

THE

TERRORISM

News

BEAT

*Professionalism, Profit,
and the Press*

**Aaron M.
Hoffman**

The Terrorism News Beat

The Terrorism News Beat

Professionalism, Profit, and the Press

Aaron M. Hoffman

University of Michigan Press
Ann Arbor

Copyright © 2025 by Aaron M. Hoffman
Some rights reserved



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. *Note to users:* A Creative Commons license is only valid when it is applied by the person or entity that holds rights to the licensed work. Works may contain components (e.g., photographs, illustrations, or quotations) to which the rightsholder in the work cannot apply the license. It is ultimately your responsibility to independently evaluate the copyright status of any work or component part of a work you use, in light of your intended use. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

For questions or permissions, please contact um.press.perms@umich.edu

Published in the United States of America by the
University of Michigan Press
First published March 2025

A CIP catalog record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2024046659
LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2024046659>

ISBN 978-0-472-07730-4 (hardcover : alk. paper)
ISBN 978-0-472-05730-6 (paper : alk. paper)
ISBN 978-0-472-90491-4 (open access ebook)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.14327772>

Funding for this publication provided by Simon Fraser University's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

The University of Michigan Press's open access publishing program is made possible thanks to additional funding from the University of Michigan Office of the Provost and the generous support of contributing libraries.

Authorized Representative: Easy Access System Europe, Mustamäe tee 50, 10621 Tallinn, Estonia, gpsr.requests@easproject.com

Contents

<i>Preface and Acknowledgments</i>	vii
<i>List of Illustrations</i>	xiii
Chapter 1 A Very Bad News Beat?	1
Chapter 2 Continuity, Change, and the Professional-Media Thesis	26
Chapter 3 Terrorism Beat Topics, 1997–2014	58
Chapter 4 The Language of the Terrorism Beat	86
Chapter 5 Overestimating Journalists, Underestimating Audiences	115
Chapter 6 Near and Dear: Spatial Variation in the Coverage of the Boston Marathon Bombing	141
Chapter 7 Distance and Media Coverage in Five Terrorism Crises	163
Chapter 8 Conclusions about a Surprisingly Sober News Beat	178
<i>References</i>	197
<i>Index</i>	227

Digital materials related to this title can be found on the Fulcrum platform via the following citable URL:
<https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.14327772>

Preface and Acknowledgments

As I write this preface, the Israeli military is engaged in a massive counterterrorism operation in the Gaza Strip and a smaller one in the West Bank. Israel's actions are a response to Hamas's shocking and brutal incursion into Israeli territory on October 7, 2023, that killed about 1,200 Israelis and enabled the kidnapping of more than 200 people.

The news about these events is hard to read. Hamas fighters raped, mutilated, and tortured Israelis during their rampage. Israel's military killed thousands of Palestinians and created a humanitarian disaster that some observers describe as the worst they have ever seen.

The slice of the news media that I consult regularly is not making these terrible events worse. Israel's counterterrorism operation gets more attention than other subjects, certainly more than Hamas's attack, but the reporting is about much more than fighting. The suffering in Gaza is an important theme in the coverage. US newspapers are also discussing US diplomatic efforts in the region, providing update about the hostages, covering indirect discussions between Israel and Hamas over the terms of ceasefires, and tracking reactions in the United Nations, European capitals, and around the Arab world to the unfolding events.

The domestic politics of the conflict in Israel are getting covered too. In Israel, there are questions about prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's political future and about whether his governing coalition is doing enough to secure the release of hostages. The Israeli Supreme Court's decision to strike down a controversial change to Israel's Basic Laws made headlines. Journalists are also scrutinizing the health of Israel's economy.

In the United States, the conflict created fissures in the Democratic

Party that came to reporters' attention. The press followed Congress's willingness to appropriate funds to support Israel's war amid softening support for Ukraine's war against Russia. College campuses emerged as focal points for pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian activism and, unfortunately, antisemitism and Islamophobia. Jewish families in the United States learned about divides between parents and children over Israel's legitimacy as a state. These are just some of the topics getting covered.

The content is reminiscent of the reporting patterns that I identify in this book. Counterterrorism news is the most covered subject on the terrorism news beat. Threats and attacks get significantly less attention in the United States' most-read newspapers. Community responses to terrorism play a smaller but significant role in regular terrorism beat reporting, addressing everything from the suffering that terrorism and counterterrorism produces to the unexpected successes and happy moments that people experience in times of great tribulation. Even the terrorism beat has some good-news stories.

I see little effort on the part of reporters to amplify the situations on the ground. I also see little inclination to dwell on the terrorist attack that started this round of fighting. The lion's share of coverage focuses on unfolding events.

Critics of terrorism beat news usually suggest that reporters sensationalize the news to get attention for their stories and improve their employers' bottom lines. My research did not uncover patterns that are consistent with this claim, and I see little evidence that the latest round of fighting between Israel and the Palestinians is routinely exaggerated in the news I read. Neither the subject matter relating to the conflict nor the language reporters are using fit this sensationalism narrative.

Instead, many complaints about the news coming out of Israel and Gaza suggest that the language reporters are using is not provocative enough. Some listeners of National Public Radio (NPR) are upset that NPR often refers to Hamas "militants" rather than "terrorists" (McBride 2023). On the other side, some reporters are complaining that news outlets rarely describe Israel's military action as either "genocide" or "ethnic cleansing" (Horovitz 2023).

Journalists are avoiding these linguistic excesses because they follow professional norms and principles that dissuade them from sensationalizing the news. In their watchdog role, journalists are supposed to keep their eyes on governments even when the things governments do are not espe-

cially dramatic. The norm of objectivity demands that journalists report the news accurately, in nonpartisan terms, and using moderate language. Journalists are supposed to write about the news in ways that allow audiences to draw their own conclusions based on the facts, not because they were swayed by provocative language. These and other reporting principles combine to produce terrorism beat news that is varied in scope and moderate in tone.

The alternative to this model of professional journalism is one that puts the profit motive at the heart of reporting. This way of thinking certainly has produced important conclusions about terrorism beat news, including that larger terrorist attacks tend to displace smaller ones from the pages of major newspapers and that the attacks that get reported often reflect the interests of news audiences.

The profit-seeking model, however, leaves me cold. Like most workers, journalists depend on their employers' profitability, but there is something off-putting about reducing journalism to its economic prerequisites. The Committee to Protect Journalists reports that nearly 2,200 journalists and media workers have been killed since 1992. Almost 2,250 have been imprisoned for their reporting (see <https://cpj.org/data>). Countless more risk their lives and freedom to pursue stories they consider to be important. These brave people are not motivated primarily by concern for their employers' bottom lines.

I arrived at these conclusions with plenty of help from colleagues, friends, and family. The students and faculty at Purdue University were instrumental in fostering this research. Two students, Dwaine Jengelley and Will Shelby, encouraged different elements of this work by walking into my office and asking to work on research with me. These contacts turned into valuable collaborations and collegial relationships and, most importantly, terrific friendships. The work I did with Dwaine is ongoing and has involved several other students at Purdue, including Melissa Buehler, Natasha Duncan, and Meredith Rees. Stefanie Walsh helped gather data on newspaper coverage of major terrorism crises.

The faculty at Purdue played a big part in this research as well. Ann Clark, Rosalee Clawson, Jay McCann, Leigh Raymond, Keith Shimko, Eric Waltenburg, and S. Laurel Weldon all commented on various parts of the argument and evidence over the years. Christopher Agnew taught me how to develop and conduct laboratory experiments. They all helped keep

me sane along the way, and their friendship is what I value most from my time at Purdue.

Students and faculty at Simon Fraser University also made major contributions to this work. Julia Johnston and Kevin Leung both worked with me on what eventually became the coding scheme I used to classify articles into subject-matter categories. Imraj Bolduc, Theresa Feng, Liam Palcu-Johnston, and Michael Shirley did the hard work with me of reading and classifying the more than 9,000 text segments that went into chapters 3 and 4. Devin Sidhu helped me gather data on the crime beat that I used in chapter 4. Thanks to them for their work and dedication.

Simon Fraser University's Department of Political Science supported a book workshop for me that transformed this project. Catherine Corrigan-Brown, Eline de Rooij, Shana Gadarian, Alan Jacobs, Stuart Soroka, Mark Pickup, Steve Weldon, and S. Laurel Weldon all participated and made significant contributions to my thinking on this research. I count the time I spent with this group as one of high points of my career.

My family deserves credit as well. The example my father, Stephen D. Hoffman, set convinces me more than anything else that people put principles over profit. Thanks to him for his love and support. I owe him more than I can express.

My sister, Judith Hoffman, showed me that I had to improve my writing by falling asleep while she read my first book. Judith and her terrific kids, Sarah and Zachary, and husband, Ed, are a constant source of support and joy. Thanks to them for always being there for me and my family.

My mother- and brother-in-law, Sirje and Kaljo, are my loyal supporters and enthusiastic fans. I went around and around with Sirje more than once on different aspects of this work. Thanks to her for keeping my thinking on this subject sharp.

My father-in-law, Larry, and his family, Jill, Christine, Kailis, Sequoia, Allison, Andy, Penny, Rocco, Katie, and Jeff, helped make Vancouver my new home. Always the statistician, Larry encouraged me to embrace the power of randomness, which made a big difference in this research. Jeff, the anchorman on this Weldon family list, complained about being listed behind my sisters-in-law and nieces and nephews, but never came up with the cash to boost his standing. I look forward to laughing with him about this for years to come.

Audrey, Zed, and Laurel, my children and my wife, make life worth living. Each year with this amazing crew is better than the one before. Audrey and Zed are the best kids a parent could have. Laurel is the best and most supportive partner. The news is never too depressing with my family around. This book is dedicated to them.

Illustrations

Figures

1	Terrorism beat news by subject, 1997–2014	75
2	Terrorism beat subjects over time, 1997–2014	78
3	Terrorism beat subjects by newspaper, 1997–2014	80
4	Average tone of terrorism beat reporting across major US newspapers, 1997–2014	93
5	The tone of terrorism beat reporting at major US newspapers, 1997–2014	94
6	Tone of terrorism and crime beat reporting by the <i>New York Times</i> , 1997–2014	97
7	Moderate and extreme language in terrorism beat news, 1997–2014	111
8	The <i>Boston Globe</i> covered the Boston Marathon bombing less negatively than other newspapers	158
9	Relationship between proximity to Boston and tone of reporting on the Boston Marathon bombing	161
10	Relationship between physical distance and news tone in five crises	175

Tables

1	Differing expectations about the terrorism beat's content and language	54
2	Study start dates, end dates, and epicenters in five terrorism crises	172
3	Panel regression results: distance and the tone of crisis coverage	176

CHAPTER I

A Very Bad News Beat?

Newspapers are not supposed to describe terrorist attacks in gruesome detail, but many do so anyway. Shortly after the Boston Marathon bombing, the *New York Daily News* reported that the attack turned “one of the nation’s premier sporting events into a war zone of screams and severed limbs” (Ford, Chapman, and Otis 2013). The *New York Times* wrote that the explosions transformed the marathon’s finish line from “a scene of cheers and sweaty triumph to one of screams and carnage” (Eligon and Cooper 2013). The *Boston Globe* said the assault left Boston’s Boylston Street, “covered in blood” (Arsenault 2013a).

Journalists claim they report only the facts, but graphic depictions of terrorism that appear even in the most respected newspapers make it difficult to take this assertion seriously. Some newspapers, in fairness, covered the marathon bombing less dramatically than the *Daily News*, *New York Times*, and *Boston Globe* did. The *Providence Journal’s* lede, for instance, simply stated, “Three people died and more than 140 were injured in two powerful blasts at the Boston Marathon finish on Monday afternoon that the FBI said have become a ‘potential terrorist investigation’” (Milkovits 2013, A1). Nevertheless, it is hard to find other newspapers that exercised similar restraint.

Perhaps for this reason, the public, politicians, and government officials distrust journalists. More than half of Americans consistently reject the idea that the news media reports the news “fully, accurately, and fairly” (Brenan 2022). Forty-eight percent are dismissive of newspaper journalists’ honesty and ethical standards. Only television reporters, lobbyists,

and members of Congress fare worse than newspaper reporters on Gallup's annual professional honesty and ethics survey (Saad 2022).

Politicians and elected officials have their doubts too. Modern elected leaders are less inclined than their predecessors from the 1970s to restrict press coverage of terrorism. This hesitancy, however, seems to come more from a sense that restricting the press is counterproductive than from a belief that the news media's terrorism coverage is helpful (Ganor 2005). Like leaders from the 1970s, modern leaders are inclined to complain that the press makes it harder for them to deal with terrorist threats, remain open to limiting press coverage of counterterrorism, and see the news media as empowering groups that commit violence.

By and large, scholarly studies of terrorism reporting support the dim view of the press held by the public and their politicians. Academics often describe the relationship between journalists and terrorists as symbiotic (e.g., Forst 2011; Laqueur 1999). Acts of terrorism help news organizations attract audience attention, increasing profits, while news coverage of attacks enable terrorists to terrorize on a mass scale, boosting the coercive power of this violence.

Terrorism's economic value to news organizations is revealed by the variation in the stories that news organizations distribute. Reporting about threats and attacks fills the terrorism beat, while the steps governments take to protect the public are overlooked (Nacos 2007). When counterterrorism makes the news, it is either because governments used force against suspected terrorists or because counterterrorism failures came to light (Nacos 2007; Jenkins 1979).

Reporting about ordinary people is relatively rare on the terrorism news beat, and reliably gloomy. Regular people make the news when they are either victims of terrorism (Powell 2011) or haunted by the specter of attacks. Resiliency is an uncommon theme in reporting about the American public's experience with terrorism.

The language reporters use on the terrorism beat supports the exaggerated picture of terrorism that journalists paint through their subject matter choices. According to David Altheide (2017), since the 9/11 attacks, the gratuitous use of negative and extreme language has characterized terrorism beat reporting. Relying on techniques developed by crime beat reporters, journalists covering the terrorism beat increased their uses of the words "fear" and "victim" in their reporting to amplify the sense of danger their articles conveyed (Altheide 2017). The result is a news beat that has

become more threatening than it had been before, as newspapers realized the economic benefits of portraying terrorist threats in dire terms.

Good-news stories are rare on the terrorism beat. By implication, positive language is in short supply—temperate language too. The capture and killing of notorious terrorists like Osama bin Laden and the Tsarnaev brothers surely count as counterterrorism successes for US audiences, but events like these are dramatic and uncommon. There is little room on the sensationalized terrorism beat for moderation.

It is still possible to find skeptics who question whether the press advances the interests of terrorists by supplying audiences a steady stream of grim news (e.g., Picard 1993; English 2016). But contrarians on this topic are uncommon, and recent research suggests that most readers assume that the terrorism beat is sensationalized. Gone are the days when academics explicitly claimed that the news media sensationalized terrorism reporting (e.g., Wilkinson 1997, 54–55). Now, that characterization operates as an implicit assumption in studies that only consider the effects of reporting on terrorist threats and attacks (Rohner and Frey 2007; Merolla and Zechmeister 2009; Jetter 2019b, 2019a), as if no other subject that might balance the coverage of threats makes the news.

Argument of the Book

In this book, I argue that characterizations of the terrorism beat as sensationalized and intimidating do a poor job of describing the material newspapers publish regularly about terrorist threats and attacks, counterterrorism, and community responses to terrorism. Critics treat journalists as if they were profit-generating agents of their employers who try to attract news audiences by provoking feelings of insecurity through the content they present and the language they use in their reporting. The record of reporting from the terrorism beat, however, does not support this narrative.

Journalists as Professionals

A more accurate picture of the terrorism news beat emerges when we assume that journalists abide by professional principles and norms in the conduct of their jobs. These disciplinary principles and norms influence

reporting in meaningful ways by establishing quality standards that shape and constrain the content that major newspapers publish. The terrorism beat news that results is closer to a model of sober reporting than a model of sensationalized coverage.

The *watchdog norm*, *norm of objectivity*, and *harm minimization principle* that are often invoked in discussions of journalistic practice in the United States play important roles in my argument. So do the rules of thumb or “news values” that journalists use to help them identify newsworthy content. These principles influence the character of the news terrorism beat that reporters produce.

The watchdog norm creates a presumption that good journalism involves monitoring the actions and performance of government and government officials (Norris 2014). Other newsworthy actors, like terrorists, deserve attention, but keeping governments accountable to the people plays a special role in reporting circles. The proof is in the coverage: stories focusing on governments and political leaders dominate the news (Bennett 2016).

The norm of objectivity is best known for requiring journalists to report the news accurately and unbiasedly (Schudson 2001), although whether reporters can or should provide neutral coverage of the news is controversial. Reporters from underrepresented communities, for example, argue that the news is always reported from some perspective, just rarely theirs. Objective news presents itself as detached from any interests or perspectives, but these representations are illusory (Wallace 2019).

The objectivity norm influences the news in other ways as well. “Objective” news is organized hierarchically and detailed using dispassionate language (Mindich 2000). The hierarchical structure, which starts with a statement containing the most essential information and distributes the remaining facts in descending order of importance, enables readers to inform themselves quickly about the news they read. The use of moderate language prevents journalists from unduly influencing the conclusions audiences draw from the material they read. The facts are supposed to matter most to the judgments readers make, not presentations of the news that journalists design to provoke impassioned responses.

The principle of harm minimization also informs journalistic practice (Ward 2011). Like many professionals, journalists have an ethical obligation to minimize negative consequences that might arise from their reporting. For example, journalists are not supposed to tarnish the reputations

of innocent third parties. This became an issue during the coverage of the Boston Marathon bombing when the *New York Post* accused two innocent people of involvement in the attack, an error that National Public Radio's media correspondent, David Folkenflik, described as a "pretty shameful episode, and an indefensible one" (Simon 2013).

This responsibility to protect also applies to news audiences. According to the Society of Professional Journalists, unnecessarily provocative accounts of events are to be avoided because they place audiences at risk. The news is supposed to be informative, not materially or psychologically damaging.

Last but not least, journalistic practice is guided by several news values that help reporters identify newsworthy content. Negative news is the news value that gets the most attention, but journalists use many principles to select newsworthy content. Good news, surprising news, and timely news are just some of the content categories journalists try to draw on.

Collectively, these news values encourage journalists to cover a variety of topics and events that relate to their area of reporting. Negative news might make up the largest share of any news beat, but not all of it. Newspapers deliver a range of content to their readers.

The Terrorism Beat through the Lens of Professional Practices

Examining the terrorism news beat through the lens of journalism's professional principles and practices suggests that terrorism reporting continues to meet journalistic standards for quality. The watchdog norm calls upon journalists to focus their attention on governments, and this is exactly what they do. Between 1997 and 2014, counterterrorism reporting dominated the United States' most widely read newspapers—the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post*. Across the entire period, material about counterterrorism appeared more than twice as often than material about terrorist threats and attacks.

Counterterrorism played an important role in the coverage of the Boston Marathon bombing as well. Day one of the marathon bombing coverage was almost entirely about the attack at the finish line, but days two through five focused on the investigation of the attack by local and federal authorities. Developments in the criminal investigation made the front pages of the *New York Times* and *Boston Globe* from the second day of the

crisis until its end. The *New York Daily News* made the death of eight-year-old Martin Richard the subject of its April 17, 2013, front page, but made the counterterrorism investigation front-page news the next three days.

Critics say that counterterrorism is newsworthy when governments use force against suspected terrorists or their behind-the-scenes sponsors. This view cannot account for the marathon coverage, however, since neither local nor federal authorities used force in their investigation until the final night of the crisis. The same conclusion applies to counterterrorism coverage more generally. Between 1997 and 2014, both criminal justice and diplomatic responses to terrorism received more attention in major US newspapers than violent counterterrorism efforts. This result emerged even though the United States conducted extensive military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and made regular use of drone strikes in places like Pakistan and Yemen after the 9/11 attacks.

Material about terrorist threats and attacks is not even the second-most-reported-on subject on the terrorism beat, raising questions about the idea that the terrorism beat focuses on shocking acts of political violence perpetrated by subnational actors. Numerous miscellaneous reports appear regularly in terrorism beat reporting, covering everything from the details of diplomatic meetings that bring national leaders together to the earnings reports of companies that are traded on the New York Stock Exchange.

Critics of the terrorism beat are right that news about community responses to terrorism make up the smallest portion of the stories that appear on the terrorism news beat, but this content is more varied than expected. This variety is consistent with the value journalists place on subject matter diversity, as reflected in the large number of news values that reporters use to identify newsworthy material.

Accounts of people who are frightened by the prospect of future attacks constitute just one of the ways journalists portray the public. During coverage of the Boston Marathon bombing, journalists also reported on the heroism of doctors who ran in the marathon and then rushed to give injured people medical attention. They reported about the generosity of Bostonians who opened their homes to disoriented and displaced runners. They reported about community groups that organized vigils, remembrances, and funding drives to ease the pain caused by the marathon attack.

News about members of the public taking active roles against terrorism also appears outside of crises. These stories include accounts of work people do to improve the capacity of their communities to respond to

terrorism, including lobbying governments to pass anti-terrorism legislation. The decisions people make to purchase services and devices to protect themselves from terrorism get covered as well.

This last observation is worth underscoring, because news about the economic consequences of terrorism appears frequently but rarely gets mentioned in studies of terrorism beat reporting. The *Wall Street Journal*, the US newspaper with the largest circulation, regularly covers terrorism's effects on the economy, both the good and the bad, including terrorism's impact on the profitability of individual firms and industries. After 9/11, the financial difficulties experienced by the US airline industry got a lot of attention, but stories about companies, such as luxury goods producer Burberry PLC, that did well despite the poor economy appeared too (*Wall Street Journal* 2003).

The relative mixture of reporting on terrorist threats and attacks, counterterrorism, and community responses to terrorism changed over time—critics said this would happen—but not enough to alter the terrorism beat's central tendencies. The ratio of counterterrorism reporting to reporting about terrorist threats and attacks was largest toward the end of the Clinton administration and smallest toward the end of the Obama administration, but the magnitude of the changes in reporting from Clinton to Obama was relatively small. Counterterrorism coverage still dominated terrorism beat reporting during the Obama years, as it did when Clinton was president.

The gap between the amount of reporting on threats and attacks and the amount of reporting on community responses to terrorism changed from year to year in unexpected ways. Even though journalists usually devote less attention to community responses to terrorism than other terrorism beat subjects, there are periods when they cover community responses to terrorism as much or more than they cover threats and attacks. Once again, it is difficult to square this result with the idea that newspapers rely on reporting about threats and attacks to sell the news.

The language journalists use to cover the terrorism beat is also consistent with journalism's professional norms and standards. Highly negative language attracts audience attention (Albertson and Gadarian 2015; Trussler and Soroka 2014), but the norm of objectivity and the harm-minimization principle encourage journalists to use temperate language. The evidence suggests that the United States' most widely read newspapers used negative language with care.

