Visual Persuasion: The Media's Use of Images in Framing People Groups

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Abstract

This article compares the media's framing of five groups in response to a societal catalyst that propelled them into the public and media spotlight: Native Americans during the Indian Wars; women during the suffrage movement; African Americans during the Civil Rights Movement; Japanese Americans following the attacks on Pearl Harbor; and Muslim Americans after 9/11. A tipping point forced each group outside the "status quo," leading to pointed and biased coverage, usually in conjunction with dominant prejudices of the era, with the goal of protecting the ruling majority. While the target may have changed, the media have advanced little, during the past century, in their treatment of groups outside the traditionally understood American identity. Methodology used in this study includes analysis of print reports from multiple media outlets, including both text and visuals, to identify framing techniques, as well as study of secondary sources to provide historical context.

I. Introduction

In May 1963, the same image was featured within the pages of four national news publications, including The *New York Times*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *Life*. The photograph, shot by Bill Hudson with the Associated Press, showed a meek and seemingly harmless African American man being held by a police officer while a dog lunged at the young man's stomach. The image came to define the heart of the Civil Rights Movement and the fight waged by African Americans in their quest for equal rights. While the target may have changed, the media's use of images, such as Hudson's, in framing the debate about current events has not altered significantly since the start of the 20th century. Specifically, the press' treatment of groups considered threats to the "status quo" has, in most cases, assumed a biased and negative tone. Some examples of mainstream press calls for less biased treatment of these groups occurred, but they were greatly outweighed. While numerous groups were targeted by both the public sphere and the press throughout the past century or more, five specific groups stand out in the similarities of their treatment: Native Americans during the American Indian Wars (1811-1923); women during the suffrage movement; African Americans during the Civil Rights Movement; Japanese Americans following the attacks on Pearl Harbor; and Muslim Americans following the 9/11 attacks. At each significant point in America's history, these groups were framed as a threat to the norm, or the traditional American identity. As a result, the press frequently used exaggerated photographs and twisted editorial cartoons to dictate how the public should view them and, in some cases, encouraged action against them. Sometimes, the group appeared innocuous and in others as threatening. But no matter which direction the media frame tilted, one commonality remained: When in the crosshairs of the media, the people

group was not the norm and was, rather, categorized as "the other."

II. Framing as Theory

Since the creation of the printing press and the ability to distribute news and information on a mass scale, the media have been used as a tool through which to promote not only the reports of the day, but the way the public should view them. In some cases, this comes as a result of inherent prejudices or weaknesses in the practices of the organization. In other instances, it is founded in the reliance of the press on biased sources with underlying motives. This construction of public perception, using tools such as language, style, structure, and images, is referred to as framing and can seriously influence not only the audience's under-standing, but public policy as well. While the information itself may be factual, the reporting style advanced by the media can have definite effects on the reader's perception: "The effect of this framing can be far more powerful than the opinions expressed in editorial columns. Media framing affects government decision-mak-ing both directly, by supplying information to decision makers, and indirectly, through public opinion."[1] Expert Robert Entman describes framing as "the process of culling a few elements of perceived reality and assem-bling a narrative that highlights connections among them to promote a particular interpretation."[2] Essentially, according to his analysis, framing is the process of raising the salience or perceived significance of particular ideas, characteristics, or events that, most importantly, works to slant the audience toward a particular way of thinking. Various explanations have been provided as to the actual tactics used by the media to promote a particular frame – or, in other words, how the audience is led to think in this particular way. And while most stories will not contain all of these elements, they form the broadly based foundation for constructing a frame. According to research by Pan and Kosicki, there are four primary structural dimensions of news: (1) syntac-tic structures, or how words or phrases are placed; (2) script structures, or the perceived newsworthiness of the event; (3) thematic structures, or the use of causal statements to emphasize blame; and (4) rhetorical structures, or the stylistic choices made by journalists.[3] Entman explained that the foundation of framing lies in the selection and salience emphasized by journalists: "to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular defini-tion, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation."[4] He also identified five media traits that can create a frame of reference: (1) importance judgments; (2) agency, or answer to the question (such as, who did it?); (3) identification of potential victims; (4) categorization or choice of labels; and (5) gen-eralization to a broader context.[5] It has been established within the study of journalism that "issues the news media set up as important will be considered to be important by the public, and media thus set the agenda for public discussion."[6] After defining the problems worthy of the public's attention, and spotlighting particular events or traits, the media can then promote their own spin on the story.[7] While not always deliberate, this sense of orchestration of information and style at the hands of journalists contributes to the operations of democracy, a critical component of the media when facilitating engagement with society.[8]

Framing occurs both organically and purposefully. In some cases, it is the result of a media group's weak organizational skills that result in poor writing and editing skills − usually the organization is unaware of how their work is being affected by deadlines or enforced protocols.[9] But, more often than not, framing is a deliberate, active process that comes as a result of the media's inherent limitations and prejudices. Perhaps

1. Matt Evans, "Framing International Conflicts: Media Coverage of Fighting in the Middle East," *International Journal of Media and Cultural Politics* 6.2 (2010): 209-210.
2. Robert Entman, "Framing Bias: Media in the Distribution of Power," *Journal of Communications* 57 (2007): 164.
3. Gerald Kosicki and Zhongdang Pan, "Framing Analysis: An Approach to News Discourse," *Political Com-munication* 10 (1993): 55-75.
4. Robert Entman, "Framing: Towards Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," *Journal of Communication* 43.4 (1991): 52.
5. Ibid, 52.
6. Lesley Cowling, "The Media and the Production of the Public Debate," *Social Dynamics* 36.1 (2010): 78.
7. Entman, "Framing Bias: Media in the Distribution of Power," 164.
8. Cowling, "The Media and the Production of the Public Debate," 83.
9. Ibid, 79.

