are “monolithic and categorically negative in character” (2009: 77). This can be an example for the letters appearing in New Zealand newspapers. For example, the *ODT*

published three letters to the editor with regard to Iraq, President Bush, the British Prime Minister Tony Blair and their policies. All writers share a similar perception - that these leaders are dangerous for world peace. For example, one letter questions—“Which country would want to be invad[ed] in the name of democracy?” (Mike Robertson: *Disregard for Honesty over Iraq a Warning*: April 4, 2006).

The *NZH* published three letters to the editor regarding Iraq. All letters state that the US and its allies are invaders and they are responsible for killings and abuses of human rights (see for example: Ian Jones: *Iraq's Most Wanted*: June 12, 2006). Writers of the *ODT* and *NZH* challenge the ‘Western’ political elites and oppose the authority of the ruling elites.

The *Press* published three letters to the editor. One of them (*Barry Paul*: September 11, 2006) argues that the US has succeeded in Iraq in establishing people’s rights and democracy. The second letter (*Martin Gilmour*: March 25, 2006) also maintains a similar perception that ‘the West’ has been successful in establishing democracy. One letter (*Richard Harman*: September 11, 2006 [*Press*]) questions the legitimacy of invading Iraq. This letter suggests: “there was no global Islamic terrorism before 1967, when Israel grabbed more Arab lands” (*Richard Harman*: September 11, 2006). The ‘many voices’ inside the civilization can be understood through the letter writers’ views presented above.

Editorial Cartoons

The opposing voice of the Orientalist view is reinforced in the editorial cartoon image appearing in these newspapers. The ‘clash of civilization’ is challenged through questioning the ‘Western’ elite’s authority. As argued in Chapter 1 there is evidence that ‘the Western’ media scholars oppose elite agendas. For example, Professor D.

Kellner argues that President Bush “systematically engag[ed] in the discourse of deception, manipulation, and lies”³⁷ (2007a: 135). In the editorial cartoon, these newspapers reiterated Kellner’s argument. For example, both the *ODT* and the *Press* published 22 cartoon images. The images are similar in both newspapers. In these cartoons the US President is depicted as greedy for oil, a liar, and a threat. For example, one caricature (October 14, 2006) suggests Bush is a warmonger and in a hurry to capture the Middle East’s oil, and that all his policies about Iraq relate to his desire for oil. Even though none of his efforts or policies were pursued or were applicable to that region, Bush refused to give them up. Finally, the sign pointing the way to the Middle East reads: “The Muddle East”, a term reflecting what Bush has already done in the region. In another cartoon Bush’s horse is almost drowned in mud (cartoon: November 1, 2005), implying that his policies are bad. President Bush, in fact, is depicted as a threat to civilization.

Kellner (2004) and Smith (2005) argue that President Bush used al Qaeda and bin Laden for his political purposes and invaded Iraq using false-and mis-information (Jamieson and Waldman, 2003). For example, the 9/11 Commission reports that there is no evidence that Iraq supported al Qaeda (Kull et al., 2004: 4; cited in Smith 2005: 34). However, Bush uses propaganda to invade Muslim nations, linking the al Qaeda with terrorism (Smith, 2005). The critique of Bush is also reflected in the *NZH* editorial cartoon. There was one editorial cartoon in the *NZH* in which President Bush and Iraq feature. The image provides the impression that Bush has been defeated in Iraq by Osama bin Laden (cartoon: October 28, 2005), in a game they are playing. The cartoon images thus questions elite authority, and frames Bush’s actions in Iraq

³⁷ Kellner presents this observation on the basis of his scholarly contributions in *Grand Theft 2000* (2001), *From 9/11 to Terror War: The Dangers of the Bush Legacy* (2003), and *Media Spectacle and the Crisis of Democracy* (2005).

as an illegitimate invasion. The elite authority is challenged through the suggestion that Bush played with terrorism in the context of Iraq war.

Editorials

All editorials in the *NZH* and *ODT* are critical of the US policies in Iraq and the war on terror. The *Press* editorials, in contrast, imply that the US occupation of Iraq is both successful and legitimate. As mentioned elsewhere the Iraq invasion and the war on terror policy were critically perceived in scholarly debates. Then President Bush is blamed for promoting a ‘we’ versus ‘them’ identification of civilization— Islamic threat versus ‘the Western civilization’ (Smith, 2005; Kellner, 2007a). Scholars such as Gurtov (2005: 1 & 8-28) and Weisberg (2008: 240) identify Bush and his ‘war on terror’ policy as a threat to the world. The rejection of Bush and his policy can be seen in New Zealand newspapers. For example, the *ODT* editorial (*Legacies of 9/11: September 11, 2006*), appearing on the fifth anniversary of September 11, 2001 challenges the policies that were implemented by then President Bush, arguing that they were “foolish” policies, based on false information and a “pretext”. This editorial suggests that Bush is responsible for making the world unsafe, thus challenging the legitimacy of US’ war on terror policy.

In a similar manner to the *ODT*, the *NZH* editorial describes the torture of (Muslim) prisoners as being against “civil liberties”. The editorial argues that the US-led “so-called” war on terror does not bring anything but world instability (*America’s Heart of Darkness: December 9, 2005*). The rejection of the Bush policy can be perceived through the lexical choice: “so-called.” The *NZH* editorial argues that the invading nations have failed in Iraq and that “violence and lawlessness will become ...a staple of Iraq life”; thus, the invading parties are responsible for the serious human rights

abuses occurring within Iraq (*Chance to Unite Iraq Divides it*: October 26, 2005). As a result, the power of social elites is questioned.

In contrast to the editorials above, many newspapers and journalists “quickly” accept Bush’s proclamation of “weapon of mass destruction” (Lewis and Resee, 2009: 87) and his ‘war on terror’ policy that perpetuates the elite political agenda (Ibid, p. 87). The acceptance of Bush’s policy on the Middle East is also evident in New Zealand newspapers. For example, the *Press* editorial maintains that the US President is successful in Iraq (*Welcome Death*: June 12, 2006)—for example, stating that “the American military succeeded brilliantly in reaching Baghdad” and toppling Saddam’s regime (*Different World*: September 11, 2006). The deaths of some ‘militants’ such as Abu Musab al-Zarqawi demonstrate that “Iraq is not a deepening quagmire in which the United States is stuck” (*Welcome Death*: June 12, 2006). The appreciation and acceptance of the invading troops appear in the lexical choice: ‘our’ troops’ ‘brilliant success.’ The *Press* rejects world criticism of Bush: Iraq is *not* a deepening *quagmire* (italic added). The framing legitimates the US invasion of Iraq, the US presence and the actions in the Middle East through the ‘saviour’ image; this image however is questioned and challenged in editorials appearing in the *ODT* and *NZH*.

c. The Hezbollah-Israel Conflict

There are several conflicting interpretations of the worsening relations between Lebanon and Israel. For example, Nasrallah (1992: 1) argues that the continuous Israeli incursions into southern Lebanon are the major factor in worsening relations between Lebanon and Israel. Deeb (2003: 216) argues that after its occupation in the 1980s, Israel attempted to come to a peaceful agreement with Lebanon but Syria disrupted such efforts by helping Hezbollah. Others do not agree with this

interpretation of events and hold that since the 1980s Lebanon has witnessed a period of killings, kidnappings and the dangerous mixing of religion and politics because of Israel (Salem, 1995: vi), and, furthermore, that Israel has exploited the relationship between Christians and Muslims (Salem, 1995). In addition, the proxies— i.e. Hezbollah for Iran and Israel for the US— are active in Lebanon; and the Lebanese people are suffering because of these proxies (Ehteshami and Hinnebusch, 1997: 116; Nasrallah, 1992: 1). Since the mid-sixties the US has identified the importance of Lebanon for its political interests; Iran and Syria have also found a similar interest (Iskandar, 2006: 194 & 21-41). This indicates that the conflict between Israel and Lebanon is not a conflict between ‘Islam’ and ‘the West’; rather it is a conflict between different interest groups.

Yet, there is another construction of Hezbollah that is different to how the Western mainstream media construct the group. For example, some scholars— e.g. Alagha, 2011; Iskander, 1992— argue that Hezbollah is an identity-based (i.e. Shia) political movement; but in mainstream Western discourse it is identified as an ‘Islamic terrorist group’ active inside Lebanon. Hezbollah repeatedly appears in ‘Western’ construction of terrorism. For example, the US President Bush defined the action of Israel in the context of the 2006 Hezbollah-Israel conflict as a “war on terror”, likewise the US, UK, Canadian, German and Australian governments asserted “Israel’s rights to self-defense” (Shinar, 2009: 455). The New Zealand government also supports dominant Western views regarding the Hezbollah-Israel conflict. According to the New Zealand official government website (2006), during the conflict, the New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark “asked ...Hezbollah to stop its rocket attacks on Israel, and for states with influence over Hamas and Hezbollah to act for restraint in the interests of

the wider international community” (New Zealand Government official website, 2006). Significantly, she did not ask Israel to stop its attacks. As with some Western nations, New Zealand interpreted the Israeli attack as a reaction to Hezbollah.

Background

The current Hezbollah-Israel conflict began with the capture of two Israeli soldiers by the Lebanese branch of Hezbollah on July 12, 2006. Hezbollah claimed that the soldiers were kidnapped in order to force an exchange of prisoners held in Israel, but Israel refused to discuss the issue and instead provided Hezbollah and the Lebanese government 48 hours to return the soldiers. This warning was ignored and Israel attacked Lebanon in the name of attacking Hezbollah. Later, an UN-led ceasefire was brokered on the 14th of August 2006 in order to facilitate negotiation of the crisis.

When covering the Hezbollah-Israel conflict, the *ODT*, the *Press* and the *NZH* reports on two dimensions of this conflict: the proxy war inside Lebanon and the Israeli attack as a reaction to Hezbollah’s attacks. The representation of the proxy war in the *ODT* and *NZH* are similar in their framing of the event, while the *Press* maintains a different view. The following discussion demonstrates similarities and differences among the three newspapers’ representation of the “proxy war”. In addition, while promoting the “proxy war” many ‘Western’ media do not examine the root of the crisis (Alagha, 2002 & 2011)— its presence due to Israeli occupation and the Israeli exploitation of religious relations inside Lebanon (Salem, 1995). Instead they focused upon the fact that was Iran and Syria that provoked Hezbollah to take action against Israel. For example, the *ODT* reports argue that Hezbollah is backed by Iran and Syria and that the US supports Israel. It reports that the conflict between Hezbollah and Israel was in fact a “proxy war” between the US and Iran—“Iran and Syria voiced

their support for the guerrillas” (*Bush Blames Syria and Iran*: July 15-16, 2006 [ODT]). Then US President George Bush was reported as saying, “Israel has the right to defend itself” (*Israel Wrath Brings Fire to Lebanon*: July 15-16, 2006 [ODT]). The distortion created through historical interpretation is identifiable in the narratives. For example, the Israeli invasion of Lebanese capital Beirut in 1982 was possible “after a long blockade and bombings” (Ezzi, 2012: 73) but Israel withdrew its troops in 2000. The Israeli withdrawal was due to the Hezbollah resistance— the resistance led to huge casualties in the Israeli army (Alagha, 2002: 12; Ezzi, 2012: 75). ‘The West’ rejects Hezbollah’s resistance against Israel but they do accept Israeli occupation (Donohue, 2009: 2514) and they construct Israeli attacks as ‘Israeli rights’ (Alagha, 2002: 2012).

Many scholars— e.g. Saleem, 1995, Iskander, 1992, Alagha, 2002 & 2011—argue that Hezbollah resistance against Israel is omitted in ‘Western’ discourses but the relationships of the three— Iran, Syria, Hezbollah terrorism— is presented for public attention³⁸. For example, the *NZH* reports state that Israeli forces were backed by the US when attacking Lebanon, while the Hezbollah group was backed by Iran and Syria. The *NZH* believes that the question of “how long Israel will bomb Lebanon is not a military question, but ...a political [one] ” (*Bush – the hidden hand holding Israel’s leash*: July 17, 2006 [NZH]). It holds that Israel is “pro-Western”, that Hezbollah is a “radical Islamic group” and says: “Lebanon has become the battlefield of pro-Western and radical Islamic forces” (*Bush – the Hidden Hand Holding Israel’s Leash*: July 17, 2006 [NZH]). The identification of proxies ensures that this conflict is framed as ‘pro-Western’ versus ‘radical Islam’—that is, ‘the West’ versus ‘Islam’.

Due to various interventions and interruptions— foreign invasion; sectarian/civil

³⁸ While the Iranian and Syrian influence on Hezbollah is a fact it also fact that Hezbollah is the only force who has shown resistance against Israel (Ezzi, 2012) which goes against ‘the Western’ political agenda (Donohue, 2009; Alagha, 2012).

conflict— Lebanon has become a ‘weak’ nation since the 1970s (Alagha, 2011: 19; Picard and Ramsbotham, 2012; Ezzi, 2012). Foreign interest groups interrupted Lebanon both through their ‘proxies’ and direct intervention. For example, Iran and Syria supported its proxy Hezbollah; the US interrupted Lebanon through its ‘proxy’ Israel. Israel too created its proxy³⁹ inside Lebanon (de Clerck, 2012: 24). In media constructions, however, the ‘destruction’ of the ‘terrorist group’ Hezbollah is frequently represented while the Israeli action against Lebanon is legitimated as Israel’s right. This kind of identification reduces social discourse (van Dijk, 2004). The reductionist view becomes evident when ‘our’ ideology is preserved but ‘our’ involvement is omitted in constructing the issue (Entman, 1993; van Dijk, 1996; Achugar, 2004; Karim, 2000). For example, the *Press* reports suggest that two Middle Eastern countries, Iran and Syria, backed Hezbollah. Iran is represented as using this conflict to “deflect attention” from its nuclear plans (*Backers Lurk in the Wings*: July 14, 2006 [*Press*]). The *Press* maintains that Iran and Syria have armed and aided this group which, in fact, serves the purposes of these two nations, stating: “it is unlikely that [the] operations [that is, the Hezbollah attacks] would have been ordered without reference to Damascus” (*Backers Lurk in the Wings*: July 14, 2006 [*Press*]). This newspaper’s reports never mention the US as Israel’s backer. The news frame downplays the US involvement but focuses attention on Iran and Syria. In addition, while reinforcing the ‘victim’ and ‘enemy’ dichotomy, this newspaper omitted various discourses— for example, the identity of the Hezbollah; the inaction of the US and Israel in peace negotiations in Lebanon; the US support of Israel in invading Lebanon. These discourses are sidelined in this newspaper’s construction with reports

³⁹ Israel created the South Lebanon Army. This group attacked Lebanese people along with Israeli troops. Many members of this group currently have taken shelter in Israel (de Clerck, 2012: 24).

stating that ‘pro-Western’ Israel is a ‘victim’ of the ‘terrorist group’ Hezbollah⁴⁰. Thus, political and ideological support is given to Israel and to the US against the “terrorist group” Hezbollah, which is a ‘proxy’ of ‘Islamist’ Iran and Syria.

Hezbollah-Israel Conflict in Op-eds

The *ODT* published four op-eds, while the *Press* published 16 and the *NZH* published 12. In all cases, op-eds appearing in the *ODT* criticize the US position with regard to the Hezbollah-Israel conflict. The *NZH* op-ed maintains pluralist views, as seven of the op-eds criticize the US and Israel, and five op-eds argue that Iran and Syria are indirectly responsible for this conflict. Of the 16 op-eds appearing in the *Press*, all but two argue that this conflict is “sponsored” by Iran and Syria. In these op-ed articles one might see a challenge to the clash of cultures and, the (New Zealand) state policy towards Hezbollah-Israel conflict. Ultimately, the reader can identify ‘many different voices’.

As addressed above, the New Zealand Prime Minister’s voice is parallel to the elite Western political agenda that legitimates Israeli’s attack in Lebanon but rejects Hezbollah’s activities. This policy is challenged in the op-eds. For example, the *ODT* op-ed argues that Lebanese blood is worthless to both the US and its ally Israel (*Human Link Uncut as Lebanon Left to Suffer*, August 7, 2006 [*ODT*]). It maintains that the US has taken a prejudicial position against Lebanon by favoring Israeli attacks and maintains that the US started “pseudo-diplomatic attempts” with Iran and other nations in the Middle East (*US, Israel Driven by Distorted Quest*: August 10, 2006). The essentialist perception of ‘the West’ versus ‘the East’ or ‘Islam’ is challenged in this view. This op-ed presented a negative view of the US (i.e. ‘the

⁴⁰ See for example the news report, *Backers Lurk in the Wings*: July 14, 2006 (*Press*).

West’) and its depiction of this Muslim nation. On the one hand the *ODT* op-eds question the actors (mainly the US) and argue that it is because of ‘Western’ interests that a cease-fire was not allowed in Lebanon. This point of view interrogates the argument that ‘the Western’ media frame issues in favour of their cultural proximate groups— in this case, ‘the West’— and challenges the Orientalist view that identifies Islam as a threat.

A pluralistic view can be identified in the *NZH*— some of the op-eds promote an Orientalist perception while others oppose the essentialist view. For example, the *NZH* op-eds argue that the US is using Israel against the Middle East and that Israel’s attacks against Lebanon are part of a US policy against Iran (e.g. *Olmert’s Fall Best Hope*: July 25, 2006). The *NZH* op-eds argue that Israel is killing innocent people and that these people have nothing to do with this war. They also suggest that the “US only pays lip service to the establishment of a Palestinian state” (*US Stance Will Cost Dearly in Long Term*: August 17, 2006). This newspaper’s op-eds observe that the US is reluctant to establish peace and/or a Palestinian state in the Middle East, and challenged Western elite policy towards the Middle East. However, five op-eds appearing in the *NZH* maintain a supportive view of Israeli action. For example, one op-ed argues that the Israeli action against Lebanon is “proportionate” and a “legitimate reaction” (e.g. *For Israel, This is a ‘Proportionate’ Response*: July 26, 2006 [*NZH*]).

Western mainstream journalists maintain a uniform ideological affiliation when covering world issues (Hirst and Schutze, 2004; Hawkins, 2009). Manning (2006) observes that since the 1970s, some ‘Western’ society was sympathetic to Muslims because of some critical events in the Middle East— e.g. the conflict between Lebanon and Israel (p. 128). However, the situation has dramatically changed since

the toppling of the Shah of Iran and his regime and the establishment of the Islamic Republic in 1979 (Ibid, p. 128). In some cases, Muslim immigrants are identified as a “problem community” (Humphrey, 2007: 12). For example, since 9/11, “the two parts of the designation *Muslim Australian* have seemed” to be identified as opposing elements and are not recognized as integral parts of each other (Celermajer, Yasmeen and Saeed, 2007: 3 [italic in original]) and in media reporting ‘Islam’ and ‘Muslims’ are constructed as opposing element of ‘the West’. For example, the *Press* op-ed maintains ‘the West’ versus ‘Islamist’ frame in the op-ed representation—presenting the conflict as the ‘Islamic terrorist group’ Hezbollah against pro-Western Israel, and arguing that this conflict is an example of the Iran-Syrian policy against Israel and ‘the West’ (*Bold Move or Political Suicide?* July 17, 2006). The *Press* op-ed maintains that Israel is not fighting just its “terrorist enemies”—namely, Hamas and Hezbollah—but rather “proxies for its old nation state foes: Syria and Iran” (*Israel: A Just Cause?*: July 21, 2006 [*Press*]); the “heart of the problem lies in Syria and Iran and their support for Hezbollah” (*Solution is Far from Lebanon-Israel Border*: July 19, 2006 [*Press*]). Iran’s involvement and Syria influence in Lebanon is repeatedly mentioned but the US participation is never stated.

Hezbollah-Israel Conflict in Editorial Cartoons

There were no cartoons in the *ODT* and the *Press* on the Hezbollah-Israel issue. The *NZH* included five cartoon images. The cartoon images recognize the crisis as a conflict between interest groups—Iran and US—and not necessarily as a conflict between ‘Islam’ and ‘the West’. For example, both sides—America and Iran-Syria (in the background), and Israel and Hezbollah (in the field) — are shown as aggressive, with mass destruction and deaths on both sides (cartoon: August 5, 2006); but they do not care about the rest of the world who are asking for an immediate ceasefire

(August 12, 2006). The cartoons satirically question the world powers that are playing a game in Lebanon.

Hezbollah-Israel Conflict in Editorials

There were no editorials about this conflict in the *ODT*. The *NZH* published two while the *Press* published three editorials. The *NZH* reprinted one editorial from foreign newspapers, as did the *Pres*. The *NZH* editorial accepts the Israeli attack against the “Muslim militant organization Hezbollah” but rejects the mass destruction and the killing of innocents perpetrated by Israel (*Israel Loses its Moral Authority*: August 1, 2006 [*NZH*]). In a different editorial, the *NZH* states that the Israeli attack is a response to the “Muslim militant organization Hezbollah” (*Israel Must End Civilian Suffering*: July 24, 2006 [*NZH*]). The elite policy is not challenged primarily but secondarily—that is, it is challenged not for the attack but for an irrational use of weapons. Once again, the killing of Hezbollah members is accepted, as this “Islamist group” kills innocent Israelis. This editorial is uncritical of the dominant ideology of ‘the West’ and their policy about Lebanon, which legitimates US/Israeli action against Lebanon. The New Zealand state policy—which is critical towards Hezbollah—is also maintained in the *NZH* editorials. The elite policy against Lebanon is accepted and the interpretation of Israel’s actions is parallels the state policy.

Many scholars argue that Islamist politics is a response to ‘Western secularism’ and colonial suppression (Poole, 2002: 34). The blaming of ‘Islam’ and ‘Muslims’ in ‘the West’ actually has political roots—the oil crisis in the 1970s, the creation of Israel, the defeat of the Byzantine Empires, the Ottoman expansion, and the establishment of Islamic Republic of Iran are a few examples. All of these issues created the perception

of Muslims as Other and exotic Islam (Poole, 2002: 33-34). The suppressive governments are still acceptable in the current Western discourse in pursuit of rejecting and sidelining Iran and 'Islamic terrorism' (Debashi, 2009: ix-x). The colonial ideology— accepting 'friendly' leaderships in opposing 'Iranian/Islamist threat' is promoted in the New Zealand newspapers in the context of the Hezbollah-Israel conflict. The *Press* editorial (*Where Will it End?* July 18, 2006) argues that Israel should be interested in stability in Lebanon because this stability is important for Israel— unless Lebanon is stable, terrorist action will continue to occur in Israel. However, this editorial focuses upon why the Israeli attack is "unwise"— it is some "moderate" nations, namely, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan that not only support 'us' but also co-operates with 'us'. The writer of this editorial cannot "understand" why this attack is being attempted in such an aggressive manner when it could upset these "moderate" nations. This editorial specifically mentions that these "moderate" nations are against 'Islamist' Iran, which is 'our' main interest in the Middle East at this moment (*Where Will it End?* July 18, 2006). The 'enemy' is identified in 'our' narration— Iran, an Islamic nation, and Iran's ally Hezbollah, which both oppose 'our' interests in the Middle East. In addition, for the purpose of 'our' Middle Eastern policies, these 'moderate' nations' support is important. Thus, murder of Lebanese citizens by Israel is identified as "unwise"; otherwise these killings could be accepted. There is no questioning of these "moderate" nations' political structures, which follow 'Islamist' conservative Wahabism (Saudi Arabia), dictatorship (Hosni Mubarak in Egypt) and dictatorial monarchy (Jordan). All non-democratic systems are now accepted because these nations are a part of 'us', found inside 'them'. It seems that 'our' perceived 'enemy' can be changed simply depending on 'our' interests.

Summary

The news representation of Iraq in New Zealand newspapers maintains a similar pattern, defining the problem as Iraqi terrorists; this representation arguably maintains the dualistic images of ‘good’/‘evil’, and ‘peaceful’/‘threat’, in which the foreign troops are identified as ‘good’, while in contrast, Iraqi people are depicted as ‘evil’. The dominant ideology is not critically examined which legitimates the invasion of Iraq. The ‘evil’ image of Iraqi people, however, is not found in non-news appearing in the *ODT* and the *NZH*. The news frame appearing in the *ODT* and *NZH* legitimates the Western elite policy on Iraq and the Middle East, but in many cases, their non-news items challenge it. However, the *Press* exhibits an almost uniform representation of the conflict in news and non-news— legitimating Western elite ideology.

The identification of ‘good’ versus ‘evil’ is also evident in the context of the Israel-Palestine and Hezbollah-Israel conflicts—which in turn legitimates the Israeli attacks and Western elite policy on the Middle East. In their international news section these three newspapers maintained uniformity. However, a contrasting frame is found in non-news appearing in the *ODT* that questions and challenges Western elite policy and the Israeli attacks in Palestine, in Lebanon and in the Middle East in general. The framing of non-news appearing in the *Press* follows the US and Israeli policy line, legitimating the Israeli attacks. The non-news items appearing in the *NZH* constructs pluralism—the op-eds question Israel; the editorials accept Israeli attacks; and the cartoon images argue that Lebanon is suffering as a result of both Israel and Iran’s actions.

2. The Muhammad Cartoon Controversy

This section discusses the representation of the Muhammad cartoon controversy in three newspapers—the *ODT*, the *Press* and the *NZH*. These cartoon images were first published in a Danish newspaper—the *Jyllands-Posten*. Their publication caused much controversy and Muslims across the world protested against the images. The *ODT* and the *NZH* refused to reproduce the controversial cartoons. The *Press* published two of the 12 images on its front page. However, all of these newspapers showed solidarity with the Danish newspaper by publishing their own caricatures in their editorial pages. The issue received prominent news coverage and the representation intermingled with the discourse of the clash of cultures/civilizations, Islamic norms and the question of inter-religious relations.

Background

Islam forbids any depiction of God (in Arabic *Allah*) and the Prophets including Muhammad (Ho, 2009: 284), and, to some extent, bars the depiction of any living being. Thus there are no depictions of Jesus (*Isa*), and no icons of Mary (*Mariam*) in Muslim art or iconography. For the Muslim community respect for God, the Prophets and others—e.g. Joseph/*Yusuf*— is shown through not presenting them in images.

On September 30, 2005, the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* published 12 cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad. Later, some Western media reproduced these cartoons in support of the Danish newspaper. Some New Zealand media outlets, following their Western counterparts, also reprinted the caricatures in solidarity with the Danish newspaper. In their framing of the issue these newspapers maintained that there was a conflict between Islam and one's right to freedom of speech (Hussain, 2007: 113). The Danish newspaper did not consider the Danish Muslim community at any time

(before or after) the publication of the images (Rostbøl, 2009: 627). The *Jyllands-Posten* is an ideologically far-right media outlet which plays a political spokesman role for the far-right Danish People's Party, a party which "has been a main contributor" in the promotion of racism against Danish immigrants including Muslims (Rostbøl, 2009: 627).⁴¹ The publication of the cartoons can thus be seen as ideologically and politically motivated. The subsequent reproduction of these controversial images in other media outlets however does not imply that they have conceptualized, understood and recognized the "root of the problem" (Hussain, 2007: 113); rather, they have obscured the problem. In addition, the rhetoric surrounding the freedom of the press—that is, that freedom of expression for the press is more important than anything else—is a contested discourse. For example, Mike Marland's cartoon, which depicted President Bush piloting a plane into the Twin Towers, received much criticism and the cartoonist had to apologize (Hoffman and Howard, 2007: 271). During the first Gulf War BBC stopped broadcasting anti-war songs such as "Give Peace a Chance" (Sorabjee, 1994: 334 [original quotation marks]). Sometimes social institutions including media censor free expression. For example, in 1996, some American media proposed cutting funding to the Phoenix Art Museum when it was revealed that they were exhibiting works that media perceived as anti-US and anti-religion/Christianity (Murphy, 1997: 549-550). Hakam argues that the cartoon controversy was "exacerbated [by] pre-existing tensions between Muslims and the Euro-centred 'West'" (2009: 37), but, by failing to accurately conceptualize the background, some media presented the publication and republication of the cartoons as upholding the right to freedom of expression.

⁴¹ The Danish Government led by *Venstre* [Liberal Party of Denmark] has received the support of the People's Party since 2001 in forming the government (Rostbøl, 2009: 627).

Freedom of Expression

The concept of freedom of speech or expression is derived from the philosophical arguments of John Stuart Mill⁴² and John Milton, who show that expressing thoughts in a form of writing, speaking or any other kind of expression such as painting can be offensive to a community or an individual. Mill argues, however, that offence cannot be a justification for limiting freedom of expression. The First Amendment in the US Constitution and in other Western nations⁴³ accepted John Stuart Mill's idea, which preserves freedom of expression including freedom of the press. However, Mill and later Thomas Jefferson recognize that freedom is “not simply [...] an individual right” (Rehnquist, 1973: 2) and its practice should dignify humanity and respects rights in a society (Sorabjee, 1994: 328). The society “must” defend its freedom but we need to be careful so that our perception of freedom will not be counterproductive (Ibid, p. 328). Freedom of speech is one of the pillars of democratic and liberal norms (Rehnquist, 1973; Murphy, 2003: 53) because it is necessary for “free and rational inquiry” in our society (Emerson, 1977: 741). However, from the outset the “usefulness” of this freedom, particularly in the press, has been doubted (Rehnquist, 1973: 2)—for example, media may suppress citizens and this media “suppression” is stronger than “suppression through a criminal process” (Sorabjee, 1994: 330). In some cases, there are clear reasons for self-censorship—e.g. censoring pornography including child porn because it harms society (Dyzenhaus, 1992: 534; Vernon, 1996: 621). Some scholars (Kairys, 1982; Garnham, 1992; Peterson, 2007: 379) argue that the ideological perception and interpretation of freedom of expression benefits corporate media. Media facilitate political, ideological (Himmelboim and Limor, 2008:

⁴² John Stuart Mill does not use the term ‘freedom of expression’; rather, in *On Liberty*, he uses terms like “freedom of opinion”, “free discussion”, “liberty of the press”, and “expression of opinion”, which are articulated in the second chapter— *Of the Liberty of Thought and Discussion*— of the book.

