Kill or Be Killed: Seeing the Middle East as a Threat to the Western World

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Abstract

In the context of Middle Eastern conflict, fear is a powerful tool that can sway Western opinion for or against certain causes, as seen through the use of framing. Even outside of fear's overt usage in the media, narratives tend to separate the West from the Middle East. The presence of these narratives, and the extent of this presence, is indicative of increasingly divisive relations between the West and the Middle East, driven by fear of alien peoples. This research identified, defined, and analyzed the frames used in American broadcast television coverage of the Arab–Israeli conflict and Islamic acts of terrorism. It established the textual makeup of independent narratives, which will allow for more involved macroanalysis of framing relationships.

Western civilization has long viewed the Middle East as an exotic land, "set[ting] up boundaries between their land and its immediate surroundings and the territories beyond, which they call 'the land of the barbarians'" (Said, 1979, p. 54). It is through this lens of the media that such views are exacerbated and perpetuated during times of crisis. Many of these divisions and their justifications are based on long-held fabrications of the Orient, especially the Middle East and the Islamic people who reside there (Said, 1979). Even the advent of modern mass media, with their ability to transmit information across geographical boundaries, has not succeeded in clarifying vague, inaccurate views of the Middle East and Islam (Said, 1997, p. 5). In fact, in light of contemporary events, Said (1997) states:

> Overtly Muslim countries like Iran threaten "us" [the West] and our way of life, and speculations about the latest conspiracy to blow up buildings, sabotage commercial airliners, and poison water supplies seem to play increasingly on the Western consciousness. (p. xi)

The urgency of such claims and their implications, such as the allocation of military resources in the Middle East and the breakdown of relations between countries in a global economy, deem it necessary to examine the verity of such claims and to present an accurate view of the Middle East and the people who live there. This collective growth of knowledge can invaluably foster stronger, safer relations between the West and the Middle East.

Literature Review

Media Framing

This study seeks to examine the framing, especially through language, used in American media coverage of violent events related to the Middle East—specifically, those occurring within the Arab–Israeli conflict and those that have been characterized as Islamic terrorist acts. Framing, as defined by Entman (2004), is the process of "selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution" (p. 5). Entman identifies the cascade activation model as the specific medium through which the official views of the government become the legitimized views of the hegemony. Because frames pervade government agencies by affecting policy and resource allocation as well as the public consciousness, their definitions are significant both symbolically and literally (Gitlin, 1980). Furthermore, frames are naturally reproduced throughout the media: "The more often journalists hear similar thoughts expressed by their sources and by other news outlets, the more likely their own thoughts will run along those lines" (Entman, 2004, p. 9). For this reason, it is necessary to define and assess significant frames and their interconnectivity as independent variables, as well as their relation to audiences who

Katherine Zaslavsky. Kill or Be Killed: Seeing the Middle East as a Threat to the Western World.
The Proceedings of GREAT Day (2015): 13-27.

are learning to understand unfamiliar geographic areas and events.

Using Media Frames to Characterize the Middle East

With regard to conflict in unfamiliar areas, such as Israel and the recently recognized state of Palestine, frames affect American audience's perceptions and their investment in the conflict (Sheafer & Dvir-Gvirsman, 2010). The ways by which Western media relate these issues to their audiences define the reactions of those audiences and their support of and investment in the future actions of Western governments, according to Entman's (2004) cascade activation model. Therefore, language alluding to conflict and the conditions thereof is especially important among media schema, as it determines the relation between the audience and foreign cultures.

The cultural divisions between West and non-West (in this case, the United States and the Middle East) are clear enough in their abstract presence, but their manifestations in sources of information such as media extend beyond the abstract to influence Western views on global policy and relations to Middle Eastern states (Chomsky, 2007). Public support for Western global policy, then, becomes a commodity that can be affected by and controlled through media frames; it attains a new level of significance in determining public support of and perceived worth of relevant governmental agencies (Nacos, 2002; Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, & Shapiro, 2011). Interactions between constituents and policy makers take place largely in the realm of media. These constituents observe and assess their representatives who then gauge their constituents' views in order to maintain their bases of support (Entman, 2004). Therefore, when the media portray a third group of people from an area outside the relevant political jurisdiction, this group is not directly involved in its own representation and interpretation, and both constituents and politicians form their views on the sole basis of the media coverage.

In such instances, frames transcend their symbolic roles as lenses through which to view a particular topic that one might encounter in some form of reality (Altheide, 1997). They become the reality for media audiences who do not look further into the events being portrayed, and they naturally use these views, the truth as they know it, to form opinions and to decide American global policy (e.g., Altheide, 1997; Entman, 2004). In the cases of the Arab–Israeli conflict and Islamic acts of terrorism, extreme violence and accounts of definite blame are the reality for Western audiences. Without truly exhaustive analytical reporting, the United States views "the Middle East as a spectacle about which one was supposed to be excited" (Said, 1992, p. 183), a separate and alien zone of violence. Therefore, acts of Islamic terrorism against the West are frightening not only in their form of brutality and violence, but also in their capacity to cause the spread of this violence to other areas and harm those who are alien to the original conflict (Nacos, 2002; Nacos, 2007). The juxtaposition of a safe Western world being exposed to the violence of the turbulent Middle East results in a specific, evocative state: fear.

