

FRAMING MORAL EVALUATIONS: MORAL FOUNDATIONS IN U.S. NEWSPAPER
COVERAGE OF MOSQUE CONTROVERSIES

By

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ABSTRACT

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In recent years, attempts by Muslims all across the U.S. to build worship spaces have been met with opposition. Some opponents questioned whether Islam should be considered a religion afforded all the protections of the First Amendment, or whether it is a sinister ideology that posed a threat to American values and should therefore be opposed. Supporters, on the other hand, argued that protecting the rights of Muslims to worship freely is a validation of important American principles. This debate played out in news coverage of the issue.

This dissertation examines the discourse in the debate through a framing analysis of news articles and editorials (n=349) from five U.S. newspapers between 2010 and 2013. Framing is the selection and emphasis of certain problem definitions, causal attributions, moral evaluations, and treatment recommendations in discussion of an issue. This research makes a contribution to framing theory by using Moral Foundations Theory to improve the operationalization of the moral evaluation dimension of framing. A cluster analysis of moral foundations was conducted, which four moral foundation profiles, all of which were strongly rooted in socially binding moral foundations. Those moral foundation variables were subsequently incorporated into a full framing analysis. A cluster analysis of all the framing components revealed five frames: Local Regulation, Political Debate, Muslim Neighbors, Islamic Threat, and Legal Authority. A subsequent qualitative analysis validated that these five frames encompassed the bulk of the debate.

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Dedicated to my parents, Catherine and Jack

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INTRODUCTION

For several weeks in the summer of 2010, American public discourse was dominated by a fiery debate over a proposal to build a mosque and community center in Manhattan two blocks from the site of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. It began as a local land use question but transformed into a national debate, with implications far beyond New York.

But while the debate over Park51 — the so-called “Ground Zero Mosque” — was the most prominent example of a controversy over the construction of Islamic worship spaces in the U.S., it was not alone. The Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life (2013, April 8) has documented at least 53 mosques and related projects by Muslim organizations that have faced local regulatory opposition in recent years. Sometimes opponents raised typical land use objections such as building height, traffic, and parking. Often, however, these political debates were transformed into a forum for discussion about the position of Islam — both literally and figuratively a debate over what space Muslims would be allowed to occupy in contemporary American society.

All across the U.S., opponents questioned whether Islam should be considered a religion afforded all the protections of the First Amendment or whether it is a sinister ideology that poses a threat to American values and should therefore be opposed. This discourse took place in public meetings and private conversations all over the U.S., but it was also heavily featured in news content. The Park51 debate dominated national media coverage for several weeks (Morgan, 2010, August 23; Holcomb, 2010, August 30; Morgan, 2010, September 13) and emerged the top religion story of 2010 (Liu, 2011, February 23). In recent years, comparable controversies appeared in local newspapers from coast to coast (Pew, 2013, April 8). The increased attention to Muslim worship spaces may be related to a general increase in concern about Islam in the post-

9/11 world, but it may also be related to the rapid growth of the number of mosques in the U.S., which swelled 74% between 2000 and 2011 (Bagby, 2012a) and 25% between 1994 and 2000 (Bagby et al., 2001). These mosques offer a variety of activities, including worship, educational programs, group activities, interfaith outreach, and social justice work (Bagby, 2012b). However, to some opponents, these spaces are accompanied by a growing fear of homegrown radicalism and a threat to American moral values.

Previous research has shown that coverage of Islam in American media tends to represent the religion in problematic terms — for example, as a monolithic other or a terrorist threat. *Media framing* offers an effective theoretical lens for examining such coverage because the battle over dominant frames is a fundamental component of public deliberation. One side in a debate can increase the potency of its frames by linking them to time-honored journalistic practices or societal values, like religion or national ideology (Pan & Kosicki, 2001). Because conflict is a central characteristic of both news content and political debate, one of the main areas of discretion journalists are able to exercise in content is deciding which advocacy frames to adopt and which to ignore in their coverage (de Vreese, 2012).

Furthermore, studying the media framing of Islam is particularly important because the population of Muslims in the U.S. is relatively small — estimated at around 1% (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2009). A Gallup survey found that nearly half of Americans reported not knowing a Muslim personally, and those who didn't know a Muslim were twice as likely to report possessing a “great deal” of prejudice against Muslims (Gallup Center for Muslim Studies, 2010). Given the relatively narrow segment of the U.S. public that is Muslim, mass media portrayals of the faith may be a major contributor to the formation of perceptions (and misperceptions) about Islam (Gallup, 2010) — an important dynamic for framing researchers

because “audiences with less direct experience of the situations at issue [are] more vulnerable to the framings of the mass media” (Gitlin, 1980: 245). The first goal of this dissertation is to examine the framing in newspaper coverage of mosque controversies in several locations across the U.S. between 2010-2013 as a way of considering what the discourse about Islam says about the ways Americans construct understanding about the religion — or, in Gans’ (2004: xxi) words, to examine “what society tells itself about itself through the news and why.”

Media framing has been most commonly defined (Matthes, 2009) in current research as the selection and emphasis of certain aspects of a perceived reality in mass media texts in ways that promote particular 1) problem definitions, 2) causal interpretations, 3) moral evaluations and/or 4) treatment recommendations (Entman, 1993). Despite its ubiquity in the literature (Bryant & Miron, 2004), the field of framing has been plagued by operational imprecision (Matthes, 2009). In an attempt to ameliorate this problem, researchers have begun to study frames as clustered patterns of Entman’s individual frame elements (Matthes & Kohring, 2008). These four framing elements “hold together in a kind of cultural logic, serving each other, with the connections cemented more by custom and convention than by the principles of valid reasoning or syllogistic logic” (Entman, 2003: 417).

But if a frame is a pattern of individual frame elements, it seems clear that researchers do not treat all of the elements equally. Tankard (2001: 95) wrote, “Defining the terms of a debate takes one a long way toward winning it.” Reflecting that perceived truism of framing, Entman (2003: 418) suggests that the most important frame elements are problem definition, which “often virtually predetermines the rest of the frame,” and treatment recommendation, which “promotes support of (or opposition to) actual government action.” However, one important function of journalism is to serve as a part of a culture’s overall system of moral judgment

(Fuglsang, 2001). Thus, the lack of attention to moral evaluations is a notable lacuna in framing research.

Previous framing research has shown that the moral evaluation element is particularly difficult to operationalize and code (Bowe, Oshita, Terracina-Hartman, & Chao, 2012). But while reducing frames to their problem definition might be easier to code in a content analysis, that would come at the sacrifice of analytical nuance and descriptive power. A second goal of this dissertation is to improve the operationalization of the moral evaluation component of media framing and, hopefully, begin to close this gap.

This research refines the operationalization of framing's moral evaluation dimension by turning to *Moral Foundations Theory (MFT)*. Designed as a tool to examine morality at a cultural rather than individual level (Haidt, Graham & Joseph, 2009), MFT bridges models of moral judgment based in anthropology and evolutionary psychology (Haidt & Joseph, 2004). MFT has been proposed as an appropriate tool for the study of political action and rhetoric (Haidt & Graham, 2007), therefore it may offer a way of operationalizing the moral evaluation frame element. Moral reasoning as proposed by MFT is similar to framing because it is related to a "conscious mental activity that consists of transforming information about people and their actions in order to reach a moral judgment or decision" (Haidt, 2007: 998).

MFT posits that human morality is partially rooted in psychological mechanisms called moral foundations, which are the evolutionary result of adaptive responses to recurrent social challenges (Graham et al., 2013). The theory suggests that moral reasoning is connected to these mechanisms, and that differing emphasis on one or another of these foundations that lead entire cultures (and individuals within cultures) to hold divergent values and beliefs (Haidt & Joseph, 2004; Graham et al. 2013). MFT holds that these moral foundations are the result of a reciprocal

interplay of cognition and culture. As Haidt and Graham (2007: 106) explain: “Virtues are cultural constructions, and children develop different virtues in different cultures and historical eras, yet the available range of human virtues is constrained by the five sets of intuitions that human minds are prepared to have.” These five paired virtue/vice moral foundations, which have been at the center of a decade of MFT research, are: care/harm; fairness/cheating; loyalty/betrayal; authority/subversion; and sanctity/degradation — though the authors of MFT assert that there are likely other foundations as well (Graham et al., 2013).

Given its proposed suitability for examining public deliberation, this dissertation uses MFT’s five foundations to operationalize the moral evaluation component of media frames. Viewed in concert with established methods of operationalizing problem definitions, causal attributions, and treatment recommendations, this research proposes that the resulting frames will offer a more nuanced and valid portrayal of the frames in the content in question. This question of validity will be addressed in depth in the next step of this research.

While the Matthes and Kohring technique has been widely adopted by framing researchers, to date studies using this technique have been exclusively based on quantitative content analysis. One may still ask whether the statistical analysis reveals patterns that are meaningful — that is, are connected to discursive patterns that actually exist in the texts. The third contribution of this dissertation will be to conduct a second-stage qualitative analysis to confirm whether the frames identified by the cluster analysis can subsequently be discerned in a sampling of individual stories from the corpus of content. This qualitative step, which has not previously been performed in published framing research, would serve as an important test of the face validity of the Matthes and Kohring cluster technique by pairing quantitative and qualitative methods within the same research problem — often referred to as triangulation.

The idea of connecting quantitative content analysis with qualitative analysis is not new. Weber (1990) suggested that the best content analysis research marshals both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Triangulation provides a way of strengthening the researcher's claims by deploying different approaches to offer confirmation of findings (Neuendorf, 2002). As Neuendorf (2002: 49) explained, "The various methods' strengths and weaknesses tend to balance out, and if all the various methods reveal similar findings, the support for the hypothesis is particularly strong." Riffe, Lacy, and Fico (2005: 172) also acknowledge the strength of triangulation, noting that the combined application of quantitative and qualitative approaches in the same study "will enrich the research and extend its meaningfulness." And with framing theory used in a variety of quantitative and critical contexts, triangulation allows researchers "greater confidence in our conclusions" (Coleman, 2010: 233) by building in external checks.

To summarize, this dissertation hopes to improve the measurement of media frames by applying MFT to the operationalization of the moral evaluation frame dimension. It further hopes to establish the face validity of the frames discovered by conducting a second-stage qualitative analysis of study texts. Finally, using the insights gained from these theoretical and methodological improvements, this dissertation will discuss the socially constructed position of Islam in contemporary American society based on how some aspects of the faith are represented in news media texts. In this way, framing will be used to probe relationship between media and culture, which "is at its core a process in which cultural values and norms are reproduced" (Van Gorp, 2010: 88).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

When media frame social phenomena outside the lived experiences of individuals, they do so by depicting groups through the use of codes, conventions, and social schemata, which are portrayed as representational of members of that specific culture (Tuchman, 1980). Members of the social group at the center of a discussion are presented symbolically, “garbed in the clothing appropriate to their occupation” and “made to typify all members of their particular group or class” (Tuchman, 1980: 123). Such framing may be especially influential for issues that are new, ambiguous, or emotionally charged (Gitlin, 1980). Such practices of representation — which construct our understanding of the world through language — form the point of connection between meaning and culture (Hall, 1997). But mass media representations do not merely reflect an external world that exists separate from that which is represented; they “play a part in the formation, in the constitution, of the things that they reflect” (Hall, 1992: 14).

In recent years — and especially since the 9/11 terrorist attacks — the framing and representation of Islam in news media has taken on a greater importance. This section reviews the literature on media coverage of Islam and ties it to the current debate over the construction or expansion of mosques in the U.S. Secondly, it reviews the literature of media framing and how it relates to a constructionist notion of how meaning is made. Finally, it focuses on the moral evaluation component of framing and connects it to Moral Foundations Theory.

Islam: A monolithic other or a terrorist threat?

A common critique of Western media coverage of Islam is that it is generally monolithic and “emblematic of the West’s present-day unarticulated discourse on Islamic countries as incorrigibly other” (Lorcin & Sanders, 2007: 343). The discourse surrounding Islam in American media is said to rely on “a handful of rules, stereotypes, and generalizations about the faith, its

founder, and all of its people” even as the global Muslim population includes more than a billion people in dozens of countries with a vast variety of cultural practices (Said, 1997: xvi). Within this monolithic representation, differences of ethnicity, immigration status, sect, age, etc., are placed in the background in favor of a unified, singular Muslim whole (Morey & Yaqin, 2011; Said, 1997).

Reflecting the importance of this media discourse, scholars have studied a series of widely reported issues related to Islam in the news, including the threat of international terrorism (Nacos & Torres-Reyna, 2006), wars in the Muslim-majority nations of Iraq and Afghanistan (Entman, 2004), controversies over the *hijab* head coverings worn by some Muslim women (Scott, 2007), the ritual *halal* preparation of meat (Saha, 2012; Poynting & Noble, 2003), immigration issues (Poynting & Mason, 2007), the construction of mosques (Bowe, 2013), regulations of the use of sharia by U.S. courts (Hoewe, Bowe & Makhadmeh, 2014), and free speech issues related to visually depicting the Prophet Muhammad (Shehata, 2007).

In the post-9/11 world, opinion polls generally suggest that large numbers of non-Muslim Americans have a low level of knowledge of Islam, harbor negative attitudes toward Muslims, and favor curtailing Muslims’ civil and religious rights in favor of security (Gallup, 2010; Nisbet et al., 2009). Hoewe et al. (2014) found Muslims were consistently placed in an out-group position compared to a normative Western in-group in a decade of network television news coverage of sharia. In addition to fostering negative attitudes among other Americans toward Muslims, Nisbet et al. (2004) suggested that American TV coverage also fostered negative attitudes toward Americans among viewers in the Muslim world.

This Islamic monolith may be related to the way some coverage frames the situation between Islam and the West as a clash of two homogeneous civilizations. This concept emerged

in the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe, when Huntington (1996, 1993) posited that the world was entering a period of civilization-based conflicts — most notably between those he labeled “Islam” and “The West.” This hypothesis has been widely critiqued in scholarly literature (e.g., Charron, 2010; Esposito & Mogahed, 2007; Seib, 2005; Norris & Inglehart, 2003; Ali, 2003; Fox, 2002; 2001), yet it continues to hold great salience because of the ways in which it informs media discourse about Islam (Bowe & Hoewe, 2011; Bantimaroudis & Kampanellou, 2009; Seib, 2005). This notion of a clash of civilizations may well remain a feature of media coverage because of the way it fits with the journalistic attraction to conflict in news production by offering the sort of “counterposed extremisms” that “set up the sort of balances that journalists routinely equate with ‘good stories’” (Gitlin, 1980: 90). However, scholars and civil rights advocates denounce the current state of coverage of issues related to Islam as relying on reductive distortions of the diverse lived realities of Muslims (Esposito & Mogahed, 2007; Said, 1997).

Without a doubt, the 9/11 terrorist attacks brought Islam into the American consciousness and media spotlight more than ever before. This stands to reason, as capturing news media coverage is a defining goal of terrorists, functioning as a force multiplier that allows minor groups to appear more politically important than they actually are (White, 2008). This makes terrorism “the prototypical mediated issue” (Iyengar, 1991: 26). In the case of 9/11, the common sense of the attacks was established quickly through a combination of government and media framing — the attacks were an act of war, the perpetrators were evildoers motivated by hatred for American freedoms, the world was forever changed, and the appropriate response was to declare war on Islamic terrorism itself (Archetti, 2008; Entman, 2004). While each of these assertions could have been contested, such debate was largely absent from American media

discourse (Entman, 2004), though it was present in some British and German coverage (Gerhards & Schäfer, 2014). As a result of this sense-making process, Islam has become intertwined with terrorism in public perceptions. As terrorism scholar White (2008: 75) wrote:

Islam suffers from cable news simplifications. Viewers are encouraged to believe that radicalism defines Islam and that all Muslims believe exactly the same thing. There is no difference between Hezbollah, Hamas and al Qaeda. In fact, the religious radicals have replaced the Soviet Union as a cold war rival to the West, and the only way they can be confronted is to respond to military force.