⁴³ In Europe, Article 10 of the European Convention of Human Rights 1950 (ECHR) protects the right to free expression.

236) and business (Bagdikian, 2004; Corner, 2004) advantages but violate the ideal position of free speech (Corner, 2004). For example, under the mask of freedom of expression media may cause “offence” to one group to “please” another group or other groups living in their society (Himmelboim and Limor, 2008: 239), due to their various links with social interest groups. Thus, the watchdog role of media is questioned. This section, however, does not argue against the freedom of expression or the press; rather it observes that the normative position of social responsibility of the press may be at risk in some cases, due to their apparent innocent view of an issue or through their narrow definition of the freedom of expression (Rostbøl, 2011).

The Publication of Controversial Cartoons in the *Jyllands-Posten*

The Danish newspaper *Jyllands-posten* published 12 cartoons under the headline: “The Face of Muhammad” (Rostbøl, 2009 [original quotation marks]). The newspaper itself explicitly stated the reason for publishing these cartoons—“To push back self imposed limits on expression” [original quotation marks]. It categorically intended “to teach” Muslim minorities and said that while living in Danish secular democracy “one must be prepared to put up with this scorn, mockery and ridicule” (Rostbøl, 2009: 625). These cartoons fuelled an intense controversy within Islamic and Western rhetoric, which involved issues of freedom of expression, Muslim immigration and integration, and relations between Western and Muslim nations. In some Western media the issue of the controversy surrounding these cartoons was identified as an “Islamist” issue (Shehata 2007).

Initiating the Controversy

Immediately after the appearance of these cartoons the reaction from the Muslim community was minimal—there was no reaction apart from a few letters to the editor. However, the Danish Muslim community members and organizations later met to discuss how they could approach the newspapers about the issue (Shehata, 2007). Shehata (2007: 138) notes that in October 12, 2005 the Danish Muslim community, along with 11 Muslim ambassadors in Denmark, decided to discuss the issue with the Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen. The minister however did not allow time and thus, they sent their response in writing to the Prime Minister. In this written response, they underlined the racial and xenophobic attitudes towards Muslims living in Denmark including the cartoon controversy issue (Shehata 2007: 138). They asked for an official view on the issue. The Danish Prime Minister, however, responded by rejecting the problem (Rostbøll, 2011: 12), maintaining that the freedom of the press in Denmark was important and he had nothing to do with the issue (Shehata 2007: 139). The situation became critical when a Norwegian newspaper the *Magazinet*—a conservative weekly⁴⁴— published these cartoons on January 10, 2006 and sparked renewed protest (Shehata, 2007: 139). It is interesting to note that in an interview Vebjørn Selbekk, the *Magazinet* editor, said that he would not publish any image that would be “critical of Jesus” (Steien, 2008: 3). However, soon after this reproduction of the cartoons some other Western newspapers also reprinted these images claiming that their publication of the cartoons was a sign of solidarity for freedom of expression. These media outlets framed the concern as an issue of Muslim intolerance versus freedom of expression, and as a clash of cultures; the issue became one of ‘us’ versus ‘them’—“Islam” versus “the West”. In New Zealand the *Press*, the *Dominion*

⁴⁴ Ideologically this paper is a supporter of the far-right Progress Party of Norway and this party is a close ally—ideologically and politically—of the Danish People’s Party. Both parties have an anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitude (Steien, 2008).

Post and the *Nelson Mail* published the controversial cartoons while TVNZ and TV3 broadcast the images.

The Cartoon Issue in Selected Newspapers

The *ODT* published 21 news stories, seven op-eds, one editorial, 17 letters to the editor and four editorial cartoons on this issue. The *NZH* published 28 news reports, 10 op-eds, eight editorials (four of which were retrieved from foreign newspapers), four editorial cartoons and 48 letters to the editor. The *Press* published 31 news stories, 16 op-eds, two editorials, four editorial cartoons and 82 letters to the editor.

As mentioned previously, the *Press* was the only newspaper to publish the controversial cartoons, and they reprinted (in the February 4-5, 2006 issue, on its front page) two images out of the 12 that appeared in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* under the banner headline: *Cartoon Wars and the Clash of Civilisations*. The *ODT* and *NZH* did not publish these controversial cartoons. However, the Muslims' protests and the responses to the publication of the cartoons were prominently focused upon in these newspapers. The *ODT* and *NZH*, in the first instance, refused to publish the cartoons. However, both these newspapers published editorial cartoons that portrayed Muslims as being similar to terrorists and as butchers who cut off cartoonists' hands, which once again suggested that Islam and Muslims are against freedom of speech.

Understanding the Issue: Freedom of Expression Versus Blasphemous Rhetoric

These newspapers covered the controversial cartoon issue within two main rhetorical frames: freedom of expression, and the clash of cultures. In promoting freedom of expression, these newspapers present several critical voices that included, among

others, politicians, protesters and journalists. The dominance of the elite in the news frame was prominent. The way in which the New Zealand newspapers' reports represent the dominance of elite officials, and the way in which the rhetoric of freedom of expression versus Muslim religious values appears in these newspapers, is evident in two different excerpts from each newspaper:

Denmark advised its citizens to leave Indonesia yesterday amid increasingly violent protests in the world's most populous Muslim nation over drawings of the Prophet Mohammed in Western newspapers (*Protests Grow, Danes Told to Quit Indonesia*: February 8, 2006 [ODT]).

United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said on Sunday that violent protests in the Muslim world over the Prophet Mohammed caricatures could "spin out of control" if governments refused to act responsibly (*Holocaust Cartoon Contest*: February 14, 2006 [ODT]).

The White House has said it will hold Syria responsible for the burning of the Danish and Norwegian embassies in Damascus, saying such violence does not occur there without the host government's approval (*NZ Muslims Angry*: February 6, 2006 [Press]).

[National MP Murray] McCully said the [New Zealand] Government was in danger of "pandering" to countries such as Iran and Jordan [with respect to the cartoon issue] (*Cultural 'Pandering' Risk over Cartoons*: February 9, 2006 [Press]).

The British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, attempted to calm the situation, insisting the trouble was caused by a 'few hot-heads' (*Aussie Cleric's Plea: Don't Publish*: February 6, 2006 [NZH]).

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Iran and Syria "have gone out of their way to inflame sentiments. The world ought to call them on it" (*Cartoon Fury 'Guided by Govt Hand'*: February 10, 2006 [NZH]).

Journalists' ideological leaning can be seen through their selection of social actors—in other words, who is allowed to talk about a particular issue (Poole, 2002; van Dijk, 2006). Hussain (2007: 112) argues that the media coverage of the Muhammad cartoon

issue created “confusion” rather than clarifying the issue. The confusion is also identifiable in the coverage of political elites. Journalists create a perceived world—which may not be real or may indeed be wholly imagined—which incorporates a perception about a cultural group through the images they create (Ismail 2010: 89). This perceived world also creates an “inseparable understanding” between media and the political elite towards a specific social group (Hippler, 2000). The above examples demonstrate how news framing presents Western political actors— Condoleezza Rice— as dominant voices in the construction of news. In contrast, the voice of the Muslim political elites was largely silence. Furthermore, the coverage of the response of some Muslim leaders was limited mainly to that of Iran⁴⁵. The ‘Western’ political leaders brought the cartoon issue up in relations to existing political relations with some Muslim nations (Hussein, 2007: 114-15)— in other words they focused on their involvement in the Middle East; rather than finding a solution. Parallel to the political elites, media also failed to suggest a solution. For example, in covering the elite response media mainly focused upon how some elite nations’ leaders perceive Iran and Syria. In the current Western discourse both these nations are ‘enemies’ of ‘the West’ (Rashidi and Rasti, 2012). Hippler (2000: 85) argues that mainstream Western media are closely linked with politics and therefore, media work as an apparatus of government, especially in the context of its relationship with various communities including the Muslim one. For example, in framing the controversy, what Iran and Syria do; and how the UK, EU and US perceive these two nations, was repeated. The ideological leaning of the media can be understood through the repeated actors and from the angle of explanation (Greer, 2007: 36), thus a reader can understand how media promote cultural bias (Shaheen, 2001: 55; McCafferty 2005: 4; Louw, 2004).

⁴⁵ See news report, for example: *Cartoon Fury ‘Guided by Govt Hand’*: February 10, 2006 (NZH); *US: Syria, Iran Stoke Fury*: February 10, 2006 (Press); *(Iran Rejects Claims of Fanning Islamic Protests*: February 10, 2006 (ODT).

Through repeated attention Iran becomes the representative of all Muslim nations. These newspapers' reports speculated about how active these 'Muslim nations' are against 'the West'. This, in turn, validates the perceived clash of civilizations. The sidelining or Othering, however, can also be understood when news reports use terms such as (Muslim) "madness", "fury", "militants" and "intolerance". These terms were all used in news reports to describe Muslim reactions to the cartoons; thus, by downplaying the issue, the protest is given a different meaning. The repetition of these terms eventually justifies the 'clash of cultures' notion and shows solidarity with the publication of the cartoons.

In European writings Muhammad becomes the theme for "sexuality and militancy" (Hussain, 2007: 119) and this false image (Watt, 1983: 4) of Muhammad reinforces the exotic image of Muslims Other (Maira, 2008). Hussain (2007: 119) notes that through events such as the First Crusade and the Ottoman expansion Europe/'the West' perceives a serious failure of 'Christianity' both militarily and culturally. This failure affects "collective Christian consciousness" (Ibid, p. 119) and provokes 'the West' into depicting Muhammad as "Devil incarnate" and "false prophet" (Reeves, 2000: 4 [original quotation mark]). This image continues to be reinforced in later 'Western' imagination (Ibid, p. 4). The current caricatures can be recognized as a part of this imagination. For example, one (of 12 images appearing in the *Jyllands-Posten*) caricature depicts Muhammad wearing a black bomb-turban. His appearance is wild; he has wide eyes, and a black beard. The *shahadah* or testimony of faith that is visible in Arabic on his turban/bomb means— *there is no god but God; and Muhammad is His messenger*⁴⁶. The cartoon clearly constructs Islam as an inherently violent

⁴⁶ All Muslims need to accept this testimony as part of their faith.

religion; Muhammad is depicted as a terrorist who teaches violence. Ultimately he is seen to represent⁴⁷ a religion that is a threat to civilization. The sexist image of Islam, Muhammad as polygamous and Islam as violent religion (Kumar, 2012) are also depicted in other images. The *Press* re-produces two caricatures on its front page. Other newspapers do not publish the images but their framing of the issue suggests that the images are acceptable. For example, their own caricatures represent Islam as an inherently violent religion and indicate that Muslims are against free expression. It is not, however, that these newspapers could not conceptualize Islamic norms. They did; but they maintained ‘Western’ superiority. These newspapers’ reports frequently described the cartoon controversy as an issue that Muslims believe to be blasphemous, and therefore, in accordance to Islamic norms, the cartoons should not have been published. The following excerpts can demonstrate how these newspapers’ reports perceive Islamic values in regards to the cartoon controversy:

Considered by Muslims to be blasphemous, the cartoons were reprinted in newspapers around the world as the row exploded into an international incident pitting Western ideals of freedom of expression against Islamic beliefs (*Danes Told to Quit Indonesia*: February 13, 2006 [ODT]).

The cartoons are considered blasphemous by Muslims as Islamic tradition bars any depiction of the prophet to prevent idolatry (*Cartoon Wars and the Clash of Civilisation*: February 4-5, 2006 [Press]).

Crowds chanted [...] as anger spread through the Islamic world yesterday over the re-printing of blasphemous cartoons (*Muslim Rage at Press Blasphemy*: February 4, 2006 [NZH]).

When depicting an event, group/community or culture, journalists not only (re)produce the “core values of the culture in which they are produced” but also the cultural values they are dealing with (Ismail, 2010: 89). They also include “morally

⁴⁷ Muhammad “never claimed” that he was a founder of a new religion but said he is a reformer and the seal of the previous messengers (of God)— “the greatest Biblical prophets” (Hussein, 2007: 121)

judgmental words” that produce a perceived good/bad dichotomy— ‘pro-freedom’ versus ‘against freedom’— inside that society (Ismail, 2010: 89). For example, the three newspapers described this issue as an instance of ‘Islam’ versus ‘the West’— Islamic religious norms against ‘Western’ freedom of expression. This is evident from the description of this “blasphemous” (to Muslims) issue being “pitt[ed against] Western ideals of freedom of expression” (*Danes Told to Quit Indonesia*: February 13, 2006 [ODT]). The religious belief that Muslims follow—showing respect for the Prophet by not depicting his image, for example— is rejected because the “European press asserted its right to publish these hostile cartoons” (*Muslim Rage at Press Blasphemy*: February 4, 2006 [NZH]). This section discussed how the normative position of freedom of expression is violated and how the philosophy of this concept is misused and abused by interest groups. These newspapers, however, repeatedly argue that according to ‘Western’ norms, freedom of expression is more important than anything else and that this is one of the pre-conditions of ‘Western liberal democracy’. In fact, as social agents, media outlets, supply and construct religious, cultural and social meaning among members of society in various contexts (Hoover and Lundby, 1997: 6), and their meaning can be misleading due to superficial explanation. For example, these newspapers’ reports failed to question the anti-Muslim intentions and perceptions of the cartoon publications in the *Jyllands-Posten*, and in its ideological ally in Norway, the *Magazinet*. Since 9/11, many ‘Western’ media overly constructed a “mimic” image of Islam— Islam against ‘the West’ (Byng, 2008: 659). The reproduction of the controversial cartoon images is also a part of the ‘mimic’ image that overshadowed the perception of the Danish and Norwegian media outlets— immigrants as a threat.

Voice of Official Actors

In terms of media coverage, a journalist' perception of the world, which construct his/her attitude towards a social or cultural group, influence media images and "affect news decisions" concerning how an event will be covered and presented (Donsbach, 2004: 135). For example, these newspapers' reports reference several Western political actors that condemn Muslim 'violence.'⁴⁸ Their repeated appearance/statements sensationalize the issue. Through imposing perceived news values such as 'importance' and 'consequence' the perceived 'clash' between cultures is established as a fact. The voices of political actors are important in understanding the imperatives of the call to "freedom of expression":

[Australian Foreign Minister] Mr [Alexander] Downer condemned the violent protest [and said]:

"There is no doubt that the cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammad have caused offence to many Muslims and that is unfortunate, but the decision about whether to publish such material is in the end a matter for the media" (*Protests Grow, Danes Told to Quit Indonesia*: February 8, 2006 [ODT]).

"I can understand that religious feelings of Muslims have been injured and violated but I also have to make clear that it is unacceptable to see this as legitimising the use of violence", she [German Chancellor Angela Merkel] said (*Aussie Cleric's Plea: Don't Publish*: February 6, 2006 [NZH]).

[EU Justice Commissioner Franco Frattini said,] "It should be crystal clear to all that violence, intimidation, and the calls for boycotts or for restraints on the freedom of the press are completely unacceptable [...]" (*Cartoon Wars and the Clash of Civilisations*: February 4-5, 2006 [Press]).

⁴⁸ See for example *Muslim Outrage Exploited*: February 7, 2006 (ODT); and (*Govts 'Complicit in Violence'*: February 6, 2006 (NZH); *US: Syria, Iran Stoke Fury*: February 10, 2010 (Press).

In terms of the representation of social or cultural groups in media images, Sharify-Funk (2009: 77) holds that it is a common practice in ‘Western’ journalism, when covering Islam and Muslims, to produce representations that are “centred on binary thinking”—that is, within a dichotomy that distinguishes between ‘us’ and ‘them’. The excerpts above demonstrate how several elite actors frame the cartoon issue. They “condemned the[ir] violence”, but supported ‘our freedom’; thus rejecting the “violence”, while not condemning the actual act of publishing the cartoons. For example, the Australian Foreign Minister describes the publication as “unfortunate”, and having “injured and violated” the religious feelings of Muslims, but he did not condemn the publication of the cartoons itself. The reprinting of the cartoons in several European and New Zealand newspapers is described “as a statement on behalf of a free press” (*Embassies Placed on Alert*: February 6, 2006 [ODT]), the “public’s right to know” (*Meeting Sought to Deal with Cartoon Fallout*: February 7, 2006 [Press]), and “a stand for free press” (*Aussie Cleric’s Plea: Don’t Publish*: February 6, 2006 [NZH]). These statements also legitimate the actions of Danish Prime Minister who refused to discuss the issue when defending the publication rights of these papers. The *Jyllands-Posten* is not an exception in promoting anti-Muslims racism. For example, some right wing news magazines published in Germany (e.g. *Jung Freiheit* [Young Freedom]) also campaign against Muslims (Pinn, 2000: 101) and the *Jyllands-Posten* follows a similar ideology of those media outlets (Pinn, 2000). All of these media outlets including the Danish one’s attitude towards Islam and Muslims is accepted in these newspapers’ frame. For example, these newspapers showed solidarity with *Jyllands-Posten*, in an effort to promote ‘freedom of expression’, but did so with a superficial understanding of the issue. The newspapers that published the controversial cartoons do not realize that some newspapers promote right wing

politics that fears cultural diversity and social pluralism (van Dijk, 1991) and which embarrasses the ‘Western philosophy’ of liberal views.

Militancy in Photo Coverage

The 9/11 attacks in the US triggered a serious global security alert under which Muslims become the main target (Ramji, 2003: 63). Muslims are, however, framed as a threat to ‘the West’ in pre-9/11 media representation (Said 1978, 1981; Ghareeb, 1977) and this ‘threat’ is also manifest as an aspect of inter-racial relations (Kavaloski, 2007). The fear of Islam, which reinforces negative prejudicial attitudes towards Muslims, can be identified throughout the political history of two cultures—Christianity and Islam—and this has led to over-simplified image of Arabs, Muslims and Islam (Ramji, 2003: 65). Generalizations can also be seen in these newspapers’ coverage. For example, the cartoon issue is conflated with the issue of “extremists” and “Islamic fundamentalists”⁴⁹ and ‘Muslim militancy’ is emphasized in the photographs. Tracing the historical roots of stereotyping and contemporary representation of Muslims, Karim (2006: 116-127) focuses his attention on media occurrences relating to Islam. He maintains (2006: 117) that during the Cold War era the Communist/Communism was seen as a threat to ‘the West’ and after 9/11 Islam replaced as Communism as the dominant threat. He suggests (2006: 121) that the “Islamic terrorist” is a major figure in a typology in which the terrorist “perform[s] in Western dramatic compositions about Muslim societies”. The ‘Islamic terrorist’ or ‘extremist’ threat is also constructed in these newspapers’ frame. In furthering this impression of “extremism”, one particular photo must be mentioned, as it is central to the conflation of the cartoon controversy and the issue of extremism. The headline of

⁴⁹ For these phrases see the following reports: *Danes Told to Quit Indonesia*: February 13, 2006 [ODT]; *Denmark Faces Full Fury Across Muslim World*: (February 1, 2006 [Press]); *Cartoon Fury ‘Gained by Govt Hand’*: February 10, 2006 [NZH]).

the story—*Militant Muslims in Rampage Over Cartoons*,⁵⁰ (ODT)—was not prominent but the photograph was (see Image 1).

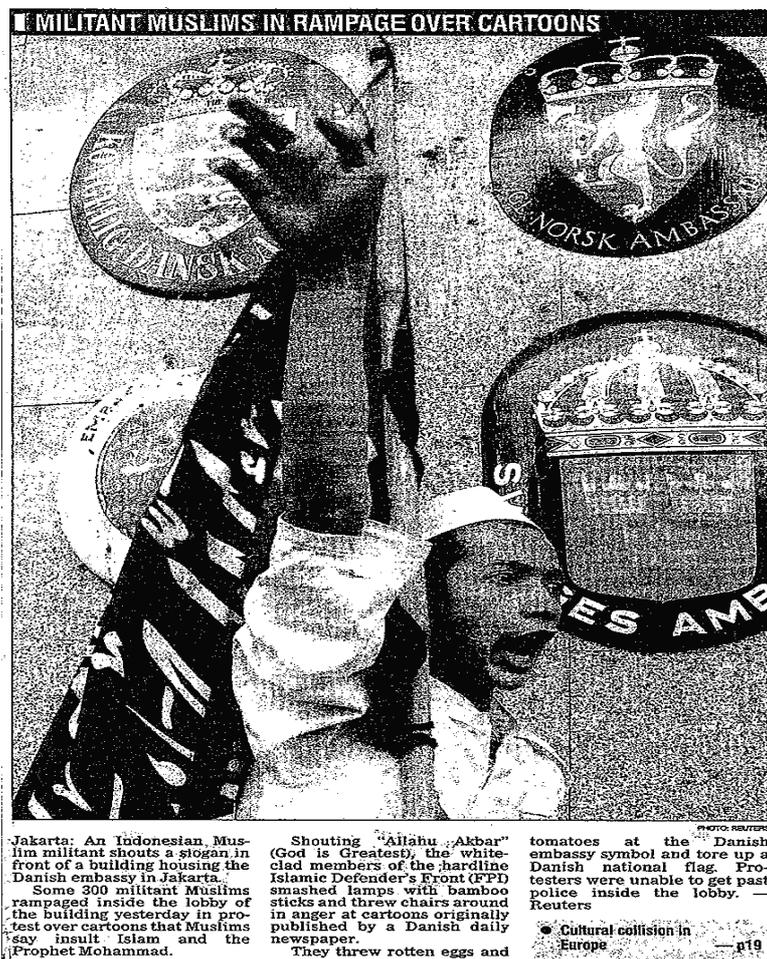


Image 1: ODT Photo-news in Cartoon Controversy

The protester is shown shouting in front of the Danish embassy. The body language and facial expressions of the man⁵¹ (the only person in this photograph) suggests that he was shouting while passing by the front of the embassy, but that he had no intention of attacking the embassy. The juxtaposition of the figure or foreground against background is manipulated and staged. This photograph focuses on some of the Danish symbols that Danish authorities have placed in front of the embassy. This

⁵⁰ This is the first report on the cartoon issue appearing in the *ODT*.

⁵¹ The opening sentence of this photo-story identifies him as “[a]n Indonesian Muslim militant”.

photograph can thus be identified as an illustration of a conflict between “Muslim militants” versus Scandinavia— in other words, “Islamism” versus ‘the West’. Furthermore, Islamic cultural signs—e.g. Muslim women’s *hijab*, men’s beards—are “readily” identified as “signs of religious fundamentalism” and perceived as a potential threat to Western society (Humphrey, 2007: 11). In the photograph above, the man is wearing a religious cap, he is dressed in traditional South Asian Muslim clothes, and carrying a placard written in Arabic— the potential clash is identified through these symbols.

Media shape, reshape and redefine social and cultural meaning (Gavrilos, 2002). They convey racism (van Dijk, 1991; Richardson, 2001), and social discrimination (Gavrilos, 2002: 339-341) through generalization (Hammond, 2007: 148), manipulation (Karim, 2000; Poole, 2002), false information (Kellner, 2005; 2007a: Taylor, 2008), and doctoring images (Fahmy, 2010). For example, the first report appearing in the *Press* on this issue (*Denmark Faces Full Fury Across Muslim World*: February 1, 2006) provides a photograph (Image 2) of Palestinian people burning a Norwegian flag. The photo-caption, however, reads: “Outrage: Palestinian Militants Burn a Norwegian Flag Outside the EU Headquarters in the Gaza Strip Yesterday”. It is hard to identify these people as “militant” unless one reads the caption. However, by engaging manipulation and producing false images media may “traumatiz[e] [citizens] with fear”, through the presentation of a superficial binary between Islamic terrorism and civilization (Kellner, 2004: 44).



Outrage: Palestinian militants burn a Norwegian flag outside the EU headquarters in the Gaza Strip yesterday.

Photo: Reuters

Image 2: *Press Photograph in Cartoon Controversy*

Since 9/11, Western media maintains an organized campaign (Said, 2001; Taylor, 2008) — Islam is a threat, Yasser Arafat and bin Laden are ideologically similar, and ‘the West’ is a victim of Islam (Tariq and Moody, 2009). This kind of campaign comes not only from the manipulation of the images but also through the false interpretation and abuse of the text, context and the event. For example, the first report appearing in the *NZH* (*Muslim Rage at Press Blasphemy*: February 4, 2006) presents a photograph (Image 3) of a Palestinian “gunman”. The photo-caption reads: “NO MERCY: A Fatah Gunman on the Roof of the EU Office in Gaza City” [original upper case]. The caption does not say whether this “Fatah gunman” has taken a position on the controversial cartoons. However, the message conveyed by the photo-caption is that this is an “Islamic militant” issue.

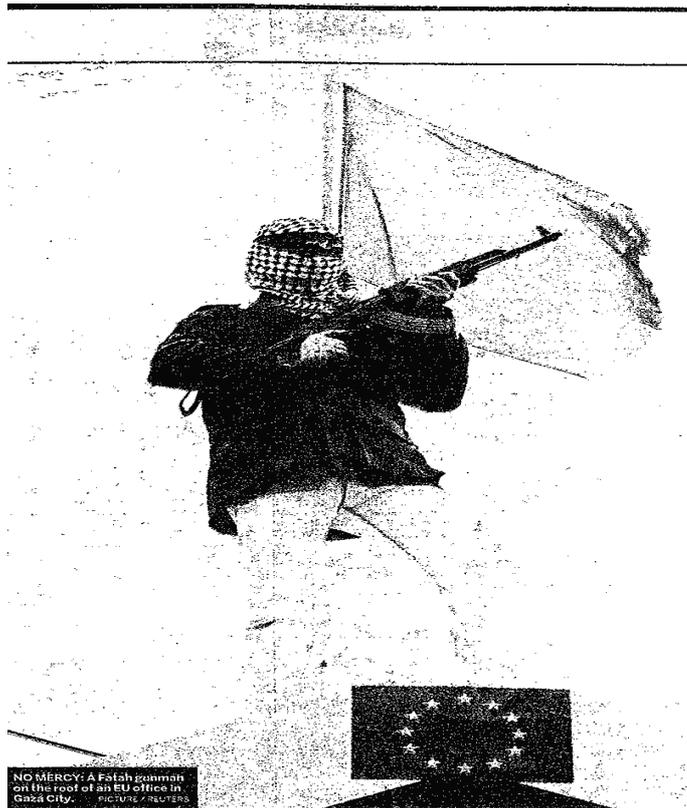


Image 3: NZH Photograph in Cartoon Controversy

In terms of the visual content—that is, photographs—used in covering the controversial cartoon issue, it can be said that visual images impact on public emotion. For example, “a negative image can result in a more negative evaluation” of what is presented in the verbal text (Brantner, Lobinger and Wetzstein, 2011: 526). Visual images that appear as a part of multimodal values impact the reader’s judgment by coloring the issue, the context, and the content, and can even misguide readers’ perception (p. 256).

The Clash of Culture

The relationships between media, politics and society construct a perceived image of the ‘Other’. For example, in most cases, British media representation of Islam and

Muslims, promote anti-Muslim racism (Richardson, 2004: 69). In reporting Muslim affairs, media generalize Muslims in a negative prejudicial way—that is, as a threat (Poole, 2006: 101-102). Poole argues that the images of Islam provided in media texts reinforce the perception that Muslims are not only different from them but also a threat. In this process, media appear to be an influential agent in producing anti-Muslim sentiment amongst non-Muslim citizens, thus promoting a cultural clash (Poole, 2006: 240). In addition, some media outlets produce propaganda voluntarily and sometimes as a collaborator with the government against Muslims (Miller, 2006: 45; d’Haenens and Bink, 2006; Kellner, 2007). ‘Islam’ and ‘Muslims’ are both subjects of negative stereotypical representation in the media and media suggest that there is a clash between cultures (e.g. Said, 1978, 1979, 1981; Artz and Pollock, 1995; Hashem, 1995; Hippler and Lueg, 1995; Hafez, 2000: 28). The New Zealand newspapers’ reports also repeatedly argue that the “Muslim fury” stemming from the cartoon controversy originated from a ‘cultural clash’. As argued above, the cartoon was not initially an issue of “fury” but it became one due to the Dutch Prime Minister’s inaction and refusal to negotiate. However, these newspapers frame the issue ‘cultural clash’. For example, the *ODT* newspaper’s report argues:

Debate over the drawings has come to be seen as a collision between freedom of expression and religious sensitivities in European nations where Muslims have struggled to fit in (*Caricatures Put **Cultural Collision** into Limelight*: February 4-5, 2006 [emphasis added]).

The above excerpt maintains that there is a “collision” between Islam and the West, in which Islam is opposed to freedom of expression. The “cultural collision” is also indicated in the headline of this report— *Caricatures Put Cultural Collision into Limelight*. This report argues that Muslims living in the West are “struggl[ing] to fit

in” and therefore, are not ready yet to understand Western norms. Providing a map of Europe and statistical figures of Muslims living in European nations, the *ODT* report says that the “Muslim backlash” has “jeopardized democratic rights”. This accords with the perception that Islam and ‘the West’ are culturally and ideologically incompatible, and that Muslims are anti-democracy. The images of Islam that some Western media have produced are in some cases explicitly anti-Islamic (Poole, 2000a: 159) and the media presents a distorted image of Islamic culture (Agha, 2000: 220). In addition, media representation of Islam “limits the scope and range of view” of mainstream society members towards Islam and Muslims (Abdallah and Rane, N/D: 2). For example, the *ODT* newspaper’s report (*Caricatures Put Cultural Collision into Limelight* (February 4-5, 2006 [*ODT*]) quotes Swiss cartoonist Patrick Chappalte who says: “[T]hey [that is, Muslims] veil women. Islamic radicals want to veil cartoons in the press”. The frequent presentation of the perceived cultural clash transforms the perception into a fact.

