

Re-presenting Islam: a case study of how 9/11 shaped Irish newspapers' depictions of Muslims and their faith.

*Gareth A. Malone*¹

This research project presents a case study of the Irish print media's depiction of the Muslim community in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks that occurred on Tuesday, September 11th 2001. The study is placed in the broader context of western media's and general western society's perceptions and representations of the Muslim community prior to, and in the aftermath of 9/11. The research draws upon Edward Said's explanatory framework, "Orientalism", to show how "Western" interpretations of Islam since the latter part of the eighteenth century. There are, as Said, and many other authors show, geo-political aspects to this interpretation. Political Islam, with its assertion of a comprehensive set of guidelines on institutional and social arrangements have historically been seen as a potential alternative and hence a rival to the dominance of Western interests. The primary aim of my research project is to analyse how the Irish media portrayed Islam and its adherents in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. My analysis will span roughly the first two weeks following the terrorist attacks. I intend to use two Irish national broadsheet newspapers as my source of information, and this analysis will be the principal part of my research project. In addition, I intend to examine how the Irish depiction of Islam and its adherents (as represented in the two print media chosen) compares to wider, post-9/11 media narratives. These specific analyses are located in the broader context of Western depictions of Islam and its adherents, prior to the 2001 attacks.

During the Middle Ages, European fears of encroachment by Muslim forces informed the perception of Islam as a disgraceful religion of blasphemy and apostasy. (Said, 1997, 72) This trepidation was largely due to the close proximity of the Islamic world to Europe. The actual geo-political threat to Europe receded at key turning points. Firstly, there was the late fifteenth century expulsion of the Moors from the Iberian Peninsula. Secondly, the late seventeenth century defeat of the Ottomans, Thereafter increasing Western dominance of lands occupied by people of the Muslim faith and the ongoing construction of a threatening Ottoman Empire were informed by a regressive and rudimentary type of thinking that can be defined as "Orientalist". The bedrock of Orientalist belief is quite imaginative, but it sharply contrasts the world into two separate and unequal parts. (Said, 1997, 77) The larger "separate" part is called the Orient, and the other part, the western part or "our" world, is called the Occident. These divisions are not necessarily unusual; they come about when one civilization or culture thinks about another, one that is different from it in some way, however, it is interesting to note that even when the Orient has consistently been regarded as a subservient part of the world, it has always been depicted as being greater in size and having a greater potential capacity for power and destruction than the West. (Said, 1997, 73) Islam has always been inextricably linked to the Orient, and Orientalist thinking views Islam and the Orient as one large monolithic monstrosity, something that is hostile, feared and kept in check through domination. The resurgence of European interest in Islam began in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century, a period that was known as the "Orientalist renaissance", when British and French academics rediscovered "the East"-China, Japan, India, Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Holy Land. Islam was regarded as a part of the East, sharing in its mysterious nature, exoticism and dormant power (Said, 1997, 81). There are obviously, many reasons for this, but chief among them, is the sense in the western world, that Islam represents a grave threat to Christianity and western civilization. (Said, 1997,

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74). The Christian view of Mohammed was not just religious dogma; actual events in the real world made Islam a significant political adversary. (Ibid)

It is very important to recognise the distinction between U.S. and European understanding of Islam. Britain and France for example maintained large Muslim empires until relatively recently. Furthermore, Muslims from Africa and Asia numbering in the millions have settled in France and Britain, and this is reflected in a particular European style of Orientalist thinking. (Said, 1997, 80) By contrast, the United States possessed neither a colonial past nor a well-established cultural interest in Islam, very few Americans have had any real exposure to Islam and its culture; by comparison, Islam is the second largest religion in France today. (Said, 1997, 81). Moreover, Europeans have had long standing links with the Islamic World for centuries. Americans by contrast, have had very little contact with Islam. There have been occasional American explorers of the Muslim world such as Mark Twain and Herman Melville, but in a cultural sense, there was no place in the United States for Islam before the Second World War. Islam entered the collective consciousness of most Americans- even scholars and intellectuals- primarily if not exclusively, in relation to news stories concerning issues such as Iran, Afghanistan and most importantly, oil. (Said, 1997, 85). The oil crises of the 1970s and the Iranian Revolution of 1978 demonstrated that the Islamic world had the capacity to instil fear and panic in the West; in a sense these events are reminiscent of Islam's earlier threat to European domination, and can be viewed as a revival of the power of the Orient (Said, 1997, 85).