The aftermath of the 9/11 attacks saw a sharp increase in the salience of Islam in the U.S. public consciousness. Nacos and Torres-Reyna (2003) found an elevenfold increase in news items mentioning Muslim-Americans (along with the oft-conflated group of Arab-Americans — a conflation that merits its own dissertation) in the six months after the attacks compared to the number published in the six months before the attacks. In the years since the terrorist attacks of 2001, Islam has continued to be frequently connected to the risk of terrorism in American media coverage. News coverage of later terrorism-related incidents has included a dominant frame of fear of international terrorists (mostly Muslims or Arabs) as collaborators against a “Christian America” (Powell, 2011). This has a direct impact on the lives of Muslims, especially when media coverage blurs the distinction between actions taken by Muslims around the world with Muslims in the U.S., calling Muslim-Americans to account for events in which they played no part (Sharma, 2008). Even when the U.S. elite press is reluctant to explicitly connect American Muslims to terrorism, “there [is] still a tendency to link Islam in general to some of the scariest accounts of the terrorist threat” (Woods, 2007: 16), thus suggesting that the religious character of terrorism is indisputable. Islam has been portrayed as “a clear threat to Christianity, the Judeo-Christian traditions, America and its ideals, and Western civilization” (Gormly, 2004: 235). Kumar (2010) discussed five common frames related to Islam in post-9/11 media coverage that

are informed by some Orientalist tropes that have become commonsense — that Islam is monolithic, exceptionally sexist, averse to science and reason, inherently violent, and anti-democratic and pro-terrorism. Steuter and Wills (2010: 156) examined metaphors related to Muslims in coverage of the War on Terror and found that they were framed as carriers of disease and decay (such as gangrene, a cancer, or a virus) or as beasts or vermin (such as weasels, cockroaches, rats, snakes) — both types of metaphors suggesting eradication as a solution. When repeated in media coverage, “such phrases come to seem like simple, natural descriptions rather than motivated, symbolic choices that perform significant ideological work.”

However, the reality appears to be more complex than simply claiming that coverage of Islam and Muslims is uniformly negative. Bowe, Fahmy, and Wanta (2013) found that, while newspaper coverage of Islam generally was more negative than positive, it was also more neutral than negative. Ibrahim (2010) uncovered both disapproving depictions of Islam and others portraying Muslims as vital contributors to American life after 9/11. She identified two common Muslim frames in that period: American Muslims depicted as integrated, diverse, and peaceful members of society, while Muslims in other parts of the world were depicted as *jihadist* supporters of violent war against the West.

Framing: the intersection of media and culture

These ideologically connected symbolic choices could also be called media framing devices. Framing has been defined as the active process of creating, selecting, and shaping aspects of a perceived reality in ways that promote certain problem definitions, causal attributions, moral evaluations and treatment recommendations (Matthes, 2012; Entman, 1993). The results of this process are called “frames,” which are organizing principles that are shared in social contexts, persist over time, and that symbolically structure the social world in meaningful

ways (Matthes, 2012; Reese, 2007; 2001). Bateson (1955) first introduced the term framing to describe a psychological structure that delimits a set of actions. However, most scholars more directly build on the work of Goffman (1974), whose book *Frame Analysis* launched the contemporary study of framing. Framing has become a frequent theoretical context for communication scholars, and has emerged as perhaps the most utilized mass communication theory of the present era (Bryant & Miron, 2004).

Framing is not exclusively a feature of media content, but rather it is a common process that occurs in everyday existence. People negotiate, manage, comprehend, and respond to reality by relying on frames, which are “principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters” (Gitlin, 1980: 6). However, researchers have often turned to media content to examine how these principles are institutionalized in ways that contribute to as well as reflect the social construction of reality (e.g., Gans, 2004; Tuchman, 1980; Gitlin, 1980, Gamson & Modigliani, 1987; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989).

Both religion and journalism play similar roles within the cultural landscape — using symbolic communication in ways that facilitate certain understandings of the social world. In other words, both institutions provide frameworks of interpretation. Framing has been advanced as a powerful theoretical framework for exploring the ways people organize and understand their lived realities and the realities that are presented to them in media content. People experience reality in strips, and they interpret those strips based on frameworks of understanding, which may be natural or socially constructed (Goffman, 1974). Frames provide “definitions of a situation [that] are built up in accordance with principles of organization which govern events — at least social ones — and our subjective involvement in them” (Goffman, 1974: 10). The

interpretations that arise from such definitions can be transposed through various means, suggesting that the understanding of an event as “real” depends in part on the frame within which it is placed.

Media framing is a dynamic process that takes place in several locations — including the frame-building process undertaken by elites and social movements to produce and reproduce particular interpretations; the frames themselves that appear as content features of news; and the consequences of framing on audience members (Vliegenthart & van Zoonen, 2011; de Vreese, 2005; Gamson, 2001; Entman, 1993; Pan & Kosicki, 1993). The frame sites — and the exchanges between them — form the basis of framing research, covering topics from the competition among frame sponsors to the influence of news production routines on content to the characteristics of content to media effects on audiences (Matthes, 2012). Framing processes operate “in the universe of shared culture and on the basis of socially defined roles” (Pan & Kosicki, 1993: 55) and can be restated as the antecedents of framing, frames, and framing effects. The characteristics of frames are influenced by the cognitions of journalists; newsroom routines and journalistic conventions; and the political and cultural contexts within which news stories are disseminated (D’Angelo & Kuypers, 2010; Entman, 2004; Entman, 1993; Pan & Kosicki, 1993).

Framing conceptualizations range from investigating thematic and ideological features to analyzing stylistic and narrative techniques (Vliegenthart & van Zoonen, 2011). The most frequently used definitions of framing can be classified into two main categories (Matthes, 2009; Entman, Matthes & Pellicano, 2009): general conceptual definitions that describe framing but do not offer guidelines for operationalization (such as Reese, 2007; Goffman, 1974; Gitlin, 1980; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989) and more specific definitions that delineate what not only what

frames *are* but also what they *do* (Entman, 1993; Iyengar, 1994; Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). An example of the first type of conceptual definition comes from Reese (2007: 150; 2001: 11), who defined frames as “organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world.” These frames are embedded in the social environment and are spread across discourse, rather than residing primarily in news content. The second type of conceptual definition tends to more explicitly connect framing to media content, such as Entman’s (1993: 52) description of framing as the selection of aspects of a perceived reality to “promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation.” This is the most commonly used definition of framing (Matthes, 2009), based in part on its ability to be operationalized for content analysis (Bowe et al., 2012; Matthes & Kohring, 2008).

Paradigmatic approaches to framing research

Generally, framing research falls within three main paradigmatic approaches: cognitive, critical, and constructionist (Reese, 2007; D’Angelo, 2002). This research is based on the constructionist paradigm, but this section will examine the differences between the three.

The cognitive paradigm examines the interaction between news frames and the experiences, beliefs, and knowledge of media audiences (Hardin & Whiteside, 2010). In the cognitive approach, media frames are the combination of the cognitive schemas of journalists, newsroom discourse, and framing elements in texts, which activate audience schemas, which are mental representations of the relations between objects (B. Scheufele & D. Scheufele, 2010). Research in the cognitive paradigm is particularly focused on the impact that different ways of wording a message has on individual-level understandings (Vliegenthart, 2012; Tversky & Kahneman, 1981; Tversky & Kahneman, 1986), an effect that occurs at the point where a frame

comes into contact with the semantic nodal structures that comprise an individual's prior knowledge (D'Angelo, 2002).

In one example of a cognitivist approach, people gave inverse preference selections when a public health program was described in terms of lives saved rather than lives lost, even though the scenarios were numerically equivalent (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981). In another, stories about a Ku Klux Klan rally elicited more tolerance from readers when framed as a free speech issue than when framed as a threat to public order (Nelson et al., 1997). However, this approach has been criticized for lacking validity based on the artificiality of the experimental treatments in which people are exposed to one frame at a time, unlike the multiple and recurring frames that people confront in quotidian existence (Vliegenthart, 2012).

While the cognitive approach is mostly agnostic about the connection between frames and societal-level power (Reese, 2007), the opposite is true of the critical paradigm, which explicitly focuses its attention on issues of domination and power relations that undergird the professional practices of journalism itself. Critical framing scholars probe variations in frames and the notion that the processes and structures of journalism favor the points of view and ideologies of the elites who dominate the media discourse (Vliegenthart, 2012; Hardin & Whiteside, 2010; Reese, 2007; D'Angelo, 2002). In this perspective, framing commences during the story selection process by editors and continues with established frames guiding the continuing coverage and obscuring contrary information (Kuypers, 2010). With roots in the late Marxism of the Frankfurt School, the critical approach to framing offers a normative counterpoint to behaviorist or scientific approaches to media studies (McQuail, 2010). Critical framing scholars are interested in the ways communicators consciously or unconsciously construct particular points of view that encourage certain interpretations by making some facts

more noticeable than others (Kuypers, 2010), naturalizing particular interpretations so they become taken for granted (Hardin & Whiteside, 2010).

Finally, the constructionist paradigm assumes that there is not a single correct and stable account of the real world, but versions generated by the selective perceptions of the perceiver, in conjunction with individual attitudes, interests, knowledge, and experiences (McQuail, 2010). The constructionist paradigm focuses on what a frame is and how different frames arise (Vliegenthart, 2012), regarding them as tools that are accessible — in varying degrees — to a variety of social actors (Reese, 2007; D'Angelo, 2002). Within this paradigm, journalists process information in dialogue with politically invested frame sponsors in ways that reflect and also add to a topic's "issue culture" (D'Angelo, 2002: 877).

Vliegenthart and van Zoonen (2011) summarized a constructionist research agenda in a series of axioms: frames are multiple and can be oppositional; they are part of a struggle for meaning between actors with unequal resources; they are the result of routinized processes; and the frames used by audience members are socially situated and combined with other social processes. This perspective suggests that many interpretations of an issue are possible, but some interpretations are made especially likely through the way stories are framed in media content, which provides citizens with a discursive toolkit to use in making sense of public affairs (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). Therefore, news media function by providing some of the interpretive tools in this toolkit — an important task because "those tools that are developed, spotlighted, and made readily accessible have a higher probability of being used" (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989: 10).

The strength of the constructionist view of framing is that it "provides the most elaborate account of what a frame actually is and how different frames arise" (Vliegenthart, 2012: 937). It

does not ignore issues of power in the ways that cognitive-based scholarship does, nor is it as deterministic on that subject as critical scholars are. Rather, media discourse is one part of a larger cultural picture where challenges to the messages of the powerful can be mounted by social movements, and where audience members can create competing constructions of reality based on their daily lives as well as media imagery (Gamson et al., 1992). In this context, “the media are not passive conduits, but rather active participants in shaping the dominant frame for a given issue” (Bell & Entman, 2011: 553).

The constructionist approach encourages a holistic group of techniques for considering the parts of the media system. This perspective allows researchers to examine media content, the ways audiences decode content, and the ways groups conceive of media, but with the major underlying question of “the cultural place of the media in the contemporary world” (Alasuutari, 2002). Frames may be highly implicated in this media space. In his landmark essay on framing, Entman (1993: 53) posited that culture could be defined as “the empirically demonstrable set of common frames exhibited in the discourse and thinking of most people in a social grouping.”

Some constructionist analyses bear a resemblance to critical perspectives; especially in the way they acknowledge that journalists and others have limited autonomy to use frames to foster certain understandings of the social world at the expense of other understandings (Reese, 2010). As Glassner (2000: 591) explains: “The very point of much constructionist analysis is to suggest how meanings that are socially constructed prevent people from seeing important features of the reality before them.” However, constructionism differs from the critical approach in that it suggests a process “in which individuals and groups actively create social reality from different information sources” (Van Gorp, 2010: 84) rather than being merely subjected to elite reality constructions. Because media producers are embedded in the same cultural system as their

audiences, the constructionist paradigm conceptualizes power in ways that allows for a “discourse-centered conceptualization of power” which “may allow for a more realistic, sophisticated understanding of relationships between producers, content, and audiences/citizens” (Hardin & Whiteside, 2010: 315).

Both the cognitive and constructionist perspectives are concerned with the effects of framing, but at different levels. Cognitivist researchers are interested the ways individual encounters with news frames elicit interpretations that are stored in memory and activated later; constructionists seek to uncover “how individuals articulate their own views in contexts that must have included prior exposure to news frames and now entail socialization based on conversations about those frames” (D’Angelo, 2002: 878). However, a critique of the constructionist approach is that there is little agreement about precisely where meanings are constructed (Glassner, 2000).

Theoretical weaknesses in framing

In the face of framing’s ubiquity, it continues to suffer from theoretical weaknesses, including inconsistency in its application (de Vreese, 2005) and a disagreement between the use of generic or issue-specific frames (Matthes, 2009). Reese (2007) complained that some researchers give a perfunctory nod to the literature before proceeding with whatever they want to do, suggesting that framing runs the risk of becoming an ill-defined catch-all term. The framing literature reveals a wide variety of conceptualizations (Matthes, 2009; de Vreese, 2005) that have yet to be resolved into a coherent parsimonious whole. As D’Angelo and Kuypers (2010) noted, framing has been described in a variety of ways — as a theory (Scheufele, 1999), a paradigm (Entman, 1993), a class of media effects (Price et al., 1997), a multiparadigmatic research program (D’Angelo, 2002), and a rhetorical perspective (Kuypers, 2010).

There are conflicting perspectives on how to solve these conceptual challenges. Entman (1993) called for greater coherence in framing in an essay lamenting framing's status as a "fractured paradigm." D'Angelo (2002) responded that framing is better understood as a multiparadigmatic research program that benefits from a diversity of approaches. Given the multitude of views represented by the current framing literature, it is perhaps unrealistic to hope for a resolution in the form of a single parsimonious conceptual definition of framing. However, D'Angelo (2002) proposed what he called the "hard core" of framing for scholars no matter what perspective they are working from. This hard core suggests that framing studies must do one or more of the following: identify thematic units called frames, investigate the antecedent conditions that cause frames, examine how news frames activate and interact with individuals' prior knowledge to influence interpretations, and study how news frames shape social-level processes.

A second main theoretical weakness in framing research involves the level of abstraction at which frames are examined, i.e., whether the research has identified generic frames that can be generalized across time, topic, and location; or whether it uses issue-specific frames that cannot be generalized into other contexts (Matthes, 2009). This presents a dilemma for researchers: whether to conduct a detailed analysis that is not generalizable, or take an all-purpose approach that might lose the rich detail of the specific case (Vliegenthart, 2012). In a content analysis of fifteen years of framing studies from major communications journals, Matthes (2009) found 78% of articles reported issue-specific frames.

The main benefit of using generic frames is that they can be measured over time, across topics, and to compare different cultural contexts, offering a greater opportunity for systematic theory building (Vliegenthart, 2012; Matthes, 2009; de Vreese, 2005; Semetko & Valkenburg,

2000) in ways that are congruent with the cumulative nature of scientific discovery. Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) proposed a set of five generic frames: attribution of responsibility, conflict, human interest, economic consequences, and morality. Other common generic frames include Iyengar's (1994) episodic frames, which depict issues as specific instances; and thematic news frames, which depict issues in more broad and abstract terms by placing them in some context. Cappella and Jamieson (1997) developed a series of generic strategic political frames. However, an examination of the most commonly reported generic frames (Matthes, 2009) points to a lack of precision in conceptualization. Some generic frames are related to the storyline being told, while others relate to the *manner* in which the story is told. This difference points to a lack of clarity — for example, one could conceivably tell a story about economic consequences in either an episodic or thematic way. A second critique of the use of generic frames is a question of a loss of validity that comes from the loss of context-specific detail (Vliegenthart, 2012).

The benefits and drawbacks of issue-specific frames are, naturally, the inverse of their generic counterparts. An issue-specific approach offers rich and specific level of detail relevant to the issue under investigation (de Vreese, 2005: 55). However these frames are difficult or impossible to generalize or compare, making the cumulation of knowledge at the center of theory building more difficult (Vliegenthart, 2012).

The cluster technique and moral evaluations

In light of these conceptual divides, developing a systematic way of identifying frames is a necessary step to improve framing research. To ameliorate some of the weaknesses of finding frames in media content, some scholars (Vliegenthart, 2012; Bell & Entman, 2011) recommend an approach developed by Matthes and Kohring (2008) and employed by other scholars (Bowe et al., 2012; David, Atun, Fille, & Monterola, 2011; Kohring & Matthes, 2002), in which separate

frame elements are coded in a content analysis, after which a cluster analysis finds the ways those elements group together to form patterns that can be identified as frames (Matthes & Kohring, 2008). This procedure has been lauded for strong reliability but also for interpretability and sensitivity in the discernment of new frames.

At its basis, the Matthes and Kohring (2008) technique assumes that a frame is made up of several elements, which vary systematically and group together in specific ways to form patterns among the variables. Breaking a frame into its constituent parts is considered superior to the coding of holistic frames as a singular unit, which has been called one of the single biggest threats to validity in framing research (Matthes & Kohring, 2008). These threats to validity are twofold. First, when coding holistic frames, the list of frames must be known in advance, making it difficult to discover the emergence of new frames. Second, a frame is a complex variable and there is a great danger of researcher or coder bias in identifying such a compound construct. In the cluster technique, though, frames are not identified beforehand, and they are not coded directly.