The *Press* reports continue to present the cartoon controversy as a clash between two civilizations:

The clash trigger for the latest clash of cultures was the publication by the Danish newspaper *Jyllends-Posten* on September 30 of 12 cartoons of Muhammad (*Denmark Faces Full Fury Across Muslim World*: February 1, 2006 [*Press*]).

The ‘Western’ mainstream media (e.g. CNN) continually failed to question the ruling elite about “the[ir] systematic lies” that they construct in regards to their political agenda (Kellner, 2005a: 179). Rather, these media outlets constructed the image of a clash of civilizations—namely, Islam versus the West. In addition, in many cases—

for example, the war on terror policy— religion⁵² including Islam is used as a rhetorical instrument to capture public sentiment (Kellner, 2005a). The above excerpt identifies a “clash of cultures” and suggests that the cartoon issue is the “latest” example of this clash. It seems that the clash is ongoing: Muslim communities and states are continually represented through an ‘Othering’ process that generalizes ‘Islam’ and ‘Muslims’ as ‘terrorists’ (Stauth, 1998: 1-2). In media representation, Islamic religious activity (whether it is political or not) is often perceived negatively—as “a lack of commitment to democracy, human rights and women’s rights” (Mishra, 2008: 155). This view of the clash, Islam as an inherently violent religion and the suppression of women’s rights in Islam are overtly presented when the *Press* published two out of the 12 controversial cartoons on the 4-5th of February 2006. One of them shows Prophet Muhammad wearing a bomb-turban (discussed above) while the second one shows the Prophet calling to the suicide bombers: “Stop stop we ran out of virgins!” This implied that it is not only the Muslim community members but also their religion that teaches terrorism and the suppression of women. This identification also accords with Kumar’s argument that “the West” perceives Islam through an Orientalist prism that presents Islam as a “sexist” (2012: 44) and an “inherently violent religion” (p. 52).

In the rhetoric of Muslims versus Europe and ‘the West’, Muslim populations are identified as suspicious (Walker, 2006: 14-15). Some ‘Western’ leaders, media and

⁵² In terms of the instrumental use of religion (other than Islam), “President Bush has often proposed that U.S. morals are synonymous with God’s larger plan” (Froese and Carson, 2009: 103) while some media commentators “proclaim that the Bush Doctrine was ‘God’s foreign policy’” (Ibid, p. 103) in defeating “evil” such as Saddam Hussein or Muslim terrorists.

journalist construct that Muslims are occupying ‘the West’⁵³ (Ho, 2009: 276; Walker, 2006: 15). In addition, demographic figures of the Muslim population are, in some cases, “significantly inflated and unsubstantiated” in media, political and scholarly statements (Alexseev, 2008). The Muslim population is exaggerated in media representation— they are framed in such a way as to suggest that they are dominating or a soon-to-dominate group. During the cartoon controversy the Muslim population was a key focus of the media coverage— some European news media maintain that their countries are at war with the huge Muslim⁵⁴ population (Steien, 2008: 2). In addition, the Muslim population is framed in a manner, which suggests that they are taking advantage of ‘Western generosity’ but are ungrateful (Walker, 2006; Alexseev, 2008; Ho, 2009). For example, the *Press* states that “[t]here are 200,000 Muslims in Denmark and the State has been subsidising many of the[ir] schools” (*Nations Mourns for Lost Tolerance*: February 8, 2006. The clash between the generous state and ungrateful beneficiaries reinforces the perception of a cultural clash.

The *NZH*, as with the *Press* and the *ODT*, identifies Muslim protests about the controversial cartoons as a “clash” between ‘Islam’ and ‘the West’. Kellner (2004: 44-46) argues that media (re)produce the “hysteria of war” between Islam and ‘the West’ without encouraging any debate on how to solve the problem. In current ‘Western’ media discourse, in post-9/11, the hysteria is highly visible and promotes the perception of a clash of civilizations; but as suggested elsewhere this is not new to media. Islam, Muslims and Muslim nations were identified through an Orientalist lens long before the 9/11 attacks (Said, 1978; 1981; Poole, 2002). For example, while the Shah regime of Iran is perceived in ‘the West’ as ‘modern’ due to the supportive

⁵³ See also Europe’s 2004 best-selling book *The Force of Reason*. Italian journalist Oriana Falaci maintains that Europe is now occupied by Muslim populations, thus, she calls Europe “Eurabia”.

⁵⁴ Steien (2008) mentions some Norwegian newspapers’ news headlines— *A Norway Almost at War*: February 12, 2006 (the *Aftenposten*). Editorial headline: *Norway at War*: February 9, 2006 (the *VG*).

ideological perception; the regime before and after the Shah— for example, the Qajar dynasty (1796-1925)— are perceived as “irrational” and a “backward Oriental society” (Keddie, 1998: 1). Media promote the clash between ‘the East’ and ‘the West’ in favour of ‘the Western’ elite agenda even when it requires mis-information (Seymour, 2004: 351). For example, the *NZH* report argues that the Muslim community has a “deep anger” and states that Muslims are “against the freedom of expression” (*France on Edge as Religious Row Reawakens Immigrant Tensions*: February 4, 2006 [*NZH*]). In connection to this, the eyebrow of the first report (*Muslim Rage at Press Blasphemous*: February 4, 2006) of the *NZH*, reads: “Culture Clash: Muhammad Row Heats Up”. The sub-headline reads: “Europeans Steadfast on Freedom to Print Images of Prophet”. This newspaper’s report also implies that this ‘culture clash’ makes this community intolerant with regards to what it sees as “blasphemy”. Whether the Muslim ‘intolerance’ originates from a cultural clash is questionable; as has been argued, it originates more from a lack of negotiation between leaders. However, the overall perception is indicated in a photo-caption of another news story *Where Tyranny is the Best Option* (February 20, 2006), which argues that the cartoon issue was caused by “CULTURE CLASH” [original upper case]. International news reports frequently convey the message that there is a “clash” between “Islam” and “the West”.

Cartoon Controversy in Op-Eds

It has been argued that in the news coverage, these newspapers promote an Orientalist view of a civilizational clash in regards to the Muhammad cartoon. However, the readers of these newspapers can expect ‘many voices’ in the newspaper op-eds. For example, all except one of the seven op-eds appearing in the *ODT* question these

controversial cartoons. Five op-eds appearing in the *Press* question the publication of the controversial cartoons while 11 op-eds accept the publication. Two op-eds appearing in the *NZH* challenge the publication of these cartoons; eight op-eds accept the controversial cartoons. Some illustrative excerpts demonstrate how these newspapers' op-eds question the controversial cartoons:

Muslims have a point when they argue that, on closer inspection, what is touted as freedom of expression and the unfettered freedom of the press is actually applied selectively. [...] Recently, it was in the news that a prominent British holocaust-denier was arrested when he visited Austria, where the promulgation of such views seems to be a criminal offence (*The Liberty to Break Taboos Leads Where?* February 8, 2005 [*ODT*]).

The cartoon showing the Prophet wearing a bomb turban is not only offensive but remarkably unsubtle, badly drawn and not very funny. It is also unfair, implying that an entire world religion is terrorist, rather than a few fanatical adherents (*Fine Line Divides Free Speech and Inciting Racial Hatred*: February 4, 2006 [*Press*]).

As suggested elsewhere many scholars including Hafez (2007) maintain that the 'Western' depiction of Islam is not always negative and in many cases we can find many positive voices on a particular issue (Sharify-Funk, 2009). In the case of New Zealand newspapers' op-eds the readers can also identify 'many voices'. For example, in the first excerpt (*The Liberty to Break Taboos Leads Where?* February 8, 2005) the *ODT* argues that the freedom of expression in 'the West' is controversial, as, from a liberal view, 'the West' reserves the concept of free speech but imposes restrictions in other cases. This op-ed argues that 'the Western' press is selective; indeed, the *ODT* op-ed explicitly says: "Freedom of expression in the West, not surprisingly, looks rather patchy". Five op-eds appearing in the *Press* are critical of these images. For example, the images are observed as "silly drawing[s] that deeply offended a religious community" and the re-publication of the cartoons in New Zealand media is seen as

an “antagonistic act” on the media’s part (*When Free Speech and Faith Clash*: February 8, 2006 [*Press*]), thus challenging the reproduction of the images. Two *NZH* op-eds (e.g. *Muslims Debate those Cartoons*: February 6, 2006 [*NZH*]) frame the event in a similar manner: they argue that the controversial images seriously offended the Muslim community and their religion. All of these op-eds also categorically dismiss the issue as simply a monolithic clash of cultures between ‘Islam’ and ‘the West’.

A number of op-eds however clearly represent the issue as an example of a ‘clash of cultures’. The discussion presented below indicates how these newspapers’ op-eds rationalized their institution’s publication of the cartoons and how they criticized some Muslims’ ‘violent’ reactions. In the *Press* op-eds, the images are not considered offensive; some political leaders, as discussed above in regards to news framing, echo this view. Said (1978) brings to light some critical issues and debates between East and West—for example, the issue of Orientalism. His critical arguments have aroused scholarly attention across the world. In his 1981 work *Covering Islam*, Said analyses the historical development of Western cultural ideas about the Islamic Middle East and delivers a scathing criticism of the ‘Western’ media treatment of Islam. Later scholars such as Karim (2002; 2006); Poole (2002; 2006); Richardson (2004; 2006); Ma (2011) empirically observe that Islam is marginalized, dehumanized and constructed negatively in some ‘Western’ media. The similar depiction can be found in these newspapers. For example, the *Press* suggests that Muslims are “conditioned” by “cultural and religious repression”, that Muslims would never change their “cultural ingrained mentality” (*Why Chocolate Icecream Should be Taken off Menu*: February 4, 2006 [*Press*]). In addition, it is argued that Muslims started the

“Islamisation” of Europe and that there is a “clash of civilization” between the “secular West” and “totalitarian Islam” (*Liberty Under Threat*: February 6, 2006 [Press]). This view accords with the Orientalist perception—that is, that ‘Islam’ is suppressive while ‘the West’ is culturally and ideologically superior and progressive. Such beliefs work to legitimate ‘our’ superiority over ‘them’. As mentioned above, ‘the West’ perceives and depicts Muhammad as a false prophet. In some cases, this perception is still active. ‘Islam’ is therefore identified as a false religion. Dehumanization may occur through cognitive perception. For example, the writer of one op-ed (*When Free Speech and Faith Clash*: February 8, 2006 [Press]) in the *Press* writes “god” (instead of “God”), and the Prophet is identified as a representative of a “supposed god”—that is, the Prophet is described as a “supposed god’s representative on earth” (*When Free Speech and Faith Clash*: February 8, 2006 [Press])—and finally argues that “the West” should not show respect to Islam. Thus, the clash is established at a cognitive level, contrasting ‘our God’ with ‘their god’.

Similar to the above op-ed articles, the *NZH* op-eds maintain that Muslims had “staged a clash” but they should “speak in the way Europe allows them to” (*Liberal Dollop of Double Standard*: February 8, 2006 [NZH])—‘our’ cultural superiority is legitimated. The op-ed further implies that the world is divided into two parts—“Muslims v the Rest” (*Islam’s Followers Must Learn to Live with Blasphemy*: February 9, 2006 [NZH])— thus, the world is divided according to an Orientalist boundary. When identifying the ‘clash’ between Islam and ‘the West’ the *NZH* op-eds frequently argue that Muslims are “intolerant” and support terrorism— thus the Orientalist view of rational versus irrational (Kumar, 2012: 48-49) is reinforced.

The *ODT's* op-eds challenge the controversial cartoon images and reject the perception of a civilizational clash. Conversely, in most cases, the *Press* and the *NZH* maintain that there is a clash between 'Islam' and 'the West'.

Editorial Cartoons

With the exception of the *Press*, the New Zealand newspapers did not publish any of the controversial cartoon images. The *ODT* and the *NZH* refused to publish them but all of these newspapers published their own caricatures that also promoted the clash between 'Islam' and 'the West'. In the context of the controversial cartoons of Prophet Muhammad, the *ODT* and the *Press* published four editorial cartoons (February 6, 7, 8 & 9, 2006). The cartoon that appears on February 6, 2006 depicts a (Muslim) butcher cutting off the cartoonists' hands one after another. However, it seems that the 'butcher' is unable to stop the cartoonist's hand—as the cut hands are still shown writing. Other cartoons focus on New Zealand's relationships with foreign nations (for example, trading with Muslim nations), and intercultural relations in New Zealand (for example, with Muslims and others).

The *NZH* cartoons imply that religious sensitivity is limiting the press' freedom of expression. For example, one cartoon (February 6, 2006) depicts a paint brush (labeled "religious sensitivity"), painting over (with black ink) all the areas of a cartoonist's space—which would have been used for drawing something. The verbal text of the cartoon reads: "A cartoonist's today; everyone else's tomorrow". The text and the image suggest that today these Muslims want to stop one cartoonist, but in future they will stop everybody. The overall message is clear—Muslims are against peace and freedom of expression.

While cartoon images in earlier issues provide a constructive image of Islam, in this case they maintain a negative image of Islam, and thus, parallel news reports, which promote the ‘civilizational clash.’

Letters to the Editor

The *ODT* published 17 letters to the editor, which related to the cartoon controversy. Three letters suggested that Muslims are intolerant and that terrorism is a fundamental component of this religion. The remaining 14 letters challenge the caricatures. The *Press* published 82 letters to the editor in relation to this issue. Forty-four letters appearing in the *Press* criticize the publication of the cartoons. In contrast, 38 letters support the publication of these caricatures. The *NZH* published 48 letters to the editor. While 23 readers question the controversial cartoons, 22 readers maintain that publishing the cartoons was important in relation to freedom of expression. The other three letters reject both publishing the caricatures and Muslims’ reactions to this issue. In some cases, for the construction and negotiation of identity, religion plays an “effective cultural artefact” role in ethnic, immigrant and minority communities (Byng, 2008: 660). Thus, Hoover (2003: 12-13) argues that the “form and boundaries” of religion are expanding and changing as the “world of media” (Hoover, 2003: 12-13) evolves. The discussion presented below demonstrates how the social negotiation is constructed and how it is rejected.

Questioning the Publication

When discussing the depiction of two editorial cartoons in the *ODT*, which made reference to Muslims’ responses to the controversial cartoons, letter writers of the *ODT* were positive about Muslim values and criticized the editorial cartoons. For

example, one letter writer considers the editorial cartoon “distasteful” and says that there was no reason to provoke Muslim sentiments in the *ODT* cartoon (Najib Lafraie: February 13, 2006), while another argued that “no responsible newspaper should have published it” (June Sim: February 14, 2006 [*ODT*]). A different letter (Mathew Stephen: February 9, 2006 [*ODT*]) observes that “some newspapers published cartoons that they knew would hurt the feelings of Muslims” and “it’s quite simply a matter of some Western newspapers being rude”. Another writer argued that Garrick Tremain, the editorial cartoonist of the *ODT*, “should have rested his pen” (Margaret Cossens: February 16, 2006).

The *Press* letters to the editor argue that “republishing the images wasn’t insulting just to Islam, but to the intelligence of *Press* readers and writers” (Mike Kemp: February 8, 2006). Letters contend that the publication and republication of these cartoons in the name of freedom of expression is “suspicious” (Mike Kemp: February 8, 2006) and “fairly doubtful” (David Ingram: February 8, 2006). One letter says that the decision to publish these cartoons shows the “breathtaking arrogance” of the editor of the *Press*, and argues that it is “irresponsible and foolish” when New Zealand is trying to promote “racial and religious harmony, respect for all cultures and religious beliefs” (Vivien Graham, February 8, 2006). In addition, letters argue that the *Press* “dress[ed] up” the “freedom of the press” and this is “shameful” and “childish” (Dennis Greville: February 8, 2006).

The *NZH* letter writers also argue that the publication is “insensitive” and runs counter to a peaceful co-existence in a multicultural society, and these readers give their “full support” not to publish the controversial cartoons in any news media. For example, one writer says: “I am hurt and dismayed by these insincerities” (Iain Powrie: February 7, 2006) and “your decision not to publish the cartoons has my full

support” (S. Thompson: February 7, 2006). The writers of the letters suggest that the publication of these cartoons will harm the multicultural philosophy in New Zealand and around the world. Readers hold that this is not “objective reporting”; rather it is a “deliberate mocking” (Norm and Liz Silcock: February 7, 2006), arguing that “[t]he first promotes reasoned debate, the second displays arrogance”. Letter writers assert that “[t]he New Zealand papers which published the Muhammad cartoons have done the wrong thing. This is a sure way of inciting racial hatred” (Johannes Jenje: February 7, 2006). The Orientalist perception of ‘Islam’— ‘threat of Islam’— is rejected in the letters writers’ view. By rejecting the controversial cartoon images a reader can perceive the mutual understanding between social groups and the perception of peaceful co-existence in the civilization.

Accepting the Publication

The letter writers’ responses do not always exhibit positive attitudes towards Muslim values. In many cases, letters to the editor challenge Muslim beliefs. For example, one the *ODT* letter maintains that Muslims “bigots” need to understand “Western norms” (Peter Min: February 22, 2006). The *Press* letters maintain that the West “must not buckle to threats to our lives” (Heather Carter: February 8, 2006), and gives “top marks to the *Press*” for publishing these caricatures (Bruce Williamson: February 8, 2006). Letters argue that Islam is a “rigid, intolerant, and seemingly humourless religion” that is “incompatible” with the West’s “hard-earned freedom” (Marc Fibbens: February 9, 2006). Some letter writers argue that Muslims should go “back ...[to] an Islamic state” (e.g. Mike Lyons; February 8, 2006).

The letter writers in the *NZH* imply that Muslims are intolerant and that they belong to a “sick religion” (G. Evans: February 7, 2006). One *NZH* letter writer (Michael

Pether: February 9, 2006) maintains that Muslims have displayed a “naked aggression” with regards to these cartoons. The *NZH* is blamed for not publishing these cartoons and it is argued that this newspaper has taken an unjustified policy in not publishing these cartoons (Sally Trafford: February 9, 2009). Writers argue that Islam has failed to deal with other cultures (Alan Charman: February 6, 2006) and that the leaders of Muslim communities “promise martyrdom and a ticket to heaven to the suicide bomber” (Leo Swart: February 6, 2006). Some writers argue that the *NZH* has undermined the Western value of ‘freedom of speech’ by promoting “Middle Eastern values” of censorship (Cameron Stater: February 6, 2006).

Through the above mentioned discussion in relations to the letter writers’ view, it can be said that the two neighbours—Islam and the West—sometimes seem to be involved in clashes; however, sometimes we see harmony between them. In both cases media take part in either producing the perception of a clash or reinforcing mutual understanding (Hoover, 2006; Sharify-Funk, 2009). The media as a social institution has contributed to the perception of clashes and mutual understanding since its birth, and in this century the relations between media, religion, culture and society have become closely connected than ever (Hoover, 2006: 1). Similarly, the letter writers in these newspapers produce a pluralistic view— in some cases they maintain the idea that there is a clash between Islam and the West; while in other cases they suggest an alternative perception that implicitly support Islamic norms.

The Muhammad Cartoon Issue in Editorials

In this regard, to understand the relations between media and Islam as a religion and Muslims as a community, it is important to conceptualize how these agents or institutions construct, symbolize and explain Islam and Muslims’ issues through their

own expression— editorials. Therefore, this sections intends to draw on discussions concerning the way Islam is represented in the New Zealand newspapers in the context of controversial cartoon issue and what meaning the media represents to its audience. ‘Many voices’ can be found in editorials from these newspapers— some of them perceive a clash between ‘Islam’ and ‘the West’, while others do not. In the context of the cartoon controversy, the *ODT* published one editorial, the *NZH* published eight and the *Press* published four editorials. The way these newspapers’ editorials perceive the cartoon issue can be seen in the discussion presented below.

In contrast to their news items, the newspapers’ editorials promote mutual understanding and a sense of co-existence. For example, the *ODT* editorial (*Islam and Us*: February 8, 2006 [*ODT*]) primarily discusses why censorship is at times important. Therefore, this newspaper creates space for an explanation behind this newspaper’s decision not to publish the controversial cartoons. The *ODT* argues that censorship sometimes occurs for the betterment of society. It observes that the publications of these cartoons elsewhere, including in New Zealand media, was “wrong” (*Islam and Us*: February 8, 2006). The editorial writer argues that freedom of expression is important but that it must be applied for the value of our society and we should not disrespect the values of a particular community in the name of freedom of speech, which is also a responsibility of the press.

It needs to be mentioned that our civilization advances through negotiation between groups and that these groups continuously consult one another to enrich civilization so that understanding might take place (Hoover, 2006). Thus, we saw in the discussion above how the *ODT* editorial perceives the event. A similar view of the *ODT* towards Muslim communities can also be identified in the *NZH* editorials that oppose the Orientalist perception of the Islamic threat and reject the perceived

‘civilizational clash.’ For example, the *NZH* editorial praises the New Zealand Muslim communities, who have shown a sensibility and politeness in respect to this issue (*Muslims’ Restraint Admirable*: February 9, 2006 [*NZH*]). The title of another editorial (*Why We did not Run those Cartoons*: February 4, 2006 [*NZH*]) also indicates why the paper decided not to publish the controversial cartoons. This editorial argues that Muslims are minorities in the West and media have the power to offend them. The editorial argues that these cartoons have produced a “nasty taste”; that some media outlets have intentionally published these controversial images to offend Islam. The *NZH* editorial also observes that these cartoons are “offensive” and “had been commissioned to challenge Islamic sensitivity” (*It’s All About Context*: February 6, 2006).

Opposing voices can be seen in the *Press* editorials which (re)construct the Orientalist perception of the Muslim Other. For example, the *Press* editorial identifies a “clash of civilisation” between “Western secularism and Islamic fundamentalism”. Many scholarly documents observe that ‘the West’ maintains an Orientalist clash in their ‘texts’ that legitimates the ‘Western’ superiority against the non-West (Said 1978, 1981; Richardson, 2001, 2004; 2006; Poole, 2002, 2006; Kumar, 2012, 2010; Maira, 2008). This fact is also seen in the *Press*’ editorials. The *Press* maintains ‘Western’ ideological and cultural superiority its editorials. For example, this newspaper’s editorial maintains that the “secular Western World” is different from the Muslim world because Islam is traditional (*In Danger of a Cold War with Islam*: February 11, 2006). Said (1981) argues that the construction of Muslim societies by the Western media, and demonstrates that reporting on Muslim countries has been ill-equipped to provide a clear understanding of Muslim societies. This editorial reinforces the belief that ‘Islam’ and ‘the West’ are not compatible as Islam is inferior and a threat to ‘the

West'. The way, 'Muslim terrorism' has been represented and generalized in various media seems to suggest, in certain ways, that all Muslims are possible terrorists (Hammond, 2007: 148). The racialised perception produced by the media can also be identified in the rhetoric of some Western leaders— for example, "His [US President George Bush's] rhetoric [is] built on stereotypical words and images already established in more than 20 years of media and popular culture portrayals" of Muslims and Islam (Merskin, 2004: 157). In addition, former Australian Prime Minister John Howard asked immigrant people to be integrated in the Western society but mainly targeted Muslim immigrants, saying, "There's a small section of the Islamic population which is unwilling to integrate and I have said generally all migrants ... have to integrate" (Kerbaj 2006; cited in Humphrey, 2007). Similar to the elite political agenda, "The sharp differences" between Muslims and "the West" are identified in this editorial—"militant Islam is on the rise", producing terrorism, which works against "secular democracy", "personal liberty" and "free speech" (*In Danger of a Cold War with Islam*: February 11, 2006 [*Press*]). Thus, "Islam" and "the West" are positioned as opponents with the West presented as progressive and secular. The elite agenda is established.

Summary

In terms of news framing, these newspapers maintain that there is a clash of civilizations in which 'Islam' conflicts with 'the West.' This perception legitimates the Orientalist boundary between 'us' and 'them', and 'our' superiority is legitimated. In establishing 'our' superiority 'our' social actor's voice was repeatedly presented as a defender of 'freedom of speech' and the publication and republication of the cartoons was accepted without recognizing the root of the issue—that is, the political

and ideological intention behind the *Jyllands-Posten*'s decision to publish. The (re)publication of the cartoons, without reference to their original political context, was accepted despite knowing that the cartoons contained anti-Islamic values and that the Muslim community would be offended. In addition, by advocating the Western liberal view of freedom of expression, these newspapers have legitimated the far-right political ideology that challenges liberal ideology.

The non-news items appearing in these newspapers promote a more nuanced and pluralistic view—in some cases they legitimate the publications while in other cases challenge them. The *ODT* editorial questions the publication of the controversial images. This is also the case for the op-eds appearing in the *ODT*. In all cases, the *Press* editorials suggest that Islam and the West are contradictory in terms of their ideologies and politics and that there is a clash between them. In most cases, the op-eds parallel this view of a clash between Islam and the West. The *NZH* editorial parallels the *ODT* by producing a constructive view of the issue and by rejecting the perceived clash between Islam and the West. The *NZH* op-eds, however, in most cases produced the perception of a clash of cultures. Letter writers, however, in most cases question the newspaper's decision to republish the images.

3. The Iran Nuclear Issue

This section examines the representation of Iran's nuclear program in the New Zealand newspapers being studied, and determines how the events, actors and issues have been represented. More specifically it examines how the nuclear issue has been framed using 'Islamic threat' rhetoric. The nuclear Iran issue can be identified as an important current issue with regards to international relations. This issue was covered extensively in the New Zealand newspapers. The *ODT* published 46 news stories and

11 op-eds, the *Press* published 71 news stories, 14 op-eds and two editorials, and the *NZH* published 81 news stories, 15 op-eds, and seven editorials (three of which were retrieved from foreign newspapers).

Iran insists its nuclear program is non-military, and that it would save their oil reserves, which would enable them to increase foreign revenues (Moshirzadeh, 2007: 524). Some Western nations are not convinced by Iran's explanation for their nuclear program however, and argue that Iran has ambitions to manufacture nuclear bombs under the mask of its claimed civil nuclear program (Araz and Ozbay, 2008; Moshirzadeh, 2007). Iran's nuclear success is identified as a "mortal blow" to these Western nations in regards to their Middle Eastern policies—according to which Iran is opposed politically and economically (Araz and Ozbay, 2008: 47).

Some Western elite nations insisted upon attacking Iran; the US, for example, allocated funds to "regime change promotion" in Iran (Nasr and Takeyb, 2008: 85-86). This section is therefore necessary in order to understand the position the New Zealand newspapers have taken when representing Iran's nuclear issue. Scholarly findings (e.g. Kothari, 2010; Hawkins 2009; Wall, 1997) argue that 'Western' mainstream media follow the US and UK's mainstream media, and serve (ideologically and culturally) the interests of these two nations and the greater 'West'. This section thus examines how proximity—e.g. of culture— can be influential in news representation. In addition, this section discusses how Iranian issues are identified and linked with Islamic issues, which in turn creates a boundary between 'the West' and the Islamic 'Other'. In the following section I provide a summary of the scholarly literature on Iran's nuclear policy.

Iran's Nuclear Background

Iran's nuclear program started during the Shah regime of Muhammad Reza Pahlavi in the 1950s with the support of the US. Later in 1968 Iran signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The US encouraged Iran in its development of non-oil energy and provided technologies to establish a nuclear reactor (Izadi and Saghaye-Biria, 2007: 145). US support was withdrawn after the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979. Russia came to Iran's aid, helping them to develop a nuclear program and Iranian-Russian talks regarding the nuclear project resumed in 1990. Previously, many nations including Germany, France, UK, India and Belgium had contributed to this project (Araz and Ozbay, 2006: 133). Since 1995, Russia has been the only nation involved in Iran's nuclear program, and since then this issue has become a subject of 'Western' concern (Araz and Ozbay, 2006: 132-133). Iran has ignored these concerns however and has continued to develop its nuclear resources (Sauer, 2008: 290). The 'Western' concern about the nuclear issue is multifaceted—for example, it is clear that Iran is gaining influence in the Middle East. The perceived influence of Iran in the Middle East, however, was also encouraged by the US to counter Communism (Kibaroglu, 2007). Due to some Western nations' mistrust of Iran, the US and Israel threatened Iran with military action. Furthermore the US and some European nations threatened to enact decades-long sanctions on Iran if they did not do as they wanted. Iran, in contrast, vehemently argues that its nuclear project is 'peaceful' and that Iran has the right to conduct nuclear activity.

'Us' and 'Them' Identification

The Islamic nature of Iran is usually emphasized with the use of specific terms such as "Islamic Republic/republic", "cleric regime", "fundamentalist regime", and "ultra-

conservatives”⁵⁵. As mentioned in Chapter 2 images of an enemy function in human society to construct perceptions of an opponent within social groups. The image of the ‘enemy’ has a very intimate role in the field of international politics, legitimating one side while dehumanizing the other (Hase, 1997: 140; Bech, 1997: 66-67) and influencing the authority of power inside and outside of a particular state (Hase, 1997). An ‘enemy’ or ‘opponent’ becomes the main focus of political and policy agendas. Such an “enemy” incorporates any negative qualities and always possesses qualities, which *we* do not want to see in *ourselves* (Stein, 1989 and Volkan, 1990). Furthermore, any action of an “enemy” is seen as an action directed against ‘us’. Their activities are always suspicious and are readily questioned. The New Zealand newspapers’ reports represent Iran as a threat to the world; it is described according to the rhetoric of ‘us’ and ‘them’. The following examples are useful in demonstrating this argument:

The diplomatic changes are part of a government shake-up by ultra-conservative President Ahmadinejad that includes putting Islamic hard-liners in key posts at security agencies.

