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From Tragedy to Policy: Representations of Muslims and Islam in U.S. Mainstream Media

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As the world becomes more globalized, the tangible lines dividing countries and cultures are increasingly blurred. The inter-connectedness of the globe brings people thousands of miles away from each other together in a matter of seconds. However, as globalization has proliferated, other theories of dividing the world have arisen. One of the most popular—some may argue it is *the* most popular—theories of dividing up the world was published in 1993 in *Foreign Affairs* by Samuel Huntington. Originally titled “Clash of Civilizations?”—later on the question mark was removed when the thesis was expounded upon and made into a book—Huntington attempted to provide readers with a new term that described a long-standing, internalized political myth: “The idea of a Clash between Civilizations is a sort of electric spark that sets people’s imagination alight, because it finds fertile soil in which to proliferate” (Bottici & Challand, 2010, p. 2). The popularity behind this essay and book can partly be attributed to its timing. The Soviet Union had collapsed just two years before, and the public, as well as policy makers, were having difficulty in making sense of the new unipolar/multipolar world. Huntington provided a frame to help make sense of the world.¹ In other words, this book had a large influence on those in political power as well as the general public, providing a very particular lens for Western society at large to look through. My assertion is that the American media adopted the ‘Clash of Civilizations’ theory in its framing of Muslims and Islam after September 11. Although, as mentioned above, this idea itself was not at all new to intellectual discourse when Huntington introduced it, in order to fully understand the notion it is necessary to recall its history.

1. It should be made clear that I am in no way vouching for Huntington’s interpretation of the world. As I will touch on later, I very much disagree with his reductionist stance of interpreting the world. His framework provided a name to an idea that had been prevalent a long time before Huntington. For more on framing’s effect on thought process, see *Political Myth: A Theoretical Introduction* (Flood 1996) .

History

The idea of the Clash of Civilizations has been held within many different societies dating far back in history. To this day there is much argument about the actual genesis of the idea of the Clash of Civilizations—whether it began as far back as the Crusades, or with the colonization of the Iberian Peninsula, etc. —however, that argument is irrelevant to my research. I will briefly review the literature of the European colonization of Eastern countries, for that is the same time period when the concept of Orientalism came to fruition. In postcolonial studies there is an idea called “colonial discourse” which functions as the main purpose of Orientalism. Doris Garraway gives an excellent summary of this idea: “In the work of Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi Bhabha, ‘colonial discourse’ has been described as the epistemological corollary to colonial violence, a system of knowledge and representation through which Europeans produced, defined, and contained non-European difference and, in the process developed ideological justifications of colonialism” (Garraway; 209).² In the same paragraph Garraway continues, “This discursive apparatus of power is said to have relied in many instances on a structure of binary opposition that posited the racial, cultural, and linguistic inferiority of the colonized as compared with the Europeans” (Garraway 209). The Clash of Civilizations theory also imitates this concept, and once again in a more agile fashion than in colonial times. There is a dialectical relationship between the West and Islam that is implied by Huntington throughout his book. Early on he even addresses this dialectic: “We know who we are only when we know who we are not and often only when we know whom we are against” (Huntington, 2003, p. 21).

2. Although it is too farfetched to say that it is advertently mimicked, Huntington’s claim “to promote Western political values and institutions by pressing other societies to respect human rights as conceived in the West and adopt democracy on Western lines” does fall in the same vein as ‘colonial discourse;’ it is just a more refined argument using the idea of promoting values rather than imposing them upon a certain people.

In other words, the negative creates the positive, and vice versa. To say that the West is ‘democratic,’ ‘liberal,’ and ‘free,’ then placing the Islamic world as something opposed to the West, implies the idea that the Islamic world is non-democratic and backward.³ From here, as mentioned above by Garraway, the campaign calls for involvement in the Islamic world however the West sees fit. The West is the pinnacle of civilization, so it must naturally help the other ‘lesser’ civilizations modernize. This concept of the West as the apex of the world is central in *Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* and Huntington’s view of the world can partly be attributed to Francis Fukuyama’s *End of History* thesis. Huntington built *Clash of Civilizations* off of the model established by Fukuyama. And in order to fully understand the West as the ‘best’ it is necessary to review the main argument of *The End of History* before beginning my analysis of Huntington’s work.

End of History Analysis

In the introduction of his book *The End of History and the Last Man*, Fukuyama summarizes the thesis he expounds upon in the *End of History* section of his book. He writes, “I argued that liberal democracy may constitute the ‘end point of mankind’s ideological evolution’ and the ‘final form of human government,’ and such constituted the ‘end of history’” (Fukuyama, 1989, p. 1). This is of course a variation from the Marxist historical interpretation of global economic systems eventually culminating in the creation of a worldwide communist society. Fukuyama’s linear impression of governmental bodies posits all other current and former governmental bodies behind the ideal of liberal democracy. He writes: “While some present-day countries might fail to achieve stable liberal democracy, and others might lapse back into other,

3. “Islamic culture explains in large par the failure of democracy to emerge in much of the Muslim world” (Huntington, 1996, p. 29); also see:

http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/10/1021_031021_islamicdemocracy.html

more primitive forms of rule like theocracy or military dictatorship, the *ideal* of liberal democracy could not be improved on” (Fukuyama, 1989, p.1). It is from this idea that Huntington builds his Clash of Civilizations theory. One should refer to the notion mentioned by Huntington that I reference later on in my argument, “the West and the rest,” for it embodies Fukuyama’s argument. If one sees the world divided between ‘the West’ and everything else (Huntington 1996, p. 22) the immediate thought that comes to mind is ‘the West’ holding power over ‘the rest.’ Again the dialectical relationship emerges with Fukuyama’s claim: Liberal democracy is *the end*, the best, and so it becomes the *thesis*. All other governments become the *antithesis*. In this case, the West can either remain uninvolved in the other ‘lesser’ governments, allowing them to eventually become liberal democracies like the West; or, supported by Fukuyama’s comment about governments “[lapsing] back into other, more primitive forms of rule,” the West could take aggressive action in an effort to contain the threat or possibly force the government into a democracy. It is from this point that I will begin my analysis of Huntington’s argument for the *Clash of Civilizations*.

Clash of Civilizations Analysis

Huntington’s book is divided into five parts, which are centered on the idea that “culture and cultural identities...are shaping the patterns of cohesion, disintegration, and conflict in the post-Cold War world” (Huntington, 1996, p. 20). These five parts are: 1) An assessment of a multipolar and multicivilizational world; 2) The shifting balance of power among ‘civilizations’; 3) “A Civilization-based world order is emerging” (1996, p. 20); 4) “The West’s universalist pretensions increasingly bring it into conflict with other civilizations, most seriously with Islam and China” (1996, p. 20); 5) “The survival of the West depends on *Americans* reaffirming their Western identity and Westerners accepting their civilization as unique not universal and uniting

to renew and preserve it against challenges from non-Western societies” (Huntington, 1996, p. 20-1, italics mine). In my research, close attention will be paid to Parts 4 and 5, for they are extremely volatile assertions when incorporated into the political realm, specifically foreign policy. I will come back to this issue later on in this paper, as it is very important to the core argument in my research. Subsequent to Huntington’s mentioning of the five parts of his argument, he establishes his nine ‘civilizations’ of the world. The ‘civilizations’ are listed as follows: “Western, Latin American, African, Islamic, Sinic, Hindu, Orthodox, Buddhist, and Japanese” (Huntington, 1996, p. 27). Huntington pays close attention to, as mentioned in part 4, ‘Islam’ and ‘Confucian’ civilizations. The manner in which attention is paid to Islam in particular takes up an Orientalist position. The concept of “knowing” the Orient is displayed in Huntington’s assessment of Islam. It is the classic example of the West interpreting the East in a way that supports the West’s endeavors.⁴

In evaluating different civilizations’ viability for democracy in the early stages of his argument, Huntington pays close attention to Islam. At one point he writes, “Islamic culture explains in large part the failure of democracy to emerge in much of the Muslim world” (Huntington 1996; 29), a point that he fails to elaborate upon. Huntington makes a sweeping generalization of the Orient without *any* support and then, unexpectedly, goes on to praise Edward Said’s work, *Orientalism*. Regarding Said’s work Huntington says, “These myths [Unity of the non-West, as well as the East-West dichotomy] suffer the defects of the Orientalism which Edward Said appropriately criticized for promoting ‘the difference between

