

SUAD JOSEPH LAB: Media Project
Representing Muslims and Islam in *The New York Times*: 1851 – 2020.
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Environmental Policy Analysis and Planning

The Middle East and North Africa in U.S. Media Representations: An Analysis of the Term
"Sunni*" in *The New York Times* (1900-1909)

The term "Sunni*" was used by the West in reference to Muslims. Our lab examined 283 articles published from 1900 to 1909, and I critically analyzed 8 relevant articles where the term "Sunni*" was used by *New York Times* correspondents. We discovered that the term "Sunni*" was used almost exclusively in volatile binary opposition to Shite Muslims. I argue that this depiction of volatility between Sunni Muslims and Shite Muslims was used to craft a narrative of Islam as being inherently troubled and used to justify colonial rule. This misrepresentation has embedded into American society the idea that Islam is a form of organized religion which is inherently problematical. I suggest that such news media misrepresentation supported the West to build a narrative of Islam that persists today. This research is part of an analytical genealogical project of *The New York Times* over 150 years conducted in Dr. Suad Joseph's lab of Anthropology