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Arab and Muslim Women in American Entertainment Media: A Qualitative Content Analysis of 'Homeland'.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Noting the fact that the media has the power to influence the way we, the audience, perceive the world around us should come as no surprise. The media has the power to decide not only *what* we see, but to also decide *how* we see this. Partisanship across the media can strongly influence the way news surrounding events and people reach us. Scharrer and Ramasubramanian (2015) argue that the media has a potential educational function. Their research on media literacy – the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and communicate messages in a variety of forms- shows that audiences age 12 and up are generally able to understand that media delivery can come with biases and stereotypes. However, they are often not able to recognize *when* they encounter biases in their media of choice. In other words: audiences usually do not possess the media literacy necessary to disregard media bias, whether positive or negative, and have the tendency to internalize media bias. Furthermore, George Gerbner's cultivation theory analyzes the independent contributions television viewing makes to viewer conceptions of social reality. Television molds American behavioral norms and values, and the more TV we watch, the more we tend to believe what we see, even if what we see is misleading (Gerbner, 2002)

These findings of television shaping our reality become especially interesting when applied to race and ethnicity. Scharrer and Ramasubramanian showed that movies and television series that defy stereotypes can have a positive effect on society by promoting multicultural understanding. On that same note, movies and television series that reinforce stereotypes can contribute to society negatively by creating a sense of 'otherness': us versus them. Stereotypes are harmful: " when one perceives an individual as a member of a particular stereotyped group, the perceiver's mind activates the group-relevant cognitive structure and processes […] judgements

and attitudes within the framework of that particular stereotype" (Abreu et. Al., 2003). This research paper will therefore focus on representation and stereotypes in entertainment media, focusing on Arab and Muslim women. With 'Arab', I mean women originating from one of the 22 Arabic states[1]. With 'Muslim', I mean women who disclose their Islamic faith in words, actions, or attire. The purpose of this research is to find out to what extent entertainment media resort to stereotypical depiction of Arab and Muslim women, and how the use of stereotypes has changed over time. This research will thus focus on the representation of Arab and Muslim women after the year 2000. The existing body of work on the representation of Arabs and Muslims in entertainment media has primarily been conducted before the 2000's, creating a gap in our current knowledge on this topic. It is relevant to update research in this field, since there have been a number of developments and actualities in the Arab and Islamic world since the 2000's that affected not only the Islamic world, but also the U.S. and Europe. Islamic terrorist organizations have started targeting the Western world more frequently, causing destruction and fear; the attacks on 9/11 by Al Qaeda serve as a prime example. As a direct response, the U.S. launched the 'War on Terror', making Arabs and Muslims a public enemy. The War on Terror aims to pursuit and prosecute terrorism and terrorists, which gives the U.S. the freedom to establish policies of direct military intervention and preemptive measures in addition to capturing, detaining, and persecuting all those suspected of being involved or associated with terrorist organizations (Cole, 2003). The War on Terror targets Arabs and Muslims abroad and within the U.S, and Cole points to the case of U.S. citizen Yaser Hamdi to illustrate this point. Hamdi has been declared 'enemy combatant' on allegations only: he has not been charged with a

[1] The 22 Arab states are Algeria, Bahrain, Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen (Shaheen, 2001: 539).

crime and has never had access to a lawyer. This is a clear violation of U.S. laws, justified by the War on Terror. The 9/11 attacks and the subsequent War on Terror have created a pattern of distrust and suspicion between the U.S. and its Arab population, and more generally, between the U.S. and the Arab and Islamic world. Furthermore, in 2014, after the eruption of the civil war in Syria, IS became an active threat to the Arab- and Western world alike. Europe has experienced terrorist attacks perpetrated by IS, such as the November 2015 attacks in Paris, and terror and aggression in mainly Syria and Iraq has caused over 5,5 million refugees to flee towards Europe and the U.S (Syria Regional Refugee Response, 2019). This influx of Arabic refugees combined with increased Islamic terrorism and the War on Terror is hypothesized to have influenced the general image depiction of Arabs and Muslims in Western society into an antagonistic portrayal of Arab and Muslim women with a high number of female terrorist representations. To test this hypothesis and to update our current knowledge on the depiction of Arabic and Muslim women in entertainment media, a case study will be conducted using the SHOWTIME TV-series 'Homeland'.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The work of Jack Shaheen on representation of Arabs in Hollywood is of foremost importance in this field of study. Shaheen's first work on this topic, '*The TV Arab'* (1984), describes an 'Instant TV Arab Kit': this kit, suitable for most TV Arabs, consists of a belly dancer's outfit, headdresses, veils, oil wells, daggers, magic lamps and carpets, and camels. They are fabulously wealthy, barbaric and uncultured, sex maniacs, and revel in acts of terrorism. This TV Arab is a rerun of a rerun; it is a stereotype, a standardized image that contributes to ignorance and dislike among the audience. Shaheen's book and documentary *'Reel bad Arabs. How Hollywood vilifies a people'* (2001) has gained a lot of scholarly attention and has since its publication been a foundation for further research. Reel Bad Arabs analyzes over 900 feature films displaying Arab characters, and the findings are unsettling: derogatory stereotypes are omnipresent, and almost all Hollywood depictions of Arabs are bad ones. With almost a century worth of movies in his analyzation, Shaheen concludes that the negative image of Arabs is being passed on across generations without being challenged. Commonly, movies contain Western protagonists calling out racial- and ethnic slurs. In addition, Arabs are often being referred to as 'Ayrabs'.