one of the most powerful of these confines is the tendency of the press to be biased toward the status quo: "[objectivity in journalism] is inherently conservative to the extent that it encourages reporters to rely on…the 'managers of the status quo' – the prominent and the elite."[10] Often, elite, white, males serve as the key sources for quotes, insight, analysis, and basic information, meaning the media often serve as the conduits for the promotion of a certain perspective to an audience.[11] Beyond the elite, the press is often tied as well with the state, relying on information provided by the government to construct their stories. But, as much as journalists are influenced by their sources, the target audience also drives their content. Most news organizations seek audiences that are affluent, those being most preferred by advertisers, on which media outlets rely heavily.[12] As a result of this pandering to the well-off, educated, and urban, certain classes are inherently ignored: "The majority – the poor and disadvantaged – have little or no access to the mode of engaged citizenship such media can offer."[13]

Framing has been criticized by some as a convenient tool in the pocket of a biased media system and praised by others as a means of quickly and easily explaining a dense or expansive topic. Yet a conundrum still remains: "for a rationally debating public to come into being, a high degree of orchestration is needed. However, with orchestration comes control – control over the dynamics of debate, over the issues and voices, and over who gets to be a part of a public and who is excluded."[14] Ideally, frames are intended to be prescribed to certain topics as a means through which to give meaning and an organizing idea or story line to an event being covered by a journalist. But it is when these tendencies are coupled with a tense sociopolitical climate that the dangers of framing become most apparent. Frequently, frames reflect shared cultural narratives and social themes to which journalists are acutely sensitive: "In the great blooming, buzzing confusion of the outer world we pick out what our culture has already defined for us, and we tend to perceive that which we have picked out in the form stereotypes for us by our culture."[15] Often, this equates to the marginalization of sociocultural, religious, and other groups considered outside the norm through "misinformation, racist ridicule, and overall unfair coverage."[16] And, in many cases, the press simply reflects the prevailing public sentiment of the time: "[Established] general circulation newspapers have tended to go along with efforts to suppress deviations from the prevailing political and social orthodoxies of their time and place, rather than support the right to dissent."[17]

III. Existing Literature

While the use of media framing has been prevalent for centuries, it was only more recently that the tactics employed by journalists have come under the close scrutiny of researchers. Around the turn of the 20th century, fear of the effect of media messages on attitudes first began to grow as strategic propaganda dominated the experiences of much of the developed world during World War I. Studies of framing progressed through different stages during subsequent years. From the 1930s to the 1960s, much emphasis was placed on the idea of personal preference and the fact that the media simply reinforced existing ideas, followed by a brief period of focus on the cognitive effects of the media. The most current understanding is that of the idea of "social constructivism" by which the "mass media actively set the frames of reference that readers or

10. Theodore Glasser, "Objectivity Precludes Responsibility," *The Quill* (1984). Cited by Scott London in "How the Media Frames Political Issues," 1993, http://bit.ly/ScottLondon. Accessed Nov. 17, 2012.

11. Rosalee Clawson, Thomas Nelson, and Zoe Oxley. "Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Conflict and its Effect on Tolerance," *American Political Science Review* 91.3 (1997): 568.

12. Cowling, "The Media and the Production of the Public Debate," 83.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Walter Lippman, *Public Opinion* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1922): 81. Cited by Juan Gonzalez and Joseph Torres, *News for All the People: The Epic Story of Race and the American Media* (London: Verso, 2011): 3.

16. Frankie Hutton and Barbara Straus Reed, eds., *Outsiders in 19th-Century Press History: Multicultural Perspectives* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1995), 1.

17. John Lofton, *The Press as Guardian of the First Amendment* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1980), 279.

viewers use to interpret and discuss public events."[18] Works including *Mightier than the Sword: How the News Media Have Shaped American History* by George Streitmatter and *News for All the People: The Epic Story of Race and the American Media* by Juan Gonzalez and Joseph Torres have examined the intersection between framing and the public's perception. However, this study is unique in that it draws comparisons between five groups of a people in a way that has never previously been done, concluding that the press has historically set its crosshairs on a group of people and attempted to portray them as "the other" when they posed a threat. The study draws primarily upon print visuals (both in newspapers and as stand alone images, such as propaganda) from each time period, while also incorporating written text to support and bolster the argument made by the images.

IV. Native Americans

From the arrival of the Europeans on the shores of the continent, Native Americans had always been considered inferior, heathen beings that must either oblige with civilization or face certain destruction. Early news reports in the 18th century set the standard for visualizing Native Americans. Indians were often referred to as "the Skulking Indian Enemy" in colonial newspapers. "Good" Indians were referred to as "Christianized Indians." Both, however, were generally considered the other. Indians who signed alliances with the British colonies were tolerated until no longer needed to help protect white colonists from the French, the Spanish, and from Great Britain during the Revolution.[19] After serving their purpose, they were expendable, as Massachusetts Governor William Shirley explained to Indians in Massachusetts after they had successfully helped Americans repulse the French in 1760. Their land was now to belong to the whites of the colony: "Tell your people I am come to build a fort at Penobscot and will make the land English–I am able to do it– and I will do it."[20]

Figure 1, "American Progress," John Gast, 1872. This early visual representation of Manifest Destiny idealistically shows the Native Americans fleeing their land upon the advance of the White Man, acting under the authority of higher power. In reality, the Indians would not vacate their territory without a fight.

