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# **A contemporary understanding of Islamophobia in the West - the case of Donald Trump**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis uses *Critical Discourse Analysis* to analyse the narratives of Islamophobia of United States of America, with President Donald Trump as a case study, examining his interviews and speeches. The theoretical framework is constituted by critical race theory (with particular focus on cultural racism), the critique of the colonial mentality, clash of civilization and populism. Drawing on these, I argue that political leaders in the West, including Donald Trump, have an Islamophobic approach because they “otherize(s)” Islam and Muslims in order to justify political decisions and policies. The empirical material of the thesis was constituted of speeches and interviews delivered by Donald Trump. Some of the main findings pointing to the Islamophobic narratives used by Donald Trump are: the main cause of terrorism is radical Islam; the global existential threat is blamed on radical Islamic terrorism; and that Muslim immigrants and refugees are a threat to Americas security and to its safety. The thesis concludes by claiming that Donald Trump holds an Islamophobic approach and supports this argument with policy implications.

*Key words:* Islamophobia, United States of America, Donald Trump, Orientalism, Populism, Critical Discourse Analysis, Fairclough

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*''We will make America strong again. We will make America proud again. We will America safe again. And we will make America great again.'''*

- The President of the United States of America, Donald Trump

## **1 Introduction**

### **1.1 The research problem**

It is evident that there is a rise of nationalism across the world. This is most noticeable in the United States (U.S.) with President Donald Trump and in the United Kingdom (U.K.) regarding the Brexit referendum. These two events have both sparked new waves of discussions, on nationalism, nativism and the far right (Cheng Leidig, 2019). Catarina Kinnvall (2018), argues that the Brexit Referendum in the U.K. and election of Donald Trump do not stand alone regarding their strains on simple answers to complex questions. Rather they are considered as part of a larger global rise of populism, with a stronger threat of declining democratic principles. Populism also stress several underlying tensions and emotional experiences regarding to the effects on a postcolonial past, neoliberal governance and rigor politics (Kinnvall, 2018). They both consist of varying degrees of populist nationalism and have sustained the idea of a “Muslim Question” at the centre of political discourse in both North America and Europe (Mandaville, 2017). Many scholars have blamed the fear of immigrants, more specifically Islamic immigrants, for Brexit (Roy, 2016). Although the U.K. is an important part of the Islamophobic discourse, this thesis will provide a case study on the U.S. examining the language of populist President Donald Trump. According to Jessie Daniels (2010), Islamophobia is the most common form of racism in our society today. It is a complex phenomenon that has a long history and involves many different features

and expressions. Furthermore, it can be understood from a perspective where the West stands in contrast to the East (the Orient versus the Occident) (Jessie, 2010).

The attacks of the September 11 on the United States had a profound effect on the American political and cultural landscape, consequently leading to concerns about a powerful Muslim enemy that would destroy Western values and freedoms. According to Todd H. Green (2015), the succumbing fears towards an “Islamic threat” was not held by the United States alone, rather Europe also held similar fears. This fear was stemming partly from the new realities in global terrorism but also from several other events that intensified the worries about this international threat. Additionally, this threat was mainly perceived to target the security and the opposition against the Western values posed by the growing number of Muslim refugees and immigrants (ibid).

When President Donald Trump was elected as the 45<sup>th</sup> president in the US, he came to define the U.S. foreign policy as “America First”, and arguably came to power with an Islamophobic campaign. With his proposal to “ban Muslims” he marked a new highpoint regarding American’s fear of Muslims (Beydoun, 2017). This paper will therefore mainly focus on Donald Trump’s presidency in relation to Muslim immigrants and refugees. Nevertheless, it is important to state that Donald Trump does not only discriminate against Muslim immigrants but also several other kinds of immigrants, such as Mexicans. With his campaign’s motto, “Making America Great Again”, he indirectly proposed a turn back to the better past, to a time when the number of immigrants was not as high or socially noticeable as it is today. When reviewing his interviews and speeches, one can reveal racist discursive practices. The same kind of practices was identified by van Dijk (1997), regarding the positive self-representation, and the negative other-representation. In relation to this, Trump constantly portrays himself as a billionaire, a successful businessman (Donald J. Trump for president, Inc., n.d.), while presenting immigrants (particularly focus on

Muslim immigrants in this thesis) as a threat, this is a clear example of positive self-representation, and the negative other-representation.

Muslims are often seen as an object of suspicions and overt hostility and cannot speak for themselves to Western audiences and when they do speak, they are not heard. In line with this, Green argues that Muslims lack the power to control the public narrative of Islam. We can clearly see how prominent politicians in the both Europe and the United States drive negative views in the context of foreign military and political endeavors as well as domestic security in relation to Muslims. Generally speaking, the media also dictate the narrative of Islam in the light of key events (Green, 2015). In this thesis, I will examine the specific discursive strategies used by U.S. President Donald Trump in his speeches and interviews - from November 2015 to February 2017 - which will help to understand the current phenomenon of Islamophobia in the U.S. Taking a critical discourse analytical stance, I will explore the use of linguistic strategies, such as positive ‘us’ framing and negative ‘them’ framing, that has been used to stoke fear and anti-Muslim sentiment.

In 1981, the public intellectual and prominent academic, Edward Said warned:

For the general public of America and Europe today, Islam is news of a particularly unpleasant sort... negative images of Islam are very much more prevalent than any others... (however) such images correspond not with what Islam is, but to what prominent sectors of a particular society take it to be. ... Those sectors have the power and the will to propagate that particular image of Islam and this image, therefore, becomes more prevalent, more present than all others. (1981, p.136)

Currently, the threat perceived by the far right is the anxiety that Islam – and therefore also Muslims, are the fundamental ‘other’ in Western societies. Far-right populists hold an intuitive opposition to Islam and immigrants from Muslim countries, since they are seen as a threat to national values especially after the events



of September 11, 2001 (also referred to as 9/11) (Kallis, p.28, 2015; Rydgren, p. 244, 2007). Therefore, the theoretical ambition of this thesis is to look into these ‘othering’ factors from several concepts and theories, which will be used as the base of the analytical part of the thesis.

This issue is salient as many political leaders, parties, institutions (and also many citizens) believe that the relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims is one of the main political challenges in the West today. The development of these relationships and interactions are having a great impact on the social and political cohesion in these societies. If Islamophobia continues to grow, it may result in an increase of marginalisation, discrimination, and social isolation of Muslims.

When Donald Trump, a self-proclaimed billionaire, announced his candidacy for the GOP presidential primaries in June 2015, most politicians and analysts did not consider his candidacy a viable one (Drezner, 2016). Also, the news media did not take him seriously and in particular cases, stories related to him were relegated to the entertainment sector (Hare, 2015). However, in July 2016, he became the presidential nominee of the Republicans and, despite all the odds (Katz, 2016), he won the presidential election in November 2016. Topics related to immigration have been used as a campaign means often on both sides of the political spectrum (Lauter, 2012). What makes Trump stand out, however, is that he managed to anger immigrants, minorities, and even Republicans from his first speech with derogatory terms and contestable facts (Washington Post Staff, 2015). For instance, he used assertions such as “Mexico sends drug dealers, criminals and rapists to the U.S.” (Washington Post Staff, 2015). He also offended other minority groups, with claims like “Most Syrian refugees are probably from the Islamic state” (Bruton, Tur, & Roecker, 2016) and also by claiming “New Jersey’s Arab population cheered as the World Trade Center was attacked” (Kessler, 2015).

Does it really matter *how* Donald Trump speaks? Some may argue that everyone should be allowed to speak freely. However, the issue is not concerning whether individuals should be allowed to express themselves in whatever way they choose. To protect such claims, the First Amendment is in place. What is crucial to point out regarding the issue at hand is that not everyone has the opportunity for their voices to be heard. Rather it is only those in control of the dominant discourse whose voices and ideologies are inexplicably disseminated to the masses. The first step towards social justice is the ability to see and understand what is happening. One must first identify the issue, in order to discuss it. The only way to do this is through a close analysis of language. This will enable us to uncover the discursive patterns that further contribute to such ideologies. The careful analysis undertaken in this thesis is critical of the increasing consciousness of “how language contributes to the domination of some people by others, because consciousness is the first step towards emancipation” (Fairclough, 2001, p. 233).

## **1.2 Aim and Research Question**

The aim of this research is to get a deeper understanding of Islamophobia, both empirically and theoretically. Furthermore, research on Islamophobia has included a range of research methods, including historical methods, qualitative interviews, quantitative surveys, case studies and content analysis. Moreover, critical discourse analysis has been practical to study the war on terror narrative in a fictional text, but critical discourse analysis has not been applied when it comes to Trump, with the specific focus on Islamophobia, therefore this research aims to contribute to that methodological research gap. The main aim of this thesis is to analyse, with the help of a theoretical framework, how Trump’s use of language can be considered Islamophobic. The theoretical framework of this thesis is also a unique mix of concepts and theories, which will lead to a new contribution to the research field, with the analytical outcomes of the thesis. The overall ambition of the thesis is to contribute to the existing debate concerning the political debate in relation to Islamophobia. This study will aim to understand how the phenomenon of

Islamophobia is occurring through the use of language by political leaders. Therefore, the aim of the thesis is to address the following research questions:

- ❖ How do political leaders use Islamophobia to justify their policies and political decisions in the West?
  - ❖ What strategies does Donald Trump use to otherize Muslims and Islam in the Media?

### **1.3 Delimitation**

It is important to point out that Islamophobia does not exist in every country in the Western part of the world, nor does it exist in every society globally. Furthermore, this research cannot cover all discussions regarding Islamophobia, therefore the theoretical framework may leave out some features that also can operate within Islamophobia. Moreover, this research mainly focuses on Trump and does not cover the entire United States, nor does it represent the entire Western part of the world. It mainly explores Trump as a president, the language he uses and what discourses this could lead to. Nonetheless, it is important to state that Islamophobia existed in the U.S. before he became president, and this research will look into Islamophobia and examine how Trump's use of language is unique, and how this promotes an Islamophobic approach.

### **1.4 Disposition**

In this section, I will provide the disposition of the thesis. The thesis starts off by providing an introduction of the research problem. Within the introduction section, the Aim, Purpose, Research Questions and Delimitations are also outlined. Then I move on to the theoretical framework of the thesis. In this section, I start off by presenting a conceptual framework of what Islamophobia consist of and the definition of the term that will be used in this thesis. After the definition of islamophobia is provided, I then move on to the theoretical framework, discussing how one can understand Islamophobia in the West from a theoretical point of view.

The theoretical framework further consists of critical race theory, orientalism, the clash of civilizations and the discussion regarding populism and the far right. The answer to the main research question will be imbedded in this section. After the theoretical framework is presented, I move on to and present the methodological framework. The methodological framework of this thesis consists of *Critical Discourse Analysis* (CDA). After CDA is presented, the thesis then moves on to the empirical part. In this section, I will outline the empirical discussion, with President Donald Trump as the case study. Here, I will answer the sub research question with examples and quotes from interviews and speeches delivered by Trump. The last section of the thesis consists of concluding remarks, where I will provide an overall analysis and some reflective thoughts regarding Islamophobia. In this section, I will also provide suggestions for future research related to the discourse on Islamophobia. After the concluding remarks, the reference section will be outlined.

## **2 Theoretical Framework**

In this section I will present the theoretical framework. As proposed before, this thesis aims to investigate the phenomenon of Islamophobia. In this section the theoretical base for the following analysis will be provided, starting by introducing key concepts of Islamophobia and then move on to the discussion regarding related theories. This section will end by discussing why populism is a useful phenomenon for the analysis of Islamophobia.