Despite the promise and growing evidence of its effectiveness, the cluster method of frame identification still needs refinement — particularly when it comes to the moral evaluation component. While moral evaluations are an important part of framing, they can be difficult to recognize because of the dominant American journalistic convention of “objectivity,” which means that most outlets do not directly express ideological alliances, other than on editorial and op-ed pages or in bylined columns (Benson, 2010, Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). In terms of practices, American journalists have customarily viewed themselves as objective storytellers dealing in narratives (Benson, 2010). These traditional standards of American journalism practice are rooted in the Enlightenment model of rational discourse, in which the public must be

exposed to competing ideas before the truth can ultimately emerge (Tuchman, 1980). This means that news content is not likely to contain the direct moral assessments of journalists. Rather, events, problems and issues are placed in a “morality frame,” which constructs understanding “in the context of religious tenets or moral prescriptions” (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000: 195). Thus, the professional norms of American journalism dictate that moral evaluations in news content are typically made implicitly, through the use of quotes and opinions from involved parties (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

In previous framing research, the concept of moral evaluation has been most frequently operationalized in terms of benefits or risks (Matthes & Kohring, 2008; David et al., 2011), though it has also been operationalized as positive or negative evaluations (Donk, Metag, Kohring & Marcinkowski, 2012) or, in the case of “Climategate” coverage, data manipulation or criminal behavior (Bowe et al. 2012). None of these operationalizations seem to adequately map onto the concept of morality, though. For example, a certain public policy may carry economic or political risks or benefits that are not related to morality. To move framing research forward, it is important to find a better theoretical grounding for the moral evaluation element.

Moral Foundations Theory

Moral Foundations Theory (MFT) may provide a theoretical grounding for the moral evaluations in media frames because it examines morality at the cultural level (Haidt, Graham & Joseph, 2009) and has been used extensively to examine political discourse (e.g., Haidt & Graham, 2007; Graham, Haidt & Nosek, 2009; Graham, Nosek & Haidt, 2012; Finberg & Willer, 2012). Using metaphors like taste receptors (Graham et al., 2013) or the slider switches on an audio equalizer (Haidt, Graham & Joseph, 2009), MFT posits that morality is based on foundations that offer a wide — but not infinite — number of combinations, and members of a

particular culture find that certain “palates” or “presets” can be made easier to choose than others.

MFT is based on four principles: that there is an innate “first draft” of the moral mind that is organized in advance of experience; that this draft is “edited” during development within a particular culture; that moral intuitions are nearly automatic and come first, with moral reasoning generally used to justify these intuitive judgments; and that particular patterns of moral foundations emerged in response to diverse social challenges (Haidt, 2007; Graham et al., 2013). MFT research has mostly focused on five paired virtue/vice foundations, though the authors of MFT assert that there are likely other foundations as well (Graham et al., 2013). These moral foundations can be summarized as care vs. harm, fairness vs. cheating, loyalty vs. betrayal, authority vs. subversion, and sanctity vs. degradation.

The care/harm foundation is manifest in feelings of protecting the helpless, relieving suffering, sympathy toward victims and anger toward actors responsible for harm (Haidt et al., 2009; Graham et al., 2013). The fairness/cheating foundation is related to concepts of justice, cooperation, and fair play as well as a disdain for cheaters (Haidt et al., 2009; Graham et al., 2013). The loyalty/betrayal foundation is focused on fealty to one’s in-group in competition with out-groups over scarce resources (Haidt, 2007; Haidt et al., 2009; Graham et al., 2013). The authority/subversion foundation is related to notions of respect, deference and obedience toward hierarchical institutions (Haidt, 2007; Graham et al., 2013). The sanctity/degradation foundation is related to notions of both physical and spiritual purity and hygiene along with the feelings of disgust that accompany impure stimuli (Graham, Haidt & Nosek, 2009; Graham et al., 2013).

The fairness and care foundations are considered “individualizing” dimensions that emphasize the protection of and fairness toward individuals; the other three foundations are

“binding” dimensions that connect individuals to communities and institutions (Graham, Nosek & Haidt, 2012). Much of the research of MFT has been related to the differing moral components in political discourse. Research suggests that liberals tend to have moral intuitions that draw mostly upon on the foundations of prevention of harm and promotion of fairness, while the intuitions of conservatives tend to rely on all five somewhat equally (Haidt & Graham, 2007; Haidt, Graham & Nosek, 2009). Haidt & Graham (2007) argue that these foundational differences can lead liberals to misunderstand the moral evaluations of conservatives as immoral, because they do not recognize the moral foundations underpinning those intuitions. In this argument, what appears to be immoral is merely differently moral. Also, research suggests that each side exaggerates the other side’s ideological extremity, but extreme liberals tend to be particularly inaccurate in overestimating the differences, while moderate conservatives tended to be the most accurate (Graham, Nosek & Haidt, 2012).

There have long been suggestions that using framing to examine ideology in media content would be a more nuanced and sophisticated replacement for the overly simplistic concepts of “objectivity” and “bias” (Reese, 2001; Tankard, 2001). Investigating the moral foundations of frames using MFT is a further step in that direction. Using a cluster analysis on responses to a large-scale survey, Haidt, Graham and Joseph (2009) used MFT to find four distinct moral profiles in content: secular liberals, libertarians, the religious left, and social conservatives. Two of those patterns fit the traditional left-right political division, but the libertarian and the religious left profiles did not fit that continuum. Libertarians have been found to strongly endorse individual liberty over other moral considerations, possessing a unique moral-psychological profile that rejects morality based on a sense of obligation to others (Iyer et al., 2012; Haidt, Graham & Joseph, 2009). The religious left was found to resemble liberals on

the individualizing foundations and conservatives on the binding foundations (Haidt, Graham & Joseph, 2009).

These differences in moral reasoning show up in different issue-specific perceptions. For example, liberals tend to look at the environment as an issue of morality based on the care/harm moral foundation (Feinberg & Willer, 2013). Media coverage of the environment tends to be framed in those terms, which are more deeply held by liberals than they are conservatives — which may account for the deep political polarization on that issue (Feinberg & Willer, 2013). Even in headlines related to coverage of an event for which there was near-universal approval — the killing of Osama bin Laden — media producers tailored the moral dimension of their reporting based on the perceived political leanings of audiences (Bowman, Lewis & Tamborini, in press). In this case, the headlines from newspapers in more politically conservative regions tended to emphasize concepts related to in-group loyalty, while those in more liberal regions emphasized notions of fairness and justice. These findings were consistent with MFT-related research on the morality subcultures in the formation of perceptions (Graham et al., 2009; Eden & Tamborini, 2009; Tamborini et al., 2012).

Validation of frames through qualitative triangulation

As Matthes and Kohring (2008) suggest, frames can be conceptualized as the patterns of frame elements that cluster together over a corpus of media content. Because the cluster analysis process records each individual text's cluster membership, there is an opportunity to conduct a post-analysis qualitative validation. The researcher should be able to return to individual stories to verify that the frame to which they have been assigned is actually present in the story. The addition of an external validation step is in line with the notion of triangulation, in which multiple types of data, methods or theories enhance the credibility of the findings of a content

analysis (Stemler, 2001). The point of using rigorous content analysis in framing research is not “to be quantitative for its own sake, but to take the subjectivity out of the identification of frames” (Tankard, 2001: 104). Furthermore, such a tactic helps the researcher develop a fuller interpretation, because, as Weber (1990: 62) noted: “interpretation is in part an art. Those who naïvely believe that data or texts speak for themselves (the doctrine of radical empiricism) are mistaken. The content analyst contributes factual and theoretical knowledge to the interpretation.”

There are some major differences between quantitative and qualitative approaches to analyzing texts. Quantitative content analysis provides a way of converting media content into quantitative variables that are both reliable and valid (Fico et al., 2008: 115). The data thus gathered on those variables can subsequently used to make inferences about message senders, the messages themselves, the audiences of the message (Weber, 1990), the contexts of the ways messages are used (Krippendorff, 2013), or between content and some objective measure of reality (McQuail, 2010). The results of a properly designed and executed content analysis should be both generalizable and replicable (Neuendorf, 2002). A crucial step in quantitative content analysis is demonstrating intercoder reliability — the extent to which independent coders arrive at the same coding decisions when following established measuring procedures for evaluating message characteristics (Lombard, Snyder-Duch & Bracken, 2002; Neuendorf, 2002; Riffe & Freitag, 1997). Determining intercoder reliability is a necessary condition to establish validity (Fico et al., 2008; Lombard et al., 2002; Riffe & Freitag, 1997), but it is not sufficient by itself to establish validity. Combining methods allows researchers to collect data that are rich in both internal and external validity and also richer in breadth and depth (Brewer & Gross, 2010).

Because quantitative analysis is weak at determining the underlying meaning of a text, sometimes a subsequent qualitative analysis is required to report the significance or interest of the findings (Neuendorf, 2002). Compared to quantitative analysis, qualitative analyses are more impressionistic, flexible and useful for the discovery of novel relationships and hypotheses (George, 2009). Generally, these methods are deeply interpretive, focus on a close reading of a small number of texts, and feature an acknowledgment by the researcher of his or her own understandings are brought to bear on the research; the research is open-ended and always considered tentative (Krippendorff, 2013). Qualitative researchers stress that texts cannot be separated from the social and cultural contexts within which they were created — but that culture is difficult to study because it contains quotidian routines that are taken for granted (Altheide, 1996).

In the case of framing, Matthes and Kohring (2008: 274) present a strong argument for quantitative approaches by asserting: “a frame is, in fact, the sum of its parts—that is, a sum of frame elements. If there is anything beyond these frame elements that signifies a frame, we have to make it explicit in frame analysis. Otherwise, we cannot measure it.” However, because frames work symbolically through combinations of discursive devices, Reese (2001: 17) questioned whether frames become powerful “with the sheer weight of accumulated sentences” or whether they are more embedded, implicit, and complex. In addition to the framing mechanisms based in manifest content such as headlines and subheads, photographs and their captions, leads, sources, quotes, and graphs (Tankard, 2001), readers bring their own understandings to texts — including what is omitted altogether (Entman, 2010; Gans, 1993). Ultimately, the qualitative step of this research aims to answer the question whether the sum of frame elements add up to patterns that are indeed reflected in a qualitative reading of the texts.

Connecting the theoretical reality of the nature of frames with the methodological quandary of manifest vs. latent content creates a puzzle — and an opportunity — for framing researchers who hope to learn something about social reality by studying the patterns of information in news content. Reese (2007: 152) lauded an increase in understanding among researchers that there are features of frames that tell a tale larger than what is in the manifest content, opening more room for interpretation, captures a more dynamic process of negotiating meaning, and highlights the relationships within discourse” (Reese, 2007: 152). Content analysis itself cannot speak to the cultural context of frame creation, which is the province of constructionists. Are the frames building the culture? Or is it (as the constructionist perspective might claim) that both journalists and audience members are embedded in the same cultural milieu?

HYPOTHESES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the preceding review of the literature, this dissertation will answer the following research questions and hypotheses. First, the stories will be analyzed using Moral Foundations Theory to determine the moral foundations in the corpus of articles.

RQ1: What moral foundation profiles are present in the news coverage of mosque building controversies?

Second, this dissertation will identify the thematic units called frames in newspaper coverage of U.S. mosque construction controversies between 2010 and 2013. Identifying frames as thematic units is part of the “hard core” of framing research as defined by D’Angelo (2002). In identifying frames, this research will consider MFT’s five moral foundations — care/harm, fairness/cheating, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, sanctity/degradation — alongside variables measuring problem definitions, causal attributions, and treatment recommendations. Together, this analysis will answer the following research question:

RQ2: What are the frames that emerge in coverage of mosque controversies in American newspapers?

Because Moral Foundations Theory posits a moral “flavor profile” that is connected to certain political ideologies, this research should be able to use MFT to determine the ideological moral reasoning underpinning the frames — whether secular liberal, libertarian, religious left, social conservative (Haidt, Graham & Joseph, 2009), or some other profile heretofore undiscovered. Special attention will be paid to the moral evaluation component of each frame to answer the following research question:

RQ3: Do the moral profiles of the frames in the news coverage of mosque building controversies reflect particular ideologies?

Based on previous research discussed in the literature review (particularly Haidt et al., 2009), we may be able to predict the moral dimensions present in articles based on ideological position. Specifically:

H1: Anti-mosque articles will emphasize the moral dimensions of loyalty, authority, and sanctity.

H2: Pro-mosque articles will emphasize the moral dimensions of care and fairness.

As discussed above, this research will conduct a second-stage qualitative analysis to determine whether the cluster analysis frames can subsequently be detected in a review of individual stories from the corpus, confirming or challenging the validity of cluster analysis. This step will answer the following research question.

RQ4: Does a qualitative analysis of individual stories reflect the patterns of frames revealed in the cluster analysis?

METHODS

This dissertation analyzes print-edition articles (n=349) about mosque-building controversies in five American daily newspapers: the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* (n=45), the *Chicago Tribune* (n=37), the *New York Times* (n=83), the *Nashville Tennessean* (n=145), and the (Temecula, Calif.) *Californian* (n=39). The papers were selected to provide geographic diversity and also because they represent areas with a particularly controversial mosque project (such as Temecula and New York), multiple controversial projects (such as Chicago), or both (such as Atlanta and Nashville). Articles were found using newspaper websites and online databases (Lexis-Nexis, Gannett Newsstand, ProQuest) using the search term “mosque” for stories published between January 1, 2010, and December 31, 2013 (except for the *Californian*, which ceased publication on May 28, 2013). The articles were downloaded, and the sample was further narrowed to only staff-produced news stories, staff editorials, and bylined columns involving mosque construction controversies. Letters to the editor and blog posts were discarded. The sampling frame included the period in 2010 when a plan to construct an Islamic community center in New York was at its most controversial nationally. Local, staff-produced stories about that controversy were kept, but wire service content was discarded. The unit of analysis was the article.

A major concern in framing research is a lack of reliability reporting, with 55% of framing studies between 1990 and 2005 offering no details about intercoder reliability (Matthes, 2009). Two coders coded a randomly selected subsample of 10% of the corpus to assess intercoder reliability. Following the recommendation of Lombard et al. (2005), reliability was calculated based on both observed agreement and Krippendorff's α to correct for chance agreement. Because multiple sources could be coded for each story, reliability for that variable

calculated for each source type. For the 12 different types of sources, observed agreement ranged between 91.4% and 100%. For sources, the average of Krippendorff's $\alpha=0.74$. The other reliabilities are: Issue (80%, $\alpha=0.76$), Causal attribution (85.7%, $\alpha=0.80$) and Treatment recommendation (80%, $\alpha=0.64$). While treatment recommendation has a lower corrected reliability than would normally be acceptable, it is a variable that had little variation — many of the stories were coded “both” — and that had relatively few options for coders to choose from. Both of those characteristics work against the conservative Krippendorff coefficient. However, because observed agreement was comparable to the other variables, the decision was made to retain treatment recommendation in the analysis (a similar justification has been used by Bowe et al., 2012 and Brossard et al., 2004). Operationalization of the framing variables is detailed below.

Because this dissertation focuses primarily on the moral evaluation component of framing, the operationalization of that variable will be discussed first. To determine *moral evaluation*, the individual stories were analyzed using the moral foundations dictionary developed for use with the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) software, which counts virtue and vice terms related to the five foundations (see Graham, Haidt & Nosek, 2009). After counting the words, the software then calculates a percentage of words in each text that are related to each foundation. This is a technique that has been used in published MFT studies, and thus replicates an established method for determining moral foundations. This computer-assisted analysis will be coupled with a human quantitative content analysis for the other clustering variables of problem definition, causal attribution, and treatment recommendation.

When frames define problems, they “determine what a causal agent is doing with what costs and benefits, usually measured in terms of common cultural values” (Entman, 1993: 52).

Problem definition was operationalized by identifying the central sub-issues and actors, which taken together “define the central problem of a news story” (Matthes & Kohring, 2008: 266). While all of the stories in this study’s population of content were related to the central issue of the construction of a mosque, they were coded at a more granular level for main sub-issues that include regulatory processes, legal processes, activities by mosque proponents and opponents, the threat of terrorism, immigration, vandalism/hate crimes, and politics. Because some stories may include several sub-issues, the main sub-issue was considered the one identified in the headline and/or lead paragraph of the story. Actors were operationalized as attributed sources in the stories because a major part of journalistic framing takes place when journalists decide whom to quote or paraphrase. Sources were coded by category (i.e., elected officials, mosque supporters, mosque opponents, neutral experts, religious leaders, etc.). All quoted or paraphrased attributed human sources were coded. Organizations were counted if assertions were made in their names, but generic sources (i.e., “religious figures say the project should move forward”) were not counted if they were not tied to a specific named source.