4. Said provides an excellent example of this concept when he discusses Henry Kissinger’s relationship to the traditional Orientalist; he writes, “Both the traditional Orientalist, as we shall see, and Kissinger conceive of the difference between cultures, first, as creating a battlefield that separates them, and second, as inviting the West to control, contain and otherwise govern (through superior knowledge and accommodating power) the Other” (Said, 2003, p. 48)

the familiar (Europe, the West, ‘us’) and the strange (the Orient, the East, ‘them’) and for assuming the inherent superiority of the former to the latter” (Huntington, 1996, p. 33). As mentioned above, the generalization of ‘Islamic culture’ attests to the idea of Orientalism, yet Huntington explicitly denounces the idea while implicitly supporting it.⁵

In my final word about the introduction of *Clash of Civilizations*, Huntington attempts to change the popular conception of the East-West dichotomy, which ends up just adding to the problem. He argues, “Instead of ‘East and West,’ it is more appropriate to speak of ‘the West and the rest,’ which at least implies the existence of many non-Wests. The world is too complex to be usefully envisioned for most purposes as simply divided economically between North and South or culturally between East and West” (Huntington, 1996, p. 33). The first and most glaring issue with this passage is the ethnocentrism “the West and the rest” implies. This phrase places the importance on the West while lumping every other country in the world together. Huntington, with this phrase, practices an Orientalist tactic of using ‘the West’ as a pinnacle of civilization.⁶ He is able to guard against any potential accusations of being called an Orientalist by referencing Edward Said earlier on in the book. Huntington’s use of denying that which he textually follows through with is what I will call *explicit-denunciation—implicit-support*. This is a tactic that is used often in policy rhetoric as well as media coverage, and it is a methodology I will cover later on in my argument. In Part IV of *Clash of Civilizations*, Huntington makes two points which should be mentioned before concluding this analysis of his argument. The first is this: “Islam and China embody great cultural traditions very different from and in their eyes

5. This same type of linguistic gymnastics was used after September 11th, first by President Bush in his reiteration ‘This is not a war with Islam,’ followed by the media adopting the same characteristics of explicit-denunciation implicit-support. For example, “Barbarians at the gate,” and “The one true faith.”

6. See Orientalism, pages, 222-224 278-289, and 308-309. For example, “Orientalism staked its existence, not upon its openness, its receptivity to the Orient, but rather on its internal, repetitious consistency about its constitutive will-to-power over the Orient.” Also, “the Orientalist could be regarded as the special agent of Western power as it attempted policy vis-à-vis the Orient.”

infinitely superior to that of the West” (Huntington, 2003, p.185). Huntington’s statement here displays, once again, his Orientalist stance of ‘knowing’ the Orient and how ‘they’ perceive the world; in particular, how ‘they’ perceive ‘us’. This distinction of Islam and China against the West is an idea that helps to construct a new enemy of the United States. However, Huntington’s argument focuses on Islam, using China almost as a guarding term against criticism.⁷ Following this passage, Huntington presents his three issues within Islamic and Confucian societies that the West must become more involved in: “(1) to maintain its military superiority through policies of nonproliferation and counterproliferation with respect to nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons and the means to deliver them; (2) to promote Western political values and institutions by pressing other societies to respect human rights as conceived in the West and adopt democracy on Western lines; and (3) to protect the cultural, social, and ethnic integrity of Western societies by restricting the number of non-Westerners admitted as immigrants or refugees” (Huntington, 1996, 185-6).⁸ The first clause in this section calls for the efforts of US policy makers to maintain a unipolar military dominance in (of) the world—this is an important point because many people in the US at this time were having difficulty in figuring out what the new world would look like with the fall of the Soviet Union. Beginning around the time this book was written, up until today, the US has focused heavily on the nuclear, chemical, and biological proliferation in countries, particularly in the ‘Muslim world’—i.e. Syria, Iraq, and Iran. The second clause, which initially may seem as though it is altruistic and humanitarian,

7. He focuses on fundamentalism and the rise of an anti-Western trend in Muslim countries since 1970s. Guarding is used in reference to logic: defending one’s claim by adding an additional clause or concept, to prevent the argument from being seen as too aggressive.

8. These three issues that Huntington claims the West should become more involved in were adopted as some of the main argumentative points in the mainstream American media’s framing of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. For example, see *Time* magazine’s issues “Life After Saddam,” “Do You Want This War?” and *Time*’s Special Winter Edition

when used by radical policy makers can call for a Machiavellian-type of promotion of Western values. It also implies a certain ethnocentrism, claiming, ‘Our values and institutions in the West are the best,’ which in turn denounces all other civilizations’ values and institutions—this idea refers back to Fukuyama’s *End of History*. A particular instance of this clause is adopted and carried out in the Bush administration’s use of the figure of the Afghan woman—depicted as marginalized, oppressed, and weak under the rule of the Taliban—in an effort to garner support for the Afghanistan war. The third clause, though it focuses on immigrants and refugees, alludes to the *ideal* American who fits a particular cultural, social, and ethnic frame. Thus, this allusion moves those who are American citizens but do not fit the ideal model to the periphery of society. In other words, those who happen to be part of the West but do not fit the mold are not ‘fully part of the West.’

In conclusion, Huntington’s Clash of Civilizations theory provided policy makers and laypeople with a more definitive model of a long-standing political myth through which to perceive the post-Soviet world. This theory’s popularity can be attributed to its timing rather than its argument. As mentioned earlier, many Americans—policy makers and laypeople alike—were having difficulty interpreting the new post-Soviet world. Initially, the essay and the book were denounced, as noted by Bottici and Challand: “Immediately after publication, his ideas were strongly criticized, if not simply dismissed as scientifically inadequate to render the complexities of the world we live in” (p. 2). Despite the many criticisms, Huntington was able to plant a seed in the collective mind of American policy makers and journalists that blossomed on September 11 with the attacks in New York City and Washington D.C. The mainstream media framed the assaults almost immediately as an attack on the West by Islam, a frame which emulated the view of many policy makers in the George W. Bush administration’s view of the

crisis.⁹ This project is a systematic analysis of four mainstream print media sources—*New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Time*, and *USA Today*—from September 11, 2001 to December 31, 2001. I argue that, in varying degrees, the media collectively adopted a framework of the Clash of Civilizations in its representation of Muslims and Islam, which in turn supported the aggressive military endeavors in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Methodology

I designed a methodology that proved very effective in my analysis of media sources from September 11, 2001 to December 31, 2001. I examined the Tuesday paper each week in all four of my sources. I chose the Tuesday of every week to assist the systematizing of my research. The attacks happened on a Tuesday, and many of the mainstream papers ran articles specifically on the ‘anniversaries’ of the attacks in subsequent weeks. Additionally, because my media analysis was, in some respects, a comparative study, the material between sources was easier to compare. Fortunately, I was able to find many different books that provided a similar analysis as mine. Due to this, I benefitted from in-depth coverage and interpretation of some articles that were not available because of my date-specific analysis. The lack of time available for analysis due to my short summer research program was another added liability when it came to my in-depth research. Given more time I would have been able to examine more articles and literature, and it is also something that I will take into account when I add to this project in the future. In my media analysis, I looked for explicit statements and implicit allusions to the Clash of Civilizations. Among the explicit statements I searched for are: a ‘clash’ between Islam [Muslim world] and the West; ‘Islam vs. the West; descriptions of the Middle East as backward, archaic, pre-modern, barbaric; Manichean dualism—in other words, good vs. evil; and

9. For example, Dick Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz, Bernard Lewis, and Francis Fukuyama.

descriptions of the West, particularly the US, as the pinnacle of civilization— which demonstrates the dialectical relationship between the West and Islam. The implicit allusions were more difficult to find for they needed to be discovered contextually rather than superficially. Some examples of these are: the coverage of the oppressed Afghan woman under the rule of the Taliban—this implies the need for a savior who is also someone civilized to liberate these women; the concept of ‘knowing’ why the enemy hates ‘us’ because of our values alludes to the concept of the Clash of Civilizations because they do not hold our same values, which in this case are implied to be ‘right’—it subordinates the enemy as weak-minded because they are easily understood, and it absolves the US of all responsibility for potentially instigating the actions of others. After the data was collected I organized the evidence using a mixture of chronological and thematic order. Initially, the first few weeks of reporting were important to be placed chronologically; however, once I noticed a shift in the reporting away from the attacks I switched to a more thematic assessment. The aim of my research is to act as an extension to studies of media representation of Islam and Muslims, the Clash of Civilizations theory, and the media’s relationship to foreign policy.

Literary Analysis

Edward Said’s work, *Covering Islam*, greatly influenced my topic. It serves as a criticism of the mainstream media’s representation of Islam before the September 11 attacks. Said had a great understanding of the media’s power and how it operates. *Covering Islam* examines the mainstream media’s representation of the Iranian revolution in 1979 on television and in print, particularly the *New York Times*. My project has a close relation to his, though it covers a different time frame and my topic is also more defined. Said focuses on the way the media distorts its representation of Islam. Additionally he does not focus on a particular frame; instead

he focuses on an all-inclusive frame that the media operates within. In other words, Said in his research, looked on a large scale at print and visual media sources in the United States and examined its representation of Islam. My project attempts to uncover a particular frame which will allow individuals to gain a better understanding of how the media frames foreign peoples and religions, especially when they are part of an area of American foreign interest.