The simplistic and clichéd view of Muslims held by those particularly in the United States became even more profound in the wake of the collapse of communism. In 1993, just two years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the American Academic Samuel P. Huntington postulated that in the post-Cold War era, the primary source of conflict in the world come from confrontation between ideologically opposed civilizations (Huntington, 1993,22). He claimed that while the nation state would remain the most important political entity, the principal conflicts of international politics would arise between nation-states grouped into competing civilizations. During the Cold War the world was split between East and West and divided into the First World and the rest; divisions no longer pertinent according to Huntington (Huntington, 1993,23). In his seminal work *The Clash of Civilizations?* Civilization, broadly shared cultural values, rather than specific national identities will become increasingly important. Given the collapse of communism, the old cultural division between Western Christianity and Islam is likely to resurface (Huntington, 1993,31). Huntington's views weren't unique. As the post-Cold war era dawned in the early 1990s several different academics and authors foresaw the widespread perception of a cultural clash between the west and the Islamic world that was to emerge in the coming decades. The "next confrontation is definitely going to come from the Muslim world. It is in the sweep of the Islamic nations from the Maghreb to Pakistan that the struggle for a new world order will begin", remarked M.J. Akbar, a Muslim author (Huntington, 1993,32). Moreover, Bernard Lewis, the British-American historian, writing in *The Atlantic Monthly* in September 1990 had a similar view "We are facing a mood and a movement far transcending the level of issue and policies and the governments that pursue them, this is no less than a clash of civilizations- the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the world-wide expansion of both"(Lewis, 1992,24-28).

Whether Huntington's thesis described geo-political reality or in some way gave rise to this idea of civilizational clashes is difficult to say. What we do know is that in the so-called West and amongst so-called Islamic extremists there are actors whom, for directly opposing reasons, buy into the notion of clashing civilizations. Such a worldview suits Islamic fundamentalists as much as it suits their opponents. What is clear is that the event of

9/11 have been taken as evidence that “we” the West, are under attack from a historically uncompromising and threatening “other”, they, Islam. To summarise, since the events of that day, many scholars and academics have argued that Islam and the Middle East have increasingly taken on the role of the western world’s “Other”, that is to say it has come to represent everything that is anathema to the West, a role that was largely filled by the Soviet Union during the Cold War. (Morey and Yaqin, 2011:18) Caricatures, simplistic one-dimensional representations are central to the process known as “Moral Panic” (Cohen, 2002) around Islam and Muslims, as we are all now well aware, living in this post 9/11 zeitgeist of fear over “radical Islamic terrorism”. (CNN, 2017)

The meaning of the word “Arab” is disputed. Scholars commonly define it as a cultural and semantic term that includes people from nations where Arabic is the dominant language. (Naber and Jamal, 2008:4) Moreover, another definition, strongly influenced by Arab nationalist social movements, asserts that “Arab” is a national identity, and Arabs have a common cultural and imagined community, since the end of the Second World War, countries where Arabic is the primary spoken language, have formed the Arab league. (Naber and Jamal, 2008:5) It is all too common for American and other western cultural representations to conflate the groups “Arab” and “Muslim,” however, not all Muslims are Arabs, and not all Arabs are Muslims. Today, the top six countries with the greatest Muslim population are: Indonesia (170.3 million), Pakistan (136 million), Bangladesh (106 million), India (103 million) Turkey (62 million) and Iran (60.4 million). It is important to note that none of these countries are regarded as Arab; Arab nations are highly diverse with distinct ethnic, religious and language groups within them. (Naber and Jamal, 2008:6) It is critical for one to recognise the complexities when attempting to classify Arab region is extremely diverse, and this goes some way in explaining why the U.S. government as well as Arab communities have found the task of clearly defining who an Arab person is what constitutes “Arabness” particularly troublesome. (Naber and Jamal, 2008:5)