Fear as a Political Weapon

The Western media have played a significant role in establishing the dichotomy of safety versus danger in terms of the threats that people fear (Glassner, 1999). The media are a primary avenue through which moral panics spread, allowing audiences to learn of the threats to their well-being and the ways by which they can protect themselves from these threats (Gerbner & Morgan, 2002; Hunt, 1997). In standard examples of moral panics, the threat typically originates from within some section of society as opposed to a section outside the bounds of the given society, and it is therefore presented as a domestic issue (Hunt, 1997).

However, in the cases considered in this study, the threat being constructed is an outside force on a massive scale, that of the entire Middle Eastern people (Nacos & Torres-Reyna, 2007; Said, 1997). For centuries, the overwhelming majority of Western impressions of the Middle East have reflected feelings of superiority, disdain, and even disgust; however, there has been a trend toward media coverage focusing on the inherently dangerous and barbaric nature of Middle Easterners as a people whose existence threatens the peace of the West (Said, 1979; Said, 1997). In addition, Altheide's (1997) identification of fear as a "*vocabulary of motive*—certain characteristics and identities are attributed to those persons we associate

with fearing acts" (p. 663)—designates the language of fear as the language of blame. Due to ambivalent characterization in the news, actors in these situations, specifically Middle Easterners, become associated with acts of violence that were committed by those of their ethnicity (Gerbner, Mowlana, & Schiller, 1996; Said, 1997).

Gerbner (1980) and Glassner (1999) assert that sensationalism is rewarded in media, motivating newsmakers to focus on stories of violence and horror. Therefore, it is not surprising that Western audiences are so overwhelmingly exposed to negative views of the Middle East (Said, 1997). Furthermore, agencies, politicians, and activists whose funding and support rely on public opinion are also able to appeal to audiences by drawing on reports that evoke fear in order to highlight the value of their causes (Gerbner, 1977; Glassner, 1999). In the case of terrorism, Malhotra and Popp (2012) found "reducing perceived threat substantially decreases support for policies intended to combat terrorism" (p. 34). This directly affects support for and funding of a counterterrorism agency, which makes the threat of attack an economic commodity that can result in increased support and funding for that agency (Chomsky, 2007; Eytan, 2002; Nacos et al., 2011; Savun & Philips, 2009).

Certain audiences are particularly susceptible to fear stimuli in the media. Hatemi, McDermott, Eaves, Kendler, and Neale (2013) found that genetically influenced personal traits, such as social phobia, are related to negative attitudes toward out-groups, such as people whose social conditions and attributes differ from those of the subjects. Fear of Middle Easterners as a cultural and geographical out-group can be targeted at certain audiences to elicit the most powerful and effective responses at both the individual and the societal levels (Gerbner, 1988; Glassner, 1999). Through the problem frame described by Altheide (1997), media purport to link a certain issue or problem to a certain solution, playing on "the audience's familiarity with narratives that spell out simple and clear truths" (p. 655), such as the dichotomy between evil and good. This is essentially an extension on moral panics, linking the moral issue to the interests of those who purportedly provide a solution (Altheide, 1997).

Media Coverage of Islamic Terrorism and the Arab–Israeli Conflict

This dichotomy, as well as its implications for American foreign policy, was never so relevant as it is in the current "crisis" of Islamic terrorism, in the wake of such widely publicized and far-reaching events as 9/11 and the increasingly tumultuous relationship between the United States and Iran (Nacos, 1994; Nacos et al., 2011; Said, 1997). Terrorism is a threat perceived throughout all major social institutions in the United States, pervading American culture and saturating it with images and phrases that characterize Middle Easterners as inherently violent beings, their views antithetical to those held by democratic powers (Nacos, 1994, 2002). Acts of Islamic terrorism are seen as unjustifiable, despite viewers' lack of knowledge of pertinent social conditions, especially when contrasted with the self-legitimized actions of Western counterterrorism operatives in the Middle East (Chomsky, 2007; Kruglanski & Fishman, 2006). It is essentially a moral panic, in which most Americans are unclear on the extent of their actual risk but are willing to support public policy that claims to protect them; they "buy" the fear that the media advertise to them, despite the reality of terrorist attacks (e.g., Chomsky, 2007; Enders & Sandler, 1999; Nacos et al., 2011; Norris, Kern, & Just, 2003). This directly affects policy changes and the population's investment in overseas military action, as well as the United States' relations with the Middle East, all while keeping public attention on horrendous acts of terrorism and the perpetrators of those acts (Gilboa, 2002; Wolfsfeld, 1997).