Scheufele & Scheufele (2010) called *causal attributions* a core element of a media frame because different causal attributions for a problematic situation are likely to yield vastly different frames. For example, Entman (2004) contrasted the coverage of the shooting down of a Korean Airlines passenger jet by the Soviet Union with the downing of an Iran Air passenger jet by the US. Even though the events bore many similarities, the former was attributed to an intentional act of murder by the Soviet regime; the latter was attributed to an understandable error. These different causal attributions led to very different interpretations of what the events meant. Matthes and Kohring (2008) proposed operationalizing causal interpretations as failure or success attribution regarding specific outcomes. Previously, causal attribution has been

operationalized in terms of the protagonists responsible for the risks or benefits of the issue under discussion (Matthes & Kohring, 2008; Donk et al., 2012). For example, in a framing study of the so-called “Climategate” scandal, causal attribution was operationalized as whether the responsibility for the controversy was attributed to scientists or hackers (Bowe et al., 2012). In this study, causal attribution was operationalized as whether responsibility for the controversy was attributed to mosque opponents (for example, as a violation of Muslims’ freedom of religion) or mosque proponents (building on the notion that Islam is not a religion but a political force).

Treatment recommendations offer remedies or a specific call for action for the problematic situation defined in a frame (Matthes & Kohring, 2008). Conceptually, treatment recommendation or remedy has been closely tied to problem definitions in that each problem definition suggests a certain public policy solution (Entman, 2004). Entman (2004) noted that these recommendations are important in political communications because they directly support or oppose public policy. Donk et al. (2012) operationalized it as the call for regulation or support of nanotechnology, while Bowe et al. (2012) operationalized it in terms of whether climate change was depicted as true phenomenon that required action, or false. In the current study, treatment recommendation will be operationalized as calls in favor of or in opposition to the construction of a mosque.

RESULTS

Analysis of Moral Foundations

To determine the moral foundations in answer to RQ1, the individual stories were analyzed using a moral foundations dictionary developed by Graham and Haidt (n.d.) for use with the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) software, which divides each module into virtue (i.e., care) and vice (i.e., harm) terms related to the five foundations. This is a technique that has been used in prior MFT studies (such as Graham et al. 2009), and thus replicates one established method for determining moral foundations. The LIWC output was cluster analyzed to determine patterns in the content. As Matthes and Kohring (2008) noted, such textual patterns can be considered frames (or, in this case, partial frames, because only one of the four framing components is used).

Cluster analysis is an accepted method for content analysts “because, unlike factor analysis and multidimensional scaling, it is based on intuitively meaningful similarities among units of analysis, and its resulting hierarchies resemble the conceptualization of text on various levels of abstraction” (Krippendorff, 2013: 206). Following previous research (Bowe et al., 2012; Kohring & Matthes, 2002; Matthes & Kohring, 2008), this study used Ward’s (1963) method for the clustering algorithm. While other clustering algorithms work by successively combining pairs of points based on similarity, Ward’s method forms clusters by minimizing variability within each cluster (Mooi & Sarstedt, 2011; Rapkin & Luke, 1993). It is best used in cases where roughly equally sized clusters are expected in a dataset that does not include outliers (Mooi & Sarstedt, 2011) — a case that is likely to be true, given the rigidity of newspaper journalism conventions. In Ward’s method, the analysis begins with a group of subsets equal to (n), where (n) equals the number of individual cases. In the next step, the two most similar individual cases

are combined to form a cluster. This process is repeated hierarchically until there remains a single cluster of all cases — making Ward’s method an agglomerative method (Bailey, 1975). Hierarchical agglomerative methods have traditionally been the most dominant clustering methods (Aldenderfer & Blashfield, 1984). Ward’s method is also polythelic, which means it yields clusters in which members are similar on some, but not all, variables. This provides a level of imperfection that some researchers consider more “natural” (Bailey, 1975: 75).

After examining the cluster analysis’ graphical representation — its scree plot — for a steep increase in heterogeneity, a four-cluster solution was determined to be the best solution because of superior interpretability, compared to three- and five-cluster solutions. The means of each variable are displayed in *Table 1*. By examining the means of the variables in each cluster, certain variables emerge as the most important in determining cluster membership. Taken together, the combination of dominant variables in each cluster represent patterns in the articles contained in that cluster. To interpret the results, means greater than 0.45 were considered to be primary components of a cluster, while means between 0.25 and 0.45 were considered secondary components. Means smaller than 0.25 are too small to be an interpretable part of a cluster.

Each of the four clusters can be considered distinct moral foundation profiles. Cluster 1 (n=106) grouped around the module of loyalty (0.57), with secondary component of authority (0.27). Cluster 2 (n=108) grouped strongly on authority (0.96), with a secondary component of loyalty (0.32). Cluster 3 (n=85) clustered strongly around the foundations of loyalty (1.45) and authority (0.58). Cluster 4 (n=50) grouped around harm (0.74) and loyalty (0.65), with a secondary component of betrayal (0.31).

However, MFT posits that these pairs are ends of a continuum rather than distinct dimensions — though it has been suggested that the individual items function differently when

allowed to independently vary (Bowe & Hoewe, 2014). In a secondary step, this study combined the means of the virtue/vice pairs to see if they were easier to interpret when considered as a continuous whole. *Table 2* displays the combined means of the virtue and vice terms for each foundation. The first two clusters each have one main component. Cluster 1 is strongly clustered around loyalty/betrayal (0.65), with secondary components of authority/subversion and care/harm (which is not an interpretable module in this cluster if the two variables are considered separately). In Cluster 2, authority/subversion (1.02) is the main module, with secondary modules of loyalty/betrayal, fairness/cheating and care/harm. Again, the last two elements pass the threshold of importance when considered together, but they did not on their own. Cluster 3 has both loyalty/betrayal (1.54) and authority/subversion (0.65) as main components, with secondary components of care/harm and sanctity/degradation. This is the only cluster where the sanctity/degradation module emerges as an element of interpretation. Cluster 4 has three main components — care/harm (0.95), loyalty/betrayal (0.96) and authority/subversion (1.02) — nearly equally. This is the only profile where care/harm is a main component.

Incorporating moral foundations into frames

It is one thing to look solely at the moral foundations in the articles. But one of the overarching questions in this dissertation is whether adding a more sophisticated conceptualization of moral evaluations helps in the discovery of more complete frames. Following the MFT analysis, the moral foundations variables were incorporated with the other framing variables for a full-scale analysis.

Variables with an occurrence of less than 10% were excluded from the cluster analysis, because such infrequent variables are not capable of contributing meaningfully to the formation

of clusters. This led to the exclusion of the issues of interfaith activities, vandalism, and political campaigns, as well as law enforcement sources, and stories with no attributed sources.

After consulting the scree plot to look for a strong “elbow” in the diagram, and comparing several cluster solutions, the five-cluster solution was determined to be superior in terms of interpretability. There are trade-offs in the number of clusters selected — fewer clusters are easier to interpret, while more clusters may allow for the discernment of more subtle differences between groups (Mooi & Sarstedt, 2011). Because this research is concerned with the broadly descriptive frames, cluster interpretability was paramount.

Table 3a-Table 3d display the means of the variables in each frame cluster. As was the case with the moral foundations clusters, means greater than .45 were considered main components, while means between .25 and .45 were considered secondary components. Means below .25 are small enough components of a cluster to be considered nuance (or noise).

The first frame (n=123) was named the Local Regulation frame. It contained a main issue of regulatory processes, suggesting that this frame dealt mostly with the activity of gaining approval for the construction of a mosque. Islamic community members were the main actors, in dialogue with local government officials charged with granting approval. Because submitting to these sorts of bureaucratic procedures is part of “playing by the rules” in a society, it stands to reason that binding moral foundations of loyalty and authority are the main moral evaluations present. Causal attributions were mostly absent in this cluster, while treatment recommendations were split between neither and both as secondary components. Those results suggest that this was not a hot-blooded frame but rather more transactional in nature.

The second frame (n=67) was named the Political Debate frame. The issues in this frame were dispersed among all the categories, with opponent activities the only variable large enough

to be considered a secondary component. Muslim community leaders were the single largest type of sources (0.68) followed closely by anti-mosque activists (0.60). The presence of secondary source types of local government officials, state and national political sources, and non-Muslim religious community leaders suggests that this was a debate that sparked interest among a wide variety of stakeholders. The main moral evaluations were, again, loyalty and authority, with a secondary moral component of harm. Harm is an individualizing foundation that is based on antagonism toward those who cause suffering (Graham et al., 2013). Its presence in this frame suggests a subtle sense of injustice. However, because causal attribution and treatment recommendation were both balanced between the two options (i.e., “both”), the identity of the victim of this injustice is unclear. This balance of components suggests that this frame was dominated by the guiding journalistic principle of objectivity, in which an attempt is made for all sides of a debate to be represented.

The third frame (n=34) was named the Islamic Threat frame. This frame was comprised mainly of feature stories and secondarily of stories about opponent protests. Main sources were anti-mosque activists, and secondary sources included state and national politicians, Muslim community leaders, and non-Muslim religious community leaders. Similar to the previous two frames, the main moral evaluations were loyalty and authority while harm and betrayal were secondary components. Betrayal is unique to this frame. It is based on the idea of threats to the in-group (Graham et al., 2013). Because this frame clustered strongly around the idea that Islam is a political ideology and that the mosque in question should be stopped, this frame reflects a strong impression that Islam is an incompatible political ideology that poses a danger to American society, and that this threat must be stopped by regulation.

The fourth frame (n=84) was named the Muslim Neighbors frame, and in many ways it was the opposite of the third cluster. It was also made up of feature stories. It featured Muslim community leaders as main sources, with additional sources made up of local government officials, pro-mosque activists, and non-Muslim religious community leaders. Once again, the main moral evaluations were loyalty and authority (with an additional component of harm). The main difference from the third cluster was that it was strongly clustered around Muslim rights to free expression and the idea that the mosque should move forward. This frame suggests that Muslims are the ones who would be harmed if the mosque projects were stopped, and that it is important to extend full civil rights to Muslims in the U.S. because not doing so would violate American values.

The fifth frame (n=41) was named the Legal Authority frame. It was completely clustered around legal processes and featured local government officials and anti-mosque activists as main sources. The main moral evaluation was very strongly clustered around authority (presumably the authority of courts to settle controversial matters), with fairness and loyalty appearing as secondary components. The causal attribution was weakly clustered around “neither” and Islam as a political ideology. The treatment recommendation mainly clustered around “both,” suggesting editorial balance. The Legal Authority frame was very stable, appearing in roughly the same form in the four-, five-, and six-cluster solutions. This suggests that judicial processes occupy a particular kind of authoritative space in civic discourse.

MFT connects morality to ideology, and RQ3 posed the question of which ideologies are reflected in the moral foundation profiles in the frames. Figure 1 displays a histogram of the combined moral foundations in each of the frames. The moral profiles generally do not fit any of the four prototypical ideological profiles as identified by Haidt, Graham and Joseph (2009).

None of the frames emphasize the care/harm and fairness/cheating foundations enough to fit the secular liberal or religious left profiles. All of the frames emphasize the socially binding foundations of loyalty and authority too much to fit the libertarian profile. The social conservative profile tends to feature a balance among all five of the foundations, but all of the frames in this study emphasize one foundation much more than the others, and none of them include much of the sanctity/degradation foundation. In most cases, the dominant foundation is loyalty/betrayal, but in the case of the Legal Authority frame, authority. This suggests an ideological profile that emphasizes the binding social foundations of adherence to the in-group and deference to the hierarchical authority that supports that in-group social structure. This profile de-emphasizes the binding foundation of sanctity as well as the individualizing foundations of care and fairness. Thus, even though there are variations between the frames, these similarities across the five suggest that, in moral terms, these stories present a moral profile — and perhaps an ideology — that is unique in itself.

To further examine the ideological positions present in the stories, the moral foundations of stories that clearly presented positions on one side of the debate or the other were analyzed. H1 proposed that stories with the treatment recommendation that the mosque should be stopped would emphasize the moral foundations of loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/degradation. To answer that hypothesis, the moral foundations of stories with the treatment recommendation that a mosque project should be stopped were analyzed. Because the dependent variable was discrete, binary logistic regression was conducted. The dependent variable of treatment recommendation was re-coded equal to 1 if the mosque should be stopped, with all other cases coded 0.

The results of the binary logistic regression (displayed in *Table 4*) show that only one moral foundation, betrayal, was a significant predictor of mosque opposition at the 0.05 level. The odds ratio for betrayal is 4.24 with a 95% confidence interval of [1.01, 17.79]. Because this was one of the foundations hypothesized to be a significant predictor, it could be considered weak support for the hypothesis. But with the absence of any other expected variable as a significant predictor, the **H1 is not supported** overall.

The analysis of H2 is the inverse of H1. The dependent variable of treatment recommendation was equal to 1 if the mosque should be allowed, with all other cases coded 0. This hypothesis posited that stories with the treatment recommendation that the mosque should proceed would emphasize the moral dimensions of care/harm and fairness/cheating. The results of this binary logistic regression are displayed in *Table 5*. These results show two variables were significant predictors: care (0.001) and cheating (0.038), while two variables approached significance at the 0.05 level: authority (0.052) and sanctity (0.059). The odds ratio for care is 4.867 with a 95% confidence interval of [1.86, 12.64]; the odds ratio for cheating is 4.027 with a 95% confidence interval of [1.081, 15.001]. Because the two significant predictors were from the hypothesized moral foundations, **H2 is supported**.

Qualitative Analysis

This dissertation's RQ4 asks whether a qualitative analysis of individual stories reflect the patterns of frames revealed in the cluster analysis. Essentially, this research question calls for a qualitative analysis to test the face validity of the quantitative cluster analysis. Based on the results of the quantitative stage of analysis, a qualitative analysis was conducted through multiple readings of the corpus—a process that in some ways began as the population of content was prepared and continued through the quantitative content analysis process.

After the quantitative results were compiled, individual articles were grouped by frame membership. The constituent stories in each frame were printed and re-read as a group. The qualitative analysis was guided by Altheide's (1996: 17) concept of ethnographic content analysis, a reflexive, recursive, and interactive method oriented toward offering "clear descriptions and definitions compatible with the materials." The analysis is focused on the "situations, settings, styles, images, meanings, and nuances presumed to be recognizable by the actors/speakers involved" (Krippendorff, 2013: 23) to determine whether a holistic reading of the articles matches the groups in which the articles have been clustered.

Using the dominant components of each frame as a guide, the stories were analyzed to determine the extent to which they formed a coherent, thematic whole, and whether that whole was related to the contours of the frame as suggested by the quantitative analysis. Because moral evaluations are at the center of this study, special attention was paid to the moral foundations of the frames, though the other components were considered as well. In almost all cases, the loyalty and authority were the two moral foundations emphasized most, which meant the other framing components were required to help make sense of the frame. In addition to looking for stories that fit well with the frame, attention was paid to stories that seemed to be outliers that were not a good fit.

Following an initial reading of all the stories in the frame, notes were typed and synthesized. Stories that were particularly emblematic of the frame were read again. Insights about each frame are detailed below, with illustrative quotes taken from stories in the study population.

It's not about religion, it's about zoning: the Local Regulation frame.

The Local Regulation frame was solidly concerned with breaking news and day-to-day developments in the cases, not the deeper underlying issues. Islam was mostly — though not entirely — placed in the background. Rather than discussing sharia or terrorism, these articles focused on zoning and planning as mosque projects worked their way through the approval process at the local level. These articles generally have passing mentions of concerns about Islam or allegations of anti-Muslim sentiment, but the nature of those concerns is not discussed in depth. This was the single largest frame (n=123), and it is most strongly characterized by a lack of causal attributions related to either Muslim free expression or a societal threat posed by Islam. The issue definition was most strongly clustered around regulatory developments (i.e., zoning board meetings and other parts of the local approval process) and, secondarily, feature stories. The main sources were Muslim community members, with local government officials as a secondary component. As is true in virtually all five frames, the moral evaluations are most strongly clustered around loyalty and authority. The treatment recommendation was split between portraying both sides to portraying neither side.

Because these are generally hard news stories, they appear to strive for a clinical sort of objectivity. One way the framing attempted to appear objective is through the emphasis on numbers. Articles in this frame frequently gave precise square footages, talked about specific setbacks, buffers, floodplains, and height restrictions. Also included in this frame were real estate stories that discussed prices and stories that focused on a municipality's legal bills for responding to litigation over these developments.

