DEFINING TERRORISM:
A FRAMING ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF “TERRORISM” POST-9/11

by Gregory E. Moser

This thesis analyzes the rhetorical frames used by the U.S. print media immediately prior to 9/11, one year after 9/11, and seven years after 9/11. Using a framing analysis, news articles from two major daily newspapers, the New York Times and USA Today, are examined. Analysis suggests implications for the study of media frames.
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Chapter One: The Critical Problem

No group or nation should mistake America’s intentions:
We will not rest until terrorist groups of global reach
have been found, have been stopped, and have been defeated.
--U.S. President George W. Bush, November 6, 2001

On September 11, 2001, nineteen Islamic terrorists hijacked four U.S. commercial passenger jets. The two World Trade Center (WTC) towers were intentionally crashed into by one plane each, killing 157 passengers and crew, ten hijackers, and 2,595 people inside the towers, including emergency personnel working to rescue those trapped inside (CNN, 2001a). The terrorists piloted the third plane into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., killing 64 passengers and crew, including five hijackers, and 125 people at the Pentagon (CNN, 2001a). It is speculated that the fourth plane, United Airlines Flight 93, also targeted another landmark building in Washington, DC, but the airline passengers overcame the terrorists before the plane crashed onto a field in rural Pennsylvania (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, 2004). Like the other three hijacked planes before it, all 45 people onboard died including four hijackers (CNN, 2001a).

In total, 2,999 were killed in the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, excluding the 19 hijackers; another 24 people are still missing and presumed dead (CNN, 2001a). In response to what became known as 9/11, the United States began a “War on Terrorism” on October 7, 2001, when American troops attempted to break up terror cells in Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom (Bush, 2001). In addition, the objectives of the war were to secure the American homeland and disrupt the activities of the international network of terrorist organizations made up of a number of terrorist groups under the umbrella of al-Qaeda, a Sunni Islamic militant organization (Counterterrorism, N.D.). Although the war had seemingly clear objectives, the exact definition of terrorism remained unclear in the eyes of the world community, complicating allies’ involvement. The United States government has defined terrorism under the United States Code (18 U.S.C. § 2331(1)(a-c), 2000) as activities that:

(a) Involve violent acts or acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State, or that would be a criminal violation if committed within the jurisdiction of the United States or of any State;
(b) Appear to be intended
   (i) To intimidate or coerce a civilian population;
   (ii) To influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or
   (iii) To affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and

(c) Occur primarily outside the territorial jurisdiction of the United States, or transcend national boundaries in terms of the means by which they are accomplished, the persons they appear intended to intimidate or coerce, or the locale in which their perpetrators operate or seek asylum

Although the United States government officially defines terrorism, the global community has not. According to a briefing prepared for the Australian Parliament by Australian policy analyst Angus Martyn (2002), “The international community has never succeeded in developing an accepted comprehensive definition of terrorism. During the 1970s and 1980s, the United Nations’ attempts to define the term foundered mainly due to differences of opinion between various members on the use of violence in the context of conflicts over national liberation and self-determination” (p. 3). Essentially, there is no universal definition of terrorism because of a lack of agreement regarding what separates terrorism from other types of violence.

The European Union (2002) officially defined terrorism in Article 1 of the Framework Decision on Combating Terrorism. This article states that terrorism is a specific criminal act which, “given their nature or context, may seriously damage a country or an international organization where committed with the aim of: seriously intimidating a population; or unduly compelling a Government or international organization to perform or abstain from performing any act; or seriously destabilizing or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organization” (p. 2).

The British Terrorism Act of 2000 defines terrorism so as to include not only violent acts against people and physical damage to property, but also acts “designed seriously to interfere with or to disrupt an electronic system,” whereas the Supreme Court of India (2003) defined terrorism more generally as “peacetime equivalents of war crimes” (Madan Singh v. State of Bihar). Through the four examples provided by the United States Code, the United Nations, the European Union, the British Terrorism Act of 2000, and the Supreme Court of India, we see that no two definitions of the term “terrorism” are alike. The critical differences among the various definitions include the notions of violence and technology, including the question of whether or not terrorism must involve physical violence or if threats and/or electronic crime is enough to be termed terrorism. The varying definitions lead to a clouded understanding of what constitutes
terrorism. With this lack of understanding, individuals’ conceptualizations of terrorism depend on how terrorism is framed for them in the media. Therefore, in order to reach a deeper understanding of the print media’s framing of terrorism, it is necessary to first examine the history of terrorism in the United States.

**Terrorism in the United States**

Prior to 9/11, the U.S. saw many terrorist acts, including bombings on U.S. Senate Buildings, Fraunces Tavern on Wall Street, and the U.S. State Department, but one of the most well-known international terrorist acts on U.S. soil was the bombing of the World Trade Center on February 26, 1993. According to the Council on Foreign Relations, there were 335 recorded incidents or suspected incidents of terrorism in the United States between 1980 and 1999 (Fletcher, 2008). However, the 1993 bombing was abnormal because it was not an act of domestic terrorism, defined as terrorism that occurred in the United States and carried out by a United States citizen. A car bomb detonated below Tower One of the World Trade Center, killing six and injuring 1,042. A group of eight Middle-Eastern conspirators planned the attack in retaliation for U.S. support of Israel. Six of the conspirators were formally charged with conspiracy, explosive destruction of property, and interstate transportation of explosives.

The 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center, like the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, remains distinctive because of its perpetrators. The Council on Foreign Relations indicated the majority (250) of the 335 terrorist acts in the U.S. between 1980 and 2000 were domestic terrorism, making the 1993 World Trade Center bombing distinctive (Fletcher, 2008). The Federal Bureau of Investigation (1999) recognized this particular act of terrorism posed a unique challenge because it was not done “on behalf of any nation that sponsors anti-Western terrorism. Nor was the group a formal terrorist organization with an identifiable organizational structure, known base of operation, or well established means of fund-raising” (p. 16-17). In order to respond militarily to punish those responsible for an act of terrorism, the act would have to be carried out by an organized group, such as Al-Qaeda, the terrorist organization the Bush Administration held responsible for 9/11 (CNN, 2001b; CNN, 2002). Without an organized group to blame, it is unlikely that the United States would have entered into a military conflict in Afghanistan and Iraq and the political landscape in years that followed may have been drastically different. However, the Bush Administration believed Al-Qaeda responsible for the 9/11 acts of
terrorism, and the U.S. subsequently entered into military conflict in Afghanistan, where thousands of al-Qaeda members were housed, on October 7, 2001, as the U.S. military operation Operation Enduring Freedom (Guardian, 2001). The U.S. military was joined by the United Kingdom, among others, as part of a coalition of forces whose intent was to stop the growth of terrorism throughout the world.

The stated purpose of Operation Enduring Freedom was to capture Osama bin Laden, destroy Al-Qaeda, and remove the Taliban regime which had provided support and safe harbor to Al-Qaeda (Guardian, 2001). Although Afghanistan was not controlled by Al-Qaeda, the Bush Doctrine stated that it would not distinguish between Al-Qaeda and nations that harbor its members (Bush, 2001).

According to the Bush Administration, in addition to the belief that Iraq was creating weapons of mass destruction, the conflict in Iraq was also tied to an alleged relationship between Iraqi president Saddam Hussein and Al-Qaeda (CNN, 2001b; CNN, 2002). Although no evidence was found to support the claim, the Bush Administration believed that Hussein harbored and supported members of Al-Qaeda, and was also suspected of potentially providing Al-Qaeda with weapons of mass destruction (Hayes, 2003). U.S. forces captured Hussein on December 13, 2003, and the Iraqi government executed him on December 30, 2006 (BBC, 2006). Despite his removal from power and subsequent death, the U.S. continued to maintain a military presence in Iraq, as it also continued its presence in Afghanistan. On April 9, 2008, Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki told President Bush that Iraqi security forces were capable of their duties and U.S. troops should be pulled out as the situation allows (Associated Press, 2008). On November 27, 2008, the Iraqi Parliament ratified a Status of Forces Agreement with the United States, establishing the withdrawal of Coalition combat forces from Iraqi cities, which occurred on June 30, 2009; all other Coalition forces are expected to be out of Iraq by December 31, 2011 (McClatchy Newspapers, 2008).

The conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, both of which came about after 9/11, have had a continuous presence in American media for nearly a decade. With this in mind, it is important to understand how the media framed these conflicts and the war on terrorism so that we can better understand how information is being portrayed to American readers.
Selection of Artifacts and Research Question

This thesis seeks to determine if framing of the term “terrorism” in The New York Times’ and USA Today changed between the month leading up to 9/11 and the attacks’ seven-year anniversary. The artifacts considered in this study are 32 news articles containing the word “terrorism” in USA Today and The New York Times, published from August 10 to September 10, 2001, 71 news articles meeting the same criteria published between March 10 and April 10, 2002, and 58 news articles meeting the same criteria published between August 10 and September 10, 2008. These daily publications represent two of the newspapers with the largest circulation in the United States. USA Today has the country’s largest circulation, 2,549,252, and The New York Times has the third largest circulation in the United States, 1,623,697 (New York Job Source, N.D.). These two newspapers were chosen because of their ability to reach mass American audiences. However, the large-scale readership of these media outlets does not assume generalizability for this study’s findings.

These three time periods represent the month immediately preceding 9/11, the thirty day period occurring six months after 9/11, and the month preceding the seventh anniversary of 9/11. The decision to study artifacts from these three periods was made in order to compare the frame(s) of “terrorism” from pre-9/11 to the frame(s) six months following 9/11, and the frame(s) the media used seven years after 9/11. This allows for an understanding of how the media framed terrorism during each of these periods and how the frames changed or evolved over time.

The artifacts were found by using LexisNexis News to retrieve every article in the given time periods containing the term “terrorism.” The artifacts were further narrowed by omitting those that were found to have nothing to do with acts of terrorism. These artifacts were used to answer the following research question: How did the U.S. print media frame the term terrorism immediately before and in the years following September 11, 2001?

Selection of Methodology

To analyze the way in which the U.S. media uses the term “terrorism,” it was necessary to employ a textual analysis using framing theory. Text, according to Real (1996), generates meaning by how its message is understood by a receiver. The receiver’s understanding of its message can be manipulated by the framing of the article. When applied to this study, text
involved an examination of the framing of these articles to seek a richer understanding of the media’s use of the term “terrorism.”