Even the Arab–Israeli conflict, which is distanced both politically and geographically from the United States, is susceptible to such perceptions by American viewers. American media identify with the Israeli cause and portray Palestinians as aggressors within the frame of the violent Middle East, adhering to their "inherently violent" nature (Chomsky, 2003; Chomsky, 2007; Suleiman, 1974). This viewpoint has long been the official stand of the American government and the hegemonic frame in American media coverage of the Arab–Israeli conflict (Chomsky, 2007; Gilboa, 1987; Suleiman, 1974). Because the United States views Israel as a democratic political ally, American media frame this as a civil conflict, in which terrorist rebels (displaced Palestinians) are

aggressing against Israel (Bizman & Hoffman, 1993; Chomsky, 2007; Said, 1992; Savun & Philips, 2009). Portrayed as a legitimate state within this frame, Israel has full justification to defend itself against the unwarranted attacks of Palestinians (Chomsky, 2003; Chomsky, 2007). However, in recent decades there has arisen a competing (although not hegemonic) frame: that of Palestinians victimized by Israelis, civilians who are unnecessarily targeted by Israeli defense operations (Gilboa, 1987; Wolfsfeld, 1997).

Past research on media coverage of the Arab–Israeli conflict and acts of terrorism shows unifying elements in the frames used to cover both types of events (Chomsky, 2007; Wolfsfeld, 1997; Wolfsfeld, 2004). However, no formal analysis has been undertaken to determine the exact makeup of these frames and the extent to which they are present in American media. Given the political, governmental, military, and cultural value of those viewpoints and the lives that are affected or terminated based on their ramifications, it is crucial to ascertain the truth behind the frames (e.g., Haklai, 2009; Wolfsfeld, 2004).

Methods

Sample

This study analyzes American media coverage of the Arab–Israeli conflict and of Islamic acts of terrorism in order to determine trends in the frames used. While these events are not representative of all violence linked to the Middle East, they are significant examples of such violence (e.g., Nacos et al., 2011; Wolfsfeld, 2004). In particular, it focuses on the medium of broadcast television, Americans' most popular source of news (Saad, 2013). Analysis is limited to the language used in covering the Arab–Israeli conflict and Islamic terrorism, as language is a primary indicator of problem frames, to which specific terms can be linked (Altheide, 1997; Hunt, 1997). This sample consists of relevant transcripts of ABC, CBS, and NBC newscasts, accessed through the *LexisNexis* database. These networks have the highest levels of viewership and salience among Americans (e.g., Behr & Iyengar, 1985; Guskin, Jurkowitz, & Mitchell, 2013; Meadow, 1972; Olmstead, Jurkowitz, Mitchell, & Enda, 2013). Because of their popularity and reputation for (relative) reliability, the frames portrayed by these networks reflect the frames to which most television viewers are exposed. Analyzing transcripts from these sources therefore draws on the data that are most relevant to and reflective of the experiences of the general public, especially given the rise of publicized Islamic terrorist groups, such as ISIS, and the increasing political turbulence within and around the Middle East (e.g., Bayat, 2015; "Iraq profile," 2015; "Timeline," 2014). Given the timeframes of these events, transcripts were selected only from the period 2010-2014 in order to capture those events which were relevant and had not been covered in previous literature.

Identification and Categorization of Narratives

The analysis utilized in this study employs both qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative procedure consists of examining a sample of approximately 5% of 2,348 total transcripts, recording the subject matter and the language used in reporting the acts of violence. All terms present in the transcripts are organized into narrative categorizies (also referred to as "frames") based on their definitions and the context in which they were typically used within coverage of the relevant events, drawing on the combination of qualitative analysis and a computer program designed by a faculty member of the university where this study takes place. The program identifies all unique terms present in every transcript, as well as their frequencies, then parses through every transcript by sentence, identifying each occurrence of a term from a given category. The results are a complete record of the frequency of occurrences of each category throughout the transcripts, which allows for analysis and ease of identifying trends among the frames. For efficient analysis, these categories are mutually exclusive, outside the frames of *Palestine* and *Israel*, which separate the terms from "Arab–Israeli Conflict" into terms that referred to Palestine and those that referred to Israel (see Table 1).

The final step of qualitative analysis consisted of in-depth textual analysis of two transcripts, selected on the basis of their representative nature. The first is "Middle East on the brink: Rain of fire," cast on ABC (Sawyer & Marquadt, 2012). This story was selected because it presents accounts of violence enacted on both the Palestinian and the Israeli sides of the Arab–Israeli conflict. These acts are presented within the

context of ongoing violence, rather than as a result of a single specific act that brought unusual attention to the area. The language used in this transcript therefore addresses the conditions of that violence within the same segment, allowing for clear comparison of the language used to address the two sides. The second transcript is an account of a terror threat, a prime example of the many times when fear of violence brought coverage to terrorism (Schieffer et al., 2013). Audiences depend on news media to warn them of impending danger, and in such cases the media present the background on these possible threats. Similar to the ongoing conflict between Palestine and Israel, these threats represent an ongoing state of violence that is in danger of bleeding into the United States through terrorist attacks. This account of one such threat is therefore representative of the majority of the transcripts that cover Islamic terrorism.