Within this environment of facticity, most of the discussion in the Local Regulation frame centered on definitions of public space — often in terms of the character of a surrounding

neighborhood. What defines a mosque? What makes a neighborhood residential? How can a community define the “character” of a neighborhood — and who has the authority to determine that definition? These questions assume a moral dimension because the definition of a community is in itself the creation of an in-group, which is the concept at the center of this frame’s dominant moral foundation of loyalty.

This question of community characterization arose, for example, in Georgia, when Lilburn residents were upset after zoning was changed to allow for a Muslim cemetery. These residents complained that the change was made without citizen input — that is to say, in-group members were not given a voice. “You don’t keep us informed and you condescendingly say ‘You don’t understand,’” said one resident in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. “We want to know how this affects us as citizens.”

Sometimes, in-group/out-group tensions surrounding these questions turned heated. Lamenting the changing character of a neighborhood, some non-Muslim neighbors of the mosque in Lilburn alleged harassment by Muslims. Suggesting that neighbors were armed, one mosque opponent said, “We have a feeling somebody is going to get hurt.” A mosque leader denied the allegations, responding, “If they falsely accuse us, we will sue them.” In another *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* story, a neighbor responded to the rising presence of out-group by saying: “I’m a Christian, but I’m aggravated. I feel like we’re being invaded by people sneaking in.”

Many of the complaints were also couched in the systems of authority that govern what kinds of building projects are allowed or prohibited in a community. Traffic, noise, flooding, lights, and other characteristics of a large development were posed as the problem, regardless of use. For example, one resident near Atlanta said during a Lilburn City Council meeting, “it has

nothing to do with religion. If Publix wanted to put a grocery store down there, we'd be just as unhappy." In New York, stories also included the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's ability to regulate the content of advertisements on subways, giving one example of an official institution with the power to regulate the terms of discourse.

In several of the Local Regulation stories, members of the Muslim community seemed to accept that resistance was indeed based on land use questions and not religious animus. "I think most of the people here are concerned about will there be more people coming here, will there be more traffic?" said one Muslim community member near Atlanta. Less ambiguous, though, was the presence of several initial reports of vandalism incidents, including arson at mosques in Murfreesboro and Marietta, Ga., as well as a subsequent bomb threat in Murfreesboro and a defaced flag in Temecula. While, at first blush, these may seem unrelated to this frame, they fit an overall pattern present in the other stories. They were breaking news reports that featured official public sources (i.e., police and fire) and mosque community members responding. Such stories did not delve into the underlying causes of the controversy in any depth.

While any news article is a series of choices that could be called "framing" decisions, the Local Regulation frame contained many stories that could almost be considered "unframed." That is to say, they were news briefs or very short stories that were event-driven, giving the time and location of an event and offering scant details beyond the existence of a debate or controversy.

From a local zoning dispute into a national referendum: the Political Debate frame.

While the Local Regulation frame covered the issue in process-related terms and concrete developments, the Political Debate frame (n=67) framed it as discourse surrounding a political issue. The stories in this frame presented the opinions and analysis of a diffuse group of

stakeholders, including political figures, academic experts, and community members. The main differentiating characteristic of this frame was the causal attributions and treatment recommendations were almost entirely coded “both,” which would suggest an effort to provide editorial balance between opposing viewpoints. In many ways, these articles were about the conversation itself, often connecting the local events to their larger context.

The moral foundations emphasized were loyalty, followed by authority, but this frame included a secondary foundation of harm. The harm foundation became manifest when talking about the New York proposal, which, in the words of one candidate for Georgia governor, would “keep the wounds of 9/11 alive.”

The biggest single problem definition in this frame was opponent protests (though they were only a secondary component). Along with protests, there were lectures, forums, open houses, and other similar types of open events. Collectively, such events both disseminated information but also offered a performative space for partisans to stake out positions in a public way. Such happenings are in and of themselves discursive events, and when reporters write about them, they aren’t writing about the issue itself, they are writing about the discourse surrounding it. This is tellingly suggested in one *Tennessean* story, which began “Debate over whether a mosque should be built just south of Murfreesboro packed 1,000 protesters into that city’s public square on Wednesday, police estimated.” Framed that way, it wasn’t the issue itself that packed the square, but the debate over it.

These symbolic demonstrations offered an easy way for reporters to frame the opposing sides of the story. A vigil in Murfreesboro discussed signs with messages like “We’re all in this together” and “My god is not a bigot.” A similar event in New York featured signs that said, “Religious tolerance is what makes America great” while protesters from opposing sides angrily

confronted one another. In Temecula, opponents wore clothing emblazoned with slogans like “Proud American” and brought dogs, which some Muslims traditionally find unclean. “American families all have dogs,” one protestor said, using dog ownership as a proxy for in-group membership.

Such oppositional framing was common in the Political Debate frame. This is demonstrated in the leads of some the articles in this frame. Oftentimes, the lead would identify the issue as a debate and briefly summarize the two sides. Here are several exemplars of this type of lead:

“Plans for a new Islamic center south of Murfreesboro have some residents denouncing the Muslim religion and others calling the dispute one of the ugliest displays of religious intolerance in the county’s history.”

“The Cordoba House was supposed to be a monument to religious tolerance, and homage to the city in Spain where Muslims, Jews, and Christians lived together centuries ago in the midst of religious foment ... But instead of inspiring mutual respect, the center has opened deep divisions marked by vitriolic commentary, pitting Muslims against Christians, Tea Partiers against staunch liberals, and Sept. 11 families against one another”

“The debate over an Islamic center and mosque is resonating beyond Manhattan. Faith and community leaders in metro Atlanta appear just as divided as the rest of the nation over whether the project should be built near the site of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack in New York City that killed nearly 3,000 people.”

“On the one side, the issue is about the right to have a sacred space where believers can pray. On the other, it’s about preventing religious institutions from crowding residential neighborhoods.”

Along with these public demonstrations, another important part of the Political Debate frame was campaign politics. Even political figures with no direct connection to or responsibility

for the issue offered their points of view — particularly as it related to the Park51 development in New York. Partially because 2010 was a midterm election year, candidates and partisan pundits across the country made statements about the project in this frame. Both candidates for Georgia governor spoke out against it. Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn caused controversy when he compared New York’s Ground Zero to Pearl Harbor or Auschwitz and strongly urged Park51 organizers to “rethink their position.” A *New York Times* story dissected the political logic driving the issue on a national level, as partisans assumed positions that seemed to be based less on the merits of the project but on the political calculations associated with it. In the story, Republican congressional candidates “intensified efforts to inject the divide” over the Park51 development into the campaign discourse. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid spoke out against the project, though the *Times* article immediately noted that the Democrat was “facing a difficult re-election fight,” subtly suggesting that his position was driven more by poll numbers than deeply held convictions. The Republican candidate for New York governor, Rick Lazio, used the issue during the primary campaign to “attract a burst of public attention to a campaign that had failed to gather much momentum,” according to the *New York Times*. However, the paper posited that he risked “alienating moderates” in the general election by so doing.

Statewide Tennessee politicians also spoke out on the Murfreesboro mosque. Congressional candidates for the 6th District faced off on the issue: “Islam is a system of government,” said candidate George Erdel. Ben Leming retorted: “We do not fear those different from you and I. In America, we embrace them.” Gubernatorial candidate Ron Ramsey (who was lieutenant governor at the time) mused, “You could even argue whether being a Muslim is actually a religion, or is it a nationality, a way of life or cult, whatever you want to call it?”

New York Times reporters commented that the commemoration of the ninth anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks in 2010 turned political. “For the first time, the anniversary of the worst attack on American soil and New York’s deadliest disaster served almost as a backdrop to politics.” In this frame, the Park51 debate took on a feeling similar to international diplomacy between opponents and the Muslim community. New York Gov. David Patterson was portrayed as “seeking talks” on a new site; Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan offered to lead mediation between the sides; the Islamic Society of North America convened a summit of leaders from different faiths to discuss the issue.

The principle of public deliberation itself was frequently celebrated in the articles in this frame. “Everyone from President Barack Obama to Newt Gingrich has an opinion about the proposal to build an Islamic facility near the former World Trade Center Site in New York,” began one *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* story that described the neighborhood. The notion is that, through debate, the correct decision would emerge. One mosque supporter was quoted in the *Tennessean*, “This shouldn’t be an issue, but looking at all these people, it’s good to see a people debating over the First Amendment.” A candlelight vigil in Murfreesboro was organized “to encourage supporters and opponents of the mosque to demonstrate for a community free of violence, arson or other such activity.” Again, this even underscores the idea that it is not the ideological position taken that is important, but the fact that the debate is happening.

Many of the stories attempted to connect a local situation to a broader context. Probing this question, a columnist in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* asked: “Why, nine years after the terrorist atrocities in New York and Washington, are communities around the country coming unglued over the prospect of mosques?” Some stories in the Political Debate frame used reports from research organizations (such as the Pew Forum for Religion & Public Life) and external

experts were called upon to offer context and commentary. A long explanatory feature story in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* connected the debate over the Lilburn mosque as part of a broader national movement. “There is a notable trend of opposition to mosques nationwide,” explained a religious freedom expert from the American Civil Liberties Union. A similar feature in the *Tennessean* noted that “building new mosques has become increasingly difficult since 2001,” offering some statistics and related cases from elsewhere. The *Californian* ran a similar story, noting “the tenor and the verbiage associated with the debate has intensified in recent years.”

These stories mostly portrayed Muslims as going out of their way to try to fit in and become part of the in-group, but there was also frustration expressed. A Nashville Muslim leader attributed the debate to representatives of the two major political parties who “are using ... Islamophobia, the fear, for their own advantage.” A *New York Times* headline posed the question, “American Muslims Ask, Will We Ever Belong?”

They don’t want to be us: the Islamic Threat frame.

The articles in this frame (n=34) were a mixture of news and opinion pieces. The opinion articles generally took an oppositional stance, while the news stories mostly detailed some aspect of opponent arguments in detail. There were some opinion articles that were in favor of mosque developments, however, these explained anti-mosque arguments in depth in order to rebut them.

The Islamic Threat frame was most strongly characterized by the moral foundation of loyalty. In this context, loyalty is associated with concepts like nationalism, patriotism, and protecting the homeland. Within the frame, protecting the dominant American in-group is of utmost importance. Thus, the in-group is “American,” and thus anything that is identified as “Islamic” is considered out-group and, therefore, disloyal.

One clear example of Islamic Threat framing is an op-ed published in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, in which former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich discussed the Park51 development in New York. Using an alternate spelling of “sharia,” Gingrich wrote:

... radical Islamists are actively engaged in a public relations campaign to try and browbeat and guilt Americans (and other Western countries) to accept the imposition of Sharia in certain communities, no matter how deeply Shariah law is in conflict with the protections afforded by the civil law and the democratic values undergirding our constitutional system.

After providing a list of “shocking acts of barbarity” permitted by Islamic legal codes worldwide, Gingrich identifies Feisal Abdul Rauf as “an apologist for Shariah,” thus making the rhetorical turn of connecting Rauf directly to this threat. In this framing, Rauf is tied to foreign, terrorist forces, which are external menaces to the in-group. For “radical Islamists” — of which Gingrich considers Rauf a member — “the mosque would become an icon of triumph, encouraging them in their challenge to our civilization.”

The fear of sharia was a common theme in the Islamic Threat frame. In the Temecula debate, one pastor described the U.S. as being based in part on Christian ideals, while “Islam is built on a foundation of laws and ideals that spur people to ‘strap bombs on children and go on shooting rampages.’” In fact, Temecula stories were so centered around the fear of sharia that they adopted a boilerplate phrasing included in most of the stories on the issue (both within this frame and in other stories) describing the opposition position as mainly concerned with “Sharia law, which is defined as a set of rules that govern the lives of Muslims and that require them to impose that law on non-Muslims.” Later versions of that boilerplate paragraph noted that Muslims reject that interpretation.

This threat of terrorism cloaked in secrecy was another major theme. “Not enough people understand the political doctrine of Islam,” one opponent of a mosque in Brentwood, Tenn., was

quoted as saying. “The fact is that mosques are more than just a church. No one can predict what this one will be used for.” A similar email attributed to opponents was printed in its entirety in a subsequent news story. Similarly in the *Californian*, an opponent described a mosque as a “center of radicalization” and “a place where people are brainwashed to become radicals.”

Muslims, then, are portrayed as representing an unpredictable existential threat to in-group cohesion. “They don’t want to be us,” one Murfreesboro resident was quoted as saying, later adding: “Tennessee is a nice place ... I don’t know how long it will stay nice.”

Particularly in the New York debate, a frequent theme in this frame was the concept of healing, and especially the idea that the wounds caused by the 9/11 attacks had not yet been made whole. In the face of this collective injury to the homeland caused by the attacks, it becomes incumbent upon citizens to protect American symbols and institutions — the Constitution, the courts. Not only does this theme relate to in-group loyalty, it also relates to the secondary moral foundation of harm. This harm becomes manifest in insensitivity to the victims of terrorism — a group that includes the entire nation, but that generally excludes Muslims. As one opinion article in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* about the Park51 project in New York noted, “Americans’ wound hasn’t scabbed over in nine divisive years” and therefore project organizers should think “maybe this is not the very best moment to gauge the national reserves of tolerance and patience.” In other words, there is an injury to Americans that hasn’t yet been made whole, and the Muslim out-group is causing harm by insisting on creating a visible presence so close to where the injury occurred.

In this frame, the in-group of “Americans” and the out-group of “Muslims” seem to be mutually exclusive. As one Temecula mosque opponent stated in the *Californian*, “You can only be an American or a devoted Muslim.” The question of multiple identities was posed directly in

an *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* column around the anniversary of 9/11 in 2010. “For Americans, this is a time of mourning the events of 9/11 that forged a national identity around fighting global terrorism,” the columnist wrote. But, viewed through this lens of identity forged by collective injury, the symbolic interpretation of mosque building is at the hands of in-group members, intentionality of out-group members aside. “Muslims need to be sensitive to the fact that ground zero is a sacred place in the heart of Americans,” the columnist wrote, again setting up the two groups as oppositional. “The intent may be to build a place for healing, but if it is not viewed that way by a majority of Americans, then it will only lead to more strife.” Congruent with this interpretation is the oft-repeated phrase that 9/11 was committed “in the name of Islam,” which conflates the terrorist act of a few to a monolithic threat from many and excludes the possibility that Muslims can fully participate in the national tragedy.

This refusal on the part of Muslims to fully grasp the depth of injury to the homeland encompasses the other secondary moral foundation in this frame: betrayal. This concept contains ideas of enemies, treason, terrorism, immigration, deception and general “otherness.”

The qualitative analysis revealed that the fallout of the 2008 economic crash was discussed occasionally in this frame, generally in the context that the local in-group population connected demographic changes to the community to a decrease in economic prosperity. One *Tennessean* article put it this way: “Good economic times make for good neighbors. Bad economic times make bad neighbors.” A similar note of generalized unease at the direction of society was sounded at a protest in Temecula, which linked the mosque, illegal immigration, and tax policy as evidence that Americans faced a variety of threats, which included the growing Muslim population.

Acceptance bridges differences: the Muslim Neighbors frame.

The Muslim Neighbors frame (n=84) was most strongly clustered around its treatment recommendation — nearly all of the stories suggested that the mosque should be allowed. The causal attribution was strongly clustered around Muslim rights to free religious expression. Muslim community leaders were the main source types, and the main moral evaluations were loyalty, followed by authority.

While the moral evaluations were very similar to those in the Islamic Threat frame, the interpretation of what those moral foundations mean is different. In the Muslim Neighbors frame, the major theme is that Muslims are loyal community members and that communities need to be united by including all. In this frame, loyalty means upholding American ideals of equality and fair play (as opposed to the Islamic Threat frame, where loyalty meant protecting the homeland). Those who would deny Muslims their rights were often called “un-American” (unlike the Islamic Threat frame, where Muslims were the ones described in such terms). A columnist in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* offered a summary of this frame in the passage: “In this country tolerance trumps ignorance, confidence defeats fear, and acceptance bridges differences.”

This difference in theme can be seen in some differing terminology. For example, the Islamic Threat frame typically refers to Islamic community members as “radicals” or attributes terrorist links to them. In the Muslim Neighbors frame, organizers are portrayed as “moderates.”