Mr Ahmadinejad has steered Iran into a more confrontational stance in its dealings with other nations, particularly in suspicion about whether Iran’s nuclear programme is illicitly trying to develop nuclear weapons, a charge the regime denies (*Iran Hard-line Regime Fires 40 Ambassadors*: November 4, 2005 [ODT]).

Iran announced yesterday that it was removing 40 ambassadors from their posts abroad and indicated a farther hardening of the regime’s policies by preparing a new phase in its nuclear program (*Nuclear Plans on Course After Purge of Diplomats*: November, 4, 2005 [Press]).

Iran’s government is pursuing a nuclear development programme, stoking fears among major powers that it will be used to make nuclear weapons (*President Issues Threat of Nuclear Attack*: January 21-22, 2006 [Press]).

⁵⁵ These examples, along with other terms, will be presented in both this and subsequent sections.

Iran's hardline government is removing 40 ambassadors and senior diplomats, including supporters of warmer ties with the West, as part of a widescale purge that has pushed reformists out of key security ministries (*The New Iranian Revolution*: November 4, 2005 [NZH]).

[Though] “not definitive[,] it is strongly suggestive that Iran has made significant advancement towards weaponisation”, said one US official (*Stolen Laptop Used to Damn Iran*: November 14, 2005 [NZH]).

The choice of language/words, creating myth etc. are socially constructed—“express[ion] of prevailing ideas, ideologies, values and beliefs”—to uphold dominant ideology (Lule, 2002: 277). The cultural superiority of the storyteller must be preserved in myth/language. Thus, we see how an invasion of a nation is accepted in media narrative (Kellner, 2004; 2005). The narrative often helps the audience to perceive the world through the prism of the storytellers' ideological and cultural perception (Lule, 2002). However, tellers' narratives legitimate elite agenda. The first examples from the *ODT*, the *Press* and the *NZH* suggest that Iran's diplomatic position—the replacement of diplomats—is a “shake-up” for the West⁵⁶. The *NZH* report – *The New Iranian Revolution*: November 4, 2005 – states that it was the decision of Iran's president to “[put] Islamic hard-liners” in key security posts. The diplomatic re-shaping of this country is not accepted, and the changing of its diplomats and diplomatic strategies are identified as an indication of a “confrontational stance” with ‘the West’. In addition, the replacement of the Iranian diplomats is perceived as equivalent/parallel to the 1979's Islamic revolution in the narratives—i.e. it is referred to as the ‘new revolution’. Since the establishment of Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979, this nation has been called an anti-Western

⁵⁶ The phrase “shake-up” can also be found in the *Press* report (*Nuclear Plans on Course After Purge of Diplomats*: November, 4, 2005) and the *NZH* report (*The New Iranian Revolution*: November 4, 2005) and sub-headings.

‘Islamist’ country and identified as an enemy of ‘the West’ (Rashidi and Rasti, 2012; Said, 1981; 2003; Debashi, 2009) due to the ‘Islamic’ nature of its political structure (Said, 1981/1995; Keddi, 1998). The image of Iran as an ‘enemy’, in fact, legitimates ‘the Western’ political agenda as it was once worked for ‘the West’ against Russia during Cold War era (Karim, 2000; Poole, 2002). This identification parallels with the clash of civilization thesis, which argues that a clash will occupy the world/international relation (O’Hagan, 2002: 1) after the Cold War era. The concept of the ‘clash’ suggests that only ‘the West’ is rational (Ibid, p.1) and therefore, what ‘the West’ perceives to be good, is also right for the rest of the world (Ibid, p. 1). However, their political agenda towards spoiling ‘democratic’ norm in the ‘non-West’ is absent in the discourse. For example, in 1953, a democratic regime in Iran was overthrown with the involvement of CIA (The *Guardian*, 2013; Lee, 2013) and a ‘Western-friendly regime’— the Shah— was placed instead. ‘The West’ received control over Iranian oil from its ‘friend’ (that is what ‘the West’ was unable to gain before and after the Shah). In 1979 with the overthrow of ‘the friend’ by ‘the Islamist’ however, the distrust begins to build again. Since then ‘the West’ is suspicion of Iran’s activities—and promotes the view that what Iran does is against ‘the West’ and ‘the world’ (O’Hagan, 2002; Karim, 2000). Media join this elite discourse in perpetuating elite agenda through Orientalist perception of the Islamic Other (Izadi and Saghaye-Biria: 2007: 161; Lee, 2013). For example, the portrayal of Iran appears in the context of the US accusation that “Iran [was] secretly trying to develop atomic arms in violation of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty” (*Iran Hard-line Regime Fires 40 Ambassadors*: November 4, 2005 [ODT]). The photo-caption of the NZH report reinforces the Western policy line, reading: “EXTREME VISION: Ultraconservative President Mahmood Ahmadinejad’s broom has swept through the

security ministries” [original upper case]. This kind of construction suggests that Iran’s nuclear advancement (and whatever else they do) is cause for suspicion.

The “social [and] symbolic power of words” (Lule, 2002: 276) indeed appears when these newspapers represent the ‘anti-West’ enemy according to the ‘Western’ political agenda— even without authentic information. For example, two issues appear in the above-mentioned excerpts—the US accusations and suspicion, and the diplomatic reshuffle of Iran. Both suggest that Iran has adopted a position against “the West”. The symbols that a text carries and the message it wants to convey for social consumption legitimates the narrator’s ideology and creates a purposive meaning which favors the narrator’s construction of the event (Choudhury, 2004: 78) and also perpetuates the elite agenda. For example, the US official quoted in the second example (and indeed in all cases) suggests that s/he is not sure⁵⁷ whether Iran is advancing any nuclear weapon program but s/he is skeptical about the innocence of Iran’s nuclear program. The source is anonymous here—that is, s/he has “asked not to be named”. The framing, however, shows that the US suspects Iran is planning to manufacture a nuclear bomb. The nuclear program and the diplomatic changes Iran is implementing are defined as “Islamic”— a perception that comes through the ‘enemy’ image of Iran that parallels the construction of an Islamic Other. ‘Our’ perceived threat is presented as a fact. In contrast, ‘their’ explanation—namely, that the nuclear program is peaceful and “intended only to produce electricity”—is categorically rejected (*Iran Hard-line Regime Fires 40 Ambassadors*: November 4, 2005 [ODT]⁵⁸). The reader can see the myth making process and the particular interpretation (Goc, 2009: 4) that projects the ‘enemy’ image through suspicion. The interpretation legitimates the

⁵⁷ In most cases, these newspapers reports maintain that it is not “definitive” but “strongly suggestive” that Iran is advancing towards a nuclear bomb. See for the *ODT* reference, for example, *US Claims Iran Advancing Nuclear Arms Plans*: November 14, 2005.

⁵⁸ For similar narratives see: *MPs Threaten to Pull Out of Nuclear Treaty*: May 9, 2006 (*Press*); *Bush Planning Nuclear Strike Against Iran*: April 10, 2006 (*NZH*).

elite's authority. For example, in *US Claims Iran Advancing Nuclear Arms Plans*: November 14, 2005 (*ODT*), the reporter argues: "there should be increased international pressure on Tehran to end the program". The *NZH* reports: "The President [George W. Bush] said "the world **must not** permit" Iran to develop a nuclear weapon and said Tehran was being "held hostage" by "Islamic clerics" (*Bush Vows to End Addiction to Mideast Oil*: February 2, 2006 [emphasis added]). The *Press* reports: "George W. Bush declared in his State of the Union address that 'the nations of the world **must not** permit the Iranian regime to gain nuclear weapons' [...]" (*Defiant Iran Warns World*: February 3, 2006 [emphasis added]). 'Our' authority over 'them' can be seen in the emphasized words. This, in fact, reinforces political world order equivalent to cultural world order— 'Islam' versus 'the West' (O' Hagan, 2002: 4). However, the "international pressure" from "the world" is in reality, "pressure" from the US, Israel and three European nations—France, the UK and Germany. In addition, the generalization of "the West" is limited to the US, the UK, France and Germany. The ideological leanings of international news agencies towards some elite nations are prominently focused upon in this context. The power of the texts is evident through the sensationalization of the issue— the isolation of Iran from 'the world' and the assertion that Iran is doing something, which will harm 'the world'. The narratives support elite nations' agenda against Iran by constructing the Islamic Other.

Untrustworthy Islamic State

'Western' mainstream media represent Iran through the Cold War discourse— that is that, Iran is Islamist and a threat to 'the West' (Lee, 2013; Karim, 2000). In political communication some identity based terms such as Islam, the West etc. are frequently

used in defining the clash between civilizations (O'Hagan, 2002: 39). This issue needs to be discussed in the context of the New Zealand newspapers. The New Zealand newspapers' reports maintain the suspicion that Iran cannot be trusted with its nuclear program. This perpetuates the Orientalist view of threat, despite the fact that "Iran had not yet purified uranium" (*Iran Threatens to Halt Nuclear Inspections*: February 2, 2006 [ODT]). The US officials are not able to confirm "the timetable" indicating *when* Iran may start its "nuclear bomb" project, instead saying that the "Islamic Republic had the money and sophisticated scientific personnel to complete the work" (*Told to Remove Cameras*: February 8, 2006 [ODT]). These New Zealand newspapers' reports however say that "the world" cannot trust this "Islamic" (*Iran Has Bomb Training Camps*: October 13, 2005[NZH]), "ultraconservative" (*Iran Insists: Wipe Out Israel*: October 29, 2006 [Press]) "Islamic Republic" (*Reports Indicate Solid Case Against Iran*: March 4-5, 2006 [ODT]). 'We' are making decisions on the basis of a perception of untrustworthiness. The following examples show the way in which these newspapers' reports further reinforce the perception of 'untrustworthiness.' These kinds of statements appear frequently in these newspapers:

Iran has repeatedly said it only wants to enrich uranium to the low grade needed to generate electricity, not to the much higher level needed for a bomb (*Bid to Break Impasse*: March 2, 2006 [ODT]).

The United States and European Union fear Iran's nuclear power program is a cover for making nuclear weapons. Iran says it needs the technology to generate electricity (*Iran Seeking Nuclear Weapons, Says Report*: January 5, 2006 [NZH]).

The West suspects Iran is seeking nuclear arms, Tehran says its atomic programme aims only to generate electricity.

Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said nuclear weapons were against Islamic teachings, but he vowed to pursue atomic energy (*Iran Scorns EU's Draft*: January 20, 2006 [Press]).

Through the use of language one can see the workings of an inclusion/exclusion process and the media manipulation of the content, context and event. For example, the 1953 coup against democratically elected President M. Mossadegh was constructed as a popular uprising against an “incompetent” leader (Lee, 2013: 6). In fact, the overthrow of the Mossadegh regime and establishment of the Shah was due to the UK-US political and economic agenda—controlling Iranian oil—that was continually supported and legitimated in ‘the Western’ media construction (Ibid, p. 6-7). In the ‘Western’ media frame, however, the overthrow of the Shah regime is perceived as the ‘enemy agenda’ (Lee, 2013; Keddie, 1998: 6) of Islamic fundamentalists. Since then Iran has been identified as the ‘enemy’ and a ‘threat’ to ‘the West’ (Rashidi and Rasti, 2012). This identification, nonetheless, legitimates ‘the Western’ elite agenda against Iran, a process which can be traced back to 1953 (Lee, 2013; Keddie, 1998). This also seems to be the case for New Zealand. The above excerpts indicate that, according to Iran, Iran’s only aspiration is to build facilities to provide citizens with electricity. However, the excerpts also question this assertion—stating that this plant can also be converted to create nuclear weapons. This implies that Iran’s officially stated aspirations to build civilian electricity plants are false, and that this “Islamic nation” is therefore intending to deceive. A particular social group may create a boundary around them and their institutions such as media who legitimate the construction of that boundary. This eventually constructs a perceived clash between groups (Simons, 2010: 393). The clash is focused upon through the various activities of the social elites that perpetuate elite political agenda. For example, the former US President Bush perceived his enemy in the streets of Baghdad and he proposed that until ‘the enemy’ was defeated, the clash would remain (Ibid, p.

394). In his speeches⁵⁹ he uses terms such as ‘Islamists’, ‘Islamism’, ‘axis of evil’ (e.g. Iran), all of which refer to ‘the enemy’ (Ansari, 2007: 108). To defeat ‘the enemy’ political elites need to set their agenda— which in this case is a fear of Islamist/Islam (Simons, 2010: 394). In the ‘West’ Iran is identified as ‘Islamist Iran’ or as a ‘totalitarian’ nation (Ansari, 2007: 107). Social institutions perpetuate political agenda against ‘the enemy’. President Bush framed the Iraq invasion as a war against a “civilizational enemy” (Simons, 2010: 406)⁶⁰, which included the ‘Islamist’ including ‘Islamist Iran’. The elite-supportive social institutions legitimate the elite agenda. For example, these newspapers parallel the political elite or “Western fears”— “Iran will use its civilian nuclear program” for military purposes (*Iran’s Nuclear Research Raises Prospect of Sanctions*: January 12, 2006 [NZH]).⁶¹ Nonetheless, Iran is represented as a future threat with its nuclear program even with its current peaceful project. This is an extreme position that rejects Iran’s right to any kind of nuclear energy. The news reports appearing in these newspapers framed the issues through the news value of perceived consequences (Entman, 2003; 2004)—any kind of nuclear program in Iran is constructed as a threat for “the world” and thus, Iran continues to be seen as an untrustworthy nation. This position seems to show that the framing is not only against the possibility of Iranian nuclear bombs, but also against its civilian project. The moral authority is given to some Western elite nations

⁵⁹ See for example, President Bush’s address in Fort Bragg (North Carolina) delivered on June 28, 2005. In addition, in his March 19, 2003 “War Message”, President Bush maintains that US is confronting ‘enemy’ and it has sent troops to Iraq to establish peace etc. Almost all of President Bush’s speeches can be found on at: www.PresidentialRethoric.com

⁶⁰ Discussing the political use of the ‘clash’ Simons (2010: 406) observes how some Western political leaders use it for their agenda: Bush has used terms like this on a number of occasions: ‘it is the decisive ideological struggle of the 21st century and the calling of our generation’ and ‘it is a struggle for civilization. We are fighting to maintain a way of life enjoyed by free nations’.

⁶¹ Similar messages can be found in other newspapers. For example, the *Press* suggests that the “traditional religious conservative” Iran has ambitions to manufacture nuclear bombs (*Call to Wipe Israel Off Map*: October 28, 2005). The *NZH* reports that the nuclear projects of this “Islamic Republic” ... “could eventually result in production of a nuclear weapon” (*Ahmadinejad: Israel Cannot Continue to Live*: April 26, 2006).

through the frame of ‘good’ versus ‘bad’ in which the elite nations are morally superior (Entman, 2004). These Western nations play the role of ‘defender of the world’ against the ‘threat’ of Iran. This fear, actually, comes from the Orientalist perceptions—the “traditional religion” of Islam versus the ‘modern’ West.

Policy Recommendations

The discussion above proves that Western elites were successful in framing their agenda against Iran through international news agencies. The success of the elite agenda can also be identified through policy recommendations given by the news reports. For example, according to the report *US Attack on Iran Seen as Last Option* (January 17, 2006 [ODT]), it might not be possible to destroy Iran’s nuclear projects because “much of it is underground” and “dispersed in numerous sites”. The suspicion eventually presents the consequences—the ‘Islamist enemy’ wants to bomb us. The report suggests that it is better to bomb ‘them’ before ‘they’ bomb ‘us’. The selective representation of ‘our’ good action—that is bombing Iran is legitimated and acceptable as harmless. In contrast, Iran’s civilian nuclear plant is framed as dangerous or ‘bad’. This kind of selective frame of media text promotes the Othering of Iran (Said, 1993: 80-82; O’Hagan, 2002; 12). ‘The Western’ media provide cohesive voice in perpetuating political agenda (O’Hagan, 2002; 4; Louw, 2004). For example, these newspapers identified some common issues that could destabilize ‘Western’ interests. For example, “an attack on Iran could inflame anti-Americanism” across the world and it will “launch new attacks” on “the West” (*US Attack on Iran Seen as Last Option*: January 17, 2006). Such an attack will also “inflame US problems in [the] Muslim world” (*Spy Plane Shot Down Over Iran*: April 11, 2006) because what the Iranian President says about “the West” is repeated to the people

living in “Algiers to Islamabad” (*Man of People is West’s Biggest Fear*: January 18, 2006). The non-West and more specifically ‘Islam’ is depicted as an exotic ‘Other’ (Nashef, 2012: 80) and the perceived view ‘the West’ possesses of ‘non-Western’ countries. Islam can be viewed within ‘our’ texts (Said, 1978: 58-69) that focus on ‘our’ choice of language (Jourdan and Tuite, 2006: 9 & 11). In addition, ‘the West’ divides the world into two categories: in/out groups— namely, pro-and anti-American nations (Said, 1997/1981: 40). For example, the above-mentioned report reinforces that it is not only Iran but the entire ‘Muslim world’— i.e. Algeria to Pakistan, which is constructed as untrustworthy or as a possible threat. Thus, the strike against Iran is justified and accepted, but the consequence— Muslim anger— needs to be considered. However, “the last option” is still available: “the United States may ultimately have to undertake a military strike to deter Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons” (*US Attack on Iran Seen as Last Option*: January 17, 2006 [ODT]; *Tehran’s Assurances Facing ‘Litmus Test’*: January 17, 2006 [NZH]), and “the military option may be the only means of halting a regime” (*Hawks Ready the Warplanes*: February 8, 2006 [Press]). These threats continue Iran’s guarantee that the “nuclear programme will not be diverted towards weapons” (*Iran Says Chirac’s Nuclear Comment Unacceptable*: January 23, 2006 [ODT]). But ‘we’ do not accept that guarantee. Therefore, ‘our’ actions, attacking a nation on the basis of hearsay or rumour, are accepted, while ‘their’ guarantees with regard to achieving nuclear energy are rejected. Young (1995: 98) argues that the sense of the Western colonial supremacy does not come through the administration of war only, rather this sense may appear as “a desiring machine” (ibid, p. 95)— ‘the West’ has the right to advocate for/against others (Nashef, 2012: 80). For example, “the West” does not want to strike against Iran in the first place. Rather, it has compiled a “package of incentives” (*Split Over*

European Plan for Nuclear Deal with Iran: May 22, 2006 [ODT]) that includes “foreign supply of atomic fuel so Iran would not need to enrich uranium itself” (*Carrot or Stick for Tehran*: June 3, 2006 [NZH]). ‘The West’ is constructed in this report as having a benevolent nature (Gavrilos, 2002: 341-342); such framing however limits oppositional discourses— control over Iran. In addition, media construct the social world by framing the issue from their ideological view that arguably preserves the elite agenda (van Dijk, 1988: 8). For example, this package will only be provided on the condition that Iran stops “enriching uranium” (*Split Over European Plan for Nuclear Deal with Iran*: May 22, 2006 [ODT])⁶². Therefore, “the West” will “ensure Iran’s security”, which is already identified as a “threat to international peace” (*No Deal on Talks, Iran Tells US*: June 2, 2006 [ODT])⁶³. ‘Our’ authority over Iran is clearly constructed through the imperial psyche. In short, the “support” would only be provided if “the West” perceives that there is no possibility of hostility from this “Islamic Republic”. It is safe for “the West”, because it will not encounter hostility from this or any other ‘Islamic’ nations. But Iran will, once again, be dependent on ‘the West’— ‘the West’ will ensure Iran’s security. The package is, however, one of ‘our’ political mechanisms, which further ‘our’ power over this “Islamic Republic”. This will secure ‘us’ from the ‘threat’, which has already been identified as “Islamic” since 1979.

In countering this “clerical regime”, the US has adopted another strategy— encouraging “regime change” in Tehran, as “the ultimate goal” (*US Thinking of Bombing Iran*: April 10, 2006 [ODT]). Along with diplomacy, sanctions and striking

⁶² A similar message can be found in *West Holds its Breath as Iran Mulls Nuke Deal*: June 8, 2006 (NZH); *Big Powers Agree on Iran Strategy*: June 3, 2006 (Press).

⁶³ The claim that Iran is a threat is presented elsewhere in the ODT, the Press and the NZH.

Iran, “regime change” in Iran is another strategy “in resisting the theocracy” of Iran⁶⁴. In short, “we [the US] want the Iranian people to be free” (*US Eyes Iran Regime: Report*: March 14, 2006 [*ODT*]). The ‘freedom’ will come in the form of striking Iran, imposing sanctions on the country and/or replacing “the ayatollahs of Tehran” (*Tehran Regime Change US Goal*: March 14, 2006 [*NZH*]). Whatever it is that ‘we’ want to do, ‘we’ appear to have the right to do it— if the UN cannot take action against “this regime” the US and/or Israel will launch strikes against them. The legitimacy of such strikes will not be questioned; nor will the legitimacy of ‘the world’s belief in the threat of Iran upon world peace. It is ‘our’ definition of ‘threat’ and ‘peace’ that matters, and this definition is a means of authority over ‘them’.

Iran’s Nuclear Issue in Op-Eds

The above discussion of Iran nuclear issue demonstrates that New Zealand newspapers (re)produce the ‘Western’ elite agenda from a particular view— that is, that Iran and Islam are a threat to the world. They promote a civilizational clash in favour of the political elites. However, as this study has argued, in non-news items these newspapers promote a pluralistic view. This is also a case for the Iran nuclear issue. For example, the op-eds appearing in the *ODT* take a liberal stance arguing that a nuclear plant is Iran’s right; thus, these op-eds challenge the Western elite narrative. The op-ed items appearing in the *NZH* (in most cases) and the *Press* (in all cases), however, construct an Orientalist view. The following discussion demonstrates the validity of these statements.

So, as with Iraq, there is no “smoking gun”, but there are suspicions and little co-operation.

⁶⁴ For the reference to ‘regime change’ strategy in the *Press*, please see for example: *US to Push For Regime Change*: March 14, 2007; and in *NZH: Tehran Regime Change US Goal*: March 14, 2006.

Moscow and Beijing grudgingly agreed that Iran poses a threat, but, as with Iraq, disagree over imposing sanctions, let alone military action (*The Bitter Task of Confronting Iran*: March 17, 2006 [NZH]).

Russia and China can operate in contradiction of what many assume to be their self-interest because they have always had a different appreciation of, and doctrine relating to, nuclear weapons, because they are willing to live dangerously and because they are the least likely targets (*Think Imaginatively as Well as Systematically*: April 15, 2006 [Press]).

The US campaign to impose United Nations sanctions on Iran is doomed to fail, because it [Iran] is not breaking the law. As a signatory of the NPT, it is fully entitled to develop nuclear power for peaceful purposes [...] (*Iran No Real Threat to Anyone*: January 17, 2006 [ODT]).

These excerpts retrieved from the *NZH* and the *Press* appear in the debate around the justification for air strikes from the US and Israel, which suggests that “the world” can attack on genuine grounds—Iran is a threat. Nonetheless, if “the world” wants action against Iran, it is important to consider responses by Russia and China. These countries “disagree over imposing sanctions” and “military action” against Iran (*The Bitter Task of Confronting Iran*: March 17, 2006 [NZH]). Both the *NZH* and the *Press* op-eds argue that a nation “like Iran” should not be trusted with a nuclear program and that “the world” needs to do something—either initiate strikes against Iran (preferably by the US and/or Israel) or place sanctions on Iran (e.g. *Think Imaginatively as Well as Systematically*: April 15, 2006 [Press]; *The Bitter Task of Confronting Iran*: March 17, 2006 [NZH]).

The *ODT* op-eds offer an alternative view that conflict with the *NZH* and the *Press*. Its op-ed opposes the Orientalist perception of an Islamic threat. It argues that a nuclear project is Iran’s right and it is not in violation of the NPT (*Iran No Real Threat to Anyone*: January 17, 2006 [ODT]). It questions why other countries are

prohibited from carrying out nuclear enrichment when its neighbors can do so. Another *ODT* op-ed—*Western Attack on Iran Not Answer to Impasse*: December 20: 2005— argues that ‘the Western’ fear of Iran is baseless because it has proven its value to ‘the West’ by helping ‘the West’ “[d]uring the American-led intervention in Afghanistan”. It observed that Iran follows democracy in practice and the President cannot implement a decision on his own; the op-ed therefore challenges the perception that Iran is an ‘Islamic dictatorship’.

The enemy image can be seen in the lexical choice that dehumanizes the ‘enemy’ in perpetuating ‘our’ agenda. For example, in the *NZH* op-ed, a reader can see name-calling through the lexical choice such as ‘Mullah’ and ‘madman’. The *NZH* op-ed (*Air Strikes Threat Only Deterrent to Madman of Iran*: January 24, 2007) argues that this “police state” is advancing with its gradual plans towards nuclear weapons. The policy of ‘the West’ is indicated in the headline of this op-ed: *Air Strikes Threat Only Deterrent to Madman of Iran*. It frequently uses terms like ‘mad’ or ‘Mullah’ when defining Iranian leadership. The media manufacturing of ‘the enemy’ image (Muižnieks, 2008: 5) can be perceived through the selective choice of language (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). These routine characterizations— terms like ‘mad’ and ‘Mullah’—indicate ‘our’ perception of this ‘Islamic’ nation. This op-ed implies that encouraging Iranian citizens to “rise up” against the “Islamic regime” and “this man” will not work⁶⁵. Instead this op-ed argues for air strikes against this “rogue state”. The sub-heading of this op-ed reads: “Inaction over Iran is not an Option”. It argues for “serious action” against this “Islamic regime”. The *NZH* op-eds define Iran as a “rogue state” (*The Bitter Task of Confronting Iran*: March 17, 2006), argues that

⁶⁵ The op-ed, like some other op-eds, prefers to use terms like ‘madman’, ‘this man’, ‘Mullah’, or ‘the man of Iran’ to denote Mr Mahmoud Ahmadinejad instead of identifying him as the Iranian President. In addition, some op-eds appearing in the *NZH* and the *Press* (in all cases) mention that Iran is a friend of China and Russia—that is, the friend of a Communist bloc, further indicating its political and ideological difference from ‘the West’.

Muslims are “keen to be martyrs” against “the West” (*War, Then the Second Coming*: April 19, 2006). Yet again, the issue is framed within an Orientalist view—Muslims are portrayed as irrational and violent (Kumar, 2012: 52-55).

In some of its op-eds, the *NZH* adopts a positive position to that shown in the *ODT*. For example, one op-ed observes that the position of ‘the West’ against Iran is indicative of “hypocrisy on the part of the members of the world’s nuclear community” (*Israel Complicated Nuclear High Noon*: May 1, 2006 [*NZH*]). Another op-ed questions the activities of ‘the West’ and the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Association) against Iran— with the op-ed suggesting that both are motivated by “guesswork and propaganda” (*Iran Not Clearly a Present Danger*: May 4, 2006 [*NZH*]). Thus, as in the *ODT*, these op-eds challenge elite ideology and question the elite authority that harbors Orientalist perceptions.

The construction of the ‘enemy’ image can be understood through the selective adjectives used to describe ‘the Other.’ The lexical choice that ‘we’ prefer for ‘them’ promotes ‘our’ view through the dehumanization of ‘the enemy’. For example, one of the *Press* op-eds appears under the headline *Mullahs’ Iran Will Fail* (November 2, 2005). The sub-heading of this op-ed reads: “Mullahs Appear to Want Iran to be Like a Psychiatric Hospital”. The language used to describe ‘them’ clearly maintains ‘our’ extreme opposition towards ‘the enemy’. The last sentence of this op-ed reads: “We should love-bomb the mullahs out of the Stone Age”. These propositions help to conceptualize how this op-ed identifies Iran, Iran’s leadership and Islam—‘they’ are ‘Mullahs’, who come from the ‘Stone Age’— and are an indication of Orientalist perceptions of Eastern backwardness. Consequently, the report suggests it would be very progressive to bomb the ‘Mullahs’ who seem to work against ‘us’. The

dehumanization process not only works through opposing ‘Islamist’ or ‘Mullah’ to ‘the West’ but also through the construction of ‘enemy’ leadership. The *Press* op-ed portrays the Iranian president as a “tiny, wiry figure with a gaunt face.” We are told that his “small black eyes” never seem to “change expression”. In addition, this “obscure person” was born in a poor blacksmith’s family (*If Only Iran’s Hardliner Had Stuck to Traffic*: December 21, 2005 [*Press*]). The Orientalist narratives not only appear to ascribe and describe the ‘Islamic regime’ and its policy but also the physical structure of an individual— the son of a poor blacksmith. This depiction legitimates social discrimination through stereotyping. Comparisons are also made between the Iranian president and Hitler (*If Only Iran’s Hardliner Had Stuck to Traffic*: December 21, 2005). Another op-ed (*Invade Iran? There’s Another Way, Stupid*: February 3, 2006 [*Press*]) argues that Iran would create problems in terms of the transport of oil from the Middle East to the West.

Overall, ‘our’ problem is defined— a threat from Iran; the creator of the problem is identified—as the Islamic regime; the main person behind ‘our’ problem (at this moment) is indicated—the son of a blacksmith; the resemblance of the problem creator is marked— Hitler; one of the possible consequences of the threat is spelled out— transporting ‘our’ oil; and the solution to these perceived threats is outlined— ‘bomb them’. It seems that ‘we’ are suffering from a false fear and from a perceived ‘enemy’; but in ‘our’ explanation only a bomb can bring about ‘peace’ in ‘the West’.

Letter Writers’ Response

The *NZH* published eight letters to the editor. All letters question the Western elite nations arguing that they ignore Iran’s nuclear rights. Three letters, for example, appear on April 11, 2006 under the headline: *White House and Iran*. One letter,

challenging the US, says: “The United States has more weapons of mass destruction than any other country, but feels it has the right to tell others they cannot have them” (*Andrew Stevenson*). Likewise, Richard Jenkins writes that if the US considers that the only option for dealing with the nuclear issue is initiating nuclear strikes against Iran, “it can be soundly rejected as inappropriate.”

