

The Evolution of the Concept of Jihad in the *New York Times*:
A Case Study of the Coverage of Afghanistan

by

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Abstract

This thesis explores the use of the terms jihad, mujahedeen, and jihadists, in relation to the coverage of Afghanistan. The focus is on how the *New York Times*, a major journalistic actor, participated in changing the connotations of the terms in different political contexts from 1987 – 2015. During the Soviet-Afghan War (1979 – 1989), jihad was favourably depicted as a solution to thwart Soviet presence. However, following the end of the war, the concept has been presented as a violent phenomenon targeting people who are religiously (and also ideologically) different. The notable difference in the coverage during the Soviet invasion and afterward reflects the evolution of the reporting. The theoretical basis of this thesis employs media framing to understand how changes in the language of news stories can establish multiple meanings of the terms. It concludes that journalistic norms and routines, national culture, ideology, and elites have all swayed the framing of the words to fit shifting political narratives. It also observes that journalists often invoke the dominant ideological view that their own societies have about the cultures on which they report, particularly if they have to account for complex historical backgrounds.

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Introduction

“Words bounce. Words, if you let them, will do what they want to do and what they have to do” (Carson, 1999, p. 3).

Language is one of the most important aspects of human behaviour. As a purely human phenomenon, language separates us from other species. As Dwight Bolinger (1968) says: “Language is species-specific. It is a uniquely human trait, shared by the cultures so diverse and by individuals physically and mentally so unlike one another...” (p. 3). As the natural vehicle for their thought, humans rely on phrases, expressions or words in order to interpret the world around them. Karim H. Karim (2014) posits it is “an inherent tendency” (p.153) for humans to separate the world into Self and Other by using particular vocabulary (i.e., names and labels). Sometimes, this separation is innocently employed through our day-to-day communications. At other times, certain words establish themselves in psyches and without people’s knowledge, constructing a limited view of the world. A prime example of the latter are political protagonists and antagonists, who are divided by politicians and the news media into categories of “good” or “bad.” However, this division, argues Jacqueline O’Rourke (2012), is sometimes reversed “when the occasion calls for it” (p. 3).

The news media play a significant role in communicating information about events and people, shaping their audiences’ perceptions of the world. According to Colleen Cotter (1999), “Much of what we find normal in everyday conversation (how we take turns, how we tell stories, how we display alliance) is normal in everyday news talk, with some adaptations” (p. 170). This thesis explores the assumption that the language of

the news media plays a major role in fomenting the context of many leading discussions about politics. It is particularly interested in exploring how language evolves with shifting political developments. It is important to note at the outset of the introduction that this study acknowledges that there are many forms of “media” - movies, television shows, video games, to name a few. As such, it specifically deploys the term “news media” to denote outlets that solely deliver the news.

This thesis focuses on the framing of the meaning of three terms: jihad, mujahedeen, and jihadists, each in relation to Afghanistan, as covered in the *New York Times*, a prominent American newspaper. The research focuses on the changes in coverage within different political contexts as they developed between 1987 and 2015. The study examines how the language of the *New York Times* evolved and, in turn, shaped perceptions of jihad. Considering that the concept of jihad has gained much attention in the 21st century as a violent religious phenomenon, this idea continues to remain important today. Indeed, the mere mention of the term is enough to evoke panic and fear, as it brings to mind images of Muslims threatening to attack people who are religiously (and also ideologically) different.

The goal of this thesis is to provide insight into how the *New York Times* emphasized particular interpretations of the concept of jihad during different time periods and contexts. It seeks to answer the research question: How has the *New York Times* participated in the transformation of the connotations surrounding the vocabulary associated with the concept of jihad in Afghanistan? It is important to note how the question positions the *New York Times* as a “participator” in the evolution of the

coverage. The question was deliberately phrased in such a manner to avoid denoting that the newspaper is the sole outlet responsible for the transformation. However, as the *New York Times* is a major journalistic force and actor, the findings may be transferable to the framing of jihad, mujahedeen, and jihadists circulated by other dominant media in Western societies. Secondary questions around the portrayal of the terms mujahedeen and jihadists¹ will also be investigated.

Afghanistan has been selected as the case study because of the significant geopolitical developments there that fomented particular perspectives about jihad. The case study has been carried out in four distinct but major periods: the Soviet-Afghan War (1979 – 1989); Afghanistan’s civil war, the rise of the Taliban and the prelude to the U.S.-led war (1990 to summer of 2001); the American-led war in Afghanistan (fall of 2001 to 2014); and present-day Afghanistan (2013 – 2015), which has witnessed a rise of insurgent movements. This thesis encapsulates how events during these periods influenced the coverage of these particular terms. As the various conflicts are stretched over numerous years, the content analysis will focus on only two years within each period.

The study begins with a literature review on two different forms of jihad: inner spirituality and the legitimation of warfare. It then presents the theoretical framework and the methodology, and subsequently offers an historical examination of the conflicts in Afghanistan. This is followed by an interpretation of the findings of various media articles before finally giving a conclusion.

¹ Another word that is synonymous with jihadist is ‘jihadi.’ This thesis does not investigate the term jihadi because it detected that the *New York Times* uses jihadist more in its reporting.

Chapter Outline

The following is a roadmap of the structure of the study, along with a summary of what each chapter includes.

Chapter One presents a review of the literature concerning the concept of jihad as well as the terms mujahedeen and jihadist. It examines how jihad has evolved from early Islamic history into the present day. The goal is to establish the political, social, and economic conditions that have shaped its connotations today. Furthermore, it offers a brief historical background on the representation of Islam and Muslims in Western discourses to demonstrate how other, long-standing themes have led to a Western misunderstanding of the religion and its adherents.

Chapter Two explores existing journalism and communication scholarship as pertaining to framing analysis and theory. The goal is to establish how the news media frame stories in order to provide a lens through which to analyze the portrayals of jihad. It emphasizes research on coverage of the *New York Times* because it is important to understand what the beliefs held by some scholars have about what is a highly influential paper. It also focuses on research that has used framing theory to examine the extent to which the news media disseminate the policy interests of the ruling elites. Finally, it discusses studies that have explored the coverage of American foreign policy towards Afghanistan.

Chapter Three describes the methodology chosen as most suitable for pursuing the overall inquiry. It outlines a mixed-method, combining content analysis with a competition of discourses approach. It explains the process of each method, along with

how this study applies them. The chapter concludes by building on the research of framing theory outlined in Chapter Two, articulating an approach for evaluating the coverage of the *New York Times*.

The theoretical and methodological foundations of this thesis are informed by the collective works of Gaye Tuchman; Robert Entman; Pamela Shoemaker and Stephen D. Reese; Tuen A. van Dijk; Karim H. Karim; Stuart Hall; Michael Schudson; Lance Bennett; Nicholas Berry and many others. Based on the research of the scholars cited above, this thesis views news coverage as a reflection of a culture's dominant perspectives, which are, in turn, influenced by ideology.

Chapter Four examines the relevant historical context in Afghanistan. Focusing on the major events that transpired beginning with the Soviet-Afghan War (1979 – 1989) and concluding in 2015 with the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) as a major player in regional politics, this chapter provides the reader with a specific and historical background of the events that shaped the varying political environments in Afghanistan. The goal is to outline the necessary information behind – and around – any events and developments that may arise in the content analysis of Chapter Five and Chapter Six.

Chapter Five contains the first content analysis, which focuses on the final two years of the Soviet-Afghan War, i.e., 1987 – 1989, as well as Afghanistan's civil war, the rise of the Taliban and the prelude to the American-led war in Afghanistan, from 1999 – 2001. This chapter evaluates the *New York Times*' coverage regarding the terms jihad and mujahedeen (jihadist had not yet been used). It presents findings on how the framing of

the words changed according to differing political contexts. It also draws on background from the previous chapters – literature on jihad as well as journalistic practices and Afghanistan’s history – to highlight key factors influencing coverage. The objective is to provide a summary of the content produced by the aforementioned terminology.

Chapter Six follows the same steps as Chapter Five, while considering more recent events as well as taking into account the term jihadist.² It does so by exploring the years 2003 – 2005, immediately following the American-led war in Afghanistan, as well as the period from 2013 – 2015, when local insurgent movements began their rise to prominence. The goal of this chapter is to present the culmination of the research by illustrating how coverage evolved from 1987 to 2015.

The thesis concludes by summarizing the research and by recommending how journalists and news media organizations can be more vigilant in their use of value-laden terminology.

Why this Topic?

Fifteen years ago, at the age of nine, I was attempting to fast for the very first time during the month of Ramadan. Among the many foods being prepared was “tabouli,” a Lebanese dish. I watched as my mother seasoned it, which prompted me to tell her that I was tempted to break my fast early. My mother did not tell me whether to break it or not. Instead, she responded: “Resisting the urge is a form of jihad.” This was the first time I heard of the term jihad. I did not know what it signified, nor did I understand what my

² According to the research, the first time the *New York Times* invoked the term jihadist was in 1999, but it was not until after September 11, 2001 that the term gained more traction. It is for this reason that this period (2003 – 2005) investigates the use of the term.

mother was insinuating, but it inspired me to continue my fast. We later sat down to eat, and the conversation around the dinner table revolved around this very noble concept.

As a young child, jihad reminded me of tabouli and tabouli reminded me of jihad. Years later, however, I grew up and realized that not everyone innocently associates a dish with a religious concept. I learned instead that the term had been abused by Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

When I entered Carleton's Master of Journalism program in the fall of 2015, I had several ideas for a thesis topic, none of which were particularly related to the concept of jihad. Professor Karim H. Karim agreed to be my supervisor. He advised me to read more literature, and to focus on a single topic. I sifted through books and articles, trying to decide which topic to choose. Among the books I examined was *Re-imagining the Other: Culture, Media and Western-Muslim Intersections* (2014), which was edited by Karim and Mahmoud Eid. The focus of this thesis was inspired by a chapter written by Karim and titled: "Islamic, Islamist, moderate, extremist: Imagining the Muslim Self and the Muslim Other." Within it, Karim addresses the terminology used to distinguish Muslims by their political affiliations. Among the terms this work tackles are "mujahedeen" and "jihadists" (Karim, 2014, p. 167). Up until reading Karim's chapter, it had never occurred to me how mujahedeen and jihadists mean more than what is set down on paper. They are complex, intermittent, and political. The focus of this study was inspired by the theme first planted in my mind by Karim's chapter.

Significance

Over the past few decades, a significant amount of research has gone into understanding the concept of jihad (e.g., Williams, 1971; Firestone, 1995; Karim, 2003). Numerous studies have provided historical analyses of the different conflicts that arose in Afghanistan (e.g. Goodson, 2001; Kolhatkar and Ingalls, 2006; Fitzgerald and Gould, 2009). Scholars have inquired about the way in which the news media frame American foreign policy (e.g., Berry, 1990; Entman, 1991; Schaefer, 2003; Friel and Falk, 2004; Ryan, 2004; Wilesmith, 2011), as well as about how liberal elites and the journalistic work they consume may influence coverage (e.g., Herman and Chomsky, 1988; Bennett, 1990; Schudson, 1995; Robinson, 2002; Hall et al., 2013). While substantial research has been devoted to these areas, this thesis seeks to more specifically investigate the ways they are linked in relation to the meaning – and perversion – of jihad. There is little examination on the shift of the portrayal of jihad in Afghanistan vis-à-vis evolving political contexts.

Furthermore, there is little research exploring the term mujahedeen and jihadists in relation to the ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan (Karim, 2014). Is less fascination accorded to the words mujahedeen and jihadists because they are perceived as agents of a larger phenomenon? Has an examination of these terms gone unnoticed because the connotations of these terms are not deemed significant? It is here, at the intersection of the coverage of jihad in Afghanistan and the shifting political developments, that this study will demonstrate that a complete examination and understanding of these terms is crucial.

This thesis aims to provide a valuable addition to the literature on jihad as it relates to Afghan-American political affairs and the highly influential news source that mediates their ideas to much of the Western public. More specifically, it aims to foreground the importance of language in relation to the portrayal of a religious concept, and provide lessons the news media might use in the years to come. Words and their connotations have the ability to do more than just report a story; they can shift and shape political narratives in lasting ways. With any luck, this work will help join the conversation of this story in the future.

Limitations

A thesis can only shed so much light on a topic because the scope is, by nature, narrow so as to dig deeply into its subject. This study focuses on a qualitative content analysis, which is restricted to describing the behaviour of a medium (i.e., including or excluding certain aspects of a story in an article) as opposed to explaining it (Krippendorf, 2004). This method of content analysis does not propose to tell us what the behaviour means to those communicating with the medium. Therefore, the study does not examine how the media frames deployed by *New York Times* contribute to audience perceptions and the understanding of the concept of jihad, for this would require a different type of methodology.

While this study uses framing theory, it does not seek to explain why the newspaper framed the terms in certain ways in different political contexts. Also, as this study focuses on one news outlet, there are limitations in relation to how far the conclusions inferred can be applied to a larger context. Every journalistic outlet operates

differently and maintains unique dynamics. This thesis does not speculate that the news media as a whole relied on the same terminology during the same timelines. Given the proposed research method, it is simply impossible to follow the discussion surrounding each and every American news company or outlet. However, considering that the *New York Times* is a major journalistic actor, this study makes inferences to a certain extent about the way in which the dominant media in Western societies framed jihad, mujahedeen, and jihadists.

Not only is the analysis limited to the *New York Times*, but the sample size is also relatively small (50 articles). As such, this renders the findings harder to generalize about and project onto the greater news media.

A final limitation worth noting is that although my religion (Islam) helped me to understand certain aspects of jihad, it is possible that a potential bias may have affected the manner in which certain arguments are presented or certain conclusions are reached. To avoid submitting an Islam-apologetic study, and to refrain from implying a political and journalistic conspiracy against Islam and Muslims, I present counter arguments in the first few chapters to illustrate more than one side. My view of the news media was primarily informed by following in the steps of scholars who conclude that framing is an unconscious act, and as such is a product of culture, ideology, and journalistic norms and routines, among other systems and structures.

Chapter One

Jihad's Origins, History, and Evolution

“Without knowing the force of words, it is impossible to know more” (Zhang, 2000, p. 47).

This chapter presents the manner in which the concept of jihad has evolved from early Islamic history and into the present day. The goal of this chapter is not to deliver a complete linguistic, religious or historical examination of jihad, but to establish the chronological changes that have shaped its negative connotations. This chapter demonstrates that political, social, and economic conditions have played a significant role in moulding the dominant perception of jihad as a violent religious doctrine.

The chapter also seeks to contextualize the terms mujahedeen and jihadists before providing a working definition of each word and its relevance to this study. It concludes by presenting a brief historical background on the representation of Islam and Muslims in Western discourses. It is important to review Western historical discourses in order to demonstrate how other long-standing themes have also led to the misunderstanding of Islam and its adherents.

Linguistic Origins: An Inner or External Battle?

For the context of this study, it is important to introduce the concept of jihad by tracing its linguistic origins. Establishing its literal roots will help to provide the backdrop to discuss how its form and meaning have evolved.

In the linguistic sense, the Arabic word *jihad* refers to “striving,” “struggling” or “exerting” oneself (e.g., Firestone, 1995; Esposito, 2003; Karim, 2003; Cook, 2005,

Afsaruddin, 2006; Nanji, 2008; El Sayed, 2015). It is a verbal noun derived from the root *j-h-d* and almost all instances of the root emphasize intention and devotion (Heck, 2004, p. 97). Definitions of jihad vary greatly. The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) defines it narrowly as “a religious war of Muslims against unbelievers, inculcated as a duty by the Qur’an and traditions” (OED, 2016). A broader definition of jihad is offered by translator and lexicographer Edward Lane dating back to 1865. He categorizes it as: “‘exerting one’s utmost power, efforts, endeavors, or ability in contending with an object of disapprobation’” (as cited in Firestone, 1995, p. 16). Such an object might stem from one of three sources: an enemy, the devil, and bad characteristics of one’s self (ibid). The latter is recognized as the most preferred form by the Prophet Muhammad, who is reported to have returned from a battle and said, “‘We have returned from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad’” (as cited in Williams, 1971, p. 281). Traditionally, scholars recognize those two different types of jihad: *al-jihad al-akbar* (the greater jihad) and *al-jihad al-asghar* (the lesser jihad) (e.g., Firestone, 1995; Esposito, 2003; Karim, 2003; Cook, 2005; Nanji, 2008; Johnson, 2010; O’Rourke, 2012; El Sayed, 2015). The former functions as a personal endeavour, comprising the acts and deeds of an individual striving against his or her weaknesses and prejudices. The latter emphasizes the Muslim community’s role as a whole in upholding a just society, and in its struggle against an external foe.

The origins of the characteristics of jihad are found primarily in the Qur’an. Whereas the Qur’an invokes other words to denote warfare, such as *harb* (war) and *qital* (fighting) (in the context of non-religious wars, i.e., tribal and nationalist), jihad does not

necessarily have to imply war (Karim, 2003, p. 42; Johnson, 2010, pp. 35-36; Lapidus, 2012, p. 44). The Qur'anic significance of jihad emphasizes devotion to God over worldly affairs. The orientation of one's devotion is outlined as follows: "O ye who believe! Do your duty to Allah, seek the means of approach unto Him, and strive (*jahada*) (with might and main) in His cause: that ye may prosper" (Holy Qur'an, 5:35). Scholars Reuven Firestone (1995) and Asma Afsaruddin (2006) emphasize the importance of the phrase "to strive in His way" (*jihad fi sabil Allah*) because it expands the definition of jihad to suggest personal and social endeavours. Firestone (1995) argues the phrase distinguishes "the activity of jihad as furthering or promoting God's kingdom on earth," (p. 17) which points to the multiplicity of meanings potentially ascribed to the term. Afsaruddin (2006) validates this argument by demonstrating that during the first three Islamic centuries, jihad referred to a range of actions: "embarking on pursuit of knowledge, earning a licit livelihood, and engaging in charitable works, in addition to military defense" (pp. 15-16).

As a result of jihad encompassing a wide range of activities, available literature generally recognizes four broad categories: "jihad of the heart" as an internal struggle against one's own weaknesses; "jihad of the tongue" as a verbal approach to speaking the truth and protesting evil; "jihad of the hand" as a physical approach that encourages authorities to avert immoral behaviour; and "jihad of the sword" as a fight against nonbelievers for religion (e.g. Peters, 1979; Firestone, 1995; Karim, 2003; Burke, 2004; Anwar, 2004). In all instances, self-control is prioritized and expected (Karim, 2003). Jalal al-din Rumi, a 13th century Sufi mystic, traces an event which illustrates the

significance of this argument. Rumi narrates a battle involving Ali, the prophet's cousin and son-in-law. Ali overcame an opponent and was about to deal the final blow with his sword when the opponent spat in Ali's face. Ali stopped, withdrew the sword and walked away. The opponent found Ali's behaviour odd and asked him to explain why he stopped fighting. Ali replied: "In the hour of battle, O knight, when thou didst spit in my face, my fleshy self was aroused and my (good) disposition was corrupted. Half of my fighting came to be for God's sake, and half (for) idle passion: in God's affair partnership is not allowable" (as cited in Karim, 2003, p. 42).

The origins of jihad are also found in the traditions (*hadith*) of the Prophet. *Hadiths* are the tens of thousands of pieces of hearsay evidence collected by his companions. In a *hadith* compiled in the book *Sahih Muslim*, Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said:

Every prophet sent by God to a nation (*umma*) before me has had disciples and followers who followed his ways (*sunna*) and obeyed his commands. But after them came successors who preached what they did not practice and practiced what they were not commanded. Whoever strives (*jahada*) against them with one's hand is a believer, whoever strives against them with one's tongue is a believer, whoever strives against them with one's heart is a believer. There is nothing greater than [the size of] a mustard seed beyond that in the way of faith (as cited in Firestone, 1995, p. 17).

Another book, titled *Sunan Abi Dawud*, credits Muhammad as saying: "The best jihad is [speaking] a word of justice to a tyrannical leader" (as cited in Firestone, 1995, p. 17).

Although it is acknowledged that jihad is not solely for the purpose of warfare and consists of a combination of forms, jihad often gets translated to mean “holy war,” at least at the semantic English level. However, the words “holy” and “war” are never simultaneously referenced in the Qur’an (Holy Qur’an). If “holy war” is translated into Arabic, it would linguistically become *al harb al moqadasa*. Such a phrase, however, does not exist in the Arabic language, nor does it have any Islamic roots. The historical roots of “holy war” are thought to have emerged from circumstances that are unrelated to Islam. Reuven Firestone (1995) has studied ancient religious scriptures, revealing the expression “holy war” did not originate from the Islamic tradition, but was a medieval European invention used to substantiate theory about justifying going to war (p. 15). Even though the term does not have any Islamic roots, scholarly discussions have not rejected the idea that Islam endorses warfare. Some scholars have indeed concluded that Islam, along with Christianity and Judaism, has promoted and encouraged religiously sanctioned wars (Firestone, 1995; Kung, 2005; Steffen, 2007; Fine, 2015).

From a Defensive Struggle...To Armed Expansion

Literature by scholars who studied jihad under the rule of the Prophet Muhammad offers a detailed account of the manner in which the concept was controlled via deific commands. The Quranic verses delivered between 610 and 623 CE, when the Prophet’s community was being persecuted, did not allow Muslims to retaliate against their attackers, the pagan Meccans (e.g., Firestone, 1999; Karim, 2003; Burke, 2004; Afsaruddin, 2007). Verses from this time counselled Muslims to be patient, and to forgive those who had done harm to others. Among the verses is the following: “Invite

(all) to the way of the Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious” (Holy Qur’an, 16:125). Further, the Qur’an demanded: “but forgive and overlook, till Allah brings about His command” (Holy Qur’an, 2:109). Despite this peaceful approach, Muslims continued to face persecution, forcing them to emigrate from Mecca to Medina in 622 (Karim, 2003, p. 43). The Meccan raiding parties persisted, and the verses revealed at that time could be interpreted to allow those who had been victimized to engage in defensive warfare: “Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah loveth not transgressors” (Holy Qur’an, 2:190). Later, the attacks against Muslims increased, leading to a more forceful assessment of jihad aligned with mobilization. It is in this context that the language of the verses intensifies: “But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the Pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war); but if they repent, and establish regular prayers and pay Zakat then open the way for them: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful” (Holy Qur’an, 9:5).

During the classical period (characterized as between the 7th-8th to 13th-14th CE), rulers were interested in establishing political and administrative powers over their subjects. It is during this period that jihad became a useful apparatus for expansionist goals. Jihad was divided into two categories: first, a jihad to uphold Islamic society based on the efforts of individuals and their personal struggles and, second, a jihad that promulgates Islamic control (Knapp, 2003; Heck, 2004; Burke, 2004; Nanji, 2008). This division is a result of the two geographical boundaries that were established by Muslim

jurists and rulers: the territory of Islam led by a just Muslim ruler (*dar al-Islam*) and the territory of war (*dar al-harb*), which consisted of all lands where Islam did not rule. During this period, Muslim jurists and rulers sought to increase the sphere of *dar al-Islam*, causing jihad to be re-cast as a “divine struggle in a world divided into *dar al-Islam*...and *dar al-harb*” (as cited in O’Rourke, 2012, p. 4). Abdulaziz A. Sachedina (1988) argues that whereas the Qur’an justifies the use of jihad for particular situations, the idea of jihad as “a war to increase the ‘sphere of Islam’” evolved with the classical jurists (p. 106). Paul L. Heck (2004) mirrors Sachedina’s argument by positing that the new interpretation by the classical jurists and rulers submitted jihad to “a *raison d’état*” (2004, p. 107). Hence, during the classical stage of Islam, the way Muslims were ruled developed alongside the dynastical doctrine of the time, which, despite no Qur’anic basis for territorial divisions, saw religious transcendence evolve into a theocracy. This suggests that religion and state became synonymous during this stage of Islam’s history.

Muslim dynasties later flourished. Literature notes an offensive form of jihad was used to legitimate “a religious justification for armed expansion” beyond the Arabian Peninsula (Burke, 2004, p. 32). Whereas the earlier dominant narrative of jihad during the time of the Prophet had been a defensive form of struggle, the narrative then became a jihad to spread Islam to non-Muslim areas. Khalid Blankinship (1994) argues that the first Muslim dynasty, the Umayyad Caliphate (661-750 CE), initiated the notion that jihad is a spiritual conquest essential for establishing an Islamic state, with later dynasties following suit. Hence, battles against opponents – namely polytheists – were legitimized within the dominant legal-theological discourses (although there were dissenters who did

not agree with this view) (Karim, 2003, p. 44). Michael Bonner (2006) states that at separate times throughout history, Muslim dynasties – the Umayyad Caliphate (661-750 CE), the Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258 CE), and the Ottoman Empire (1301-1922 CE) – sent raiding expeditions into non-Muslim territories, which drew on political and territorial conceptions of jihad. As the dynasties developed and established territories, Muslim-majority societies thrived. However, a turning point in their advancements was the arrival of Napoleon and his army in Egypt in 1798. Bonner (2006) notes his arrival caused Muslim-majority societies to experience “multiple shocks” due to Europe’s political, industrial, military, and financial strengths (p. 157). The colonizers’ seizure of Muslim-ruled areas spurred major changes in all the political, economic, cultural, and demographical spheres, causing Muslims to feel that their identities were under threat. As a result of such circumstances, Bonner argues that jihad became a rallying slogan against colonization.

Jihad in the Modern Era: A Response to Colonialism

The literature on contemporary jihad has focused on the effects of the arrival of European imperialism in the second half of the 20th century, which inspired Muslim reform movements in Muslim-majority countries (e.g., Esposito, 2001; Knapp, 2003; Kepel, 2006). Most countries gained their independence during widespread decolonization after the Second World War, yet many of the themes dominating international relations were foreign to the classical Islamic tradition. John Esposito (1994) describes the Western concepts of modernization and secular nationalism as potent mobilizing forces which drove religious-based groups to search for alternative

mechanisms in which they could re-apply the ideals of Islamic states. Esposito provides three main causes for Islamic revivalism during this period. First, secular nationalism had not provided a common identity for citizens. Second, governments had failed to achieve economic self-sufficiency due to dependence on Western societies. Third, Israel's defeat of the Arab forces in the 1967 war³ prompted "soul-searching in the Arab world" (ibid). As a result, non-state actors rallied for a system based on Islamic law, hoping the association of religion with the state would bring about a more satisfying form of governance.

Most scholars agree there are three Islamic leaders whose literature in the early 20th century presented a disinclination towards secularity and modernity, a condition that paved the way for the emergence of Islamic movements (e.g., Esposito, 1999; Knapp, 2004; Habeck, 2006; Kepel, 2006; Mandaville, 2014). These thinkers are Egyptians Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949) and Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), and Indo-Pakistani Abul A'la Mawdudi (1903-1979). In dealing with the sudden changes that erupted in Muslim-majority societies, these scholars approached the issue of jihad systematically. Separately, they argued that Muslims were no longer following the rules of God, but were instead establishing the rules of man (e.g., Kepel, 2006; Bonner, 2006). Qutb's work, in particular, received considerable attention. Qutb, executed in 1966, became the catalyst for the association of jihad with Islamic-based polities as an agent for social change (Mandaville, 2014, p. 101). He built on al-Banna and Mawdudi's thoughts for strict Islamic religious governance, but evolved a more radical approach to jihad in his native

³ The 1967 war, also known as the "Six Day War," was when Israel defeated Jordan, Syria and Egypt and captured what was previously Arab land, such as the Golan Heights, the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip.

Egypt, which had a legacy of British rule and weak socio-economic conditions. Qutb denounced the post-independence history of Muslim states by using a word from the Qur'an, *jahiliyya*, which describes the state of ignorance in which Arabs are thought to have lived before Prophet Muhammad (Kepel, 2006, p. 24; Mandaville, 2014, p. 101). He criticized societies based on northern models of secular nationalism, such as Egypt (at the time under the rule of Gamal Abdel Nasser), calling for them to be overthrown by “a vanguard of dedicated fighters, using every means, including jihad” (as cited in Hourani, 2002, p. 446). Jihad, according to Qutb, was required “so that the earth may be cleansed of corruption” and so that a single Islamic entity may then be established in its place (as cited in Musallam, 2005, p. 182). According to Michael Ryan (2013), Qutb’s ideas had a particular appeal to al-Qaida. Ryan refers to the group as Qutb’s “vanguard,” adding that “they absorbed his thought...then moved beyond it to the global stage” (p. 45).

The creation and persistence of movements seeking to establish a religious state illustrate how the policies of outsiders during a crucial era of globalization led some Muslims to rally around religious beliefs, rather than any one system based on secularity. The impact of globalization on religious orthodoxy and nationalism is the focus of Benjamin R. Barber’s influential book, *Jihad vs. McWorld* (2001). Barber focuses on two antagonistic principles of our modern age – jihad and “mcworld” – to explain the flow of world events. Barber uses the term “mcworld” as a metaphor to refer to the forces behind modernism and economic and cultural globalism – namely, multi-national corporations. These corporations, he writes in an article (1992) on the same topic, have pushed “nations into one homogenous global theme park...tied together by communications, information,

entertainment, and commerce.” The result – the reaction – has been various forms of jihad. Whereas jihad is associated with Islam, Barber invokes the term broadly to refer to religious, cultural, ethnic, and nationalistic groups responding to global capitalism. Jihad, according to Barber (2001), represents a borderless force seeking “to recapture a world that existed prior to cosmopolitan capitalism and was defined by religious mysteries, hierarchical communities, spellbinding traditions, and historical torpor” (p. 157). For Barber, jihad is not only initiated via religion, but also by the desire to stir up nationalism. Although his focus is on disgruntled nations, as opposed to non-state actors seeking a particular form of state governance (which seems to be the modern-day dilemma, as argued by the literature), Barber’s work is important nonetheless. Most notably, he normalizes an extreme conception of jihad that specifically denounces Western capitalism in an increasingly globalizing world.

Mujahedeen and Jihadists: Good Muslims or Bad Muslims?

As illustrated in the previous pages, literature on the linguistic origins of jihad and its historical formulations is abundant. The majority of the research suggests that economic, social, cultural, and political changes throughout history have led the doctrine of jihad to be interpreted and applied differently. While jihad has received substantial attention, the associated terms – mujahedeen and jihadists – seem to have been given much less consideration by comparison. It might be argued that less fascination is accorded to the words mujahedeen and jihadists for they are perceived as agents of a larger phenomenon. It is not only the connotations associated with jihad that shift with

each context and historical era – the terms mujahedeen and jihadists also undergo similar transformations.