It can be argued that before the 9/11 attacks, Muslims and Arabs had already been racialised in U.S. society, they had been socially constructed as a population who were different from normal Americans, and the disparity was related to culture, place of origin and comprehended by many as “racially” recognizable. (Cainkar, 2009:65) The racialization paradigm is useful because it allows us to identify social practices and processes that unfold over time and gives us an insight into how Muslim and Arab Americans came to be perceived by a large section of American society as persons who were different or “others” with a set of negative and destructive characteristics. (Cainkar, 2009:65) Prior to the events of 9/11, many Arab American academics and writers used the “invisibility” to describe the place the place of Arab Americans within the prevailing American discourses around race and ethnicity. Moreover, within this literature, a common trope was that despite most government’s attempts to define Arab Americans as “white” prevailing U.S. discourses are inclined to represent “Arabs” as not only different from but also subservient to white persons. (Naber and Jamal, 2008:1) Furthermore, numerous scholars have asserted that the fallout from the 9/11 attacks embedded the racialization of the category “Arab/MiddleEastern/Muslims” as a marker of non-white Otherness, or that the “racialization of Islam” is fundamental to the post September 11th retaliation against people who are seen as Middle Eastern, Arab, South Asian and/or Muslim. (Naber and Jamal, 2008:2) These processes of racialization allowed certain immigrant groups to the United States that had been regarded as non-white (e.g. the Irish) to eventually come to be regarded as white and therefore acquire a host of privileges that come with being perceived as white. This constructionist view postulates that race is a flexible concept, not static and based on irrefutable biological characteristics. (Cainkar, 2009:66)

It has been argued that Arab Americans lost many of the benefits that comes with the status of being white over a period of time, such as being recognised as unique individuals

with favorable attributes, and being protected from institutional discrimination-and by the time of the 9/11 attacks, they were well positioned socially to be constructed as collectively responsible for the terrorist attacks, and too weak politically and economically to be able to defend themselves. (Cainkar, 2009:66) Although this racial formation paradigm is imperfect, mainly due to the messy nature of the concept of race in relation to Arab Americans, it still has a lot of value, because racial formation helps us to understand how Muslims and Arabs came to be perceived by a large section of the American and broader western public, in a collective and negative fashion, and how these ascriptions were linked to geographical origin, styles of dress etc. This understanding is fundamental in rationalizing the experience of Muslim and Arab Americans post 9/11. (Cainkar, 2009:67)

Now we must turn to the history of Arabs and Muslim communities in the United States. Academics have identified Arab immigration to the United States in two periods, before and after the Second World War, and have claimed that the first wave of Arab immigrants were primarily Christian, and emigrated from Greater Syria at the beginning of the twentieth century. (Naber and Jamal, 2008:8) In the early twentieth century, the “Orient” as defined by Professor Edward Said, became increasingly depicted in the form of sexualized imagery in American culture, the entertainment industry in particular. In Hollywood films, the Orient appeared as an exotic subject for the satisfaction of western desires, and the “recurrent figure of the veiled woman” became a core representation in mid-twentieth century American pop culture. (Naber and Jamal, 2008:25) The period, in which the understanding of “race” began to change in the United States, was also a period of growing anti-Arab sentiments and policies. Along with discrimination against those perceived to be of Arab origin after World War II, American legislators and oil companies teamed up to apply pressure on the Arab region in a political move referred to by Douglas Little as “What was best for Exxon and Texaco seemed also what was best for America, and vice versa”, which was a result of the increasing importance of oil as a commodity. (Naber, and Jamal, 2009:31) America’s conflict with the Arab world began in the aftermath of the 1960s, when the U.S. government was trying to build friendly relationships with nations such as Iran and Saudi Arabia. Moreover, as American presence abroad increased considerably, the Arab-Israeli War of 1967, marked a watershed moment in U.S. involvement in the Arab region, and also entrenched America’s long standing alliance with and support for, Israel. (Naber and Jamal, 2008:32) The period of increased U.S. military and economic activity in the Arab region also saw an intensification of anti-Arab media depictions and discrimination within the United States. From the 1970s, through to the 1990s, a number of occurrences and the increasing uniformity of U.S. and Israeli policy, helped the expansion of American dominance in the Arab region, these include: The American-Arab oil wars of the 1970s through to the 1991 Gulf War. (Naber and Jamal, 2008:33-34) Media depictions of “Arabs” reflected America’s imperial endeavours in the Middle East.