### **2.1 Presenting the Theoretical Framework**

In the following section, the structure of the theoretical framework will be presented. This section will begin by presenting an overview of the literature regarding Islamophobia. I will then move on to the theoretical section. Firstly, the conceptualization of Islamophobia will be presented. Secondly, the forerunners of Islamophobia will be outlined. This part of the thesis also comprehends several concepts such as orientalism and racism, and how they can be used to understand Islamophobia. Critical race theory will also be presented and aims to explain why race is important to bring forth when discussing Islamophobia. Thirdly, the theoretical part will move on to the political phenomenon of populism, and its possible relation to Islamophobia. I conclude that the conceptual and the theoretical framework is the most relevant approach when answering the research questions of the thesis.

### **2.2 Conceptualizing Islamophobia**

In order to address the proposed research question, this section will elaborate and go into a deeper understanding of what Islamophobia consists of and how it operates theoretically.

*What is Islamophobia? Do we know what the concept refers to and means? All types of discussions on Islamophobia need to be examined including the historical*

processes, occasions, and personalities fundamental to its formation. If failing to do so, it can result in reductionist shortcomings, where Islamophobia exclusively is seen as an outcome of the War on Terror and the present-day political climate. Anti-Muslim racism in Western contexts has a lasting legacy, which is resulting from historical power relations and imbalances, that have positioned Muslims as the opposed 'Other' (Bakali, 2016).

In order to understand the term Islamophobia and therefore be able to use an operational definition in this thesis, I will start by looking at the term's origins. Different scholars have argued for different definitions of Islamophobia. One of the first usages found of the term 'Islamophobia' can be traced back to France, where Etienne Dinet and Slima Ben in 1925 wrote 'accès de délire Islamophobe' ('Islamophobic delirium') referring to the perceptions of Muslims by the West (Bakali, 2016). Caroline Fourest and Fiammetta Venner (2003) further argue that the term was used in the Iranian revolution by religious conservatives to explain Muslim women who refused to wear the *hijab*. Nonetheless, neither of these cases noted above describe how it has come into usage in contemporary times. However, Esposito and Mogahed (2007) have elaborated on a more recent, and relevant definition of Islamophobia, and define it as 'intolerance towards Muslims' cultural and religious beliefs. Another definition of Islamophobia is seen "as an othering discourse" that seeks to construct an us/them dualism of Muslims in opposition to the supposedly superior Western values (Smith, p.80, 2014).

When defining a term such as Islamophobia, several challenges can arise. If a broad definition is used, then occurrences of anti-Muslim racism could escape censure, as ultimately the term becomes meaningless and does not describe a phenomenon that can substantially be observed or grasped. Contrariwise, if a too simplified definition is used, solutions lacking the depth and complexity needed in addressing anti-Muslim racism will be deficient as a consequence. With that being said, I will use

the following comprehensive definition of Islamophobia developed by Allen (2010) throughout the thesis.

Islamophobia is an ideology, similar in theory, function and purpose to racism and other similar phenomena, that sustains and perpetuates negatively evaluated meaning about Muslims and Islam in the contemporary setting in similar ways to that which it has historically ... that inform and construct thinking about Muslims and Islam as Other. Neither restricted to explicit nor direct relationships of power and domination but instead, and possibly even more importantly, in the less explicit and everyday relationships of power that we contemporarily encounter, identified both in that which is real and that which is clearly not. (Ibid, p. 190)

This specific definition will be used because it recognizes the historical roots of Islamophobia, and clarifies that Islamophobia is a phenomenon that has been influenced over several centuries. It further shows several efforts of thought and ideologies that have observed Muslims and the Orient as the 'Other'. Furthermore, it also acknowledges the varying spheres in which Islamophobia exists (i.e. political, social and economic). Now that Islamophobia has been defined in a comprehensive manner, I will move on to the theoretical part of the thesis.

Historical examples of anti-Muslim sentiment in the West are the Israel-Palestine conflict (Green, p.11, 2015), the 1993 World Trade Center Bombing (Ibid., p.122), the Iranian Hostage Crisis and the Salman Rushdie affair. With this in mind, the 1997 Runnymede Report<sup>1</sup> defined Islamophobia as "the dread or hatred of Islam" that encompasses "fear and dislike of all [...] Muslims" (Ibid., p.11). The Runnymede report provides a criterion to define the scope of beliefs, attitudes and behaviours that are considered as Islamophobic (Tamdgidi, 2012). Considerably,

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<sup>1</sup> The Runnymede Trust is a British think-tank and published a report titled '*Islamophobia- a challenge to us all*', which had a major affect on the discussion regarding Islamophobia. The report aims to take a holistic approach to Islamophobia (The Runnymede Trust, 1997).

this criterion involves the characterization of firstly Islam as a monolithic system of belief and secondly Muslims as a monolithic bloc of people incapable of demonstrating individuality (Kundnani, 2014). This is problematic as it treats Islamophobia as a by-product of particular perceptions individuals hold against Muslims. Undoubtedly, Islamophobia is reflected in the “beliefs and attitudes” that people have towards Muslims (Suad and D’Harlingue, p.136, 2012). Therefore, Islamophobia is unavoidably political since it seeks to present the definition of Muslims as a whole in uncomplimentary terms, and consequently, determine how the West should act towards, dominate and control them (Sayyid, 2014). Arguably, Islamophobia is part of a globally hegemonic discourse, and the exclusion is similarly global and is expressed in multiple ways (López, 2011).

There has been public discussion regarding the relations between Islam and the West. Whether discussions will be on the relations between non- Muslim countries and Muslim States or the discussions on the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims within Western countries, on both sides there has been a tendency towards simplification and alarmism, with some exceptions. The simplification by non-Muslims involves several obvious issues. Some examples include: terrorism- as if most terrorists are Muslims or most Muslims are terrorist; the amount of aggressiveness in the Muslim world and the responsibility of Muslims for this; the willingness of Muslims to allow for debate, diversity, and respect for human rights (Halliday, 1999). Misrepresentation like this is not only reinforced by the media, but also done by writers with an eye to the current anxieties of the reading public, such as Samuel Huntington and S. Naipaul. The simplification of Muslims in itself is also leading to the affirmation of all Muslims as a unitary identity, as well as a unitary interpretation of text and culture. The term ‘Islam’ is used to summarize how a billion Muslims, that is divided into over fifty states and into the countless ethnicities and social groups, are related to the contemporary world. However, it is virtually impossible to fully get away from such simplifications, because both those invoking ‘Islam’ and those opposed to it follow such labels (Halliday, 1999). As a



researcher I am aware of this, and it is essential to be aware of such simplifications, as those terms will be used in the research. Also, when talking about Islamophobia it is of importance to state that it does not exist in every country in the West. Therefore, as a reader of this thesis, it is elemental to have this in mind while reading through this research.

### **2.3 Forerunners of Islamophobia**

The numerous discussions regarding suitability of the term Islamophobia are easier to grasp if we examine a number of similar theories and phenomena. Islamophobia is interlinked and is part of a bigger picture and consists several factors. Therefore, in order to fully grasp Islamophobia, this section aims to show that it is part of a bigger phenomenon, but it also shows the complexity of the phenomenon. In order to truly understand the discussions around Islamophobia, I will first give a brief description of what the theories and concepts consist of. Then I will move on and elaborate on how they are interlinked with Islamophobia, and how they can help me in my analytical framework. This particular selection of theories and concepts have been chosen with the aim to answer the main research question of this thesis.

### **2.4 Islamophobia- a form of racism?**

Historically, critical race theory has been understood to develop a subdivision of critical legal studies (CLS), based on economic and racialized oppression. CLS advocates “that the law is power-inscribed tool that serves the interest of some in society while perpetuating injustices towards others under the guise of being fair” (Bakali, p 28, 2016). From a critical point of view, its critics have been pointing to the failure to acknowledge the inescapability of the legal system. Without going into depth, some of the key legal scholars that influenced the field of critical race theory include; Charles Lawrence, Allen Freeman, Derrick Bell, Richard Delgado, Kimberle Crenshaw, and Lani Guinier.

Critical race theory is a theoretical framework, that uses critical theory to examine society and culture (Yosso, 2015) and is important for this thesis for two reasons. Firstly, the theory aims to understand how the regime of white supremacy and its subordination of people of colour came into being and has been able to persist in society. Secondly, it also aims to understand the relationship between racial power and the law and working towards changing the status quo. From this standpoint, racism is structurally embedded in a society that systematically disadvantages people of colour and advantages whites. This is considered to be a 'normal' condition and not something anomalous. One of the overall goals with this theory is to disassemble systematic inequalities in society (Bakali, 2016).

The terrorist attack of 9/11 2001, led to an extraordinary heave in Islamophobia hate crimes and discrimination which led many scholars and analysts to conclude that a new wave of anti-Muslim sentiment emerged in the U.S. In order to understand Islamophobia it requires not only to look farther back in time than just 2001, rather it is also important for expanding our understanding of Islamophobia beyond ethical and religious frameworks. Therefore, race must be included in the analysis (Love, 2017). Eric Love (2017) argues, that Islamophobia in the U.S. is developed in the same way as all American social structures involving race. Put differently, he argues that Islamophobia is built into the American institutions as a form of racism. Drawing on the connection between Islamophobia and race provides the main reasonable explanation for why Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, and people of all faiths are vulnerable to Islamophobia. It also is important to note that Muslim Americans represent a marvellous diversity of communities. This is often being ignored in the racialization process (Love, 2017).

So, what drives the debate concerning Islamophobia? Todd H. Green (2015), claims that the explanatory factor that drives Islamophobia is racism, arguing that Islamophobia is not racially blind. It is not a simple manifestation of older forms of racism that have been rooted in biological inferiority. Rather, it is what some

scholars have labeled “cultural racism.” Cultural racism “incites hatred and hostility based on religious beliefs, cultural traditions, and ethnic backgrounds” (Green, p. 27, 2015). In line with this, I will in the analysis argue that hatred toward Muslims is often expressed in terms of religious and cultural inferiority.

In the debate regarding whether Islamophobia is a form of racism, there is commonly two questions being raised. Firstly, if fear of Islam as a religion represents Islamophobia, does classifying it a form of racism puzzle the matters? How can it include both? Some scholars favour one or the other, however, considering the complexities of cultural racism, it is nearly impossible to choose one instead of the other. In the Western discourse regarding Islam, it is often combined with culture, race, ethnicity, and religion. Therefore, arguably, hostility based on religious differences is problematic to disengage from bigotry based on cultural and ethnic differences. Secondly, debated concerns often regard the matter of choice. Can one call Islamophobia racism, when religious identity is a voluntary choice, and is it not something which you are born with, unlike race? Regarding this, the main assumption is that one chooses to embrace Islam, one chooses to become a Muslim (or remain a Muslim). Therefore, one can “unchoose” this identification and consequently also avoid discrimination, whilst victims of racism on the other hand, are targeted for something that they have no choice or control. Here, race and racism are rooted in biological categories that do not completely cover the type of racism that is being analysed here. (Green, 2015).

However, as the scholars Tariq Modood and Naser Meer argue, people do not choose to be born into a Muslim family. Neither do they choose to be born into a society in which to be a Muslim, or to have ethnic roots in a Muslim- majority country, this automatically makes one an object of uncertainties among the non-Muslim majority population (Meer and Modood, 2009). In fact, many people suffer hostility and discrimination in the West merely because they are *perceived* to be Muslim, either due to family heritage or ethnic lineage, or because of outward dress.