In Reel Bad Arabs, Shaheen argues that Arabs are seen as 'different' and 'threatening' in Hollywood movies. They are 'projected along racial and religious lines', and their 'stereotypes are deeply ingrained in American cinema' (8). Arabs are often the enemy: uncivilized, barbaric religious fanatics, their purpose in life to terrorize the enlightened West. TV Arabs who are just ordinary people seem to be absent. This is a dangerous given, since creating a dislike of 'the stranger' (or xenophobia) can cause innocent people to suffer. Shaheen states the effect of

stereotypes portrayed in entertainment media by using an Arabic proverb: *Al tikrar biallem il hmar.* By repetition, even the donkey learns (7).

Shaheen argues that the stereotypes of Arabs are inherited from Europe's pre-existing Arab caricatures. "In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Europeans […] presented images of desolate deserts, corrupt palaces and slimy souks inhabited by the cultural 'other' – the lazy, bearded heathen Arab Muslim" (8). The same idea of a cultural 'other' is what Edward Said described in his 1978 book '*Orientalism'.* Orientalism is the way the West, particularly Europe, portrays Arabs: differences are emphasized and exaggerated, creating an image of Arab culture as backwards, uncivilized, and one-dimensional. Orientalism operates under an assumption of Western superiority over the East. Said defines orientalism as "the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, 'mind,' destiny and so on". Orientalism has a cultural view of the Arab world as irrational, violent, and fanatic. What is interesting is that this stereotype has hardly changed in modern times. Partially, because of the absence of Arab-Americans in the movie industry, and partially, because the public has an attitude of apathy towards Arabs, making them easy targets. "You can hit an Arab free; they're free enemies, free villains – where you couldn't do it to a Jew or you can't do it to a black anymore" (Keen, 1987).

Stereotypes rendered upon Arab women also stem from European heritage, Shaheen argues in *Hollywood's Reel Arab Women* (2007). In European popular culture, Arab women were portrayed as submissive, exotic subjects. In Hollywood, we see that producers associate Arab women with oppression, sex, and violence. It should thus come as no surprise that the most common stereotypes Shaheen discovered for Arab women were based on exactly these three

characteristics. First, there is the oppressed wife, described by Shaheen as "shapeless bundles of black, a homogeneous sea of covered, ululating women, trekking behind their unshaven mates" (27). The TV wife is completely covered and stripped of voice (other than ululating) and free will. She obeys to her husband and takes care of the children and household. Second, there is the oversexualized harem maiden. She has a bare midriff and often a see-through veil or see-through pantaloons and jewels for her navel. She is often a belly dancer who lounges around on soft couches, ready to perform on request. Lastly, there is the female terrorist. She is a religious fanatic motivated to bring down the United States infidels and its allies, but she is usually no match for the Western protagonists.[2] As also concluded in *Reel Bad Arabs*, ordinary Arab women seem to be absent. Hollywood has created an image of Arab women in a pathetic state; they are dehumanized, unsuccessful characters.

As mentioned, Shaheen's work gained a lot of scholarly attention. Most authors publishing work on Arab representation in Hollywood after Shaheen's publication refer to his theoretical foundation and his coding is often reproduces. For example, Yasmeen Elayan wrote her dissertation on stereotypes of Arabs and American-Arabs in Hollywood movies released between 1994 and 2000. She argues that Hollywood and other major outlets behave as if the stereotypes around Arabs are truthful. Reinforcement of stereotypes might cause the viewers of these movies and TV-series to see Arabs in a stereotypical light, believing that all people from this ethnicity will behave in the same manner. Even though movies and TV-series are fictional, the public might develop a biased view of Arabs or other stereotyped groups (Elayan, 2005). In

[2] In *Hollywood's Reel Arab Women,* Shaheen presents two other stereotypes: the Beasts of Burden (unattractive, overweight characters lurking in the background, sometimes robbing Westerners) and Black Magic Vamps (enchantresses, 'serpents and vampires', 'possessed of devils'). Shaheen concludes that these two stereotypes largely faded away in the 60's. For this reason, Beasts of Burden and Black Magic Vamps have not been included in this study.

her research, Elayan noticed that Arab women are rarely ever depicted in a workplace environment. Furthermore, they do not often have meaningful on-screen dialogues. She saw a high frequency of the 'black bundle of cloths' Shaheen described. This promotes the association of the Arab culture, and more specifically the Islamic religion, with oppression of women. It neglects the fact that Arab women, like women of every ethnicity, come in more than one variety. Women throughout the Middle East wear a variety of apparel and are very capable of contributing to their community, or to the world. The mute, oppressed stereotype provided in movies does not reflect Arab women as a group, yet the media has the power to make its viewers believe this is the case. Elayan analyzed six Hollywood movies on depictions of Arabs. She concluded that all six of these movies contained persistent stereotyping and a failure to offer neutral of positive viewpoints and characters. "In portraying continually violent characters that seem to use Islam as a justification for their acts of mass destruction, this may cause the public to form judgmental and negative opinions of Arabs, Arab-Americans, and Islam. […] The six analyzed films did contain stereotypical portrayals of Arabs and Arab-Americans in connection with hostility, aggression, speech patterns, traditional/native dress, and victimization" (52).