When Native Americans became a threat to Manifest Destiny in the 19th century, the press actively stepped up its coverage of Native Americans, and truly painted Indians as "the other." With the necessity of removing Natives through forced relocation and the reservation system came the necessity of justifying the treatment, and preserving the status quo, through the power of the press. As a result, the late 19th and early 20th century press went about constructing an identity for the native, an often-contradictory persona that painted the Indian as dually savage, yet romantic, virtuous yet doomed and was based entirely off the standards of the press and its readers, not that of the Native. According to John Coward, "news about Indians was created, organized, and received in ways that supported Euro-American ideas and challenged or ignored native ones," thereby degrading and marginalizing the Native.[21]

The press representation of the Indian has been described as a "double-minded" scenario, wherein

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18. Dietram Scheufele. "Framing as a Theory of Media Effects," *Journal of Communication* (2009): 105.
19. David A. Copeland, *Colonial American Newspapers: Character and Content* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1997), 46-66.
20. *Boston Evening-Post*, May 12, 1760, quoted in David A. Copeland, *Debating the Issues in Colonial Newspapers* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2000), 56.
21. John Coward, *The Newspaper Indian* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 10.

they were either "sensitive, proud, peaceful children of the forest or they were sneaky and cruel barbarians, a race of naturally violent and warlike people." But no matter which identity was employed by the press, both served the distinct purpose of constructing a national identity that excluded the Native: "Both identities were oversimplified stereotypes and both conceived of Indians as markedly different from Euro-Americans."[22] Imagery of Native Americans, by the end of the 19th century, typically fell into one of two categories: (1) the violent, inhumane beast that must be subdued at all costs; (2) the Noble Savage who, while representing the origins of America, could never entirely assimilate. In both cases, the press advanced the notion that the Indian race was doomed for extinction.

Figure 2, "The Proper Way to Dispose of Sitting Bull and His Braves," *New York Graphic*, Aug. 15, 1876.

The image of the Native American as savage was the most prevalent among visuals, and generally reflected similar descriptions presented through the written word: "…when Indians refused to be quaint, White culture's imagery condemns them. In the nineteenth century, those who resisted domination were painted as bloodthirsty savages…."[23] Newspaper reports were quick to point out the atrocities committed by Native Americans, even if these actions came in response to violent actions carried out by white warriors invading Indian territory. Figure 2, "The Right Way to Dispose of Sitting Bull and His Braves," was published in response to the death of George Custer, which incited a wave of racial hatred toward the Natives. (Ironically, Sitting Bull eventually died not at the hands of a white man, but by a stray bullet shot in a firefight by one of his Indian peers.) In this drawing, Sitting Bull is

Figure 3, "After Mother Country's Scalp," Thomas Nast, *Harper's Weekly*, July 17, 1886.

depicted as a half-human beast responsible for the death of a white man, lying trampled under his feet. His white adversary is victorious against him, as to be expected by a public hungry for the destruction of the Native American way of life. Natives were portrayed as violent, cruel, contemptuous toward authority, and inhumane in a process Coward calls "making the evil Indian." During wartime particularly, the cultural identity of the native society was of no concern or importance in written and visual reports. References and images of scalping, cannibalism, and torture were prevalent and all served to create the image of a bloodthirsty, warmongering Indians that must be subdued, such as this one, from a March 1837 report in the New Orleans Picayune: "When once an Indian is aroused to revenge and war, his spirit will never be subdued. They cannot – must not be trusted."[24] Writers did not mince words and resorted to the ugliest of name calling in their descriptions of the Native American: "The Indian in romance may be a noble savage, but in fact, I mean in the bloody reality of the days I am going to tell you of, [the Indian] was vermin, ruthless, cunning, brutal vermin, and no good till he was dead – and precious little good then."[25] Figure 3, published by *Harper's Weekly* in 1886, visually depicts the "ruthless, cunning, brutal" creature described above. In this image, a band of enraged, savage-looking Indians remove the scalp from a woman intended to visually represent the "mother country," or the rapidly expanding United States. As the artist knew, the general public would be enraged to think that the Native, considered barbarians when compared to advanced European society, would dare to threaten the future of the nation.

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22. Ibid, 7.

23. S. Elizabeth Bird, ed. *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1998), 4.

24. *Picayune* (New Orleans), March 24, 1837, 2. Cited by John Coward, *The Newspaper Indian.*

25. "Old Man Porter's Revenge," *Fort Worth Gazette*, July 7, 1895, 13.

Native Americans were also visually portrayed as the Noble Savage, representing the unity of civility and savagery, humanity and beastliness. This characterization served a dual purpose for the American public. Some believed the savage could be redeemed and fully embrace his noble side through European practices and culture and denying himself of all semblances to his former culture. Others were reminded of the natural, authentic qualities of American life inherent in the perceived nobility of the Indian, while also easily measuring their own civilization against his savagery. The term can be traced back to that of the "eloquent savage," which was portrayed by traders, travelers, missionaries, and others who interacted with Natives early on. Similar to the contrasting terms of the phrase "noble savage," there was a contrast in these travelers' experiences among the Native country of the New World: "They alternated between admiration for the ease and simplicity of life which they envisioned every Indian enjoying and fear that they might very soon meet some tragic end."[26] The romanticized, noble Indian portrayed in print and visuals was archetypical representations of a type of Indian, not a real individual from an actual tribe. In 1834, a weekly Tennessee paper published a factually inaccurate story about an Indian woman mourning the loss of her husband and child: "The father of Life and Light has taken from me the apple of my eye, and the core of my heart, and hid him in these two graves, I will moisten the one with my tears, and the other with the milk of my breast, till I meet them in that country where the sun never sets."[27] As were many similar accounts about Indian life, "the story reinforces the vanishing Indian idea by portraying native life as marked by tragedy and by suggesting that Indian happiness comes only when their lives have ended…."[28] The use of children in Noble Savage imagery was common, and they were often tied to both the freedom of nature and the inevitable doom