Arguably, these realities would not vanish even if Muslims chose to identify with another religious community, or if they chose to drop the religious identity altogether (Green, 2015).

A key part element of Islamophobia comes when specifically looking at how race, comes by the analyses of White supremacy. Several generations of critical scholarship have provided an explanation of White supremacy and the insidious power that the ideology underpins to be the most racist structures in the United States. Islamophobia stems from the same White supremacist roots as other expressions of racism, and this helps us understand that they are closely interlinked with each other. According to Andrea Smith (2006), White supremacy consists of three logics: capitalism/slavery, colonialism/genocide, and Orientalism/war (ibid). Moreover, White supremacy has been interrelated by these pillars throughout American history, which also can clearly be seen at work in the production of Islamophobia (Love, 2017). Smith's understanding of White supremacy has been expanded by the anti-Islamophobia activist and scholar Deepa Iyer (2015). Furthermore, she states:

. . . we could offer another pillar to [Smith's] framework, one called Islamophobia/national security that derogates Muslims and anyone perceived to be Muslim in order to preserve the illusion of collective safety. These pillars of White supremacy enable the United States to go to war; to deny people rights to their languages, histories, and homes; to militarize police forces in our cities; and to enact laws that profile, target, imprison, detain, and deport communities of color and immigrants (ibid, p104).

The same logic that support White supremacy is the center of social processes that reproduce Islamophobia. This way of understanding Islamophobia reveals that there is no distinction between the racism that allows the indefinite detention regarding the Middle Eastern Americans on suspicion of terrorism (amongst others), are stems from White supremacy (Love, 2015).

## 2.5 The critique of the colonial mentality

Islamophobia is a rather new concept that draws its etymological roots from Europe in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although mistrust and fear towards Muslims and the perception of Muslim as an entirely opposed ‘Other’ have deeper historical roots in Europe. Attempts to civilize the ‘Other’ mainly through colonial expansion, started another chapter in Europe’s interaction with the Orient- colonialism (Bakali, 2016). Postcolonial theories have explored the impacts of colonialism on both the colonizers and the colonized. One of the foundational works, that has examined the colonization of Muslim majority nations, was Edward Said’s (1979) *Orientalism*. In *Orientalism*, he discusses the ideologies, which provided moral justifications for and the continuity in constructing Muslims as the ‘Other’. The work was a critique of Orientalist scholarship and has inspired many current day critiques of anti-Muslim racism. Islamophobia is evident when Muslims are perceived as if they do not belong with (the superior) us, rather they are seen as the *other*. This notion of *Us* versus *Them* is consequently integrated in a way where Islamic affiliations and/or Muslims are excluded from the dominant discourse, and therefore to some extent based upon the Orientalist view.

The general basis of Orientalist thought is an imaginative and yet drastically polarized geography dividing the world into two unequal parts, the larger, “different” one called the Orient, the other, also known as “our” world, called the Occident or the West...There are, of course, many religious, psychological, and political reasons for this, but all of these reasons derive from a sense that so far as the West is concerned, Islam represents not only a formidable competitor but also a late coming challenge to Christianity (Said, pp. 4-5, 1997).

Said (p.9, 1997) argues that “...In our time, direct colonialism has largely ended; imperialism...lingers where it has always been in a kind of general cultural sphere as well as in specific political, ideological, economic, and social practices”. He

believed the mindset of the superior laid the foundations from Orientalist thought throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Bakali, 2016).

Said's book *Orientalism* created forceful debate and controversy after it was published. Some of the more prominent criticisms of Said: he is too contentious, he fails to connect Orientalism concretely to colonial history and to its connection with the development of capitalism, he neglects the many ways the colonized resisted colonial power, and he tends to essentialize the West as he critiques Western essentialization of the Orient (Lookman, 2004). Although I do not intend to engage in a detailed analysis of each of these critiques, they have validity and it would be worth debating and analysing at length in a different context from his book. Nevertheless, although the shortcomings in Said's *Orientalism*, it is his larger argument that is on target, which raises important questions about how the West has studied and continues to study Muslims and Islam. Despite the critiques, many scholars of Islamophobia are indebted to Said for helping them understand how much anti-Islam and anti-Muslim sentiment has been shaped by the discourse deep-rooted in the power relation between the Muslim-majority regions and the West.

The construction of Muslims as the essentialized "Others" against Europeans, with the assumption that the Europeans inherent civilization and cultural superiority, ties to the Orientalist scholarship and literature (Green, 2015). Extending Orientalism as a framework in relation to Islamophobia, it is based upon the belief that Islam is a hostile faith. Muslims are seen as foreign, even when they have citizenship, and are also seen as violent and unassailable people (Marranci, 2004). Therefore, the Orient becomes apparent as a power relation of *us* the Occident (the West) versus *them* the Orient (Said, 1997). The discussion on Orientalism is crucial for this thesis since it provided the building blocks for what became Islamophobia. Additionally, the relationships between Islamophobia and political power have antecedents in the link between Orientalism and colonial power going back to the nineteenth century.

Drawing on this, it will be of use in the analytical part of this thesis, as I will argue that Trump makes these distinctions of *us* and *them*.

## **2.6 The International System and Islamophobia**

Theories of international relations often tend to privilege analyses of interstate relations and are mainly dominated by alternatives of liberalism and realism (Rengger and Thirkell-White, 2007). As a consequence, studies of international politics are not always seen as simplistic, as the international system is not simply a battleground for self-interested states. As the world is constitutive of states, consisting of non-state actors, narratives, communities, cultures, and people, it is unavoidable that each of these constitutive elements of the international system will shape the outcome of international affairs, to varying degrees. Based on this, Robert Cox's (1981) conceptualization of the global capitalist international system as a 'global political economy', uses critical international relations theory to take account of these constitutive elements, therefore allowing a more holistic and accurate study of international relations. As the global political economy is global capitalist, one could conclude the international system is characterized by global capitalism (Ibid, 1981).

The global capitalist international system develops ideologies from various actors to contest with each other with the goal of achieving ideational predominance. This contestation is referred to as patterns "of interacting social forces" that continuously shape and reshape the ideas come to be globally hegemonic (Ibid, p. 141, 1981). The norms, beliefs, and values propagated by an ideology possess the power to influence people to act in a particular way, and therefore govern human behaviour (Foucault, 1991). Arguably, it stands to reason that a *globally hegemonic* ideology would predispose, organise and govern people at the international level (Douglas, 2000). This problematizes the normativity of dominant ideology within the societies and explains the conditions of inequalities and oppression that result because of the dominant ideology (Habermas, 1972).

Regarding the notion of 'culture' and 'cultural difference' have developed a lot of currency in the post-Cold War geopolitical thinking, where the concept of 'clash of civilizations' has found particular currency. In 1993 the notion was popularized by Samuel Huntington but was originally first used in an article by Bernard Lewis (1990) with the title, 'the roots of Muslim rage'. In the bipolar paradigm of the Cold War, international relations, security and strategic studies were empowered. At the end of the Cold War, clash of civilization has become the paradigm that explains the geopolitical conflicts in the world. In the United States, the 'quality media' (*e.g. The New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal*) tremendously framed the events of September 11, 2001, with the context of Islam, civilization and culture. Even though the paradigm of 'clash of civilization' had been forcefully rejected by experts as amateurish history and fanciful political science, it came to be the paradigm to reach for when explaining all forms of phenomena in the Middle East. Economic failures, social problems, corruption, political stalemates are some examples that are routinely explained by attributing these phenomena to 'Islam' (Semati, 2010).

Civilization is defined by Huntington as distinct cultures possessing "common objective elements," including religion, institutions, customs, history, and language. Moreover, Huntington believes that the greatest source of conflict will be between Islamic and Western civilizations. Huntington further argues that the clash of civilizations between Islam and the West is likely to continue, using the argument that Islam is prone to bloodshed and violence to support his claim. Furthermore, he argues that Muslims are entrenched in violent conflict with other people, giving the examples of Orthodox Serbs in the Balkans, Buddhist in Burma, and Jews in Israel. Put differently, he claims that "Islam has bloody borders" (Green, 2015) & (Huntington, p. 22, 1993).



Huntington and Lewis invoke several of classic Orientalist themes. For instance, Huntington assumes that the West constitutes a superior and distinct civilization and promotes the imperial interests of the West at the expense of Arab and Muslim regions. He characterizes Islam as violent and inherently prone to aggression. Regarding the observation that “Islam has bloody borders”, it is a not-so-subtle proposal that Muslims are accountable for all of the conflicts in which they find themselves, which also applies to the clashes with Western powers.

Both Huntington and Lewis have been challenged and criticised in many circles, predominantly academic ones, for their promotion of the clash of civilization thesis. Edward Said is perhaps one of the most vocal critics of the thesis and his criticism is fairly representative of the concerns many scholars have raised with Lewis’s and Huntington’s work, therefore it is worth concluding this debate with Said’s response to both of them (Said, 2003). Said considers the arguments of both Lewis and Huntington to be two sides of the same Orientalist coin:

Elsewhere I have described [Lewis’s] methods—the lazy generalizations, the reckless distortions of history, the wholesale demotion of civilizations to categories like irrational and enraged, and so on. Few people today with any sense would want to volunteer such sweeping characterizations as the ones advanced by Lewis about over a billion Muslims, scattered through at least five continents, dozens of different languages and traditions and histories...But what I do want to stress is, first, how Huntington has picked up from Lewis the notion that civilizations are monolithic and homogenous and, second, how—again from Lewis—he assumes the unchanging character of the duality between “us” and “them” (Ibid, p. 71).

At its core, Said’s argument challenges the motivation of those who rely on the clash of civilizations paradigm to make sense of the world and particularly the relationship between Islam and the West. The clash of civilizations serves the Western imperialism in a rather Orientalist fashion (Green, 2015).

## 2.7 Populism and the far right

I will now move on to the theoretical discussion regarding populism. Considering Trump being a populist leader, it is important to examine populism in relation to Islamophobia and this will also be useful for answering my research question.

Definitions on populism elaborated by Mudde and Kaltwasser, consider populism to be divided into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, “the corrupt elite” and “the pure people” (2012, p. 8). Additionally, they argue that populism always perceives ‘politics to be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people’ (ibid.). Moreover, Mudde and Kaltwasser conclude their conceptual analysis claiming that any serious definition of populism includes three core concepts: the people, the general will and the elite; with its two opposites being elitism and pluralism (ibid. p, 9).

The political scientist Anton Pelinka (2013) states that “Populism simplifies complex development by looking for a culprit” (Ibid, p. 8), and claims that:

[a]s the enemy – the foreigner, the foreign culture – has already succeeded in breaking into the fortress of the nation state, someone must be responsible. The élites are the secondary ‘defining others’, responsible for the liberal democratic policies of accepting cultural diversity. The populist answer to the complexities of a more and more pluralistic society is not multiculturalism. [...] right-wing populism sees multiculturalism as a recipe to denationalize one’s (own) nation, to deconstruct one’s (own) people.

(Ibid.)

Additionally, Dick Pels (2012) lists several important socio-political challenges that presently worry voters, mostly during times of environmental and financial crises, that are related to a multitude of fears, pessimism and disaffection, here are some: fears of losing one’s job, fear of losing national autonomy, fear of ‘strangers’ (i.e. migrants), fear of losing old values and traditions and fear of climate change

(Rydgren, 2007). When conducting analyses on right-wing populist movements and their rhetoric, it is important to be aware of their propaganda, by doing so we are able to understand, explain and deconstruct their messages.