There were no letters to the editor in the *Press*. The *ODT* published one letter. This letter suggests that Iran has the right to carry out its nuclear project (*Joseph Dougherty*: March 1, 2006).

Editorial Cartoons

There were no editorial cartoons on this issue appearing in the *Press* and the *ODT*. However, Iran was the main focus of seven editorial cartoons appearing in the *NZH*. All cartoons question US President Bush’s position towards Iran’s nuclear program. One cartoon maintains that Iran’s nuclear power has received prominent (but unnecessary) attention from the US (cartoon: January 20, 2006). President Bush is represented as a warmonger who is greedy for (Iranian) oil; in a cartoon published on February 11, 2006, Bush is shown giving a lecture on the issue of “oil addiction.” The verbal text reads: “America has decided to dig for its own oil reserves ... in Iran ...” Bush, fails in his attempts to stop Iran from establishing its nuclear project, and Iran is shown giving the finger—a taboo sign—to the US and, eventually, to the whole world (cartoon: September 2, 2006).

The Iranian Nuclear Issue in Editorials

The Iranian issue was less prominent in editorials. This issue was covered throughout the timeframe studied, but there were no editorials in the *ODT* on this issue. The

Press published two editorials from its own writers and the *NZH* published four of its own editorials. It seems, however, that the Western political elites were successful in setting their own agenda via framing the issue both in New Zealand newspapers and international news agencies. For example, the *NZH* editorial argues that Iran's nuclear project is a threat to Israel and the world. The editorial maintains that Israel is facing "Iran's ally" in the Middle East—Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Palestine (*Iran Must Accept Fuel Without Fire*: September 4, 2006 [*NZH*]). The headline of the editorial— *Iran **Must Accept Fuel Without Fire*** [emphasis added] – also suggests the absolute authority of 'the West'. The authority also parallels the elite policy line and follows a political argument that parallels the elite agenda. As discussed above President Bush decides what Iran can do and cannot do. The US blames Iran for everything bad in the Middle East and Afghanistan (Debashi, 2009: x). The reports construct Islamophobia through the false fear of the Iranian influence in the Middle East (Ibid, p. ix). As suggested above, Iran's 'nuclear success' is perceived in 'the West' as a (international) political defeat to their Middle Eastern policy. The perceived 'success' eventually creates Iranophobia inside 'the West'— this success may reduce 'Western' authority in the Middle East. As a result, 'the West' and the 'Western-elite supportive media' oppose any kind of nuclear development in Iran (Izadi and Saghaye-Biria: 2007). Similarly, New Zealand newspapers' editorial argues that a "nuclear-armed Iran would make the Middle East, and the world, a far more dangerous place" and therefore, "[a] concerted international effort must be made before it is too late" (*Iran Needs Carrots and Sticks*: January 13, 2006). Likewise, another editorial argues that "it is unsurprising" that the US "would consider a military strike to prevent Iran" (*Diplomacy Not Nukes Key to Iran*: April 11, 2006 [*NZH*]) because "Iran's nuclear ambitions" make the US "frustrated"; it asks for

“world unity” in taking action against Iran (*World Unity Needed Over Iran*: May 1, 2006). The Orientalist perception of the Islamic Other as ‘irrational’/‘inferior’/‘awkward’/‘a threat’, in fact, legitimates ‘our’ actions against ‘them’—that is, the Islamic nation.

In current Western discourse ‘Islam and Iran’ is similarly identified as a threat (Said, 1981; Debashi, 2009). In Western media ‘Iran’ and its citizens are dehumanized (Debashi, 2009: ix) due to its political relationship with ‘the West’. For example, in the *Columbus Post-Dispatch* newspapers’ editorial cartoon⁶⁶ individuals of Iranian descent are depicted as cockroaches (Ibid, p. ix). The caricature promotes the ‘enemy’ image of Iran and suggests that its people cannot and should not be trusted (Ibid, pp. x-ix). This image of Iranian’s untrustworthiness can also be found in New Zealand newspapers’ editorials. For example, the *Press*’s editorial says that “No-one believes [Iran]” and that Iran will supply nuclear bombs to ‘terrorist groups’ active across the world (*Iran on the Brink*: January 16, 2006 [*Press*]). Another editorial takes a similar position: “Iran insists that its nuclear program is peaceful, aiming to simply ensure the nation’s energy supply. That is balderdash” (*Iran’s Treachery*: April 12, 2006). Both the *NZH* and the *Press* editorials hint that Iran is untrustworthy/irrational/awkward and ask the world to take action against this “Islamic regime”. The newspapers’ editorial frame positions the elite nations as the moral authority; these elite nations are framed as the defender of the world. They question Iran’s nuclear rights but ultimately encourage the US strikes against Iran. In contrast, these editorials frame ‘our’ good motives in initiating strikes but emphasize ‘their’ bad motives in initiating

⁶⁶ Published in this newspaper on September 4, 2007.

a civilian project. The Orientalist identification of ‘good’ vs. ‘bad’ appears according to the elite agenda.

Summary

In regards to news framing, New Zealand newspapers maintain a similar construction— Iran is a threat and should not be trusted with its nuclear program. The Orientalist perception of untrustworthiness is thus repeated. The stories emphasize the Islamic elements found in Iran’s political structure and stress that the state is a source of distrust. Muslim nations and their issues are perceived through an Orientalist prism (Karim, 2000; McAlister, 2001; Richardson, 2004; Izadi and Saghaye-Biria: 2007: 161) that arguably legitimates Western elite policy. The Western mainstream media rarely challenge the dominant ideology (Poole, 2002). In their news frame these newspapers reproduce the Orientalist view of ‘us’ and ‘them’, in which Iran is identified as the Islamic Other and as a threat. This unchallenging news frame legitimates and authorizes the power of some Western elite nations; and the elite ideology is accepted without question.

With regard to non-news items appearing in these newspapers, a pluralistic view can be found. In all cases the *ODT* challenges the dominant ideology—that is, it contradicts its news framing in articles sourced from international news agencies. In the case of the *Press*, its non-news parallels the news framing by legitimating the ideology of the Western elite; thus, the elite power remains unchallenged in both news and non-news. Iran is constructed as dangerous and deceptive, thus the Orientalist narrative of mistrusting ‘the Other’ is reinforced. Non-news appearing in the *NZH* maintains a multidimensional frame. In the editorials the elite policy is legitimated, as is the Orientalist perception of Othering, which emphasizes the

untrustworthiness of this Islamic nation. In op-ed the Orientalist perception was challenged. The cartoon images questions Western elite policy.

We can discuss this Iranian nuclear issue from another angle. Iran is not violating the IAEA agreement (Izadi and Saghaye-Biria: 2007) in planning a civilian nuclear project. As suggested above, Iran is far from actually achieving the kind civilian project that the country claims will be cost effective in terms of its internal energy consumption. In addition, Iran is not the only nation that could be identified as a nuclear power in this region—Russia, India and Pakistan for instance could also be defined in this way. There may be several reasons behind the identification of Iran as a threat or the simplistic depiction of Iran in these newspapers. Firstly, with the establishment of the Islamic Republic in 1979 ‘the West’ lost its ‘faithful’ leader in Iran; a perceived mistrust between the two countries has been building since this time. As discussed in Chapter 2, in many cases corporate media voluntarily support their state policy and thus they frame ‘Iran’ in relation to their country’s political agenda. In addition, as discussed elsewhere, the power elites try to set their agenda through mass media; and it seems that they are successful in this case in framing Iran negatively. The success of the elite’s framing is also reflected in New Zealand newspapers—their editorial comments parallel the international news agencies. The Islamic nature of Iran’s political structure is the cause of this simplistic framing. The religious political identification also seems be part of the ‘problem’. Descriptions of Iran’s ‘Islamist’ political ideology appear only with a specific agenda—the non-reliable leadership in Iran. In considering the Middle East nations Iran is more ‘progressive’ in its political views— e.g. giving citizens the right to vote, which nations like Qatar, reject. The rhetoric of the ‘Islamist’ Iran appears confrontational due to the political relations between Iran and ‘the West’. These media typically echo

the elite voice in their society. The elite political agenda comes through the hostile relationship between Iran and the Western elite nations; and the elites are successful in setting the agenda by framing Iran negatively in these newspapers.

4. Representing the 2006 Palestinian Election

This section is important because of the prominence of news coverage of the Palestinian election that links the ‘Islamic group’ Hamas, ‘Islamic terrorism’ and the future of Palestine under an ‘Islamic radical group’. The policy and position of some Western nations are typically followed in news reports on the Palestinian election, which was held on the 25th of January 2006. This election may have received prominent coverage because Hamas, a designated terrorist organization in “the West”, participated for the first time in the 2006 Palestine parliamentary election. This section thus attempts to elucidate the representation of the policies of Western elite nations and their relationship with Israel. The *ODT* published 21 news reports, the *Press* published 41 news reports and the *NZH* published 48 news reports. This section will examine how these newspapers’ stories legitimate Western elite interests. It aims to identify how these newspapers have framed various actors active in the Palestinian election. Some Western nations refused to fund the Hamas-led Palestinian government.

The New Zealand government did not produce any comment on this election. This section identifies how an indirect relationship with an event plays an important role in the way in which the event is represented. It asks whether the Western elite agenda that filtered through international news agencies parallels these newspapers’ own voice, as expressed in their editorials.

Hamas, Israel and the West

Hamas has been designated as a terrorist group by the US, Israel and some other Western nations. As a result, this group has been subjected to close observation in the US particularly after 9/11. These Western nations also consider Hamas as a “spoiler” of democracy (Brown, 2008: 73). Some Western nations support the exclusion of Hamas in political negotiations and therefore, did not recognize the Hamas’ victory in the 2006 election. These nations also refused to cooperate with a Hamas-led government. They argued that Hamas must comply with three demands: the recognition of the existence of Israel; the renunciation of militancy; and the agreement to abide by all past agreements between the Palestine Authority and Israel. Hamas rejected these demands. However, with regard to the democratization process in Palestine, the US and EU seemed to have double standards (Hovdenak: 2009: 75) as, on the one hand, they appeared to advocate for democratization while on the other hand, they rejected the people’s choice in the democratic process. Said argues that “the West” is “sufficiently blind that when a Middle Eastern leader emerges whom our [Western] leaders, like the Shah of Iran or Anwar Sadat, it is assumed that he is a visionary who does things our way” and that leader’s emergence occurs “because he is moved by principles that [the West] share[s]” (2003). This section therefore contends that “the West” exclusively supports those “who do things our way,” an argument that is evident in the Palestinian election.

Since colonial era, Islamist political activists were subject to “brutal suppression” (Knudsen, 2003: iii; Cooke, 1994: 13; Lewis, 2007).⁶⁷ Their politics, including the politics of Hamas, is identified as the main obstacle in Middle East policies of ‘the

⁶⁷ For a direct explanation of the colonial and post-colonial power against ‘Islamist’ see the well-cited writings of Zainab al-Ghazzali, “Days from my Life” (in Arabic *Ayyâm min hayâtî*) translated in English as the *Return of the Pharaoh* by Mokrane Guezzou. Al-Ghazzali wrote this book during her imprisonment under Gamal Abdel Nasser.

West’ (Eickelman, 1998; Milton-Edwards, 2000; Sharp, 2006). The suppression of Islamist political activists occurs throughout colonial, post-colonial (Kumar, 2010) and ‘modern’ Arab rule—for example, in Morocco, “Islamists often have unfair trials” and are the subjects of serious human rights abuses (Storm, 2012: N/P). These nations however fail to stop ‘Islamist politics’ (Kumar, 2010). In addition, the “political Islam” in Palestine is a repercussion of the military defeat of Arab nations by Israel in 1967 (Milton-Edwards, 2000: 123) and the economic and political crises within Arab region (Knudsen, 2003: 2). Nonetheless, despite its apparent “Islamist” character and strong opposition of Israel⁶⁸, Hamas is ideologically flexible (Usher, 2005: Shikaki, 2007: 9) regarding the interests of Palestine. Furthermore this organization believes in political pragmatism (Milton-Edwards, 1996), which indicates that in the future Hamas may change in its attitude towards Israel⁶⁹.

Hamas in Palestine

Hamas is seen as a fundamentalist, dogmatic entity in some Western nations. In Palestine, however, it is regarded as a “religious national movement” (Klein, 2009: 881). In the period of its formation, Hamas was a liberal and secular organization and some of its leaders, like Ahmed Yassin, were accepted in Israel (Brown, 2008: 74). At one point Hamas was a close ally of Israel with the aim of countering Fatah, an aim that mirrored Israeli policy (Akbarzadeh, 2006: 202). Today’s Hamas members however are identified as an ‘enemy’ of Israel. Hamas’s historical opposition to Fatah remains unchanged. In current political discourse, Fatah’s policies are closer to those of Israel and ‘the West’, and they tend to promote Mahmoud Abbas and Fatah, while

⁶⁸ In its Charter, Hamas maintain that Israel is a “Nazi-like enemy” for the Palestinian people (Yonah 2002: 61).

⁶⁹ For example, Hamas maintains that it may leave its arms resistance against Israel if Israel ensures that “it will end its policies of assassination, incursion, and (in the case of Gaza) reoccupation” (Usher, 2005: 51-52).

sidelining Hamas (Asseburg and Perthes, 2009: 20). From the outset, Fatah and Hamas were positioned as rivals, with each having military wings.

Hamas decided to participate in the 2006 Palestinian election (Hovdenak, 2009: 60) and declared, and “respected, unilateral ceasefires towards Israel in 2003 and in 2005-2006” (Ibid, p. 60). In this election Hamas won with a landslide victory (winning 76 out of 134 parliamentary seats) and took control of the Palestinian Parliament. As in the past, Fatah showed no cooperation with its rival Hamas (International Crisis Group, 2006: 9) and instigated violence including killing and kidnapping (Milton-Edwards, 2008: 1589). In the current Palestine democratization discourse however Hamas’s presence is undeniable (Hovdenak, 2009: 59). Some Western nations reject Hamas with their political victory leading to “difficult questions” for those nations regarding their Middle East political strategies (Akbarzadeh, 2006: 201). Both the election and victory of Hamas were significant internally, regionally and globally. As a result, Hamas became a prominent subject in New Zealand newspapers.

Hamas: A Proposition Against a Peace Deal

The importance of a particular interpretation that comes through the perceived news value of consequences (Shoemaker, 1991) can in many cases be a cause of simplified media framing (Entman, 2004). This simplification serves political elite agenda (Lee, 2013: 6). In addition, the simplified frame focuses upon not only on *what* to think but also *how* to think about an issue (Marchionni, 2012: 151 [original italic]). In addition, media selectively (re)produce symbols and metaphors when constructing their perceived reality. The media also produce multiple interpretations, but one interpretation becomes prominent (Ismail, 2010: 88). In the process other interpretations are downplayed or marginalized (Hall, 1980). The marginalization of

other interpretations can be seen in the case of the 2006 Palestinian election. Political agenda can be understood through the use of political language (Dunmire, 2012); and, in many cases, media-texts uphold the elite policy, at times through propaganda or false depiction of a group (Richardson, 2007; Fairclough, 2006: 33). In short, they legitimate the powerful while sidelining the powerless (Chadwick, 2001: 435). The dehumanization of the powerless and legitimization of the dominant group can be better understood when media and political elites use parallel terms, create a similar meaning, perpetuate a similar agenda through (re)constructing the meaning of a particular social group (Edelman, 1964: 1; Richardson, 2007; Dunmire, 2012: 737) in an effort to dehumanize ‘them’. For example, in newspapers’ reports, Hamas’s electoral victory in Palestine is represented in such a way that it appeared that the Palestinians had voted in a “terrorist group”, thus aggravating relations with Israel and its allies in ‘the West’ (*Political Rout of Fatah Stuns Disgruntled Palestinian Voters: January 27, 2006 [ODT]*). These newspapers’ reports identify Hamas as an “Islamist militant group” (*Leaders Say Hamas Could Negotiate: January 25, 2006 [ODT]*), “Islamic fundamentalist group” (*Calls for Abbas to Quit: January 23, 2006 [the Press]*), and as a “Palestinian militant group” (*Hamas on the Political Warpath: January 16, 2006 [NZH]*)— that follows a similar pattern of the Western political elite’s identification of Hamas (Karim, 2000; Kumar, 2010; 2012). The way in which these newspapers downplayed Hamas’s victory in the Palestinian election, can be understood in the following illustrative excerpts. The *ODT* report reads:

The Islamic militant group Hamas captured a majority of seats in Palestinian legislative elections, [...] – a dramatic upset that is sure to throw Mideast peacekeeping into turmoil.

Israel and the United States have said they would not deal with a Hamas-led Palestinian government (*Huge Upset as Hamas Claims Poll Win: January 27, 2006*).

Likewise, the *NZH* reports:

The prospect of Hamas gaining political power has triggered an urgent appraisal in the West and Israel over the handling of an organisation they have long proscribed as “terrorist” (*Hamas: New Dawn or Nightmare?* January 24, 2006).

The *Press* report states:

The Islamic militant group Hamas swept to victory over the long-dominant Fatah faction last night in the Palestinian parliamentary election, a political earthquake that could bury chances for peace-making with Israel (*Hamas Win Shock for US, Israel*: January 27, 2006).

Palestinians become the subjects of exaggeration and dehumanization in ‘the Western’ discourse (Said, 1978; Kumar, 2010) including media depictions and elite political texts. For example, Israel attacks Palestinian civilians, makes human shield, and maintains the attacks as action against ‘terrorism’ (UN Report, 2009: 17). Israeli’s destruction of infrastructures in Palestine is identified as the destruction of “ Hamas terrorist infrastructure” in Israeli discourse (Ibid, p. 18 [original quotation mark])⁷⁰. In addition, in depicting Hamas as a peace-spoiler, Palestinians/Hamas action against Israel is perceived as “terrorism” but Israeli action is perceived as Israel is fighting terror (Khalidi, 2010: 18-19)— in short, the ‘spoilers’⁷¹ rights are sidelined. A prejudicial perception can thus be identified in media depictions of Hamas. The above excerpts’ main focus is that a ‘group’ has won the election, and that this group is defined as ‘Islamic’ and ‘terrorist.’ The consequence of the victory is also defined— it could “bury” the peace process. These newspapers argue that Hamas is anti-peace; thus, their victory is also identified as a “political earthquake”

⁷⁰ United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict provides details about the human rights abuses of Israel and how they use human shields. The report focuses on the fact that the Israeli forces attack Palestinian infrastructure including the Palestinian Legislative Council building and the main Gaza prison. The report says that these two buildings cannot be used any longer (p. 18) due to Israeli attacks.

⁷¹ As suggested above, ‘the West’ and its ally Israel describe the ‘Islamist group’ Hamas as spoiler of the Palestine-Israel peace process in an effort to cover up their inaction towards the process.

because Hamas has won more than 70 seats or 50 per cent of the total vote.⁷² The Palestinian people are held responsible for voting for this ‘terrorist group.’

Only ‘Western-friendly’ political leadership is acceptable in ‘the West’ (Said, 2003). In other words, Hosni Mubarak or Anwar Sadat can continue their dictatorial regimes in Egypt without much ‘Western’ criticism. ‘The West’ wants their ideology-based leaders in the Middle East or elsewhere such as the Shah in Iran (Karim, 2000; Kumar, 2012; Lee, 2013). In Palestine, Fatah is corrupt and suffering from identity crisis (Dermer, 2010: 73) but it opposes Hamas in Palestinian politics and is therefore more accepted in ‘the West’. Since colonialist times, ‘Islamist’ politics have been perceived as a challenge to ‘Western’ interests (Kumar, 2010). In Western and Israeli discourse, any positive image of Hamas is rejected identifying them as ‘Islamist terrorists’ (Cooke, 1994: 13). Hamas’ victory in the Palestinian election is also rejected in ‘the West’ and elite supportive ‘Western’ media. By identifying Hamas’s victory as a “huge upset” or a “dramatic upset”, the reports parallel the attitudes of some Western nations and their ally Israel in focusing on Hamas. Reports frequently imply that Hamas is a “terrorist group” or an “Islamic militant group”. According to this construction (and the “the West” expectations), Hamas— a foe to Israel and ‘the West’— would be defeated, and Fatah—an acceptable party (at this moment) of ‘the West’— would win. As a result, ‘we’ are ‘upset’ due to ‘our’ opponent’s victory. The cause of ‘the Western’ upset is identified in several stories—“the West” cannot “trust” this “Islamic group” Hamas (*Huge Upset as Hamas Claims Poll Win*: January 27, 2006 [ODT])— ‘Islamic’, ‘Islamist’ and ‘Islam’ are ‘untrustworthy’. These reports reinforce perceptions of untrustworthiness found in Orientalist constructions of the Islamic Other—in other words, they suggest that Islam is a ‘threat’.

⁷² According to the final count, Hamas won 76 of 132 seats, and Fatah won 43 seats (*Fatah Surveys Wreckage After Shock Hamas Win*: January 28-29, 2006 [Press]).

It must be noted that ‘Western’ support of Fatah is due not to the fact that that ‘the West’ prefers a liberal/moderate-ideology based leadership in Palestine as this is not the case (Dermer, 2010: 78). Instead the West’s support relates to their opposition of ‘Islamist’ Hamas. In Israel and in ‘the West’ most Palestinian leaderships including Fatah— Y. Arafat— are perceived as terrorists. But in the current discourse they accept Fatah due to their (i.e. Fatah, Israel and ‘the West’) confrontational relationship with ‘Islamist’ Hamas. In addition, Hamas is ideologically supported by ‘Islamist’ Iran— an ideological opponent of ‘the West’ (Ansari, 2007: 107) in the Middle East region. Hamas’ victory can therefore be perceived as Iran’s political influence in regional politics. The reports also establish the perception that since Fatah has been defeated, ‘the West’ has lost interest in dealing with Palestine. For example, both Israel and US President George Bush say they would not deal with a Hamas-led Palestine government⁷³. The news items suggest that if the US and Israel had been happy with the results of the election that there would have been no “upset” and the “peace agenda” would have remained. This fact implies that the Western elite choice must be maintained and indicates a predetermined position of political elites that legitimates ‘our’ authority over ‘them’.

Aid Politics

In the democratization process the result of the election or people’s choice may not reflect one’s desire (Turner, 2006: 739); however ‘the West’ wanted to establish their ‘ideal’ leadership (Lee, 2013; Said, 2003). In addition, through this and many other elections across the world, ‘the West’ is unable to understand that they cannot impose their ideology (Reckinger, 2007) elsewhere without respecting interest (p. 21).

⁷³ See the following news report: *Huge Upset as Hamas Claims Poll Win*: January 27, 2006 (ODT); *One-Year Plan to Oust Settlers*: March 31, 2006 (NZH); *Rice Ruled Out US Aid to Hamas Government*: January 31, 2006 (Press).

Scholars including Turner (2006) argue that unless the Israeli occupation is ended and a two-state is created, Palestinian will never be able to create a democratic culture inside their boundary (p. 739). Despite President Bush's identification that election is important for Palestinian democratization process⁷⁴, many Western leaders including Bush could not accept Hamas' victory (Turner, 2006: 740). From an Orientalist point of view, 'Islam', 'Islamist', 'Muslims' are equivalent to "ultimate Other" (Buijs and Rath, 2003: 12). As a result, in 'Western' discourse they are 'untrustworthy' (Krämer, 2000). The 'Islamist' Hamas, which is also labeled as an 'Islamic terrorist group' in 'the West, is clearly positioned as ideologically opposed to 'the West'. The ideological Orientalist view of Hamas is focused upon the elite political voice and these newspapers' construction of the issue parallels the elite political agenda. These political actors and their bureaucrats categorically reject Hamas's victory. For example, as one report notes Israel has "halted the transfer" of money, and the US and EU will "withhold aid" (*Israel Halts Payments to Palestinians*: February 21, 2006 [ODT]) due to the Hamas's victory in the election. These newspapers' reports support the elite Western view regarding the refusal of aid, as this will "isolate the new Hamas government and lay the ground for a political crisis that would lead to fresh elections" (*Hamas Takes Hot Seat in Parliament*: February 20, 2006 [NZH]). Palestinians' vote is rejected, with one report describing the victory as "an aberration thrown up by the vote system rather than the will of the people" (*Hamas Takes Hot Seat in Parliament*: February 20, 2006 [NZH]). Such reports contend that the "will" of the people is not reflected in Hamas' victory; rather, the win is "thrown up"—delegitimizing the will of the people. Bush wanted a "democracy" in the Middle East (*Hamas Victory Leaves Bush in Quandary*: January 28-29, 2006) however the result

⁷⁴ See Bush statement in: 'Bush Backs U.A.E. Company's Administration of Six U.S. Ports'. (Online): <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2006/02/20060221194357esnamfuak0.4827234.htm> l#axzz2iiph5ts

of such democracy led to a party being voted in that he did not like. So democracy itself is dangerous to ‘our’ perception. ‘The West’ provides aid to the governments of Muslim and non-Muslim nations from Africa to Southeast Asia. However, some of these nations’ governments—for example, that of Egypt—are suppressive but have close relations to the West and are willing to perpetuate Western nations’ interests (van der Veer, 2004: 3). ‘The West’, however, ignores people’s struggle against these governments—governments which are suppressive and corrupt, but which are nevertheless supported by Western elite nations (van der Veer, 2004: 3). ‘The West’ also wants to establish a similar government in Palestine through their ‘aid politics’. For example, the international news agencies’ reports appearing in these newspapers accept the subsequent recommendation from ‘the West’ to “cut aid” in response to the victory of this “terrorist group”.⁷⁵ When the news repeatedly uses terms such as ‘Islamic terrorist’, these topics are magnified. This helps to strengthen one group’s ideology over another. The elite agenda is conveyed successfully through the perceived news value of consequence that framed the ‘Islamist group’ as a perceived ‘threat’, which in fact appeared as an obstacle to the Western elite policy.

Withdrawal of ‘Our’ Troops

Israeli’s withdrawal from occupied land; and peace between Palestine and Israel could not be brokered to ‘the West’ and Israel’s interests-based perception of the Middle East (Ansari, 2007; Nash, 2010; International Crisis Group, 2012). Scholars such as Nash (2010) argue that the continuous Israeli settlement in the occupied land is the main obstacle to establishing peace. However, ‘the West’ blames Palestinian ‘Muslim terrorists’ or ‘Islamic terrorists’ for spoiling the peace process (Kramer, 2007).

⁷⁵ See for example: *Threat to End aid to Palestinians*: January 31, 2006 (ODT); *Israel Chokes Hamas Cash*: February 2, 2006 (NZH); *Donors’ Threat to Chop Aid*: January 30, 2006 (Press).

Hamas' political ideology "differ[s] from other Islamic movement" and it can be better recognized as nationalist movement (Kramer, 2007: 62). However, in 'Western' discourse, Hamas is 'terrorist' group who is anti-democratic. The New Zealand newspapers also construct Hamas in a similar manner to 'the Western' elite political line. Hamas is repeatedly identified as anti-democratic and as an obstacle to peace in the Middle East, and its "militancy" and "terrorism" are also continually emphasized. Fatah's position is defined as counter to the Islamic militant group Hamas" and reports suggest that their victory could ensure "democracy" (*US Backs Fatah to Keep Extremist Put*: January 24, 2006 [NZH]). In relations to Hamas and Palestine, it can be said that "Islam" is another "language" that can be read in similar ways to Palestinian independence (Kramer, 2007: 62). There is a "structural" tendency in 'the West' and Israel to blame 'Islam'— for example, 'Islamist'; and Islam is identified monolithically (Ibid, p. 62) through Orientalist perception. In addition, the US, Israel and Fatah have similarly tried to remove Hamas from its office since its victory in Palestinian Parliament, identifying them as 'terrorist', 'Islamist' and against the Israel-Palestine peace process (Kassem, 2012: 128). Many scholars— e.g. Kramer (2007); Kassem (2012)— contend that Hamas is not a 'terrorist' group' and argue that Hamas's presence is not an obstacle to the peace process. Rather they argue that process depends primarily on 'the West' and Israel (Kramer, 2007: 62; International Crisis Group, 2012: ii). In short, Hamas is labeled as 'Islamist', 'terrorist' due to the elite political agenda. The mainstream media support the elite political agenda. For example, Israel chose to reject peace talks with Palestine, even with a pro-democratic Palestinian President, because of Hamas's victory. The reason is clear —the Palestinian government is now a "hostile entity" (*Israel to Cut Ties with Hamas-led Palestinian Authority*: April 11, 2006 [ODT]). Israel sealed the Gaza Strip (*Gaza in*

Front Line of Israeli Sanctions: February 18, 2006 [*Press*]) and withdrew but the Palestinians also needed to vote for a “preferred” group (*First Step to a New Future*: January 26, 2006 [*NZH*]). This move suggests that the troops’ withdrawal from the occupied land would be possible if Palestinians had voted for a “preferred” group that Israel could recognize. This once again implies the ideological choice of ‘our friend’/‘enemy’. The perceived problem is defined—Fatah is defeated. These newspapers’ reports⁷⁶ say, however, that Fatah is suffering from an image crisis because of its corruption, while Hamas is corruption-free. The framing of the politics of this region implies that a party or a leader is acceptable even though it/he is corrupt and rejected by the people. This legitimates the ideology of elite Western power—at the cost, however, of devaluing people’s rights.

Hamas in Op-Eds

The *ODT* published seven op-eds regarding the 2006 Palestinian election, while the *Press* published nine and the *NZH* published eight. The op-eds appearing in the *ODT* were positive about Hamas in all cases. However, the *Press* and the *NZH* (except in two op-eds) reject this position. The way these newspapers’ op-eds perceive the election needs to be discussed.

