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**HEGEMONY OF MISREPRESENTATION:
AMERICAN MEDIA COVERAGE OF ISLAM AND
ISLAMIC REVIVALISM (1980 – 2001)***

Irum Shehreen Ali

Lecturer

BRAC University

66 Mohakhali C/A

Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh

Email: irum@bracuniversity.ac.bd

ABSTRACT

Using Gramsci's notion of hegemony this paper analyses the nature, functions and wide-ranging implications of the U.S. media's coverage of Islam as represented by U.S. daily newspapers the New York Times and the Washington Times. Over the past two decades, the media coverage of Islam in these two newspapers has been unduly focused on negative portrayals of Islam and Islamic Revivalism and has produced a decontextualised picture of fringe extremist movements that have arisen in some Islamic nations. There is an operation of hegemonic ideas regarding Islam in which hegemony works to limit the frames of reference, and subsequently, the space for discourse regarding Islam within the public sphere. The ideas that the uninformed public are being socialized into regarding Islam are those that benefit the governmental elites in maintaining support for U.S. foreign policy on Islamic nations.

**This paper was initially researched and written in 2002, and in the context of the continuing media attention on Islam borne out of the "War on Terror", is in the process of being updated.*

I. INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Over the past two decades, the U.S. news media's coverage of Islam as a political and religious force has grown steadily. The nature of the coverage, however, is at best unsympathetic, and at worst derogatory. In order to understand the hegemonic domination of the monolithic view of Islam as represented by the U.S. media as being reflective of dominant ideologies within the country, we must first understand hegemony. The Italian Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci formulated the concept of hegemony in response to the power he saw the dominant economic classes of society holding. It can be defined as a situation where:

Dominant groups in society, including fundamentally but not exclusively the ruling class, maintain their dominance by securing the "spontaneous consent" of subordinate groups, including the working class, through the negotiated construction of a political and ideological consensus which incorporates both dominant and dominated groups (Strinati, 1995:165)

Hegemony in a society is the political, moral and intellectual authority or leadership of a particular class over all others. The authority exerted by the ruling class under hegemonic control is not enforced through coercion, but flows from political and intellectual, leadership. Individuals under hegemonic control are manipulated into believing and internalising the ideologies of the political and economic elite. Under hegemonic subordination, the members of a society are unknowingly socialised into a belief system that benefits those who are powerful within that society, and is symbolic of that society (Gitlin, 1980:253). Hegemony works to the detriment of the non-ruling classes within a society as their members internalize ruling class values to their own disadvantage by negating their own values. While subsuming culture, core hegemonic values become the nucleus of culture by marginalizing values that are not consonant with the dominant ideology. What begins as economic and political hegemony soon evolves into cultural hegemony, i.e. the shaping of cultural values and discourse within a society in a manner such that only certain frames of reference are left open for debate, and only certain realities are presented.

Hegemony does not rely on propaganda in order to brainwash a nation into political or cultural consensus. Rather, it relies on the major institutions of civil society such as education, the family, religion, mass media, popular culture, etc to disseminate dominant values (Strinati, 1995:168-169). In his *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci notes that hegemony operates through the creation of a "false consciousness" through these institutions, by which the subordinate class believes the ideology and interests of the ruling class to be its own. According to Gramsci, hegemony is perpetuated by the middle class intellectuals in a society, who unconsciously undertake the task of organising and passing on the dominant values. By the very nature of capitalism, a division of labour occurs between all members of a society. Gramsci states that although all tasks within society require some amount of intelligence and creativity, there are some "overtly intellectual tasks" which middle class intellectuals will be called upon to perform (Ransome, 1992:198). These tasks are primarily related to the "more general administrative and organisational institutions which synchronise the

activities of the economy with those of society as a whole" (Ransome 1992:198). In the modern world, one of these major institutions of middle class intellectual influence is the media.

The consent from subordinate classes must be constantly won and re-won, because subordinate classes are often reminded of their disadvantageous position in society and must be re-manipulated into subordination. In the U.S., the media has a prized spot in the cultural and political life of the nation. As Gitlin has noted, people look to the media for their realities, their heroes and their symbols (1980:1). As all communications and text within the society is open to the media, it is an ideal site for consent to be created and implemented, for the "production, reproduction and transformation of hegemony" (Strinati, 1995:168). Media has the power to present and implement certain representations of the world that become reality for its consumers, who trust it to present them with all the relevant information that they require in order to make choices regarding their world. The notion of objectivity that is attributed to the media in a democratic political system allows and gives it the legitimacy to perpetuate ideologies and perceptions that are either deliberately (propaganda) or unconsciously (hegemony) supportive of ruling interests. Gans quotes Phillip Schlesinger as saying:

"News is information which is transmitted from sources to audiences, with journalists - who are members of bureaucratic commercial organisations and members of the profession - summarising, refining and altering what becomes available in order to make the information suitable for their audience." (Gans, 1980:80)

Thus, the media shapes news with the goal of re-enforcing pre-existing hegemonic ideals. This process is not an intentional one, as the journalists themselves are under hegemonic domination and unaware that they are presenting skewed views of reality. Yet their presentation of limited frames of information causes the public to believe these frames to be the entire story, Discourse is thus limited only to the presented frames and conflicts in the news are "played out within a field of terms and premises that which does not overstep the hegemonic boundaries" (Gitlin, 1980: 263).

The media can be considered a site of struggle between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic (representing ideals that are opposed to dominant ideology) movements in a society. However, counter-hegemonic movements are subject to misrepresentation in strategic efforts to maintain ruling ideology. This is because the media must "honor the political-economic system, as [its] very power and prestige presuppose that system" (Gitlin, 1980:263).

Using Gramsci's notion of hegemony this paper analyses the nature, functions and wide-ranging implications of the U.S. media's coverage of Islam as represented by U.S. daily newspapers the New York Times and the Washington Times. Over the past two decades, the media coverage of Islam in these two newspapers has been unduly focused on negative portrayals of Islam and Islamic Revivalism and has produced a decontextualised picture of fringe extremist movements that have arisen

in some Islamic nations. There is an operation of hegemonic ideas regarding Islam in which hegemony works to limit the frames of reference, and subsequently, the space for discourse regarding Islam within the public sphere. The ideas that the uninformed public are being socialized into regarding Islam are those that benefit the governmental elites in maintaining support for U.S. foreign policy on Islamic nations.

II. CRITICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND FORMATION OF IDEAL TYPES

Over the past two decades there has been a rise in the amount of coverage devoted to Islam and Islamic "fundamentalism" in the U.S. mainstream media, especially the print media. One of the major reasons for this is cited as the rise in Islamic "extremism" or "fundamentalism" that manifests itself through the rise of religious leaders who are spearheading 'Islamist groups' across the world, as well as through violent acts of protest in many countries (Esposito, 1997:20).

This so-called revivalism is the subject of much academic and journalistic writing, representing a variety of viewpoints on its causes and manifestations. These views run along a continuum of thought that ranges from conservative, anti-Islamic views through moderate, culturally relativist views to pro-Islamic, culturally theocratic views. Identifying these disparate discourses is important, as differing view points increase our understanding of the complex social, cultural, historical, religious, geographical and political forces that intersect to define life in Muslim countries and give rise to the phenomenon of Islamic Revivalism. These attitudes and viewpoints, once identified into Ideal Types, can help to create a typology to analyse the media's representations of Islam. By elaborating the components of each type, we can use these types as shorthand constructs to denote certain prevalent patterns in the media. These patterns are not merely coincidental. The representation of particular view points and absence of others are illustrative of media stereotyping .

The Ideal Types of perspectives on Islam that this paper attempts to define according to their presence in the U.S. are divided into the following: Clash of Civilisations, Moderate Cultural, Anti-Imperialist, Moderate Islamic and Militant Islamic. This paper uses the Ideal Types to analyse Islam-related media coverage over the past two decades. While we are not hypothesising that all these viewpoints will be present in the mainstream media under analysis, both their presence or absence speaks volumes about the nature of hegemonic values in American society regarding Islam. An even distribution of view representation over the Moderate Cultural, Anti-Imperialist, Islamic Moderate or Militant Islamic Ideal Types, will demonstrate a non-monolithic representation of Islam or Muslims within the U.S. However, if the pervading framing lens for news falls into the Clash of Civilisations Ideal Type, it may be surmised that the general level of accurate and sympathetic representation is very low, given this type's propensity to view Muslims as the inferior and confrontational "Other".