Furthermore, right wing populist parties appear to offer clear-cut and simplified answers to fears and challenges (mentioned above) in society, for instance through constructing scapegoats and enemies- ‘Others’, that are blamed for our current woes - by regularly tapping into traditional collective images and stereotypes of the enemy. Ruth Wodak (2015) claims that the latter depend on the respective historical traditions in specific national, regional, and even local context, the scapegoats can sometimes be Muslims, Jews, Roma and/ or other minorities. However, it can also be capitalists, career women, the EU, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the US or Communists, elites the media and so forth. Often, the ones affected are foreigners, victimised by religion, ‘race’ or language. Furthermore, Wodak argues that discursive strategies of ‘scapegoating’, ‘victim-perpetrator reversal’ and the ‘construction of conspiracy theories’ belong to the necessary ‘toolkit’ of the right-wing populist rhetoric (Wodak, 2015).

Populism does not exist in a vacuum, rather populism has neoliberal features and a postcolonial pasts, where the mainstream parties also identify the same type of threat as the far right. By doing so, the mainstream parties can claim to act as ‘rational’ and ‘responsible’ mediators between the need to tackle the authoritarian solutions proposed by the far-right parties and to tackle a threat (Rossi, p. 131, 2017). Recent developments in the West show features of populist trends which seem to correspond with current far-right populism: nativism and nationalism, xenophobia, new forms of democratic governance, and requests for a strong state (Ignazi, 2003, in Kinnvall 2018). The main emphasis is often on the restoration of national values, but also on the idealized images of the past order (Kenny, 2017). In the context of Islamophobia, “immigrant” or “Being Muslim” have been

perceived by several populist party followers as being perpetrators (Siims and Skjele, 2008).

The phenomena of right-wing populism and right-wing extremism are not new. David Altheide presents in *Creating Fear* (2002) the ways in which creating scenarios of fear and danger indeed have been constructed all for many years in US media and politics. Altheide further argues "...fear has become a dominant public perspective. Fear begins with things we fear, but over time, with enough repetition and expanded use, it becomes a way of looking at life" (Altheide, p, 3, 2002). The creation of fear to successfully legitimize policy proposals is not unusual amongst right- wing populist parties (Wodak, 2015). Young-Bruehl argues the heart of the populist rhetoric is the promise of redemption and relief from everyday fears, frustration, and anxiety (Young-Bruehl, 1996).

Focus on rhetoric has become even more prominent since Trump became President, where other republicans try to follow him by being "more Trump than Trump himself" by using narratives (both visual and emotional) such as "drain the swamp," "rigged systems," "Build the wall," "fake news" and "America first" (Peters, p. 5, 2018, in Kinnvall 2018). Moreover, post-truth politics have been "spilled over into xenophobic expressions of migrants on various social media sites" and consequently we see an increase in reported hate crimes in the U.S., and in the U.K., but also the rest of Europe (Kinnvall, p, 529, 2018) & (FRA, 2016). This is especially true when looking at scrutiny of and institutionalized prejudice against Muslim Americans.

Muslim terrorist is a notion that not only relates to xenophobia and 9/11 but is also built on the image of the U.S. as a Christian nation (Torre, 2019). In line with this I argue that this is also used as one of the arguments when trying to justify why Muslims do not belong in the U.S. After the 9/11 attack, the U.S. legal system would inspire the public rage against Muslims to enter an era of Islamophobia,

which were seeded by the Orientalism of the past and the World Trade Center terror attack. Hence, the violent reaction against American Muslims carried out by private hatemongers and by the state was intense in the months and years after 9/11 (Beydoun, 2018). When Trump called for a “total and complete shutdown” of Muslims entering into the U.S. (Pilkington, 2015) his proposal came to have a historical input with the (first) Muslim ban. This even mobilized his detractors and roused his supporters. His speeches to ban Muslims from immigrating into the U.S. have rocked and surprised many, even the party’s conservative elite. This demonstrates truly revolutionary populism now emanated from the far right, which is not directly a pretty sight (Eiermann, 2016). With his proposal, he marked a new era of American Islamophobia (Beydoun, 2018). In line with this I argue that populist solutions often tend to be simplistic, problematic and in most instances rather than leading to better forms of democracy, their outcomes tend to be authoritarian. Trump’s Muslim ban proposal is a clear example of this. Instead of seeking solutions to the issue, he finds it more suitable to just simply propose for a shutdown for Muslims to enter the U.S.

This is also related to the matter of security in an increasingly globalized world, and in relation to the conflict in the Middle East. Catarina Kinnvall (2018), argues that when aiming to understand the search for security, it includes both challenging the faces of postcolonial legacies in the past and occidental racism. The migration and economic crisis in Europe are examples of visible sociocultural tensions. This has been further enhanced by the globality of the internet and the mass media, which has opened up doors and created opportunities for populist and authoritarian leaders to spread their messages. In contexts like this, targeting of the *other* is particularly easy since it is vague and broad (e.g., refugees, migrants, Muslims), which Kinnvall argues is a key element in the far-right populist rhetoric (Kinnvall, 2018). Drawing upon this, I argue that this also applies to the U.S. context. Populist movements in the U.S. (and in Europe) often tend to use ethnicity to exclude minority populations. Populist leader Donald Trump constantly blames migrants for crises in the U.S.

which we can see in his political statements and policy suggestions, such as “Build the wall” and the “Muslim ban”.

## **2.8 Populism, political rhetoric and the importance of media**

There are several different takes regarding populism. At its core, populism should be described and understood as the main unite which the people and the political communication is fundamental (Mudde, 2004). The main pillars within the political communication is the convincing process, which consist of manipulation of language based on the politician’s own beliefs and agendas, which takes place every time during a convincing process (Heradstveit & Bjørgo, 1996). Political rhetoric aims to package one’s ideology and political intentions in well-formulated messages in order to convince that the delivered message is the actual truth. Furthermore, Heradstveit and Bjørgo argues, political rhetoric’s is a bridge between the actor’s political intensions and the people. Thoughtful rhetoric’s may appeal easier to people; thus, it generates a larger achievement of legitimacy rather than political messages with unclear and impressionistic rhetoric’s (Ibid, 1996).

Stephen Coleman, political communication professor argues that populism should be seen as an ‘ideological perversion of democracy’ which is “[...]based upon a myth of the common-sense public taking on the corrupt elite.” (Coleman, p. 84, 2017). Furthermore, Coleman argues that their rhetorical strategies are to convince people, that everyone making decisions are working against society and the people for their own winning. A populist skips well-formulated rhetoric’s and arguments in political debates and exchange these with ‘chantable slogans’, simple rhetoric’s with rather clear and loud messages in order to appeal to the common people. Moreover, the rhetoric’s can consist of hidden messages which bend the truth in favour for the populist (ibid, 2017).

Today, we are witnessing the development of a ‘media-democracy’, where the individual, media-savvy performance of politics appears to become more important

than the political process (Grande 2000; Wodak 2010; Stögner and Wodak 2014). There is a strong connection between media and populism. The aim of commercial news channels and newspapers is to sell numbers and be attractive to the people, with populist leaders and parties, where compared to the mainstream actors more scandal tend to happen around these. Commercial news organs see the chance to capitalize on headlines caused by populist actors, and consequently it generates more publicity to the populist (Aalberg, de Vreese, 2017). Successful right-wing populist leaders have accomplished to achieve a delicate balance between the appearing unusual and populist or anti-establishment and the authoritative and legitimate (Wodak, 2015).

Extra publicity in the commercial news forums, in combination with a globalized world where twitter and such are excellent communication platforms, causes populism to grow. The mainstream media still plays an important role for headline-settings and news reporting; however, the internet media is the strongest boosting tool for spreading of populism (Mazzoleni, 2014). Globalization interlinked with the developed technology has caused to what political communication scholars calls the mediatization of politics. With the arrival of the radio and further on to the television, politics have moved closer to our homes and become more mediated (Strömbäck & Esser, 2014). This limited political arena came to grow with the development of technology and has reached the largest boom with the internet. The internet's functions as a political arena, made politics more mediated today than ever (Mazzoleni, 2014).

Some of the main criticism of populist theories is that they are too widely described. With several takes and definitions, defining the phenomena of populism can be difficult. Furthermore, the theories on populism tend to generalize populist actors as a homogenous group, which also been criticized, this can be problematic as there are differences between different actors. Globally, different populist actors have different ideologies, which can be a crucial dividing line in the effect of populist

act (Moffitt, 2017). Although different populist actors have different opinions and ideologies, research mainly present populist as a similar group. Additionally, academic studies also tend to generalize 'the people' regarding 'populist actor versus the people'. Similarly, the same way populist actors tend to be generalized into homogenous groups, the same way 'the people' also tend to be exposed to the risk of generalization.

According to Moffitt, the way to understand populism remains an open question (Moffitt, 2017). Scholars express different takes on the phenomena, therefore making it unclear. Argued by some scholars, populism is absolutely an ideology, while other scholars firmly argue that it should be interpreted as a political strategy. Henceforth, scholars that agree with each other, have issues conceptualizing the phenomena which consequently can produce blurry definitions of populism (Ibid, 2017). Criticism of populism is of importance to be aware of. The way to eliminate the phenomena's weaknesses is to study the theories and contribute to a larger understanding of populism.

When it comes to media it "plays an important role in our community with the ability to influence people" (Akbarzadeh and Smith, p. 1, 2005). Furthermore, the emphasis will be on newspaper articles for this research. However, a note need to be made regarding newspapers only being a fraction of today's media landscape, and other sources are moving much faster, such as the Internet for example. Nonetheless, the assumption is that the reporting of newspapers is high standing.

When reporting, many factors decide on the content, for example the journalist are "shaped by various social forces which contribute to their understanding of Muslims and Islam" (Akbarzadeh and Smith, p. 6, 2005). Commonly, assumed differences between non-Muslims and Muslims, between the West and Islam are presented (Richardson, 2004). Often these reports are marked by negativity, threat and their inferiority (ibid, p.75), which is highly related to the previous sections of



this research. Topics are often reduced to terrorism, subjugation of women, and fundamentalism (ibid, p.130).

Worth mentioning is that the “the media is fluid and changing” (Akbarzadeh and Smith, p. 6, 2005), which results in a continuous conversation regarding the way in which Islam and Muslims are portrayed and described (ibid.). Factors that are contributing are factors of developments of both social and political circumstances; such factors can for example be interstate relations, which consequently leads to more movements across national borders. Moreover, the way particular events occur can influence the way Muslims and Islam is portrayed but also how the media itself develops. This may affect the analysis of this research at hand. For instance, possible threats are that the theory of Orientalism can fit well with one case example, better than the other. Also concepts of Islamophobia and Orientalism do not only serve to reveal particular power structures, as they also are utilized deliberately. The author of this thesis bears these aspects in mind whenever the own findings are presented. Furthermore, an analysis of newspapers coverage is necessary. But first, a short conclusion is needed to summarise key theoretical insights.

In summary, the theoretical framework stated off by offering a section regarding the conceptualization of Islamophobia. Then it presented the forerunners of Islamophobia, consisting of several concepts that was considered to be useful for the discussing. The discussion of islamophobia as a form of racism was then presented. Then it moved on to the theoretical discussion of the critique of the colonial mentality, a presentation of Edward Said’s, *Orientalism*, was introduced, arguing that international relations are based on unequal terms of a relegation of the Orient and Occident, where the Occident colonizing the Orient. This perspective was carried on to Islamophobia, where insights into hostility towards Islam and Muslims where provided. It then moved on to discuss the international system, with a presentation of Samuel Huntington’s ‘clash of civilization’ and its relation to

Islamophobia. The theoretical part, lastly, consists of the phenomenon of populism. The presented theoretical framework is a unique combination of concepts and theories, that will be used in the analytical part of the thesis for answering the main research question. Moreover, I argue that this combination of both conceptual and theoretical framework is the most relevant framework to be used when aiming to answer the main research question of the thesis: *How do political leaders use Islamophobia to justify their policies and political decisions in the West?* However, it will also be of use when answering the sub-question to my research question, related to Donald Trump, following: *What strategies do Donald Trump use to otherize Muslims and Islam in Media?* In order to answer this question, the theoretical discussion regarding populism was particularly of importance. In the next section I will present the methodological framework to the thesis, consisting of critical discourse analysis.