Negative words outnumbered positive words on the terrorism news beat between 1997 and 2014, but it does not appear that newspaper reporters used 9/11 as an excuse to frighten readers by deliberately amplifying the sense of danger their reporting conveyed. Words like “fear” and “victim” appeared less frequently after 9/11 than before it. The overall negativity of terrorism beat news in the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post* also declined after 9/11.

To be clear, the terrorism beat’s reduced negativity did not produce a preponderance of positively worded stories. Positive words either equaled or outnumbered negative words in only about 25 percent of paragraphs I examined. Nevertheless, this small but identifiable subset of the terrorism beat is consistent with the professional interest journalists show in providing audiences a diverse set of stories to consider.

It is also worth noting that the crime beat did not experience a similar reduction in the negativity of the content it provided. Before 9/11, reporters on the terrorism and crime beats produced stories that had approximately the same mixture of negative and positive words in them. After 9/11, reporters on the terrorism beat reduced their reliance on negative words relative to positive ones, while their crime beat counterparts increased their reliance on negative words relative to positive ones. It took three years for the negativity of the terrorism and crime beats to harmonize. The negativity of the two news beats diverged again in 2008. These results contradict the notion that terrorism beat reporters began to copy the techniques used by their crime beat reporting counterparts after 9/11. It also raises doubts about the idea that the terrorism beat’s reduced negativity reflected an overall shift in the tone of news that major US newspapers published.

There are other signs that the craft of journalism is alive and well on the terrorism news beat. I scrutinized a subsample of 500 articles that I drew at random from the larger set of terrorism beat articles I analyzed, looking for evidence that reporters followed the principles of objective reporting. I found they did.

Articles in this subsample overwhelmingly relied on the inverted-pyramid organizational style and wrote in the third person, a writing technique reporters use to show their detachment from the news they covered. Journalists did not “balance” competing perspectives on terrorism beat subjects frequently, a strategy that journalists often use to avoid political bias from corrupting their work, but after 9/11 Republicans and

Democrats often agreed on terrorism-related issues. The use of balance as a reporting strategy increased noticeably in years Republicans and Democrats vied for the presidency.

The charge that journalists use negative language gratuitously instead of judiciously, as professional practice dictates, is contradicted by the results of an editing test I devised. News that relies on unnecessary language can be edited so that the resulting sentences contain fewer negative words, while still conveying the essential information contained in the original. My efforts to cut unnecessary words from 500 lead sentences, however, did not result in substantial changes to the originals. There just were not that many words that could be removed from published terrorism beat articles.

The affective intensity of the language used in terrorism beat news is also consistent with the idea that journalists are supposed to avoid extreme language to the extent they can. Whether journalists used negative or positive words in their reporting, they typically opted for moderate language even though they had more provocative words available. For instance, instead of reporting that the US government considered ways to negotiate with the Taliban over Osama bin Laden's "seizure," the *New York Times* reported that the Clinton administration worked to secure bin Laden's "capture" (Risen 1998).

Truly extreme words like "torture" did appear in terrorism news beat articles (mostly in reporting about the treatment of people captured by the US military during its campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq), but infrequently. When reporters used intensely negative or positive words, they often either lacked less provocative synonyms or were quoting sources. Provocative words also tended to appear in article headlines, the one area of news where journalists allow themselves to use sensational language with some frequency. As a rule, in other words, the terrorism news beat does not appear to be filled with shocking words that are selected simply for effect. Moderate language predominates. Extreme words are used appropriately.

The tendency to rely on muted language can even be found during the coverage of terrorism crises like the Boston Marathon bombing. Instead of increasing the negativity of their reporting during these periods, newspapers across the United States moderate the tone of the terrorism beat news they publish. This is a pattern that emerged in coverage of the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, the 1996 Olympic Park bombing, the 2001 9/11 attacks, the 2002 DC Sniper case, the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, and the 2016 Dallas police shooting (see Schudson 2002; McDonald and

Lawrence 2004; and Alexander 2004 for complementary findings). This shift in the tone of reporting is strongest among journalists who work for newspapers that are closest to the sites of attacks. Local reporters provide their readers the least negative news of all. Journalists who serve more distant audiences use negative language more freely.

The Terrorism Beat through the Eyes of Audiences

These findings paint an unconventional portrait of the terrorism beat's content. Some might even say an unconvincing one, because the central question about the terrorism beat is not about the news journalists produce but about the reactions audiences have to that material. Many studies have shown that news about terrorism is capable of intimidating on a mass scale. Prominent emotional reactions include fear (Huddy, Feldman, Taber, and Lahav 2005), anger (Huddy et al. 2021), and distress (Silver et al. 2005). These responses often lead to a host of political reactions, including heightened ethnocentrism (Kam and Kinder 2007), less respect for democracy (Merolla and Zechmeister 2009), and greater disdain for civil liberties (Davis and Silver 2004). These responses are not simply a product of sensationalized reporting. There is even evidence that positive terrorism beat news undermines people's sense of security by reminding them of the dangers that lurk (Sunstein 2005).

My research, however, questions this narrative about public sensitivity to terrorism beat news. The problem with concluding that exposure to terrorism beat news straightforwardly causes people to experience a host of negative psychological effects is that the results that support this claim draw on biased samples of terrorism beat content. Representations of terrorism beat content in scholarly research are overwhelmingly based on the most provocative work newspapers publish about terrorist threats and attacks (e.g., Hall and Ross 2015). Rarely considered is the possibility that the less provocative terrorism beat material that newspapers publish might mitigate the effects of news about acts of terrorist violence.

Using a simulation based on the work of Lukas Feick, Karsten Donnay, and Katherine McCabe (2021), I show that when people are exposed to average news from the terrorism beat, they can be expected to react more moderately than when they are exposed to extreme terrorism beat content. In most cases, the daily terrorism beat news people receive is not alarming

enough to turn fundamentally secure people into fundamentally insecure ones. This simulation also suggests that a subset of terrorism beat content can improve people's sense of security from terrorism. Just as the terrorism news beat offers audiences a wide range of content, audiences react in a variety of ways to the news they receive.

Attention to the effects of counterterrorism reporting underscores this point. It is difficult to find empirical research on the effects of counterterrorism news even though counterterrorism is the most reported subject on the terrorism beat and effective counterterrorism operations appear to be reassuring (e.g., Zussman and Zussman 2006). A series of experiments I conducted underscore that counterterrorism coverage cannot be assumed to have the same consequences as reporting about threats and attacks. On the contrary, news about effective counterterrorism can improve people's sense of security from terrorism. These results contradict the idea that terrorism beat news inevitably makes news audiences feel insecure. Instead, counterterrorism news can have the opposite effect on those who read it.

More generally, the findings reported in this book raise questions about describing the terrorism beat in sensationalized terms. Journalists surely exaggerate the news by providing audiences a statistically unrepresentative sample of events that take place each day. Reporters tend to cover the most dramatic events rather than the least dramatic ones, a selection process that distorts the severity of issues like terrorism and crime.

But gatekeeping and sensationalism are not the same. Charges of sensationalism imply that journalists deliberately exaggerate the events they cover. I find little evidence, however, for this claim. Instead, the terrorism beat follows journalistic standards for excellence. In this way, it is more accurate to characterize the terrorism news beat as a source of quality news, one that performs the press's watchdog functions, meets journalistic standards for objectivity, is measured in its presentation, and follows industry-wide writing practices. The terrorism beat may even help audiences cope with the threat of terrorism.

(Almost) Nothing up My Sleeve

My findings and conclusions are not a product of quirky designations, unusual news sources, or exotic research methods. I use a standard definition of terrorism as "the premediated use or threat to use violence by

individuals or subnational groups to obtain a political or social objective through the intimidation of a large audience beyond the immediate victims” (Enders and Sandler 2006, 4).

I define counterterrorism as efforts by governments to either prevent future attacks or to manage the consequences of terrorist violence. This definition is consistent with Todd Sandler’s (2015, 12) conceptualization of counterterrorism as any action “to ameliorate the threat and consequences of terrorism.” When I discuss security perceptions, I mean the sense that people are in “a stable, relatively predictable environment” that allows them to pursue their goals “without disruption or harm and without fear of such disturbance or injury” (Fisher and Green, quoted in Brooks 2010, 226).

My data is drawn from the pages of local, national, and international English-language newspapers available to researchers through Lexis Nexis and its successor, Nexis Uni. Both are popular databases for studying news content. My closest analyses focus on stories published in the following mainstream news outlets: *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post*. Only the *Wall Street Journal* has not been used in previous studies of the terrorism news beat. I identified articles in all these sources using variations on the words “terrorism” and “terrorist” in keyword searches. The only restrictions I placed on my searches were temporal.

With one exception, my research methods are also standard. The techniques I use include qualitative content analysis, automated text analysis, and laboratory experiments. I rely on these methods to help me uncover various dimensions of the terrorism news beat.

The one methodological innovation I introduce appears in chapter 4, involving the use of copy editing as a research tool. As I mentioned earlier, I relied on copy editing to examine whether journalists used tonal (i.e., negative and positive) language gratuitously in their reporting. Copy editing, in other words, provides one way of getting at the counterfactual claim that terrorism beat news could have been written less dramatically.

Regardless of whether readers are persuaded by copy editing as a research method, my conclusions about the terrorism news beat do not depend on my copy-editing skills. Instead, my conclusions about terrorism news can be traced to my conceptualization of terrorism reporting as a kind of journalistic beat governed by strong reporting norms and professional standards, my reliance on research that shows that people cope effec-

tively with terrorist activity (e.g., Bonanno 2004), and my use of probabilistic sampling techniques to gather articles for study. Bringing these ideas together with a range of research techniques produces a different view of the content of terrorism beat news than orthodox accounts provide.

Treating terrorism reporting as if it constituted a news beat is the first step in the intellectual process that produced these divergent results. Beats establish thematic areas of reporting that journalists cover from any number of angles (Becker and Vlad 2009; Reich 2012). Reporters on the sports beat, for example, routinely document the outcomes of professional and amateur competitions. They also examine the influence of gambling on sports, the economics of sports, the personal struggles athletes confront, and ownership and rules changes that impact teams and sporting activities. Sports reporters even cover terrorism's effects on athletic events (Hoffman 1998).

In principle, observers recognize that the terrorism beat is like other news beats, in the sense that it can be a wide-ranging source of material relating to terrorist and counterterrorist activity. In practice, though, terrorism beat research mainly focuses on the coverage of terrorist threats and attacks (Weimann and Brosius 1991; Weimann and Winn 1994; Jetter 2019a, 2019b; Yang and Chen 2018; Delli Carpini and Williams 1987; Kearns, Betus, and Lemieux 2019; Rohner and Frey 2007; Chermak and Gruenewald 2006; Mitnik, Freilich, and Chermak 2020; Moeller 2009; Winkler et al. 2018). News about anything other than terrorist threats and attacks either gets ignored or treated like a sideshow. As a result, scholarly research on the terrorism beat tends to portray this area of reporting as preoccupied with violence by subnational actors.

Another advantage of conceptualizing terrorism reporting as a news beat is the connection this framing facilitates for research that treats journalism as an organized activity defined by professional rules, norms, and expectations (e.g., Gaye 1978; Ryfe 2006; Bennett 2016). Reporters who work the terrorism beat must conform to these rules and principles of appropriate behavior to have their work taken seriously by colleagues and news audiences. What counts as quality news in the first place depends on the set of professionally accepted standards that serve as benchmarks for evaluating the work journalists do.

My conclusions about the terrorism news beat are also influenced by research on the psychological responses Americans had to the 9/11 attacks. The standard take on the terrorism beat implicitly assumes that people are

easily intimidated by the news they receive, but research on reactions to 9/11 calls this conclusion into question. Relatively small percentages of people experienced extreme stress reactions to 9/11, including residents of New York City, where two of the attacks took place (Bonanno et al. 2006).

This pessimism about people's ability to cope with terrorism news reflects an unwarranted level of cynicism about the strength of their psychological defenses against bad news. The pessimism also reflects a lack of appreciation of the amount of variation there is in the negativity of reporting. Negative news from the terrorism beat surely reduces people's relative sense of security from terrorism, but this does not mean that exposure to terrorism beat news routinely makes people cross the threshold between feeling secure from terrorism and feeling insecure from terrorism. On average, people can maintain their sense of security from terrorism while reading the news because they possess a strong enough set of psychosocial resources to respond adaptively to negative information and because the news tends to be moderate in tone.

Finally, my conclusions about the terrorism news beat depart from the conventional wisdom, because I gathered news content for this research using random sampling techniques. Purposive samples guarantee that consideration is given to reporting on the most salient attacks, but it also means that conclusions from studies that rely on purposive samples may not reflect typical journalistic practices. Random sampling addresses the problem of bias, albeit at the cost of being unable to guarantee that reporting about specific attacks is considered. My sample, for instance, contains no news about the anthrax attacks in the United States that took place between September 18, 2001, and October 9, 2001. This an unfortunate but acceptable omission, since one of the goals of this work is to establish a reliable picture of everyday terrorism beat news.

The Context for This Research

Questions about the coverage of terrorism by the news media stem from the belief that terrorists require publicity to be successful (Schmid and de Graaf 1982; Rohner and Frey 2007; Pfeiffer 2012). This idea has a long history. Nineteenth-century terrorists dubbed their use of violence "propaganda by deed" because of their ability to attract attention to their causes

by staging shocking attacks (Schmid 1989; Bolt 2012). Executed properly, even small-time violence and threats could gain attention. The key to causing a stir was getting the press to report on attacks.

During the mid-1800s, the efforts of terrorist organizations were assisted by a burgeoning newspaper industry and sharply rising literacy rates. Changes in printing technology enabled publishers to print and distribute many more papers per day than they had in the past. The price of publishing these copies dropped as well. Newspapers became a mass-market product sold to increasingly literate consumers (Saunders 2015).

The rise of widely available news solved a fundamental problem that terrorists have had to solve: how to disseminate information about attacks to the public. Perpetrating symbolic crimes for the purposes of sowing fear and conveying political messages to target audiences only works if word of these attacks gets out. Otherwise, as former ABC news anchor Ted Koppel noted, “terrorism becomes rather like the philosopher’s hypothetical tree falling in the forest: no one hears it fall and therefore it has no reason for being” (quoted in Zulaika and Douglass 1996, 7).

Nineteenth-century newspapers were happy to oblige, regularly printing reports about successful and unsuccessful attacks in Europe, Russia, and the United States (Dietze 2022). The frequency of the coverage undoubtedly encouraged the view that the news media was unable to resist reporting about terrorism because it was such “dramatic, bad news” (Wilkinson 1997).

What we now know about terrorism reporting, however, suggests that the task of getting press coverage is more complicated than the publication rate implies. Terrorists undoubtedly enjoy an advantage over many other potential newsmakers, because journalists prefer news that is dramatic (Hilgartner and Bosk 1988), conflictual (Oliver and Meyers 1999), surprising (Baum and Groeling 2010), and threatening to the status quo (Gans 1979). These advantages, however, are not decisive. Numerous acts of terrorism are ignored by the press because there are still many events for journalists to choose from within the set of dramatic, conflictual, surprising, and status-quo-threatening occurrences. This includes other acts of terrorism that vie for space in daily newspapers (Scott 2001). Committing acts of terrorism comes with no guarantee of press attention (Shelton, Clevin, and Hoffman 2018).

On the contrary, news organizations exercise discretion over the events

they cover, a process known as “gatekeeping.” Instead of presenting audiences either a comprehensive or a statistically representative sample of attacks, newspapers favor the attacks that are most relevant to their audiences. This often means the most violent attacks are covered (Weimann and Winn 1994; Chermak and Gruenewald 2006; Mitnik, Freilich, and Chermak 2020), but it might also mean the attacks that are the most proximate to news audiences are favored (Hoffman et al. 2010). Whatever the calculus, the news selection process journalists use leaves audiences with an inflated sense of the threat terrorists pose (Nellis and Savage 2012).

Just how big a problem this selection effect creates is open to debate. A news media that unintentionally exaggerates terrorism’s severity by focusing on the most dramatic attacks, broadly conceived, might not do its audiences a tremendous disservice. The type and quality of the information that news organizations provide on attacks has to be considered before coming to any conclusions (Nacos 1990). If the same gatekeeping processes also exaggerated the quality of counterterrorism responses and the strength of anti-terrorism programs and defenses, then public reactions to dramatic acts of terrorism might be less intense (Hoffman and Shelby 2017). The way the news media reported on community responses to terrorism would matter as well. Reporting that overrepresented the public’s ability to cope with terrorism could make news audiences more confident about their own resilience.

Critics, however, say that news organizations are unaccustomed to offering audiences comfort. Instead, newspapers sensationalize the terrorism beat. They do this by covering frightening topics while ignoring reassuring ones, depicting the material they do cover in alarming ways that break with established journalistic principles and standards. The effect is a news beat that frightens audiences unnecessarily and helps perpetrators achieve their goals by exaggerating the threat they pose to society.

The Intellectual Challenge

This idea that the distorted coverage of terrorism by the news media helps perpetrators sow fear is widely, but not universally, accepted (Picard 1993). Michael Stohl (2008) says the idea that the news media is complicit in advancing the interests of terrorist organizations is a myth. His work with Mary Brinson (2010) shows that terrorism reporting gets framed in terms

governments provide rather than terrorist organizations. In a similar vein, Paletz, Fozzard, and Ayanian (1982) argue that the news media's coverage of terrorist organizations fails to legitimize these groups, as is often alleged.

Responses like these, however, have not stuck. Instead, analysts essentially say that reporters dramatize the terrorism news beat in ways that make it "a panic and fear multiplier rather than a shock absorber in emergencies" (Mitra 2009, 434).

Consequently, the idea that the news media is complicit in advancing the interests of terrorists persists. One reason for this is that defenders of the news media are not unified around a theoretical framework that challenges the charge of media complicity and provides a coherent account of how news on the terrorism beat gets produced. The complicit-media thesis, in contrast, integrates its account of the quality of terrorism beat news with an account of how all news, not just the terrorism beat, is made: journalists produce provocative news because provocative content sells and news organizations need profits to survive. This profit-seeking model that is at the heart of the complicit-media thesis suggests that the alarming character of terrorism beat news is a direct product of a news production process that incentivizes the creation of provocative content.

Arguments against the complicit-media thesis are at a disadvantage, because they cannot connect the general principles journalists use to create the news to the kinds of information they say newspapers normally produce. They have no analogue to the profit-seeking model that proponents of the complicit-media thesis use to explain how terrorism beat news is produced. Hence, there is little reason to abandon the idea that the news media helps terrorists intimidate audiences, because critics have not offered reasons to believe that it is unusual for journalists to produce sensationalized news.

Arguments that defend the quality of terrorism beat news also operate at a methodological deficit. The charge that the news media sensationalizes terrorism is long-standing, but critics continue to meet this argument with research that focuses on either a relatively small number of high-profile cases (e.g., Atwater 1987) or from news reported over relatively short periods of time (e.g., Brinson and Stohl 2010). These limitations make it too easy for proponents of the complicit-media thesis to paint confounding results as outside the norm. Arguments that challenge the notion of media complicity must be able to make a case for that perspective across a relatively large number of cases and over a relatively lengthy time frame to be persuasive.

The Professional-Media Thesis

My goal in this book is to examine the terrorism news beat by articulating and evaluating an alternative model of news production that draws on the sociology and psychology of news reporting instead of the economics of news reporting. This model is designed to explain both the news production process at major newspapers and the implications of that process for the content produced by terrorism beat reporters. I refer to this as the professional model of news production.

There is enormous evidence that reporters in the United States behave as if they are members of a professional community who are bound by industry-wide norms and practices. Journalists routinely produce news from the terrorism beat in conformity with established professional norms, rules, and conventions that define quality work in their field. Journalistic institutions, like the watchdog principle and the norm of objectivity, influence the content of the news, set standards for quality reporting, and homogenize the ways information is presented to the public (Ryfe 2012). These journalistic principles and practices also insulate reporters from economic pressures on the business of news, tempering the incentives to break with standard practices.

Crises are the exception. Crises induced by acts of terrorism disrupt the professional principles and standard operating procedures that journalists rely on from day to day and bring a new psychology to the forefront of terrorism beat reporting. Sympathy for victims affects the production of news about crises in ways it does not for non-crisis news. Journalists are more inclined to worry about the impact their reporting might have on audiences during emergencies. The result is a reduction in the negativity of the news about terrorism crises as compared to day-to-day terrorism beat reporting.

Mapping the Terrorism Beat

I compare the contending professional and profit-seeking models of news production to the record of actual terrorism beat reporting using a variety of data sources and research techniques in order to identify the model that maps that content most effectively. I examine the subject matter and language of the terrorism beat using qualitative and quantitative content

analyses and a database of more than 4,000 articles published between 1997 and 2014 in the four newspapers with the largest circulation in the United States: *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post*. No study of terrorism beat reporting examines a larger chronological period of news reports.

I hold my thinking about the behavior of journalists during terrorism crises up to regression analyses that focus on the tone of the language that appears in articles published in English-language newspapers during six of the most significant terrorist attacks in US history: the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, the 1996 Olympic Park bombing, the 9/11 attacks, the 2002 DC Sniper case, the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, and the 2016 Dallas police shooting. I examine the influence of terrorism beat content on news audiences using a simulation that draws on the work of Feick et al. (2021). I use a series of laboratory experiments to consider the impact of counterterrorism news on people's sense of security from terrorism.¹

Despite using experiments and regression analyses, this is principally a work of scientific description as Gerring (2012) conceives it: the central question in this book is about the patterns that define the terrorism beat's content, rather than what causes the content to exhibit these characteristics. The methods I employ support this descriptive goal: content analysis for an accounting of the subjects covered on the terrorism beat; text analysis for an examination of the language terrorism beat reporters use; regression to identify subtle changes in terrorism beat coverage through space and time; copy editing to assess whether negative language is used gratuitously by reporters (I explain this presently); and simulation and experiments to consider claims about the terrorism beat's impact on audiences—a central feature of the complicit-media thesis's critique of terrorism beat reporting.

My contention is that the mapping of the terrorism beat that suggests it is a sensationalized area of news is descriptively inaccurate in several ways. A more precise atlas of the terrorism beat can be derived from work that is rooted in assumptions about the sociology and psychology of reporting. Some of these assumptions, such as the idea that rules and norms influence journalistic behavior, have been used to understand the practice of journalism in the past. Others, such as the idea that the quality of the reporting

1. Data and analysis scripts for this book's chapters are available on Simon Fraser University's Summit data repository, accessible via <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.14327772.cmp.11>

that journalists do during crises is influenced by the ways they construe the topics they cover, have not been applied to journalistic practice before.

A challenge is finding criteria to assess the relative quality of the contending models (Gerring 2012). There is no Archimedean point for sensational news. This means that the debate over the terrorism news beat might simply be a disagreement over different projections of the same underlying data, akin to differences between Mercator and polar (azimuthal equidistant) projection maps.

