FRAMING ISLAM: AN ANALYSIS OF U.S. ETHNIC AND MAINSTREAM COVERAGE OF THE FORT HOOD SHOOTING

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Master of Arts in

Mass Communication

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August 2011
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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

My eternal gratitude is extended to my thesis chair, Dr. Taehyun Kim. Thank you for helping me through the completion of this study. My family and I thank you and your family for sharing your precious time. I will be forever grateful for your generosity and compassion and will pay that kindness forward in your honor over the course of my life. I would like to thank the other members of my thesis committee: Dr. José Luis Benavides and Dr. Lori Baker-Schena. I would like to thank Dr. Kent Kirkton for sharing books and honest insight about the challenges of graduate school early on. Your candor allowed me to better prepare my family for the road ahead. I would like to acknowledge the late Dr. Tom Reilly—former CSUN journalism chair. generous spirit, engaging educator, and historian—for recognizing me as a professional journalist, not just a student, and encouraging me to pursue this degree long before I started this journey. I would like to acknowledge my peers in the graduate program. In particular, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to Homaira Shifa. Your constant support and unrelenting faith served as a wonderful source of light and hope along the way.
DEDICATION

For Steve Hofmann, my darling husband, my best friend, my one true thing. Your humility and grace amazes me still. Thank you for encouraging me to take this journey and staying the course no matter what. To my children: Samantha Louise, Natalie Isabella, and Cooper Steven. Thank you for carrying me on the wings of your endless love, joy, and laughter. You are the greatest scholars. You have taught me so much. How lucky am I that there is so much more to learn. To Steve Reich (Uncle Steve) for being an endless support to a family often in need of an extra hand. To my dearest mother, beloved friend and travel buddy, for all the wonderful moments and laughter shared when you were here and all the precious memories you left behind. To my darling father, a brilliant writer, a gifted mind. To Professor Rob O’Neil—you are living proof that great teachers change lives. To the wise Brit in the blue room, Julie Bailey, for starting the journey and encouraging me to embrace every dream along the way. To Ruby Nichols for teaching me that you are never too old to go to college. To my sister and dearest friend, Inshallah, Simone (Jamilla) Chowdhary, the muse, the genesis that informed this work, a devoted Muslim, and the bravest person I have ever known.
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ABSTRACT

FRAMING ISLAM: AN ANALYSIS OF U.S. ETHNIC AND MAINSTREAM COVERAGE OF THE FORT HOOD SHOOTING

By

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Master of Arts in Mass Communication

Domestic terrorism has been linked to Islam and Muslims since 9/11. This framing analysis study examines how the New York Times and various U.S. Arab and Muslim print agencies constructed news coverage of the shooting massacre at the Fort Hood Military base, a U.S. Army post in Killeen, Texas, on November 5, 2009. The work considered dominant news frames. The findings underscore the need for an informed press and accurate representations of Islam and Muslim subjects in coverage of terror stories. The results show that mainstream newspapers embraced a mostly episodic frame in covering the Fort Hood story that placed the Muslim gunman, U.S. Army Major Nidal Malik Hasan, outside the norm. The shooting is framed as an attack on the nation. Ethnic media adopted a thematic approach to coverage but reinforced many common stereotypes by adopting a defensive stance. The attack is framed as system failure and the product of an unjust war.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

On November 5, 2009, U.S. Army Major Nidal Malik Hasan, M.D., a 39-year-old psychiatrist who specialized in post-traumatic-stress, headed to work at the Fort Hood Military base in Killeen, Texas. Hasan transferred to Fort Hood, a U.S. Army post and the nation’s largest domestic military base, in July 2009. He worked in the Fort Hood Readiness Center. The center featured a series of medical-screening stations unarmed soldiers passed through in preparation for military deployment or when returning from combat. When he entered the readiness center on November 5, 2009, Major Hasan, a Muslim, sat down at a desk and began to pray. Then, according to eye-witness accounts, Hasan rose from his seated prayer, drew out two guns, shouted “Allahu Akbar,” Arabic for “God is the greatest,” and started shooting (Roan, 2009; Rushing, 2009). In the 10 minutes between the first shot and the moment when Sergeant Mark Todd—a retired soldier who worked as a Department of Defense civilian police officer at Fort Hood—shot Hasan and placed the gunman in custody, Hasan fired about 100 rounds, injuring more than 32 and killing 13 (Roan, 2009; Rushing, 2009).

In the days that followed the shooting, the Fort Hood massacre became a headline news event; and Hasan, who lay in a coma in hospital, became a household name. With no confession from Hasan, early mainstream newspaper reports drew heavily on statements from government officials and anonymous sources.

In the years since 9/11, numerous studies have examined how mainstream media, publications primarily owned by upper-class professionals and staffed by Western reporters, cover terror stories. This study will analyze news coverage of the Fort Hood
story in the *New York Times*, an elite mainstream newspaper. However, this analysis aims to expand beyond previous studies of mainstream media through a parallel examination of U.S.-based ethnic newspapers. In particular, this study considered coverage in ethnic publications primarily owned and produced by or for Arab and Muslim Americans. In short, this study investigates how U.S. mainstream newspaper reports and U.S. ethnic publications constructed the Fort Hood shooting and Muslim gunman.

The analysis finds that the *New York Times* built narratives around in-house reports or culled details from other national media and news wires. Initial reports portrayed Hasan as a mindless workplace killer or a domestic terrorist agent linked to international terror sects. Western publications focused on Hasan’s personal attributes and largely ignored broader issues associated with mental illness or compassion fatigue, the strain of counseling veterans returning from the frontlines of U.S.-led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The ‘terror’ frame in the Fort Hood coverage was mirrored in other U.S. mainstream news outlets. For instance, the November 23, 2009 *Time* magazine cover that followed the shooting featured a single dominant head shot of Hasan and one word: “Terrorist?”

In contrast to mainstream media, U.S. Arab and Muslim newspapers like the *Arab American News, Arab Detroit*, and the *Muslim Observer* focused coverage on the psychological impact of the U.S. military conflicts on the nation’s soldiers. These publications emphasized the role of U.S. Arabs and Muslims as national stakeholders. In addition, these news outlets examined the demonizing of Arab Americans and
Muslims in relation to the Muslim shooter, his crime, and America’s post-9/11 war on terror.

For many Americans, the domestic terror attacks of September 11, 2001 served as a new reference for understanding Arab and Muslim societies’ cultures and history. Kellner (2006) asserts that as a “transformational event,” 9/11 changed the context of U.S. politics and forced Americans to face the vulnerabilities and dangers of a complex global landscape (Kellner, 2006). “September 11 was so dramatic, so far reaching, and so catastrophic that it flipped the political world upside down, put new issues on the agenda, and changed the political, cultural, and economic climate almost overnight” (Kellner, 2006, p. 164).

Research has shown that media coverage of terror events and related stories post-9/11 was heavily influenced by the Bush administration’s ‘War on Terror’ frame (Tuman, 2010). The framing of terror in news contributed to extreme levels of public vulnerability and fueled irrational American fears about Arabs and Muslim populations at home and away (Tuman, 2010). Xenophobic policies like the 2001 PATRIOT Act and ethnocentric ideas about ‘good’ and ‘bad’ Muslims further excluded or vilified these groups. Elite views further silenced oppositional voices or overshadowed more neutral ethnic storylines the Western press (Jamal & Naber, 2008).

Journalism is competitive by design. Shocking and sensational crimes are a natural draw for reporters and audiences (Tuman, 2010; Herman & Chomsky, 1988). In the aftermath of 9/11, the media have sometimes struggled to cover violent crimes, particularly political violence or crimes linked to terror, without reproducing racial labels and stereotypes (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). Keying off this concept, this study
pays close attention to the presence or absence of racial labels and stereotypes in mainstream and ethnic news coverage of the Fort Hood shooting and the main suspect, U.S. Army Major Nidal Malik Hasan, an American-born Muslim of Arab descent.

**Research Question**

This study poses the following research question: How did a U.S.-based mainstream newspaper and its U.S.-based Arab and Muslim counterparts portray the Fort Hood shooting event?

**Organization of study**

This thesis will discuss findings that emerged from a frame analysis of news coverage of the Fort Hood shooting in mainstream and ethnic news. What follows is a review of the literature on terrorism and media coverage of terrorism. This section includes a discussion of media production of news and news frames. The third chapter articulates the methods used in gathering and conducting research. Overall research findings are outlined in the fourth chapter. The final chapter provides closing remarks and research implications.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to understand how ethnic and mainstream print media covered the story of Fort Hood, it is necessary to examine previous scholarly literature in the field of media criticism and terrorism studies. This chapter reviews this literature, beginning with a discussion of terror definitions and concepts. This is followed by an examination of studies on news coverage of terrorism. This section examines some of the varied approaches to cultural studies. This study employs frame analysis research methods, so a discussion of the roles and functions of news frames is included in this review. The closing sections examine news coverage of Islam and Muslims before and after 9/11. This summary builds on Said’s (1993) authoritative conceptualizing of Orientalism, a perspective that indicates how the Occident (the West) maintains power over the Orient (the East) by defining Arabs and Islam as the Other (Said, 1993). Because this study considers both ethnic and mainstream news texts, the chapter closes with a brief overview of ethnic media and a discussion of ethnic media as a counter-hegemonic institution to mainstream news.

Defining Terrorism

What separates a violent crime from an act of domestic terrorism? How is a homicidal rampage in which the shooter ‘goes postal’ different from a homicidal rampage in which a domestic terrorist ‘goes jihad’ (Jenkins, 2009)? The events of 9/11 and the ensuing ‘War on Terror’ have made it increasingly difficult to answer these questions (Steuter & Wills, 2008). However, for the purpose of this study and to understand the placement of the Fort Hood shooting as a violent crime or an act of terrorism, it is important to consider some contemporary terror definitions.
Communication researchers have long sought consensus in this field. For instance, in the 1980s, Schmid (2011) conducted an exhaustive survey of international groups, experts, scholars, and governments. His final work outlined more than 100 definitions for terrorism. In a recent update to his previous survey, Schmid (2011) lists 260 definitions of terrorism.

Classic terrorism is rooted in ancient history but found a hard landing in Western literature during the French Revolution. In this epoch, the word was used to characterize violence by those in power against individuals seen as “real or perceived enemies of the state” (Nacos, 2007, p. 26). By the nineteenth century, the term was linked to anarchists, bombings, and the assassination of political figures.

Contemporary terror definitions encompass state-sponsored crimes, violent actions by governments or states against other governments, and violent crime executed by individuals and fringe groups looking to communicate a message to a mass audience and influence the behavior or actions of governments (Nacos, 2007).

Scholars have noted that terror definitions often reflect the interests of the group defining the term. The U.S. Department of Defense defines terrorism as “the unlawful use of—or threatened use of—force or violence against individuals or property to coerce or intimidate governments or societies, often to achieve political, ideological, or religious objectives” (Nacos, 2010, p. 24). The 2001 USA PATRIOT Act defines domestic terrorism as an act that:

(A) involves acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State; (B) appear to be intended—(i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and (C) occur
primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States.” (18 U.S.C. § 802)

In an effort to resolve discrepancies in terror studies, communication researchers have attempted to pinpoint a singular definition. For instance, after examining terror definitions in 73 academic journals, Weinberg, Pedahzur, and Hirsch-Hoefler (2005) offered this compact sentence: “Terrorism is a politically motivated tactic involving the threat or use of force or violence in which the pursuit of publicity plays a significant role” (pp. 10-11). In the field of terror research, academic consensus about the nature and purpose of terror is most often grounded in Schmid’s (1983) extensive research. Schmid (2005) studied twenty-two common characteristic culled from 109 definitions of terror. Schmid’s research, which included the responses of 50 experts to extensive questionnaires, yielded this broad definition:

Terrorism is an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-) clandestine individual, group, or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal, or political reasons, whereby—in contrast to assassination—the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. The immediate human victims of violence are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic targets) from a target population, and serve as message generators. Threat- and violence-based communication processes between terrorist (organization), (imperiled) victims, and main targets are used to manipulate the main target (audience(s), turning it into a target of terror, a target of demands, or a target of attention, depending on whether intimidation, coercion, or propaganda is primarily sought. (p. 140, emphasis added)

The space that separates a violent crime from an act of terrorism, Hoffmann (2006) notes, continues to be clouded by the lack of definitional consistency in naming the phenomenon of terrorism. As terrorism moves into 2011, media scholars posit that ‘value-free’ definitions that encompass new varieties of political violence will emerge and provide a broader platform for mediating terror stories (Laqueur, 1999; Nacos,
2010). Until that time, and for the purpose of this research, Schmid’s aforementioned definition will serve as a grounding concept.