### **3 Methodological Framework**

In this section, I will present the methodological framework for this thesis. In order, to study the discourse of Islamophobia, the theoretical framework laid out previously, needs to be combined with a methodological framework. To answer the propositioned research question, the methodological framework for the research will be using critical discourse analysis. This claims reality and meaning is created through the use of language and it is through language we should study society (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). There are different types of discourse analysis, this study adopts Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Norman Fairclough argues CDA acknowledges that factors of non-discursive can establish the discourse, and therefore the importance of context is recognized (Bergström & Boréus, 2012). Using the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis, this thesis will critically analyse Trump's Speeches and a collection of news articles. As this research will look into Trump's use of language in the context of Islamophobia, it is appropriate to analyse it with CDA.

#### **3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis**

In this section I will only explore the grounds of CDA which are of relevance for my research and not provide Fairclough's full work. I will also mention other important scholars within the CDA field. The main purpose of CDA is to "reveal the role of discursive practice in the maintenance of the social world, including those social relations that involve unequal relations of power" (Jørgensen & Phillips, p.63, 2002).

There is a difference between discourse analysis and CDA. Fairclough stresses the dialectical relationship between discourse and social structure, which means that discourse is both constituted and constitutive by the social world. Furthermore, he argues the way one speaks about an issue is part of the creation of the issue, but the nature of the issue, also affects how we talk about the issue (Fairclough, 1992),

(Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). The method stresses the importance of understanding the surrounding context the discourse operates and therefore discourse cannot be understood in isolation. This is mainly because CDA recognizes the importance of discursive and non-discursive practices, so when using discourse analyses a phenomenon cannot be studied alone. Theories connected to a specific phenomenon should be included to understand the social practice which can affect the discourse (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).

For this research the use of language is important, and if “there is nothing outside of language” than language become the basis for thoughts, values, norms, and beliefs that eventually culminate into ideologies (Berdayes and Murphy, 2016). To make sense of any ideology, it requires making sense of how the language is used to articulate that ideology. Therefore, critical discourse analysis is the most suitable methodological approach for this paper. In this research discourse is referring to “an institutionalized way of talking that regulates and reinforces action and thereby exerts power” (Wodak & Meyer, p. 35, 2009). Additionally, critical discourse analysis is not concerned with the scope of their quantity since “large samples can create an unmanageable amount of data without adding to the analytical outcome” to the research (McCloskey, p. 30, 2008). Therefore, when conducting analytically useful analyses, it can be made with a small sample size (Ruiz, 2009).

The adoption of CDA covers almost every feature of language use in either political or social matters. Moreover, this method is specifically of interest when it considers political, institutional, gender and discourse (Wodak & Meyer, 2001), in this research the first mentioned will be examined, as it is a multidisciplinary approach that emphasizes on language as a mean of social practices (Fairclough, 1995, 2010). Arguably, CDA is an increasingly important tool for critical-qualitative-communication research (Reynolds, 2018). Furthermore, CDA aims to critically describe, explain and interpret discourses that legitimize social inequalities within

a broader context (Mullet, 2018). When the interest in the relationship between language and power is occurring, then CDA is a suitable method.

Van Dijk (1998) states; “CDA is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context”. CDA main focus is to highlight how applied power in discourse is to counter and control the actions, minds of dominant groups and to safeguard their interests. Consequently, this method puts emphasis on the ways in which certain persons or events are legitimized within certain ideological beliefs. Henceforth, CDA is often being used in certain domains in order to analyse their sub-themes and contents. The domain of politics is of importance since CDA is specifically employed to analyse parliamentary proceedings, demonstrations, election campaigns but also political speeches and statements as ideological battles among politicians (Dijk, 1998). In other words:

Critical discourse analysis is a contemporary approach to the study of language and discourses in social institutions. Drawing on poststructuralist discourse theory and critical linguistics, it focuses on how social relations, identity, knowledge and power are constructed through written and spoken texts in communities, schools and classrooms (Luke A., 2000, introduction).

This is a unique way to study Trump’s speeches in relation to Islamophobia. This does not mean that the analysis is free from biases and unconscious preconceptions from the researcher. There are association patterns that represent quantitative relations and hence can be measured, while in qualitative enterprise interpretation is fundamentally important as they are involving interpretation, expert knowledge of the specific text material in question and adjustment of tool to produce interpretable and coherent topics. Furthermore, data often needs to be “subtly massaged” to be able to produce desired results (Baker, p.179, 2006).

The core of CDA concerns a research paradigm, which is the “de-mystifying of Ideologies and power through the systematic and retroductable investigation of semiotic data (written, spoken or visual)” (Wodak & Meyer, p.3, 2009). Fairclough (1985) claims “ideological discursive formations” (IDF) can be likened to speech communities, which are informed by ideological and discursive norms that construct institutional subjects. CDA predicts it must have three different dimensions of social discourses and their interrelations; the texts itself, the productive, receptive practices regarding the text and the sociocultural environment that surrounds all of them. In Fairclough’s book devoted exclusively to media discourse analysis, makes the following statement regarding the scope of critical discourse analysis:

Critical discourse analysis of a communicative event is the analysis of relationships between three dimensions or facets of that event, which I call text, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice. [...] By “discourse practice” I mean the processes of text production and text consumption. (Fairclough, p.57, 1995)

Furthermore, he claims that discourse practices are crucial for understanding the media text/society nexus, since they facilitate between the other two levels of analysis:

I see discourse practice as mediating between [...] text and sociocultural practice, in the sense that the link between the sociocultural and the textual is an indirect one, made by way of discourse practice: properties of sociocultural practice shape texts, but by way of shaping the nature of the discourse practice, i.e. the ways in which texts are produced and consumed, which is realized in the features of texts. (Fairclough 1995, 59–60)

In Critical Discourse Analysis, language is used by society’s power elites such as mass media, politicians, mass media, and entertainments and is given special attention. Main reason for this is due to its power to influence the actions and

thoughts of the masses. In this thesis, I examined the news articles and interviews through the lens of CDA, to help understand the ways in which language is used within provides information about the context of Trump's language is supported and situated. Since the context in which language is situated is very complex, it is therefore important to stress that elements which were mentioned in this thesis represents correlations and therefore not essentially causation. While some of the elements discussed may have been contribution factors, it was no my assertion that these elements are the main reason Trump was not more heavily penalized for his language use against Muslims.

Therefore, CDA is useful for the discussion related to Islamophobia and Donald Trump. My empirical part was organised through different themes, where I choose certain words to be representative, in order to say something about the larger context of the problem. The chosen themes are important once for the Islamophobic discussion. According to Halliday (2004), themes are that which the clause is concerned (ibid, p. 37). How one themes is of the overall importance which is being attached to the subject of the text. Furthermore, it also points directions in the construction and the sequencing of the discourse. As the researcher, I looked into the empirical part of the thesis and asked whether a number of recurring themes could be abstracted about what is being said. After finding some familiarisation, I divided the empirical data in 4 sections: 'Terrorism', 'Radical Islamic Terrorism', 'The Trojan Horse' and lastly 'Making America "Safe Again" and the Islamophobia Policy Prescriptions'. Within each theme I looked for certain key words such as: terrorism, radical Islamic terrorism, safe again, Muslims, us/them etc., these key words would be representative of the themes. Finding these themes is unique way of using CDA. Additionally, in line with CDA, I have structured the themes that were based on the theoretical part of the thesis and they were also of use when I structured the themes. The reason for why I themed the empirical part this way is because it helped me structure the analysis and enabled me to say something about the larger context regarding discourse of Islamophobia.

### **3.2 Validity and Reliability**

Discourse analysis has been criticized for not being transparent, systematic, and for having strict guidelines or governing principles. As CDA problematizes language and concepts within languages, consequently it cannot rest on conventional research values of validity, reliability, replicability or generalizability. Hence, the discursive analysis is personal, however it is not necessarily subjective. The process of conducting analysis is a dialogue between the interpreter's undertaking is to study the function of the discourse and its relation to social practices (Bergström & Boréus, 2012). Another weakness regarding CDA is regarding the risk for "cherry picking" (i.e. when the author "picks a text to prove a point", this can be problematic when relating it to representativeness and generalizability (Baker et al, 2008; Stubbs 1997). Despite this CDA is uncovering throughout a critical linguistic scrutiny of syntactic constructions that create a social discourse. A proper domain for critical analysis of language use of journalism is CDA, which is stated by Richardson's (2007, p.14) in his five arguments "That language is social, that it enacts identity, that it is active, that it has power and language is political". In the next segment a closer look at the how CDA is used in this study.

Moreover, CDA offers a powerful and systematic lens where discursive strategies can be judiciously examined. Lederer (2013) argues, "the reinforcement of negative cultural and conceptual stereotypes is of primary concern in Critical Discourse Analysis" (p. 265), the framework is unquestionably essential that has generated important scholarship regarding power constructions and discursive practices. Nonetheless, it is of importance to not that it has limitations as well. Gabruelatos and Baker (2008) clarify that the selection and number of texts that have been used in CDA projects have been scrutinized and their value have been questioned. They further argue that "CDA studies have been criticized for arbitrary selection of texts, which is seen to cast doubts on their representativeness, and the analysis of a small number of texts or text fragments, which cannot be expected to reveal helpful



insights into their frequency” (Gabrielatos and Baker, p. 6, 2008). Although the selection of texts for this thesis was targeted and purposeful, additional research on this topic with a different set of texts, or wider texts, might challenge the findings of this study.

### **3.3 Material**

For this thesis I have used two primary sources of data: 1) speeches delivered by Donald Trump and 2) news articles and reports. CDA is a good choice of method when looking into fifteen speeches and five interviews delivered by Trump from 18 November 2015 to 24 February 2017. Transcripts of the text are available on C-SPAN, ABC News, CNN, Time, and White House Office of the Press Secretary. The aim is to select a text only if the themes discussed by Trump were underpinned or contain by Islamophobia. The aim is to go through them and find 20 relevant texts until it appears that no additional data can be gleaned from other text. The main reason for analysing and collecting these data sets is that they collectively represent powerful forms of discourse that are widely circulated among larger audiences. Furthermore, it gives them potential to have huge influence in shaping the public’s ideologies and perceptions (Lederer, 2013).

### **3.4 Reflexivity**

When conducting research, it is important to be reflective about your role as a researcher, and therefore I will now present a reflexive approach. When defining reflexivity, O’Reilly (2009) argues that a reflexive way to conduct research is through looking into the person behind the research. Reflexivity is about thinking critically about the context and accomplishment of the research (O’Reilly, p189, 2009). Jackson (2010) argues the core of reflexivity is generally placed on the capability of humans to reflect on their situation, also when conducting research on humans the humans are not interfered in their objective as when conducting research on non-human objects (Jackson, p.172, 2010). Now that we have a

comprehensive understanding of what reflexivity refers to, it is important to explore and reflect upon my role as a researcher and the “backpack” that I am carrying, to see how this may have an effect on the research that I am conducting due to my “backpack”. I am very interested to in the topic of Islamophobia, as I myself am Muslim. This is important to mention since it shapes what I decide to include in the research. One example is regarding the “cherry picking” mentioned above, I may choose certain newspapers to prove a point, whilst someone of different background may do otherwise depending on their background, and therefore could get a different outcome of the research. In the next section I will provide with the empirical part of the thesis.

