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**Domestic Conflict or Global Terror? Framing the  
Mumbai Terror Attacks in the U.S. Print Press**

**Kamla Pande,**  
MSc in Global Media and Communications

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# **Domestic Conflict or Global Terror? Framing the Mumbai Terror Attacks in the U.S. Print Press**

**Kamla Pande**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the coverage of the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attack in the U.S. print media. International news is notoriously absent from the American press. When foreign stories do appear, it is primarily news of conflict or disaster. Historically, reporting of terror attacks on non-Western soil tended to domesticize the event as conflict between two rival nations distant from American interests. This was best exemplified by coverage from the Middle East throughout the 1990s. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, however, led to the rise of the mainstream media's war on terror narrative used to explain international security and global conflict from a strongly American ethnocentric perspective. The changing nature of American media discourse on acts of terror establishes the background for this research. The theory of media framing, the emphasis on certain aspects of a story at the expense of others, is used to determine the presence of particular narratives in the coverage of the Mumbai attack. Understanding the nature of the frames is critical to determining audience reception, as they influence not only the salience of a story but also its interpretation. The frames and narratives are explored through a content analysis of stories written about the attack in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. Deriving from the previous literature, the two major narratives under investigation are endemic internal conflict and the war on terror. The analysis reveals that the war on terror frame is actually the dominant meta-narrative within which conflict framing may occur. Regardless of the dominant rhetoric, however, American press coverage of the attack is found to be neutral in proximity and not overly nationalistic but still overall lacking in thematic contextualization.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In an era of seemingly endless technological advancements in media and communications leading to the near total compression of time and space, the once impassable distance between world citizens has been bridged, linking people both physically and symbolically at high speeds (Harvey, 1989 as cited in Tomlinson, 1997, p. 170). Indeed, Bauman (2001) describes the environment created by technology allowing instantaneous transmission of information, images and sounds to and from the most remote corners of the world as one in which "while our hands have not grown any longer, we have acquired 'artificial eyes' which enable us to see what our own eyes never would" (p. 2). Globalization – the "rapidly developing process of complex interconnections between societies, cultures, institutions and individuals world-wide" – has generated heightened concern for the nature of news content circulated in the ever growing world network (Tomlinson, 1997, p. 170). The terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> "dramatized the interconnected networked globe and the important role of the media in which individuals everywhere can simultaneously watch events of global significance unfold and thus participate in the dramas of globalization" (Kellner, 2002, p. 152). In this environment, it is now more critical than ever to understand exactly how these global events are conveyed to audiences by their national media in order to build increased understanding and unity in the global sphere.

### *November 26, 2008: Mumbai Terror Attack*

On November 26, 2008, attackers armed with semi-automatic weapons, grenades and bombs launched a series of coordinated attacks on Mumbai, India's largest city and financial center. The siege, which lasted three days, began when gunmen opened fire indiscriminately on people at two luxury hotels, restaurants, hospitals, the city's main train station and a Jewish cultural center. Hostages were taken at both the Taj Mahal and Oberoi Trident hotels as well as at the Chabad Lubavitch Jewish Center. Initial reports indicating that the terrorists targeted foreigners – primarily those with American or British passports – were later proven wrong. Mumbai's police force was overwhelmed with the carnage caused by the ten terrorists. Eventually, special force commandos and the Indian army killed all but one of the attackers and the siege came to an end. On November 29, 2008, the death toll reached more than 170 with another 300 injured. Almost immediately, finger-pointing between India and Pakistan began over who was to blame for the deadly attack.

Terrorist attacks are not new to either the city of Mumbai or the country of India. In 2008 alone, at least seven terror attacks took place across the nation, killing more than 350 people. The coordination, style and personal nature of the 2008 attack in Mumbai, however, was unprecedented. Not surprisingly, it was precisely these qualities that led many in the media to proclaim the event "Mumbai's 9/11."<sup>1</sup> Others balked at the analogy.<sup>2</sup> Such vehement disagreement begs further investigation into the strengths and weaknesses of the American press' treatment of the event. What was the best way to cover the attack in Mumbai? Did the U.S. news media foster greater understanding by providing audiences with contextualized information and analysis or did they rely on culturally familiar narratives to convey a simplified version of the event?

Though there is a great deal of research focusing on American media coverage of international events, very little of it focuses specifically on news from South Asia. In fact, there has been no major published research into American media coverage of terrorism in South Asia. The vast majority of coverage of terrorist attacks on non-western soil tends to be domesticized as local conflict and virtually ignored unless Westerners are directly involved, as in the case of the Bali bomb blast in 2002. It is hoped that this study will launch further research into the nature of news coverage of conflict in one of the largest and most politically influential regions in the world.

The specific goal of this dissertation is to identify the primary frames used to cover the Mumbai attack in the U.S. press. I will then investigate the correlates of each frame to determine how well the American news media informed the audience with contextualized, global content. Through an analysis of the metaphors, subjects, sources and language used by American journalists to cover the attack, I seek to determine whether an endemic conflict frame prevails over other narratives in the U.S.'s news coverage of international terrorism. Furthermore, I endeavor to analyze the amount of valuable, contextualized information provided by the conflict frame as compared to other types of frames employed by journalists.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/standard/article-23594215-details/India's+911+strikes+at+the+heart+of+Mumbai/article.do>;  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/nov/28/mumbai-terror-attacks-india-pakistan>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/dec/12/mumbai-arundhati-roy>;  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/vamsee-juluri/how-the-west-lost-us-a-cr\\_b\\_151730.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/vamsee-juluri/how-the-west-lost-us-a-cr_b_151730.html);  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/03/opinion/03ghosh.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/03/opinion/03ghosh.html?_r=1)

Based on the theory of framing, patterns of language, metaphors and subjects topics were codified and categorized in a content analysis conducted on newspaper coverage of the attack in two American daily newspapers of record. Owing to the time and scale constraints on this research, the analysis is limited to a relatively small sample of content. The value of this study would be enhanced by a larger sample of news stories from additional newspapers. Particularly valuable results could be uncovered by a comparative analysis of news stories from other Western and non-Western nations. Additionally, conducting a deeper investigation into the conceptual framework for the war on terror meta-narrative prior to developing the coding scheme might have provided more valid results than a post-hoc secondary analysis. Finally, future research would benefit greatly from a point for comparison provided by a similar investigation into coverage of prior terror events in India.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***U.S. Press Coverage of Foreign News***

Critics of the American press have argued that U.S. coverage of international news suffers greatly from the declining numbers of reporters across the world resulting from modern budget constraints on news organizations (Lent, 1977; Riffe et al., 1994). Even in an age in which improvements in the accessibility of instantaneous communications technologies foster multidirectional global media flows, changes in the nature of foreign news coverage in the West are under debate. In a study of international news flows, Horvit et al. (2000) found that many countries only appeared in the U.S. press if they were in the midst of a disaster or civil conflict (see also Riffe and Budianto, 2001). Chang (1998) discovered a similar bias in the amount of news coverage given to different geographic regions around the world in his study of U.S. network television. More recently, Horvit et al. (2007) found that “even if coverage of international news peaked after Sept. 11, 2001, it seems to have returned to – and even fallen below – the levels of the 1990s” (p. 16); furthermore, “U.S. newspapers do not seem to have improved the quality of their reports” (p. 21).