My solution to this problem is to use the claims about sensationalism on the terrorism beat as the standards for assessing actual reporting practices. When critics suggest that terrorism beat reporting is skewed toward the coverage of threats and attacks, I investigate that claim on the assumption that the relative mixture of topics is one of the terrorism beat's important characteristics. Similarly, when critics say that the terrorism beat is getting more sensational in response to the worsening economic fortunes of newspapers, I investigate that claim by tracking the quality of coverage over time. Finally, when critics say that even the coverage of counterterrorism intimidates audiences, I investigate that claim using experimental designs that expose participants to this type of reporting.

Letting proponents of the complicit-media thesis set the terms of the debate over sensationalism does not mean that my analyses stop where these critiques end. The professional model suggests novel results that I examine. In chapter 3, for instance, I show that reporting on community responses to terrorism involves a good deal of coverage of resilient reactions to terrorist activity. In chapter 4, I show that the language used by reporters tends to be moderate rather than extreme. In chapters 5 and 6, I show that the terrorism beat becomes less negative shortly after major terrorist attacks. In chapter 7, I show that news from the terrorism beat is unlikely to transform fundamentally secure people into fundamentally insecure ones and that counterterrorism reporting can reassure people about their safety from terrorist violence.

Since I am focused on the charge that the terrorism news beat intimidates audiences, however, there are some kinds of sensational reporting that I do not examine in depth. The use of "horse race" coverage, for example, is a form of sensationalized public-affairs reporting that I address only a bit, since it is not generally alleged that this coverage works to the advantage of terrorists. This book is not a comprehensive examination of sensational content on the terrorism news beat.

At Stake in This Research

Accurate description is a prerequisite for accurate explanation and prudent policy-making. My research suggests, however, that depictions of the terrorism news beat that academics and policy makers rely on are distorted. The terrorism beat is less sensationalized than generally alleged; it focuses more on counterterrorism than terrorism and delivers the news in moderate rather than extreme terms. The inability to see the terrorism beat more accurately encourages observers to treat the news media as a problem that can hobble anti-terrorism efforts by democracies rather than as an ally in these efforts.

A consequence of this negative framing can be seen in research on the so-called encouragement effect (Picard 1986). This is the idea that news coverage of terrorist threats and attacks inspires additional terrorism (Rohner and Frey 2007; Jetter 2019a, 2019b) by imbuing violence with a kind of “seductive appeal” (Miller and Hayward 2019, 3) by boosting the morale and motivation of perpetrators and their comrades (Jetter 2019a), and by amplifying terrorism’s psychological (Silver et al. 2002; Aber et al. 2004) and political consequences (Davis and Silver 2004).

These consequences work to the advantage of terrorists and the disadvantage of the innocent people who are victimized. Combine this result with the additional observation that terrorists depend on publicity from the news media to sew fear on a mass scale and it becomes clear why the news media is often described as “the terrorists’ best friend” (Laqueur 2017, 104). The news media reliably helps terrorists achieve goals they otherwise could not.

Since the news media makes terrorism worse, the big public policy question revolves around proposals to limit this tendency. Frey (2004) argues that the news media can be incentivized to provide reporting that is less sensational with subsidies for quality news. Forst (2011) calls for treating reporting about terrorism as a public health matter rather than an issue of press freedom. The public health framing would enable US courts to punish irresponsible reporting under the theory that “needlessly incendiary media accounts of violence or threats of violence” (Forst 2011, 295) are akin to shouting “fire” in a crowded theater.

Whether interventions like these are needed at all, however, depend on the characteristics of terrorism beat news that audiences receive. As critics suggest, a news media that focuses on terrorist threats and attacks largely

ignores counterterrorism and represents ordinary citizens as paralyzed by the specter of terrorism probably does the public more harm than good. In contrast, a news media that does more reporting on counterterrorism than terrorism, represents the public as resilient in the face of terrorism, and uses moderate language in its reporting is more difficult to decode.

If indications that counterterrorism news (Zussman and Zussman 2006; Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, and Shapiro 2011) and other reassuring messages (Silverman, Kent, and Gelpi 2022; Krause et al. 2022) can counteract the intimidating effects of reporting about threats and attacks, then the argument for interfering with the news media becomes more tenuous. The research I present in chapter 5 suggests that both of these reassuring effects of exposure to terrorism beat news are possible. The implication is that the news media may counteract the efforts of terrorists to intimidate audiences in unrecognized ways and that the equation between the news media and public fear is too simple.

Plan of the Book

I lay out competing visions of the terrorism news beat in chapter 2. The orthodox view represents terrorism beat reporting as sensitive to economic pressures on the newspaper industry, which encourages the creation of sensational content. This profit-seeking model of news production is at the heart of claims that the news media undermines the public interest by amplifying the psychological effects of terrorist activity.

In chapter 2, I also lay out the case for viewing the terrorism beat through the lens of professional norms and institutions that govern the production of news. Connecting with a sociological tradition in the study of journalism (e.g., Gaye 1978; Ryfe 2012), I develop a model of the terrorism beat that implies that the degradation in news standards identified by the complicit media thesis is overstated. Instead, I assume that strong news values and professional standards that traditionally have guided reporters continue to do so. Events change, but the way news about those events is developed has been relatively stable.

I compare the expectations derived from the profit-seeking and professional models to data I gathered on more than 4,000 newspaper articles published between 1997 and 2014 in chapters 3 and 4. In chapter 3, I focus on the subject matter of the terrorism beat—the topics that terror-

ism beat reporters cover on a regular basis. In chapter 4, I examine the language of the terrorism beat—whether it has become more negative over time and the degree to which it relies on provocative words.

In chapter 5, I consider the effects of the content that people read from the terrorism beat. Whether news from the terrorism beat intimidates cannot be determined through content analysis alone (Baum and Potter 2008; Soroka 2003). One person's negative story is another's neutral report. Connecting what gets published to people's reactions is necessary for getting a full picture of the news media's contribution to public anxiety about terrorism.

I use two approaches to examine the effects of negative language in news from the terrorism beat on people's sense of security from terrorism. First, I use a simulation to suggest that the expected effects of exposure to news about threats and attacks on insecurity depends on the negativity of the news people get. When people are exposed to unusually negative reports, as they often are in academic studies, the expected effects on insecurity are large. When the reports people read are more reflective of the material newspapers publish, however, the size of the effects on insecurity is attenuated.

Second, I examine the effects of news about counterterrorism on people's sense of security from terrorist threats and attacks. Some say that any coverage of terrorism or counterterrorism is inherently alarming because it reminds people of danger. Chapter 5 examines this claim using a series of laboratory experiments. The idea is that the capacity for news coverage to intimidate depends on what that coverage depicts. Stories about effective counterterrorism do not necessarily have the alarming quality critics worry about.

Chapter 6 lays out the case for the alteration of professional norms on terrorism beat reporting during crises through a case study of the reporting on the Boston Marathon bombing. Building on the work on Sandman and Paden (1979b) and Trope and Liberman (2010), I argue that newspapers that covered the marathon bombing moderated the tone of the reporting they produced, especially for audiences who lived closest to the point of attack. This behavior is inconsistent with the notion that negativity is a dominant strategy for reporters. In the most fraught moments, journalists are more measured in their reporting.

I replicate the results of this research on crisis reporting about the Boston Marathon bombing using the coverage newspapers produced about the Oklahoma City bombing, the Olympic Park bombing, the 9/11 attacks,

the DC Sniper case, and the Dallas police shooting in chapter 7. Once again, I show that the negativity of the language reporters use to convey crisis events varies in ways the profit-seeking model does not anticipate. The average story published during a crisis is less negative than the average terrorism beat story published in non-crisis conditions. In addition, the stories published by news organizations that are the most proximate to the site of attacks are the least negative of all.

In chapter 8, the final chapter of this book, I examine the implications of my research. The news media is thought to make terrorism-related fears worse, but the evidence presented in this book suggests that this conclusion is hasty. Some coverage may be alarming, but the most alarming reports are also rare. News from the terrorism beat is more likely to provide audiences a measured view of government counterterrorism than alarmist views of terrorist threats and attacks.

Scope Conditions

If drawing on material published in newspapers to understand how the news media covers the terrorism beat seems out of step with the times, it shouldn't. The United States' most widely circulated newspapers remain important sources of news, despite all the talk of social media and how consumer demand for free news is driving a crisis in the US newspaper industry. Consider that in 2020, the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post* reached as many as 86.2 million people through Twitter (47.6 million, *NYT*; 18.1 million, *WSJ*; 4.1 million *USAT*; 16.4 million *WaPo*) and almost 40 million people via Facebook (17.54 million, *NYT*; 6.66 million, *WSJ*; 8.74 million, *USAT*; 6.78 million, *WaPo*).

I rely on articles published in the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post* in chapters 3 and 4. Even though fake news, conspiracy theories, and real news from television and internet news organizations also compete for news audiences' attention, newspapers remain significant contributors to what people know about the world. This is especially the case with terrorism, since such a large portion of the material about terrorist threats and attacks falls into the category of foreign news (see chapter 3), which is still primarily produced by journalists who work for newspapers and wire services (e.g., Associated Press).

Of course, the largest source of sensationalized news may be the images that both television and internet news sources use to a far greater extent than newspapers do. My inattention to the visual dimensions of the terrorism news beat, therefore, may understate the extent to which the main news sources that Americans consult dramatize terrorist activity. A more comprehensive picture of the terrorism beat must take this imagery into account.

Still, it is worth remembering that the written terrorism beat news people receive has all the problems of televised news, even though images are not the newspaper journalist's main tool for communicating information. Most of the research advancing claims about the declining quality of the terrorism beat focuses on newspaper reporting. Some even say that people who get their news from newspapers report more insecurity from terrorism than people who get their news from television and the internet (Williamson, Fay, and Miles-Johnson 2019). The point is that even if my account of the terrorism beat is partial, I am addressing the news sources that play an important role in shaping conceptions of terrorism reporting as sensationalized.

Whether this dim take on the terrorism beat accurately represents the reporting produced by the United States' most widely read newspapers is the central question of this book. The answer, I submit, is no.

CHAPTER 2

Continuity, Change, and the Professional-Media Thesis

Veteran journalist Dan Rather grudgingly agreed when Colombia's president and Nobel Peace Prize winner Juan Manuel Santos said that news media reporting on terrorism made it harder to bring the insurgency his country experienced to an end. In Rather's view, there were too many signs that journalists were putting their industry's economic interests ahead of the public interest for Santos to be wrong. In Mexico, newspapers sold copies by displaying gruesome pictures of people murdered by drug gangs on their front pages. In the United States, news organizations covered the 9/11 attacks by publishing pictures of people leaping from the World Trade Center buildings to their deaths. The press's obligations to provide the public responsible reporting were clearly getting lost (Rather 2012).

Rather's concerns about the news media are familiar ones. Journalism is often described as an occupation that requires reporters to sacrifice their principles in favor of selling the news to consumers. Instead of helping the public, as they are supposed to do, journalists do the opposite. They help terrorists sow fear by giving them attention and by exaggerating terrorism's dangers to the public (Weimann and Winn 1994). Reporters do this because exaggerated terrorism news is profitable.

Treating reporters as if profit was their sole motivation, however, is not the only way to make sense of journalistic behavior. It is also possible to conceive of journalism as a rule-governed activity and journalists as rule followers. Journalists maintain this relationship to the rules of reporting for two reasons. They recognize the central role a free press plays in demo-

cratic societies, where the ability to hold people to account depends on the availability of information that is uncorrupted by powerful and self-interested parties (Alexander 2015). Journalists also adhere to the principles of news reporting because doing so keeps them in step with their peers and marks them as members of the community of reporters. In other words, to be a journalist means adhering to the normative standards that define that line of work.

In this chapter, I detail these two models of news production and their implications for understanding the terrorism news beat, defined in terms of the range and variability of the content major newspapers publish. The profit-seeking and professionalism models of news production are the focus here because of the central roles they play in discussions of news as political communication. The profit-seeking model is the most widely cited model of news production in studies of the terrorism news beat. The professionalism model is the most prominent alternative to the profit-seeking model in the wider literature on political communication.

There are other models of the news production process that could have been included in this work but were not. The partisan media (Patterson and Donsbagh 1996) and propaganda (Herman and Chomsky 1988) models of news production are at the top of this list. I passed on the partisan media model because the partisan bent of newspapers is unlikely to make a big difference in terrorism news beat reporting over time. Terrorism is one of the few issues in American politics that Democrats and Republicans largely agree upon.

I also passed on the propaganda model of news production because it is a model of gatekeeping rather than a model of news presentation. The premise of the propaganda model is that wealthy and powerful elites “filter out the news fit to print, marginalize dissent, and allow government and private interests to get their messages across to the public” (Herman and Chomsky 1988, 2). Since I do not have systematic information about the stories that reporters on the terrorism beat could have published, it made sense to set this approach aside.

Descriptive Models

The two models I examine here are designed for the purpose of exploring the terrorism news beat in major US newspapers. The models provide

guides to the range and variability of the content we can expect newspapers in the US to have published about terrorist threats and attacks, counterterrorism, and community responses to terrorism. The empirical chapters that follow examine the accuracy of these models in relation to samples of news content.

Models in political science are typically used for causal inference (Clarke and Primo 2012), but using models for descriptive inference, as I do in this book, is an option as well. In fact, in their important work on the use of models in political science, Kevin Clarke and David Primo (2008) liken models to maps of subway systems, highway systems, and pedestrian walkways. Clarke and Primo draw these analogies because models help people navigate unfamiliar terrain. That is how I use the profit-seeking and professionalism models that are the focus of this book—as guides to the twists and turns in content that quality newspapers in the US produce.

My choice of these models, however, does not indicate that either of them are perfectly accurate. Like maps, both the profit-seeking and professionalism models have limitations. These models are designed to answer questions about the qualities of terrorism beat reporting that appear in privately owned, for-profit newspapers in the United States that operated during a historical period in which the norms and practices of journalistic practice remained relatively stable. It is unclear whether these models have anything to say about what terrorism beat reporting would look like in a modern-day version of the *Los Angeles Municipal News*, a non-profit, taxpayer funded newspaper created in 1911 (Pickard 2020a). These models also provide little guidance about the content of news produced by news organizations that reject principles of journalistic practice, like the norm of objectivity. It is also questionable whether the models are capable of outlining terrorism beat reporting outside the United States, since the practice of reporting often varies considerably from country to country (Mellado 2020).

The design of the profit-seeking and professionalism models for descriptive purposes is also consequential for understanding what these models can and cannot do. As descriptive models, the profit-seeking and professionalism models can suggest what the terrorism beat's contours look like, but they cannot explain the production of that content entirely (Gering 2012).

For instance, the profit-seeking model assumes that newspaper journalists, the employees of print news organizations who identify and investi-

gate stories to cover, sensationalize the news. This simplification creates an empirically verifiable claim about the quality of terrorism beat news, but it does not provide an accurate account of how terrorism beat coverage might become sensationalized. In reality, teams of people play roles in producing the content that gets published as news. The profit-seeking model is silent on the roles these teams play in the editorial process and how they might influence the content that newspapers produce, relying instead on the assumption that journalists do all the reporting work at newspapers.

In return for this simplicity, the profit-seeking and professionalism models make the complexity of news production analytically tractable. The profit-seeking and professionalism models do this by isolating the factors that, in their estimation, are most important for understanding the quality of the news audiences receive. Precisely what those factors are and how they influence news quality is the subject of the next sections.

The Profit-Seeking Model of News Production

The profit-seeking model of news production is the first model up for consideration. This model starts from the premise that news organizations are, at root, economic firms in the business of selling news to consumers. Profits are necessary for their survival (Hamilton 2006).

The journalists and editors that news organizations employ understand that keeping their jobs means helping their employers advance their economic fortunes. Journalists accomplish this goal by focusing on the events that are most likely to command audience attention and presenting the news they gather in engaging ways. Competition from other news organizations creates constant pressure on reporters to keep up with their rivals (Boczkowski 2014).

The Viability of Newspapers in the Internet Age

Using these assumptions, proponents of the profit-seeking model understand the production of terrorism beat news to reflect the challenges of profiting from the sale of news in the 21st century. This is a period in which “the 150-year-old business model for commercial newspapers imploded” (Pickard 2020b).

For most of the 20th century, newspapers generated revenue from a mixture of advertising and hard-copy sales to readers. Advertisers provided most of the revenue, about 80 percent (Pickard 2020b), but these dollars always depended on the ability of newspapers to deliver audiences. Circulation became the single most important measure of each newspaper's economic value to advertisers (Rucker 1958).

The rise of internet news changed the formula the news industry used to generate revenue. Disseminating news electronically is significantly less expensive than printing and delivering news in physical formats. The difference in costs enable digital news producers to use their advantage to cut into the audiences for physical news by offering to distribute and sell their products for less than traditional newspapers can do. The resulting loss of revenue is upending the market for physical newspapers.

The immediacy of digital news also gives it an advantage over traditional newspapers that makes it more attractive to consumers. Digital news can be delivered to audiences almost as quickly as digital news can be produced. In contrast, physical news producers must wait to print new editions before they can distribute the news to audiences. This speed advantage inclines the public to turn to internet news providers for their news instead of the slower traditional news producers (Hamilton 2006).

Compounding the newspaper industry's problems, the rise of digital advertising platforms, like Craigslist, further cut into the revenues traditional news suppliers could generate. Smaller audiences already meant lower advertising revenues, but digital advertisers reduced demand for paid classified advertisements that newspapers depended on.

These changes devastated traditional newspaper companies, put reporters out of work, and created an "extinction level crisis" (Gabbatt 2020) in the newspaper industry. Knowing that bad news sells (Arango-Kure, Garz, and Rott 2014; Soroka 2014) and that people are drawn to stories that contain more negative words than positive ones (Albertson and Gadarian 2015; Trussler and Soroka 2014), newspapers responded to this economic crisis by sensationalizing the reporting they published (Fuller 2010).

The terrorism beat became a useful vehicle for advancing this fear-mongering project (Altheide 2017). As ABC News anchor Peter Jennings explained,

What accounts for the extraordinary intensity of media coverage of hijackings and hostage takings? Ratings? The answer is yes. We work

for commercial enterprises. We all want to be number one. Number one means dollars and cents to our corporations and so ratings are certainly important. Does it have to do with advertising revenue? Yes, I suppose it does, in that advertising revenue results from ratings. (quoted in Nacos 1994, 157)

Tried and True Strategies

Time and again, newspapers answered the economic challenges they faced by doubling down on formulas from the past. This meant four things. First, newspapers altered their coverage to emphasize reporting on terrorist threats and attacks over counterterrorism. Second, instead of reporting on the broad range of counterterrorism measures governments pursued, newspapers narrowed their reporting on counterterrorism to those operations that either involved the use of military force or obviously failed. Third, newspapers declined to cover public reactions to terrorism and counterterrorism, leaving the impression that terrorists were successfully intimidating the populace. Finally, newspapers supported their content choices by injecting their coverage with language that was deliberately designed to amplify the sense of threat from terrorism.

Terrorist Threats and Attacks vs. Counterterrorism

Since at least the 1980s, the conventional wisdom in newsrooms has been that stories about terrorist threats and attacks are especially valuable (Burgoon, Burgoon, and Wilkinson 1983). Terrorism's dramatic qualities align with the principles journalists use to identify newsworthy events and the principles audiences use to identify stories to follow (Schmid 1989). From the standpoint of news sales, terrorism enables news organizations to boost revenues.

Aside from enabling news organizations to meet audience demand, reporting on threats and attacks allowed newspapers to present terrorism beat news differently from other public affairs topics. The perpetrators of violence emerged as the focus of terrorism beat news, while the importance of government sources and perspectives got downgraded (Nacos 1994). In effect, reporting about terrorist threats and attacks pushed reporting about counterterrorism out of the news.

Indicative of this shift, between 1996 and 2000 the *New York Times*, National Public Radio, ABC, NBC, and CBS (the United States' three main television networks) used the word "terrorism" 11,000 times, as compared to about 2,400 uses of the word "counterterrorism" (Nacos 2007). A follow-up study by Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, and Shapiro (2011) identified a similar pattern: over a 39-month period following the 9/11 attacks, network news shows covered terrorism 385 times, but dedicated only 85 segments to terrorism prevention. Terrorists, Nacos noted, got all the media coverage they wanted (1994, 22).

Military vs. Nonmilitary Counterterrorism Efforts

Governments, on the other hand, struggled to capture press attention unless they involved the military (Nacos 2007). Marsden (2013) notes, for example, that the Western press reported on the post-9/11 War on Terror as if it were principally a military effort, even though the US government used a range of tactics to reduce the threat of future attacks. In the United States, news about anti-terrorism measures, including reports commissioned by Congress detailing terrorist threats, anti-terrorism legislation, and the state of government preparedness for terrorist attacks, were conspicuous in their absence in major newspapers (Nacos 2007).

Keystone Cops

Frustratingly for governments, the only other counterterrorism events journalists were interested in are those that involved conspicuous counterterrorism failures (Jenkins 1982; Nacos 2007; Marsden 2013). As a result, reporting on government counterterrorism efforts often portrayed governments as "reactive, impotent, [and] incompetent" (Jenkins 1982, 17).

Invisible People

Reporters on the terrorism beat also covered community responses to terrorism less often than news about either terrorist threats and attacks or news about counterterrorism (Moeller 2009). The coverage newspa-

pers did provide was decidedly negative, focused on terrorism's tragic and frightening qualities rather than on the public's resiliency to these attacks (Nacos 2007).

Sensational Language

Newspapers supported their content choices by sensationalizing the language they used in terrorism beat coverage. Working from the premise that "fear gets your eyeballs" (Edward Hallowell quoted in ABC News 2007), journalists started delivering a more shocking brand of news. For newspapers, this meant injecting the news with the words "fear" and "victim" and other unnecessarily provocative language to accentuate the state of insecurity terrorists caused (Altheide 2017; Moeller 2009).

This reporting change also meant increasing the use of negative words relative to positive ones in terrorism beat reporting. The idea was that writing in more provocative ways would make newspapers into a more profitable product. "Threats, danger, fear. These words grab the attention of readers. And that's what the media want. Your attention. Be afraid. Be very afraid" (Moeller 2009).

The crime beat provided the proof of concept for this approach (Altheide 2017; Krajicek 1998). In the 1990s, Rupert Murdoch's Fox television network demonstrated the economic potential of treating crime as entertainment with the successful television show *Hard Copy*. Thereafter, news organizations, including those that banked on their reputations for quality, began covering crime in more sensational terms. Even in newspapers like the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, the dry language of traditional hard news gave way to more provocative writing (Krajicek 1998).

The opportunity to test the crime beat's successful formula on the terrorism beat came after 9/11. Reporters hammered home messages that conveyed a strong "sense of disorder and belief that things are out of control" (Altheide 2017, 90). The discourse of fear, indicated by the reliance on the words "fear" and "victim" in terrorism beat reporting, skyrocketed. Prior to 9/11, these staples of the crime beat rarely appeared in terrorism beat news. After 9/11, reports using the words "fear" and "victim" became ubiquitous. In the *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *USA Today*, and *Washington Post*, the number of terrorism beat articles

containing the word fear increased by at least a factor of ten. At the *San Francisco Chronicle*, reporters published 45 times more articles containing the word fear after 9/11 than before (Altheide 2017).