This analysis was accomplished by analyzing the text of the articles using Hallahan’s (1999) categories of valence framing, semantic framing, and story framing, and another category that emerged from the analysis. The use of the various types of framing was determined by a careful reading of each article and questioning the impact of semantic choices, inclusion and exclusion of information, and themes seen throughout the articles. This research is important because it deepens the understanding of framing categories available to the media as it presents information about terrorism to American readers. As this understanding deepens, communication scholars gain greater insight into media frames.

Framing is an important theoretical component of this study because it describes how communication is shaped to elicit particular responses in receivers. The research question introduced here asks whether or not newspapers’ frames of “terrorism” changed after 9/11. Therefore, reviewing literature existing on framing theory is important to provide an understanding of current and past research in areas relating to this study.

**Overview of Thesis**

In order to determine whether or not newspapers’ frames of “terrorism” changed after 9/11, this thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter two presents a careful review of existing literature about framing and the media’s role in public discourse. Chapter three, using framing theory, serves as a discussion and analysis of the frames used by the media to depict terrorism in 32 news articles in *USA Today* and *The New York Times* between August 10 and September 10, 2001. Likewise, chapter four uses framing theory to analyze 71 news articles between March 10 and April 10, 2002, and chapter five uses framing theory to analyze 58 news articles between August 10 and September 10, 2008. Finally, chapter six discusses of the study’s findings, including the discovery of the existence of a new category in framing theory, as well as the political and societal implications associated with media framing of terrorism.
Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Through clever and constant application of Propaganda, people can be made to see Paradise as Hell; and also the other way around, to consider the most wretched sort of life as Paradise. -Adolph Hitler, Mein Kampf

Framing theory is used to understand and investigate communication and related behavior in a wide range of disciplines, including psychology, communication, economics, and media studies (Rendahl, 1995). Goffman (2000) offered a general concept of frame theory in 1974, saying a situation is defined by the organization of social principles that control events and by a receiver’s involvement in the organization of those social principles. Additionally, he held that receivers’ perceptions of reality are influenced by the way in which an activity is portrayed or fabricated within a frame (p. 22). Entman (1989) applied general frame analysis to media, asserting “media messages significantly influence what the public and the elites think, by affecting what they perceive and think about” (p. 89).

Framing: Influences and Processes

Entman (1993), influenced by Gamson’s (1992) work, determined that frames identify problems by establishing costs and benefits measured by common cultural values; identify causes through the detection of forces; make moral judgments by analyzing causes and effects; and suggest remedies by offering validation for problems and predicting effects. Salience, according to Entman (1993, p. 53), increases the chance that receivers will recognize information because salient information is made, either consciously or unconsciously by the communicator, more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to that receiver.

Each person in a communicative process has an original, preconceived frame to categorize messages – from the sender to the receiver. Although frames may be present in the message, audiences do not necessarily understand and retain a sender’s frames because audiences apply their own frames to media messages, and each person’s original frame of reference is different (Graber, 1988). If a message does not fit into the receiver’s applied frame, the receiver may discard the message. Similarly, the interdependence model predicts that each
person’s interpretation of a media message is based on ideological leanings; two people with opposing ideologies can read the same message differently (Entman, 1989; Entman, 1993; Fiske, 1991). The information processing research dictated that “schemas,” or cognitive structures that store beliefs, attitudes, values and ideas, actually organize the viewer’s thinking depending on the prominence of issues. Schemas allow people to classify new information according to knowledge already organized, and help people link new ideas with previously held ideas (Entman & Rojecki, 2000).

A frame may be best understood as a lens that allows a viewer to see only part of a bigger picture by omitting certain information, which is kept outside of the frame (or lens). The act of framing, then, is the act of placing information in a frame by highlighting or omitting information (Entman, 1993; Hallahan, 1999). Omission of information is as important to framing as inclusion of information, as demonstrated by Kahneman and Tversky’s (1984) study, which illustrated that audiences are influenced by frames that direct attention away from some aspects while simultaneously highlighting others. Edelman (1993) similarly described inclusion and omission, saying, “the character, causes, and consequences of any phenomenon become radically different as changes are made in what is prominently displayed, what is repressed and especially in how observations are classified.” Excluding information provides a different frame than full disclosure.

According to the assumption of audience autonomy, viewers either selectively omit information that does not agree with their views, or they lack enough attention even to be influenced (Entman, 1989). These audiences gain their abilities to process information from socialization, which is constantly altered by parents, teachers, friends, and others who all use the media. Gamson (1992) explains that the ways in which information is constructed, or framed, can influence society. Examining how frames are used by the media will help understand how this can be the case.

**Frame Usage**

Framing is a critical process used by individuals to construct their perspectives of the world. A frame is a boundary which allows an individual to focus on only specific key elements of a given situation by allowing the elements to appear in the frame; other elements are downplayed or ignored by keeping them in the periphery. Framing involves the processes of
inclusion and exclusion of information, as well as emphasis of some information more than others (Hallahan, 1999). Entman (1993) summarized the essence of framing processes with the following:

Framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in the communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described. Frames, then, define problems – determine what a causal agent is doing and costs and benefits, usually measured in terms of cultural values; diagnose causes – identify the forces creating the problem; make moral judgments – evaluate causal agents and their effects; and suggest remedies – offer and justify treatments for the problem and predict their likely effects. (p. 55)

A frame limits a message’s meaning by influencing what can be inferred by the message. When given a message in its entirety as well as a frame of the message, the frame may provide an understanding of the framer’s judgment of the message. Some frames are designed to put information in either a positive or negative light. This is called valence framing (Hallahan, 1999). For example, if a local public official is announcing property tax increases, he/she might say “property taxes are increasing by three percent.” To put this in a positive light, he/she could reference other communities’ property taxes that are increasing by more than three percent. This would frame the taxes in a manner that would lead people to believe things could be worse.

Alternatively, semantic framing involves alternative phrasing of terms (Hallahan, 1999). Alternate phrasing includes such words as “only,” “merely,” “especially,” and other words that stress certain information. Using the example of a public official announcing tax increases, he/she could state, “property taxes are increasing by only three percent.” By using the word “only,” the official leads the audience to believe taxes could have increased by a larger amount.

According to Hallahan (1999), “The most complex form of framing is story telling (story framing). Story framing involves (a) selecting key themes or ideas that are the focus of the message and (b) incorporating a variety of storytelling or narrative techniques that support that theme” (p. 207). Again using the example of tax increases, a public official might tell the story of a child whose education has been at a disadvantage because of a lack of funding. The property tax increase would help the child, therefore putting the tax increase in a positive light. On the other hand, an opponent of the tax increase might use the story of a struggling small business owner who might have to close his/her business because he/she is unable to pay the new taxes.
Framing provides a useful lens for examining political messages. “In addition to a rhetorical approach that focuses on how messages are created, framing is conceptually connected to the underlying psychological processes that people use to examine information, to make judgments, and to draw inferences about the world around them” (Hallahan, 1999, p. 206). Riker (1986) explains framing as the process by which government officials and journalists exercise political influence over each other and over the public. This is accomplished by selecting certain aspects (frames) of messages or situations to highlight in order to promote specific interpretations, evaluations, and/or solutions (Entman, 2003).

The words and images used in framing can be distinguished by their cultural resonance and magnitude. Resonance refers to words and images that are noticeable, understandable, memorable, and emotionally charged, whereas magnitude refers to their prominence and repetition (Entman, 2003). The Bush administration’s recurring use of words such as evil and war in framing the September 11, 2001 events and pairing it with searing images of the burning and collapsing World Trade towers in many media reports, provide a textbook example of high magnitude, high resonance framing (Entman, 2003). “Some words and images possess sufficient resonance to impress themselves on public consciousness without requiring a significant number of exposures: airliners flying into the World Trade Center on September 11, for instance” (Entman, 2003, p. 417). The resonance of these words and images aid in the creation of fear appeals.

**Fear Appeals**

Many frames can instill fear in a reader in an attempt to cultivate an emotionally charged response. Previous literature available on fear appeals provides the concept that fear motivates people to adopt recommendations in order to avoid something negative, such as a punishment or consequence (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953; Janis & Feshbach, 1953, 1954). Leventhal (1970) offered the parallel processing model (PPM) which considered the cognitive aspects involved in processing fear appeals. According to PPM, those exposed to fear appeals engage in either fear control or damage control. Under fear control, a person will respond to a fear appeal by denying the appeals validity or the validity of the source of the appeal. On the other hand, if a person participates in damage control, s/he will adapt in an effort to avoid the threat.
Although Leventhal (1970) offered PPM, Rogers (1975; 1983) was responsible for offering a way to predict how a fear appeal is processed - the protection motivation theory (PMT). Under PMT, there are three categories of responses to fear appeals – judgments of threat severity, threat susceptibility, and efficacy of the fear appeal’s recommendation (both the efficacy of the message itself and the individual’s ability to follow the recommendation). Witte (1992) offered the Extended Parallel Processing Model (EPPM), which integrated PPM and PMT, focusing more on fear appeals’ motivational factors than their cognitive elements.

Witte’s (1992) EPPM suggests that fear appeals should contain information related to susceptibility, severity, response efficacy and self efficacy. In order to perceive a threat, an audience must perceive susceptibility and severity (Witte, 1992). After a threat is perceived, perceived efficacy is assessed. If perceived efficacy exceeds perceived threat (one can effectively cope with the danger), one will engage in danger control by complying with the message’s recommendations (Witte, 1992). On the other hand, if perceived threat exceeds perceived efficacy (one cannot effectively cope with the danger), one will engage in fear control by engaging in denial or rejection of the message’s recommendations (Witte, 1992).

The news media might use fear appeals because the threat contained in the fear appeal may be a genuine and newsworthy threat. Young (2003) notes that fear is an appealing emotion for journalists and it is associated with greater issue importance when choosing what news stories to broadcast or publish. Therefore, a news story may be framed in such a way that it unnecessarily contains one or more fear appeals in an effort to increase the likelihood it will be broadcast or published. Once sent to the public, the fear instilled in the public may incite individuals to discuss their fears, thereby increasing civic discourse in the United States.

**Framing and Civic Discourse**

Prior to September 11, 2001, the United States suffered from poor democratic health because successive generations knew less and less about politics (Schudson, 2000). “Voting patterns and other measures of civic engagement were in a continual state of decay…[and] the quality of public debate revealed a similar state of decline” (Carlin, et al., 2005, p. 617). In the post-9/11 era, Americans’ everyday discourse includes jargon that was rarely used in the past. Specifically, the term “terrorism” is now commonplace in civic discourse (Putnam, 2002).
Barber (1984) argued that this type of increase is a positive sign for our democracy, and observed that discourse must be at the heart of a strong democracy.

