

## ABSTRACT

Race, Faith and Fear: General Press and Black Press Coverage of  
Arabs, Muslims and the Stigma of Terrorism in the United States

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The global impact of the events of September 11, 2001, provoked an interest in American media coverage of terrorism. With African-Americans making up more than 12 percent of the country's population and more than 40 percent of the country's Muslim population, an overview of black press coverage of race relations is juxtaposed with mainstream (white-owned) press coverage of black Americans. An account of the general press' mostly negative coverage of Arab-Americans and Muslims as potential terrorists follows. Clashing viewpoints of the black press and the general press are best explained by the idea that news is culture, reflecting the historical experiences and psychological and sociological makeup of white and black Americans. This content analysis of six newspapers from Atlanta, Chicago and Los Angeles found important distinctions in results before and after 9/11 but little statistical significance, primarily because of low or "0" scores amongst the minority publications.

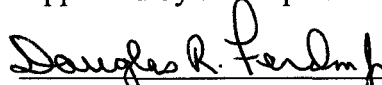
Race, Faith and Fear: General Press and Black Press Coverage of  
Arabs, Muslims and the Stigma of Terrorism in the United States

by

Robert P. Stone, B.A.

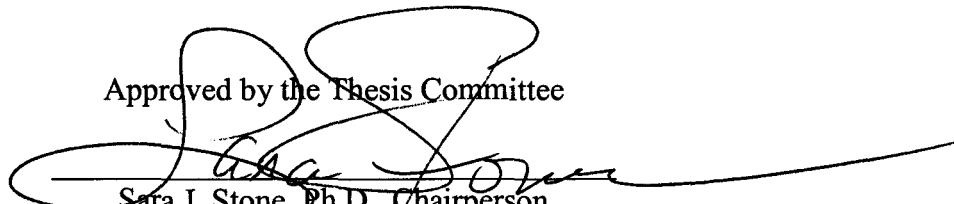
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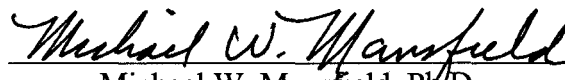
  
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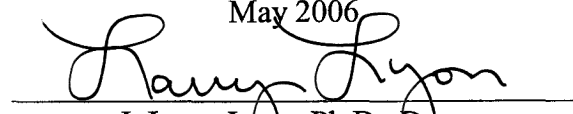
  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vii
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	5
American Evolution – Part I	
Seeing Black and White	
A New Challenge	
The “Brown Scare”	
American Evolution – Part II	
Wounded America	
Hypotheses and Research Questions	
3. METHODOLOGY	39
Research Method and Design	
Reasons for Content Analysis	
Sample Parameters	
Operational Definitions	
4. RESULTS	48
5. CONCLUSION	79
APPENDIX	85

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

BIBLIOGRAPHY

89

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1a. Blame for terrorist attacks against the United States in the General and Black Press before 9/11	49
1b. Blame for terrorist attacks against the United States in the General and Black Press after 9/11	49
2a. Information on terrorism from American government sources in the General and Black Press before 9/11 by source	50
2b. Information on terrorism from American government sources in the General and Black Press after 9/11 by source	51
2c. Information on terrorism from American non-government sources in the General and Black Press before 9/11 by source	51
2d. Information on terrorism from American non-government sources in the General and Black Press after 9/11 by source	52
3a. American approval of the federal government's anti-terrorism policy in the General and Black Press before 9/11 by source	54
3b. American disapproval of the federal government's anti-terrorism policy in the General and Black Press before 9/11 by source	55
3c. American approval of the federal government's anti-terrorism policy in the General and Black Press after 9/11 by source	55
3d. American disapproval of the federal government's anti-terrorism policy in the General and Black Press after 9/11 by source	56
4a. Depictions of Islam and Muslims in the General and Black Press before 9/11	60
4b. Depictions of Islam and Muslims in the General and Black Press after 9/11	61
4c. Definitions of "jihad" in the General and Black Press before 9/11	62
4d. Definitions of "jihad" in the General and Black Press after 9/11	63

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
5. Stereotypical selection phase in the General Press	64
6. Descriptions of Islam's role in the General and Black Press by religion	66
7. Human-Interest stories	68
8. Arab-Americans' and Muslims' place in society	69
9. News Frames in the General and Black Press	72

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

Arguably the most widespread cultural distinctions throughout U.S. history lie between white and black Americans. Although terrorism is a highly uncommon means of conflict between these racial groups, it has been an increasingly troublesome issue on the national agenda within roughly the last 10 years. According to the mass media, terrorism often involves another ethnic party and one religious group—Arabs and Muslims, respectively. Only one in 10 terrorist attacks against the United States originated in the Middle East before September 11, 2001, but the mainstream media have mentioned Arabs and Muslims when reporting on terrorism for decades (Wicks 2002, 7).

The U.S. Census Bureau reported that the number of Arabs in the country has almost doubled over 20 years, from 610,000 people in 1980 to nearly 1.2 million in 2000 (<http://www.newsmax.com/archives/articles/2003/12/3/192906.shtml>). The Arab-American Institute believes the latter figure could be far below the actual number, claiming that more than 3.5 million people in the United States are Arabs (<http://www.aaiusa.org/census.htm>). In addition, *Editor & Publisher* identified Islam as one of the most rapidly growing religions in the United States in 1994 (AL-Saeed 1997, 11). Consequently, coverage of terrorism by white-owned and black-owned American media should be studied to look for varying images of Arabs and Muslims and essential differences—real and perceived—between those two groups. As a primary incident, the

global magnitude of the September 11 attacks prompted the researcher's interest in black American media coverage of terrorism.

The primary objective of this paper is to challenge the existence of a "singular American national identity" characterized by race and/or religion (Hutcheson et al. 2002, 7). As a summary of black American and white American press history regarding race relations, the literature review shows that the black and white print media once had the same ideas but gradually adopted dissimilar and at times irreconcilable stances.

Although the national government has pressured both sides to change, the rift is due to cultural norms and traditional ways of thought as well as vastly different experiences.

The literature review initially focuses on black American print media perspectives of other minorities because studies of black American coverage of Arab-Americans, Muslims and terrorism proved elusive. Black American views are important because of the race's centuries-long struggle to gain acceptance and respect in the United States.

They [African-Americans] have

a well-deserved reputation for being in the forefront of progressive thinking regarding race. Historically, they have been significant in the shaping of American democracy, insisting that it be inclusive; they were in the forefront of the fight for civil and human rights; they have advocated an appreciation for ethnic diversity, the foundation for a truly multicultural society, and led the fight for progressive social policies (Kearney 1998, 156).

We must remember that in America, terrorism does not by any means affect whites only. Given the social progress black Americans have achieved, the fact that 12 percent of the U.S. population was black in 2000 and the fact that nearly half of the country's Muslims were black in 2003 (<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/>

0000.html), terrorism coverage from this racial minority should have substantial value in the national discourse.

The rest of the literature review focuses on mainstream print media coverage of Arabs and Muslims in the United States, along with the firmly established stereotype that portrays them as potential terrorists. This portion of the study reveals that these two groups are in dire need of a widespread movement that exposes their societal problems in detail and supports their causes in order to establish more positive images than the ones in the general press. Aside from Arab-American publications like the *ADC Times* newsletter, the rhetoric and experience of the black press provide the most convenient vehicles toward those ends. Black Americans' historical opposition to and affiliation with various minorities are precedents from which we can extrapolate their attitudes toward Arabs and Muslims. Since the mainstream media often portray Arabs and Muslims as anti- or un-American, the attitudes of black Americans may reveal cultural differences and ways to bridge them.

The consequences of the September 11 attacks could not have been more serious. President George W. Bush declared the start of a "war on terrorism" when he stated that terrorists and any nation or group supporting, arming or harboring them could face severe punishment. Before the end of 2001, the United States waged a military offensive against Saudi exile Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda (or al-Qaida) terrorist network, which was backed by the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. In March 2003, a U.S.-led coalition including armed forces from Great Britain and Australia launched Operation Iraqi Freedom with the intent to oust Saddam Hussein, provoking international dissent. The Iraqi dictator was accused of hiding chemical, biological or nuclear "Weapons of Mass

Destruction,” and Bush, dissatisfied with the progress of United Nations weapons inspections in that country, told Hussein to comply with the U.N. by March 17 or face an invasion. With the Iraqi regime expressing defiance on the day of the deadline, Bush told Hussein to leave the country by March 19. The two days passed without incident and Operation Iraqi Freedom began at 8 p.m. ET. The invasion lasted less than a month, but no WMD were found. Saddam Hussein was captured in early 2004 and an interim Iraqi government took command in June of that year, but Reuters reported that the Iraq Survey Group assigned to locate WMD ended its mission without success on January 12, 2005, (<http://aolsvc.news.aol.com/news/article.adp?id=20050112005909990004>). Although nationwide democratic elections took place two weeks later, coalition forces remained engaged in frequent and intense battles with rebel forces throughout the year.

The content analysis further examines racial and religious bias surrounding the issue of terrorism, but does not focus exclusively on mainstream print media responses to September 11 because many scholars have published such studies in the last three years. To increase the scope of coverage, viewpoints from the black American print media toward Arab-Americans and Muslims in relation to terrorism are explored.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Review of Literature

The mass media frequently have a “crucial and . . . decisive role in the enhancement or destruction of images of other people, places, religions, and nations of the world” (Kamalipour and Carilli 1998, xix). Thus when peoples of various ethnic and religious backgrounds come to the United States, their status as a minority often carries a negative connotation, signifying a group that is “small not only in number, but in importance” (Wilson and Gutierrez 1995, 5). America’s mainstream media typically report through the eyes of whites, presenting majority opinions and values and thereby rendering the perspectives and priorities of nonwhites fairly obscure (ibid., 160). Infrequent reporting about everyday life and ordinary individuals has created the notion of minorities as “‘problem people,’ groups either beset by problems or causing them for larger society” (ibid., 26).

The media have been found to perpetuate stereotypes and misperceptions more often than they create them, and they also tend to be more influential when reinforcing rather than attempting to alter public opinion (Wilson and Gutierrez 1995, 44). Willard Enteman has associated stereotyping with journalism more than any other profession (AL-Saeed 1997, 4), and Edward W. Said supported this by arguing that news is not only the “result of culture . . . it is the culture” (Jackson 1996, 64). Walter Lippmann may have devised the simplest definition of stereotypes in 1961, identifying them as pictures in our heads (ibid., 1). In greater detail, Gorham described a racial stereotype as “the

operationalization of racial myths as social reality beliefs concerning members of racial groups based on perceived group affiliations” (Lind and Danowski 1998, 157).

But the media do not always employ stereotypes to simplify racial affairs. The media’s unavoidable role as an “economic service” demands that they “function as corporations serving the needs of their shareholders and other corporations by attracting audiences that will either pay for the product and/or serve as the target for advertising messages” (Wilson and Gutierrez 1995, 38). Given the ever-increasing importance of advertising, “media geared for political, national, or racial minorities were consigned to economic second-class standing and members of those groups were either ignored in the mass media attracting the majority society or portrayed in a way that made them palatable to the majority” (ibid., 40). Since there are relatively few middle- and upper-class nonwhites in modern America (ibid., 159), the mainstream media have become inextricably associated with the “mass audience” (ibid., 40).

#### *American Evolution – Part I*

On the broadest level, print media in the United States can be categorized according to the “black press” and the “general press” (Dates and Barlow 1993, 370). The former is identified as “newspapers and magazines that are aimed at African-American readers and speak to their issues,” while the latter is described as “publications directed to the general populace and usually erroneously perceived as presenting continuous objective coverage of issues and areas of interest” (ibid.). More to the point, the general press is an institution traditionally “dominated by white Americans who disallow the use of publications under their control for the free expression of alternative views by African-Americans” (ibid.). Until the creation of the black press, then,

“African-Americans had no voice in the general press” unless their views were in line with mainstream opinions (ibid.).

In the words of the country’s first black newspaper, *Freedom’s Journal*, the black press was created in 1827 “to plead our own cause. Too long have others spoken for us” (Wilson and Gutierrez 1995, 181). Surely many other minorities have echoed that statement in the 179 years since, but black American press coverage of certain racial and religious groups and mainstream coverage of the black American fight for equality in the 20<sup>th</sup> century illustrate the major ideological differences between the two institutions. Contemporary discussions of race are dominated by this “black-white dichotomy,” and clear parallels exist among several minorities that justify the study of black American press coverage of terrorism (Oh 2003, 3). In addition, the study of mainstream media treatment of black Americans is a springboard to the study of mainstream media coverage of Arab-Americans and Muslims (ibid., 7-8).

In spite of the social changes after the Civil War, black press editors faced greater physical threats than their predecessors from the slave era. But they were not without allies as white newspaper editors began to pay attention to the black press and “quote extensively its news and opinions” from 1880 to 1890 (Simmons 1998, 20-21).

At about the same time—1870 to 1900—the black press tried to establish a legitimate presence in American society by “borrowing” the phraseology of the general press (Gourgey 2001, 112). By creating “rhetorical walls” between themselves and Native Americans (ibid., 105) and labeling the American Indian as an “exotic other”—just as whites had labeled blacks (ibid., 110)—African-Americans “allowed themselves to ascend the hierarchy of civilization. The price . . . was to partake in the dialogue of a

dominant culture: the cost—a lost opportunity for solidarity against a common oppressor” (ibid., 111). Articles in the *A.M.E. Church Review* and the *Baptist Headlight*—respectively published in 1888 and 1894—portrayed Native Americans as “children” of nature, with “the rude cradle of the papoose” hanging from a tree like fruit, and as adept tree-climbers, “like squirrels” (Gourgey 2001, 109). Perhaps the most straightforward image of the American Indian is the “wild and violent savage” (ibid., 110). Also in 1888, the *Afro-Independent* of St. Paul/Minneapolis ran an article on talks with the Sioux Nation. Although civilization “may seem” unjust, the author said, it had forced the Indian westward and he might be eradicated “unless he becomes civilized and lives as white men do” (ibid., 111).

Expansion certainly continued, to the West Coast and beyond in the next few decades. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, the immense popularity of Western civilization created a technologically advanced nation in the Far East. Japan’s aims to become an imperial force created a model for nonwhite empowerment the world over, but the black press at first adopted white America’s perspective, depicting Japanese people and their culture as unique, strange and even ridiculous (Kearney 1998, 3).

Then Japan’s potential for dominance was seen, for a time, as “A Colored Man’s Dream” (Kearney 1998, 9). Although black political leaders and journalists criticized each other for different views regarding the path to social progress, the black press lauded Oriental victories against a vastly larger country in the Russo-Japanese War (ibid., 24). While one writer argued that the Japanese character combined the “power of originality” common to the English with the “practical intuition” of the Germans (ibid., 27), the *Washington Bee* likened Russians to white males in the American South (ibid., 28).