Figure 4, "The Indian Child," *Harper's Young People*, November 4, 1884.

of the people. In a November 1884 edition of *Harper's Young People*, the image of an Indian child in Figure 4 was accompanied by a poem by M. E. Sangster, titled "The Indian Child," which concludes "Better things one day shall be / For thy dusky race and thee, / Indian child, so sad and grave, / Boastful, ignorant, and brave."[29] Other images showed the dual nature of the Noble Savage by presenting the Indian with representations of both. Figure 5, from a 1905 edition of *Washington Times*, includes a Native American dressed in European clothes and using an advanced weapon, yet still clinging to his savage side, indicated by the headdress. A few years prior, the same newspaper ran a story that relied on the model of the Noble Savage to describe the Indian, rather than his actual name or individual personality: "A notable gathering of private and public citizens had assembled to shake the red hand of the noble savage and hear the grunt and chuckle of blazing warriors, who had lifted the scalps of many white settlers and left their lonely cabins in ashes."[30] In both the written and visual representations from the *Times*, the Indian is painted in terms of the identity given him by the press and public. Once the Indian was effectively conquered by the mid-20th century, the savage part of his nature was essentially stripped and, instead, his characterization fully became that of the noble representation of days gone by and the foundations of America: "Noble Indians were presented as members

Figure 5, *Washington Times,* Sept. 30, 1905, page 1.

26. Edna Sorber, "The Noble Eloquent Savage," *Ethnohistory* 19:3 (1972), 227.

27. *Western Weekly Review* (Franklin, Tennessee), June 20, 1834, 1. Cited by John Coward, *The Newspaper Indian.*

28. Coward, *The Newspaper Indian,* 49.

29. M. E. Sangster, *Harper's Young People* 6:202 (New York: Harper & Brothers, November 4, 1884), 2.

30. John Joyce, "Personal Collections of Walt Whitman," *The Washington Times*, Oct. 5, 1902, 10.

of a dying race and as holders of long-dead traditions that were no longer a threat to white people, their ambitions, or their values."[31]

Both the savage and noble depictions of the Indian resulted in their distinction as "the other," which effectively reinforced the idea that the Indian was the enemy of America and the direction in which the nation was heading. Many whites believed their eradication was simply the natural order of things, ordained by God, and an unavoidable conclusion. In some cases, whites took pity on what they considered to be the dying breed and allowed natives to celebrate their culture before it was entirely eradicated. In the fall of 1898, an Indian Congress was held in Omaha with more than 500 participants from 35 different tribes. But even then the American press could not stay away from poking fun at the event. *The Conservative* in Nebraska described the Congress as a "spectacle," while also acknowledging the disservice being done to the Indians: "Is history ever likely to be written from the Indians' standpoint?"[32]
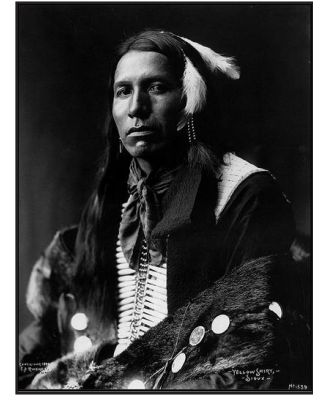

Figure 6, "Yellow Shirt." Taken by Frank Rinehart at the 1898 Indian Congress in Omaha.

V. Women

The women's suffrage movement in the United States was defined by females questioning the traditional roles imposed on their lives and seeking expanding rights. This led dominant males in society to feel their power threatened and attempt to reassert control and authority over the opposite sex. The core of the anti-suffragists' philosophy was that the nature of women, as ordained by God, was inconsistent with participation at the polls.[33] The specific focus on the limitations of women, including their excitable temperaments, was often hard to counter: "This emphasis on intangible qualities worked well in the [anti-suffragist's] struggle to maintain the status quo. Suffragists knew they could not challenge these undefined perceptions of women, and, therefore, were limited in the possible direct attacks on the anti-suffragists' logic."[34] By the time the suffrage movement was launched in the late 19th century and reached its peak in the early 20th, the role of the press within society, and its key players, had been well-established: "The Fourth Estate was a body overwhelmingly peopled by – and largely committed to serving – men."[35] The men were threatened by the thought that women could potentially arise from their positions as a lower class of society and take hold of the power base traditionally held by the male half of the population. Thus, the media reflected this fear – the major male players in American media of the time either entirely ignored the Women's Rights Movement, or when they did cover it, used methods of mockery and disdain.[36] Images of women fell into two categories: (1) cartoons of women emphasizing their weaker nature, lack of intelligence, or potential problems caused by granting them the right to vote; and (2) anti-suffrage propaganda used to portray women as "the other" and destroyers of the family.

It is almost a century since women first gained the right to vote and society has yet to crumble into complete disarray. Yet, when women's suffrage was first demanded at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 in New York, that's exactly what men feared. In order to stir up opposition to the women's right to enter the polling booth, the media became a key tool in suppressing women's voices. Females were described as weak, unintelligent, inferior, silly and giving them the right to cast a vote called a sin against God.[37] And while the words published against the movement would have been enough to dampen their shouts, newspaper images and cartoons also served as a means of limiting the cause. In August 1912, the *New York Tribune* ran a story

31. John Bloom, "'There is Madness in the Air:' The 1926 Haskell Homecoming and Popular Representations of Sports in Federal Indian Boarding Schools," in *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture*, ed. S. Elizabeth Bird (Oxford: Westview Press, 1998), 104.