Analysis

Defining the Narratives

It is through the use of common narratives in media that one is able to assess the utilized frameworks within these conflicts. The results of this research show strong presences of similarities between coverage of the Arab–Israeli conflict and that of acts of Islamic terrorism. For example, the *VictimCasualties* frame is indicative of a report that focuses on the casualties of an act of violence as opposed to the perpetrators of that act (*BlameIncarceration*). Narratives such as *Terror*, *VictimCasualties*, *Warzone*, *Violence*, *IllegitimateState*, and *Protest* present the Middle East as an unstable geographic area, the setting of ongoing conflict and destitution, which disqualifies it as a political actor equal to the United States (see Table 2). By contrast, the *LegitimateState*, *Defense*, and *Honor* narratives serve to define the United States and their actions as legitimate and justifiable, understandable in the eyes of the audience (see Table 2).

Narratives that address the framing of acts of violence are *Terror*, *Warzone*, *Defense*, *ResponseRevenge*, *BlameIncarceration*, *Honor*, and *Threat* (see Table 2). The distinctions between these define the audience's perception of acts of violence. The *Warzone* narrative defines the violence as ongoing, occurring in an acceptable format, such as war. *Defense*, *ResponseRevenge*, and *Honor* are narratives that provide justification for the violence being addressed, presenting the act as legitimate in its capacity to protect a people (see Table 2). They shift blame away from the perpetrators, all the while acknowledging their actions, formulating conditions that favor the perpetrators from the audience's viewpoint. The *Honor* narrative goes even further to present the perpetrators in a noble light, while the *BlameIncarceration* frame serves the opposite purpose, alienating the audience from the perpetrators and designating them as deviants. The *Threat* narrative has its own connotations, as the words that fall into this category address the possibility of violence, maintaining its relevance to audiences that are physically separate from the conflict. These designations are often subtle, but they effectually design a spectrum of assigned guilt on which perpetrators are placed, defining a viewer's understanding of the event and the people involved.

Terms used to identify the audience with victims are included under *VictimCasualties*, *Warzone*, and *FearSorrowRage*—these narratives establish specific persons as victims of their surroundings (even when they are committing acts of violence), thereby aligning audiences with their sentiments. *ResolutionSafety* and *Recovery* narratives are extensions on this concept, dealing with the aftermath of the violence, again with tendencies to sympathize with the victims of violence. As the roles of perpetrator and victim are easily interchangeable in situations of ongoing violence, media usage of specific narratives designating these labels to specific sides is essential to establishing the audience's interpretation of the event.

The remaining narratives (*ArabIsraeli*, *Palestine*, *Israel*, *USWesternWorld*, *Religion*, and *IslamMiddleEast*) are identifiers of specific entities. Further application of quantitative methods will allow for analysis of the ways in which other narratives are used relative to these identifiers, beyond the qualitative observations present in this study.

Arab–Israeli Conflict

A classic example of this portrayal of turmoil in the context of the Arab–Israeli conflict is the segment "Middle East on the brink; rain of fire," cast on ABC (Sawyer & Marquadt, 2012). This piece introduces "the holy city of Jerusalem, under fire" (Sawyer & Marquadt, 2012, para. 3), a juxtaposition of inno-

cence against an onslaught of violence. Jerusalem is identified as a religious place, a sanctuary that would not be involved in the violence were it not being targeted; this is a clear utilization of the *Religion* narrative in the process of advancing the portrayed innocence of the victims. "Under fire" is a manifestation of the *Violence* narrative, and it inherently assigns blame by its presence, informing the audience that not only is a religious sanctuary involved in violence, it is the victim of an attack. The reporter of this article then mentions "families huddled in concrete pipes for safety" (Sawyer & Marquadt, 2012, para. 5), an elaboration on Jerusalem's state of victimhood and that of its citizens. They are punished for their geographic position, forced to pay with the risk of injury or death.

Presenting these subjects as "families," as opposed to "people," is an example of the use of the *VictimCasualties* frame. It elevates their perceived innocence by stating that they are not isolated individuals but are emotionally connected human beings with whom the audience can connect. Again, the use of the *VictimCasualties* frame has the dual effect of presenting a specific subject as innocent and relatable to the audience, to an attempt to evoke the sympathy from viewers. In this excerpt, "safety" is a manifestation of the *ResolutionSafety* narrative, representing a possible end to the violence. It heightens the desperation of these families' situations, suggesting that their fear of danger and their need for safety is so great that they must huddle in pipes to survive. In the context of a warzone, the *ResolutionSafety* narrative presents American audiences a victimized people that emphasizes the disparity between their safety and the dangerous conditions under which the subjects live.