But the realities of the business world prompted African-Americans to abate their affection for the Japanese as immigrants vied for unskilled labor even before Japan's conflict with Russia (Kearney 1998, 10). After the war, more Japanese came to the West Coast of the United States, an area that had already developed a dislike for Asians because of Chinese immigrants (ibid., 41). As the *Chicago Defender* saw the matter, "The white man does not want him [the Japanese], for economic reasons; neither do we" (ibid., 68). Curiously, when the Japanese were officially excluded from the United States in 1924, many black Americans felt compelled to support the other side in a possible war but the *Defender* plainly stated: "Your sympathy to Japan, but your heart, your hand to Uncle Sam" (ibid., 65-66).

According to historian Ernest Allen, "tens of thousands of black Americans" saw Japan as an "impersonal messiah" in the years of the Great Depression (Kearney 1998, 81). It is also worth noting that the Nation of Islam, when led by Elijah Muhammad, shared pro-Japanese views (ibid., 83). These sentiments were later directed toward American Indians.

Along with the *Defender*, a few other African-American newspapers stood out during the major events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

During World War I, the black press pointed out the irony of taking part in the fight to "make the world safe for democracy" while the race suffered widespread verbal abuse, physical danger and death inside American borders. With 367,000 black Americans in the military during the war (Fairclough 1998, 258), the highly successful and influential *Defender* argued in one editorial: "Why Fight For A Flag Whose Folds Do Not Protect?" (Simmons 1998, 38). Overall, however, the black press encouraged

readers to support their country to bring about the democratic ideal envisioned when independence from foreign rule was secured in the late 1700s (ibid., 25). After all, if the other side won the war, the Kaiser would have no sympathy for the black American cause (ibid., 26).

In late 1919, a year after World War I ended, the Justice Department published a report concerning black press coverage of more than 10 nationwide riots that had begun two years earlier. The riots were largely due to a dearth of housing accommodations since the *Defender* had persuaded black Americans to move to the northern states in large numbers, and while the government's report made no mention of such "immediate causes" for the trouble, it declared the black press responsible by way of "incendiary" and "constant protests against disenfranchisement and lynching" (Simmons 1998, 46-47).

The black press became more unified when the National Negro Publishing Association was established in early 1940 (Simmons 1998, 70). Subsequently, the black press was more outspoken during World War II, but there was always the risk of losing advertisers when using forceful rhetoric. Opposite this scenario, a softer tone of voice often pleased advertisers but turned subscribers away—a reaction which could discourage advertisers and cripple a paper. In any case, the typical response to militant language coming from the black press was government surveillance or intervention (ibid., 71).

The U.S. government preserved its policy of racial segregation in World War II. African-Americans served in the Army, but were excluded from the Marine Corps and Coast Guard and could only work as cooks in the Navy. Furthermore, black servicemen often encountered discrimination and received less recognition than whites for acts of valor (Simmons 1998, 70).

The *Pittsburgh Courier* addressed these issues. Leading black newspapers with a circulation of roughly 330,000 by the spring of 1942 (Perry 2004, 4), the *Courier* was considered the most important black newspaper in America during the war (Simmons 1998, 72). The FBI visited the paper in 1940 (*ibid.*, 75) and again when the Army accused several black publications of spreading Japanese and Communist propaganda and hiring editors with such ideological views (*ibid.*, 76).

Some of the accusations may have been justified because the black press did not advance a universal view. Ranked third among the leading-circulation black newspapers (Broussard and Hamilton 2004, 6), the *Baltimore Afro-American* approved of Japanese plans to expel whites from China and establish an “Asiatic Monroe Doctrine” in 1939 (Simmons 1998, 74-75). On the other hand, the *Courier* denounced charges of sedition in January 1942 by referring to the Axis countries as “stooges” and the *Defender* stated that the black press would not tarnish its history of “sound patriotism” by calling for subversive action (*ibid.*, 76-77).

When Japan carried out its air raid on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the *Courier*, *California Eagle*, *Amsterdam Star-News*, *Indianapolis Recorder* and *Afro-American* swiftly denounced the attack and the *Defender* abandoned the image of Japan as a “racial deliverer of the black man” (Kearney 1998, 95-96). But the fact that the *Courier*, the *Star-News* and the *Defender* covered the Japanese internment from 1942 to 1945 and considered their fellow citizens “kin in some way” is no less important (*ibid.*, 115; Doreski 2001, 163). In particular, the *Courier* argued that there was “no valid reason for moving . . . American citizens from their homes to concentration camps on the basis of what they MIGHT say or do [emphasis theirs]” (Kearney 1998, 115).

Based on a letter to the editor in early 1942, the *Courier* initiated a “Double V” campaign on February 7 (Broussard and Hamilton 2004, 5). The movement was created to promote military victory against the Axis countries as well as social victory for black Americans, and the *Defender* joined the cause from March to June (Perry 2004, 2). While the *Courier* concentrated on African-American contributions to the war effort and the military and defense industries’ violations of civil rights (ibid., 15), the *Defender*—second only to the *Courier* with a circulation of 230,000—portrayed American democracy as two-faced and devised a “self-help” program to empower the race and counter harmful stereotypes (ibid., 3-4).

While the government and the black press blamed each other for the low morale of black Americans (Simmons 1998, 87), the general press offered a different type of support to help the government “sell the war” to the public (Yang 2003, 3). As a primary example of blind loyalty, the mainstream media consulted “official sources” in order to cast Japanese-Americans as a national security threat (Brennen and Duffy 2002, 6).

### *Seeing Black and White*

Although the horrors of global warfare passed in 1945, a glaring lack of mainstream media coverage of minorities over the next 10 years proved that black Americans’ contributions during World War II did little to improve their social status. Evidence of this situation came from a study of five metropolitan daily newspapers. Of the *Youngstown (Ohio) Vindicator*, *New York Times*, *Atlanta Constitution* (the only southern publication in the sample), *Boston Globe* and the *Chicago Tribune*, none

devoted as much as two percent of its news hole to black Americans in 12 issues of each paper from 1950 through 1953 (Martindale 1985, 323-324).

As another example of social barriers, schools were forced to integrate in 1954 but just one percent of black youth were in those schools a decade later (Moss 1998, 240). The black press clearly remained the lone voice of black America because the general press “continued to take little or no interest in covering African-American life” (Dates and Barlow 1993, 389).

The civil rights movement in the 1960s was, however, “a story that the white press could not ignore,” thus adding to the voice of the black press but only on a cursory level (Dates and Barlow 1993, 389). “Urban ghettos” across the country exploded in violence and, like the Justice Department’s report of widespread rioting shortly after World War I, the general press often concentrated “on the conflict aspects of protest activities while providing scant explanation of the causes underlying the protests” (Martindale 1985, 321).

At this point, African-American newspapers gave up their roles as “champions” of the race and as a “fighting press.” The rise of commercial television and increased coverage by white newspapers prompted black publications to focus on community news, and most editors no longer had the power to influence the masses. Activists such as Martin Luther King and Medgar Evers had galvanized the populace into action, and the assassinations of two such prominent leaders only made black Americans more determined to sustain the quest for equality (Simmons 1998, 102).

In spite of the black press' new mission, the U.S. government acknowledged the mainstream media's flaws in 1968, when the National Advisory Commission on Racial Disorders (informally known as the Kerner Commission) declared that the press' actions persuaded whites to continue to believe blacks were not an integral part of society (Martindale 1985, 322). In sum, the commission announced

They (general media) have not communicated to the majority of their audience—which is white—a sense of the degradation, misery, and hopelessness of living in the ghetto. They have not communicated to whites a feeling for the difficulties and frustrations of being a Negro in the United States. They have not shown understanding or appreciation of—and thus have not communicated—a sense of Negro culture, thought, or history. (Dates and Barlow 1993, 390)

The five newspapers that said so little about black Americans in the early 1950s adhered commendably to the Kerner Commission's guidelines through the 1970s (Martindale 1985, 322). Almost 20 years after the government's report, Martindale investigated whether newspaper managers had dropped the black-white issue because by then the African-American struggle rarely involved violence (ibid.).

Martindale examined 66 issues each of the same publications—the *Youngstown Vindicator*, *New York Times*, *Atlanta Constitution*, *Boston Globe* and the *Chicago Tribune*—and coded nearly 1,500 news and feature stories, editorials, letters to the editor, photos and cartoons pertaining to black Americans. The *Vindicator* was identified as a “medium-sized metropolitan daily” while the other four newspapers exemplified the “resource-rich [and] influential” publications the Kerner Commission criticized (Martindale 1985, 323). Four categories of coverage were established: stereotypic, which included anti-social behavior and “entertainment figures;” everyday life, which cast blacks as “part of the normal life of the community;” civil rights, which dealt with the

fight for equal rights; and minority life, which discussed “black problems and housing programs” (ibid.).

The *Constitution* devoted more news space to African-Americans than each of the other four newspapers in the 1960s and 1970s (Martindale 1985, 324). This is not surprising in light of the South’s history of intense racial conflict and the fact that 37 percent of Atlanta’s residents were black in the 1950s (ibid., 326).

In most other areas, the *Vindicator* led the pack in terms of statistics. First, the *Vindicator* featured the smallest amount of stereotypical news coverage in all three decades (Martindale 1985, 325). Second, each paper made an extensive increase in the amount of everyday life coverage in the 1970s—in one case almost five times as high as the 1960s figure. This may have been a way of compensating for the decline of civil rights activities (ibid., 325-326). Whatever the reason, this was a crucial change because it reinforced the notion of blacks as a vital piece of America’s social fabric—a specific suggestion of the Kerner Commission (ibid., 328). The percentage of everyday life coverage in the *Vindicator* was the highest of all five papers in each decade (ibid., 326).

It seems that the only downside was a lack of coverage of the reasons for black protests—never as much as 11 percent of the total space devoted to coverage of the protest activities in any newspaper in any of the three decades. This is unusual since each publication devoted the most space to the protests in the 1960s, but it was no surprise that the four larger papers (all but the *Vindicator*) “typically covered protest activities as isolated conflicts, without providing any background or historical context” (Martindale 1985, 327). Most explanations for the protests were short statements made by a “black spokesman” (ibid.).

*A New Challenge*

The civil rights movement and the national government's urgings that the general press portray African-Americans positively began a century after the Emancipation Proclamation and the end of the Civil War. Considering the amount of time needed to effect such changes, the words of former Oklahoma Senator Fred Harris constitute a poignant summary of the events described so far: "the practice of slavery stopped over a hundred years ago, *but the minds of our citizens have never been freed* [emphasis his]" (Moss 1998, 246).

The mainstream media's attitude toward Arabs and Muslims, especially the frequent association of these groups with terrorism (Chernyshova 2000, 7-8, 10), bring one particular phrase from the Kerner Commission to mind. The next task of this project was to find out how or if the black press and the general press have expressed the "culture, thought, or history" of Arabs and Muslims in the United States. As of 2000, there were five million Muslims living in the United States—roughly two percent of the country's population (ibid., 17)—and the followers of Islam transcend ethnicity and skin color. That number was estimated to be as high as six million by 2003, with black Americans making up a little more than 40 percent of the Muslim community—up to 2.5 million people ([http://www.africana.com/research/encarta/tt\\_938.asp](http://www.africana.com/research/encarta/tt_938.asp)).

There are a few ways the American media can provide the public with substantial details about Arabs and Muslims.

Other than employing these minorities in the general press, researchers and journalists should scrutinize the views of the black press. In contrast to the practice of interviewing official government sources for information, the movement known as



“medialism” contends that the press has the ability to “short-circuit the dominance of the president and a relatively limited circle of establishment members by opening up the discourse to a multitude of views, voices, and interests” (Nacos 1994, 43). This idea will be used to find out whether there is an American identity that is dominant but not universal.

Granted, the black press is not as widespread as the general press and therefore cannot exert the same degree of influence on American citizens or the government. But some members of the general press began to take black newspapers seriously in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the black press clearly revealed a separate “multitude of views, voices, and interests” concerning race relations in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

When the civil rights and antiwar movements of the 1960s and 1970s brought African-Americans to full “political consciousness,” the black press executed a dramatic shift in perceptions of the American Indian (Gourgey 2001, 112). Through their struggles and collective memory, black Americans identified and sympathized with Indian tribes (*ibid.*, 118). From 1970 to 1990, the “master narratives” of recorded history—that is, written records—were challenged by unity between the two minorities (*ibid.*, 117).

Black press coverage of groups in conflict with and within the United States inevitably leads to the study of African-American views of Arabs and Muslims. Recalling the words of *Freedom’s Journal*, the black press cannot fully speak for the Arab community, but there is common ground.

One crucial similarity between many African- and Arab-Americans is the practice of Islam. In 1960, the Nation of Islam established *Mr. Muhammed Speaks to the*

*Blackman*, which later became the “radical and . . . controversial” *Muhammed Speaks*. The famous black Muslim leader Malcolm X started by writing a column published in the *Amsterdam News* and eventually oversaw the latter version of the paper, which focused solely on Muslim views. First published in New York and later in Chicago, the publication was the largest-circulation black newspaper in the 1970s, boasting 600,000 readers (Dates and Barlow 1993, 391). It was renamed *The Final Call* in the following decade and maintained a sizeable readership despite declining circulation. Also in the 1960s and 1970s, the militant Black Panther organization supported Arab causes in its self-titled publication, *The Black Panther*, and condemned police actions taken when the black community opposed Zionism and Israel (ibid.).

Although the Kerner Commission leveled its charges at the general press, it may be worthwhile finding out if the black press has taken note of the suggestions as a rule of thumb for all media interested in diversified reporting. Just as the general press was urged to connect with African-Americans in the late 1960s, perhaps the black press has continued to identify with Muslims and Arab-Americans after the examples respectively set by *Muhammed Speaks* and *The Black Panther*.

In any of these cases, if news or information sources in either press are classified as elites or carry representative status for communities but are not associated with the government and challenge rather than repeat the “company line,” the existence of a monolithic American identity is called into question and the case for medialism strengthens (Hutcheson et al. 2000, 10).

Another crucial step toward more objective press coverage is the education and training of journalism students at American colleges and universities through course

content that encourages a relentless search for diversity. As former journalist Clint W. Wilson II said at a conference at Howard University, “‘Good reporting’ should be defined and taught as inclusive of multicultural news sources” (Dates and Barlow 1993, 414).

### *The “Brown Scare”*

These actions need to be taken because Arabs and Muslims in the United States have been subjected to the same treatment African-Americans have received from the general press (Kamalipour and Carilli 1998, xxi).

The objective ideals of American journalism frequently appear to be myths because mainstream news is “heavily tilted in favor of official U.S. government perspectives, especially in its treatment of foreign nations” (Detmer 1995, 91). The general press relies heavily on sources such as the White House, Congress, city hall officials and other political or intellectual elites who carefully present information to the media. Such examples are the antitheses of medialism.

The “American national culture,” implied as that of the white majority and articulated in the general press, seems to possess “a constant hunger for an enemy . . . to concentrate its thinking” (Khleif 1998, 289). This process of “enemy-making” involves the creation of phrases and pictures that “dehumanize others, thereby making it easier for us to kill them” (Artz and Pollock 1995, 122). In other words, stereotypes turn “real persons into artificial persons” (Enteman 1996, 10). This phenomenon has been expounded by claims that the United States searched for a new enemy after World War II and after the Cold War and in each case found that foe in the Arabs and Muslims of the Middle East, “which coincidentally is *where the oil is* [emphasis his]” (ibid.).