**Reporting Terror**

For many news agencies, the focus on terror stories and coverage increased considerably after the events of 9/11 (Nacos, 2007). However, when placed against a backdrop of drug-related deaths or national murder rates, violent acts of domestic terrorism in the United States are rare (CDC MMDR, 2002, 2006, 2007, 2008). Despite minimized threats, terrorism was the most widely covered subject in the news in 2010 (Pew Research Center, 2010). The Fort Hood story mirrored this trend. In January 2007, Pew Research Center’s Project for Excellence in Journalism started tracking weekly media coverage across the five main media sectors (print, online, network, TV, cable, and radio). Coverage of the Fort Hood story accounted for 15% of the total weekly news from November 2-8, 2009 (Pew, 2009). The story broke late in the week, so this number is somewhat misleading. In the three days that followed the November 5, 2009 shooting, the story garnered 34% of the national newshole (the total available space for news)—overshadowing stories about the economic crisis, the healthcare debate, and Afghanistan (Pew, 2009). It is of interest to note here that Pew (2010) found that every high-profile national shooting event recorded since January 2007 experienced a significant drop in second-week coverage (2010). However, second-week media coverage of the Fort Hood shooting increased from 15% to 20% in the week of November 9-15, 2009. This finding suggests that news agencies stayed on this story longer than other well-publicized shootings. Also, it supports research that media focus and attention increases during times of crisis and in the aftermath of terror events (Perse
et al., 2002). As of January 2011, the Fort Hood shooting ranked as the second biggest crime story—behind the 2007 shooting massacre of 32 teachers and students at Virginia Tech. Fort Hood ranks as the third most covered U.S. terror plot since January 2007 (Pew Research Center’s PEJ, 2009, 2010). The Virginia Tech story garnered 51% of the newshole in first-week coverage and 11% in the week that followed the shooting.

Terrorist actors and media content producers are drawn together by design. Terror stories are a popular staple for news producers (Gans, 2004). However, with the absence of a singular definition or context beyond emotionally charged events like Fort Hood and 9/11, terror stories present complex challenges for journalists (Tuman, 2010). The goals of the terrorist, the effect of the act, and the depth and scope of the reporting all impact news coverage. While viewed by many as a symbolic act of communication, terrorism can appear senseless, and the killer, mindless (Jenkins, 1974; Picard, 1993; Schmid, 2005). Terrorism, Jenkins (1974) contends, is not about the victims; it is about the audience: “Terrorism is theater” (Jenkins, 1974, p. 3). On April 19, 1995, Oklahoma City bomber and decorated U.S. Army Gulf War veteran Timothy McVeigh illustrated this point. McVeigh bombed the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in response to the use of lethal force by federal law enforcement agencies and the ensuing civilian deaths during sieges at Northern Idaho’s Ruby Ridge in 1992 and Waco, Texas, in 1993 (Hoffman, 2006). The bombing killed 168 people and injured 450 (Michel & Herbeck, 2008). Death, McVeigh told his attorney, was part of the plan: “We need a body count to make our point” (Hoffman, 2006, p. 248).

The Oklahoma City bombing galvanized America (Altheide, 2006). In the days that followed the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, “one in four Americans worried that
they, or a member of their family, could become victims of terrorism” (Nacos, 2007, p. 50). Similarly, a Gallup survey conducted in the days after 9/11 found that 51% to 58% of the public worried about being victimized by terror (Nacos, 2007). Research on public risk and media consumption of terror stories is shifting terrain. Snyder and Park’s (2002) survey measured national stress reactions and public perceptions against exposure to media coverage of 9/11. The findings drew on 30 studies and polls conducted with the support or scientists and nationwide polling organizations directly after 9/11 and at various points in the three months after the attacks. Snyder and Park (2002) found that public concerns and stress reactions increased and decreased with media consumption of terror stories. Woods et al. (2008) offer a different finding. Their survey of Michigan residents supports the assumption that proximity to potential terror targets is a greater predictor of public risk perceptions than mass media consumption of terror stories.

As Oklahoma City and 9/11 reveal, terrorism stories require reporters to take on complex issues that can have serious implications for broad society and specific ethnic groups. An act of terrorism can be accompanied by logical arguments (Jenkins, 1974). Uprisings can be viewed as justified social revolutions. ‘Soldiers,’ ‘guerrillas,’ and ‘freedom fighters’ often wage war to defend the masses (Rubenstein, 1987). Positive associations can legitimize seemingly reprehensible actions. Conversely, phrases like ‘dirty war,’ and words like ‘enemy,’ ‘lunatic,’ or ‘madman’ can present a different portrait that denies legitimate status or moral high ground to an individual or group involved in an act of terrorism (Rubenstein, 1987, pp. 17-18). With no clear definition
and positive and negative associations, terrorism is open to a variety of interpretations, values, and moral judgments (Ismail, 2006).

**Critical Media Studies: What Shapes News?**

Cultural studies provide a host of models and theoretical approaches to assist researchers when examining the influences and constraints that shape news coverage of terror stories. For the purpose of this study, there is value in examining who and what makes news (Gans, 2004). At its core, the profession and practice of journalism is rooted in the art of telling stories. The nature of crime and terror stories attracts news agencies and journalists to events like Fort Hood. The degree to which these media reports influence the public is an area of much debate and contention. However, research has shown that mass media serve an important role in a healthy society (Perse et al., 2002). As watchdogs over abuse and corruption, builders of solidarity and empathy, educators, information providers, and a source of comfort and reassurance, journalists and news agencies serve many valuable functions in times of peace and particularly during times of crisis and conflict (Perse et al., 2002).

Other scholars have offered a mostly cynical view of news media and journalism (McChesney, 1999; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; McChesney & Nichols, 2010). Gans’s (2004) seminal survey of national television stories and newsmagazine columns published and aired during 1967, 1969, 1971, and 1975 examined standardized media practices and professional routines and norms. Gans’s research provides insight about how reporters attempt to locate an objective or balanced viewpoint while negotiating the organizational constraints inherent in newsrooms (deadlines, corporate censorship). In his survey, Gans considered how these factors work together to
influence news processes and the final product. To unearth his findings, Gans (2004) used participant-observation research and visited the New York offices of \textit{CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek and Time} magazines over a period over several months from 1965 to 1969. He conducted additional interviews in June 1978. Gans (2004) found that media organizations tend to focus on a fairly small number of subjects (\textit{knowns} and \textit{unknowns}) and events. Also, he found that reporters take their cues from government (federal officials, the president, politicians) and popular culture (actors or sports celebrities). These groups define the \textit{knowns}. Protestors, strikers, victims, voters, survey respondents, and participants in unusual activities make up the group of \textit{unknown} subjects in the press. Gans argues that news judgment and event coverage often reflect “dominant themes” and “enduring values”—particularly, patriotism, small-town pastoralism, rugged individualism, and the preservation and advancement of democracy. Moreover, he notes, reporters unconsciously internalize these popular ideas and promote these shared values and beliefs when selecting, researching, and writing stories (Gans, 2004)

Building on previous research, Herman and Chomsky (1988) examined the organizational model of knowns and unknowns in news and added \textit{worthy} and \textit{unworthy} victims to form one level of their \textit{propaganda model}. In this context, \textit{propaganda} is described as a desire to limit or silence critical discussions and gain “acceptance of certain interpretations” through the use of colorful and value-laden discourse (Bhatia, 2005). In the propaganda system of media production, Herman and Chomsky (1988) contend that political people abused by the enemy state are seen as \textit{worthy} victims. The authors posit \textit{worth} as a reflection of acceptance by broader
society. To examine this concept, Herman and Chomsky traced patterns of media suppression, shading, emphasis, source selection, and agenda in case studies of various conflicts, wars (Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia), and political elections. In summarizing their findings, Herman and Chomsky (1988) position the news media as a supporting pillar in a hegemonic superstructure. From this position, Kellner (2006) explains, the media system serves to neutralize subordinate classes by engineering public support for the established order and power structure.

At its core, the propaganda model is grounded in Gramsci’s (1971) concept of hegemony—the idea that a dominant group or ruling culture or class maintains power and social control over other groups and cultures through a systemized practice of coercion and consent (Said, 1993). Gramsci’s (1971) work is seeded in Marxist ideas about the economies of political power (Marx & Engels, 1978). Gramsci (1971) argues that the press is the most dynamic institutional force in knowledge formation and the replication of hegemonic power. He attributes this power to the ability to control material production, which, in turn, supports the ability to reproduce dominant beliefs. These dominant beliefs further support the ruling ideas (ideological frameworks) in society and popular culture. Althusser (1971) contends that the subtle trick of hegemony is that it makes the ruling ideas or shared identity appear natural, freely chosen by the individual; therefore, the most logical or common sense approach to things. Herman and Chomsky (1988) further note that the propaganda goes almost unnoticed by journalists and most readers. This, in turn, prevents audiences from having full knowledge and impedes participation in the political arena and the
democratic process (McChesney, 1999). The aforementioned ideas underscore the value of frame analysis of media coverage of terror stories.

**News Frames**

Framing research has often been employed to examine how news stories can create structures of meaning that support the propaganda model and the hegemonic power structure. This research method has been shown to be particularly useful when analyzing coverage of race, ethnicity, religion, conflict, war, and political power (Hall, 1974; Van Dijk, 1993; Entman, 1991, 1993; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Iyengar, 1990, 1991). Framing research covers a broad area of cultural studies. For the purpose of this research, it is first important to define frames. Frames are part of the news structure. On the surface, a news story is a standardized set of verifiable facts (who, what, where, when, and why) linked together in a specific format. Beyond the single-dimensions of the headline and the text, Hall (1974) explains, the fixed structure of the lexical world yields to a multidimensional system. Within these layers of communication, Hall (1974) observes, overtures of intent, cause, and tone may be activated through a complex system of codes (units of meaning and clarification) and content. The manner in which these elements are pulled together with a series of ‘event-specific schema’ is known as framing (Entman, 1991). Goffman (1974) first recognized frames as a sociological processing tool that helps people understand the world around them. Scholars have posed various frame definitions. This study relies on Entman’s (1993) explanation:

Frames, then, define problems—determine what a causal agent is doing with what costs and benefits, usually measured in terms of common cultural values; diagnose causes—identify the forces creating the problem; make moral
judgments—evaluate causal agents and their effects; and suggest remedies—offer and justify treatments for the problem and predict their likely effects. (p. 52)

Frames serve many roles. In simple terms, to frame is to promote or diminish some aspect of a story (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Because most people do not experience an event in a real-world setting, much of what they know about an event and its broader implications is determined by the news coverage and the frame (Lippmann, 2010; Gans, 2004; Hall, 1974). The problem with a media-centered view of the world is illustrated in national attitudes toward crime. In 2010, a Pew Research Center poll found that despite annual drops in nationwide crime reports from 2007 to 2010, 42% of Americans believe crime is on the rise. Pew’s findings support Hall’s (1980) assertion that dominant news frames may inform erroneous ideas in large populations. This is not to say that a variety of information is not available or that the audience is without autonomy. Hall (1980) contends that audiences can operate in opposition to dominant meanings.

News stories can have one dominant frame or a series of key frames. These frames often connect the text to a variety of moral judgments, themes, metaphors, and values (Entman, 1991). News frames are in many ways unavoidable (Norris, Kern & Just, 2003). Frames can act like shorthand for media professionals and their readers. Like shorthand, frames contain familiar elements that cue the reader (Scheufele & Tewsbury, 2007). These familiar and simple representations can serve as access points that allow readers to understand a story, process new information, and relate previous information to future events (Entman, 1991). News frames often help writers organize or simplify complex issues (crime, AIDS/HIV, poverty, politics) and reference similar events (a plane crash, domestic terrorism, and natural disasters) for audiences (Norris,
Kern & Just, 2003; Hall, 1974). The image of the ‘horse-race frame’ (who is winning or
losing) in political campaigns and the ‘Cold War’ frame (communism is the enemy of
democracy) illustrate how framing works in news texts (Entman, 1991; Norris, Kern &
Just, 2003).

Entman (1993) posits that framing mechanisms can be detected within the
presence or absence of keywords, phrases, images, stereotypes, metaphors, categories,
themes, and source selection. Entman (1991) further explains:

By providing, repeating, and thereby reinforcing words and visual images that
reference some ideas but not others, frames work to make some ideas more
salient in the text, others less so—and others entirely invisible. The frame does
not eliminate all inconsistent information; texts inevitably contain some
incongruent data. But through repetition, placement, and reinforcing associations
with each other, the words and images that comprise the frame render one basic
interpretation more readily discernable, comprehensible, and memorable than
others. (p. 7)

Researchers use various methods to conduct frame analysis. For instance,
Entman (1991) examined source selection and moral judgment when conducting a frame
analysis of two similar events: the downing of Korean Air Lines Flight 007 by a Soviet
fighter plane in 1983, and the downing of Iran Air Flight 655 by a U.S. Navy ship, the
Vincennes, in 1988. Entman examined U.S. print and television coverage on nightly
news in the two weeks that followed each event. Both incidents involved misuse of
military force and substantial deaths—269 people died in the downing of Flight 007 and
290 died during the incident on Flight 655. However, Entman found that the U.S. media
framed the Soviet incident as an attack. Conversely, the U.S.-involved airstrike against
Iran Air Flight 655 was framed as a “technical problem” (Entman, 1991, p. 6). Entman’s
work shows that while audiences can draw their own conclusions about events,
dominant frames authorized by elite newsmakers make it harder to see opposing forces at play (Entman, 1991).