The *ODT* op-ed asserts that Fatah—the party “the West” supports—“is corrupt and incompetent” and that the Palestinians have chosen the best party—Hamas, a corruption-free party (*Goal of Peace for Palestinians Not Beyond Hamas*: January 31, 2006 [*ODT*]). It questions Israel and Western elite nations’ perceptions that Hamas is a ‘terrorist group’. Op-eds maintain that it is not Hamas or any other party’s victory that is the problem, regardless of whether that party is Islamist or terrorist; rather, the

⁷⁶See for example: *US Backs Fatah to Keep Extremist Out*: January 24, 2006 (*NZH*); *Hamas Win Shock for US, Israel*: January 27-28, 2006 (*Press*); *Leaders Says Hamas Could Negotiate*: January 25, 2006 (*ODT*).

problem for the US and Israel is the defeat of the groups that are loyal to them (*Oil's Not Well for US*: February 7, 2006 [ODT]). In sum, the op-eds appearing in the *ODT* challenge the Western elite position concerning Hamas (namely that Palestinians have elected a terrorist group).

Some Western media constructions oversimplify the image of Islam in a specific way. For example, according to the *700 Club* television program “Islam is an evil heresy” and it is a threat to Israel, Jews/Judaism and Christianity. In addition, Islam and Muslims are depicted as challenging the ‘good’ motive of ‘the West’ including “Christian America” (Gormly, 2004: 226). The show promotes the belief that America and Israel work against a “common enemy”—namely, Islam— because they share a “common background of faiths” (Ibid, p. 226). The rejection of Islam is achieved in many ways— for example, devaluing the vote. This identification can be perceived in some op-eds appearing in the Palestinian context. For example, the *Press* op-ed parallels its news reporting, and states that “the right to vote” is not sufficient “for producing free, stable societies” (*Why Chocolate, Icecream Should be Taken Off Menu*: February 4, 2006). The op-ed argues that “advances by Islamists” in the Middle East, as shown by the Hamas victory, reminds us that they support a “culture of intolerance” and the “[a]ttitudes in much of the Islamic world have been conditioned as well by cultural and religious repression”. This op-ed perceives ‘Islam’ as an inherently a problematic religion. This op-ed defines “our job”—to challenge and oppose the ‘Islamic world’ (*Why Chocolate, Icecream Should be Taken Off Menu*: February 4, 2006). The century-long political relationship— ‘Islam’ against ‘the West’— is upheld in this op-ed. It maintains that there is a clash between cultures and argues that the Islamic world is culturally intolerant—reinforcing Orientalist Othering. These newspapers perpetuate a distorted image of Islam— that is they

promote a negative image of Islam in society (Ramji, 2003: 65). The Orientalist “myth” of incapacity for reason democracy, and irrationality (Kumar, 2012) is also established.

The *NZH* op-ed (*Naïve to Expect a Softer Hamas*: January 31, 2006) argues that “Saddam, Islamist Iran, or the Taliban” regimes share similarities with “communist and Nazi regimes”. Consequently, these perceptions legitimate the social power and superiority of ‘the West’. It also parallels the discussion presented in Chapter 2 that Islam is sometimes presented superficially—for example, in the world history in American school textbooks Islam is equivalent to ‘Islamist radicals’. In two cases, the *NZH* op-ed (e.g. *Threat From Weapons of Cash Destruction*: April 12, 2006) challenges ‘the Western’ perceptions of the Palestinian election, arguing that the Palestinian people will “see [the Western policy] as the punitive act of an international community unable to tolerate democracy except when it produce[s] the result it wanted” (*Threat From Weapons of Cash Destruction*: April 12, 2006).

Letters to the Editor

There were no letters to the editor in the *ODT* and the *Press* regarding the Palestinian election. Two letters addressing the Hamas election appeared in the *NZH*. One letter (*Clive Sinclair*: February 7, 2006) argues that the threat to cut financial aid to Palestine is a “hypocritical Western approach”. Another letter contends that it is the US who is responsible for Hamas’ popularity (*Lew Daitry*, February 7, 2006).

Editorial Cartoons

The *ODT* and the *Press* cartoons (both of which are similar to each other) suggest that Bush was not happy, because Hamas won a majority in the Palestinian parliament.

Hamas—symbolized in the cartoon as a car—has negotiated the democratic road successfully while Bush, who positioned himself against Hamas, is stranded off the road with his broken-down car (cartoon: January 30, 2006). The *NZH* did not include any cartoons about the Hamas victory.

Editorials

With regard to the 2006 Palestinian election, the *Press* published two editorials, the *NZH* published three editorials (two of which were retrieved from foreign newspapers), while the *ODT* published one editorial.

The elite agenda that we have found in these newspapers' international news frame is sometimes challenged in editorials. These newspapers present a pluralistic view in their representation. For example, the *ODT* editorial supports a different view: this editorial asks for “pragmatism” which will “win in the end”, and asks the US to accept Hamas's victory (*The Politics of Despair*: January 28, 2006 [*ODT*]). This editorial observes that Hamas has maintained a peaceful co-existence with Israel since 2004— Hamas “has not carried out a suicide bombing since August 2004”. It argues that Hamas “seems to have substantially maintained a truce for the past year”. All these arguments imply that this editorial does not reproduce a typical Western elite view of Hamas which consists only of irrational terrorists.

With respect to occupying Afghanistan and Iraq, the US President Bush and former First Lady Laura Bush both expressed their concern about the suppression of women in these and other Muslim nations; in a statement Laura Bush defined the invasion as “a fight for the rights and dignity of women” (Gerstenzang and Getter, 2001). Laura Bush's concern was directed mainly towards Afghan women. The Bushes' concern was repeated in some Western media and media covered this topic in a way that

justified the invasion (Stabile and Kumar, 2005), by saying that these invasions were important in order to liberate suppressed women and other people living in Muslim nations (Chan-Malik, 2011: 116-117). This kind of messages, in fact, not only legitimate ‘our’ authority over them, but also ‘our’ superiority over ‘them’ through the depiction that ‘the Western’ opposition of Islamist, Islam and Muslim nations has a genuine ground. Similarly, the *NZH* editorial identifies Hamas as a “terrorist” group and implies that having an Islamist group in power is an “affront to human rights and civil liberties” (*Voters Can Elect Who They Wish*: January 25, 2006). It argues that this “Islamic militant organization” does not support human rights and specifically women’s rights—, the editorial refers to “their treatment of women”. This statement seems to indicate that the *NZH* believes that there are problems associated with Islamist politics— as mentioned in Chapter 2— regarding minority, women’s and human rights under Islamist politics. The Orientalist perception of sexist, suppressive and violent religion of Islam is thus upheld (Kumar, 2012; 2010) in this editorial.

Media sometimes voluntarily perpetuate government agendas and also maintain self-censorship towards government policies (Tuosto, 2008). For example, the US media has maintained the US government policy towards Iran since the fall of the Shah regime in 1979 (Chan-Malik, 2011); thus, media can be biased in favour of a particular government’s political agenda (Kellner, 2005a: 178; Tuosto, 2008) while opposing others. The editorial appearing in the *Press* (*Uncertain Future*: January 27, 2006) praises the voting environment as being “reasonably fair and honest”. However, it argues that the victory of the “radical Muslim terrorist [group] Hamas” makes the future for the Middle East “extremely cloudy”. This newspaper’s editorial describes Hamas as being comprised of “suicide bombers”. Furthermore, when discussing the IRA (Irish Republican Army), this editorial does not describe the group according to

any other identification (e.g. as Catholic), but in the case of Hamas, they are identified as “Islamic militant”. The term ‘Islam’ is continually linked with terrorism—leading to use of the term ‘Islamic terrorism’. The second editorial (*Horror at Hamas [Press]*) comes a week after the Palestinian election (on the 31st of January 2006). This editorial confirms that this period of time is enough to “confirm” that a Hamas-led government cannot be viewed with “anything less than grave trepidation”, because this “terrorist group”, does not have a “consolatory approach” to a peace deal in this region.

Summary

The ‘Western’ elite agenda is upheld in New Zealand newspapers. The dominant ideology of the Western elite nations is followed in New Zealand newspapers’ news framing. These newspapers legitimate the elite policy towards Israel, Palestine and the Middle East. The elite policy is unchallenged, the Orientalist view of cultural clash is promoted; responsibility is given to the ‘spoiler’ for the interruption of peace process; and the ideological superiority of ‘the West’ is established by framing the issue against an ‘Islamist political group’. The elite Western policy is legitimated through international news framing that frequently questions a corruption-free political ‘group’ but expects a corrupt political party. These newspapers become each other’s supporters in respect to the elite ideology. In the context of non-news, the Orientalist identification was not perceived in the *ODT*. It challenges the dominant Western view towards Palestine, the Middle East and Hamas in all cases. The non-news appearing in the *Press* legitimates the elite policy agenda towards Palestine; and produces a counter frame to the *ODT*. The *Press* also maintains a civilizational clash between Islam and ‘the West’. A pluralistic finding is identified in some cases of non-news

items appearing in the *NZH*; but its editorial and op-ed (in most cases) question Hamas' victory. Overall, the political elite group is successful in framing their agenda through the foreign news agencies, and that is also reflected in most cases in non-news appearing in New Zealand newspapers.

The perceptions regarding Western elite policy in Palestine may be caused by two factors. Firstly, as Said proposes (2003) these reports legitimate and accept some Western nations' authority over the Middle East without questioning it. The other factor may be the political position of Hamas— Islamic religious politics. However, it has also been identified that these newspapers accepted some nations that also followed strict Islamic law—for example, Saudi Arabia (discussed in the section on the Hezbollah-Israel conflict). In addition, these perceptions may be caused by Hamas' position against Israel, a 'Western' ally; according to these newspapers' frame Hamas has killed innocent Israelis. Fatah, like Hamas, has also been involved in the 'murder of innocents' and 'terrorism', but this party is accepted in these newspapers, in parallel with Western elite nations. Finally, 'Islamist politics', arguably suppressed by colonial and post-colonial political powers,⁷⁷ may be behind the popularity of these 'groups', as these 'groups' have shown strong activity since the colonial era and have a corruption-free image; the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt is an example of this. In addition, in current 'Western' media discourse the traditional⁷⁸ media representation, which maintains an Orientalist view of Islam and Muslims, is, in many cases, challenged, such as the popular revolution in 2011-12 in

⁷⁷ This is also true for the leftist and liberal politics in the Middle East. The nationalists and leftists were also the subjects of suppression by Western forces and their post-colonial political allies (Kumar, 2010).

⁷⁸ 'Traditional' is appropriated here as in most cases scholarly arguments generalize that the 'Western media' promote an Orientalist view that arguably legitimates Western ideology.

the Arab-African region (Korepin and Sharan, 2011: 2 & 7; Goldstone, 2011).⁷⁹ The Western mainstream media perception thus opposes, delegitimizes and challenges the traditional form of relations between media and power elites. In covering the 2006 Palestinian election, however, in most cases these newspapers do not question the traditional Orientalist view thus the Western elite agenda remains unchallenged.

5. Aircraft Terror Plot in Britain

Studies (e.g. van Dijk, 1991; Poole, 2006) argue that in Europe minority groups including Muslims are the subjects of negative stereotyping. Journalists represent these minority groups as challenges to mainstream European society and the originators of social problems (van Dijk, 1991: ix). In media Muslims are the prime suspects for terrorism (Richardson, 2001; Poole, 2002), and are subject to distorted and biased reporting (Holohan, 2006). For example, the depiction of the British Muslim community is oversimplified and their presence in the British society is perceived negatively (Rex, 1996: 218). Their population is greatly exaggerated. Rex (1996: 218) argues that the exaggeration mainly focuses on this community as a “threat”— that is, the threat of Islamism— which is linked to terrorism. As Hartley (1992) and Richardson (2001: 224) observe the notion of British Muslims’ “threat” originated in the identification of ‘us’ vs. ‘them’. In addition, foreign corporate news agencies contribute to the stereotyping of social groups and their simplified frames (Giffard and Van Leuven, 2005) often dehumanize minority groups. This section identifies the way in which the British Muslim community was depicted in news and

⁷⁹ See newspaper editorials including those from the *New York Times*, the *Guardian*, and the *Observer* are helpful in conceptualizing how some ‘Western’ media outlets reject the so-called Orientalist perception in relation to the Arab-African uprisings of 2011-2012. They opposed the elite policy of their nation of the dictatorial regimes in this region.

non-news coverage in relation to the possible terrorist attack at Heathrow Airport in 2006.

Van Dijk, outlining media-coverage and some elements of media-treatment that focus on a particular newspaper's position towards an issue, proposes how media emphasize an issue:

[B]y printing part of the text in a **salient position** (e.g. on top), and in **larger or bold fonts**; [so that] these devices will attract more attention, and hence will be processed with extra time or memory resources, as is the case for **headlines, titles or publicity slogans** – thus contributing to more detailed processing and to better representation and recall [...]. **[V]isual representation** – may specifically affect [audiences' memory], so that readers pay more attention to some pieces of information than others (2006: 365 [emphases added]).

The above (and emphasized) elements are common techniques used in New Zealand newspapers when covering the 2006 aircraft terror plot. Media promote, construct, and reconstruct mainstream ideology through their representation (van Dijk, 1988: 13), and control information and present “events-as-news” (Altheide, 1974: 24) according to their own interests (Nossek, 2004: 346). New Zealand newspapers provided prominent coverage on the Heathrow Airport terror plot. The first story on this issue appears in the 11th of August 2006 issue with full-front-page coverage along with being lead news in the international news pages. In their first reports these newspapers provide information that 21 (finally, 24) people were arrested in connection with the aircraft attack plot. Initially, reports do not mention the (religious) identity of those suspected but eventually mention that they are Muslims, terms, which appear alongside adjectives such as “suspected” and “Muslim terrorist”. The reports emphasize the serious nature of the event —with prominent headlines, a front-page banner, and as lead news, with full-page coverage and photographs. All

reports also appear under a slogan⁸⁰ of *TERROR ALERT* (in *ODT* from August 12, 2006, the second day of coverage), *TERROR PLOT REVEALED* (in *NZH* from August 11, 2006, the first day of coverage) and *AIR TERROR PLOT* (in the *Press* from August 11, 2006, the first day of coverage). The *ODT* published 26 news reports and one op-ed. The *NZH* published 39 news stories, and six op-eds. The *Press* published 32 news reports and five op-eds. There were no editorials and editorial cartoons with regard to this issue in these newspapers. These newspapers report:

A plot to blow up aircraft in mid-flight between Britain and the United States “intended to be mass murder on an unimaginable scale” was yesterday thwarted by British police who arrested more than 21 people (*Aircraft Terror Foiled: August 11, 2006 [ODT]*).

British police have arrested 21 people in connection with a terror plot against airlines travelling from Britain to the United States that was “intended to be mass murder on an unimaginable scale” (*Air Terror Plot Foiled: August 11, 2006 [Press]*).

The arrests foiled a terror plot “intended to be mass murder on an unimaginable scale”, said Deputy Police Commissioner Paul Stephenson (*Worldwide Travel Chaos: August 11, 2006 [NZH]*).

Soon after the 9/11 attacks, then US President Bush declared a “crusade” against the responsible terrorists (Chibundu, 2006: 125). This crusade however seems to be directed towards ‘Islam’ and ‘Muslims’ where the ‘crusade’ intermingled with ‘Muslim terrorism’ specifically with his policy of ‘war against terror’. The ‘crusade’ quickly spread due to the media’s construction of ‘Muslim terrorism’ and ‘Islamic fundamentalism’ (Hafez, 2007; Maira, 2008; Poole, 2002; Richardson, 2004). In many cases, media marginalize minority voices and lead to the ‘invisibility of minorit[ies]’ (Campbell, 1995; van Dijk, 2000: 39-40). However, in the context of

⁸⁰ Original upper case in slogan.

suspicion— suspected terrorism— minorities become highly visible in media depictions that reinforced negative stereotypes (Campbell, 1995: 7; van Dijk, 2000: 36). Media depictions appear to perpetuate the social elite agenda (van Dijk, 2006: 36). Since 9/11, al Qaeda, bin Laden are repeatedly represented in media narratives that sensationalize the issue but dehumanize Muslims and Islam. The following discussion can demonstrate how this is a case for the suspected terror attack in Heathrow in 2006. Apart from the third quote from the *NZH*, which is the fourth sentence from the fourth paragraph of the story, the above excerpts are the leads to the respective news stories appearing in the front-page banner news. These excerpts state that police arrested 21 people. The *Press* report does not disclose the nationality of those arrested. This news report maintains that this terrorist attack could have been “unimaginable”. However, the *NZH* report says in the 19th paragraph that “homegrown” citizens are involved in this “suspected attack” and “police [are] working with the South Asian community” (*Worldwide Travel Chaos: August 11, 2006 [NZH]*), but does not include further information despite the fact it already provided a hint regarding where these ‘terrorists’ originally came from— South Asia. Likewise, the *ODT* report (*Aircraft Terror Foiled: August 11, 2006 [ODT]*) does not disclose the identity of the arrested. However, it maintains: “13 months [ago] four British Islamist suicide bombers killed 52 people”, “al Qaeda called on Muslims to fight those who backed Israel” and “al Qaeda hijacked a passenger aircraft in September 2000”. The *ODT* report does not say whether those arrested are linked with the al Qaeda terrorist group or whether they are Muslims. The “September 11, 2001” and “July 7 bombings in London” were repeated phrases in these newspapers’ reports, maintaining the prominence of the terrorists’ actions. The repetition of “al Qaeda”, “Islamist” and other such terms encourages readers to identify those

“suspected”/“terrorists” as Muslims, although these reports do not yet spell out that those arrested are “Muslims”.

When covering some world issues (including Muslim affairs) ‘Western’ news media, maintain uniformity (Brasted, 2009), which in turn sustains uniform media coverage of Islam, Muslim and Muslim nations (Hirst and Schutze, 2004). The negative representation of Islam in the media is not a consequence of 9/11; rather it has a long history (Said, 1978; Karim 2000; Poole, 2002). Said (1981: 1) argues that “Islam”, in the ‘Western media’, “is peculiarly traumatic” and since the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979 Islam has received extensive attention from the ‘Western’ media (p. li). In terms of the Heathrow plot, the *Press*’ report, *24 Bomb Suspects Held* (August 12-13, 2006), maintains that two of the arrested are converted Muslims. This report presents a headshot of one of the converted— Abdul Waheed—who was previously known as Don Stewart Whyte. Later, in the 18th paragraph (of a report containing 23 paragraphs), the journalist writes, “two arrests were made in Pakistan”. The *NZH* report notes in the 24th paragraph of a 42-paragraph story: “The suspected were believed to be mainly British Muslims” (*Plot Secrets Revealed*: 12-13 August, 2006). The *ODT* report *Terror Cells Watched for Months* (August 12-13, 2006) says that the arrested are “British Muslims of Pakistani descent” in the 16th paragraph of this 19-paragraph story. Consequently, all of these newspapers identified the ‘terrorists’ as Muslim.

Finally, these newspapers’ reports link “terrorism” and “Muslims”. The “villain”, is identified in ‘our’ narratives as being against “our way of life” (*Ritual of Denial Must Stop Now*: August 12, 2006 [*Press*]). Consequently, the Othering process can be identified through representing the creators of ‘our’ problems as socially “misguided” and “Islamic”. The phrase ‘Islamic terrorism’ is repeated in ‘our’ Orientalist

narratives in establishing and legitimating the dominant ideology. During the ‘war on terror’ policy, the US administration had to justify its invasion and they repeatedly focused upon weapon of mass destruction in Iraq (Gendzier, 2003: 17), and other propaganda (Taylor, 2008) such as Saddam’s link with al Qaeda and more specifically the 9/11 attacks etc. (Kellner, 2005; Taylor, 2008). This kind of propaganda received justification in the ‘Western’ mainstream media frame (Kellner, 2005; 2004; 2003) that they produced for social consumption (Kellner, 2004: 69) in which media construct reality on the basis of propaganda (Kamalipour, 2007: 20). In the context of suspected terrorism at Heathrow, these newspapers also legitimate the Iraq invasion. It seems that perceived ‘Islamic terrorism’ is the subject of massive media coverage (Nacos, Bloch-Elkon and Shapiro, 2007: 106). The *Press* report, *Ritual of Denial Must Stop Now* (August 12, 2006), argues that “Muslim terrorists” were planning to attack before 9/11 and before “the West” invaded Iraq, and that the suspected terrorist attack in London Airport is associated with the 9/11 event. The *NZH* report also maintains that “Islamic terrorists” are attacking “the West” in an organized way and moreover that they tried to attack long before the 9/11 incident (*Airline Terror Planning Echoes Plot by World Trade Centre Bomber: August 12, 2006 [NZH]*). Kellner (2004) argues that the mainstream media supported President Bush and his political agenda with regard to the invasion of Iraq and the war on terror policy. These media representations also reveal that ‘the West’ is vulnerable, as these Muslim “terrorist[s] could create harm” against any civilized nation (p. 44). The elite political agenda against ‘Muslim terrorists’ and Muslim nations, including the war on terror, was justified. It also seems to be the case in the New Zealand newspapers. For example, the *ODT* maintains that these “plotters” are Muslims as it was in the case of the 9/11 attacks and the July 7, 2005 bombing in England (*Suspects Questioned;*

Terror Threat Still 'Critical': August 14, 2006 [ODT]). Furthermore, the terrorism activity in London in July 7, 2005 and 9/11 in USA are repeated phrases in these newspapers that link “Muslim” and “terrorism”. Thus, ‘our’ actions in invading Iraq and Afghanistan are justified because these ‘plotters’ started harming ‘us’ long before ‘we’ invaded ‘them’.

As argued in Chapter 1 coverage relating to terrorism and fundamentalism has grown markedly in Western media. Prior to 9/11, however, the United Nations (UN) recognized that Islamophobia was growing in the West and was encouraged to take action against it (Allen, 2004: 2). The prejudicial attitude towards Islam and Muslims is identifiable in the society through elite and ordinary people’s talk, texts and attitudes (Ibid, p. 2). The ‘Western’ mainstream media reinforce racial attitudes towards minorities including Muslims (van Dijk, 2000: 36). Thus, we—the readers—can see an interrelationship between language, politics, culture and social institutions such as media (Dunmire, 2012: 736). Allen argues that Western political elites such as British politicians perceive “Islamophobia” or anti-Muslim racism as “fair and justified” (Allen, 2004: 1). Some Western mainstream media join the elite political agenda that dehumanizes Muslims (Poole, 2002; Richardson, 2004). Media representation, however, appear through imagination (Maira, 2008) and ‘Islam and ‘the West’ [original quotation mark] is presented within a contrasting discourse in the ‘Western’ media construction (Richardson, 2004: 113). This construction creates fears about Muslims living in Western society (Richardson, 2001). By engaging in this process media promotes “fear’ inside society by depicting civilizational clash and ‘Muslim terrorism’ (Kellner, 2004: 44). For example, stories –*Terror Suspects Remain at Large:* August 14, 2006 (*Press*); *Bin Laden’s ‘Helping Hand’:* August 14, 2006 (*Press*) – suggest that British Police “used a mole from within the Muslim

community to infiltrate the plot”. The *ODT* report *Terror Cells Watched For Months* (August 12-13, 2006), referring to the July 7, 2005 London bombing, says that “British authorities received a call from a worried member of the Muslim community” and this tip helped police to trace these “Muslims”. The *NZH* report *Deadly Plane Blast Plot Bears All the Signs of the ‘Big One’* (August 14, 2006) reports that “counterterrorism agents have been tracking the alleged [British-born Muslim] plotters for months”. All of these references establish the message that it was a pre-planned attempt and police arrested them on the basis of genuine information. Thus, the issue is grounded as a fact and these Muslims are identified as being genuinely criminal.

When discussing contemporary British politics and media rhetoric, Holohan (2006) notes that there is an “antagonistic” relationship between British “insiders” and outsiders “by virtue of visible religious, cultural, or ethnic difference” (Holohan, 2006: 13). Mainstream British media regularly produce anti-Muslim images (Halliday, 2006: 24-26). Observing the current global crisis as a consequence of colonial rule, Halliday (2006) argues that in dominant media narratives a generalized Muslim image (e.g. of the Muslim terrorist) is presented. He argues that this depiction is a consequence of political relations between the media and state that constructs a negative image of Islam and produces racist attitudes towards Muslims in society. The anti-Muslim attitudes in society were also the focus of a survey in England, commissioned by the *Search for Common Ground* report (2007), which found that English media depicted a generalized, oversimplified and prejudicial image of Islam. As mentioned before, in the context of ‘terrorism’ Muslims are the primary suspects and ‘Muslim terrorist’ becomes a major focus of the media (Richardson, 2004: 120). For example, reports state that police “arrested suspected Islamist terrorists” (*Anger*

Fuels Denial Culture: August 14, 2006 [*Press*]) and “suspected Islamist militants” (*Suspect Held Over Jet Plot*: August 17, 2006 [*Press*]), they “learned bomb-making skills in al Qaeda training camps” (*Bin Laden’s ‘Helping Hand’*: August 14, 2006 [*NZH*]), and these “suspected terrorists” were raising funds for terrorism (*Terror Cells Watched the Intensification of this ‘Foiled Plot’*: August 14, 2006 [*ODT*]). Richardson (2004: 118) argues that the denial of the Muslim minority group in British society does not come through the media narratives only, but also through the depiction of “symbol[s], artifact[s] and characteristics” that could be identified as Islamic (p. 118). This is true in this event as well. For example, the *NZH* presents a story— *Anti-Terror Police in for the Long Haul* (August 14, 2006)—with a photo-caption that reads: “TAKING TIME: The Terrorism Act 2006 Gives the Police 28 Days to Question Suspects Before Charging Them” [original upper case]. This caption is presented under a photo of a mosque. This seems to indicate that it is Muslims who are the only culprits. The coverage of the symbol actually promotes the ‘suspected terrorist’s Islamic identity that is already identified against ‘Western’ values and a source of ‘terrorism’. The ‘villain’ is defined as a terrorist; the problem, as Islamic terrorism; and the future problem, as fund-raising for terrorism. The prominence of Orientalist generalization can be perceived as mis-information via later coverage.

The later reports state that one of the arrested had been released without charge and “it is anticipated that a number of others will be freed”⁸¹. The *NZH* report provides details about the arrested and the released persons:

Of the 23 British Muslims arrested in the operations, 11 are being held pending a decision whether to charge them. Another woman was released

⁸¹ E.g. *Terror Threat is Still Critical* (15 August, 2006 [*Press*]), *Suspects Questioned: Terror Threat Still Critical* (August 14, 2006 [*ODT*]).

without charge (*Aircraft Terror Suspects in Court*: August 23, 2006 [NZH]).

The invisibility of minorities (van Dijk, 2000: 36) can be identified in these media depictions when reporters stop covering the issue or keep silent on particular issues. Their silence preserves the elite agenda and dominant ideology. In addition, media marginalize the minority group through omitting the minority voice (van Dijk, 2000). In contrast they depict issues relating to minority group such as Muslims concerns that dehumanize them (Campbell, 1995) In the process readers see a “serious” negligence towards minority issues (Ibid, p.7). The negligence and marginalization may come through sensationalizing the issue, keeping silent in favor of the dominant ideology and omitting minority voices. In any cases, the powerless will be dehumanized (Entman, 2006). This is also the case for New Zealand newspapers where there were no further reports on this issue. However, in earlier reports the suspects were frequently associated with the terrorist acts of al Qaeda—for example, 9/11—to emphasize the seriousness of the event. In later reports (mentioned before), it was found that not all of those arrested were so-called “plotters” or “terrorists”. Yet these newspapers’ reports still depict them as “terrorists”. It seems that any further reports could challenge the Orientalist view of Othering. Since 9/11 media often frame 9/11 and the war against terror policy within a “religious paradigm”—Muslim versus Christian—which harmed the liberal view of ‘Western’ nations— e.g. Australia— within its political structure (Crabb, 2009: 276). The focus on religious affiliation amongst politicians in the public forum has also increased since 9/11 (Crabb, 2009). The question of religious affiliation has affected other social institutions such as media, and eventually led to discrimination between religious groups (Crabb, 2009). For example, the gatekeepers’ active role in judging the

newsworthiness of the coverage can be identified through the special attention of the coverage—namely, producing photographs of the airport travel screen on the front page that shows the cancellation of flights and anxious people, producing a banner heading on the front page with full-page coverage that states that due to the “Muslim terrorist” threat these flights are cancelled. The photographs occupied a major portion including the front pages; graphic presentations were also shown indicating how the ‘Muslim terrorists’ planned the plot, and how they could destroy flights from ‘innocent-appearing small electronics devices’ and liquids. The frame providing the voice of the power elite and their bureaucrats—for example, the police and politicians— in collaboration with extensive coverage can create fear across society, and be “accepted by the large sentiment of the public” (van Dijk, 1991: 4). All of these elements indicate how international news agencies sensationalize an issue through a particular frame.

Terrorism in Op-Eds

In the above discussion, we have seen a uniformed depiction of Islam and Muslims that dehumanizes them through the process of Othering. We can see a similar process at work in op-eds although this is not always the case. In other words, a ‘many voices’ can be identified in the construction of op-eds appearing in these newspapers. For example, the *NZH* publishes six op-eds, two of which reject the “suspected plot”. The other four suggest that the actions of the British authorities are genuine. Two illustrative excerpts demonstrate how the *NZH* op-eds construct the involvement of Muslims in the suspected aircraft terrorism:

[T]hey [liberal politicians] pretend that Islamism doesn’t exist or rationalise it as an understandable, if regrettably bloody, critique of

Anglo-American foreign policy, as if what we are up against is the armed wing of the Liberal Democrats (*West's Culture of Denial*: August 16, 2006 [NZH]).