The general press has also painted an incomplete picture of Arabs and Muslims in other parts of the world because long-distance trips can be expensive without providing much detail or accurate information (Detmer 1995, 97) and because journalists usually rely on upper-class, English-speaking sources instead of average citizens (Wiegand and Malek 1995, 208).

There is little or no excuse for a lack of accurate reporting about minorities on American soil (Wilson and Gutierrez 1995, 160), but the increasing Arab and Muslim populations in the United States have kept alarm bells ringing among the country's general press outlets. In place of the "Red Scare" brought on by Communism, America has become consumed by the "Brown Scare," the fear of "anyone with brown skin, from Hindu Sikhs to Hispanic-Americans" ([http://www.poynter.org/content/content\\_view.asp?id=6206&sid=44](http://www.poynter.org/content/content_view.asp?id=6206&sid=44)).

The general press of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries described Arab immigrants as "peddlers and beggars," and some encyclopedias have since associated Arabs with "deviance and degeneration" (Hasian, Jr. 1998, 207). Western societies have often considered Islam "a false and deliberate perversion of faith, a religion spread by violence and the sword, and a religion of self-indulgence" (Wiegand and Malek 1995, 202-203). According to Said, so-called Middle East pundits known as Orientalists "have perceived the Islamic world as illogical and irrational" (ibid.). In the mid-1990s, the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *Christian Science Monitor* and the *Washington Post* were the most renowned publications providing simplified information about the world of Islam (ibid., 206).

Because Islam's revivalist movement, often erroneously dubbed "fundamentalism," rejects "secularism, liberalism, socialism, imperialism, and all that is Western," people tend to assume that "most Muslims are or will soon become fanatics, fundamentalists, extremists, or militants" (Wiegand and Malek 1995, 205). In fact, "fundamentalism" originated in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century as a label for people who opposed liberal Protestantism in America (Khleif 1998, 287). Nevertheless, one *New York Times* editor wrote in 1993 that "Muslim fundamentalism" was swiftly "becoming the chief threat to global peace and security as well as a cause of national and local disturbance through terrorism" (Jackson 1996, 65).

In similar fashion, the word "jihad" is often misused. Many academics and television pundits say the term stands for "holy war," but its daily use in Arabic means "'striving,' 'exertion of effort,' 'struggle' . . . in the context of trying to do well in school, in scholarship, in working hard . . . [it is] also linked with a sense of justice . . . [and] with efforts to create a moral community" (Khleif 1998, 284).

Even if the general press used such terms correctly, it is not likely that they would report the good deeds of Muslims on a regular basis because the media think most people don't care about such acts and because many journalists influenced by Orientalism don't believe such events take place (Wiegand and Malek 1995, 207).

However, some reporters have spent years in Muslim regions and found few positive things to say. After four years in Cairo, *Los Angeles Times* correspondent David Lamb concluded that Arabs don't understand the concept of public relations. He was dumbfounded "by [their] inability to present to the world a favorable or accurate image of either themselves or their causes" (Jackson 1996, 64).

For most of the American public, then, Arabs are “sinister, uncivilized, and dangerous . . . terrorists, religious zealots, or culturally backward nomads” (Artz and Pollock 1995, 131). Ultimately, “If much of the media believe they have the capacity to help conquer any cultures that threaten Western civilization, they would” oppose “what is viewed by Western society as the next substantial threat . . . Islamic culture” (Wiegand and Malek 1995, 205).

The fact that some Americans think their country is not only threatened but invaded by this culture begs for a powerful remedy. One possible solution is “a social and political movement . . . that can both identify the terror that accompanies U.S. policies in the Middle East and retrieve or construct positive images of . . . Arab-Americans” and Muslims (Wiegand and Malek 1995, 133). This thesis is concerned with the latter effort via medialism: as these groups struggle to improve their positions in American society because of negative coverage by the general press, it is quite feasible that the black press, the voice of the country’s largest minority, may be taking up their cause.

America’s mainstream media have leveled criticism and ridicule at the Arab and Muslim worlds from Israel’s establishment as a country in 1948 until the 1991 Gulf War and beyond, and one particular event is worth reviewing.

Coverage of Operation Desert Storm in 1991 offered extensive but not unanimous evidence of the general press’ backing of the U.S. government. The *Washington Post* cited President Bush’s description of Saddam Hussein as a “modern-day Hitler” in late 1990, but also stated that the president and his administration were having trouble intimidating Hussein and convincing the American public of the reasons for military

action (Hasian, Jr. 1998, 210). Other media outlets seemed to pick up on the president's Hitler reference by rendering Arab nationalism as "fertile soil" for the regrowth of fascist ideology (Artz and Pollock 1995, 124; Hasian, Jr. 1998, 210). In more general terms, "Islam . . . associated with nationalism" was "the real enemy of American economic and security interests in the Middle East" (Khleif 1998, 281). Hussein epitomized this threat as "an 'extremely coldblooded clever thug' who laid out a 'welcome mat for terrorists'" (Artz and Pollock 1995, 125). He was often considered a member of a "brotherhood of terrorists," with PLO leader Yasser Arafat and Libya's Muammar Qaddafi his primary allies (ibid., 127).

The mainstream media's "hierarchies of human value" placed Americans and Europeans at the top, followed by Israelis and then Arab allies (Hasian, Jr. 1998, 213). The last of those four groups was portrayed as "incompetent, weak, self-centered, and incapable of diplomacy in their own region," thus reinforcing Lamb's notion of an inarticulate race (Artz and Pollock 1995, 121). Arab nations were America's allies only if they complied with the coalition or denounced "the tyrannies of Islamic fundamentalism" (Hasian, Jr. 1998, 208). Lastly, as the river of invective flowing toward Iraq's dictator made clear, the lives of Arab enemies were of no real concern. It has been argued that the general press and the Bush administration sent a "subliminal message . . . Arab life has no value" (ibid., 213). In the end, negotiations were ruled out because Arabs were believed to defy all "notions of logic and frankness" (Artz and Pollock 1995, 125).

But the mainstream media also shunned honesty, rationality and objectivity during the Gulf War. Helms placed the cost of the conflict to the Arab world at \$600

billion, along with an extremely high number of human casualties and severe ecological damage resulting from the oil wells that spewed fire and smoke into the skies for weeks (Kellner 1995, 105). Estimates of the dead ranged from 85,000 to 150,000 Iraqis, but the general press omitted these and other statistics from their reports to present the scenario as a rousing success for America (Hasian, Jr. 1998, 213).

The American public approved of Operation Desert Storm largely because the mass media made use of “culturally acceptable anti-Arab images” (Artz and Pollock 1995, 120). Much like the situation in Vietnam, televised reports moved the Middle East into millions of American households but the coverage “did little to deepen understanding of the Arab world or its people” (Jackson 1996, 65). The advice of the Kerner Commission had not been heeded. Ignoring the blood-soaked nature of military combat, the media talked about erasing the bitter memories of defeat in southeast Asia thanks to a “quick and sanitized” victory against Hussein’s forces. In essence, “It seemed that war wasn’t so bad after all if only enemies died. And Arabs made good enemies” (Artz and Pollock 1995, 119).

The mainstream media again served the government almost without question when Presidents George H.W. Bush and William Clinton ordered air strikes against Iraq for alleged violations of U.N. and U.S. laws in January and June of 1993 (Kellner 1995, 106). A month after the first strike, terrorist attacks against the United States began in earnest.

This barrage of negative coverage has caused Arab-Americans to face a massive amount of adversity. They are the “one ethnic group . . . that consistently bears the brunt of media discrimination” (Khleif 1998, 290). In Khleif’s view, “It seems that everyone



can make pejorative remarks on TV and in newspapers against them and get away with it” (ibid.). Said has articulated the plight of Arab-Americans thusly: “There is something already suspicious about you. . . . The image is not of diversity and success . . . but of terrorists, militants, and extremists” (Jackson 1996, 66).

### *American Evolution – Part II*

The history of the general press has been split into five eras when considering relationships with minorities.

First, the “exclusionary phase” implied that minorities were not an integral part of “American society, because the function of news is to reflect social reality” (Wilson and Gutierrez 1995, 152-153). African-Americans encountered this phase for centuries—until the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

Second, the “threatening-issue phase” presented minorities “as a threat to the existing social order.” “Grounded in fear,” general press newspapers fostered this phase by referring to Native Americans as “savages” and Latinos as “wetbacks . . . illegals and aliens” (Wilson and Gutierrez 1995, 153-154). In reference to black Americans, this phase was encountered during the civil rights movement but the black press went through this stage regarding Native Americans seven decades earlier, just prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Next, the “confrontation phase” was played out through an “us versus them” attitude. This is the stage in which the media have had the greatest chance to be leaders of change on the issue of race, but have fallen short of the ideal even into the 1990s (Wilson and Gutierrez 1995, 155). Looking back at the Los Angeles riots after the Rodney King verdict in 1992, the reports of numerous black journalists employed by the general press were altered by white editors. As a result, the riots were depicted as

“racially motivated in the context of black versus white ‘establishment’ when, in fact, they were class motivated” (ibid., 155-156).

The fourth phase is one of “stereotypical selection.” After meeting the “perceived threat of a nonwhite racial group via confrontation,” it is time for the restoration of social order and “transition . . . into a postconflict period.” The media must strike an uneasy balance “designed to neutralize white apprehension of people of color while accommodating their presence” (Wilson and Gutierrez 1995, 156). This is done by reporting minority “success stories” and cultural holidays such as Martin Luther King Day, Cinco de Mayo and Chinese New Year (ibid., 157).

The final phase is one of “multiracial coverage . . . the antithesis of exclusion.” This stage remains an ideal. Multiracial coverage will not consist of entirely good news about minorities, but rather incorporate them in all kinds of reports. According to Wilson and Gutierrez (1995), the most effective way to reach this stage is to continue to add minorities to the ranks of the general press (158).

By associating Arab-Americans and Muslims with terrorism on a regular basis, the general press has placed these groups in one of the first three phases—most likely the “threatening-issue” or “confrontation” phase. Coverage of terrorist attacks against the United States in the 1990s should answer that for certain.

### *Wounded America*

Terrorists carried out three major attacks against the United States from 1993 to 1998.

With six people dead and more than 1,000 injured, the bombing of the World Trade Center in February 1993 was the first large-scale terrorist attack on American soil

(AL-Saeed 1997, 6). The country's aura of invulnerability was shattered, but the general press treated the event quite differently from overseas incidents: the "terror in the towers" was presented "like any other domestic disaster with primarily local rather than nationwide consequences," and the *New York Times* consequently placed most of the event's non-front page stories in the metropolitan city sections rather than in the national pages (Nacos 1994, 47). Not surprisingly, this "domestic crime" was presented with "local, state, and federal officials, and especially law enforcement agencies, [as] the dominant news sources" (ibid.). Perhaps as a direct result, the image of "'dirty Arabs' at home and abroad" seemed to grow in the minds of most Americans (Jackson 1996, 64). That summer, *Time* warned the nation to beware of "The Terror Within" (ibid., 63).

Bazzi and Alter reported in 1995 that the mainstream media did not hesitate to blame Arabs for the attack despite a lack of concrete details (Lind and Danowski 1998, 159). In the end, however, the man believed to have orchestrated the bombing was Ramzi Ahmed Yousef, an Arab. Four terrorists led by an Egyptian priest, Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman, were convicted in the case and the U.S. government saw the attack as part of a larger conspiracy (AL-Saeed 1997, 6). Rahman's appeal was rejected in early 2003.

The next major terrorist incident occurred in the heart of the country. The Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City was blown in half by a car bomb on April 19, 1995, and accusations of foreign responsibility spread from coast to coast within minutes because of the World Trade Center attack two years earlier (AL-Saeed 1997, 7). While the general press wasted little time speculating that Middle Eastern—i.e., Arab—

terrorists were responsible, the FBI needed two days to issue composite sketches of two white males suspected of the attack.

Even when the perpetrators were found to be American citizens, “suspicions [of Arabs] were not dispelled” (Little 1998, 261). Seeking the reasons for such bias and its extent in coverage of terrorism, AL-Saeed (1997) conducted a content analysis of general press reports about Arabs after the Oklahoma City bombing. The sample included three national newspapers: the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and the *Wall Street Journal*, three regional papers: the *Chicago Tribune*, *Daily Oklahoman* and the *Courier Journal* (in Louisville, Kentucky) and three news magazines: *Newsweek*, *Time* and the *U.S. News and World Report*. All newspaper articles, feature stories and editorials related to the attack for the following week (April 20, 1995 to April 27) were included along with the May 1 and May 8 issues of the weekly magazines.

More than 305 stories and editorials were categorized before and after Timothy McVeigh was named the chief suspect on April 22. The sample was further separated into crime stories focusing on the suspects and the investigation and human-interest stories focusing on the victims, rescue efforts, memorial ceremonies and the American public’s reaction. The human-interest category was not subjected to content analysis because AL-Saeed was concerned with crime stories. The total number of “demographic/ethnic references” that connected various groups with the attack were counted.

Using April 22 as the “predictor variable,” four “criterion variables” were used: terrorist “groups,” “attacks” and their locations, “possible origin” for the Oklahoma City bombing and “involvement” in the attack (AL-Saeed 1997, 27).

Among the newspapers, there was a significant relationship between the date and each criterion variable. In the first two cases,  $p < .01$ , and in the latter two cases, both  $p < .001$  (AL-Saeed 1997, 27-28, 30).

References to Middle Eastern terrorist groups dropped from 51 to 17 after April 22. But overall, Middle Eastern terrorist groups were mentioned almost twice as often as European and “other” counterparts even after McVeigh was singled out as the most likely perpetrator of the attack (AL-Saeed 1997, 27-28).

The number of references to terrorist incidents in America rose from 11 to 13 while mention of attacks in the Middle East fell from 51 to 17. Overall, the number of references to terrorist attacks in the Middle East after April 22 was exactly equal to the number of references made to attacks in Europe and other places combined (AL-Saeed 1997, 28).

Regarding the “possible origin” of the Oklahoma City bombing, Middle Eastern perpetrators were mentioned 46 times before April 22 and 26 times afterwards—more often than American Right Wing and non-Right Wing groups combined (AL-Saeed 1997, 28-29).

Lastly, Arab involvement was mentioned 21 times before April 22 and nine times afterward (AL-Saeed 1997, 30, Table 7).

The three magazines yielded 21 stories for the content analysis. With one exception, there were no significant relationships found between medium and the four criterion variables after April 22.

There were five references to Middle Eastern terrorist groups in the magazines and 17 said references in the newspapers. The magazines mentioned terrorist incidents in

America and the Middle East four times each, while the newspapers respectively mentioned those incidents 13 and 24 times. References to Middle Eastern groups as the “possible origin” of the Oklahoma City bombing occurred 11 times in the magazines and 26 times in the newspapers; the difference in every case is best explained by the smaller number of magazine stories than newspaper stories (AL-Saeed 1997, 31, Table 10). The only category that showed a significant relationship ( $p < .001$ ) was “involvement:” Arabs were mentioned five times in the magazines and nine times in the newspapers.