Taking another page from their crime beat counterparts, reporters for the *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *USA Today*, and *Washington Post* also used the words “fear” and “victim” together at an increased rate. The *New York Times* produced nearly ten times (9.86) more articles using both the words “fear” and “victim” after 9/11 than it did prior to the attacks. *USA Today* increased the number of articles using the words “fear” and “victim” by a factor of thirty. News from the *Los Angeles Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, and *USA Today* fell between these extremes (Altheide 2017).

Crisis Reporting

The sensationalized reporting patterns journalists relied on to offset their operating losses got interrupted during crises—for the worse. The reason for this has to do with some peculiar aspects of the economics of information.

In the short term, crises increase both audience demand for news (Althaus 2002) and the price of covering the news (Bakker 2015). People want news more during crises out of a heightened sense that the string of unexpected events that happen in rapid succession are especially impactful. At the same time, the news media must invest more resources into covering crises to keep track of these rapidly evolving events. These added costs include expenditures that news organizations make to hire additional reporters as well as premiums that news organizations pay to keep their employees safe in crisis environments (Bakker 2015).

In many industries, firms can increase prices to offset increased production costs, but short-term price increases are difficult to implement in the newspaper industry, which tends to generate revenues through subscriptions. Increasing prices, therefore, would require news organizations to engage in costly contract renegotiations with consumers (Bakker 2015). Instead, newspapers tried to offset the increased costs of reporting during crises by selling more copies. This meant giving into incentives to distort the news more using sensational language. Bad news sells (Arango-Kure, Garz, and Rott 2014); bad news in bad times sells more.

Implications of the Profit-Seeking Model

Between its starting assumptions and its account of the newspaper industry's recent economic history, the profit-seeking model paints a picture of terrorism beat reporting that is designed to alarm audiences and reactive to bottom-line pressures on newspapers. Given the dire state of the traditional newspaper industry, the profit-seeking model's basic assessment of terrorism beat reporting is that it underwent a period of change, becoming more alarming and more sensational as profitability declined. Coverage shifted toward news about threats and attacks, and the language journalists used became immoderate.

Subject Matter Expectations

The profit-seeking model suggests that terrorist threats and attacks dominate the terrorism news beat, appearing more often in newspapers than either counterterrorism news or reporting about community responses to terrorism (Nacos 2007). This preference for news about terrorist threats and attacks increases as the newspaper industry's economic fortunes worsens. This pattern reflects terrorism's economic value to newspapers. Audiences are willing to pay for news about terrorist activity.

Government counterterrorism efforts typically make the news either when those efforts involve the use of military force or when they fail in obvious ways. Otherwise, counterterrorism gets short shrift in newspapers. Criminal justice proceedings against suspected terrorists, government hearings and reports, diplomatic agreements relating to terrorism, and other nonviolent ways governments try to control terrorism are too boring to sell papers. Consequently, newspapers exclude stories like these from their pages.

Linguistic Expectations

Another way economic pressure on the newspaper industry manifests itself is in the language journalists use to deliver terrorism beat news to audiences. Like other news beats (Soroka 2014), the terrorism news beat features more negative language than positive language, but the willingness of

journalists to use negative language increased as their newspapers struggled to turn profits.

This shift in approach began after the 9/11 attacks (Altheide 2017). In an effort to sell fear, journalists increased their use of the words “fear” and “victim” since these specific words helped news organizations sensationalize the crime beat. The overall use of negative language increased as did gratuitous uses of provocative language (Moeller 2009). Unsurprisingly, the terrorism news beat and already sensationalized crime beat became more similar as economic pressure on newspapers increased.

Crisis Reporting

Crises are opportunities for newspapers to increase their profits. The shocking quality of crisis events greatly expands the audience for news. At the same time, competition for audience attention increases. This twin dynamic effectively triggers an outbidding process in which news organizations vie for a greater share of audience attention by using more sensational language in the news they deliver.

This outbidding dynamic results in terrorism beat news that is more negative during terrorism crises than it is during non-crisis periods. Conditions during crises are worse than during non-crisis periods, so some of this increased negativity is a natural reflection of events themselves. At the same time, newspapers also exaggerate the negativity of the news more because doing so helps them outsell their competitors. This pattern reflects the increased competition for audiences during crises, when the demand for news is high.

The Professional-Media Model of News Production

The second model up for consideration is the professional-media model of news production. The professional-media model starts from the premise that the practice of journalism is circumscribed and defined by sets of rules, norms, and practices that set standards of reporting excellence. Economic pressures on the news media are testing traditional reporting methods but have not yet forced the most fundamental practices to change (Ryfe 2012).

Rules in this framework refer to specific, often codified statements that

either regulate or constitute professional activities. Explicit rules prohibiting journalists from falsifying their reporting are regulative in the sense that they proscribe behavior. Written rules that identify who may speak on behalf of news organizations are constitutive in the sense that they establish activities and positions within news organizations.

Alongside the rules that circumscribe the behavior of journalists are norms and practices that shape the news by establishing standards of quality work. Norms in this context refer to the “moral standards, codes of ethics, and guidelines about inserting voices and viewpoints into stories” (Bennett 2016, 131). The injunction to act independently in service to the public interest, found in the Society of Professional Journalists’ ethical code (see <https://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp>), is an example of a moral standard that operates among journalists.

Practices refer to ways of executing the roles and obligations associated with producing the news on behalf of news organizations. The strategies for writing effective lead sentences are among the important practices that journalists follow. These practices are learned on the job and in journalism schools. They affect the quality of the news that gets published while also standardizing the material that gets published across outlets and over time.

Journalists and their editors follow the rules, norms, and practices that define reporting for two reasons. First, journalists follow the rules of reporting because doing so is appropriate to self-conceptions of themselves as the public’s eyes and ears in the defense of democracy.¹ Paraphrasing author and editor Jack Fuller, without truth-telling journalists, the public will not have the information necessary to exercise their sovereignty (Fuller’s original quote appears in Gans 2003, 1). This commitment obliges reporters to provide the public with evenhanded news about matters of interest.

Second, reporters follow the rules of reporting because they risk being either misunderstood or questioned by their colleagues and readers if they deviate from these well-worn principles.² Journalistic norms and practices

1. In the terminology of political science, journalists are guided by the “logic of appropriateness” rather than the “logic of consequences.” This means that journalists make decisions according to rules that are suited to the situations they confront in their roles as reporters. Journalists do not make decisions by identifying and pursuing actions that maximize their individual preferences. See March and Olsen (1989) for more on the distinction between the logic of appropriateness and the logic of consequences.

2. See Wendt (1999) for an explanation of the difficulty of understanding violations of constitutive rules.

are constitutive of modern reporting: they define the rules of the journalistic game, mark the participants in it, and, through the actions of these participants, are responsible for producing outputs that are recognizable to audiences as news. “Reporters,” for instance, who deviate from the industry archetype are dismissed. Davis McAuley, editor of the *Bastrop Advertiser* explained in an interview about citizen journalism, “It does not make any sense. News is meant to be reported professionally, not through some random citizen. . . . Journalism is a profession and it cannot be done by anyone” (Lewis, Kauffhold, and Lasorsa 2010, 169).

Combining these starting assumptions—i.e., journalism is a profession defined and circumscribed by institutions and reporters are people who follow these reporting rules, norms, and principles—produces an image of newspapers as continuing to provide quality news despite the economic challenges facing the newspaper industry. Where the profit-seeking model suggests change in the characteristics of news over time, the professional-media model suggests relative consistency. There is variation in reporting across journalists and news outlets, but the average news article falls squarely within the boundaries of quality journalism.

The terrorism beat, as a regular part of mainstream reporting, is subject to the practices and norms that govern other news beats. In this sense, the terrorism beat is pedestrian, subject to the principles journalists established for themselves to maintain their professional autonomy (Coddington 2015).

Firewalls

Journalists understand that the marketplace for news provides tempting opportunities to sacrifice principled reporting for profitable news. Since the two are not always the same, journalists have sought ways to protect what they consider to be a sacred responsibility to truth from the profane demands of the marketplace (Alexander 2016). “Firewalls,” physical and rhetorical barriers that lie between the work of reporting and the work of profit generation that goes on in news organizations, are journalists’ first line of defense.

Newspapers physically separate their reporters in newsrooms from staff responsible for business decisions (Downie and Kaiser 2003) and demand that the production of stories by reporters occurs with-

out input from the business side of news organizations (Illman 2016). Journalists have also made independence from financial interests a central element of their professional codes of ethics (Coddington 2015). The norm of independence, codified in ethical codes, such as the one maintained by the Society of Professional Journalists, reminds journalists that their most important obligations are to the public. Reporters are bound by this rule to avoid conflicts of interest, turn down gifts and other favors that could compromise their credibility, avoid paying for news, and generally resist both internal and external pressures to influence their coverage.

Of all the institutions discussed in this chapter, the separation between the news and business divisions of news organizations could be under the most economic strain. Even the *New York Times* made the barrier between its news and business divisions more porous following a 2014 internal report that identified the separation as hindering innovation at the paper (Ellick et al. 2014).

This reduction in the strength of the firewalls that newspapers use to protect the independence of their newsrooms is certainly a cause for concern. Whether a newspaper is publicly traded, for example, influences the quality of the news it produces (Dunaway 2008; Baum and Zhukov 2019). Nevertheless, there is evidence that the division between the news and business sides of newspapers have not broken down entirely. On the terrorism beat, for instance, the negativity of reporting is greatest in the newsrooms that are the most insulated from market pressures (Hoffman and Jengelly 2020). This result is opposite what an economic perspective on news production anticipates.

The behavior of journalists who are facing the prospect of losing their jobs also suggests that the division between the reporting and business sides of newspapers is holding. Christopher Anderson's (2013) research on this is telling. Journalists working for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Daily News* continued to work much as they had, even though the owner of both newspapers declared bankruptcy. Anderson found no evidence that the quality of the news these journalists produced changed during this period of economic uncertainty, and he reported no efforts by reporters at these Philadelphia news organizations to curry favor with possible future employers. Even with the worst economic outcome looming on the immediate horizon, these reporters continued to uphold their professional obligations.

Reporting Norms

Three reporting norms that influence the content of the news and its presentation to audiences further restrain market-based pressures to sensationalize the news for sales purposes. The watchdog norm encourages journalists to report on government activities, even though other kinds of news (e.g., celebrity news) is more lucrative (Hallin 1990). The norm of objectivity defines and constrains what counts as acceptable presentations of the news. Measured presentations are acceptable, emotional ones are not. The harm minimization principle further limits the ability of news organizations to slide into sensationalism. Reporters must consider the impact their reporting has on audiences. Producing unnecessarily shocking reporting is unethical.

The Watchdog Norm

The watchdog ethos that permeates the ranks of the press is related to the norm of independence in the sense that it starts from the idea that the news media's role in guarding the public interest stands above all others. The press achieves this goal by monitoring government activities and the activities of other elites and elite institutions vigilantly (Norris 2014).

This conceptualization of the press as the “fourth estate” has guided the news media for over 200 years (Hampton 2009) and is a principle that US journalists embrace (Marquez-Ramirez et al. 2020). A survey commissioned by the American Society of News Editors suggests that 80 percent of reporters think it is “extremely” or “very” important for the press to investigate “claims and statements made by the government and political candidates” (Norris 2014, 528). As Walter Cronkite explained, “A democracy ceases to be a democracy if its citizens do not participate in its governance. To participate in the polity, they must know what their government has done, is doing, and plans to do in their name. . . . This is the meaning of freedom of the press. It is not just important to democracy, it is democracy” (quoted in Shaya 2012).

This is more than just talk from journalists. Coverage of the activities of government, measured as a percentage of the reporting journalists produce, remains relatively constant (Livingston and Bennett 2003). Meanwhile, investigative journalism, the most expensive form of watchdog reporting,

is thriving. Newspapers are cutting other areas of their newsrooms before whittling down their investigative journalism budgets and are collaborating with other news organizations to tackle investigative projects that they could not complete on their own (Carson and Farhall 2018). The practice of watchdog reporting is alive and well despite economic pressures to reduce the most expensive news journalists produce.

The Norm of Objectivity

The norm of objectivity requires that journalists cover the news fairly and accurately. Emerging in the 19th century, objectivity as a guiding principle has several characteristics. Objective reporters are detached from the subjects of their reporting, nonpartisan in their outlook on issues and events, at arm's length from political parties, committed to reporting events factually, and balanced in their treatment of political issues (Mindich 2000; Schudson 2001).

These principles are operationalized in several ways. Journalists attempt to remain neutral in their reporting by providing balanced coverage of competing perspectives (Kovach and Rosenstiel 2007). Objective news uses the inverted pyramid writing style (Mindich 2000), presenting the most important elements of stories first and less important elements afterward in descending order (Cotter 2010). Establishing the facts right away is seen by the press as an important part of making sure that audiences have the information they need “to be free and self-governing” (Kovach and Rosenstiel 2007). Journalists buttress this organizational approach by writing in the third person, a writing strategy that detaches authors from the events they observe.

Objective reporting demands that reporters use a measured tone to convey the news. This, in fact, was one of the goals of the original objective reporting movement: to counter sensationalized newspaper reporting (Streckfuss 1990). Objective news must appeal to reason rather than emotion (Wahl-Jorgensen 2016), a goal journalists accomplish using a “cool” (Schudson 2001, 150) tone in their writing.

All these techniques for producing objective news are supported by an elaborate system designed to prevent deviations from the objectivity norm. Novice journalists are cautioned against permitting their emotions to influence their reporting (Hopper and Huxford 2017). More seasoned

reporters practice self-discipline so that they may approach their subject matter dispassionately (Hopper and Huxford 2015). Editors police journalists who allow their reporting to veer beyond the boundaries of acceptable discourse (Wahl-Jorgensen 2013; Goodman and Boudana 2019).

Elements of the norm of objectivity are under fire, however, and may be changing. Critics charge that journalists routinely fall short of the objectivity ideal, leaving the news with a partisan bent it should not have (Goldberg 2014), corporate biases that undermine its commitment to truth (Herman and Chomsky 1988), and an insensitivity to underrepresented communities (e.g., African American and transgender) that skew its coverage (Wallace 2019). The commitment to balanced reporting is increasingly seen as problematic when treating competing perspectives equally means lending credence to false claims (Boykoff and Boykoff 2004).

Efforts to revise the norm of objectivity are narrowly focused, however. There are few calls to replace the inverted-pyramid style of writing and little pressure from within journalistic circles to abandon the use of moderate language. Balanced reporting has long been seen as subservient to truthful reporting (Kovach and Rosenstiel 2007). So, while the norm of objectivity is under pressure, the professional model of news production suggests that it continues to shape the news in fundamental ways.

The Harm-Minimization Principle

One of the important principles of professional journalism is that reporters should avoid harming their sources, the subjects of their reporting, and their colleagues as much as possible (Ward 2011). First codified in the Society of Professional Journalism's code of ethics in 1996 (Yoder and Bleske 1997), the principle of minimizing harm requires journalists to treat "sources, subjects, colleagues and members of the public as human beings deserving of respect." Among other things, this means: constantly balancing the public's need to know with the potential harm revealing information could cause; showing compassion for the subjects of news coverage, especially people in vulnerable situations; and resisting the temptation to "[pander] to lurid curiosity" (<https://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp>).

This injunction operates as a general restriction on the behavior of reporters (Ward 2009). Reporters are supposed to consider the consequences of their reporting and act cautiously, with these consequences in

mind. Journalists, for example, are cautious about revealing the names of people who commit suicide because of the negative impact this information often has on family members (Plaisance and Deppa 2009).

Journalists have a special responsibility to minimize harm when confronting unusual circumstances. The Society of Professional Journalists reminds reporters to be especially careful about sensationalism during periods of intense grief and tragedy. During these periods, reporters should recall that “news of grief and tragedy circulates quickly. The news will draw attention no matter the presentation. In other words, media will receive higher marks if they present the stories in responsible fashion without resorting to sensationalism in words or photos” (Pumarlo 1996). Reporters appear to take the idea that they have special responsibilities to the public they serve seriously (Plaisance and Deppa 2009).

Professional Practice

Broad principles are useful but incomplete guides to professional practice. In the field, journalists are constantly confronted with choices over a range of reporting options that all conform with journalistic norms. How do they decide among these options? Should journalists invest their time and energy into reporting about their government’s support for another government’s foreign counterterrorism operation or focus on public protests of that operation? Space and time constraints limit what journalists can cover, so the answer cannot always be “report on both.”

Then, there are questions about the language reporters use to convey news to audiences. The words newspapers publish frame the news for audiences (Entman, Matthes, and Pellicano 2009), signaling them about the severity of the issues at hand (McLeod and Shah 2015). Strongly worded negative depictions of the news attract readers, but reporters must be careful about pandering to their audiences. What do the rules of professional practice allow when reporters put pen to paper?

News Values

Journalists resolve some conflicts by relying on several reporting rules of thumb, otherwise known as news values, that help them identify news-

worthy content (Galtung and Ruge 1965). Every day, there are always more events that could be reported on than journalists can cover. Journalists require some method of picking events to report on from the pool of events that could be the focus of their attention. News values encapsulate the principles journalists use to make these choices.

Although there is disagreement over the complete list of news values journalists rely on (Brighton and Foy 2007), there appears to be a core set of principles that journalists use to identify newsworthy events. Stories about powerful people and institutions, surprising or unusual events, bad news, good news, timely news, impactful stories, and relevant news (often defined in terms of the proximity between events and the place of publication) are all characteristics journalists look for in the events they focus on. Journalists also appear to prefer stories with a conflictual dimension and stories that have some sort of dramatic quality. Lists including these news values have been appearing in journalism textbooks since the early 1900s (Parks 2019).

The professional model assumes that the news values journalists use reflect their commitment to serving the public interest. The emphasis on powerful people and institutions fits with the news media's sense of itself as a watchdog for the public interest. A similar logic can be applied to the news media's preference for impactful stories, since these touch on matters of public interest the most.

Writing Conventions

The writing conventions that define the genre of hard news influence how journalists present events to their audiences. Like news values, these writing conventions are taught successfully in journalism schools: employers report satisfaction with the writing skills of students they hire from journalism programs (Lane and Johnston 2017).

The specific conventions journalists rely on encapsulate higher-order professional norms. Both the norm of objectivity and the harm-minimization principle play large roles in defining the writing conventions that journalists use. Objective news begins by delivering the most important information about events first, followed by less important information in descending order (Thomson, White, and Kitley 2008). The initial "lead" sentences that deliver this information must be brief, roughly twenty-five to thirty words long.

This “just the facts” organizational approach is supported with the careful use of language. Neutral, dispassionate language is both strongly preferred and enforced by editors (Cotter 2010). The Reuters style guide, for example, identifies neutrality as “the hallmark of our news brand” (Palmer 2017, 659). This preference for moderate language is consistent with both the norm of objectivity, which discourages journalists from using language that would unduly prejudice their accounts of events, and the harm-minimization principle, which cautions journalists against reporting in ways that could injure people. Reporters who rely on emotive words are castigated by post-publication quality control editors (“quacs”) who review their news organization’s news output each day (Palmer 2017).

Unlike news values, which afford reporters leeway over the stories they choose to pursue, the rules of journalistic writing are relatively strict. Reporters describe the hard news genre (in contrast to feature writing, for example) as the one that gives them the least room for creativity (Fulton and McIntyre 2013). The use of computer programs that can produce acceptable news copy (Carlson 2015) points to the formulaic quality of news writing.

Interestingly, journalists are permitted two exceptions to the rule that restricts their use of emotive language. It is permissible to use immoderate language when writing headlines (Molek-Kozakowska 2013) and when quoting sources (Wahl-Jorgensen 2013). Headlines are specifically designed to attract reader attention (Dor 2003), and interviewees are not bound by the same rules journalists are (Wahl-Jorgensen 2013). In both cases, reporters are permitted to use language differently. Headlines can be deliberately provocative. Quotes can contain the vivid language choices that interviewees use. In fact, quotes must use these vivid words if they are to be included in news articles. Journalists cannot revise these statements.

These caveats aside, the stiff-upper-lip writing principles that define quality news appear to be secure. Some news organizations are experimenting with delivering the news using narrative styles, but this practice is neither widespread nor obviously the wave of the future. On the contrary, Johnston and Graham’s (2012) study of more than 5,000 news stories found declining use of narrative styles between 2007 and 2009, suggesting some dissatisfaction with this alternative method of conveying the news. Objectivity, as a set of writing practices, persists in US newsrooms.

Implications

Reporting guided by industry-wide principles and practices and informed by the attention-grabbing efforts of various potential newsmakers has identifiable characteristics. Here, I draw out the implications of this professional-media model of news production, beginning with a discussion of the subject matter covered on the terrorism beat.

Subject Matter Expectations

The first implication of the professional model is that stories about counterterrorism can be expected to be covered more frequently than either terrorist threats and attacks or community responses to terrorism. This expectation stems from the news media's self-conception as a watchdog for the public interest and from the way journalists prioritize governments over terrorists and the public as newsmakers.

Whether the government is doing its job to protect the public from threats is a key question for the press in its watchdog role. Without information on government performance in this area, voters cannot be expected to hold their leaders to account. This interest in covering government as the public's sentinel implies disproportionate attention to counterterrorism on the terrorism beat. Focusing on the efforts governments make to keep their citizens safe is also implied by the standard journalistic practice of attending to the actions of government more than the actions of others (Bennett 1990; Schudson 2002). Governments are the most important sources of news for journalists. This means that counterterrorism is one of the most important storylines.

This preference for counterterrorism news is unlikely to depend on whether governments use force to prevent terrorist activity. Violent counterterrorism efforts might displace criminal justice efforts from the news more easily than criminal justice efforts displace violent counterterrorism. Nevertheless, the pages of US newspapers are still likely to be filled with the details of criminal justice responses to terrorism. Court cases are dramatic in their own ways, and at any time there are more court cases to report on than there are militarized counterterrorism efforts to cover.

Taking their cues from governments means that journalists will be encouraged to follow criminal justice responses to terrorism by their

sources. Democratic governments are eager to demonstrate that they are managing terrorist threats. The successful apprehension and prosecution of suspected terrorists is part of that effort.

This sense that the actions governments take to deal with terrorism are matters of public interest implies that reporting from the terrorism beat will reflect, in rough terms, what governments do to prevent terrorist activity. Since nonviolent responses by governments to terrorism nearly always occur more often than violent responses, the pages of major newspapers will reflect this activity bias.

Counterterrorism Successes and Failures

The norms of reporting that journalists rely on also suggest that the terrorism beat will feature regular coverage of both counterterrorism successes and failures. The complicit-media thesis implies that journalists are biased in favor of reporting on counterterrorism failures. A model rooted in the professional-media thesis, however, points once again to the press's role as a watchdog of the public interest as providing reporters the motivation to track both successful and unsuccessful government efforts to protect the public from terrorist attacks. Providing security is a core function for governments and one that the public has an interest in monitoring.