According to sources in Pakistan and the US, [Rased] Rauf is the brother of Tayib Rauf, who was arrested and released without charge in connection with the 7/7 [July 7, 2005 London] bombing and was again arrested in connection with last week's alleged plot (*An Enemy Within: The Sleepers Awake*: August 14, 2006 [NZH]).

In some 'Western media' such as in Hollywood films Muslims or Arabs are "dangerously construct[ed]" in a politically "purposeful" way—that is, in line with 'Western' political interest (Aguayo, 2009: 43) that regularly produces false fear of Islam. Arti (2007) argues that the depiction follows the Western elite political line that accords with the perception of a clash of civilizations (p. 1). For example, the excerpts from the NZH op-eds provide two main messages—that Islamists are active in 'the West' and the criminality of Rased Rauf. While the first excerpt provides a general message about Islamism and argues that Islamism is active, the other links Islamism and terrorism with Rased Rauf. The excerpt (*An Enemy Within: The Sleepers Awake*: August 14, 2006 [NZH]) argues that Mr Rauf is a criminal because he was once suspected to be a criminal. Despite the fact that he was released "without charge" this op-ed tries to link him with criminality. It says he was "arrested" in connection with 7/7. It maintains this link in a particular way—Rased Rauf was suspected of being involved in, and thus arrested for, the 7/7 bombing, which legitimates his arrest. Another op-ed (*Conspiracy Theorists Losing Grip on Reality*: August 19, 2006 [NZH]), while identifying this case as genuine, rejects some commentators who believe that this "plot" is a "design to shore up George W. Bush and Tony Blair and distract international attention from the chaos in Iraq", and argues

that the invasion was important to calm down world terrorism— a justification of ‘Western’ superiority in invading other nations.

The *Press* op-eds argue that “Islamists” are active in Britain and maintains that the “plot” was genuine (*Cleric Mocks Terror Victims*: July 12, 2006 [*Press*]). Another op-ed (*Terror Plots: Whose Side is Pakistan on?* August 15, 2006 [*Press*]) argues that “British-born Muslims” are “always in connection” with terrorism; thus, the British Muslim community are unproblematically generalized as criminals.

It is important however to examine those op-eds which challenge the dominant representation of the event. In many cases, the Orientalist voices are questioned in these newspapers. For example, two op-eds appearing in the *NZH* denied the “suspected terrorism” at Heathrow Airport. They argued that the suspected terrorist issue was being used politically and that this case was just one of the ways the Prime Minister Tony Blair and the US President manipulated power politically (*Scaring the Public into Backing Wars*: August 16, 2006 [*NZH*]). Another op-ed argues that according to current security measures, the “young, brown, [and] male equals terrorist”, and that this simplistic perception is misleading (*Young, Brown, Male Equals Terrorist – That’s Not ‘Common Sense’*: August 22, 2006 [*NZH*]). This op-ed thus challenged the Orientalist view presented in earlier op-eds and questioned the legitimacy of the power elite and their role— e.g. in the Iraq invasion.

Summary

The extensive coverage of terrorism may contribute to “the broad discourse of fear”, which in turn “legitimat[es] the war on terror” (Altheide, 2009: 1355) and the invasion of Iraq. Reports maintain a frame of fear about Muslims; thus, a socio-cultural conflict between the mainstream and minority cultural groups is identified.

The conflict is presented within an Orientalist frame that creates an ‘us’/‘them’ social identification. When covering the Heathrow plot, the international news, maintain that Muslims were suspected terrorists and, eventually, a threat to ‘the West’. The minority Muslim group living in Britain is defined as a social problem and negatively stereotyped. The reporting pattern is uniform—all of these media outlets’ reports describe the suspected and arrested Muslims as genuine terrorists. However, later, when some of them were released without any charge, there was no follow-up and it remains unclear whether these newspapers questioned the issue, in their own voice and in opposition to the point of view of the elite. All but two of the op-eds appearing in these newspapers also produce a frame similar to that of the news narratives. In addition they linked the issue with the Iraq invasion, which justifies the US-led war on terror in which Britain participated.

6. The 2005 Bali Bombing

Scholars (e.g. Fengler and Ruß-Mohl, 2008: 668; Underwood, 1993) often question journalistic practices and in particular the notion of objectivity because in covering an issue reporters often sideline some groups while upholding others. Reporters frame an issue for their audiences using narratives, based on readers’ perceived preferences, and by giving a local angle and local flavour to international events (Peterson, 2007: 247-148). In addition, media adopt self-censorship, and focus prominently upon an event, filtering and constructing an issue based on their cultural and ideological interests (Bagdikian, 2000; Brockus, 2009: 34). Through censoring and prominence, news media construct narratives around a ‘villains’ and ‘victims’ (Karim, 2000) and reinforce “fear and intimidation” through their reports (Kumar, 2010: 254). The storytelling form and framing thus construct the view of a perceived ‘us’/‘them’ social

identification by sidelining one and upholding another (Poole, 2002; Richardson, 2004: 118-24). This can be seen in the New Zealand newspapers' reports of the Bali bombing in 2005. Cultural proximity played a major role in covering this issue. However, as mentioned earlier (in Chapter 4) New Zealand newspapers published a total of 18 news reports from local contributors. These 18 reports mainly focus upon how this issue will affect local business and will impact upon the Indonesian economy—for example, on travel agencies, as Kiwi holidaymakers would be less interested in holidaying in Bali. The framing that (re)produces an Orientalist view that is in fact a reflection of the view of international news agencies.

In the context of the 2005 Bali bombing all of the blame was directed at Muslim groups without these newspapers providing any confirmed information. The Bali bombing issue was increasingly linked to the Philippines. New Zealand newspapers covered this issue prominently—making it the banner-lead on the front page. The *ODT* published 22 news stories and one editorial. The *Press* published 28 news reports, three op-eds and one editorial. The *NZH* published 25 news stories, five op-eds, three editorials, three editorial cartoons, and one letter to the editor. The Bali terrorist attack killed 27 people—three Australians, one Japanese and 23 Indonesians. Gatekeepers decide country-based importance when considering the newsworthiness of certain stories; not all countries are important to them (Chang, Shoemaker and Brendlinger, 1986). Furthermore, cultural affinity influences what news is covered (Chang, 1998; Louw, 2004). The issue of proximity is thus of interest to this discussion—more specifically, whether cultural and geographic proximity was a factor and how cultural proximity impacted the coverage of this issue. It is important to recognize however that “Newsworthiness [e.g. whether the item will reach a wider readership] is a mental judgment that can only marginally predict what actually

becomes news” (Shoemaker, 2006: 110). As one of the key values of reporting, newsworthiness helps to sell news.

In terms of proximity, the Bali bombing issue can be recognized as the most newsworthy item in these newspapers, as it occurred in a nation (Indonesia) that is geographically close to New Zealand. From a cultural perspective, Australian citizens were affected; and Australia and New Zealand share a similar (Western) cultural identity. In terms of consequences, this incident has been identified as the act of an organized terrorist group, Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), which according to these newspapers has a link with al-Qaeda. However, JI did not confirm their participation in this attack. ‘Suspected Muslim terrorism’ receives extra attention in media coverage (Poole, 2002: Richardson, 2004; Maira, 2008), which in turn produces fear inside society (Altheide, 2009: 1355; Kellner, 2004: 44). This also constructs the Orientalist perception of an Islamic threat and Islamic fundamentalism (Richardson, 2004). When reporting on the war on terror, terrorism, the attacks on Afghanistan, and the invasion of Iraq, the media have been “comprehensively overhauled as a propaganda apparatus”, attacking mainly Muslims (Miller, 2006: 45). In addition, Muslim violence is the main focus of ‘Western’ media (Richardson, 2004: 120; Poole, 2002) while covering issues relating to Islam and Muslims. Media frame the issue from a particular angle to make the event more salient (Entman, 2007: 164), and in many cases the pattern of coverage appears to be based on their imagination and unchecked information. For example, all three newspapers suggest that the attack was carried out by JI, a ‘Muslim militant group’. In covering the Bali bombing, these newspapers follow a similar pattern in blaming JI. The Indonesian government could not identify any one group or person responsible for the attack and no group claimed responsibility. For example, the *ODT* reports say:

No-one claims responsibility for the attacks at two sea-food cafes [in Bali]... But suspicion immediately fell on Jemaah Islamiyah” (*Photos of Bombers’ Heads Used in Hunt*: October 4, 2005).

The *NZH* reports claim:

Last week’s attacks [...] could have been carried out by an autonomous cell of radical Islamist group Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) (*Police Await Breakthrough in Bali Bombers’ Identities*: October 10, 2005).

Media construct a prejudicial image of Islam that reinforces anti-Islamic perceptions, plays a counterpart role in the promotion of ‘Western’ elite interests and carries a simplified image of Muslims (Dunsky, 2008: 22-33). In discussing Australian media coverage of Islam, Kabir (2006) argues that when covering violence or terrorism, Australian media emphasize ‘Muslim violence’ but ignore ‘violence against Muslims’ through dehumanizing Islam (p. 316). This kind of construction can also be seen in New Zealand newspapers. For example, the *Press* reports quotes the Indonesian President, who says, “It is too soon to blame anyone” (*Attacks on Westerners Will Continue Says Expert*: October 3, 2005). However, the *Press* speculates on who was responsible for the attacks: with al-Qaeda linked to JI (*Deadly Attacks Revive Fears*: October 6, 2005). The *Press* report provides more clues and implies this linking in a different way, making reference to the attacks’ “timing”— there was a similar terrorist attack in October 2002; and the “planning [of] the selection sites”— a bar or tourist spot Western people prefer to visit, which proves that JI “or a similar group” did it (*Deadly Attacks Revive Fears*: October 6, 2005 [*Press*]). All newspapers argue that, as JI was “blamed” in the 2002 and 2004 bomb blasts in Bali, this group is therefore

“responsible” for this attack as well⁸². Two words— ‘blame’ and ‘responsible’— seem to generate a similar meaning.

Scholarly documents— Louw, 2004; Nossek, 2004; Manning, 2006: 129; Hirst and Schutze, 2004: 171; Chang and Lee, 1992; Hawkins, 2009— identify how media construct culturally biased frame in covering issue. Through their coverage they promote ‘we’ vs. ‘they’ identification that Others one group (Richardson, 2004: 121; Poole, 2002). In this process the cultural and ideological proximate group is framed in a positive manner (Nossek, 2004: 347) while the Other is dehumanized. Through their concept of newsworthiness (Shoemaker, 1991; Shoemaker and Vos, 2009: 25) media gatekeepers promote the perception that ‘we’ are victimized by ‘the Other’ (Said, 1997; Richardson, 2004). Thus, the normative position of journalistic objectivity is questioned (Andy, Livingston and Hebert, 2005: 6) especially during crisis moments. For example, these newspapers reports maintain that “Westerners” were the main target, despite the fact that 23 out of the 27 victims killed were not Westerners. In addition, the pattern of focusing on the identity of Western victims reinforces an Orientalist view. For example, in the attack 27 people were killed, including three Australians (identified as “Westerners”). It was repeatedly reported: “three Australians were killed”. Reports also provide details of the Australians’ identities—their names, parents, and states. The *ODT*’s first report, (*Suicide Blasts Batter Bali*: October 3, 2005), devotes 26 words (in the 16th paragraph of this 25-paragraph story) to say that “12 Indonesians” and “a Japanese” were killed. There was no mention in later reports of the deaths of non-Australians (simply mentioning the 27 people who were killed, including the three Australians). In the first 14 news stories of the *Press* coverage, there was no identification (e.g. of nationality) of non-Australian deaths. The report

⁸² For these phrases and references, see: *Search Widened for Bombing Suspects*: October 7, 2005 (*ODT*); *Cold and Calculated Destruction*: October 4, 2005 (*NZH*); *Deadly Attacks Revive Fears*: October 6, 2005 (*Press*).

argues that “Westerners” and “Western interests” are the main targets of these terrorists (*Suspect’s Al-Qaeda Link*: October 3, 2005). The 12th paragraph of the 15th story (*Cellphones Likely Trigger*: October 4, 2005 [*Press*]) reports that Indonesian and Japanese citizens were killed. The follow-up stories do not mention non-Australians. The *NZH* does not mention whether any other nationals were killed. However, it notes that 27 people were killed including three Australians. The photo-coverage of these newspapers also (re)produces a similar perception, providing photos of dead and injured Australians. There was no photo-coverage of non-Australians killed or injured. This fact suggests that these newspapers imposed a local flavour—that Westerners are the target of terrorists, generating fear amongst its readers (mainly “Westerners”) and creating a boundary between ‘us’ and ‘them’, that is, between “Westerners” and ‘Muslim terrorists’, or the West and Islam; and thus, parallels the argument of Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, Shapiro (2011) that media sell fear. This coverage pattern also follows Said’s arguments— “East” versus “West”— about media’s tendency to produce Others mentioned elsewhere in this thesis. For example, the ‘three Westerners’ received extensive coverage but the 24 ‘non-Westerners’ received none. These newspapers’ coverage creates a perception of ‘the West’ and ‘the Rest’, which is an important aspect of the Orientalist view.

The *ODT*, *NZH* and *Press* reports suggest a link between JI, the Moro Muslims in the Philippines, and Islamic terrorism. Moro Muslims are the minority religious group living mainly in the Mindanao province in the Philippines; there was a separatist movement in this province. Initially, Moros demanded equal support from their government, arguing that the Christian majorities were the focus the government. The authorities did not resolve the issue (McKenna, 1996: 233; Gowing 1983; Majul, 1999). Later, the Moro’s demanded more power. Finally, they started a separatist

movement. In the 1990s, they began negotiations with the Philippine government. The Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and her government finalized a peace deal with them. The government agreed to resolve the Moro demands gradually; and in 2012, with President Benigno Aquino, they agreed, “to end a 40-year conflict” (TVNZ, 2012). It is important to note that the Moro rebellion in the Philippines started long before the al-Qaeda activity. The Mindanao people “were forced to resist abuses not because the separatists had a better political program or a clear national agenda or even an ideology, but for the reason of self-defense and survival” (Buendia, 2007: 16). By presenting a ‘Moro Muslim terrorist’ frame, these newspapers maintain that Moros are intimately linked with al Qaeda and JI.

The news narratives implied that Mindanao had become a “key training area” and “fertile ground” for al Qaeda and other “Islamic terrorist groups”⁸³. This interlinking may reinforce a perception that Muslims populated places harbor terrorists. The Orientalist descriptions of the backwardness of the location— describing it as “unguarded”, “jungle-clad islands”, “mountains” and “marshes” (*Attacks Revive Concerns Over Region’s Terror Links: October 6, 2005 [ODT]*)— may encourage readers to believe —that it is a “fertile ground” for terrorists. The repeated focus on this issue indicates that the news representation accords with the perception of a clash of cultures between the innocent and the victim, in which Muslims victimize ‘the West’.

The fear of Islamization is the main focus of current media and elite political discourses (Walker, 2006; Alexseev, 2008; Allen, 2004; Richardson, 2004; Poole, 2002). Since media produce knowledge about a social group (van Dijk, 2000), they

⁸³ For these references, see: *Spotlight on Asia’s Most-Wanted: October 3, 2005 (NZH)*; *Deadly Attacks Revive Fears: October 6, 2005 (Press)*; *More Frequent Terror Attacks Predicted, November 23, 2005 (ODT)*.

promote discrimination and anti-Muslim attitude inside society (Islamic Human Right Commission, 2007: 9). In addition, by constructing ‘Islamism’ the elite-supportive media promote hostility (Nahdi, 2003: 1), reinforce Islamophobia (Abbas, 2000: 65) and construct a negative prejudicial perception towards Islam and Muslims through Orientalist view of ‘Islamic threat’ (Whitaker, 2002: 55). These newspapers also construct the frame of Islamization. For example, in the context of the Bali bombing, two of New Zealand’s newspapers (*ODT* and *NZH*) contextualize the event by reporting that the “terrorist Islamic groups”—JI, al Qaeda and Moro Muslims— are planning to establish a “fundamentalist” pan-Islamic state across Southeast Asia spanning from Mindanao to Singapore⁸⁴. However, as mentioned before the Moro Muslims group in the Philippines is advancing a peace treaty with their government. In promoting ‘Islamism’ or ‘Islamic fundamentalism’ these newspapers omit this fact; instead they highlight elite political discourse and promote Orientalist fear. For example, the perception of a “fundamentalist Islamic state” or “pan-Islamic state” matches statements by US President Bush printed in the *NZH*. He states that “Islamic militants” had made Iraq their “main front in a war against civilized society”. Scholarly documents— Said (1978; 1981; 2003); Poole (2002); Richardson (2004)— argue that ‘the West’ maintains their ideological and cultural superiority by marginalizing the ‘Islamic Other’. Similarly, the Western elite-supportive media promote ‘the Western’ superiority that legitimates the authority of the elites. For example, by linking the ‘ideology’ of “Islamic militants” to communism President Bush says that they are seeking to “enslave whole nations and intimidate the world” and “set up a radical Islamic empire [...] that spans from Spain to Indonesia” (*Bush*:

⁸⁴ For the reference to a fundamentalist/pan-Islamic state, see: *Jemaah Islamiyah Inspired by al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden*, October 3, 2005 (*ODT*); *Bali Terrorist Killed in Raid*: November 11, 2005 (*NZH*). These reports provide the message that al Qaeda, JI and Muslims in Mindanao are active in creating this “fundamentalist Islamic State”.

God Told me to Invade Iraq and Attack Afghanistan: October 8, 2005; also see another report published on the same day *Bush Warns of 'Islamic Empire'*: October 8, 2005 [NZH]). President Bush is thus identified as a defender of 'us', 'our' civilization and freedom, while also being identified as a crusader fighting against the 'uncivilized Muslim'. In addition, as suggested above Islam is equated with communism. Communism is also depicted as 'uncivilized' ideology. The 'non-communist West' is ideologically superior, and 'our' superiority is legitimated over 'them'—the communist and the Muslim Other. In their representations, Filipino media produce Islamophobic perceptions in society and work as a government propaganda apparatus (Cole, 2006a: 63). Some Filipino journalists lack knowledge regarding Islam and Moro Muslims, and the political ideology of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) may be a cause of this simplistic perception of Muslims. These journalists' coverage of Moro Muslims is based on prejudged and erroneous notions (Cole, 2006: 63), which eventually becomes propaganda against Muslims, and consequently downplays Islam (Cole, 2006a: 63, 70 & 81). This seems to be also a case for the international news agencies that contributed reports for the Moro Muslims issue in these newspapers.

Opinion Pieces on the Bali Bombing

The *ODT* does not provide any op-ed article on this issue. In contrast, the *NZH* provides six op-eds about the Bali bombing and Moro Muslims. The *Press* publishes three op-eds on Bali and Moro Muslims. It should be acknowledged that in much of the extensive scholarly work that has been done in the West (e.g. Ma, 2012; Maira, 2008; Poole, 2002, 2006; Richardson, 2001; 2004, 2006; Miller, 2006) a profound association between Islam and Muslims and prejudicial relations with others have

been identified, and the media have been the major agent of this stereotyping image. However, the opposite voice or challenging image of the Orientalist depiction of Islam is not invisible. For example, the *NZH* op-ed says that in Southeast Asia, some non-Muslim groups are strongly active and responsible for mass killings (*Waging War on Dissent No Way to Gain Peace*: July 5, 2006 [*NZH*]) but they are ignored in media coverage and political statements. Another op-ed (*Let's Choose Words Over Death*: October 4, 2005) finds no reason to believe some Western leaders whose rhetoric reiterates a “clash” between the West and Islam in the context of terrorism such as the 2005 Bali bombing. The *NZH* op-ed (*Myth of the West-Muslim Divide*: June 27, 2006 [*NZH*]) contends that greater understanding is required for a peaceful world.

Op-eds in the *Press* present Bali as an international tourist destination and argue that the bombing will weaken the Indonesian economy (*Balinese Suffering Most*: October 5, 2006 [*Press*]). This op-ed does not say that Muslims were involved in the Bali bombing. However, a different op-ed (*Luck Runs Out for Bomber*: November 11, 2005 [*Press*]) argues that “Muslim militants” are responsible for the terrorist attacks in Bali. As the above discussion shows, with the exception of one, these op-eds challenge the Orientalist view that Islam is a threat.

Editorial Cartoons

There were no editorial cartoons in the *ODT* and the *Press*. However, three editorial cartoons appeared in the *NZH*. One cartoon suggests that tourists in Bali remain at risk as the “Muslim terrorist group” (JI) is following them (cartoon: October 3, 2005). The verbal text reads: “Balinese shadow puppetry – Jemaah Islamiyah style” while the visual shows tourists moving to different locations stalked by the shadow of the

terrorists. The cartoon therefore suggests that terrorists are active and are planning more attacks against ‘the West’ (cartoon: October 8, 2005).

Letters to the Editor

There were no letters to the editor about this issue in the *ODT* and the Press. One letter to the editor appears in the *NZH* (Mike Pole: *Bali is Worth Returning To*: October 8, 2005). This letter does not say whether JI is responsible for the Bali bombing but maintains that JI, “founded in the 1990s, has been responsible for more than 50 attempted or actual bombings”. The writer argues that the world is not safe because terrorists are active everywhere.

Editorials

As has been argued, ‘Islam’ and ‘Muslims’ are negatively depicted in ‘Western’ media. However, it is also clear that many scholarly documents counter these negative constructions. They reject the Orientalist view of Islamic threat. They promote unity and the co-existence of groups. These works contend that there is no ‘Other’ civilization; but suggest that all people living inside one civilization have different voices (Kallin, 2011; Esposito, 2011). We also see some documents that argue that ‘Western’ depictions of Islam and Muslims are not always negative— while they argue that discrimination still can be seen, they note that it is not as common as it was previously (Holohan and Poole, 2011; Mosemghvdlishvili & Jansz: 2012). This seems to suggest that ‘the West’ is changing. This belief is also reinforced in the New Zealand newspapers. With regard to the Bali bombing, the *ODT* editorial argues that the tourism industry of “Muslim Indonesia” will suffer, as Western tourists stay away from the country::

Indonesia has now certainly lost its status of “paradise”. Indeed, it is unclear whether Bali’s tourism industry will ever be able to recover fully from the latest attack by maniacal terrorists (*Paradise Lost*: October 5, 2005 [ODT]).

This newspaper’s editorial observes that the Bali bombing was the act of “maniacal terrorists” but does not imply that those involved are “Muslims”, and does not include terms such as “Islamic terrorist” or “Muslim militants”.

Some media outlets construct a prejudicial image of Islam that creates anti-Islamic perceptions, plays a counterpart role of the state and carries a simplified image of the Muslim world (Dunsky, 2008: 22-33). Their perception towards Islam and Muslim is also reflected in New Zealand newspapers. For example, an opposing voice can be identified in another newspapers’ editorial, one that clearly promotes Orientalist view of the Islamic threat. The *NZH* editorial states that the Bali bombing is the “latest outrage” of the “suspected militant Islamic group” JI (*Bomb Kills Tourism for Bali*: October 4, 2005), and argues that this group is the perpetrator of the 2002 bombings.

Since 9/11, when reporting on the war on terror, the attacks on Afghanistan, and the invasion of Iraq, the media have been “comprehensively overhauled as a propaganda apparatus”, attacking mainly Muslims (Miller, 2006: 45). This is also a case for some New Zealand media outlets. For example, the *Press* editorial (*Feeling the Effects*: October 4, 2005) takes a similar stance to that of the *NZH*, saying that this is an “Islamic terrorist attack” and JI could be responsible— “All fingers, seemingly, are again pointing to Jemaah Islamiah (JI)”. The *Press* editorial finally suggests:

If terrorism and all the instability and anxiety it breeds is to spill into our [New Zealand’s] backyard, it will almost certainly be from Indonesia (*Feeling the Effects*: October 4, 2006 [*Press*]).

In some ‘Western’ media, the cast of the coverage overwhelmingly portrays Muslims as “violent, irrational terrorists”, and ‘militant Islam’ has become central news (Manning: 2006: 140). Similarly, the editorial of the *Press* implies New Zealand is at risk from Indonesian “Muslim terrorists”. The Orientalist frame of ‘victim versus villain’ can be clearly seen. Only the *ODT*’s editorial does not (re)produce the Orientalist view. However, the *NZH* and the *Press* editorials frame the issue from an Orientalist platform, stating that ‘if ‘we’ are attacked by anybody the attack will ‘certainly’ come from these ‘irrational’ terrorists.

Summary

International news agencies constructed the 2005 Bali bombing issue within a particular frame in which cultural proximity featured strongly. News about non-Westerners was omitted and information about the Westerners was the primary focus. News reporting in the three newspapers studied show a similar frame, namely reporting on unsubstantiated suspicions about the event and generating an Orientalist perception of irrationality, backwardness and threat. The interests of the ruling class is preserved through this Orientalist perception that devalues the Orient’s freedom and struggle against the ruling elites—for example, the Moro Muslims’ struggle versus the Philippines Government. The narratives also framed the issue as one concerning ‘fundamentalists’ versus progressives, thus producing the perception that ‘uncivilized’ Muslims are actively working against ‘our’ civility. However, in many cases, the Orientalist perception and consequently, the legitimacy of the power elite, is challenged in op-ed.

In editorials, there was no evidence of an Orientalist perception in the *ODT*. However the editorials and editorial cartoons in both the *NZH* and the *Press* reinforce the

perception of an Islamic threat. While the op-ed writers challenged the news frame, in most cases the editorials parallel news reports by maintaining an Orientalist view.

Through a discussion of the six most covered issues, this chapter has argued that in their news frame New Zealand newspapers present a monolithic and Orientalist perception by following the elite agenda. This is, in part, a consequence of these newspapers' reliance on international news agencies, but is also related to the journalistic news values. It has been argued however that in non-news these newspapers maintained a pluralistic perception of Islam and Muslims. The final chapter (Chapter 6) presents the conclusion of the study.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This study examined representations of Islam and Muslims in three New Zealand newspapers—the *ODT*, the *Press* and the *NZH*—in order to identify how Islam and Muslims are socially constructed. Consequently, this study examined the events that produced the stories, identified how particular issues were framed and how different sections of these newspapers varied in their depiction of these issues. This study examined whether an Orientalist or an ‘us’/‘them’ structure was evident in the newspapers’ construction of Islam and Muslims, and how the international news which was filtered through international news agencies paralleled or conflicted with the newspapers’ own voice, as expressed in their editorials. In short, this study’s goal was to explore how Islam, in its various forms, and Muslims, as a diverse community, were framed, and what meanings the media produced through their images of Islam and Muslims. This study found that Islam and Muslims are constructed within very limited frames. As the quantitative analysis demonstrated, these newspapers frequently linked Islam and Muslims with terrorism. This study drew on Said’s work on Orientalism; he examined the historical production of knowledge about Islam and Muslims. In the Orientalist view, the ‘Western’ media frames Islam in a way that legitimates the Western elite agenda. This study also examined how an elite political agenda is established and maintained through international news agencies. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, due to the dependence on international news agencies, New Zealand newspapers’ international news coverage does not necessarily reflect New Zealand’s view of a particular issue. This study thus examined whether the elite agenda was challenged in local constructions of the reported events. Orientalism rejects any mutual understanding between the ‘East’ and the ‘West’. As suggested in

Chapter 1 Said's *Orientalism* has been challenged by a number of scholars. This study therefore examined whether the discourse of Orientalism was still relevant and if the process of Othering was evident in recent media constructions. This study used both frame analysis and critical discourse analysis to examine Said's applicability to present-day media studies. This study examined the complexity of the media constructions of Islam and Muslims in relation to social and political concerns, both locally and internationally. In particular it examined how media construct social and cultural communities, which have a minority presence in New Zealand. It is the first comprehensive study of media representations of Islam and Muslims in New Zealand newspapers.

In analyzing data, this study drew primarily on Karim's work (2000). As demonstrated, this analysis of New Zealand newspapers focused upon four main elements: the prevalence of Orientalist frames in relation to Muslims and Islam; the selection of events in relation to perceived 'news values'; the establishment and/or maintenance of an elite political agenda; and the international flow of information filtered through foreign news agencies. All of these elements are interrelated and, as argued throughout, contributed to stereotypical depictions of Muslim communities and Islamic cultures. As with Karim's (2000) study, this project focused upon how media outlets perpetuated elite agendas regarding Islam and Muslims. It also found that journalists are involved in elite 'conspiracy' framing Islam and Muslims in a negative manner in order to support elite agendas. As discussed in Chapter 1, New Zealand newspapers are hugely dependent on international news agencies; this study identified that Western mainstream news agencies are the main supplier of international news. Despite variations in ownership—both local and international—the supply of international news is similar. These newspapers drew on a very limited

cache of 'Western' news sources. Despite differences in the construction of events in the newspapers' non-news items, these newspapers maintained uniformity in their news frames. In many cases, editorials and news constructed a conflicting frame regarding Islam and Muslims— news frames reinforced the belief of an Islamic threat while editorials in most cases typically rejected the clash. The Orientalist discourse focuses upon that in 'the Western texts' Islam is perceived as a threat. Huntington's notion of civilizational clash promotes a similar belief—namely that Islam is a threat to 'the West'; and that this threat is manifested militarily, demographically and religiously (i.e. Islam versus Christianity). While newspaper reports typically upheld an Orientalist view of Othering or an 'us' vs. 'them' structure was constructed, in most editorials this view was challenged. In analyzing Western academic texts primarily, Said argues that 'the West' produces negative images of the 'non-West'; however, he focused only on selected texts. Orientalism was criticized in scholarly debates for being essentialist. This study found that New Zealand news reports (and in some cases opinion pieces) upheld 'Western' superiority through authority and ideological legitimacy. This study questioned whether the essentialist view was unchallenged and found that there was an unequal distribution of power in media texts. Although an essentialist view of the Islamic threat is seen in many newspaper reports, and 'the West' is constructed in favorable terms, opposing voices were also found. As mentioned in Chapter 2 media construct reality— their own reality— therefore, it was important not only to identify content but also, *how* content was represented (i.e. how particular events were framed). As argued, texts may legitimate or reject a particular agenda.