The term mujahedeen (plural of *mujahid*), is derived from the root *j-h-d* (similar to jihad) and refers to people who carry out a form of jihad (e.g., Karim, 2003; Anwar, 2004; Esposito, 2003). The term is often translated as “warriors of God” (Esposito, 2003), “holy warriors” (OED, 2016) or fighters involved in a “holy war” (e.g., Kushner, 2002, p. 246; Adamec, 2009, p. 222, Oliver and Steinberg, 2005, p. xi). Esposito (2003) has noted that fighters engaged in conflicts “in armed defense of Muslim lands” (p. 213) in Albania, Kashmir, Kosovo, Bosnia, and Chechnya have operated under that name. These groups, according to Esposito, view themselves as “God-fearing people who are fighting against injustice, especially foreign domination, but also against unjust state oppression” (2003, p. 213). Scholarly literature notes that the expression gained particular prominence during the Soviet-Afghan War (1979 – 1989) when it was attributed to groups who fought Communism with the support of the United States and its allies (e.g., Kushner, 2002; Nanji, 2008; Karim, 2003; Karim, 2014; OED, 2016).

Jihadists, like mujahedeen, has also been defined as those who undertake a jihad (e.g., Nanji, 2008; Sedgwick, 2015; OED, 2016). The term has often been attached to the notion of holy war. An example lies in the writings of scholars Monte Palmer and Princess Palmer (2007), who define jihadists as “a self-appointed collection of religious fanatics who have launched a holy war, a jihad, against the United States and everything American” (p.1). However, whereas the word mujahedeen reveals literal Arabic roots, the term jihadists is not acknowledged in the Arabic language. The OED (2016) and historian

Mark Sedgwick (2015) trace the context from which the word jihadist arose in the English language to American historian John Ralph Willis. Willis (1967) used the term to describe the Nigerian Usman dan Fodio, the Sultan of the independent Sokoto Caliphate (1804-1903), and an orthodox Muslim leader known to have implemented an extreme form of Islam in Africa. The OED also traces the origins of the word to Andrew C. Hess. Shortly after Willis, Hess (1970) used the term jihadist when writing about the Muslims who exercised an expansive form of jihad against non-Muslims under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. The difference between Willis and Hess's uses of the word is that the former related it to the representatives of orthodox Islam, whereas the latter associated it to Muslims fighting non-Muslims for regional control.

Azim Nanji (2008) also noted the emergence of the term, and yet he did not trace it to any particular source. Instead, he posited that jihadist was recently introduced by the news media in order to identify certain groups (p. 91). For Nanji, the identification of these groups is specifically linked to those "who believe in remaking Muslim societies" and those who are "fighting Western influence" (ibid).

In addition to the different historical contexts from which these terms arose, they also carry distinct and different connotations. Scholars have analyzed the plethora of words used to distinguish Muslims based on their ideological perspectives. The binary of a "good Muslim" and a "bad Muslim" is the principal point of reference in this discussion. In *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*, Mahmood Mamdani (2004) argues that language used to distinguish Muslims apart is political, rather than religious or cultural. What makes a Muslim "good" or "bad" is not their relationship to Islam or to their social

environments, but towards their position and relation to the United States and Western societies. Mamdani points to various instances when this practice occurred, one of which was President Bush's reference to the "bad" Muslims and the "good" Muslims directly following the 9/11 attacks. Whereas the "bad" Muslims are the culprits responsible for the attacks, the "good" Muslims are the patriotic and civilized Americans looking to distance themselves from the "bad" ones (Mamdani, 1995, p. 15).

Karim (2014) provided further analysis of Mamdani's different terminological categories by including the words jihadists and mujahedeen. He argues the word mujahedeen was reserved in Western media for the seven factions who fought against the Soviets in Afghanistan. It was presented within "positive frameworks" in Western media as it was used to describe the "good Muslims" fighting "the enemies of Western interests" (Karim, 2014, p. 167). Subsequently, jihadists became reserved for the "bad" Muslims waging a violent form of jihad (ibid). Bolstering Karim's argument, a majority of the news reports that cover terrorism and violence committed by Muslims often invoke the term jihadist(s) in the coverage. O'Rourke (2012) notes that "simplified categories have been invented" (p. 2) by political discourses to categorize Muslims into "convenient differentiations" (p. 3). She notes the different "types" of Muslims: "progressives, moderates, fundamentalists, neo-fundamentalists and jihadists" (ibid). Similarly, Karim (2014) drew a distinction between the labels "moderates" and "extremists." He wrote: "moderates' are constructed as those who side politically with Western interests and 'extremists' as those who speak or act against them" (p. 164).

Mark Sedgwick (2007) also distinguishes between the use of the terms mujahedeen and jihadists. While Karim classifies the uses of the terms by placing them within a political environment, Sedgwick's does not make the same observation. His analysis focuses on the division between jihadist and mujahid (singular of mujahedeen). He writes that "a mujahid is not necessarily the same as 'jihadist,' although it is sometimes used...to mean *mujahid*. For many, a 'jihadist' is not just a participant in jihad, but a believer in 'Jihadism'" – a political ideology that binds Islam and warfare, and which is, according to him, a "strong contender in the media" (2015, p.1). Sedgwick stops short of explaining exactly why "jihadism" receives attention by the news media and in what ways "jihadist" also plays into this attraction. Sedgwick's distinction of such terminologies was assessed by Gilbert Ramsay (2012): "For Sedgwick it seems, 'jihadist' at its best is simply a foreign gloss on the word 'mujahid'...At worst it invokes an ideological figment of the Western...imagination, giving artificial coherence to a heterodox dogma when, in reality, there exists only a complex and shifting process of ongoing Islamic interpretation" (p. 54). It appears that Sedgwick did not confirm whether or not Ramsay's understanding of the argument is correct.

Other scholars have indirectly paralleled Ramsay's assessment, which asserts that certain terms receive Western attention because they fit into a particular agenda. For example, O'Rourke (2012) notes that Westerners regard people who undertake a jihad in a manner that satisfies the vision and desires of Western societies. The Western "fascination of the figure of the jihadist," she writes, "has been reflective of a culture of victimology and fear that has become reflective of the logic required for imperialist,

Euro-American capitalist expansion” (p. 24). Slavoj Žižek contextualizes this argument – and took it a step further by stating that the American public has become an armchair observer to jihad caught in a “closed loop of perversion” (as cited in O’Rourke, *ibid*). This perversion enacts “not the desire to see and control so much as the drive to make oneself” (*ibid*).

Available literature has documented that jihad, mujahedeen, and jihadists have been defined differently throughout different periods in history. To prevent inconsistencies, this study provides specific definitions of each term based upon the dominant and recurring themes in the aforementioned literature:

Jihad: It is here defined in two iterations. The first situates jihad as a cause pursued by the mujahedeen factions to liberate Afghanistan from the Soviet Union. The second positions jihad as a form of warfare used by groups or individuals against Western influence.

Mujahedeen: The term is defined as the seven groups that were backed at some point by the United States and its allies during the Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989).

Jihadist: The word describes the Muslim individuals and/or groups perceived as waging a violent form of warfare.

Historical Western Discourses: Is Islam Violent?

Prior to concluding this chapter, it is important to note that the predominant depiction of jihad as a violent doctrine is not the sole cause behind how Islam has come to be perceived. Religious misrepresentations can be found as far back as the early

Christian-Muslim encounters. Peter Morey and Amina Yaqin (2011) point to the early Middle Ages and the arrival of Islam “on the radar of an unsuspecting and recently consolidated Christian world in the seventh century” (p. 7). Despite the fact that religious encounters were mutually beneficial (increased trade routes, cultural intermingling, the transferring of knowledge, etc.), misrepresentations pertaining to different religious communities swiftly emerged in written historical accounts. John Tolan (2002) notes that medieval writings about Islam are, in fact, based on misinformation, primarily because Christian writers had not recognized that Islam was also a monotheistic faith. Christians, therefore, struggled to comprehend that Islam and Christianity share similar edicts, referring instead to Islam as “the law of Muhammad” or “the law of Saracens” (Tolan, 2002, p. xv). Matters were exacerbated during the 7th century when Muslim empires began to conquer and rule Christian-dominated regions. Christians then retaliated with a series of military campaigns, known as the Crusades, in order to re-capture lands from Muslim control (and non-Muslim as well). Later, European colonizers seized control of Muslim-ruled countries during the 19th and 20th centuries. Such colonization led to a resurgence of Islamic movements in the Middle East and surrounding areas.

This review of related literature also illustrates that some researchers do not accept the dominant depiction of jihad as a dangerous Islamic doctrine. They argue that economic, social, and political changes throughout history have contributed to a wholesale misrepresentation of jihad. Other researchers align behind an opposing stance by positioning Islam and its adherents as inherently and ideologically violent. In an influential essay that came to dominate global relations in the post-Cold War world,

Samuel Huntington (1993) assessed the resultant conflicts as defining Christian-Muslim relations and as a testament to Islam as a global threat. It argues the source of conflict between countries will no longer be economic or ideological, as the Cold War had been. The primary factor for divisions will stem from “cultural fault lines” (Huntington, 1993, p. 25). Huntington divides the world into eight monolithic civilizations, paying particular attention to two: “Islam” and “the West.” He narrates a history marked by conflict from the beginning of Islam to today: “Conflict along the fault line between Western and Islamic civilizations has been going on for 1,300 years” (ibid, p. 31). The essay traces the capturing of Spain by Arab armies, the Crusades, the colonization of Muslim-dominated countries, and the modern-day conflicts in the Middle East, claiming that “Islam” and “the West” have always been in conflict. Huntington notates the “bloody borders” of the “crescent-shaped Islamic bloc of nations from the bulge of Africa to central Asia,” (ibid, p. 34) while painting Muslims as backward, unsophisticated, and lacking the capacity to progress and develop akin to the Western way of life. He concludes by projecting Islam as the next potential threat for Western countries (ibid, p. 48).

Other scholars duly reinforce Huntington’s harsh assessment of Islam. Paul Johnson presents the view that ““Western-style concepts”” such as ““democracy, personal freedoms, and the rule of law”” do not exist in Muslim-dominated countries, while Amos Perlmutter argues that ““Islam, fundamentalist or otherwise”” is irreconcilable with ““liberal, human-rights oriented, Western-style, representative democracy”” (as cited in Eickelman, 1997, p. 18).

These critical Western perspectives not only introduced a violent concept of Islam into global relations, but they presented ways to mark conversation in relation to national politics, and in particular during times of heightened national security concerns. Newt Gingrich, an American Republican politician, compared Muslim Americans to Nazis. He asserted that Muslims may try to infiltrate the U.S. to promote an anti-American agenda, as the Nazis had previously done during the Second World War (Khan and Bingham, 2011, June 14). Donald Trump's rhetoric during the 2016 American presidential campaign called for a ban on Muslim immigrants and persistently using the term "radical Islamic terrorism" (Dale, 2016, June 13). Furthermore, the rise of Europe's Far Right has also stoked anti-Muslim fears (Chadwick, 2016, May 26).

Although the misrepresentation of Islam is visible in Western public discourse, this study does not discount the fact that favourable depictions are also in circulation. As such, while it has become commonplace to theorize that Muslims are violent and backward, this section does not seek to argue that the notion is widely held in political and academic communities. There are many Western scholars cited in this chapter whose literature concludes that Islam is misrepresented (e.g., Firestone, 1995; Esposito, 2002; Tolan, 2002).

The following chapter will present a theoretical framework that can be used to assess how the news media frame jihad and its associations.

Chapter Two

News Media Framing

“*But if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought*” (as cited in Hutton, 2009, p. 5).

This chapter explores existing journalism and communication scholarship pertaining to framing theory. The goal of this chapter is to assess how the news media frame stories in order to establish a framework for analyzing how jihad is portrayed. Chapter One indicated that historical changes have shaped the unfavourable connotations of jihad that are now part of today’s public discourse. Taking this point into consideration, this chapter outlines how the news media reinforce the dominant cultural perspectives of the society on which they report.

This chapter begins by presenting an overview of framing theory as well as the context in which theorists have debated it. Next, it explores studies that use framing theory to investigate media coverage of the American elite and foreign policy. The aim is to gain a greater understanding into how reportage of political situations comes to be. There is emphasis on research that has studied the coverage of the *New York Times* because it is important to understand what a number of scholars have concluded about the paper. In the same vein, there is also emphasis on studies pertaining to American news media coverage of Afghanistan.

(It is important to note that although this study focuses on textual data from published newspaper content, the studies referenced in this chapter do not all focus on such newspaper content, per se).

The concept of media framing as a theoretical framework explains how news stories are framed through a process of selection and organization. Charlotte Ryan (1991) describes framing as: “how news stories are made, i.e., how pieces of information are selected and organized to produce stories that make sense to their writers and audiences” (p. 53). William Gamson and Andre Modigliani (1987) define a media frame as “a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events...the frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue” (p. 143). Framing research investigates how topics are discussed by considering the language, concepts and images employed. These elements are what Stuart Hall (1996) calls the “mental frameworks,” which social groups use to understand how society functions (p. 26). In recent decades, framing theory has garnered much attention in the field of media studies, particularly concerning social movements, politics, journalism, and public opinion (Fahlenbrach et al., 2014, p. 4).

Unconscious vs. Conscious Framing

Studies on media framing focus on both the unconscious and conscious selection of the news by journalists. The unconscious selection of media frames is a product and outcome of cultural and journalistic routines. Erving Goffman’s (1974) early work on frame analysis provided a foundation for research on media framing. Goffman describes frames as the “definitions of a situation” that “are built up in accordance with principles of organization which govern events...and our subjective involvement in them” (1974, p. 10). A frame thus allows people “to locate, perceive, identify and label” different events in their lives (ibid, p. 21). Goffman set the precedent for the view that frames guide the

perception of reality. He posited that communicative processes create the frames through which we see the world. In journalistic terms, his approach assumes that the frames used by journalists interpret an overall understanding of events. Goffman argues analyses of world events are couched in primary frameworks, which consist of two frames: a natural frame and a social frame. The former implies an understanding of situations that is “undirected,” “unguided,” and “purely physical,” such as “the state of weather as given in a report” (ibid, p. 22). The latter is influenced by social life, which Goffman describes as “guided doings,” or more specifically a situation where there is a conscious effort to present a precise view. Goffman’s research helped establish framing as having both unconscious and conscious aspects. “Social frameworks,” he wrote, “provide(s) background understanding for events that incorporate the will, aim and controlling effort of an intelligence, a live agency...the human being” (ibid).

Since Goffman, scholars conducting framing research have focused more on strategic frameworks. Sociologist Gaye Tuchman (1978) introduced framing into the world of media studies. While adopting Goffman’s idea of a frame, she undertook field work in print and television newsrooms to understand the working patterns of journalists and how these patterns affect the content produced. Tuchman argued that frames are part of the very culture of the news media, whereby the habitual workings and routines of journalists influence the framing process. Expanding on *routines* and *workings*, Tuchman refers to the deadlines, market pressures, use of individual sources, as well as how journalists interpret their social surroundings. This perspective leads her to categorize journalism as a “social institution” (Tuchman, 1978, pp. 4-5) that is an “organizationally

and professionally produced” system, such as science, sociology, and film production (ibid, p. 217). The framing of this system must question why journalists frame issues in certain ways, why frames change over time, and “the institutional mechanisms that accomplish transformation” (Tuchman, 1978, p. 195).

By conceptualizing media framing within cultural parameters, Tuchman emphasizes how cultural and journalistic norms and routines produce recurring patterns amidst their output of news content and reporting. Journalists assign news media frames based on access to information and based on how they interpret that information. Tuchman’s approach acknowledges that although journalists are media workers, they are also ordinary members of society. As such, their understanding of events through dominant ideologies is reflected in their work. Tuchman’s study parallels an argument by Dietram Scheufele (1999) who categorizes journalists as “audiences” (p. 117). He argues that journalists “like their audiences, are cognitive misers” in that they are “equally susceptible to the very frames that they use to describe events and issues” (ibid).

Considering the literature review on jihad in Chapter One and applying the view of Tuchman and Scheufele helps explain the dominant perception of jihad within the public discourse vis-à-vis the news media. Journalists may also be unaware how the terms jihadists and mujahedeen have come to represent different meanings, although both are used to denote those who undertake a jihad.

Following Tuchman’s work, some research began to focus on unconscious elements of framing as they relate to journalistic routines (e.g., time constraints) and social and cultural norms shaping bias (Gitlin, 1980; Gamson and Modigliani, 1987;

Schudson, 1991; Morey and Yaqin, 2011). For instance, Peter Morey and Amina Yaqin's (2011) study on the Western news media's framing of Muslims notes Islam is presented in a "limited and limiting" manner. They noted misrepresentation arises from a "collision between government policy, the established conventions of media communication, and ideological pressures having their historical roots in Orientalism" (Morey and Yaqin, 2011, p. 30). By *Orientalism*, the authors refer to a concept laid out by Edward Said (1978). Said posits Western countries view themselves as more intellectual and advanced than Eastern communities. Despite this unfavourable representation, Morey and Yaqin argue against the idea of a conspiracy to create an anti-Muslim narrative in the press. Portrayals are instead constructed through the "habitual workings of the mainstream press and news media..." (ibid, p. 3). While there are many viewpoints available, a majority of scholarly research in the area of unconscious framing seems to indicate that the frames produced by the content of the news media are the products of a larger set of cultural and journalistic structures.

Research in the field of media studies has not been static, and it has continued to build on one of Goffman's ideas about the conscious production of frames. This approach argues that journalists knowingly structure their news reports to be consistent with established narratives (Entman, 1993; Scheufele, 1999; Reese, 2001; Tankard, 2001; D'Angelo, 2002). Studies associate this idea to Robert Entman's seminal work (1993) on media framing. Entman describes framing as the structuring of certain aspects of reality through a process of "selection" that is intended to give a particular idea or narrative "salience" (1993, p. 52). He regards "selection" as a way of drawing audience attention to

certain aspects, while ignoring others. He further defines “salience” as “making a piece of information more noticeable, meaningful or memorable to audiences” (ibid, p. 53).

Frames, according to Entman, are used to “define problems,” “make moral judgements,” and “suggest remedies” (ibid, p. 52).

In the same vein as Entman, Paul D’Angelo (2002) regards frames as deliberately slanted (p. 873). He postulates that journalists provide the “interpretive packages” of an issue, for example, by selecting certain sources because they are prominent (D’Angelo, 2002, p. 877). Taking the idea further, D’Angelo insists that a frame emerging from the official narrative becomes valuable for journalists because it contains “a range of viewpoints that is potentially useful” to the understanding of an issue (ibid). Theorist James Tankard (2001) goes even further, suggesting that journalists report information in particular ways to deceive the audience (p. 7). Tankard compares media framing to “the magician’s sleight of hand,” whereby, “attention is directed to one point so that people do not notice the manipulation that is going on at another point” (Tankard, 2001, p. 97).

By applying the conscious-selection approach, it could be argued that journalists and the news media are fully aware of the connotations they are attaching to jihad through their use of frames. Similarly, a case could be made that although the news media are mindful that jihadists and mujahedeen are based on the same concept (i.e., one who undertakes a jihad, as illustrated in Chapter One), they purposefully produce politically-charged frames within which these actors are viewed differently. This study, however, duly rejects this approach because it does not make overt, unfounded and broad-reaching theorizations about the news media. As Karim (2003) argues, “There

is...not a deliberate plan by the mass media to portray specific issues in particular ways, but a hegemonic process through which they adhere” (p. 178).

News Media, Foreign Policy, and Elites

Researchers use framing theory to investigate the news media’s portrayal of American foreign policy (Berry, 1990; Entman, 1991; Schaefer, 2003; Friel and Falk, 2004; Ryan, 2004; Wilesmith, 2011). Examinations are also made into the extent to which the news media tend to apply the policy interests of the ruling elites (e.g., Herman and Chomsky, 1988; Bennett, 1990; Schudson, 1995; Robinson, 2002; Hall et al., 2013). Theorizations about the elite-driven model offer two dominant perspectives. The first posits that while the media are supposed to act as watchdogs and provide transparent coverage, elitist influence prevents that process from fully taking place because elites sway journalists to promote their same values (e.g., Herman and Chomsky, 1988; Bennett, 1990; Entman, 1991; Friel and Falk, 2004; Ryan, 2004). The second approach argues that the news media are capable of providing critical coverage and resisting elite narratives (e.g., Hallin, 1989; Lawrence, 2000; Althaus, 2003; Baum and Groeling, 2010), thus implying that elite discourse is not as hegemonic as the other perspective assumes. This chapter has chosen to extrapolate only representative examples within this argument, because the body of research is too broad to discuss here.

For decades, scholars of political science, sociology, economics, and communication have been analyzing elite theory and questioning the roles of powerful figures and their influence in society. The earliest and most widely cited account emerged from the middle of the Cold War and was written by C. Wright Mills (1956). Mills

coined the term the “power elite” to describe a powerful group that rose to prominence in the United States following the Second World War. Following the war, the United States became the hegemon in the world arena. Since then, American interests have shifted beyond its borders, with its military assuming a dominant global role. The American power elite were a result of these changes. Mills argues the influence of this group resides in their authoritative positions, or what he terms, the “higher circles” (1956, p. 11). They are composed of corporate executives, military generals, and politicians in the executive branch. Their positions “enable them to transcend the ordinary environments of ordinary men and women; they are in positions to make decisions having major consequences” (ibid, pp. 3-4). United by mutual interests, social backgrounds, education, and financial wealth, they oversee the political, corporate, and military spheres. Mills’ main concern is that the political-military-corporate triad has fuelled an interest in military affairs (domestically and abroad), while propelling capitalism as a perpetual war economy. He is cautious, however, about making claims that allege that the power elite are always united by the same political goals.

Scholars who agree with Mills’ concerns about a military approach dominating American foreign policy allege that such an alliance has continued well into the late 20th century and even the early 21st century (Bachrach, 1971; Johnson, 2000; Bacevich, 2008; Bacevich, 2013; Sholtis, 2013). A similarly important assessment of the American military’s role in domestic and foreign policy is Chalmers Johnson’s (2000) *Blowback*. *Blowback* is “shorthand for saying that a nation reaps what it sows, even if it does not fully know or understand what it has sown” (Johnson, 2000, p. 223). Johnson presents a

timeline of historical events that shaped the role of American militarism in the world. He argues the U.S. could have demobilized after the Cold War, but instead, “imprudently committed to maintaining a global empire” (ibid, p. ix). Johnson traces American imperialist projects since the Cold War, arguing that the country’s interventionist policies had significant global consequences. Among many “blowback” cases analyzed in Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East is the United States’s involvement in Afghanistan – their arming of the mujahedeen, their initial support for bin Laden, as well as their help to bring the Taliban to power (ibid, pp. 10-13). Johnson maintains news media reports about “the malign acts of ‘terrorists’ or ‘drug lords’ or ‘rogue states’ or ‘illegal arms merchants’ often turn out to be blowback from earlier American operations” (ibid, p. 8). For Johnson, the events which occurred in the 20th century will almost certainly have blowback consequences in the 21st (ibid, p. 229).

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States became the only global superpower, a status it strives to maintain. However, it was also in a unique position given the influence its foreign policy had on that of other nations, particularly nations grappling with widespread poverty. For instance, the Clinton administration used the country’s powerful role to assist in the area of peacekeeping by increasing contributions to UN peacekeeping operations (as cited in Lindsay and Ripley, 1997, p. 6). Another example of U.S. expansion is the armed intervention and humanitarian relief given to Somalia in the 1990s in an attempt to revamp the country’s political system (ibid). In a parallel development, interest groups dealing with the environment, human rights, international development, and nuclear proliferation “pressured the White House

to move their issue to the forefront of the foreign policy agenda” (Lindsay and Ripley, 1997, p. 6). Whether through development or funding, the relationship between the United States and other countries and interest groups re-enforced a sense of expansion and stratification in the international system in this key period.

Although Mills and Johnson did not present major arguments for elite domination of prominent media systems, these authors are nevertheless included to provide a fuller understanding of political connotations that may be latent in the news texts. Both scholars’ points are relevant to this study because they recognize both the complexity and nuances of foreign policy affairs by considering history, the actions of political figures, and the repercussions of different events. Although Mills and Johnson’s books are separated by many decades (the former written in 1956 and the latter in 2000), they still help illuminate the central ordeal of our world today. In their assessment of the overall political environment and by questioning the influence of elites, Mills and Johnson present valuable approaches. Combining their outlooks further allows for an interesting debate about how foreign policy since the Cold War has created a particular view of the world, and how the culture of American militarism has influenced this perception.

A large body of research into elite-driven news coverage has questioned the relationship between the news media and the political and economic elites (Hallin, 1989; Gitlin, 1980; Altheide, 1984; Jensen, 1987; Dorman and Farhang, 1988; Bennett, 1990; van Dijk 1998; van Dijk, 2009; Hall et. al, 2013). One of the most prominent and debated accounts is Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky’s (1988) *Manufacturing Consent*. Their book examines the large, profit-seeking media corporations in relation to elites,

arguing the news media's "societal purpose" is to manufacture consent for the elite class (Herman and Chomsky, 2002, p. 298) and to influence public opinion. The authors insist that pro-market forces in the media landscape – corporatization, privatization, and the global press market – have strengthened the power of the elites over the news media. Herman and Chomsky subsequently devised "the propaganda model," a conceptual model based on American media operating through interlocking "filters," which screen the news to ensure that it reflects elite concerns and mobilizes support for the state and private activity. The five filters at work are: the media's profit-seeking orientation; dependence on advertisers; the selection of reliable and credible sources; "flak," which refers to a negative response by the privileged groups regarding the media's assessment of an issue; and anti-communism, which builds on the Cold War power struggle and the deployment of an "us" vs. "them" narrative. The importance of *Manufacturing Consent* lies in its examination of how the top 24 American media giants are responsible for virtually all media productions (one of which is the *New York Times*) and the ways in which they respond to American foreign policy.

Herman and Chomsky examine cases of Western media coverage of American military interventions. Among the cases studied and compared were the Vietnam War (1955 – 1975) and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which was particularly related to the "anti-communism" filter in their model. Their study posits that news media reported on both conflicts vis-à-vis the official U.S. policy line of the Cold War. Ideological differences between the United States and the Soviet Union since the end of the Second World War stirred military and political tension. The Soviet Union adhered to Marxist-

Leninist communism, whereas the U.S. advocated a capitalist economic state. The Vietnam War and the Soviet war in Afghanistan are both characterized as periods of hostile confrontation between the Cold War superpowers, even when battles were waged through proxies. During the Vietnam War, the Americans supported the anti-communist Vietnamese, whereas in Afghanistan, the Soviets supported pro-communist Afghans. Militarily, the U.S. relied on a “boots on the ground” operation to thwart the spread of Communist ideology in Vietnam, whereas in Afghanistan, local forces – i.e., the mujahedeen, were financially supported by the United States to carry out the war. In turn, the politics of the Cold War shaped the coverage of both events.

Herman and Chomsky argue that news coverage of the Vietnam War supported American policy by viewing it as “highly moral and well intentioned” (Herman and Chomsky, 2002, *ibid*, p. xxix). They also underline how reportage failed to hold American leaders accountable for a conflict in which they had no legal basis in entering (the United States did not present a formal request to intervene, but merely, “*moved in*”) (*ibid*, p. 178). In contrast, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was described as an act of “aggression” (*ibid*, p. 167). “Western reporters,” they write, “covered the war from the view of the rebels defending their country from foreign attack,” adding that Washington’s pronouncements were treated as “fact,” whereas Soviet pronouncements were assessed with “disdain” (*ibid*, pp. 166-167).

Herman and Chomsky’s “propaganda model” is controversial. While some researchers agree with it (e.g., Robinson, 2002), substantive others do not. Some have viewed the propaganda model as an “extreme viewpoint” (Malek and Wiegand, 1997, p.

6), an “almost conspiratorial view of the media” (as cited in Klaehn, 2002, p. 148) as well as “misleading and mischievous” (Schudson, 1995, p. 4). Despite arguing that filters control the work of journalists and that the news media “collaborate” with the elites (ibid, p. 33), Herman and Chomsky assert filtering by journalists is unintentional. Filtering, they write, “occurs so naturally that media news people, frequently operating with complete integrity and goodwill, are able to convince themselves that they choose and interpret the news ‘objectively’ and on the basis of professional news values” (Herman and Chomsky, 1988, p. 2). They further note that, while news media people do promote the political, economic and social agenda of elites, they concurrently present a “tolerable realistic portrayal of the world” (ibid, p. 303). Consequently, while Herman and Chomsky attempt to argue that news media do not intentionally produce news coverage propagating the interests of the corporate and political elites, their arguments do not seem to support this stance. In spite of these contradictions, the propaganda model is worth consideration. Although contradictory, it usefully demonstrates how journalists are susceptible to sharing the messages that transpire from the elites.