Moreover, most of the information journalists get for their stories comes from government sources—elected officials, political appointees, and bureaucrats who have either knowledge of the issues journalists focus on or relevant perspectives. These government sources, especially elected officials and political appointees, have incentives to feed journalists material about both government successes and failures in the area of counterterrorism. Members of the party in power have reasons to make sure journalists know about their successes. Members of the opposition have incentives to highlight blunders by the government. Outside experts may chime in on these matters as well.

The result is that journalists will often be in possession of information that bears on the success and failure of government counterterrorism efforts. Since journalists care about tracking government performance, there is reason to believe that counterterrorism efficacy, both positive and negative, will be a running theme on the terrorism beat.

Terrorist Threats and Attacks

The professional model of news production suggests that terrorist threats and attacks receive less newspaper coverage than government counterterrorism efforts on average. The inclination of reporters to focus on government actions matters here, as does the relative frequency of counterterrorism and terrorism events. Governments engage in counterterrorism activities more frequently often than terrorists either launch attacks or issue threats. This activity gap creates an imbalance in the stories available to journalists to report on in favor of counterterrorism. Consequently, counterterrorism news appears more frequently in the news.

Terrorism's shocking quality certainly helps perpetrators draw the news media's attention away from governments and the public (Shelton, Clevon, and Hoffman 2018), but not in all situations. Attacks must resonate with the news media (Mitnik, Freilich, and Chermak 2020; Kearns, Betus, and Lemieux 2019) and be recognizable as terrorism (Huff and Kertzer 2018) to get press coverage. Even so, public interest in counterterrorism is highest in the aftermath of attacks, giving reporters additional incentive to report on government responses. Both factors, the greater effort governments invest in counterterrorism activities and the public's heightened interest in counterterrorism after attacks, make it difficult for terrorist threats and attacks to dominate published news.

Community Responses to Terrorism

One matter the profit-seeking and professional models agree upon relates to reporting on community responses to terrorism. Both models suggest that journalists are likely to pay the least attention to community responses to terrorism in their reporting relative to the attention they invest in counterterrorism and terrorism reporting. Reporting biases in favor of elite people and institutions suggest that news about community responses to terrorism is likely to appear relatively infrequently in major newspapers.

Subject Matter Variety

Journalists prefer stories about governments to stories about either terrorists or the public, new stories to old ones, and negative, shocking stories

to positive, uplifting ones, but their allegiance to variety takes precedence over specific subject matter considerations (Dell’Orto 2016). This conclusion derives from the range of news values journalists use to identify newsworthy items. Journalists are trained to find news even in out-of-the-ordinary places. Content from the terrorism beat reflects this commitment to variety.

Linguistic Expectations

Assuming journalists follow industry-wide rules and reporting practices implies that language use on the terrorism beat follows several patterns. Like other forms of news, the tone of the terrorism beat will rely on negative more than positive language. This reflects persistent negativity bias in published news: even when events are positive, reporters tend to provide news audiences gloomy assessments (Soroka 2014).

Variation in Tone

Just because the terrorism beat is generally a bad-news beat, however, does not mean that newspapers only publish negative news about terrorist threats and attacks, counterterrorism, and community responses to terrorism. Good-news stories, reflected in the tone of coverage, are also to be expected. This variation reflects the news industry’s commitment to variety.

To be clear, good-news stories from the terrorism beat do not refer to articles that cheer acts of terrorism. Journalists are a patriotic group (Gans 1979) who have a professional obligation to care about their audiences. Expressing positive sentiments about terrorism should be exceedingly rare.

Instead, good-news stories from the terrorism beat can be expected to cover counterterrorism successes, acts of heroism and fellowship during terrorist attacks, and evidence of the public’s resilience in the shadow of terrorism, among other topics. The tone of terrorism beat coverage is not monolithic.

Variation across Newspapers and Time

The notion that there are industry-wide standards for writing about the news further implies that variation in the written quality of terrorism beat

news is small across news outlets and time. Even though newspapers like the *Wall Street Journal* and *Washington Post* compete with one another, they follow similar ideas about how to write about the news. This implies that the negativity of terrorism beat reporting is likely to be similar across newspapers within periods governed by the same standards for written reporting.

Variation by Subject Matter

Instead of searching for reporting differences across outlets and time, the professional model suggests that meaningful variation in the tone of terrorism beat reporting can be found in the types of stories reporters cover. The most negative news that reporters deliver to their audiences focuses on terrorist threats and attacks. Dastardly crimes that harm the public earn terrorists no plaudits from the press, making this category of news a dismal one as terrorism beat topics go. Counterterrorism coverage and reporting about community responses to terrorism are story-types that depend on negative language less than reporting on terrorist threats and attacks. Many government counterterrorism efforts result in unclear outcomes, meaning that criticisms and praise of these programs are muted. Reporting about community responses to terrorism are not uniformly negative. People are resilient to terrorism in often surprising ways (Bonanno et al. 2006). This resiliency is reflected in the tone of terrorism beat reporting about people, communities, and community organizations.

Sobriety Dominates Sensationalism

Despite differences in the negativity of the language reporters use across the subjects they cover, terrorism beat reporters typically rely on moderate language over extreme language. By moderate language, I mean words that express cautious sentiments and that evoke restrained reactions in relation to their more intense synonyms. “Like,” for example, is a more moderate expression of appreciation than the word “love.” “Dislike” expresses distaste less intensely than the word “hate.”

Presuming that journalists adhere to the norms of professional practice implies that the articles they publish will tend to rely on words that

produce middling levels of arousal in readers (see Warriner, Kuperman, and Brysbaert 2013 for a discussion of arousal effects associated with English language words). Sensational language, i.e., language deliberately chosen and gratuitously used to provoke strong reactions from readers, is uncommon.

This orientation to conveying the news in moderate terms suggests a reason to be skeptical about claims that the news media began dramatizing its terrorism beat reporting after 9/11. The rules of journalistic practice do not permit reporters to use language to artificially amplify the sense of dread readers experience. From the vantage point of the professional model, there is no reason to expect sharp increases in the use of scare words like “fear” and “victim” in terrorism beat reporting.

The same reasoning applies to the use of negative language in terrorism beat news. Negative language is more provocative than positive language, which gives reports that contain more negative words than positive ones an economic advantage in the marketplace for news. There are limits, however, to just how far journalists can go. Accuracy is the first principle of good journalism. Reporters are also required to minimize harm to their audiences. The news that reporters deliver, therefore, cannot intentionally mischaracterize the state of the world journalists observe. This suggests that changes in the negativity of the language used on the terrorism beat have more to do with variation in the quality of the events reporters cover than variation in the profitability of the news organizations that employ them.

When Sensationalism Dominates Sobriety

The norms of professional practice admit three exceptions to the rule that journalists should prefer moderate language over sensational language. First, sensational language is permissible in headlines. The need to alert readers to important stories is the (professional) justification for this practice.

Second, sensational language is permissible when it is necessary, i.e., when reporters lack moderate options. Consider the challenge of reporting on acts of terrorism perpetrated using guns. These weapons are not easy to identify with more moderate terms. A gun could be referred to as a firearm, but this is not obviously either a superior or less provocative choice.

“Piece” is a slang term for gun that might qualify as more moderate, but slang and other euphemisms are frowned upon in news coverage. Journalists who report on events involving guns do not have much flexibility in their language choices.

Finally, extreme language is permissible when reporters quote sources. News sources are not limited by the rules of journalistic communication. Sources may express ideas as provocatively as they want. If journalists decide to use quotes from their sources, they are required to report those statements accurately.

Crisis Communication

The reporting rules that journalists normally rely on are disrupted during crises sparked by acts of terrorism. The harm-minimization principle encourages journalists to moderate their language more than usual.

There is also a psychological dimension to the changes in reporting that crises bring about. During terrorism crises, journalists worry about the potential for public panic (Sandman and Paden 1979b). This further encourages newspapers to moderate the tone of the reporting they publish.

Some newspapers, however, temper their reporting more than others. Journalists who serve communities that are physically distant from the places where crises take place report on crisis events more negatively than journalists who serve communities that are physically proximate to crisis events. Journalists who serve distant audiences tend to rely on negative language more than their proximate counterparts to drive the relevance of distant events home to their readers. Proximate journalists, in contrast, report less negatively than their distant counterparts out of concern that their normal reporting styles could spark panic.

Yaacov Trope and Nira Liberman (2010) call this pattern a “construal level” effect. As distance between people and the location of event increases, so too does the psychological distance between them (Liberman, Trope, and Stephan 2007). The greater the distance between people and distal objects in either space or time, the more abstractly they represent those objects in their minds. In contrast, the smaller the distance between people and objects in either space or time, the more concretely people think about those objects.

When journalists at newspapers far from the epicenter of crisis events

write more negatively about crises than journalists at newspapers close to the epicenter of crisis events, it is because their respective audiences relate to the crisis differently. Distance audiences appreciate the crisis in more abstract terms. Local audiences, in contrast, understand the crisis in exquisite detail. The greater negativity of distant reporting reflects the effort by journalists to make far-away events more tangible to their readers.

Basic Research Strategy

Both the profit-seeking and professional models of news production presume that they provide a useful description of terrorism beat news. In this section, I sketch the approaches I take to developing an accurate description of the terrorism beat. More detailed discussions of my research design choices appear in subsequent chapters.

Mapping the terrorism beat accurately is complicated because it requires answers to several interrelated questions. There are questions about the terrorism beat's content: What subjects garner the most attention? How do terrorism beat reporters use language to communicate with audiences? Then, there are questions about how people respond to the terrorism beat news they receive: Is content from the terrorism beat provocative? Media effects emerge from the combination of content and human psychology. Assessments of the terrorism beat must consider how people react to the news reporters produce. Finally, there is the question of intent: How do journalists use negative information during terrorism crises when they have their audiences' undivided attention?

These questions about content, consequences, and calculations speak to the elements of the terrorism beat that critics say present audiences with sensationalized news: journalists supply audiences with reports that accentuate terrorist threats and attacks, ignore counterterrorism efforts except when they involve uses of force, rely on the language of fear to maintain profitability, and advance bleak narratives during crises, when people are most vulnerable to these appeals.

The research I conducted on the terrorism beat is organized around this critique. The specific claims and counterclaims I examine, derived from the profit-seeking and professional models of news production, are listed in table 1. The question I address in this section is how to assess competing arguments about the terrorism news beat fairly?

TABLE I. Differing Expectations about the Terrorism Beat's Content and Language

Expectation	Model	Chapter
<i>Most covered subjects, by relative frequency</i>		<i>see chap. 3</i>
Threats and attacks > counterterrorism > community responses	Profit seeking	
Counterterrorism > threats and attacks > community responses	Professional media	
<i>Change in subject matter, 1997–2014</i>		<i>see chap. 3</i>
Reporting on terrorist threats and attacks increases	Profit seeking	
<i>Counterterrorism reporting</i>		<i>see chap. 3</i>
Militarized counterterrorism > other counterterrorism	Profit seeking	
Criminal justice responses > militarized counterterrorism	Professional media	
Counterterrorism failures > counterterrorism successes	Profit seeking	
Counterterrorism success \approx counterterrorism success	Professional media	
<i>Language</i>		<i>see chap. 4</i>
Predominantly negative	Both	
Gratuitous uses of provocative language are common	Profit seeking	
Articles with positive tone appear regularly	Professional media	
Moderate language, regardless of valence, predominates	Professional media	
<i>Change in language, 1997–2014</i>		<i>see chap. 4</i>
Use of words “fear” and “victim” increase after 9/11	Profit seeking	
Increased reliance on negative language after 9/11	Profit seeking	
Tone of news roughly consistent over time	Professional media	
<i>Language use during terrorism crises</i>		<i>see chap. 5</i>
Reporting during crises is more negative than usual	Profit seeking	
Reporting during crises is less negative than usual	Professional media	
Negativity of language varies by proximity to site of attack	Professional media	

I start by treating questions about the terrorism beat's content as statistical estimation problems. In other words, I attempt to identify the relative proportion of terrorism news beat articles that address the subjects of terrorist threats and attacks, counterterrorism, and community responses to terrorism based on observations of a sample of coverage.

Methodologically, this approach demands a strategy for drawing unbiased samples of newspaper coverage for the purposes of estimating population parameters accurately. I accomplished this by identifying articles catalogued in Lexis Nexis, an important database for news, containing the

words “terrorism,” “terrorist,” or “terrorists” in their headlines, lead sentences, or keywords and drawing at random from this sampling frame. In chapters 3 and 4, I used this approach to draw random samples of terrorism beat articles published in the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post* between 1997 and 2014.

Relying on randomly selected articles from the terrorism beat distinguishes this work from previous work on this subject. The most common method of identifying articles from the terrorism beat has been to search for news about specific attacks (e.g., Atwater 1987; Rohner and Frey 2007; Mitnik, Freilich, and Chermak 2020). Journalists file reports from the terrorism beat several times per week. Sampling articles based on their connection to specific acts of terrorism misses this and, therefore, cannot provide a representative picture of terrorism beat reporting.

The biggest benefit of using a random sample of terrorism news beat articles is unbiasedness. Samples drawn at random represent the population from which they were drawn more reliably than articles drawn from that population deliberately. The cost of randomization is that important acts of terrorism can get left out.

I address this in chapters 6 and 7. These chapters examine the coverage of six major terrorism crises that took place in the United States between 1995 and 2018: the Oklahoma City bombing, the 1996 Olympic Park bombing, the 9/11 attacks, the 2002 DC Sniper attacks, the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, and the 2018 Dallas Police Shooting. Once again, I sampled coverage of these attacks at random but made sure to focus the samples I drew on the reporting about these crises as they unfolded.

The professional model of news production suggests that moderation is called for in times of crisis, but the profit-seeking model suggests that reporters increase the negativity of their reporting under these circumstances. Is crisis journalism described more effectively using a model that assumes journalists report with the public interest at heart or using a model that assumes reporters are driven by a desire to maintain the profitability of their employers?

In chapter 8, I turn my attention from the quality of terrorism beat reporting to the influence this reporting has on audiences. At its most basic level, the study of terrorism beat news is motivated by the sense that the news people receive shapes their sense of safety from terrorism. Reactions to press reporting, however, cannot be inferred directly from published news. Instead, public reactions to press coverage must be examined directly.

I treat questions about the consequences of reading terrorism beat articles as counterfactual reasoning problems in which the challenge is finding ways to assess how exposure to different forms of terrorism beat news influences the ways people think about their security. The profit-seeking model suggests that journalists report the way they do in anticipation of the reactions that reporting has on audiences. I examine the logic of this claim in chapters 7 and 8.

In chapter 7, I use a simulation to examine the consequences of exposing people to the range of reporting that appears on the terrorism beat. Most experimental studies of exposure to terrorism beat news present participants with examples of reporting that use unusually negative language about terrorist threats and attacks. These experimental treatments are unrepresentative of the range of reporting that people get from major newspapers. The simulation I analyze suggests that supplying participants with less extreme examples of terrorism beat news produces far less noxious effects on the audiences for this material. Some terrorism beat reports even help bolster people's sense of security.

In chapter 8, I present several experiments that test the idea that counterterrorism reporting is reassuring. Counterterrorism coverage is an underappreciated dimension of terrorism beat reporting. Some say counterterrorism news undermines the public's sense of security by reminding them that terrorism is a threat to them (e.g., Sunstein 2005). This result is consistent with the profit-seeking model, which suggests that delivering alarming coverage helps news organizations improve their profitability. Others say that counterterrorism news is reassuring (e.g., Zussman and Zussman). This claim is more in line with the professional model, which suggests that reporters deliver content that helps audiences appreciate their circumstances more accurately. The tests in chapter 8 help scrutinize these claims.

The evidence I present across all these analyses is consistent with expectations derived from the professional model. This evidence cannot validate that the observed patterns emerge because journalists follow professional rules and practices, but this is not the goal. The goal is to see the terrorism beat more clearly as a varied area of reporting that sometimes makes people feel insecure and sometimes does not.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I described two nonformal models of the terrorism news beat, the profit-seeking model of news production and the professional model of news production. The profit-seeking model is rooted in the idea that economic pressures on the news industry influence coverage. Its basic claim is that journalists traffic in fear in order to make the sale of news more profitable. There has always been a need for news organizations to make money, but the pressure to do so has increased exponentially as the result of technological changes that are threatening the news industry in fundamental ways. The worse these economic pressures became, the more journalists responded with sensationalized reporting.

In contrast, the professional model of news production is rooted in the idea that journalists align their work with a set of well-known norms, principles, and practices that establish benchmarks for quality reporting. If there is an overarching prediction from this model of news production, it would be consistency over time. Change in the rules and practices that govern the production of news occurs largely at the margins. Central organizing principles, like the idea that journalists are watchdogs for the public interest, have not changed fundamentally. The terrorism beat's quality has remained relatively consistent.

The profit-seeking and professional models are not the only models of news production that are in use, but they are almost certainly the most talked-about models. This is for good reason: both models seem to describe significant aspects of terrorism beat reporting. The images of gruesome murders displayed on the front pages of Mexican newspapers, for instance, are hard to understand as anything other than mechanisms to increase profits. At the same time, stories about bilateral agreements between governments to prevent terrorism seem in line with professional reporting standards. The question is which one of these models is better at describing the terrorism beat's central tendencies? Answering this question is the subject of the next several chapters.

Terrorism Beat Topics, 1997–2014

It is no exaggeration to say that terrorism became the dominant issue in American politics after 9/11. Before 9/11, the *Washington Post* published an average of one to two articles per day from the terrorism beat. After 9/11, the *Post* carried an average of eleven terrorism beat articles per day (Hoffman et al. 2010). Increases like this did not just happen at the *Post*. After 9/11, the phrase “terrorist attacks” appeared in more than 1.2 million articles, while the phrase “terrorist attack” appeared in more than 500,000 articles (Segalla 2017).

Changes like these in the number of articles referencing terrorism are often cited as evidence of the terrorism beat’s transformation from serious news beat to “infotainment” (e.g., Nacos 2007). The trouble is that the relationship between the number of terrorism beat articles published and the content of those articles is unclear. The same is true of phrases like “terrorist attack.” Articles that use this phrase can address a range of topics, not just material about threats and attacks.

The research presented in this chapter underscores these points. The large increase in terrorism beat content was primarily an increase in work covering the subject of counterterrorism, government efforts to prevent, postpone, and punish terrorist activity. Terrorist threats and attacks receive substantially less attention than counterterrorism even though I used words like “terrorism” and “terrorist” to search for terrorism beat articles.

This conclusion about counterterrorism news is difficult to find in studies of the terrorism beat. Academics routinely represent the terrorism beat as an area of reporting focused on political violence perpetrated by non-state actors against civilian targets (Ahern et al. 2005; Altheide 2017;

Archetti 2013; Boyle and Mower 2018; Breckenridge, Zimbardo, and Sweeton 2010; Chermak and Gruenewald 2006; Das et al. 2009; Delli Carpini and Williams 1987; Gadarian 2010; Jetter 2014; Kearns, Betus, and Lemieux 2019; Marin 2011; Matthes, Schmuck, and von Sikorski 2019; Merolla and Zechmeister 2009; Mitnik, Freilich, and Chermak 2020; Moeller 2009; Papacharissi and de Fatima Oliveira 2008; Rohner and Frey 2007; Slone, Shoshani, and Baumgarten-Katz 2008; Slone 2000; Weimann and Winn 1994; Weimann and Brosius 1991). The reality is that audiences regularly receive news about new counterterrorism laws and policies; legislative hearings about counterterrorism efforts; academic and think-tank reports detailing terrorist activity around the world; political controversies surrounding counterterrorism; political competition between parties about which one of them will be toughest on terror; and diplomatic efforts to establish anti-terrorism cooperation between countries.

The unrecognized volume of reporting on counterterrorism speaks directly to the idea that reporters frighten the public through their intense focus on threats and attacks. There is simply too much reporting on counterterrorism to maintain this claim in any straightforward way.

My analysis of articles focusing on community responses to terrorism also raise questions about characterizations of the terrorism beat as a sensationalized area of reporting. News about community responses to terrorism often highlight community-level efforts to cope with the threat of terrorism, individual acts of heroism during terrorist attacks, and economic resilience following acts of terrorism. These topics are inconsistent with representations of the terrorism beat as a consistent source of scary stories.

Just as surprisingly, articles about community responses to terrorism appear roughly as often as articles about terrorist threats and attacks in *USA Today*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Washington Post*. The *New York Times* is the exception. It is the only paper of the four that regularly published fewer articles about community responses to terrorism than articles about terrorist threats and attacks over the period I examined. This result suggests that articles about community responses to terrorism are an important part of the terrorism beat but that precisely how important depends on the news source.

Overall, the disconnect between the terrorism beat's content and characterizations of that content underscores the need for more accurate descriptions of the subject matter that comprises terrorism beat news. More generally, these findings suggest that concerns about the quality of report-

ing on the terrorism beat are overstated. Instead of displaying the tell-tale signs of sensationalized news, the terrorism beat follows professional patterns. Government action dominates reporting, whether it involves the use of force or not. Community responses to terrorism are covered least, although the number of stories about ordinary people occasionally exceeds the number of stories about terrorist threats and attacks. There is little evidence of a correlation between the terrorism beat topics that journalists publish and the profitability of the newspapers that employ them.

An Evidentiary Approach

My conclusions about the terrorism beat reflect the strategy I used to sample material from this reporting domain. Previous research on the terrorism beat mapped its subject matter either by using the number of articles identified through keyword searches as a proxy for the content of those stories (e.g., Nacos 2007) or by deliberately selecting stories about specific terrorist threats and attacks (e.g., Moeller 2009).

The standard approaches, however, produce erroneous inferences about the population of terrorism beat articles. Using keyword searches to draw conclusions about content is dubious, because words like “terrorism,” “terrorist,” and “terrorists” are used to classify a range of news, not just stories about violent events perpetrated by non-state actors against non-combatant targets. The content of articles identified through keyword searches must be checked to ensure they are classified properly.

Studying purposive samples of terrorism beat content is less likely than simple keyword searching to result in content misclassification errors, but it is also susceptible to bias. Almost by definition, news about notable terrorist attacks is unlikely to be representative of typical terrorism beat news. This makes purposive sampling a risky method of learning about day-to-day terrorism beat reporting. The lessons built on observations of unusual attacks are unlikely to apply to ordinary reporting.

Simple random sampling is my answer to the challenge of drawing unbiased samples of terrorism beat content without losing the ability to read these stories carefully for classification purposes. Bias is a problem when sample selection strategies are correlated with outcomes of interest, in this case the terrorism beat news that newspapers publish. Random sampling solves the problem of bias by selecting articles independent of

any process that might be related to the production of that material. Random sampling also makes it possible to cut the population of terrorism beat articles down to size for content analysis.

The procedure I followed to create the random sample I used is straightforward. I identified the total number of stories published annually on the terrorism beat by searching the LexisNexis academic database for articles published in the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post* between 1997 and 2014 that had the words “terrorism,” “terrorist,” or “terrorists” in the headline, lead paragraph, or key terms.¹ Then, I selected roughly 50 articles per year from each newspaper at random using random numbers generated using the random.org website.