This effect is a defining force behind the statements of the reporter, including such lines as "no letup in this deadly escalation" (Sawyer & Marquadt, 2012, para. 10), another phrase used to describe the plight of the Israelis. "Escalation" is an example of the *Warzone* narrative, implying that there is an ongoing conflict occurring, in which this particular event is a temporary swell. However, this is contrasted with the term "no letup," which implies that what ought to be a temporary swell is lasting longer than expected; because this is an act of violence, extending it becomes extreme violence, an escalation that inflames the audience. "Letup" belongs to the *ResolutionSafety* frame, and its negation is another portrayal of desperation, highlighting the constant danger that will not allow citizens the luxury of safety enjoyed by the audience. Furthermore, "deadly" is a term from the *Violence* narrative, a word that is inherently linked to life-threatening violence. Even without further elaboration, "deadly" describes a situation of extreme danger, which, in conjunction with "no letup," inflames the audience with its portrayal of these victimized people.

Similar language is used in portraying the Palestinian side of the conflict, as the reporter states that there has been "almost no letup in the Israeli warplanes hammering of Gaza" (Sawyer & Marquadt, 2012, para. 27). Again, "no letup" functions in the same way to present the people as victims of an ongoing conflict, innocent bystanders in an environment engulfed in violence. However, this statement follows the description of the Israeli victims, as well as the reporter's statement that Palestinian militants were launching rockets at Israel, victimizing its citizens as aforementioned. In addition, the reporter took a statement from a militant, asserting that their motivations were founded in Israel's initial attacks on Palestine. Therefore, the audience hears of Gaza as a victimized region in the context of a conflict in which blame was assigned to both sides. They are acclimatized to the concept of ongoing violence, so Gaza's victimization is less shocking than the vivid introduction of Israeli families hiding from danger.

However, the mention of "a steady stream of wounded arriving [in a hospital in Gaza], including children" (Sawyer & Marquadt, 2012, para. 31) elevates the portrayed victimization of the Palestinians. "Children" belongs to the *VictimCasualties* frame, their innocence inherently evoking sympathy from audiences. Their inclusion in this "steady stream" of victims supports the impression of a people wounded beyond their resources. "Hospital" belongs to the *Recovery* category, as it is a sign of an area that needs support. Such terms are used to suggest a need for sustenance in the face of danger and hurt, which translates to desperation when it is applied to a vulnerable population, such as children.

Furthermore, the juxtaposition of Israel's "iron dome anti-missile system" (Sawyer & Marquadt, 2012, para. 20) with Palestine's "militant rocket-launching

site" (Sawyer & Marquadt, 2012, para. 23) highlights a disparity in the coverage of these two sides. The words used in the description of Israel fall into the *Defense* narrative (with the exception of the word "system"), presenting Israel as an entity that is taking action to protect its citizens. Palestine, in contrast, is protected by a "militant" (which belongs to the *Terror* category) "rocket-launching" (which belongs to the *Violence* category) "site," portraying Palestine as an illegitimate, reactive, and violent entity. The word "militant" is commonly used to describe those who commit violence as members of terrorist organizations, thereby delegitimizing fighters who are labelled as such. However, they are portrayed as representative of Palestine, which extends this terrorist designation to the citizens they represent. "Rocket-launching," although categorized under *Violence*, is a manifestation of the *ResponseRevenge* frame because it is presented in the context of Palestinians responding to Israeli attacks with their own violence. This again indicates a people engaged in ongoing conflict, both sides simultaneously portrayed as combatants and as victims. It is a theme used by the media often and effectively in the representation of this conflict, in order to elicit emotional responses from the audience and to provide the sensationalism that supports their interests.

Islamic Terrorism

The presence of Islamic terrorism as covered by American media between 2010 and 2014 consists primarily of periodic threats or potential threats as opposed to acts of violence. The transcript being analyzed (Schieffer et al., 2013) is a prime example of this trend, as it covers a terror threat regarded as serious enough to warrant a travel alert for Americans. The anchor introduces this as the first headline, simply stating, "America on alert" (Schieffer et al., 2013, para. 1). In these first few words, there are two major sentiments at play. The first is designated by the use of "America" as referring to a collective community, an example of the *USWesternWorld* narrative. This narrative presents the Western world and its counterparts as a cohesive state. Stating that America is "on alert" holds further implications for the audience. "Alert" is from the *Defense* narrative, meaning that America must be prepared to defend itself. This unites members of the American community in their need for protection and their fear of violence. Presenting America as a community preparing to defend itself against an outside force does not merely unite the audience as Americans, however—it unites them against whatever outside force is implementing the threat. These words engage citizens at an individual level and alienate them from whoever is potentially causing the violence, even before that party is introduced in the broadcast. Even the simplicity of this statement, "America on alert," brings a sense of urgency, fear, and panic. It is terse and short, only stating the necessary information. It implies, in this sense, that the threat is so dire that it must be stated clearly and explicitly to inform audiences of the danger.