## **4 Empirical part - the case of President Donald Trump**

The discourse of Muslims and Islam in present day, is inseparably bound with the issue of terrorism. However, the present-day notion of terrorism has a moderately short history. The discourse of today's terrorism is located in the American foreign policy in 1980s during the presidency of Ronald Reagan. Without going into any historical details, the characterization of this era has been that of a ruthless foreign policy as a response to the apparent erosion of the American power and its standing in the international political area (Semati, 2010). When I started of the search for interviews that would be useful for the discussion regarding Islamophobia, it was not my intention to mainly look into the discussion related to terrorism nor was it my intention to focus on radical Islam. However, I soon came to find out that terrorism and the Islamic Stat of Syria and Iraq (ISIS) was the main topic that Donald Trump talked about in relation to the Islamophobia. This was done during the chosen time frame mentioned in the methodological framework (from 18<sup>th</sup> of November 2015 to 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2017). Consequently, the main discussion of the empirical part will consist of the issues related to radical Islam and terrorism. I will in the next section start the empirical part of the thesis, presenting the case study of Donald Trump, with quotes and examples from his speeches and interviews. This is specifically important in order to answer my sub research question following: *What strategies does Donald Trump use to otherize Muslims and Islam in Media?* This sub research question will be answered and analysed throughout the section, drawing on the theoretical and methodological framework of this thesis, that has been presented in the previous sections.

### **4.1 Terrorism**

Donald Trump believes that the main cause of terrorism is radical Islam. To support his claim, he draws parallels between terrorism in the West and in the Middle East, where he uses the expression of “the Harvard of terrorism” when he describes Iraq, claiming “Now you want to be a terrorist? You go to Iraq. That's called the Harvard

of terrorism”. (Cooper, 2016). As the Islamic State of Syria and Iraq (ISIS) was establishing their manifestation there, consequently Iraq has become the place to go for those who “want to be ... terrorist(s)” (ibid.). In this context Trump is using the term “Harvard” mixed with the combination of terms such as “terrorism,” “terrorists,” and “Iraq”. The main argumentation Trump aims to make here is that that ISIS’ terroristic cruelty in the Middle East region and Iraq is unparalleled. He further goes on and gives examples of these brutal events carried out in the region ISIS controls, where he claims that “ISIS drowns people in steel cages and pulls up the cage an hour later. Everyone is gone, 40, 50, 60 people at a time” (ibid). Additionally, Trump claims that such actions carried out by ISIS ignores the “onerous” laws. Example of such laws that was exemplified for being ignored was “the Geneva Convention”, which in times of war, command the rules of war (ibid).

Donald Trump then moves on to argue and characterizes the terrorist attacks in the West, arguing that they are being inspired by the ones happening in the Middle East. The interviewer asks Donald Trump: “I guess the question is, is there a war between the west and radical Islam or between the west and Islam itself?”. Upon where Donald Trump answers: “Well, it's radical but it's very hard to define... It's very hard to separate because you don't know who is who. Look, these two young people that got married, she supposedly radicalized him. Who knows what happened?” (ibid). To support his argument, he states that these “radicalized” attackers in San Bernardino “killed 14 people” and claims they were “friends of theirs” and that they earlier even given “(the attackers) baby showers” (ibid). The rhetoric Trump uses aims to describe that the relationship between the attackers and their victims where neither simple associates nor were they strangers. Instead Trump use the rhetorical strategy to underline the idea that the attackers *knew* the people that they killed. The assumption that they were willing to kill their *friends*, Trump’s argues that the single rational clarification for the attack was that they were encouraged by an “unbelievable hatred” which can be comparable to that hatred which are held by ISIS members, more specifically he claims “I think Islam hates

us. There is something -- there is something there that is a tremendous hatred there. There's a tremendous hatred. We have to get to the bottom of it. There's an unbelievable hatred of us". He further refers to this as a "sickness" stating that "There's a sickness going on that's unbelievable. And honestly, you have to get to the bottom of it." (ibid). This statement indicates that nobody has truly understood the reasons behind terrorism. In a speech condemning the Orlando attack in 2016, Trump indeed develops this claim by beginning the speech with "we must find out what is going on" (Time, 2016).

Additionally, Trump proposes he truly understands the causes of terrorism. He further makes the point that his entrepreneurial success linked with his capacity to make sound decisions on the other avenues of his life. For example, he says due to his "great judgement" he has become "a world-class businessman" claiming "I built a multi-multi-multi-billion dollar company, some of the greatest assets in the world, tremendously big, number one bestsellers" (CNN, 2015). In this example, he brings forth the nonessential exaggeration with the aim to brighten his brighten wisdom. His apparently outstanding judgement has also enabled him to establish "unbelievable relationships claiming "I have many friends, and at the highest level. And they -- I have partners that are Muslim. I have unbelievable relationships." (ibid). His socially elite Muslim friends are familiarised of the notion that "they have a problem" which is fuelling terrorism (ibid).

Trump's use of the term "*they have*" consequently affects the "problem" comes from within Muslims, and hence also within Islam. When he takes use of his "great judgement" to label the issues as "radical Islamic terrorism," his "many (Muslim) friends ... are so happy" about finally "somebody (has) spoke(n) up to radicalism" (ibid). Regarding his decision to extended terrorism to radical Islamic terrorism, given that it has been authorised by his Muslim friends- friendships he has established with his "great judgement"- gives Trump no reason to believe radical Islam is the main factor that drives terrorism. Trump holds the belief that "the real

nature of the problem”, of terrorism can be named “radical Islamic terrorism” (Right Side Broadcasting, 2016). Meanwhile, he also condemns any denial to “use the term radical Islamic terrorism” as a big problem with the desire to be “political(ly) correct” as he states “We’re fighting a political correct war. It’s a political correct war. I mean, you know what’s going on. You know what’s going on. These are people that chop off heads. These are people that, in steel cages, drop steel cages into the waters and drowned large numbers of people.” (Time, 2016).

To discursively make the decision to couple “radical” with “Islamic” gives the effect of suggesting, there is something Islamic about radical behaviour. Discursive combining like this example tends to overlook the complex historical and contemporary structures of power, which also give rise to terrorism and other problems to begin with. Overall, Donald Trump is here suggesting that the main source for motivation for violent action that is performed by Muslims, is to blame on his or her blind obedience to a radical variant form of Islam. Based on such grounds, Trump simplistically claims “Nor can we let the hateful ideology of Radical Islam – its oppression of women, gays, children, and nonbelievers – be allowed to reside or spread within our own countries”. When he states that “... we couldn’t defeat communism without acknowledging that communism exists- or explaining its evils- we can’t defeat Radical Islamic Terrorism unless we do the same” he is making the conclusion that “evil” is the main reason for terrorism (The Hill, 2016).

## **4.2 Radical Islamic Terrorism**

According to Donald Trump there is a new global existential threat, he claims that “a different threat challenges our world: Radical Islamic Terrorism” (The Hill, 2016). Furthermore, he claims his position being valid due to terrorist attacks being “launched outside the war zones of Middle East every 84 hours”. He then moves on and states:

Here, in America we have seen one brutal attack after another. 13 were murdered, and 38 wounded, in the assault on Ft. Hood. The Boston Marathon Bombing... in Chattanooga, Tennessee... In June, 49 Americans were executed at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, and another 53 were injured. It was the worst mass shooting in our history, and the worst attack on the LGTBQ community in our history... In Europe, we have seen the same carnage and bloodshed inflicted upon our closest allies. Christians driven from their homes and hunted for extermination. ISIS rounding-up what it calls the “nation of the cross” in a campaign of genocide. We cannot let this evil continue. (ibid)

Trump then moves on and claims “(but) we will not defeat it with closed eyes, or silenced voices. Anyone who cannot name our enemy, is not fit to lead this country. Anyone who cannot condemn the hatred, oppression and violence of Radical Islam lacks the moral clarity to serve as our President” (ibid).

Additionally, Trump considers this unequivocal indication that “ISIS is on a campaign of genocide, committing atrocities across the world. Radical Islamic terrorists are determined to strike our homeland as they did on 9/11; as they did from Boston to Orlando, to San Bernardino” (The White House, 2017). Meanwhile, Trump claims the threat postured by terrorism has been unpretentious and are occurring “all across Europe, you’ve seen what happened in Paris and Nice. All over Europe it’s happening. It’s gotten to a point where it’s not even being reported and, in many cases, the very, very dishonest press doesn’t want to report it” (ibid). The underreporting is rationalized by Trump as a consequence of “very, very dishonest press” that “doesn’t want to report” the attacks that are supposedly sweeping throughout Europe (ibid). In this example it is clear that Trump seeks to legitimize his claim by giving examples that highlight media’s supposed untruthfulness and by claiming that certain media is lacking integrity. One of his arguments for this accusation is that he managed to win the presidency although “the media didn’t think (I) could win” (The White House, 2017).

The media's failure to predict his victory, according to Trump, reflected two trends. Firstly, the media could not read the sentiment of American voters, and therefore the media "underestimated the power of the people" (ibid). As a consequence, it did "a tremendous disservice" to Americans by erroneously reporting the trajectory of the elections further claims that they "are very dishonest people, and they shouldn't use sources" (ibid). Secondly, Trump believes the media failed to correctly report the elections highlights and argues that "I ran for President to represent the citizens of our country. I am here to change the broken system, so it serves their families and their communities well", according to this statement the media did not want him to become the president, which he rationalizes by fixing the system that apparently is broken. Consequently, the media therefore fears him because it is of benefits from the "entrenched power structure" (The White House, 2017). Trump also claims, "the media is going through what they have to go through to oftentimes distort — not all the time — and some of the media is fantastic, I have to say; they're honest and fantastic. But much of it is not — the distortion". He further accuses media for "attack(ing) his administration" (ibid) and thus maintains its own interests. Trump concludes his argument by claiming that some media companies are "blood-suckers" (Right Side Broadcasting, 2015).

Consequently, the aim here is to rationalize the media's "dishonesty" by declaring that media is deliberately and regularly producing "fake news". He suggests that since the media could not predict his victory to the precedency- a contingency both the voters and he, where certain of- which leads to Trump arguing that the media either openly lies or is absolutely incompetent at reporting news. In both cases, the suggestion Trump is arguing for is that of which media is devoid of credibility and should not be trusted, therefore when he claims that media "doesn't want to report" the increase of terrorism "all across Europe," (The White house, 2017) indeed he does so in the backdrop of having criticised and dismissed the credibility of media.



Thus, if the untrusted media underreports terrorism and downplays it than the opposite, that of terrorism being a colossal problem- must be true. This is what Trump bases his argumentation of regarding the claim “It used to be a small group, and now it’s in large sections of the world. They’ve spread like cancer. ISIS has spread like cancer. Another mess I inherited”. Additionally, he claims that it has “determined to strike our homeland” (The White house, 2017). He further argues “Radical Islamic Terrorism” has the congenital of the “threat (that) challenged our world” all form “Fascism, Nazism, and Communism” (The Hill, 2016). This gives room for Trump to argue the U.S. now is at war with radical Islam, as he states “We have done nothing to help the Christians, nothing, and we should always be ashamed for that, for that lack of action. Our actions in Iraq, Libya and Syria have helped unleash ISIS, and we’re in a war against radical Islam, but President Obama won’t even name the enemy, and unless you name the enemy, you will never ever solve the problem” (Time, 2016).