This study identified an elite agenda within coverage of international news. The political elite agenda is established through particular frames, which indicate an

Orientalist focus; this can be seen in issues like foreign invasion, financial aid, giving support to a nation, opposing a group or a nation, and identifying a problem-group within society. This study found that international news agencies constructed Muslims and Islam using an Orientalist perspective, which ultimately reinforced elite political agendas. The elite agenda is constructed in various ways—for example, by omitting contextual information pertaining to a cultural group; identifying a cultural group as a problem; providing sanitized images of the invader and internal political allies; identifying a perceived clash between cultures; or representing a cultural group as resistant to unproblematic liberal views. As mentioned in Chapters 2 and 5, medieval ‘Western’ texts deliberately constructed Islam as a threat, both in terms of politics and religion. The perceived clash of religion and Huntington’s notion of the clash of civilizations construct the Otherness through a process of exclusion. Exclusion is important for imperial politics as the clash persists through the construction of an ‘enemy’

As discussed in Chapter 1, the 9/11 terrorist attacks changed the pattern of journalism. Since this time, there has been a significant increase in the number of reports on Islam and Muslims. Post-9/11 media typically frame Islam and Muslims in a negative manner, and sideline opposing voices (Poole, 2006). Chapter 4 noted the volume of coverage, while Chapter 5 identified six key concerns in relation to this coverage. These issues are either discussed directly through the frame of ‘Muslim terrorism’ (for example, the Middle East conflict) or indirectly related to ‘Muslim terrorism’ and extremism (for example, the Palestinian election of 2006). The huge volume of coverage that depicts Muslims and Islam in a negative manner reveals the global construction of the Orientalist Other. This study, however, proposes that since the publication of *Orientalism* (1978) relations— e.g. Islamic ‘threat’ towards ‘the

West’— between Islam and ‘the West’ have been slowly changing and that these changes can also be found in ‘Western’ texts. For example, the ‘Western-led’ war on terror policy encouraged ‘the West’ to invade Iraq and Afghanistan. This policy however was challenged in many of the New Zealand newspapers’ editorials. So while we have seen that many news reports continue to construct a ‘common enemy’ not all social institutions accept elite projections. In many cases, ‘Western text’s questioned the elite for exploiting 9/11, particularly for political reasons (see Kellner, 2004; 2007; Taylor, 2008). In most cases, the ‘Western elite’ was successful in promoting their agenda, which inevitably reinforced the Orientalist threat between civilizations (Esposito, 1992). Readers may therefore identify a common link between power elites and media and perceive the continuation of the confrontation between Islam and ‘the West’ during the time frame of this study. It is surprising that when editorial writers criticize the elites or reject the elite agenda, the media persistently allow the confrontation between Islam and ‘the West’ to be presented for public attention. For example, it seems to be that the information these newspapers cannot rely upon, the construction of the event they believed as ‘untruth’ or ‘non-factual’; these media outlets, however, repeatedly focuses upon those information for social consumption. Coverage sensationalizes Muslim issues through selective lexical choice, visual images, prominent font and the placement of stories in the newspaper.

The issues identified in this study can be examined from several angles. An issue may be multifaceted but reporters may focus on only one aspect. For example, the Hezbollah-Israel conflict can be seen as arising from the marginalization of the Shia in Lebanon; Sunni Muslim and Christian religious groups are privileged through Lebanon’s controversial constitution (Evron, 1987)—a constitution, which no party has attempted to reform. Conversely, the Hezbollah-Israel conflict can be framed as a

conflict concerning an ‘Islamist’/‘terrorist’ movement acting against Israel or as a group holding Lebanon ‘hostage’. The Orientalist “myth” of Islamic ‘violence’ is reinforced in the framing of the Hezbollah-Israel conflict. One particular angle is highlighted in the construction of the “violent” ‘Islamist group.’ This angle perpetuates elite interests. When a particular issue parallels the elite’s concerns—for example, the way the elites are discussed, and the elite’s are interests—news reports appearing in New Zealand newspapers also parallel the elite agenda. As a result, news frames regularly emphasize one aspect—for example, the threat of ‘Muslim terrorism’—and omit or purposely leave out other important details, such as the need for democratic negotiation. The ‘Islamist terrorist’ nature of Hamas politics is constructed as unchangeable—that is, newspaper reports suggest that this ‘group’ has a history of ‘terrorism’, and that it will remain a terrorist organization regardless of any interest it shows in democratic negotiations. However, political history provides examples of other so-called ‘terrorist groups’, which have evolved through political/democratic negotiation, such as the Irish Republican Army. The Orientalist view manifests itself in respect to portrayals of Hamas and other Islamic groups; accordingly, ‘Islamists’ are seen as unchangeable, irrational and violent (Kumar, 2012). These news frames parallel some ‘Western’ political elites: thus they do not question why Iran cannot acquire a nuclear project while it is surrounded by nuclear power nations (Kumar, 2012: 50). No one questions whether and how the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) agreement would be violated, should Iran complete its construction of its civilian nuclear energy plant. Iran’s ‘Islamic regime’ was identified from an Orientalist view that describes the regime as ‘irrational’ and a ‘threat, as a nation that cannot be trusted.

Chapter 2 argued that the process of judging an event’s newsworthiness by applying

certain criteria is evident in news media through the selection, evaluation, omission and prominence of a particular frame, which can at times, lead to the dehumanization of a social group. For example, a cultural group can be framed as a threat. When a group is identified as a ‘threat’ the perceived social boundary of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ is constructed. This perceived boundary reinforces the Orientalist view of a clash of cultures. The elite agenda thus appears through the framing of an issue within an Orientalist perception—that is, creating an ‘us’/‘them’ definition of a social boundary; defining a cultural group as a problem; highlighting proximate groups; emphasizing the social structure of ‘Western’ and ‘non-Western’ societies; and maintaining the perception of a civilizational clash. As noted in Chapter 2 gatekeepers can create a perceived boundary through the process of judging news value. In this process, when elite policy could be challenged, in most cases, media keep silent, and this silence eventually leads to the marginalization of ‘other’ groups. For example, in the context of the possible terrorist attack in Heathrow Airport, the attack was sensationalized, as seen in the visuals (e.g. photographs) and verbal texts (e.g. full-page coverage). The newspaper report claimed that ‘British born Muslim terrorists’ were planning a serious attack on the airport. However, nothing was reported when it was concluded that those suspects were innocent. When covering the possible terrorist attack at Heathrow Airport the Orientalist “myth” of ‘irrationality’ and ‘violence’ central in the framing of the issue.

In Chapters 1 and 2 it was argued in coverage of Islam and Muslims’ issues mainstream Western media, including mainstream Western news agencies, have, at times, challenged Western elite policy. As stated in Chapter 2, there are numerous Western scholarly works that have questioned the Orientalist view. In this case, however, this study found that in the international news frame of New Zealand

newspapers, the 'Western' elite agenda remained unchallenged and thus, and an Orientalist and monolithic view of Islam, Muslims, and the 'East' was maintained. This can be seen in the coverage of the 2005 Bali bombing, which killed many more 'non-Westerners' than 'Westerners'. 'Western' citizens received much more attention than the non-Westerners, as news reports emphasized the proximity of the event. Due to differences in cultural and national identity the deaths of 'non-Westerners' were ignored (Hanusch, 2007); these non-Western deaths failed to carry any kind of 'value' for these newspapers. Thus, what 'value' a particular media outlet imposes upon its news originates from their ideology and policy (van Dijk, 1991), and media frame an issue according to elite policy. For example, this study showed that the Islamic political structure of Iran was questioned when covering Iran's nuclear issue according to elite policy. In selecting the issue the elite agenda/ideology repeatedly influenced the perceived news value. In addition, besides the perceived 'news value', this study showed that some other aspects including the availability of information should be considered. Information may come through a newspaper's own channels, for example, via a staff correspondent, or from outside, for example, via an international news agency. This study argued that New Zealand newspapers rely on Western mainstream news agencies (as mentioned in Chapters 1, 2 and 4) and did not consider other agencies, which could provide an alternative view.

As mentioned in Chapter 2 international news agencies legitimate the dominant cultural and ideological proximate group through setting the elite agenda. The group that these news agencies perceive as *not us* is often represented negatively. In addition, the localization or value judgment of an event through a local prism can lead to the establishment of a particular frame. For example, when framing the controversial Muhammad cartoon issue, these newspapers perceived a clash of cultures; it is not

that New Zealand journalists/editors/owners believe in a cultural clash, or that the issue was considered prominent because this ‘clash’ is really occurring within their society. Rather, the frame reinforces a monolithic Orientalist perception due to the cultural proximity of the news—that is, reporters make the event ‘meaningful’ for their local “Western” readers. In other words, the localization of the issue produced a particular frame (Peterson, 2007: 248). In addition, there is pressure to publish in a competitive media market—one newspaper may publish an event and other newspapers may think they should also publish the event in order to retain their readerships. One might therefore think that Othering often appears due to the government’s association with the media, experts and scholars. But in most cases, the New Zealand government either opposed ‘elite’ policy or maintained no relations—for example, producing no comment on the issue. In addition, New Zealand Muslims are identified as a non-threatening community inside the society. This is a major factor in the non-essentialist view seen in opinion pieces of these three New Zealand newspapers.

New Zealand newspapers overwhelmingly depend on international agencies, receiving news reports from mainstream news agencies such as Reuters. As argued, these agencies occupy prime positions in the news industry (Paterson, 2003: 1) and thus influence other media in setting a particular agenda (p. 2). Therefore, “despite the editorial claims of independence”, international news agencies dominate the supply of world information including Internet news (Paterson, 2003: 1). Consequently, in terms of availability, newspapers depend upon news agencies. In addition, the international news that appears in a particular newspaper may not convey the ‘house policy’ towards an event (as mentioned in Chapter 1). For example, in most cases, New Zealand newspapers’ editorials argued that the publication of the controversial

cartoons of Muhammad was ‘wrong’ and ‘foolish’. They constructively challenged the publication and re-publication of the images. It was not the ‘house’ policy or an intentional anti-Islamic editorial policy that provoked the particular frame used to cover the cartoon issue. In many cases, we see that the ‘house policy’ contrasts with international news agendas and thus international news frames and editorial coverage in a particular newspaper can be conflictual (Peterson, 2007). The study of non-news revealed a rejection of the Orientalist perception of a civilizational clash or fear of Islam. For example, the editorials questioned the Orientalist perception of the ‘Muslim Other’ and the consequent perception of a clash of culture when they described the cartoon images as ‘insulting.’ In addition, the perceived clash is challenged when these newspapers’ editorials praise Muslims living in New Zealand, arguing that they are tolerant and peaceful. Diversity was thus found in opinion pieces or non-news. In the context of the Middle East crisis—the Iraq issue, for example—in most cases, New Zealand newspapers questioned the ‘Western elite policy, which conflicted with their news frame.

The myth of Orientalist ‘irrationality’ and ‘violence’ versus ‘Western superiority’ is also challenged when these newspapers’ editorials argued that the invasion was the ‘uncivilized’ decision of some Western elite nations and that ‘terrorism’ in Iraq started due to their ‘foolish’ decision to invade. A similar pluralism is identified in the construction of the Israel-Palestine conflict. The non-Orientalist frame is also evident in coverage of the 2005 Bali bombing—international news framed the issue as one involving ‘Islamist’ and ‘Muslim terrorist’ activities but non-news primarily focused upon the economic consequences of the event. These newspapers editorials argued against ‘terrorism’ and in most cases did not construct the issue as specifically ‘Islamist’ or involving ‘Islamic terrorists’. However, in the context of the Iran nuclear

issue and the 2006 Palestinian election, in most cases, New Zealand newspapers' editorials paralleled the Western elite policy. Overall, New Zealand newspapers maintained a pluralistic approach in framing the issue in editorials—one newspaper (the *ODT*), in all cases, questioned the elite policy, while another newspaper (the *Press*), in all cases, paralleled the international elite agenda; the final newspaper (the *NZH*), in most cases, challenged the elite agenda but at times, paralleled it. In op-eds, these newspapers, in most cases, questioned the elite policy.

In almost all cases, editorial cartoons question the elite—for example, by satirically criticizing the Iraq invasion and challenging the policies of some Western elite nations towards the Middle East. Thus, in considering news this study discovered a monolithic frame, but found that in non-news New Zealand newspapers produced a pluralistic view. As argued in Chapter 1 the actors who work overseas determine New Zealand newspapers' news frames and do not necessarily follow the New Zealand perspective in framing or constructing the issue. This argument is shown to be true when comparing news reports with non-news items. It can also be argued that while New Zealand newspapers played a watchdog role in relation to religious and cultural minority groups like Muslims, the international news framed this group negatively—in other words, international news agencies supported the elite agenda.

Overall, in respect to the construction of Islam and Muslims, we—the reader—hear many voices inside 'the West', which eventually collapse the essentialist notions of Orientalism and civilizational clash. This study argued things have changed since the publication of *Orientalism* (1978). Knowledge construction is not and cannot be controlled solely by 'the West' and we see that mutual understanding between groups is possible and is happening. This is evident in non-news items, which opposed the stigmatized Orientalist perception of cultural clash.

New Zealand newspapers' coverage is also influenced by other factors: the stories that come through international channels are 'pre-packaged' media and predominantly support the Orientalist view; in contrast, editorials appearing in these newspapers are more likely to challenge overseas-sourced news. This study argued that due to the relative invisibility of Muslim community members in New Zealand the local coverage in the newspapers is insignificant. It is an indication that Kiwi Muslim community members need to be more active in order to be acknowledged by the New Zealand media. This visibility is a challenge and also an opportunity for the Kiwi Muslim community—they can present themselves both in positive and negative ways. New Zealand newspapers are hugely dependent on international news which creates imbalanced coverage of Muslims' issues. However, New Zealand media outlets do not always reinforce the 'elite' view. The 'truth' is reflected in their opinion pieces (editorials for example), that are not supported by news reports. As a result of the conflict between news reports and editorials, readers may become confused or misinformed. This study argues that New Zealand newspapers need to expand their information sources, and that they should not simply depend on what 'the Western' mainstream newspapers and agencies cover; rather, they should find alternative outlets so that other opinions can also be heard. This can be done either by sending their own correspondents to events or by receiving reports from alternative agencies.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

This study has some limitations. Firstly, most qualitative researchers acknowledge the inevitability of bias in any research owing to one's background and personal experience. As a self-declared moderate Muslim, I am also aware that my own personal beliefs may have influenced the research. However, through rigorous self-

reflection and consultation, I have consciously attempted to maintain objectivity throughout the research process and the interpretation of my findings.

This study was also limited to print media and does not consider other media (e.g. broadcasting services). There is, therefore, space for further work, which examines other media such as television. Media play an influential role in constructing public opinion; audience research, which identifies reader's responses to media coverage of Islam and Muslims, would therefore be another possible avenue of study

With respect to public opinion, the value of the qualitative approach needs to be considered. In-depth interviews with editors and journalists may help to identify why the local framing of Islam differs from internationally-sourced reports. Other factors such as age should also be considered; for example, senior management and young journalists may vary in the way that they frame certain issues. Senior management may have been influenced by the Cold War and might be more critical or cynical of the dominant narratives. In short, it may be interesting to investigate how the different age groups perceive an issue, how they cover it and whether their perceptions are reflected in news coverage of a particular issue.

The public response can be examined on a broader scale that might include leaders, general citizens (e.g. people from other ethnic and religious groups) and media-workers (e.g. editors). These responses can be examined in a cross-cultural frame—that is, regarding the perception of non-Muslims towards the Muslim community and Islam as a religion. The cross-cultural frame can also be investigated in relation to the media's role in constructing prejudicial perceptions. This examination would bring useful insights with regard to social co-existence and will help to resolve problems between groups separated by ethnicity and religion. However, examination under this cross-cultural frame would require more funding than a simple university grant.

As with Karim (2000) work, this study identified an ‘Islam’ versus ‘the West’ narrative. However, Bonnefoy (2004) argues that in current elite political discourse ‘Islam versus the West’ is not the only discourse; rather, other discourses such as Islam versus ‘radical Islam’ are also evident. Further work could therefore identify how/whether New Zealand media outlets focus upon the issue of ‘Islam versus radical Islam’— ‘good versus bad Islam’. As observed, in many cases in current Western media discourse the essentialist perception of the Orientalist clash is challenged. These challenges can be seen in media that reject the ‘authority’ of ‘the West’ and their (Western) elite political agenda— for example, during the 2010-12 popular revolution in the Middle East⁸⁵ the elite agenda was challenged and rejected in the ‘Western’ mainstream media. For example, how some ‘Western’ media outlets and how some media commentators— e.g. Australian John Pilger and New Zealander Jon Stephenson (mentioned in Chapter 1)— read ‘Western’ political agenda and issues relating to Islam, Muslims and Muslim nations. The rejection and challenge of Western elite agenda in the Western media —is another area that could be expanded. This study focused on three quality newspapers published in New Zealand. Other print media (e.g. magazines) is beyond the scope of this study. There is therefore an opportunity for further research in this field—namely, how other print media represent Islam. This study examined a specific time frame. One that began with the terrorist attack in Bali (this event was identified as one of the consequences of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US). Research about the coverage of Islam and Muslim issues prior to the 9/11 attacks may therefore yield different results. One could also investigate whether New Zealand newspapers maintain any evidence of pack-

⁸⁵ The ‘Western’ mainstream media (including news agencies) reporting and opinion can be seen as authentic documents in challenging the essentialist perception of Orientalism/clash of civilization. See for example, the *New York Times*, the *Guardian*, the *Observer*, BBC, CNN reporting and opinion during the revolution, for this reference. In particular, for few example, see the reference: ‘Editorials and news services’ (2011-2012), in referesnce section.

journalism (i.e. maintaining similar patterns of perception in covering a specific issue) with other Western nations' media outlets in coverage of Islam. Such a study could examine the cultural framework between two different nations' news media.

A project, which examines Muslim nations' media coverage, would be interesting as well. For example, one could examine the way Iranian news media represent 'the West' or how Palestinian media represent their relations with the West and/or Israel. This study provides insights in relation to the 'us'/'them' structure and the ways in which enemies are constructed. This kind of study could also investigate whether Occidentalism (as a discourse opposed to Orientalism) is a phenomenon that is active within Muslim communities and/or in other nations' media constructions of the 'Western Other'.

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Appendix

Categories and variables

1. Origin of the story

Local

International

2. OIC country of origin:

Algeria

Jordan

Afghanistan

Iran

Pakistan

Arab Emirate

Iraq

Lebanon

Indonesia

Somalia

Azerbaijan

Turkey

Sudan

Syria

Saudi Arabia

Egypt

Morocco

Libya

Malaysia

Albania

Uzbekistan

Uganda

Bahrain

Brunei-Darussalam

Bangladesh

Benin

Burkina-Faso

Tajikistan

Turkmenistan

Chad

Togo

Tunisia

Djibouti

Senegal

Suriname

Sierra Leone

Oman

Gabon

Gambia

Guyana

Guinea

Guinea-Bissau
Palestine
Comoros
Kyrgyz
Qatar
Kazakhstan
Cameroon
Cote D'Ivoire
Kuwait
Mauritania
Mozambique
Niger
Nigeria
Yemen
Maldives
Mali
Bosnia and Herzegovina

3. Non-OIC country of origin

Australia
New Zealand
United States
United Kingdom
France
India
Thailand
Denmark
Others

4. Regions

North America
Middle East
Indian sub-continent
South East Asia
Australasia and South Pacific
Africa
Europe
Others

5. Crisis event (Primary)

Islamic world politics
Civic politics
Terrorism/civil conflict
Domestic crime
Natural disaster
Human-made disaster
Accident
Others

6. Crisis event (Secondary)

Islamic world politics
Civic politics
Terrorism/civil conflict
Domestic crime
Natural disaster
Human-made disaster
Accident
Others

7. *Non-crisis event* (Primary)

Education and science
Sports
Business and economy
Equal opportunity
Religious
Others

8. *Non-crisis event* (Secondary)

Education and science
Sports
Business and economy
Equal opportunity
Religious
Others

9. References to Islam or Muslims (Primary)

Muslim individual
Muslim group
Muslim in certain nation
Muslim as a religion
Others

10. References to Islam or Muslims (Secondary)

Muslim individual
Muslim group
Muslim in certain nation
Muslim as a religion
Others

11. Placement of the story

Front page
Local news page
Editorial/opinion page
International page
Back page
Others

12. Story type

Hard news

Human interest-story
Feature story
Editorial
Opinion piece
News analysis and commentary
Backgrounder
Letters to the editor
Others

13. Graphic
No graphic
Cartoon
Photograph with text
Head shot
Map/design
Visual tag
Others

14. Graphic content
General Muslim leaders
Specific Muslim group leader
Non-Muslim leaders
Muslim women
Muslim children
People not specific
Conflict-scene
Others

15. Newspaper
Otago Daily Times
The Press
The New Zealand Herald

16. Domestic news sources
NZPA
AAP
Staff correspondent
Non-specific
Letter writers
Others

17. International news sources
Reuters
AFP
AP
Xinhua
Bloomberg
Foreign Newspaper
International Journalist
Others

18. Sources cited in story

Politician

Public servant

Journalist

Corporate

Religious

Police/Military/Security

Academic/Teacher

Lawyer/Judge

Medical/Health

NGO

Citizen

Terrorist/criminal

Activist

Sports person

Celebrity/Actor

Other

Explanation

Origin of the story

Primarily, all news stories have been categorized into two major divisions: local and international. When it was found that a story originated as a local (New Zealand) event, it was categorized as 'local' and when a story originated from outside of New Zealand, it was categorized as 'international'.

All countries have also been categorized as either Muslim or non-Muslim countries and categorized according to two variables, such as OIC (Organization of Islamic conference) country and non-OIC Country of Origin.

OIC Country of Origin

All member countries of the (OIC) including Palestine and Bosnia-Herzegovina have been categorized as Muslim countries.

Non-OIC Country of Origin

All countries outside of the OIC have been identified as non-OIC. These countries have been categorized into nine divisions: Australia, New Zealand, United States, United Kingdom, France, India, Thailand, Denmark, and others.

Region

Categorization of location/origin is employed on the basis of the region, such as: North America (RG1), Middle East (RG2), Indian sub-continent (RG3), South East Asia (RG4), Australasia and South Pacific (RG5), Africa (RG6), UK (RG7) and others (RG8). All North American countries are categorized as RG1, all Middle Eastern countries including Iran have been categorized as RG2, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan have been categorized as RG3, and all South East Asian countries are included in RG4. Australia, New Zealand and South Pacific countries have been categorized as RG5. All African countries have been categorized as RG6, Europe is categorized as RG7 and the rest of the world is categorized as RG 8.

Crisis Event

All news stories have been classified in terms of whether they are crisis or non-crisis events. Therefore, the content of any news story is categorized into two major divisions: crisis event and non-crisis event. Later both divisions each have been split into two further divisions: crisis event (primary) and crisis event (secondary), and non-crisis event (primary) and non-crisis event (secondary). The divisions of primary and secondary have been categorized according to whether the crisis event was mentioned in the first three paragraphs or in the rest of the body of the story. Therefore, if a story focuses on any crisis event within the first three paragraphs, the event was classified as primary; if not, it was categorized as a secondary event.

All crisis events have been categorized into eight divisions: Islamic world politics, Civic politics, Terrorism/civil conflict, Domestic crime, Natural disaster, Manmade disaster, Accident and Others.

All non-crisis events have been categorized into six divisions: Education and science, Sports, Business and economy, Equal opportunity, Religious, and Others.

Stories were included within the category of Islamic (religious) politics when it was found that that story has a link between Islam and politics. When a story focused on political activity without mentioning its connection with Islam, it was categorized as civic politics. A story was classified as one to do with terrorism/civil conflict when it was found that a story focused upon terrorism and conflict between people, community or groups (for example, the Bali bombing). A story was categorized as a domestic crime story when it was found that a news story focused on internal criminals. Any report on a criminal event inside a specific country, which did not focus upon religion, was included in this category (for example, drug trafficking). The stories on environmental disasters, which did not involve any humans, is categorized as natural disaster. In contrast, disasters, which involved humans, were categorized as man-made disasters. When an accident happened in which there was nobody intentionally involved (e.g. crash of a flight), it was categorized as an accident. The stories, which could not be categorized according to the above classifications, have been considered as others.

A story, which did not focus upon any crisis event, was considered as a non-crisis event story.

When it was found that a story focused upon education and science that story was categorized as an education and science story (for example, stories about the academic achievement of a Muslim student). Any story relating to business that also related to Muslims was categorized as a business and economy story. Stories that reported on the opportunities of men and women, and of ethnic and mainstream groups etc were categorized as equal opportunity stories (for example, reports of the participation of a woman in a national poll). Stories reporting on religious festivals, religious discussion and celebrations related to religion, have been categorized as stories in the religion category (for example, Muslims' celebration of Eid). The rest of the stories were considered within the 'Others' category.

References to Islam or Muslims

This category has been divided into two divisions: references to Islam or Muslims (primary) and references to Islam or Muslims (secondary).

The various references to Islam or Muslims (both primary and secondary) were divided into five categories: Muslim individuals, Muslim group, Muslims in certain nations, Islam as a religion, and others. When an individual story focused upon any Muslim person and made no connection with religion (Islam) or the Muslim community, the story was categorized as 'Muslim individual' (for example, a business man). 'Muslim group' stories were so categorized when it was found that a story had explicitly focused upon a political group (for example, Hamas). When it was found that a news story focused upon Islam as a religion or on Muslims as a community, the story was categorized as an 'Islam as a religion' story. When it was found that a story focused upon a Muslim community of a certain nation (e.g. France Muslims), this was

categorized as 'Muslim in a certain nation'. The remaining stories were included in the 'others' category.

Placement of the news story

All news stories have also been classified on the basis of their placement in a specific newspaper. The placement of the news story has been recorded as: front page, local news page, editorial/opinion page, international page, back page and others. For example, when a story was published on the front page in any newspapers, it has been categorized as 'front page'. If a story appeared on the national news page (for example, in the *Regions* section, in the case of the *ODT*) that story was categorized as having been placed on the 'local news page'. Any news story appearing in the international news page (for example, the *World* page, in the case of the *Press*) was categorized as 'international news page'. In this way, a news story appearing on the editorial or opinion page will be categorized as 'editorial/opinion page'. The last page of any newspaper was considered as 'back page'. If any story was found in other pages it has been considered under the 'others' category.

Story type

The story categorization has also been done on the basis of its nature (e.g. whether a story was a hard news, soft news or an opinion story). This category has seven variables: hard news, human-interest-story, feature story, editorial, opinion piece, news analysis and commentary, backgrounder and others. Editorial cartoons images were considered as opinion.

Graphic

In categorizing graphics, this study considered eight variables: no graphic, cartoon, photograph with text, headshot, map/design, visual tag and others. The 'no graphic' categorization is employed when it was found that a story appeared without any graphic content. When a photograph appeared with text, it was categorised as photograph with text. Any cartoon that appeared as an opinion has been categorized as 'cartoon'. When a headshot was presented with a story, it was categorized as headshot. When a map or other design (for example, a statistical graph) was presented in a story, it has been categorized as map/design. Visual tag was categorized when it was found that a visual tag has been used in a story. The remaining graphics has been categorized as others.

Graphic content

Graphic content has been divided into seven categories: general Muslim leaders, specific Muslim group leaders, non-Muslim leaders, Muslim women, Muslim children, conflict-scene, non-conflict scene, and others. In this category, Muslim leaders who are identified as leaders of a nation or so and was not focused upon as a group leader, was categorized as general Muslim leaders (e.g. Iraqi Prime Minister). In this way, George Bush was categorized as a non-Muslim leader. Hamas, Hezbollah, Jemaah Islamiyah leaders were categorized as specific Muslim group leaders. In addition, al Qaeda leaders were identified as specific Muslim group leaders.

Newspaper

This category was used in order to understand the frequency of stories published in a specific newspaper. This category has been divided into three divisions: *Otago Daily*

Times, the *Press*, and the *New Zealand Herald*. For example, any story appearing in the *Press* was categorized as the *Press*.

Domestic news sources

All domestic news sources have been categorized into six divisions: NZPA, AAP, staff correspondent, letter writers, non-specific, and others. When it was found that a story was a contribution of the news agency NZPA, it was categorized as NZPA. The other categories were identified in a similar manner. Also, all letters appearing in New Zealand newspapers were categorized as 'letters writer'.

International news sources

International news sources have been categorized as Reuters, AFP, AP, Xinhua, Bloomberg, Foreign Newspaper, International Journalist, and others. When it was identified that a story was a contribution of an international news source such as AP, it was categorized as AP. In other cases a similar process has been applied.

Sources Cited in News Story

The sources used in newspapers have been examined and categorized into 12 categories. These categories are: Politician, Public servant, Journalist, Corporate, Religious, Police/Military/Security, Academic/Teacher/Expert, Lawyer/Judge, Medical/Health, NGO, Citizen, Terrorist/criminal, Activist, Sports person, Celebrity/Actor and Other. In relation to this, it needs to be mentioned that the first source that was mentioned in the story was used to categorize the story with regards to its sources.. For example, if a story mentioned a police, then a politician, then a local citizen, it was categorized as 'police'.

In addition, sometimes a story might state that ‘news reports say’ or other phrases to similar effect; in these cases, this source was classified as ‘journalist’. It should also be clarified that a police or a judge is a public servant. However, they have been excluded from the “public servant” category in order to generate a more specific classification. A ‘government official’ is included under the ‘public servant’ category.