Many of the beliefs held by U.S. citizens, and therefore the beliefs argued for/against in civic discourse, are created based on the individual’s level of trust in the U.S. government (Putnam, 2002). U.S. citizens’ beliefs are also created through their source of news and their responsiveness to the presidential administration’s framing and agenda-setting strategies. Furthermore, U.S. citizens’ beliefs are partly created through their levels of concern and/or fear of terrorism (Arsenault & Castells, 2006). When comparing surveys before and after 9/11, Putnam (2002) found substantial increases in citizens’ trust in federal and local governments. It can be argued that an increase in trust results in an easier path for the government to influence the public’s beliefs. This notion is the basis for John Mueller’s (1973) “Rally ‘Round the Flag Syndrome,” as discussed in his book, War, Presidents, and Public Opinion. The syndrome explains the increased popular support of the President of the United States and his agenda during specific, dramatic, and sharply focused periods of international crisis or war (Mueller, 1973).

Through the works of the aforementioned researchers, we see that frames are used to influence thought. This can be accomplished through the level of salience of the information presented, or by the inclusion or exclusion of information. There are several different categories of framing, including valence framing, which places information in either a positive or negative; semantic framing, which uses alternative phrasing as a means to pass judgment on information; and story framing, which uses the inclusion or exclusion of themes and narratives to provide information. These three types of framing are examined in this study, as well as a new frame category that emerged during analysis.
Chapter 3: Analysis of Pre-9/11 News Articles

Throwing a bomb is bad,
Dropping a bomb is good;
Terror, no need to add,
Depends on who’s wearing the hood.
- R. Woddis, Ethics for Everyman

During the month leading up to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, a total of 32 articles in the New York Times and USA Today report on acts of terrorism between August 10 and September 10, 2001. This chapter analyzes the valence frames, semantic frames, and story frames used in these articles, which were provided by a LexisNexis search of the term “terrorism” and further refined by omitting articles which, upon reading, were miscategorized. In total 17 of the 32 articles analyzed (approximately 53.1%) feature at least one type of framing of terrorism. Although all messages are framed by their senders through unconscious construction of metamessages indicating the way in which the content is to be taken, as demonstrated by Bateson (1972), Goffman (1961, 1974, 1981), and Tannen (1985), the remaining 15 articles (approximately 46.9%) present only clear facts that did not highlight or omit any information that would slant the article in an obvious manner. This indicates that framing was common in print media during this time period. The articles during this time period focus primarily on conflicts between Macedonians and Albanians, and between Israelis and Palestinians.

In the late summer of 2001, the insurgency in the Republic of Macedonia was raging as ethnic Albanians, calling themselves the National Liberation Army, and the government of Macedonia fought for control of villages on the Macedonian/Serbian border (Cooper & Nixon, 2003). In the meantime, amid continuous violence between the Israelis and Palestinians – violence which resulted in the deaths of 191 Israelis and 469 Palestinians, Ariel Sharon began his term as the newly elected Prime Minister of Israel (B’Tselem, 2009). Using news reports describing these two violent situations, the following analysis provides insight into the frames used in the New York Times and USA Today during the month immediately preceding 9/11.
Valence Frame

A valence frame places an act in either a positive or negative light. The label of terrorism is, in itself, a negative valence frame. When an act is labeled as terrorism, the act is placed in a negative valence frame; when a person is labeled as a terrorist, the person is placed in a negative valence frame. Alternatively, an act could be placed in a positive light by labeling it a “revolution” or a person who commits violent acts could be placed in a positive light by labeling them a “liberator.” With this in mind, every article analyzed that discussed terrorism, and labeled it as such, was already using a negative valence frame. Aside from this usage, other valence frames occurred in three of the 17 articles, roughly 17.6%.

The article, “Man In Orthodox Jew’s Garb Sets Off Blast in Jerusalem,” discusses events surrounding the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, giving a voice to those who believe the state of Israel is acting as a terrorist organization targeting Palestinians (Haberman, 2001m). However, the article goes on to align Israel with the United States:

> For some it was no coincidence that the bombs had gone off at the same time that Israel was being denounced at the United Nations conference on racism in Durban, South Africa, where it has been called a racist colonial power and an "apartheid regime" that has committed "ethnic cleansing and other acts of genocide" against the Palestinians. On Monday, Israel joined the United States in withdrawing from the conference. (Haberman, 2001m, P. 16)

For American readers, many of whom may believe the United States and its allies are always the “good guys,” the author uses a valence frame when he places Israel in a positive light by explaining that Israel “joined the United States.” This aligns Israel with the United States, which may negate the thought that Israel committed any acts of terrorism against the Palestinians because neither the United States nor its allies could be terrorists.

The placing of Israelis in a positive light in comparison to Palestinians seems to be common in articles about the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, such as a September 3 article, “Back to School on Two Sides Of Mideast's Dividing Line”, the New York Times reports Israeli children returning to school amid fears of terrorist attacks at the hands of Palestinians:

> All weekend, newspapers and television broadcasts talked about how the police in Jerusalem were on high alert for a Palestinian terrorist attack, perhaps on a school building or a school bus. (Haberman, 2001k, P. 4).
This section of the article provides an expectation of Palestinian violence, and consequently casts a negative light on Palestinian extremist acts. (In the context of this study, extremist means someone who commits violence because they hold convictions that are contrary to governmental action or policy. This includes anyone who commits violence in the name of governmental change, such as violent civil rights advocates, freedom fighters, terrorists, or dangerous vigilantes. Thus, extremist is not intended to have a negative connotation.)

However, despite the commonality of violence against Palestinians by Israelis, the only mention of hardships surrounding Palestinian children returning to school is concerning roadblocks, which the article states “are an essential security measure in this ugly conflict” (Haberman, 2001k, P. 9). This valence frame, which puts Palestinian extremist acts in a negative light while making no mention of Israeli violence, is prevalent in articles regarding the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

In an article published on August 18, 2001, “Israelis and Palestinians Prepare for a Long Struggle,” Palestinian violence, termed “terrorism,” reportedly resulted in 169 Israeli deaths:

> In the last eight or nine days, there have been new acts of Palestinian terrorism against Israelis going about their daily lives. Suicide bombers killed 15 people at a Jerusalem pizzeria and wounded 21 at a cafe outside Haifa -- in addition to taking their own lives, of course. The death toll in this conflict is nearing 700. Though figures are somewhat imprecise, the count is put at … 155 Israeli Jews and 14 Israeli Arabs, whose casualties came almost entirely in the intifada's earliest days. (Haberman, 2001g, P. 14; P. 20)

On the other hand, Israeli violence, deemed military pressure, resulted in 525 Palestinian deaths:

> These attacks led to new forms of Israeli retaliation, intended to put pressure on Yasir Arafat and his Palestinian Authority to control the bombers and shooters. First, Israel seized Palestinian offices in Jerusalem, including the symbolically important Orient House. Then, for a few hours, the Israeli Army lunged deeper than it ever had into Palestinian-controlled territory, with a threat of more such strikes to come unless the violence stopped. The death toll in this conflict is nearing 700. Though figures are somewhat imprecise, the count is put at about 525 Palestinians... (Haberman, 2001g, P. 15; P. 20)

These valence frames indicate that the framing of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict during this time period was empathetic with the ruling majority (Israel) and untrustworthy of extremists in the minority (Palestine) in spite of the skewed number of deaths. By aligning the Israeli government with the United States, publishing stories that emphasize Palestinian extremist
violence without providing stories about Israeli violence, and calling Palestinian violence “terrorism,” the valence frames place the government in a positive light while placing extremists in a negative light. This notion is analyzed further in the semantic frame.

**Semantic Frame**

Semantic frames use alternative phrasing of words to emphasize or deemphasize an aspect of a situation. This emphasis (or lack thereof) is in an effort to sway readers’ opinions on the subject. Although its use is not widespread, the semantic frame is more common than the valence frame, appearing in six of the 17 articles (approximately 35.3%) throughout the examined time period of August 10, 2001 to September 10, 2001.

On September 5, 2001, the *New York Times* published “Report Says Macedonians Killed Civilians in Revenge,” which describes the Macedonian military response to attacks in Macedonia that were allegedly committed by Albanian terrorists. In the article, explaining the Macedonian response to the attacks, Fisher (2001b) states, “seven ethnic Albanians were killed [by the Macedonian army] in Ljuboten. But nearly a month later, no evidence has emerged that those people, or three others also killed from the village, were anything but civilians” (emphasis added) (P. 2). Fisher’s choice of the term “killed” can be seen as an attempt to avoid emphasizing the situation’s level of severity. Because of the Albanians’ apparent innocence, alternative choices (i.e. “executed”) are not used, possibly in an attempt to avoid vilifying the Macedonian government. If the Macedonian army “slaughtered” or “executed” ten individuals who were civilians, the language intensity would be higher, and as a result, outcry against the Macedonian army and government would be more likely. Even the headline uses “killed” and seems to justify the deaths as revenge. As it is worded, the article deemphasizes the Macedonian government’s deadly attack on civilians with no relationship to the terrorists.

In the article “Explosion wrecks a 14th-century monastery,” concerning violence in Macedonia, the labels used for the ethnic Albanians included the term “guerrillas”:

The explosion occurred just a week after the Macedonian majority and ethnic Albanians signed a peace deal -- and on the very morning that NATO military officials in Brussels recommended sending the full force of 3,500 troops to collect weapons from ethnic Albanian guerrillas. In strong language, the Macedonian government blamed the guerrillas for the attack on the monastery, St. Atanasie and the Holy Virgin in the village of Lesok in the northwest, saying that the Albanian guerrillas wanted to provoke an attack that might also take down the entire peace deal. But an
area commander with the guerrillas, the National Liberation Army, said he believed that it was government soldiers who carried out the attack. (Fisher, 2001a, P. 4-6).