The first simple statement is followed by the elaboration that, "The State Department warns Americans" (Schieffer et al., 2013, para. 1). "State" is a member of the *LegitimateState* narrative, indicating its role as a source of authority the audience will trust. It is stated that this official department "warns Americans" of the terror threat, indicating a link between the official bureaucracy at the national level and the individual American citizens that are receiving this message. Again, the use of "Americans" identifies listeners as belonging to the community of America, linking the audience to this collective identity. "Warns" belongs to the *Threat* narrative, indicating impending danger. The use of this narrative in addressing the American community relates the danger of the warning to the very nature of this unknown threat, implying an inherent link between the people to whom the threat will be attributed. The use of the *Threat* narrative alienates the audience from the source of the threat and, like the *Defense* narrative, prepares them to protect themselves from the outside force, which is already being framed as an "other."

When the nature of the threat is introduced, it is clearly labeled an "al Qaeda terror threat" (Scheiffer et al., 2013, para. 1). "Al Qaeda," fitting into the United States' view of the *Terror* narrative, is the perpetrator of the threat, made immediately apparent to the audience. "Threat" is a part of the *Threat* narrative, and it functions in the same way as "warns": it evokes a sense of impending danger from an outside force, specified as al Qaeda. *Terror*, as a frame, serves two functions: labeling al Qaeda as a terrorist group and the "threat" as a terror threat. "Terror" in this instance goes beyond the function of clarification; it triggers an extreme response from the audience,

based on the recent history of such events (Nacos et al., 2011). The word "terror" in and of itself evokes fear in audiences familiar with events such as 9/11 (Chomsky, 2007). Even those unfamiliar with the events themselves are entrenched in a culture that fears anything categorized as terror, and therefore the word itself is ubiquitous as a catalyst for fear (Chomsky, 2007).

The threat is reintroduced later on in the segment, again as an "alert…for Americans" (Schieffer et al., 2013, para. 13). Repeatedly, this clear statement of a threat addressed directly at the community of America solidifies the dichotomy of a united collective that fears a dangerous outside force. When the correspondent delves into more detail, he reveals that the specific branch of al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) is the "most dangerous terrorist organization in the world" (Schieffer et al., 2013, para. 15). Describing this organization as not only dangerous (from the *Warzone* narrative) but as "the most dangerous terrorist organization in the world" is a strong designation. Terms that belong to the *Warzone* narrative assign instability to communities, and when combined with the *Terror* narrative category, suggests a combination of instability, illegitimacy, and ongoing violence. These words describing AQAP relate to the traditional understanding of a terrorist organization as fitting this account, legitimizing hegemonic views of Middle Eastern terrorism and the communities around them. Furthermore, the correspondent states explicitly that an attack from al Qaeda could occur in any "mostly Muslim countr[y]" (Schieffer et al., 2013, para. 15). This identifies the organization with the geographic region of Middle Eastern countries, the religion of Islam, and the people who observe that religion or live in those countries. Such implications are typical of the *IslamMiddleEast* narrative, which expresses that region, religion, and people as a conglomerate "other" relative to the West.

Because of the instability and violence of this conglomerate, the *IslamMiddleEast* narrative expresses the danger of this region expanding or infringing on the West. One manifestation of this is apparent when the correspondent states, "The threat goes beyond U.S. installations to include those of other Western countries" (Schieffer et al., 2013, para. 15). This statement introduces the threat of terrorism against Western embassies in Muslim countries. It only includes terms from the *USWesternWorld* narrative ("U.S." and "Western"). The correspondent is expanding the defense of safety, threatened by terrorism, beyond American audiences to include citizens of all Western countries. However, there is no mention of the safety of Middle Eastern citizens, no warning that their lives would be threatened by a terrorist attack. This is the result of the *IslamMiddleEast* narrative conglomeration, in which all Middle Easterners are identified as a single given community. AQAP is a defining Islamic organization and the source of the terror threat from the beginning of the report, so its identity as a representation of the Islamic community (and the Middle East) projects the terrorist identity onto the entire Middle Eastern population. Therefore, they are seen as collectively complicit in the terror threat, with no acknowledgment of those Middle Eastern citizens who are at risk of being harmed if the attack occurs.

The correspondent then identified AQAP as a group that "specialized in suicide bombings" (Schieffer et al., 2013, para. 15). Both "suicide" and "bombings" belong to the *Violence* narrative and are terms that are associated with terrorist organizations. Similar terms, such as "bomb," "blew up," and "explosives," occur throughout the remainder of the report, as the correspondent covers past terror attacks and attempts (Schieffer et al., 2013, para. 15). The connection of such specific terms with terrorism and more specifically, AQAP, reminds audiences of these past events that evoke the fear associated with terrorism. Moreover, the correspondent references details of these events and the circumstances thereof, which bring them to mind all the more vividly. All of this pursues the fear of terrorism, a fear that can be brought up by the vague suggestion of an attack and the memory of past violence.