Research has demonstrated that since the 1970s, the corporate media has progressively portrayed persons who come under the category “Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim” as backward, exotic, barbaric, and dangerous. Moreover, media in the 1970s depicted Arabs as rich oil sheikhs threatening the U.S. along with images of belly dancers; the 1980s and 1990s gave us films that invested heavily in the “Arabs are terrorists” narrative, in such films as *True Lies* (1994) *The Siege* (1998) and *Back to the Future* (1985). (Naber and Jamal, 2008:37) When these narratives about a predisposition of Arabs to violent behavior was effortlessly extended to Muslims, Muslims and Arabs converged into one group in the minds of many Americans under the category of “Middle Easterners”, that was linked to phenotype, religious belief, attitude towards women and certain place of origin. These would become the symbols that Americans and broader western society, both government and public would act on in the aftermath of 9/11. (Cainkar, 2009:109) The detrimental

experiences described by Muslims and Arabs in the wake of the 9/11 attacks were triggered by social constructions of their relationship to the terrorist attacks not by the attacks on their own. When claims were made that Arab and Muslims living in the United States were a population of co-conspirators of the 9/11 terrorists, many Americans accepted these allegations as plausible because they were based on social constructions that were embedded long before the events of that day in September 2001, and appeared to lend credibility to them. (Cainkar, 2009:64) Those who asserted Muslim and Arab responsibility for the atrocity posited that Muslim and Arab communities were quietly condoning the attacks and knowingly harboured terrorist sleeper cells. (Cainkar, p. 64) Social constructions of Muslims and Arabs that predate September 11th, postulate the existence of a common value-set and orientation that all Arabs and Muslims share, including a predisposition to committing terrorist acts and a deep hatred of the United States, which laid the groundwork for these ideas to garner wider public support, in the immediate aftermath of the attacks. (Cainkar, 2009:64)

On the morning of September 11th 2001, nineteen Islamic extremists hijacked four commercial jet airliners shortly after taking off from airports on the East Coast of the United States. Two of the passenger jets were deliberately flown into the Twin Towers of New York City's World Trade Center, a third plane smashed into the Pentagon located near Washington DC, and a fourth crashed into a field in rural Pennsylvania, after some of the passengers on board overpowered the terrorists, and prevented the plane from reaching its intended target, which many have speculated was likely to be the White House or the U.S. Capitol. (BBC History, 2017) The Twin Towers were powerful symbols of America's power and wealth, and the Pentagon is the nerve centre of the United States Department of Defense. (BBC History, 2017) Moreover, both Towers of the World Trade Center collapsed onto themselves, within two hours of being struck by the jet airliners, severely damaging other buildings in the World Trade Center complex and covering lower Manhattan in a thick toxic dust. Approximately 3,000 people died in the deadly attacks, including the nineteen hijackers, which became the worst terrorist attack on American soil, which many compared to the attack on Pearl Harbour in 1941. (BBC History, 2017)

Now we must turn to the primary purpose of this research project, an analysis of the Irish print media's representation of the Muslim community in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attack. Beginning with an analysis of articles that appeared in the *Irish Independent*, from approximately the first two weeks following the attacks. In an article titled: "Arafat offers sympathy but anti-US mood grips Palestine", on 12th September, while discussing the Palestinian reaction to the attacks, the columnist asserts that some Palestinian civilians began to celebrate the attacks in New York and Washington "America thinks it can play God, but this proves that God is greater, said Fahmi Abu Nab, and "America is the head of the snake, America always stands by Israel in its war against us", said Nawal Abdel Fatah. Furthermore, the author, while stating these were "unlikely" to represent the views of the majority of the Palestinian people, claims that there were "plenty" who were willing to speak out in support of the atrocity in the United States, and also displayed a picture of a group of children apparently celebrating the attacks. (Phil Reeves: 2001) "Suicide bombers strike at heart of the nuclear power", in this article from 12th September, Robert Fisk argues that "America is at war and, unless I am grotesquely mistaken, many thousands more are now scheduled to die in the Middle East, perhaps in America too", while acknowledging that at such an early stage after the attacks, no one had any proof that the hijackers originated in Middle Eastern nations. Fisk also claims that Palestinians were out celebrating the attacks, and repeatedly uses terms such as "Arabs" and "Middle East", and overall has a fearful and doom-laden tone. (Fisk, 2001) "Gardaí keep watch on suspected terror cells", in this article also from 12th September, Tom Brady asserts that a terrorist cell that many are claiming is

closely associated with Osama Bin Laden, one of the prime suspects for the attack, is believed to be operating in Ireland. Moreover he asserts “A number of people suspected of being members of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad group, are being kept under close surveillance by the security agencies in the State”, and in addition, Brady states that officials now believe that Ireland is being used as a “safe haven” for Islamic terrorists, and the article also makes reference to “tackling Middle Eastern groups”. (Brady, 2001) “One step nearer a Middle East bloodbath”, in this article from 13th September, the columnist suggests that if it is revealed that an Islamic group was behind the attacks “life for Muslims inside the country will become socially difficult quite quickly and may be legally circumscribed soon after”. (Keegan, 2001)