Evelyn Alsultany (2012) is one of the few scholars who has conducted research on the depiction of Arabs after the attacks on September 11, 2001. She saw something striking happening: there was an increase in sympathetic portrayals of Arabs and Muslims on U.S. television. In recent movies and TV-series, producers have tried to balance out the 'bad' Arab stereotype by including a 'good' Arab in the script, which became the new standard when representing Arabs. For example, *24* portrayed an Arab female terrorist and an Arab-American patriotic government agent (71). Furthermore, when employing stereotypes such as the Arabic terrorist, Alsultany argues that these figures have become more multidimensional. Instead of the

'stock villain', the one-dimensional bad guy who was bad because of their ethnic background or religious beliefs, the post 9/11 terrorist is humanized. The characters are parents and spouses, they have a back-story that brought them to where they are today (see, for example, *Sleeper Cell*). In her 2013 article *Arabs and Muslims in the Media after 9/11: Representational Strategies for a "Postrace" Era*, Alsultany tries to explain the shift towards more positive and more nuanced representation of Arabs by placing it in the context of the War on Terror. With 'the Arabs' as the enemy in the War on Terror, positive portrayals of Arabs can be a war strategy: 'positive' representations of 'the enemy' were used as a tool to place the U.S. in a benevolent light. It creates the image that the U.S. has entered a 'post-race' era, where the media is aware of the sensitivities around negative stereotyping. By placing a 'good' Arab next to a 'bad' Arab, the bad Arab will not seem like such a stereotype anymore; rather, the bad Arab can be seen as the bad apple we find in every race, ethnicity, or religion. The question however is if the 'good' Arab is enough to counterweigh the 'bad' Arab stereotype that has been prevalent for over a century. Awareness of stereotypical representation has perhaps changed the surface of Arab depiction, but the underlying message remains the same: "Post-9/11 television is testimony to the fact that the stereotypes that held sway for much of the twentieth century are no longer socially acceptable—at least in their most blatant forms. But this does not mean that such stereotypes (and viewers' taste for them) have actually gone away; they have only become covert" (Alsultany, 2012: pp. 27-28).

I want to place a side note to Alsultany's findings. Both her book and her article on Arab representation do not contain original research with a solid methodological foundation. She does not provide a list of used movies or TV-shows, making it questionable as to how she came to her conclusions. There is also a lack of coding on how she decided which Arab is 'good' and which

Arab is 'bad'. I still see value in adding her work to my theoretical background, as she is one of the few scholars who has conducted research on representation specifically after 9/11. Since I intend to do the same in this research paper, it will be interesting to compare my findings to Alsultany's results.

Race, Gender, Hollywood: Representation in Cultural Production and Digital Media's Potential for Change (2015) by Maryann Erigha stresses not only that the *quality* of representation (meaning the type of roles groups occupy) of women and minorities is often stereotypical and creatively limited, the *numerical* representation (meaning the respective presence or absence of a certain group) is also limited: women and ethnic minorities occupy far less space in the cultural canon than the narrative of the white male. This creates a worse position for Arab women than for their male counterparts, Erigha states. "Underrepresentation of women and racial/ethnic minorities can lead to the perpetuation of racist or sexist stereotypes and myths about marginalized groups on-screen due to bias or lack of experience with that group" (86). Not only do women and minorities generally get less on-screen time, making them less familiar to the public, they also are qualitatively reduced to stereotypes. That is why this study focuses on the representation of Arab women in specific.

What I noticed on research on the representation on Arabs, and more specifically on Arab women, in entertainment media is the lack of scholarly attention after roughly the year 2000. Most research conducted focuses on movies and TV-series before 2000, as we see for example with Shaheen and Elayan. The few studies after 2000 mostly go into Arab men and leave the field of representation of Arab women untouched. Alsultany's article goes into representation in the 21st century, but as mentioned above, her work seems to lack some credibility. It draws easy conclusions and does not show any original research. This is why I feel there is room for

improvement: this study focuses on the representation of Arab and Muslim women in entertainment media in the 21st century. This has led to the following research question: "How are Arab and Muslim women represented in American entertainment media, and how has this changed in the 21st century in comparison to the 20th century?"