I focused on the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post* because they are the most influential producers of terrorism beat news in the United States. Historically, material from the terrorism beat comes disproportionately from reporters who work at the “foreign desks” of their news organizations. This alone makes the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post* influential. While most news organizations have no foreign news gathering capacity at all, the *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times*, have the US’s largest and second-largest foreign reporting operations. The *Washington Post* also devotes significant resources to foreign reporting (Kaphle 2015). *USA Today* is less invested in foreign reporting than the other three, but its influence is felt through its distribution of news to its affiliates in the Gannett media network.

The *New York Times*, *USA Today*, and *Washington Post* are also good choices because these newspapers figure prominently in terrorism beat research (e.g., Nacos 2007; Hoffman et al. 2010; Altheide 2017). Focusing on these papers, therefore, helps make this work comparable with previous terrorism beat studies. The addition of the *Wall Street Journal* extends this work to another influential US newspaper that, to my knowledge, has not been included in terrorism beat studies before.

A downside of using published articles from these newspapers is that I cannot examine biases that are introduced into the news through the gatekeeping process. This issue has drawn attention over the years (Weimann and Brosius 1991; Chermak and Gruenewald 2006; Scott 2001), because media gatekeeping produces coverage of terrorist activity that is

1. The articles I examined from the *Wall Street Journal* start in the year 2000, reflecting their availability in LexisNexis.

unrepresentative of the universe of attacks. Nevertheless, this is an acceptable limitation since the qualities of the news that people receive is at issue in this research.

Drawing on articles at random also creates some challenges, because randomly chosen articles can include news that is not directly about terrorism at all. Several of the articles I sampled, for example, focused on Israeli-Palestinian relations without dealing specifically with terrorist threats and attacks, counterterrorism, or community responses to terrorism. Articles like these would be a problem if the number of articles I selected was too great to screen carefully, but my sample was small enough for me and a team of coders to identify and remove 1,001 of these false positives from the analysis set.

Classifying Articles

Articles in hand, three coders and I read and categorized the headline and the first three paragraphs of every story we sampled. In all, the coding team read and coded 13,884 headlines and first, second, and third paragraphs spread across 3,471 articles.

Coders focused on these four elements of each article to balance our interest in what articles on the terrorism beat focus on with concerns for the feasibility of studying reporting over a lengthy period. Focusing on the headline and first few paragraphs ensures that the material most news consumers read is part of this study.

The coded parts of each article were categorized using a set of rules designed to distinguish the coverage of terrorist threats and attacks from the coverage of (1) counterterrorism, (2) community responses to terrorism, and (3) other, non-terrorism subjects. I included a category for “other” subjects because articles from the terrorism beat routinely blend material focusing on terrorist threats and attacks, counterterrorism, and community responses to terrorism with material that addresses subject matter that does not fall into any of these categories. The codebook that establishes the principles for assigning material to each of the categories appears in the online appendix (Hoffman 2025).

I established inter-coder reliability using 150 articles from the terrorism beat that do not appear in the analysis set. Krippendorff's α , the measure of inter-rater reliability I used, suggest a high degree of agreement

in the coders' assessments. Scores ranged from a low of .76 for the third paragraphs in the articles coders examined to .89 for the lead paragraphs. Krippendorff's α for the headlines and second paragraphs were .81 and .82 respectively.

The Diverse Terrorism Beat

The image of the terrorism beat that emerges from this reading might best be described as kaleidoscopic, given the intermingling of stock-in-trade stories with out of the ordinary news. Some terrorism beat stories are unusual or unexpected. Others involve fresh looks at otherwise standard material. Either way, the newspapers I studied provided their readers varied coverage of a range of terrorism related topics. Below, I describe the kinds of stories I found in each category of reporting.

Threats and Attacks

The coverage of terrorist threats and attacks is the most controversial dimension of terrorism beat reporting. It is also the most homogenous category of news that newspapers provide. In the threats and attacks category, I asked coders to search for: published news focusing on actual or threatened acts of violence by non-state actors, usually against non-combatant targets (e.g., civilians); reporting about individual terrorists and terrorist organizations; and content about state sponsorship of terrorist activity. These are the types of stories that are thought to do the public the most harm.

In the threats-and-attacks category, stories about recent acts of terrorism appear most often. Major terrorist attacks took place in the United States in New York (Herszenhorn 1997), Washington DC (Twomey and Santana 2001), and Boston (Madhani and Singer 2013) over the course of the research period I examined. The newspapers I examined covered all of them.

Less dramatic attacks and failed attempts inside the United States made the papers as well. Army major Nidal M. Hasan's assault on an army base in Texas got covered (Wan, Hosh, and Davenport 2009) as did the murder of Dr. Barnett Slepian, an abortion provider in New York (*USA*

Today 1998). José Padilla's unsuccessful effort to release a dirty bomb in the United States got reported (Tyler 2002). So did Richard Reid's failed shoe-bombing attempt (Bandler 2002).

Acts of international terrorism targeting Americans are another frequent topic of reporting. Bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 received a lot of attention (e.g., Shenon 1998) as did the attack against the USS *Cole* (e.g., Gordon 2000). There was a steady stream of reporting about terrorism in Afghanistan and Iraq after the US invasions of those countries, such as a 2007 suicide car bombing against US soldiers in Diyala Province, Iraq, that got attention (Rubin 2007). The 2012 attack on the US embassy in Libya that killed an American ambassador made the news too (Associated Press 2012).

Terrorist attacks that took place outside of the United States and did not harm Americans or their property were also the frequent subject of reporting. This list includes attacks taking place in Canada (Austen and Gladstone 2014), England (Anderson and Knickmeyer 2006), India (Wax and Lakshmi 2008), Israel (Myre 2005), Nigeria (Hinshaw, Moore, and McGroarty 2012), Northern Ireland (Squitieri 1997), Norway (Press 2011), and Spain (Catan and Ferreira 2009).

The specter of terrorism loomed large in late 1999 as people planned for the turn of the millennium (King and McKinnon 1999). *USA Today* reported that security concerns were so high in the days before New Year's Eve that there were not enough bomb-sniffing dogs to meet demand (Johnson 2000). Following the 9/11 attacks, concerns about attacks targeting airports, shipping ports, health-care facilities, and chemical plants were reported on as well (e.g., Hall 2005).

Statements issued by terrorists got press coverage, as did windows into the operations of prominent terrorist organizations. Threats and other statements issued by Osama bin Laden got the most attention, but terror organizations other than Al-Qaeda also found ways into the news. The *New York Times* ran an article on life in "Farlandia," an area in Colombia under the de facto control of the FARC (Rohter 1999). The *Wall Street Journal* covered Hezbollah's reliance on Al-Manar television to promote its message (Solomon and Fam 2006).

All four newspapers I studied published material about state sponsorship of terrorism. Iran (Bronner 2012), Pakistan (Dugger 1999), and Syria (Kalman 2000) were the focus of most of these stories, but reporters also identified Cuba (Frank 2010), North Korea (Simpson and Meckler 2009), and Sudan (Lynch 2000) as problematic promoters of terrorist activity.

Libya, an active sponsor of terrorism in the 1980s, is noticeably missing from the reporting on state sponsorship in my sample. Only one article in my sample mentions Libya as a state sponsor of terrorism, and that article explores whether Libya might be removed from the State Department's list of state sponsors of terrorism (Slavin 1999).

The coverage of terrorist threats and attacks contains some other surprises as well. The terrorists who get press coverage are not always at the top of the United States' most-wanted list. In 1999, for example, the *New York Times* profiled George Habash, Nayef Hawatmeh, and Ahmed Jibril, all three of whom lead violent Palestinian groups in the 1970s and 1980s, but who had not been involved in terrorist activity for at least a decade when the article appeared (Jehl 1999a). Another article focused on Abu Nidal, "one of the world's most infamous terrorists," but whose organization was "a shadow of the terrorist machine that staged airport killings in the mid-1980s" at the time of publication (Risen 1999). *USA Today* covered the capture of four "elderly" domestic terrorists in the United States (Bacon 2011).

The geographic distribution of news about terrorist threats and attacks defies easy explanation. Proximate attacks tend to be more intimidating than distant ones (Avdan and Webb 2019) and should be preferred by journalists based on their attention to proximate news, but reports of terrorist threats and attacks taking place on US soil are the exception rather than the rule in the articles. Eighty percent of the terrorist threats and attacks in my article database relate to events that took place outside the United States.

The simple explanation is that the United States suffers more terrorism abroad than it does at home (Sandler 2015). But the imbalance also reflects a norm of viewing terrorist threats and attacks through the lens of US foreign policy (Moeller 2009) and a hesitancy in the States to apply the term "terrorism" to instances of domestic political violence (Taylor 2019; Wilson and Lynxwiler 1988). My research uncovered just two references to abortion clinic violence and no reporting about arson attacks targeting African American churches in the US South, even though attacks of both kinds took place during the period I examined. I also found no profiles of leaders in the white Christian Patriot movement even though the Oklahoma City bombing, the largest act of terrorism in US history at the time, remained a prominent story when my sample began in 1997.

In short, the category of threats and attacks is the place where readers wanting news about violence and intimidation by terrorists should look.

This is where newspapers chronicle recent acts of terrorism, potential soft targets, and state sponsorship of terrorism.

Despite its reputation for consistently frightening content, however, news in the threats-and-attacks category is neither monolithic nor, on its face, persistently intimidating. Terrorists are occasionally depicted as incompetent and feeble. State sponsors of terrorism are thought to be capable of renouncing their support for terrorist organizations. Even this mostly grim category of news has its rays of hope.

Counterterrorism

Reporting on counterterrorism is far more varied than the coverage of threats and attacks. This probably reflects the wide range of activities, investments, and policies that address the threat of terrorism. As Enders and Sandler (1993) point out, counterterrorism works by either raising the price of terrorist activities or lowering the costs of alternative courses of action.²

In principle, this means that everything governments do to deter, disrupt, and dissuade future acts of terrorism, from target hardening and decapitation strikes to diplomatic efforts, government surveillance and data gathering, and criminal investigations and prosecutions, counts as counterterrorism. This list also includes investments, such as support for educational programs delivered through foreign-aid spending (Azam and Thelen 2008), government sponsored insurance programs that make societies less sensitive to the economic consequences of terrorist activity (Kunreuther and Michel-Kerjan 2004), and efforts to boost the psychological hardiness of citizens (Bartone 2006). All these programs are thought to combat terrorism in one way or another.

Given the range of possible counterterrorism stories, my collaborators and I counted any articles that connected the prevention or management of future attacks and/or their consequences to the actions of governments or government officials as articles about counterterrorism. This definition made it relatively easy to identify material about counterterrorism. It did not, however, make it easy to figure out where the dividing line between counterterrorism and terrorism fell.

2. For a similar conceptualization of counterterrorism, see Ganor (2005).

The following lead sentence from an article about accused shoe-bomber Richard C. Reid illustrates the challenge: “Accused shoe bomber Richard C. Reid had help from at least one accomplice in his failed bid to blow up a trans-Atlantic flight and told his mother the action was part of ‘a war between’ Islam and ‘disbelief,’ according to court records” (Bandler 2002).

On one hand, the article covers a court proceeding against Reid, a clear element of the United States’ counterterrorism machinery. On the other hand, the article details Reid’s effort to engage in terrorism by blowing up a passenger airplane. Counterterrorism and terrorism are often deeply intertwined.

We handled stories like this one by asking about the timing of reports and about the sources journalists relied on. Had the reporting been “day after” reporting about Reid’s initial attempt, we would have assigned it to the threats-and-attacks category. When reporters relied on government officials and processes for information, as they did in the article about Reid, we assigned the text segment to the counterterrorism category. Information about his plot came to light as part of court proceedings against him, and so we classified it as counterterrorism coverage.³

Using these rules, we identified a range of reporting about government counterterrorism efforts spread across several thematic areas. Unsurprisingly, articles about *militarized counterterrorism efforts*, the subject of some concern in the literature on terrorism coverage, are well represented. Between 1997 and 2014, we found articles on retaliatory US airstrikes against suspected terrorist training camps in Afghanistan and Sudan during the Clinton administration (Nichols 1998), Russian airstrikes against Chechen targets during Boris Yeltsin’s presidency (*USA Today* 1999), US drone strikes in North Waziristan (Witte and Khan 2009), and Colombian airstrikes against a base operated by the FARC (Forero 2010), among others.

After 9/11, however, reporting on military counterterrorism efforts expanded beyond the coverage of military strikes against suspected terrorists and their assets. The United States’ four major national newspapers also covered questions relating to military trials of suspected terrorists held at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba (e.g., Gomez 2008), the use of military prisons

3. Originally, coders were instructed to classify terrorist attacks reported by government officials in the counterterrorism category. This coding rule, however, assigned too many reports about terrorism to the counterterrorism condition. I reversed this decision after the team completed its work and assigned text units with this characteristic to the terrorism category to avoid skewing the analysis in favor of counterterrorism content.

in the war on terror (Savage 2011), and efforts by US military officials to win the trust of Muslims living in the Philippines as a way of undercutting an insurgency in that country (Wiseman 2002).

We also found many articles focusing on *criminal justice responses to terrorism*. Reporting on criminal investigations into terrorist attacks and conspiracies appeared in the news frequently, from numerous stories about the investigation into the 9/11 hijacking (e.g., Trofimov 2001), to the FBI's identification of the Unabomber's identity (Johnston 1998), and the hunt for Boston Marathon bombers (Dawsey et al. 2013).

Many stories examined ongoing criminal prosecutions. Several articles covered the guilty verdict against Timothy McVeigh (e.g, Johnson and Willing 1997) and Terry Nichols's life sentence for his role in the Oklahoma City bombing (Johnson 1998). 9/11 prosecutions loomed large, especially the cases against Zacarias Moussaoui (e.g., Loci 2004) and José Padilla, an American citizen who was arrested for plotting to detonate a "dirty" bomb in the United States in support of Al-Qaeda (Parker 2007). Foreign court cases got covered too. A case in Spain against two former government officials charged with the kidnapping of a Basque official got attention when former prime minister Felipe González formally joined the defense team (*New York Times* 1998). The proceedings against the alleged Lockerbie bombers was a persistent topic in the news (McNeil 2000). The Iranian government received attention after announcing that they would try terrorism suspects in their courts (Branigin and Wright 2004).

We found frequent reporting on *legislative responses to terrorism*. Congressional hearings involving executive branch officials were a constant source of stories about counterterrorism efforts. In one case, the *Washington Post* reported on testimony by Secretary of State Madeline Albright detailing her efforts to help the victims of terrorism identify Iranian assets they could target in lawsuits against Tehran (Miller 2000). Another story examined treasury secretary Paul O'Neill's testimony to Congress that the US economy was struggling to cope with uncertainty about how the insurance industry would price the threat of future attacks after 9/11 (Spinner 2001).

In addition to congressional testimony, terrorism beat reporters also covered the passage of new anti-terrorism legislation. In 2008, an agreement between House and Senate leaders over new surveillance legislation that could protect telecommunications companies from lawsuits made the news (Eggen and Kane 2008). A Senate bill to ban waterboarding, which President Bush threatened to veto, got coverage that same year as well

(Eggen and Kane 2008). In 2009, newspapers covered President Obama's decision to withdraw legislation designed to authorize the indefinite detention of prisoners held in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba (Perez 2009). We found stories about anti-terrorism legislation passed by foreign governments as well (e.g., Lyall 2005).

Political leaders became the subject of terrorism beat reporting through their *diplomatic responses to terrorism*. An agreement between the United States and Argentina to share intelligence in an effort to reduce the incidence of international terrorism is an example of this type of news (*Washington Post* 1998). A story about US and Russian efforts to place an embargo on the Taliban (Lynch 1999) falls into this subcategory of counterterrorism coverage as well. Leaders could also be included on the terrorism beat for their public diplomacy (e.g., Kumar 2005).

The politics of counterterrorism, a segment of terrorism beat news that examines the intersection between counterterrorism and the political fortunes of politicians, received a fair amount of attention in the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post*. Examples of this type of reporting include stories about recent public opinion polls (Nagourney and Elder 2004), charges and counter-charges leveled by politicians at each other during formal debates (Page 2012), and the ways in which counterterrorism influences elections (Sengupta 2008). Some of this reporting, although by no means all of it, has the "horserace" quality often used in electoral reporting (Iyengar, Norpoth, and Hahn 2004; Patterson 2011).

Like reporting on terrorist threats and attacks, counterterrorism coverage has its share of unexpected stories. Reporters were fascinated by stories about the capture of yesteryear's terrorists, even when those individuals and the groups they lead had been inactive for decades. Japan, for example, got the *New York Times's* attention when, in 2000, it captured Fusako Shigenobu, the founder of the Japanese Red Army (Strom 2000). In 2003, the *Washington Post* noted that Leon Klinghoffer's family applauded US authorities for capturing the man suspected of murdering Klinghoffer in 1985 on the *Achille Lauro* cruise ship (Eggen 2003).

It is also fair to describe stories on the US government's use of sea lions and dolphins for counterterrorism purposes as unexpected discoveries. In February 2003, *USA Today* reported that the US Navy deployed sea lions to the Persian Gulf to help protect its ships from underwater terrorist attacks (Leinwand 2003). Four years later, the *Washington Post* described

the use of sea lions and dolphins to defend the Puget Sound from terrorist attacks (Harden 2007). Counterterrorism coverage is nothing if not wide-ranging.

Community Responses

The final category of reporting we considered focused on the responses of private citizens and organizations (e.g., social media companies, human rights groups, private insurance companies, think tanks) to acts and threatened acts of terrorism. The people and organizations covered by this category were neither members of the government nor candidates for political office at the time they made the news.⁴ Statements by former government officials and politicians, for example, were assigned to this category. Academic and think-tank reports about terrorism's effects on people, community organizations, and corporations and their responses to terrorism also appear in this category.

Like counterterrorism reporting, news about community responses to terrorism can be wide-ranging. Coverage of community responses to terrorism include reporting about prayer vigils organized by religious groups, anti-terrorism demonstrations, defensive measures adopted by people (e.g., handgun purchases), statements condemning and, in some cases, supporting terrorism, statements of fear or anger relating to terrorism, acts of heroism during terrorist events, reports by medical professionals about the health of the victims of terrorism, and confrontations between citizens and their elected officials about terrorism. We also classified news about terrorism's influence on the economy in this category. These stories include reports about the earning reports of companies affected by terrorism, news of industry lobbying for new terrorism regulations and protections, as well as news about terrorism's influence on labor.

As with the other categories of reporting, the community-response category contains several stories that depict terrorism as a significant danger to people and property. The friends and family of journalist James Foley made the news for trying but failing to raise the millions of dollars Foley's captors demanded in exchange for Foley's life (Nissenbaum, Levitz,

4. Statements by candidates for office were assigned to the counterterrorism category, as these individuals were representing what they would do if they got elected.

and Gauthier-Villars 2014). The insurgency in Afghanistan did as well, because it sparked a run on Afghanistan's largest bank in 2010 (Nakamura and Higgins 2010).

Terrorism's harsh toll on the families of victims is another theme in community-response reporting. Journalists told the stories of Sharon Booker, whose husband was killed in the 9/11 attacks and whose identity was later stolen (Jones 2002), and of Alisa Flatow's parents, who attempted to sue the Iranian government for their role in supporting the 1995 suicide attack in Israel that killed their daughter only to be impeded in their efforts by their own (US) government (Miller and Mintz 1998). A reporter also wrote a poignant story about William McVeigh, Timothy McVeigh's father, the Friday after his son was sentenced to death for his role in the Oklahoma City bombing. This was soon enough for William McVeigh to understand the penalty for his son's actions, but too soon for McVeigh to know what the verdict meant for his own life (Halbfinger 1997).

At the same time, major US newspapers also attended to signs of hope and defiance that emerged in response to terrorism. The cities of Baltimore and Washington, DC, continued to press their bid for the 2012 Olympics after the 9/11 attacks (Shipley 2001). The residents of Arlington, Virginia, banded together to improve their county's emergency preparedness (Jenkins 2003). Spanish citizens demonstrated en masse, demanding that Basque rebels release councilman Miguel Ángel Blanco from captivity (*New York Times* 1997).

Community-response reporting considered questions about the proper balance between liberty and security in democratic societies (e.g., Ritter 2000) and examined the extent to which private companies complied with government requests for information (Schatz 2004).

Terrorism's impact on the economy, specific industries, and individual businesses were also prominent themes. The 9/11 attacks hit the airline industry's profits hard but were a boon for firms that supplied security related products. Microsoft bought back some of its stock partly to help stabilize the economy after 9/11 (*Wall Street Journal* 2001).

There were even stories about terrorism and counterterrorism as entertainment. Hollywood contemplated the production of movies related to foreign policy and war (Lippman 2005), while a book about the killing of Osama bin Laden became the top-selling book on *USA Today's* best-seller list (2012). After 9/11, Americans appeared eager for news that showed them turning the tables on their assailants.

Other Topics

The last subject category we used gathered material within our analysis set that did not relate to terrorism, counterterrorism, or community responses to terrorism directly. These “other” subjects appear on the terrorism beat frequently, although I did not anticipate this when I began this research. Reporting about subjects other than terrorism, counterterrorism, and community responses to terrorism is not something that extant research discusses. But the more my coding team and I read material from the terrorism beat, the clearer it became such a category was necessary.

Material in the “other” category can appear anywhere in articles, including headlines and lead paragraphs. Other content also appears alongside material about threats and attacks, counterterrorism, and community responses to terrorism. Most often, other news fills out reporting about a terrorism beat subject. For instance, in a story addressing meetings between Bill Clinton and several political figures in Northern Ireland about counterterrorism, the *New York Times* included a paragraph explaining that Clinton met each of his Northern Ireland counterparts individually: “Mr. Clinton met separately with David Trimble, the First Minister of Northern Ireland, Seamus Mallon, the Deputy First Minister, Gerry Adams, the Sinn Fein leader, and Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland before the annual St. Patrick’s Day reception” (Perlez 1999).

In short, the “other” category is a catchall for information that appears in articles about terrorist activity, counterterrorism, or community responses to terrorism, without addressing those subjects directly. This category serves as an additional reminder that the terrorism beat does not report solely on typical terrorism-related content.

The Disagreements

Although coverage diversity is an element of terrorism beat reporting, scholarly debates revolve around the terrorism beat’s central tendencies—in particular, the relative frequency with which news about terrorist threats, counterterrorism, and community responses to terrorism appear in the news. As I explained in chapter 2, the profit-seeking and professional models give rise to different expectations about the prevalence of different subjects on the terrorism beat.

In this section, I assess how well these models account for the coverage I examined. I evaluate competing claims about the terrorism beat by asking whether relevant parameters (e.g., means, percentages, etc.) describing the terrorism beat's subject matter are consistent with model expectations given the range of values the estimates could take within the boundaries of the 95% confidence interval or the related margin of error. For instance, it appears that approximately 44% of the third paragraphs in my database focus on counterterrorism news, as compared to roughly 15% that focus on threats and attacks, but these estimates may not be the same in the population of third paragraphs from the terrorism beat. The 95% confidence interval expresses the range of plausible values these estimates can take given what we know about the errors that random samples produce. Thus, the percentage of third paragraphs that are focused on counterterrorism range from a high of 46% to a low of 42%, while the range of third paragraphs about threats and attacks range from a high of 16% to a low of 14%.