Discussion and Conclusions

The results of this study reinforce the conclusions of existing research on media coverage of Islamic acts of violence. The language used in covering these events presents the Middle East as a cultural conglomerate that is defined as the "other" relative to the West. Qualitative analysis illustrates the media's designation of terrorism, instability, and rampant violence as characteristic of Middle Eastern society as a whole. This, of course, is an unrealistic view, but it is veiled

within the language that is used to cover terror attacks and, more often, terror threats. Coverage of the Arab–Israeli conflict falls under similar conditions, as shown by qualitative analysis. Typical coverage of this conflict designates this area as a warzone, a setting of ongoing violence that evokes sympathy from audiences. It uses emotional narratives to connect audiences to the victims, while maintaining detachment between the audiences' lives and the struggles of the victims.

However, these are established principles; they are supported by the existing literature that addresses Middle Eastern and Western relations. The macroanalysis stage of this research—the categorization of individual terms into significant narratives—serves to expand textual analysis by melding qualitative bases with quantitative methods. Because it is founded in basic methods (primarily word count), this type of analysis is accessible to all levels of researchers and observers. Furthermore, this methodology is a significant tool that, once established, can be applied to and expanded through future research. It bridges quantitative and qualitative methods, allowing for expansion in a field that has traditionally relied on qualitative, interpretive methods. The establishment of clearly defined narratives relies on accurate categorization of the terms, accomplished through qualitative means. It is at this point that computer programs can be utilized to test the rate and nature of the narratives' occurrences, allowing researchers to analyze larger amounts of data than would be possible without these methods.

These narratives are independent conglomerates that were designed to have standardized contents; that is, they were developed to avoid bias within each given narrative. For instance, the *Palestine* narrative will not include any mention of protest, although research supports a strong presence of such themes in coverage of the Gaza Strip (Wolfsfeld, 2004). These terms instead belong to the *Protest* narrative. Researchers will therefore approach each narrative as a collection of terms related to its heading, according to the definitions provided. Furthermore, the narratives were established specifically to avoid assigning blame at this point in the study. This methodology was developed to take human bias out of the textual analysis and interpretation, in order to maximize reliable and consistent results. The narratives have, at this point, only been used to calculate word count. This basis will allow for future depth of analysis, such as inferential statistics and association testing.

Testing for correlation and association will allow for clarification into the exact nature of these media frames and their significance. For instance, there has been a recent shift in coverage of the Arab–Israeli conflict from its exclusive portrayal as a struggle between a legitimate state (Israel) and the illegitimate forces that threaten its existence (Palestine) to the introduction of the Palestinians as a people oppressed and victimized by Israel (Chomsky, 2003; Chomsky, 2007; Gilboa, 1987; Wolfsfeld, 1997). Ascertaining the degree of association over time between the frames, *Palestine* and *VictimCasualties,* as opposed to the *Israel* and *VictimCasualties* narratives can determine the exact timing and, possibly, the catalyst of this evolution. In the context of the Middle East, the narratives *LegitimateState* and *IllegitimateState* can be tested against specific countries or political leaders to ascertain which are regarded as legitimate by the American media. An examination of these narratives' relationships will reveal the presence or absence of such trends beyond that allowed by present conjecture. In this capacity, the categorizations are also designed to be transferable to subject matter beyond Islamic acts of violence. They were assembled on the basis of strict definition, so the narratives' presence can be tested on other types of textual analysis, spanning different times, events, geographic areas, and even media. Because these narratives are in the early stages of development, however, their contents will benefit from refinement through future research. This will create more reliable and accurate categorizations, possibly by incorporating existing techniques of text mining utilized in corporate settings.

An expansion on the scope of this research will allow for further examination and comparison of the use of these narratives by expanding the base of texts being examined. For instance, future research can compare the extent to which frames of *Violence* and *Defense* are used in covering acts of Islamic terrorism that occur on American soil as opposed to those that occur in Europe. Furthermore, an expansion of this research will allow for comparisons between networks beyond the national scale to that of local sources. Standardizing narratives in Western coverage allows for comparative analysis against local coverage within the Mid-

dle East, which will shed further light on the cultural disconnect and "othering" that occurs. Violence in this region as understood from the local perspective will, if dissected clearly, lead to valuable insights into domestic and foreign understandings of Islamic terrorism, as well as Western intervention and motives. Even outside the scope of Islamic terrorism, further analyses can examine the extent of conflicts between the United States and "hostile" states such as Iran and North Korea, or coverage of past wars with foreign entities. Expanding the timeframe of the study will allow for greater assessment of trends among the narratives, which will in turn expose the shifts in uses of these narratives, rising or falling in response to the times and events. The value of this research lies in its possibilities for future study. The current study has advanced existing techniques of textual analysis, melding it with macro-analysis in order to expand its capacity for accurate and progressive research. These techniques are in the early stages, but they present a new way to assess the presence of media frames, allowing researchers to directly build upon and contribute to textual analysis at a higher level.