Other scholars have since developed other models about the elite-media nexus, such as Lance Bennett (1990) with his indexing hypothesis. The Bennett approach elucidates how news content on policy issues follows elite narratives: if elites are in agreement on a matter, or if they are engaged in debates, news coverage will remain within the sphere of the official consensus or the primary discussion. News reportage, then, will cover a matter in a certain way because journalists rely on official sources and utilize the information provided by the government. An important body of related

scholarship has noted the reliance on official sources prevails given the organizational structures of the news media and the daily routines of journalists who compose it (e.g., Gans, 1979; Hall et al., 2013). Herbert Gans (1979) posits one of the influences of news framing is the source and the fact that news gathering is a repetitive process in which journalists become routinized to seek out the same sources, even if they “harbor a pervasive distrust” of them (p. 130). Since it is always the same official sources who are interviewed repeatedly, alternative views do not often arise. Stuart Hall et al. (2013) on the other hand, have noted that journalists prefer authoritative and prominent sources, such as those emerging from the government and the courts, because they serve as the “primary definers of news,” particularly during times of crisis (p. 393). These practices position the news media as the “secondary definers” (ibid). Hall et al. (1978) also emphasize the significance of the first figure quoted in a news article. They write, “Arguments against a primary interpretation are forced to insert themselves into its definition of ‘what is at issue’ — they must begin from this framework of interpretation as their starting point” (p. 58). This suggests that the first person quoted sets the dominant narrative in an article, and in turn if the text later references or cites an alternative view, it becomes difficult to supercede that which was presented first. Presenting a counter-argument, Michael Schudson suggests that the reliance of journalists on official sources is an outgrowth of the news media’s belief in the ““democratic order”” and its constant desire to maintain independence (as cited in Hardy, 2014, p. 53). Schudson (1995) has also responded to media-elite nexus criticisms, arguing that journalism is often misjudged. While suggesting that dominant groups do control many sectors in society,

Schudson maintains that the contentions against the news media arise from a lack of understanding of the character of contemporary journalism (Schudson, 1995, p. 3). In order to comprehend the dynamics of news production, Schudson argues it must be recognized that news is not a political form, but rather, “a form of culture” (ibid). While exchanges between sources and journalists and the overall process of news-gathering are political in nature, the news itself is not. Taking the argument deeper into media-elite dynamics, he observes that the relationship between journalism and the elites is ambiguous, noting the news media’s connection to the “political action of readers or viewers or to further political acts of government officials or other elites is rarely clear” (ibid). Such an argument suggests a de-emphasis of the ideological effects of the news and an emphasis on a cultural component. Schudson also argues that painting all journalists with the same brush is a slippery slope. He wrote about the *New York Times*’ journalists and noted the likelihood that they are “American patriots,” but simultaneously argued that their goal is to report the news objectively and fairly (ibid, p. 4).

In another account a decade later, Schudson (2005) presents similar arguments by maintaining that the American model of journalism continues to focus on objectivity, despite experiencing many systematic changes over the course of its history. In an even more recent essay, Schudson (2013) acknowledges institutional pressures from the marketplace and the elite class do in fact impact journalistic work. However, he argues one of the effects is not as detrimental as the other: “It may... be that efforts to cater to the marketplace sometimes serve the public good better than efforts to fashion news as a type of pedagogy in which elites who ‘know best’ work to educate the untutored masses”

(Schudson, 2013, p. 173). For Schudson, although the news media are affected by institutional forces (i.e., marketplace and elites), they also continue to uphold their role as agents of objectivity.

While some of Schudson's arguments constitute an important assessment of the American news media – including his view that discussions misjudge contemporary journalism, that the elite-media nexus is nuanced and vague, and that most journalists do want to report objectively – his relatively optimistic view of the news media fails to consider some fundamental aspects. Schudson acknowledges that the creation of news is a cultural and sociological exercise (an argument also presented by Tuchman, 1978). And yet, he suggests focusing on ideology is unnecessary. This claim is seemingly contradictory because it does not consider that journalists, like their audiences, are “cognitive misers” (Scheufele, 1999, p. 117) and thus, tend to unknowingly invoke the dominant ideological figments that are part of a given culture. In the context of this thesis, ideology refers to a “coherent set of political beliefs and values” which serve the interests of certain groups (Augoustinos et al., 2006, p. 273) and to the “social representations shared by members of a group” (van Dijk, 1998, p. 8).

While Schudson convincingly reasons that news is a cultural form and that some elements of news gathering are political, he fails to properly inquire about the dominant ideology latent in a text. Every text, according to Pierre Macherey (2012), contains implicit and explicit content. The explicit content is governed by a “secret” manifesting itself through ideology (Macherey, 2012, p. 42). Defining ideology as a phenomenon that is interested in wielding political power, Macherey maintains it “exists because there are

certain things which must not be spoken of” (ibid, p. 147). In this sense, ideology is in practice invisible and “formless,” allowing it to easily become part of the public’s common sense (ibid, p. 72).

An overall synthesis of the literature in the area of policy-driven news coverage posits that the prominent international role of the United States influences news media coverage (Entman, 1991; Friel and Falk, 2004; Ryan, 2004). Todd M. Schaefer (2003) refers to several observers whose studies have explored the news media’s “*ethnocentric, nationalistic* bias in covering foreign affairs” (p. 98). The American news media, according to Schaefer, tend to pay particular importance to international issues that are of concern to the U.S., while simultaneously portraying their “allies in a more favorable light than enemies” (ibid). Pertinent to this discussion is a brief summary of news values. In a well-known essay, John Galtung and Mari Ruge (1965) proposed a series of news values that allow insight into how events become news. Galtung and Ruge were primarily interested in how international events gained the attention of the Norwegian press. Their chief focus and research findings included: if the issues reference elite people or nations; if they are negative and unexpected; if they provide additional coverage to issues that have been on the public’s radar for some time; and if they match the culture’s values.

Of related theoretical interest to Galtung and Ruge’s news values is Entman’s (1991) comparative study on the contrasting frames that developed between two similar incidents involving the Cold War superpowers: the Russian downing of a Korean airplane (1983) and the American military’s destruction of an Iranian airliner (1988). Entman analyzes coverage in three categories of news media: news weeklies (*Time* and

Newsweek), television (*CBS*) and print (*Washington Post* and *New York Times*). Although both incidents involved a loss of civilian life on non-military airplanes, Entman concludes that different labels (i.e., repeated descriptors and adjectives) tended to “elicit or omit moral evaluation” (1988, p. 18). He found the news mediums described the Korean airliner as an “attack,” while the Iranian downing was a “tragedy” that arose from a “technical” problem (ibid). As per Entman, journalists played a role in aligning the coverage with the Cold War policy interests of their government. Whereas the “attack” frame reinforced Ronald Reagan’s rhetoric, which held the USSR as an “evil empire,” (1988, p. 10) the “technical” problem frame diminished criticism of American foreign policy in the Gulf: “Gulf policy persisted without significant challenge or change after the incident” (ibid, p. 23). Entman ultimately suggests that the American media intentionally structured their articles in order to remain consistent with the narratives of political elites.

However, in a later study, Entman (2009) retreated from this line of thought, noting that journalists are not always deliberately pursuing the dominant narratives of the elites, but are limited by their news-gathering routines and workplace power structures. Entman’s argument is relevant, especially given that the concept of conscious framing is credited to his 1993 seminal work (as stated at the beginning of this chapter). Therefore, for Entman, it seems that conscious and unconscious framing varies depending the context and the subject. Such variation within the influences of media coverage was also noted by mass communication experts Pamela Shoemaker and Stephen D. Reese (1996). Their framework consists of five different levels that influence news media production.

The first level revolves around the journalist's social, cultural, and demographical background. The second relates to journalistic routines, such as seeking sources and their deadlines and time constraints. The third denotes the organizational level, which involves the working dynamics of the news media company. The fourth relates to outside influences, such as interest groups and the government. The fifth is ideology, which is also the most influential, because of its ability to infiltrate every aspect of society.

There are also important studies that examine how the American news media report on Afghanistan, particularly in relation to the American-led invasion in 2001 (Jasperson and Kikhia, 2003; Ryan, 2004; Papacharissi and Fatima Oliveira, 2008). It seems that there is consensus among these studies that coverage upheld Washington's policies. For instance, Amy E. Jasperson and Mansour O. El-Kikhia (2003) compared CNN's coverage with that of Al-Jazeera, finding that the frames employed in CNN's coverage of the war in Afghanistan promoted the Administration's position and presented patriotic messages, whereas Al-Jazeera's did not. For instance, American coverage focused on military frames, which was characterized by the technological superiority of the American forces. Al-Jazeera, on the other hand, did not promote military and strategic issues, opting instead for emphasis on the collateral damage from American bombings (Jasperson and Kikhia, 2003, p. 126). Similarly, Zizi Papacharissi and Maria de Fatima Oliveira (2008) compared coverage of the war in the American newspapers, the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*, with two British papers, the *London Financial Times* and the *Guardian*. Their study concludes American reportage excluded coverage of military alternatives, whereas the UK's reporting offered policy alternatives. In

particular, the *New York Times* “tried to personify” its coverage by using political officials and characters involved in the events as sources, along with invoking dramatic language (p. 70). In another example, Michael Ryan (2004) inquired about the editorial content of the *New York Times*, along with the 10 largest American newspapers. His study focused on each paper’s official position following 9/11 during the lead-up to the bombing of Afghanistan, concluding the papers supported a military intervention without promoting alternative responses. A military intervention in Afghanistan was portrayed positively, Ryan wrote, largely because the main themes in the editorials reinforced Washington’s political narrative.

Another area of research into the dynamics between elites and the media employs a perspective focused on critical coverage of the news. Researchers in this area measure the news media as platforms capable of presenting critical coverage, despite elite influence (e.g., Hallin, 1989; Lawrence, 2000; Althaus, 2003; Baum and Groeling, 2010). Scott Althaus (2003) studied American news coverage of the Gulf War (1990-1991) and found that in contrast to previous studies, news media coverage on foreign policy did not mirror elite interests: “Television news did not merely shadow the debate occurring among US officials. Journalists frequently presented competing perspectives and were often the instigators rather than merely gatekeepers of critical viewpoints” (p. 402). In assessing whether the news media accept or reject dominant political perspectives, Entman (2009) similarly concluded that critical views of government policy existed during the American invasion of Grenada (1983) and Panama (1989-1990) as well as during the U.S.-Libya crisis (1985-1986). He found the vast range of foreign sources

cited in articles allowed journalists to present reports that did not reflect the perspectives of Congress: “Foreign sources contributed far more to the policy critique than members of Congress” (Entman, 2009, p. 55).

Nicholas Berry’s (1990) analysis of coverage in the *New York Times* also concludes that the use of foreign sources tends to offer alternative perspectives. Berry’s final conclusion is that, despite the fact that the *New York Times* accepts and reports the government’s official foreign policy position, a shift to critical coverage occurs when government policy begins to fail. When the policy fails, journalists turn to critical coverage while relying less on the narratives of American officials and more on foreign sources, which help endorse oppositional views (Berry, 1990, pp. 139-140). As a result, the government attempts to regain the trust of the paper, but does not always succeed in doing so.

Based upon the research information available in this area, American elites are interested in having the news tailored to their policy interests. The research, however, also suggests that coverage goes both ways – sometimes supporting elite rhetoric and other times resisting their hegemony. In consideration of both approaches, this study postulates that government rhetoric tends to infiltrate journalistic frames.

Master Narratives

Studies on the news media have examined and established how the ideological positioning of news stories leads to the creation of master narratives (Hackett and Zhao, 1994; King, 2007; Bivins, 2009). Master narratives are dominant stories deeply entrenched in culture, due, at least in part, to stories that have regularly appeared in the

news media over time. Master narratives reflect the values of a socio-cultural context and also serve to set the precedent for how to perceive certain situations. They provide a structure for understanding concepts and topics, and a way to reinforce the circulation of similar ideas. Halverson et al. (2011) define a master narrative as a “coherent *system* of interrelated and sequentially organized *stories* that share a common rhetorical desire to resolve a conflict by establishing audience expectations according to the known trajectories of its literary and rhetorical form” (p. 14). Like all narratives, master narratives are incorporated into news articles as stories: they contain a beginning, a middle and an end. This structure presents a plot with characters depicted as either protagonists or antagonists. Master narratives are thus “set story lines with set characters who act in set ways” (Cline, 2009, p. 483).

Via a textual analysis of American newspaper articles during the Gulf War (1991), Robert Hackett and Yuezhi Zhao (1994) deduced that the news frames used in covering antiwar protests are linked to a “master narrative of war” (p. 532). This particular narrative frame describes a hesitant United States, possessing a good will to help restore social order, and yet being forced to wage a war against its enemies. Although this study focuses on textual analysis, Tom Bivins’ (2009) scholarship on photos and their captions is also worth citing here. The dualist visual/textual study presents a convincing argument of how powerful words – and photos – can be in assessing and establishing culture. The study notes that following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the images and headlines that were used to identify homeless people created different narratives. One image portrayed a young African American man carrying a

plastic garbage bag with a caption that read, “A young man walks through chest-deep flood water after looting a grocery store in New Orleans on Tuesday, Aug. 20, 2005” (Bivins, 2009, p. 236). In another photo depicting two white individuals also carrying a plastic bag and walking through the water, the caption reads, “Two residents wade through chest-deep water after finding bread and soda from a local grocery store after Hurricane Katrina came through the area in New Orleans Louisiana” (ibid). According to Bivins, although the language of the captions may appear as racist at first glance, they are part of a master narrative that has been predominant in the U.S. for many years.

Master narratives and their related frames actively alternate according to shifts in the international system. Charles King (2007) argues that during the Cold War, belligerents identified their actions “in overtly political terms” by claiming to be defending the free market against Communist-backed insurgents (p. 122). Later in the 1990s, the frames assumed a cultural narrative, emphasizing national liberation movements or a minority group fighting a majority. A further transition occurred during the early 2000s, as dominant labels began to focus on “terrorists or insurgents” (King, 2007, p. 122). King lists examples of each particular group: the conflicts in Angola and El Salvador fall into the first category; those in Bosnia, Georgia and Rwanda fall into the second; and Iraq and Afghanistan fall into the third. Although King falls short of providing definitions that distinguish a *terrorist* from an *insurgent*, his study is nonetheless important for this thesis because he shows how the framing of political groups correlates with – and modulates in relation to – their surrounding developments.

While assessing the frames within news articles, this study will consider whether one or more master narratives are relied upon or circulated. King (2007) illustrated that political movements were framed differently during various political contexts, and as a result, narratives tended to shift according to the overall political environment. This study takes a similar premise and therefore assumes that while framing involves an overall emphasis on the surrounding culture, it is often triggered by ideology (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996).

The Embedded System

The importance of war in the news has inspired research focused on how journalists living alongside a military unit in or around a battlefield frame issues. Scholarly debate on the effects of covering combat operations has noted both advantages and risks to embedding journalists with combat units (Miller, 2003; Keeble, 2004; Pfau et al, 2004; Aday et al, 2005; Lewis et al, 2006). In a study examining the coverage of embedded journalists during the Iraq invasion (2003), Michael Pfau et al. (2004) find the embedding system increases bias and decreases objectivity as it links journalists directly with combat operations. This study suggests embedded journalists tend to present more favourable coverage about the military than reporters who are not part of the embedded system, because journalists become “encultured” into the military (Pfau et al, 2004, p. 78). Due to their proximity to the military culture of war, embedded journalists become reliant on the army and political sources that surround them to survive. The frames are therefore influenced by the journalist’s relationship to the troops as sources and their subsequent views of the war.

The system of embedding may also give journalists access to other political actors in a conflict. In an article published by the *Daily Mail*, the head of BBC announced the news organization's coverage of the Libyan uprising was one-sided because journalists were embedded with rebels and tended to cover events from their perspective (Revoir, 2012, June 25). Although research investigating embedded journalists with rebels/guerrilla troops seems scarce, it is still important to consider. Further to this strain of research, this study considers the geographical location of journalists as well as the influence of sources on reportage, including whether the journalist is embedded with the military or with other wartime actors.

Not all studies agree with the conclusions made about embedded journalists. There is also literature that explores how, despite being embedded, journalists continue to see the larger critical picture. In a British study investigating the news media's coverage of the Iraq war (2003), Lewis et al. (2006) found that embedded journalists were "generally able to preserve their objectivity" without military or government influences (p. 196) and by offering views that "contradicted official military claims" (p. 197). Additionally, Aday et al. (2005) analyze the coverage of embedded and non-embedded reporters during the Iraq war (2003), discovering that embedded reporters presented more neutral stories than reporters who were not part of the embedded system (p.15). The study demonstrates embedded journalists did not produce articles in support of the military even if the articles featured quotes from military officials or soldiers, nor did they promote favourable coverage about "battle, strategy or tactics" (Aday et al, 2005, p. 15). Aday et al. suggest the difference between embeds and non-embeds corresponded to the

type of stories being generated: embeds predominantly focus on American and coalition forces, whereas non-embedded reporters focus on the civilian population.

There are many different ways in which journalists can be influenced to frame information. Based on the different perspectives outlined in this chapter, this thesis will evaluate the news media within primarily cultural parameters (e.g., Tuchman, 1978; Shoemaker and Reese, 1996), an approach based upon the assumption that news media coverage is influenced by outside powers. The validity of this view will be addressed in the methods and findings sections in later chapters.

The next chapter explains the methodological approach selected for this study. It builds on the research outlined in this chapter by presenting the approach devised to evaluate the *New York Times*' coverage.

Chapter Three

Content Analysis and the Competition of Discourses

“Choices of words and their organization into news stories are not trivial matters. They hold great power in setting the context for debate, defining issues under consideration, summoning a variety of mental representations, and providing the basic tools to discuss the issues at hand” (Pan and Kosicki, 1993, p. 70).

The purpose of this study is to examine how coverage by the *New York Times* emphasized different interpretations of jihad across several decades of conflict in Afghanistan. This takes into consideration how the concept of jihad itself has evolved throughout history, while concurrently investigating how the news media report on culturally dominant issues. This chapter works towards integrating a methodological approach for content analysis and responding to the below research questions.

Primary Research Question:

- 1) How has the *New York Times* participated in the transformation of the connotations surrounding the vocabulary associated with the concept of jihad in Afghanistan?

Secondary Research Questions:

- 2) How did the *New York Times* frame the term mujahedeen when referring to the seven factions funded by the United States and its allies?
- 3) How were the mujahedeen framed following the Soviet Union’s withdrawal in 1989? Was the terminology consistent with prior coverage, or did a new narrative emerge?

- 4) How was the term jihadist framed? Was the coverage similar to that of the mujahedeen (considering they are both viewed as participants in a jihad) or was the meaning of the word re-positioned to fit another narrative?
- 5) What type of dominant discourses are prevalent throughout the decades of conflicts in Afghanistan when considering the overall concept of jihad?

This chapter presents the research strategy intended to respond to these questions. It outlines a mixed-method approach, combining content analysis with a competition of discourses. The following constitutes a blueprint for the research design.

Qualitative Content Analysis

The first research method that this study follows is qualitative content analysis. Philip Stone et al. define content analysis as “any research technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specific characteristics within text” (as cited in Macnamara, 2005, p. 2). These features can refer to any written, visual or spoken content in a text, including words, images, ideas, symbols, and themes.

This study is interested in a qualitative assessment of textual data rooted in the way it focuses on language as a means of communication (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005, p. 1283). This specific approach engages in a critical analysis of the content at issue in order to provide more detailed answers for the research questions. Most importantly, it makes *inferences* about the underlying meaning of the content by “reading between the lines” (Sparks, 2012, p. 26). Hence, this study is qualitative insofar that it investigates the language of news reports, but it also looks beyond the surface to uncover the more subtle nuances that result from such actions. Tom Koch (1990) suggests an examination of the

written news media should investigate stories “as if they were exotic artifacts from a distant culture and not items of such familiarity as to have a form whose rules appear self-evident and natural” (pp. 14-15). He points to the importance of understanding the manner in which news is written, because it contains, by its very nature, inconsistencies and ubiquities which are part of the “taken-for-granted-world” (p. 15).

Content Analysis Procedure

The designated unit of analysis used here is the newspaper text, as produced by major news media. The *New York Times* has been selected as the source of inquiry due to its prominent position as a “paper of record.” Founded in 1851, it has one of the largest circulation rates in the United States and the world. In 2013, it had a total average circulation of 1,865,318, including 1,133,923 of its digital editions, making it the second most widely read newspaper in the U.S. (The Huffington Post). The *New York Times* has won 117 Pulitzer Prizes for outstanding journalism, more than any other news organization in the U.S. (The *New York Times* Company). That the paper has won the most prestigious prize in journalism so many times demonstrates that it is doing some of the best journalism – with the most regularity – amongst the world’s largest newspapers, rendering it preferable and crucial to this analysis.

The *New York Times* was also selected because it represents the mainstream Western market. Scholars Frances Henry and Carol Tator (2002) define mainstream as “the dominant culture and the political, social, educational, cultural and economic institutions through which its power is maintained and reproduced” (p. 246). This

statement might also be used to observe how the concept of jihad is portrayed in a society that may not be familiar with its original meanings.

It is important to note as well that the *New York Times Manual of Style and Usage* (Siegal and Connolly, 1990 and 2015) advises its journalists to write jihad when referring to “a holy war carried out by Muslims against the enemies of Islam” (p. 98). This exhibits how the *New York Times* journalists are being instructed to define the phenomenon in a limited way.

The sampling of the chosen news articles is meant to be purposive. Purposive sampling techniques involve selecting cases “based on a specific purpose...” (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2008, p. 173). They are required if the researcher’s personal judgement deems it necessary to select criteria (i.e., events, people, cases, pieces of information) of interest as shaped by specific research questions. This study is one such case. Its research questions revolve around four main elements required as part of the sample: news articles from the *New York Times*, an emphasis on the conflicts in Afghanistan, a focus on three specific words, and an examination of four different time periods. As such, a sampling plan considers all these elements at once. Purposive sampling attracts researcher bias, meaning the research process could be jeopardized if articles reflective of that were consciously or unconsciously selected (Curtis et al., 2013, p. 29). To preserve the integrity of the study, random sampling elements were incorporated (ibid).

Purposive and Random Elements

Although the samples are mainly purposive, they also contain random elements or selected articles. The articles were accessed through the Lexis Nexis academic database

by searching the terms jihad, mujahedeen, and jihadists during four periods. The four periods were chosen to present a steady timeline for the evolution of the term jihad. Doing so required a full examination from the beginning of the modern-day conflict in Afghanistan to the most recent state of affairs and events. As such, each selected period focuses on particular issues that alter the circumstances of the conflicts and are thus addressed in this study.

The four major periods to be examined are: the Soviet-Afghan War (1979 – 1989); Afghanistan’s civil war, the rise of the Taliban and the prelude to the U.S.-led war in the country (1990 to summer of 2001); the war in Afghanistan (fall of 2001 to 2014) and present-day Afghanistan (2013 – 2015). As the events are stretched over several decades, the content analysis will investigate only two years within each period. The selected years are: 1987 – 1989, 1999 – 2001, 2003 – 2005 and 2013 – 2015.

The years 1987 – 1989, 1999 – 2001 and 2013 – 2015 (2003 – 2005 will be explained below) mark the final two years of each of the major periods. This study selects the final two years of each period to examine because it infers that the *New York Times* would have already set the standards for its reporting on either situation. This means that if the publication was framing one of the words in a particular manner during a specific period, the final two years would theoretically offer a better understanding of the coverage than the first few years, when the event was still relatively new. However, the selected years of 2003 – 2005 do not mark the final two years of the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan. American troops are not scheduled to withdraw from Afghanistan before December, 2016 (details about the U.S.-led war are examined in the next chapter). This

study did not select the presumed final two years of that conflict (i.e., 2014 – 2016) because there would be a large gap with the previous period (i.e., 1999 – 2001 and 2014 – 2016), which could potentially offset the evolution of the concept of jihad in the reportage. The selected years 2003 – 2005 were chosen for analysis at random using a draw. The draw contained four randomly chosen periods: 2003 – 2005, 2004 – 2006, 2005 – 2007 and 2006 – 2008. These years were marked on separate papers and placed in a basket. The years 2003 – 2005 were then randomly selected to form the third period of examination for this thesis. Table 1 presents the major periods and their length, along with the years selected.

Table 1
The Four Periods Selected and their Political Context

Political context	Length of conflict	Years selected
The Soviet war in Afghanistan	1979-1989	1987-1989
Afghanistan's civil war, the rise of the Taliban, and the prelude to the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan	1990-summer of 2001	1999-2001
U.S.-led war in Afghanistan	Fall of 2001-2014	2003-2005
Present-day Afghanistan: NATO forces withdrawal, new non-combative mission, and rise of ISIS	2013-ongoing	2013-2015

Because the study investigates three chosen words during four periods, an equal number of articles has been allotted for the examination of each word, so as to avoid having a sample that is not balanced. It is for this reason that each of the three terms analyzes five articles during each period (the breakdown of how the articles were sampled is explained in detail next). In total, 50 articles were selected. The sample includes 50 articles due to the fact that qualitative analysis requires in-depth investigation as well as a detailed explanation of the findings, and there is subsequently limited space and time in this thesis. This sample also considers content saturation. Dominant news frames, for example, are typically revealed in the first few articles, and later become more evident and prominent in later ones. Therefore, it assumes that content saturation will be identified in the early stages of the analysis and reached in the later stages, whether the sample contains 50 or more articles.

Since the sample consists of 50 articles, the results of the analysis are not exhaustive; the *New York Times* is merely one news outlet and the articles are selections from a large sample from the newspaper (the sample comprised 1761 articles). However, the inferences made from the analysis of the articles sampled are still potentially transferable to broader news coverage. This is supported by communications scholar Maxwell McCombs (2014) who asserts that the “elite news media” (the *New York Times* has acquired a reputation of being an elite paper), “frequently exert a substantial influence on the agenda of other news media” (2014, p. 128).

The first section of the content analysis (Chapter Five) focuses on two terms: jihad and mujahedeen. The chapter looks at the years 1987 – 1989, which are the final

two years of the Soviet-Afghan War, and 1999 – 2001, which are the last two years of the Taliban’s domination, Afghanistan’s civil rivalries and the prelude to the U.S.-led invasion. A total of 20 articles were selected, 10 of which study the word jihad (five for each period) and an additional 10 that examine the word mujahedeen (five for each period). The term jihadist was not part of the sample in these periods. As demonstrated in Appendix A, it was not until recently that media discourses introduced the term “jihadist” to identify particular groups.

The second section of the content analysis (Chapter Six) focuses on three terms: jihad, mujahedeen, and jihadists. The chapter begins with the years 2003 – 2005, a few years following the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan and the emergence of a new heightened political context. It also studies the years 2013 – 2015 because it is during this period that the presence of foreign troops began to decrease in Afghanistan, while a new organization – the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) – was on the rise in the Middle East. Like al-Qaida and the Taliban, ISIS also claims to be fighting a jihad. Media coverage of the group describes its actions as a jihad, presenting its participants as jihadists. A total 30 articles for this chapter were selected for analysis; 10 examine the word jihad (five for each period); 10 study the word mujahedeen (five for each period); and a final 10 observe the word jihadists (five for each period).

Each term was searched in the Lexis Nexis database during each selected time period (e.g., jihad, 1987 – 1989). During the search, the word Afghanistan was included in order to yield results related to the country. The news articles produced by the search were chosen for analysis at random using a draw. Blank papers were numbered in

accordance with the number of articles retrieved in the searches and placed in a basket (e.g., if a search yielded 250 articles, blank papers were numbered 1 to 250). Next, papers were randomly selected from the basket and matched with an article's number. It was important to read through the article to confirm that it was related to Afghanistan. Other conflicts were also characterized as a jihad, while different groups were identified as mujahedeen and jihadists (depending on the time period). The database retrieved articles related to other conflicts as well, specifically those in Palestine⁴ and Syria.⁵

A few issues came up while sampling articles which merit a mention here. Because the focus of the sample was on news articles from the *New York Times* newspaper, there were several omissions made in order to remain consistent. First, the *New York Times* launched an online website in January of 1996 (Lewis, January 22, 1996). Therefore, it was important to ensure the articles selected in the sample were print-based, not Internet-based, since there would be no online option during the earlier sample periods. Second, the New York Times Company, which owns the *New York Times*, recently (2013) refashioned the *International Herald Tribune* as the *International New York Times*, a newspaper tailored to a global audience (NYT, 2013, October 14). Although both papers share the same owner and resources, the articles from the international publication were not considered as part of the sample. Third, the sample also omitted book and movie reviews that the *New York Times* publishes.

⁴ During the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, a Palestinian movement known as 'Palestine Liberation Organization' was undertaking political violence against Israel to protest against occupation. The *New York Times* and other media outlets referred to their actions as jihad.

⁵ Particularly following the Syrian uprising in 2011, ISIS and Al-Nusra Front rose in the Middle East. The *New York Times* (as will be shown in the next chapters) identified them as "jihadists."

Further, some of the news articles drawn for the analysis include bylines that say “special to the New York Times.” Searching for a biography of each journalist whose name accompanied that phrase confirmed that none of them were freelancers or employed by wire services. In a phone call, staff at the *New York Times* advised that “special to the New York Times” does not signify anything. It was a phrase the paper used to include in bylines for its reporters but it no longer does.

Another issue encountered was that some articles that were part of the large sample were published in the *New York Times* magazine and not the newspaper proper. Considering this study focuses on newspaper texts, the magazine articles were omitted.

Additionally, not all of the articles have datelines. Consulting the *New York Times*’ style manual (2015) indicated datelines are used to specify a location outside New York City (NYC) (Siegal and Connolly, 2015, p. 90). If no dateline is included, it means the journalist submitted the article from NYC. An earlier version of the manual was read from 1990 to verify whether this was a practice during previous years, and confirmed that the same practices were in place then as well (Siegal and Connolly, 1990).

Finally, some articles were co-written by journalists from the *New York Times* and by freelance reporters in Afghanistan or Pakistan. In such cases, the bylines primarily attributed the article to the journalist from the newspaper, but also mentioned that so and so “contributed reporting from...” These articles were selected because the byline mainly recognizes the journalist affiliated with the *New York Times*.

The sample is not limited to news stories, but also includes letters to the editor, editorials, and opinion pieces (op-eds). As detailed in the competition of discourses

section below, it is important to assess whether these types of articles align with the dominant narratives (Karim, 2003). The following explains how each type of article is identified in order to prevent inconsistencies. A letter to the editor is sent to a publication by an individual regarding an issue of concern manifested within an earlier article. In such letters, the individual writing and sending it presents an argument to a piece he or she has read. This could potentially “reveal an intensity of feeling,” and the writers may also “resort to logical fallacies and other questionable tactics” (Trimbur, 2013, p. 174). An editorial is an article that presents the newspaper’s official stance on a topic and is usually written by an editor. An opinion piece (op-ed) relates the personal opinion of a member of the audience about an issue. Since letters to the editor, editorials, and op-eds may either promote marginal discourses or reaffirm the dominant discourse, they were part of the sample.