Typifying existing thought in such manner can help draw connections between the everyday world of the daily newspaper and the academic world of the scholar, illuminating how these notions translate into cultural practice and reality through the operation of cultural hegemony. The roots behind the perpetuation of the "Islamic Other" status are important to understand, as they have far-reaching consequences for the American polity as well as Muslims the world over.

Before we place the various schools of thought regarding Islam and political Islamism into a typology, it is helpful to define pertinent terms. "Islam" means:

(Islām~, Islām), [Arab.,~submission to God], world religion founded by the Prophet Muahammad. The term "Islamic" is the adjective that defines those who are followers of the above religion, or the "lands where Islam is the predominant religion. (Collins Dictionary, 198 1:450)

Although reductive and misleading, the term "Western" or "the West" appears in much of the literature regarding Islam, usually placing it in opposition to or comparison to Islam. In its common usage, the "West" means: "the western part of the world. Commonly, Europe or North America as distinguished from Asia" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2002). In Islamic discourse, the West is often used to refer to the parts of the world, especially Western Europe and North America, where a) Islam is not the predominant religion and b) secular governments are in power. The term "Western" has been used to describe mores and people who are: "Of or pertaining to the Western or European countries or races as distinguished from the Eastern or Oriental" (OED, 2002). The terms "Islamic" and "Western" are extremely reductive as they do not allow for the diversity of thought and cultural practice that is present in both of the geographical and religious spheres that these words encompass. However, extant literature is replete with this dichotomy, and this paper takes recourse to these terms for convenience.

The words "fundamentalism", "militant" and "extremist" are all laden with negative associations. They bring to mind a vision of a fanatic zealot who is ready to die for Islam. The literal meaning of the word "fundamentalist" can mean one who calls for a return to the foundational beliefs of a religion. In the U.S. fundamentalism has been traditionally negatively associated with a movement in 20th century Protestantism that recognised the literal interpretation of the Bible as the only guide for Christian living in the face of Darwinian evolution, secularism, and the emergence of liberal theology (Columbia Encyclopaedia, 2002; Esposito, 1999:5). In the mainstream U.S. media climate over the past three decades, the word has been applied to anyone connected with Islam who supports the view that Islam should inform every aspect of socio-political life, often through a theocratic government based on Islamic principles. It is difficult to find a definition of "fundamentalism" that is not laden with stereotypes and presuppositions and so this paper uses the word "revivalism", which is often referred to as "Islamic resurgence". This term refers to a movement present in some Islamic countries at the personal, socio-cultural and political level in favour of using Islamic precepts as a guide for communal life.

In the U.S., there currently exist many constructions of Islam as a religion. Any accurate discourse that relates to Islam's religious, moral and political influence on its followers must stem from an awareness and understanding of the philosophy of Islam as a way of life and as a way of governance. This understanding must also embrace the fact that Islam is not followed in a uniform manner worldwide, and that cultural imperatives play a large part in how religion is adapted (Esposito, 1997:50). One must be wary of not imputing all motives to Islam when dealing with Islamic nations. The "Islamic world", like any other, is dynamic, complex and ever evolving. It cannot be simplified or treated as a monolith that can be placed in comparison alongside the "West". Even though many tangible differences exist between Islam and its practices in various nations and the mores of "the West", we cannot take these differences at face value without examining them or understanding where they stem from.

In order to identify and compare the various discourses existing within the U.S. regarding Islam, this paper employs a Weberian typology of "Ideal Types". Lewis Coser defines an ideal type as:

An ideal type is formed by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasised view points into a unified analytical construct. (1977:223-224)

The ideal types that we shall construe to meaningfully categorize media views range from Anti-Islamic to Pro-Islamic. These are:

- A. Clash of Civilisations/Conservative View
- B. Moderate/Cultural View
- C. Anti-Imperialist View
- D. Islamic Moderate View
- E. Militant Islamic View

A: Clash of Civilizations/Conservative View

The phrase "Clash of Civilizations" was coined by Samuel P. Huntington, a noted scholar at Harvard University and one of the prime proponents of this view, in an essay and a book that outlined this theory. Along with Bernard Lewis, a greatly respected scholar of Islam and the Muslim world at Princeton University, Huntington popularised this theory, which has had a substantial impact on U.S. foreign and terrorism policy.

The Clash of Civilisations view is based on the theory that Islam and the West are two incompatible civilisations. Due to historical, cultural and ideological differences in the values between Islamic nations and the Western world, they will inevitably be at odds with each other in destructive ways. This view is notable for its monolithic and dichotomous analysis of both Islamic and Western nations.

In his influential essay "The Clash of Civilizations", Huntington claims that a civilisation is "... the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity that people have short of that which distinguishes humans from other species" and that civilizational differences will be the most pervasive sources of conflict between people in this era (2000:4). He notes that this conflict is exacerbated by a phenomenon of "civilization consciousness" in non-Western civilizations, such as Islam, that brings people with a common civilization together and sees them compete with other civilizations for international and economic pre-eminence and the dissemination of their own religious and moral beliefs (2000:3-8).

One of the hallmarks of this ideology is to cite historical conflict between Islamic civilisation and Western civilisation as a basis for current and future inter-civilization (read: Islamic-Western) conflict. In "The Roots of Muslim Rage" Bernard Lewis similarly argues:

"This is no less than a clash of civilisations — the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both" (1990:47/10).

He contends that the historical humiliation of the "Muslim" at the hands of the West, has made the Muslim angry, and emphasises three particular areas: the "loss of domination in the world" (beginning with the ultimate demise of the Ottoman Empire), the invasion of Western ideas and cultural practices into Muslim countries that undermined the traditional ways of life and enfranchised non-Muslim minorities in these countries, and the gradual loss of male dominance in Muslim households due to emancipated women and insubordinate children (1990:47/3). Lewis claims that Muslims feel "a growing sense of awareness, among the heirs of an old, proud and long dominant civilization, of having been overtaken, overborne and overwhelmed by those who they regarded as inferiors" (1990:47/9). Huntington agrees, saying: "Muslims fear and resent Western power, and the threat which this poses to their society and their beliefs" (1996:2 13). Thus, much of the discord between these two civilizations is based on jealousy and fear, on Muslims' part, of the modern political, social and technological prowess exhibited by the West.

The Clash of Civilisations view emphasises the differences between so-called Islamic and Western culture that have historically led to conflict. The main source of conflict between the two nations stems from a disagreement on the place of religion in politics. It is obvious from the title "the Islamic world" that the main religion of the nations that comprise this civilisation is Islam. For the Western world, the leading religion is Christianity, especially in its Protestant form (Huntington, 1996:70). Huntington claims that this is the "single most important characteristic of Western civilisation" (1996:70). From the predominance of Protestant Christianity stems the deeply held belief in the Western world that there should be a separation between Church and State, i.e. religion and government. Lewis argues that this separation was not required in Islam, nor was it acceptable or welcome (1990:47/9): "for traditional Muslims, religion and politics are one and the same" (1990:107/2).

Islam, by its very nature as a theocratic way of life is at odds with the West's cherished institutions such as democracy and pluralism, which are regarded as the highest point in man's evolutionary journey. Huntington puts it bluntly when he states that Islam is "inhospitable" to "Western liberal ideas", mainly secularism (1996:114). If the adoption of Western liberal ideas such as secularism, pluralism and representative democracy in the manner employed by the West are hallmarks of modernity and enlightenment, then the Islamic world is lagging far behind. However, both Huntington and Lewis tend to analyse nations or parts of the world where Islam is the predominant religion as if they were a monolith, as opposed to distinct and dynamic cultures where the interpretation and practice of Islam varies greatly from one place to another and is constantly changing.

The Clash of Civilizations does not merely delineate differences between the West and Islam, but insists that these differences will continue to be exacerbated and expressed in violent ways, primarily in the form of an inter-civilizational war between Islam and the West (Huntington, 1996: 216). This war is a direct result of the Islamic Resurgence, a "crusade" occurring within the Islamic world: "a revival of Islamic ideas, practices, rhetoric and the rededication to Islam by Muslim populations" and claims that this is a mainstream movement (Huntington, 1996:110)

What this perspectives lack is an understanding of Islamic culture and religion as distinct from, but non-inferior to, Western culture, and of the immense variety in Islamic practice within and among Muslim nations. Basing current understandings of Muslims on centuries old historical events and an ideological notion of civilizational identity not only reduces a complex geo-political reality to a dichotomous framework, but also ignores the power of the nation state as both a symbol and reality that forms the basis of identity. Huntington and Lewis seek historical and religious explanations for largely geo-political and cultural phenomena. They fail to note that causal relationships between the various components of society are much more complex than they appear. While exploring the deficiencies within the Islamic world in depth, Huntington and Lewis are content to conveniently ignore less than moral actions carried out by the West.