Researchers have identified five common framing devices used by reporters when covering politically charged issues (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). These devices include metaphors; exemplars, historical reference points; catchphrases; depictions; and icons, visual images. Gamson and Modigliani (1989) studied news reports on nuclear power in the 1970s when conducting their research. In addition to the five framing mechanisms previously mentioned, the researchers located three reasoning devices used by journalists—agency (who is to blame or the root of the problem), consequences and moral implications, and solutions. Gamson and Modigliani (1989) posit that politically charged topics can result in dominant frames that locate the topic within a specific issue culture. This issue culture is then reaffirmed and reflected in related news texts through the specific framing mechanisms and devices (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). Once an issue or problem is defined within a particular frame, the dominant issue culture may “take on a life of its own in the media” and become “superimposed upon other issues” (Olien, Donohue & Tichenor, 1995, p. 304). A $10 million advertising campaign by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) illustrates this point. The ONDCP Drug Czar arranged for two advertising spots to run during the 2002 Super Bowl. The 30-second TV ads linked the purchase of illegal street drugs to terrorism. One ad suggested that people who buy and use illegal drugs fund terrorist activities and support terrorism (Altheide, 2006). When signing the Drug-Free Communities Act in 2002, President Bush suggested that patriotic Americans who wanted to “join the fight against terror” quit drugs (Altheide, 2006, p. 85). In this
context, drug use shifts out of the framework of a simple crime and reenters the news
discourse framed as both a crime and an unpatriotic act that supports terrorism. This
framing reinforces the need for additional government policies that may result in the
marginalization of certain ethnic groups (Altheide, 2006).

As Entman’s (1991) work suggests, frame analysis lends itself to consideration of
symbolic power. This power is often revealed by studying who is quoted in news
stories. Research has shown that journalist often believe government officials and
political elites know what is happening (Gans, 2004; Emery, 1995). Moreover, research
suggests that the tendency to rely on elite sources is amplified during times of war and
conflict (Emery, 1995; Herman & Chomsky, 1988). Bennett’s (1990) research on
source selection and the press-government link supports this view. Bennett (1990)
examined 2148 news stories and editorials, from January 1, 1983 to October 15, 1986,
in his study of coverage of U.S. funding for the Nicaraguan contras in the New York
Times. Bennett (1990) concluded that when covering terrorism, reporters “‘index” the
range of voices and viewpoints in both news and editorials according to the range of
views expressed in mainstream government debate about a given topic” (1990, p. 106).
Rather than provide a broad range of voices, Bennett’s study revealed that mainstream
journalists tend to embrace an institutionalized view that edges out “popular
expression” and oppositional representations (p. 106). Of the 889 quoted sources
Bennett examined in the Times coverage, 604 were government officials.
Approximately, 139 were nongovernment sources. However, Bennett (1990) found that
nonofficial or “Other” voices included in the chorus of elite sources echoed the same
“opinions already emerging in official circles” (p. 106).
Bennett’s findings show the value of examining source selection in terror coverage post-9/11. Media analysis of terror stories on NBC, ABC, and CBS from the September 11, 2001 attacks to February 2002 found that all but 34 of the 414 broadcasts originated from the White House, the Pentagon, and the U.S. Department of State (Altheide, 2006). Herman and Chomsky (1998) suggest that the official bias or expert slant supports xenophobic U.S. policies and elevates elite opinions to a higher status of prestige, recognition, and credibility than those of other sources or groups. Moreover, when a single source dominates a news story, research suggests that oppositional voices may be drowned out or silenced (Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Jamal & Naber, 2008). For the purpose of this research, it is important to note this trend in news coverage.

The shifting dimensions and “impoverished definitions” of framing theories can be problematic for researchers (Carragee & Roefs, 2004, p. 227). However, while framing research does not answer every analytical challenge, framing methods have value for researchers looking to examine patterns of media coverage in terror stories and events like Fort Hood. In particular, this method is useful in understanding how news agencies and journalists—whether consciously or not—assign political power to particular individuals and causes, and promote dominant meanings and messages when reporting news (Entman, 1993). In coverage of events like Fort Hood, in which a Muslim suspect takes center stage, these meanings can have repercussions for America’s ethnic communities (Said, 1993).
Ethnic Coverage: Islam in the News

Van Dijk (1993) has shown that coverage of ethnic groups is limited and often reflects ‘in-groups’ and ‘out-groups’. The outsiders tend to be presented as difficult or problem people, for example, welfare cheats and criminals who threaten or burden the natural order of life and societies’ “valued resources” (1993, p. 43). His research has shown that out-groups are often portrayed in as deficient or morally bankrupt, in need of help or guidance from the ideologically and culturally superior in-groups (1993). Van Dijk concludes that ethnic groups have less access to media, and less credible source representations. In coverage of news stories that highlight ethnic and racial conflicts, source indexing that favors elite views may contribute to the reproduction of bias and racism (Bennett, 1990).

Media studies of post-9/11 terror coverage located similar bias in emerging conflict frames specific to Islam and the Western world: us versus them; good versus evil; the axis of evil; national unity; international unity; and the all-inclusive war on terror, formerly linked to communism and the Cold War frame (Tuman, 2010). With the advent of U.S.-led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, geopolitics and world order frames joined the list (Tuman, 2010).

Because the primary suspect in the Fort Hood shooting is an Arab American and a Muslim, this study considers research on race and ethnicity in the post-9/11 climate. First, it is important to review previous research on Western attitudes to Eastern subjects. Fundamental understanding of Islam and political violence is not bound to the recent past and the years since 9/11. Western attitudes toward Islam and terrorism were planted in the U.S. public’s subliminal mindset in the post-colonial period (Said, 1997, 1993).
However, the contemporary message that positions Arabs and Islam in opposition to the West began to take a more definitive shape during the 1970 oil crisis and related news reports. This image was further defined by coverage of high-profile terror events in the 1980s and early 1990s (Said, 1997; Nacos, 2007).

The events of 9/11 further raised awareness about America’s Arab and Muslim communities. Evidence suggests that increased news coverage on these groups has not always translated to broader knowledge. Powell (2011) contends that post-9/11 terror stories demonized Muslim suspects and amplified fears about Arabs and Muslims working together in organized cells against “Christian America” (Powell, 2011, p. 91). Additional research suggests that when reporters cover terror stories, professional policies and journalistic standards about objectivity and balance take a backseat to prevailing national frames (Ismail & Mishra, 2009).

To examine the concept of a patriotic press, Hutcheson et al. (2004) conducted a content analysis of *Newsweek* and *Time* magazines in the five weeks after 9/11. Their research builds on the assumption that U.S. government officials and military leaders mobilized support for a War on Terror by constructing a patriotic national identity. Hutcheson et al. (2004) found that terror coverage mirrors the values expressed by military and government officials. Moreover, Hutcheson et al. noted, communication strategies emphasized American values and beliefs, affirmation of U.S. power, and dominance on national and international fronts. Their findings suggest that these communication strategies support a national identity. This identity is rooted in U.S. strength, power, and moral superiority over other nations; emphasizes democracy, liberty, and equality; and further demonizes the enemy (Hutcheson et al., 2004).
Ismail and Mishra (2009) contend that the concept of a patriotic press is important point for researchers, “given that journalists themselves sometimes engage in attaching labels to violence perpetrators” (2009, p. 467). In their study of news coverage in relation to the war on terrorism and the U.S. occupation of Iraq, Ismail and Mishra (2009) examined 35 articles from the *Times of India* and 86 stories from the *New York Times*. The researchers selected stories published from December 23, 2006 to January 6, 2007, shortly before and after the execution of Saddam Hussein. Ismail and Mishra found that the *Times of India* was more “sympathetic to the Iraqi people and localized the war in part by soliciting Indian Muslims’ reactions to war” (2009, p. 466).

Ismail and Mishra’s work supports previous findings that contextual and interpretive information on cause, background, and objectives is underreported in terror stories (Pazlet, 1985). Ismail and Mishra (2009) found that background on the Sunni-Shiite violence was left unexplored by both publications. This finding support Paletz’s (1985) research on terror coverage. In studying terror stories in the *New York Times*, Paletz (1985) found that 75% of the articles failed to include detailed information that would provide clear explanations of goals or underlying factors that contributed to the terror event.

Some research connects the general lack of reporting on terror goals or background and contextual issues to deadlines, space considerations, and corporate pressures (Picard, 1993). Other findings suggest that Western journalists lack the training and education required to develop comprehensive terror reports. In the year after the 9/11 attacks, Hess and Kalb (2003) conducted interviews with sixty-nine journalists, government officials, and scholars during 20 informal discussions. From
January 1 and April 5, 2002, 28 percent of the nightly news on ABC, CBS, and NBC related to terrorism (2003). However, Hess & Kalb contend that a survey of 774 foreign correspondents working for U.S. news organizations found that only ten said they could “conduct an interview in Arabic” (Hess & Kalb, 2003, p. 2).

Said (1997) contends that Western reports on Muslim subjects are limited by lack of professional knowledge. “Instead of trying to find out more about the country, the reporter takes hold of what is nearest at hand, usually a cliché or some bit of journalist wisdom that readers at home are unlikely to challenge” (Said, 1997, pp. ii-iii). This application often applies to terror stories. Shortly after the Oklahoma City bombing, media reports positioned an Arab or Muslim suspect as responsible for the bombing (Nacos, 2007). Steve Emerson, a mainstream journalist turned terror expert, commented after the bombing that the Oklahoma City attack looked like the work of radical Islamic terrorists. These comments were picked up by other media outlets and fueled early searches for Middle Eastern suspects. When McVeigh was arrested, Emerson was decidedly silent about the racial profiling (Said, 1997).

Existing research provides supporting evidence for the idea that press failings have contributed to a skewed view of Middle Eastern subjects in Western media. According to a U.S. poll conducted with American Muslims from October to November 2001, two in three respondents said the news media were not covering Muslims and Islam fairly (Nacos & Torres-Reyna, 2003, 2007).

Still, other research suggests that news coverage of Muslims improved after 9/11. In their study of Muslims in news before and after 9/11, Nacos and Torres-Reyna (2003, 2007) noted that 5% of the front-page stories in the New York Times covered Muslims
and Arabs in the 6 months before 9/11. Placements doubled in the 6 months after 9/11. The three other New York City newspaper samples—USA Today, the Daily News, and the New York Post—ran no front-page stories in the 6 months before 9/11. In the 6 months after 9/11, placements jumped to 7% in USA today, 2% in the Post, and 1% in the Daily News. Most compelling in their textual analysis research is the finding that that positive associations and thematic stories about identity issues and cultural stories rose considerably in the 12 months after 9/11. In the 12 months before 9/11, the four newspapers combined ran 60% episodic stories and 30% thematic, with 10% equally split. In the 12 months after 9/11, 49% of the coverage was thematic, 39% episodic, and 12% mixed. Nacos and Torres-Reyna (2003, 2007) found that placements of broad themes and positive portrayals of Muslims and Arab Americans in newspaper stories after 9/11 increased. This coverage and the more frequent use of Muslim and Arab American sources resulted in more balanced news. Despite some inroads in ethnic coverage, with minimal moderate Muslim voices to contest the stereotypes, the authors assert that negative views of Arabs and Muslims in the United States persist.