On 14th September, in an article titled: “Champ Muhammad Ali pleads: ‘don’t blame all of us Muslims’”, Ian Ball and Simon English report that there has been “after shocks” against those who fit the Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim category, in cities across the United States. The article reports that there has been hostility against cab drivers that wear turbans, women who wear headscarves, and Arab-Americans have faced harassment at U.S. airports, in Florida, mosques and Islamic centres were defaced with graffiti, and in Virginia, bricks attached with hate messages were thrown through the windows of an Islamic bookstore. Moreover the article also refers to “Muslim terrorists” “Arab-Americans” and “Arab or Muslim businesses”. (Ball and English, 2001) Furthermore, in an article from 14th September, titled: “How the CIA tracked the world’s most evil men”, while discussing U.S intelligence agencies and their response to the attack, the columnist makes repeated use of terms such as “Middle Eastern” “Muslim world” and “Arab world” and appears to use them interchangeably, suggesting that these terms have the exact same meaning. (Jeffreys, 2001) “We’ll fight to the death vow Islamic extremists”: In this article from 17th September, the correspondents report that Islamic fundamentalists in Britain have been radicalizing young Muslims and calling on them to sacrifice themselves in a war against the United States and its allies, leaflets distributed during a meeting of Islamic extremists declared that “The final hour will not come until the Muslims conquer the White House”. The article also reports that two Asian men were brutally murdered in the United States, in what Muslims and Arabs fear could be the beginning of revenge attacks, Moreover, an acquaintance of one of the men who was murdered, asserted that “We practice a religion which makes us look like the bad guy, Because of the beards and turbans we look more like bin Laden than the Muslims do”. (Laville and Rozenberg, 2001) *Bin Laden linked to bogus refugee racket*: this article from 18th September claims that the suspected terrorists linked to Osama Bin Laden have been raising money in Ireland through a “bogus asylum racket” and reports that an Islamic fundamentalist with close links to Bin Laden has been living in Ireland for the past few years. (Tom Brady, 2001). Lastly, *Backlash feared as US Muslims are targeted*: this article from 19th September while reporting on revenge attacks against America’s Muslim and Arab populations, repeatedly uses key terms such as “Middle Eastern terrorists” “Muslim Americans” and “Arab Americans” and again, appears to use these last two phrases interchangeably. (Fletcher, 2001).

Now moving on to articles that appeared in *The Irish Times*. “Israel goes on alert for possible attack as Palestinian factions deny involvement”, in this article from 12th September, while discussing the Israeli and Palestinian response to the terrorist attacks, the columnist asserts that “local people were distributing sweets, cars honked horns, and children danced with small Palestinian flags in celebration of what seen as the U.S. getting its comeuppance for its perceived pro-Israeli bias”. (Horovitz, 2001) “Representatives of suspect groups living in Republic”: In this article, also from 12th September, the columnist reports that senior military officers in Ireland have informed the Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, “that representatives of some of the groups at the top of the list of suspects for the attack on America are living in the Republic”. (Cusack, 2001) The article goes on to claim “al Qa-ida-the name roughly

translates as “The Base”- is known to have had a presence in the Republic for several years”. “Horror must not infect world with fanaticism”: This article written in on 13th September, asserts that when we in the West are viciously attacked by a small number of “Arab” and “Muslim” fundamentalists we often fly into a blind rage and “tend to ignore the rise of chauvinistic and religious extremism not only in the domain of Islam but also various parts of the Christian world”. Moreover, the author further claims “ Despite the abhorrent manifestation of celebration and joy in Gaza and Ramallah while people in New York were still burning, the vast majority of Arabs and other Muslims are neither accomplices to the crime nor rejoicing in it”. (Oz, 2001) “US attacks denounced in Dublin mosque as victims remembered”: This article from 14th September, by May Minihan, reports that Imam Hussein Halawa of Clonskeagh mosque in Dublin has raised concerns about “groundless accusations” against the Islamic religion in the aftermath of the attacks, Moreover, the article reports that over 90 abusive telephone calls have been made to the Islamic Foundation of Ireland in Dublin, and according to a spokesman “The calls ranged from people showing sheer anger to using the lowest of low words about Muslims”.(Minihan, 2001).