B: Moderate/Cultural View

All the available literature that views both Islam and Islamic revivalism through a culturally relativist lens fall into this category. This view takes a closer look at regions of the world where Islamism is on the rise, and not draw simplistic, unchanging conclusions about why this phenomenon is occurring. Rather, it thoroughly and respectfully explores the local circumstances and complexities of Islamic Revivalism and political unrest within Islamic countries before drawing conclusions on which foreign policy decisions are made. This view point holds that much of the "religiously based" violence emanating from Muslim nations in the form of radical fringe groups is often politically-based ideology expressed through the vocabulary of religion. The Moderate/Cultural view espouses foreign policy reform that allows the U.S. to take a clearer view of the situation in the Middle East,

unclouded by simplistic understandings of religion and its intersection with politics. It asks that previous policy be replaced with a view that addresses the realities of specific threats that might arise for the U.S. from instable political conditions in the Islamic world.

Islamic scholar John Esposito has commented:

“Distinguishing between a religious or ideological alternative and a direct political threat requires walking the fine line between myth and reality, between the unity of Islam and the diversity of its multiple and complex manifestations in the world today, between the violent actions of the few and the aspirations of many. (1999:3)”

Esposito argues that local circumstances must play a major role in our understanding of Islamic revivalism, and of those who embrace it in its violent forms, such as through terrorist attacks. He notes that this resurgence has been demonstrated by a desire for an increase in Islamically oriented government organisations, laws, banks, social welfare services and educational systems, not merely violence, and that there are often non-religious reasons for the apparent rise of Islamism.

Fouad Ajami, a Lebanese scholar writing on Middle Eastern politics and Islamic revivalism notes that it is not civilisations, but states, who are the largest actors, and that the “phenomenon we have dubbed Islamic fundamentalism is less a sign of resurgence than of panic and bewilderment and guilt that the border with ‘the other’ (the West) has been crossed (2000:64-65). He sees revivalism as “tradition mongering” in order to appeal to the youth of disenfranchised Arab nations, and argues that the “Clash of Civilizations” hypothesis lacks complexity in acknowledging the serious political aspects of revivalism. Ajami sees a large part of the militant Islamic resurgence groups among some nations such as Saudi Arabia as “xenophobia of a murderous kind ... dressed up in religious garb” and more a response to U.S. foreign policy and continued military presence than religiously based fervour (2001:55)

Robin Wright, the Middle East correspondent for The Los Angeles Times, agrees, arguing that the so-called Islamic uprisings in many Islamic nations is “rage” directed against manipulation by foreign (especially colonial) powers; occupation of Islamic territory by aliens (Israel and the U.S. military presence in Saudi Arabia); the failure of some secular movements - from Baathist socialism to hereditary monarchy - to address foreign and domestic policy problems; pandemic corruption; and the absence of institutions through which discontent can be voiced effectively. Wright makes the important case, ignored by Huntington and Lewis, that religious revivals are not always, or even often, religiously motivated. If this is the case, then the answers lie in foreign policy reform that does not create such hostility in the Middle East.

This viewpoint argues for cultural and political specificity in pinpointing the cause of ‘religious’ uprisings within Islamic nations - the reasons are sometimes not very religious at all. A moderate/cultural approach to Islam asks us to be aware of all the

other complex factors that interact to create political and religious conflict in Islamic nations, and seriously consider the possibility that these conflicts are often reflective of U.S. foreign and local policy rather than internal religious dissent.

C: Anti-Imperialist View

Those who are the proponents of this view present one of the few voices critical of what they characterise as the U.S.'s imperialistic actions in the Middle East and other parts of the world. It is impossible to analyse politics and foreign policy in those regions without alluding to Islam, and the emergent revivalism, though proponents of this view see religion as having very little to do with the current state of unrest in the Middle East's Islamic nations. This view is grounded in its criticism of the U.S.'s constant exacerbation of tension with Islamic nations by its unequivocal support of Israel. It is also characterised by the notion that there exists an Orientalist bias within the American media that colours its representation of Islamic nations in a negative manner and is connected to political imperialism.

For scholar Edward Said, imperialism has its roots in "Orientalism". In the book of the same name, Said traces the hegemony of negative portrayals of the Middle Eastern Orient back to the colonial era. He comments that the Orient has aided the West in defining itself, even if only in opposition to the Orient. Said defines Orientalism as: "a distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical and philological texts" (Said, 1979:12). It is not merely an elaboration of a geographical difference, but also a difference in personality, experience, and inherent characteristics between the Orient (Islam) and the Occident (the West). It has within it the notion of a superior Western identity. This makes Orientalism hegemonic both within the West and without it. Outside the West the hegemony exists in that all non-Western identities are inferior to those that are Western. Within the West, a hegemony of negative Western ideas about the Orient exists (Said, 1979: 7). These ideas about the Orient serve a dual purpose, they not only supported and justified the ideologies of colonialism in the past, they currently serve commercial and political imperialism by the West (Said, 1979:39).

Said speaks particularly of Islam. He advances the theory that Islam's mighty historical presence up until the 19th century proved to be a challenge to Western Orientalism — "only the Arab and Islamic Orient presented Europe with an unresolved challenge on the political, intellectual, and ... economic levels" (Said, 1979:74). However, after a period of global colonial dominance, the West was still at odds with the Orient. The end of the Cold War did nothing to ameliorate relations, and Islam continues to be represented with a set of Orientalist clichés. Islam is spoken about with "an extreme level of non-specificity, and with scarcely a mention of the differences between individual Muslims, between Muslim societies, or between Muslim traditions and eras" (Said, 1979:341).

It is using a vocabulary of generalisations that the media paints Islam as opposed to the values that are espoused by the U.S.: secularism, democracy, and freedom (Said,

1997:22). This representation is carried out with a seeming ignorance of the fact that most of the U.S.'s allies in the Middle East have traditionally been repressive regimes such as the ones in Saudi Arabia, Iran (during the Shah's rule) and Egypt which ignore these selfsame values to the U.S.'s complete indifference. The undemocratic acts and human rights abuses perpetrated by nations that are U.S. allies are not discussed, such as Israel's breach of international law and many U.N. Resolutions by its annexation of East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, as well as its occupation of South Lebanon since 1982 (Said, 1997:21). The U.S. media is adept at judging Islam, its followers and those who espouse a political life influenced by religion, by the standards of its own political and social practices. Said warns us to be critical of these representations — of both Islamists, and religious minorities alike in these regions, as they are often not correlative to reality.

For Noam Chomsky, linguist and veteran foreign policy commentator, the problem lies not only in successive U.S. governments acts of blatant self-interest, support of rogue states, and the illegal occupation of Israel in the Middle East (1999:vii), but also in the inability of the U.S. media to report these events in any accountable, standardised and representative manner. Chomsky protests how "Israel has been granted a unique immunity from criticism in mainstream journalism and scholarship" in the U.S., that is not present even in Israel itself, and demands a balanced and fair representation of the situation on the ground. (2002: 10-16)

For both Said and Chomsky, the largest threat in the modern world is not the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, but rather the appropriation of the ultimate moral standard by the U.S. The discriminatory acts carried out by the government in the name of justice, while refusing to accept a resolution backed by the United Nations that requires the U.S. to operate with international law and flouting it at every turn, are unacceptable. The Islamic Middle East is but one area where this attitude creates resentment and political complications.

D: Islamic Moderate View

The voices of Middle Eastern and Muslim scholars are rarely heard in the American media or in the international debate on Islamic militancy and the propensity of so-called Islamic extremist groups to violence. However, there are Muslim academics who are arguing for a range of approaches towards understanding Islam that are united in their desire to use detailed interpretations of the Q'uran as guides to creating tolerant and respectful communities where Muslims and others can live side by side. The Islamic Moderate view encompasses a call to treat the Q'uran as an open text, to re-evaluate the Q'uranic concepts that separate the world into the places where Muslims may and may not reside and to validate and establish societies that are governed by Islamic precepts without being negatively judged by those with alternative views.