Many scholars agree that “while news organizations use new technologies to communicate information, they nevertheless tackle foreign news from a local angle” (Nossek, 2004, p. 345; see also Chang and Lee, 1992; Fenby, 1986; Golan and Wanta, 2003; Nossek, 2000; Sreberny and Stevenson, 1999; Stevenson and Gaddy, 1984). Kern (1981) asserts that foreign news has “two dimensions: the foreign story that deals with events abroad and the domestic story that concentrates on the United States’s role and reaction to world events”

(p. 106 as cited in Nacos and Torres-Reyna, 2003, p. 135). Owing to the United States' position as a military and economic world super-power, the national media tends to "have an *ethnocentric, nationalistic* bias in covering foreign affairs (Hallin, 1986; Page and Shapiro, 1992)" (Schaefer, 2003, p. 98). As a result, foreign news coverage focuses primarily on international events with high domestic impact. Research by Cohen et al. (1993) into American television coverage of the *intifada* and the Gulf War provided further support for theory that the media's treatment of events depends on how closely involved the United States is with the conflict (see also Liebes, 1992; Cohen et al., 1990).

In a study of media coverage of four international events, Nossek (2004) further argues that a "journalist's definition of an event – as 'ours' or 'theirs' – determines whether the event is selected by the journalist" and whether the nature of coverage is patriotic or professional (p. 344). This is particularly concerning when considered in tandem with research by Wanta, Golan and Lee (2004) which revealed that negative or biased nature of news coverage of foreign nations negatively affects people's perceptions of those nations (see also Wanta and Hu, 1993).

### ***News Coverage and Proximity***

Galtung and Ruge's (1965) seminal research identified proximity as a news value critical for meaningful understanding of events for audiences. While the newsworthiness of an event is determined by a number of additional factors including drama, negativity, tragedy and pain (Nossek, 1994; Weimann and Brosius, 1991), Nossek (2004) argues that meeting these criteria alone does not guarantee that a politically violent event like terrorism will receive media coverage. Instead, media attention tends to favor those events which are geographically, economically and culturally proximate (Chang et al., 1987; Schaefer, 2003; Sparkes, 1978; Sreberny and Stevenson, 1999; Wu, 2000).

Geographic proximity determines the nature and amount of coverage given to particular events. In evaluating coverage of local and global terrorist attacks in the American, British and Dutch press, Ruigrok and van Atteveldt (2007) discovered that "news coverage increases most clearly the moment an event occurs on a local level" (p. 85). In a comparative study of coverage of foreign disasters in the *New York Times* and on U.S. network TV, Van Belle (2000) found that, controlling for the magnitude of the event, the distance of the country from the United States significantly determines the amount of coverage it received. Additionally, in an analysis of news frames used to cover the U.S.

Embassy bombings in Africa and the September 11 attacks in African and American newspapers, Schaefer (2003) found that acts of terror geographically distant from the U.S. compete with domestic events for attention and often lose out in placement prominence.

Cultural proximity similarly affects the frames used to cover particular stories. Gurevitch et al. (1991) argue that the perceived importance of a foreign event ultimately depends on its insertion into "a narrative framework that is already familiar to and recognizable by newsmen as well as by audiences" (p. 207). This assertion is supported by Ruigrok and van Atteveldt's (2007) finding that the U.S. press immediately located terror events in London and Madrid within the framework of 9/11. In fact, the research suggests that the press in all three countries "considered [terror] events after 9/11 in the global framework of the war on terror while retaining a local angle and frame of reference" (Ruigrok and van Atteveldt, 2007, p. 87). Without locally or regionally comprehensible frames, media consumers are unable to make sense of complex, distant events.

On the other hand, there is evidence that international news reporting is influenced as much by U.S. foreign policy as by cultural or geographic proximity (Entman and Rojecki, 1993; Herman and Chomsky, 1988; Iyengar and Simon, 1993; Lundsten and Stocchetti, 2005; Schiffer, 2002). Dating back to Cold War reporting, Herman and Chomsky (1988) developed the propaganda model to explain the anti-communism frame used by the U.S. news media to cover foreign events. Similarly, Iyengar and Simon (1993) argued that U.S. media's framing of Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War was commensurate with American foreign policy. Schiffer's (2002) content analysis of *New York Times* coverage of foreign conflicts between 1992 and 1997 found that that the number of mentions of the conflict by U.S. government sources was more indicative of the amount of coverage it received than the conflict's magnitude and its physical or cultural proximity to the United States. In a cross-national study of newspaper coverage of the North Korean nuclear threat in the United States, China, South Korea, Japan, and Russia, Chung et al. (2008) found that each country's press tended to frame the "issue not just in the context of their home country, but as an international issue, breaking away from a previous tendency toward localization or domestication of news in favor of a broader outlook" (p. 21). Owing to the extensive use of elite government sources, the issue was framed as "one of interest to many, caused by many, and of consequence to many" (p. 21).



### **September 11, 2001**

The events of September 11<sup>th</sup> marked a distinct change in American journalistic traditions. Coverage of terrorism, in particular, was thrust into the forefront of newsworthiness. Along with it, however, came concern for the role of journalists in meeting standards of objectivity and truth in the face of an event with extreme political, social and cultural consequences. The clear move toward patriotic discourse of both American political figures and media practitioners following September 11, 2001 has only compounded the inward-looking nature of foreign media coverage in the U.S. press (Hutcheson et al., 2003).

As a part of the national in-group, American journalists subscribe to and are influenced by the cultural traditions and belief systems of the nation, which can lead to the application of an ethnocentric or nationalistic filter on news production (Gans, 1979; Ellis, 2000; Schaefer, 2003; Tuchman, 1978). Hutcheson et al. (2003) argue that such ethnocentrism is heightened in coverage of "U.S. involvement in international events (Gans, 1979) and seems likely to reflect nationalist themes in crisis situations in which there is a perceived threat to national interests or national security (Brookes, 1999)" (p. 32; see also Bennett, 1990; Wolfsfeld, 2004).