As previous literature shows, framing analysis of news allows researchers to move beyond the surface structure and examine pathways of meaning (i.e., mood, intention, and purpose) and interpretation (Van Dijk, 1983). Hall (1974) refers to these signifying elements as “maps of meaning” that have a “whole range of social meanings, practices and usages, power and interests” carried within the texts (1974, p. 306). When a news story is heavily weighted with dominant codes (labels; stereotypes; national values; moral judgments; problems, motives, solutions) and sub-codes, the open narrative closes. Hall (1974) notes that the structured set of characters, images, and descriptions of
preferred views of society or national interest maintain order while forwarding the dominant ideology favored by ruling elites seeking to stay in power by keeping the status quo. In short, research has shown that news coverage plays a key role in the “distribution and acceptance of ethnic ideologies” (Van Dijk, 1991, p. 203):

The media not only express, reflect or disseminate ethnic opinions, but actively mediate them, both among the various power elites themselves, as well as between the elites and the public. They autonomously (re-)interpret, (re-)construct and (re-)present them, and therefore contribute themselves to their production, and hence to the construction of the ethnic consensus that underlies the racist ideologies and practices of our society. (p. 221)

Without question, all media represent ethnic subjects in some form or manner (Said, 1993). Still, Said (1993) contends that Western coverage of Muslim subjects in news is limited by the racial formations and ideological and cultural assumptions associated with Orientalism. The framework for Orientalism and what Said (2000) refers to as the Othering of Muslims is grounded in Gramsci’s concept of hegemony, mentioned earlier in this chapter. To understand the racism directed at Islam, Said explains, is to understand the broad history that links politics and power to culture (Said, 1993, 1997). As a longstanding attitude or body of knowledge, Orientalism positions the Occident (the Western world, ‘us’, the good) in opposition to the Orient (the East, Asians, and Islam) and its people (the Other, ‘them’, Arabs, Muslims). Orientalism reflects and reinforces geographical references, post-colonial perspectives, the concept of Western power rooted in the history of empirical order. This conceptualized model of racism is cultivated in geography, literature, and media discourse (Said, 1993).

By distorting the Other, terror stories link the postcolonial concept of imperial power and cultural consent with contemporary images of Arabs and Islam: “If the Arab occupies space enough for attention, it is a negative value” (Said, 2000, p 65). Said
(2000) notes that news stories covering Islam emphasize the inferiority of the Muslim race as subordinate through the production of ethnocentric images and labels: “Islam has licensed not only patent inaccuracy but also expressions of unrestrained ethnocentrism, cultural and even racial hatred, deep yet paradoxically free-floating hostility” (2000, pp. 169-170). Prevailing and positive images of the West, in turn, are presented with ideas about cultural democracy, “natural advantages”, historic domination and reinforced and validated through cultural “structures of attitude and reference” (Said, 1993, pp. 48-52). “In a quite constant way,” Said explains, “Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible position of superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand” (Said, 2000, p. 73).

On Nov. 19, 2009, RAND Corporation’s Senior Advisor and terrorism expert Brian M. Jenkins illustrated the power of both Orientalism and hegemony when addressing the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs to provide a preliminary assessment of the Fort Hood shooter’s motives:

Major Nidal Malik Hasan has the characteristics of both political extremist and ordinary mass murderer. At a glance, his homicidal rampage looks a lot like what used to be called ‘going postal’—a deepening sense of personal grievance culminating in a homicidal rampage directed against co-workers, in this case, fellow soldiers. For Hasan, ‘going jihad’ reflects the channeling of obvious personality problems into deadly fanaticism. (pp. 1-2)

The reproduction of “mass-mediated” racism is particularly relevant in terror stories (Van Dijk, 1983, p. 221; Said, 1997). Moreover, the denial of racism is reinforced with reproductions of ethnocentrism (Van Dijk, 1983). Said (2000) posits that within the dominant or hegemonic system of cultural democracy, the Muslim is reduced to a crude representative for a racially informed ideology that divides ‘us’ and ‘them’
(the Others). This, in turn, influences prevailing public attitudes and dislike of ‘the stranger’, a term defined by the Greeks as xenophobia. In short, Shaheen (2003) notes, “acceptable villains make our troubles so manageable” (pp. 179-180).

Kavoori (2006) describes the postcolonial perspective as an attempt to link the conditions of the modern world to the “spatial, social, and cultural maps for most, if not all, contemporary societies” (p. 180). In this space, Kavoori (2006) contends, the media can serve two roles in developmental debates. The media are both agents for change or builders of Western dominance. Kavoori (2006) refers to terrorism as “a kind of niche identity politics” that is “both conflated and reduced to one of many sites for the articulation of cultural conflict” (p. 181). Terrorism, Kavoori (2006) notes, “operates at the margins—questioning the integrity of states or as impediments to their development” (p. 181). In this way, the author explains, terrorism is similar to topics such as race, gender, sex, and class (Kavoori, 2006).

The problematic construction of Arab and Muslim subjects is not limited to terror stories in news. Shaheen (2003) surveyed more than 900 films and examined Hollywood’s projection of Arabs and Muslims from 1912 to 2001. He found that only 5% of the Arab film roles presented these characters with normal or human features. Most images held negative characteristics that projected Eastern subjects as heartless, uncivilized, money-mad, hook-nosed religious fanatics. When presented “along racial and religious lines,” Shaheen contends that these images expose a “systematic, pervasive, and unapologetic degradation and dehumanization of a people” (2003, p. 172).
For journalists covering terror stories, the challenges of producing balanced reports are further complicated by the diverse nature of Islamic and Arab identities often connected to terror reports. Arabs and Muslims represent a multinational collection of geographic regions, ethnicities, and faiths (Shaheen, 2003). However, with the global Muslim population projected to double in the next 20 years, evidence suggests that the need for images that accurately represent the Arab American and Muslim communities is pressing (Pew Research Center, 2011). Shaheen (2003) contends that the global reach of mass media means negative images of Arabs and Muslims have more impact on viewers today than in previous decades.

There is evidence to support Shaheen’s concerns about the impact of racial stereotypes on audiences. In the three months that followed 9/11 and the widened media focus on terror, the FBI noted a 1600% increase in reported hate crimes against Muslims. The FBI recorded 481 hate crimes against Muslims in 2001, and 28 in 2000. Additional impact is visible in a 2007 Pew Research poll. In surveying public attitudes about Islam and Mormonism, researchers found that “about a third of the public (32%)—including nearly half of those who offer a negative opinion of Muslims (48%)—say what they have seen or read in the media has had the biggest influence on their views” (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2007, pp. 4-5). Other research suggests the impact extends beyond U.S. borders. The 9/11 Commission (2004) found that despite the benefits of 20 years of U.S. aid to the Middle East, only 15% of Egypt’s population had a favorable opinion of the United States in 2002 (The 9/11 Commission Report, 2004, p. 375). This number dropped to 12% in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, two-
thirds of those surveyed in countries ranging from Indonesia to Turkey said they were “fearful or somewhat fearful of a U.S. attack” in 2003 (2004, p. 375).

Research has shown that religious literacy and cultural knowledge are important to media professionals and the public (Moore, 2006). When working with a limited basis of knowledge and given the power to act as a gatekeeper in the process of news delivery, Vultee (2006) found that media producers can create false meanings about language and Islamic cultures. Vultee conducted qualitative content analysis to examine how Islamic signifiers like fatwa, a term associated with a ruling on a question of Islamic religious law, came to be more closely understood to mean death sentence, a far more negative term, in mainstream news and popular culture. To conduct his research, Vultee examined stories in Associated Press, USA Today, the St. Petersburg Times, the Atlanta Journal and Constitution, and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch from 1989 to 2002. The author found that the concept of fatwa shifted during a series of failures by media producers. He explains how this happens:

At each of several checkpoints, an accessible, culturally congruent construct won out over one that required extra layers of processing by writers or editors—or one that simply made less of a case for attention. (p. 320)

Still, the author argues, once the false meaning has taken hold in popular culture, it may be countered, but never can be fully corrected (Vultee, 2006). Against emerging scholarly recognition of the links between public opinion and media influence, the 9/11 commission authors (2004) conclude that it is imperative that media policies and practices be corrected to allow the more than six million American Muslims a place in democratic discussion and debate (CAIR, 2001).
Ethnic Media and Oppositional Press

This study considers the role of both mainstream and ethnic media in covering the Fort Hood story. It is therefore important to briefly highlight their separate roles.

The New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, and USA Today are the only three U.S. newspapers with national print circulations (Pew Research Center, 2011). The national scope of the New York Times allows the publication to have a significant role in setting the overall tone for the nation’s daily news (2011). As an aggregate for other sources of national media, the Times and other benchmark newspapers have “tremendous influence on the national and international news agenda because they serve as a sources of news that many other outlets look to in making their own programming and editorial decisions” (Pew Research Center, 2011, p. 1).

McChesney (1999) contends that the overall impact of the corporate and mainstream media growth is seen in the limited access to real information “that serves the entire population,” widespread depoliticization and the rise of “neoliberalism,” a political theory that refers to policies that maximize the role of markets and profits over nonmarket institutions (McChesney, 1999, p. 5). Deregulation has allowed a small number of media giants to dominate the variety of content streams. When a few groups dominate, McChesney notes, “they are able to inflict their will on the subdued and unorganized populations” (1999, p. 6).

If limited access disenfranchises readers, a multiperspectival approach to news suggested by Gans (2004) provides a platform for individuals to gain a more global view of what is happening in the world. Ethnic media fall within the purview of this broad approach to presenting information and news. As of June 2010, there were more
than 3,000 ethnic media outlets in the United States (New American Media, 2010). Additional research suggests that ethnic news outlets reach more than 82% of the total minority populations in the United States (New American Media, 2010). Scholars contend that the rise in ethnic media reflects the interests of these audiences. The influx of communication technologies has provided forums for subcultures and ethnic networks (Cottle, 2000). For minority groups, Downing (2011) notes, ethnic media represent an important mechanism for intercultural dialogue, self-representation of cultural values and history, and political inclusion:

Indigenous media are at once a form of political activism, an emerging genre, and a practice of intercultural dialogue. Indigenous media has also become an independent field of cultural production by and for Indigenous peoples, situated at the crossroads of contemporary politics of cultural identity and representation. As such, they challenge the modern binary logic of self/other, and the politics of representation of cultural purities, between the so-called traditional and modern. (p. 255)

Existing work has shown that mainstream news media (predominantly white-owned and staffed) increasingly favor the voices and opinions of dominant institutions and political elites (Bennett, 1990; Shah & Thornton, 2004). Official sources and decision-makers, in turn, forward themes that mirror accepted society and beliefs and values often rooted in ethnocentrism, the idea that American democracy is the gold standard for the rest of the world (Gans, 1980; Bennett, 1990). In contrast, ethnic media have been shown to promote a world view (Shah & Thornton, 2004).

Newspapers cater to their specific audiences. However, ethnic media raise the profile of underrepresented groups and present an opportunity for readers—both ethnic and mainstream—to be exposed to opposing views. Hence, ethnic media have been shown to challenge traditional ideas about institutional and class-based bias (Huspek,
2004; Cottle, 2000). Over time, this oppositional outlook may serve to encourage more reporters and editors to return to early practices rooted in the Jeffersonian concept of an independent, adversarial press when communicating stories about political violence and terror (Tuman, 2010).

Having the means to produce content allows ethnic news agencies to empower audiences by focusing on topics relevant and “flattering to the minority group” (1992, p. 279). Researchers have observed that ethnic media can promote assimilation (Riggins, 1992). In addition, ethnic news agencies have been shown to recognize and focus attention on the “differences between minority and majority populations” (Riggins, 1992, p. 279). Ethnic media professionals may also serve as cultural emissaries to support accurate viewpoints of minority subjects in ethnic and mainstream news environments (Riggins, 1992).

Still, the ethnic media are not without limits. Both ethnic and mainstream media trace dominant ideology, favor elite voices, and provide opposing voices that counter hegemonic interests (Riggins, 1992). In short, they each serve a dual role. Riggins highlights the duality by examining whether ethnic media forward cultural preservation or serve to assimilate ethnic minority audiences into the dominant culture. Riggins (1992) provides evidence to support both assumptions. On one hand, ethnic journalists promote and accelerate assimilation of audiences by emphasizing the shared interests of major and minor populations (Riggins, 1992). This approach may reinforce dominant views and be reproduced accidentally or unconsciously by reporters (Riggins, 1992).

Scholars also recognize that ethnic media can delay assimilation. Ethnic reporters can have their own biases or elitists views and be out of touch with broad-scale issues.
Riggins defines the framework of narrow programming on behalf of ethnic journalist as “intellectual ghettoization” (Riggins, 1992, p. 285). Riggins also finds that intellectual ghettoization can turn away readers and reduce the growth and success of ethnic news agencies.

Other research suggests that ethnic media can reinforce common stereotypes within superficial layers of multiculturalism that reflect modern or ‘new’ racism (Cottle, 2000; Gray, 2000; Van Dijk, 2000). As described by Cottle (2000), new racism is rooted in old racism:

[Modern racism] is interpreted as the unintended outcome of news producers who seek to move beyond ‘old-fashioned racism’ by portraying African Americans in more positive ways but who thereby create an impression of black social advance and thus undermine black claims on white resources and sympathies (p. 11).

In looking at black representations on network television, Gray (2000) found that this ‘new’ racism is often produced by well-intentioned editors. The Cosby Show reveals how ‘enlightened racism’ is reproduced in media representations of ethnic groups in other media formats. The television character of Dr. Cliff Huxtable (played by Bill Cosby), a wealthy doctor, is not the average African American role model. “The Cosby Show, ‘which tells us nothing about the structures behind success or failure’ and ‘leaves white viewers to assume that black people who do not measure up to their television counterparts have only themselves to blame,’” (Cottle, 2000, p. 12).