Khaled Abou El Fadi, a law professor at UCLA, is at the forefront of proposing a challenge to Wahhabi Puritanism in the form of a more reformist, moderate Islam

that is based in open interpretation of the Q'uran. Wahhabism is an Islamic reform movement, originating in Arabia that was founded by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahab (c.1703—1791), who taught that all accretions to Islam after the 3rd century. of the Muslim era—i.e., after c.950— were spurious and must be expunged. “(Wahabism is)essentially a purification of Sunni Islam”. (Columbia Encyclopaedia, 2000)

In opposition to Wahabism, El Fadi argues that the Q'uran must be read keeping historicity and textuality in mind (2001). The desire to re-interpret Islamic texts in light of the exigencies of modern life characterise the “open text” argument of Islam. El Fadi is supported in his argument by fellow scholar Amina Wadud, a professor of Islamic studies at Virginia Commonwealth University, who states that Islamic scriptures, like all religious texts, provide “possibilities for meaning, not inevitabilities” (2001, Wadud, 2001). Thus, Muslim scholars have a responsibility to create interpretive communities around Q'uranic texts that speak to the complexities and variations in modern Islamic practice and politics, while remaining true to the overall moral message of the Q'uran.

The Moderate Islamic view encompasses movements to create Islamic spaces in traditionally non-Muslim countries. In a recent Time International article on Islam in France, author Nicholas Le Quesne notes the rise of “Euro-Islam” (Time, 2001). Le Quense speaks of many practising Muslims who feel that it is possible to be minority members of secular societies and still practice their faith with integrity. Interpretation of the Q'uran becomes more of a personal matter, and the *sharia* (Divine Law) can be interpreted as precepts to be followed in spirit rather than in practice. Adopting this stance on their faith requires some degree of assimilation into the society in which these Muslims reside. They value traditionally “Western” values of secularism and the rule of civil law free from religious influence, and seek to create a space for Islam within it, rather than the other way around.

However, there are those for whom Islam is less of a personal matter than a societal one and who see this as a different but equally valid form of governance that Western nations must respect. The Ayatollah Mahdi Hadavi, a Shi-ite Muslim scholar in France, asks that the West not be ignorant or dismissive in their understanding of Islam as a religion and political entity (Nightline, 2002). He stresses that people in the West, who choose to judge Muslim cultures using their own notions of what is right, misunderstand many aspects of Islam. He argues that Islamic sexual morality, a Muslim's personal relationship with God, the *hijab* (women's head dress), etc cannot be judged according to dominantly Protestant values, but must be understood within the context of Islamic precepts and the manner in which they are being practiced in various societies. He notes that understanding can only be reached if the West recognises that many Muslim countries have different, theologically based morals and values that cannot be understood in a Western secular context and may not be conducive to Western forms of government. The imposition of Western values and systems of government would be morally absolutist, imperialistic and regressive. Hadavi stresses the need for cultures to understand each other and respect the tenets that guide each society.

E: “Fundamentalist” Islamic View

The availability of academic literature on the views of puritanical or extremist Muslims is at best limited and erratic. These groups vary geographical location as well as ideology — running the gamut from literal interpretations of the Q’uran to anti-imperialist, anti-U.S. rhetoric with a religious underpinning. While it is difficult to summarise the major grievances of militant groups that range from the Jihad organisations to Al Qai’da, some of these are discussed below. Since September 11, 2001, much media attention has been focused on Osama Bin Laden and his loose affiliation of terrorist cells/groups, Al Qai’da. In this section, I will use supporting indictments and comments from Osama Bin Laden and other ‘Islamist’ leaders.

It is important to realise that while the rhetoric of these groups is articulated in Islamic terms, in many cases the goals of these groups are based on specific geographical and political grievances, as opposed to an overarching Islamic ideology. The political ideology of an organisation relates to their views regarding structures and methods of government, policy and law. In many nations, Islam is often the idiom for expressing dissent with current governments and political systems that have failed to deliver on their promises of poverty alleviation and greater socio-economic equality.

Political groups use religion to their advantage because of its large mobilising potential, drawing legitimacy from their interpretations of Islamic texts (Majid, 2000: 29). The demise of Leftist Socialist movements in many Middle East nations has changed the landscape of political conflict in these nations. Scholars note that the primary lure of fundamentalism lies not in its religious ideology, but rather its promise to right the wrongs of the failed secular past (Esposito, 1998). The potent combination of ineffectual governance and a national potential to be mobilised with religious fervour provide an ideal base for increased support for Muslim revivalism, in its violent and non-violent forms.

One of the major grievances of fundamentalist groups against the United States is its self-serving and invasive military presence in Saudi Arabia after the Gulf War. There is resentment and ire at the presence of “infidels” (non-Muslims) in the land of two of Islam’s holiest cities, Mecca and Media. According to some groups, it amounts to a “crusade” against Islam that is taking place at its very heart. In a 1998 interview, Osama Bin Laden notes that “The call to wage war against America was made because America has spear headed the crusade against the Islamic nation, sending tens of thousands of its troops to the land of the two Holy Mosques ... meddling in its affairs and politics, and its support of the corrupt, tyrannical regime that is in control” (www.pbs.org, 2001).

Another source of rage is the U.S.’s continued support and protection of Israel — at the cost of not only Palestinian sovereignty, but also, according to some Islamists, Palestinians’ dignity and humanity. Many all around the world, not only Muslims

and Islamists, see the Israeli occupation of Palestine as ethically wrong. Islamists see the Palestinian fight for sovereignty as a justified war against aggression and terrorism. Osama Bin Laden sees this favouritism on the part of the U.S. towards Israel as a particularly strong reason to be anti-U.S. He notes: "For over half a century, Muslims in Palestine have been slaughtered and assaulted and robbed of their honor and of their property" (www.pbs.org, 2001). The instigator of these actions is Israel, with the military support of the U.S. (The U.S. is the largest exporter of arms and military equipment to Israel). Many Islamists, including Bin Laden, reproach the U.S. for supporting the illegal (according to the Geneva Convention) acts of the Israelis.

The U.S. led embargo on Iraq that has resulted in the deaths of over half a million Iraqis, yet has not achieved any political goal, is another source of ire for many Islamists. The U.S. government is seen as immoral, self-serving and ethically corrupt for espousing the ideals of freedom and democracy while imposing these inhumane sanctions. This is seen as yet another injustice against Muslims, along with the U.S. military occupation in Somalia, and lack of support and intervention from the U.S. against the ethnic cleansing of Bosnian Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In retaliation for these and a multitude of other grievances, such as the so-called immorality of Americans, some militant Islamists feel that it is justified to use violent means of protest against the U.S. These are what the U.S., many other Western nations and many Muslims around the world would call terrorism. However, many militant Islamist groups see it differently. The acts of the U.S. government are also often seen as not only anti-Islamic, but anti-God (Allah). Many see violent Islamism as an act of God (El Fadl, 2001). Yusuf al Qaradwi, Director of the influential Sunni Research Centre in Qatar, has stated that Muslims "refuse terrorism, but don't consider it terrorism to defend one's own home," (Feder, 2001:40). Osama Bin Laden, defending suicide bombings and attacks against U.S. targets has stated: "The terrorism we practice is of a commendable kind for it is directed at the tyrants and aggressors and the enemies of Allah". (www.pbs.org, 2001). Sheik Muhammad Sayyed Tantawi, a religious leader in Egypt's Sunni community claims: "taking one's life in the process of killing one's enemies of Islam isn't suicide but 'self-defence and a kind of martyrdom'" (Feder, 2001:40). Thus, terrorism is not seen as terrorism, but as a fight against injustice.

Militant groups as populist movements are believed to be borne out of the frustration with despotic, corrupt governments and interventionist foreign powers. However, these frustrations are soon shrouded in puritanical theological ideologies, and are expressed through "symbolic acts of power", and tend to be violent and extremist (El Fadl, 2001).

In summation, the grievances of the militant Islamist are mainly geo-political: the U.S. military presence in the holy lands of Saudi Arabia, their anti-Palestinian, pro-Israel stance, sanctions against Iraq that are debilitating the nation's infrastructure and people, self-serving policy stances in many other Muslim nations and support for

the “un-Islamic” Saud regime in Saudi Arabia. However, some of their objections are also based on perceptions of the U.S. as an immoral, anti-Islamic nation that needs to be opposed.

The Ideal Types presented above allow us to look for discrete trends in the media presentation of Islam. By looking at the views presented in the New York Times and Washington Times coverage on Islam, as well as the manner of presentation, conclusions may be drawn as to the type of representation Islam is subject to. The Ideal Type allows us to extrapolate from the specificities of article content to the larger themes of voice within the public sphere. If there is an equitable presence of all the Ideal Types within the media, then there is truly a full variety of information from which the public can draw their conclusions. However, if there is a prevalence of one over the other, then the reader is only getting one or few sides of a multi-faceted picture.