Studies into the coverage of terrorism in particular support these observations of a domestic culture filter (Simmons and Lowry, 1990; Van Belle, 2000; Weimann and Winn, 1994). The particular myths included in news coverage of terrorism – domestic or otherwise – depend on the degree of affinity or proximity of the event to the local culture (Berkowitz and Nossek, 2001; Nossek et al., 2003). Ruigrok and van Atteveldt (2007) identify this process of using "familiar local, domestic contexts...to integrate global events in increasingly local discourses" as a greater trend toward regionalization typical of post September 11<sup>th</sup> media in the United States (see also Volkmer, 2002).

The journalistic response to the events of September 11 is well documented. The patriotic reaction of journalists and its subsequent effect on the importance of the discourse of terrorism in American culture has been studied by many researchers (Carey, 2002; Nacos and Torres-Reyna, 2003; Norris et al., 2003; Zelizer and Allen, 2002). The events of 9/11 marked a "critical culture shift in the predominant *news frame* used by the American mass media for understanding issues of national security" (Norris et al., 2003, p. 4). The previously dominant Cold War frame has been replaced by the war on terror frame characterized by a Manichean style binarism between good and evil (Kellner, 2004; Ruigrok

and van Atteveldt, 2007; Silverstone, 2007). According to Norris et al (2003), the war on terror frame “offered a way for American politicians and journalists to construct a narrative to make sense of a range of diverse stories about international security, civil wars, and global conflict” (p. 15). After 9/11, the frame was used by the media to simplify complex international events for the American public.

Gamson and Modigliani (1989) argue that changes in media discourse do not directly cause changes in public opinion but rather that opinion and discourse work in tandem. Changes in media messages provide a context for interpreting public opinion, but do not directly explain it. According to the researchers, changes in media discourse about a low to moderately salient issue, in particular, accelerate changes in popular ways of thinking about the issue. When particular frames dominate news coverage, citizens begin to shape their thinking around those frames. The persuasiveness of any news frame is determined by the amount of prior knowledge, direct personal experience and relative salience of the issue held by the media consumer (Moore 2002; Petty and Cacioppo 1986). Thus, understanding the narrative structures and frames for covering terror attacks and related elements that have been employed by American journalists for close to a decade is critical to predicting public attitudes toward different countries. It is hoped that this study into the nature of American coverage of terrorism in India will serve as a starting point for a future investigation into the effect of a greater post-9/11 shift in media discourse of foreign terrorism on media consumers.

### **3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

#### ***Framing Theory***

It is well documented that, under certain circumstances, the news media can have a significant impact on issue salience and public opinion (Iyengar and Simon 1993; Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Gamson and Modigliani 1989). Because people have only a finite amount of time, attention and motivation to understand and evaluate complex issues, they rely on the media to break the world down into smaller, more manageable units (Lippmann, 1992). The frames, metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases and visual images employed by journalists to communicate the news have the potential to change the way people feel about a political issue. The attribution patterns, ideological themes and affective elements of a story provide readers with a narrative framework for interpreting complex issues. This “pseudo-

environment” created by journalists works in tandem with personal history, predispositions and existing cognitive associations, many of which have been influenced by the media, to formulate opinions and attitudes (Gamson and Modigliani, 1989; Lippmann, 1922).

The canon of framing research is extensive (Entman, 1993; Iyengar, 1991; Iyengar and Simon, 1993; Larson, 1982; Norris, 1995; Pan and Kosicki, 1993; Scheufele, 1999; Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000; Tewksbury et al., 2000). The framing theory suggests that the ways in which journalists organize and communicate the news creates a particular understanding of issues. Entman (1993) defined framing as the selection of “some aspects of a perceived reality [to] make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.” (p. 52). According to many researchers, framing also “affects interpretations of the news, not just its salience” (Chung et. al, 2008, p. 7; see also Dimitrova and Strömbäck, 2005; Entman, 1993; Scheufele, 2000) The particular frames employed by journalists to present news stories are “largely unspoken and unacknowledged, organize the world both for journalists who report it and, in some important degree, for us who rely on their reports” (Gitlin, 1980, p. 7). As a “second-level” agenda setting mechanism, framing not only impacts news perception but also influences public discourse about an issue (Tuchman, 1978).

### ***Framing Terrorism***

According to Matteo Stocchetti (2007), the dominant views on terrorism in the American media are “international order” and “clash of civilizations.” These views “reflect political ideologies and serve as interpretive and prescriptive conceptual frameworks” (Stocchetti, 2007, p. 224). The international order frame characterizes terrorism as organized crime against a global society and places a secondary emphasis on religious, political or ethnic motivations for violence. The prescribed response to such criminal actions is legitimate violence authorized by an international legal body. The clash of civilizations frame explains terrorism as the hostility of “different civilizations” towards distinctively Western values of individual freedom and democracy (Stocchetti, 2007, p. 225). The only possible response is war against the enemy.

### ***Episodic and Thematic Framing***

A correlate of the framing theory is the distinction between episodic and thematic framing. Based on research into U.S. television news, Iyengar (1991) identified two different news frames – episodic and thematic. Episodic stories focus on specific, often immediate, events without reference to historical context, temporal sequence or greater consequence. Thematic stories, on the other hand, are analytical and provide a greater amount of context and background. Iyengar argues that episodic framing reduces “complex issues to the level of anecdotal evidence” (p. 136) and cause errors by media audiences in proper attribution of responsibility for problems.

In their content analysis of network television news coverage following 9/11, Mahan and Griset (2007) operationalized episodic news segments as those which focused on specific events, lacked greater context, ignored historical sequence and causes and did not identify larger consequences of the events. Conversely, segments were identified as thematic if they possessed at least one of the criteria (excluding the first). Their findings corroborated Iyengar’s (1991) seminal research on television news coverage of foreign terrorism which discovered that the majority of news stories were purely episodic.

### ***Thematic Narratives***

Research by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) identified the four most common frames in news coverage as: conflict, human interest, responsibility, and economic consequences (p. 551). Many previous studies of news coverage have similarly operationalized news frames in order to measure the nature of coverage from an empirical standpoint. Studying Arab-Israeli relations, Gamson (1992) identified four news frames including Arab intransigence, feuding neighbors, Israeli expansionism, and strategic interests. Li, Lindsay, and Mogensen (2002) analyzed U.S. television coverage of the 9/11 attacks through eight frames: crime, disaster, economy, environment, human interest, politics, religious, and safety.