Several stories in the Muslim Neighbors frame were feature stories that tried to demystify and normalize what goes on inside mosques, frequently comparing mosques to churches. For example, this passage from the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* focuses on the similarities among faiths, rather than the differences:

“Classes in Arabic and reading the Quran sound much like Bible study, complete with Sunday school. Although it serves a specific religious need, the center participates in many community events, including the March of Dimes, Relay for Life and food bank drives. You’d find a similar list at the Methodist church across the street.”

In other examples, a young Muslim girl is described in the *Tennessean* as holding a Barbie doll at prayer time, while some women eschew headscarves and robes for slacks and makeup. “In some ways, it’s like any church service,” wrote the *Tennessean* journalist. In New York, the idea was similar, but the descriptions were grittier and more evocative of the big city. The fabric of the neighborhood includes a multiplicity of uses — including some that could be considered less-than-savory. “A strip joint, a porno store and a government-run bookie operation. No one has organized demonstrations to denounce those activities as defiling the memory of the men and women who died a few hundred yards away,” a *New York Times* reporter wrote. “But an Islamic center strikes a nerve for some.” This, the reporter subtly suggests, is absurd.

In this frame, Muslim community members were often portrayed as making great effort to prove their neighborliness (and thus their loyalty) to the community in order to gain acceptance. For example, one member of a mosque near Atlanta told the *Journal-Constitution* that it was important to show non-Muslim neighbors that Muslims aren’t scary. “Smiling is charity,” she said “You can’t just smile at Muslims.” In another Atlanta example, a community member said, “We’re willing to go the extra mile ... We will continue to be good neighbors.” Similar sentiments were expressed by a community member after a project was approved in the Chicago suburb of Willowbrook: “I can’t read people’s minds, but I have heard from neighbors that this wasn’t about religion, and I believe them ... The work for us has just begun. Now our job is to show them how good of a neighbor we can be.”

Sometimes, this framing that emphasized similarities was raised in the aftermath of anti-mosque vandalism. After a sign marking the future construction of the mosque in Murfreesboro was spray-painted “Not Welcome” by a vandal, a national Muslim civil rights activist told the *Tennessean*, “There are millions of American Muslims going to work and contributing to society on a daily basis, and unfortunately we get tarred with the brush of terrorism because of things that happen (both in the United States and) overseas that we have no control over.” After a subsequent arson at the construction site, a community member said, “It’s shocking and sad, but we know this is not representing the majority of the people in this lovely country.”

Such statements subtly play on the in-group/out-group distinctions at the center of the loyalty foundation but suggesting that the out-group is not Muslims, but rather those who would deny Muslims their rights. To underscore this theme, the *Tennessean* ran several news stories and commentaries that connected contemporary anti-Muslim sentiment to the bigotry of the Civil Rights era or to the Ku Klux Klan burning of the first Catholic Church in Murfreesboro in 1929. “The mosque site arsonists join the 1960 bombers and the KKK hiding behind white sheets: They never let facts get in the way of their own stupidity,” wrote one *Tennessean* columnist. Murfreesboro opponents were further described as “delusional” and compared to Nazis — the most detested out-group association one can make in political discourse.

The authority at work in this frame is strongly related to the Constitution and the rule of law. For example, a Temecula councilman responded to a question about what he would tell his grandchildren about his vote in favor of the mosque by saying, “I’ll tell them I was proud to sit up here and uphold the Constitution.” In particular, the First Amendment’s protections of religious practice were often cited. “The First Amendment guarantees people the right to worship where they live,” said one Southern Baptist leader in the *Tennessean*, calling “for all people of

faith and good will to stand up for the rights of our Muslim fellow citizens.” In his ruling allowing the Murfreesboro mosque to move forward, Chancellor Robert Corlew III wrote: “Those who are adherents to Islam are entitled to worship in the United States just as those who are adherents to more universally established faiths.” However, even in his ruling affirming that Muslim rights to religious expression, Corlew continues to place Islamic adherents in an out-group position by suggesting that Islam — the faith of a quarter of the world’s population with a more than 1,400 years of history — is not “universally established.”

The authority of local laws was also cited. For example, one county commissioner who voted in favor of the Murfreesboro mosque responded to fire from opponents by saying: “I’m a Christian, and I’m proud to be a Christian. But we have to vote on things that are legal and binding, and that’s the reason it was a unanimous vote on the planning commission.” An important part of legal authority, though, is in the equitable application of it. In a *Tennessean* editorial, the writer noted that traffic studies were required of a mosque development when they were not required for large church developments. “Between those who are feeding paranoia over the local Islamic community and those who are placing every governmental obstacle in the mosque’s path, there is no room for real discussion or a search for understanding — and that is what is needed most at this critical moment,” the editorial said.

Someone will win. Someone will lose: the Legal Authority frame.

In the Legal Authority frame (n=41), the most important framing component was the problem definition. All of the stories in this frame were about legal processes — mostly lawsuits that had been filed to oppose either local government approval or denial of mosque projects. It was strongly clustered around anti-mosque activists, local government officials, and judges. This frame also had a unique moral foundation profile, compared to the other four frames. It is the

frame that had the strongest presence of the authority foundation, and it is the only one in which authority was stronger than the loyalty foundation (which was a secondary component). It was also the only frame where fairness was a secondary component. Most of the articles were news stories, but there were a few staff editorials or columns. In various instances, mosque supporters and opponents alike sought redress from the legal system. Mosque supporters in Lilburn and Alpharetta, Ga., and DuPage County, Ill., filed suits opposing a project denial; opponents in Temecula and Murfreesboro were the sources of legal action over a mosque that had been approved. A New York firefighter unsuccessfully tried to sue to stop the construction of Park51.

One reason why authority is so dominant in this frame is the definitive terms in which legal proceedings are described. Judges “decide” issues, legal disputes are “resolved” or “settled,” lawsuits are “dismissed,” arguments are “rejected,” opposing parties are “ordered” into mediation. These terms — and words like them — carry with them a sense of conclusiveness. Two parties are in dispute (in this frame, mostly mosque opponents and local government officials) and a judge wields the position of authority to come down on one side or the other. The authority foundation in this frame largely centers on concepts like respect for law, the duty to obey court rulings, and allegiance and submission to the juridical system. This authority to make decisions with finality was at the heart of a comment by one Atlanta judge who noted in the *Journal-Constitution* that when he rules, “Someone will win. Someone will lose.”

This frame was dominated by stories from the *Nashville Tennessean*, which accounted for 33 of the articles and chronicled a dramatic case that included an eight-day trial spread out over three months, which was followed by several years of appeals. The state Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal in 2013, and the U.S. Supreme Court did the same in 2014. In the Murfreesboro case, opponents took to the courts to try to overturn the approval of a mosque. In

this instance, the Islamic Center of Murfreesboro was not a party to the suit; thus its members were not part of the defense. As a result, this is the only frame in which Muslim community members did not make up either a primary or secondary component.

At the same time, the stories in this frame allowed opponents of the Murfreesboro mosque to air highly controversial (and mostly unsupported) claims against Islam as a religion, portraying it as a violation of the moral foundation of loyalty in the extreme. For example, one plaintiff was quoted saying about Islam, “The religion part is less than 30 percent. The rest of it is about killing nonbelievers.” Later in her testimony, she was asked by the plaintiffs’ attorney “Are you aware that Islam has executed over 278 million (people) since its inception?” She responded in the affirmative. Another plaintiff testified that she believes Islam endorses “beheadings, forced conversions, and pedophilia,” though the article did not offer evidence that she had any expertise to speak authoritatively on these questions. The judge in the case rejected the arguments relating to Islam, though he ruled that there was insufficient public notice of the meeting and voided the approval of the mosque, but declined to stop construction. The *Tennessean* published opinion pieces in support of the mosque that were highly critical of mosque opponents. Opponents were referred to as “sore losers” and their testimony was called “sheer nuttiness.”

The stories in the *Tennessean* can be contrasted with some of the other stories included in this frame. For example, stories from the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* largely described the legal process, mentioning that there were allegations of religious discrimination in zoning, but did not detail charges against the Islamic community.

An oft-cited issue in this frame is whether local governments were in violation of the federal Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons act of 2000 (RLUIPA), which aims to

prevent faith-based discrimination in the application of zoning laws. Morally, this issue combines the concept of authority (in that it is a requirement based in law) as well as fairness (whether the law has been fairly applied). The attorney representing the Irshad Learning Center in Illinois offers an example of this argument: “The law requires that the county not impose a substantial burden on a religious entity, and that’s what was done here,” he said. “The county did impose numerous conditions on them that have never been imposed on another religious institution.”

One of the characteristics of the authority moral foundation is its hierarchical nature. This hierarchy of authority is present in this frame. Local authorities make preliminary decisions (i.e., the zoning board); these decisions can be appealed to state courts. Federal authority can be brought to bear either through federal courts. However, federal authority can also be exerted through the intervention of the Department of Justice (DOJ). The department, which is responsible for enforcing RLUIPA, appears like a *deus ex machina* in several of these cases to make this very argument. For example, the city of Lilburn signed an agreement with the DOJ that required it to “not impose different zoning and building requirements on other houses of worship.” This agreement came after the DOJ determined that Lilburn’s denial of a rezoning application was “based on the religious bias of city officials and to appease members of the public who opposed the construction of a mosque because of religious bias.”

Examining outliers

Many stories were obviously part of one frame or another; however, each frame contained stories that were outliers that didn’t fit perfectly. For example, a *Tennessean* feature story about the Islamic Center of Tennessee converting a movie theater into a mosque was included in the Local Regulation frame, but it seemed more appropriate for inclusion in the

Muslim Neighbors frame. Similarly, the Local Regulation frame included some stories about lawsuit filings and legal rulings that were more similar to stories in the Legal Authority frame, including an in-depth *Tennessean* feature story about the legal issues around a ruling in the Murfreesboro case. However, because this was a ruling in a case that questioned the local regulatory process, its status is somewhat ambiguous. In the Islamic Threat frame, several stories discussed interfaith activities that were conciliatory in nature and seemed more naturally to belong in the Muslim Neighbors frame. These included stories about an Atlanta interfaith group called the Friendship Force and the placement of billboards around Nashville that said “Love Your Muslim Neighbors.” The stories grouped in the Muslim Neighbors frame generally held up as a thematic whole, but several stories — particularly from the *Chicago Tribune* — seemed like they may have been more suited to the Islamic Threat, Local Regulation, or Legal Authority frames.

While this may expose a weakness of the cluster technique, some ambiguity is to be expected. The Islamic Threat and Muslim Neighbors frames included many similar components, even though they portrayed diametrically opposed interpretations of the issue. Furthermore, the nature of a polythelic cluster analysis technique like Ward’s method dictates that cluster members are similar on some, but not all, variables. This means that articles at the centers of clusters are more similar to each other than ones at the edges, and the farther from the center, the greater the ambiguity.

DISCUSSION

This research aimed to examine the coverage of mosque-building controversies to examine what space — both physical and metaphorical — Muslims are allowed to occupy in contemporary America. A cluster analysis revealed five main frames in the debate, and a qualitative analysis of the articles in those frames verified that those frames largely map the contours of the discourse surrounding the issue.

The initial MFT analysis offered some useful insights — particularly that the corpus of articles was strongly rooted in socially binding moral foundations. However, considering moral evaluations alone was insufficient to fully understand what was going on in the coverage. When incorporated into an analysis with variables for problem definitions, causal attributions, and treatment recommendations, the MFT variables did contribute greatly to a nuanced accounting of the frames in the debate.

These mosque construction controversies had their genesis in the local regulation of land use. This origin was shown in the Local Regulation frame, which portrayed the issue procedurally as the concern of local officials and local Muslim community leaders. But these controversies at some point moved beyond questions about building heights and traffic studies to enter political discourse over the position of Islam in American society. This Political Debate frame saw the introduction of politicians and pundits who did not have a direct stake in the outcome, but who used the issue to symbolically cloak themselves with a particular ideological position. In this frame, the two sides were presented as a back-and-forth debate, and topics like war, terrorism, and the economy were introduced. The Islamic Threat and Muslim Neighbors frames were twins in many ways, each distinct from the Political Debate frame through the emphasis of one favored outcome or the other. In one, Islam is presented as an existential threat

to American society and, therefore a force to be strenuously opposed by preventing the construction of mosques (or at least investigating the Muslims who want to build them). In the other, Muslims are presented as contributing members of society whose rights are being trampled by the forces of paranoia and bigotry. Finally, the Legal Authority frame emphasized the special power the rule of law holds in American society. The qualitative analysis of the stories showed that these five frames encompassed the bulk of the debate. Even when an individual article seemed to have been categorized into the wrong frame, it seemed to naturally fit into one of the frames that had already been identified (and not some other undiscovered frame).

It is important to note that these frames were happening more-or-less simultaneously. A newspaper could publish a Local Regulation story one day and a Muslim Neighbors story the next (although legal processes generally came after regulatory processes had occurred). Furthermore, they did not occur in equal proportions. The most common frame, by far, was the Local Regulation frame. The Muslim Neighbors frame was the second most common, followed by the Political Debate frame. The least common frame was the Islamic Threat frame. This array of multiple and oppositional frames is not surprising — in fact, it is what one might expect if approaching framing from a constructionist perspective (Vliegenthart & van Zoonen, 2011). The debate over this issue is a struggle among a variety of actors to negotiate and create meaning within routine social processes. The process-related frames concerning local regulation, legal proceedings, and election campaigns account for two-thirds of the coverage. These frames seemed to tell the story through concrete day-to-day developments in an episodic way, to use Iyengar's (1994) concept. Conversely, the other two frames offered cues for interpreting these routine processes within this struggle for meaning similar to Iyengar's concept of thematic frames. These two types of frames should not be considered in a vacuum because they all

influence audience understandings. For example, audience members inclined to accept the Islamic Threat framing may interpret Regulatory Process stories differently than those inclined to accept the Muslim Neighbors framing.

The differences in frame frequencies raise an important question about the consequences of framing. The most frequently occurring frame — the Regulatory Process frame — contained 123 articles, but its dominant concern with technical matters rendered it fairly unexciting overall. On the other hand, the least occurring frame was the Islamic Threat frame. At 34 stories, it accounted for less than 10% of the study population. While the Islamic Threat frame was the smallest, it was also the most negative, contrasted with the Muslim Neighbors frame, which was more positive and included more than double the number of stories. However, one should be careful in equating the sheer number of articles in a frame with frame strength. In agenda setting research, a growing body of literature supports the idea that negative information has a greater agenda-setting power than does positive information (Coleman & Wu, 2010; Ragas & Kiouisis, 2010; Wu & Coleman, 2009). This cuts to the very heart of the question of whether it is sufficient to be quantitative, measuring, in Reese's (2001: 17) words, "the sheer weight of accumulated sentences." Relying on counting alone may only get us so far.

This study cannot directly answer questions about the agenda setting or priming effects of negatively valenced coverage, and the constructivist paradigm in which it is based raises doubts about whether we can isolate the effects of a particular group of articles outside the cultural setting in which it is embedded. In all cases, to make broader claims, content analysis data must be paired with information either about those producing the content or those consuming it. But analyzing texts still tells us some important things. As Krippendorff (2013: 66) notes, "texts do not merely map, speak about, or indicate features of an existing world, they can *construct worlds*

for competent speakers of a language to see, enact, and live within.” It is important remember that these articles are the product of a dynamic and socially constructed discourse. It may stand that infrequent but particularly negative frames can set the tone of a debate and influence audience interpretations of more neutral information that follows — a Legal Authority story could thus be read as an Islamic Threat. And, to the extent that some negative framing is based on unfair or inaccurate stereotypes, journalists should ask themselves whether even allowing rare occurrences is good enough.

Using Moral Foundations Theory to operationalize the framing component of moral evaluations provides some important insights for interpreting frames. As was noted earlier, the foundations identified by MFT can be broadly divided into two groups — “individualizing” foundations that are related personal liberation and “binding” foundations that are concerned with the protection of group cohesion (Haidt, 2008; Graham et al., 2009). Overall, the frames emphasized socially binding foundations of loyalty/betrayal and authority/subversion.

Generally speaking, the loyalty foundation relates to notions of allegiance to one’s in-group (at the expense of an opposing out-group) (Graham et al., 2013). This in-group loyalty has evolutionary roots in competition between groups over scarce resources (Haidt, 2007; Haidt et al., 2009; Graham et al., 2013). Previous research has shown that Muslims are frequently depicted in an out-group position in American media coverage (Hoewe et al., 2014; Ibrahim, 2010). This was also true in these frames, as Muslims were often portrayed by opponents as affiliated with terrorism and part of a nefarious political movement aimed at destroying the homeland. Yet there was a loyalty-based counter-narrative presented as well, in which mosque opponents were framed as agents of intolerance, violating many of the U.S.’ most deeply held principles of tolerance and free expression. In both cases, though, protecting the values that bind

Americans together as a people were emphasized. The second binding foundation that was stressed — authority — is related to the legitimacy of institutions and the maintenance of social order through the establishment of hierarchical relationships characterized by obedience and deference to superiors (Graham et al., 2013). Therefore, it is no surprise that the Legal Authority frame placed the most emphasis on this concept of all the frames.