III. METHODOLOGY

Hypothesising that there exists a prevalent anti-Islamic bias in the media, this analysis coded article content in 180 articles from two Northeastern U.S. papers, the New York Times and the Washington Times. I chose these two papers because they have distinct ideological positions and structural locations. Printing “All the News That’s Fit to Print,” The New York Times bears the reputation of being the United States’ unofficial newspaper of record. The New York Times is a moderately liberal paper, and one of the most influential in the nation, not only for its effect on public opinion, but also due to its reputation for journalistic integrity and in-depth coverage of news (Gitlin, 1980: 299). The New York Times has an “extensive readership among the politically influential” and practically operates as the house organ for the political elite (Gitlin, 1980:299). This is the newspaper that, above all others, “sets agendas, generating and certifying issues in government, business, intellectual, professional and academic circles in the country” (Gitlin, 1980: 299). Thus, the New York Times is an extremely important barometer of the issues and events that are considered newsworthy, and would be indicative of the manner in which these issues are being discussed within certain influential circles in this country.

The Washington Times is a conservative paper close to Capitol Hill, with a relatively small subscribership of 105,000 (www.web.lexis-nexis.com). The paper’s editorials generally favour a more militaristic and conservative foreign policy, and contrast well with the apparent liberalism of the New York Times.

This analysis selects discrete events during the time span 1979-2001 that have been linked by the media to Islam and Islamic extremism by the media, and have analysed articles from the year of those events. It uses 15 articles per year for each sample year per newspaper. The sample years are: 1980, 1983, 1990, 1993, 1998, 2000 and 2001. For the Washington Times my sample begins with the year 1990, as the paper is archived online beginning from 1989. While noting that the difference in sample

years may lead to inconsistencies in the results analysed, this paper attempts to keep these errors to a minimum. For each of the event years chosen, both newspapers were searched for articles with "Islam" in the headline or the lead paragraph. From the articles that fell into this category, every 3rd article was chosen until there were 15 per newspaper. These were then coded for the variables listed in Appendix A.

IV. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The content analysis will look for patterns of media bias in representations of Islam, and use events that have generated substantial media coverage about Islam and Islamic extremism. During media "events" to which Islamic fundamentalists are allegedly linked, the number of articles in both the New York Times and the Washington Times with "Islam" in the headline rises significantly. For example, a search for articles with the word "Islam" in the headline and lead paragraph in the New York Times in 1982 (a year with no high profile media event linked to Islamic extremism) produced only 79 articles, while a search for the same type of articles in 2001 (the year of 9/11) produced 740. A brief historical background of the events in this sample follows.

The Iranian Hostage Crisis: (1979-1980)

The events following the seizure of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran by a group of students on November 4, 1979 have consequently been labelled "The Iranian Hostage Crisis". Approximately 500 students stormed the Embassy, and took 90 people hostage. These hostages were held for various periods of time, with 52 remaining in captivity for the full duration of 444 days. On January 20, 1981, the U.S. released almost \$8 billion in Iranian assets and the hostages were freed. This act of protest towards the United States came about as the result of long fermenting grievances against the U.S. involvement in Iranian domestic politics (Said, 1997:56) and its support of the ruler Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi's "White Revolution" that sought to forcibly Westernise, secularise and "modernise" Iran. The Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) role in a coup overthrowing Mohammed Musadeq who had been elected in the 1953 elections began to sour relations between the two nations (Demeter, 1995:94). The U.S supported the Shah's policies, which resulted in the unequal distribution of oil wealth, and the isolation of the grassroots population from age-old traditions and cultural practices (Columbia Encyclopaedia, 2001). By the early 1970s, there was much discontent among not only the general public, but also the nation's religious clergy, the *ulama*. In response to this unrest, the Shah's policies became repressive. The CIA trained secret police (SAVAK) were brutal in suppressing any dissent in the nation (Demeter, 1995:94). Thousands of protesters had been imprisoned and/or executed. In 1978, violent protests broke out nation-wide in support of the exiled leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. By 1979, the Shah had fled the nation. Khomeini returned and took control of the nation. The Shah was admitted into the United States for medical treatment in 1979. This is the final event that led to the embassy seizure.

This event marks the beginning of “Islamic fundamentalism” entering U.S. public media discourse in a major way, and it is during reporting of and around this event that many of the parameters for discourse on Islam in relation to the West were set. While reporting the events in Iran, the media described the religiously based political views of the current Iranian regime as “Islamic fundamentalism”, “religious radicalism”, “extremism” etc as a way of invalidating claims to legitimate grievances that the Iranian protesters might have had against successive United States governments (Said, 1997:57). The coverage of this event highlights the U.S media’s process of “omission” rather than “commission” in reporting events related to events in the Middle East i.e. the vital information the public needs to understand the context of the conflict is denied to them. An example of such information is the Shah’s abuse of human rights, the CIA’s involvement in the 1953 coup or information regarding SAVAK. (Said, 1997: 91)

U.S Marine Barrack Bombing, Lebanon (1983)

By 1975, Lebanon was caught in the grips of a deadly civil war between its Christian, Muslim and Palestinian populations. A cease-fire was declared in October 1976, but proved ineffective. Israel briefly occupied South Lebanon in 1978 in retaliation for attacks by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). With the installation of 6,000 United Nations peacekeeping troops, Israel withdrew. In April 1983, a truck bomb killed 260 U.S. Marines in their barracks at Beirut, as well as 60 French soldiers (Columbia Encyclopaedia, 2001). This event led to an international outcry and suspicion centred again on Islamic extremists. The local guerrilla movement Hizbollah (Party of God) has gained huge journalistic attention in the U.S. media for protesting the Israeli occupied “security zone” in South Lebanon (Said, 1997:13).

The Gulf War (1990-1991)

The Gulf War officially began on August 2, 1990 and ended on March 31, 1991 with Iraq accepting a cease-fire. The conflicts that had led to Iraq’s annexation of Kuwait had been long contested. Iraq had long considered Kuwait to be a part of its territory and claimed that Kuwait was illegally tapping into its oil wells on the border of the two nations (Columbia Encyclopaedia, 2001). On August 2, 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait. After many U.S. threats of sanctions and demands for withdrawal, Iraq refused to comply, and the United Nations coalition led by the U.S. launched Operation Desert Storm. This was a massive air war (beginning January 16, 1991) designed to destroy Iraqi military and civil infrastructure. The main coalition forces invaded Kuwait and Southern Iraq on February 24, 1991 and a cease-fire was signed on March 31, 1991. The onslaught ended with as many as 100,000 Iraqi deaths, 5 million people displaced and over \$200 billion in property damage (Hooglund, 1991:107).

The Gulf War has been seen as a great triumph for the first Bush administration and

the U.S. However, Keller argues that it “was a brilliantly managed public relations event” and a “spectacle constructed for the media to prove the superiority of U.S. weapons , to establish the U.S as the number one super cop in the world ..., to gain control of the flow of oil “ (Keller, 1995:105). Artz and Pollock argue that the U.S media reduced “a complex geopolitical situation to the motives of Saddam Hussein” (1995:120). They argue that the media’s symbolic aggression towards Saddam Hussein by reviving old caricatures of Arabs and Muslims prepared the nation for the actual aggression of the unconditional demands President Bush placed on Iraq (1995:121).

World Trade Centre Bombing (1993)

In October 1993, a group of militants attacked the World Trade Centre (WTC) in New York City with a massive car bomb. The resulting explosion killed 6 people and caused more than \$300 million in damages (Columbia Encyclopaedia, 2001). Suspicion immediately fell on the AlQai’da group of insurgents led by Osama Bin Laden. In 1995, Sheik Omar Abdul Rahman (“The Blind Sheik”) and nine other terrorists were convicted of conspiracy and other bombing-related charges. In 1998 the mastermind behind the bomb, Razmi Youssef was arrested and is now in jail, as is Sheik Rahman (Newsweek, Sept 24, 2001:420). This event created a spate of articles expressing the rising concern over the threat of Islamic terrorism on U.S. soil.