For the purposes of this study, I identified two main related frames I expect to be present in American media coverage of the attack: internal conflict and war on terror. The internal conflict frame emphasizes endemic, “tribal” warfare, distant from American interests. The war on terror frame alludes to a clash of civilizations characterized by a common enemy in Islamic fundamentalism.

Critical to determining the nature of coverage is the perceived distance from or proximity to the attacks themselves. Based on previous research of foreign news coverage in the U.S. press, the further the perceived distance from the attack, the more likely the coverage will be contextual, providing facts and attribution of blame; however, coverage is also more likely to succumb to nationalism (Chang et al., 1987; Schaefer, 2003). The more the frames identify the attacks with terrorism in the United States, the more likely the coverage will be out of context, and rather fall into the discursive frames of the global war on terror.

### ***Hypotheses***

Siraj's (2008) analysis of U.S. newspaper coverage of India/Pakistan relations found that the vast majority of stories written between 2001 and 2002 were representative of war journalism despite the U.S. government's interest in maintaining peace in the region. According to Wolfsfeld (2004), the "default mode of operation for the [American] press is to cover tension, conflict, and violence" (p. 156), especially when the news is coming from foreign countries. Even when "there is no conflict inherent in the news event or issue, it is often introduced into the news narrative in the name of objectivity" (Chung et al., 2008, p. 19; Hachten 1992; Lent 1977). Thus, the tendency toward conflict journalism combined with the high level of cultural and geographic distance from India will remove the Mumbai attack from the framework of terrorism. Distancing the event from the context of terrorism in favor of a focus on the endemic conflict in foreign news causes the attribution of responsibility to be assigned to irreconcilable differences between warring nations (Gatlung, 1998; Siraj, 2008). According to Iyengar (1991), when responsibility for terrorist attacks is placed on societal conditions or political policies, the coverage tends to be more thematic.

**Hypothesis 1:** Newspaper coverage will frame the attack as endemic internal conflict between India and Pakistan more frequently than as a part of the war on terror.

**Hypothesis 2:** When the frame is endemic political or religious conflict, the story will assign responsibility for the attack to the longstanding history of conflict in the region and will thus be historically contextualized and thematic.

**Hypothesis 2a:** When the frame is endemic conflict, the perspective will be distant and highly nationalistic, focusing on the American victims and the impact on American foreign policy/interests.

**Hypothesis 3:** When the story does not frame the attack as endemic conflict, coverage will employ culturally familiar discursive narratives of the war on terror frame and analogies to the 9/11 terror attacks.

**Hypothesis 4:** When the attack is explained within the war on terror frame, the story will assign responsibility for the attack to the common enemy (i.e. global jihad and Islamic fundamentalism).

**Hypothesis 4a:** When the war on terror frame is used to explain the attack, the perspective will be proximate and emphasize global solidarity against terror.

### 3. METHODS

#### *Research Design*

To test the proposed hypotheses, a content analysis was conducted on news coverage of the Mumbai attack from selected American daily newspapers. Content analysis is an empirical research method used to make “inferences from texts to the contexts of their use” (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 18). It is a technique for systematically discovering trends by consolidating large texts into categories based on defined coding rules (Berelson, 1952; Krippendorff, 2004; Weber, 1990). Because of the strict rules associated with the coding scheme, content analysis is also beneficial for its reproducibility. It is particularly useful in the present study for its ability to analyze large amounts of text.

Content analysis has been criticized for its tendency to reduce ‘meaning’ to patterns of frequency counts that can lose sight of more subtle, ambiguous or contextual significance. Furthermore, the method focuses more on manifest content than latent content (Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 1986, p. 218). Manifest content includes the denotative or surface elements that are physically present and countable. Latent content, on the other hand, consists of concepts that cannot be observed directly, such as deep structures of language (Neuendorf, 2002). Because content is not inherent in text but subject to analyst and audience interpretation, content analysis suffers from the failure to recognize the connotative elements in a text.

However, by one definition, content analysis “consists of inferring features of a nonmanifest context from features of a manifest text” (Merten, 1991, p. 15 qtd in Krippendorff, 2004, p. 25). According to Krippendorff, as long as the researcher explicitly identifies the context within which their analysis will be conducted, valid inferences can be made from the text to real world occurrences. Similarly, when the analytical constructs guiding the researcher’s hypotheses are reached through abductive reasoning, the descriptive evidence discovered in the text, however manifest, can be used to infer contextual phenomena beyond the data itself (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 85).

In developing a coding scheme, I defined five main content themes of interest. In the debate over whether to use emergent versus a priori categories for coding, I chose the latter based on the breadth of existing literature within each theme (Krippendorff, 2004; Weber, 1990). The content categories associated with each theme were pre-defined then revised during coding to be as mutually exclusive and exhaustive as possible (Weber, 1990).

The population of the analysis was news stories retrieved by LexisNexis with the search terms "Mumbai" and "attack" between November 26, 2008 and December 8, 2008 from *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. Though television is the most common news source for Americans, newspapers were chosen for this analysis because they are easily accessible and provide a larger quantity of comprehensive content. Though *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* do not have the circulation of *USA Today*, they are the largest newspapers of record in the United States. They are read nationwide and are considered highly influential as a result of their elite readership (Gitlin, 2003).

Following Van Dijk's (1985) categorization of news media discourses, I distinguished between factual news stories with no comment or opinion and editorial pieces with clear analysis and slant. However, as both types of stories contribute to the overall understanding of an issue for a newspaper reader, I chose to not to restrict the analysis to one or the other.

Because the quantity of coverage was highest immediately following the event, I limited the analysis to stories written within the first three weeks following the attack. The sample consisted of 131 news stories – 68 from *The New York Times* and 63 from *The Washington Post* (see Table 1). Of the 131 stories, 102 were hard news, 22 were editorials and 7 were news analysis pieces.