Overall, my analysis suggests that the profit-seeking model offers a less descriptively accurate account of the terrorism beat than the professional model. The profit-seeking model exaggerates the amount of reporting about threats and attacks relative to coverage of counterterrorism and community responses. News of terrorist threats and attacks can hardly be described as filling the pages of the United States' most-read newspapers. Instead, counterterrorism is the most-reported-on subject on the terrorism beat.

Counterterrorism Dominates the Terrorism Beat

The first expectation I consider focuses on coverage of terrorist threats and attacks versus the coverage of counterterrorism. The profit-seeking model suggests that threats and attacks are the bread and butter of the terrorism beat, while the professional model suggests that counterterrorism reporting garners press attention more often. Both models anticipate that the relationships they predict hold across both the study period and the newspapers included in this research.

Only one of these expectations, however, is consistent with the data I gathered on terrorism beat reporting. Counterterrorism, not threats and attacks, is the most covered subject on the terrorism beat. This can be seen in several ways both cross-sectionally and through time.

The modal paragraph across the entire study period focuses on counterterrorism. About 41.3 percent of the 9,072 headlines and paragraphs we examined covered everything from military operations against suspected terrorist training sites to proclamations by leaders to eliminate the threat posed by terrorist organizations. The margin of error for this estimate, like all the cross-sectional estimates I present in this chapter, is plus or minus 1 percent.

“Other” subjects are the second most-reported-on topics on the terrorism beat. As I detailed above, this category covers everything from reports about high-level meetings between national leaders to earnings reports from publicly traded companies. Approximately 39.5 percent of the total fell into this residual category.⁵

Terrorist threats and attacks came in as the third most common subject on the terrorism beat—and a distant third at that. Only about 14 percent (1,240/9,072) of the paragraphs we studied focused on the activities of terrorist organizations or their sympathizers.

Community responses to terrorism was the least common subject covered on the terrorism beat from 1997 to 2014. Just 5.4 percent of the paragraphs we coded addressed ways ordinary citizens and civil society organizations dealt with the threat of terrorism. Figure 1 displays the basic frequencies associated with each subject type and the range of values for each category consistent with the 95% confidence interval.

Both the profit-seeking model and the professional model anticipated that news about community responses to terrorism appears relatively infrequently on the terrorism beat. Neither model expected other subjects to receive more coverage than threats and attacks, although this surprise is more problematic for the profit-seeking model since it suggests that threats and attacks comprise the bulk of terrorism beat news. Finally, the professional model suggests, correctly, that counterterrorism news is the most frequently covered subject on the terrorism beat. The size of the gap between counterterrorism coverage and threats-and-attacks reporting and the fact

5. The “other” category overestimates the frequency of miscellaneous topics a bit. My coding team had difficulty distinguishing between headlines that should be placed in the “other” category and headlines that could not be easily classified as one of the other categories. I deal with this by collapsing the “other” category with the “unsure” category (and getting rid of the latter category). The result is that a portion of the headlines classified as “other” are probably better described as unclear. Collapsing the two categories inflates the size of the “other” category somewhat, but not enough to make content about threats and attacks more common.

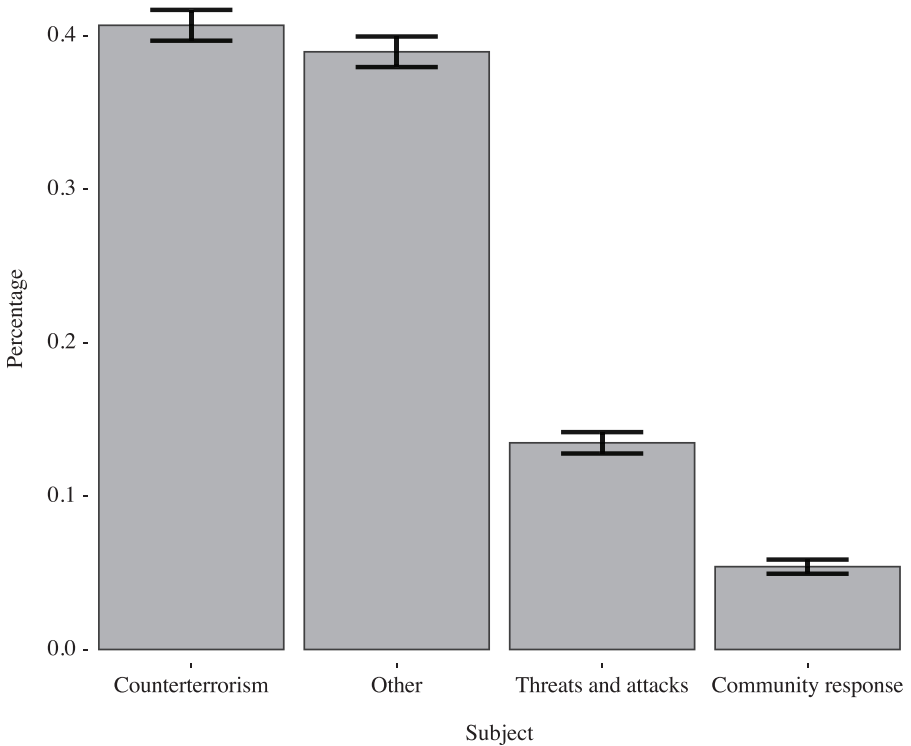


Fig. 1. Terrorism beat news by subject, 1997–2014. (Note: Error bars depict the 95% confidence interval.)

that the estimated confidence intervals for each subject do not overlap suggests that this result is robust. Counterterrorism is the most-reported-on topic on the terrorism beats of the four most widely circulating newspapers in the United States.

Relative frequencies

Digging deeper, counterterrorism's dominance can be seen across all the segments of the articles we examined. Counterterrorism is the subject of article headlines more than twice as often as terrorist threats and attacks. Lead paragraphs are dedicated to counterterrorism nearly 3.3 times (3.29:1) more often than terrorist threats and attacks. The second paragraphs of the articles we examined are about 3.44 times more likely

to report about counterterrorism than terrorist threats and attacks. Third paragraphs are about 3.00 times more likely to focus on counterterrorism than terrorist threats and attacks.

The imbalance between counterterrorism reporting and threats-and-attacks reporting narrows some when the prominence of each subject is considered relative to the appearance of each subject in the news. About 22 percent of the material we gathered about terrorist threats and attacks appeared in the headlines of stories, as compared to 17 percent of the material we gathered about counterterrorism. In other words, reporting about threats and attacks commands the headlines somewhat more than reporting about counterterrorism, contingent upon each topic appearing in the news.

Material about counterterrorism and threats and attacks is distributed relatively equally throughout the rest of the segments we examined. Of the material we gathered, 29% of all the counterterrorism content appeared in the lead sentence/first paragraph of the articles we examined, as compared with about 27% of the content addressing terrorist threats and attacks. Second paragraphs held 27.9% of the counterterrorism content in the articles we examined, as compared to 24.5% of the material focusing on terrorist threats and attacks. The third and final paragraphs of the articles we studied were the repository of 26% of the counterterrorism content and 26.1% of the content about terrorist threats. When newspapers report on terrorist threats and attacks, they are more likely to make that content the subject of headlines than when they cover counterterrorism. Threats and attacks and counterterrorism news, however, are equally likely to appear in paragraphs one, two, or three of the articles that newspapers publish.

It is important to note that similarities in the per-unit treatment of counterterrorism and terrorist threats and attacks may be purely theoretical. Whether audiences can detect these differences is doubtful. The underlying coverage rates are difficult to detect without systematic data collection efforts. More likely, what matters to readers is that on a day-to-day basis they see counterterrorism news frequently and threats-and-attacks coverage less often.

Trends

The aggregate patterns favoring counterterrorism are replicated annually over the entire study period. At no point in the seventeen-year period

examined does any terrorism-related topic appear in the news more often than counterterrorism as a share of all the coverage from the terrorism beat. This result is depicted in figure 2.

Counterterrorism reporting appeared most frequently as a share of the news we analyzed at the end of the second Clinton administration, between 1998 and 2000. The low point for counterterrorism reporting occurred in 2008, the end of George W. Bush's second term in office. Between 2008 and 2014, corresponding to Barack Obama's first six years in office, the percentage of paragraphs devoted to counterterrorism increased, although it never reached the levels seen at the beginning of the study period.

Nothing in the reporting itself suggests that there are overarching reasons for the fluctuations in coverage of counterterrorism. The most obvious explanation for the changes in coverage is that the trends reflect changes in the amount of counterterrorist activity available for journalists to cover. But the problem with this argument is that the frequency of terrorism and counterterrorism coverage as a percentage of all reporting from the terrorism beat reaches its highest point in 1998, prior to the start of the war on terror, a period of intense terrorist and counterterrorist activity. As has been shown repeatedly, the news does not simply mirror world events.

The possibility that economic factors influenced reporting is hinted at by the changing ratio of counterterrorism stories to threats-and-attacks news. Starting in 2005, reports about threats and attacks increase as a share of all terrorism beat stories, while reports about counterterrorism decline in number. The profit-seeking model suggested that a result like this would emerge as newspapers changed the mix of stories they published in order to attract readers.

The timing of the increase in reporting about threats and attacks relative to counterterrorism, however, does not correlate with downturns in the business of news. Revenues in the overall news industry do not begin to drop until 2009. Profits at the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post*, indicated by their circulation figures and advertising rates, remained strong as well. In short, the economic decline that was supposed to be at the root of this shift toward reporting on threats and attacks had not manifested itself yet.

The temporal patterns depicted in figure 2 also do not seem related to politics. Counterterrorism coverage hits its highest points during the Democratic Clinton and Republican Bush administrations. Counterterrorism news got relatively less attention during the Democratic Obama administration, which also had to deal with more coverage of terrorist

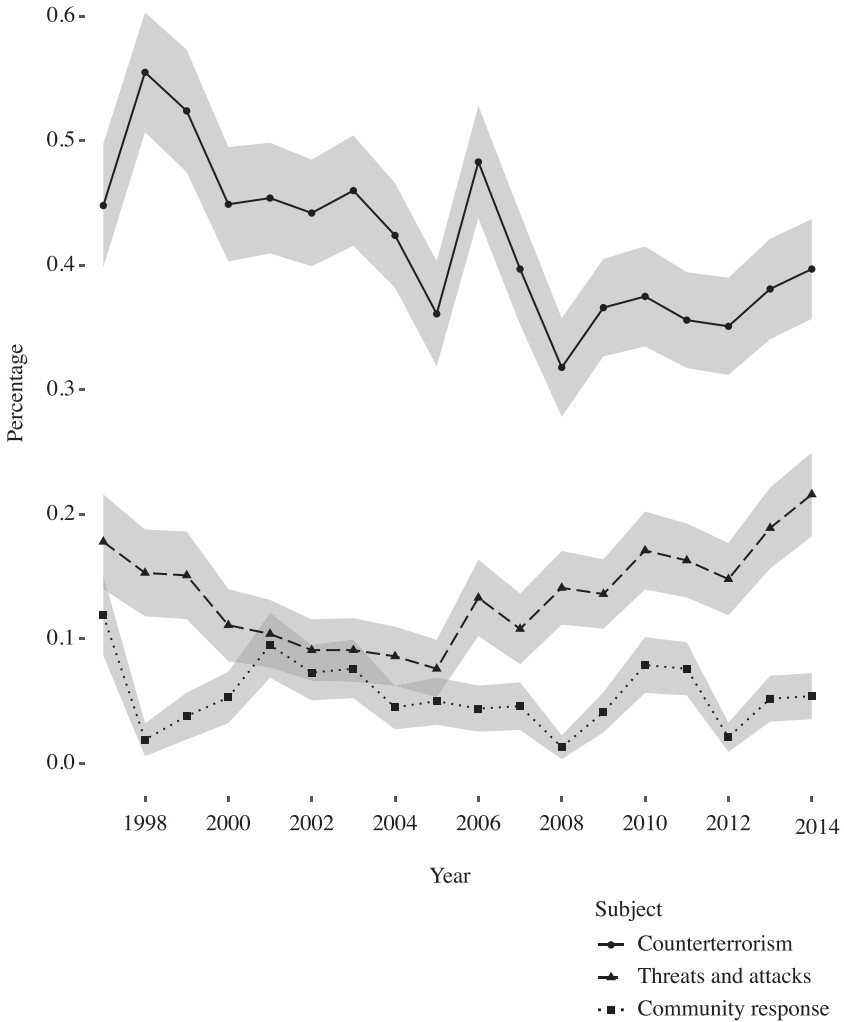


Fig. 2. Terrorism beat subjects over time, 1997–2014. (Note: Shaded areas represent the boundaries of the 95% confidence interval.)

threats-and-attacks coverage than the two administrations that preceded it. Exactly why these patterns emerge on a news beat produced by aggregating the reporting of two center-left newspapers, one centrist newspaper, and a center-right newspaper is unclear, but this is not a pattern that can be easily attributed to the partisan leanings of the press.

Trends by Newspaper

Apropos of this last observation, the difficulty of identifying clear reasons for the coverage trends I found might be related to my use of aggregate data. Decisions about what to cover are made by journalists and editorial teams at independent news organizations that must navigate their own sets of opportunities and constraints. More recognizable patterns of reporting, therefore, might become apparent at the level of the individual newspapers that I studied rather than in the aggregate. I consider that possibility here.

Breaking the aggregate terrorism beat down into its constituent parts, however, does not change the fundamental finding from the aggregate analysis: counterterrorism is the most reported subject in each of the newspapers I examined, followed by threats and attacks, and community responses to terrorism (I am continuing to exclude the “other” category from this analysis in order to focus on the elements of the terrorism beat that are the subject of academic discussion). Figure 3 displays these coverage patterns.

As figure 3 shows, each newspaper covered counterterrorism, threats and attacks, and community responses to terrorism at their own slightly different rates over the study period. Between 1998 and 2006, the *Washington Post* gave counterterrorism more attention as a share of the material it published than any of the other newspapers I studied. After 2006, however, the *Post*'s focus on counterterrorism declined. The *New York Times* devoted more attention to counterterrorism relative to other terrorism beat subjects in 2002 and 2003. The *Wall Street Journal* also increased its counterterrorism coverage in 2002 but did not exceed the level of counterterrorism reporting it produced in 2000. In contrast, *USA Today* reduced its coverage of counterterrorism coverage as a share of its terrorism beat reporting in 2002 and did not exceed its pre-9/11 counterterrorism reporting rate until 2004. Even with this variation, all four papers gave counterterrorism more attention than terrorist threats and attacks year after year.

For the most part, terrorist threats and attacks appears to be the next most covered subject on the terrorism news beat at each of the newspapers I examined, but it is difficult to be confident in this judgement because of the degree of statistical uncertainty surrounding the estimates. I will return to this point later, when I discuss reporting on community

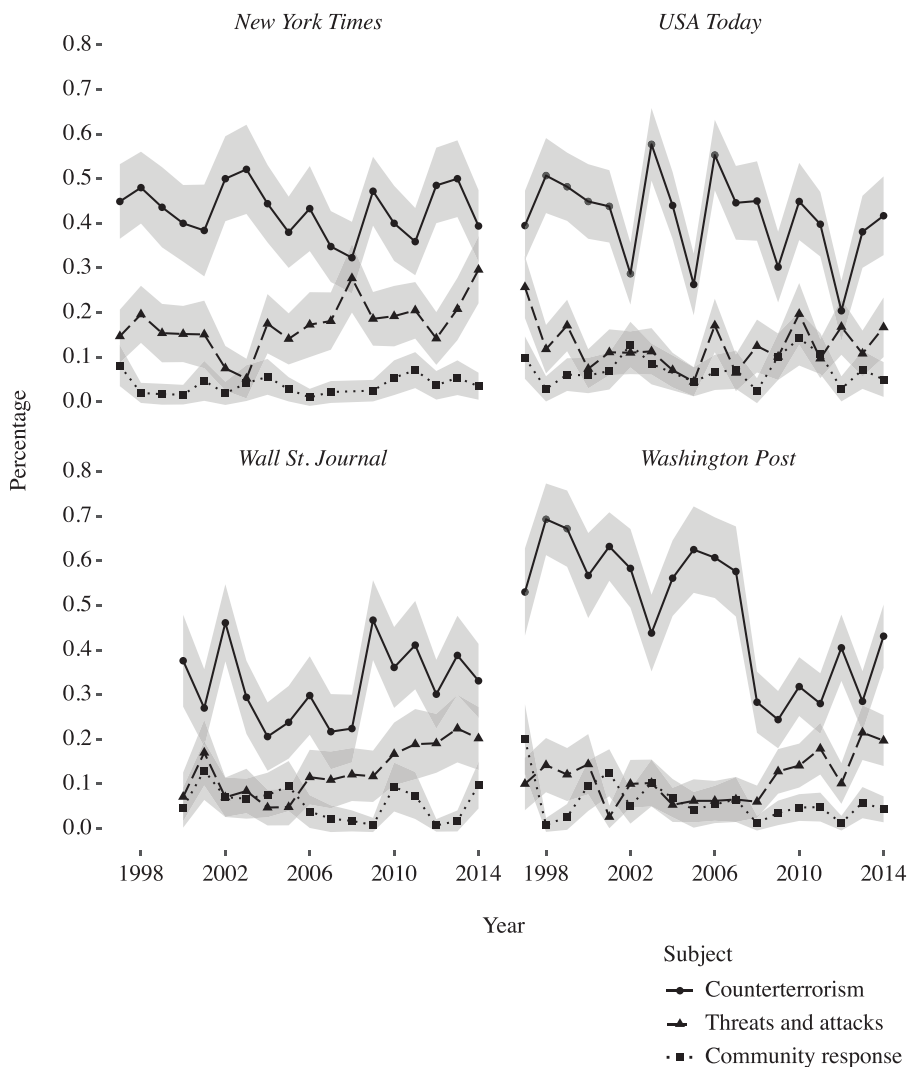


Fig. 3. Terrorism beat subjects by newspaper, 1997–2014. (Note: Shaded areas represent the boundaries of the 95% confidence interval.)

responses to terrorism. Suffice it to say for the moment that responsibility for the aggregate increases in the coverage of terrorist threats and attacks that I noted appears to belong to the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post*. *USA Today* mostly maintained a consistent level of reporting on terrorist threats and attacks over the study period. The other newspapers did not. Starting in 2005, the *New York*

Times began increasing the amount of coverage it devoted to threats and attacks. A similar pattern started at the *Wall Street Journal* in 2006 and at the *Washington Post* in 2008.

It is unlikely that economic pressures explain these coverage patterns at the individual newspapers. Based on exposure to market pressures, the profit-seeking model suggests that *USA Today* would produce the most reporting about terrorist threats and attacks, as it is a publicly traded company. The *Washington Post* is the next most likely candidate to increase its coverage of threats and attacks, as it was in the most financial difficulty of the three remaining newspapers. The *Wall Street Journal* was in the best financial position of the newspapers considered here, but it, too, put greater emphasis on threats and attacks over time.

The War on Terror Effect?

Another matter of controversy relating to the coverage of counterterrorism has to do with the attention newspapers devote to uses of military force relative to their coverage of criminal-justice responses.

I examined this question by searching the headlines and lead paragraphs assigned to the counterterrorism category for words associated with either militarized or criminal justice responses to terrorism. For example, I assigned paragraphs to the category of militarized counterterrorism if they contained words such as “troop,” “military,” or “Defense Department.”⁶ I assigned paragraphs to the category of criminal-justice responses if they contained words or phrases like “judge,” “lawyer,” and “Justice Department.”⁷

Then, I reviewed the articles assigned to these two categories to check that they were assigned properly. Some were not. Articles, for example, that do not focus on militarized counterterrorism efforts got placed in the

6. I used the following search terms to identify content focused on militarized counterterrorism responses: troop, military, army, air force, navy, marine, commando, war, invasion, occupation, joint chief, defense department, defense secretary, soldier, pentagon, base, forces, combat, battle, or skirmish.

7. The search terms I used to identify material about criminal justice responses to terrorism include: judge, convict, sentence, court, lawyer, attorney, jail, prison, plea, appeal, trial, prosecute, death penalty, charged, hearing, indict, defendant, accuse, justice department, testify, investigate, FBI, police, witness, cross-examinat, arrest, arraign, apprehend, or arrest. Word fragments on this list, like “prosecut,” appear intentionally. I used these fragments to search for words such as “prosecute” and “prosecuted.”

militarized counterterrorism category anyway because they use terms like “battle” euphemistically. I removed these incorrectly assigned articles and reassigned them to their proper categories.

During this review, I also assigned any material about prisoners held in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to the military-response category even though some of these paragraphs could be placed in the criminal-justice category. Counting these stories in the military-response category made sense, since the detainees were under military control and subject to the military code of justice. This assignment strategy also biases the test I conducted in favor of the profit-seeking model by adding to the number of stories classified under the military-response category.

Finally, I assigned the paragraphs that were not in either the militarized-response or criminal-justice-response categories to a third category of political and diplomatic responses to terrorism. The importance of this category emerged as I read the articles for this research. It is not a category of reporting explicitly anticipated by either the profit-seeking or professional models of news production. My reading, however, suggests that it is both a reasonable category of analysis and a good fit for the stories that do not fall into either the military or the criminal-justice response categories.

Results

The results of this exercise suggest that criminal-justice responses to terrorism get the most newspaper coverage and that military responses to terrorism get the least. Criminal-justice responses to terrorism comprise nearly 40 percent of the headlines and lead paragraphs in the counterterrorism news category. Political and diplomatic responses to terrorism represent about 34 percent of this coverage. Just 26 percent of the headlines and leads in the counterterrorism category focus on military operations. The margin of error for these estimates is approximately 2.6 percent.

The relative frequency of criminal-justice reports to military-response reports is consistent with the professional model. Surprisingly, reports about military responses to terrorism also lag reporting about political and diplomatic responses to terrorist activity. This means that in addition to reporting about criminal justice efforts, the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post* invest a lot of reporting resources on meetings between national heads of state, diplomatic entreaties from

one country to another, congressional hearings, as well as material about competition between elected officials and other politicians over the quality of government counterterrorism efforts (e.g., John Kerry and George W. Bush during the 2004 election).

It is difficult to square these results with the idea that the politics of violence trumps the politics of nonviolence on the terrorism beat. Instead, my data suggest that nonviolent counterterrorism responses make up more than 70 percent of the coverage of counterterrorism. This result emerges even though most of the stories I examined were reported during the war on terror and is at odds with the profit-seeking model's insistence that violent activities preoccupy the terrorism beat. Even when there were many more military responses to terrorism than usual, major newspapers in the United States kept their focus on criminal-justice and diplomatic responses. A reasonable conclusion is that reporting about military responses to terrorism is relatively rare.