The original goal was to limit the op-eds, letters to the editor and editorials to no more than 15 in order to keep the focus on the *New York Times*’ coverage. However, the sample only retrieved six. Given the nature of the random sampling procedure, including more might potentially undermine the research design. Therefore, the words in particular sections are only analyzed through news articles (e.g., jihad in 1987 – 1989 includes five news articles and no op-ed, letter to the editor or editorial). It is worth noting as well that the majority sampled were op-eds, rather than letters to the editor and editorials. In order to see why that occurred, a search was conducted on the database by limiting the results to articles derived from the editorial desk, as Lexis Nexis provides that option. Again, four separate searches for each word and each time period were conducted, along with

the word “Afghanistan,” so as to yield results that speak about the country. The results yielded an abundance of op-eds, but comparatively few letters to the editor and editorials. What this exhibited is that not many letters to the editor and editorials addressed the topic of Afghanistan and jihad. Therefore, it was beyond the control of this analysis to present more of these articles or an equal amount of each type in the overall sample, as that would impose risks on its randomness. In total, out of 50 articles, the analysis included two letters to the editor, one editorial, and three op-eds across the four periods.

Following upon the article selection, a coding procedure was created. The goal of coding is to observe the persistent use of particular elements or themes in a text, which in turn, allow a researcher to deduce the dominant frames that emerge. The procedure looked for the terms/labels that appeared frequently alongside the three words under investigation. The procedure also notated the common elements in the coverage. Detailed in Chapter Two, this considers the sources included, the language employed, and/or the reporting techniques. The coding scheme also considered the *direction* of the stories, which refers to the content’s positive or negative tone (Neuman, 1997). The coding process was conducted three times in order to ensure accurate results. In order to identify dominant frames and repetitive labels, the language employed and the suggestions made by sources must be evident in the majority of the articles representing any particular word during a corresponding period.

Competition of Discourses

The second methodological approach used in this study is the competition of discourses method. Before discussing the terms of analysis, it is important to consider the conception of discourse as theorized by Michel Foucault, a leading scholar in the area.

While discourse typically refers to a written or spoken form of communication, Foucault does not solely categorize it as such. For him, discourse is a system of social representation used to communicate a particular subject for society at a particular period in history. The meaning of a discourse is constructed through “social practices,” which refers to the constitutive process by which information is transmitted, understood, and discussed (Foucault, 1969, p. 49). Foucault (1978) argues that the *social practices* which bring a discourse to fruition are linked to power: “Power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything but because it comes from everywhere” (p. 93). For him, power is, and has historically been, entrenched within social relations. It is part of our daily interactions and practices, seamlessly constructing social knowledge. It is undetected unless it is acknowledged and explored. It also changes shape from time to time and from context to context, all with a power that is outside the control of any one person.

It has been argued that elites use their influential roles in politics, the economy, society, and law to construct dominant discourses (Hall, 1979; Karim, 1993; van Dijk, 1993; Wodak and Matouschek, 1993; Tator and Henry, 2006). Carol Tator and Frances Henry (2006) posit that “dominant discourses are composed of the thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and public declarations made by public authority figures who are involved in maintaining political order and social control” (p. 115). According to Wodak and

Matouschek (1993), elites are the ones who define and dominate certain groups in society at large. This argument is paralleled by Tuen A. van Dijk (1993), who wrote that elites assign labels that, in turn, become social markers, such as “radicals,” “criminals” and “illegal immigrants.”

While it is imperative to understand the role power relations play in the construction of dominant discourses, it is also important to comprehend that dominant discourses are not static (Hall, 1979; Collins, 1989; Karim, 1993; Karim, 2003). For instance, Karim (2003) noted that elites are not always in agreement – they tend to disagree on matters related to policy, among other subjects. As a result, their shifting power structures prompt discursive fluctuations. Karim cites cultural theorist Stuart Hall, who had previously expanded upon a similar view:

We must remember that this is not a single, unitary, but a plurality of dominant discourses: that they are not deliberately selected by encoders to ‘reproduce events within the horizon of the dominant ideology’, but constitute the field of meanings within which they must choose. Precisely because they have become ‘universalized and naturalized’, they appear to be the only forms of intelligibility available; they have become sedimented as the ‘only rational, universally valid ones’...that these premises embody the dominant definitions of the situation, and represent or refract the existing structures of power, wealth and domination, hence that they structure every event they signify, and accent them in a manner which reproduces the given ideological structures – this process has become unconscious, even for the encoders (as cited in Karim, 2003, p. 5).

Although dominant discourses reinforce power, there are other forms of discourse that try to resist and challenge that very power (Foucault, 1970; Karim, 1993; Karim 2003). Such discourses are of utmost importance to this study because they demonstrate that spaces used to contest the ideological framework of the dominant discourses do exist. In order to determine whether or not these types of discussions arise in the context of this study, Karim's (1993 and 2003) competition of discourses method, which argues discourses fragment into several competing branches, will be followed.

Karim's approach is inspired by the works of scholar Philip Schlesinger and others, as well as the media studies theorist Raymond Williams. Karim's study of the different discourses of ethno-cultural terminology in Canadian society identifies four competing discourses: dominant, oppositional, alternative and populist (1993). He analyzes a wide array of sources including media articles, legislation, and governmental publications. While focusing on the socio-political contexts of the language within the material rather than on their semantic structures, Karim proposes specific indicators, each of which serves to identify the struggles between the four forms of discourses. Dominant discourses, according to Karim, provide the definitions used in public discourse as well as supporting the status quo; oppositional discourses criticize the views of dominant discourses, but do not question their legitimacy; alternative discourses directly challenge the representation made by dominant discourses, do not accede to their ideological foundations, and may even create their own meanings; and populist discourses agree with the prevailing views, but express their position in a more vocal and assertive manner.

His study makes two paramount observations. The first is that the “cultural spaces” of the news media allow for “non-dominant discourses to appear from time to time.” This is an important statement because it presents the view that, although news coverage promotes a dominant discourse, contestation is not always so limited. The second significant observation Karim’s study makes is that, while socio-economic and political elites do set the dominant discourses, they are not always in agreement. Karim observes that different forms of government (in the case of his essay, this refers to Canada’s provincial and federal levels) compete over how to define terms and concepts that are of particular interest to their political constituents. The latter argument mirrors the observations of some of the scholars cited in Chapter Two, who argue that internal disagreements amongst elitist circles are always in existence (e.g., Mills, 1956; Bennett, 1990).

Karim further expanded his competition of discourses approach in a 2003 study on how the news media report on violence within Muslim-majority societies versus Western societies. Whereas his earlier work recognizes four types of discourses, this one identifies three: official, alternative, and oppositional. Karim’s analysis uncovers various representative examples of journalists who presented oppositional and alternative discourses in their reportage. However, he observes that such examples “are drowned out by the constant din of the dominant discourses that capitalize on the store of negative images to present ‘Islam’ as a primary obstacle to global peace” (p. 4).

This study regards discourses as indicative of a precise way of speaking about a subject of interest within particular contexts. It acknowledges that, although dominant

discourses may always maintain their hierarchical status, other forms of discourses attempt to subvert their power. Michael Huspek (2009) notes that non-dominant discourses are openly oppositional, in that they “are geared toward active and open contestations of the truths and meanings advanced through discourses of the state and other dominant discourses” (ibid). Huspek notes that these discourses provide the basis for political expressions of dissatisfaction with the existing power structures, and aim to provide a ground to counter the hegemonic ideologies that have scrutinized or ignored other meanings. Crucially, he states that non-dominant discourses allow those who are “unreflectively beholden” to the dominant discourses to assess their interpretations and, in turn, become aware of the naturalized process that distorts communication as a whole (Huspek, 2009, pp. 3-4). As such, this study is interested in exploring whether or not such discourses exist surrounding the subject of jihad in Afghanistan.

This thesis primarily follows Karim’s competition of discourses approach as outlined in his 2003 study. The rationale behind following the more recent study (Karim, 2003) is due to its more intense focus on the news media, as well as the fact that it is also applied to three concrete yet distinct discourses. Karim further builds on his earlier approach by observing that discourses do not only carry differences in ideologies, but are also conveyed to the public within specific settings. Dominant discourses appear on the front and editorial pages of newspapers, while alternative and oppositional discourses “are relegated to the more obscure parts of newspapers and electronic broadcasts” in the rare cases in which they arise (Karim, 2003, p. 6). In recognition of differing contexts, this study acknowledges the possibility that dominant and non-dominant discourses may

be published in unexpected sections. If such a scenario were to arise – for example, if an editorial presented an alternative discourse rather than a dominant one – it will be outlined and examined within the content analysis and its parameters.

In addition to using Karim's method to inquire about the dominant and non-dominant discourses, the discourse analysis techniques of Tuen A. van Dijk (1985), which stress the importance of isolating every element in a text – its surface, tone, lexical style, connotations, associations and overall pragmatics (p. 5) – are also deployed. Although he identifies other properties, such as lay-out and graphical design, these will be omitted in order to restrict the findings to the written discourse represented in each textual example. In other words, while prioritizing the three words under investigation (jihad, mujahedeen, and jihadists), the analysis will also examine the articles in their entirety to assess the overall impression from the text: the discourse.

Overall Inquiry Approach

Because this study is unique in the sense that it examines the framing of three words over different periods, using the overarching approaches to framing cited by academics in Chapter Two, an attempt has also been made not to completely mimic them. In order to determine a dominant frame, the coding procedures of the content analysis kept track of the type of articles (editorial, opinion piece, long news analysis or straight reporting), news sources and the policy position supported by their quotes or attributed to the source, and finally, themes (i.e., the repetitive manner in which to address a topic).

While the goal is to determine the dominant frame for the words throughout each period, less dominant frames will also be considered. If any should arise, they will be

extrapolated in the analysis chapters, because they demonstrate that other perspectives do emerge. While framing considers the content included, it also questions what is excluded (as cited in Altheide, 2002, p. 34). Therefore, the analysis will also ask what context is overlooked. These final analyses will be presented in the conclusion.

In order to properly track the discourses that appear, the rhetorical style of the news (van Dijk, 1985; van Dijk, 1998) will be investigated. This process entails isolating certain words and themes and comparing them to the context from which they arose. It also allows for determining how discourses evolve over a period of time. Finally, in order to uncover oppositional and alternative discourses, the differences in the usage of the terms will be inspected, alongside what those differences are and where they come from (i.e., news article or opinion piece). The competition of discourses method ultimately seeks to identify whether there is a single parameter of meaning for each term or whether more than one exists at a given time.

Additional Observations

As the literature review demonstrates in Chapter One, jihad is not limited to the conflicts in Afghanistan, and neither are the terms mujahedeen and jihadists. While media discourses recently introduced the term jihadist, the words jihad and mujahedeen have been used for some time; they have historically shifted from time to time and from context to context. Although the focus of this study is firmly focused on the use of the terms throughout Afghanistan's conflicts, the many articles retrieved illustrate how the usage of such terms has spread internationally.

In order to be able to reveal these findings coherently, one last pass was made on Lexis Nexis – the third in total. This was due to new observations that arose in the coding process. The most crucial element documented in all the texts was the journalist’s location and/or the dateline of the article. As with the earlier search, the words jihad, mujahedeen, and jihadists during each of the four periods were searched on the academic database. An additional search was carried out with the word “Afghanistan” in order to ensure the articles at least mention Afghanistan. For this particular search, letters to the editor were not included, nor were editorials or opinion pieces because the aim was a closer look at regular news articles. Book and movie reviews were similarly omitted. As such, this sample is different than the earlier sample used to retrieve the 50 articles.

The subsequent analysis revealed how the use of the words jihad and jihadists have proliferated beyond Afghanistan’s context, whereas the term mujahedeen continues to be primarily used for Afghanistan (see Appendix A). Although the nature of this study is qualitative rather than quantitative, Appendix A lists the number of results for each search, along with the number of times articles were written in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Washington, elsewhere in the U.S., as well as internationally (Middle East, Africa, Europe, etc.). One search focused on Pakistan’s location because it is next-door to Afghanistan and because their conflicts are related (as will be demonstrated in the upcoming history chapter). Another category specified was Washington D.C., due to the fact that journalists who work there are in close proximity to the State Department. It was posited that the articles written from the U.S. capital may lean in a particular direction, given that government officials are more likely to be used as sources. However, there

were no discernible differences between journalists reporting from Washington or elsewhere. The findings of this search are extrapolated in Chapter Five and Chapter Six. While analyzing the frames of each word throughout a particular period in both chapters, a brief paragraph is dedicated at the end of each section (as will be explained, the analysis chapters are divided into sections) to explain the developing use of the terms.

The following chapter presents a historical timeline of Afghanistan's conflicts.

Chapter Four

Shattered

“The most persistent sound which reverberates through men’s history is the beating of war drums” (Koestler, 1978, p. 2).

Afghanistan’s history is long and complex. As such, it would be difficult to summarize it in its entirety. This chapter will therefore present a brief but comprehensive history of the country, beginning with its independence in 1919, and ending in 2015. While it does incorporate some events which occurred before the first period (1987 – 1989) examined in this thesis, it pays particular attention to the developments within the four previously identified periods: 1987 – 1989, 1999 – 2001, 2003 – 2005 and 2013 – 2015. The goal is to unravel the country’s geopolitical background in an attempt to understand the settings that affected the portrayal of the terms jihad, mujahedeen, and jihadists. The history aims to provide the necessary information needed as context for the events and situations that may arise in the content analyses of Chapter Five and Chapter Six.

Independence, Coup d’état, and Soviet Invasion

Afghanistan won its independence from Britain following the Third Anglo-Afghan War in 1919.⁶ It emerged as a monarchy in 1933 under Muhammad Zahir Shah (e.g. Goodson, 2003; and Fitzgerald and Gould, 2009). Shah’s cousin, Mohammed Daoud Khan, became the Prime Minister of Afghanistan in 1953. Daoud supported reconciliation with the Pakistani Pashtun people who straddled the Afghan-Pakistani

⁶ Although Britain had substantial power over Afghanistan, the country was never officially a British colony. Britain maintained control over Afghanistan’s political sphere, but its power was subdued in 1919 when Afghanistan declared independence from British interference in its affairs.

border, but their reunification would have involved taking territory from Pakistan. In light of Daoud's foreign policy, political unrest simmered. Pakistan responded by closing its borders with Afghanistan, thereby impairing the Afghan economy. This historical setting made it possible for Afghanistan to increase its dependence on the Soviet Union and to forge a deeper economic relationship (Goodson, 2001, p. 49). The Soviet Union, therefore, emerged as the leading foreign donor to Afghanistan. The second in line was the United States (Kolhatkar and Ingalls, 2006, p. 3). Authors Sonali Kolhatkar and James Ingalls (2006) argue that Afghanistan, once viewed as a "buffer state" between Britain and Russia, would later become a "buffer" between the U.S. and the Soviet Union (p. 4).

Without much internal support, Daoud resigned as prime minister in 1963. Zahir Shah proceeded by introducing a new constitution to allow for a more representational government, and for the first time in the history of Afghanistan, excluded all royal family members from the council of ministers. However, Zahir Shah did not surrender his power (Gearon, 2002, p. 262). Under his leadership, left-leaning parties became a natural part of Afghanistan's political process. Among the many parties established in the 1960s and 1970s was the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), a Marxist-Leninist organization launched in 1965. The PDPA later split into two major factions, Khalq (the masses), led by Nur Mohammed Taraki and Hafizullah Amin, and Parcham (flag), led by Babrak Karmal and Taher Badakhshi (e.g. Gearon, 2002; Goodson, 2003; and Fitzgerald and Gould, 2009).

In 1973, while on a trip to Italy, Daoud ousted Zahir Shah and declared himself king of the new Republic of Afghanistan. During his second period in office, Daoud took a different approach than his previous pro-Soviet rule in the 1950s by distancing Afghanistan from the Soviets and establishing ties with Western countries (Goodson, 2002, p. 52). In 1977, the U.S. State Department said it was satisfied Daoud was making “significant contributions to the improvement of regional stability – thereby helping to fulfill [a] principle U.S. objective” (as cited in Kolhatkar and Ingalls, 2006, p. 5). The two PDPA factions did not favour Daoud’s distancing from the Soviet Union and thus reunited in April 1978, subsequently launching a coup d’état and killing Daoud. They seized power under what became known as the Saur Revolution (Banting, 2003, p. 11). Shortly after, Mohammed Taraki, head of the Khalq bloc of the PDPA, became President, but a rebellion soon challenged the party. Taraki’s government promoted progressive policies that did not capture the approval of traditional Afghans, particularly those in rural areas. Meanwhile, Taraki’s deputy Hafizullah Amin grew worrisome over Taraki’s close relationship with the Soviet Union. In November 1979, Amin murdered Taraki and took power.

To restore a faltering communist government, the Soviet Red Army crossed the Afghan border on Christmas Eve (Coll, 2004, p. 56). After assassinating Amin that same month, the Soviets installed Babrak Karmal as their leader (Mitrokhin, 2002, p 13). When the Soviets entered Afghanistan, no one realized the extent of the repercussions that would later unfold. Journalists Paul Fitzgerald and Elizabeth Gould (2009) articulated this same concern: “Suddenly and without warning a supposedly insignificant little

country called Afghanistan had managed to roll the clock back thirty years on U.S.-Soviet relations and usher in a new and dangerous era of U.S.-Soviet competition and pave the way for a ‘conservative revolution’ in American politics” (p. 12). Author and former CIA officer Robert Baer (2003) similarly noted that the Soviets themselves were oblivious to the effects of their incursion: “For the Soviet Union, it turned out to be a mistake of biblical proportions,” adding “all its money, soldiers, T-72 tanks, and Mi-24 Hind gunships counted for nothing in stopping Afghans with faith on their side” (p. 113).

The United States, under President Jimmy Carter’s administration, regarded the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as a “serious blow to its credibility” (Kolhatkar and Ingalls, 2006, p.7). In 1979, the Iranian revolution overthrew the Shah, a close ally of the U.S., while the American military defeat in Vietnam during 1975 had “shattered the morale of the defense establishment to the core” (Fitzgerald and Gould, 2009, p. 139). Moreover, and most importantly, the U.S. was at the height of a nuclear arms race with the Soviet Union. Known as the Cold War, ideological differences stirred military and political tension between the United States and the Soviet Union and their respective allies. The Soviet Union was defined by a Marxist-Leninist communist state, whereas the U.S. advocated a capitalist economy state.

The beginning of the Cold War is attributed to the 1945 Yalta Conference, in which the leaders of the Soviet Union, Britain, and the U.S. participated (Neville, 2013, p. 323). Although the Soviet Union and the U.S. were, to some extent, allies during the war, their post-war relations as a result of the conference’s proclamations ignited a seemingly endless conflict between both countries. The conference was convened to

discuss the postwar reconstruction plans of Europe. One of the main subjects agreed upon was that Joseph Stalin would permit free elections in Eastern Europe. This agreement stirred early Cold War friction due to the fact that Stalin broke his promise by suppressing the elections. Over time, the two countries, which emerged as the world's twin superpowers, grew distrustful of the other. In 1947, the U.S. government, under Harry S. Truman (Roosevelt passed away two months following the conference) launched the Marshall Plan, an aid program worth billions of dollars, directed at stabilizing European countries (Johnson, 2000, p. 22). The plan was part of the strategy of "containment," aimed at resisting the expansion of Communism through any economic, political, or military means available (Kellogg, 2003, p. 282). Escalations continued to mount, particularly after the United States joined Western European nations in forming the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (*ibid*). The Soviet Union responded by establishing the Warsaw Pact in 1955, a defense treaty between the Soviet Union and seven European states (*ibid*), known as the "Eastern bloc." The treaty stipulated the Soviets be in command of the armed forces of the states. The seven states are referred to as the "satellite states," implying that despite gaining independence, they remained under the control of the Soviet Union. It is during this period that the famous term the "Iron Curtain" was coined (*ibid*, p. 285). It signifies an imaginary barrier sealing the Soviet Union and its satellite states from non-Soviet controlled regions.

Both superpowers moved their "cold" battle beyond Europe, opting instead for the establishment of ideological influence over small countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America (e.g., Johnson, 2000). While both sides supported proxy wars, the Soviet-

Afghan War “played a pivotal role” in bringing the Cold War to an end (Goodson, 2001, p. 5). Mainly with the help of Saudi Arabia’s royal family and Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), the CIA financed and spearheaded a “resistance” against the Soviets, known as the “mujahedeen.”⁷ The mujahedeen were composed of seven groups⁸ recruited not only from Afghanistan but from around the globe (e.g., Goodson, 2001; Cooley, 2002; Baer, 2003; and Kepel, 2006). Egypt and China also played a role, albeit not as large as that of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. According to President Jimmy Carter’s National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, American support for the mujahedeen debuted before the Soviet invasion. In an interview with *Le Nouvel Observateur* in 1998, Brzezinski said:

According to the official version of history, CIA aid to the Mujahideen began during 1980, that is to say, after the Soviet army invaded Afghanistan, [on] 24 December 1979. But the reality, secretly guarded until now, is completely otherwise. Indeed, it was July 3, 1979, that President Carter signed the first directive for secret aid to the opponents of the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul. And that very day, I wrote a note to the President in which I explained to him that in my opinion, this aid was going to induce a Soviet military intervention... We didn’t push the Russians to intervene, but we knowingly increased the probability

⁷ The U.S. is not the first Western country to support a jihad. During the First World War, Britain swayed Indian Muslims to declare a jihad against the Central Powers (i.e., Germany, Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary), and the Central Powers encouraged the Ottomans to declare a jihad against Britain and its allies (Rogan, 2015).

⁸ The names of the groups were: Jammat i Islami, Hisb e Islami, Khalis faction, Ittihad i Islami, the Afghan National Liberation Front, Harakat i Inqilab i Islami and Mahaz i Milli i Islami.

that they would... It had the effect of drawing the Russians into the Afghan trap (Nouvel Observateur, 1998, January 15-21).

Afghanistan quickly became “a permanent base for holy war” (Fitzgerald and Gould, 2009, p. 160). One month following the Soviet incursion, Brzezinski flew to Pakistan and spoke to the mujahedeen: “We know of your deep belief in God, and we are confident that your struggle will succeed. That land over there is yours, you will go back to it one day because your fight will prevail, and you will have your homes and your mosques back again. Because your cause is right and God is on your side” (Ganji, 2014, July 2). July 2). The names of the groups and their leaders were: the Jammāt i Islami (Burhanuddin Rabbani), Hisb e Islami (Gulbuddin Hekmatyar), Khalis faction (Younis Khalis), Ittihad i Islami (Abdul Rasoul Sayyaf), the Afghan National Liberation Front (Sibghatullah Mojadedi), Harakat i Inqilab i Islami (Nabi Muhammadi) and Mahaz i Milli i Islami (Pir Gailani).

Between 1981 and 1983, CIA assistance to these groups totaled \$60 million per year (Jones, 2010, p. 37). Later, in 1984, Charlie Wilson, a congressman from Texas, convinced the CIA to increase aid to over \$1 billion per year (ibid). Wilson is quoted to have said, “By this time I had everyone in Congress convinced that the mujahideen were a cause only slightly below Christianity. Everyone on the subcommittee was enthusiastic. I gave them the sense they could lead the way on a just cause” (ibid, pp. 37-38). As a result of Wilson’s pressure on the Administration, the CIA began to distribute arms to the mujahedeen, “including heavy machine guns, SA-7s, and Oerlikon anti-aircraft cannons” (ibid, p. 38). It also provided “technical advice on weapons and explosives, strategic

advice, intelligence, and sophisticated technology such as wireless interception equipment” (ibid). The most significant weapon supplied to the mujahedeen was the American-made Stinger missile which provided the groups with a thorough air defense. Author Larry Goodson (2001) posits - as per media reports and analysis of data on air losses - that the Stinger missiles helped force the USSR to alter their air war strategy (2001, p. 68). The U.S. was also providing financial and military support to Afghan warlords. Key among them was Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a man who allegedly threw acid in the faces of women who did not wear a veil, and murdered civilians who did not agree with his religious ideologies. Despite his violent behaviour, Barnett Rubin, a leading expert on Afghanistan, was quoted saying that the ISI and the CIA saw Hekmatyar as a “useful tool for shaping the future of Central Asia” (as cited in Kolhatkar and Ingalls, 2009, p. 9).

Research has minimally noted how the Administration’s official position towards the mujahedeen exerted a strong influence on media coverage. Journalists Paul Fitzgerald and Elizabeth Gould write that the reporters from the dominant media of Western societies presented the “official narrative” as “a Rambo-esque struggle of holy warriors against the evil empire” (2011, July 13). This position is paralleled by scholar Daya Kishan Thussu (2006), who argued that Western media reports were “profoundly influenced by Cold War thinking” and thus, “routinely labeled” the mujahedeen as “freedom fighters” (p. 9). Further, as presented in Chapter One, Karim (2014) argues that the dominant Western media portrayed the mujahedeen as the “good Muslims” (p. 167).

Some Muslim educational institutions, known as *madrassahs*, influenced the men who joined the fight against the Soviets (e.g., Cooley, 2002). *Madrassahs* were created as centres of learning long before the Soviet-Afghan War. They are prominent in Muslim-dominated countries such as India, Iraq, Egypt, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia. They teach students Islamic theology and other topics, such as math and the sciences. Some of these institutions are also charitable organizations, contributing to various efforts, such as building schools and mosques as well as helping the poor. However, when Muslim-dominated countries began to feel the effects of European imperialism in the second half of the 19th century, some of these schools aligned their teachings with a strict and highly limited interpretation of Islam. When the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, a number of these centres were used as settings to mobilize young men to join the fight. The U.S. and its allies, namely Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, utilized some of the *madrassahs* as “politico-military training camps” (Mamdani, 2004, p. 136). Baer (2003) argues some of the institutions became “the main breeding ground for Islamic militants called to holy war against the Soviet invaders in Afghanistan” (Baer, 2003, p. 89). One particular school, the Tablighi Jamaat, held a convention in Chicago, Illinois in 1988, attracting over 6,000 Muslims from around the world (Cooley, 2002, p. 66). Further, many camps used by the American forces in the U.S. also became training grounds to prepare the mujahedeen. Scholar John Cooley (2002) lists the following as prominent examples: The High Rock Gun Club in Naugatuck, Connecticut; Fort Bragg, North Carolina; CIA’s Camp Perry in Williamsburg, Virginia; a CIA-used Army Special Forces site, Harvey Point, North Carolina; Fort A. P. Hill, Virginia; and Camp Pickett, Virginia (pp. 64-85).

Although the strict orthodox approach preached at the various *madrassahs* influenced those who later formed into al-Qaida and the Taliban, Brzezinski said he did not regret initially supporting them. In the interview with *Le Nouvel Observateur*, he stated, “What is more important in world history? The Taliban or the collapse of the Soviet empire? Some agitated Muslims or the liberation of Central Europe and the end of the Cold War?” (Nouvel Observateur, 1998, January 15-21).

One fundamental aspect of the war that has not received much attention is the fact that the U.S. was not only financing and training the mujahedeen, but was also spending millions of dollars producing “propaganda” textbooks for Afghan schoolchildren (Tharoor, 2014, December 8). The University of Nebraska at Omaha, which is home to the only academic program specializing in Afghan studies in the United States, received a \$51 million grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development to produce school material from 1984 to 1994. The textbooks were smuggled into Afghanistan by the CIA and ISI, but did not contain ordinary child-like images of farm animals and cartoons. As reported by the Washington Post: “The primers, which were filled with talk of jihad and featured drawings of guns, bullets, soldiers and mines, have served since then as the Afghan school system’s core curriculum” (Stephens and Ottaway, 2002, March 23). Mahmood Mamdani (2004) quotes Pervez Hoodbhoy, a Pakistani academic, who elaborates on what a third-grade mathematics textbook enclosed: ““One group of maujahidin attack 50 Russian soldiers. In that attack 20 Russians are killed. How many Russians fled?”” (p. 137). A fourth-grade textbook contained more graphic details: ““The speed of a Kalashnikov...bullet is 800 meters per second. If a Russian is at a distance of

3200 meters from a mujahid, and that mujahid aims at the Russian's head, calculate how many seconds it will take for the bullet to strike the Russian in the forehead” (ibid).

These books continue to circulate in Afghanistan today under the Taliban who control parts of the country (Tharoor, 2014, December 8).

Osama bin Laden, the son of a wealthy Saudi Arabian businessperson with close ties to the Saudi government, emerged as a strategic personality for the United States and its allies (Kolhatkar and Ingalls, 2006, p. 9), before rising to even more notorious prominence. In 1984, bin Laden established an organization called Maktab al-Khidimat (MAK) in Afghanistan to recruit international Muslim volunteers to partake in the fighting. MAK, the “organizational predecessor to al-Qaeda,” (Holbrook, 2014, p. 13) later played “a major role in raising the concept of global holy war to reality over the next decade” (McFadden, 2001, September 30). Milton Bearden, a former CIA officer, said, “bin Laden did some very good things” by placing “a lot of money in a lot of the right places in Afghanistan” and was thus not regarded as anti-American (as cited by Coll, 2004, p. 155). However, the Americans later altered their view of him. In 1990, U.S. President George W. Bush deployed troops into Saudi Arabia with the authorization of the Saudi government due to the Gulf War. Opposing the presence of American forces in Saudi Arabia, bin Laden left for Sudan in 1991 (Kolhatkar and Ingalls, 2006, p. 29). Pressure from the U.S. prompted the Saudis to revoke his citizenship and the Sudanese government to expel him. The Taliban responded by offering him a haven, and so, he returned to Afghanistan and hid under their protection. Interestingly, Bearden disclosed that the U.S. was complicit in bin Laden's return to Afghanistan. “We were involved in

sending bin Laden to Afghanistan when we told the Sudanese, ‘Kick him out.’ They said ‘Somalia’? We said no! They said ‘Afghanistan’? We said okay” (as cited in Fitzgerald and Gould, 2009, p. 226).

During the final two years of the war, the Soviets were no longer making advancements. When a new statesman, Mikhail S. Gorbachev, came to power, he wanted to bring the war to an end. As such, following many peace talk rounds, the Geneva Accords of Afghanistan were signed in 1988, calling for a nine-month phased Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. The last Soviet soldier crossed the border on February 15, 1989 (Jones, 2010, p. xii).

The nine-year conflict is estimated to have killed one million Afghan civilians, 18,000 Afghan troops, 90,000 mujahedeen and 12,500 Soviet soldiers (Taylor, 2014, August 4).