**Table 1:** *Number of Stories Coded Per Week*

	<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Week 2</b>	<b>Week 3</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>New York Times</i>	33	24	11	68
<i>Washington Post</i>	32	22	9	63
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>131</b>

In each story, I looked for conflict framing, war on terror framing, historical context, nationalism and proximity (see Appendix 1 for codebook). To determine whether the story had a strong internal conflict approach to the attack, I coded for the presence of certain frames – *conflict as the primary or secondary subject, the use of conflict language, indication of war as a possible outcome, mention of nuclear warfare, references to historical religious or political conflict, analogies to the Middle East and religious or political conflict as the motivation for the attack*. Each dichotomous variable was coded 1 for “yes” if it sufficiently covered the issue or 0 for “no” if it did not. The variables were then summed into the *Internal Conflict Scale*. A reliability analysis of the 8 items in the scale yielded a *Cronbach's alpha* score of .676, which is too low to be considered an adequate scale. When the reference to historical conflict between Hindus and Muslims in India and the presence of an analogy to the Middle East were removed from the scale, the alpha increased to a satisfactorily reliable score of .746.

Determining the presence of the *war on terror frame* was based on explicit reference to the *war on terror* as well as themes from previous literature: *global jihad, evils of Islamic extremism, clash of civilizations, attribution of responsibility to Al Qaeda or the Taliban* and *White House sound bites*. Each variable was coded 1 for “yes” if it sufficiently included the reference or 0 for “no” if it did not. If two or more of the references were present, the story was deemed to fit into the war on terror narrative.

Historical context was measured by a set of variables concerned with the absence or presence of references to the history of the region. The historical mentions coded were the *1947 partition of India and Pakistan, past terror attacks in India, Hindu/Muslim conflicts in India* and *past political conflict between India and Pakistan*. If a story included two or more of the variables, it was deemed to be historically contextualized.

Operationalizing episodic versus thematic framing was based on research conducted by Mahan and Griset (2007, p. 235). Following from their work, I identified episodic news segments as those which focused on specific events, lacked greater context, ignored historical sequence and causes and did not identify larger consequences of the events. However, I decided on a stricter scheme for determining the presence of thematic framing and coded each story as such only if it met two or more of the requirements.



Close proximity was measured in terms of American identification and involvement with the attack specified as *solidarity with India, analogies to 9/11, common enemy* and *global jihad*. Mentions of any of these variables were recoded and summed. Similarly, distant proximity was measured by the emphasis on Indian or Pakistani responsibility for the attack and its aftermath. The three dichotomous variables – *India/Pakistan domestic solutions, India/Pakistan responsibility for response* and *religious/political motivation* – were recorded as 1 if it was present and 0 if it was not.

A total *Proximity* variable was created by subtracting the distant proximity scale from the close proximity scale. However, a reliability analysis of the items in both the distant and close proximity scales again yielded low alpha scores of .496 and .542, respectively. Thus, the proximity scales were not determined to be reliable enough to be used in further analysis. Instead, *solidarity* and *9/11 analogies* were used as dependent variables on their own.

In order to identify whether or not the story had an American nationalist slant, a *Nationalism Scale* was created by combining six of codes: a *primarily American perspective* on the attack – characterized by the use of the words “we” or “us” in the narrative, *majority use of American sources* and mentions of the costly impact on *American victims, the American effort in Afghanistan, American foreign policy* and *increased risk of domestic attack*. Each variable, which was coded 1 for “yes” and 0 for “no,” was summed and recoded into a 3-point scale ranging from not at all nationalistic to highly nationalistic. However, the *Cronbach’s alpha* reliability score for the six items was quite low at .577. Removing the mention of impact on American foreign policy and the American military effort in Afghanistan yielded a relatively higher score of .645. Because it is still below the acceptable threshold of .70, the scale will be used with caution.

### **Reliability**

Before coding the full sample, a secondary researcher double coded 17 stories to determine the reliability of the codebook. Inter-coder agreement is “the extent to which the different [independent] judges tend to assign exactly the same rating to each object” (Tinsley and Weiss, 2000, p. 98). A high level of agreement between coders is critical to establishing the strength of the codebook used to analyze the data. *Scott’s pi* was selected as the best

measure of reliability because it accounts for chance agreement between the coders.<sup>3</sup> Because it is a relatively conservative index, variables were determined to be reliable if they yielded a coefficient of .80 or above.

After the first round of double coding, all but two of the variables produced a correlation coefficient greater than .85, indicating strong operationalization of the definitions. The high level of agreement is likely due to the fact that most variables seek to measure manifest, rather than latent, content. Of the two variables for which reliability fell below 85%, one was dropped and the other was revised. The overlapping response categories for the *blame* variable proved to be confusing for the researchers. *Lashkar-e-Taiba* and *Kashmiri militants* were distinct responses for the code measuring which group was blamed for the attack; however, Lashkar-e-Taiba is in fact a Kashmiri militant group. As the responses were not mutually exclusive, the variable was dropped in favor of the use of a dichotomous variable indicating whether or not Islamic extremism was to blame. Additionally, the *solution* variable yielded a low level of reliability based upon the first analysis and was subsequently modified to measure whether or not the proposed solution was domesticized to India and/or Pakistan.

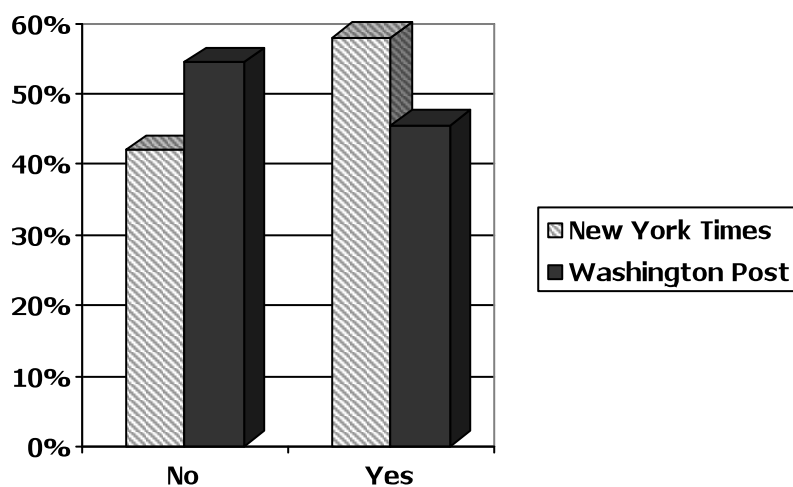
#### **4. RESULTS**

According to the first hypothesis, the bulk of the newspaper coverage of the attack will frame it as endemic internal conflict between India and Pakistan instead of as a part of the war on terror. The results do not support this hypothesis. Based on scores on the *Internal Conflict Scale*, which range from 0 for the lack of a conflict frame to 2, indicative of a strong conflict frame, only 19.1% of the stories have a strong conflict frame, while 49.6% of the stories do not emphasize conflict at all. The mean score of .69 indicates that most of the stories allude to conflict but do not use it to frame coverage of the attack. When comparing coverage across the newspapers, *The Washington Post* has a slightly higher mean score (.72) than *The New York Times* (.67), but the difference is not statistically significant.