Another piece that heavily influenced my work is *The Myth of the Clash of Civilizations* by Chiara Bottici and Benoit Challand. Their work helped me pinpoint my thesis, which diverges somewhat from theirs. They write, “How was it possible, then, that a theory that had been so strongly criticized has turned into a lens through which so many people look at the world?...Our book argues that this is because the Clash of Civilizations has become a successful political myth. The appeal of Huntington’s book lies in its title more than in its content” (Bottici & Challand 2). In my analysis of Huntington’s book I covered his three issues with Islamic and Confucian civilizations, his use of *explicit-denunciation—implicit-support* and his all-around focus on Islamic civilizations juxtaposed with the West. I disagree with the assertion that Huntington’s title is more appealing than the contents within the book. To claim this reduces the framing of the Clash of Civilizations in the media to a three-word title, and it also avoids the potential influence of the contents of the book. Granted, Bottici and Challand use the vague phrase “so many people,” but one can infer from the content of their book they are mainly referring to policy makers and the media. In other words, they believe the title of Huntington’s work influenced the worldview of those in power more than its contents. I want to argue that it is not this simple. Making the claim that the name ‘Clash of Civilizations’ carries more weight than the contents of the theory creates two problems: 1) It overlooks the contents of the theory in comparison to political rhetoric and media coverage; and 2) It denounces the ability of the

contents of a political theory to influence media and policy. I argue that the Clash of Civilizations theory was used in two frameworks by policy makers and the media in light of September 11: A large scale, *geopolitical framework* and a *micro-political framework*. The *geopolitical framework* refers to the concept that Bottici and Challand argue for. It is the adopting of the idea of clashing, isolated civilizations— and as I cover in my media analysis, the juxtaposition of the West and Islam. The *micro-political framework* is the use of specific arguments from the book, such as “promoting Western political values and institutions by pressing other societies to respect human rights as conceived in the West” (Huntington, 1996, p.185). I will be using the cascading activation model created by Robert Entman as a justification for both of the aforementioned frameworks. (Entman, 2004, p. 10) This model explains how both the *geopolitical* and *micro-political frameworks* are used within the media. According to the model, the reciprocal relationship between the “Administration” and “Other Elites” explains how the Clash of Civilizations theory was adopted. First, Samuel Huntington created the theory in 1996, explaining the longstanding idea that civilizations had been in conflict with each other for many years. Though it was denounced and almost forgotten, the September 11 attacks—accompanied by the unrest in the Middle East, one could argue particularly the first Intifada between Israel and Palestine—enabled it to resurface, stronger than ever. Subsequent to September 11, the *Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* became an instant bestseller: so much so that by 2002, Netscape, an internet provider, was offering free copies (Abrahamian, 2003, p. 529). Ervand Abrahamian, in discussing the proliferation of the Clash of Civilizations theory writes, “Paradigms do not have to be true to become conventional wisdom” (2003, p. 529). Simply by logically assessing the resurgence and exponential increase in sales of Huntington’s book one can come to the conclusion that in

moving from a theory that was mostly part of academia in the 1990s to becoming conventional wisdom within the public after September 11 some kind of arbiter is needed to bridge the gap. That bridge is the American media. The idea of the media serving as an intermediary to the public is supported in the cascading activation model as well. Before the information is relayed from the media to the public it goes through a framing process—the framing is also closely related to the “Other Elite” category, which would include Huntington as an “expert.” Also, because I will be adhering to the cascading activation model in my research of the media, if I do uncover rhetoric and reporting that resembles either framework I mentioned above, it gives all the more evidence that Clash of Civilization theory was used in the reporting of Muslims and Islam. As I have mentioned, my assertion is that the portrayal of Muslims and Islam through the lens of the Clash of Civilizations was done so, partly, in support—and to garner support—of aggressive action in Afghanistan and Iraq. In order to fully understand this use of representations and “knowing” the enemy abroad we must look towards colonial literature. I will expound upon the history in the next section.

Introduction

One gets the feeling that, through the proliferation of technology, the ability to acquire information across the world in New York from Iran brings the two cultures and ‘worlds’ together. It does, but only to a certain extent. One of the main factors that inhibit this connection is the manner in which the media operates. For most, the media is the main source of informational access to the rest of the world. It has the ability to create a country’s interpretations of events, peoples, cultures, religions, and nations abroad. A news organization can, simply by writing negatively of an event occurring elsewhere in the world, for which readers have no other access than that particular news source, create an entire viewpoint from a

single article. From the concept of the free press—one that is often mentioned in the American political realm—the power of the media could act as a check on the government. Robert Entman elaborates on this idea: “Ideally, a free press balances official view with a more impartial perspective that allows the public to deliberate independently on the government’s decisions” (Entman, 2004, p. 2). The large-scale point of my research is to add to the concept that the *press* is not ‘free’ from influences and is instead molded and shaped by the political arena—particularly policy makers and government officials. Proving that the mainstream media adopted, in varying degrees, a Clash of Civilizations framework in its coverage of Muslims and Islam demonstrates the idea of understanding where information comes from before internalizing the said information as fact. In other words, this project is founded on the principle of power-knowledge.¹⁰ The often-used, conventional criticism of the media is the partisan framing, particularly done on news stations—the most criticized are Fox News and MSNBC. However, what is often overlooked is the concept of a larger framework: the media functioning complementary or as a cohesive unit. The concept of partisan framing is an obvious bias in reporting but it also limits the discussion.¹¹ That is particularly why I chose the four particular sources for this project. The *New York Times* is arguably the most influential paper in the world, and more importantly for this study, in the United States.¹² The paper’s bias is collectively more liberal, which gives rise to my reasoning for selecting the *Wall Street Journal*. This paper

10. This concept is best studied in-depth from the works *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Madness* both by Michel Foucault. Edward Said, however, gives an excellent summary of power-knowledge in *Orientalism*: knowledge gives power, more power requires more knowledge, and so on in an increasingly profitable dialectic of information and control.”

11. An example of the limiting effects of media on discussion can be found in two side-by-side articles in *Time* magazine regarding preemptive war in Iraq. See articles “Let’s Wait to Attack” and “No Let’s Not Waste Any Time” in the October 14, 2002 *Time* magazine. Between the two articles the arguments are ‘We should immediately go to war with Iraq’ and ‘we should hold off on the war.’ These two articles serve to frame the argument on potential war in Iraq into a minimized spectrum. In other words, the arguments it fuels are going to war immediately or holding off for a certain period of time.

12. <http://adage.com/article/datacenter/newspaper-circulation-6-mos-ending-9-30-02/106705/> The NYT, WSJ, and USA Today were the top three papers in circulation in 2001.

conversely is collectively more conservative, and is among the most read papers in the US, so an analysis of the WSJ and the NYT side-by-side gives both sides of the partisan story. It also greatly helps my argument for the framing of the media because finding evidence in both papers proves the framing to be non-partisan. I chose *Time* due to the magazine's different approach to reporting using pictures alongside text, as well as less technical language in reporting political events. In addition, *Time* essentially sits in the middle of the partisan spectrum and was a top magazine with political coverage from 2001-2003.¹³ *USA Today* is considered 'soft news,' a term which means the reporting uses terminology and rhetoric more appealing to laypeople. Although it is not the newspaper upon which I will be focusing my analysis, I find it important to incorporate 'soft news' as it is an overlooked media outlet, and *USA Today* was the top newspaper in circulation during the time my research covers.¹⁴ I now begin my media analysis.