The term “guerrillas” is the same term used to describe members of the Viet Cong, and is therefore reminiscent of the guerrillas who cost so many American lives during the Vietnam War. With the understanding of the negative connotations resulting from this choice of wording, the term “guerrillas” seems excessive in light of the questions surrounding who was responsible for the act:

In six months of low-level ethnic war, this is one of the few attacks on a religious building. Neither the Macedonian Slavs, who are Orthodox, nor the ethnic Albanians, who are Muslim, have made religion an overt part of the conflict here. Today each side blamed the other, in an attack that seemed, both by the target and the timing, aimed at inflaming passions. (Fisher, 2001a, P. 2; P. 3)

Although the author admits religion is not an overt part of the conflict, he makes a point of mentioning that it is Orthodox versus Muslim, rather than using word choices that would have left religious distinctions out of the article. This is important to note because 65 percent of Americans believe religion plays a significant role in most wars and conflicts throughout the world, and the salience of Albanians’ Islamic heritage and Macedonians’ Orthodox heritage makes it seem as though their religion is the cause of the violence in Macedonia (PRC, 2002). In March 2001, just five months before, 82 percent of Americans self-reported identifying with a Christian religion, whereas only 38 percent of Americans held favorable views of Islam (PRC, 2002). With this in mind, readers may be more likely to hold negative views of the Muslim Albanians than they are of the Macedonian government, indicating a pro-government attitude. The pro-government framing is also seen in articles concerning the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. As with valence frames, which are pro-government and anti-extremist, semantic frames of the conflict also appear to the detriment of Palestinian extremists. This is the case with the semantic framing of headlines of articles. Among the headlines during this time period are, “Palestinian Raids Kill 6 Israelis, Including 3 Soldiers at Gaza Base,” “Man in Orthodox Jew’s Garb Sets Off Blast in Jerusalem,” and “Militants Vow More Bombings To Avenge Deaths in Gaza” (Haberman, 2001h; 2001j; Reuters, 2001). These headlines indicate Israelis were the victims of terrorism by Palestinian extremists. However, when violence was committed by Israelis or the Israeli government, as eye witnesses confirmed, the headline read,
“Palestinians Accuse Israelis” (Associated Press, 2001). This headline casts doubt on Israeli
guilt, even when “witnesses said that a car with Israeli license plates stopped and that a person
inside threw a rock,” and the article later admitted, “there have been several incidents involving
Israelis throwing rocks at Palestinian vehicles in the area” (Associated Press, 2001, P. 3; P. 7). The word choices for these headlines make it seem as though Palestinian guilt is assumed while
Israeli guilt is questioned.

As with valence framing, the semantic framing of acts of terrorism between August 10
and September 10, 2001, are pro-Israeli-government and anti-Palestinian-extremist, as well as
pro-Macedonian-government and anti-Albanian-extremist. However, unlike valence framing,
the semantic framing of the Macedonian/Albanian conflict indicate an anti-extremist/pro-
government underpinning of the arguments, no matter the conflict. Israelis and Macedonians
both fall under a government category because they are the ruling majority in their respective
countries. Alternatively, members of the Palestinian and Albanian factions are extremists.
Thus, the semantic framing benefiting the ruling majority (Israelis and Macedonians), indicates
a pro-government and anti-extremist attitude.

Story Frame

Unlike semantic framing, which uses individual word choices, story framing uses
themes and narratives throughout an article or series of articles. This section analyzes the
amount of coverage and space dedicated to the story frame and how the story frame portrayed
terrorism in the pre-9/11 world. The story frame is the most common frame throughout the
examined time period of August 10, 2001, to September 10, 2001. Thirteen of the 17 articles
(approximately 76.5%) featured story frames.

The first type of story frame, which selects key themes or ideas on which to focus, is
easily seen in the articles. The theme is violent extremists, which coincides with the pro-
government/anti-extremist attitude of the semantic frame. In articles in USA Today and the New
York Times on August 10 (“Explosion, then arms and legs rain down” and “At Least 14 Dead
As Suicide Bomber Strikes Jerusalem” respectively), Kelley (2001a) reports on a bombing of a
pizza restaurant in Jerusalem, allegedly committed by the militant Muslim group, the Islamic
Jihad:

The militant Muslim group Islamic Jihad, in a telephone interview with
USA TODAY, claimed responsibility for the attack. It identified the
suicide bomber as Hussein Omar Abu Naaseh, 23, from the West Bank town of Jenin. The militant Muslim group Hamas also claimed credit for the bombing. (Kelley, 2001a, P. 13-14)

Haberman (2001a) also reported on the bombing:

At first, two militant Islamic groups, Hamas and Islamic Jihad, or Islamic Holy War, took responsibility for Thursday's terrorism. But then Islamic Jihad withdrew its claim, leaving it to Hamas, which released a photograph of the bomber, Izzadine Masri, 23, holding an automatic rifle in one hand and a copy of the Koran in the other. (Haberman, 2001a, P. 21)

These two articles both publicize violence at the hands of Palestinian extremists, even with conflicting reports of who was responsible for the attacks. In the first article, Kelley (2001a) initially blamed Hussein Omar Abu Naaseh for the terrorist attack, but the attack was later credited to Hamas (P. 13-14). In the second, Haberman (2001a) reported both Hamas and Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for a terrorist act, even though Hamas later took full responsibility (P.21). By publishing reports of guilt when others already assumed full responsibility, the authors unnecessarily place blame where it does not belong. Furthermore, on August 11, Haberman (2001b) reported on Israel’s response to the Palestinian suicide bomber:

As Israel draped itself in mourning for its latest terrorism victims, senior Israeli officials vowed today to keep control of important Palestinian offices that the army and the police had seized overnight. Hours after a Palestinian suicide bomber killed 15 people and himself on Thursday in a crowded pizzeria in downtown Jerusalem, Israel responded with a direct blow to the heart of Palestinian nationalism. Its forces took over nine buildings in East Jerusalem and its outskirts, most significantly Orient House, a squat stone building on Abu Ubaida Street that had come to symbolize Palestinian yearnings for a state, with Jerusalem as its capital. Foreign leaders and diplomats routinely made pilgrimages there, affirming a sense among Palestinians that it was, in effect, their government house. (Haberman, 2001b, P. 1-3)

This segment portrayed Israel as a grieving nation that was taking military action in response to terrorism, even though the suicide bomber attacked individual people while the Israeli government attacked the Palestinian Authority. This portrayal left the impression that the suicide bomber was somehow related to the Palestinian Authority when there was no indication it was true. As a result, the Palestinian Authority was placed in a negative position due to the anti-extremist attitude.
August 13 featured another *USA Today* article regarding a Palestinian suicide bomber, also allegedly at the hands of the Islamic Jihad (Kelley 2001b):

At least 20 people were injured Sunday when a Palestinian suicide bomber blew himself up at a cafe near the coastal city of Haifa. The militant Muslim group Islamic Jihad took responsibility. (Kelley, 2001b, P. 1)

In this case, the information highlights Palestinian violence while *USA Today* omitted entirely from their newspaper any information surrounding violence against the Palestinians, including information that was contained in a *New York Times* article about an 8-year-old Palestinian girl who was killed during “intense exchanges of fire between Israeli forces and Palestinian gunmen” (Haberman, 2001c, P. 4). However, even in the *New York Times* article, the girl’s death was not discussed until the fourth paragraph, instead spending three paragraphs discussing another Palestinian suicide bombing:

The struggle over shuttered Palestinian offices in Jerusalem intensified today as another Palestinian suicide bomber blew himself up in a group of Israelis, this time at a cafe outside Haifa. About 15 people were wounded, none gravely, the police said. The only death was that of the bomber, whom the Islamic Holy War group claimed as one of its own. Even without Israeli deaths, the explosion near Haifa, in the Qiryat Motzkin suburb, was one more jolt for a country already extremely jittery because of a lengthening string of terrorist incidents. (Haberman, 2001c, P. 1-3)

The information about this Palestinian attack was unrelated to the girl’s death, serving only to further vilify the Palestinian extremists. The lack of information provided about the girl’s death at the hands of the Israeli government avoids placing the government in a negative role, further evidencing a pro-government attitude.

The theme of Palestinian extremist violence continued the next week when *USA Today* ran an article describing an Israeli campaign against dozens of alleged Palestinian terrorists, providing even more salience for Palestinian violence:

Hundreds of Israeli soldiers backed by 70 tanks leveled a Palestinian police station today in what officials say was retaliation for recent suicide bombings. (Kelley, 2001d, P. 1).

This article makes it clear that hundreds of Israeli soldiers and 70 tanks were used in the attack. Judging from the number of Israeli soldiers, a reader may believe Palestinians were also great in number. However, the article makes no mention of how many Palestinians were actually present at the time. If the number was small, its inclusion would have made the Israelis seem
overly harsh because they outnumbered the Palestinians. If the number was large, it would have provided a reason for the number of Israeli resources, and its omission would not make sense. As it is, the reader does not know from the article whether the use of so many Israeli resources was necessary or excessive.

The same day, the New York Times ran a Reuters (2001) article about “Muslim militants [who] vowed today to avenge the killing of a Palestinian fighter and his two children with more suicide bombings in Israel” (P. 1). This threat is not out of the ordinary, which makes this article lack a newsworthy quality. However, in spite of its lack of newsworthiness, the publication of further Palestinian threat adds to the anti-extremist theme contained in the news articles.

The second type of story frame, which incorporates narratives to support the theme, can be seen as late as September 10, 2001, when a New York Times article depicted the story of “a small man trying to carry a large box along a bustling railway platform at the start of Israel’s work week” (Bennet, 2001, P. 3). The article then added details, such as the man’s blue jeans and checked shirt, the crowdedness of the platform, and the expressions of those responding to the attack, furthering the imagery in the reader’s mind. All of the descriptions were a part of an article providing the news of “a jackhammer series of terrorist blows” in Israel (Bennet, 2001, P. 1).

The story frame is also seen in Fisher’s (2001b) article in the New York Times on September 5. In this article, Fisher describes the previously mentioned attack on Macedonian soldiers:

> It was on the mountain that on Friday morning, Aug. 10, the two antitank mines exploded a few miles from Ljubo-ten, killing eight Macedonian soldiers. Two days earlier, 10 Macedonian soldiers had been killed in another ambush. Emotions were running high among the nation's police officers, soldiers and reservists. (Fisher, 2001b, P. 14)

In this segment, Fisher provides the background for the narrative that follows. Fisher continues:

> Early that evening, after a lull, the shelling resumed. A villager, Fazil Duraku, 25, said he saw a panic-stricken boy, Erxhan Aliu, 6, die in the shelling. "There were two or three people in one spot, and this boy was trying to go toward them," he said. "The shell landed maybe the distance of one palm-width away from him, and it threw him into the air." On Friday evening, he said, "We went to our basement because the shooting didn't stop all night." (Fisher, 2001b, P. 16)
Possibly in an attempt to incite empathy from the reader, this narrative provides a vivid description of a young child who died during the conflict – a conflict for which the ethnic Albanians are allegedly responsible. By describing the harming of a child, Fisher also utilizes a tactic that can result in negative feelings toward the suspected culprits of the attack. Simply put, a reader typically does not like the thought of harm coming to a child. As a result, readers do not like those who are supposedly responsible for harming the child.