Homeland has been selected for this case study for three important reasons. First and foremost, because the show features Arab and Muslim women, which is essential to this research design. Second, because of its popularity. The series has reached a significantly large audience: the very first episode attracted a total of 2.78 million viewers, giving it the status of most watched drama premiere in eight years. (Seidman, 2011). Furthermore, Homeland was very well received amongst both critics and the audience. The show won an Emmy award for outstanding drama series in 2012, and Golden Globe awards in both 2011 and 2012 for Best Television Series - Drama. Third, because of the show's airdate. In 2011, the first season of Homeland aired, well in the 21st century. This makes the show qualify for a study on representation in entertainment media after 2000. Currently, there are six seasons out and a forthcoming seventh and eighth season has been confirmed by SHOWTIME. This gives a greater timeframe and more material to analyze then when focusing on movies and gives the opportunity to look for development of the characters of Arab and Muslim women within the series.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

This study contains a qualitative content analysis of the SHOWTIME TV-series Homeland. Homeland is the case study to analyze the representation of Arab women in entertainment media after the year 2000. Currently, there are seven seasons out with each season containing 12 episodes. Because this study focuses on the representation of Arab and Muslim women in entertainment media with Homeland as its case study, rather than on the representation of Arab and Muslim women in Homeland, I used purposive sampling to specify episodes that will function as units of analysis. Using IMDB, I identified female Arab and Muslim characters in Homeland with a credited role. (IMDB, 2019). This resulted in the following episodes:

Season one (2011) – episode 9 (Crossfire).

Season two (2012) – episodes 1 (The Smile), 2 (Beirut is Back), 3 (State of Independence), 4 (New Car Smell), 6 (A Gettysburg Address), 7 (The Clearing), 8 (I'll Fly Away), 9 (Two Hats), and 11 (In Memoriam).

Season three (2013) – episodes 2 (Uh… Oh… Ah…), 4 (Game On), 5 (The Yoga Play), 6 (Still Positive), 7 (Gerontion), 8 (A Red Wheelbarrow), and 11 (Big Man in Tehran).

Season four (2014) – episodes 1 (The Drone Queen), 2 (Trylon and Perisphere), 3 (Shalwar Kameez), 4 (Iron in the Fire), 5 (About a Boy), 6 (From A to B and Back Again), 7 (Redux), 8 (Halfway to a Donut), 9 (There's Something Else Going On), 10 (13 Hours in Islamabad), 11 (Krieg Nicht Lieb), and 12 (Long Time Coming).

Season five (2015) – episodes 2 (The Tradition of Hospitality), 4 (Why Is This Night Different?), 7 (Oriole), and 8 (All About Allison).

Season six (2017) – episodes 1 (Fair Game), 3 (The Covenant), and 6 (The Return).

The scenes in the abovementioned episodes in which Arab and Muslim women appeared were used as units of analyses. A scene was defined by the DVD version of the show's seasons. Scenes without Arab and/or Muslim women were not included in this study.

The coding of female Arab and Muslim characters followed Shaheen's work: his three main stereotypes (oppressed wife, harem maiden, and female terrorist) were used to make for a fair comparison of representation before the year 2000 and after the year 2000. I have chosen to compare my results to Shaheen's results, mainly because his work is highly regarded in the field and his theory used for a multitude of studies after his publications. It makes for not only a fair comparison, but simultaneously looks at whether or not Shaheen's theory is still relevant. To decide in which category a woman falls, if in any, the following questions were asked. If the answer was 'yes' to two or more questions, the character was labeled as belonging to that category. If the answer was 'no' to two or more question, the character did not belong to that category. A neutral and positive category were added as well. [3]

Oppressed wife

- Does the woman wear traditional/native attire (this includes hijabs, niqabs, burqas, and abayas)? Yes / No
- Is the woman silent? Yes / No
- Is the woman portrayed as a caretaker (children, house, parents, husband)? Yes / No

Harem maiden

- Is the woman scarcely clothed or wearing see-through clothes? Yes / No

[3] The coding questions are based on the descriptions of the categories provided by Jack Shaheen in *Reel Bad Arabs* and *Hollywood's Reel Arab Women*. The coding is loosely based on the formatting of Elayan's coding in *Stereotypes of Arab and Arab-Americans presented in Hollywood movies released during 1994 to 2000.*

- Is the woman servicing rich men and/or portrayed in a palace? Yes / No
- Is the woman in the company of other, similar looking and similar acting women? Yes / No

Female terrorist

- Is the woman part of a terrorist organization? Yes / No
- Is the woman the perpetrator or facilitator of religious or politically motivated violence? Yes / No
- Does the woman commit acts of hostility and aggression, placing victimhood on other characters, or instigating others to do so? Yes / No

Positive character

- Does the woman have goals and ambitions that she is working towards to that are not affiliated with terrorism? Yes / No
- Is the woman a protagonist? Yes / No
- Is there emphasis on the humanity of the woman (does she have meaningful relationships, interactions, jobs, daily activities)? Yes / No

The presented codes were used as a baseline; they were not locked and exclusive. Through grounded theory approach, the possibility for new categories was kept open. If after collecting the data a new stereotype should be added, the coding will be adjusted to fit. If the female character could not be identified as any of the four above-mentioned categories or as a new stereotype, she was added into the ‘neutral’ category.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The results will be presented per season.