Media Analysis

Time magazine, like many other print media sources, ran a special on September 11. Many of its central themes were akin to the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*'s coverage of the events: A strong focus on nationalism and rallying around the flag, the immense sorrow felt by all Americans for those who lost their lives, and the lingering question of "what is next?" However, one article stands out to be quite unlike the rest of the issue. The kicker of the special edition is an article called "The Case for Rage and Retribution" by Lance Morrow. Lance Morrow is a journalist and an essayist that works mainly for *Time* magazine. He has been with *Time* since 1965, and has written more "Man of the Year" articles than any other writer in *Time* magazine's history. As mentioned in the essay's title, Morrow attempts to make a logical

13. http://adage.com/datacenter/datapopup.php?article_id=106627

14. <http://adage.com/article/datacenter/newspaper-circulation-6-mos-ending-9-30-01/106378/>

argument for rage among the American people. Who we should use our rage towards is never specifically mentioned, although many of his statements are descriptive enough for one to formulate for his or herself who the enemy is that Morrow refers to. He writes, “What’s needed is a unified, unifying, Pearl Harbor sort of purple American fury—a ruthless indignation that doesn’t leak away in a week or two...into a corruptly thoughtful relativism (as has happened in the recent past, when, for example, you might hear someone say, ‘Terrible what he did, of course, but, you know, the Unabomber does have a point, doesn’t he, about modern technology?’” (Morrow, 2001). In other words, what Morrow argues in this statement is the idea of not logically assessing the attacks and rather just becoming angry at an enemy without a state that one cannot pick out of a crowd. Applying this logic to the rest of the article creates in one’s understanding of who the true enemy is. Morrow goes on to write, “Let America explore the rich reciprocal possibilities of the *fatwa*. A policy of focused brutality does not come easily to a self-conscious, self-indulgent, contradictory, diverse, humane nation with a short attention span.” The wrongful use of the term *fatwa*¹⁵ in the aforementioned sentence misrepresents Islam and Muslims as ‘brutal’ and incorporates the geopolitical effect of the Clash of Civilizations theory. It differentiates Islam and the West, arguing that the West should take up the barbaric qualities of the Islamic world. But Morrow does not stop here. He continues, writing, “Anyone who does not loathe the people who did these things, and the people who cheer them on, is too philosophical for decent company.” The use of ‘people’ here calls to mind an ethnic group or ‘civilization’ of people cheering on crazed terrorists.¹⁶ Morrow concludes his article with this

15. From the *Concise Encyclopedia of Islam*: “A fatwa is a formal legal opinion given by a mufti or canon lawyer of standing, in answer to a question submitted to him either by a judge or by a private individual. On the basis of such an ‘opinion’ a judge may decide a case, or an individual may regulate his personal life.”

16. Another example of this method of referring to a large group of peoples—connected ethnically, religiously, etc.—is in the oft used phrase “Why Do They Hate Us?” They in this question have a collective mind. Sources: *The Big Terrible, Smoking or Non-Smoking* NYT, WSJ: *US steps up leaflets*, Time: *How Do They See Us Now?*

statement: “The worst times, as we see, separate the civilized of the world from the uncivilized. This is the moment of clarity. Let the civilized toughen up, and let the uncivilized take their chances in the game they started.” One should keep in mind, that this is the kicker of the kicker of one of the most important issues of *Time* ever. In other words, it is the last statement that will be read by Americans on one of the most impressionable days of their lives. Morrow adopts the idea of the Clash of Civilizations in this passage, although he just uses different terminology. The ‘civilized’ are the West; the ‘uncivilized,’ Islam. One should note that ‘uncivilized’ does not refer to those on the fringe of the Islamic ‘civilization,’ but rather everyone who lives in the Islamic world. Due to the importance of this issue of *Time* magazine and the positioning of this essay, it invokes a priming effect¹⁷ for its audience that associates the attacks with the dichotomy of the civilized and uncivilized, with Islam representing the uncivilized. The other mainstream print media outlets did not initially utilize the same coverage as *Time* magazine; the other sources that I analyzed took a more ambiguous route.

The *New York Times*’ initial coverage of Muslims and Islam after the terrorist attacks varied in each story. On September 12 the *Times* ran an article about the anti-Arab and Muslim attacks all across the country.¹⁸ The article displayed some sympathy towards Muslims, referencing the profiling and internal aggression against Muslims after the Oklahoma City bombing. In the same article, references are made about the controversial televised images of celebrating Palestinians. David A. Harris of the American Jewish Commission is quoted as saying, “The fact that they are celebrating means they become our enemy.” This statement

17. “Priming refers to the effect of some preceding stimulus or event on how we react, broadly defined, to some subsequent stimulus. As applied to the media, priming refers to the effects of the content of the media on people’s later behavior or judgments related to the content that was processed.” In *The SAGE Handbook of Media Processes and Effects* by: Robin L. Nabi, Mary Beth Oliver, p. 14

18. *In US, Echoes of Rift of Muslims and Jews*; interestingly enough the article covered violence against Arabs as well, yet the title only contained Muslims, implying Muslims are Arabs.

essentially puts into words what the many Americans felt when they saw the videos on the television. The article, however, fails to provide any counter-point to Mr. Harris' statement; instead, the author just moves on letting the volatile assertion resonate with the reader. Within the same issue of the *New York Times* is an article entitled "Attackers Believed to Be Sane."¹⁹ One finds here the first kind of dialectical relationship that becomes more present in later coverage of Muslims and Islam in the mainstream media. What the title implies is this: 'We cannot label these men as crazed, barbaric religious fanatics, like the many other terrorists.' The author goes on to describe some interviews with a few psychologists who have studied the psychology of terrorism. One quote in particular is interesting because it works against the concept of the Clash of Civilizations, especially when Islam is used as the root-cause to terrorism. The article quotes Dr. Harvey Kushner, a terrorism expert from Long Island University, who says, "The person who does this [commits suicide in a bombing attack] does not see himself as giving up his life at a premature point. He sees it as for the greater good of society. And for us who try to guard against this, it's disastrous." Unlike some of the subsequent articles on terrorists out of the Middle East, this article includes a concept that goes against the grain. In other words, those who attacked the United States did so, in their eyes, for the greater good of their society, rather than due to Islam. Unfortunately, this counter-point is short-lived, as the very next point made by Dr. Vamik Volkan, an expert on inter-ethnic conflict out of the University of Virginia Medical School, who posits the societies of the suicide bombers [undoubtedly the Islamic world] back into their rightful barbaric, violence-loving place beneath

¹⁹ Goode, E. (2001, Sep 12). *Attackers believed to be sane*, New York Times.

that of the West: “Indeed, after their deaths, suicide bombers are often celebrated as heroes by their families and their communities.”²⁰

In the same *New York Times* issue, in the article “America the Vulnerable Meets a Ruthless Enemy,”²¹ the author uses the same kind of rhetoric as a writer for the *Wall Street Journal* does two days later. Burns writes, “On the tape, Mr. bin Laden read a chilling poem with themes that have a powerful resonance among Muslims with the grievances against America.” The subsequent article in the *Wall Street Journal* titled “Moving Target: Bin Laden’s Network, Far-Flung and Fanatic, Challenges Retaliation” reads, “Above all, the network’s [al Qaeda] ‘great strength is his [bin Laden] ability to pick up people, especially Muslims in Western countries at a loose end, looking for a cause,’ Mr. Randal says.” Both of these articles employ the Orientalist concept of ‘knowing’ the Orient, which is in this case the Muslim. The universalist language present in both articles—the former refers to all Muslims, while the latter refers to those only in Western countries—subordinates the Muslim into a more primitive, single-minded being.²² The root cause of Muslims joining al Qaeda, according to both of these articles, is the feeling of disenfranchisement and animosity towards the United States.²³ What is constructed in both of these articles is the concept of the ‘bad’ Muslim. The phrase ‘grievance against America’ is vague, putting any Muslim who criticizes an aspect of the United States in the ‘bad’ group. In other words, the statement leaves the interpretation up to the reader. The

20. Ibid.

21. Burns, J. F. (2001, Sep 12). “America the vulnerable meets a ruthless enemy.” *New York Times*.

22. There are many examples of this concept displayed more explicitly in texts from previous years; for more see: *The Roots of Muslim Rage* by Bernard Lewis; or Maxime Rodinson in *Europe and the Mystique of Islam* (1987) “The Oriental may always have been characterized as a savage enemy, but during the Middle Ages, he was at least considered on the same level as his European counterpart...In the nineteenth century, however, he became something quite separate, sealed off in his own specificity, yet worthy of a kind of grudging admiration. This is the origin of the homo islamicus, a notion widely accepted even today.”

23. A concept the Francis Fukuyama argues for in his article in Slate, “Europe vs. Radical Islam”: http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/books/2006/02/europe_vs_radical_islam.html.

Wall Street Journal article takes it a step further and says that al Qaeda is able to garner recruits from any Muslim who is ‘looking for a cause.’ This concept lumps all Muslims who are looking to become politically active in with potential terrorists. In addition to the sweeping generalizations both of these articles commit, they also create a ‘good’ Muslim to serve as the antithesis to the ‘bad.’ The ‘good’ Muslim is one who is not looking for a cause and lacks any ‘grievance’ toward the United States because he or she supports the country. Mahmood Mamdani also covers the idea of the ‘good’ and ‘bad’ Muslim using President Bush’s speech as an example of the normalizing:

“The president seemed to assure Americans that ‘good Muslims’ were anxious to clear their names and consciences of this horrible crime and would undoubtedly support ‘us’ in a war against ‘them.’ But this could not hide the central message of such discourse: unless proved to be ‘good,’ every Muslim was presumed to be ‘bad.’ All Muslims were now under obligation to prove their credentials by joining in a war against ‘bad’ Muslims.”²⁴

Subsequent articles in the *New York Times* also used this kind of distinction as well as incorporating the Orientalist tactic of ‘knowing.’