In fact, the war on terror frame appears much more frequently – in 52.1% of stories in the sample – than internal conflict framing. When analyzing the prevalence of the frame between papers, 58% of *New York Times* stories employ a war on terror theme as compared to only 45.5% of *Washington Post* stories that do so (see Graph 1).

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<sup>3</sup> <http://astro.temple.edu/~lombard/reliability/>

**Graph 1:** *Does the story employ a war on terror frame?*

The second, multi-pronged hypothesis focuses on correlates of the conflict frame. It was predicted that when the frame is endemic conflict, the story will (a) indicate the attack was motivated by longstanding history of conflict in the region, (b) will thus be historically contextualized, (c) thematic, (d) have a distanced perspective and (e) be highly nationalistic.

Part (a) is supported. Overall, 30.5% of all stories reference religious or political conflict as the motivation for the attack. When the analysis is limited to stories with a strong conflict frame, the percentage of those attributing the attacks to religious or political conflict jumps to 64% (see Table 2). Part (b) is also supported. Stories with a strong conflict frame are 65% more likely to be historically contextualized than those with no conflict framing (see Table 3). The relationships between the conflict frame and both motivation and historical contextualization are both statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). The results do not support part (c) of hypothesis two. There is no significant difference in episodic versus thematic story type between stories with a conflict frame or without. In fact, stories are more likely to be episodic than thematic across all levels of conflict framing. Part (d) is supported. A distant perspective on the attack appears in 64% of stories with a strong conflict frame and only in 18.5% of those without. Interestingly, the majority (66.7%) of stories without a conflict frame are neutral in proximity, though, and not close. It should be noted, however, that the because of the aforementioned reliability problems with the proximity scale, these results are not reliable. Finally, part (e) is not supported. There is no significant difference in nationalism across all categories of the conflict scale. Furthermore, only 8% of conflict framed stories are

highly nationalistic. As with the proximity scale, however, these results must be considered with care due to the low reliability score yielded by the items in the nationalism scale.

**Table 2:** Crosstab of primary motivation by conflict framing

		Is the primary motivation religious or political conflict?		
		No	Yes	Total
Is the attack primarily framed as internal conflict?	No	60 92.3%	5 7.7%	65 100.0%
	Somewhat	22 53.7%	19 46.3%	41 100.0%
	Yes	9 36.0%	16 64.0%	25 100.0%
Total		91 69.5%	40 30.5%	131 100.0%

$$\chi^2 = 34.019, df = 2, P = .0001$$

**Table 3:** Crosstab of historical contextualization by conflict framing

		Does the story provide historical context?		
		No	Yes	Total
Is the attack primarily framed as internal conflict?	No	58 89.2%	7 10.8%	65 100.0%
	Somewhat	27 65.9%	14 34.1%	41 100.0%
	Yes	6 24.0%	19 76.0%	25 100.0%
Total		91 69.5%	40 30.5%	131 100.0%

$$\chi^2 = 36.59, df = 2, P = .0001$$

The third hypothesis predicts that when the story does not frame the attack as endemic conflict, it will employ culturally familiar discursive narratives of the war on terror frame and make analogies to the 9/11 terror attacks. The results only provide weak support for this hypothesis. Though 54.5% of stories that do not have a conflict frame do employ war on terror frames, the relationship is not statistically significant. Furthermore, there is no difference in the percentage of stories that make analogies to 9/11 across all levels of conflict framing.

Hypothesis four addresses war on terror framing. First, the prediction that stories with a war on terror frame will be more likely to cite global jihad as the primary motivation and blame Islamic extremism is strongly supported. Though the vast majority of all stories do not cite global jihad as the motivation for the attack, stories that fit into the war on terror frame are 32.5% more likely to do so than stories that are not framed by the war on terror (see Table 4a). Similarly, 71.4% of stories with a war on terror frame blame Islamic extremism for the attack while 73.3% of those without such a frame do not (see Table 4b). Both relationships are statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ).

**Table 4a:** *Crosstab of primary motivation by war on terror framing*

		Is the primary motivation global jihad?		Total
		No	Yes	
Does the story employ war on terror framing?	No	44 97.8%	1 2.2%	45 100.0%
	Yes	32 65.3%	17 34.7%	49 100.0%
Total		76 80.9%	18 19.1%	94 100.0%

$$\chi^2 = 15.98, df = 1, P = .0001$$

**Table 4b:** *Crosstab of Islamic extremism blame by war on terror framing*

		Is Islamic extremism to blame?		Total
		No	Yes	
Does the story employ war on terror framing?	No	33 73.3%	12 26.7%	45 100.0%
	Yes	14 28.6%	35 71.4%	49 100.0%
Total		47 50.0%	47 50.0%	94 100.0%

$$\chi^2 = 18.8, df = 1, P = .0001$$

Part (a) of hypothesis four expects that stories with a war on terror frame will have a proximate perspective and emphasize global solidarity against terror. This hypothesis is partially supported. Though 55.1% of stories with war on terror framing are actually neutral

in proximity, they are still 20% more likely to have a proximate perspective on the attack and 50% less likely to have a distant perspective than those stories that do not have a war on terror frame. The relationship between war on terror framing and proximity is statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ), but, again, as previously mentioned, the reliability problems with the proximity scale render these results questionable.

Finally, the majority of stories in both framing categories do not imply global solidarity with India; however, when the frame is war on terror, the story is 21.1% more likely to do so than when the story does not employ a war on terror frame (see Table 5). This relationship between the variables is statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ).

**Table 5:** *Crosstab of solidarity by war on terror framing*

		Does the story mention U.S. solidarity with India?		
		No	Yes	Total
Does the story employ war on terror framing?	No	41 91.1%	4 8.9%	45 100.0%
	Yes	34 69.4%	15 30.6%	49 100.0%
Total		75 79.8%	19 20.2%	94 100.0%

$$\chi^2 = 6.84, df = 1, P = .009$$

Interestingly, when the conflict frame is layered in the cross tabulation, there is no longer a significant relationship between the war on terror narrative and mentions of global solidarity. There is no statistical difference in mentions of solidarity across all levels of conflict framing regardless of the presence of the war on terror meta-narrative (see Table 6).