Yet another example of story framing during this time period comes from the previously mentioned September 3 article concerning Israeli children returning to school. This article advances the narrative of Barbara Ben-Ami and her 6-year-old son, Boaz (Haberman, 2001g). “Naturally, mother and son were excited. But it was the start of the first school year since violence broke out 11 months ago, and that made it hard to keep dread from creeping in at the edges” (Haberman, 2001g, P. 3). The imagery of dread “creeping in at the edges” provides the reader insight into the situation of the mother and her young son, insight which is supplemented by quotations from Ms. Ben-Ami:

Young as he is, Boaz sensed that things were out of kilter, his mother said. “Whenever something like that is on TV, you try to shut it off,” she said. “He does feel the tension.” … “You’re frightened,” she said. “It’s something that you think about all the time. You don’t want to put your kids on a bus, so you end up driving them because you fear that something could happen on the bus.” (Haberman, 2001g, P. 5; P. 7)

In total, four Israelis gave their narratives in this article. This is in contrast to the lone Palestinian quoted. As with the valence and semantic framing discussed earlier, this story framing is pro-government and anti-extremist, in this case by placing Israeli citizens (members of the ruling majority) in the role of victim.

In comparison to the abundance of articles regarding Palestinian and Albanian violence, few articles feature news of Israeli or Macedonian violence. One such article published by USA Today on August 14, “Israeli Tanks Attack Bombers' Base City,” tells of Israeli soldiers who destroyed a Palestinian police station in Jenin as well as several police stations in the area. The end of the article justifies the violence, explaining, “Up to eight Palestinian suicide bombers came from Jenin. Among them, Israeli officials say, is the man who blew up a pizzeria in Jerusalem on Thursday, killing himself and 15 other people” (Kelley, 2001c, P. 5). This event was also covered in the New York Times (Haberman, 2001d; 2001e). A second event was covered in the New York Times on August 16, this time regarding the Israeli killing of a member
of the Palestinian militia (Haberman, 2001f). However, out of 21 paragraphs, only four discuss the Israeli violence; the remainder of the article discusses arrests and the suicide bombing of the pizza restaurant.

When comparing the sheer number of articles focusing on the theme of extremist violence to the number focusing on government-sponsored violence, it is clear that there is more coverage of extremist violence. This seems skewed for the Israeli/Palestinian conflict considering the death count was 191 Israelis and 469 Palestinians (B’Tselem, 2009). The same is true when examining the amount of narrative provided at the benefit of Israelis and Macedonians (the ruling majorities) versus the amount provided at the benefit of Palestinians and Albanians (among them are extremists in the minority).

Summary

In examining the valence frames, semantic frames, and story frames of acts of terrorism as used in the New York Times and USA Today during the month leading up to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, two commonalities emerge. First, if someone is viewed as defending themselves, then their actions are unlikely to be described as terrorism. This is seen through the cases of the Macedonian and Israeli governments, whose violence against Albanians and Palestinians was portrayed as retaliation. This provides the understanding that terrorism is not a governmental tool, but is instead an extremist act.

The second commonality observed is the pro-government and anti-extremist theme, which is likely to continue because of the extremist natures of the perpetrators of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Extremists are cast in a negative light by valence frames in articles surrounding the Israeli/Palestinian conflict because the Palestinian extremists are cast in a negative light. Furthermore, ethnic Albanians extremists are vilified by semantic choices in articles surrounding the conflict between ethnic Albanians and the Macedonian government.

In summary, of the 32 articles reporting on acts of terrorism between August 10 and September 10, 2001, 17 (approximately 37.8%) framed terrorism in some fashion, while the others were straightforward in providing only pertinent facts and statistics which, through a thorough reading of the articles, did not appear to have any type of frame. The frames used indicate a pro-government and anti-extremist slant in articles in the New York Times and USA Today, such as those used in articles that avoid vilifying the Israeli and Macedonian
governments while highlighting extremist acts allegedly committed by ethnic Albanians and Palestinians. This finding is important because it is necessary to know how news articles were framed prior to 9/11 so that we may see how the frames changed after the terrorist attack on the United States.
Chapter 4: Analysis of News Articles Six Months After 9/11

The worst nightmare I ever had about Vietnam was that I had to go back.
I woke up in a sweat, in total terror.
- Oliver Stone

From March 10 to April 10, 2002, the month following the six month anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, a total of 71 articles in the New York Times and USA Today report on acts of terrorism. The valence frames, semantic frames, and story frames observed through a careful reading of these articles represent an increase of approximately 57.8% from the period examined in chapter three (August 10 to September 10, 2001). Of these 71 articles, 38 featured at least one type of framing of terrorism (approximately 53.5%). The remaining 33 articles (46.5%) present only clear facts that did not highlight or omit any information that would slant the article in an obvious way. Regarding the context, the articles during this time period focus primarily on conflicts between Israelis and Palestinians and on the conflicts between terrorist organizations, such as al Qaeda, and the United States and its allies.

During March and early April of 2002, the Israeli/Palestinian conflict grew to a new level of violence, resulting in a total of 134 deaths bringing the total to 411 Israelis and 1,280 Palestinians since the most recent conflict began in September 2000 (New York Times, 2002). Meanwhile, American forces were engaged in Operation Anaconda as part of the “War on Terrorism.” This operation featured U.S. military and CIA Paramilitary officers working with allied Afghan military forces to destroy Al Qaeda and Taliban forces in the Shah-i-Kot Valley and Arma Mountains southeast of Zormat (Friscolanti, 2006). Using news reports describing these two storylines, the following analysis provides insight into the frames of terrorism used in the New York Times and USA Today six months following 9/11.

Valence Frame

A valence frame places an act in either a positive or negative light. All 71 articles analyzed placed terrorism in a negative light because terrorism, itself is a negative valence frame, as discussed in chapter three. Other valence frames occurred in 16 of 38 articles (approximately 42.1%) from March 10 to April 10, 2002. This type of framing is the most common type of frame used during the time period.
Matthew Kalman’s March 14 (2002b) article, “Terrorist Says Orders Come From Arafat,” uses a valence frame that places the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, in a negative light by aligning him with a terrorist organization, stating, “a leader of the largest Palestinian terrorist group spearheading suicide bombings and other attacks against Israel says he is following the orders of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat” (P. 1). In fact, Arafat is aligned with the terrorist group throughout the article in spite of information to the contrary:

Abu Rudeineh, Arafat’s chief spokesman, says he has never heard of Thabet. ”The president has nothing to do with these things, he has nothing to say about this issue,” Rudeineh says. Israeli security officials concede Arafat is not involved in directing the on-the-ground operations of militant groups. (Kalman, 2002b, P. 5; P. 8)

Other than these two paragraphs, in which even Israeli security officials argue Arafat is not involved in the attacks, the remainder of the article places Arafat, the Muslim Palestinian leader, in a negative light. However, unlike the valence framing from August 10 to September 10, 2001, the Palestinians were no longer the only faction of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict portrayed in a negative light.

In Schemann’s March 14 (2002a) article, “Mideast Turmoil: The Offensive,” the author portrays the Israeli government in a negative light. This is accomplished by describing the Israeli troops, in tanks, “entering the [Palestinian] refugee camp from three directions” (Schemann, 2002a, P. 1). The use of tanks is excessive for a refugee camp, unless the goal is attacking the refugee camp, which was not the case. The goal was to capture Palestinian “terrorists,” but was largely unsuccessful because “the men most wanted by the Israelis slipped the dragnet” (Schemann, 2002a, P. 14-15). The vilifying of the Israeli government continues:

Within hours of the Israeli withdrawal Saturday night, a freshly printed poster with 10 "martyrs" was plastered on every wall, including the picture of a 9-year-old boy shot on his stoop, and another of a slim man in shirt and tie who had worked in an ambulance. (Schemann, 2002a, P. 16)

This valence frame is accomplished by reporting the death of a 9-year-old boy at the hands of Israeli violence. The anti-Israeli-government sentiment, which was not present in the articles from 2001, can be explained by the U.S. mistrust of anyone from the Middle East as a result of the knowledge of the 9/11 attackers’ Middle-Eastern heritage. This valence frame, along with the continued use of valence frames placing Palestinian violence in a negative light, indicates an anti-violence attitude in the New York Times and USA Today during this time period.
In Pakistan, the anti-extremist frame discussed in chapter three is perpetuated in Wiseman’s March 18 (2002) article in *USA Today*, “2 Americans, 3 Others Die in Church Attack.” In this article, the author explains that “No group immediately claimed responsibility for the assault” (Wiseman, 2002, P. 6). However, in spite of no clear indication of who was responsible for the attack, Wiseman (2002) goes on to question the role of Islamic extremist groups, providing seemingly unnecessary information:

Musharraf banned several Islamic extremist groups and jailed hundreds of their followers in a major crackdown announced on Jan. 12. Even before that, the militants, who supported the hard-line Islamic Taliban regime that had led Afghanistan, were furious at Musharraf for supporting President Bush's campaign against the Taliban and Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda terrorist network. (Wiseman, 2002, P. 7)

By discussing the banning of Islamic extremist groups and their alleged responsibility for the attack, the author casts guilt upon those Islamic extremists in the groups. In aligning these groups with the deaths of those in the Protestant church that was attacked, the extremists are portrayed as guilty of killing Christians. The anti-extremist valence framing is continued by highlighting innocent Christians attacked at the hands of guilty Islamic extremists, even though guilt was not determined. This attitude is also seen in articles concerning American military battles outside of Pakistan.