32. "The Indians at Omaha," *The Conservative*, Aug. 18, 1898, 4.

33. Carolyn Summers Vaca, *A Reform Against Nature: Woman Suffrage and the Rethinking of American Citizenship, 1840-1920* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2004), 81.

34. Ibid.

35. Rodger Streitmatter, *Mightier than the Sword: How the News Media have Shaped American History* (Philadelphia: Westview Press, 2008), 37.

36. Streitmatter, *Mightier than the Sword,* 37.

37. Ibid, 48.

Figure 7, *New York Tribune*, Aug. 18, 1812, page 3.

about a rally for women's suffrage at Hyde Park. The headline read "War Cry of the Militant Suffrages Enticed Kate Carew to Hyde Park," accompanied by a photo of a matronly woman wagging her finger while clearly admonishing someone (Figure 7). The headline and the photo both portray the females as demanding, almost violent (as expressed by the use of the word "militant"). The image, in particular, is reminiscent of a mother scolding her young son. What grown man wants to be scolded by a woman who could potentially erode some of his power? While the *Tribune* was not as direct in discrediting the rally, perhaps because the reporter was surprisingly a female, other papers were quick to deride such gatherings of women. An 1852 meeting in Syracuse was called a "Tomfoolery Convention" and described as a "mass of corruption, heresies, ridiculous nonsense, and reeking vulgarities which these bad women have vomited forth."[38] Magazines were the most common source of images challenging the women's rights movement, with *Life* magazine particularly known for line drawings that placed women in unflattering light. One such image showed a female minister behind a pulpit in an abandoned church, while another depicted women "smoking, drinking alcohol, and cavorting in a modern-day club for women."[39] In Figure 8, we see the worst fears of men being realized, as women take over control of the Navy, completely stripping men of their power. Similar to the written abuse often hurled against them, the physical appearances of the women in the photo are exaggerated and uncomplimentary.

Figure 8, "The New Navy, about 1900 A.D.," *Life,* April 16, 1896.

Figure 9, "Suffragette Vote-Getting." Published in "The Male Madonna and the Feminine Uncle Sam," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 91:4 (2005): 368.

Propaganda images were often distributed among anti-suffragists in an attempt to belittle women and the impact they would have as voters. Most notable was the 1909 campaign by the Dunston-Weiler Lithograph Company of New York, which published a set of 12 full-color cartoon postcards "lampooning, satirizing, and opposing woman suffrage…."[40] The postcards portray the dangers of women voting, including men being forced to stay home and care for children, women fraudulently paying for votes, and a wife who loves her vote more than her husband. These images were particularly significant due to the popularity of postcards during the era – they were often circulated more widely than magazines and were not dependent on literacy, thereby reaching far beyond the scope of normal print media: "Postcards were ubiquitous, cheap, easily accessible, and clearly participated in the suffrage controversy in a way that developed and extended the argument beyond what can be found in the verbal

Figure 10, "Election Day." Published in "The Male Madonna and the Feminine Uncle Sam," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 91:4 (2005): 370.

38. *Syracuse Star*, 1852. Cited by Rodger Streitmatter, *Mightier than the Sword.*
39. Streitmatter, *Mightier than the Sword,* 53-54.
40. Catherine Palczewski, "The Male Madonna and the Feminine Uncle Sam: Visual Argument, Icons, and Ideographs in 1909 Anti-Woman Suffrage Postcards," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 91:4 (2005): 366.

arguments contained in broadsides and print media."[41] In this way, anti-suffragists could easily and quickly relay their message and effectively frighten the ruling class of men about how women would surely erode their power if given the vote. However, in many ways, these postcards simply echoed the words of opponents printed in the preceding decades, who also emphasized the wife's need to tend to the home. In March 1870, the *New York Times* wrote that "the number of woman…who can keep house without feeling what are called its 'cares' overwhelming is alarmingly small."[42]