“Suffering must not give way to vengeance”: In this article also from 14th September, the columnist pleads for a sense of perspective following the attacks, and asserts that “Much of the anger felt by American citizens will be focused on what is termed the Islamic world, or rather, specific states within that world, this is more dangerous, particularly if the actions of fundamentalists were considered to be representative of Islam or Muslims in general” and in addition “ As Mark Little of RTE pointed out, the celebrations of joy in the streets by Palestinians were short-lived, it would be more than tragic if this small group were to suffer any form of backlash because of the actions of a few who commit atrocities, the Islamic world is huge and diverse, al-Qaeda are no more representative of Islam than those who harassed and terrified small girls on their way to school in the Ardoyne are representative of Protestants”. (O’Brien, 2001) “The enemy during a war will not see Ireland as being militarily neutral”: This article from 17th September reports that Gardaí have been receiving calls from the public “who have suspicions about the activities of some Muslims here”. “Irish Muslims urge US not to act in haste”: In this article from 18th September, the columnist asserts that Muslims living in Ireland have encountered only “isolated cases of hostility or verbal abuse” despite some reports of a backlash, in fact many Irish people have expressed solidarity with the Muslim community in Ireland, Furthermore, the article reports that a spokesman for the Irish Government has described media claims concerning possible links between al-Qaeda and members of the Irish Muslim community as “absolutely irresponsible and appalling”(Cullen, 2001) Finally, “US Muslims suffer spate of hate attacks”: this article from 19th September reports that persons who fit into the Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim category have come under attack in the wake of the atrocity stating that “ There are about 6.5 million Muslims in the United States, fewer than a million of whom are Arabs” and in addition “ The Council on American-Islamic Relations says it has received reports of more than 350 attacks against Arab-Americans around the country, ranging from verbal harassment to physical assaults”.(Smyth, 2001).

From this analysis of both sets of newspaper articles from the relevant period, we can make several findings, both newspapers engaged in a level of fear mongering with respect to the Muslim community in Ireland, both had articles discussing the possible link between Osama Bin Laden and Muslims living in Ireland within the first days of the attacks. Moreover, as reported in *The Irish Times* on 18th September, this reporting was irresponsible and possibly contributed to some of the harassment and abuse leveled against Irish Muslims in the immediate aftermath of the attacks. However, there are as some noticeable and important differences between the depictions of Islam and Muslims in *The Irish Times* and *The Irish Independent*. It is clearly that the articles appearing in *The Independent* displayed a

noticeable lack of knowledge about the terms ‘Arab World’ ‘Muslim World’ and ‘Middle East’ and conflate these terms, tapping into the racialised category of Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim that was already established prior to 9/11. Moreover, further evidence of this can be seen in a U.S. context in the article from 17th September that reported how two Asian men were automatically assumed to be Muslims and so complicit in the attacks. In contrast articles that appeared in *The Irish Times* displayed a much greater depth of knowledge about the difference between ‘Arabs and ‘Muslims’ and the diversity of the Islamic world, there were also several articles that explicitly warned against the knee jerk reaction of condemning all Muslims for the actions of a few extremists, there were similar articles in the *Irish Independent*, but fewer and much less explicit. Moreover, it appears that while persons in Ireland who fit into the Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim did face some hostility immediately after the 9/11 attacks, these incidences were much more isolated and less serious than in the United States. Furthermore, researchers in the United States who analyzed the *New York Time*’s depiction of Islam and its adherents from 2000-2004, identified a similar phenomenon of the racialization of Arab and Muslim Americans, and depict them in their “collective” identities, instead of their differences or individuality. (Joseph, D’Harlingue and Wong, 2008) In conclusion, the representation of Islam and its adherents, in Ireland’s two main newspapers in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, was to a significant extent, based on the racialization of Islam’s adherents as belonging to the category of Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim, a category which had been established long before the events of that September morning in 2001.

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