In the March 18 *New York Times* article by Chivers and Rohde (2002), entitled “Turning Out Guerrillas and Terrorists to Wage a Holy War,” Americans’ deadliest battle in Afghanistan is blamed on “terror schools” that were designed to instruct pupils on “waging Islamic war”:

The Taliban and Al Qaeda resistance near Gardez was a bracing display for fighters who, despite their appearance as a ragged band of fanatics, had achieved a level of competence that American military officials say was on par with the world's best guerrilla forces. It also demonstrated the degree to which Osama bin Laden and other jihad leaders had turned Afghanistan's network of training bases and guest houses, typically described as terror schools, into a sort of two-tiered university for waging Islamic war. (Chivers & Rohde, 2002, P. 3)

This information advances the notion that the deadliest battle in Afghanistan for the American military was against extremists fighting a holy war in the name of Islam. This anti-extremist sentiment is also observed through the use of semantic frames.
Semantic Framing

Semantic framing, which uses alternative word choices, such as “half-full” rather than “half-empty” to emphasize or deemphasize an aspect of a situation, is used in 14 of 38 articles (approximately 36.8%) throughout the examined time period of March 10 to April 10, 2002.

The anti-extremist semantic frame is used in the New York Times article, “Briefly Noted; 4 Rebels Killed in Philippines,” on March 20, 2002. This article reports:

Philippine troops shot dead four Muslim guerrillas in an offensive to rescue two American hostages held by a group linked to Al Qaeda, the military said. Two members of a Philippine army patrol were wounded within earshot of American troops and four Green Berets entered the combat zone to try to retrieve the wounded. Officials said American detection equipment was helping pinpoint the Abu Sayyaf rebels, aiding chances of rescuing an American missionary couple, Martin and Gracia Burnham. [emphasis added] (Reuters & AP, 2002, P. 1)

The use of the term Muslim to describe the guerrillas is extraneous and could have easily been omitted without devaluing the context. However, with the understanding of American mistrust of Islamic extremists, the use of the term serves to reinforce the religion of those fighting against the United States in Pakistan – leading to the conclusion that the perpetrators are not just Muslim, but are Islamic extremists. Furthermore, the use of the military term “guerrillas” emphasizes the notion that the United States military is engaged in a war. Other articles also use military word choices to advance a pro-American sentiment.

In the New York Times article, “A Nation Challenged: The Fighting,” Burns uses semantic framing in a fashion that emphasizes the concept that the United States military and its allies are fighting a war as opposed to fighting a group of criminals. In the article, the enemies are referred to as “enemy soldiers” when describing the enemies that were killed in battle in the Shah-i-Kot Valley (Burns, 2002, P. 7). Later, Burns uses the militaristic terms “fighters” and “enemy fighters” (2002a, P. 14; P. 20). Additionally, this semantic framing appears in USA Today’s “Afghan: Anaconda Killed 340 Foes,” on March 22, 2002. When discussing the number of dead enemies, the author refers to them as “enemy forces” (Walt, 2002). This is another militaristic term that emphasizes the notion that the United States is fighting a war, which incites a sense of nationalism in the reader (Van Evera, 1994). By using terms that emphasize the militaristic nature of the extremist American enemies and thereby inciting a sense
of nationalism, the article advances a pro-American sentiment while also advancing an anti-extremist sentiment.

The militaristic semantic framing is complemented by the use of pro-American semantic framing. In the March 13 issue of the *New York Times*, Schmitt’s (2002) article, “A Nation Challenged: The Bombing,” reports on the casualties resulting from American military strikes against Al Qaeda in the Shah-i-Kot Valley:

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld last week seemed to prepare the American public for casualties among noncombatants, specifically the families of Al Qaeda or Taliban fighters, who had taken their families with them to the battle zone. (Schmitt, 2002, P. 7)

This part of the article discusses what could be phrased as “civilian casualties,” but rather than using this phrase, which explains that innocent people died, Schmitt (2002) instead uses “noncombatants,” a term which fails to state the victims’ status, instead saying what the victims’ status was *not* (P. 7). The author avoids vilifying the United States military by not clearly stating that civilians were killed by the American troops. This article’s avoidance of vilifying American troops indicates a pro-American sentiment, following the trend of the earlier semantic choices of the articles in this time period.

**Story Frame**

Story frames appear in six of the 38 articles (approximately 15.8%) from the time period of March 10 to April 10, 2002. Story frames, which use themes and narratives throughout an article or series of articles, are the least used of the frames during this time period.

The March 11 *New York Times* article, “A Nation Challenged: The Fighting” uses pro-American military story framing. This article provides the narrative of U.S. soldiers returning from battle:

As the helicopters touched down, troops, splashed with mud, their faces burned by long exposure to sun and snow in the thin air of a battlefield that rises above 10,000 feet, poured onto the taxiway, weighed down by 150-pound back-packs and bristling weapons….While many seemed at the far edge of fatigue after eight days of sleeping in the open in temperatures around 25 degrees, they exulted at what they described as an increasingly desperate situation for the enemy, as well as their own survival after what was, for most, their first combat experience. (Burns, 2002, P. 16-17)
This description provides a sense that the United States is still strong, just as its troops, in spite being tired and dirty, are still strong enough to carry “150-pound back-packs and bristling weapons” (Burns, 2002, P. 16). The portrayal of strong soldiers makes the American military appear strong and, as a result, makes America appear strong, indicating a pro-American sentiment. Other previously discussed sentiments continue to appear in the analysis of story frames, such as the violent Muslim theme and the anti-Palestinian sentiment.

In the *New York Times* article, “Palestinian Gunmen Use Manger Square for Cover,” Kalman continues the violent Muslim theme discussed in chapter three. This article focuses primarily on Palestinian gunmen who were avoiding capture by Israeli troops by stationing themselves outside of the Church of the Nativity, which marks the traditional birthplace of Jesus (Kalman, 2002a). Kalman provides their narrative:

Dozens of Palestinian gunmen from the three main militant Palestinian groups -- Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, Hamas and Islamic Jihad -- smoked cigarettes, drank coffee or wandered around Manger Square…. The men said they felt safe among the shuttered souvenir shops because Israel would not dare to launch an attack so close to the ancient shrine. Many of the men are wanted by Israel, which accuses them of masterminding and carrying out a long string of terror attacks, including suicide bombings over the past 10 days. (Kalman, 2002a, P. 3; P. 4)

This narrative places the Palestinian men in a violent role as well as the role of fugitives. Therefore, the notion of violent Palestinians (violent Muslims) is salient in this article, advancing the violent Muslim extremist theme.


One passenger, Staff Sgt. Vadim Veinfuss, 22, said he was sitting in the back of the bus and immediately realized that the young Arab climbing aboard was a suicide bomber. Sergeant Veinfuss, who was on his way back to his unit to celebrate his last day of army service, said he stood up and started pushing an ammunition clip into his M-16 when the man exploded…. "He was in a thick, bulging jacket, and I saw something under the jacket," Sergeant Veinfuss said at the hospital in Afula, where he was treated for cuts. "Then I took my gun and decided to go up to him. He was having some words with a passenger next to him. Just as I was about to insert the clip, he blew up." (Schemann, 2002b, P. 21-22)
The description of the suicide bomber by Staff Sgt. Veinfuss, although providing interesting detail, is not an essential narrative for this news story. Other information pertinent to the situation could have taken the narrative’s place in the article, such as the suicide bomber’s name. Instead of this information, this description may have been used to provide more detail about the Palestinian in an effort to enhance the reader’s recollection of the suicide bomber. By remembering the suicide bomber, the reader also remembers Palestinian extremist violence. Therefore, this description furthers the anti-extremist sentiment.

During this time period, valence, semantic, and story framing account for 36 occurrences of framing between March 10 and April 10, 2002. The remaining two occurrences of framing occur within a new type of framing that emerged during the examination of the articles.

**Sensational Fear Method**

Although it only appeared once during this analysis, a new framing method emerged in the articles from March 10 to September 10, 2002. This method, the “sensational fear method,” uses frames to place information in a context in which the author sensationalizes events by withholding information until the end of the article. If s/he does not read the article in its entirety, the reader may be led to believe s/he is susceptible to some type of terrorism when, in fact, the danger is minimal or not at all present.

The sensational fear method is seen in one of the 38 articles (approximately 2.6%). Although its use is minimal, the sensational fear method’s existence is clear because of the use of fear appeals even when susceptibility to a threat is not present. This method could be seen as a pseudo-fear appeal, which typically would be used as a method to motivate people to adopt a recommendation so that they will avoid a negative state (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953; Janis & Feshbach, 1953, 1954). In contrast, these articles present no recommendations to avoid a negative state because none are necessary; there is no threat and therefore no susceptibility, yet the author sensationalizes the events.

The rare usage of the sensational fear method is likely related to questionable journalistic practices. Using readers’ fear and insecurities to gain readership when it is not warranted (i.e. there is no reason for the reader to be afraid) may be unethical. Furthermore, the rare usage observed in this study may be due to the medium studied. A newspaper may only have one or
two editions to fill with news each day, whereas 24 hour news channels may use the sensational fear method more often because they need to fill time and keep viewers interested.

The sensational fear method is used in the March 27 New York Times article, “A Nation Challenged: The Bioterror Threat” [sic]. In this article, Grady (2002) reports that a “94-year-old Connecticut woman who died of inhalation anthrax” may have come into contact with the anthrax while opening junk mail (P. 1). The author explains that the mail was always suspected. The notion that junk mail leaves citizens vulnerable to anthrax contamination is startling. However, “Connecticut's state epidemiologist, Dr. James L. Hadler, said that none of Mrs. Lundgren's first-class mail was found to have passed through contaminated postal centers” (Grady, 2002, P. 3).

In this article, Grady (2002) uses the story of the woman’s death as a story frame to give readers enough information at the beginning to believe they are vulnerable to an act of terrorism. It is not until later parts of the article that the concern of susceptibility is questioned or negated. This leaves the reader open to being misled by the article to believe they are susceptible when they are not, sensationalizing the events.

**Summary**

In summary, the valence, semantic, and story frames examined in the New York Times and USA Today from March 10 to April 10, 2002, indicate an anti-violence sentiment, due to the portrayal of both Israelis and Palestinians as violent and unwilling or unable to compromise with each other. The anti-Palestinian-violence sentiment comes from articles aligning Yasser Arafat with a terrorist organization, while the anti-Israeli-violence sentiment stems from articles vilifying the Israeli army. Additionally, frames advance a pro-American frame, indicated by the lack of clarity regarding civilian casualties at the hands of the United States military, as well as the strong America metaphor provided by the framing of American soldiers.

Finally, the sensational fear method emerges from the text, indicating articles are framed in a manner so that information is sensationalized so readers are led to believe they are vulnerable to terrorist attacks, possibly in an attempt to broaden readership. This is seen in an article concerning anthrax found in junk mail.