Supporting Gramsci (1971) and Althusser’s (1971) previously mentioned assumptions of hegemony, new racism is sometimes so subtle that it cannot be captured within the confines of typical stereotypes. These stereotypes may further diminish the role of ethnic citizens as national stakeholders (Van Dijk, 2000; Cottle, 2000; Jamal &

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Naber, 2008). Although many content producers aim to show ethnic groups in a more positive light, Gray (2000) finds the media system lacking.

Despite debate on the roles and functions of ethnic media, Shah and Thornton (2004) contend that without perspective provided by ethnic newspapers, “there would be few or no truly competing views in the public sphere about interethnic relations among minority groups” (Shah & Thornton, 2004, p. 220). As noted earlier, a multi-ethnic media are limited by the economies of scale and have struggled to gain secure footing in the public sphere (Husband, 2000). The public sphere represents civil society or the forum in which individuals can exercise formal and informal control over the state and government by electing officials or voicing public opinions (Habermas, 1989). Husband (2000) defines the public sphere as “communicative and institutional space wherein the principles of democracy can be practiced and the rights of citizenship nurtured and expressed” (Husband, 2000, p. 201).

Research has shown that ethnic media are crucial to facilitating civility in the public sphere and democracy (Husband, 2000). For this reason, Riggins (1992) contends that ethnic reporters should aim to produce valuable journalism that crosses over to both mainstream and ethnic cultures. In keeping with this idea, Husband (2000) proposes a media model for a multi-ethnic public sphere. The model goes beyond current Eurocentric human rights discourse and the inadequacies of contemporary political philosophy and is grounded in the idea of access to communication as a basic human right. Husband’s model encompasses three main ideas: the right to communicate and have space for individual expression; the acceptance of a new media structure that includes all groups and all voices; and state-sponsored subsidies that support diverse
communication and access that reflects the interests of modern society over profits (Husband, 2000).
CHAPTER 3: METHODS

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology used to construct the basis for this thesis study and address the research question. This chapter includes a discussion of the sample used. Following Altheide’s (1996) qualitative research methods, this section highlights data collection and analysis. The final sections discuss the limitations of the research and efforts to ensure the validity in the work.

Divergent ideas about the dimensions and impact of rhetoric in news discourse have yielded various methods for study and research. The present study follows Entman’s (1991) guidelines for examining frame construction in news texts. As mentioned earlier, frame analysis seeks to capture the essence of meanings and significance (Altheide, 1996). This study uses frame analysis to define the dominant news frames. The ultimate goal of this work is to understand how ethnic and mainstream media construct terror stories and the Fort Hood story in particular.

Research Questions

This study poses the following research questions: How did a U.S.-based mainstream newspaper and its U.S.-based Arab and Muslim counterparts portray the Fort Hood shooting event?

This study includes several sub questions:

1. What does the article identify as the primary problem cause/problem?
2. How are the main actors portrayed and what narrative devices (keywords/metaphors) support the overall theme/tone of the coverage?
3. What is identified as the primary solution?
4. Who is quoted in the articles?
Analysis Protocols

This study follows Entman’s (1991) framing approach and Altheide’s (1996) model for comprehensive qualitative analysis and critical inquiry. Qualitative content analysis as a research method has five stages (Altheide, 1996). Altheide (1996) suggests analysts develop a comprehensive understanding of the social climate (context) that surrounded a document and the organizational structure (source) of the production process. This “general awareness greatly informs the nature” of the research. It enables the analyst to make the first step in the process of qualitative document analysis and identify a specific problem or source for investigation (Altheide, 1996, p.9).

Articulating a problem enables the analyst to move toward the development of a question or theory (hypothesis). Once grounded in a theory, the researcher selects a sample population—national newspapers, for instance—from which to extract a unit for analysis. For the reasons mentioned in the previous chapter, this study selected news texts (articles) as a unit of analysis.

Development of a content analysis procedure listed on a code sheet provides a framework for research. A protocol is a set of categories and descriptions (date, length, focus, main topic, sources, themes, location, emphasis) listed on a single page and completed for each document examined. The protocol allows for different outcomes and notations. It also provides a platform for initial testing of the main research question. If the first protocol codes represent the salient features of the document, other documents (data) may be collected to complete the sample. As a general practice in qualitative research, a coding protocol develops and emerges over time, and with various document readings (Altheide, 1996, p. 28). With a foundation for research and
analysis, articles are coded and analyzed through a detailed process of extensive readings, sorting, and comparisons. This analytical process should provide contrasting information (similarities, extremes, and significant differences) that can be organized in a comprehensive system of short summaries. This research serves as the basis for the final report on the researcher’s key findings and provides suggestions for future studies.

**Data Collection and Sampling**

This study examined U.S. mainstream news and ethnic media—particularly, Arab and Muslim ethnic news publications. To articulate how the Fort Hood story was presented in mainstream news, a dataset was formed by collecting articles that appeared in the *New York Times*. The U.S. ethnic media are a growing force (New American Media, 2010). No single Arab and Muslim publication provided a large enough comparative sample to measure against the *New York Times*. For this reason, a composite approach was applied to collecting articles to examine how the Fort Hood story was presented by U.S.-based ethnic publications.

In consideration of the ongoing nature of the Fort Hood story and to allow for evolving frames, a broad timeline from the day of the shooting (November 5, 2009) to present day (June 2011) was selected when collecting stories. The case is pending. Still, in July 2011, Fort Hood’s Chief Circuit Judge Colonel Gregory Gross ordered a trial date set for March 5, 2012. In January 2011, a military panel found Hasan—held in military prison after his 2009 arrest and at a Benton, Texas jail since April 2011—mentally fit to stand trial for 13 counts of murder and 32 counts of attempted premeditated murder (Fox News, 2011).
Research has shown that frames often depend on the “degree of consensus among elite news sources” (Entman, 1993, p. 8). This theory makes an elite and mainstream newspaper like the New York Times an effective population from which to collect data for a study of contrasting frames in mainstream and ethnic news. Despite major shifts in the production, formats, and media consumption, news organizations like the Times continue to deliver the majority of content consumed by the national audience (Pew Research Center, 2011). Pew Research Center’s census data shows that 40% of Americans read a newspaper three times a week. Newsletters and web-only publications were omitted from this study because of differences in the characteristics of format, production, and standards. Because editorials and opinion texts have been shown to influence readers’ views, these texts were included with news stories in the sample (Huspek, 2004; Van Dijk, 1991).

Mainstream Media: Data Collection and Sampling

As a catalog of the day’s most prominent and significant happenings both observed by the on-scene crime reporter or unobserved through a series of post-event investigative reports, newspapers like the New York Times are vital sources for recording notable occurrences in society at large (Moltotch & Lester, 1974). The New York Times articles were accessed through the ProQuest database. A search in the ProQuest database using keywords “Fort Hood shooting” and “Nidal Hasan” from November 5, 2009 to June 16, 2011 produced 66 articles. The sample was reduced to 35 articles through a series of close readings that eliminating duplicate stories, articles of less than 300 words, and other stories in which the shooting event or the gunman was not the central focus.
**Ethnic Media: Data Collection and Sampling**

To build a balanced sample for comparison with the mainstream sample, the dataset for the U.S. Arab and Muslim texts was formed by collecting articles from ethnic print news media (newspapers and magazines). A search in ProQuest databases using keywords “Fort Hood shooting” and “Nidal Hasan” from November 5, 2009 to June 16, 2011 produced 11 articles from the *Arab American News*, five articles from *Arab Detroit*, one article from the *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, and three articles from *Islamic Horizons*. The National Arab American Journalists Association has a membership of 130 news outlets across various sectors. Requests for Fort Hood articles were sent to 130 NAAJA members on June 13, 2011. The email request outlined the nature of the study and requested newspaper articles on the Fort Hood shooting published from Nov. 5, 2009 to June 16, 2011. The request was resent on June 16, 2011.

Additional articles were located by using phone and email contacts from the 2008 *Arab-American Press Project* guide (Hirsh & Hopper, 1998). The list provided some current contact information for various Arab and Muslim publications. Contacts that were no longer valid or did not meet the research parameters of this study were omitted from the overall search. Follow-up emails and phone calls were conducted to advance the sample.

Further samples were gathered through archived Arab and Muslim publication website searches using keywords “Fort Hood shooting” and “Nidal Hasan” from Nov. 5, 2009 to June 16, 2011. The total sample for database research and additional methods rounded out at 37 articles in 19 publications. Each article was converted into an archived text file, printed, and read over several times. Duplicate stories and articles not deemed to
have specific relevance to the Fort Hood shooting were eliminated during additional close readings. This process brought the final sample to 28 articles in 13 U.S.-based Arab and Islamic publications. These publications include the *Arab American News*, *Arab Detroit*, the *Arab Horizon*, *Azizah* magazine the *Beirut Times*, the *Chicago Crescent*, *Common Ground News Service*, Forum & Link, In-Focus News, the *Iran Times*, the *Muslim Observer*, the *Muslim Voice*, and the *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* (see Appendix A).

**Coding Protocol and Analysis**

When the sample collection process was completed, coding sheets were designed (see Appendix B) and focused around three main news frames: problem (cause), moral judgments, and solutions. To highlight devices used to support the news frames, this study considered the use of keywords and sources. These items were reviewed, recorded, and coded separately during the analyses. Sources were categorized into several groups: Hasan’s circle (family, friends, coworkers), U.S. officials (politicians, government, FBI), victims and military families, Pro-Arabs and Muslim voices, U.S. media, and a general Other category (local sources, doctors, lawyers). To highlight emerging themes, stories were examined in chronological order and by publication groups.

**Validity and Limitations**

In qualitative research the validity of a study refers to the overall quality of the research and findings (Miller, 2008). Unlike scientific studies, qualitative research is interpretive by nature and subject to the impressions of the researcher. A coding method that focuses too far in one direction may result in information being overlooked (Altheide, 1996). “Problematic meanings, and self-deceptions” on behalf of the
researcher can further impact plausible findings (Altheide, 1996, p. 80). Lindlof (1995) posits that “qualitative inquirers do seek credible, dependable data” that presents a platform for reader confidence (Lindlof, 1995, p. 238). Qualitative research is not exact. The researcher seeks to “achieve right interpretations” (1995, p. 238). Providing a detailed methodology rooted in a broad knowledge, a representative sample, and transparent data collection and coding guidelines can provide a detailed analysis. The *New York Times* is one of many mainstream U.S. newspapers. The newspaper does not represent all mainstream coverage on the Fort Hood event. Similarly, the Arab and Muslim sample does not represent every Fort Hood article produced by these news sectors. A broader sample with several mainstream publishers and additional ethnic publishers or online forums conducted over a longer period or upon completion of the legal case associated with the story could present different findings than those produced by this research. In addition, a study that included the voices of mainstream and Western journalists who covered the Fort Hood event would add another dimension to the findings.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS.

This chapter seeks to examine how mainstream and ethnic media framed the Fort Hood shooting and the prime suspect, Major Nidal Hasan. The November 5, 2009 event was not the first mass shooting to focus media attention on the central Texas enclave. On Oct. 16, 1991, George Jo Hennard drove his truck into a Luby’s Cafeteria located about four miles from the site of Hasan’s crime. Hennard shot and killed 23 people and wounded another 20 (Barrett & Castro, 2010). Hennard is widely held as a garden-variety lunatic. Like many killers, Hasan could be viewed as just one more gun-toting workplace madman ‘going postal’. So what separates the madman from the terrorist? A close analysis of the 63 articles examined for this study provides insight for answering this question through an analysis of the key frames adopted by both mainstream and ethnic media in coverage of the Fort Hood story. For the purpose of this study, it is important to note that as of July 2011, the murder trial was more than 8 months away, and Hasan had yet to speak openly about the shootings. However, Hasan’s guilt is not in question. A parade of witnesses and government officials confirmed that Hasan was the lone shooter at Fort Hood (Krauss, 2010).

This chapter is presented in two sections. The first section examines coverage of the Fort Hood shooting in the New York Times. The second section examines the U.S. Arab and Muslim news coverage. The analytical goal of this work is to consider the messages and frames embedded within the texts. In short, the section aims to show how these stories presented the problem and the root cause, moral judgments, and solutions.
The New York Times

Like many breaking news stories, Fort Hood coverage was initially fragmented by the chaos that accompanied the violence. Early news reports said the gunman was dead and implicated more than one shooter. Hasan, who was shot four times by a Fort Hood-based civilian police officer during the rampage, lay in intensive care at a San Antonio military hospital, paralyzed, and in a coma (Johnston & Shane, 2009a). With so many unanswered questions, early news reports depicted the gunman as either a mentally unstable individual (possibly suffering from pre-deployment stress) or a radicalized poster child for a new breed of home-grown terror.