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Table 1
Narratives Present in Coverage of Middle Eastern Acts of Violence

Name of narrative (category)	Definition of narrative	Ten most common examples	Total count of occurrences in all transcripts
Terror	Terrorist organizations, individuals, and events	[al] Qaeda, terror, Taliban, ISIS, bin [Laden], terrorist, plot, militants, 911 [9/11], [bin] Laden	22,855
Arab—Israeli	Geographic regions, persons, actions, events, and legislation associated with the Arab–Israeli conflict	Israel, Gaza, Israeli, Hamas, Palestinian, Palestinians, West [Bank], Israelis, Netanyahu, Israel's	22,749
Palestine	Geographic regions, persons, and actions associated with Palestinian territories	Gaza, Hamas, Palestinian, Palestinians, West [Bank], [West] Bank, [Gaza] Strip, tunnels, Palestine, Abbas	11,031
Israel	Geographic regions, persons, actions associated with Israeli territories and Judaic culture	Israel, Israeli, Israelis, Netanyahu, Israel's, [Tel] Aviv, Jerusalem, Jewish, Shalit, synagogue	10,643
VictimCasualties	Identities of victims, conditions of victims	people, man, home, woman, children, school, men, young, kids, women	58,252
Warzone	Military action, destruction/destitution, disputed territories, ongoing conflict	military, war, forces, troops, border, side, soldiers, storm, situation, crisis	34,063
Violence	Violent actions and direct results of those actions	attack, killed, attacks, fire, ground [assault], bomb, hit, death, fighting, fight	57,246
Resolution-Safety	Break in ongoing conflict, emotions, actions associated with that	deal, peace, ceasefire, hope, [peace] talks, safe, [peace] process, pressure, safety, [peace] effort	15,343
Illegitimate-State	Structure and positions associated with illegitimate and undeveloped states and dictatorships	dictator, dictatorship, totalitarian, dictatorships, tyranny, tyrants, despotism, tribesmen, tyrannical, despotic	91
Legitimate-State	Structure and positions associated with legitimate states and democracy	president, rights, country, government, state, officials, national, police, king, secretary [e.g. of state]	63,592
USWestern-World	People, geographic areas, and structure associated with the United States, Western world, and the world at large as referenced by Western media	American, Obama, world, [United] States, United [States], Washington, Americans, America, international, republican	44,339
Defense	Structures, feelings, and actions associated with protection and justified preemptive actions	security, defense, wall, alert, protect, prevent, defend, intercepted, crackdown, defended	7,831

Table 1 cont'd
Narratives Present in Coverage of Middle Eastern Acts of Violence

Name of narrative (category)	Definition of narrative	Ten most common examples	Total count of occurrences in all transcripts
IslamMiddleEast	People, geographic areas, and structure associated with the Middle East and Islamic culture	Afghanistan, [Middle] East, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Pakistan, oil, Iran, Egypt, Islamic	24,672
Religion	Practices and beliefs associated with religion and religious tenets (precluding those specific to Islam and Judaism)	god, faith, truth, religious, holy, religion, miracle, pray, ideology, prayer	2,221
Response-Revenge	Retaliatory actions in response to initial acts of violence	response, effect, reform, reaction, respond, revenge, backlash, responding, react, retaliate	2,221
BlameIncarceration	Instigators, investigation, incarceration	investigation, evidence, caught, suspect, arrested, investigators, accused, responsibility, charges, cause	16,361
Recovery	Actions and positions associated with recovery aiding victims after violence	help, doctor, hospital, aid, rescue, doctors, build, built, recovery, humanitarian	5,633
Honor	Actions and ideas associated with morality and honor	mission, justice, honor, proud, duty, hero, honest, sacrifice, honored, missions	3,063
FearSorrow-Rage	Reactive emotions associated with the aftermath of acts of violence	fear, memorial, anger, fears, tragedy, afraid, emotional, sad, outrage, scary	4,800
Protest	Actions, ideologies, positions associated with protest	protests, protesters, protest, movement, opposition, activists, activist, resistance, antigovernment, protestors	2,127
Threat	Possible and impending violence	threat, warning, threats, warned, threatening, warnings, threatened, warns, threaten, threatens	4,036

Table 2
Properties of Narratives

Name of Narrative (Category)	Legitimizes entities and their actions	Delegitimizes entities and their actions	Represents area as instable	Describes acts of violence	Provides justification for acts of violence	Reflects perpetrators of violence	Reflects victims of violence
Terror		✓	✓	✓			
VictimCasualties		✓				✓	
Warzone		✓	✓	✓			✓
Violence			✓				
ResolutionSafety						✓	
Illegitimate-State	✓	✓					
Legitimate-State	✓						
Defense	✓				✓		
Response-Revenge			✓	✓			
BlameIncarceration			✓		✓		
Recovery							✓
Honor	✓			✓	✓		
FearSorrowRage					✓	✓	
Protest			✓				
Threat				✓			