Although the newspapers made 75 references to Arabs/Middle Easterners for the criterion variables and the magazines made 25 references to the same categories after April 22, both clearly continued to refer to Middle Eastern terrorist groups, attacks in the Middle East, Middle Eastern involvement and Arabs after U.S. government authorities declared McVeigh the prime suspect in the Oklahoma City bombing investigation (AL-Saeed 1997, Tables 8-11). Without a doubt, the conspiracy theory that surfaced after the World Trade Center attack in 1993 had not been discarded.

To complement AL-Saeed’s work, a study of articles in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times* and *USA Today*—the nation’s four largest-circulation dailies by the turn of the millennium—revealed that 14 to 32 percent of reports about Islam associated Muslims with terrorism from January through December 1995 (Chernyshova 2000, 8). The range increased considerably throughout 1999: the same newspapers linked Muslims and terrorism in 23 to 36 percent of stories about Muslims or Islam (ibid., 7). Also in 1999, 25 to 30 percent of stories about terrorism discussed Muslim involvement (ibid.).

The final events prior to the ones investigated in the content analysis were the same-day attacks on the U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, on August 8, 1998. Twelve Americans and 212 Africans were killed (Roushanzamir and Robins 2002, 1), and Osama bin Laden and several other members of al-Qaeda took responsibility for the explosions (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/binladen/who/alqaeda.html>).

*New York Times* reports from August 8 through August 16 were subjected to a textual analysis (Roushanzamir and Robins 2002, 12). In front-page stories released the day of the attacks, President Clinton was the first quoted source (in the lead story's fourth paragraph), preceding statements from "American officials" and one "embassy spokesman;" the words of Nairobi's chief of police appeared in the ninth paragraph, just before a jump (ibid., 14). In another article, quotes by local (African) authority figures were absent from the front page (ibid.). Another report faulted the U.S. Congress and an unnamed administration for failing to respond to "security recommendations" made 13 years earlier (ibid., 15).

Continuing on page A8, one of the stories countered the front-page statement that there were no suspects by mentioning bin Laden and Islamic militants. Several "reputable American sources," many of them anonymous, expressed suspicion of "Islamic fundamentalists" (Roushanzamir and Robins 2002, 17). The editorials were just as quick to establish a theme of "terrorism as a late 20<sup>th</sup>-century phenomenon . . . sponsored by Islamic states which act against civilized nations" (ibid., 18). One piece in the first day's op-ed page began by admitting that "[I]t is still unclear who is behind the

evil bombing” but sought to “identify the perpetrator” and suggested that the United States take “punitive” action “against the web of irrational, rogue Islamic states” (ibid.).

Lastly, few stories or editorials searched for the reasons behind the attacks (Roushanzamir and Robins 2002, 22). Only the last day of studied coverage provided a sketch of “the history or context of American interventions into global events” (ibid., 23).

It seems the general press has reached the “confrontation phase” concerning Muslims and Arabs and is therefore halfway through the five-step process.

### *Hypotheses and Research Questions*

The viewpoints of the general press and the black press in the content analysis offer a recent blueprint for coverage of Arab-Americans and Muslims in the context of terrorism. There is no doubt that every country affected by terrorism needs “informed communicators with positive ethical motivations” to create “images that heal” (AL-Saeed 1997, 36).

Consequently, the purpose of the content analysis is twofold. It is designed to locate bias in the black press—predicted to favor Arab-Americans and Muslims—and to expand upon previous studies of general press reports that have perpetuated the abundance of negative stereotypes used for generations or revealed a concerted effort to portray these groups in a positive manner.

This study is not concerned with the effects of media coverage on the American public or the government.

Many of the research questions and hypotheses involve other issues raised since September 11, from here on referred to as 9/11. In addition, there are important incidents before that date—chiefly the October 2000 attack on the USS Cole—so items will be



categorized as “Before 9/11” and “After 9/11.” Most hypotheses and research questions pertain to the general press and the black press, but a few are exclusive.

Seven hypotheses will be tested.

H<sub>1</sub>: The general press is more likely than the black press to accuse Arabs and/or Muslims of perpetrating terrorist attacks against the United States.

The general press did not hesitate to point the finger at Arabs and Muslims for attacks in 1993, 1995 and 1998, even before there was substantial evidence of responsibility. In the absence of written or spoken statements from the terrorists of 9/11, for example, it was crucial to identify the perpetrators quickly and search for a mastermind behind the coordinated attacks. Perhaps this began with the acquisition of the airline passenger lists and a search for similar (i.e., Middle Eastern) names. President George W. Bush made no mention of any individual or group when he addressed the nation on the night of 9/11 (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010911-16.html>), and just as publicly absolved Arabs and Muslims of the attacks nine days later by calling “many” of them “friends” of the United States and by identifying bin Laden, al-Qaeda and the Taliban as enemies in a speech delivered to a joint session of Congress (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>).

H<sub>2a</sub>: After terrorist attacks against the United States, the general press is more likely than the black press to rely on American government and law enforcement officials for information.

H<sub>2b</sub>: After terrorist attacks against the United States, the black press is more likely than the general press to rely on American non-government sources for information.

These hypotheses are offered in search of medialism, which meets Wilson's standard for "good reporting," characterized as "culturally integrated" (Wilson and Gutierrez 1995, 159). Considering the general press' traditional reliance on government sources within the United States, each source's status is codified. American government authorities are expected to exercise a virtual monopoly on the dispersal of information to the mainstream media after terrorist attacks, and are also expected to be the primary sources of information regarding anticipation of future attacks. The general press and the black press are expected to present Presidents Clinton and Bush as the "crisis managers" and therefore the chief sources of information (Nacos 1994, 103). The black press, however, is expected to be less dependent on personnel below that position in the hierarchy of establishment figures. The black press will almost surely prefer to consult respected (elite) sources within the African-American community and Muslim organizations which are not associated with the government.

H<sub>3</sub>: U.S. non-government sources (elite and non-elite citizens) will tend to be less likely than government sources to support the federal government's anti-terrorism policy.

This hypothesis is at the heart of medialism, for it will not suffice to list the frequency of various sources. The directionality of each source type must also be noted, for the actions and planning of the federal government, and in some cases the lack thereof, determine how the rest of the world views the United States. In spite of the gruesome nature of most terrorist incidents, opinions about how to respond are not expected to be unanimous. Based on the idea that the number of opinions on a subject is directly proportional to the size of a population in a democracy such as ours, the amount of disagreement over the federal government's responses to terrorism should increase

down the hierarchy of source types, from government personnel at the top to non-establishment elites in the middle and non-government, non-elite American citizens at the bottom.

H<sub>4a</sub>: The black press is more likely than the general press to present Islam and Muslims as peaceful.

H<sub>4b</sub>: The black press is more likely than the general press to portray “jihad” as a concept separated from violence.

The Quran states that “Allah does not love aggression” (Chernyshova 2000, 16). But in the past, the general press has referred to “jihad” as “warlike behavior in defense of Islam” even though it signifies spiritual improvement and “struggle for a good cause” (Wiegand and Malek 1995, 207). Black press reporters associated with Islam (namely, self-professed Muslims or religion beat writers) are expected to stress the religion’s objection to violence. President Bush tried to clarify these issues immediately after 9/11 by denouncing the idea of a “holy war,” so the general press may have used fewer negative descriptions of Muslims such as “fanatic, fundamentalist, radical, extremist and militant” than in the past.

H<sub>5</sub>: The general press will initiate the “stereotypical selection” phase after 9/11.

The United States returned to normalcy in a “postconflict period” lasting several months. Black press reports were excluded from this hypothesis because African-Americans have identified with several other minorities in the past and would have no reason to emphasize Arab-American or Muslim cultural holidays and “success stories” in order to abate “white apprehension of people of color while accommodating their presence” (Wilson and Gutierrez 1995, 156). That was a task the mainstream media had

to face while the wreckage of the three crash sites was cleared and thousands of families dealt with loss. Although there are no Arab holidays and few Muslim holidays that might make headlines in the general press, perhaps there will be a greater focus on minority “success stories” (ibid., 157).

The research questions are as follows.

RQ<sub>1</sub>: Based on the variety of ethnic groups that practice Islam, how often did either press mention or consult Muslim leaders to articulate the religion’s status in American society?

References to and statements from famous past figures such as Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X and modern ones such as Louis Farrakahn may be used to give context to Islam’s role in the United States. Although the focus is on the frequency of discussion about Islam, Christianity also transcends racial boundaries. As a result, references to and information from Christian leaders are included to offer comparisons between the country’s two most prominent religions.

Two questions can be lifted from Martindale’s study, altered by replacing “blacks” with “Arab-Americans and Muslims.”

RQ<sub>2</sub>: How often did each press write human-interest stories?

Countering the aura of terrorism by revealing the standard, ordinary affairs of Arab and Muslim life in the United States is arguably the most efficient way for the media to show the humanity of this ethnic group and religion and thereby challenge stereotypes. But human-interest stories of victims, memorials and public responses were included to gain some sense of proportion with the previous category. This subject is

highly relevant when compared to the framing of human-interest stories after terrorist attacks, described on the next page.

RQ<sub>3</sub>: With respect to RQ<sub>2</sub>, did the general press and the black press depict Arab-Americans and Muslims as integral parts of American society or emphasize their differences from the rest of the country?

In the United States, the gathering place of peoples from all over the world, the media are being compelled to reevaluate their methods of dealing with minorities (Wilson and Gutierrez 1995, 21). Nonwhites and non-Christians should not be social pariahs, nor portrayed as such, because ignorance and rejection often breed civil unrest in the form of violence. And yet, another suggestion is that the media can no longer afford to present these groups “as part of the melting pot” and thus should emphasize their diversity (ibid., 21-22). Wilson and Gutierrez argue against the latter course of action because the media struggle to transmit a “common culture” when reinforcing differences (ibid., 261). As noted earlier, it is easier for journalists to maintain the status quo than it is to persuade readers and viewers to adopt a new attitude. But if the media can change public opinion on racial and religious matters, the full-scale inclusion of minority groups could create major problems in terms of advertising prowess and, in turn, affect a media outlet’s economic stability. A dominant course of action needs to be identified to project consequences for future generations of America and for the future of the mass media.

The last qualitative aspect worth investigating is the issue of framing. This is important because frames introduce the theme of each story and themes “have always, in one way or another, guided storytelling” ([http://www.jrn.columbia.edu/events/race/excellence\\_2.html](http://www.jrn.columbia.edu/events/race/excellence_2.html)). When used thoughtlessly or in traditional ways, “frames can restrict,

stereotype, [and] over-simplify, hurting not only the people about whom journalists report, but also those who are poorly informed as a result.” In contrast, journalists who take a fresh, thoughtful approach use frames to “enlighten, explode stereotypes, [and] help the audience better understand the world and the people in it” (ibid.).

Iyengar’s research from 1991 offers two frames related to “violence and terrorism . . . episodic news [and] thematic news” (Eckstein 2003, 6).

Six more frames are included from another study: “Discrimination Detected, Racial Pathology, Common Ground, Personal Journey, Assimilation or Fitting In/Selling Out and Diversity Discovered” ([http://www.jrn.columbia.edu/events/race/excellence\\_2.html](http://www.jrn.columbia.edu/events/race/excellence_2.html); [http://www.jrn.columbia.edu/events/race/excellence\\_5.html](http://www.jrn.columbia.edu/events/race/excellence_5.html)).

## CHAPTER THREE

### Methodology

#### *Research Method and Design*

The original plan for the literature review was to conclude with studies of coverage of the attack on the USS Cole in October 2000. That would have prompted a content analysis of articles only published after 9/11, but studies of press reports about the USS Cole attack could not be found. As a result, an alteration was made to include articles two years before and two years after 9/11—from September 11, 1999, through September 11, 2003. The sample thus extends roughly six months into the course of Operation Iraqi Freedom. These reports are expected to reveal racial and religious bias in terrorism coverage among the black press and the general press over the four years surrounding 9/11 as well as attitudinal changes either institution may have made after that date.

Content analysis can reveal “bias techniques,” reflecting “attitudes, interests, and values (“cultural patterns”) of population groups” (Habal 1998, 29). This brings to mind Said’s statement that news is culture and thus accommodates medialism, which recognizes the power of the press to expand “discourse to a multitude of views, voices, and interests.” When applied to the media, content analysis is based on the idea that words reflect actions—“What is said in the communication channels of any country at any time is . . . part of what is done in that country” (Pool 1970, 26). Thus the procedure was chosen to scrutinize black-owned and white-owned American print

media perspectives toward Arab-Americans and Muslims, primarily in the context of terrorism, with the understanding that attitudes from both institutions can and do serve as models for relationships with those groups in the United States.

The decision to study print media in the form of newspapers was made because these publications remain “fundamental distributor(s) of information;” that is, they “continue to fill a basic role despite the proliferation of electronic news media” (AL-Saeed 1997, 22).

Publications were chosen from three metropolitan cities. The researcher hoped this arrangement would have a qualitative dimension by revealing the variety of political climates (e.g. Democrat or Republican, conservative or liberal) in different areas of the country.

It is also crucial to note each city’s racial composition and the fact that each location is geographically removed from the 9/11 attacks.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, blacks or African-Americans made up 36.8 percent of Chicago’s population—nearly as high as whites (at 42 percent) and 10 percent more than Hispanics or Latinos (at 26 percent) (<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/17/1714000.html>). Blacks or African-Americans made up 61.4 percent of Atlanta’s population—nearly twice as high as that of whites (at 33.2 percent) (<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/13/1304000.html>). Blacks or African-Americans made up 11.2 percent of Los Angeles’ population—second only to Hispanics as a minority (at 46.5 percent) (<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/0644000.html>).

In addition, two of the three cities—Chicago and Los Angeles—have sizeable Arab and Muslim communities.



One black press newspaper and one general press newspaper was selected from each city. The publications were selected from online databases to limit the time and energy spent in the process of gathering articles, and also to avoid the financial burdens of internet subscriptions, photocopying or microfiche copying. According to the aforementioned order, the Chicago papers were the *Defender* and the *Tribune*, the Atlanta papers were the *Inquirer* and the *Journal-Constitution* and the Los Angeles papers were the *Sentinel* and the *Times*.

Ninety percent of Arab-Americans live in major urban areas, presumably hoping to find the most acceptance ([http://www.pbs.org/itvs/caughtinthecrossfire/arab\\_americans.html](http://www.pbs.org/itvs/caughtinthecrossfire/arab_americans.html)). Of cities with populations greater than 100,000 people, the largest Arab communities are found in Los Angeles, Detroit, New York City, Chicago and Washington, D.C. (ibid.). The Detroit suburb of Dearborn has the country's highest percentage of Arab-Americans at 30 percent, but has often been left off the record books because its population was slightly less than 100,000 people as of December 2003. As a result, Sterling Heights, Michigan, and Jersey City, New Jersey, have the highest percentages of Arab-Americans—3.7 percent and 2.8 percent, respectively (<http://www.newsmax.com/archives/articles/2003/12/3/192906.shtml>). Detroit, New York City, Chicago, Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles are also five of the six cities with the largest Muslim communities in the nation (<http://www.americanmuslim.org/5community5.html>).