The New York Times recognized the Fort Hood shooting as a story of national importance. This is apparent in the appearance of quotes from U.S. President Barack Obama and other high-level government officials in early reports. The 35 Times stories contained a total of 417 quotes. Government officials were the most frequently cited sources. This group made up 53% (n=222). Hasan’s family and friends were the second most quoted group. This group made up 20% (n=82) followed by victims and their families 10% (n=41); other U.S. media outlets 9% (n=37); and the general Other group (local sources, doctors, lawyers) 2% (n=11). Muslim and Arab sources were cited 9% (n=37). It is of note that 5% (n=23) of the Arab and Muslim voices included in the Times coverage recognized Muslim religious leaders and Islamic scholars like Anwar al-Awlaki, a man wanted by the FBI in connection with terrorism and Islamic extremism. One Times report links Hasan to terrorism with a quote culled just after the Fort Hood shooting from al-Awlaki’s website. The reporters (Johnston & Shane, 2009a) note that:
Mr. Awlaki, an American citizen born in New Mexico to Yemeni parents, wrote on Monday on his English-language website that Mr. Hasan was ‘a hero.’ The cleric said, ‘He is a man of conscience who could not bear living the contradiction of being a Muslim and serving in an army that is fighting against his own people’ (¶ 11).

He added, ‘The only way a Muslim could Islamically justify serving as a soldier in the U.S. Army is if his intention is to follow the footsteps of men like Nidal.’ (¶ 12)

This finding is important because overall Muslim and Arab voices that could provide perspective on Muslims in the military are lacking in the *Times* coverage. The *Times* uses “Islam” (n= 140), “Muslims” (n=181), “Arabs” (n=24), and “Palestine” (n=11) but fails to provide any context or background about each group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1</th>
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<th>NYT</th>
<th>Ethnic News</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fort Hood Articles: Keywords</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>number</em></td>
<td><em>number</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islam</td>
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<td>Muslim</td>
<td></td>
<td>181</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestine</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
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As Shaheen (2003) notes, not all Arabs are Muslims and not all Muslims are Arabs. These groups cover a diverse landscape. A 2001 study by the Council of American-Islamic Relations examined membership at 631 of 1209 U.S. mosques. CAIR (2001) determined that one-third (33%) of the mosque members are South Asian (from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh), three-tenths (30%) are African American, and a quarter (25%) are Arabic or from Arab-speaking countries.

Still, rather than represent these differences or explain Islam to the readers, the *Times* highlights the link between an international terror suspect wanted by the FBI and
the Fort Hood shooter, a lifelong soldier and a practicing Muslim. Most troubling in the findings is that rather than locate a legitimate Arab or Muslim source, a moderate Muslim or a Muslim soldier serving in the military, the reporters exploit the narrative by culling content from a website that gives credence to a stereotypical viewpoint not reflective of the broad Muslim community. Moreover, this source selection and quote panders to post-9/11 American fears that Islam and Muslims are a threat to the West—us vs. them. This framing of Muslims as the Other is presented across much of the Times reporting and is in line with Said’s (1997, 1993) research on Orientalism and the tendency of Western reports to marginalize Muslim subjects. This pattern of linking a Muslim suspect to terrorism has been observed in previous terror studies (Powell, 2011). The finding supports additional research that in moments of conflict and national security, journalists routinely cede First Amendment freedoms to national interests and follow a patriotic line established by the White House and high-level officials (Bennett, 1990).

This finding also articulates one of the key problems outlined in this coverage: violence linked to terrorism. The New York Times presents the main cause of the problem as Islamic violence against the U.S. The New York Times further amplifies the horror of Fort Hood with graphic and detailed reports. The day after the shootings one Times reporter quotes President Obama calling the shootings “a horrific outburst of violence” (McFadden, 2009, ¶ 17). The victims are described with care and detail. One Times headline refers to the victims as “Dedicated, Caring, and Suddenly Lost at Home” (Robbins, 2009). The victims were “cut down in clusters” (McFadden, 2009, ¶ 5). Words like “hero,” “brave,” “dedicated,” and “patriot” provide strong imagery that supports a collective identity and national empathy for the victims. With image-provoking
terminology reminiscent of a Hollywood blockbuster, team writers McKinley and Dao (2009) use every one of 2465 words to highlight the horror of Fort Hood for readers:

Hasan began shooting around 1:20 p.m., investigators say. (¶ 52)

As he methodically moved around the room, he spared some people while firing on others several times. He seemed to discriminate among his targets, though it is unclear why. All but one of the dead were soldiers. (¶ 53)

‘Our witnesses said he made eye contact with a guy and then moved to somebody in uniform,’ said Representative K. Michael Conaway, Republican of Texas. (¶ 54)

He fired more than 100 rounds. (¶ 55)

The intermittent firing gave some soldiers false hope as they hunkered down in the processing center, flattening themselves under tables and propping chairs against flimsy cubicle doors. (¶ 56)

Witnesses said that the floor became drenched with blood and that soldiers, apparently dead, were draped over chairs in the waiting area or lying on the floor. (¶ 57)

. . . The shooting stopped momentarily, and Corporal Hewitt started to crawl out of the room on his belly with others following. Major Hasan was only reloading. (¶ 61)

. . . It was 1:27 p.m. (¶ 63)

As presented in the New York Times, the victims support standard secular roles.

They are shown as loyal and brave soldiers who belong to the nation. They are, in the words of Herman and Chomksy (1988), “worthy victims” who deserve our attention (p 37). Another Times (Robbins, 2009) report observes the irony and moral outrage of the murders in describing one of the victims:

Capt. Russell Seager of Racine, Wis., was a nurse practitioner who helped veterans struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder at the Clement J. Zablocki Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Milwaukee. (¶ 5)
‘He just wanted to help the soldiers because they helped us,’ his uncle Larry Seager of Mauston, Wis., said in a telephone interview. ‘And then he got shot by a psychiatrist.’ (¶ 6)

As with the presentation of the victims in the Times reports, the families of the victims are drawn as a close community linked by national pride and love for country. None of these characters is placed in a setting that criticizes the nation or the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Times presents the overriding problem and cause of the violence as domestic terror fueled by links to radical Islam. This is not to say that other problems and causal factors are omitted. The Times coverage addresses causes outside of the ‘war on terror’ frame. For instance, another problem outlined in the Times coverage is threaded in stories that articulate the issues associated with a decade of U.S.-led wars. The issue of battle fatigue is raised in several stories. The Times introduces this causal factor through stories that address the possibility that Hasan may have been suffering from compassion fatigue, a syndrome experienced by military mental health professionals in dealing with combat troops returning from the frontlines of war. One story that ran the day after the shooting discusses compassion fatigue as a possible factor in the Fort Hood shooter’s actions. In the following paragraph, the reporter describes comments that Hasan, the gunman, reportedly made to a cousin, Nader Hasan, in the months before the event (Dao, 2009):

He had also more recently expressed deep concerns about being sent to Iraq or Afghanistan. Having counseled scores of returning soldiers with post-traumatic stress disorder, first at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington and more recently at Fort Hood, he knew all too well the terrifying realities of war, said a cousin, Nader Hasan. ‘He was mortified by the idea of having to deploy,’ Mr. Hasan said. ‘He had people telling him on a daily basis the horrors they saw over there.’ (¶ 3-4)

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In this setting, the reporter takes the spotlight off the terror problem and links the violence at Fort Hood to the U.S. military and, in turn, the government. The writers also present an additional causal link for the problem of violence built around the idea that the military failed to spot the internal threat from one of its own soldiers. In a story headlined “Army Concerned for Muslim Troops” (Berger & Krauss, 2009), the reporters quote Connecticut Senator Joseph Lieberman speaking during a recent television appearance:

[Lieberman ] labeled the shooting spree ‘the most destructive terrorist act to be committed on American soil since 9/11’ and said that as chairman of the Senate Homeland Security Committee he intended to investigate Major Hasan's suspected motives and whether the Army ‘missed warning signs that should have led them to essentially discharge him.’ (¶ 7)

Here, there is a momentary appearance of oppositional coverage in the mainstream media that links the problem and possible cause to a failure in the U.S. military system. Also, there is an implication that the military failed twice—once in not heeding Hasan’s repeated requests to be released from deployment; and finally, in failing to spot the homegrown domestic terrorist traitor hiding in plain sight. However, after pointing the finger of moral judgment briefly at the military, a symbol of nation and U.S. power, the narrative circles back and repositions Islam and Muslims as the root cause for the Fort Hood event and the ultimate enemy. Pulling another quote from Senator Lieberman’s TV appearance, the writers (Berger & Krauss, 2009) revert to the earlier ‘war on terror’ frame:

‘If Hasan was showing signs, saying to people that he had become an Islamist extremist, the U.S. Army has to have zero tolerance,’ Senator Lieberman said. ‘He should have been gone.’ (¶ 8)
In the next paragraph, General George Casey Jr., the Army chief of staff and spokesperson in the days that followed the shooting, tries to caution against adopting the terror label (Berger & Krauss, 2009):

Asked whether he thought the Army ‘dropped the ball’ in not responding to warning signs that the major was increasingly radical, General Casey replied that he was encouraging soldiers to provide information to criminal investigators. But he added that the Army needs to be careful not to jump to conclusions based on early tidbits of information. (¶ 9)

‘The speculation could heighten the backlash,’ he said on ‘This Week.’ ‘What happened at Fort Hood is a tragedy and I believe it would be a greater tragedy if diversity became a casualty here.’ (¶ 10)

Still, one could argue that for many readers, the terror label embedded in the Fort Hood narrative will have already taken hold. As the above passage shows, Islam holds two positions in the Times coverage. In one sense, comments from Casey and other cautious officials link Islam to peace and consider the possible ramifications of Fort Hood on law-abiding Muslims. This idea is included in further coverage and discussions about backlash and government concerns for Muslims in the wake of the violence at Fort Hood. However, as mentioned earlier, the issue’s value is not mirrored in the news agency’s selection of sources. Nor is it reflected in the overall coverage.

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<tr>
<th>TABLE 2</th>
<th>NYT</th>
<th>Ethnic News</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fort Hood Articles: Sources</td>
<td>n %</td>
<td>n %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Officials</td>
<td>222 53%</td>
<td>79 25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasan’s Circle (Family &amp; Friends)</td>
<td>82 20%</td>
<td>8 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victims &amp; Military Families</td>
<td>41 10%</td>
<td>8 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-Arab &amp; Muslim Voices</td>
<td>37 9%</td>
<td>149 46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Media</td>
<td>24 6%</td>
<td>16 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11 2%</td>
<td>54 15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The dominant problem and cause in this coverage repeatedly links Hasan and the Fort Hood shooting to the evolving threat of domestic terrorism and its international supporters. The *Times* articles make repeated references to “homegrown extremist” (n=2), “domestic terrorism” (n=1), “homegrown terrorist attack” (n=1), “homegrown terrorism (n=1), and the problem of the “evolving domestic internal security threat” (n=1).

The magnitude of Hasan’s homegrown terror plot and his betrayal to the military system that provided his education and career is emphasized in the framing of the nation as powerless to prevent the attack but resolute to make sure it never happens again. This message is amplified and supported by a parade of victims and blindsided government officials. Here, a key solution to the problem of Fort Hood comes into focus. The President appears as a keystone figure, urging Americans to remain calm, and pray for those who were killed and wounded. As observed in previous studies on conflict stories, the Fort Hood event is presented as an attack on the nation. The moral outrage is echoed in quotes from President Obama: “It is difficult enough when we lose these men and women in battles overseas . . . [but] it is horrifying that they should come under fire at an Army base on American soil,” (McFadden, 2009, ¶ 18). During a eulogy at Fort Hood, the *Times* further vilifies Hasan and his crime by showing President Obama standing in front of 13 sets of boots, rifles, helmets. One *Times* article presents the nation’s leader heading the charge to restore order (Baker & Krauss, 2009):

> The memory of those slain in a rampage here last week would ‘endure through the life of our nation.’ One by one, he listed the names of those killed and described their hopes and dreams and the families they left behind. ‘It may be hard to comprehend the twisted logic that led to this tragedy,’ the president told thousands of soldiers and relatives gathered here at the nation's largest Army post. (¶ 2)
‘But this much we do know: No faith justifies these murderous and craven acts. No just and loving God looks upon them with favor. For what he has done, we know that the killer will be met with justice, in this world and the next.’ (¶ 3)

It is interesting to note that a broad selection of Times coverage focused on the quotes of officials’ cautioning about jumping to conclusions and echoing concerns about possible hate crimes against Muslims. While the coverage is reminiscent of similar reports presented in the aftermath of 9/11, Islam is predominantly positioned in opposition to this peaceful counterview. Moreover, the moral outrage allows for the demonizing of Islam and Muslims in relation to Hasan’s crime. Obama does not use the word ‘terrorist’. However, his use of metaphoric emotional primers such as “no faith”, “no just and loving God”, and “justice, in this world and the next” guide the reader down the pathway to a final moral judgment about the Muslim shooter and his Islamic faith.