The findings point toward a shift in the framing tactics used after 9/11. In addition to an anti-extremist frame, all violence of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict are placed in a negative light,
even when committed by the Israeli government. This indicates a shift from an anti-extremist attitude to a more general anti-violence attitude. The next chapter explores whether or not these frames continue in 2008 or if they were a temporary product of 9/11.
Chapter 5: Analysis of News Articles from 2008

This chapter analyzes the valence frames, semantic frames, and story frames of acts of terrorism, as used in the New York Times and USA Today during the month leading up to the seven-year anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. A total of 58 articles in these two publications report on acts of terrorism between August 10 and September 10, 2008. These articles were provided by a LexisNexis search of the term “terrorism” and further refined by omitting articles which, upon reading, were found to not discuss acts of terrorism. In total, 12 of the 58 articles analyzed (approximately 20.7%) feature at least one type of framing of terrorism. The remaining 46 articles present only clear facts that did not highlight or omit any information that would slant the article in an obvious way. It is interesting to note that a great majority (approximately 79.3%) of the articles did not feature a type of framing. This indicates a shift from chapters three and four, in which nearly half of the articles were framed.

The articles during this time period focus primarily on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, as well as other conflicts occurring in the Middle East that were related to the War on Terrorism. Other articles focus on the arrest of individuals believed to be responsible for the 2006 terrorist scare in Britain.

In the late summer of 2008, Senators Barack Obama and John McCain were vying for the United States presidency while the Olympic Games were taking place in China amid controversy surrounding the country’s alleged human rights violations. In the meantime, the United States military continued its presence in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Israelis and Palestinians were working to sustain a sense of peace amid pressure from the West, and the British government was working to establish guilt in the 2006 transatlantic aircraft terrorism plot (Burns & Sciolino, 2008). Using news reports describing these storylines, the following analysis provides insight into the frames used in the New York Times and USA Today seven years after 9/11.

Valence Frame

A valence frame places an act in either a positive or negative light. Due to the nature of terrorism, all 58 articles analyzed placed terrorism in a negative light because terrorism is, in itself, a negative valence frame, as discussed in chapter three. Aside from this use of the valence frame, other uses occurred in 8 of 12 articles (approximately 66.7%) from August 10 to September 10, 2008.
In the August 13 *New York Times* article, “13 Killed in Attack On a Bus in Pakistan,” valence frames are used to place American military actions against terrorists in Pakistan in a negative light. This was accomplished by unnecessarily including the information that the military was “risking retaliation from the militants and the wrath of thousands of civilians who have been forced to flee their homes” (Perlez & Shah, 2008a, P. 1). This information leaves the reader with the tragic reality that civilians were homeless because of the actions taken by the United States military – a reality that places the United States military violence in a negative light. This sentiment can be explained by American citizens’ tiredness of continued military presence in the Middle East, which is evidenced by their worry that “the cost in blood may be too high, and they don’t think Osama bin Laden will ever be caught” (Associated Press, 2006).

The United States military violence continues to be placed in a negative light in the August 15 *New York Times* article, “Bomber Kills 18 on Shiite Pilgrimage in Iraq.” In this article, Robertson (2008) delivers the story of a suicide bomber who killed at least 18 people. However, the author also states, “And at Camp Bucca, an American military base in southern Iraq, six sailors who were working as prison guards in Iraq are facing courts-martial on charges of abusing detainees, the United States Navy said in a statement on Thursday” (Robertson, 2008, P. 2). This information is completely irrelevant to the issue on which the author is reporting – the suicide bombing. Although newsworthy, the information is not pertinent to this article and only serves to place violent acts of members of the American military in a negative light, furthering the anti-U.S. military violence sentiment.

The anti-extremist attitude is continued in the August 20, 2008 *New York Times* article, “Bomber Kills At Least 43 Near Capital of Algeria”:

The Algerian government has strived in recent years to convince the outside world that its crackdown against insurgents was working and that the threat from terrorism inside Algeria had diminished. The country enjoyed a period of relative peace after the suppression of a bloody insurgency in the 1990s that claimed the lives of more than 150,000 people. But the violence returned in 2006 after an insurgent group, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, swore allegiance to Al Qaeda. (Brothers, 2008, P. 3-4)

The valence frame used here places Islamic insurgents (extremists) in a negative light by aligning them with Al Qaeda. The article reports that a suicide bomber attacked a police academy in Algeria – an attack for which neither Al Qaeda nor Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
have claimed responsibility, calling into question the author’s choice to include the above excerpt. It was unnecessary to mention Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, but by bringing them into the article, the author advances the notion that Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb may have been responsible for the attack.

Erlanger (2008) uses this same type of framing in his August 21, 2008 New York Times article, “Blasts Kill 12 and Damage a Military Compound in Algeria”: “There has been a string of bombings in Algeria since December 2006, when the largest remaining insurgent group in the country, dating from the 1990s, changed its name to Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and swore allegiance to Al Qaeda” (P. 7). Again, this information about Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, which aligns Muslim extremists with Al Qaeda, is an unnecessary component of the article. The inclusion of the “Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb” aligns Muslim extremists with the blast that killed twelve people and therefore aligns Muslim extremists with violence and terror, further evidencing the notion of an anti-extremist attitude. Through this article and the three others discussed in this segment, this time period shows a continuation of the anti-extremist valence frames observed in earlier time periods.

Semantic Frame

Semantic framing, which uses alternative word choices to emphasize or deemphasize an aspect of a situation, is used in 8 of 12 articles (approximately 66.7%) throughout the examined time period of August 10 to September 10, 2008. This type of framing is the most common type of frame used during the time period.

Anti-extremist frames continue during the time period of August 10 to September 10, 2008. In an August 20, 2008, New York Times article, “10 French Soldiers Killed Near Kabul,” Brothers and Rachman (2008) emphasize that it was Islamic extremist terrorists who were committing terrorist acts in Afghanistan, and that other “radical Islamic terrorists may have shifted their focus to Afghanistan from Iraq” (Brothers & Rachman, 2008, P. 2). Stressing the notion of “radical Islamic terrorists” frames the information in a way that can produce an anti-extremist sentiment in the reader.

An August 28, 2008, New York Times article, “5th Arrest in Britain on Suspected Terrorist Plot,” reports on a group of individuals who were arrested in England for their plot to assassinate British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and former Prime Minister Tony Blair (Cowell, 2008). This same story is continued by Burns and Sciolino (2008) in a New York Times
article on September 9 entitled, “No One Convicted of Terror Plot to Bomb Planes.” In both cases, the authors continue the anti-extremist semantic framing, explaining that one of the arrested individuals is “believed to be a white Muslim convert,” and later that they were “all British Muslims aged 24 to 30” (Burns & Sciolino, 2008, P. 11; Cowell, 2008, P. 3). The religion of the alleged terrorists does not need to be included in the article unless it relates to their crime. In the case of this article, religious extremism was never established. However, this religious categorization aligned the terrorists with Islam, making it appear that they may have been Islamic extremists and furthering the anti-extremist sentiment.


A car bomb apparently planted by Taliban insurgents blew up a police bus in northwestern Pakistan on Thursday, killing at least eight people, security officials said. The bombing followed a pattern of Taliban attacks against government security installations in retaliation for a fierce Pakistani military campaign, including airstrikes, in the tribal area of Bajaur. The continuing campaign has inflicted heavy casualties on the Islamic militants. (Perlez & Shah, 2008b, P. 1-2)

By using the phrase “Islamic militants” when discussing whom the Pakistani military was targeting in a campaign against terrorism in the tribal area of Bajaur, the authors unnecessarily state the militant’s religion, again making it appear as though the militants were Islamic extremists.

Furthermore, in a September 1, 2008, New York Times article, “Terrorism Suspect is Returned to Philippines,” the author states:

Philippine authorities on Saturday said they had in custody a leader and founder of the Islamic extremist group involved in the bombing of a passenger ship here in 2004, which killed 116 people. It was the worst terrorist attack in Southeast Asia since the Bali bombings in October 2002, when 202 people died. (Conde, 2008, P. 1)

This use of the phrase “Islamic extremist group” in the story is yet another instance of semantic framing that unnecessarily brings to attention the extremist background of the terrorists, advancing the notion of an anti-extremist sentiment in the New York Times.

The eight articles featuring semantic framing from August 10 to September 10, 2008, display the continuance of an anti-extremist attitude, as seen through the semantic choices of “radical” when describing terrorists, as well as the unnecessary aligning of terrorists with the
same religion that is associated with al Qaeda. The next section analyzes whether or not this or any other attitudes emerged through the use of story framing from August 10 to September 10, 2008.

**Story Frame**

Story frames appear in only two of the 12 articles (approximately 16.7%) from the time period of August 10 to September 10, 2008. During this time period, story frames, which use themes and narratives throughout an article or series of articles, is the least used of the frames.

Perlez and Shah’s August 13 (2008a) article, “13 Killed In Attack On a Bus In Pakistan,” features the narrative of a man who was nearly a victim of the U.S. military’s attack on terrorists in his home village:

> Another man who escaped, Samiullah Khan, a trader, said the Taliban had attacked a convoy of the Frontier Corps, a government paramilitary group, not far from his house in the village of Tang Khataa, about three miles from Loe Sam. In response, a government helicopter gunship that fired a furious volley that pummeled his house, he said. As he fled, Mr. Khan said, the debris of two Frontier Corps trucks, a destroyed tank and a food truck littered the road near his house. The bodies of two soldiers lay near the tank, he said. The air attack had turned him against the government, Mr. Shah said. "I am now one of them," he said of the Taliban. "I have lost my nephew, I have no fare to get back. I hate the government very much." (Perlez & Shah, 2008a, P. 12-14)

This frame gives the reader the sense that the U.S. military’s attack on the area was a poorly planned retaliation, placing the violence in a negative frame. This anti-violence notion is furthered in a September 4 *New York Times* article, “Handshake Defuses a Standoff in Baghdad,” when Goode (2008) provides the narrative of a man whom the Iraqi government is persecuting:

> Ali Abdul Jabbar, an Awakening commander in the Adhamiya neighborhood, sat tautly in a battered green ```-chair at his headquarters early Wednesday afternoon, waiting for the Iraqi Army to come and try to arrest him. His men -- armed with Kalashnikov rifles, ammunition pouches hanging from their chests -- guarded the door, prepared to defend him if the army arrived. Other members of the Awakening Council, one of the Sunni-dominated citizen patrols backed by American forces here, lounged around the room, drinking Pepsis and observing a one-day strike called in protest of Mr. Jabbar's rumored status as a wanted man. But a few hours later, the atmosphere appeared to have calmed. Mr. Jabbar and an Iraqi Army captain stood in front of the neighborhood's Abu Hanifa mosque, shaking hands and exchanging mutual expressions of support and friendship. The strike was called off. And the warrant was forgotten, if it
had ever existed; the captain told Mr. Jabbar it had never been issued. (Goode, 2008, P. 1-3)

The man and the Iraqi government are both considered partners of the United States military, yet they do not trust each other. The story frame of Mr. Jabbar highlights the two parties’ views of each other as untrustworthy. As a result of reading this frame, the reader may question why the U.S. government has allies who some consider untrustworthy. If the U.S. government has untrustworthy allies, it may also be untrustworthy, and the violence of the conflict may therefore be under false pretenses. This is an indication of an anti-violence frame because it calls into question the legitimacy of the need for violence by the U.S. military.