The search keywords were “terrorism or terrorist(s), Arab-American(s), Muslim(s) or Islam(ic)” and the date range was from September 11, 1999, to September 11, 2003. The units of analysis were news articles, feature stories, editorials and letters to

the editor. Hard news is paramount, but editorial opinion is also important because editors have the final word in the formation of a story and often clarify their positions in editorials. Furthermore, reader responses are significant because they express a vast array of viewpoints. Of all relevant articles, every fifth article was selected to construct a systematic sample.

Black press articles were collected through the ProQuest online database. Further parameters for an advanced search through ProQuest included each newspaper's name and a "document text" search for the keywords. The "full text documents only" option was used to prevent citations and abstracts from appearing in the results.

General press articles were collected through three online databases. A "full text" search of the Newspaper Source database was used to collect *Chicago Tribune* articles because a "headline search" was not available. A "headline/lead paragraph" search of the America's Newspapers database was used to collect *Los Angeles Times* articles. A "full text" search would have produced a much larger number of results, but the *Times* still produced by far the highest number of articles in the sample. A Guided News search with a "headline, lead paragraph, terms" search of the LexisNexis Academic database was used to collect *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* articles.

Items were coded at the nominal level of measurement. Each item was counted only once per article, although the categories were not necessarily exclusive: there was often more than one source from each source type, and, as other examples, an article could include descriptions of Islam as both violent and peaceful while another could mention the minority life of Arab-Americans as well as American Muslims. Statistical tests were performed with the online Web Chi Square Calculator made available by

Georgetown University ([http://www.georgetown.edu/faculty/ballc/webtools/web\\_chi.html](http://www.georgetown.edu/faculty/ballc/webtools/web_chi.html)).

An adult family member was chosen as a second coder. After a two-hour Q&A session regarding the meaning of each item on the coding sheet, consulting the operational definitions for clarification, a test run was conducted with six articles—one from each newspaper. After discussing the differences in the two coders' results for each article, with the researcher's results serving as the "answer sheets," a pilot sample of 30 articles was randomly selected from the full sample to begin the formal assessment of reliability. The Holsti formula was chosen as the simplest mathematical determination of reliability, accounting for each coding decision whether it showed agreement or not. Managing an 84 percent agreement with this formula, the second coder then proceeded with 120 more articles (also randomly selected from the full sample) to code 150 articles—10 percent of the total sample. Intercoder reliability was 82 percent.

The operational definitions are as follows.

The Arab League defines an Arab as "a person whose language is Arabic, who lives in an Arabic-speaking country, who is in sympathy with the aspirations of the Arabic-speaking peoples" ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab\\_world](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_world)). Therefore, Arab-Americans are people who meet these conditions but live in the United States as legal citizens, or live in other countries while holding U.S. citizenship. Palestinians, Iranians and Afghanis are not Arabs (Khleif 1998, 285; [http://www.poynter.org/content/content\\_view.asp?id=5852&sid=44](http://www.poynter.org/content/content_view.asp?id=5852&sid=44)). Muslims are followers of Islam, regardless of ethnic background. Other groups that may be mentioned as terrorists are Right Wing (conservative) Americans, non-Right Wing Americans and Europeans.

Although it is a government source, the U.S. Department of Defense defines terrorism specifically and at length as “the calculated use of violence or the threat of violence to induce fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological” (Moore et al. 2002).

As for the variety of media sources, those in foreign locations are divided between elites and non-elites. Within the United States, President Clinton is expected to play the central role of “crisis manager” after the USS Cole attack, and the same can be said for President Bush after the grand scale of the 9/11 attacks. The rest of the “relatively limited circle of establishment members,” however, may not be as prominent. Following the president in the traditional hierarchy of information sources are other federal government officials, who have nationwide authority and are chiefly located in Washington, D.C. This category includes the vice president, members of Congress (who represent state districts but make federal laws) and the Cabinet, FBI and CIA officials and military officers. Regional authorities are state governors. Local authorities are city mayors, council members and police and fire department officials. Lastly, African-American and Muslim spokespersons who carry prestige among their communities but who do not hold government positions are expected to be prominent figures in the gathering of news and information among the black press.

Islam and Muslims are depicted as peaceful if the following words are used: “ally, understanding, friend, legitimate, peace, sympathy and moral” (Moore 2002, 12). “Truce, amnesty, diplomatic, moderate” and “civilized” have been added to this category from the text of the articles in the sample. Islam and Muslims are depicted as violent if

they threaten war or if the following words are used: “terrorist, extremist, enemy, guerilla, immoral, oppress, [and] violence” (Moore 2002, 12); the terms “fundamentalist, radical, militant, hard-line, fanatic, dangerous, kidnapping, raid, killer” and “murderer” have been added to this category from the text of the articles in the sample.

References to “jihad” as an Islamic “holy war” will be compared to references of the term as a “struggle for a good cause.”

The general press can exhibit the “stereotypical selection” phase in two ways. The first method is to cover the four major Muslim holidays: Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca; the month of Ramadan; Eid-al-Fitr, the Festival of Fast-Breaking; and Eid-al-Adha, the Festival of Sacrifice (<http://www.ottawamuslim.net/Religious%20events/holidays.htm>). There appear to be no exclusively Arab holidays per se, presumably because this ethnic group is found in so many different countries, each of which has distinct cultural festivals. Secondly, minority “success stories” are best defined as people who have realized the “American Dream,” achieving economic stability and/or social recognition through hard work and persistence.

Religious sources are identified by faith to reveal the relative importance of Islam and Christianity. Christianity includes a number of denominations: Assembly of God, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, etc. Two more categories, “Other” and “Unknown,” are included because some reports may incorporate non-Christian and non-Muslim sources and some reports may not specify the religion of certain sources.

For human-interest stories, two categories of coverage were selected from Martindale’s study: everyday life, which casts these groups as “part of the normal life of the community,” and minority life, which discusses their social problems.

Arab-Americans and Muslims were portrayed as integral or “ingroup” members of society if they were productive, patriotic or supported (Oh 2003, 14). To counter the stereotype of minorities as “lazy,” examples of productivity are “being a student, gainful employment, participation in the democratic process, contributing to charity, providing jobs, etc.” (ibid., 32). Patriotism includes “depictions being described as supportive of the United States or . . . as United States citizens” (ibid., 15). Support is exemplified as the reception of “emotional, legal, financial, medical, and political support from other Americans” (ibid.).

Arab-Americans and Muslims are depicted as excluded or “outgroup” members if they are aggressive or exhibit unusual behavior. The former category includes “acts of physical aggression and/or violence against others” in the form of “confrontations, murder, terrorism, intimidation, rape, threats, etc.” (Oh 2003, 14, 32). The latter category includes any practice or belief that is “not consistent with mainstream American culture”—in essence, “behavior that would appear unusual if performed by white, middle-class adults” (ibid., 15) and therefore applies only to general press reports.

“News framing” suggests an issue’s “most salient aspects . . . through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration” (Eckstein 2003, 6).

An “episodic” frame “takes the form of a case study or event-oriented report and depicts public issues” with “concrete” examples, and is usually “timelier and depicts breaking news of events that are in progress” (Eckstein 2003, 6). A “thematic” frame “places public issues in a more general or abstract context and takes the form of a feature or ‘backgrounder’ report directed at general outcomes and conditions” (ibid.). When

related to terrorism, this frame provides “information that places violent acts in the context of social and historic facts about the suspected perpetrators” (ibid.).

The “Discrimination Detected” frame looks into “accusations of racial and ethnic prejudice in social institutions—criminal justice, education, housing, employment, commerce, and athletics.” The “Racial Pathology” frame involves “inequities . . . as they play out in racial or ethnic terms. They often suggest discrimination, but outcome, not intent, is frequently the focus of the story.” Stories about “Common Ground” highlight “moments when people of different races [or religions] . . . join forces to consciously cross a racial (or religious) divide.” The “Personal Journey” frame tells “parallel tales of human relations and individual revelations” and usually helps to create the most emotional stories. The “Assimilation” frame describes the “personal, cultural and societal challenges of fitting in when you’re from someplace else” and the “Diversity Discovered” frame involves areas in which “racial and ethnic groups have been integrated into communities that are new to them” ([http://www.jrn.columbia.edu/events/race/excellence\\_2.html](http://www.jrn.columbia.edu/events/race/excellence_2.html)).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Results

The four-year span of the content analysis provided far more coverage of responses to terrorism than coverage of Arab and Muslim affairs in the United States. The Bush administration's "global war on terrorism" began soon after 9/11, so this study focuses largely on the types of sources used in reference to terrorism investigations and the military campaigns in Afghanistan, beginning in late 2001, and Iraq, beginning in March 2003. United States military involvement in Iraq was included because of President Bush's statement that the country was a "central front" in the protracted struggle against terrorism (*Chicago Tribune*, 8 September 2003).

Matters of homeland security were included to classify sources of information in regard to terrorist attacks (including threats and foiled plots) and to examine threats to American citizens' civil liberties because of Arab heritage or Muslim background.

Legal cases against captured terrorists, whether involved in planning, financing, or acts of coercion and/or violence, were also included.

Details of foreign conflicts such as the nuclear arms buildup between India and Pakistan, battles between Russians and Chechens and the Palestinian-Israeli situation were not considered.

The sample produced exactly 1,500 results: 11 from the *Atlanta Inquirer*, 44 from the *Chicago Defender*, 18 from the *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 417 from the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 252 from the *Chicago Tribune* and 758 from the *Los Angeles Times*.



Tables 1a and 1b show that the black press made no accusations of Arab or Muslim involvement in terrorist attacks against Americans before 9/11, but the two groups were suspected in equal measure after that date. The general press respectively blamed Arabs and Muslims for terrorist attacks seven and five times as often after 9/11.

Table 1a. Blame for terrorist attacks against the United States in the General and Black Press before 9/11

Group	Type of Press	
	General Press	Black Press
Arabs	27 (36%)	0 (0%)
Muslims	35 (47%)	0 (0%)
Other	13 (17%)	1 (100%)
Total	75 (100%)	1 (100%)

$X^2=4.487$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p<.20$

As Table 1a indicates, blame was higher for Muslims than for Arabs. The  $X^2$  statistic was not significant at the  $p<.05$  level, suggesting the difference was not important.

Table 1b. Blame for terrorist attacks against the United States in the General and Black Press after 9/11

Group	Type of Press	
	General Press	Black Press
Arabs	184 (43%)	11 (48%)
Muslims	176 (42%)	10 (43%)
Other	63 (15%)	2 (9%)
Total	423 (100%)	23 (100%)

$X^2=0.686$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p<1$

As Table 1b indicates, blame was higher for Arabs than for Muslims. The  $X^2$  statistic was not significant at the  $p < .05$  level, suggesting the difference was not important.

In early 1998, Osama bin Laden issued a “fatwa” (religious edict) that Muslims should kill Americans regardless of time or location (*Los Angeles Times*, 24 December 1999). According to one black press editorial, the exiled Saudi declared that he was not behind the 9/11 attacks soon after they happened (*Los Angeles Sentinel*, 26 September 2001). Ten weeks later, however, a videotape found in Afghanistan was said to feature bin Laden admitting involvement in the attacks (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 10 December 2001). It was aired within days, and reactions varied widely according to source and location: while most viewers said it confirmed their opinion of the al-Qaeda leader as evil, some foreign sources said the tape was a fabrication (*ibid.*, 14 December 2001).

Table 2a. Information on terrorism from American government sources in the General and Black Press before 9/11 by source

Source	Type of Press	
	General Press	Black Press
Federal	48 (94%)	0
Regional	1 (2%)	0
Local	2 (4%)	0
Total	51 (100%)	0

A chi-square value for Table 2a could not be determined because of the unanimous “0” values in the Black Press.

Table 2b. Information on terrorism from American government sources in the General and Black Press after 9/11 by source

Source	Type of Press	
	General Press	Black Press
Federal	823 (88%)	40 (85%)
Regional	40 (4%)	3 (6%)
Local	73 (8%)	4 (9%)
Total	936 (100%)	47 (100%)

$X^2=0.524$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p<1$

As Table 2b indicates, federal and local sources were used more frequently than regional sources. The  $X^2$  statistic was not significant at the  $p<.05$  level, suggesting the difference was not important.

Table 2c. Information on terrorism from American non-government sources in the General and Black Press before 9/11 by source

Source	Type of Press	
	General Press	Black Press
Non-establishment elites	32 (65%)	1 (50%)
Non-elites	17 (35%)	1 (50%)
Total	49 (100%)	2 (100%)

$X^2=0.197$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p<1$

As Table 2c indicates, the black press rarely presented information from non-government sources before 9/11. The  $X^2$  statistic was not significant at the  $p<.05$  level, suggesting the difference was not important.

Table 2d. Information on terrorism from American non-government sources in the General and Black Press after 9/11 by source

Source	Type of Press	
	General Press	Black Press
Non-establishment elites	513 (70%)	39 (89%)
Non-elites	222 (30%)	5 (11%)
Total	735 (100%)	44 (100%)

$X^2=7.136, df=1, p<.01$

As Table 2d indicates, non-establishment elites were used more frequently than non-elite sources. The  $X^2$  statistic was significant for the  $p<.05$  level, suggesting that the difference was important.

In the general press, non-establishment elites were used roughly twice as often as non-elites before and after 9/11. The black press' use of non-establishment elites increased by a factor of 39 while the use of non-elites increased by a factor of five.

State and city government officials in the United States were cited the least often: the general press consulted just three before 9/11 and the black press didn't consult any in the same period of time, but the status of non-government elites seems rather high. Furthermore, the *Chicago Tribune* sample only included 35 American non-elite citizens as sources because letters to the editor were not available.

One of the most controversial opinions about terrorism from a state official came almost a year and a half after 9/11. Oregon Rep. Lois McMahan, a Christian conservative, briefly left the House floor when a Muslim cleric led the morning prayer. "It's an issue of patriotism," McMahan said. "The Islamic religion is so . . . part and parcel with the attack on America. I just didn't want to be a part of that. Even though the

mainstream Islamic religion doesn't profess to hate America, nonetheless it spawns the groups that hate America" (*Los Angeles Times*, 5 March 2003).

Elsewhere, the general press referenced foreign elite sources roughly three times as often as foreign non-elites: in particular, British Prime Minister Tony Blair provided unfailing support for the Bush administration and Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, although in power because of a military coup, also lent support and thus faced constant and forceful public unrest with Afghanistan to the north and India to the east.

Regardless of foreign sources in the news, the words of President Bush had to confuse a lot of people. First, he declared that he wanted Osama bin Laden "Dead or Alive" (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 18 September 2001). Six months later, however, he announced that "I truly am not that concerned about him" (*ibid.*, 14 March 2002).