The New York Times uses metaphor (traitor, coward, lone wolf) to separate Hasan from the nation and the military. In essence, Hasan is not presented as a true American soldier. He is shown as an enemy of the state: “He swore an oath of loyalty to the military,” Dr. Thomas Greiger, Hasan’s training director during his medical internship at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, tells the Times (McKinley & Dao, 2009, ¶ 33). From the beginning of this article, the narrative presents Hasan as a fraud, a turncoat turned terrorist. The Times uses Hasan’s family to highlight the gunman’s recent radicalization. Another Times (McKinley & Berger, 2009) story informs readers that:

[Family] said he had grown more openly vocal in his opposition to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and had also become more religiously observant, often praying five times a day at a local mosque. He began his rampages, according to witnesses, by bowing his head as if praying and saying, ‘Allahu akbar’—‘God is Great.’ (¶ 15)
The use of Hasan’s family serves to legitimize the terror frame. However, these sources, most of them Muslims, provide no context for Islam. Moreover, the presentation of prayer in the story stands in opposition to common Islamic practices. As part of their standard religious practice, millions of the world’s Muslims pray five times each day—at dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset and night. Prayer is one of the pillars of Islam. The five pillars include faith in one God, daily prayer, charity to those in need, purification through fasting, and making the pilgrimage to Mecca. Rather than provide context for a well-established practice, the Times report presents prayer as strange, further marginalizing the shooter and his faith.

The lack of Western knowledge about Islam is visible in Times statements about Hasan’s sparse apartment and lifestyle. Images and statues are forbidden to be displayed in the homes and places of worship of Muslims who follow the Islamic writings known as the Hadiths. Instead of explaining simple Islamic prayer routines or underscoring that one of the requirements of Islam is modesty and living a humble existence, the report makes these characteristics seem foreign and freakish. Presented in this light, and following patterns observed by Said (1997) and other scholars, Hasan and his faith are measured, judged, and dismissed as something Other than acceptable to mainstream Western values.

There are many contradictions in the construction of Hasan in the New York Times. On one hand, he is presented as a radical Muslim turned traitor by a deviant sect of Islamic clerics looking to gain an advantage by accessing weaknesses in the American military system. However, the coverage also presents a man rejected by the nation he swore to protect and the Muslim culture in which he tried to assimilate. Hasan’s failure to
assimilate to his cultural roots is reflected in *Times* reports. Readers are told that Hasan tried to speak Arabic with a local convenience store owner. However, the store owner reported that Hasan did not know the language well enough to communicate (Newman & Brick, 2009).

The *Times* shows a man conflicted and two-faced, wearing his military uniform to the mosque to pray and a white Islamic robe to run errands around town (Newman & Brick, 2009). Another *Times* piece implies that Hasan rejected his faith at one point by citing “no religious preference” instead of “Muslim” on a military questionnaire (McFadden, 2009, ¶ 20). Readers are told the shooter frequented local strip clubs to get lap dances (Shane & Dao, 2009). The contradictions serve to make the gunman appear shifty, suspicious. This finding supports Van Dijk’s (1993) research that outsiders tend to be presented as problem people and not of good moral character.

Some stories emphasize Hasan’s role as a loyal follower of Islam, connecting him to radical Islam through links to known terror cells. Other stories delegitimize Hasan and his religious practice. Painted with sweeping contradictions, Hasan is further isolated from mainstream society and the nation. Moreover, while the coverage provides little depth or insight about the motives for the crime or who Hasan is, the pattern of coverage and quotes provide a familiar portrait for what he is—a new breed of home-grown domestic terrorist.

*Times* stories give the gunman a voice. However, when Hasan speaks in the *New York Times*, it is through family, friends, and coworkers. *The New York Times* pulls 82 (20% of 417) direct quotes from Hasan’s circle and quotes victims and military families 41 times (10%). These indirect quotes support the dominant messages threaded in
coverage. This supports previous findings that mainstream coverage of ethnic groups is framed in an episodic manner that highlights personal attributes and individual elements (Iyengar, 1991).

As Entman (1991) has shown, frequently repeated keywords contribute to dominant news frames. *Times* stories included 224 references to “terror”, “terrorism”, and “terrorist”. Moreover, these stories made 14 connections from Hasan to Anwar al-Awlaki, a “radical cleric now in Yemen” (Shane & Dao, 2009, ¶ 17); seven connections from al-Awlaki to al-Qaeda (Shane & Johnston, 2009); and included 28 references to 9/11, including suggestions that Hasan could have links to the 9/11 hijackers (Johnston & Shane, 2009b). These findings support previous research that “terrorism is constructed as a problem from the outside the United States, not a problem within or with the United States” (Powell, 2011, p. 97).

Several stories attempt to challenge the terror frame and shift moral responsibility by presenting Hasan as a victim, suffering from “emotional and psychological problems,” frustrated with “a perceived set of grievances against him,” who “slipped through the cracks in the Army’s personnel and mental health system” (Johnston, 2009). With a new threat isolated, the overriding solution to the problem is presented as increased surveillance and due diligence on behalf of the government and military. To illustrate this point, one *Times* story notes that military officials are actively involved in reviewing base “records to see if any other soldiers had problems that might cause for concern about future incidents” (McKinley & Berger, 2009, ¶ 4).

It is important to note here that reporters could raise questions about the absolute power of the government and its system of justice by highlighting the emotional impact
of U.S.-led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Several *Times* reports cite mental problems, stress, and rising suicide rates among military personnel. However, these ideas are overshadowed by the national agenda and the portrayal of U.S. powerbrokers working to solve the problem at Fort Hood by rooting out other domestic terrorists hidden within the military ranks.

Gerson (2009) has noted that despite the “bewildering array of theological and historical debates within Islam” since 9/11, news coverage of this topic has been lacking (p. xix). Marshall (2009) notes that the accumulation of factual errors, lack of knowledge, and reporting omissions frequently leads to misrepresentations and “blind spots” in news coverage (Marshall, 2009, p. 40). These blind spots are visible in the coverage of Fort Hood. The *Times* presentation of Hasan as a terrorist and his act terrorism provides limited context for readers about underlying causes beyond Islam. Moreover, the news agency adopts a nationalistic frame that mainly focuses on Islam as reason for the violence, Muslims as the problem, and increased U.S. surveillance of Muslims in the military as a solution. Broader dialogue between American’s mainstream and ethnic communities is suggested as a solution for the problem of violence but not supported by the selection of sources, language, and the overall coverage.

**U.S. Arab and Muslim Publications**

Similar to their mainstream counterpart, the Arab and Muslim publications examined in this study recognized the scope of the Fort Hood shooting. Many ethnic publications like the *Arab American News*, a free weekly published out of Metropolitan Detroit, don’t publish daily like the *New York Times*. However, most of these agencies covered the Fort Hood story in the next edition. Arab and Muslim news reports
recognized the value of the story for different reasons than the *New York Times*. This is evident in the selection of sources quoted in the coverage. President Obama and other high-level government officials were not quoted as often in the ethnic media. The 28 articles that represented 13 U.S. Arab and Muslim agencies contained a total number of 321 quotes. In these publications, U.S. government officials were quoted in 25% (n=79) of the coverage. Arab groups and Muslims were the most frequently cited sources. This group made up 46% (n=149) of the sources.

In addition, Arab and Muslims stories aimed to provide references for Islam. In a story titled “Fort Hood and the Invisibility of Arabs” in *Arab Detroit* (Malik, 2009), the writer notes the presence of Muslims in the military and describes them as heroes:

Arabs—both Christian and Muslim—began emigrating to the United States in appreciable numbers from the Arabic speaking world in the late 1800s. But too often their lives here are invisible, absent from national conversation, except in moments like the one we are living through right now in the wake of the tragedy at Ft. Hood. We tend to check in with this diverse community only when something goes ‘BOOM’ in America or when someone of Arab or Muslim descent does something criminal. (¶1)

It's a shame because the Arab-American contribution stretches across the landscape and, significantly, into the U.S. armed forces. Consider Navy SEAL Mike Monsoor who threw himself on a grenade in Iraq on September 29, 2006. The device had landed among SEALs and Iraqi soldiers, and Monsoor absorbed the blast with his body, saving everyone's life but his own. For his act of self sacrifice, he was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor last year. (¶2)

Then there's Lance Corporal Abraham al-Thaibani of New York who enlisted with the Marines after his city was attacked on 9/11. On the day the World Trade Center towers fell, al-Thaibani ran through the streets of Brooklyn looking for his veiled wife to protect her from any potential backlash. He went to war in Iraq, a battleground chosen by American leaders for reasons that were unclear to him. He focused his efforts on seeing that every Marine he knew came home alive and tried to help Iraqi civilians where he could. (¶3)

Abe's brother followed in his footsteps, enlisting and serving in Fallujah. He won the Purple Heart for his service. (¶2)
These men are just a few of the thousands of Arab Americans who are in the armed services or have served in U.S. forces over the years. Like other Americans in the service, their experiences have run the gamut from ordinary to valiant to the ultimate sacrifice. (¶5)

Arab-American history is long and deep in the United States but Arab and Muslim Americans are not part of how we imagine who we are as Americans or how we perceive what makes up the American experience. Now, in the national discussion among commentators, politicians, and others in the aftermath of Ft. Hood, we can see the dangerous effects of Arab-American invisibility; in that vacuum, acts of a single individual, Major Hasan, cast a shadow of collective guilt on millions of Americans. (¶6)

Timothy McVeigh warped the interpretations of the Constitution but we easily dismissed that without pondering whether there was inherent evil in the Constitution. The same cannot be said of how we view the relationship between the Koran and violent behavior—we unfairly blame individuals’ horrific acts on the teachings of the Koran. We ignore needed discussion of evident mental health issues, which were the focus when other service people have cracked and murdered their colleagues, and instead engage in lazy analysis about ethnic predilection of violence. (¶7)

Despite broader contextual references and specific characterizations for Muslims in the military and Islam, the Arab and Muslim reports downplay the individualistic characteristics associated with Hasan and the victims of the Fort Hood shooting. This trend is supported by the source selection. For instance, ethnic media adopted more thematic frames and quoted fewer family members or individuals from Hasan’s circle. In the ethnic publications, Hasan’s family and friends represented a small segment 2% (n=8) of total quoted sources followed by victims and their families 2% (n=8); other U.S. media outlets 11% (n=37); the general Other (local sources, doctors, lawyers) category 2% (n=15); and Muslim and Arab clerics 7% (n=23). This suggests that these papers sought to distance the shooter from the Islamic and Arab communities they serve.

Unlike the graphic images of the victims presented in the New York Times, these reports spent little time focusing on the Fort Hood victims. Instead, the focus shifted to
the victimization of Arab and Muslim communities and ensuing backlash against these groups as a result of Hasan’s crime. A story headlined “The Other Victims of the Fort Hood Tragedy” (Sahloul, 2009) published in the *Chicago Crescent* news illustrates this point. The author opens the piece with the story of father Alexios Marakis, a Greek Orthodox priest attacked by Jason Bruce, a marine reservist, in Florida. The author (Sahloul, 2009) notes that:

Father Marakis, who was bearded, wore a robe and spoke English with an accent, reportedly was lost and approached the young man asking for directions. Bruce told the Tampa Police that the man yelled Allahu Akbar, Arabic for ‘God is great,’ the same words some witnesses said the Fort Hood shooting suspect uttered before killing 13 people. Bruce then went to say: ‘That’s what they tell you right before they blow you up’. The report failed to mention Bruce’s religious affiliation, his church or his pastor. (¶1)

Similar to the *New York Times*, these publications label the violence and the loss of life as two key problems in the Fort Hood story. These articles do not condone the violence. However, the ethnic reports explore broad issues and causal factors beyond Islam and violence. Many Arab and Muslim publications led their Fort Hood reports with the backlash problem. Chicago’s *Arab Horizon* articulates the sentiments of many Muslims after the Fort Hood shooting. The story included comments about the shooting and the Muslim gunman from several Arab and Muslim media producers. *Arab American News* Publisher Osama Siblani is quoted in the *Arab Horizon* story. Siblani notes that the shooting was “shocking”. The publisher goes on to say that “as an Arab American, things come to your mind: I hope he’s not an Arab or Muslim” (Manneh, 2010, ¶ 1). Mosaic News, Link TV Producer Jama Dajani commented for the same *Arab Horizon* article. Dajani notes: “I'm sick and tired of these kinds of questions from media outlets whenever
some kooky Muslim decides to commit a random act of violence . . . or in this case when a GI psychiatrist goes psycho” (Manneh, 2010, ¶ 5).