Perhaps surprisingly, the moral foundation of sanctity/degradation was not strongly present in the articles. It only showed up as a secondary component in Cluster 3. This foundation has its roots in issues of ritual purity and spiritual cleanliness, which has sparked what is often called the “behavioral immune system,” which features the human-specific emotion of disgust (Graham et al., 2013). Its relative absence in these articles may support previous findings that show Islam is often treated in American media discourse as a political matter rather than a spiritual one (Bowe, 2013). The emphasis of loyalty and authority is consistent with some previous research. Bowman, Dogruel, and Jöckel (2011) found that Americans stress binding moral foundations more than Germans, and that those differences are related to television and movie selection preferences, suggesting that there may be a commercial incentive for media organizations to frame stories strongly in those terms.

While individualizing foundations were not main components of any of the frames, the logistic regression results showed that care and cheating were significant predictors of mosque support. Care includes concepts like safety, peace, security and protecting; cheating encompasses bias, injustice, bigotry, and discrimination. Stories with a treatment recommendation in support of mosque construction endorsed the desire of Muslim communities to have a safe place to worship and portrayed those in opposition as forces of prejudice or segregation. Of the individualizing foundations, harm was a secondary component of three of the frames (Political

Debate, Islamic Threat, and Muslim Neighbors). Harm carries with it concepts like war, violence, killing, and attacks. Within American media discourse, the reverberations of both the 9/11 attacks and the wars in Muslim-majority nations Iraq and Afghanistan are frequently referenced in articles about Islam and Muslims — even when discussing Muslims unaffiliated with those topics. This continued association of Islam with the topics of terrorism and war may be so salient for some audience members as to drown out other associations. Further differentiating the Legal Authority frame from the others, this was the only frame in which the individualizing foundation of fairness is a secondary component, suggesting that legal solutions must not only uphold in-group societal values, but they also must be fair to the parties involved in order to be perceived as just.

Much of the research of MFT has been related to the differing moral components in political discourse. Research suggests that liberals tend to have moral intuitions that draw mostly upon on the foundations of prevention of harm and promotion of fairness, while the intuitions of conservatives tend to rely on all five somewhat equally (Haidt & Graham, 2007; Haidt, Graham & Nosek, 2009). Haidt & Graham (2007) argue that these foundational differences can lead liberals to misunderstand the moral evaluations of conservatives as immoral because they do not recognize the moral foundations underpinning those intuitions. In this argument, what appears to be immoral may be better described as differently moral.

Yet the moral profiles found in this study were strongly based in socially binding moral foundations. On one level, this finding stands the notion of a “liberal media” on its head, because liberal moral reasoning is typically based on individualizing foundations. But the preference for these community-building moral foundations may not be surprising when considering the traditional function of journalism in American society. This function dictates that American

journalists work to inform the public, and in turn those informed citizens have a responsibility to the greater community (Tuchman, 1980). Considering how embedded media institutions are in the functioning of that social order, perhaps media content at its core serves a binding function. As Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007) explained, journalists have a loyalty to citizens and a responsibility to foster public debate and compromise. These results may conceivably show a particular journalistic moral foundation profile.

These results will need to be squared with other studies of moral foundations in public discourse. While the foundations of loyalty and authority were strongly emphasized in controversies about mosque construction, Bowman et al. (in press) found ideologically related differences in moral foundations in a content analysis of headlines related to the killing of Osama bin Laden in which conservative-region newspapers emphasized authority and loyalty and liberal-region papers emphasized fairness and cheating (or, as they referred to it, reciprocity). Unlike that study, this research did not consider regional differences. Further, because of their brevity, it could hold that headlines are more starkly framed because there is not room to portray nuances or multiple positions. But, perhaps most importantly, those studies only considered moral foundations and did not examine the other components of framing. As this study shows, moral foundations group differently when incorporated into a full framing analysis than they do on their own.

Considered alongside other studies of coverage of Islam, this study further suggests that the position of Muslims in within American pluralism is still unsettled. Ibrahim (2010) found that American Muslims were portrayed as a mostly peaceful part of an American in-group, while foreign Muslims were portrayed as violent jihadis in out-group terms. On the other hand, Hoewe et al. (2014) found that American Muslims were consistently portrayed as members of an out-

group by associating them with references to foreign nations in a decade of coverage of sharia. These varying results might be change over time or be related to the specific details of a debate. However, the in-group/out-group distinction seems key, where Muslims are “always required to perform and thereby prove their loyalty” by disassociating themselves from international conflicts in order to become a part of the in-group (Morey & Yaquin, 2011: 88).

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This research makes a contribution to framing theory by using Moral Foundations Theory to operationalize moral evaluations and by verifying the cluster analysis technique through qualitative analysis. Even though care was taken, like all research it contains limitations. These limitations include omitting visuals from the framing analysis, partial reliance on computer-assisted content analysis, and the selection of a morally intense debate to study moral foundations. It also points to future research opportunities to continue improving the operationalization of other framing components.

Foremost among this study's limitations is the fact that it examined only the text of newspaper articles and not the accompanying visuals. Visuals transmit a tremendous amount of information (hence the cliché that “a picture is worth a thousand words”). Visual content in news stories shapes learning by enhancing viewer recall of information — especially when the information is unusual — through the activation of cognitions, emotions and memories (Graber, 1990). Affective nonverbal cues portrayed in television coverage can have an effect on the attitudes of audiences (Coleman & Banning, 2006). Photographs can convey emotional content related to emotions and suffering, and they also carry information about demographics like race (Fahmy, Kelly & Yung, 2009). Especially through such use of racial, gender, ethnic, and religious stereotypes, visuals provide a way of articulating ideological messages, allowing news outlets to can say things in pictures that would be too controversial to write in words (Coleman, 2010; Messaris & Abraham, 2001). Given the serious stereotypes related to Islam in the U.S., it is important to analyze the extent to which newspaper photos continue to perpetuate or subvert commonly held beliefs and attitudes toward Muslims.

Furthermore, visuals can reinforce in-group and out-group framing, which relates to some of this study's more important findings. For example, Fahmy (2010) found that *International Herald Tribune* coverage of 9/11 and the Afghan war in 2001 emphasized the human casualties of 9/11 yet focused on patriotic images and high-tech military machinery when depicting the Afghan war; the Arabic-language *Al-Hayat* did the inverse, focusing on the suffering of mostly Muslim Afghan civilians and the technical aspects of the 9/11 attacks. Each side, Fahmy (2010: 711) noted, was "less centered on the humanity of the other, and thus less likely to evoke sympathy." In a visual framing analysis of network television coverage after 9/11, Ibrahim (2010: 117) found that in-group Muslims were portrayed as those "who conform to the American way of life [and] should be protected and treated with dignity and humanity," while out-group Muslims were generally shown as dangerous bearded and heavily armed angry men protesting the U.S. Adding analysis of news visuals might help us improve our understanding of the position of Muslims in American society and the ways it continues to shift in the post-9/11 era.

Despite the importance of visuals to the framing process, an analysis of published research showed that the vast majority of studies fail to discuss visuals at all (Matthes, 2009), perhaps because coding visuals is a complex and difficult task, as Graber (1990) noted. There have been some interesting breakthroughs in visual framing research in recent years, and researchers should continue to develop ways to incorporate visual information into their work. It seems crucial to routinize the inclusion of visual content in framing studies generally. Considering such content separately from textual and verbal content is an artificial distinction because audiences process both kinds of information simultaneously (Coleman, 2010).

In a second limitation, this study relied in part on a computer-assisted content analysis using a dictionary compiled by the authors of MFT (Graham, Haidt & Nosek, 2009) for use with

the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) software (Pennebaker, Francis & Booth, 2001). The LIWC software has a built-in dictionary that has been tested and is considered reliable and valid in being able to discern meanings in a wide variety of contexts (Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010). However, moral foundations dictionary used with the software is more recent. At the time of this writing, the originators of MFT are working on an updated and expanded version of the moral foundations dictionary that includes an in-depth human-coded validation. This new dictionary will presumably offer superior results.

The use of computer-assisted coding in this research brings benefits in cost, efficiency, and reliability — criteria that must be met to justify selecting a computer-assisted procedure (Riffe et al, 2005). However, it also brings inherent limitations. For example, this manner of text analysis is unable to discern semantic characteristics like context, irony, sarcasm, or subtle differences in meaning of a word with multiple definitions (Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010). More importantly, a dictionary approach relies on predefined groups of words that indicate the relevant categories (Pennebaker & Chung, 2009), which means that the software is unable to discern novel or emerging meanings. While the benefits outweigh the limitations, the limitations make the need for qualitative validation more acute.

This study proposed using MFT to operationalize the moral evaluation component of framing generally. However, the case chosen for this research — controversies about mosque construction in the post-9/11 era — may be a topic in which moral evaluations play a particularly important role. Future researchers should extend this research in less morally fraught topics to see if this technique holds in multiple contexts. Further, this study looked only at the frames themselves and did not connect them to their antecedents or possible effects. Connecting this type of research to the process of frame building or to agenda setting effects would help draw a

more integrated picture of all stages of the framing process, which has been identified as a need if framing researchers hope to improve theory building (Matthes, 2012).

One insight gained in this research is that different framing components may be emphasized in the frames across discourse on a single topic. In this study, for example, the Local Regulation and Legal Authority frames were most strongly defined by their problem definition, while the Political Debate frame was characterized by its combination of causal attribution and treatment recommendation. While this study has made a contribution to one under-theorized framing component, it also points out an urgent need to improve the theoretical grounding behind the operationalization of the other framing components. In this study, treatment recommendations were somewhat problematic, as evidenced by the low intercoder reliability. Treatment recommendations might be related to which side of a debate is favored in discourse, in which case measures of partisan balance that have been used in previous research (e.g. Fico, Freedman & Love, 2006; Zeldes, Fico, Carpenter & Diddi, 2008) could be adapted for use in the development of frames. Improving the operationalization of all the framing components will provide researchers a more accurate and nuanced picture of the frames manifest in content while also offering an opportunity to connect framing to other theoretical innovations. Such improvements to the theoretical and methodological rigor of framing would go a long way toward resolving Reese's (2007) fears that framing runs the risk of becoming an unfocused catch-all term.

Finally, as researchers work to further improve the operational definitions of framing components, it might also be important for them re-open the question of whether the four framing components derived from Entman (1993) tell the complete picture. Given the increasingly widespread use of the Matthes and Kohring (2008) cluster technique, it may be that

researchers are trying to hang too heavy of a burden on the framework the Entman provided.

While his definition is clearly of monumental importance, future researchers should proceed with open minds regarding the question of whether there is some other component that should be considered a “framing component” for the purposes of cluster analysis.

CONCLUSION

Entman's 1993 article about framing's fractured paradigm has provided researchers with a conceptual definition that has been used frequently in research, including this dissertation. But his insight that culture might be defined as the common frames in a social group is not as often discussed. If his conceptual definition tells us *how* to study framing, his connection of frames to culture offers a succinct explanation of *why* we should engage in such study. This dissertation analyzed the frames American culture — that is, those common frames — as it relates to Islam in an attempt to understand the current socially constructed position the faith holds in American society. The range of frames shows that this position remains conflicted.

While media frames are an important part of both reflecting and creating culture, they cannot be disassociated from their cultural milieu. Religion remains important in the United States, with around 70% of Americans professing to be either very or moderately religious (Newport, 2014). At the same time, Americans are expected to give precedence to conforming to national values over religious commitments (Haddad & Ricks, 2009). In the interpretation of many Americans, Islam represents “a unified and unchanging codex of religious, juridical and moral rules, supposedly regulating the life of both the individual Muslim and the Islamic community in all its aspects” (Jung, 2010: 16). This essentialist view sets up a cultural conflict in which Muslim loyalty to the U.S. is always under suspicion. This distrust was a major feature of the debates surrounding these mosque proposals and is so engrained that, even after the DOJ and multiple judges issued rulings that Islam is a religion deserving First Amendment protections, mosque opponents continued to be quoted in media stories saying that the answer to that question remained unclear.

This pervasive suspicion raises a question of responsibility for media workers when confronted with such points of view. Even as multiple authoritative sources attempted to answer the question of Islam's position in American society, opponents held fast to their mistrust. In some instances, reporters subtly signaled their disdain for mosque opponents through embedded editorialization, and news organizations generally editorialized directly against the more outlandish claims. Yet they still gave voice to those claims by offering space to debate questions that many would consider to be matters of fact. If journalism's essence is a discipline of verification — as Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007) propose — then media organizations should ask themselves to what extent they grant legitimacy to claims that are not verifiable. For example, in one story about the Murfreesboro mosque, congressional candidate Lou Ann Zelenik claimed that she saw a picture online of a mosque member posing with militants. The reporter added: “But when pressed to provide a copy of the picture, Zelenik ended the interview.” It is certainly legitimate to question whether the reporter should have included that fact at all, given its unverifiability.

The coverage of mosque controversies shows deep tensions playing out in American public discourse. Haddad and Ricks (2009: 30) described the post-9/11 era as a profound test of American diversity. Muslims, they wrote, “are demanding that America live up to its values of pluralism and freedom of speech and religion and make room for its Muslim citizens, allowing them to be fully American and fully Muslim, and to define their own religion without outside interference.” Yet the results of this research show that becoming connected to socially binding moral foundations may be an important part of Muslims gaining acceptance in American society. The extent to which American Muslims can create an identity that is considered by the public to

be fully American and fully Islamic remains an open question — and one that will likely play out in part in the sphere of journalism.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Content Analysis Coding Protocol

Content Analysis Coding Protocol

Variable Operational Definitions*

Story ID

The computer file for each news article has a unique filename. This filename consists of an abbreviation for the publication and the publication date of the article. For example, TEM_2010_09_02.pdf is an article published in the *Temecula Californian* on September 2, 2010. For this entry, mark the filename (excluding the file type). Using the example above, mark TEM_2010_09_02 in the StoryID space.

Publication

Select the name of the publication (i.e., New York Times, Nashville Tennessean, Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Chicago Tribune or Temecula Californian).

Date

Enter the publication date in the online form.

Story Type

Articles will be either classified as news stories (whether hard news or feature stories) or opinion pieces (staff-produced editorials, columns, and guest op-eds).

Issue

While all of the stories in this study's population of content will be related to the central issue of the construction of a mosque, they will be coded at a more granular level for main sub-issues that animate the debate. Because stories may include several sub-issues, the main sub-issue will generally be considered the one identified in the headline and/or lead paragraph of the story, though some feature stories and columns may take longer to get to the central point. In those cases, the coder must use his or her best judgment to determine the central issue in the article.

[i1] **Regulatory Processes:** Includes the zoning and planning approval process and questions related to traffic, parking, building height. This involves meetings and approvals by city councils, planning commissions, zoning boards, historic district commissions, and other similar local, non-judicial entities)

[i2] **Legal processes:** Includes lawsuits, court hearings, trials, and rulings related to the construction approval of a mosque.

[i3] **Interfaith Activities:** Includes mosque open houses, public lectures at Christian churches or Jewish temples, or educational events in neutral locations like community centers and schools, aimed at bringing faiths together.

[i4] **Opponent Activities / Protests:** Lectures, panel discussions and other public events and programs staged by mosque opponents

[i5] **Terrorism:** Stories related to attacks, threats of attacks, but also

suspicions/speculation/allegations of affiliations with terrorist groups.

[i6] **Immigration**

[i7] **Personality profile / feature story:** These are generally longer and more complex stories, without a strong time peg that are focused on storytelling. A personality profile of a prominent figure in the debate or an in-depth story connecting several of the mosque controversies would be examples of feature stories.

[i8] **Vandalism / hate crime:** These are stories that are related to the vandalism of mosques or the harassment or threatening of Muslims based on their religious identity.

[i9] **Political campaigns:** Campaign events, political rallies, and candidate statements related to a campaign for public office.

Sources

Actors will be operationalized as attributed sources in the stories, because a major part of journalistic framing takes place when journalists decide whom to quote or paraphrase. Actors will be coded by category (i.e., elected officials, mosque supporters, mosque opponents, neutral experts, religious leaders, etc.). All quoted or paraphrased human sources will be coded. Organizations will be counted if assertions are made in their names, but generic sources (i.e., “religious figures say the project should move forward”) will *not* be counted if they are not tied to a specific named source. Some examples of sources and their codes are listed at the end of the protocol. A source must be linked to an assertion by a verb denoting:

- A. Speaking: “said,” “argued,” “stated” and/or
- B. State of mind: “thinks,” “feels”
- C. For verbs describing both speaking and action (e.g., “Jones protested the tax”), context must determine if a source is making attributed assertions or if a reporter is independently describing actions.