One of the longest-running terrorist incidents involving Americans was the kidnapping of at least four people in the Philippines. Held hostage for more than a year by a Muslim extremist group called the Abu Sayyaf—a group convinced it can gain sovereignty in the southern islands by murdering civilians—a missionary from Kansas was killed and his wife injured some time after the beheading of Californian Guillermo Sobero (*Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 19 April 2000-3 July 2001; *Los Angeles Times*, 30 August 2000-8 June 2002).

Of all American sources, the black press only made use of one non-government elite and one non-elite citizen before 9/11—and both in the *Los Angeles Sentinel*. Afterwards, the federal government was referenced once more often than non-establishment elites.

Foreign sources were absent from black press reports before 9/11, and foreign non-elite citizens remained so after that date. Barring disinterest, which could hardly be the case after such monumental attacks, it seems the black press may be unable to establish itself in other parts of the world for news “on the street.”

Tables 3a-3d provide details of the directionality of American sources regarding federal responses to terrorism.

Table 3a. American approval of the federal government’s anti-terrorism policy in the General and Black Press before 9/11 by source

Source	Type of Press	
	General Press	Black Press
Federal	7 (88%)	0 (0%)
Non-establishment elites	1 (12%)	1 (50%)
Non-elites	0 (0%)	1 (50%)
Total	8 (100%)	2 (100%)

$X^2=6.875$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p<.05$

As Table 3a indicates, support was higher among government sources than non-government sources in the general press but higher among non-government sources in the black press. The  $X^2$  statistic was significant at the  $p<.05$  level, suggesting the difference was important.

As Table 3b indicates, lack of support was highest among non-government elites in the general press while the black press included just one directional statement from a non-elite citizen. The  $X^2$  statistic was not significant at the  $p<.05$  level, suggesting the difference was not important.

Table 3b. American disapproval of the federal government's anti-terrorism policy in the General and Black Press before 9/11 by source

Source	Type of Press	
	General Press	Black Press
Federal	2 (25%)	0 (0%)
Non-establishment elites	4 (50%)	0 (0%)
Non-elites	2 (25%)	1 (100%)
Total	8 (100%)	1 (100%)

$X^2=2.25, df=2, p<1$

Regional and local government sources were omitted from Tables 3a and 3b because they made no statements of directionality in either press before 9/11.

Table 3c. American approval of the federal government's anti-terrorism policy in the General and Black Press after 9/11 by source

Source	Type of Press	
	General Press	Black Press
Federal	221 (62%)	14 (56%)
Regional	7 (2%)	0 (0%)
Local	6 (2%)	1 (4%)
Non-establishment elites	77 (21%)	7 (28%)
Non-elites	46 (13%)	3 (12%)
Total	357 (100%)	25 (100%)

$X^2=1.762, df=4, p<1$

As Table 3c indicates, support was highest among federal and non-establishment elite sources. The  $X^2$  statistic was not significant at the  $p<.05$  level, suggesting the difference was not important.

Approving government sources in the general press increased by a factor of 33 after 9/11 and increased from 0 to 15 references in the black press. Approving non-government sources in the general press increased by a factor of 123 after 9/11 and increased by a factor of five in the black press. Overall support from American sources increased by a factor of 45 in the general press and by a factor of 13 in the black press.

Table 3d. American disapproval of the federal government's anti-terrorism policy in the General and Black Press after 9/11 by source

Source	Type of Press	
	General Press	Black Press
Federal	84 (29%)	11 (31%)
Local	7 (2%)	0 (0%)
Non-establishment elites	134 (46%)	23 (64%)
Non-elites	65 (22%)	2 (5%)
Total	290 (100%)	36 (100%)

$X^2=7.404$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p<.10$

As Table 3d indicates, lack of support was highest among non-establishment elite and federal sources, proving that those two groups (from Table 3c) can have a wide range of viewpoints. The  $X^2$  statistic was not significant at the  $p<.05$  level, suggesting the difference was not important.

Regional sources were not included in Table 3d because they made no directional statements.

Disapproving government sources in the general press increased by a factor of 46 after 9/11 and increased from 0 to 11 sources in the black press. Disapproving non-government sources in the general press increased by a factor of 33 after 9/11 and



increased by a factor of 25 in the black press. Overall disapproval from American sources increased by a factor of 36 in each press—a surprisingly uniform change.

The week of the 9/11 attacks, Georgia Senator Zell Miller expressed his heartfelt desire to “bomb the hell” out of Osama bin Laden’s network (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 13 September 2001). Congressman David Scott, also from Georgia, concurred in regards to Iraq, arguing that Saddam Hussein be deposed because of a WMD program and connections with terrorist groups (*Atlanta Inquirer*, 29 March 2003). One opinion in favor of “Rooting Out the World’s #1 Varmint” made its way into the pages of the black press after the first week of military action in Afghanistan (*Los Angeles Sentinel*, 17 October 2001).

But there were several U.S. government officials who questioned President Bush’s strategy. Senators Robert C. Byrd (D-W.Va.) and Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) were probably the most renowned figures leading federal opposition to war in Iraq (*Los Angeles Times*, 9 March 2003). Senator John Kerry (D-Mass.), before his presidential campaign, also said the country should not attempt a policy of “belligerent and myopic unilateralism” (*Chicago Tribune*, 23 January 2003)

The black press lauded Brad Kiesling, the U.S. Embassy’s political counselor in Athens, Greece, for acting on “principles” rather than “loyalty” two weeks before Operation Iraqi Freedom began. Declaring that “not one of my colleagues is comfortable with our policy,” but noting that most people chose not to say anything, Kiesling sent a letter to Gen. Colin Powell and resigned in protest after two decades of service (*Chicago Defender*, 1 March 2003).

Three African-American Congresswomen also served as steadfast voices of dissent. Representative Barbara Lee (D-Calif.) cast the only vote against a war on terrorism a week before the U.S. military commenced operations to find Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan (*Los Angeles Sentinel*, 3 October 2001). Representative Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) repeatedly argued against Bush's plans for Iraq in black press reports (*ibid.*, 5 September 2002-23 January 2003). Representative Cynthia McKinney (D-Ga.) voted for the War Powers Resolution authorizing Bush to conduct the hunt for terrorists, but also claimed that while she was "not aware of any evidence showing that President Bush or members of his administration . . . personally profited from the [9/11] attacks," former President George Bush had strong connections to a billion-dollar corporation that would benefit from an expanded military budget in the war on terrorism (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 15 April 2002; *Atlanta Inquirer*, 27 April 2002). McKinney was joined in protest by Salim Muwakkil, the senior editor of "In These Times," a column in the *Chicago Tribune* (*Los Angeles Sentinel*, 6 June 2002). McKinney caused a major controversy when she penned an apology to a Saudi Arabian prince who offered \$10 million in aid to New York City mayor Rudolph Giuliani. Giuliani dismissed the offer because the prince suggested that the attacks may have been the result of America's support for Israel (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 17 October 2001).

Another source of dissenting opinion in the black press was the Rev. Jesse Jackson. Although declaring soon after the 9/11 attacks that "Whoever has done this does not represent us," he followed up a few days later by urging President Bush to work toward national security through intelligence operations rather than warfare (*Chicago Defender*, 13-17 September 2001).

In Chicago a year later, an array of religious leaders who were silent about operations in Afghanistan spoke out against an invasion of Iraq (*Chicago Tribune*, 18 October 2002).

At about the same time, the *Defender* commended former Vice President Al Gore for opposing a military campaign against Iraq, which, according to Vice President Dick Cheney, was not involved in the attacks (*Chicago Defender*, 25 September 2002). An editorial in the same paper soon followed to question Bush's work since Osama bin Laden hadn't been found (*ibid.*, 9 October 2002).

There were also a number of New Yorkers—some of them directly affected by 9/11—who counseled against war (*Chicago Tribune*, 27 March 2003).

In the plainest terms, many people were upset that the United States would send a large military force into “an oppressed and impoverished nation that has not attacked us” (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 2 January 2003). They believed the Bush administration's primary goal was to confiscate Iraq's oil resources and that the campaign would increase the chances of future terrorist attacks rather than serve as a deterrent (*ibid.*; *Atlanta Inquirer*, 3 May 2003; *Los Angeles Times*, 4 November 2002, 20 August 2003). The Vatican also advanced the former idea (*ibid.*, 17 January 2003) while the latter notion was also presented in dozens of articles, editorials and letters to the editor about the campaign in Afghanistan.

On the other hand, one reader who had been a staunch pacifist contended that a violent response was necessary to guarantee that “terrorists are walking and talking and plotting among us no more” (*Los Angeles Times*, 6 October 2001). In addition, a nationwide poll showed that 58 percent of American voters supported war against Iraq

while 72 percent accepted the reasons Colin Powell offered for war five weeks before Operation Iraqi Freedom commenced (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 9 February 2003).

Four months later, one letter to the editor called the situation in Iraq an “economic, political, medical and environmental disaster” and cited seven key members of the Bush administration as “weapons of mass destruction . . . found in Washington” while another reader hoped that countries opposed to the United States might remember that even the Soviets “backed off” when they thought President Nixon was “unstable” (*Los Angeles Times*, 6 June 2003). Yet another reader considered America’s “moral and cultural haughtiness . . . disgusting” in light of a senior military official’s statement that “You have to go in and tell them . . . We’re gonna write your constitution. We’re gonna install your government. We’re gonna write your laws. We’re gonna watch your every move for a decade, and then maybe you’ll get a chance to do it yourself” (*ibid.*, 3 July 2003).

Table 4a. Depictions of Islam and Muslims in the General and Black Press before 9/11

	Type of Press	
	General Press	Black Press
Violent	59 (76%)	3 (50%)
Peaceful	19 (24%)	3 (50%)
Total	78 (100%)	6 (100%)

$X^2=1.894$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .20$

Table 4a indicates a marked gap only in the mainstream newspapers. The  $X^2$  statistic was not significant at the  $p < .05$  level, suggesting the difference was not important.

Table 4b. Depictions of Islam and Muslims in the General and Black Press after 9/11

	Type of Press	
	General Press	Black Press
Violent	318 (69%)	17 (68%)
Peaceful	146 (31%)	8 (32%)
Total	464 (100%)	25 (100%)

$X^2=0.003$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p<1$

As Table 4b indicates, both presses considered Arabs and Muslims as violent more often than peaceful after 9/11. The  $X^2$  statistic was not significant at the  $p<.05$  level, suggesting that the difference was not important.

Before 9/11, the general press labeled Islam and Muslims as violent three times more often than they were considered peaceful. After 9/11, each press labeled Islam and Muslims as violent twice more often than they were considered peaceful. Seen another way, the stigma of violence in Islam increased by a factor of five in the general press after 9/11—due in large part to the persistent use of words like “fundamentalist” and “extremist”—but the general press also presented Muslims as peaceful eight times more often after 9/11.

Of 20 references to Islam and Muslims as violent in the black press, all but three were made after 9/11. In other words, the stigma of violence in Islam increased by a factor of six in the black press while depictions of Muslims as peaceful increased by a factor of three.

In sum, the religion and its followers were considered peaceful roughly half as often as they were called violent in each press.

One of the chief defenses of Islam as a peaceful religion came from a Pakistani-born speaker who said that the Taliban and bin Laden were not “practicing” the faith they claimed to uphold because the Quran “says if you take one life, it is as bad as if you have killed all of humanity” (*Los Angeles Times*, 30 September 2001).

As seen in Table 4c, “jihad” was discussed seven times in the general press before 9/11 but was not defined as a “struggle for righteousness” until after that date. Its use in this context—just four times—pales in comparison to the sevenfold increase of the “holy war” connotation after 9/11.

The black press didn’t use the word before 9/11, and offered the two definitions once each after that date.

Table 4c. Definitions of “jihad” in the General and Black Press before 9/11

	Type of Press	
	General Press	Black Press
Struggle for righteousness/good cause	0 (0%)	0
Holy war	7 (100%)	0
Total	7 (100%)	0

A statistical calculation of Table 4c could not be made because of the lack of figures.

The  $X^2$  statistic for Table 4d was significant at the  $p < .05$  level, suggesting the difference was important.

Table 4d. Definitions of “jihad” in the General and Black Press after 9/11

	Type of Press	
	General Press	Black Press
Struggle for		
righteousness/good cause	4 (7%)	1 (50%)
Holy war	50 (93%)	1 (50%)
Total	54 (100%)	2 (100%)

$X^2=4.302$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p<.05$

An American Muslim student at Harvard University took the opportunity of a commencement speech to examine the meaning of “jihad.” Changing the title of his speech from “American Jihad” to “Of Faith and Citizenship” after receiving a death threat via e-mail, the former president of the school’s Islamic Society still used the term frequently while prompting the graduating class to work toward “a more just, peaceful and honorable global society” (*Los Angeles Times*, 7 June 2002).

Table 5 shows that there were 35 articles covering stereotypical selection. Ten of the 11 Muslim holiday pieces before 9/11 came from the *Los Angeles Times*. This aspect of racial reporting was not found in the *Chicago Tribune* before 9/11, but it increased to two stories (both of which focused on holidays) after the attacks in that publication; the increase in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* was from two stories to eight while the *Los Angeles Times* included 13 stories before 9/11 and 10 afterward.

Table 5 indicates that Muslim holidays were covered roughly twice as often as success stories. It seems the stereotypical selection phase remains to be realized in the American mainstream press. The  $X^2$  statistic was not significant at the  $p<.05$  level, suggesting the difference was not important.

Table 5. Stereotypical selection phase in the General Press

	Before 9/11	After 9/11
Muslim holidays	11 (73%)	13 (65%)
Arab-American or Muslim success stories	4 (27%)	7 (35%)
Total	15 (100%)	20 (100%)

$\chi^2=0.276$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < 1$

The month-long observance of Ramadan was discussed more than any other Muslim holiday. Following Ramadan's rules of prayer, daylight fasts, abstinence, and the rejection of material desires such as drinking and smoking, said one Muslim, shows that "if you are a good person for the month, it can stick with you for the rest of the year" (*Los Angeles Times*, 30 December 1999-1 January 2000). In the observance of 2001, one reader thanked "the Pope and the Catholic community" for fasting on the first and last days of the month and also expressed gratitude for the media's "effort to educate the public about Islam" (*ibid.*, 24 December 2001). The latter sentiment was also found early the following year, with emphasis on a PR campaign by the Muslims of Southern California to promulgate "Islam and its message of peace" (*ibid.*, 17 February 2002).

An editorial about Ramadan in the black press asked if Islam's rapid growth in America could "say something positive about America's potential for learning about, and integrating with, different faith traditions" (*Atlanta Inquirer*, 29 December 2001).

One of the most interesting aspects of Muslim holidays involved the U.S. military's decision to continue attacks in Afghanistan during Ramadan. The Muslim community in Atlanta thought such a choice would make the war on terrorism more



difficult, isolating the Muslim world instead of unifying cultures (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 3 November 2001).

The ceremony of the hajj, the trip to Mecca required at least once for any able-bodied Muslim, was mentioned in detail once in the *Journal-Constitution* (20 February 2002) and once in the *Times* (5 March 2000).