U.S Embassy Bombings in Kenya and Tanzania (1998)

On August 7, 1998 a truck bomb destroyed the U.S. Embassy in the Kenyan capital Nairobi. Moments later another truck bomb exploded at the U.S. Embassy in Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania. The bombings killed 213 in Nairobi and 11 in Dar-Es-Salaam (www.cnn.com). The ensuing investigation by the U.S. government led them to Osama Bin Laden who by this time was hiding in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan. A Federal Grand Jury indicted 22 men with crimes related to the bombings. In response, the U.S. government launched cruise missiles on an alleged terrorism-training complex in Afghanistan and a pharmaceutical factory in Sudan on August 20, 1998. Serious doubts have been raised about whether the pharmaceutical company was involved in producing biological weapons or not and the U.S. has faced criticism for its precipitous action in this regard (www.cnn.com).

USS Cole Bombing, 2000

Terrorists attacked the USS Cole, a Navy destroyer moored at the port of Aden, Yemen on October 12, 2000. The attack blew a 40-foot by 40-foot gash in the side of the ship. Seventeen sailors and 39 others were killed in the blast. The ensuing investigation placed responsibility for the attacks with members of the Al Qai’da group.

World Trade Centre Attack, 2001

On September 11, 2001 two hijacked Boeing 767s slammed into Tower 1 and 2 of the WTC. As a result, both the towers collapsed due to fire damage from the burning fuel. On the same day, two other Boeing 757s were hijacked. One crashed into the military headquarters at the Pentagon, and another crashed near Pittsburgh. The death toll of the attacks has been estimated at 266 airline victims, over 5,000 workers and visitors at the WTC, 125 at the Pentagon and approximately 300 rescue, police and fire fighters (Newsweek, Sept 24, 2001:47).

A group of 19 men led by Mohammed Atta have been identified as the culprits. They have being linked to Osama Bin Laden's network of extremist cells, Al Qai'da. The U.S. media has labelled them as "evil geniuses", "zealots" and "madmen" (Newsweek, Sept 24, 2001: 45). The swift retaliatory actions of the U.S. by bombing Afghanistan have also received great support in the mainstream media (Newsweek, October 1, 2001: 28). This retaliation is made more acceptable to the public by the demonisation of the Taliban movement and anti-U.S. guerrillas worldwide.

V. RESULTS

In general, this paper hypothesised that the New York Times (NYT) would be more liberal in its reporting of the two papers surveyed, i.e. more likely to speak about Islamism in a more contextualised and balanced way. On the other hand, the Washington Times (WT) would be conservative in its reporting, and appear derogatory towards a religion and culture that was far enough removed from conservative US political values to be somewhat incomprehensible. The former would be more likely to report through a Moderate/Cultural lens, that while still reporting from a U.S. viewpoint. The NYT would try and place Islam and Muslim societies in a culturally relativist structural location. The hypothesis held that WT, as a newspaper that espouses Conservative values including a more isolationist and military-based foreign policy, would frame their reporting through a Clash of Civilizations lens.

When looking at the headline themes of the articles, it was expected that the majority of them would fall into the category of Islamic political/religious extremism for both papers. This proved to be the case, as 62.2% of the overall sample articles headlines fell into this category. There did not seem to be any discernable difference in the headline coverage between the two papers.

Article location also plays an important role in creating readers' perceptions of an issue's importance and validity. The null hypothesis existed that the articles would mainly be in the international section, followed by the front page and that there would not be very significant differences between papers on this variable. The two different locations serve two very different purposes that are both integral to shaping

the public view of an issue or group, in this case Islam and Muslims. A story's presence on the front page denotes that it is important and newsworthy. If Islamic fundamentalist stories regularly turn up on front page, then it sends the message to the public that events related to Islam are important. However, by putting articles about Islam in the International section, the paper distances and objectifies the subject. It can be viewed as far away and unimportant, somehow divorced from the realities of everyday life for most Americans. By putting articles regarding Islam on the Editorial page the newspaper sends the message that analysis of the news regarding Islam is more important than factually reporting it.

Contrary to the hypothesis, the data showed some surprising trends. Even though the overall sample's data – 50.6% in the International News section, followed by 18.3% for the Front Page and 13.9% in Editorial and Commentary sections seemed to support the initial thesis, the differences between newspapers were interesting. The NYT had a larger percentage (62.9%) in the International section, a similar percentage to the overall sample on the Front Page, and decidedly fewer articles (6.7%) in the Editorial section. The WT on the other hand had only 33.33% in the international section and 18.7% on the Front Page, while an unusually high 24% of all articles were in the Editorial and Commentary section.

When looking at regional coverage patterns over the years, it seems there is an absence of articles in the total sample of articles focusing on Central Asia until the rule of the Taliban. Media coverage does not merely identify a specific region as one where there is activity related to a particular issue, but often links the region with the reported activity in a causal way. This was the case with the Middle East. Within the articles that focused on the Middle East, Over 90% of the articles on the Middle East referred to Islamic fundamentalism, with 12% focusing on fundamentalist activity as a key point. A further, 66.7% of articles about the Middle East did not distinguish between Islamic extremists and other practicing Muslims, as compared to only 35% of articles about South Asia. The nature of reporting on Islam in the Middle East highlights the media's perhaps inadvertent decision to concentrate on a particular construct of the region's practice of Islam in a manner conducive to foreign policies favouring U.S. interests.

The overall data observed across all seven events shows 47.8% of the articles reporting through a political frame and 31.7% reporting through a religious one. The inter-newspaper differences show important distinctions between the way hegemonic ideals are disseminated. The NYT focuses on a political rather than religious frame of reporting (54.3% vs. 25.7%). The reportage for the WT is more religious than political (40%vs. 38%).

The majority of articles (66% of overall sample) portrayed Islam as the over arching ideology of the location and culture portrayed. The data shows that 66% of the overall sample cited a religious Islamic outlook as the dominant cultural outlook for the region or individuals portrayed. Thus, the belief is perpetuated that Islam is a religion that is linked to all aspects of life in a nation/culture and dominates life in

regions where it is practiced, and that cultural life in these regions is characterised only by religion.

The majority of surveyed articles constructs a picture of Islam as traditional and unable to meet the demands of modernity (45% for the entire sample, with no significant differences between the two sources), or conflicted (36.7% for overall sample). The view of Islam as traditional has been more or less constant over the years, but representing it as conflicted is a recent development, primarily since 1990. This could be due to the Islamic resurgence in some Islamic nations that has been often reported as fundamentalist activity. The WT is more likely than the NYT to characterize Islam as traditional without distinguishing modalities of practice while The NYT is as likely to consider Islam as conflicted, as it is traditional (41.9% and 41% respectively).

The results show pervasive patterns of skewed representation regarding Islamic movements – their characteristic, origins, means of attaining goals and ideologies. Over 82% of the articles in the overall sample referred to Islamic fundamentalism, and for 53.9% it was a major focus of the article. These percentages remained constant across both papers. Over half of the articles in the sample did not differentiate between Islamic Revivalism/Resurgence as a socio-political movement, and fundamentalism or radical Islamic fringe groups

The data also supports a view projecting strong link between Islam and violence, with approximately 74% of articles linking Islam to violence in the overall sample and across both newspapers, further painting a negative picture. This violence is thought to be mainly linked with religious movements (approximately 35% in the overall sample, as well as the NYT and the WT individually) and are thought to be religiously motivated (41% in the overall sample). However, WT has a tendency to view more acts as religiously motivated than the NYT (48% vs. 36%), as opposed to politically motivated (20% in WT vs. 31% in NYT) or social protest acts (2.7% in WT vs. 4.8% in NYT).

Islamic fundamentalists (including revivalists) are presented in such a manner as to diminish their legitimacy as protesters against unjust policies and corrupt governments, but while unquestioningly accepting the threat they present. They are regarded as devious in 25.9% and irrational in 58.5% of all articles.

In most articles, Islamic movements are denied voice, and information on their goals and beliefs is imparted through Western spokespeople, who put forward their own ideologically biased beliefs as to the source and nature of these movements. In the overall sample, 50.6% of articles had 1-5 anti-Islamic quotes and only 35% had pro-Islamic quotes. 14.4% of articles in the sample had 6-10 anti-Islamic quotes vs. 2% of pro-Islamic quotes of the same number. The presence of quotes from both sides gives the appearance of a balanced story, however, as Detmer notes, “there is nothing magical about the number two” (1995:99) and a careful look must be taken at the proportion of quotes as well as their content. In the NYT and WI, the overall

picture is of a biased slant against Islam, with an article often having only 1 or 2 quotes from an Islamic source, and 4-6 from an anti-Islamic source. These articles also fail to realise that there are more than two sides to a story, and accordingly fail to capture the moral ambiguities that are common in any of movement or conflict.