Season 1

Table 1: Depiction of Arab and Muslim women in Season 1

	Number of Scenes
Oppressed Wife	4
Harem Maiden	0
Female Terrorist	0
Positive Portrayal	0
Neutral Portrayal	0

In season 1, there were four scenes that contained credited female Arab or Muslim characters. All of the four scenes contained a presentation of the Oppressed Wife. For example, the first scene with an Arab or Muslim woman showed a fully covered, silent woman obeying to her husband. Her husband, who is an Imam, is speaking to the protagonist of the show, a CIA-agent named Carrie, while the woman is quiet. Carrie is trying to gather information about a shooting that happened at their mosque earlier that week. The Imam tells his wife to wait upstairs while he talks to Carrie. She gets up and leaves the scene. Later, when the conversation between Carrie and the Imam is over, the wife returns to let Carrie out. Again, she does not speak.

Season one did not contain any portrayals of the Harem Maiden and the Female Terrorist, and there were no positive or neutral portrayals. An interesting new perspective did surface; that of the Informant. The CIA receives a phone call of the Imam's wife, who is willing to give out

information on the Mosque attacks that her husband refused to give in the first scene. She emerges from her role as obedient wife to provide the CIA with information, but doing so brings risks. As the Informant, the woman is scared of being caught and asks the CIA for discretion on her identity. She asks for protection of the United States in exchange for her information. The depiction of Informant appeared in two of the scenes in Season 1.

Season 2

Table 2: Depiction of Arab and Muslim women in Season 2

	Number of Scenes
Oppressed Wife	0
Harem Maiden	0
Female Terrorist	21
Positive Portrayal	0
Neutral Portrayal	6

In season 2, there were a total of 27 scenes that contained credited Arab or Muslim women. 21 of these scenes contained the Female Terrorist. A notable character is Roya Hammad. Hiding behind her job as a journalist, she gets her hands on important information that she passes on to terrorists planning an attack on American soil. She does not commit any crimes of terrorism herself, rather, she is the mastermind behind planned attacks. She is the facilitator; she is the one people report to, and she is the one who connects people. Her character is initially portrayed as westernized and professional, focused on her job, and speaking English with a British accent. She is a trusted journalist that has access to the White House and is often asked to

report high- profile actualities. When her true identity of terrorist facilitator is discovered, she becomes violent and starts shouting in Arabic. This portrayal is a reinforcement and a magnifier of the general sense of distrust towards Arabs and Muslims. Although Arabs and Muslims may seem 'good' at first, you can never be sure about their true agenda – Hammad proves that.

There were no portrayals of the Oppressed Wife or the Harem Maiden. There were six scenes that contained neutral portrayals of Arab or Muslim women. In two of the neutral scenes, Carrie is teaching a class of Arab immigrants English. In this class, there are seven women. Their native tongue is Arabic. Some women wear hijabs, other women do not. The group is a diverse representation of Arab and Muslim women.

This leaves four scenes with Arab or Muslim women to have been categorized as Neutral Portrayals in table 2. In these four scenes, the Informant appeared. The character is a former victim of domestic violence and the wife of a Hezbollah commander. She is ready to give the CIA information about a planned attack on America, in exchange for money and refuge in the United States. The CIA accepts these terms. The Informant, like the Informant in season 1, is scared and discrete. The Informant seems to emerge from the Oppressed Wife: where she used to fit in to the stereotype of Oppressed Wife, she now takes matters into her own hands and goes against the orders of her husband. She does, however, need U.S. protection in order to come forward.

Season 3

Table 3: Depiction of Arab and Muslim women in Season 3

	Number of Scenes
Oppressed Wife	3
Harem Maiden	0
Female Terrorist	0
Positive Portrayal	21
Neutral Portrayal	4

Season 3 contained 28 scenes with Arab or Muslim women. An interesting switch happened: where season 1 and 2 saw mostly portrayals of the Oppressed Wife and the Female Terrorist, season 3 saw a large representation of Positive Portrayals. This is mostly due to the character Fara Sherazi. She is a new employee to the CIA of Iranian descent, hired as an analyst. She is smart and ambitious, and throughout the season she is portrayed as the voice of reason, looking out for the humanitarian aspect of the CIA's missions. Initially, she is not received well in the CIA as she is rather young and wearing a hijab; she is referred to as 'the kid in the headscarf'. A senior member of the team asks her to find evidence of money laundering, and when she cannot find any evidence he tells her: "You wearing that thing on your head is a big f*ck you to those who would've been your coworkers except they died in attacks. So if you NEED to wear it, it is your right, but you better be the best analyst we've ever seen, so don't tell me there is nothing". It is a condescending scene where negative judgement is attached to Fara's religious attire. Her religious identity is connected to religious violence and terrorism, which draws to the image Shaheen painted of Islam being inherently connected to violence. Even

though Fara works for the CIA and for the United States, she is met with hostility and suspicion caused by her Islamic faith, as if she is somehow to blame for the deaths of Americans by Islamic terrorists. However, Fara is motivated to work harder and prove herself. Her character undergoes personal and professional development, causing the attitude of her coworkers towards her to change as the season progresses. Fara turns out to be a valuable and appreciated asset to the organization and a protagonist throughout the season.