In contrast to the episodic framing in the Times, the Arab and Muslim newspapers place the problem and causal factors associated with the Fort Hood shooting within a framework of larger issues. Many stories aim to show that fratricide is not uncommon in military circles. Arab American News writer Khalil AlHajal (2009) includes a sidebar with detailed accounts of U.S. soldier-on-soldier violence. The article states that “Between 1969 and 1971, during the Vietnam War, the Army reported 600 attacks on fellow soldiers, killing 82 Americans and injuring 651” (AlHajal, 2009, ¶ 1). The reporter notes that “according to the New York Times at least 128 soldiers killed themselves last year and the Army’s reported suicide rate surpassed that for civilians for the first time since the Vietnam War” (¶ 8). He adds that “the Army reported in January that the rate of suicide among soldiers had increased in 2008 for the fourth year in a row” (2009, ¶ 7). Also, the Arab and Muslim coverage considers the fact that doctors have slightly higher suicide rates than the general population. Moreover, these news agencies spent less time examining Hasan’s individual characteristics or personal habits and more time focused on wartime issues and broad themes.

The Arab and Muslim agencies draw from a broad source pool. Many of articles contain comments and views from Muslims serving in the military. One Muslim Marine who served in Iraq in 2005 and 2006 tells the Arab American News about the racism in the warzone (AlHajal, 2009, ¶ 11).

‘Your average service member is not particularly racist and not necessarily more racist than your average American. But in order to go be involved with killing large [numbers] of other human beings, you have to dehumanize the enemy,” . . . ‘and the easiest way to dehumanize them is to racialize them. In my experience,
they're much more prone to talking about 'f** hajjis,' if only 'these f** hajjis' wouldn't be here, this wouldn't have happened... People would say, 'Why are hajjis wearing dresses all the time,' [talking about traditional Iraqi dishdash].'

Racist backlash is identified as both a serious problem and a moral judgment in the Arab and Muslim publications. In discussing the idea of post-9/11 backlash, the ethnic publications introduce the problem of domestic terrorism. The Arab and Muslim articles make several references to “homegrown extremist” (n=1), and “homegrown terrorist” (n=3). However, the discussion is presented in the form of an honest self-examination. Several Arab and Muslim articles place blame for events like Fort Hood squarely on the shoulders of the Islamic communities—particularly in reference to the lack of awareness among American Arabs and Muslims about the impact of radical voices and international terror sects on impressionable and vulnerable Muslim youth. This is one of the most surprising findings in this research. Rather than deny the problem of radical Islam as a causal factor in the Fort Hood shooting, many of the Arab and Muslim publications acknowledge the dangers of Islamist-motivated violence and the rhetoric presented by radical preachers and clerics. In this regard, the moral judgment is levied against the Muslim community. The solution is linked to two ideas repeatedly presented throughout these texts: acknowledge the problem, and engage in an informed discussion about the problem at the public level to raise awareness with Muslim and Arab youth.

In the June 2010 issue of *Azizah*, author Hedieh Mirahmadi voices concerns about the Fort Hood shooting, the roots of radical Islam, and the possible ‘homegrown terror’ implications in the crime. In recalling when she first heard about shooting, Mirahmadi (2010) notes that:
Like most Muslims across America, I watched the news of the Ft. Hood tragedy, holding my breath and praying that the crazed gunman was not a Muslim. As the days passed, we learned Major Malik Hasan was not only a Muslim; but that his actions were motivated in large part by a deviant, manipulated interpretation of Islamic law. The case of Malik Hasan and the slew of other ‘homegrown terrorists’ take us to the larger crisis of confronting Islamist radicalism in our communities. Behind closed doors, in the privacy of our own mosques and community centers, the Muslim community can no longer deny it has a problem. (¶ 1)

Rather than run from the presentation of radical Islam and homegrown terrorism, publications like Azizah address the problem without flinching. Keyword analysis of the ethnic media sampled for this research shows the news agencies used “radical,” “radicalized,” or “radicalization,” 62 times—16 more times than the New York Times (n=46). These publications also stressed the place of Muslims as American patriots and national stakeholders. The Arab and Muslim publications referenced the word “patriot” (n=6) in discussions of American Muslims and Muslims in the military. In contrast, the New York Times used the word “patriot” twice in discussing Muslims in the military and once in reference to right-wing views (n=3).

| TABLE 3 |  |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fort Hood Articles: Keywords/Phrases | NYT number | Ethnic News number |
| "Allahu Akbar!" | 6 | 9 |
| Al Qaeda | 7 | 3 |
| Anwar al-Awlaki | 14 | 11 |
| Homegrown-domestic terror/extremism/attack | 6 | 4 |
| Jihad | 15 | 8 |
| Radical (ized) (iztion) | 45 | 52 |
| September 11 (9/11) | 28 | 18 |
| Suicide bomber | 10 | 1 |
| Terror (ist) (ism) | 224 | 94 |
The Arab and Muslim coverage focused less on the event and more on how the U.S. response impacted American Muslims. Here, we see the appearance of a moral judgment against the United States rooted in a defensive stance. This opening from Steve Chapman (2010) published in the *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* is one example of a common moralizing approach adopted by the Arab and Muslim publications:

Mass murders are usually a mystery. When Maj. Nidal Hasan allegedly committed one at Fort Hood Nov. 5, though, there was no time wasted in solving the mystery by blaming the massacre on his religion, which is Islam. (¶1)

Maybe Hasan is just a homicidal lunatic set to work by fevered demons inside his brain. But post-9/11, you can't be a killer who happens to be a Muslim. If you're a killer, it has to be because you're a Muslim. (¶2)

A story published in Michigan’s *Forum & Link* Arab journal (Zogby, 2009) reinforces the moral judgment and the problem of post-9/11 Islamophobia:

In times like this we Arab and Muslim Americans transform from what Professor Amaney Jamal aptly put it, from invisible citizens to visible subjects. Somehow we are seen as responsible or at least able to explain the behavior of one of us gone bad. If a close friend of mine commits a crime, God forbid, I expect that I would be sought to explain. There is no logic to seeking Arabs and Muslims to explain and account for the behavior of one of more than millions of us. (¶2)

Here, a moral judgment showing how modern-day racism is used against Arabs and Muslims is placed against the United States. It is of note in this analysis that despite Hasan’s connections to Islam and Arab American cultures, the ethnic media frame the Muslim shooter as an American soldier—as opposed to a Muslim serving in the military. In short, the coverage uses Hasan as a vehicle to judge the U.S. This judgment is rooted in the discussions of unjust wars and military failings. By implying that Hasan is less a product of Islam and more a product of a failed U.S. military system burdened by the ongoing wars, Hasan comes to represent the problem with U.S.-led wars in Iraq and
Afghanistan. This moral judgment is presented through discussions of cracks in the
Military system and lack of support for soldiers. This theme is illustrated in an Arab
American News (Hanana, 2009) story by reporter and veteran Ray Hanana:

I served during the Vietnam War and have both an honorable discharge and a
Vietnam Era Service ribbon, among other recognitions. Bigotry and racism
existed in the U.S. Air Force even when I served in it in the early 1970s. My
colleagues called me such names as ‘sand nigger’ and ‘camel jockey.’ Officers
and enlisted personnel challenged me: ‘Whose side will you be on if we have to
go fight in the (1973) Arab-Israeli war?’ they would ask. Among my best friends
in the military were two Muslim brothers who suffered similar taunts. Yet those
incidents did not discourage me from continuing my service in the Illinois Air
National guard for 10 more years. (¶4)

The difference is that the pre-Sept. 11 form of discrimination generally did not
lead to violence as it does today. Most of those who are engaging in the hate-filled
talk to ban Arabs and Muslims from the military are in fact not going to act out
their hatred. But it only takes one person. After Sept. 11, 2001, more than 12
people who ‘looked’ Middle Eastern were killed at the hands of individuals who, in
many instances, said that they were avenging the terrorists' attacks. (¶5)

The U.S. government is not doing enough to change people's attitudes. Arabs and
Muslims continue to get short shrift from the federal government when it comes
time to be counted by the U.S. Census. We are categorized as ‘white,’ and
therefore, unlike other recognized minorities, are not protected under hate crime
laws when we are confronted, for example, by racial stereotyping in incidents
involving police traffic stops and ticketing. Arabs and Muslims have the highest
incidence of racial profiling at U.S. airports, with Arab and Muslim names
dominating the Federal Aviation Administration's no-fly list. (¶6)

The Association of Patriotic Arab Americans in Military . . . of which I am a
proud member, has estimated that there are about 3,500 Arabs of both Muslim
and Christian faith serving in the military. (¶8)

Overall, the Arab and Muslim publications examined for this study provide an
oppositional viewpoint to mainstream news. Despite the fact that many of these
publications ran in the weeks or months that followed the shooting, the overall coverage
shows some level of balance in the reporting and a willingness to present broader themes
as opposed to standard national views. The ethnic media presented a different set of
solutions than the New York Times in the Fort Hood story. These solutions included open
dialogue, cross-cultural communication, and broader cultural acceptance and understanding. These publications, adopted a post-9/11 narrative that defended Arabs and Muslims as national stakeholders. However, the ethnic publications were also willing to fully explore internal issues that operate within the margins of terror and radical Islam. These findings support similar research on the role of ethnic media in presenting broader views of terror stories. The following chapter provides some closing thoughts about this research and its implications.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The main goal of this study was to compare news coverage of the Fort Hood shooting in U.S.-based mainstream and ethnic newspapers. The results show that mainstream newspapers embraced a mostly episodic frame in covering the Fort Hood story that placed Hasan outside the norm. To support the terror frame, the coverage repeatedly linked Hasan to domestic and international terror cells and known terrorists like Anwar al-Awlaki. The attack on a military base during a time of national conflict is framed as an attack on the nation. By labeling Hasan a terrorist, the threat is isolated and national order is restored (Gans, 2004). Ethnic media adopted a thematic approach to coverage but reinforced many common stereotypes by taking a defensive stance. The attack is framed as system failure and the product of an unjust war. Ironically, both media groups distanced themselves from the suspect and supported an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ viewpoint. Mainstream media’s tendency to publish elite opinions and justifications for the war against terror also divides the readers and provides no context for American Muslims or Islam. While Arab and Muslim publications do a better job at presenting a broader view, these publications tend to trace the edges of their own ideological comfort zones.

When examining the complexities of domestic terror stories, media practices that favor dominant ideology and news reports that fail to offer readers comprehensive information have deeply troubling implications for society as a whole and the future of professional journalism. In their study of race and Arab Americans before and after 9/11, Jamal and Naber (2008) conclude that the construction of Arabs and Muslims as the enemy has increased the divisions between America and her Muslim citizens. The
authors further assert that because “Arabs and Muslims possess neither the resources nor the media necessary to alter mainstream public opinion,” intolerance continues to operate against them (p. 128). The growth of Arab and Muslim media provides some hope in this area (New American Media, 2010). However, this research shows that both ethnic and mainstream media professionals have room for significant improvement in covering terror stories and Muslim subjects. Future studies could consider how ethnic audiences interpret major and minor messages in terror stories and consider which elements forward or hinder cultural inclusion, national belonging, and assimilation (Riggins, 1992). Media studies research may benefit from interviews with editors and reporters about why specific keywords are used or sources selected in coverage of terror stories and minority groups. Other studies could explore what happens in the mind of the audience when race and ethnicity are removed from the discourse.

Going forward, the field of media literacy needs to be improved on two fronts. Journalists need to educate themselves about religious illiteracy, diverse cultures, and the practices of the populations they serve. Also, readers need to question obvious misrepresentations and seek broader views to avoid yielding to false generalizations and stereotypes.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


U.S. State Department Fact Sheet, 2010; Counsel on American Islamic Relations 2010.


**REFERENCES**


APPENDIX A

ETHNIC MEDIA (U.S. MUSLIM AND ARAB READERS)


Azizah magazine (Cir: 45,000): Magazine for Muslim American women published four times a year. Founded in 2002. Based in Atlanta, Ga.


Common Ground News Service (Cir: 30,000): Stories address Muslim-Western issues. Distributed to 3,000 media outlets in conjunction with McClatchy-Tribune Information Services. Founded in 2000 by Search for Common Ground, a nonprofit based in Washington, D.C.


In-Focus News (Cir: 25,000): Monthly newspaper for Muslim readers in California. Founded in 2005. Based in Anaheim, Calif.
The *Iran Times* (Cir: 65,000). Weekly newspaper for Iran communities.

Founded in 1970. Based in Washington, D.C.


## APPENDIX B

### CODE SHEET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NYT</th>
<th>Islamic Ethnic Media</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Causes (of the Fort Hood shooting)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Moral Judgments</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(murder is morally wrong)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Solutions (more surveillance vs. cross cultural understanding)</strong></td>
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