**Table 6:** Crosstab of solidarity by war on terror framing within conflict framing

Is the attack primarily framed as internal conflict?		Does the story mention U.S. solidarity with India?		Total	
		No	Yes		
No <sup>1</sup>	Does the story employ war on terror framing?	No	14 93.3%	1 6.7%	15 100%
		Yes	12 66.7%	6 33.3%	18 100%
	Total		26 78.8%	7 21.2%	33 100%
Somewhat <sup>2</sup>	Does the story employ war on terror framing?	No	14 82.4%	3 17.6%	17 100%
		Yes	15 71.4%	6 28.6%	21 100%
	Total		29 76.3%	9 23.7%	38 100%
Yes <sup>3</sup>	Does the story employ war on terror framing?	No	13 100%	0 0%	13 100%
		Yes	7 70%	3 30%	10 100%
	Total		20 87%	3 23%	23 100%

<sup>1</sup>  $\chi^2 = 3.48, df = 1, P = .062$

<sup>2</sup>  $\chi^2 = 6.2, df = 1, P = .031$

<sup>3</sup>  $\chi^2 = 4.49, df = 1, P = .034$

## 5. DISCUSSION

The primary objective of this study was to discover the nature of coverage of the Mumbai terrorist attacks in the American print press. The Mumbai attacks received an unprecedented amount of coverage in the United States. In fact, the 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament by the *Lashkar-e-Taiba* and *Jaish-e-Mohammed* terrorist groups which led to a military stand-off between India and Pakistan received only a third of the coverage in the three weeks following the event. Between the attack on December 13, 2001 and January 3, 2002, a combined 47 stories were published in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. In the same three-week span following the event, the Mumbai attack was covered in 131 stories, 26 of which appeared on the front page. Why was the Mumbai attack in 2008 deemed three times as newsworthy as an impending confrontation between nuclear powers? Based on theories of newsworthiness as determined by geographic and cultural proximity, the Mumbai attacks differ from the Parliament attack in very significant ways. First, the Mumbai attack fit well into the discursive framework of a clash between the evil of Islamic fundamentalism and Western values of democracy and liberalism. Second, the initial presumption that Westerners were targeted (which was later proven false) and the more general involvement of American victims made the attack much more relevant to audiences in the U.S. At the time of the Parliament attack, the United States was still reeling from the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The U.S.-led war on terror was in its infancy and the subsequent journalistic and governmental narrative for covering international terrorism was not yet solidified.

Contrary to expectations, war on terror frame appeared in more than twice as many stories as the internal conflict frame. However, that just under half of the stories with strong conflict framing also employ the war on terror frame demonstrates that the two categories are not mutually exclusive. In other words, there is considerable overlap between frames in each story. This is likely a result of the post-hoc decision to treat the war on terror as a counter-frame to endemic conflict when it was discovered that relatively few stories fit exclusively into a strict conflict frame. These results are still quite interesting, as it is perhaps more appropriate to consider the war on terror as a meta-narrative (Douai, 2005; see also Entman, 2004; Hertog and McLeod, 2001) within which global conflict can be explained to American audiences rather than as oppositional frames. It appears that even though eight years have passed since the events of 9/11, the war on terror remains a, if not the, dominant narrative for international conflict reporting.



Despite the distant geographic proximity that generally limits the amount and scope of international news stories in the American press, the surprisingly vast amount of coverage in Mumbai can likely be explained by the prevalence of the war on terror frame. That the stories in this study were overall more likely to employ a war on terror frame than internal conflict between India and Pakistan when covering the attack most likely contributed to the overall amount of coverage the event received. Not only is the framework cultural recognizable for American audiences, but it places terrorism, no matter how distant, into an American context. The continuing trend of employing culturally-specific narrative patterns to convey complex international events is potentially worrisome as "specific and identifiable narrative models restrict the range of understandings that uncritical viewers can sensibly achieve of reported events" (Lundsten and Stocchetti, 2005, p. 7).

In this investigation into how the U.S. news press covered the Mumbai attack, it was proposed that the nature and content of the coverage would depend on which frame was used to convey the event to the American public. A story that frames the attack as a part of an endemic conflict between irreconcilable rival countries presumably will present a very different perspective, context, rationale and solutions than one that employs the discourse of the war on terror. Because it was discovered that the frames actually overlap, however, they will not be considered oppositionally but rather in tandem.

It seems intuitive that stories with conflict framing are more likely to attribute the attack to religious or political conflict; however, following from Stocchetti's (2007) argument that religious and political motivations are traditionally considered secondarily in the dominant perspective on terrorism in the American media, it would seem that these results lend support to the assumption that stories with a conflict frame distance the attack from global terror (and, subsequently, from the war on terror). In fact, a cross tabulation between the war on terror frame and the primary motivation demonstrates that a majority of the stories that employ the war on terror meta-narrative indicate a motivation other than political or religious conflict.

These findings help to explain the strong relationship between the conflict frame and historical contextualization. When a complex international conflict story is removed from the context of terrorism, media coverage cannot rely on culturally familiar discursive elements but must provide background and historical context in order for the American audience to

gain adequate understanding. Surprisingly, only eight stories (evenly split between the two papers) referenced the most familiar of such conflicts – between Israel and Palestine in the Middle East. Both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* provided relatively extensive historical context for three-quarters of conflict-focused stories in an effort to provide the required background knowledge to comprehend the frame within which the story was presented.

Somewhat surprising was the discovery that, while conflict stories did include historical context, they were still overwhelmingly episodic. Unlike research done by Mahan and Griset (2007) which allowed for partial framing, this study classified stories as either episodic or thematic. It is likely that the use of a more lenient coding scheme would lead to a greater number of at least partially thematic stories; however, I chose to separate historical context from thematic framing for a richer analysis. The dearth of knowledge about foreign conflict in the United States renders some amount of background information necessary to any story written in a respected newspaper. As such, the presence of historical context alone was not deemed enough to identify a story as thematic.

More important to the story frame than the coding scheme is the temporal proximity to the attack. Because the analysis was limited to the three weeks following the attack, the story was still very much breaking news. It has been shown that newspaper coverage of large-scale events tends to become more thematic as time progresses (Dimitrova, 2005). Thus, an expansion of the analysis to include stories written two or three months after the attack would likely show an increase in thematic framing.

The goal of the proximity measure was to gauge the extent to which the story identified with India and the victims of the attack. Unfortunately, the scale devised to measure proximity was plagued by reliability problems. This was likely due to the fact that the variables that comprised the measure of distant proximity were combined post-hoc and not rooted in previous literature. In hindsight, a more accurate scale would have measured explicit mentions of “us” against mentions of “them.” Despite these issues, however, the proximity scale still presented interesting results.