The Oppressed Wife appeared in three scenes. After suffering through years of abuse, she decided to leave her husband and build a new life in the United States. Her ex-husband, who is wanted by the CIA on grounds of terrorist activities, finds out where she lives; he drives to her house and very violently kills her. To the CIA he states: "She was unfaithful. […] I should have stoned her to death, but I did not have enough time". Here, again, the same pattern of the Informant was visible. A formerly Oppressed Wife decides to go against her husband and willingly help the United States in exchange for protection of said husband. However, in this case, protection from the United States was not enough to keep the Oppressed Wife safe. The linkage between Islam and violence is a recurring theme throughout the series.

Four scenes contained neutral portrayals of Arab or Muslim women. For example, two scenes contained Arab or Muslim women working in an office setting. Not enough is known about these characters to type them as anything else than neutral; they represent average, working women. One character has been placed in the neutral category, even though she exhibited traits of the Oppressed Wife; she is fully covered, figuratively standing in the shadow of the reputation of her husband. She showed traits of the Female Terrorist; her husband held a high position in a terrorist organization, and after his passing she provides information to help wreak the death of her husband. She also showed signs of Positive Portrayal, as her strong

relationship with her deceased husband and her love for her children are emphasized. However, she could not fully be placed in either of these categories. Hence, her multi-faceted character placed her in the Neutral category. There were no appearances of the Harem Maiden and the Female Terrorist.

Season 4

Table 4: Depiction of Arab and Muslim women in Season 4

	Number of Scenes
Oppressed Wife	1
Harem Maiden	0
Female Terrorist	13
Positive Portrayal	16
Neutral Portrayal	4

Season 4 saw a total of 34 scenes with female Arabic or Muslim characters. Like season 3, the amount of Positive Portrayals was relatively high: 16 scenes contained Positive Portrayals of Arab or Muslim women. And, like season 3, the character of Fara was largely responsible for this number. She manages to win the trust and respect of her CIA colleagues, resulting in more responsibilities and more challenging duties. Rather than solely working on a computer as an analyst, Fara is now trusted with fieldwork. This creates the opportunity for Fara to make some important contributions. For example, Fara discovers that a Taliban leader (Haqqani) who was presumed to be dead is in fact alive and responsible for the abduction of a CIA-agent. Her discovery changes the course of the operation, as the CIA finds out a breach in their operation is leaking information to Haqqani. The breach turns out to be Tasneem Qureshi, a female Pakistani

diplomat who is secretly working for the Taliban. Her role resembles that of Roya Hammad in season 2; a professional woman, trusted by the United States, who turns out to be a Female Terrorist. Tasneem's double role leads to a Taliban invasion of the American embassy in Islamabad with several American casualties as a result; one of the victims is Fara. She is stabbed to death after the Taliban tells her she brings shame on her family and Islam by being a Muslim working for the United States. As a result, all U.S. officials retreat from Pakistan. Tasneem is later seen on TV delivering a speech, stating that Washington's meddling in Pakistani business will no longer be tolerated.

Four scenes contained Neutral Portrayals. When Haqqani's nephew unknowingly becomes an informant to the CIA, he asks his friend for help. She provides help, but is unable to fulfill his requests. Initially, she was categorized as neutral. As the season progressed, however, she was categorized as Positive Portrayal; she is attending medical school in the hopes of becoming a doctor. In addition, her relationships with her friends, coworkers, and family make her a multi-dimensional, positive female Muslim character. One scene saw the Oppressed Wife stereotype; Haqqani's abduction of a CIA-agent allows him to safely visit his hometown without CIA-interference, to harbor the safety of their abducted agent. Here, his children and his wife wait for him. His wife is fully covered and does not speak, and is not invited to the table to eat. The Harem Maiden did not appear in Season 4.

Season 5

Table 5: Depiction of Arabic and Muslim women in Season 5

	Number of Scenes
Oppressed Wife	1
Harem Maiden	0
Female Terrorist	6
Positive Portrayal	0
Neutral Portrayal	2

The fifth season of Homeland saw a sharp decline of female Arab and Muslim characters in comparison to the previous seasons; only 9 scenes contained such portrayals. The majority of female Arab or Muslim appearances were that of the Female Terrorist. Homeland adapts its seasons to real-world timeframes: where the earlier seasons focused on Al Qaeda and the Taliban, Season 5, which was filmed in 2015, emphasizes the rise of IS. Thus, the Female Terrorists of Season 5 are IS-members, IS-recruiters, and IS-recruitees. One scene shows a Muslim woman talking to young women in Germany. She is affiliated with IS and is on a mission to recruit new fighters. The new recruits are placed into a van, which will take them to Istanbul, Turkey. As the girls depart, the CIA enters the scene and executes the recruiter.