VI. Japanese Americans

On February 19, 1942, a little more than two months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 into law that called for the internment of an estimated 120,000 American-born Japanese citizens.[43] The Japanese Americans were rounded up and placed in shelters in some of the most inhospitable regions of the country, all in the name of protecting the country from more attacks by the Japanese. The immediate re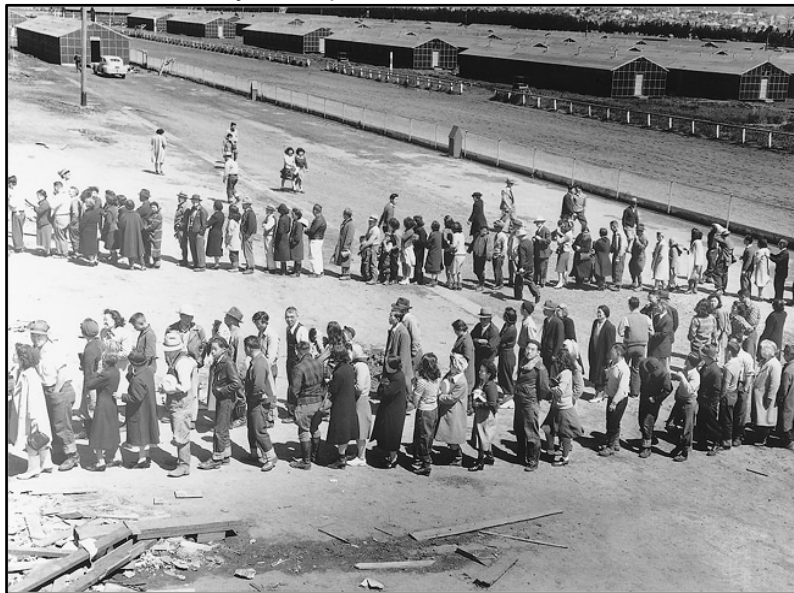action within the pages of the press was swift, both in the form of editorials and letters to the editor, the majority of which voiced support for the incarceration of innocent citizens.[44] A common thread ran among all coverage: Japanese Americans were, in fact, not a part of the American identity, which banded together in the wake of the devastation of the Pearl Harbor attacks. In one letter to the editor, George Martin expressed a racism that was prevalent through much of the coverage, that tied Japanese Americans to the pilots who bombed Pearl Harbor, and not the nation they had called home all their lives: "The way I look at it, the average tame American Jap is hard to tell from a wild Jap. The Japs in Tokyo, no doubt, intended to use the Japs already here as a screen to filter into our midst, then stab us in the back."[45] And while letters against internment were published, not a single of seven major newspapers on the West Coast, nor the *New York Times*, questioned the military's claim that the Japanese Americans were a threat.[46] Keenly aware of how visual representations of the internment would be perceived, the government closely controlled the images that were published of the round-up and internment campus. Images of Japanese Americans generally fell into two categories: (a) photographs of the internment that served to demonize the Japanese American, without highlighting their maltreatment in the internment campus; and (b) propaganda images portraying all Japanese as a threatening savage and an enemy that must be stopped.

Photographer Dorothea Lange, well known for her images of the Great Depression, was called upon by the War Relocation Authority to take photos of the internment in 1942. The Authority provided her with strict restrictions that included no images of barbed wire, watchtowers, armed soldiers, or Japanese resis-

Figure 11, Dorothea Lange for the United States War Relocation Authority.

41. Ibid, 384.
42. "Will Women go Crazy in Politics?" *The New York Times*, March 9, 1870.
43. Brian Thornton, "Historic Editors in Short Supply," *Newspaper Research Journal* 23:2 (2002), 100.
44. Ibid 104.
45. George Martin, "Japanese Problem," *Seattle Post Intelligencer,* June 9, 1942, 4. Cited by Thornton, "Historic Editors in Short Supply."
46. Thornton, "Heroic Editors in Short Supply," 109.

Figure 12, U.S. propaganda campaign.

tance: "They wanted the roundup and sequestering of Japanese Americans documented – but not too well."[47] Lange was entirely restricted from talking to detainees and almost lost her job when one of her images showed up in an anti-interment pamphlet published by the Quakers.[48] The images Lange produced were, in fact, so damning of the federal government and failed to demonize the Japanese American that the War Relocation Authority censored the vast majority, leaving 97 percent of Lange's work unpublished. The images that did make their way to the pages of publications were those that showed the process of internment, but not the negative, brutal side of it. Japanese American families standing in line before entering their new home were common, as were images of daily life in the camp. Those images that tied Japanese Americans to the national American identity were quietly impounded, lest the public forget that the Japanese – all of them – were the enemy.

The most important visual tool used to frame the Japanese Americans during the World War II internment was propaganda which, again, relegated all Japanese, even those born on American soil, to the position of enemy and threat within the larger American community. This served a dual purpose, both of uniting the United States against a common enemy and justifying the government's use of internment camps to prevent any further attacks from happening. Images such as the Tokio Kid (Figure 12) were frightening and played up to racial stereotypes about the physical appearance and culture of Japanese. In many cases, the propaganda was used to warn the public about Japanese Americans helping their peers, echoed in the pages of newspapers that incorrectly claimed local Japanese were helping their homeland government prepare another attach on the West Coast.[49] The propaganda posters only served to add fuel to a fire that had been blazing since December 7, 1941, as evidenced by a story published by the *Los Angeles Times* the day after the attack: "A viper is nonetheless a viper wherever the egg is hatched – so a Japanese American, born of Japanese parents, grows up to be a Japanese, not an American."[50]

VII. African Americans

Similar to the Suffrage Movement, the Civil Rights Movement posed a serious threat to the status quo and the ability of the white male to hold onto his traditional base of power within society. With the rise in popularity and availability of television, TV news reports brought the violence of the movement into the living rooms of the American people. But while video cameras showed the reality of the fight for equality, printed publications still very much relied on biased word choice, emphasis on the negative, and sensational images to subjugate African Americans to the position of "other" within society. While detailed in their coverage of all race-related issues, most newspapers fell short in one important area: "…[they] showed their propensity to cover the hot and simple story, not the complex one; they were drawn to the raging fire, not to the slow burn, so the successful boycott on the Negro side of the racial line went on for weeks with little notice."[51] The general public was not so much drawn in by the stories of success, but more so by the tales of conflict, a force that is, in many ways, the heart of news coverage. In the years since the conclusion of the Civil Rights Campaigns, some newspapers have issued public apologies for what they believe to be weaknesses in their coverage, including the *Kentucky Herald-Leader* and *Birmingham News*, with reporters and editors admit-

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47. "Impounded: Dorothea Lange and the Censored Images of Japanese American internment," Review, *Publisher's Weekly* 253: 28 (2006): 144.

48. Dintia Smith, "Photographs of an Episode That Lives in Infamy," *The New York Times*, November 6, 2006.

49. Gonzalez and Torres, *News for All the People*, 274.

50. *Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 8, 1941. Cited by Gonzalez and Torres, *News for All the People,* 275.