As presumed, stories with strong conflict framing are more likely to be written from a distanced perspective. These findings corroborate previous literature which demonstrates that journalists tend to distance international news stories as far away problems about

"them, out there," especially when the primary focus is not culturally familiar (Nossek, 2004). When internal conflict is not emphasized, however, and the frame is primarily the war on terror, only 5% of stories are distanced. In this case, the vast majority of stories are written from a neutral proximity and neither distance nor identify with the attack. This makes sense, as the attack is not explicitly foreign – "their news" – owing to the American victims but also not domestic – "our news" – as it occurred on foreign soil. As such, journalistic professionalism is not subordinated to national interest (Nossek, 2004).

Stories are equally as unlikely to mention solidarity with India regardless of whether or not internal conflict is emphasized. Furthermore, the relationship between a war on terror frame and the implication of solidarity is spurious, as the significance disappears when the measure of conflict framing is introduced. The findings are indicative of the high level of professionalism employed by journalists toward the attack. This trend should not be surprising as American journalists pride themselves on a dedication to high levels of objectivity and professionalism.

Similarly, the related measures of nationalism were not significantly varied across different levels of framing. The bulk of stories did not represent a primarily American perspective, use mostly American sources, focus on American victims or emphasize the impact on American foreign policy interests regardless of whether or not they had a strong conflict framing or fit within the war on terror meta-narrative. This runs contrary to the vast canon of previous literature identifying the tendency by the American news media to apply a nationalistic filter to international news (Ellis, 2000; Gans, 1979; Schaefer, 2003; Tuchman, 1978). Perhaps the patriotism of the American press, which peaked immediately following 9/11, has waned. More likely, though, the large geographic and cultural distance combined with limited American involvement in the event caused little perception of a domestic threat. As a result, ethnocentrism and nationalistic themes were less relevant (Bennett, 1990; Brookes, 1999; Hutcheson et al., 2003; Wolfsfeld, 2004). If true, it would seem that this is further indication of a distanced perspective on the attack. Thus, further investigation is necessary.

In opposition to Ruigrok and Van Atteveldt's (2007) findings that U.S. journalists use analogies to 9/11 to make sense of foreign terror events, only 22% of stories about the Mumbai attack referenced 9/11. When the war on terror meta-narrative was used, stories were slightly more likely to allude to 9/11, but such analogies were still rare. Introducing the conflict frame had no impact. It is possible that the lack of 9/11 analogies is a result of the

geographic location of the attack. Ruigrok and Van Atteveldt studied coverage of terror events in other Western countries with some level of cultural proximity. Research into media coverage of terrorism on non-Western soil is limited. The 9/11 metaphor may not have been applied because the Mumbai attack did not fit easily into the narrative of an assault on the United States by outside evil-doers. It was, rather, perceived as an attack on one culturally dissimilar "other" by a different "other."

While references to the 9/11 attack were scarce, 53% of all stories directly blamed Islamic extremism for the Mumbai attack. When limited to stories that fit into the war on terror meta-narrative, the percentage of those blaming Islam jumped to 71%. The "us" versus "them" dichotomy inherent in the war on terror narrative is well documented (Norris et al., 2003; Pintak, 2006; Silverstone, 2007). The emphasis on the identifiable enemy of Islamic extremism in discussions of terrorism is routine in the U.S. government's rhetoric and press coverage (Karim, 2002). Its prevalence in coverage of the Mumbai attack is likely attributable to the fact that is a theme that American news audiences can easily understand. Without any other indication of who to blame, the U.S. press falls back on the culturally familiar enemy.

Similarly, stories framed by the war on terror narrative were much more likely to cite global jihad as the motivation for the attack than stories without the frame. Almost eight years after the 9/11 attacks, there is still a strong association between the war on terror rhetoric and global *jihad*. Interestingly, stories that mention global *jihad* as the motivation behind the attack in Mumbai are twice as likely to indicate American solidarity with India. This relationship approaches significance for stories that fit into the war on terror narrative ( $p=.055$ ). It is possible that under the discursive framework of the war on terror, the common enemy of global *jihad* causes the American press to identify with culturally or geographically distant nations. In opposition to a well-defined "them" in Islamic extremists, India becomes a part of "us" in the war on terror.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The concept of framing by the media is based upon the assumption that people rely on the media to break complex events down into manageable units. Because the general American public's understanding of distant international events, in particular, depends on the way in which the media covers them, the dominant frames used in coverage of involved nations likely affects the way news audiences feel about them. It is critical to keep in mind, however, that dominant media discourse about complex global issues cannot be easily explained by the relationships between independent and dependent variables. Rather, discourse is the "outcome of a value-added process" through a combination of "cultural resonances, sponsor activities, and media practices" (Gamson and Modigliani, 1989, p. 5).

Understanding the tendencies of the American press in covering global terror is extremely important in the building of a global public sphere to combat such extremism. Informative, contextualized coverage is critical to public understanding of issues both at home and abroad. According to Chung et al. (2008), "such international awareness increases understanding and acceptance of different nations and cultures, allowing members of the public to make sense of an international event or issue in precisely that context" (p. 21).

Despite the relatively large amount of coverage dedicated to the attack, it must be kept in mind that the number of stories written pales in comparison to that following the terror attacks in both Madrid and London. Producers for *CBS News* argued that the attack didn't warrant a commensurate amount of coverage as it was more "a regional conflict...geographically confined [to South Asia] than something that really threatened the West."<sup>4</sup> Thus, while the coverage itself may not have reflected a strong nationalist view, the gate-keeping decisions by editors, producers and journalists themselves were informed by ethnocentric tendencies. Perhaps more important than what Americans did read about the attacks is what they never saw at all.

Though the prevalence of the war on terror narrative over other frames in reporting of the Mumbai attacks contributed to the amount of coverage in the U.S. press, it limited the scope and depth of content and social, historical and political context. The familiar discourse of the clash between Western values of democracy and liberalism and the evil of Islamic extremism

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.cbsnews.com/blogs/2006/07/17/publiceye/entry1811279.shtml>

is still a dominant rubric, however, the relatively few analogies to 9/11 and the apparent lack of journalistic nationalism suggests that while the war on terror frame is not disappearing, it might be changing in an effort to better explain international conflict. This potential shift in tandem with the fact that very few stories domesticized the attack as international conflict between India and Pakistan is an encouraging step in the movement toward global journalism. It is hoped that future research will continue to investigate coverage of international terrorism in countries across the world and encourage journalists to provide the valuable, contextualized information needed for every person to become a world citizen.

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