In Thomas Friedman’s article, “Smoking or Non-Smoking”, he writes,

“These people [Muslim terrorists] think strategically. They also want to trigger the sort of massive U.S. retaliation that makes no distinction between them and other Muslims. That would be their ultimate victory -- because they do see the

²⁴ Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror by: Mahmood Mamdani, p. 15.

world as a clash of civilizations, and they want every Muslim to see it that way as well and to join their jihad.”

He describes the attackers as ‘Muslim terrorists’ yet strangely denounces the idea of a Clash of Civilizations; Muslim becomes their defining characteristic. Of all of my research this is the only instance which I found the phrase ‘Muslim terrorist’ used. In the context of the article the phrase becomes more peculiar because Friedman blatantly says ‘they...see the world as a Clash of Civilizations.’ However, the term Muslim as a defining term for terrorist creates an opposition. Thus, Christian or Western or Jewish must be terminology for those that oppose the Muslim terrorist. Friedman adopts the abovementioned concept of *explicit-denunciation—implicit-support* with his description. Coming from Thomas Friedman, this is important as he is one of the most popular and influential Op-Ed columnist of the *Times*. Another instance of the concept of ‘knowing’ the ‘bad’ Muslim that adheres to the Clash of Civilizations theory comes from an unlikely source, King Abdullah of Jordan.

Some days later Friedman reported on an interview he had with King Abdullah. Following suit of his previous article he included a quote from the King of Jordan denouncing the terrorists in same way Friedman had. Abdullah said,

“They want to break down what America stands for. The terrorists actually want to provoke attacks on Arabs or Muslims in the U.S., because if the American communities start going after each other, if we see America fragment, then you destroy that special thing that America stands for.”

Once again the concept of knowing the Orient is used, this time however it is by the Orient—which in turn also gives it more credibility.²⁵ The Clash of Civilizations is what the terrorists want to create inside the United States. This claim works in a way that implicitly supports the geopolitical aspect of the Clash of Civilizations theory. If the United States wanted to defend against the terrorists, who were attempting to create a battle between those who would be considered a part of the Islamic world and the West, the terrorists would be deemed as Islam and the U.S. as the West. It paradoxically becomes the West vs. Islam in defense of the West vs. Islam. I will provide a short analysis of *USA Today*'s initial coverage of the attacks.

On September 13, an article was run that featured the opinions of many different demographics across the United States; “Muslims Share USA’s Sorrows in Attacks” was one of the headlines. It starts: “On behalf of the estimated 7 million American Muslims in this country, I want to condemn the vicious and cowardly acts that transpired Tuesday in our nation's capital and in New York City.” The author of this piece pins the fault of the attacks on Muslims, just not those who are American. In other words, it supports the Clash of Civilizations so long as those who are persecuted are not American. Additionally it follows the ‘good Muslim, bad Muslim’ paradigm mentioned by Mamdani. Those who are ‘good’ must condemn the attacks in the same manner as the author of this article did. Despite vouching for the ‘seven million American Muslims’ there is no way to differentiate who is ‘good’ simply by looking. Therefore, this article reinforces the idea that all Muslims are ‘bad’ until proven to be ‘good.’ The same *USA Today* issue used similar vague language as mentioned above.

25. Banks’ Typology: King Abdullah is an Indigenous-Outsider, meaning, though he has adopted the values of an external community his opinion about his indigenous community still carries more weight than someone external like Friedman. For a full review of the concept of Banks’ Typology see: *Applying Banks’ Typology of Ethnic Identity Development and Curriculum Goals to Story Content, Classroom Discussion, and the Ecology of Classroom and Community* (1996)

In “Bin Laden Hard to Find,” the terrorists in al Qaeda are referred to as ‘Militant Muslims.’ Just as Friedman does in “Smoking or Non-Smoking,” this article uses Muslim as the defining characteristic of the terrorist. This insinuates Muslims, and Islam as a whole, being the root cause of the attacks. In turn, this supports Huntington’s Clash of Civilizations theory, both micro-politically and geopolitically. On the micro-political level, the defining characteristic of Muslim adheres to Huntington’s fourth clause of his book: “The West’s universalist pretensions increasingly bring it into conflict with other civilizations, most seriously with Islam and China” (Huntington, 1996, p. 20). The conflict stems from Islam because being Muslim is the defining characteristic of the terrorists. In “Taliban May be the First Target of US Retaliation,” Jim Philips, a terrorist analyst of the Heritage Foundation, is quoted regarding bin Laden’s motives. He says, “bin Laden hates the United States because of our values...His terrorism is not meant to affect our polices as much as shake up our confidence... and help pave the way for the radicalization of the entire Muslim world.” Again the paradoxical notion of fighting Islam to prevent a larger Clash of Civilizations is brought up. The fact that bin Laden ‘hates our values’ posits Islam against the West in the same fashion Huntington argued; specifically by ‘promoting Western values.’ After a few days of media coverage of the attacks it became a given that bin Laden was evil, which also meant his values were evil. The thesis-antithesis relationship of him hating our values proves that our values are good. If bin Laden wants to radicalize the Muslim world we must prevent him, for we are a force of good. As a result, bin Laden hating our values invites our intervention.²⁶

26. This is similar to the point Said makes: “Both the traditional Orientalist, as we shall see, and Kissinger conceive of the difference between cultures, first, as creating a battlefield that separates them, and second, as inviting the West to control, contain, and otherwise govern (through superior knowledge and accommodating power) the Other” (Said, *Orientalism*, p. 48).

USA Today, in some of its initial coverage, included some articles making small attempts to its readers away from stereotyping. One of the most common points brought up was the attacks and discrimination against Muslims and Arabs after the Oklahoma City bombing. Additionally, the paper allowed some Muslims to speak for themselves rather than allowing journalists to assess the conflict and backlash on their own merit. However, as demonstrated above in “Muslims Share USA’s Sorrows in Attacks,” the Muslims that were printed in the paper were always ‘good:’ condemning the attacks and those that cheered them on, showing a large amount of nationalism, and supporting the United States’ subsequent military action in response. As the weeks progressed, a new paradigm was set incorporated into the coverage of Muslims and Islam: The backward, barbaric Middle East.

The structure of the *New York Times*’ article, “Who Hates the U.S.? Who Loves It?” is built on the Clash of Civilizations theory. It starts, “There are barbarians out there who hate America;” the term ‘barbarians’ in this instance essentially means a lack of modernity. The article continues with a quote from President Bush, “Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms, our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other.” The president here commits a self-sealing fallacy, as there is no possible way to prove why ‘they’ hate ‘us.’ All that is accomplished from this quote is the creation of a juxtaposition between ‘us’ and ‘them,’ and a denouncing of ‘them’ as a cohesive unit incapable of thinking individually. In other words, it is wartime rhetoric, not cultural theory. The editorial continues down the same road, peppering phrases like “yearnings for freedom,” “there is very little democracy in the Arabic-speaking and Muslims lands,” and the term “Westoxication” from 1960 Iran into the mix. I found this article to be very important in the context of the *NYT*’s coverage of the attacks and Islam due to its argumentative style. About

mid-way through the text the author addresses potential counter-arguments as to why ‘they’ hate ‘us.’ One of these counter-arguments is: “No, they [Saudi consultative body] replied; the real motivations for the Sept. 11 attack were Israel and sanctions against Iraq.” The author wastes no time in shutting down this argument with a quote from an unnamed American official, “It was clear they were trying to deflect the issue. It was a classic case of looking for the outside problem.” This is the first instance in which I found a counter-argument to the Clash of Civilizations paradigm used by the mainstream print media. Meaning, this was potentially the first instance a critical stance of the United States’ policies was addressed; however in the context of the article it is immediately dismissed. Subsequently, the author shifts gears and begins to discuss Iranian and American economic relations. Islam vs. the West is the overarching theme of the last half of the article. From “American CD’s, videos, and computer programs are pirated and sold on the streets Tehran” to “Clerics in Qom have a sophisticated Islamic computer center where Koranic teaching and interpretations are on the Internet”—the Internet is labeled as one of America’s most secular achievements—Islam in Iran is seen as separate from the modernity in the United States. The *Wall Street Journal* also began using a more critical tone when referring to Muslims and Islam a few weeks after the attacks, as well as covering more aggression against American Muslims.