51. Hank Klibanoff and Gene Roberts, *The Race Beat: The Press, The Civil Rights Struggle, and the Awakening of a Nation* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006), 110.

Figure 13, Bill Hudson/Associated Press

ting their stories were influenced by internal forces of the organization and, externally, political leaders of the era.[52] The images that were published during the Civil Rights Movement draw much of their meaning from the accompanying text, which provides important context that explains the media's coverage: "[It] told modern myths of heroes and villains, good and bad, that defined the photographs' meaning for us."[53] Images of African Americans generally fell into two categories: (1) photographs of African Americans engaged in Civil Rights Activities, while usually being opposed by white authority; and (2) political cartoons highlighting the differences of African Americans, as mirrored by society.

The iconic image of anti-Black, anti-Communist Bull Connor, holding a German shepherd as it lunged toward a defenseless black man (Figure 13) took on different meanings in different publications, largely dependent upon the text within the accompanying story. While some, such as The *New York Times* strove to remain neutral by not placing blame on either involved party, others were more direct in their pointed language, such as *Newsweek*. In a May 1963 edition, the popular news magazine wrote about "angry mobs of Negroes" within a story titled "Look at them Run," a reference to a statement made by Connor. Printed in its entirety within the story, the magazine was derogatory toward the participants: "'Look at those niggers run,' he beamed as five dogs bounded out of police cars and set the crowd backpedaling. Some of the negroes darted up close, woofing back at the dogs. One stripped off his red shirt and waved it like a matador's cape."[54] The imagery here is striking, as the reporter suggests that the African American participants were attempting to rile the dogs and provoke them to attack. In coverage of the same image, *Time* was quick to draw a distinction between good and evil, right and wrong when describing the scene of the event, emphasizing the fact that there was a clear distinction between the two races, while also describing the scene in mildly racist terms: blacks in Birmingham were a "docile lot," while Martin Luther King, Jr. was "inspirational but inept."[55] Unlike previous images that clearly rallied for or against a particular group, the images of the Civil Rights Movement were, at times, left up to interpretation, as "journalists, politicians, local Southern authorities, and civil rights activists vied for the power to construct meaning for the nation."[56]

Though not as often, African Americans were also represented by drawings and cartoons that often reflected those characteristics differentiating them from the rest of society, particularly their skin color. Unlike previous coverage of racial groups, this was more a reflection of deeply rooted cultural beliefs, and less about the press promoting a particular way of viewing African Americans. In many ways, the press was simply acknowledging the existing divides, based on color, which existed at the time. In a 1963 editorial, The *New*

Figure 14, *The Washington Post*, 1963.

52. Barbara Friedman and John Richardson, "'A National Disgrace:' Newspaper Coverage of the 1963 Birmingham Campaign in the South and Beyond," *Journalism History* 33:4 (2008): 225.

53. Meg Spratt, "When Police Dogs Attacked: Iconic News Photographs and Construction of History, Mythology, and Political Discourse," *American Journalism* 25:2 (2008): 86.

54. "Birmingham, U.S.A.: 'Look at Them Run," *Newsweek*, May 13, 1963, 27-29. Cited by Spratt, "When Police Dogs Attacked."

55. Spratt, "When Police Dogs Attacked," 95.

56. Ibid, 94.

York Times suggests that the staff of the paper viewed racism as an entrenched problem that could not easily be addressed: "We do not expect that there will be overnight rejection of all the policies that caused so much distress to the Negro community. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and other leaders of the drive to break down racial barriers ought not to expect it either."[57] Figure 14 shows a cartoon from a 1963 edition of the *Washington Post*, which highlights the ingrained beliefs about color as the determining factor in limiting the rights of African Americans in society. In many ways, the images that characterized African Americans in the press served to portray them as the "other" while, in some cases, also showing the audience the brutality of how they were being treated by the white establishment, such as Figure 13. In most cases, the accompanying text was particularly important in attaching meaning and context to an image, which could be taken a number of different ways, based on how the publication chose to write about the visual and the event it represents. While still pointed, the treatment of African Americans through visual was not as blatant as the treatment of the people groups that came before them.

VIII. Muslim Americans

Figure 15, "Muslim Rage," *Newsweek,* Sept. 24, 2012.

The tipping point that propelled Muslim Americans into the media spotlight was, of course, 9/11. This major catastrophic event served as the catalyst that moved Muslim Americans from the periphery and into the forefront of the United States' mindset and necessitated extensive coverage by the press: "Whether traveling, driving, working, walking through a neighborhood, or sitting in their homes, Arabs in America – citizens and non-citizens – are now subject to special scrutiny in American society. The violence, discrimination, defamation, and intolerance now faced by Arabs in American society has reached a level unparalleled in their more than 100-year history in the US."[58] When the terrorist attacks occurred that September morning, the public, with little prior knowledge of Muslim Americans, looked first to the media when attempting to make sense of the situation and the people. When the media portrayed correctly the attackers as Muslim, a connection was made between the followers of the religion and the act of terrorism and direct violent actions followed at the hands of the American public. The frame of Muslim Americans at the hands of the media was created on September 11, 2001, and the public subsequently responded. Images of Muslims Americans generally fall into two categories: (1) photographs of Muslim anger and violence against the west, that tied all Muslims to this fury; and (2) images from within local stories immediately sensationalized and played up by the national media. As was the case with African Americans, the context and text with which the image is accompanied is particularly important.