The solitary way the U.S. can conquest this enemy is by implementing a foreign policy which can indicatively be in line with America’s “proud” history, the same one of which the U.S. “saved the world” form the Nazis and Japanese imperialists” and also “form totalitarianism and communism” (ibid). Here he is likening radical Islamic terrorism to the ideologies which he argues precipitated the World War II and the Cold War, which he sees as a threat to “humanity itself” which the U.S. must “(save) the world” from (ibid). In conclusion, radical Islamic terrorism is an existential threat to the global world, according to Trump.

### **4.3 The Trojan Horse**

Regarding the movement of refugees from the Muslim world into the U.S. is a matter that Trump sees as a threat to American national security. Moreover, he problematizes refugees’ countries of origin by characterizing the Muslim world as overrun by radical Islam. Trump further claims that “ISIS has gained a new base of operations” in “Libya”. He further states that “Libya is in ruins, our ambassador

and three other brave Americans are dead, and ISIS has gained a new base of operations. Syria is in the midst of a disastrous civil war. ISIS controls large portions of territory. A refugee crisis now threatens Europe and the United States” (The Hill, 2016). Trump further argues that “ISIS... spread across the Middle East,” and are deemed to be venturing “into the West” (Ibid). He catalyses the latter by their attempts “to infiltrate refugee flows into Europe and the United States” (ibid).

Moreover, Trump seeks to lend credence regarding the belief that ISIS is infiltrating refugee nets by labelling the demographic composition of the migration networks. By doing so he gives the example that “very few women... (and) very few children” are traveling to the West from those regions (This Week, 2015). Rather, “the migration” nets are predominantly dominated by “young men and strong looking guys” who all “look like “young soldiers” (The Kuhner Report, 2015). Additionally, Trump argues that radical Islam no longer is simply the ideological backbone of terrorist groups such as ISIS. Instead, he argues that ISIS has successfully exploited refugee networks which has the effect of characterizing all Muslim refugees, particularly men for being potential supporters of radical Islam.

To extend this problematization, Trump is pointing to legitimize the radical Muslim refugees by appealing an element of Islamic language in his description of them. Here, the discursive weapon of choice used by Trump, is that of the *sharia*. For Trump, the main characteristic of the “sharia law” (Islamic Law) is that it is incontrovertibly “oppressive” as he states “I’ll tell you what: They share these oppressive views and values. We want to remain a free and open society. Then, and if we do, then we have to control our borders. We have to control, and we have to control them now, not later. Right now” (Time, 2016). He further argues that the beliefs of sharia are to command that people should be “execute(ed) for things that ... are standard part of life” (Right Side Broadcasting, 2015). Moreover, he explains that sharia is strictly against homosexual’s, arguing that they call for Muslims to execute gay people (Ibid). He extends this argument by claiming that sharia is the

vehicle which pushes Muslims “to enslave women” (Ibid). He goes on and seeks to intensify the extent to which it is problematic, which he does by measuring the number of Muslim refugees that are likely standing by the sharia laws. In his speech he further argues that “99% of” Afghan Muslims are actually supporting the oppressive laws of sharia, as he states:

Immigration from Afghanistan into the United States has increased nearly five fold — five fold in just one year. According to Pew Research, 99 percent of the people in Afghanistan support oppressive sharia law. We admit many more, and that’s just the way it is. We admit many more from other countries in the region. And I’ll tell you what: They share these oppressive views and values. We want to remain a free and open society. Then, and if we do, then we have to control our borders. We have to control, and we have to control them now, not later. Right now (Time, 2016).

In this quote, he argues that the immigration from Afghanistan into the United States has resulted the movement of “oppressive” Afghan Muslims to the US (ibid). He then goes on and dramatizes the extent to which apparently oppressive followers of sharia are entering the U.S. by arguing that the U.S. admits many more than other countries in the region. When he says region in this context he references to Muslim- majority countries neighbouring Afghanistan, who also according to him share the same oppressive views and values (ibid). Since it is most unlikely that most of the non-Muslim population that are living in the West holds a sophisticated knowledge about Islam, one could therefor argue that many of them are vaguely familiar with sharia due to media reporting on the subject. The notion of sharia is widely misapprehended across the West as a body of the oppressive Islamic laws. Therefore, to reference to sharia is a discursively strategy used by Trump, as it allows him to perpetuate and imbed the demonization of sharia to an audience that already believes its demonic. Moreover, Trump puts further emphasises on the proportion of people whom he claims stands by sharia and seeks to suggests that most of the refugees are normative adherents and practitioners of sharia-based oppression. Trump rhetorically underscored this when stating “what they believe

that's what they want, that's what they practice", referring back to the sharia-based oppression (Right Side Broadcasting, 2015).

By making such statement, Trump decreases Muslim refugees to one of three identities. Firstly, they are seen as a potential supporter of radical Islam, secondly, they are seen as strong looking soldiers that are members of ISIS, or and thirdly they are seen as humans who are normatively oppressive. Muslim refugees could only contain pockets through the network of terrorists and radicals, since Trump does not specify any numbers. His assumptions that the overwhelming majority of Muslim refugees are normatively hold by his notion of sharia which leads him to condemn them as oppressive. Therefore, although they are not supporters or advocates of terrorism, Muslim refugees are seen as unsuited with the Western values. To give an example, Trump states that "(we) cannot continue to allow thousands upon thousands of people to pour into our country many of whom have the same thought process as this savage killer. Many of the principles of radical Islam are incompatible with Western values and institutions" (Time, 2016).

Furthermore, when Trump states "beyond terrorism, as we have seen in France, foreign populations have brought their anti-Semitic attitudes with them" he is referring to Muslim refugees. Furthermore, he argues "I refuse to allow America to become a place where gay people, Christian people, Jewish people are targets of persecution and intimation by radical Islamic preachers of hate and violence" (The Hill, 2016). In this context, the approaching influx of "620,000 new refugees" from the Middle east, is considered as potentially catastrophic to the United States. By using the expression "*Trojan Horse*" (Time, 2016), Trump rhetorically aims to build an impression that Muslim refugees will unavoidably bring their terroristic, radical, or oppressive tendencies with them when they come to the United States. Consequently, according to his beliefs this will make America of guard and will lead to a compromise of the American security from within. With these arguments Trump considers the movement of Muslim refugees into the U.S. as a main threat

towards the American National Security. In the next section I will present Trump's suggestions and what he considers needs to be done in order to avoid this threat, by presenting the two policies he proposed to "*Make America Safe Again*".

#### **4.4 Islamophobically making America "Safe Again"**

As outlined and presented above, Trump has characterized three points regarding Muslims. Firstly, he claims that the main cause of terrorism is radical Islam, secondly, he characterizes Muslim refugees as a threat to the national security of the U.S. and thirdly, he considers radical Islam to be an existential threat to the global system. Drawing on this, Trump have proposed two policies with the motivation that it will "Make America Safe Again" (The Hill, 2016). Both of these policies are the reformation of American immigration policy, and its' formation of safe zones for the immigrants in Syria. In this part of the thesis I will look into how these two proposed policies can be considered Islamophobic, proposed by President Donald Trump. This is particularly of importance, since it aims to re-establish the national security of the U.S.

##### **4.4.1 Reforming American Immigration Policy**

The Muslim immigrants and refugees are considered as a Trojan Horse which has the potential to undermine American National Security, and therefore the American immigration policy requests to be reformed according to Trump. More precisely, he suggests two policy changes. The aim of the first proposal is to ensure that America is not ignorantly welcoming terrorists into the U.S. Trump further believes that the government of the U.S. should "suspend immigration from some of the most dangerous and volatile regions of the world that have a history of exporting terrorism" (Ibid). According to Trump, radical Islam have taken over the Muslim world and therefore he claims that radical Islamic terrorism is an existential threat to the U.S. today. Consequently, he is proposing a suspend approval of Muslim countries mainly because every immigrant or refugee that may be an extremist. Trump motivates this by claiming "We admit about 100,000 permanent immigrants

from the Middle East every year. Beyond that, we admit hundreds of thousands of temporary workers and visitors from the same regions. If we don't control the numbers, we can't perform adequate screening" (ibid). Suggesting that the U.S. immigration department therefore must stop processing visas from those areas in order to control the numbers of incoming immigrants from the Middle East (ibid). At this point, Trump should be aware of the fact that his proposed policy can be considered as discriminatory. He motivates his proposed policy by stating:

(we) have to address these issues head-on. I called for a ban after San Bernardino and was met with great scorn and anger but now many years and I have to say many years but many are saying that I was right to do so. And although the pause is temporary we must find out what is going on. We have to do it. (ibid).

With this policy he proposed the first "Muslim ban" prohibiting Muslim immigration into the U.S. (Time, 2016). As he received many criticism, he then aimed to justify his policy proposal by intensifying the existentiality of the threat posed by radical Islamic terrorism. This can be seen when he states "(so), look, I'm a big believer in the Constitution, OK? But, I'm a big believer in safety. We have to have the right people coming into our country. We can't have people coming in. When I hear that ISIS has now a passport machine to make false passports, counterfeit passports..." (CNN, 2015). In another example, he further argued that "(we) have people coming into the country, getting into airplanes and flying them into the World Trade Center" (ibid).

By making statements like these, Trump rhetorically refers back to the September 11 tragedy in conjunction, arguing that ISIS is in the business of reproduction passport production. By making such claims, he propose that due to terrorist using innovative methods to enter into the county, the U.S. will as a consequence suffer several terror attacks, mirroring the 9/11 attack if no actions would be taken. In this example, the terms "passport machine" are being used by Trump to tacitly suggest ISIS is making passports which strengthens the number of terrorists that may attack

the U.S., if they enter into the United States. Built on this Donald Trump is arguing that America has a problem by claiming “(our) country has a problem. People are in fear. They're waiting for the next attack. We have a president that won't even mention the name of the problem. He will not utter the words. It's ridiculous” (ibid). In this example he is suggesting that Americans are fearing the destruction of the U.S. which unavoidably will be happening with the arrival of Muslim refugees. Therefore, suspending the entrance of Muslim refugees is “smart” policy-making according to Trump (Time, 2016). To critics of the proposal, Trump defends his proposal by claiming that it is a fundamental strategy and therefore non-discriminatory, a sentiment which is best characterised by his claim that he is “the least racist person” (Time, 2016). However, in the second immigration policy that he proposed, he goes against this proposition.

After the undetermined suspension of Muslim refugees and immigrants has been brought up, Trump continues to suggest implementing an “ideological screening test” stating that “(in) the Cold War, we had an ideological screening test. The time is overdue to develop a new screening test for the threats we face today. In addition to screening out all members or sympathizers of terrorist groups, we must also screen out any who have hostile attitudes towards our country or its principles – or who believe that Sharia law should supplant American law” (The Hill, 2016). Moreover, he claims the U.S. must enact a demanding system which interrogates the beliefs of Muslims applicants to in order to be able to ensure safety as he states “(only) those who we expect to flourish in our country – and to embrace a tolerant American society – should be issued immigrant visas” will be allowed an entry into the U.S. (ibid). In addition, Donald Trump believes that it is crucial to subject every Muslim immigrant to these ideological screening test, due to radical Islam being “very hard to define” (CNN, 2016). Regarding the differentiation between radical Islam and Islam as a whole, Trump argues that “it's radical but it's very hard to define. It's very hard to separate because you don't know who is who” (ibid).