Examples:

- Imam Hassan Al-Qazwini said this is a matter of Muslim civil rights. **Code [a6]**
- Mosques are a prime breeding ground for terrorists, according to a press release from the organization Stop the Islamicization of America. **Code [a3]**
- Critics say the mosque will destroy the character of the community. ***This statement on its own would not be coded. However, if the critics were identified by name in another statement, that would be coded.***

Actor categories:

[a1] **Local government officials:** These actors include the mayor, city council members, planning commission members, historic district commission members and others who have direct decision-making responsibilities in the approval of a mosque.

[a2] **Activist / Pro-Mosque:** Representatives or groups in favor of allowing a mosque to proceed

(i.e., the Council on American-Islamic Relations, the American Civil Liberties Union).

[a3] **Activist / Anti-Mosque:** Representatives or groups opposed to allowing a mosque to proceed (i.e., Concerned American Citizens, Stop the Islamicization of America, ACT! For America).

[a4] **Expert / Academic Sources:** Professors, researchers, pollsters offering non-partisan context or commentary.

[a5] **State or National political figures:** These are actors who are commenting on a statewide or national stage but do not have direct responsibility for making decisions in the case (for example, the Governor of New York, President Barack Obama, or Rep. Michele Bachman). This category will frequently include people running for state or national political office.

[a6] **Muslim community leaders:** Including imams, president or official spokesperson of the Islamic community hoping to build the mosque.

[a7] **Non-Muslim religious community leaders:** Christian ministers, Jewish rabbis, other clergy, leaders of Christian organizations, etc.

[a8] **Police / law enforcement sources:** whether local (police departments, sheriff's office) or national (FBI, Department of Justice, U.S. Attorney)

[a9] **Legal sources:** Judges, chancellors, people who make rulings in cases. Note that attorneys representing a side in a court case would be coded as the side they represent.

[a10] **General community members, pro-mosque**

[a11] **General community members, anti-mosque**

[a12] **No attributed sources**

[a13] **OTHER:** There is an "other" option with an affiliated text box that can be used in rare troublesome cases for categories that are unlikely to be recurrent. The coder is to place the name and attribution in the text box. For example, "Construction supervisor David Salimi."

Causal Attributions or Interpretations

Attribution of causal responsibility relates to the origin of a problem (Iyengar, 1996). One of the roots of the mosque controversy issue is the question of whether Islam represents a dangerous political ideology that should be repressed, or whether Islam is a religion entitled to the same First Amendment protections afforded other religions. In this study, causal attribution will be operationalized as whether responsibility for the controversy is attributed to mosque opponents (building on the notion that Islam is not a religion but a political force) or mosque proponents (for example, as a violation of Muslims' freedom of religion), or both. We are coding at the level of the article, so we are looking for the presence or absence of the concept globally *in manifest content*. Not all stories will feature a causal attribution; if the statements are not present in manifest content, code Neither.

[c1] Islam is a political ideology

[c2] Muslims have right to religious freedom

[c3] Both

[c4] Neither

Some guiding examples of causal attribution:

- Smith said Islam is not a religion but is rather a totalitarian political ideology aimed at destroying America. *Code [c1]*.
- “This is not a freedom of religion issue because Islam is a political movement designed to subjugate women and American laws,” she said. *Code [c1]*
- “Government should never, never be in the business of telling people how they should pray or where they can pray,” Bloomberg said. *Code [c2]*
- The decision comes after months of debate that pit critics’ fears of Islamic radicalism against local Muslims’ right to worship as they wish. *Code [c3]*
- One man even invoked the memory of the Sept. 11 attacks and implied the supervisors could be inviting a terrorist cell to take root.

"It's just astounding you would consider this project," he said.

Several Muslim Americans countered him, mostly saying their mosque should be considered as any other house of worship of any faith.

"It's easier if everyone just thinks of us as a church," Bush said. *Code [c3]*

- Category [c4] will primarily be coded in cases of briefs or short stories in which the time and date of an event or similar activity happens, without discussion or commentary of the event context. The bottom of the protocol contains an example of a [c4] story.

Treatment Recommendation / Remedy Endorsement

Entman (2003) notes that one of the functions of news frames is to endorse remedies or improvements to problematic situations. In this study, the problematic situation is broadly the position of Islam in American society, with specific attention to the **outcome** of a controversy over whether to build a mosque. For coding purposes, treatment recommendation is operationalized in relation to an ultimate policy position — whether the mosque should be allowed to go forward or not. Primary attention will be paid to concrete actions (legal or regulatory rulings or mosque openings). In opinion pieces, the author’s position on the question would be considered. In news pieces, the coder will code whether both arguments are roughly equally treated in the article or whether one side dominates. Statements in the lead and headline may provide guidance, as in many cases they suggest the main thrust of the story. If a remedy endorsement is not present, code “Neither.”

[t1] Mosque should be stopped: This includes definitive outcomes denying approval for a mosque project; formal appeals regarding a mosque approval; as well event-driven stories about rallies and events sponsored by anti-mosque partisans. This category also includes opinion pieces

staking out an anti-mosque position.

[t2] Mosque should be allowed: Definitive outcomes moving a mosque project forward (regulatory or legal approval), as well event-driven stories about rallies and events sponsored by pro-mosque partisans. Stories about a mosque opening would be coded in this category. This category also includes opinion pieces staking out a pro-mosque position.

[t3] Both: This includes stories about meetings or debates in which both sides are presented but no decision has been made, or other similarly balanced stories in which both of the sides are roughly equally presented and in which there is no definitive outcome.

[t4] Neither

Guiding examples for treatment recommendation.

- A denial: A judge says the Rutherford County planning commission violated state law by not giving adequate public notice about a request to build a mosque in Murfreesboro. But the judge did not say whether work on the building has to stop. *Code [t1]*
- A denial: A Lomita mosque's plan for a new center on its property has been rejected by the City Council, prompting the mosque's congregants to allege that there was anti-Muslim bias at play. *Code [t1]*
- An approval: "The City Council approved plans early Wednesday for the 25,000-square-foot, two-story mosque after a nine-hour meeting that included rants against Islam as well as technical debates about traffic concerns and flood plains." *Code [t2]*
- An approval headline: Will County Board gives initial approval to mosque near Aurora *Code [t2]*
- A story coded for "both" included the following nut graf: Lilburn's city council plans to vote Tuesday whether to allow construction of a 20,000-square-foot Muslim worship center between a large Baptist church and a Hindu temple on a busy thoroughfare also lined with gas stations and strip malls. [Note: the rest of the story previews the meeting by talking to both sides of the dispute].
- A story coded [t4] for Neither: The developer of an Islamic cultural center near the World Trade Center site and the owner of the building are in a dispute over rent.

Consolidated Edison owns part of a site that the Park51 developers want to use for the center. The utility says that after an appraisal, the rent for that part has gone up, and now Park51 owes \$1.7 million in back rent.

In court papers, Park51 disputed the figure. The developer says Con Ed is using an incorrect formula to determine the rent and back payments owed. A spokesman declined to comment further. A court date in connection with the dispute is scheduled for November.

**Portions of this protocol are adapted from Fred Fico's draft Generic Balance Protocol course handout, 2/23/2010.*

Appendix B: Tables and Figures

Table 1:

Means of individual moral foundation clusters in mosque debates

Moral foundations	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4
Care	0.23	0.15	0.16	0.21
Harm	0.11	0.16	0.18	0.74
Fairness	0.11	0.21	0.08	0.1
Cheating	0.05	0.13	0.08	0.09
Loyalty	0.57	0.31	1.42	0.62
Betrayal	0.08	0.12	0.12	0.31
Authority	0.27	0.95	0.59	0.23
Subversion	0.08	0.06	0.06	0.1
Sanctity	0.13	0.12	0.29	0.11
Degradation	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.05

Main components are bolded; secondary components are shaded

Table 2:

Combined moral foundation clusters in mosque debate articles

Moral foundations	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4
Care/Harm	0.34	0.31	0.34	0.95
Fairness/Cheating	0.16	0.34	0.16	0.19
Loyalty/Betrayal	0.65	0.43	1.54	0.96
Authority/Subversion	0.35	1.02	0.65	1.02
Sanctity/Degradation	0.16	0.15	0.31	0.16

Main components are bolded; secondary components are shaded

Table 3a:

<i>Problem definitions (issue) by frame</i>				
Frame	Regulatory Processes	Legal Processes	Opponent Protests	Features
<i>Regulatory Development</i>	0.4634	0.0976	0.0569	0.252
<i>Journalistic Debate</i>	0.1343	0.1343	0.2687	0.209
<i>Islamic Threat</i>	0	0	0.2647	0.5882
<i>Muslim Neighbors</i>	0.2143	0.0833	0.0357	0.4405
<i>Legal Authority</i>	0	1	0	0

Main components are bolded, secondary components are shaded

Table 3b:

Problem definitions (sources) by frame

Frame	Local gov. officials	Pro- mosque activist	Anti- mosque activist	Academic Expert	Political figures	Muslim leaders	Other religious community leaders	Judges	General mosque supporters	General mosque opponents
<i>Regulatory Development</i>	0.35	0.203	0.122	0.138	0.016	0.512	0.114	0.041	0.114	0.171
<i>Journalistic Debate</i>	0.403	0.224	0.597	0.149	0.284	0.672	0.284	0.06	0.209	0.164
<i>Islamic Threat</i>	0.147	0.176	0.5	0.147	0.265	0.265	0.265	0.059	0.029	0.176
<i>Muslim Neighbors</i>	0.274	0.25	0.238	0.202	0.155	0.583	0.25	0.071	0.167	0.167
<i>Legal Authority</i>	0.683	0.146	0.805	0.146	0.049	0.244	0	0.463	0	0.024

Main components are bolded, secondary components are shaded

Table 3c:
Moral evaluations by
frame

Frame	Care	Harm	Fairness	Cheating	Loyalty	Betrayal	Authority	Subversion	Sanctity	Degradation
<i>Local Regulation</i>	0.1812	0.1103	0.0706	0.0437	0.7195	0.038	0.5016	0.0347	0.1304	0.0207
<i>Political Debate</i>	0.1973	0.3672	0.139	0.0676	0.8187	0.1876	0.5027	0.0927	0.1673	0.0463
<i>Islamic Threat</i>	0.1718	0.3	0.1497	0.0594	0.8182	0.2918	0.4685	0.1318	0.1874	0.0365
<i>Muslim Neighbors</i>	0.2095	0.347	0.1361	0.1304	0.791	0.2002	0.5687	0.0604	0.2396	0.0477
<i>Legal Authority</i>	0.1285	0.1173	0.2671	0.1766	0.31	0.0934	0.8198	0.1215	0.0998	0.0054

Major components of frames are in boldface; secondary components are shaded

Table 3d:

*Causal attribution and treatment
recommendation by frame*

Frame	Islam / political ideology	Muslim religious rights	Both	Neither	Stop mosque	Allow mosque	Both	Neither
<i>Local Regulation</i>	0.0163	0.1463	0.0163	0.8211	0.0976	0.1382	0.3496	0.4146
<i>Political Debate</i>	0.0299	0.0299	0.9403	0	0.0149	0	0.9552	0.0149
<i>Islamic Threat</i>	0.4706	0.2059	0.2647	0.0588	0.6471	0	0.0294	0.3235
<i>Muslim Neighbors</i>	0.0476	0.4762	0.4405	0.0357	0	0.9881	0.0119	0
<i>Legal Authority</i>	0.2927	0.1951	0.1463	0.3659	0.122	0.2439	0.5854	0.0488

*Major components of frames are in boldface; secondary components
are shaded*

Table 4:

Logistic regression for anti-mosque articles

Variables in the equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
								Lower	Upper
Step 1a	Care	0.293	0.597	0.241	1	0.623	1.341	0.416	4.32
	Harm	-0.885	0.661	1.792	1	0.181	0.413	0.113	1.508
	Fairness	0.368	0.719	0.261	1	0.609	1.444	0.353	5.916
	Cheating	1.048	0.892	1.38	1	0.24	2.851	0.497	16.371
	Loyalty	-0.015	0.328	0.002	1	0.963	0.985	0.518	1.873
	Betrayal	1.444	0.732	3.888	1	0.049	4.236	1.009	17.789
	Authority	-0.534	0.402	1.765	1	0.184	0.586	0.267	1.289
	Subversion	0.535	1.202	0.198	1	0.656	1.708	0.162	18.001
	Sanctity	-1.235	0.918	1.807	1	0.179	0.291	0.048	1.76
	Degradation	0.154	2.197	0.005	1	0.944	1.167	0.016	86.431
Constant		-1.868	0.432	18.675	1	0	0.154		

a Variable(s) entered on step 1: HarmVirtue, HarmVice, FairnessVirtue, FairnessVice, IngroupVirtue, IngroupVice, AuthorityVirtue, AuthorityVice, PurityVirtue, PurityVice.

Table 5:

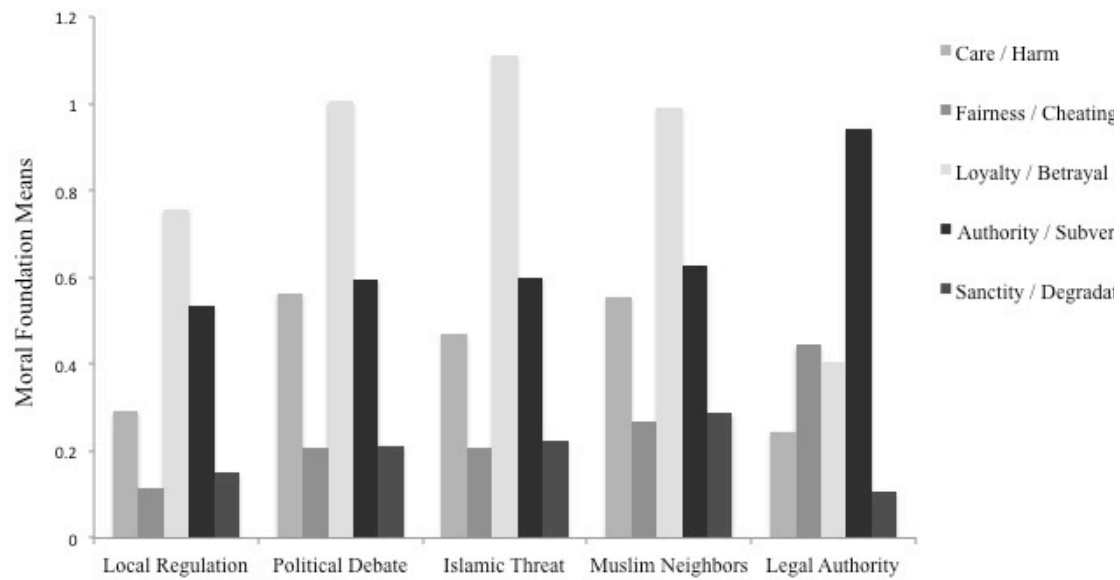
Logistic regression for pro-mosque articles

Variables in the equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
								Lower	Upper
Step 1a	Care	1.582	0.487	10.57	1	0.001	4.867	1.875	12.635
	Harm	0.213	0.411	0.268	1	0.605	1.237	0.553	2.77
	Fairness	0.356	0.528	0.454	1	0.5	1.428	0.507	4.022
	Cheating	1.393	0.671	4.311	1	0.038	4.027	1.081	15.001
	Loyalty	0.213	0.213	1.002	1	0.317	1.237	0.815	1.877
	Betrayal	0.899	0.574	2.449	1	0.118	2.457	0.797	7.576
	Authority	0.49	0.252	3.785	1	0.052	1.632	0.996	2.673
	Subversion	-0.489	0.962	0.258	1	0.611	0.613	0.093	4.043
	Sanctity	0.823	0.436	3.558	1	0.059	2.277	0.968	5.355
	Degradation	0.58	1.365	0.181	1	0.671	1.787	0.123	25.956
	Constant	-2.014	0.334	36.394	1	0	0.133		

a Variable(s) entered on step 1: HarmVirtue, HarmVice, FairnessVirtue, FairnessVice, IngroupVirtue, IngroupVice, AuthorityVirtue, AuthorityVice, PurityVirtue, PurityVice.

Figure 1:
Histogram of combined moral foundations in frames



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