32.2% of the article sample fell into the Clash of Cultures category, while 17% of the sample articles represented major spokespersons espousing an Islamic Moderate View and 3.3% represented the Militant Islamic View. There was a 21.1% representation of the Moderate Cultural view. The WT espoused the Clash of Cultures view in 42.7% of its articles while 24.8% of the surveyed articles in NYT supported the view. The NYT also presented the Moderate/Cultural view in a substantial number of cases, (20%) demonstrating a willingness to accommodate different viewpoints.

Where in the interests of objective journalism and presenting a complete story there are Islamic spokespersons quoted, they are overwhelmingly Middle Eastern (56.6%). This trend remained constant across both papers, with the majority of articles in both papers (62.7% in the NYT and 51% in the WI) citing a Middle Eastern spokesman. The newspapers do not represent the wide variety of opinion within the Islamic world by only quoting Middle Eastern sources. Most spokespersons who are quoted are contextualised with political background (32.8% of the overall sample), and with no other biographical information. 27% of articles do not quote a spokesperson at all.

The most pervasive patterns in the NYT's and WT's coverage of Islam is the enduring presence of the "Four Big Myths": Islam as anti-Western, anti-democratic, anti-women and prone to extremism. The data shows that in an additive analysis, over 53.3%, 75.9%, 84.7% and 29.2% of all cases coded portrayed Islam as anti-democratic, anti-Western, prone to extremism and anti-women respectively, demonstrating the pervasiveness of such views across different political ideologies and values within the U.S. media.

Over 59% of the articles in the overall sample, 61% in the NYT and 57.3% in the WT were unsympathetic to Islam, with the Islamic world presented as a monolithic block, free from differences in cultural and religious practice, where civil life is most influenced by religiously motivated politics, and not the general concerns of socio-cultural status, economics and civil debate. The Clash of Civilization view is entrenched in the media surveyed, with 39.4% of overall coverage subscribing to the Ideal Type.

VI. DISCUSSION

There are pervasive patterns in the results that point to the operation of underlying processes of hegemony within the media. These patterns emerge in three major areas: trends within the identifying traits of the articles (headline, location etc), in how Islam as a religion is presented and in how Islamic Revivalism is presented.

There was a large preponderance of articles with a headline referring to extremist Islamic activity. This could be due the media's propensity to report "bad news," meaning that issues relating to extremist or militant activity would get more coverage as compared to general interest stories regarding Islam. Also, instability in the Muslim world (especially in the Middle East) has been a major foreign policy concern for the U.S. since the fall of communism and the break-up of the Soviet Union and thus news to that effect would be more likely to be reported here.

Another explanation might be that the U.S.'s large political (Israel) and commercial (oil) interests in the Middle East region, and the economic and political elites's desire to maintain certain regimes (the Saud family in Saudi Arabia, Hosni Mubarak's government in Egypt), would result in media coverage that necessarily paints a negative and unstable picture of the region that would seem to necessitate stringent foreign policy measures on the behalf of the U.S. government.

The differences in article location between the two newspapers, i.e. the WT's propensity to put a larger number of articles on Islam in the Editorial section, can be accounted for by the nature of the values that the two newspapers espouse. The NYT's reporting on Islam is reflective of its moderate value base, and the paper is mostly interested in presenting these articles in the format of "factual" news reporting. The WT's proclivity to present "news" on Islam in the form of opinion pieces could be evidence of an attitude that undervalues news regarding socio-political developments in Islamic nations, and is more interested American journalists' subjective opinions on the news.

Moving onto how the media portrays Islam and Muslims, there is a definite trend towards a negative portrayal. However, there are interesting differences between the two news sources analysed. The NYT is much less likely to have a religious reporting frame than the WT, even though both papers primarily use the religious and political frame to report from. This could demonstrate that the moderate paper (NYT) is more invested in reporting news that is does not define Muslims only by their religion, but rather reports actual political events, while the more politically conservative paper believing Islam itself to be a threat, could hypothesise that most events in the Islamic world are religiously motivated, in keeping with the Clash of Civilisations view. The public would not only be presented a skewed picture of what is important about Islam and Islamic states, but would also be left unaware of the existence of other frames. A reductive approach towards Islam's diversity of social experience would result in isolating the subjects from the readers, creating a feeling that Muslim are "different" in an undesirable way.

There are four enduring myths in the media's portrayal of Islam :Islam as anti-democratic, anti-women, anti-Western and prone to extremism. The myth of Islam as anti-Western can be traced to Islam's refusal to hold the same worldview as the U.S. Islam has not gone through a great reformation in the manner of Protestantism, the religion on which the moral tenets of the U.S. are based. This is seen as a shortcoming, not merely a difference. Any religion that has not evolved in the same

manner as Protestantism is open to accusations of anti-Westernism. Islam's refusal to outwardly embrace (or at least in the Western interpretation) the tenets of secularism leave it open to the label of "backward", and make it particularly unacceptable to Americans. Many Islamic countries, where religion, while informing a large part of public life, is still not the driving force in politics, are dismissed by US media as unsecular. Nations where there is a pronounced and constitutionally enshrined place for religion are seen as backward and anti-democratic, because a hegemonic understanding of democracy leaves no place for religion. Any religion that prescribes a place for itself in the governance of a nation, as Islam does, is thought to be prone to extremism. A nation would need to adopt the U.S.'s approach to Church and State in order to be considered secular. Most Muslim nations do not fit neatly into the prescribed framework as there is a wide variety of religious practice in Islamic nations that runs the gamut from democratic to theocratic. The failure of the U.S. media to recognise and accept this is based on the secular premise of reporting and scholarship. The premise of secularity renders Islam opaque to Western readers and increases its remoteness, all the while obfuscating the subjectivity that journalists are bringing to their portrayal of Islam.

The view of Islam as anti-women is conspicuous by its absence in US media till the rise of the Taliban. U.S. media interest in women's rights in Islamic countries directly coincided with their political interests in the Taliban as an oppositional force. Suddenly, large number of articles appeared chronicling "Islam's" mistreatment of women. However, it was specifically the Taliban's interpretation of Islamic precepts that mandated their treatment of women. Yet, by linking the Taliban to the extreme oppression of women, the media created a negative public opinion of Afghanistan. As a result, when U.S. foreign policy dictates necessitated the bombing of Afghanistan, the aggression was largely accepted as *de facto*. Until the government made the Taliban a foreign policy priority, the ill-treatment of women in "Islamic" nations such as Saudi Arabia who is an economic ally and one of the U.S.'s largest suppliers of oil was not a media concern. This highlights the connection between the media and the interests of the dominating ideology.

When covering Islamic revivalism and fundamentalism, the media skews its portrayal of both the fundamentalist revivalist movement as a whole (it's hard to tell the terms apart as newspapers rarely make that distinction) and the people involved in them. By and large, both newspapers do not bother to differentiate between Islamic Revivalism and Fundamentalism. The media's tendency to confuse a desire to run a country by Islamic precepts and a desire to embrace fringe religious political ideology is interesting. Perhaps it is the notion of threat that extremist Islam brings with it that leads the media to paint all Muslims as prone to extremist thinking. Another possibility is that attempts to use textual and religious authority as a legitimator on the part of many fundamentalist groups lead journalists to view these movements as religious and not political. Another explanation could be a simple aversion to the synthesis of a religion that sees its place as a guide for all areas of civil life, including the political and political organisations that use the legitimating power of religion to gain support. Noting the U.S. two party system that seeks to

draw legitimacy from authority vested in political ideology, it is possible that the idea of religious legitimacy can not have a place within the hegemonic discourse.

Islamic revivalists are characterized as devious, intolerant, irrational and violent. These are traits that America, at least per media representation, prides itself on not possessing. The American nation supposedly struggles for the rule of rational law and openness of social life while adopting an inclusionary policy towards all. Whether or not this is true, the validity and desirability of these ideas is not up for question, and any group blatantly opposed to American values as they are portrayed is looked down upon. When applied to Islamists, trait labels are neither contextualised nor accurately defined. There is no public scrutiny of these labels because the public trusts the media to provide it with accurate representations of the news. If these labels are applied repeatedly, they become social reality, serving the interests of those who create policy. Non-contextualization slams the door on public debate. If "militants" were contextualised and their viewpoints heard, US jingoism would lose appeal. It would be harder to blatantly side with Israel if the Palestinian side of the conflict was given due share in media. Islamists and Islam are denied complete presence in the media sphere. Truncated and misrepresentative images result in the public viewing Islamic movements in any form with distaste and incomprehension. The process of hegemony is subtle in operation, and leaves little evidence of the partiality of its viewpoints.