In the wake of 9/11, Muslim Americans were particularly tied to their countries of origin, such that their American side was de-emphasized and they were portrayed as not part of the larger national community, effectively portraying them as "the other" and to be feared. The public reaction against Muslim Americans was swift and covered extensively by the media and little to no distinction was given to the differentiation between Muslim Americans and the terrorists who carried out the attack. In the immediate wake of 9/11, The New York Times ran a story containing quotes from Phil Beckwith, who was filled with violent fury against all followers of Islam: "'I know just what to do with these Arab people,' … 'We have to find them, kill them, wrap them in a

57. "Racial Peace in Birmingham," *New York Times*, May 7, 1963. Cited by Friedman and Richardson, "'A National Disgrace.'"
58. Louise Cainkar, "No Longer Invisible: Arab and Muslim Exclusion After September 11," *Middle East Research and Information Project* 224 (Fall 2002): 22-29.

Figure 16, *The Atlantic*, Sept. 12, 2012.

pigskin and bury them. That way they will never get to heaven.'"[59] Figure 15 was featured on the front page of *Newsweek* in September 2012 alongside the headline "Muslim Rage." While the image itself is not one of Muslim Americans, the accompanying, controversial story ties all followers of Islam to such violence: "In the age of globalization and mass immigration, such intolerance has crossed borders and become the defining characteristic of Islam."[60] Islam and Muslims are tied to key, inflammatory words, including "eruption," "indignation," and "violent"- -and that's only within the first paragraph of the story.[61] While voices and perspectives of Muslim Americans did exist, unlike the coverage given to Native Americans, they were often drowned out by the negative and often violent cries against them. And the written word did not go without serious consequence. For example, an innocent Muslim American was shot 35 times at point blank range by Mark Anthony Stroman, who went on a post-9/11 killing rampage. On Long Island, a 75-year-old man tried to run over a Pakistani woman at a shopping mall, threatening to kill her for "destroying my country." The examples go on and on, and researchers and Muslim Americans alike contend the media have played a direct role in the largely negative treatment toward the group. In a research study conducted with anonymous Muslim Americans in the wake of 9/11, one woman was clear in her blame: "I blame the media for the ignorance of the people, because they sit there and they make Muslims seem as if they are bad people and that they are terrorists. They're aggressive . . . they don't think. . . . You know, they have no morals, no values. And, like, the media plays a big role in [this] . . . they always show that we are negative."[62]

Another framing technique used by the media in the case of Muslim Americans was the sensationalization of local stories, which were picked up by the national media and overplayed. In many cases, these revolved around discrimination against Muslims and were accompanied by inflammatory images. Normally, such stories would not reach the national level but, because

Figure 17, *The Gainesville Sun*, July 8, 2009.

of the inferior status of Muslim Americans within society, they became more prevalent. Just a few examples include the Dove World Outreach Center, pictured in Figure 17, which has been outspoken in its criticism of the religion. The image of the "Islam is of the Devil" sign placed in front of their building was widely circulated among publications. Just a few years ago, the media were overtaken with reports about the "ground zero mosque," in reality, an Islamic community center in lower Manhattan. The coverage was met with outrage and protests across the country, even though the impact would only be felt in the local New York community. The vast majority of stories about Muslim Americans involve stereotyping, mistreatment, or anger toward Islam and never portray the positive side of the religion, such as its cultural practices, good works in the community, etc. Similarly, images often highlight either the reactions against Muslims or, as numerous researchers have

59. Blaine Harden, "For Many, Sorrow Turns to Anger and Talk of Violence," *The New York Times*, Sept. 14, 2001.

60. Ayaan Hirsi Ali, "Muslim Rage and The Last Gasp of Islamic Hate," *Newsweek,* September 17, 2012.

61. Ibid.

62. Brigitte Nacos and Oscar Torres-Reyna, *Fueling our Fears: Stereotyping, Media Coverage, and Public Opinion of Muslim Americans* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 106-107.

pointed out, the differences that mark the religion.[63] While reporters were certainly not as blatant in name calling, as they were with the Natives, the types of stories reported and the speed with which they spread across the nation were as just as negative toward the group.

IX. Conclusion

Throughout American history, the media have repeatedly been used to frame the understanding of groups of people outside of the traditionally understood boundaries of "white America" and outline the context and dictate the conversation surrounding them, thereby creating a new identity for them: "In no place on earth has the daily production of news formed such an integral part of people's images of themselves – of a national narrative – as in the United States."[64]

While the exact media tactics used against each group differed slightly, the press was successfully able to frame each in response to a catalyst that made each a threat, thereby protecting the status quo of white male America. By emphasizing cultural differences, downplaying any ties to American identity, and, in some cases, resorting to blatant name calling, the groups were framed as "the other." Many of these images have endured as representations of the struggles faced by groups on the march to equality, standing as reminders of former, misguided fears. It goes without saying that the press did improve in the more than 100 years between the Indian Wars and 9/11; however, weaknesses still exist, and framing is a major problem that must be addressed by the American media system in order to mitigate the negative effects felt by groups of people being covered by the press. As evidenced repeatedly throughout history, and specifically in these five cases, framing tactics are often employed by the media in targeted attacks designed to shape the public's understanding of an event or group of people considered outside of the status quo. While the common understanding of what this "norm" entails has changed over the course of many years, there will always be a group "outsiders" who find themselves under the scrutiny of the press.

Acknowledgments

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63. Nacos and Torres-Reyna, *Fueling our Fears: Stereotyping, Media Coverage, and Public Opinion of Muslim Americans.*
64. Gonzalez and Torres, *News for All the People*, 1.