Civil War, the Taliban, and the Prelude to the U.S.-led War

The Soviet-backed regime, now led by Mohammad Najibullah, remained in power in Kabul, despite its failure to win national or international support (Kepel, 2006, p. 217). The United States continued to denounce Najibullah, but did not propose a political alternative to him other than the mujahedeen, who were not supported by the majority of the population (Kolhatkar and Ingalls, 2006, p. 13). Meanwhile, the Soviet Union continued to provide assistance to the Afghan regime. Financial support is estimated to have ranged from \$250 million to \$300 million per month (as cited in Goodson, 2001, p. 70). The Soviets were also supplying the regime with new missiles,

providing air support from bases in Soviet Central Asia, as well as maintaining Soviet technicians and military advisers in Afghanistan (ibid).

In an attempt to thwart power from the Najibullah regime, the seven groups tried forming an Afghan Interim Government, but failed due to disagreements over its primary participants. Pressures stemming from the country's ethnic, linguistic, religious and racial divisions date back decades. Ethnicity, in particular, was the largest contributing factor to the tensions. The five major ethnicities are the Pashtun, Tajik, Uzbek, Hazara and Aimaq (Gearon, 2002, p. 262), and there are in total about 14 recognized ethnic communities in the country. The Taliban are mostly Pashtun, whereas the other seven factions are multi-ethnic. Although ethnicity did not cause major problems between the mujahedeen during the Soviet war in Afghanistan, ethnic divisions later disturbed the dynamics of the various groups when mujahedeen commanders began to affiliate themselves and their fighters with others based on shared ethnicity, an issue which helped contribute to the beginning of civil war.

With the country in chaos, Afghanistan began to play a major role in the world's opium trade. A powerful drug mafia was operating on both sides of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border (Peters, 2009, p. 9). Meanwhile, the mujahedeen came to depend on opium profits to fund their war effort, hence creating the "preconditions for the complete integration of narcotics – and reliance on drug money – into the politics of the region" (Peters, 2009, p. 9).

By December 1991, the Americans and Soviets mutually agreed to end support to the mujahedeen and the Najibullah government, while Saudi Arabia and Pakistan

continued to support the factions. During that same month, the Soviet Union fragmented into separate republics. The outcome of these developments resulted in the weakening of the Najibullah administration, which swiftly fell apart within the following few months (Katz, 2011, March 9). Najibullah resigned from his post in April 1992. As a result, American interest in the mujahedeen waned, and Washington was no longer concerned with the ensuing crisis in Afghanistan. Kolhatkar and Ingalls write: “Apparently it was somehow expected that the commanders who had been groomed by U.S. and Pakistani intelligence to oust the regime would magically unite and rebuild the country” (2006, p. 16). Following the toppling of Najibullah, the mujahedeen entered Kabul and declared themselves as its leaders (e.g. Goodson, 2001; Coll, 2004; and Jones, 2010). Top commanders were soon after competing to rule the new Kabul government, and began battling each other using leftover weapons administered by the U.S. and its allies. On April 26, 1992, Hekmatyar’s army endeavoured to take over Kabul, but was prevented by other mujahedeen groups which were part of a coalition led by Sibghatullah Mojadedi (he was later succeeded by Burhanuddin Rabbani as president in June). The forces declared themselves a “government” (Kolhatkar and Ingalls, 2006, p. 18). The U.S. responded positively to this development by sending American delegates to make plans to reopen the American embassy, which closed under Najibullah in 1989 (Meyer, 2000, p. 345).

Fighting between the groups continued for months, in particular skirmishes involving Hekmatyar’s forces. Both Rabbani and Hekmatyar were constantly rejecting a mutually-agreed upon power-sharing arrangement. However, in March 1993, an accord allowed Rabbani to finish an eighteen-month term of office, with Hekmatyar as the Prime

Minister (Goodson, 2003, p. 74). Despite the agreement, rival groups continued to attack one another. Although Hekmatyar was sworn in on June 17, 1993, his forces shelled the capital later that month and continued to attack other cities until the emergence of the Taliban.

The arrival of the Taliban ended the civil war but introduced a new phase in Afghan politics. The Taliban had emerged from Saudi Arabian and Pakistani *madrassahs* and were an off-shoot of the mujahedeen. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia also supported them. In late 1994, the Taliban rolled into Afghanistan and were welcomed by many Afghans who were in search of a better alternative (Kolhatkar and Ingalls, 2006, p. 22). Their hope was short-lived. The following year, the Taliban began a harsh assault of Kabul. Hekmatyar attempted to regain control, and thus organized a reunion with other prominent faction leaders. He was sworn in as prime minister in June 1996, but the Taliban were still able to take over major eastern and southern cities (Goodson, 2001, p. 74). Despite the fact that the mujahedeen put aside their differences and formed the Western-backed Northern Alliance (also known as “United Front”), maintaining and ruling a small region in the North of the country, they quickly lost control. On September 27, 1996, the Taliban seized over 90 per cent of the country, hunting down former Soviet-backed President Najibullah and his brother, torturing and hanging them in public (Girardet, 2012, p. 219). Fearing for their lives, Hekmatyar and Rabbani fled the city.

The Taliban quickly announced their desire to segregate society⁹ and to “crush” anyone who got in the way, particularly other ethnicities (Kolhatkar and Ingalls, 2006, p. 23-24). The Taliban, a largely Sunni Pashtun movement, and thus part of the largest ethnic group in the country (although it is not admired by the majority), dislikes ethnic minorities, particularly the Shia Hazara community. The hopes and aspirations of many Afghan citizens wanting to see an improved government was suppressed, as the Taliban brought continued instability. Nonetheless, the Taliban sustained regional and international support. Scholar Ahmed Rashid writes: “Between 1994 and 1996 the USA supported the Taliban politically through its allies Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, essentially because Washington viewed the Taliban as anti-Iranian...and pro-Western” (2000, p. 176). Rashid further stipulates that bureaucrats in Washington associated themselves with the Taliban “as messianic do-gooders – like born-again Christians from the American Bible Belt. There was not a word of criticism after the Taliban captured Herat in 1995 and threw out thousands of girls from schools” (ibid, p. 177). Furthermore, a *Washington Post* article cited by Kolhatkar and Ingalls (2006) reported how American officials assumed the Taliban’s seizure of Kabul was ““the best chance in years”” (p. 23) of ending chaos in the country, although ““it also could be the prelude to the construction of a particularly strict Islamic state”” (pp.23-24).

While in power, the Taliban relied on the financial backing of an alliance of drug smugglers, traders, and trucking and transport groups (Peters, 2009, p. 10). The poppy

⁹ Although the Taliban is often blamed for the degeneration of women’s rights, it was initially the U.S.-backed government of Rabbani which formalized the mujahedeen’s rules against women (Kolhatkar and Ingalls, 2006, pp. 18-19). These rules included a dress code for women, such as the enforcement of a headscarf, and the call to discharge all television anchorwomen (Emadi, 2001, p. 44).

economy continued to flourish, with opium production doubling between 1996 and 1999 (UNODC, 2003, p. 92). The Taliban began charging a 20 per cent Islamic tax¹⁰ on all dealers moving opium. A large number of refugees returning from bordering countries to the southern provinces controlled by the Taliban began cultivating the poppy for economic purposes because jobs were very scarce (Rashid, 2000, p. 7). By the year 2003, it is estimated nearly one million Afghan farmers made over \$100 million from poppy cultivation. The Taliban's tax take was at least \$20 million (Rashid, 2000, p. 7).

During the late 1990s and early 2000s, the United States “felt the effects of its 1980s policies” (Kolhatkar and Ingalls, 2006, p. 29) when four attacks targeted it in various global locations. They include the 1996 bombing on a U.S. Air Force housing complex in the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia; the 1998 bombings of American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania; the 1999 attack on USS Cole in Yemen; and the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center towers and the Pentagon. The attacks were allegedly carried out by members loyal to al-Qaida. This brought renewed international attention to bin Laden and al-Qaida, resulting in the FBI placing bin Laden on its Ten Most Wanted list (Asthana and Nirmal, 2009, p. 160). Following the 1998 embassy bombings, President Bill Clinton's administration “went from a policy of polite diplomacy towards Afghanistan to a policy of threats, aggression and sanction” (Kolhatkar and Ingalls, 2006, p. 30). As a response to the bombings, Clinton ordered the launching of cruise missile attacks on targets in Afghanistan and Sudan. The Sudan attack

¹⁰ Islamic law, however, does not permit the drug trade. In countries governed by Islamic law, such as Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, drug offences are punishable by lengthy sentences or death sentences (e.g., Gabbay, 2014).

targeted the Al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant, where plenty of Sudan's medications were manufactured. In Afghanistan, 50 attacks were fired on training camps killing 21 people and wounding 53 (ibid).

The United Nations Security Council responded to American pressure in 1999 by adopting Resolution 1267, banning all aircraft "owned, operated or leased, on behalf of the Taliban," as well as freezing Taliban assets outside Afghanistan (UN, 1999, October 18). The resolution was aimed at pressuring the Taliban to extradite bin Laden and to close their training camps. As the Taliban further resisted these demands and failed to implement the resolution, the sanctions mounted with the adoption of Resolution 1333, which imposed an arms embargo on the Taliban and reinforced the earlier ban on flights. The UN sanctions applied on the Taliban severely impacted the Afghan economy, decreasing the value of the Afghan national currency, but it did little harm to the movement itself (Kolhatkar and Ingalls, 2006, p. 36).

U.S.-Led War in Afghanistan

The autumn of 2001 unleashed a different yet similar type of conflict in Afghanistan, where continued insecurity and instability swept across the already war-torn and destabilized country. Many American officials believed the ongoing battles in Afghanistan were contained within the boundaries of the country and that domestic strife would not spill internationally. However, the events of September 11, 2001, brought to some Americans "apocalyptic flashbacks" of the war they had appointed others to fight in the 1980s (Cooley, 2002, p. xiii). John Cooley (2002) describes the consequences of funding the mujahedeen who later turned against their funders as "a strange love affair

which went disastrously wrong” (p. xiii). Similarly, Baer (2003) views the consequences of the relationship as explosive, “like mixing nitroglycerin in a blender” (p. 90).

When three commercial airplanes crashed into the towers of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon killing close to 3,000 people, Afghanistan witnessed a renewed battle on its ground. The U.S. partnered with Britain to begin a war directly following the attacks (NATO joined later in 2003 – this is examined further below). American and British bombs began dropping on October 7, 2001. Air strikes targeted al-Qaida camps, airfields and barracks, while Special Forces and CIA paramilitary officers attacked the Taliban regime’s strongholds in partnership with the Northern Alliance. The Bush administration (George Bush was elected January of that year) had instructed the CIA to support the Northern Alliance so they could help capture bin Laden and oust the Taliban. Over the course of the war, the CIA would give the leaders of the group \$70 million as well as provide them with weapons (Kessler, 2008, p. 37). The goal of the American-led mission in Afghanistan, known as Operation Enduring Freedom, was to target bin Laden, the mastermind behind the attack, and the Taliban, who were harboring the al-Qaida leader. The Iraq War (2003) would later be the second step in the “fight against terrorism” (American forces along with several coalition allies invaded on March 20, 2003). The operation destroyed the Taliban regime within months. In November, the Taliban collapsed and sought refuge in the southern mountains, where they were still exposed to air bombardment.

In December 2001, a number of Afghan leaders met in Bonn, Germany, under the support of the United Nations to develop a plan to re-establish Afghanistan, including

provisions for a new constitution and national elections (Human Rights Watch News, 2002, December 5). The meeting led to important developments: the signing of an agreement to draft a new constitution for the country, which established a transitional government; an agreement to hold elections within three years; and the appointment of Hamid Karzai as chairman of the governing committee. It was proposed that these changes would be implemented by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), a security mission established during the meeting and mandated by the United Nations with the aim of rebuilding Afghanistan's government and providing security (NATO, 2015, September 1).

In 2003, NATO took the lead of ISAF and entered Afghanistan (ibid), thereby expanding ISAF's mission to include combat operations. In October 2004, the American-backed Karzai won the presidential election. Parliamentary elections were then held on September 18, 2005, the first time in thirty years. Despite vowing to crush warlords, Karzai allowed them to run for seats in parliament. In December 2005, the parliament opened with warlords in most of the seats (Kolhatkar and Ingalls, 2006, p. 160-164). Meanwhile, although the Taliban were subdued, they continued to carry attacks every once in a while (Tamim, 2014).

Between 2009 and 2015, major events would continue to transform the United States role in Afghanistan. In March 2009, President Barack Obama – elected a year earlier – unveiled a new approach, announcing the dispatch of an extra 4,000 American personnel to train the Afghan army and police, as well as to support civilian development (BBC, 2015, December 24). Also in October 2009, an Afghan presidential election

proclaimed Karzai the winner and inaugurated him for a second term, although there was evidence of serious fraud and rigged votes (Lansford, 2011, p. 250; Farmer and Nelson, 2009, August 23).

On May 2, 2011, American forces conducted a raid in a suburb in Pakistan, killing bin Laden and members of his family. President Obama announced the death from Washington, declaring “justice has been done” (Cohen, 2011, May 2). Bin Laden had long since stopped playing a significant role in al-Qaida, as Ayman al-Zawahiri, the organization’s second in command, had taken over handling of its operations, signaling that al-Qaida will continue to exert a presence.

NATO Forces Withdrawal, New Non-Combative Mission, and Rise of ISIS

Ashraf Ghani was sworn in as the Afghani president in September 2014, co-signing a power-sharing agreement with Abdullah Abdullah. Shortly after, in December 2014, NATO formally ended its combat mission in Afghanistan, leaving 13,000 non-combative personnel to train Afghan forces and to assist in counter-terrorism operations, including 9,800 U.S. troops. President Obama announced his forces would remain in Afghanistan until the end of 2016. He stated this approach would not only “responsibly end our war in Afghanistan and achieve the objectives that took us to war in the first place,” but “we’ll also be able to begin a new chapter in the story of American leadership around the world” (Ackerman, 2014, May 27). Violence, however, persisted across much of the country, with some reports claiming 2014 as the bloodiest year in Afghanistan since 2001 (Marty, 2015, February 18).

Peace talks between the Taliban and Afghan officials were taking place in several locations. In May 2015, informal peace talks were held in Qatar. The talks continued well into the final months of 2015, with the White House “hailing” the first official talks in Pakistan (AlJazeera, 2015, December 9; Shah and Faiez, 2015, July 7).

Meanwhile, the United States’s war in neighbouring Iraq was also producing devastating effects. Insurgencies were on the rise against coalition forces in Iraq since 2003, many of them declaring allegiance to al-Qaida. In 2006, local tribesmen, led by Abu Ayyub Al-Masri, formed an insurgency group and branded it the “Islamic State of Iraq” (ISI) (John, 2015, October 9). Later in 2010, Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi was chosen to become ISI’s leader following Al-Masri’s death. While Syria’s revolution erupted in March 2011 to topple President Bashar Al-Assad, the Nusra Front, al-Qaida’s affiliate in Syria, merged with the ISI and took the name “the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria” (ISIS). ISIS quickly rose in the Middle East and has now emerged strongly in several countries in the region, including Afghanistan (Boghani, 2015, November 1). The movement claims to be fighting a jihad. It has taken over cities in Iraq and Syria, while also attracting an estimated 27, 000 foreign fighters from 86 countries, including some from North America and Europe (The Guardian, 2015, December 8). The group, which identifies itself as belonging to the Sunni branch of Islam, has persecuted many religious groups, including its own, that do not adhere to its ideologies (HRW, 2014, July 19). Media coverage refers to the movement’s actions as a jihad, and labels its participants as jihadists (e.g., Brown, October 8, 2014; Masi, December 28, 2014; Bennhold, August 17, 2015).

Whereas the group initially formed in Iraq and Syria, it is no longer confined to the boundaries of any one particular territory, and it has since organized attacks all over the globe. In November 2015, data revealed there had been 51 attacks directly linked to ISIS since September 2014. Forty of those attacks took place in the Middle East, while six occurred in Western countries (Harress, 2015, November 14).

The numerous conflicts in Afghanistan resulted in a “large-scale genocide of more than two million civilians and five million war victims, as well as a million handicapped and scores of internally displaced Afghan people” (Fitzgerald and Gould, 2009, p. 1). Afghanistan, once the location of a cosmopolitan Islamic culture, is now a prisoner of religious and violent extremism stemming from the complex dynamics of geopolitics, foreign policy, and domestic rivalries.

Chapter Five

Jihad and Mujahedeen: From 1987 – 1989 and 1999 – 2001

“Words mean more than what is set down on paper. It takes the human voice to infuse them with shades of deeper meaning” (Angelou, 2009, p. 96).

This chapter focuses on the *New York Times*’ coverage of the terms jihad and mujahedeen. It draws on a textual analysis of the stories in the sample in order to investigate how the meaning of the words are framed according to different political contexts. The chapter looks at the years 1987 – 1989, which are the final two years of the Soviet-Afghan War, and 1999 – 2001, which are the last two years of the Taliban’s domination, the persistence of Afghanistan’s local rivalries, and the prelude to the American-led invasion. It also simultaneously presents an analysis of the competition of discourses by observing the different media perspectives that constitute an attempt to counter the dominant narratives. The analysis contains four sections: 1) Jihad, 1987 – 1989; 2) Mujahedeen, 1987 – 1989; 3) Jihad, 1999 – 2001; and 4) Mujahedeen, 1999 – 2001.

It is important to note that the results of this analysis are not exhaustive; the *New York Times* is merely one news outlet and the stories used for the analysis are selections from a large sample. However, the resulting frames provide reasonable evidence of how the newspaper partook in changing the undertones of the vocabulary associated with the concept of jihad in Afghanistan. Table 2 illustrates the frames and discourses for the two periods included in this chapter.

The analysis also simultaneously addresses the results from Appendix A (as explained in Chapter Two), which presents how the terms were being used in Afghanistan and internationally. This is included in a section titled “Additional Observations.” Furthermore, in some parts, the analysis found evidence of debates among elites regarding American foreign policy. Therefore, a section titled “The ‘elite’ debate” will be presented when such disagreements are found.

Table 2

Dominant frames and discourses for jihad and mujahedeen from 1987 – 1989 and 1999 – 2001

Period: 1987 – 1989		
Term	Frame	Discourse
Jihad	Solution	Against Soviet Union
Mujahedeen	Weapons	American support
Period: 1999 – 2001		
Term	Frame	Discourse
Jihad	Problem	Threat against Americans
Mujahedeen	Governance	Ethnic differences but...

Jihad: 1987 – 1989

The sample for the first section of this period is composed of five news articles (op-eds, letters to the editor and editorials with the word jihad did not arise when sampling for this period). The articles used are the following: “Afghan guerrillas may be pressed to share power” (1A), “Rebel rivalry is hampering Afghan talks” (1B), “Aid to Afghan refugees: Donors bend the rules” (1C), “Kabul offering rebels local power” (1D),

and “Kandahar journal; New problem for guerrillas: No Russians to fight” (1E) (A number and letter is added after each article’s headline in order to indicate how the articles appear in their respective appendix. In this case, see Appendix B for articles’ details).

Before the chapter delves into the analysis of jihad, it is important to make an introductory note. Although the typical way to conduct a content analysis is to group news stories together and analyze the dominant elements that led to the formation of the frame(s), this analysis will take a different approach when examining the word jihad during the first period of this chapter (1987 – 1989). While it does look at the elements and the overall frame, it also pays particular attention to the publication date of the articles. The reason for this is because the frame progressed based on the date of publication. In other words, while jihad’s frame remained as is, its implications evolved with the political developments of the period. As such, the analysis explains the frame by comparing it with the political context from which the news reports arose, thereby stimulating a richer and more vigorous qualitative content analysis.

The ‘Solution’ Frame

Jihad during the final two years of the Soviet-Afghan War was framed as a solution, and thus, a strategy to liberate Afghanistan. The coverage favourably presented American foreign policy. A strong elite influence was also exhibited. The dominant discourse that emerged oriented jihad as a form of warfare against the Soviet Union’s invasion. The coverage created a discussion that jihad should end or had already ended

with Soviet withdrawal (depending on the article's date). All articles except 1C matched the discourse. The article is assessed separately.

Holy war label: All five articles defined jihad as a religious concept by assigning it the label of "holy war." The articles discussed how jihad as a "holy war" is a phenomenon the mujahedeen were exercising against the Soviet Union. For example, Article 1B wrote how Afghans were "grateful" to the mujahedeen "for leading the jihad, or holy war, against the Soviet occupation." The other four articles defined jihad similarly. The label promoted the view that jihad is a religiously prescribed solution to help rid Afghanistan of the Soviet Union.

Interestingly, the journalists translated jihad to holy war in their reporting narrative without attributing a quote or a source (as illustrated above with the Article 1B example). Referring to Chapter Three, this could be related to the *New York Times'* manual, which advises its reporters to write jihad when referring to a holy war against the enemies of Islam (Siegal and Connolly, 1990 and 2015). This may also suggest that by the final two years of the conflict, the idea of jihad being a holy war had been culturally ingrained in the mindset of the journalists, and arguably of the public, so that no further explanation was required.

Official and foreign sources: Whereas some studies cited in Chapter Two found that elite sources set the dominant narrative (Bennett, 1990; Hall et al., 2013) and others conclude that foreign sources contest it (Berry, 1990; Entman, 2009), the results of this analysis reveal a different finding: the official domestic sources and the foreign sources had the most influence in how the frames were created (this was also the case in several

sections in this chapter and in the next). The quotes included generally did not mention the word jihad, but the overall discussions of the quotations moulded the frame and the discourse. Primarily, the discussions assigned the “solution” frame differently based on the date of publication (as explained above). The two articles (1A and 1B) written before the Soviet withdrawal presented jihad against the Soviet Union as a solution that should soon end. Both articles begin by stating the official Administration position, which at this point in the conflict, was downplaying the need for warfare, and thus, jihad. Article 1A began with direct quotes from a State Department official who argued that the Soviets, pro-Soviet Afghan forces, and the mujahedeen should agree on the status of a postwar government to encourage a quick Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. Article 1B did not include direct quotes, but rather, paraphrased statements made by American officials, expressing similar sentiments. The text stated that officials were “confident” that the Soviets wanted to disengage “sincerely” from Afghanistan, earlier writing that the clashes between the mujahedeen were extending “an eventual peace.”

The two articles (1C and 1D) written following the end of the Soviet-Afghan War portrayed jihad as a solution that ended when the Soviets left the country (the Soviet Union fully withdrew in February 1989, and both articles were published in March 1989 and June 1989, respectively). During this period, the mujahedeen were unable to unite due to disagreements among the different leaders. The articles insinuated that the fighting between the mujahedeen factions must end because there was no longer a need for a jihad. Whereas the previous two articles began by citing American officials, these two articles opened with quotes from Afghans. Article 1D quoted a statement made by

President Najibullah: ““Let us stop this fratricide, which brings our fellow countrymen nothing but misery and agony. Let us sit down together as brothers and re-build this nation under God,”” denoting that jihad was unnecessary now that the Soviets were gone. Further, Article 1E’s lead opened with a direct quote by a commander of the mujahedeen: ““Before, here were Russians, there were Russians, everywhere Russians, so people were busy with the fighting. No question, everybody was against the Russians. But now people are confused.””

Other discourse: The additional article, “Aid to Afghan refugees: Donors bend the rules” (1C) did not fit the Soviet Union discourse. While it defined jihad as “holy war” and thus a solution against the Soviet occupation, it did not mention that it had ended, nor that it should end. Contrarily, it insinuated that the cause was always attracting fighters.

Additional Observations

As explained in Chapter Three, important observations about the evolution of the terms were made when sampling for the four periods. While searching the three terms in the database (and limiting the results to articles that mention Afghanistan), the articles retrieved indicate how the terms progressed from time to time. With regards to jihad in Afghanistan from 1987 – 1989, 14 articles using the word jihad were retrieved, illustrating that the coverage that referred to jihad was minimal during the final two years of the Soviet-Afghan War.

Mujahedeen: 1987 – 1989

The sample for this section is composed of three news articles written before the Soviet Union’s withdrawal as well as a letter to the editor and an editorial published

following its exit. The texts sampled are: “Moscow is seen at turning point in its intervention in Afghanistan” (2A), “Arming Afghan guerrillas: A huge effort led by U.S.” (2B), “For the guerrillas in Afghanistan, getting to the front line is half the battle” (2C), “Time to talk about Afghanistan” (2D), and “Afghanistan waits for East-West compromise; back up our rhetoric” (2E) (see Appendix B for articles’ details).

The three news articles sampled (2A, 2B, and 2C) summarized the political context of the final two years of the Soviet-Afghan War by observing that whereas the Soviet Union was advancing significantly in the beginning and the midst of the conflict, it was now losing.

Before explaining the dominant frame and the resulting discourse, it is important to draw attention to two labels that surfaced. They did not set the dominant frame, but they presented interesting observations.

Guerrillas/rebels labels: The journalists did not refer to the fighters with the word “mujahedeen,” except in attributed quotes, or when specifying that they were identified as such. For example, Article 2A wrote that they are “collectively known as the mujahedeen.” However, rather than always identifying them with the term *mujahedeen*, the texts opted to use two labels: “guerrillas” and “rebels.” For example, Article 2B referred to the mujahedeen as “the Afghan guerrillas” and as “the rebels.” Two observations are made with the use of these labels. First, the tone of the labels “guerrillas” and “rebels” carries less sensational baggage than mujahedeen. As such, journalists may have used the labels to present neutral and euphemistic language in their texts. Second, as detailed in Chapter One, scholarly literature notes that the expression

“mujahedeen” emanated from Western discourses during the Soviet-Afghan War (e.g., Kushner, 2002; Nanji, 2008; Karim, 2003; Karim, 2014; Oxford English Dictionary, 2016). Therefore, it is possible to assume that since the term was foreign to American journalists before the war and had just recently entered their reportage’s vocabulary, they were not accustomed to utilizing it. Third, this suggests journalists preferred to rely on one of the labels in order to use words that are known in the English language and, hence, garner a familiar discussion for English-speaking readers. These are only predictions and cannot be directly confirmed.

The ‘Weapons’ Frame

The dominant frame in the coverage of the mujahedeen was a “weapons frame,” illustrating an interest in the technology of the war. The repetitive discussions centred around the mujahedeen’s advancements against the Soviet Union. These discussions set the dominant discourse, which suggested that their advancements were an outcome of the technological support presented by the U.S.

Warriors label: The first label that led to the frame was “warriors.” Whereas the guerrillas/rebels labels suggested a level of neutrality, warriors does not imply the same tone. It is more dramatic in nature and denotes brave or strong fighters in a war. Article 2A and Article 2B translated mujahedeen to “holy warriors” without attribution. For example, Article 2B wrote “mujahedeen, or holy warriors.” Arguably, this presents similar observations as the jihad analysis, which is that the translation of mujahedeen to “holy warriors” had become common usage that journalists did not need to quote or reference a source. Article 2C used the “warriors” label in a sub-heading. Its style of

reportage was different from articles 3A and 3B. The journalist, who was embedded with the mujahedeen, used rampant descriptive language which served to identify them as a resistance group braving tough wartime conditions. According to a portion of the literature on the risks of the embedded system, journalists who accompany individuals fighting in a war present favourable coverage of the group in which they take part (Miller, 2003; Keeble, 2004; Pfau et al., 2004; Revoir, 2012, June 25). The article is descriptive in nature, detailing the barriers that impeded the mujahedeen as they travelled. The text's language pointed to how the journalist, along with the three other Western reporters with her, felt safe and secure to the point that they built a close bond with the mujahedeen. For example, at the end of the text, she quoted a short and witty conversation between one of the embedded journalists and a mujahedeen commander. An Italian journalist was quoted saying, "If you travel with the mujahedeen, there are only three words you need to know...Harakat, kinna and chai," which translates to "get going, sit and tea." The text then noted how the "Afghan fighters roared with laughter" and how the commander told the journalist, "You could be a mujahid."

Stinger label: The second label found in the three articles which influenced the frame was "Stinger." It reflected a focus on the mujahedeen's advancements due to the American-made Stinger anti-aircraft missiles, administered to the groups by the United States. The label implied that there is a strong alliance between the Americans and the mujahedeen. For instance, Article 2C wrote that Stingers are the "American-supplied ground-to-air missiles that the guerrillas used successfully against Soviet and Afghan helicopter gunships." Articles 2A and 2B presented similar descriptions.

Official and foreign sources: Aside from the warriors and Stinger labels, the use of both official and foreign sources set the overall tone. American elites and Western officials cited in Articles 2A and 2B described how the Stinger missiles rescued the mujahedeen. The discussions in both articles illustrated the effort by elite and Western personnel to frame American foreign policy decisions towards the mujahedeen as useful and productive. For instance, Article 2A quoted a Western diplomat who stressed that “rebel morale was pretty low” and that “they were crying out for help” before receiving the Stinger missiles. The quote is included under the subheading “Missiles a decisive factor.” Referring to Schudson (1995), exchanges between sources and journalists affect the news-gathering process. In this case, it is possible to argue the exchange between the official and the journalist steered the headline invoked. Article 2A and Article 2B also included American intelligence estimates by presenting statistics about the Stinger missiles. Article 2A, for example, wrote, “Guerrillas were downing Soviet and Afghan aircraft with Stingers at a rate of better than one a day at one point, according to intelligence estimates...” The statistics suggest that the weapons of the United States were more advanced than Soviet technology.

In Article 2C, a mujahedeen commander paralleled the American and Western sources. The quote said, “Stingers...helped us win the war.”

It was mentioned earlier in this chapter that journalists did not refer to the factions in their reporting narratives with the word “mujahedeen.” Instead, they opted to describe them with the labels “guerrillas” and “rebels.” In contrast, American elites quoted in articles 2A and 2B used the term “mujahedeen” to define the factions. This point presents

a significant observation that will be further examined in Chapter Six's analysis. As will be demonstrated, the reporting narratives of journalists at some point de-emphasize the labels guerrillas and rebels, and instead invoke the term mujahedeen. Referring to the literature cited in Chapter Three, elites are the ones who define and promulgate labels about groups (e.g., Wodak and Matouschek, 1993; van Dijk, 1993). This suggests that with time, the persistent use of the word mujahedeen by the elites allowed it to become a dominant label used to describe the seven factions.