By portraying the recruitment of young women in Germany, Homeland is exaggerating a problem that potentially adds to a greater divide and misunderstanding between the Western world and the Arab world. In 2014 and 2015 combined, an estimated 720 to 760 German individuals left the country to join the fight or otherwise support terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq (Van Ginkel and Entenmann, 2016). Twenty percent of these so-called Foreign Fighters

were female; this boils down to roughly 150 women in two years. It is, of course, important to understand and appreciate this problem. However, the recruitment of young women – who could very well still be minors at age of recruitment – is not as common and prevalent as the viewer is made to believe in Homeland.

One scene contained the image of the Oppressed Wife. A clearly troubled and intoxicated CIA-agent is seen walking towards a house. He looks inside and sees a fully covered woman placing drinks and snacks on a coffee table. There are men sitting on the couch with their feet up; they talk and watch television. Two scenes involved Neutral Portrayals. An Arab general suspected of war crimes and his wife bring their sick daughter to a U.S. hospital for treatment. The CIA takes this opportunity to present the general with two options: be tried for war crimes in The Hague, or fulfill tasks for the CIA. His wife is kept out of these negotiations – she stays with their daughter. She did not fit in any of the categories, as there was no indication of her involvement in war crimes, she did not wear religious attire, and not enough was specified to categorize her in to the established categories. Season 5 did not contain any Positive Portrayals or Harem Maidens.

Season 6

Table 6: Depiction of Arab and Muslim women in Season 6

	Number of Scenes
Oppressed Wife	0
Harem Maiden	0
Female Terrorist	0
Positive Portrayal	0
Neutral Portrayal	5

Season 6 saw five scenes that included credited Arab and Muslim women. The show completely shifted away from the Female Terrorist in this sixth season. This could be explained by the fact that the protagonist of the show, Carrie, is not doing field work on location for the CIA anymore. The show therefore features less scenes in Arab or majoritarian Muslim countries, and less Female Terrorists, as Carrie does not go on counterterrorist missions anymore. Additionally, there were no representations of the Oppressed Wife or the Harem Maiden in season 6.

Of the five scenes containing Arab or Muslim women, four scenes saw a Neutral Portrayal. Two Neutral Portrayals were that of a receptionist at work. She is pictured in an office situation, answering phone calls and greeting people. This character had the possibility to be a Positive Portrayal, however, not enough was known about the character to meet the coding criteria for Positive Portrayals. The other two Neutral Portrayals were that of an American Muslim family at home; the scene depicts every-day life settings for many Americans. The teenage children are getting ready to go to school, the mother is preparing food. The second scene of the family shows the teenage son being arrested on suspicion of terrorist affiliation. It is striking to see the very same patterns repeat itself throughout the series; Arabs or Muslims who at first glance seem 'good': common citizens, westernized, and hard-working, are found to be 'bad': they are terrorists, cooperating with terrorists, or suspected of terrorist affiliation. However, the teenage girl and the mother in this scene are not under suspicion and since this study focuses on Arabic and Muslim women, the scene had to be placed in the Neutral Portrayal category. The fifth Neutral Portrayal takes place in Iran. The scene shows an Iranian woman posing as an escort to ambush a man wanted by the CIA. Whether this woman is a CIA-agent herself, or an escort paid to cooperate is not made clear. Much like the receptionist, the woman in

this scene had the potential to be a positive character, however, the information disclosed about her was insufficient to make that decision.

Total

Table 7: Total and Proportion representation of Arab and Muslim women in Homeland

	Number of Scenes	Proportional representation
Oppressed Wife	9	8.4
Harem Maiden	0	0
Female Terrorist	40	37.4
Positive Portrayal	37	34.6
Neutral Portrayal	21	19.6
Total	107	100

This study has analyzed a total of 107 scenes as units of analysis. The Oppressed Wife stereotype appeared in 9 scenes, or in 8.4% of the scenes. The Harem Maiden did not appear in any of the scenes throughout the six seasons. The Female Terrorist appeared in 40 scenes, or in 37.4% of the scenes. Positive Portrayals appeared in 37 scenes, which comes down to 34.6% of the scenes. The remaining 21 scenes contained Neutral Portrayals; this makes up 19.6% of the total. Table 7 visualizes the total results.

The question this study aimed to answer was:

"How are Arab and Muslim women represented in American entertainment media, and how has this changed in the 21st century in comparison to the 20th century?"

Based on the results of this study, Arab and Muslim women are predominantly represented as Female Terrorists. This means the results support the expectation that developments in the Arab and Islamic world, such as Arabic refugees, Islamic terrorism, and the War on Terror have led to a greater representation of Female Terrorists in entertainment media: 37.4% of all representations of Arab and Muslim women were that of the Female Terrorist, closely followed by the Positive Portrayals of 34.6%. These findings are interesting in the light of Alsultany's statements that the 'bad' Arab is now often accompanied by the 'good' Arab. With the general image of the Arab world and Islam being overwhelmingly negative in Homeland, it is somewhat surprising to find a relatively large number of Positive Portrayals. Alsultany's findings seem to hold truth: modern-day entertainment media does not shy away from the same stereotypes we have seen for years, but has made it more covert and more 'balanced' by counterweighing the 'bad' with the 'good'.