An article published on October 2, 2001 discussed an issue between a welder and his employer (Shirouzu, 2001). The employer is quoted calling Islam “the scum of the earth,” and that Islam “breeds terrorism.” In the same issue a ‘Muslim melting pot’ is said to be the culture in Afghanistan, this is of course opposed to the idea of the United States being a melting pot for all cultures (Pope, 2001). (“For its Ferocity, Taliban Could Prove Easy Foe to Oust” *Oct.1*) The same article uses a curious quote by a Taliban leader, “The Muslim world is focusing on

Afghanistan for spiritual strength and the love of independence.” This emulates some of the rhetoric of the later coverage of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, but within the American press. This quote is only used in passing but it raises a point about war-time rhetoric and the question of why the *Wall Street Journal* would include a quote that could undermine the war effort. This is one of the only instances I found in my research of the journalist allowing the terrorist to speak for him or herself.

It was also around this time that a large shift in the representation of Muslims and Islam in the mainstream media took place. Chris Vecsey, whose book, *Following 9/11*, analyzes the religious coverage in the *New York Times*, writes about this shift:

“By the second week of October the *Times* made for a more bellicose trope regarding Islam, employing ‘clash of civilizations’ rhetoric through columnists, pundits, and reporters. It engaged in the ambiguity of defining American religion, with its Muslims more or less included, while contrasting the faith, the values, the sacralized institutions of the American way of life to those of an enemy identified with the Islamic religion” (2011, p.98).

Two important political events coincided with this shift in coverage: 1) The bombing of Afghanistan began and 2) the first video of bin Laden was broadcast on national television. In the *Time* magazine special seven countries in the Middle East were summarized in brief excerpts across three pages. In the summaries there are three statistics: the population, the percent of the country that is Muslim, and the per capita GDP. This implies that Islam is one of the most important factors in a country’s demographics; although it fails to cover the fact that the Middle East is only home to about twenty percent of worldwide Muslims. Later on in the same

magazine, “The Taliban Troubles,” a report done regarding the Taliban’s rule of Afghanistan, employs more blatant Clash of Civilizations rhetoric, using the geopolitical framework. It starts, “In a bleak fortified compound few non-Muslims have ever seen sat a man few non-Muslims have ever met mulling over the future of a wanted man” (Mcgeary, 2001). Once again, a dichotomy is drawn between who is and who is not a Muslim; it is the defining characteristic. About midway through the text the geopolitical framework becomes more apparent: “If he [Mullah Mohammad Omar] delivers bin Laden to the West, he betrays the man who helped bring him to power and sustains his rule now” (2001). Just as Huntington used ‘the West’ to disguise his actual reference to the United States, so too does this author. It is as though bin Laden had his hand in attacking all of ‘the West’, as opposed to just the United States—this invokes the idea of the larger scale ‘clash.’

In the *New York Times*, many articles that covered Muslims or Islam did in fact use much more blatant Clash of Civilizations rhetoric. For example, the title “Bin Laden Images Mesmerize Muslims” treats the 1.2 billion people in the world as drone-like, singular figure who is overly-captivated by bin Laden’s speech (Sachs, 2001). Within this article comes the statement, “Mr. bin Laden impressed many Muslims with these simple phrases.” The simple-minded Muslims found bin Laden’s simple phrases captivating according to this article. Backwardness and the pre-modern Islamic world are two concepts produced by this rhetoric, demonstrating how unlike ‘we’ are from ‘them.’

The same day the *Wall Street Journal* ran a story titled “U.S. Retaliation Draws Little Muslim Objection.” What the title explicitly says is that there was an expected backlash from Muslims, although there is no specified region where these Muslims are from. ‘Muslims’ from anywhere were expected to be angry over the bombing of Afghanistan, thinking and feeling as a

singular entity. This of course references the Clash of Civilizations, treating the religion as the most important aspect, as well as the expectation of a clash. Additionally, in the article the author uses the terms ‘Arab world’ and ‘Muslim world’ to describe the Middle East. In other words, Arab and Muslim happen to be synonymous, impressing upon the reader the same kind of viewpoint. This perpetuation of this common misconception in American society doubtlessly helped fuel the attacks on any who ‘looked Middle Eastern’ subsequent to the terrorist attacks of September 11. Following this article comes “Fight Plan,” which quotes angry demonstrators screaming, “Jihad! Jihad! America is the great Satan.” Of all my research this is the only instance in which I found the direct quotation of a crowd demonstration. To quote a chant paints a picture of a huge crowd banded together against a cause, which in this case happens to be the United States. An issue with this kind of reporting is its subjectivity. With visuals, although an image can be skewed, it can only be done to certain extent. If the reader has developed a strong dislike for Muslims he or she may read this as the genesis of the Clash of Civilizations, whereas someone else may read it as just a small group of angry people. The latter is much more feasible for the collective interpretation of this article due to the amount of priming the attacks in the context of Islam.

In the following week, the *New York Times* ran an article called “Saudi Royals and Reality” which is essentially a criticism of the Arab media for its lack of coverage and criticism of the fact that fifteen of the nineteen hijackers were Saudis. What is left out of this argument is the detail that the U.S. media essentially did the same thing, if not worse. As has been mentioned above in my analysis, most of the blame was placed on the Middle East and Islam itself for the attacks. So for the *New York Times* to come out and make the claim that Arab media was lacking coverage and criticism adopts the *explicit-denunciation—implicit-support*

paradigm: It denounced the Arab media—particularly Al Jazeera—though it implicitly supported the concept of avoiding the Saudi origin of the hijackers, most likely due to political reasons.

In the midst of my research I inadvertently came upon the International section of the *New York Times* which comes out of Brussels, Belgium. An Op-Ed was run the same day as the abovementioned article called “The Real Meaning of Jihad.” The author criticized the mainstream media for its reductionist representations of the term *jihad*, without any background or history on the term. The author expounds upon the two types of *jihad*: *al-jihad al-akbar* (the greater *jihad*) and *al-jihad al-asghar* (the lesser *jihad*). The greater is considered to be an internal struggle, whereas the lesser *jihad* is more in reference to self-defense, preservation, and justice (Rourke, 2012, p. 15). All of the mainstream media sources that I analyzed used *jihad* as essentially synonymous with ‘Holy war.’ I have sufficiently covered the increase in the critique of Islam in the mainstream media, so it is necessary to move on to the next, arguably most blatant incorporation of the Clash of Civilizations theory.

On November 17, 2001, Laura Bush broadcast nationally over the radio a commemoration of the recent attack on Afghanistan from the concept of liberating the Afghan woman. For example, in one instance she says, “Only the terrorists and the Taliban threaten to pull out women's fingernails for wearing nail polish. The plight of women and children in Afghanistan is a matter of deliberate human cruelty, carried out by those who seek to intimidate and control.”²⁷ In its entirety, Laura Bush’s speech was essentially a pseudo-feminist appeal to garner more support for the war in Afghanistan. And abiding by the cascading activation model

27. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=24992>

in nearly an ideal fashion, the media immediately followed suit in its coverage of the oppressed Afghan woman under the rule of the Taliban.

Time adhered strictly to the contents of Laura Bush's speech in its coverage of the Afghan woman subsequent to her speech. In its December, 3, 2001, issue the concept was a headliner titled, "Lifting the Veil." In the leading article, "About Face," Afghanistan is labeled explicitly as being "tribal and conservative"—tribal in this instance is used as a term of denunciation rather than as descriptive. The article's focus lies on the Taliban and its policies, it does not mention any of the Afghan tribes present at this time. In the article's coverage of different women in Afghanistan, those who show that they are content with some, or all, of their standards are denounced in what appears to be a deliberate manner. The author writes, "Many rural women, especially, claim to wear it [burka] willingly, at least when they speak in the presence of their husbands." The context here insinuates the possibility of these women not wanting to wear the burka, but due to the power exercised on them in this misogynistic society they cannot say so in the presence of men. The article continues, "But nearly any educated woman you may speak to loathes the burka." This entire claim happens to be an anecdote, as well as the application of cognitive dissonance. An example of how cognitive dissonance could be applied here is this: If one was to ask a woman in Afghanistan if she likes wearing her burka, and in private she says yes, one could claim that she is not educated because she does not 'know' that she is oppressed. Nonetheless the article still continues to push the topic of the oppressed Afghan woman: [Following the previous sentence] "So do many less educated ones-if you question them where men cannot hear." Another anecdote here is used, without any support from quotations—i.e. letting the women speak for themselves.