The 'elite' debate: Article 2B outlined a debate among the elites about the mujahedeen's advancements against the Soviet Union. It did so by crediting the developments against the Soviets with Congress's persistent call to arm the mujahedeen. The article explained how Congress had to push the CIA, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the State Department to provide more support to the mujahedeen. Such a debate parallels scholarly arguments from Chapter Two and Chapter Three which present the view that the elites disagree over policy decisions (Mills, 1956; Bennett, 1990; Karim, 1993; Karim, 2003). However, considering that the debate was not recent (the article was published in 1988, whereas the debates were from the early 1980s), the article remained within the sphere of the primary discussion. Referring to Bennett (1990), news coverage presents elite debates, but forms the discussions around the dominant position, which at the time of the article, was the mujahedeen's advancements.

A further note worth mentioning about Article 2B is that it was a news analysis, meaning it was lengthy (1964 words) and contextualized. The sources were part of the corporate-military-political elite triad (Mills, 1956), thus outlining how each sector was

involved in arming the mujahedeen. The sources referred to the words “freedom” and “freedom fighters” several times when discussing the mujahedeen. Furthermore, the article itself presented how the United States sought help from China and “many Moslem nations,” later detailing how Saudi Arabia matched its financial contributions with the United States. These discussions illustrate how the political alignment of Muslims at the time (i.e., the mujahedeen and Saudi Arabia) rendered them part of the Western “Self” (Karim, 2014).

From 1987 – 1989: A Cold War Master Narrative?

The analysis of jihad and mujahedeen from 1987 – 1989 identified some similarities between its findings and the results of other studies, which explored the coverage of foreign policy in the news media in other contexts. Similar to Herman and Chomsky’s (1988) comparative study on the Vietnam War and the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan, along with Entman’s (1991) comparative study on the Russian downing of a Korean airplane and the American military’s destruction of an Iranian airliner, the analysis found that the coverage of jihad and mujahedeen during the Soviet-Afghan War reflected Cold War policy interests.

Deconstructing the frames and the discourses that arose provides insight into how factors such as culture (e.g., Tuchman, 1978) and power structures (e.g., Shoemaker and Reese, 1996) work together to communicate an overarching ideology stemming from elite influence. During this period, ideology seems to have influenced the framing of jihad and mujahedeen. Referring to Shoemaker and Reese (1996), ideology is the strongest factor impacting news coverage.

Chapter Two explained how, when it comes to examining the ideological positioning of news stories, studies have considered how master narratives are established (Hackett and Zhao, 1994; King, 2007; Bivins, 2009). The frames, their discourses and the portrayal of the meaning of jihad and mujahedeen provide substantial insight about how news coverage can seamlessly cast master narratives.

The story of the Soviet-Afghan War (1979 – 1989), as represented by the dominant coverage, was not evaluated as an attack that solely required a response from Afghans, but as an attack that obliged American assistance. The story also oriented a perspective on the world by emphasizing allies and enemies. Therefore, the overall coverage of both terms suggests that the articles expressed an “anti-Communism” outlook by building on the Cold War power struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union (Chomsky and Herman, 1988).

By combining dominant frames and their discourses, the workings of a Cold War master narrative are revealed. An examination of the repetitive labels and the manner in which the meaning of the term mujahedeen was covered illustrates how political actors come to be presented through master narratives (King, 2007). The narrative centres around jihad as a “holy war,” as well as a solution against the Soviet Union. It also focuses on the mujahedeen as the “warriors” who militarily defeated the Soviets with the American-made “Stinger” missile. Although the frames, labels and discourses developed by way of examining the final two years of the Soviet-Afghan War, their connotations suggest that they also reflected the last few years of the Cold War, which ended in 1991.

From 1987 – 1989, when American foreign policy was predicated on a mujahedeen military victory against the Soviet Union, coverage revealed information about an alliance between the mujahedeen and the United States. The story of the Cold War master narrative begins with the Americans (firstly Congress, later the CIA) building supportive relations with the mujahedeen to serve as allies in a common fight. The mujahedeen and the United States are thus presented as protagonists in the story. The fight, referred to as a *holy war*, denoted a Muslim religious doctrine, but one that was also supported by the United States. For the mujahedeen and the U.S., the objective was a jihad to quash the Soviet Union. The master narrative then involved arming the mujahedeen, i.e., the “warriors,” with the American-made “Stinger” missile, which militarily coerced the adversary of the United States. The statistics about the missiles included in articles 2A and 2B offer context on how the Stinger competed with Soviet technology. When the coercion proved successful, the United States proceeded by encouraging talks to end the war. On the other hand, the Soviet Union was regarded as the antagonistic invading force that, as a result of the United States’s assistance to the mujahedeen, was forced to abandon its warfare and initiate talks to withdraw.

Competing discourses: Less or more involvement in Afghanistan to support the mujahedeen?

A portion of the literature cited in Chapter Two predicts that editorials tend to support the dominant policy interests (Karim, 2003; Friel and Falk, 2004; Ryan; 2004). The results of this analysis reveal a different scenario. The findings parallel the study of Berry (1990), which concludes that the *New York Times* moves to critical coverage when the government’s foreign policy begins to fail. Although Berry’s study focused on news

articles and not editorials, his findings nonetheless coincide with how the *New York Times*' editorial board, as illustrated in this editorial, reacted to changes in the overall political environment. As seen thus far, the three articles sampled in the mujahedeen section before the end of the war created favourable depictions of the factions while simultaneously echoing the Administration's official stance towards Afghanistan. However, the editorial board took a different approach when the war ended by acknowledging and criticizing Washington's failing policy in Afghanistan.

The editorial was written in September 1989 following the withdrawal of Soviet forces (the Soviets withdrew in February 1989). The headline, "Time to talk about Afghanistan," implied that the editorial board of the *New York Times* wanted the discussion concerning Afghanistan to be approached differently, as though suggesting that the media coverage thus far had not been properly "talking" about the country. The text referred to the factions as "mujahedeen" and did not opt for neutral words like guerrillas or rebels, perhaps suggesting that the editorial board did not want to present a neutral approach.

Referring to Karim's (2003) characterizations of discourses, this editorial falls under the alternative discourse branch because it: 1) directly challenged the dominant discourse about the mujahedeen, and 2) did not consent to its ideological foundation. Regarding the first point, the editorial critically assessed the mujahedeen and characterized them as impeding progress. Following the Soviet withdrawal, American support for the mujahedeen continued to pour in while ignoring a mutual arms cut-off deal and a political compromise, as the U.S. was predicting an early mujahedeen military

victory against Afghan forces. However, “that victory has proved elusive,” stated the editorial, due to several setbacks: the mujahedeen did not yet attain power in order to set up a provisional government, the Afghan forces were being resupplied by the Soviet Union and a struggle over power led to “serious quarrelling” between the mujahedeen.

The same editorial also expressed disapproval with the ideological foundations of the dominant discourse by questioning the American administration’s support for the groups. To take an example from the text, it argued that “...with American foreign policy still predicated on a mujahedeen military victory, it’s the Administration’s intentions that need testing.” It then concluded by questioning why the United States would want to extend a war that has impaired Afghanistan: “A mujahedeen military victory is neither readily attainable nor necessarily desirable for the United States. Soviet troops are gone and Soviet foreign policy is headed in more constructive directions. What American purpose justifies prolonging a civil war that has already devastated Afghanistan and left Pakistan burdened with millions of exiles?”

In a political response to the editorial, Bill McCollum, a then-member of Congress, wrote a letter to the editor. Its headline, “Afghanistan waits for east-west compromise; back up our rhetoric,” presented his attempt at convincing the *New York Times* that their stance on Afghanistan was inappropriate. The riposte’s discourse claimed that the reason for the American administration’s failure was that policy makers underestimated the Soviets by trusting that they would halt their weapons supply to the pro-Communist Afghan government. Instead, while the Soviets increased their supply, the CIA “bungled” theirs.

The letter operated within the overall Cold War narrative, but presented an oppositional discourse by suggesting that the dominant discourse about the mujahedeen was unfitting. Instead of categorizing them as “warriors,” it referred to them as “embattled” while including statistics about their monthly casualties. Whereas the coverage examined earlier suggested that the American Stinger missiles altered the course of the war, the letter’s discourse argued that the arms the factions retain, even the Stingers, were insufficient. It presented the American-made weapon as weak compared to that of the Soviets. Although the Congressman’s letter was short (388 words), it provided detailed information about the mujahedeen’s waning technology. It wrote that the rocket-launched grenades the mujahedeen possessed were not as powerful as the technology of the Soviets; that the last weapon they received was the Stinger; and that they have not been offered TOW antitank missiles¹¹ or mine-clearing equipment.

Although the letter began with measured language, it concluded with a message to the *New York Times*’ editorial board using more assertive and provocative language. “If we fail to support the mujahedeen in their hour of need, we will once again remind our allies and other countries around the world that we talk a good game, but play a poor one. It is about time to back up our rhetoric and not re-visit the ‘blame America first’ masochism of the left.”

The arguments presented in the letter offer two important observations. The first mirrors the debate that is indicated in Article 2B that the CIA and Congress disagreed over the supply of weapons. The letter alleged that some political elites in Washington

¹¹ The TOW anti-tank missile is an American-made missile developed in the 1960s.

preferred that the mujahedeen “fight with sticks and stones,” rather than be armed with more sophisticated weaponry that could defeat the Soviet-backed Afghan army. This statement reflects scholarly arguments outlined in Chapter Two and Chapter Three, which also suggest that elitist classes define events differently and are not always mutually aligned (Mills, 1956; Bennett, 1990; Karim, 1993; Karim, 2003). The second significant point that the letter illustrated is related to Mills’ (1956) concern about how elites have fuelled an interest in military affairs while propelling a perpetual war economy. Mills argues that the preservation of a military mindset amounts to “military metaphysics,” a view that defines “international reality as basically military” (p. 222). This letter seems to illustrate Mills’ concern; despite a full Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, a weapons-driven mentality continued to dominate Congress’s outlook towards the mujahedeen. The discourse only suggested armaments as a permanent solution for Afghanistan, while disqualifying any other avenue. Further, entwining this oppositional discourse with Johnson’s (2000) assessment of American foreign policy reveals that the Cold War had a lasting effect on the political position of the United States, creating a culture that encouraged continued American involvement abroad.

As illustrated through the letter to the editor, the spaces used to contest the dominant ideologies or to outline an unnoticed opinion also serve as convenient spaces in which elites can enact elements of events they feel necessitate a response.

Additional Observations

The results in Appendix A indicate that the articles that used the word mujahedeen were written from Afghanistan, Pakistan, the United States, and other

international locations. While the majority of the articles discussed Afghanistan's affairs, a small number discussed other world developments (mostly the Israeli-Palestinian conflict).¹² However, despite a focus on other events, the majority of the articles using the word mujahedeen during this period were related to Afghanistan, suggesting that the term during this time was primarily reserved for the seven Afghani factions that fought the Soviets.

Jihad: 1999 – 2001

Three news articles, an op-ed and a letter to the editor were sampled for this section. They are “U.S. hard put to find proof bin Laden directed attacks” (3A), “A nation challenged: The Taliban; Afghans coaxing bin Laden, but U.S. rejects clerics' bid” (3B), “A nation challenged: Death on the ground; U.S. raid kills unknown number in an Afghan village” (3C), “On a Sunday in October, we are at war” (3D), and “Islam and the opposition to terrorism” (3E) (see Appendix C for the articles' details).

A complete shift in the portrayal of jihad took place during this period. The Soviet presence in Afghanistan had concluded, followed by the end of the Cold War in 1991. With the demise of the Soviet Union that same year, the United States emerged as the world's sole superpower. Referring to Esposito, the collapse of the Soviet Union led to the search for new enemies (as cited in Karim, 2003, p. 128). The results of this period report on how the world's superpower was dealing with a new enemy.

¹² A Palestinian movement titled the Palestine Liberation Organization formed in 1981 with the purpose of liberating its territories from Israel's occupation. Media coverage used the words jihad and mujahedeen when referring to the movement's members and actions.

The 'Problem' Frame

Jihad during this period was framed as a “problem,” and further presented as a dangerous religious phenomenon. The coverage mostly centered around the attacks and threats directed against Americans, which became the dominant discourse. As stated in Chapter Four’s historical review, these include the 1998 embassy bombings in Africa, as well as the September 11, 2001 World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks. The “holy war” label that was introduced in the earlier period is rearticulated in articles 3A and 3B. But whereas the label was previously used as a religious justification for the mujahedeen’s stance against the Soviets, it was now directly linked to a war against Americans. Article 3A viewed it as a phenomenon that evolved from a war against the Soviets to one against Americans (without contextualizing the role of the United States), while Article 3B defined it as a “worldwide holy war...against the United States.” Article 3C did not summon the “holy war” label, but nonetheless defined jihad as a war against Americans.

Bin laden and Muslims labels: Whereas jihad was previously carried out by the mujahedeen, this period witnessed a refashioning of jihad into a concept that was widely supported by Muslims. This observation emerged from the use of two frequent labels that played a significant role in fomenting the dominant frame and the ensuing discourse. The first was “bin Laden,” which worked to link him to the attacks against Americans. The second label is “Muslims,” which emphasized their support for the al-Qaida figure. In the three articles, both labels worked together to imply that Muslims endorse bin Laden, a

man being sought for engineering attacks against Americans and for pursuing a jihad against them.

Official and foreign sources: As with previous sections, the use of official and foreign sources also influenced the coverage. Articles 3A and 3B quoted American officials, while Article 3C quoted foreign civilians. Article 3A's lead referred to a claim by senior American officials stating that American forces were near the Afghan border in order to capture bin Laden for engineering attacks against the United States, while Article 3B's lead used a White House claim, along with a quote from the White House spokesman, expressing concern with letting bin Laden go uncaptured. The rest of the quotes and references in articles 3A and 3B implied that Muslims have developed a hatred for the United States and Americans and that they support bin Laden's political position. Article 3C, which focused on an American raid that killed Afghan civilians, did not quote official sources. The sources were all foreigners expressing anger at the Americans. The text included comments like "...fight the Americans," "We pray to Allah that we have soldiers to kill," "Death to Bush," and "We will have our vengeance." The text also paraphrased one civilian saying "the Muslims of the world had decided to wage jihad against the Americans."

It is important to note as well that in the reporting narrative of each of the three articles, subjective language that was not used previously emerged. The language included words like "threat" (articles 3A and 3B), "crusade" (articles 3A and 3B), "terrorism" (Article 3A), "infidels" (Article 3C) "terrorist" (Article 3C) as well as "radical" (Articles 3A and 3B). Whereas Muslims during the Soviet war were identified

as “good” (Mamdani, 2004) and as part of the Western “Self” (Karim, 2014), this period introduced them as “bad” (Mamdani, 2004) and as part of the Muslim “Other” (Karim, 2014).

The ‘elite’ debate: Hall et al. (1978) argue that texts may present alternative views, but their placement in the news text determines whether or not they can counter the dominant narrative. In this case, articles 3A and 3B both expressed alternative opinions. However, Article 3A presented it following the official government claim, while Article 3B relegated it to the very end. Since they were presented following the dominant discussion, they did not resonate as much.

The alternative view in Article 3A emerged from two retired American officials. The first, a former counterterrorism director, stated that Administration officials made bin Laden ““sort of a Superman in Muslim garb.”” The second, a former senior CIA official, stated that the American government ““created a North Star”” out of bin Laden and then linked him to all the attacks against Americans, adding that he (the CIA official) was ““not sure”” with what evidence. While their quotes did not directly refer to jihad, they implied that the American government created a fear of bin Laden and his ideology. The inclusion of this alternative perspective in the article provides further indications that the elites engage in debates and are not always in agreement (e.g., Mills, 1956; Bennett, 1990; Karim, 1993; Karim, 2003).

Despite the fact that an elite debate existed surrounding the overarching narrative of a threat against Americans, jihad continued to be identified as it was previously. This suggests that the political discourse was strong enough to steer its connotations from a

concept that the Americans supported during the Soviet invasion, to one that the U.S. was currently struggling with.

Competing discourses: Jihad as a misunderstood doctrine?

Whereas the dominant discourse depicted jihad as a “problem” by labelling it with “bin Laden” and “Muslims,” an op-ed emerged arguing that jihad was not to be perceived as a dangerous phenomenon. Published following the 9/11 attacks, its headline’s lexical choice, “Islam and the opposition to terrorism,” suggests that the interpretation of jihad during this period had become apposite to terrorism. Although the word terrorism was not a dominant label in the articles (3A mentioned it once), it is possible that the term was often articulated in the reportage of this period, prompting the writer to use it in the headline. However, this is a mere estimation and cannot be confirmed unless all the articles of this period are examined.

The piece was written by a professor of history and chairperson of the committee on Islamic studies at Harvard University, Roy Mottahedeh. One can infer that Mottahedeh’s discourse emerged from the fact that he had been exposed to literature and research on Islam, as part of his position. The op-ed is an oppositional discourse, in that it contests the dominant discourse, which renders jihad a problem but does not question its ideological framework.

The discourse linked jihad to an internal struggle, arguing that its unfavourable connotations have historically evolved based on global developments. It rejected the association of jihad to an armed struggle in three different ways: by referring to verses from the Qur’an and scholars from Islam’s classical period; by briefly comparing the

language linking jihad to violence with American leaders who have used the word “crusade,”¹³ and by arguing that violence is not always motivated by religious convictions, but by colonial and political encounters. His final argument parallels Chapter One’s literature on contemporary jihad. Scholars in this area have focused on the effects of the arrival of European imperialism in the 20th century (e.g., Esposito, 2001; Knapp, 2002; Kepel, 2006). Mottahedeh also argued that a “violent interpretation” of jihad dates back to the First World War, when Britain swayed Indian Muslims to declare a jihad against the Central Powers, and the Central Powers encouraged the Ottomans to declare a jihad against Britain and its allies. However, the op-ed piece did not pose any questions about jihad’s shifting connotations, hence maintaining an oppositional – and not an alternative – nature.

About a week following this op-ed, a letter to the editor was written. It was also published a day after the debut of the American-led mission in Afghanistan (letter published October 8, 2001, and the war began October 7). Although it was written by an audience member who identified as a Muslim, the letter supported the dominant discourse about jihad. Interestingly, it also invoked the two labels that were documented in the content analysis of the dominant jihad frame: “bin Laden” and “Muslims.” The writer, named Jaffer Qamar, argued that the United States should be alarmed about Muslims in the United States expressing sympathy for bin Laden and other clergy members with similar ideologies. He referenced the word jihad when writing about Muslims in the United States and other countries who should be sent to fight in

¹³ This is mostly directed at Bush for using the word to describe his government’s counterterrorism plans following the 9/11 attacks.

Afghanistan to “counter the call for jihad against America.” The letter’s language is conversational and personal, using “I” to present particular arguments. Qamar had mentioned that he immigrated to the United States 30 years ago and that he was now an American citizen. He also invoked the word “we,” as though to illustrate that he shared the same sentiments as the wider American public. It is also possible to infer that the choice of language reflected his patriotic sentiments following the 9/11 attacks and the need for the “good Muslims” to distance themselves from the “bad Muslims.” Referring back to Mamdani (2004), a certain public discourse since the September 11, 2001 attacks has focused on the binary division between the “good Muslims” and the “bad Muslims,” invoked primarily by Bush’s reference to the “bad Muslims” responsible for the attacks and the “good Muslims” trying to distance themselves from the “bad” ones (p. 15). Mamdani argues the “good Muslims” need to set themselves apart from the “bad Muslims,” or they would risk being painted with the same brush (ibid). This letter operated in exactly these ways. However, the discourse that emerged from Qamar appears incognizant, and he probably did not know that he was splitting himself into a binary formation.

Although Mottahedeh’s op-ed did attempt to counter the prevailing perception of jihad being a problem, it is fair to infer that his discourse did not change much. As exemplified with the letter that emerged, the dominant frame was re-invoked, this time coming from a reader. Further, and even more apparent is that, as illustrated with the first frame that emerged during the final few years of the Soviet-Afghan War, jihad and violence have been interwoven in the news coverage for over a decade. Although the

violence of jihad was previously favourably represented against the Soviets, it was nonetheless defined as a “holy war,” deducing a religiously sanctioned war against an invading force. The articles also spoke about weapons and armament. This illustrates that the life cycle and narrative of jihad, which links it to violence and a religiously sanctioned war, have in fact been leading the coverage for many years. Therefore, since the narrative had been entrenched for a while, it would be difficult for a member of the public to completely counter it. Furthermore, and as will be demonstrated in the jihad sections in Chapter Six, the unfavourable connotations that were introduced during this period in relation to the term continued to dominate the coverage.

Additional Observations

While the coverage on jihad during the final two years (1987 – 1989) of the Soviet Afghan War was solely reserved for Afghanistan, this period presented a complete shift in the usage of the term. First, the number of articles that evoked the word jihad increased drastically compared to the earlier period. From 1987 – 1989, 14 articles emerged. However, from 1999 – 2001, 222 articles appeared. Furthermore, whereas the articles using the word jihad throughout the former period were primarily written from Afghanistan and Pakistan, the byline of the articles authored during the latter period expanded to international locations, primarily discussing terrorist attacks and threats against Western countries. This illustrates that, as international developments unfolded, jihad was no longer perceived as a phenomenon that was primarily based in Afghanistan.

Mujahedeen: 1999 – 2001

Five news articles are analyzed in this section (op-eds, letters to the editor and editorials did not arise in the sample). The news articles are: “Afghan ‘lion’ fights Taliban with rifle and fax machine” (4A), “An Afghan Mosaic of misery: Hunger, war and repression” (4B), “A nation challenged: The Taliban; once vigilantes, now strict rulers” (4C), “A nation challenged: The opposition; In new glare, questions dog Afghan rebels” (4D), and “A nation challenged: The displaced; Afghan family salvages little but its hopes” (4E) (see Appendix C for articles’ details).

The ‘Governance’ Frame

The mujahedeen were reported vis-à-vis a governance frame, which worked to present their role in Afghanistan. The political context in Afghanistan during this period centred around the rise of the Taliban, as well as the disagreements among the mujahedeen as they rose from Afghanistan’s dire political state.

When contrasting this frame with the dominant weapons frame that emerged during the final two years (1987 – 1989) of the Soviet invasion, differences in the style of reportage were observed. First, American elites were not substantially cited (Article 4D is the only text that did rely on them). Second, the texts sometimes used the terms “guerrillas” and “rebels,” but they also simultaneously invoked the word “mujahedeen” without attribution or quotes. This suggests that the term mujahedeen, which was previously invoked by the elites during the 1987 – 1989 period, had now become a social marker (van Dijk, 1993) that was easily called upon and mobilized. Thirdly, weapons

were not a focus in the texts, signifying that the alliance between the groups and the U.S. during this period was not as strategic as it used to be during the Soviet-Afghan War.

Ethnic label: Whereas the previous labels that were used to identify the mujahedeen were “warriors” and “Stinger,” the new and often used label during this period of the mujahedeen’s civil war is “ethnic.” The label arose from the coverage which focused on the divisions amongst the various ethnicities of the seven factions. This positioned the dominant discourse in relation to the fact that the mujahedeen maintain different ethnicities and rally together based on their backgrounds. For example, Article 4A described a mujahedeen commander as an “ethnic Tajik” who has “been at war with other Afghan guerrillas, their ethnicities different from his and their loyalties notably fluid.” The other articles discussed ethnicity in a similar fashion.

Language changes: Interestingly, each text conveyed how the mujahedeen shifted from a unified movement during the Soviet-Afghan War into divided groups following the Soviet withdrawal. While explaining this change, the language used to describe the mujahedeen during and after the Soviet invasion was different. For example, Article 4A drew attention to how the mujahedeen were once united, using descriptions like the “Afghan resistance,” “a monolithic horde of freedom fighters,” “mountain warriors” and “Hollywood icon[s].” The language quickly switched when describing their state during the present day (the article was published on November 9, 1999), writing that they were fighting over “age-old ethnic and tribal rivalries” as well as “modern-day avarice and thirst for power.” The remaining four articles invoked similar language, demonstrating

how the evolving image of the mujahedeen was subsequently mirrored in the news coverage.

Alliance: Despite the not-so-favourable tone, a common theme in the coverage of articles 4B, 4D, and 4E was the acknowledgement of an alliance between the U.S. and the mujahedeen. Article 4B mentioned that the United States had previously helped “resistance fighters” “battle for freedom.” Article 4D is the only text that referred to Administration officials. It did not use direct quotes, but it made significant references to the official claim. Writing about the American officials who worked with the mujahedeen in the 1980s and early 1990s, it stated that “many of those officials now sigh when asked whether they believe the fractiousness of those earlier years will be put aside in the quest for a new government.” The use of the word “sigh” is significant because it suggested that the officials had exhausted all measures to aid the mujahedeen. And finally, Article 4E related the story of an Afghan refugee who had lived through Afghanistan’s numerous conflicts: the Soviet invasion, the civil war, the rise of the Taliban and the 2001 invasion. In reference to the American-led war, the article paraphrased the refugee by stating that he “wholeheartedly supported the American bombing.” It also mentioned how the interview was conducted in an area under control of the Northern Alliance “rebels.”

As such, despite the fact that elite sentiments and statements were only used once, and despite the fact that the tone of the coverage was not as favourable as it used to be during the Soviet-Afghan War, the texts continued to make links related to the alliance between the Americans and the mujahedeen.

Competing discourses: Who is at fault?

The aforementioned articles did not contextualize the story of the mujahedeen. However, Article 4C did so by indirectly acknowledging Johnson's (2000) "blowback" concept, and thus, presented an alternative discourse. The article is about the Taliban's stringent governing of Afghanistan. It seems to be more of a background analysis than a news report because it provided a detailed analysis on the history of the country and because no quotes were included. Nonetheless, what is compelling is that this article was written by journalist Barry Bearak, who also wrote two of the articles analyzed above (Articles 4A and 4B). Whereas the dominant discourse discussed the ethnic differences among the mujahedeen, the discourse that emerged in this article acknowledged that there was more to the story than it seemed.

The topical focus was on Washington's policy shifts following the Soviet Union's withdrawal. Bearak wrote:

It is sometimes said that the United States gave a friendly wink, and perhaps more, to the incipient Taliban, but Washington's great impact was more likely its indifference. That neglect of Afghanistan since 1996 was a turnabout in policy. Just a few years before, this nation seemed vital to American concerns as the United States tried to dislodge the Soviet Union from Afghanistan by backing holy warriors, or mujahedeen. Then, as if it had tired of a television serial, America lost interest, and the influence it might have exerted in Afghanistan's future was wielded instead by others, including Mr. bin Laden.

Bearak concluded by reminding readers of Afghanistan's dire state, in addition to a severe drought that had devastated the population. Using detailed and sympathetic language, he stated, "As [Afghans] look skyward for rain, it seems they may soon see American bombers instead."

The discourse of this article acknowledged that the mujahedeen were being militarily prepped up by the United States so that it could use the seven factions to coerce its rival. But after the coercion of the Soviet Union was a success, Afghanistan was no longer on the radar, and it was soon forced to deal with a complex confluence of results in the wake of conflict. Although it is impossible to state why Bearak's discourse changed, it could be assumed that the emanating discourse from public officials threatening to invade Afghanistan following the 9/11 attacks motivated him to contextualize his coverage in deeper and different ways. One may also infer that Bearak was not aware that he had altered his reportage. We may never really know what facilitated his resistance to the status quo. This alternative discourse illustrated that there is more to the story of the mujahedeen than ethnic strife, thereby stimulating a minor but recognizable challenge to the dominant perspective of the time. The Bearak story, in particular, demonstrated that journalists can use their powers of communication to conceptualize alternative discourses if the circumstances are right.

Additional Observations

As with mujahedeen during the 1999 – 2001 period of Afghanistan's civil war, the majority of the articles using the word take Afghanistan as their topic. Appendix A reveals that 46 out of 127 articles were indeed written from Afghanistan. The rest

emerged from the United States, Europe, and the Middle East. Some of the articles from the U.S. discussed Afghanistan's context, whereas others focused on international developments. In a similar vein, those from Europe and the Middle East were also focused on international developments related to terrorist attacks and threats. The results suggest that the term mujahedeen during this period was being used by the news media to conflate terrorism and what was once known as a liberation movement (i.e., the mujahedeen). As will be argued in the upcoming chapter, the word *jihadist* rose to prominence in the early 2000s to refer to those whose violence was also considered as acts of terrorism.

The next chapter follows a similar path by analyzing the two additional time periods: 2003 – 2005 and 2013 – 2015. It will draw further conclusions on the evolution of jihad as a conceptual term, along with the word mujahedeen and jihadists by sampling additional coverage from the first few years of the 2001 War on Afghanistan to the most recent state of affairs.

Chapter Six

Jihad, Mujahedeen, and Jihadists: From 2003 – 2005 and 2013 – 2015

“Words can be like X-rays if you use them properly – they’ll go through anything.

You read and you’re pierced” (Huxley, 2010, p. 70).

Similar to the content analysis in Chapter Five, this one also focuses on the *New York Times*’ coverage of the terms jihad and mujahedeen, while including an additional term, jihadist. This particular term was not used in the previous chapter. As outlined in Chapter One, this was due to the fact that, until quite recently, media discourses had not yet introduced the term to identify particular groups (Nanji, 2008, p. 91). According to the research, the first time the *New York Times* invoked the term jihadist was in 1999, a time when bin Laden was allegedly executing attacks against Americans. However, it was not until after September 11, 2001 that the term gained more traction. Therefore, this chapter examines the use of the three terms.

As mentioned in the introduction, the research interest of this thesis lies within changes in media coverage based on the different political contexts that developed between 1987 and 2015. Chapter Five presented the first half of this timeline, while this chapter focuses on the latter period. The following considers the years 2003 – 2005, which were the first few years following the American-led war in Afghanistan, and 2013 – 2015, which is a period closer to our time. The latter period was also when foreign troops were decreasing their presence in Afghanistan, and when a new organization, known as Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), rose to prominence in the Middle East. Like al-Qaida and the Taliban, ISIS also claims to be fighting a jihad. Much like Chapter

Five's analysis, the results reveal that the frames and the discourses of the meaning of the terms shifted with the fluctuating political system. Table 3 presents the dominant frames and discourses discovered for the two periods of this chapter.