VII. CONCLUSION

Cultural hegemony serves very selective sections of the society who benefit from the intellectual, moral and political authority that hegemonic domination gives them. In the U.S., the governmental and corporate elite are served by the perpetuation of anti-Islamic sentiment that allows them to maintain its strategic support of Israel in order to appease the Jewish lobby, which is an influential force in American politics, and also to give the U.S. an ally in a historically troubled region. A military presence in Saudi Arabia protects big business' large-scale economic interests in oil. The perpetuation of negative stereotypes regarding Islam allows the U.S. to implement foreign policy that will not only appease political and corporate interests, but also maintain public support for these policies, as the public does not see them as negatively impacting Muslims. Instead, policies that are often viewed as offensive and interventionist by Muslim nations are viewed as moral and just by large sections of the U.S. public, e.g. the U.S. military presence in Saudi Arabia is seen as problematic by many in the region, but is represented by the media as a welcomed and well-regarded policy.

Within the media, the Class of Civilizations view perpetuates hegemonic domination by disseminating a stance that is supportive of the ruling class. The presence of the Moderate/Liberal view reveals some variations within the operation of this hegemony, but overall does not have a substantial effect on providing an oppositional voice in public discourse. Unlike the Gramscian model however, there

are intellectuals who are actively participating in a counter-hegemonic movement to oppose the complete domination of hegemonic ideals. Counter-hegemonic viewpoints are marginalized to the fringes of media and academia, circulating within small intellectual circles, available only through non-mainstream sources and magazines. On the other hand, media and academic work support hegemonic ideologies are not only available in the mainstream, but also canonised in the form of foreign policy that is directly influenced by it.

The cultural hegemony at work here departs from the classical Gramscian model in the fact that it is ideals about others (i.e. Muslims and Islamists) that the uninformed public is internalising, not about other members in their own society. However, the hegemonic ideas have large repercussions in garnering the American public's support for foreign policies that are punitive towards Muslims. This support is an indirect result of internalising the media's dissemination of certain ideas; regarding Islam and Muslims. These foreign policies might have long-term detrimental effects for Muslim peoples and governments who are powerless to shape how they are to be represented. However, unlike classical hegemonic models, Muslims and Islamists are not internalising these negative representations of themselves, having their own social, cultural, ethnic, political and religious identities.

This current cultural hegemony works in a far more complex manner than Gramscian capitalist economic hegemony. It is based on presenting a narrow, distorted view of Islam while appearing to represent the full breadth of opinion. The public is presented with media coverage that relegates news about Islam to the International News section, representing Islam as a tradition and faith far removed from American life. The hegemonic view of Islam is perpetuated primarily by misrepresenting the nature of Islam itself, and also by inaccurately reporting on political changes in Islamic nations, specifically the Middle East. Islamic Revivalist movements are robbed of their context and legitimacy by being presented as overly violent, irrational and dangerous. Both newspapers studied are likely to label Islamists negatively without properly contextualising their grievances or the source of their extremist views. In a large number of cases, these groups are trying to create political change within their own governments and/or protesting U.S. initiated interventionism. The reader, however, is not made aware of this, and the Islamists' causes are invalidated and de-legitimised. Islamists are seen as provocative and dangerous, and it becomes incumbent on the U.S. to reassert moral order. If all the sides of the story are not reported, the information from which to draw conclusions immediately becomes much more limited. However, neither the public nor the media itself is aware that the news framework is less than complete. By presenting Islamic movements in a vacuum, the media pushes the discourse into the realm of moral absolutist debate.

This inability to comprehend the multi-faceted nature of Islam is due to the American public's internalisation of hegemonic values that dominate American life, such as the separation of Church and State, a democratic model of government, visible societal roles for women etc. Even though religion may play a large part in American governmental and political processes (note the Christian Coalition, the

Conservative Right), Americans hold fast to the national value that there is no place for religion in politics. Subsequently, not only is the communal and political ideology of Islam rendered unfamiliar, but it is also presented as inherently inferior by those who do not accept the synthesis of religious, cultural and political life in a manner that is completely foreign to the majority of Americans. There is an inability among many Americans to comprehend the economic or cultural desire for a society-wide religious revivalist movement or a desire for a theocratic form of government. An artificial distance is created between the two worlds, with the Islamic world presented not as a collection of disparate nations and cultures with specific and enduring traditions, but as a monolithic block that is characterised solely by its adherence to Islam.

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APPENDIX A: Coding Scheme

1. In articles about Islam, what is the headline theme? headline
 1. Muslim political/religious extremism
 2. Other
 3. Islam General Interest
 4. Islam General Political
2. What is the location of article? location
 1. Front Page
 2. Domestic/National Section
 3. International News section
 4. Commentary
 5. Life/Religion/Metro
3. What is the year of the article? (2000) year
 1. 1980
 2. 1983
 3. 1990
 4. 1993
 5. 1998
 6. 2000
 7. 2001
4. What region is highlighted in the article? region
 1. Middle East-North Africa
 2. South Asia
 3. Central-East Asia
 4. Other
5. Is Islam portrayed as dominant cultural outlook of the individuals/region highlighted in the article? domcult
 1. Yes
 2. No
 3. Other
6. If Islam is the dominant cultural outlook of the individuals/region, how is it portrayed? domculpo
 1. Ahistorical/Tradtional
 2. Modern/Changing
 3. Conflicted
 4. Other
7. How could the reporting frame of the article be characterised? repframe
 1. Socio-cultural
 2. Religious

3. Political
4. Other

8. Is Islam portrayed as: (All that apply) islampor

1. Anti-Western
2. Anti-Women
3. Prone to extremism
4. Anti-democratic
5. Other

9. Is there direct reference to Islamic Fundamentalism/Revivalism? refisfun

1. Yes
2. No

10. If yes, what is its relative emphasis in the article? relifemp

1. Major
2. Minor
3. Other

11. Is there a distinction made between Islamic "Fundamentalism" and "Revivalism"? disfure

1. Yes
2. No
3. Other

12. what are the alleged sources of extremist views? (All that apply) sourcefun

1. Political Indoctrination
2. Geographical Proximity
3. Ethnic Identity
4. Deprivation (Political/Economic)
5. Unclear or Unspecified

13. Are negative ("extremist", "terrorist", "militant" etc) or positive ("activist", "freedom fighter", "protester") applied to Islamic Fundamentalist/Revivalist groups? neglabel

1. Negative
2. Positive
3. Other

14. Is there a distinction made between those labelled Islamic "Fundamentalists" and other practising Muslims? distfumu

1. Yes
2. No
3. Other

15. What are the characteristics attributed to Islamic Fundamentalists/Revivalists?
(All that apply) isfuncha

1. Violent
2. Intolerant
3. Devious
4. Irrational
5. Other

16. If an Islamic spokesperson/political leader is named in article, are they: ispokreg

1. Arabic/Middle Eastern
2. American
3. European
4. Other

17. If yes, how is he contextualised? Ispokcon

1. Educational/Occupational background
2. Political background
3. Ethnic background
4. Family/Relationship background
5. Other

18. Does the article mention or emphasise link between Islam and violent actions?
isviolen

1. Yes
2. No

19. If yes, what type of violence: typeviol

1. State driven
2. Political movement
3. Religious movement
4. Individual acts
5. Other

20. In articles that report violent acts by Islamist groups, are these acts regarded as:
isvioreg

1. Justified political acts
2. Extremist religious acts
3. Social protest acts
4. Other

21. Number of Pro-Islamist quotes in the article: numproqu

1. None
2. 1-5
3. 6-10
4. 11+

4. 11+

23. What is the overall slant of the article? artslant

1. Sympathetic to Islam
2. Unsympathetic to Islam
3. Balanced

24. What is the ideological slant of the majority of the spokespersons in the article?
ideiypoq

1. Clash of Civilisations/Conservative View
2. Moderate/Cultural View
3. Anti-Imperialist View
4. Islamic Moderate View
5. Militant Islamic View
6. Other

25. What is the ideological slant of the article? ideslant

1. Clash of Civilisations/Conservative View
2. Moderate/Cultural View
3. Anti-Imperialist View
4. Islamic Moderate View
5. Militant Islamic View
6. Other

There is a variable that codes for what newspaper the articles are from. newspapr