Another noteworthy subject concerns the status of women in various Islamic societies. One letter to the editor noted that under the Taliban, females throughout Afghanistan “were reduced to creatures with no rights” (*Los Angeles Times*, 4 December 2001). Another reader worried that “increasing Muslim influence in politics . . . should make women fear for hard-won civil rights” and argued that “secular, democratic America and repressive, misogynist Islam” could not co-exist (*ibid.*, 28 November 2001). But the content analysis provided a few valuable examples of opportunities for Muslim females to excel in the United States: an all-girls sports camp with an all-female coaching staff in Pasadena, California, fused soccer, volleyball, basketball, tennis and Tae Bo with Quran-based lectures concerning morality, spiritual faith and fair play (*ibid.*, 12 August 2000), and an educated and well-traveled Muslim woman in Atlanta developed a quarterly magazine called *Azizah* for “intelligent, strong, contributing [female] members of society” who seek “spiritual and personal growth in today’s world” (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 28 April 2002).

The results of Table 6 were as expected: Muslims discussed their religion more often than members of any other religion, with Christian commentary a distant second.

The general press mentioned Islam’s status in America 30 times before 9/11. The number increased to 45 references after 9/11, but the *Chicago Tribune* featured just one

statement, from a Muslim after 9/11. The *Los Angeles Times* was the only newspaper to include statements from “Other” sources—primarily Jewish rabbis who discussed their efforts to make friends with Muslim leaders and connect the communities. Of the 55 statements from Muslims in the general press, 45 were found in the *Times*.

Table 6. Descriptions of Islam’s role in the General and Black Press by religion

Religion	Type of Press by Date			
	General Press Before 9/11	General Press After 9/11	Black Press Before 9/11	Black Press After 9/11
Christian	3 (10%)	11 (24%)	1 (50%)	1 (20%)
Muslim	25 (83%)	30 (67%)	1 (50%)	3 (60%)
Other	2 (7%)	4 (9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Unknown	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (20%)
Total	30 (100%)	45 (100%)	2 (100%)	5 (100%)

Southern Baptists didn’t make any friends across religious lines when a former president labeled the prophet Muhammad a “demon-possessed pedophile” and said “the God they [Muslims] worship is a God of works and . . . fear” (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 12 June 2002). The Rev. Franklin Graham, son of world-renowned evangelist Billy Graham, likewise described Islam as “wicked, violent and not of the same God” that Christians pray to (ibid., 11 September 2002; *Los Angeles Times*, 15 August 2002).

The black press included seven statements in this category, four of which came from Muslims.

Regardless of what any religious figures have to say about it, the role of Islam in American society proved to be especially peculiar because of its use elsewhere: while

government and religion depend on each other in most Muslim countries, those institutions have long been independent in the United States (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 16 September 2001). Without the imposition of a theocracy like that of the Muslim clerics in Iran or the Taliban in Afghanistan, the religion is open to far more personal interpretation and, by extension, open-mindedness and tolerance of other religions and viewpoints. One commentary piece in fact went by the title: “We Have Seen the Afghans and They Are Us—Without Democracy” (*Los Angeles Times*, 6 December 2001).

One article noted that mosque attendance in America increased 300 percent from the mid-1990s to 2001. More than 66 percent of those Muslims who went to American mosques made themselves more visible by taking part in interfaith meetings, discussing their faith in schools and churches and talking to politicians and the media (*Los Angeles Times*, 27 April 2001). In Atlanta alone, the Islamic Speakers Bureau made more than 150 speeches to inform church and social groups of the Muslim faith (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 11 September 2002). Another article supported this idea by declaring that “the . . . combination of modernity and piety demonstrated by Muslims in the U.S. could catch on in the Islamic world” (*Los Angeles Times*, 29 December 2000).

In the wake of 9/11, there were far too many heart-rending stories to tell of in detail here: of phone calls made from the doomed planes to loved ones, of grim rescue efforts at “Ground Zero,” and of struggles to cope with the loss of family members or friends.

Table 7 indicates that Muslims were covered more often than Arab-Americans.

Table 7. Human-Interest Stories

	Type of Press by Date			
	General Press Before 9/11	General Press After 9/11	Black Press Before 9/11	Black Press After 9/11
Arab-Americans: everyday life	0 (0%)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (16.67%)
Arab-Americans: minority life	3 (17%)	23 (17%)	0 (0%)	1 (16.67%)
Muslims: everyday life	4 (24%)	7 (5%)	1 (33%)	1 (16.67%)
Muslims: minority life	6 (35%)	29 (21%)	2 (67%)	1 (16.67%)
After terrorist attacks: victims, memorials and public response	4 (24%)	77 (56%)	0 (0%)	2 (33.33%)
Total	17 (100%)	138 (100%)	3 (100%)	6 (100%)

Human-interest stories were rather scarce in the black press: the *Inquirer* and *Sentinel* had no such reports before 9/11 and five after that date. Four of those five were in the *Inquirer*; as for the *Defender*, there were three stories before 9/11 and one afterward.

A major example of Arab-American minority life revealed that, in the realm of politics, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee spends about \$13 million per year while the American Muslims for Jerusalem organization spends less than \$100,000 every 12 months. The Arab-American Institute, which receives the most money among more than 20 Arab and Muslim lobbying groups, has a yearly budget of little more than \$1 million (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 2 October 2002).

Table 8. Arab-Americans' and Muslims' place in society

	Type of Press by Date			
	General Press Before 9/11	General Press After 9/11	Black Press Before 9/11	Black Press After 9/11
Ingroup	52 (78%)	165 (80%)	7 (78%)	13 (93%)
Outgroup	15 (22%)	40 (20%)	2 (22%)	1 (7%)
Total	67 (100%)	205 (100%)	9 (100%)	14 (100%)

The good news is that the general press more than trebled portrayals of Arabs and Muslims as integral members of American society after 9/11, but the mainstream publications also nearly trebled the number of reports casting these groups as outsiders. Overall, the ratio of favor:disfavor in the general press was almost 4:1.

In the black press, the number of ingroup references nearly doubled after 9/11 while the number of outgroup references was halved. Overall, the ratio of favor:disfavor in the black press was almost 7:1.

Just days after 9/11, a Muslim leader in Seattle provided an excellent example of support for the United States when he asked God “to bless and to protect this land—my land and your land” (*Los Angeles Times*, 15 September 2001).

Participation in the democratic process was evident from the fact that more than 70 percent of American Muslims voted for George W. Bush in his first run for the presidency (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 22 November 2000). In addition, the American Muslim Alliance reported that 700 Muslims sought political offices in all three levels of government in 2000, but there were only 100 Muslim political candidates in the country two years after 9/11 (*Los Angeles Times*, 27 September 2002). On a broader scale, the Council on American-Islamic Relations sought to register more than 100,000

Muslim voters in California, Washington, D.C., Michigan, Missouri and Ohio (*ibid.*, 2 March 2002).

Personal growth through education was addressed in a story of the Mohammed Schools of Atlanta, which were the first Muslim schools in America to gain accreditation from several prestigious professional organizations (*Atlanta Inquirer*, 20 November 1999). A year later, the chairman of an Islamic Center in California claimed that an education tailored to Muslim youth could easily accommodate the “moral and ethical values that are the foundation of this country . . . respect and tolerance and truthfulness and work” (*Los Angeles Times*, 19 November 2000).

Although the Orange County Planning Commission blocked plans to build a Muslim school in Rancho Santa Margarita, California (*Los Angeles Times*, 11 November 1999), a citizens group in the city readily criticized phone calls made to Los Angeles’ Muslim Public Affairs Council in which the caller had said, “Go back to the desert. Go home. This place is only for Christians and Jews” (*ibid.*, 16 November 1999). A survey of 1,500 adults conducted almost two months after 9/11 showed that 59 percent of Americans had a positive image of Muslims—up from 45 percent in March of 2001 (*ibid.*, 7 December 2001). Almost a year later, another survey showed that 37 percent of the participants had a negative view of Islam while 28 percent had a favorable image of the religion. Roughly 25 percent of those questioned had an unfavorable image of American Muslims (*ibid.*, 27 September 2002).

There were several prominent cases of outgroup activity by Americans, many of whom were not of Arab ancestry.

Jose Padilla was a former Chicago gang member who converted to Islam and planned to detonate a “dirty” bomb inside the country, but he was apprehended at O’Hare Airport (*Los Angeles Times*, 11-14 June 2002; *Chicago Tribune*, 11-18 June 2002, 11 March 2003).

John Walker Lindh, captured after a prison uprising in which a CIA officer was killed, had traveled to Afghanistan as a teenager and became known as the “American Taliban” (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 4 December 2001-5 October 2002; *Chicago Tribune*, 15 January-29 March 2002; *Los Angeles Times*, 20 December 2001-23 May 2002).

Earnest James Ujaama put al-Qaeda members up in safe houses and tried to develop a terrorist training camp in Oregon—highly unusual moves for a respected community activist and entrepreneur if not for the fact that he had accused the U.S. government of “conspiracy to commit genocide and crimes of terrorism against Muslim people” (*Los Angeles Times*, 22-26 September 2002).

African-Americans John Allen Muhammad and John Lee Malvo were arrested and charged with murder after six people died from sniper shootings that lasted for three weeks in the Washington, D.C., area. Muhammad, a convert to Islam in the 1990s, seemed much like Timothy McVeigh: he had been in the U.S. Army but was believed to have committed the murders out of sympathy for the 9/11 terrorists (*Chicago Tribune*, 25 October 2002).

The “Lackawanna Six,” a group of Yemeni Americans in a suburb of Buffalo, New York, was charged with attending an al-Qaeda training camp in Afghanistan (*Los*

*Angeles Times*, 14-21 September 2002, 3 October 2002-25 March 2003; *Chicago Tribune*, 14-19 September 2002).

Then, almost two years after 9/11, U.S. Army Sgt. Hasan Akbar was accused of throwing hand grenades into the tents of fellow soldiers at a post in Iraq. Born Mark Fidel Kools, raised in Los Angeles and a convert to Islam when his father was released from prison, Hasan was an honor student in high school but seemed to crack after facing constant religious epithets and scorn from other troops while overseas (*Los Angeles Times*, 3 August 2003). Once he was arrested, Akbar allegedly expressed his fears that “You guys are coming into our countries and you’re going to rape our women and kill our children” (*Los Angeles Sentinel*, 27 March 2003).

Table 9. News Frames in the General and Black Press

	Type of Press by Date			
	General Press Before 9/11	General Press After 9/11	Black Press Before 9/11	Black Press After 9/11
Episodic	23 (25%)	55 (14%)	1 (20%)	7 (27%)
Thematic	32 (35%)	264 (67%)	0 (0%)	6 (23%)
Discrimination detected	8 (9%)	14 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Racial pathology	5 (5%)	37 (9%)	2 (40%)	7 (27%)
Common ground	16 (17%)	16 (4%)	1 (20%)	5 (19%)
Personal journey	8 (9%)	10 (3%)	1 (20%)	1 (4%)
Assimilation	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Diversity Discovered	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total	92 (100%)	396 (100%)	5 (100%)	26 (100%)



The extent of thematic content—either in news articles or in opinion and commentary—provided a steady stream of historical lessons. This is a luxury that can't be afforded in most televised news, which is 80 percent episodic and 20 percent thematic (<http://demspeak.com/?q=2005/apr/17/frames-communication-terms>). Thematic reports in the general press sample outweighed episodic news by the reverse ratio, and the number of episodic frames after 9/11 increased by a factor of two while the number of thematic frames increased by a factor of eight. Episodic reports in the black press sample after 9/11 increased by a factor of seven while the number of thematic reports increased from 0 to six.

A 30-minute broadcast covering news, sports and weather can't possibly go in-depth—in contrast, one backgrounder in the *Los Angeles Times* was 36 pages long—so in spite of the immediacy of high-tech media, the daily newspaper still holds a rather important place in the analysis of events both past and present.

Several historians, political pundits and average citizens have made the case that “the awful scenes of death and suffering we are now witnessing on our television screens have been endured by people in other parts of the world for a long time, and often as a result of our nation's policies” (*Los Angeles Times*, 23 September 2001). For example, our withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, after helping the mujahedeen (holy warriors) repel the Soviet Army, left the country without aid after 10 years of fighting. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia tried to end the chaotic scene by funding, arming, training and organizing the Taliban, or “students,” and the Clinton administration stayed away. Osama bin Laden joined the Taliban in 1991 and again in 1996 after U.S. pressure on

Sudan forced him to move. By then, the Taliban had established absolute control over the Afghan people (*Chicago Tribune*, 16 September 2001).

Other experts have argued that “only Americans aspire to innocence when it comes to foreign policy” and that President Bush has indeed “insisted . . . on the perfect blamelessness of past and current American behavior in the Middle East . . . with a determined disregard for the complications of history, much less truth” (*Los Angeles Times*, 23 March 2003).

Each mainstream publication featured a slight increase in “Discrimination Detected” reports after 9/11, but this category didn’t appear in the black press sample. One incident involved complaints that Muslims working for a cell phone company had been denied 10 minutes needed for prayer breaks during each shift (*Los Angeles Times*, 4 December 1999). Another company was sued by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission after firing a Muslim worker who cited religious reasons for not shaving his beard (*ibid.*, 7 October 2000). In Chicago, a Muslim woman settled for \$30,000 in a suit against a company from New York after she received mailed items on which ethnic slurs were printed beneath her name (*Chicago Tribune*, 18 July 2000).

The “Racial Pathology” theme, dealing with hate crimes and racial profiling, increased by a factor of seven in the general press after 9/11 and half that much in the black press—from two reports to seven.

The black press noted a rising number of hate crimes committed against Muslims in 2000: from none to three cases (*Chicago Defender*, 21 July 2001). In Orange County, California, Muslims were targeted less often than Jews, African-Americans, gays and lesbians in 2002. In that part of the state, there were 69 reported hate crimes against

Arabs, Muslims and other people from the Middle East and 15 the following year—a figure still twice as high as the number of incidents reported in the 12 months before 9/11 (*Los Angeles Sentinel*, 29 May 2003).

The FBI had 30 field offices engaged in 90 investigations of retaliatory actions against Arabs and Muslims in the three weeks after 9/11 (*Los Angeles Times*, 28 September 2001). By mid-October, the FBI had looked into 145 cases—32 in Los Angeles alone—and the Muslim Public Affairs Council reported 800 instances across the country (*ibid.*, 11 October 2001). Across California, attacks against Arab-Americans and people who looked like Arabs rose from three cases in 2000 to 73 in 2001 (*ibid.*, 25 March 2003). Federal cases concerning Arab victims numbered 350, along with 70 state and local cases, a few months later (*ibid.*, 6 July 2002).

According to Human Rights Watch, half a dozen cities with large Arab communities and high hate crime rates—L.A., Seattle, Chicago, Phoenix, New York and Dearborn—experienced a 17-fold increase in hate crimes against Muslims from 2000 to 2001. The FBI said there were 12 cases of anti-Arab attacks in Los Angeles County in 2000 and 188 cases in 2001 (*Los Angeles Times*, 14 November 2002).