Shaheen's stereotypes – the Oppressed Wife, the Harem Maiden, and the Female Terrorist – hold true in the 21st century for especially the Female Terrorist, but also for the Oppressed Wife. Homeland did not contain many scenes portraying home situations of Arab or Muslim families, but when it did, the Oppressed Wife was there in all cases but one. The Harem Maiden of Shaheen's work did not appear anymore; based on this study, the Harem Maiden can be rejected as a common stereotype. This study finds that in the 21st century, the proportion of Female Terrorists has grown, where the proportion of Oppressed Wives has decreased. An interesting finding of this study is the emergence of the Informant. The Informant appeared in 8 scenes throughout the show; an almost equal number to the Oppressed Wife. This could signal a rise of a new way of portraying Arab and Muslim women.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Throughout the seasons, Homeland showcases a prevalent negativity about the Arab world and Islam. The condescending way Fara was initially talked about because of her hijab is a prime example of the tendency of Homeland to depict Islamic faith and the Arab world as irreconcilable with and the polar opposite of the American way of living and American norms and values. It is striking to see how omnipresent islamophobia is in Homeland, both blatantly and covert. A United States marine deployed in Syria is captured by Al Qaeda and held as Prisoner of War for eight years. During his time in captivity, he not only witnesses U.S. treatment of Syria first hand – a town is bombed, killing 80 children: this is treated as a PR-catastrophe rather than a humanitarian crisis – but also converts to Islam. After his release, he returns to the United States and continues to practice his newfound Islamic faith. He does so unbeknownst to his family; he prays in his garage, he keeps his Koran hidden away. When his wife eventually finds out, she is not only visibly upset, she is angry: she waves his Koran in his face while yelling that these were the people who tortured him.

Furthermore, Homeland persistently portrays the Arab and Islamic world as homogenous. The show takes places in various countries – Lebanon, Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran – yet, these places are all visualized the same: underdeveloped, dirty, and filled with senseless violence. One episode filmed in Lebanon sparked outrage on BBC news for portraying Hamra Street in Beirut, a modern, cosmopolitan, flourishing street with companies like Starbucks present, as a dirty, unpaved road (Kumaraea, 2016). In addition, the show features major inconsistencies with reality. An Al Qaeda general is cooperating with a Hezbollah general, when in reality the two organizations have mostly been in conflict with each other throughout history.

Arabic names are mispronounced, Persian names are given to Arabic characters. The Arabic world and Islam are consistently portrayed as antithetical to the Western world, with one notable exception: the character of Fara resembles a rare bridge between the United States or 'the West' and Islam or 'the East'.

It is easy to say that Homeland, or entertainment media in general, is just that: entertainment. But when we see the same negative depiction of the Arab world, and of Muslims, circulate on our televisions, it impacts the lives of average people. Cole's research, mentioned in the introduction, demonstrates this: even today, Arabs are held captive in Guantanamo Bay without formally being charged of a crime, without access to legal assistance, and without a trial date. Hollywood needs to recognize that circulating the image of the Arab world as inherently violent and oppressing can damage an already rough relationship between East and West further. Hollywood needs to take responsibility and depict Arabic and Muslim women, in addition to the Arab and Muslim world, as the diverse group it in reality is.

Although this study has brought forth some interesting findings regarding the representation of Arab and Muslim women in the 21th century, there were some limitations. First, by choosing Homeland as a case study, I increased the likelihood of finding Female Terrorists. Homeland is a show on the CIA's counterterrorism unit. Opting for another show as a case study could have led to different results. Second, by only looking at credited roles, little attention was paid to extra's. This is a flaw, as it are the extra roles who are less detailed and could therefore be more prone to resort to stereotyping. By only viewing episodes with credited Arab or Muslim women, this study could potentially miss a pool of data on extra's. Third, this study specifically focused on Arab and Muslim women. This has been a deliberate decision, as the study of female characters is underdeveloped. However, in a show like Homeland, the main

fixation is on Arab and Muslim men. While watching the episodes, I encountered an abundance of negative, repetitive stereotypes of Arab and Muslim men, and the Arab and Muslim world in general, that Shaheen has described so well in his work. It felt unjust to not mention these findings; hence, I included them in my conclusion.

Thus, for future research, it could be interesting to dedicate a study to the general depiction of Arabs and Muslims in Homeland, without specifically focusing on female characters. This increases the available data and can draw broader conclusions on the representation of the Arabic world in entertainment media. Furthermore, it could be worthwhile to look closer into the role of the Informant in entertainment media. Is this a recurring theme in movies and shows in the 21st century? Or is this unique for Homeland? What does the Informant mean to the Arabic and Muslim community and how does the Informant develop through time?

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