Table 3

Dominant frames and discourses for jihad, mujahedeen, and jihadists from 2003 – 2005 and 2013 – 2015

Period: 2003 – 2005		
Term	Frame	Discourse
Jihad	Threat	Against Americans
Mujahedeen	Governance	Warlords
Jihadist	Problem	Muslim foreigners threatening
Period: 2013 – 2015		
Term	Frame	Discourse
Jihad	Threat	Against Americans
Mujahedeen	Governance	Warlords and militias
Jihadist	Problem	Regional power

Jihad: 2003 – 2005

Five news articles are considered in this section. They are titled as follows: “As rockets strike, U.S. hunts for Taliban tied to ambush” (5A), “A prisoner’s journey from the classroom to the Taliban” (5B), “Taliban raids widen in parts of Afghanistan” (5C), “Taliban fighters increase attacks, with troubling toll among G.I.’s and Afghans” (5D), and “Assessing the Afghan election: Enthusiastic voters, most of all, helped weaken the Taliban” (5E) (see Appendix D for articles’ details).

Chapter Five's methods of framing and discourse analysis revealed how the representation of jihad changed based on concurrent developments, evolving from a "solution" during the final two years (1987 – 1989) of the Soviet-Afghan War to a "problem" in 1999 – 2001, when attacks were executed against American targets. The chapter illustrated how, during the first period, jihad carried positive undertones as it linked American support to the mujahedeen's struggle against the Soviet invaders. It then presented how the undertones negatively developed in the second period by linking Muslim support for bin Laden. The following section of analysis demonstrates that the reportage continued to reflect unfavourable connotations about jihad, while simultaneously re-framing the term according to the prevailing political context.

During the next period, 2003 – 2005, the political environment revolved around the military role of the United States in Afghanistan. As detailed in Chapter Four, the American-led war in Afghanistan began in October 2001 with the goal of thwarting al-Qaida and the Taliban. In so doing, the U.S. became allied with the Afghan government. The five news articles sampled for this period provide coverage about the Taliban's opposition to the Americans and the Afghan forces.

The 'Problem' Frame

The framing of the meaning of jihad continued to be predominantly portrayed as a "problem." No repetitive label for jihad was identified during this period. Instead, coverage revolved around three groups: the Afghan government, the American forces, and the Taliban.

Alliance between Afghan and American forces against Taliban: A common theme in the reportage was to stress an alliance between the American and Afghan governments against the Taliban. During the second period (1999 – 2001), jihad was linked to two labels: *bin Laden* and *Muslims*. However, during this period, jihad was mentioned in the context of three groups: 1) the Taliban, 2) the American government and 3) the Afghan government. The coverage included information about how the American and Afghan troops were being targeted and attacked by the Taliban.

Despite presenting the American and Afghan forces as dual targets of the Taliban, in three out of five articles (Articles 5A, 5B and 5E) the dominant discourse of jihad was presented solely as being against the Americans. This observation was revealed in the language employed in the reporting narrative of the news articles, as well as the quotes.

Foreign sources as well as foreign statements: Although the coverage in the three articles stressed that both forces were being targeted and killed by the Taliban's warfare, the dominant discourse positioned the concept of jihad as a war against Americans. This representation was mentioned in the quotes made by foreign sources, and in the related references. Article 5A invoked the word when describing a Taliban commander who announced a jihad against American forces in Afghanistan. It referenced the following quote: "The ground became hot for the Russians here, and so maybe the ground will also become hot for the Americans." Article 5B quoted two former Taliban fighters. One of them was quoted saying the Taliban's religious schools taught students about a "jihad against Americans." Interestingly, the article presented an alternative perspective about the use of the word jihad when another former fighter said he was not "deceived" when

the Taliban used it. However, the perspective was not introduced until the final few lines of the text, and the report did not investigate what he was suggesting.

The interplay between what is introduced and when is the focus of valuable research by cultural theorist Stuart Hall and other scholars. In a book titled *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order*, Hall et al. (1978) postulate that the first person quoted sets the dominant narrative in an article, and in turn if the text later references or cites an alternative view, it becomes difficult to supercede that which was presented first. Article 5C referred to a Taliban commander's statement about a council that had been formed to "expedite jihad against occupation forces." Although the cause of jihad in the quote was pluralized – showing that it was against occupation forces and not just one force – the article did not draw any content that referenced a Western military force other than the United States.

Other discourse: Although the dominant discourse situated jihad as a problem for Americans, another discourse was discovered in two articles (5D and 5E). Article 5D referred to a claim by Afghan officials and aid workers who said that Afghan mosques were "openly preaching jihad against Americans and the Afghan government," while Article 5E referenced a Taliban spokesperson who said the group did not want to harm civilians, thus insinuating that their goal was to attack anyone who was not a civilian. He was quoted saying: "We will continue our jihad." Considering this discourse was only found in two articles, it did not gain presence in the same way as the dominant one. Nonetheless, the discourse is worth highlighting because it suggests that the coverage did not narrowly transmit jihad as a problem solely for Americans.

The 'elite' debate: Journalists tend to report and circulate domestic elite debates in their reportage, in turn demonstrating that elites do not necessarily share the same foreign policy goals (Mills, 1956; Bennett, 1990; Karim, 1993; Karim, 2003). Article 5E outlined an elitist debate. The article introduced President George Bush's argument that Afghanistan constituted "an American-backed success story," since the Afghan elections were free from Taliban violence. It then presented Senator John Kerry's disagreement, who continued to view the country as "riven with violence, terrorism and warlords." This debate illustrates that while elites want to influence foreign policy, they do not always operate as a homogenous group.

Additional Observations

The results from Appendix A reveal that during this period, the articles written in Afghanistan (24 results) and Pakistan (14 results) continued to focus on the affairs of Afghanistan. However, the articles written in the U.S (62 results) mainly discussed threats occurring on American soil. Interestingly, many articles were written from outside Afghanistan and the U.S. (107 total results, mainly in Europe and the Middle East). Such articles discussed terrorist threats and attacks occurring beyond Afghanistan. These results suggest two points. First, the majority of the articles that mention the term jihad during this period did not primarily discuss Afghanistan, illustrating that the country was no longer the main focus on the coverage of the term. Second, that the concept of jihad had evolved into a global phenomenon. The increased correlation of the term jihad with terrorist attacks that were occurring internationally suggests how the meaning of the word had shifted with the international political system.

Mujahedeen: 2003 – 2005

Thus far, we have seen the term mujahedeen evolve from a weapons frame during the final two years (1987 – 1989) of the Soviet invasion to a governance frame during 1999 – 2001, which marked the final two years of the Taliban’s rule. The governance frame continued to predominate during this period. The coverage revolved around the human rights abuses and violations of the mujahedeen against the civilian population and Afghanistan’s first democratic election, which brought American-backed Hamid Karzai to power (Articles 6B, 6C and editorial 6E). But whereas the previous period’s coverage was not completely unfavourable, the coverage of this period was.

This section examines five news articles. They are: “Rights group reports abuses by Afghans, some backed by U.S.” (6A), “A young Afghan dares to mention the unmentionable” (6B), “Afghan route to prosperity: Grow poppies” (6C), “Report names abusers in Afghan wars” (6D), and “5,800 Afghans with many agendas seek office today” (6E) (see Appendix D for articles’ details).

The ‘Governance’ Frame

As mentioned above, the governance frame established in the previous section continued to influence coverage during this period as well. Whereas the labels “guerrillas” and “rebels” were at first used to describe the mujahedeen, these labels fell out of circulation during this time period. Instead, the analysis revealed that the language used to describe the mujahedeen turned more critical. For example, the term mujahedeen was frequently attached to human rights abuses.

Warlords label: The dominant label that emerged in the five articles is “warlords,” beseeching a judgmental outlook towards the term. Other less dominant descriptors were also invoked: “militia(s)” (articles 6A, 6B, 6C, and 6D), “commanders” (Articles 6A, 6B, 6D, and 6E), “abuses” (articles 6A, 6B, and 6C) and “jihadis”¹⁴ (articles 6A and 6C). For example, Article 6A described the mujahedeen as “warlords and abusive commanders.” The use of this new set of terminology illustrates how the coverage of the mujahedeen changed during this period to characterize their actions as aggressive.

U.S. role: A recurring theme in the articles of this sample was to draw attention to the position of the United States in relation to the mujahedeen and Afghan governance. However, the discourses and tone generated by the coverage were inconsistent. Articles 6A and 6B both focused on allegations of human rights abuses against the mujahedeen. Article 6A began by citing a human rights report that laid ““much of the responsibility”” on the United States for its support of the mujahedeen. This claim was even mentioned in its headline: “Rights group reports abuses by Afghans, some backed by U.S.” No American officials were quoted. Although Article 6D did not reference the United States’s responsibility at the outset, it also presented criticism. It cited a human rights report that “criticizes” the United States for working with the leaders of the mujahedeen, but this reference was not made until the end of the article, after details had already been introduced about the type of “atrocities” committed by the mujahedeen, such as “indiscriminate shelling and killing” and the “mass rape of civilians.” Therefore, while the discourse of both articles acknowledged the role of the U.S. in arming the

¹⁴ Mentioned in the introduction is that the word ‘jihadi’ is a synonym for ‘jihadist.’ This thesis does not investigate the term jihadi because it detected that the *New York Times* uses jihadist more in its reporting.

mujahedeen and bringing them to power, the uneven distribution of criticism forged an inconsistent narrative.

Articles 6B and 6E articulated how the United States backed one side in Afghanistan's government, insinuating it did not support the mujahedeen. In presenting this position, the articles created a more critical view of the factions. Article 6B mentioned how the Afghan government was divided into two groups: those affiliated with the mujahedeen who were accused of "human rights atrocities" and those allied with Hamid Karzai. The article described Karzai as a man "backed" by the United States and by the "international community," and whose goal was to promote a constitution that upheld a check on the "power of the warlords," i.e., the mujahedeen. Similarly, Article 6E described Afghanistan's elections as "American-backed" and "as the next stage of the country's move to greater democracy from war and repression." It then went on to describe the mujahedeen as "suspected of human rights abuses" and as "notorious figures."

These results suggest that whether or not American foreign policy toward the mujahedeen or Afghanistan's governance was positively portrayed, the term mujahedeen itself carried unfavourable connotations from being associated with Afghanistan's failing state and the "warlords" label. The articles also demonstrate that a critical assessment of American foreign policy was, in fact, presented alongside the non-critical coverage.

The 'elite' debate: Contrary to the other articles, Article 4C promoted an alliance between the United States and the mujahedeen. This seems to have been influenced by the fact that elites were cited a number of times in the text. Overall, the article focused on

how the international community, namely the United States, wanted to deter the uptick of poppy cultivation in Afghanistan. It is the only article sampled that uses elite sources and is also the only story that presented an elitist debate (Mills, 1956; Bennett, 1990; Karim, 1993; Karim, 2003) concerning the mujahedeen and the role of the United States in combatting the drug issue. The first two American officials cited argued that the American response to the drug trade and to those supporting it should not be aggressive. An American Ambassador is quoted saying the “politics” of the drug trade “may require not to go too harsh.” An American colonel also pointed to the politics of the situation, arguing the men in the drug trade are “the guys who helped us liberate this place in 2001” and who continue to help, adding the “military does not want to go down that road.” However, the article later referred to a lieutenant general and the commander of the American-led forces who proposed a more aggressive response to the drug trade due to his troops actively finding links between drugs and extremism.

Additional Observations

During this period, the majority of the articles that used the word mujahedeen continued to focus on Afghanistan. As documented in the previous period (1999 – 2001), which marked the prelude to the U.S.-led War in Afghanistan, a majority of the articles also used the term when discussing terrorist attacks abroad. However, these articles were not the most common. The most common form of coverage was one that reported about the factions that previously fought the Soviets. This storyline illustrates that the term was still reserved for the seven factions and had not shifted to describe other groups.

Jihadists: 2003 – 2005

Although the analysis begins to study the word jihadist during this period, it is worth mentioning that the first time the *New York Times* invoked the word was on December 30, 1999 (based on results from Lexis Nexis) (Crossette, 1999, December 30). The expression was used in an article by Robert Oakley, a former American ambassador to Pakistan and a State Department counterterrorism expert. Referring to those whom the Taliban were harboring (i.e., bin Laden and his followers), Oakley said they were “jihadist” and “terrorists.” It is also important to note that the article was written in 1999. This is significant as it is the time period when the “problem” frame of jihad debuted. Although it is quite difficult to locate precisely who introduced the word jihadist during this period and under what context (one would need to take into account other newspapers and perhaps transcripts emerging from speeches and interviews), it is reasonable to make the following inference: The scholarship in Chapter Two found that elites are the primary figures who introduce dominant discourses as the main discussion points for society (Karim 1993; van Dijk, 1993), and they further define and set the discourses about the “other” (Wodak and Matouschek, 1993) by assigning labels, such as “radicals” and “criminals” (van Dijk, 1993). If these arguments are applied to the fact that the first use of the word jihadist in the coverage of the *New York Times* was invoked by an elite, and that it was used during a period when Americans were feeling threatened by Muslim “Others,” the term thus became a social marker to identify Muslim groups/individuals who posed a threat. It is important to note as well that the *New York*

Times did conjure the word twice in the year 2000, but it was not until after September 11, 2001 that the term gained traction.

The sample for this section is made up of four news articles and an op-ed. The four news articles are: “The struggle for Iraq: The next phase; 2 U.S. front: Quick wars, but bloody peace” (7A), “U.S. military describes findings at Guantanamo” (7B), “Online and even near home, a new front is opening in the global terror battle” (7C), and “01 memo to Rice warned of Qaeda and offered plan” (7E). The op-ed is titled: “How the holy warriors learned to hate” (7D) (see Appendix D for articles’ details).

The ‘Problem’ Frame

The term jihadist during this period is portrayed via a “problem” frame. It follows the jihad frame introduced in 1999 – 2001, which associated the concept to a problem. Three common themes led to the finding of the frame. First, the coverage began by identifying those responsible for inspiring attacks and threats against Americans. Second, the reportage presented jihadists as foreigners who flocked from many areas to fight for, or to join, local causes in the Middle East. Third and finally, the reporting gave jihadists a Muslim/Islamic label. Through such coverage, the dominant discourse that emerged presented jihadists as foreign Muslims threatening Americans.

Placing blame: The first theme emerged by naming the sources responsible for inspiring attacks and threats against Americans. Article 7A did so without referencing an official statement, whereas articles 7B, 7C, and 7E presented a reference to the official position. Coverage also outlined the nature of the threats and attacks. Article 7A linked attacks against American troops in Afghanistan on Taliban sympathizers, while articles

7B, 7C, and 7E pointed to al-Qaida. Article 7B referenced an official military statement about al-Qaida recruiting individuals to fight in Afghanistan, later stating that officials were not so easily releasing men from the Guantanamo Bay prison, because some will go “kill more Americans.” Article 7C announced an al-Qaida outpost may have been active in Manhattan, according to American investigators. Article 7E discussed an American strategy document that proposed ways to eliminate al-Qaida’s active cells in the United States and abroad.

Identifying location: The term jihadist is invoked in the articles when naming those who travel from abroad to fight in the Middle East. Two articles mentioned the word in the reporting narrative, whereas the other two invoked it in the quotes made by American elites. The four texts, however, used the term in similar ways. Article 7A defined jihadists as those who were “being drawn” to fight American forces in Iraq. The article focused on the role of the United States in both Iraq and Afghanistan, but used the term when discussing Iraq. Article 7B described jihadists as those who were being recruited from Europe. Article 7C invoked the term when referring to active cyber terror cells in Europe, the Middle East, and the United States used to recruit terrorists and raise funds for terrorist activities. Article 7E referenced a strategy document by a counterterrorism adviser which stated that jihadists include “tens of thousands” of trainees active in “over 40 countries.”

Muslim/Islamic labels: The articles used a “Muslim” or “Islamic” label by directly attaching it to the term jihadists or by using it to denote the. Article 7A defined jihadists as “fundamentalist Islamic warriors,” earlier claiming that an ideology stemming

from “militant Islamic extremism” is proving difficult to defeat. Article 7B stated “Muslim men in Europe” were being recruited to fight in Afghanistan. Article 7C wrote about the “Islamic fundamentalist groups” active in the United States. And lastly, Article 7E quoted a strategy document which referred to jihadists as “Islamic extremist fighters.” The use of the Islam/Muslim label, along with the other expressions, such as “extremism/extremists” (Articles 7A, 7C, and 7E), “fundamentalist” (Articles 7A and 7C) and “terrorist(s)” (Articles 7A, 7C, and 7E) worked to associate Islam and its adherents with the upsurge of terror threats. The finding of such expressions feeds into a scholarly argument presented in earlier chapters (i.e., O’Rourke, 2012; Karim, 2014). O’Rourke and Karim separately argue that terms such as “fundamentalist” (O’Rourke, 2012, p. 2) and “extremists” (Karim, 2014, p. 164) are used to identify Muslims whom Western countries oppose. As suggested above, these terms were used during this time period to identify foreign Muslim jihadists threatening Americans.

Competing discourses: Are jihadists motivated by religion?

An op-ed which presented an alternative view about the term jihadist emerged as part of this sample. Titled “How the holy warriors learned to hate,” the headline would have the reader assume that the writer is positioning himself/herself with an aspect of the dominant discourse (i.e., the discourse attached jihadists to a Muslim/Islamic label). However, the op-ed presented the contrary. Jihadist is only referenced once in the piece. The larger focus is on jihad, but it nonetheless provides a challenge to the dominant portrayal of the term jihadist by decomposing its ideological basis. The writer, Waleed Ziad, argued that the teachings of the religious *madrassahs* of the 19th century are a first

step to understanding how jihad as an armed struggle emerged. But, to grapple fully with the upsurge in violence by Muslims, one must question American involvement in the Soviet-Afghan War. What was the U.S.'s role in driving a jihad-centered war in Afghanistan? Where did the fighters who were involved in the war against the Soviets emerge from? Ziad related an engraving on a wall in Pakistan which reads: "Jihad of the sword, like prayer, is a religious obligation." Writing about the graffiti, he said, "Most Westerners probably assume this is an ancient dictum – and I bet the man who wrote it did, too. But the fact is, the slogan was conjured up no more than 25 years ago." By 25 years ago, Ziad referred to the Soviet incursion into Afghanistan. He used strong language by blaming "the West and its allies" who "decided the best resistance to Moscow would come through presenting the war as a religious struggle." When this tactic had proven successful, Western support ended, prompting the mujahedeen to search for "a new cause," which became "hatred of America."

Ziad's discourse suggests that it was Western countries and their allies who inspired a religious fervor, as related to the idea of jihad in Afghanistan, in order to drive a successful war against the Soviets. Ziad called for a critical assessment of the violence that had ensued since the U.S. assisted the mujahedeen, and he further characterized their cause as a "religious struggle." For Ziad, the mujahedeen who later turned their attention to international events were "jihadists." He argued that the Western politicians, academics, and intelligence experts who "continue to search through the annals of history to determine the sources of this jihadist mindset" must seek to comprehend the

phenomenon as “just another ideology adopted by so-called religious parties” who seek political gains and who were a part of the disaffected lower class.

As such, the discourse interprets jihadists’s undertone as a phenomenon that emerged out of the international political system. This argument would hardly come as a surprise to political theorist Benjamin Barber, author of *Jihad vs. McWorld*. Barber (2001) argues that while animosity towards Western societies generates an intense religious opposition to the dominant institution, it also presents a political determination to reclaim identities that feel threatened by hierarchical institutions. Of equal importance is how Ziad’s discourse indirectly illustrates how the term mujahedeen is used to describe those who allied with the Americans against the Soviets, whereas the word jihadist is used when denoting individuals who adhere to an extreme ideology and with whom we are not allied.

Despite being an eloquent piece that echoes many of the significant arguments presented by scholars referred to in the previous chapters, the discourse did not impact the upcoming news coverage. As the next analysis demonstrates, Ziad’s acknowledgments, such as the implications of the Soviet War on the evolving international system, and how the terms mujahedeen and jihadists are used for different purposes, went unnoticed in news coverage. Nonetheless, Ziad’s discourse proves that strong alternative discourses do exist. They may not subvert the dominant ones, but they do attempt to contest ideological foundations that may be overlooked by the news media.

Additional Observations

The results in Appendix A yielded only 48 results for articles citing the word jihadists during this time (2003 – 2005). A small fraction of that number focused on events occurring in Afghanistan, whereas a large majority fixated on international developments. Out of the 48 results, only five focused on Afghanistan (one written in Afghanistan and four in the U.S.). This suggests that the term jihadists was minimally used to describe political groups or individuals in Afghanistan, but was largely invoked to describe political actors appearing on the international scene.

Jihad: 2013 – 2015

Five news articles are considered in this section. They are: “Attacks rise on aid workers in Afghanistan, UN says” (8A), “Amid crackdown, fears of Taliban resurgence and economic collapse” (8B), “U.S. troops, spared by car bomb, face an Afghan crowd” (8C), “U.S. increases airstrikes in Afghanistan on Taliban and its new rival, ISIS” (8D) and “Taliban’s new leader urges unity, playing down peace talk” (8E) (see Appendix E for articles’ details).

The ‘Problem’ Frame

The earlier frame depicted in 2003 – 2005 which examined the meaning of jihad as a “problem” was also found to be a dominant frame during this period as well, illustrating that it maintained its discursive dominance over the years. The coverage in this period paints jihad as a form of warfare that insurgent movements were using to advance their interests in Afghanistan.

The dominant discourse, as previously set, was that jihad was presented as a threat against the U.S., more specifically against American forces in Afghanistan. This discourse was also dominantly reflected in the coverage of this period (Articles 8B, 8C and 8D). But whereas the earlier period saw an alliance between the Afghan and American forces against a common enemy – the Taliban – the coverage in these three articles presents the United States as the only force confronting insurgent movements. The coverage is focused on the decrease in the number of American forces in the country.

Only force: The lead of each article set forth that the American troops were the only forces fighting in Afghanistan. Article 8B mentioned that, although there was resentment against the American forces for their raids and airstrikes, this resentment was being “balanced, in part, by concerns about what might happen after foreign troops leave.” Although “foreign troops” is pluralized, the article only references the American forces. Article 8C’s lead wrote about a suicide attack by the Taliban that targeted American troops. In this same manner, Article 8D specified that the United States had intensified airstrikes against ISIS, later stating that airstrikes against the Taliban were also taking place.

Foreign sources: The use of foreign sources and statements also helped further forge jihad as a threat against Americans as the dominant discourse. Article 8B referenced a Taliban statement, saying “jihad won’t be canceled by the decrease in number of soldiers,” thus insinuating that even if the United States reduces its military presence, the Taliban will continue to attack its forces. Article 8C quoted Afghan civilians shouting “Death to Americans.” The article focused on how American troops

survived a Taliban bomb, and later had to fire into the air to disperse the crowd, but then ended up killing civilians. An Afghan civilian was later quoted saying: “Killing innocents permits Muslims to take weapons and stand against the enemies of Islam. You opened fire, killing and wounded our men while they were rushing in to help their family members. This permits jihad. Get out of our country.” Lastly, Article 8D quotes the supreme leader of the Taliban who said that jihad is an obligation because the country’s “land and airspace are controlled by the invaders.”

Other discourses: Article 8A did not align with the dominant discourse. The article focused on the rise of attacks by the Taliban against aid workers, and made no reference to the military role of the United States. The word jihad is used in a quote by an aid worker saying, “I think it’s just that we don’t have any more ISAF in the field, so these people who are on a jihad, they need to attack someone – so we are the target because we are out there.”

Article 8E also utilized yet another discourse. It introduced the notion that the cause of jihad in Afghanistan was to remove the Afghan government and install a religious state. A Taliban leader is then quoted as saying, “the jihad will continue until there is an Islamic system.”

Additional Observations

The same observations recorded in the jihad section of 2003 – 2005 during the U.S.-led War in Afghanistan, which noted coverage on jihad spread internationally, continued to be detected during this period as well. The majority of the articles that referenced jihad came from international locations across Europe, Africa, and the Middle

East. Appendix A illustrates these trends, indicating the use of the term in 15 articles from Afghanistan and some 52 that originated from Europe and the Middle East. The focus of the stories in the latter locations included terrorist plots, attacks, and terrorism cases taking place outside Afghanistan. While the word jihad was primarily used as a tag for articles concerning Afghanistan in the earliest period examined (1987 – 1989), media attention had shifted and begun to regularly use it when discussing other international developments.

Mujahedeen: 2013 – 2015

Four news articles and an op-ed are part of this sample. The news articles are: “Warlords with dark pasts battle in Afghan election” (9A), “Afghans forming militias to fight Taliban” (9B), “Ex-warlord bemoans his new role on sidelines” (9C), and “Building good will in a troubled Afghan district, but not without a fight” (9D). The op-ed is titled “Are we losing Afghanistan again?” (9E) (see Appendix E for articles’ details).

The ‘Governance’ Frame

During this period, the usage of the term mujahedeen was influenced by the governance frame that was previously discussed, which revolved around their role in Afghanistan. The articles continued to use the term mujahedeen, even while the subject matter was now discussing their human rights abuses against civilians in the country.

Warlords and militias labels (less dominant in this period): The “warlord” label was again used during this period, and it was invoked in four out of the five articles (except Article 9B). “Militias” was also used in the same four articles. These descriptors

suggest that the term mujahedeen has, since the end of the Soviet War, remained depicted in a less than favourable light.

Alliance: Despite the labels, the tone of the coverage was not very negative during this period. A common theme in the coverage in 1999 – 2001 helped present the alliance between the U.S. and the mujahedeen. During this period, coverage outlined their relations as well, signifying the connotations of the term itself were not completely unfavourable. Article 9A discussed Afghanistan’s election, while mentioning how some former mujahedeen were running for seats in the parliament despite war crimes and human rights abuses allegations. However, it also revealed how the United States continued to engage diplomatically with the mujahedeen. An elite source is quoted saying that State officials met with candidates based on “normal diplomatic engagement.” The article then went on to describe a former mujahedeen general running for presidency. The reporting narrative wrote the general is accused of “mass killings,” but that “he was also a stalwart of the American-allied Northern alliance that overthrew the Taliban.” Article 9C focused on a former mujahedeen commander who was then a member of parliament; the language and the descriptions included in the text present a politically sympathetic approach towards him. For example, the article’s lead begins by mentioning a security meeting. In reference to the commander (named Abdul Rashid Dostum), the lead writes that he is a “former warlord” who was “crying” at the meeting. Article 9D presented the need for former mujahedeen to help the Kabul government fight the Taliban.

It is worth noting that Article 9B portrayed the American forces in an exceptionally humanistic way. Although the article did not say whether or not the

reporter was embedded with the military, the lead suggested that the reporter was on a plane with them. It focused on a visit by the American forces to Azra, Afghanistan, an area where Afghan officers had recently been murdered by the Taliban. The language is descriptive, detailing how military members were greeted by the inhabitants who “begged” them to persist in their attacks on the Taliban. The article used quotes by Afghans from the area as well as from American military officials, which worked in tandem to demonstrate the need for an American military presence. The reportage suggested that the reporter, who may have been embedded with the forces, presented favourable coverage of the group (Miller, 2003; Keeble, 2004; Pfau et al., 2004; Revoir, 2012, June 25). This parallels a finding from the first (1987 – 1989) (Article 3C) mujahedeen section examined during the Soviet-Afghan War.

The final piece in the sample is an op-ed titled “Are we losing Afghanistan?” (9E). Published on October 21, 2015, the op-ed emerged following Obama’s call to keep the American military in Afghanistan until after his presidency ends, but to simultaneously reduce the number of soldiers partaking in the mission. The discourse, like the articles, reminded readers of the alliance between the mujahedeen and the United States, but the alliance this op-ed referred to was the one formed during the Soviet-Afghan War.

The main focus of the op-ed was to oppose Obama’s decision to reduce the number of troops in Afghanistan. As such, it presented dissatisfaction with the direction of American foreign policy in Afghanistan, calling for the deployment of more troops to provide additional security in the country.

The authors are Thomas Joscelyn and Bill Roggio, both senior fellows at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD) and the editors of the Long War Journal. The FDD is a non-profit think tank providing assistance to the political class of the United States, namely Congress,¹⁵ while the Long Journal of War provides information on counterterrorism.¹⁶ It is evident in the piece that the writers used the news media to interact with policy elites and to convince those same elites and the wider public that the policy adopted by the U.S. towards Afghanistan will not produce good outcomes (principally that Afghanistan will fall to al-Qaida if the American forces do not remain in the country to help defeat the group).

The op-ed is assertive in its arguments, positing that Obama's announcement ignored the fact that some al-Qaida networks have crossed from Pakistan into Afghanistan, and that these networks are alive and well in the country. It placed the onus of the aftermath of 9/11 on the government's policy. "The United States made many mistakes in the 9/11 wars," it wrote. "After routing the Taliban and Al Qaeda in late 2001, President George W. Bush did not dedicate the resources necessary to finish the fight. President Obama was right in December 2009 to announce a surge of forces in Afghanistan, but it was short-lived." The piece went on to say that it is not "calling for a full-scale occupation of the country," but solely "a force of as many as 20,000 to 25,000." It also stated that "drones and select counterterrorism raids are not enough to end the threat."

¹⁵ See the think tank's website: <http://www.defenddemocracy.org>

¹⁶ See journal website: <http://www.longwarjournal.org/>

The word mujahedeen is used towards the end of the piece, stating that groups like al-Qaida believe that the Soviet Union was crushed “because of the mujahedeen’s faith in Allah alone.” This statement insinuated that the battle against the Soviets would not have been accomplished without support from the Americans. Choosing to conclude the op-ed in such a way suggests the authors *wanted* to remind Americans of the Soviet Union’s defeat and how the mujahedeen did not do triumph independently. In that sense, the discourse presented the view that the U.S. is capable of using its powerful international role and its strong military to thwart attacks in Afghanistan. It also implied the question: If the United States beat its Cold War rival, why is it not capable of defeating groups on a smaller scale?

Additional Observations

According to the results in Appendix A, the majority of the articles that invoked the term mujahedeen were written from Afghanistan. Articles written from Afghanistan refer to the word when discussing the factions that fought the Soviets. A minority of the articles (written from U.S. and elsewhere in the world) raised it when discussing other international issues related to terrorism or other phenomena (as seen during the 2003 – 2005). The term mujahedeen has been, and continues to be, primarily reserved when referring to the groups in Afghanistan in the *New York Times*.