Arabs and Muslims were not free from degradation even in more controlled environments: 34 “credible” reports stated that Justice Department employees had violated the civil rights of members of these groups from mid-December of 2002 to mid-June of 2003. In fact, every case that included details of the plaintiff’s race or ethnicity was filed by an Arab or Muslim (*Chicago Tribune*, 21 July 2003).

The *Defender* was the only minority paper to hit upon this subject before 9/11.

Efforts to develop bonds on “Common Ground” were evenly split around 9/11 in the general press, but the *Tribune* only featured one article that fell into this category. This category increased by a factor of five in the black press after 9/11.

Attempts to connect with other races and religions were made in the form of conferences between Muslims and Christians (*Los Angeles Times*, 18 September 1999), a church in Irvine, California, used for Christians, Jews and Muslims, all of whom the pastor called “children of one God” (ibid., 30 October 2000), forums about intermarriage traditions featuring Christian, Jewish and Muslim speakers (ibid., 27 January 2001), a two-part discussion involving the same three faiths almost two months after 9/11 (ibid., 5 November 2001), a free “Islam 101” class for Christians offered by an Episcopal Church (ibid., 5 January 2002) and a meeting of Muslims and Jews to remember Abraham (ibid., 23 February 2002).

The “Personal Journey” was evident in stories like the change of heart experienced by Minister Louis Farrakhan at the turn of the millennium. Frightened by a life-threatening illness, the Nation of Islam leader sought reconciliation with anyone he had wronged, asking for forgiveness from members of other races and religions (*Chicago Defender*, 10 January 2000). The *Journal-Constitution* and *Times* also reported on this story.

The “Assimilation” and “Diversity Discovered” themes were not encountered in either press.

A by-newspaper breakdown of American attitudes toward the federal government’s anti-terrorism policy sheds some light on political differences across the country.

Since there were only two for/against statements in the black press and 16 in the general press before 9/11, the focus here concerns valence after that date.

In the black press, federal government sources respectively comprised 50 and 53 percent of all approving sources in the *Sentinel* and *Defender* while 33 percent of the pro-government statements in each paper came from non-establishment elites. Non-elites respectively comprised 17 and 13 percent of approving statements. Seventy-five percent of pro-government statements in the *Inquirer* were made by federal sources, with the remaining 25 percent coming from the local government.

Sixty-seven percent of disapproving statements in the *Sentinel* were made by federal sources, with the remaining 33 percent coming from non-establishment elites. The *Defender* included federal government sources in 17 percent of its negative statements while the figure in the *Inquirer* was 25 percent. The remaining 75 percent of disapproving statements in the *Inquirer* came from non-establishment elites while the figure in the *Defender* was 74 percent. The remaining nine percent of negative statements in the latter paper came from non-elites. Once again, perhaps the most telling statistic is that regional and local government sources making directional statements were absent from the *Sentinel* and *Defender* and included just once in the *Inquirer*.

In the general press, positive statements from federal sources ranged from 60 percent in the *Times* and *Journal-Constitution* to 70 percent in the *Tribune*. Approval from non-establishment elites was clustered between 17 and 23 percent and the range among non-elites was even smaller, from 11 to 14 percent. The *Times* was the only mainstream newspaper to include local government sources that supported federal policy—six statements.

Disapproval of the federal government was highest among non-establishment elites in the general press, ranging from 42 to 49 percent. Negative statements from this group outnumbered its supportive statements 2:1 in the *Tribune* as well as the *Times*.

After 9/11, with the exception of one statement in the *Tribune*, the *Times* was the only general press publication to include local government sources that opposed federal policy—another six statements.

In addition, differences among non-elites in the *Times* and the *Journal-Constitution* were rather small. Disapproving statements won out by a ratio slightly less than 2:1 in both papers, and the ratio in the *Tribune* was just above 1:1. The average American citizen made up 17 to 26 percent of the general press sources opposed to federal policy.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Conclusion

The results of the hypotheses were, in a word, perplexing. Only three of the 15 tables related to the hypotheses provided statistically significant data to indicate major differences between the mainstream and black press. Perhaps one of the problems was that the African-American newspapers yielded so few results: the *Chicago Tribune* provided the smallest portion of the general press sample, but its 250+ articles were more than three times the total number of articles from all three minority publications. The disparity stems from the fact that the general press papers were dailies and the black press papers were weeklies, or published two or three times a week at most.

Overall, the case for medialism appears to be hindered by the paucity of regional and local government sources and non-elites. The federal government's availability as a source of news and/or opinion clearly continues to overshadow the other levels of government and "John Q. Public" without much of a challenge.

Nevertheless, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld summarized the condition of America quite nicely by saying that "We've got people who think everything in the world, in this country of ours" (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 18 June 2002). The results of this study prove in some respects that there is no single American identity—that a wide variety of racial and religious perspectives is readily available to anyone who cares to give our society more than a cursory glance.

One letter to the editor argued that American society is “more paranoid” than it used to be “because of the explosion of information that people have access to today and their interpretation of it” (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 7 May 2000). Faced with so many different sources and opinions, what is the public to believe? It is clear that the media can provide the masses with reams of information to the point where one hardly dares to make sense of it all. But without that service, without a constant supply of reports on individuals, places, events and ideas, the public would unquestionably be pitifully uninformed.

It can also be said with absolute certainty that any American who rationally chooses not to accept federal authority without question isn't necessarily guilty of treason. A difference of opinion doesn't always amount to a lack of patriotism, most of all in this country: indeed, there were plenty of individuals and groups in the sample who postulated alternatives to the federal government's decisions based on precedent as well as sound hypothetical reasoning.

As far as religion is concerned, we have seen that Muslims can indeed be peaceful. They can certainly promote a lifestyle based on virtue, respect for others, tolerance and compassion. But many can be misled to twist the meanings of words like “jihad” into something destructive and intensely personal, following “an ideology that the killing of those of a different faith brings rewards” (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 12 September 2001).

It can be argued that violent acts like those planned by Osama bin Laden defy Islamic law (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 14 September 2001; *Los Angeles Times*, 24 August 2001). But around the time of the attack on the *USS Cole*, bin Laden was



estimated to have control over 3,000 “Islamic militants” (ibid., 14 October 2000). The same figure was put forth as the number of “fundamentalist extremists” among the three millions Muslims in Germany, where several of the 9/11 hijackers once lived (ibid., 15 September 2001, 30 August 2002). Such figures have prompted many people to believe that the “exclusive fundamentalist religious mentality . . . poses the greatest threat” not just to America but to all posterity (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 12 January 2002). As a result, Muslims worldwide need to acknowledge, confront and subdue—or more appropriately, eliminate—the “dark doctrines” of their faith (*Los Angeles Times*, 13 September 2001). *Journal of Terrorism and Political Violence* editor and UCLA professor David C. Rapoport believes that, as the most recent of “four waves of terrorism,” the “Religious Wave” that began around 1980 could die out within the next 15 years as the Islamic world finds ways to control radical groups (ibid., 4 May 2003).

In contrast, one reader pointed out that blacks in America “certainly had grievances during the civil rights struggle. Yet they didn’t strap on bombs and blow up white Americans. Their leader [Martin Luther King, Jr.] was a man of vision who used nonviolent means to achieve his ends, and is now revered by blacks and whites alike” (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 20 June 2002). However, Qatar’s foreign minister confessed 10 days before the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom that “The Arab and Islamic world is divided because we don’t know what goals we have” (*Los Angeles Times*, 6 March 2003). In light of this dilemma, and in spite of wayward American Muslims like John Walker Lindh and John Lee Malvo, racial and religious pluralism in the United States can offer a beacon of hope and pride to countless Arabs and Muslims searching for direction around the globe.

President George W. Bush has said as much about an Iraq without Saddam Hussein: that America is there to install democratic ideals and values. Perhaps more and more Iraqis will accept these concepts to nurse long-term hopes of imitating the progress American society has made, perhaps not. So far, many Americans are just as upset with the government's methods as others are with the overall plan, but the alternative, without responsible interference by "influential Muslims" in other countries, is to watch those places remain "breeding ground[s] of hatred, violence, oppression and brutality" (*Los Angeles Times*, 31 October 2001).

Regardless of the federal government's actions, ideas thrive in the myriad ethnic communities of the United States of America. According to a former Middle East correspondent for the *Wall Street Journal*, black Muslims outnumber Arab Muslims 2:1 in this country (*Los Angeles Times*, 16 September 2001). Furthermore, the Arab-American population of roughly three million people was estimated to be 42 percent Catholic and 23 percent Muslim (ibid., 1 September 2002, 24 September 2001). Consequently, we should continue to look to black Americans and their media to find ways to understand Islam. At best, the peculiar brand of Islam in the United States could initiate a global "Islamic renaissance" because of its "dynamism, fresh approach, enlightened scholarship and sheer growth" (ibid., 29 December 2000). In sum, the general press is irrefutably pervasive but it must not be the only voice that is heard.

One limitation to the study was the decision to merge news copy with editorials and letters to the editor. In other words, the media's reliance on various sources of information was not separated from sources of opinion. The frequency of attitudinal statements for or against the federal government's anti-terrorism policy would be

drastically different if the two types of copy were separated. In addition, the amount of thematic framing would decrease without the presence of editorial copy.

Two of the general press newspapers ended with respective expert and editorial commentary that bin Laden's goal of creating a war between the Western and Islamic worlds was threatened by the defeat of the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan but revived because of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Iraq was not the focal point of terrorist activity, but it was definitely located in the center of the Islamic Middle East (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 11 September 2003; *Los Angeles Times*, 11 September 2003), and much of the resistance in Iraq has in fact come from the union of the country's "most mutually antagonistic subcultures: secular Baath Party militants and Islamic extremists united only by a burning hatred of America" (*Chicago Tribune*, 18 June 2003). The last article from one of the black press publications summed up the situation with the headline: "Operation Iraqi Freedom Still Has Work To Do" (*Atlanta Inquirer*, 9 August 2003). More than two and a half years later, that is still the case.

In the modern age, conflicts are rarely won by weapons and soldiers alone; they are fought with words through the media as well. The Bush administration has often stated that the war on terrorism is not directed toward Muslims or Arabs, but many people in those groups don't see it that way. Perhaps this is because President Bush and former Attorney General John Ashcroft, avowed and outspoken Christians, have clung to the notion that their cause is divine (*Los Angeles Times*, 26 February 2002, 20 August 2002, 18 March 2003). Consequently, a study of verbal sparring between Muslim and Western civilizations is suggested to see if each side truly considers the other culture an enemy, and if so, who is winning the "propaganda war" (*Chicago Tribune*, 27 November

2001). Such a study should examine each side's conviction that it can't be wrong—and can't lose—because it has the support of an infallible God (*Los Angeles Times*, 26 October 2001).

Another idea for future research is to study the media—and not just newspapers—on a smaller scale. An investigation of internet media could be highly useful, provided the sites are updated on a regular basis and available for lengthy periods of time: the research's initial attempt to look at online material was abandoned largely because one African-American website stopped operating shortly after it was discovered. It may be worthwhile to forego the examination of a broad cross-section of the public in favor of more tightly-knit locales. A researcher could, for example, study a group of media outlets within a single city to examine a microcosm of American society. As mentioned in the Methodology chapter, a place like Dearborn, Mich., might be a good place to start because it has a large Arab community but can be distinguished from a metroplex.

## APPENDIX

## APPENDIX

### Sample Newspaper Information

The *Atlanta Inquirer* was established in the summer of 1960. As of January 2002, there were 61,000 paid subscriptions to the newspaper and more than 1.2 million readers. The *Inquirer* works to provide “an educated and alert African-American education perspective” and “to seek out the Truth and report it without Fear or Favor” (<http://theatlantainquirer.net/News/AboutUs.asp?ID=30>).

The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* was created by the merger of the *Atlanta Constitution*, a “reliably liberal” morning paper founded in 1868, and the *Atlanta Journal*, a “center-right” afternoon paper founded in 1883. In the 1940s, *Constitution* editor Ralph McGill was among the few southern newspaper editors who supported the Civil Rights Movement. The staffs were combined in 1982, but the papers were no longer delivered separately as of November 2001. The *Constitution* has won six Pulitzer Prizes from 1931 to 1995 ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlanta\\_Journal-Constitution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlanta_Journal-Constitution)). The circulation figure of 371,853 at the end of September 2003—a few weeks after the final date of this study’s media sample—placed the *Journal-Constitution* 19<sup>th</sup> among the country’s Top 100 daily newspapers (<http://www.infoplease.com/ipea/A0004420.html>). Julia Wallace, the first female editor of the *Journal-Constitution*, received the Editor of the Year award from *Editor & Publisher Magazine* in 2005 ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlanta\\_Journal-Constitution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlanta_Journal-Constitution)).

The *Chicago Defender* was founded in 1905 and has been recognized for its use of “bold headlines and red ink” to speak out “against lynching, racism and segregation” (<http://www.chicagodefender.com/page/aboutus.cfm>).

The *Chicago Tribune* was founded in 1847 (<http://about.chicagotribune.com/mediacenter/history.htm>). The paper has won 24 Pulitzer Prizes from 1932 to 2005 (<http://about.chicagotribune.com/mediacenter/overview.htm>). The circulation figure of 680,879 at the end of September 2003 placed the *Tribune* seventh among the country’s Top 100 daily newspapers (<http://www.infoplease.com/ipea/A0004420.html>).

The *Los Angeles Sentinel* was established in 1933 and is the “oldest and largest black-owned weekly newspaper in the West.” The paper’s circulation peaked at about 56,000 in the 1960s, but fell to 20,000 by 2002. Activist Danny J. Bakewell became the new owner in March 2004 and Cecil “Chip” Murray, an influential Christian pastor of the area, believed the paper would display a “positive militancy” under Bakewell’s direction. Although the paper faced stiff competition provided by the Wave Newspaper Group, which also has a largely African-American readership and operates eight weeklies in 39 cities and communities in Los Angeles County, circulation improved to about 30,000 as of January 2005 ([http://afgen.com/la\\_sentinel.html](http://afgen.com/la_sentinel.html)). The current readership is around 125,000 (<http://www.losangelessentinel.com/index.html>). The newspaper is a member of the Audit Bureau of Circulation, the National Newspaper Association, the National Newspaper Publishers Association and the California Newspaper Publishers Association (<http://www.losangelessentinel.com/history.shtml>).

The *Los Angeles Times* was founded in late 1881 as the *Los Angeles Daily Times*. Because of intense competition in the area, the *Times* only became the city’s leading

newspaper in the mid-1940s. It is currently the largest paper of any metropolis in the country (<http://www.latimes.com/services/newspaper/mediacenter/la-mediacenter-history,0,780158.story>). The paper has won 35 Pulitzer Prizes, five of which were awarded in 2004 (<http://latimes.com/services/newspaper/mediacenter/la-mediacenter-excellence,0,5828605.story>). The circulation figure of 914,584 at the end of September 2003 placed the *Times* fourth among the country's Top 100 daily newspapers (<http://www.infoplease.com/ipea/A0004420.html>).



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