**Summary**

The frames during the time period of August 10 to September 10, 2008, indicate an anti-violence attitude in the *New York Times* and *USA Today*. This is evidenced through the framing of the U.S. military’s violence as sloppy and questioning the need for the violence. The notion that the United States military’s violence is unnecessary comes from the valence framed article reporting American sailors facing courts-martial because of abuse of detainees and the use of story framing to depict U.S. military violence as unjustified. The sloppy notion comes from the story framed article providing information about a lack of planning for military retaliation.

The anti-extremist framing discussed in previous chapters is also seen in this time period. The valence framed articles, “Bomber Kills At Least 43 Near Capital of Algeria,” and “Blasts Kill 12 and Damage a Military Compound in Algeria,” portray extremists in Algeria and Israel as violent people who are aligned with al Qaeda. Members of al Qaeda are the U.S. military’s extremist enemies. Therefore, these articles also provide the notion that extremists in Algeria and Israel are enemies of America. This is also accomplished by the semantic framing of extremists as dangerous radicals in “10 French Soldiers Killed Near Kabul,” “5th Arrest in Britain on Suspected Terrorist Plot,” “No One Convicted of Terror plot to Bomb Planes,” “Car Bombing of Police Bus Kills 8 in Pakistan as the Taliban Pursue Security Forces,” “Terrorism Suspect is Returned to Philippines,” and “Giuliani Says Dems In Denial About Terrorism.”

Overall, 12 articles featured at least one type of framing during the month leading to the seven year anniversary of 9/11. This small number indicates the use of framing decreased since the previous two time periods analyzed. This could be due to an increase in public discourse surrounding terrorism resulting in an audience that is less susceptible to framing techniques. The
next chapter examines the attitudes and notions contained in these frames, as well as the frames discussed in previous chapters, in an attempt to consider whether any framing trends emerged throughout the three time periods considered in this study.
Chapter 6: Conclusions and Implications

This analysis has brought to light the various frames used in articles depicting terrorism in *The New York Times* and *USA Today* between August 10 and September 10, 2001; March 10 and April 10, 2002; and August 10 and September 10, 2008. Chapter one provided the following research question:

**RQ:** How did the U.S. print media frame the term *terrorism* immediately before and in the years following September 11, 2001?

The analysis shows evidence of frames used in articles in *The New York Times* and *USA Today*. These frames indicate an anti-extremist sentiment in the articles from 2001. The articles from 2002 indicate sentiments that were anti-Islamic-extremist in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, and also indicate sentiments that were anti-violence, no matter who was committing the violence. Furthermore, the articles from 2002 illustrate the emergence of the “sensational fear method,” which uses frames in a manner that sensationalizes events so that readers are led to believe they are vulnerable to terrorist attacks, but information is later brought to light that reveals minimal or nonexistent susceptibility. Finally, the articles from 2008 indicate sentiments that were anti-extremist and anti-violence. The implications of these findings can be seen on the societal level, as we work toward religious tolerance. Furthermore, implications can be seen on the governmental level as our leaders try to gain public support for international policies.

**Implications**

The frames observed in the articles in 2001 evidence an anti-extremist sentiment even before 9/11, indicating 9/11 may not be to blame for all anti-extremist attitudes in the United States. This information is important because it shows researchers need to search beyond 9/11/2001 for the cause of anti-extremist sentiments.

In examining the articles from 2002, we find anti-extremist and anti-violence sentiments. These frames indicate a shift from 2001, when the anti-violence frames were not present. The possible explanations for this shift include the notion that Americans desired a sense of peace after 9/11. Due to the violence on American soil, Americans may have been weary of their subjection to violence that occurred elsewhere, either because they only cared about violence in
the United States or because they did not want to think about violence at all. This resulted in an anti-violence attitude in the U.S. print media. This information is important because, as with the anti-extremist sentiment carrying over to another group of people, so may the anti-violence sentiment. If researchers are able to witness the beginning of this process, we may be able to understand how the rhetoric evolves with the sentiment.

The 2008 frames indicate continued anti-extremist and anti-violence sentiments in The New York Times and USA Today. This can be explained by the notion that the citizens of the United States are growing tired of their military’s engagement in ongoing violence against extremists in the Middle East. The longer the U.S. military is engaged in conflict in the Middle East, the more U.S. soldiers lose their lives. The friends and family of these soldiers likely do not want their friends/relatives to die, thus they do not want to read of extremists that may endanger their loved ones, nor do they want to read of any violence that may remind them of the ongoing conflicts facing the U.S. military.

This knowledge aids government officials in their efforts to create policy in the new Obama administration. Mueller’s (1973) “Rally ‘Round the Flag Syndrome” explains that increased support of the President of the United States and his agenda increases during sharply focused periods of international crisis or war. The longer U.S. troops are in the Middle East, the less the conflict is sharply focused, resulting in a decrease in popular support of the President and his agenda. Therefore, if President Obama wants public support, he likely does not want to highlight any new military policies or strategies that will keep U.S. troops in the Middle East.

For the communication field, the awareness of the anti-extremist and anti-violence sentiments is important because it provides political communication scholars the opportunity to see that the presence of these frames came about during the of support for the conflict in the Middle East. Furthermore, this research allows communication scholars the opportunity to examine how a war which once had public support through the Rally ‘Round the Flag Syndrome came to be viewed as a political quagmire which many viewed as the disgrace of the Bush Administration, the framing of the conflict in the print media also changed.

**Importance, Limitations, and Areas for Future Research**

This research is important because it deepens the understanding of available framing categories. In addition to Hallahan’s (1999) categories of valence framing, semantic framing,
and story framing, the notion of sensational fear method emerged from this study. This method uses frames to place information in a context in which the author sensationalizes a threat of terrorism that likely does not exist. However, this method was rarely observed in the articles which were analyzed, possibly because using readers’ fear and insecurities to gain readership when it is not warranted (i.e. there is no reason for the reader to be afraid) may be unethical. Furthermore, the rare usage observed in this study may be due to the medium studied. A newspaper may only have one or two editions to fill with news each day, whereas 24 hour news channels may use the sensational fear method more often because they need to fill time and keep viewers interested. For this reason, future research may extend this study to other time periods, sources, and mediums. The sensational fear method could have a more widespread use in areas not analyzed in this study. Future research may discover that, if an act of terrorism occurs and fear of terrorism is at a high level, frames using the sensational fear method may be commonplace in an attempt to take advantage of readers’ fears and increase readership.

Regarding our understanding of Hallahan’s categories of valence framing, semantic framing, and story framing, our knowledge is furthered in two ways. First, regarding valence frames, which place information in either a positive or negative light, no articles placed an act of terrorism in a positive light. Therefore, we can understand that the label of terrorism is, in itself, a negative valence frame. When an act is labeled as terrorism, the act is placed in a negative valence frame; when a person is labeled as a terrorist, the person is placed in a negative valence frame. Alternatively, an act could be placed in a positive light by labeling it a “crusade” or a person who commits violent acts could be placed in a positive light by labeling them a “freedom fighter.” With this in mind, every article analyzed that discussed terrorism and labeled it as such, was already using a negative valence frame.

Second, semantic frames and story frames can be used to enhance a valence frame. Semantic choices can help a rhetor place information in a positive or negative light. Semantic choices that emphasize a positive aspect and/or deemphasize a negative aspect of a situation would place that situation in a positive valence frame. On the other hand, semantic choices that emphasize a negative aspect and/or deemphasize a positive aspect of a situation would place that situation in a negative valence frame. Furthermore, story frames can use themes or narratives that place information in a positive or negative light.
There are limitations to this study. The first limitation is the fact that this study, as a rhetorical analysis, does not feature an experimental design. As a result, this study cannot determine causality regarding why certain frames were used. Second, this study examined articles from only two U.S. newspapers and from only three relatively small points of time. Therefore, generalizability cannot be determined because other newspapers or other time periods may present different findings.

Also, the frames observed in this analysis may be caused by institutional and pragmatic issues journalists face, such as word count or editorial decisions. Further, information may be portrayed in a certain manner because a journalist may only have access to certain areas or spokespersons, or they may face commercial influence, which is beyond the scope of this study. For example, a journalist may need to remove aspects of an article that reflect poorly upon companies who advertise in the newspaper, or the editor may change an article’s length or move it to a poor page location to benefit another article that may be more pertinent to readers.

The next step in this research should be a study focusing on the existence of the sensational fear method following acts of terrorism. With the notion of the sensational fear frame brought to light, further exploration into its existence, likely utilizing a content-analysis approach, is necessary to determine whether or not this frame is an anomaly. Further research should also examine reader reaction to sensational fear frames and how readers receive and interpret those frames. A quantitative study examining the information sources and levels of fear induced in readers would yield such results.

Conclusion

The frames in this analysis indicate anti-extremist and anti-violence framing. Extremist in this analysis means someone who commits violence because they hold convictions that are contrary to governmental action or policy. This information can aid the government in efforts to gain popular support for policy decisions, as explained by the “Rally ‘Round the Flag Syndrome.” For instance, this information could be used to gain public support for the use of diplomatic intervention in the Middle East instead of military intervention.

The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon were the deadliest terrorist attacks in America’s history. So great was the magnitude of 9/11 that terrorism became a common concern among United States citizens. In the years that passed
between 9/11 and its seven-year anniversary, American media frames emerged that appear intended to alarm citizens. Further research can provide more insight into the sensational fear method, including its usages, purposes, and effectiveness. The ultimate goal is to provide more information about the sensational terror method so that readers may be aware of their usage and less prone to an unnecessary state of fear.
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