Jihadists: 2013 – 2015

The sample for this section is composed of five news articles. They are: “Taliban bomb kills at least 20 at a Pakistan political rally” (10A), “Around an invisible leader, Taliban power shifts” (10B), “Taliban fissures in Afghanistan are seen as an opening for

ISIS” (10C), “Qaeda chief appears to end silence in message to Taliban” (10D) and “Qaeda revival in Afghanistan surprises U.S.” (10E) (see Appendix E for articles’ details).

The ‘Problem’ Frame

The meaning of the term jihadists during the 2003 – 2005 period was given the frame of a “problem.” The discourse identified jihadists as foreign Muslims threatening American forces in Afghanistan and the U.S. The coverage represented them with a “Muslim/Islamic” label and mentioned that they were coming from abroad to join local causes in the Middle East, primarily Afghanistan. However, the discourse of this period no longer presented jihadists as foreigners coming to Afghanistan to fight foreign troops, nor did it persistently use a label invoking religion (with the exception of Article 10B). Instead, it attached the term to regional movements seeking power.

Naming movements: As explained in Chapter Four, the 2013 – 2015 period was characterized by a rise of insurgent movements in the Middle East. In Afghanistan, three different movements were competing for power: the Taliban, al-Qaida, and ISIS. The initial theme found in each article was to identify two or more of these movements in the lead and, shortly after, illustrating how they were fighting for authority. Article 10A referred to the Taliban and to “Arab jihadists” opposing the Afghan government; articles 10B and 10C referenced the Taliban and ISIS competing for power; and Article 10D mentioned how al-Qaida and the Taliban were supporting one another, but that ISIS did not deem them powerful groups.

Militants label: The second theme was to identify the movements with a repetitive label, “militants,” presenting an aggressive outlook towards the term. Articles 10A and 10C identified the Taliban as “militants;” Article 10B described the Taliban and ISIS as participating “in the world of Islamist militants;” and Article 10E described an al-Qaida fighter as a “militant.” The fact that the label is applied separately to the three groups suggests that there are multiple organizations that fall under the “jihadists” branch. Article 10D did not enclose a militants label.

Reversed discourse and the ‘elite’ debate: Article 10E did not fit the dominant discourse which oriented jihadists as regional movements seeking power. While it did identify the aforementioned themes – except that it did not use the “militants” label – it reversed the nature of discourse from regional movements fighting for control to the one outlined during the two years (2003 – 2005) of the U.S.-led War in Afghanistan, which focused on the foreign Muslims threatening Americans discourse. It used the term “foreign fighters” to identify jihadists travelling to Afghanistan. This was the only article that used American official sources. As with other articles from this chapter, such as 5E and 6C, the official sources and their quotes propagated an elitist debate related to American foreign policy (Mills, 1956; Bennett, 1990; Karim, 1993; Karim, 2003). Overall, the article centred on the debate of whether or not the U.S. should worry about a growth in the number of jihadists operating in Afghanistan. The article’s introduction painted a grim picture of the situation in Afghanistan for the U.S., thereby enforcing one side of the debate immediately. For instance, the lead wrote that the Obama administration was confronting ISIS, the Taliban and the reappearance of an “old enemy”

– al-Qaida. This was “forcing” intelligence agencies to “assess whether they could again become a breeding ground for attacks on the United States.” A first elite source quoted supported the narrative established in the introduction by arguing that an al-Qaida rebirth would target Americans, and that Americans ““need to worry.”” Next, the article paraphrased another senior administration official saying there is no need to worry because the growth of fighters was linked to “Pakistani military operations pushing fighters across the border into Afghanistan...” This alternative view suggests that jihadists affiliated with al-Qaida were not expanding in numbers, but were merely moving from Pakistan to Afghanistan. The article then continued to centre on the debate of whether or not jihadists were increasing by quoting other military and security officials presenting arguments for either side. However, since the alternative perspective was presented after the dominant narrative was established by the article’s lead and the elite source, it did not successfully counter it (Hall et al., 1978).

Additional Observations

The results in Appendix A reveal that only 14 articles out of 192 results were written from Afghanistan, and an additional seven from Pakistan. These articles primarily discuss Afghanistan. A large number of articles were written from locations outside Afghanistan (103 results), such as Europe and the Middle East, along with a significant number of articles written in the United States (68 results). The articles written from the U.S. and other international locations primarily focus on attacks and threats against countries other than Afghanistan. These findings suggest (as was also suggested in the earlier period of 2003 – 2005) that the term jihadist was being minimally used to describe

political actors in Afghanistan, but was mainly invoked to describe groups and individuals involved in attacks and threats on the international stage beyond Afghanistan.

Conclusion

“Journalists are in the same madly rocking boat as diplomats and statesmen. Like them, when the Cold War ended, they looked for a new world order and found a new world disorder. If making and conducting foreign policy in today’s turbulent environment is difficult, so is practicing journalism” (Grunwald, 1993, p. 12).

This thesis has found that journalists play a difficult role in society when relating complex political issues into news coverage. During the final two years (1987 – 1989) of the Soviet invasion, which was also the final few years of the Cold War, the meaning of the terms jihad and mujahedeen were favourably framed. Coverage focused on the alliance between the United States and the mujahedeen against the Soviet Union, and emphasized participation in a Cold War master narrative. Following the end of the Soviet war in Afghanistan and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union, coverage shifted towards reporting on the threats and attacks against the United States and the American forces. Whereas the first threat emerged from the Soviets, the second derived from insurgent movements and their sympathizers.

This resulting coverage demonstrates that it is difficult for journalists to interpret events related to cultures of which they are not a part, particularly if there are also complex historical backgrounds to be accounted for.¹⁷ To compound this situation even more, this thesis – and its content and discursive analyses – has shown that journalists often unknowingly invoke the dominant ideological figments of the cultures on which

¹⁷ In *Islamic Peril*, Karim (2003) argues that foreign reporters may experience difficulty understanding events in another culture to produce concise reporting for readers at home (p. 183-184). However, according to the results of the analysis, interpreting events that occur in other cultures is difficult to ascertain, whether the journalist is reporting from that location or from home.

they report. This is due to the fact that although journalists operate as media workers, they are also ordinary members of society. As Scheufele (1999) articulates, journalists are “cognitive misers” like their audiences, in that they are “equally susceptible to the very frames that they use to describe events and issues” (p.117). In consideration of this point, it is possible to infer that the journalists who wrote the articles sampled assumed that they were covering Afghanistan and relating the events of the conflicts that took place there, all the while unaware that the context behind their coverage was simultaneously being shaped by narratives that shift alongside the international political system.

This study explored how the *New York Times* partook in changing the connotations of the terms jihad, mujahedeen, and jihadists in four distinct periods between 1987 – 2015. The examination identified a dominant frame and a dominant discourse for each particular term based upon the corresponding political developments of the time.

This thesis has been divided into six chapters. Each chapter sought to establish an element that responded to the inquiry which questioned the evolution of the concept of jihad in the *New York Times*, in relation to the coverage of Afghanistan. The chapters were meant to flow and connect from one to the other, with the previous always providing a relatable framework for the next. Chapter One summarized a review of the literature about jihad, mujahedeen, and jihadists while presenting the changes that shaped jihad’s dominant undertones. By establishing how the surrounding environment affects the understanding of a journalistic topic, Chapter Two used framing theory to build a case for how the news media absorb a culture’s dominant perception of foreign policy. The

approach outlined in this specific chapter was that journalists do not consciously frame coverage in particular ways; rather, framing is the result of an unconscious act rooted in interactions with culture and ideology. The chapter primarily used framing theory to investigate how the news media report on foreign policy, and whether or not the American elite influence coverage. In Chapter Three, a rationale was presented for selecting content analysis and the competition of discourses as the methodological framework. Chapter Four offered a background of Afghanistan. It began by outlining the country's geopolitical background, thereby establishing the context for how events and political groups progressed throughout different political circumstances. Having established the literature review, the theoretical framework, the methodological approach and a history of the country, Chapter Five and Chapter Six outlined the subsequent findings. Together, they aimed to demonstrate how the framing of the meanings of the words jihad, mujahedeen, and jihadists changed based upon shifting political contexts.

The findings are summarized in the three tables below. Each table focuses on the dominant frames and dominant discourses of one word in each of the four periods.

Table 4
Jihad's Dominant Frames and Discourses

<u>Period</u>	<u>Frame</u>	<u>Discourse</u>
1987 – 1989	Solution	Against Soviet Union
1999 – 2001	Threat	Against Americans
2003 – 2005	Threat	Against Americans
2013 – 2015	Threat	Against Americans

Table 5
Mujahedeen's Dominant Frames and Discourses

<u>Period</u>	<u>Frame</u>	<u>Discourse</u>
1987 – 1989	Weapons	American support
1999 – 2001	Divided	Ethnic differences
2003 – 2005	Corrupt	Warlords
2013 – 2015	Corrupt	Warlords and militias

Table 6
Jihadists's Dominant Frames and Discourses

<u>Period</u>	<u>Frame</u>	<u>Discourse</u>
1987 – 1989	N/A	N/A
1999 – 2001	N/A	N/A
2003 – 2005	Problem	Foreign Muslims threatening Americans
2013 – 2015	Problem	Regional power

Research Findings

The overall research question in this thesis asked: How has the *New York Times* participated in the transformation of the connotations surrounding the vocabulary associated with the concept of jihad in Afghanistan? The question situates the publication as a “participator” in order to avoid positioning it as the sole outlet responsible for the transformation. However, considering that the *New York Times* is a major journalistic actor, the findings may be transferable to the framing of the words jihad, mujahedeen,

and jihadists by other dominant media in Western societies. The sub-questions then asked ‘What are the dominant frames for jihad, mujahedeen, and jihadists?’

The analysis found that the *New York Times*’ framing of the overall concept of jihad in Afghanistan changed its connotations to the extent that they became bendable and refashionable, and were consequently applied to various groups and people with a different set of circumstances. Such changes were reflected in the content included and the value-laden labels which worked to communicate the dominant discourses of these very terms. Although the frames employed and the selection of certain labels in the reportage do not appear to have been consciously produced by the journalists who wrote the articles, their repetition during particular political contexts suggests their connotations originated within a larger sociopolitical ideology. This study parallels Shoemaker and Reese’s (1996) argument, which states that ideology is the most powerful factor influencing coverage. During the final few years of the Cold War and the final two years (1987 – 1989) of the Soviet-Afghan War, jihad was framed as a solution for resisting the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. The label “holy war” was deployed in order to legitimize a religiously sanctioned concept that was supported by the United States. However, when the Soviet-Afghan War ended, the coverage re-trained its focus around a more pervasive set of components that affected the United States: threats and attacks. The narrative no longer promoted jihad as a “solution,” but rather, the word began to take on a different meaning: that of a “problem.” As framed by the news media, the term worked as a way to present jihad’s dominant discourse as a threat against Americans.

The meaning of the term mujahedeen continued to be attributed to the seven main factions who fought the Soviets, whereas jihadists was used to denote foreign fighters and insurgent movements battling for regional control. These observations mirror the arguments presented in Chapter One showing that the media labels used to distinguish Muslims are not based on their religious ideologies, but rather on their relationship with Western countries (e.g., Mamdani, 2004; O'Rourke, 2014; Karim, 2014).

This framing analysis considered the content included, while also questioning what was excluded (as cited in Altheide, 2002, p. 34). Were there any important historical contexts overlooked in the coverage? Was the coverage appropriately summarizing how the mujahedeen and the jihadists came to be? Did the reportage investigate political forces that impacted in a way or another the implementation of jihad in Afghanistan? Pertaining to the latter question, the *New York Times*' coverage did not pose questions about how the concept of jihad in Afghanistan had been manipulated by the mujahedeen, the United States, and other countries, such as Pakistan. For example, during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the United States provided a \$51 million grant for the development and distribution of primary school textbooks on jihad for children (e.g., Mamdani, 2004). And yet, the coverage examined in the analysis made no mention of this project. As a result, the lack of context and historical understanding forged a harsh yet narrow image of jihad in the post-Cold War world. Finally, inquiries about how the figures of the mujahedeen had metamorphosed into those of the jihadists were also overlooked (except in Article 4C which acknowledged how the Taliban ascended). The same coverage also disregarded the history of foreign fighter recruitment to support the

mujahedeen during the Soviet invasion (e.g., Goodson, 2001; Cooley, 2002; Baer, 2003; and Kepel, 2006).

Elite and Foreign Sources

This study contradicts previous research that concludes that foreign sources contest the dominant frame (Berry, 1990; Entman, 2009). The analysis revealed that the use of foreign sources, together with official sources, set the dominant frames and the dominant discourses in some cases. This was largely because foreign sources, mostly Afghan officials and civilians, were presenting the same connotations about the term jihad as American elite sources. In other instances, sources did not set the frame. It was instead accomplished through the overall approach taken in the articles. This suggests that despite not using elite sources in the articles, their ideological interests continued to be iterated in the reportage.

Furthermore, the analysis infers it was the elites who initially defined the meanings of mujahedeen and jihadists, thereby advancing the arguments presented by some scholars about the way elites set the dominant discussion points in relation to social actors (e.g., Karim 1993; van Dijk, 1993; Wodak and Matouschek, 1993). As illustrated during the final two years (1987 – 1989) of the Soviet invasion, the reporting narrative of the news articles referred to the mujahedeen as “guerrillas” or “rebels.” The elite sources, however, were referring to them as *mujahedeen*. Later, as time lapsed, journalists began to gradually invoke the term mujahedeen in their reporting narrative. The analysis also specifically highlighted the first article printed in the *New York Times* that used the term

jihadist. The term, in this case, was directly linked to violence and terrorism by an American political elite actor.

Elite Disagreements

The findings reveal that elitist disagreements about foreign policy, as suggested by some scholars, do exist within different levels of government (Mills, 1956; Bennett, 1990; Karim, 1993; Karim, 2003). Evidence of these disagreements among the political elites were identified across the periods under several policy discussions. In total, four strains of debate were discovered. The first was between the CIA and Congress concerning the supply of weapons to the mujahedeen during the Soviet-Afghan War (Article 1E). The second was presented by two former CIA officials in relation to the threat posed by bin Laden (Article 3A). The third was related to the United States' success/failure in Afghanistan (Article 5E), and the fourth was about addressing the increased growth of opium production in Afghanistan (Article 6C). These particular points of contention suggest that, although a dominant discourse thrives, internal incongruities can also appear.

Competing Discourses

The analysis also identified alternative and oppositional discourses. They were presented in two opinion pieces, a letter to the editor, and six regular news articles. Although they were minimal, they nonetheless outlined that non-dominant discourses do exist. They may not have succeeded at subverting the dominant frameworks, but they did find ways and spaces to express themselves in the news media.

The analysis also found that the spaces used to contest the dominant discourses were used to legitimize the frameworks, or even to present stauncher opinions, such as the letter to the editor (2E) written by then-member of Congress, Bill McCollum. It argued that the mujahedeen require more weapons because the ones they possess are not as technologically advanced as the dominant discourse had characterized them.

Discussion

Educating the Educators

Stuart Hall argues that style manuals for journalists “rarely speak of the power of metaphor and other literary devices to convey meaning” (as cited in Karim, 2003, p.183). As previously mentioned, the *New York Times Manual of Style and Usage* from the year 1990 and the year 2015 advised its journalists to use the word jihad when referring to “a holy war carried out by Muslims against the enemies of Islam” (p. 98). Considering that this limited definition is outlined in the guide, jihad as a form of religiously sanctioned warfare was being clearly defined for journalists and journalists were, in turn, presenting this in their coverage. In fact, journalists are not the only group in a news institution that guides coverage. An editorial ecosystem exists within news organizations, whereby different editors exert some form of control over what the publication prints. Top editors set the policy direction for the publications; other editors oversee entertainment, financial, national and international news, as well as opinion pages; assigning editors work closely with journalists in deciding what stories to pursue; and copy editors review the articles for proper grammar, language and structure (Sterling, 2009, p. 468). Therefore, while a focus on how journalists are framing their articles is

needed, the instructions provided by the various sets of editors to reporters must also be questioned. More effort must be made towards understanding the plasticity of language, and this effort must start from the top of the editorial ecosystem in order to ensure there is not a trickle-down effect that compounds the meaning of certain terms and produces discourses as a result.

Despite the structure they function within, individual journalists do have a role to play in rectifying the issue. There is no doubt that journalism is a difficult profession; the institutionalized dynamics within news media organizations force journalists to adhere to a set of rules (as demonstrated above with the editorial ecosystem). Despite its difficulty, it is generally acknowledged that journalists take an active role in communicating the news vis-à-vis the fundamental tenets of journalism: accuracy, impartiality, objectivity, accountability, etc. Other basic news value requirements are also considered when journalists pursue stories. These include reference to elite people or nations; negative and unexpected elements; whether the issue provides additional coverage to a topic that has been on the public's radar for some time; and whether the issue correlates with the culture's values (Galtung and Ruge, 1965). Journalists are trained to write, report, and ask questions. They are, generally, curious about the world around them and have a desire to share the public's stories. My hope is that the findings of this thesis illustrates the power that words can have over the framing of contentious issues. The way a few terms are invoked here or there should not seem so trivial, particularly if they have become common usage. Crucially, this analysis revealed that the use of particular terms without attentiveness to the baggage they carry can have major repercussions for how

topics come to be shaped in the public sphere. As those who communicate world events to the public, journalists must recognize that once they invoke certain terms, they are also then affected by their underlying connotations. While journalists may not intend to present a narrow portrayal of certain terms, their coverage, as illustrated in this thesis, can lead down the path where content is presented in black and white, rather than looking more at the gray areas. The frames and discourses relating to the meaning of jihad, mujahedeen, and jihadists have illustrated how the terms have been abused and, in some cases, employed to fit larger political narratives and agendas, shifting over particular periods of time and across different issues. A heightened awareness of the flexible and loose nature of language and how powerful forces can ideologically manipulate them will foster an informed understanding of what common words in public and political discourse come to mean. It is the hope of this thesis that it will also allow journalists to protect and deepen their sense of understanding, so they are not so easily swayed to lean towards using one viewpoint over another.

Muslim communities must also participate in reshaping the meaning of the term jihad by educating others on its multiple definitions and by trying to counter its dominant discourse. This could be exercised by writing op-eds and letters to the editor as well as by engaging in public dialogues. The findings of this analysis reveal that foreign sources – mainly from Afghanistan and presumably Muslim – also contributed to the framing of jihad, though in a negative light. They did so by utilizing the term in their quotes and presenting it as a powerful concept and framework for conducting warfare. Hence, it seems that some Muslims have applied the limited meaning of jihad to their own

discourses, thereby reinforcing its unfavourable perception in the public eye and the news media.

Future Research

This thesis can potentially be used as a starting point for researchers interested in exploring how the meanings of particular terms are framed in the news media. While this study focused on presenting a qualitative analysis by explaining the different frames and discourses that emerged during the four periods, a future study might merge quantitative elements as well. Furthermore, researchers can use the findings presented in Appendix A to build on this study going forward. In doing so, the research might focus on how the terms were used elsewhere – in other news outlets, in other countries, and in other contexts. Based on the results presented in Appendix A, the words *jihad* and *jihadist* were invoked on the international stage as a way to denote threats and attacks unrelated to Afghanistan (although they reference the word Afghanistan). It would, for example, be valuable to compare their use in Afghanistan with their use when referring to events in other countries.

An additional study that might be conducted is one that uses more than one American news media outlet to evaluate the coverage and confirm whether the frames are similar. For instance, a study that reviews the framing of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* would be a significant addition to the body of research, considering that together they are the most widely read newspapers in the United States (Huffington Post). Additionally, it would be worth examining a Western news outlet in another nation, such as the *Guardian* in England, and comparing it with an American outlet, to establish

whether the frames are different or similar across Western news media. This same idea might be applied to non-Western language newspapers.

Moving from the macro to the micro, future research might also explore additional terms used to identify the actions of Muslims, including “jihadi,” “Islamist” and “extremist.” According to the results of the analysis, these terms were also used in some of the articles.

This analysis ultimately revealed that language is a powerful and dangerous tool that is used to communicate sociopolitical ideologies, as well as to promote an elitist-influenced view of the world. If language is not exercised with caution, its effects can be detrimental. Herein lies the power of journalism. Going forward, the question is whether it might be used for better or for worse in the world.

Appendix A: Geographical Location of Coverage

	Jihad	Mujahedeen	Jihadist
1987-1989	<u>14 results</u> Afghanistan: 6 Pakistan: 6 Washington: 1 Internationally: 1	<u>101 results</u> Afghanistan: 29 Pakistan: 30 Washington: 26 Elsewhere in U.S.: 9 Internationally: 7	NA
1999-2001	<u>222 results</u> Afghanistan: 30 Pakistan: 31 Washington: 19 Elsewhere in U.S.: 74 International: 68	<u>127 results</u> Afghanistan: 46 Washington: 9 Elsewhere in U.S.: 28 International: 44	NA
2003-2005	<u>208 results</u> Afghanistan: 24 Pakistan: 14 Washington: 24 Elsewhere in U.S.: 38 Mixed byline: 1 (Pakistan and Washington) International: 107	<u>145 results</u> Afghanistan: 70 Pakistan: 7 Washington: 19 Elsewhere in U.S.: 15 International: 34	<u>48 results</u> Afghanistan: 1 Washington: 9 Elsewhere in U.S.: 9 International: 29
2013-2015	<u>112 results</u> Afghanistan: 15 Pakistan: 2 Washington: 14 Elsewhere in U.S.: 29 International: 52	<u>59 results</u> Afghanistan: 30 Pakistan: 2 Washington: 8 Elsewhere in U.S.: 6 International: 13	<u>192 results</u> Afghanistan: 14 Pakistan: 7 Washington: 33 Elsewhere in U.S.: 35 International: 103

Appendix B: Jihad and Mujahedeen Articles Sampled for Period 1987 – 1989

	Jihad		Mujahedeen
1A	<p>Shipler, D. K. (1987, November 12). “Afghan guerrillas may be pressed to share power.” Type: News article Dateline: Washington</p>	2A	<p>Kifner, J. (1987, November 29). “Moscow is seen at turning point in its intervention in Afghanistan.” Type: News article Dateline: Kabul, Afghanistan</p>
1B	<p>Weisman, S. R. (1988, March 1). “Rebel rivalry is hampering Afghan talks.” Type: News article Dateline: Peshawar, Pakistan</p>	2B	<p>Pear, R. (1988, April, 18). “Arming Afghan guerrillas: A huge effort led by U.S.” Type: News article Dateline: Washington</p>
1C	<p>Kamm, H. (1988, April 2). “Aid to Afghan refugees: Donors bend the rules.” Type: News article Dateline: Islamabad, Pakistan.</p>	2C	<p>Lorch, D. (1988, December 27). “For the guerrillas in Afghanistan, getting to the front line is half the battle.” Type: News article Dateline: Tizin, Afghanistan.</p>
1D	<p>Burns, J. F. (1989, March 31). “Kabul offering rebels local power.” Type: News article Dateline: Kabul, Afghanistan.</p>	2D	<p>Editorial board. (1989, September 22). “Time to talk about Afghanistan.” Type: Editorial</p>
1E	<p>Kifner, J. (1989, June 6). “Kandahar journal; New problem for guerrillas: No Russians to fight.” Type: News article Dateline: Outskirts of Kandahar, Afghanistan.</p>	2E	<p>McCollum, B. (1989, October 8). “Afghanistan waits for East-West compromise; Back up our rhetoric.” Type: letter to the editor</p>

Appendix C: Jihad and Mujahedeen Articles Sampled for Period 1999 – 2001

	Jihad		Mujahedeen
3A	<p>Weiner, T. (1999, April 13). "U.S. hard to find proof bin Laden directed attacks." Type: News article Dateline: New York</p>	4A	<p>Bearak, B. (1999, November 9). "Afghan 'lion' fights Taliban with rifle and fax machine." Type: News article Dateline: Khwaja Bahaouddin, Afghanistan</p>
3B	<p>Burns, J. F. (2001, September 21). "A nation challenged: The Taliban; Afghans coaxing bin Laden, but U.S. rejects clerics' bid." Type: News article Dateline: Islamabad, Pakistan</p>	4B	<p>Bearak, B. (2000, February 25). "An Afghan mosaic of misery: Hunger, war and repression." Type: News article Dateline: Kabul, Afghanistan</p>
3C	<p>Bearak, B. (2001, October 13). "A nation challenged: Death n the ground; U.S. raid kills unknown number in an Afghan village." Type: News article Dateline: Peshawar, Pakistan.</p>	4C	<p>Bearak, B. (2001, September 19). "A nation challenged: The Taliban; Once vigilantes, now strict rulers." Type: News article Dateline: Jalalabad, Afghanistan.</p>
3D	<p>Mottahedeh, R. (2001, September 30). "Islam and the opposition to terrorism." Type: Op-ed</p>	4D	<p>Rohde, D. & Burns, J. F. (2001, October 7). "A nation challenged: The opposition; in new glare, questions dog Afghan rebels." Type: News article Dateline: Jabul-seraj, Afghanistan.</p>
3E	<p>Qamar, J. (2001, October 8). "On a Sunday in October, we are at war." Type: letter to the editor</p>	4E	<p>Rohde, D. (2001, October 15). "A nation challenged: The displaced; Afghan family salvages little but its hopes." Type: News article Dateline: Qabezan, Afghanistan.</p>

Appendix D: Jihad, Mujahedeen, and Jihadist Articles Sampled for Period 2003 – 2005

	Jihad		Mujahedeen		Jihadist
5A	Gall, C. (2003, March 30). "A nation at war: Afghanistan; As rockets strike, U.S. hunts for Taliban tied to ambush." Type: News article Dateline: Kabul, Afghanistan	6A	Gall, C. (2003, July 29). "Rights group reports abuses by Afghans, some backed by U.S." Type: News article Dateline: Kabul, Afghanistan	7A	Waldman, A. & Filkins, D. (2003, September 18). "The struggle for Iraq: The next phase; 2 U.S. fronts: Quick wars, but bloody peace." Type: News article Dateline: Gardez, Afghanistan
5B	Rohde, D. (2003, September 1). "A prisoner's journey from the classroom to the Taliban." Type: News article Dateline: Kandahar, Afghanistan	6B	Waldman, A. & Gall, C. (2003, December 18). "A young Afghan dares to mention the unmentionable." Type: News article Dateline: Kabul, Afghanistan	7B	Lewis, N. A. (2004, March 21). "U.S. military describes findings at Guantanamo." Type: News article Dateline: New York
5C	Rohde, D. (2003, September 1). "Taliban raids widen in parts of Afghanistan." Type: News article Dateline: Kandahar, Afghanistan	6C	Waldman, A. (2004, April 10). "Afghan route to prosperity: Grow poppies." Type: News article Dateline: Shorabak, Afghanistan	7C	Lipton, E. & Lichtblau, E. (2004, September 23). "Online and even near home, a new front is opening in the global terror battle." Type: News article Dateline: Clifton, N.J.

5D	Schmitt, E. & Rohde D. (2004, August 1). "Taliban fighters increase attacks, with troubling toll among G.I.'s and Afghans." Type: News article Dateline: Washington	6D	Gall, C. (2005, July 18). "Report names abusers in Afghan wars." Type: News article Dateline: Kabul, Afghanistan	7D	Ziad, W. (2004, June 18). "How the holy warriors learned to hate." Type: Op-ed Dateline: Washington
5E	Gall, C. & Rohde, D. (2004, October 20). "Assessing the Afghan election: Enthusiastic voters, most of all, helped weaken the Taliban." Type: News article Dateline: Kabul, Afghanistan	6E	Gall, C. (2005, September 18). "5, 800 Afghans with many agendas seek office today." Type: News article Dateline: New York	7E	Shane, S. (2005, February 12). "01 memo to Rice warned of Qaeda and offered plan." Type: News article Dateline: Washington

**Appendix E: Jihad, Mujahedeen, and Jihadist Articles Sampled for Period 2013
– 2015**

	Jihad		Mujahedeen		Jihadist
8A	Nordland, R. (2013, December 2). “Attacks rise on aid workers in Afghanistan, UN says.” Type: News article Dateline: Kabul, Afghanistan	9A	Nordland, R. (2014, February 27). “Warlords with dark pasts battle in Afghan election.” Type: News article Dateline: Kabul, Afghanistan	10A	Walsh, D. & Khan, I. (2013, May 7). “Taliban bomb kills at least 20 at a Pakistan political rally.” Type: News article Dateline: Islamabad, Pakistan
8B	Rosenberg, M. (2014, May 29). “Amid crackdown, fears of Taliban resurgence and economic collapse.” Type: News article Dateline: Kabul, Afghanistan	9B	Ahmed, A. (2014, September 7). “Building good will in a troubled Afghan district, but not without a fight.” Type: News article Dateline: Azra, Afghanistan	10B	Rosenberg, M. (2014, December 29). “Around an invisible leader, Taliban power shifts.” Type: News article Dateline: Washington
8C	Goldstein, J. (2015, July 1). “U.S. troops, spared by car bomb, face an Afghan crowd.” Type: News article Dateline: Kabul, Afghanistan	9C	Ahmed, A. (Ex-warlord bemoans his new role on sidelines.” Type: News article Dateline: Kabul, Afghanistan	10C	Shah, T. & Goldstein, J. “Taliban fissures in Afghanistan are seen as an opening for ISIS.” Type: News article Dateline: Kandahar, Afghanistan

8D	Goldstein, J. (2015, July 16). "U.S. increase airstrikes in Afghanistan on Taliban and its new rival, ISIS." Type: News article Dateline: Kabul, Afghanistan	9D	Mashal, M., Goldstein J. & Sukhanyar, J. "Afghans forming militias to fight against Taliban." Type: News article Dateline: Kabul, Afghanistan	10D	Nordland, R. (2015, August 14). "Qaeda chief appears to end silence in message to Taliban." Type: News article Dateline: Kabul, Afghanistan
8E	Goldstein, J. (2015, August 2). "Taliban's new leader urges unity, playing down peace talk." Type: News article Dateline: Kabul, Afghanistan	9E	Joscelyn, T. & Roggio, B. "Are we losing Afghanistan again?" Type: Op-ed	10E	Schmitt, E. & Sanger, D. E. "Qaeda revival in Afghanistan surprises U.S." Type: News article Dateline: Washington

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