The *New York Times* did not take as hardline of an approach to the concept of liberating the ‘Afghan woman’. There was included criticism in the November 20 edition, titled “Women in Afghanistan, and Here.” It argued for the positive portrayal of all Muslims in Afghanistan, as the author felt there was a lack of it from the *NYT*. The previous day the *NYT* ran “Behind the Burka” which documented some of the stories of the liberated Afghan woman (Waldman, 2001). It reads, “The freedom is still too new to completely trust...but for the first time in years, women here say they have hope—that they will be treated like human beings, not wayward cattle.” What this article is able to accomplish is demonstrating how good some Afghan women feel being ‘liberated’ by the United States, and in addition arguing for more intervention. This, of all the material I found in my research, abides the closest to the Clash of Civilizations theory. It embodies the micro-political framework of the second clause Huntington argued for in the Western defense against Islam and China: “to promote Western political values and institutions by pressing other societies to respect human rights as conceived in the West and adopt democracy on Western lines” (Huntington, 1996, p.185-6). ‘We’ are pressing Afghanistan to respect ‘their’ women as ‘we’ respect ‘our’ women. Due to the fact that not all Afghan women liberated at this point it gives reason to push further until all are saved by the West. The geopolitical framework also functions implicitly with this concept of liberation. As the West impresses its own values on that of an Islamic society a dichotomy is created: the West and Islam appear to be incompatible.

Implications

The media’s adopting of the Clash of Civilizations theory in its framing of Muslims and Islam had three overarching implications: social, intellectual, and political. The former two implications are mentioned in the essay “The US Media, Huntington, and September 11” by

Ervand Abrahamian. These assertions I very much agree with, for they serve to encompass some of the most important aspects of the implications of above-analyzed media framework. However, Abrahamian misses a third equally important implication of the Clash of Civilizations framing, the political ramifications. All three of these implications are important and therefore they will all be addressed.

The social implications affected how Muslims and those that ‘looked’ Muslim were perceived in the American public. As Abrahamian puts it, “By framing the crisis in the context of Islam it made all Muslims suspect—unless they could prove themselves innocent of being terrorists or sympathizing with terrorists” (2003, p. 538). What emerged from this was a mass amount of Islamophobia in the United States which led to angry, discriminatory rhetoric, legal discrimination, and even attacks on American Muslims. “The Reverend Jerry Falwell, the televangelist who claimed to speak for seventy million Christian fundamentalists, argued that he had studied enough to know that Muhammad, in contrast to the law-abiding Moses, was a ‘terrorist’ who ‘indulged in violence and warfare,’” writes Abrahamian. This same kind of verbal assault was used by other Christian fundamentalists in the United States as well: Reverend Jerry Vines, Chuck Colson, Marvin Olasky, and Reverend Pat Robertson, to name a few. Legal discrimination happened to be another social implication in result of the media’s framing of the conflict in context of Islam. For example a *New York Times* article titled “Far From Attacks, a City Finds Peace Shattered” reads,

“Last week, a cardiologist of East Indian descent from nearby Huntington was trying to go home on a bus after the airports closes, stranding him in Washington. When the bus first arrived in Charleston, he found himself surrounded by police officers who ordered him to the ground at gunpoint. They were responding to a panicky report from his fellow

passengers about the man of apparently of ‘Middle Easter descent’ carrying a black bag and asking about a local airport” (Toner, 2001).

This may be only one occurrence; however, many other incidents were reported by the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Time* magazine, and *USA Today*. *Time* magazine even included a poll of Americans that showed 67% of Americans supported an ongoing policy of interviews about 5000 people, ages 18-33 within the Arab-American and Islamic community [*sic*—the poll combines both of these communities (Just a Few Questions, 2001). In the following week’s edition of *Time* an article titled, “The Taliban Next Door” was run. The article is a narrative of John Walker, an American who converted to Islam, and subsequently joined the Taliban. Written in a chronological format, “The Taliban Next Door” focuses specifically on John Walker’s reading of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* as a turning point, as it apparently the reason Walker converted. Aside from the many allusions to the Clash of Civilizations within the article—“On Friday nights, though, he would change out of his Western clothes and attend services at the Islamic Center...John Walker had transformed himself from a quiet, smooth-cheeked American teenager to a devout, bearded Muslim studying in Yemen”—its title and overarching theme is an alarmist one. It says: ‘Anyone you know can convert to Islam, which is a rite of passage to becoming a terrorist; even your own Western neighbor.’ As Abrahamian also notes, over 1200 Muslim immigrants were detained without habeas corpus. The culture of fear within the American Muslim community also increased greatly following September 11.²⁸

28. For examples of this fear see: “Group Struggling to Shed Association with Terrorism: Narrative about a Muslim woman who was so scared she could not go out into public for weeks after the attacks” (September 18, NYT); “After Terror: Muslim Welder Files Discriminations Suit, Claims Firing Reflects Religion, Ethnicity: Story of a Muslim man fired by his employer, on the grounds of his religion” (Shirouzu, 2001); “Stocks Fall, with Notable Losses in Some Muslim Lands: Traders and investors plan to ‘sell everything Muslim after the attacks, due to the negative connotation with the religion”

The intellectual implications were a multi-layered problem that, in some respects, was worse than the social. Abrahamian writes, “Specialists who did not describe the conflict in the context of Islam and instead asked awkward questions were sidelined, leaving the field wide open to so-called experts on ‘terrorism’, ‘religious extremism’, and ‘Islamic fundamentalism.’” An example of this rests in the review of the book *Holy War, Inc.* in the New York Times article “21st Century Jihad.” In this review, the author gives a brief overview of the main thesis of the book, followed by a criticism. *Holy War, Inc.* is essentially a report on the founding of the Taliban and Osama bin Laden. “Bergen [author of *Holy War, Inc.*] has a fine eye for detail,” the journalist writes, “and as we accompany him over pot-hole filled paths, across chaotic borders, checking out arms bazaars and listening to bin Laden’s soft cough as he proclaims Americans are fair game for attack, we sense we are on an interesting journey with a trustworthy guide.” Later in the review he writes, “He [Bergen] bursts the myth that the CIA created bin Laden, pointing out that the agency never had a direct relationship with him and that he was always anti-American.” The tone of the review changes in about the last quarter of the article becoming much more critical of Bergen. The reviewer attacks a point made in the book that goes against what was seen as conventional wisdom in the mainstream media. The criticism begins:

“This book contains one significant failing, in my view, and that is Bergen’s analysis of why bin Laden is at war with the United States. Bergen take issue with Samuel Huntington’s widely cited thesis that there is clash of civilizations between the West and Islam. He says bin Laden has a clear and specific political agenda—changing American policy in the Middle East. He opposes the presence of American troops in Saudi Arabia, the bombing of Iraq, support for Israel and for regimes, like those in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, that he considers apostates

from Islam. Bin Laden has never, Bergen notes, railed against Coca-Cola or Madonna or homosexuals.”

The reviewer retorts with, “But this seems a cramped, literal parsing of bin Laden’s few public statements and, in the end, simplistic and unsatisfying. You do not have to accept Huntington’s argument entirely to see that the battle is over more than American foreign policy.” Here it is clear that the reviewer accepts Huntington’s entire thesis and views the “war on terror” as the clash between the civilizations of the West and Islam. Not only that, but the concept of bin Laden’s motives being a response to US foreign policy are denounced as being too simplistic; yet the reviewer seems satisfied with the Huntingtonian simplistic view of the world. Time and again this same sort of argumentative style was used to combat the assertions by dissenters that the reasoning for the attacks was deeper than the superficial concept of the Clash of Civilizations.

Additionally, in accordance with Entman’s Cascading Activation Model [Image 1], two of the most influential academics on Huntington’s thesis served as advisors to the Bush administration—Francis Fukuyama and Bernard Lewis.²⁹ This close connection demonstrates the reciprocal relationship in in the Cascading Activation Model between the “Administration” and the “Other Elites,” which in turn explains how the mainstream media was influenced to adopt a Clash of Civilizations framework. Abrahamian established the social and intellectual implications of the media’s framing of Islam and Muslims in the context of the Clash of Civilizations; however, he overlooks the political.

29. One example of the influence of these two scholars: they both served as panelists and speakers at a conference titled, “Islam and the West” on Bernard Lewis’ 90th birthday
http://www.businesswire.com/portal/site/google/index.jsp?ndmViewId=news_view&newsId=20060501005557&newsLang=en

To frame the September 11 attacks and subsequent ‘war on terror’ solely in the context of Islam and the Clash of Civilizations completely absolves the United States of any responsibility. The clash acts as a self-fulfilling prophecy, appearing to be inevitable. The United States was not attacked for a rational political reason, rather, it was because ‘they’ hated our values and pluralistic society. The political implication explains why there was minimal discussion in the mainstream press of Palestine and Israel’s relationship, the sanctions on Iraq in the 90s, the bombing of Al Shifa in Sudan, the U.S. support for the mujahedeen, and many other issues American foreign policy had a hand in. An example of this comes in the abovementioned quote of the King Abdullah’s reasoning for the September 11 attacks.

To reiterate the comment, Abdullah says,

“They want to break down what America stands for. The terrorists actually want to provoke attacks on Arabs or Muslims in the U.S., because if the American communities start going after each other, if we see America fragment, then you destroy that special thing that America stands for.”