Put differently, he claims the U.S. is “in a war against radical Islam” (Time, 2016). However, the implication of an ideological assessment test is Muslim immigrants and refugees will be labelled as radicals unless and until they can prove otherwise to an administration, which is led by a leader who firmly considers all foreign Muslims being predisposed to being radical to begin with. By already experienced marginalization through the immigration suspension, the ideological screening test is a supplementary mechanism which reifies the fusion of Muslim immigrants and refugees with terrorist. By taking this action, Donald Trump effectively interlinks terrorism with Islam, and that Islam is as whole considered to comprehend the potentiality for terrorism. Therefore, from this point of view one could argue that Trump’s proposal to make America great again is done with the ambition of excluding Muslim immigrants and refugees from the U.S. and therefor arguably holds Islamophobic values.

#### **4.4.2 Safe Zones**

Regarding the second policy proposal, Trump suggests facilitating establishment of safe zones for refugees in the Middle East and in Syria. Here, Trump mainly aims to avoid accusations of being called discriminatory when it comes to his immigration policy proposal. One way to do such, according to his beliefs, is through the buildings of “safe zones”. This is an example of parcel, and a strategic part of his administration quest to preserve “humanity” in the Middle East (Right Side Broadcasting, 2016). He motivates the proposal by say that he have “a heart as big as anybody else” (ibid). Although his proposal and stance towards Muslim refugees appears to be softening, the “humanitarian” (The Kuhner Report, 2015) dimension of this policy is at best shallow, and at the worst case almost non-existing. To give an example, when Trump claims that “religious freedom” as a value is foundational to the society in Amerika, this is something he himself have gone against in his first proposal by banning Muslim immigrants. Trump further emphasises his argument by stating the right people of faith are freely to practice their faith, and that it is one of the “shared values” amongst Americans (ibid). He



then moves on to contrasts abounding religious freedom in the U.S. and compares it with the beliefs of Muslim immigrants. Moreover, Trump suggests that the “hundreds of thousands of refugees”, particularly Muslim refugees, that are leaving the Middle East includes many that “have possible beliefs about people of different faiths and that some which absolutely and openly support terrorism” (ibid). In this example the term *people with different faiths* have been expended in combination with *openly support terrorism* with the aim to construct an impression that although not all Muslim refugees support terrorism, there are still many that holds prejudiced views towards non-Muslims. Due to Trump claiming that the U.S. is grounded upon religious plurality, as a consequence he is implying that Muslim immigrants, due to their *possible beliefs* and *terrorist tendencies*, would weaken the foundation of the American society. Additionally, Trump argues “we don’t need that”, and consequently underlining his view of a better America would be without any Muslim immigrants (ibid). This is also shown when he sees Muslim immigrants as *possible* extremists, oppressors and terrorists. This leads to one wondering why he would be sympathetic enough to execute a policy founded upon humanitarianism for them. Here, the establishment of Trump’s safe zones in the conflicted regions is more of an effort to keep Muslim immigrants and refugees away from the U.S. instead of the aim to provide humanitarian assistance for the ones in need.

The characterization Trump makes of the Middle East as an entire region is “Iraq is in chaos, and ISIS is on the loose.” and that “(the) current strategy of nation-building and regime change is a proven failure. We have created the vacuums that allow terrorists to grow and thrive” (The Hill, 2016). Furthermore, he argues that “ISIS controls large portions of (Syrian) territory” as “Syria is in the midst of a disastrous civil war” (Right Side Broadcasting, 2016). The flag carriers the existential threat of radical Islamic terrorism and “ISIS” is considered to be “on the loose ... across the Middle East” (ibid). Trump here, is acknowledging that the conflict in the Middle East is rather instable and consequently there is no clear signs of an end to the war.

Although it can be assumed that the international law underpinned the norms regarding the establishment of the safe zones which will be respected by the array of the involved state actors involved in the conflict. It is important to remember Trump himself has pointed out that due to ISIS having *no rules*, and are more or less lawless, therefore they would completely disregard international laws (CNN, 2016).

Moreover, his *safe zones* proposal appears self-contradictory since Trump believes that ISIS, or radical Islamic terrorism, is the existential threat of the global. Here, Trump's proposal to establish safe zones is premised by an insensitive neglect concerning the safety for Muslim refugees. If ISIS is, as Trumps puts it, "on the loose ... across the Middle East", (Right Side Broadcasting, 2016), then these safe zones cannot be sincerely be recognised without coming under fire from ISIS. As such, the suggestion is that Trump seeks to in order to "Make America Safe Again", which is mainly done by forcing Muslim refugees into these safe zones, cannot guarantee any safety. This is yet another example of Trump aiming to establish the American security at the expense of the security mostly concerning Muslim refugees. Conclusively, his proposal to establish safe zones are therefore premised on faux humanitarianism.

## 5 Concluding remarks

In the previous section I have presented the empirical part, with Donald Trump as the case study of this research. I will now move on and provide an overall discussion of the thesis, highlighting some reflective thoughts that I consider important for the discussion regarding the topic of the thesis.

What can be taken from the theoretical framework of this thesis is that Islamophobia is a mix of several forerunners, concepts and theories, and therefore it does not only consist of one factor, but rather several factors. Throughout the theoretical part I have embedded the answers to the main research question of the thesis. I have presented a unique combination of a theoretical framework, which is also a contribution to the research. Furthermore, it offers theoretical explanations of how political leaders use Islamophobia to justify their policies and political decisions in the West. To avoid repetition, I will briefly mention some example that supports this claim. For instance, drawing back to the theoretical framework and to Esposito and Mogahed (2007) who define Islamophobia as ‘intolerance towards Muslims’ cultural and religious beliefs,’ one can clearly see that Trump has an Islamophobic approach. Another way to use Islamophobia in the political sphere is through cultural racism, which includes “hatred and hostility based on religious beliefs, cultural traditions, and ethnic backgrounds” (Green, p.27, 2015). Additionally, Edward Said’s *Orientalism* is another explanation of how political leaders use an Islamophobic approach. Said discusses the ideologies that provides moral justifications for, and the continuity of the construction of Muslims as the ‘*Other*’. Generally speaking, this is repeatedly done amongst populist leaders in the West, mainly using media as a platform to spread their messages. Orientalism helps us to understand *how* abundant the anti-Muslim and the anti-Islam sentiment has been shaped by the discourse, which are deeply rooted in the power relations between the West and the Muslim majority regions. Amongst the right-wing populist parties, a successful creation of *fear and danger* is being used to create a *us* and *them* creation to legitimize their policy proposals.

Moving on to the discussion regarding the empirical part of the thesis, the reason for analysing and collecting the specific empirical examples of the previous chapter (also mentioned in the methodological section) is because it collectively represents a powerful form of discourse that is circulated amongst the larger audience. This is of importance when discussing the discourse Trump creates with the use of language. When looking into the empirical part of the thesis, several examples are shown where he uses a positive representation of ‘Us’ while giving a negative representation of ‘Them’. As previously presented, this is also presented in Wodak’s book (2016), *Conceptualization of the Politics of Fear*. Here she argues that immigrants are targeted and scapegoated due to fear of being instrumentalized and constructed for the purpose of laying the underpinnings for politicians to create themselves as the *saviours*. When ‘they’ are demonized, it enables politicians to situate themselves as agents of change to save ‘us’. Drawing back to this and link it to the case of Trump, this idea was mainly promoted through his promise to “Make America Great Again”. With regular repetition of that particular phrase, it supports the idea that America once *was* great. However, due to administrations in the past failing to protect the borders- and consequently letting too many immigrants into the country who mainly brought lawlessness and drained resources. This supports the idea that the *saviour*, Donald Trump, now is here to bring change and restore America to its prior glory. Arguably this is a discursive strategy being used by Trump, since he aims to get his idea to the larger audience in America.

Additionally, one can clearly see that Trump discursively conflates terrorism with both Muslims and Islam. Trump frequently uses phrases like: “Islamic radicalism” and “radical Islam”, the use of such language not only condemning an extreme interpretation of Islam, but which also effectively aims to demonize Islam as a whole in containing the potentiality for radicalism. For instance, when Trump states “Islam hates us” (CNN, 2016) it is not a rhetorical representation of his opinion of Islam vis-à-vis terrorism. Rather he deems all Muslims and all of Islam to be an

existential threat to the world, and this can be traced back to the problematic concern that Halliday (1999) talked about concerning the simplifications of Muslims, which was presented in the theoretical part. Based on my research for this thesis, I argue that Trump makes these simplifications of Muslims and of Islam in a repeated manner. For instance, when he talks about terrorism in relation to Muslims, he makes the mistake of making it seem like most terrorists are Muslim or that most Muslims are terrorists, which leads to the affirmation of all Muslims as a unitary identity. When the term 'Islam' is being used, as stated by Halliday (1999), it leads to a way of summarizing a billion Muslims that are divided over fifty states. I argue that such summarizations lead to the misrepresentation of innocent Muslim people, foremost in America but also in Western countries, as it shapes the perceptions of Muslims. Henceforth, as considered by many, being the president of the United States, equals holding the title of 'the most powerful man', holding such power he can easily influence people, and therefore his use of language matters. When Trump repeatedly makes such simplifications, it affects many innocent Muslims. Moreover, when Trump claims that "American culture, is the best in the world" he is consequently ranking American culture above and against Islam and its culture (but also other cultures), therefore I conclude that he defends cultural racism. Furthermore, I argue that Trump discursively constructs Islam and Muslims as a threat to American- and as a consequence innocent Muslims automatically get included in that '*threat*'.

Integrating my empirical findings back to the theoretical section, the *Clash of Civilisation* thesis that was favourably influenced by Huntington has been criticised by many scholars, as previously mentioned. However, it is still being used by some politicians and policy makers since it is related to competition, hostility, and conflict between the West and Muslims (Haynes, 2019). Therefore I argue, in line with other scholars, based on the empirical findings of this thesis, that Trump also is favourably influenced by the Huntington's class of civilizations thesis, with a particular focus on the conflicts between Islam and the West. Trump holds the belief

that Muslims (particularly immigrants and refugees as I want to base this argument on my empirical findings) do not share the same values as non-Muslims Americans, mainly because they are supposedly spellbound the Islamic values, particularly the *sharia* (Islamic law). Moreover, Huntington's "clash of civilization" paradigm, highlights two linked but separate issues. Firstly, that Muslim and Islam are said to represent a serious security concern, and secondly, that Muslim and Islam are a threat to the survival of Western values and culture. Based on the empirical findings of the thesis, one can see that this is utilized by Trump as well.

In conclusion I have analysed the narratives of Islamophobia in 20 of Trump's speeches and interviews. What to conclude from his speeches and interviews, is that he reduces terrorism into an issue originating from a radical variant of Islam. Moreover, he keeps exaggerating the radical variant of Islam as a global existential threat to the world and he degrades Muslim refugees and immigrants by effectively making them examples of being an existential threat to the global. This makes him suggest an immigration policy which conflates all Muslim refugees with radical Islam on the grounds that radical Islam and Islam are imperceptible, and therefore effectively identical. Moreover, his intentions regarding the establishment of safe zones for Muslim refugees are established (whom are also defined as radicals by himself) because he is presumably humanitarian and wants to present himself as the *saviour from the threat*.

A proposal for future research related to the topic of this thesis, could be to look into how Donald Trump's anti-immigration campaign might have an impact on people's beliefs about immigrants, and how this affects foreign policy making in the future in the U.S. As I first started my work on the thesis my goal was also to look into what *impact* Trump's Islamophobic approach has within the United States. However, due to the limited time frame I did not manage to include the impact in this thesis, therefore it is recommended for future research.

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