This turns the attacks into aggressive, irrational action against the United States. There is no mention of other potential motives of the terrorists. Instead, King Abdullah claims to know exactly what the terrorists—in this case ‘terrorist’ is directly associated with Arab and Muslim—want to do. The absolving the political implication accomplishment sets the tone for the intellectual implication. By King Abdullah putting the conflict into the context of Islam, he adds to the paradigm, making it more conventional. Thus, with each example of the interpreting of the ‘war on terror’ solely due to Islam the paradigm grows stronger, and more of a ‘truth’ in the academic sense. Anyone who attempts to step outside that paradigm, and as Abrahamian said

ask 'awkward' questions, is not only seen as a dissident, but also less of an academic. This close relationship between political and intellectual implications of the mainstream media's framing of the Clash of Civilizations is present in the *New York Times*' book review of *Holy War, Inc.*

The criticism of the book when the author says, "You do not have to accept Huntington's argument entirely to see that the battle is over more than American foreign policy," the argument embodies the political implication of the Clash of Civilizations framing. Intellectually, Bergen, the author of *Holy War, Inc.* is denounced as not understanding the crisis. But in addition, his argument regarding foreign policy is attacked. Due to this attack, the idea of the Clash is perpetuated, while other critical arguments are denounced. To criticize the United States' foreign policy, or even bring it into question is to invite the same assault as Bergen received. Thus from this, the political environment becomes constrained only allowing viewpoints that strictly adhere to the status quo.

In the article "World War IV," published on November 13, 2001 in the *Wall Street Journal*, this status quo was further solidified. The author, Eliot A. Cohen, argues for policy makers and the public to focus attention on a different enemy: "The enemy in this war is not terrorism but militant Islam." In this example, the conflict is explicitly put into the context of Islam. If this is true then it does not matter whether the U.S. was involved within the Middle East. The problem is innate to Islam, a radical side of it, but Islam nonetheless. Cohen continues his argument with advocating for "two objectives for the U.S: 1) Smashing Al Qaeda, 2) Teaching a lesson to governments that shelter such organizations" (2001). The argumentative style of the article treats the September 11 attacks as the genesis of the problem with militant Islam, and the United States' move to retaliate as a defense and preventative measure. Once

again one sees a lack of historical consciousness in Cohen's assessing of the conflict, which consequently allows the American government freer reign over the war in the Middle East.

Weeks following "World War IV," Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times* produced a similar article that adhered to the same Clash of Civilizations paradigm that has been touched on throughout this argument while also whitewashing the U.S. of all responsibility.

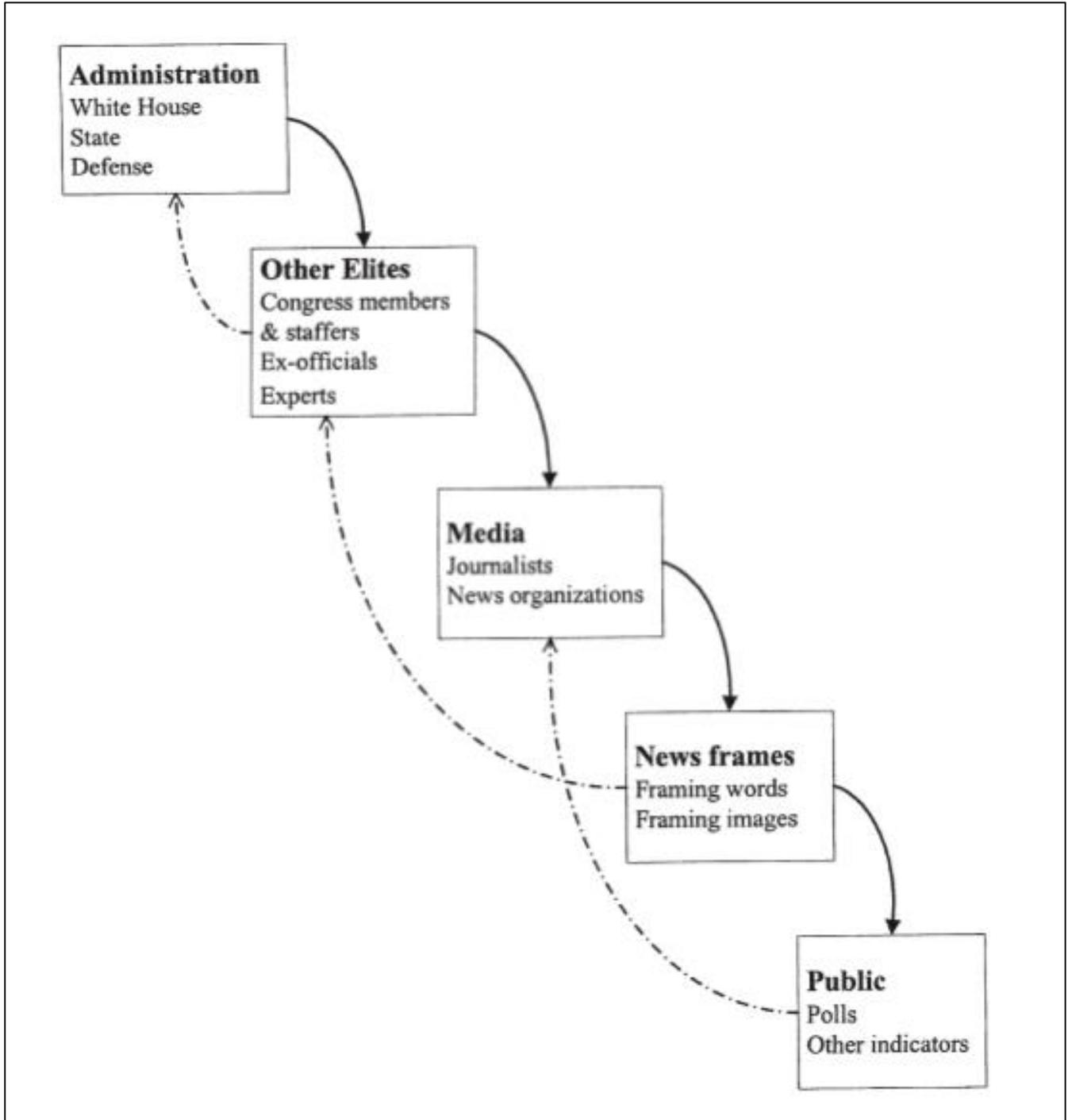
Friedman begins, "We're not fighting to eradicate 'terrorism.' Terrorism is just a tool. We're fighting to defeat an ideology: religious totalitarianism" (Friedman 2001). This statement is similar to that made two weeks before by Cohen, but it has the same effect. In two of the most important newspapers, which most argue are on opposite sides of the political spectrum, two very influential authors—Thomas Friedman is one of the most famous journalists in the world; Eliot A. Cohen was a strategic consultant that worked closely with the Bush Administration—said essentially the same thing with only two weeks dividing their statements. Unlike Cohen however, Friedman continues adding to his interpretation of the 'war on terror.' He writes, "The opposite of religious totalitarianism is an ideology of pluralism -- an ideology that embraces religious diversity and the idea that my faith can be nurtured without claiming exclusive truth." Here one sees the juxtaposition between the two 'civilizations.' Islam is seen as home to 'religious totalitarianism,' whereas the U.S. houses pluralism. Friedman continues by explicitly stating this concept: "America is the Mecca of that ideology, and that is what bin Laden hates and that is why America had to be destroyed." The concept of 'knowing' the motives of bin Laden embodies the political implication. Even if bin Laden himself was to relay a message claiming that the attacks on September 11 were a result of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, or the sanctions on Iraq, or some other U.S. involvement in the Middle East, those claims would fall outside of the paradigm of the Clash of Civilizations set within the media. In other words, after a

paradigm is solidified in the mainstream media, no one person could change that paradigm, not even the one who helped solidify it.

“Paradigms do not need to be true to become conventional wisdom,” as Abrahamian (2003) said. As demonstrated above, they can be denounced, called unscientific and denounced in the intellectual community and still reemerge years later. Because the mainstream American press media adopted the Clash of Civilizations theory in its framing of Muslims and Islam, the concept of taking information as is from this media system should be a thing of the past. It is almost impossible to change the structure of the American media due to its immense size as well as the decades of ideological reinforcing. It is up to each and every individual to discern the media framework at any given time, and apply skepticism and criticism when necessary. This of course is not an easy task, but it happens to be necessary if one wants to obtain accurate information. The world is becoming more globalized, more interconnected, more wholesome. Knowledge and skepticism are the only two ways to prevent this connectedness from fragmenting.

Image #1

Cascading activation model:



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