Community Responses to Terrorism

One issue the profit-seeking and professional models agree upon relates to the coverage of ordinary people in the news. Both perspectives on the news imply that ordinary people are less prominent in published news than either government actors or the perpetrators of terrorism. The data I gathered on the terrorism beat confirms this basic assumption with respect to the ratio of counterterrorism reports to reports about community responses. When it comes to the ratio of reporting about threats and attacks to reporting about community responses, however, neither the profit-seeking nor the professional models look particularly prescient.

The reporting patterns are clear when comparisons are made between the frequencies of reports about counterterrorism versus those about community responses. For every paragraph about community responses to terrorism, the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post* publish roughly 7.5 paragraphs about counterterrorism. Counterterrorism reporting dominates the pages of US newspapers in ways that reporting about community responses does not. This conclusion emerges cross-sectionally across the entire study period, annually, and in each of the newspapers I examined.

The gap between material about terrorist threats and attacks and material about community responses to terrorism is smaller than the gap

between counterterrorism and community response reporting. Across the entire study period, my coding team identified 2.5 paragraphs about terrorist threats and attacks for every paragraph about community responses to terrorism. In the aggregate, ordinary people, private organizations, and businesses appear to be less visible than counterterrorists and terrorists on the terrorism beat.

The relative frequencies of reporting about threats and attacks and about community responses to terrorism, however, look different when the comparisons are made by newspaper. Broken down this way, reporting about terrorist threats and attacks does not clearly dominate reporting about community responses to terrorism at any newspaper other than the *New York Times*.

Figure 2, above, displays the annual percentage of paragraphs dedicated to terrorist threats and attacks and to community responses to terrorism at the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post* annually between 1997 and 2014. Although reporting on terrorist threats and attacks looks to be more common at all four newspapers relative to material about community responses, what stands out is how entangled the confidence intervals are for each series. It is difficult to separate the two series at all with *USA Today*. The task is easier with the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Washington Post*, but only after 2007 and 2008, respectively. Before then, it is difficult to confidently conclude which subject appears more frequently in the population of terrorism beat articles.

The *New York Times's* approach to covering community responses to terrorism is the one that differs most relative to the others. Unlike its competitors, the *Times* appears to be less inclined to pay attention to ordinary people and their organizations than either to terrorists or counterterrorists.

The relative parity in reporting on threats and attacks as compared to community responses is unanticipated by either of the models of news production I examined, and it raises questions about just how much the patterns at the *Times* influence judgments about the terrorism beats at other newspapers. Overall, the terrorism beat focuses more on threats and attacks than community responses to terrorism, but this conclusion rests on a particular way of aggregating the news. Some newspapers clearly invest more time and energy in the coverage of community responses to terrorism than others.

The Complicit Media?

The results presented in this chapter raise questions about claims that suggest the news media contributes to a skewed view of terrorism by advancing distorted views of terrorist threats and attacks and counterterrorism efforts. Counterterrorism is covered more frequently than terrorist threats and attacks. Militarized counterterrorism responses take a back seat to the coverage of criminal justice and political and diplomatic responses to terrorist activity. The profit-seeking model expects reporters to deliver news audiences a steady diet of shocking violence perpetrated by out-of-control terrorists and angry governments. Instead, the news media consistently provide news audiences some reporting about terrorist threats and attacks that governments by and large meet with restraint.

News about community responses to terrorism is unusual relative to news about counterterrorism but appears in roughly equal measure to news about threats and attacks in *USA Today*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post*. Only the *New York Times* consistently covers terrorist threats and attacks more than community responses to terrorism. Both the profit-seeking model and the professional model fail to anticipate these patterns regarding community responses to terrorism, but the findings are particularly challenging for the profit-seeking model because of the model's claim that violence sells newspapers.

Instead, the terrorism beat is filled with relatively sedate material about criminal justice and diplomatic and political responses to terrorism. These stories are newsworthy. They just aren't shocking.

The Language of the Terrorism Beat

The terrorism beat is a source of negative news. No surprise there. Reporters cover awful events—the planes that crash rather than the planes that take off uneventfully, to paraphrase *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof. These choices are reflected in the words journalists use to convey events of the day. On average, reporters use negative words more than positive ones even in good times (Soroka 2012).

No one disputes this. Like other areas of news, the terrorism beat has a negativity bias (Hoffman and Jengellely 2020), but is the tendency to report negatively getting worse?

Proponents of the profit-seeking model say the answer is yes. Powerful economic incentives push journalists, even at the most reputable newspapers, to amplify the negativity of their reporting. Reliance on negative words relative to positive ones is increasing. Journalists are also injecting their reporting with extreme words more often. Provocative words like “fear” replace moderate words like “concern” in journalistic accounts.

The professional model offers a different set of expectations about language use on the terrorism beat. Instead of anticipating sensational reporting on the terrorism beat, the professional media thesis implies that the public gets a more sedate product. The negativity of news fluctuates, but there is little reason to expect that it has become much more negative and extreme than before. Even though the economics of news has changed, journalistic writing standards have not.

In this chapter, I examine the language of the terrorism beat through the lenses of these two models of news production. The profit-seeking model suggests that reporters use language to cultivate fear of terrorism. In

contrast, the professional model suggests that journalistic practice remains tethered to a recognized set of standards that define quality news.

The Economic Case against the Terrorism Beat

The most influential argument tying the language of the terrorism beat to the news media's economic fortunes appears in David Altheide's book *Terrorism and the Politics of Fear* (2017). Altheide argues that the 9/11 attacks created an opportunity for US politicians to depict the world in more dangerous and frightening terms to promote new methods of social and political control. US leaders used the specter of terrorism to justify massive government surveillance programs, the deportation of undocumented immigrants, the initiation of foreign wars, and the use of overseas drone strikes, all in the name of security. Even leisure pursuits, like professional baseball games, became places to promote militaristic patriotism.

The US news media, including newspapers with the strongest reputations for quality, assisted this political project because there was money to be made sowing fear. Terrorism beat articles published in the *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *USA Today*, and *Washington Post* all saw at least tenfold increases in uses of the scare words "fear" and "victim."

These unsubtle reminders that the world was a dangerous place were a technique that crime beat reporters developed to sensationalize crime and that terrorism beat reporters adopted to meet the economic demands of the moment. As a result of this shift in orientation, the dry language of traditional hard terrorism beat news gave way to more salacious and provocative coverage.

Real Changes?

Altheide makes a persuasive case that changes in the rates at which journalists use the words "fear" and "victim" can indicate the press is oriented toward intimidating its audiences. The evidence he presents in support of his thesis, that after 9/11 reporters on the terrorism beat injected their reporting with a discourse of fear, is not as convincing.

Two problems stand out. First, Altheide compares the number of ter-

rorism beat articles that used the words “fear” or “victim” prior to 9/11 with the number of terrorism beat articles that used the words “fear” and “victim” after 9/11 without correcting for the increased number of terrorism beat articles written in response to the 9/11 attacks. This means that Altheide cannot rule out the possibility that increases in the number of terrorism beat articles containing either the word “fear” or the words “fear” and “victim” might reflect an increase in the total number of terrorism beat articles being published rather than a change in the rate at which journalists used the word “fear” in their reporting.

Second, focusing on the words “fear” and “victim” to the exclusion of other negative words is overly restrictive even if Altheide is right that “fear” and “victim” deserve special attention. The words “fear” and “victim” do not exhaust the ways journalists use language to chronicle the events they cover. A profit-seeking press can also be expected to rely more on negative words than positive ones for the purpose of depicting the world in more dire terms. This is a possibility that should be examined.

In this chapter, I reexamine Altheide’s conclusions about language use on the terrorism beat using the random sample of terrorism articles I gathered from the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Washington Post*. Unlike the articles Altheide studied, these articles are drawn from the superset of all terrorism beat articles published in these newspapers between 1997 and 2014 rather than on the subset of terrorism beat articles that contain either the word “fear” or the words “fear” and “victim.” These articles, therefore, can be used to assess changes in rate at which the words “fear” and “victim” appeared on the terrorism beat before and after 9/11.

As an additional comparison, I contrast the random sample of terrorism beat articles published in the *New York Times* that I gathered with a random sample of crime beat articles published in the *New York Times* that I also drew. I use these two samples to evaluate Altheide’s idea that terrorism beat reporting became more like crime beat reporting after 9/11. Like my previous analyses, I focus on the headline and first three paragraphs of the terrorism and crime beat articles to draw my conclusions.

I established the sampling frame for crime beat articles using Nexis Uni, the successor to Lexis Nexis. I searched Nexis Uni for articles appearing in the first section of the *New York Times* containing either the word

“crime” or words with the root “crimin” (e.g., criminal, criminologist) in the headlines, text, or keywords of the documents.¹ Then, I drew roughly fifty articles per year from these searches, using random numbers generated by the random.org website. Details of the step-by-step procedure I followed to gather these articles can be found in the online appendix.

The Discourse of Fear in Temporal Relief

David Altheide’s work assumes a version of the complicit-media thesis: the news media assists in framing terrorism as a grave threat because those depictions increase profits. His argument suggests that this propaganda effort produced detectable changes in the language of the terrorism beat after 9/11. Words like “fear” and “victim” appeared more frequently as a share of the articles published after 9/11 than before it. It is reasonable to expect that negative language became more common as well. Differences in the language used on the terrorism and crime beats narrowed.

I examined Altheide’s first claim that articles using the words “fear” and “victim” increased as a share of the material published from the terrorism beat by identifying every use of these words (and variations on them, like “fearing” and “victims”) in the material I gathered from the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post*.

Surprisingly, these words are difficult to find. Of the 9,072 segments gathered for this study, just 250, a little less than 2.8 percent of the total, contained either the word “fear” or “victim.” Just one of these news segments contained both words together.

These aggregate figures seem inconsistent with the idea that 9/11 led to the pervasive use of the terms “fear” and “victim” in terrorism beat reporting. Nevertheless, Altheide’s central claim is that a shift took place in the use of the words fear and victim after 9/11. Diagnosing this change requires an examination of the usage rates of these words before and after the September 11 attacks.

1. Nexis Uni makes it more difficult to identify and access all the articles that meet the search criteria I used. This influenced my decision to limit my search of the crime beat to articles published in the *New York Times*.

This test also casts doubt on Altheide's thesis. Before 9/11, 4.9 percent of paragraphs contained either the word "fear" or the word "victim." After 9/11, the number of paragraphs containing at least one of these words dropped to about 2.7 percent.

Altheide appears to be right that uses of the words "fear" and "victim" on the *New York Times'* terrorism and crime beats converged after 9/11, but only because terrorism beat reporters used these words less frequently after 9/11. Between January 1, 1997, and September 10, 2001, the word "fear" appeared in 2.8 percent of crime beat articles I gathered. After September 11, 2001, this percentage dropped to 2.6 percent, about the same percentage of articles using the word "fear" as the terrorism beat. This is not the pattern Altheide anticipated.

Tonal Language on the Terrorism Beat

A more expansive version of Altheide's thesis suggests that journalists increasingly relied on negative language on the terrorism beat after 9/11. The words "fear" and "victim" are not the only way to convey a sense of disorder and peril.

I identified the use of positive and negative words in terrorism beat articles using Lexicoder, an automated sentiment dictionary designed to identify positive and negative words in political reporting (Young and Soroka 2012).² Lexicoder works by comparing the words in a text to a 4,567-word dictionary that classifies words into categories based on their valence.

Following Young and Soroka (2012), I operationalized the sentiment expressed in each article using a measure of net tone, defined as the number of positive words minus the number of negative words in a text divided by the total number of words in that text. In principle, this measure ranges from -100 to 100. Negative content uses more negative than positive words as a share of total words. Positive content reverses this relationship between negative and positive words.

In practice, the tone of the terrorism beat varies annually between -3%

2. I used Lexicoder after removing "stop" words from the corpus. These are common English words, like "the" and "but" that signal the presence of nouns or that serve to connect sentences to one another, but do not convey meaning on their own. I used the R program *quanteda* (Benoit et al. 2018) to remove stop words and to initiate Lexicoder's classification of words into positive and negative categories.

and -6%, with a margin of error of less than 1 percent (.75%). The second paragraph of an article in the *New York Times* titled “17-Year Search, an Emotional Discovery and Terror Ends” (Johnston 1998) about FBI investigator Patrick Webb’s reaction to the realization that the FBI identified the Unabomber after years of searching provides a sense of what negative terrorism beat news looks like. I highlighted negative words in this paragraph in **bold** and positive words in *italics*:

For Mr. Webb, who saw his first Unabom **crime** scene in 1982, *fresh* out of **bomb** school, and his last in 1995, when he examined the shredded body of Gilbert B. Murray in a Sacramento office, it was the instant of realization that, after 17 years, the F.B.I.’s quest for the serial **terrorist** had ended. An *exultant* whoop echoed down the snowy slopes. (Johnston 1998)

By Lexicoder’s standards, this paragraph contains 28 words (minus stop words) and 3.5 percent more negative words than positive ones. Lexicoder misses some negative phrases (“shredded body”) and positive content (“whoop”), but it is otherwise accurate in its assignments.

Not all terrorism beat content is negative, however. Approximately 25 percent of terrorism beat articles are either net neutral or net positive. Net neutral content uses negative and positive words in equal measure. For example, in the 1998 *New York Times* article mentioned above, Lexicoder identifies one negative word (“Terror”) and one positive word (“Discovery”) in the article’s headline, making this a net neutral article based on the formula I use to calculate net tone ($[(\text{positive words} - \text{negative words}) / \text{total words}]$).

Then, there is the positive content. In 1998, the *Washington Post* announced both that, “Argentina-US pledge cooperation” and that “Major [Northern] Irish Party Endorses Pact; Approval by Ulster Unionists Boosts Peace Effort.” In 2011, *USA Today* reported that Karl Rove, George W. Bush’s former political advisor, and Bush’s former vice president Dick Cheney both praised the Obama administration for killing Osama bin Laden (Korte 2011).

These are just some of the nearly 1,500 news segments I examined that use more positive words than negative ones. Positive content is published in every year I examined and by every newspaper. It represents a small percentage of all the news published by the *New York Times*, *USA Today*,

Wall Street Journal, and *Washington Post*, but it a persistent dimension of that reporting.

Annual Variation

Lexicoder's assessment of terrorism beat stories is unremarkable in the aggregate but produces surprising patterns over the study period. Figure 4 provides a look at this variation from year to year between 1997 and 2014.

The biggest surprise here is that three of the five most net-negative reporting years precede the 9/11 attacks, while two of the least net-negative reporting years, 2002 and 2004, occur shortly after 9/11. Interestingly, major terrorist attacks took place in each of these relatively positive reporting years. The Bali bombing occurred in 2002 and the Beslan school siege and Madrid train bombing occurred in 2004.

Even with these attacks, the immediate post-9/11 period looks like it was relatively less negative than normal. The negativity of terrorism beat news increased in 2003, relative to 2002 and 2004, but not dramatically: the net tone score for 2003 is still higher (i.e., more positive) than the average score for the entire study period. The most negative year on the terrorism beat is 2012, eleven years after 9/11 and the start of the United States' war in Afghanistan and nine years after the start of the Iraq War. These results appear to be inconsistent with the idea that the US news media used 9/11 as an opportunity to amplify the sense of threat from terrorism.

The data in figure 4 do offer some support, though, for the broader notion that the terrorism beat got more negative as economic pressure on the newspaper industry became acute. One of the sharpest increases in the terrorism beat's negativity occurs in 2010, right around the time newspapers began to experience economic distress. This decline is then followed by 2012 and 2014, two of the most negative years over this period.

The trouble is that the size of the confidence intervals (shaded in grey in figure 4) make it difficult to draw firm conclusions about the magnitude and direction of the temporal trends in the tone of terrorism beat coverage. It is clear from the range of values the estimates in figure 4 could take that terrorism beat reporting after 2010 is more negative than the news that the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post* published in 2002 and 2004. Whether the estimates after 2010 are more negative than the estimates for 2008 or 2009 is less clear. The confidence

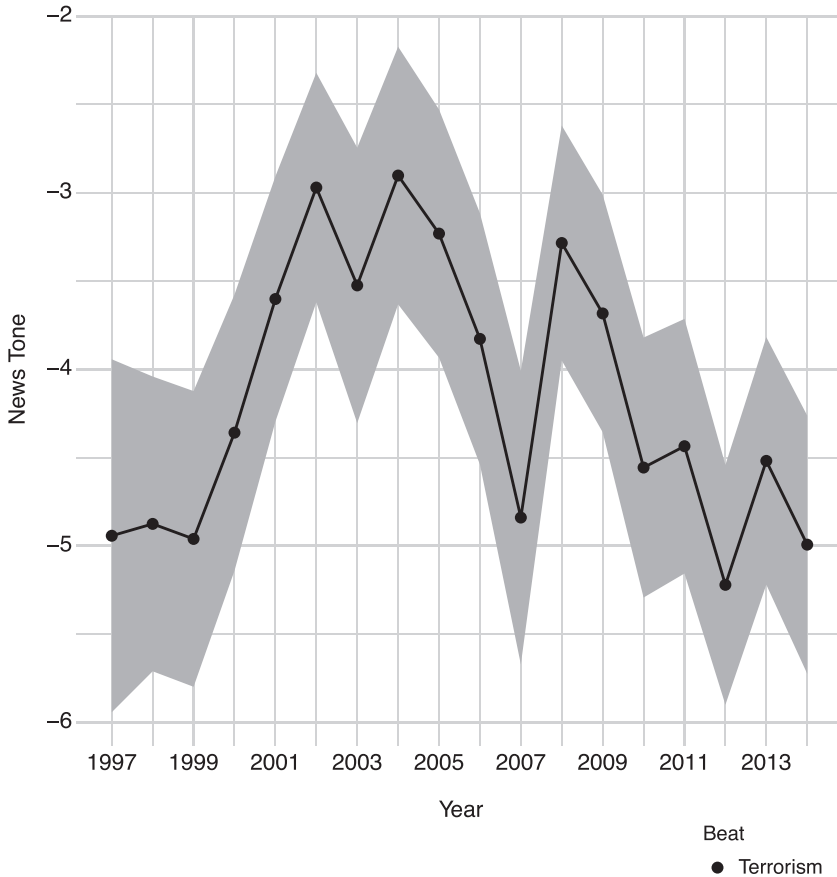


Fig. 4. Average tone of terrorism beat reporting across major US newspapers, 1997–2014. (Note: Shading depicts the 95% confidence interval.)

intervals for these estimates overlap, meaning that the observed downward trend might be a product of statistical error rather than real changes in terrorism beat reporting.

The Terrorism Beat at Individual Newspapers

Separating the data on the tone of terrorism beat reporting by the newspapers that produced that reporting helps resolve the questions raised using the aggregate information. The paper-by-paper results are reminiscent of

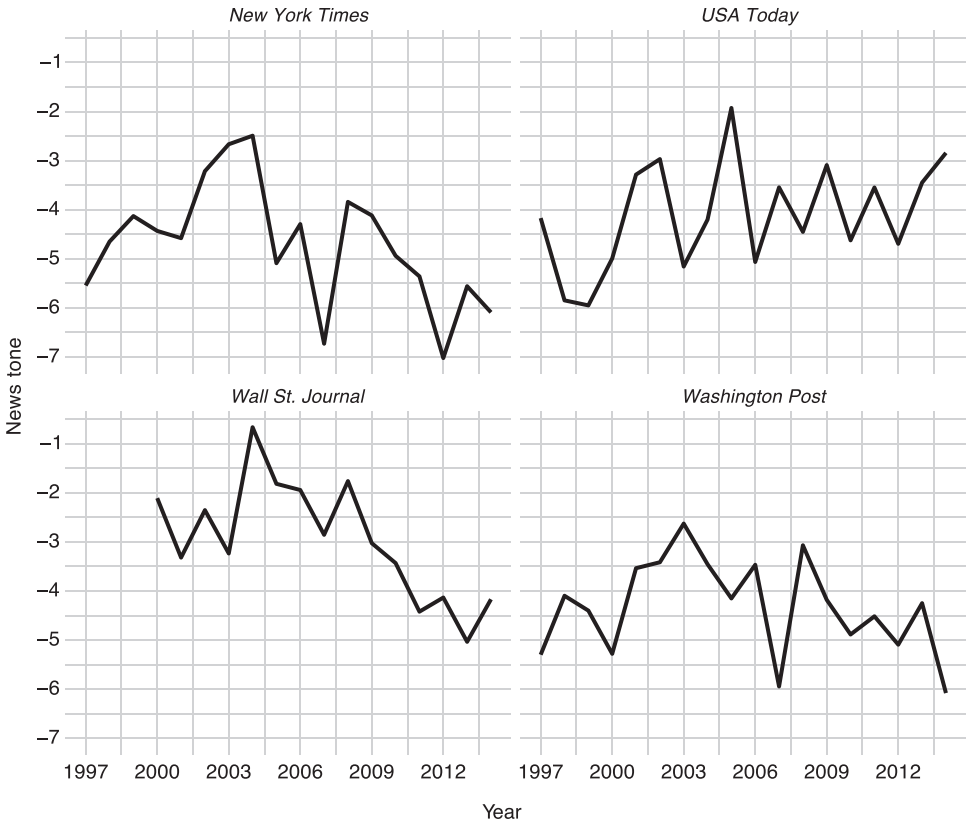


Fig. 5. The tone of terrorism beat reporting at major US newspapers, 1997–2014

the patterns displayed in figure 4, but also different enough that they shed additional light on the utility of thinking about language use as reflecting economic pressures on the news industry.

As in the aggregate, the terrorism beat is a net negative news beat in all four newspapers (see fig. 5) although the degree of negativity varies by paper and by year. The terrorism beat reporting provided by the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post* all get less negative, in fits and starts, starting after 2001. Prior to that year, terrorism beat reporting tended to be among the most negative reporting years at these papers over the study period. (Reporting before 9/11 by the *Wall Street Journal* is an exception. The *Journal's* coverage before 9/11 is relatively positive compared to its post-9/11 reporting.)

The tone of the terrorism beats at the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post* after 2009 also follow the aggregate results. Reporting at these papers becomes consistently more negative than it had been prior to 2003 and 2004. On the surface, this result is consistent with the idea that reporters at these papers used negative language to attract readers at a time when it was becoming more difficult to generate profits.

A closer look at the economic situations of these newspapers and at the reporting patterns produced by *USA Today*, however, raises questions about the value of the profit-seeking model as a guide to the terrorism beat. Consistent with the profit-seeking model, language used by journalists at the *Times* and the *Post* got more negative as circulation at these newspapers declined. (I am drawing on circulation data I gathered with Dwaine Jengellely for this discussion [see Hoffman and Jengellely 2020].)

Reporters at the *Wall Street Journal*, however, also used relatively more negative language in their reporting, even though the *Journal* maintained its audience over the study period. The pattern at *USA Today* is even more confounding: instead of getting progressively more negative, *USA Today's* reporters delivered a somewhat more positive set of articles about terrorism, counterterrorism, and community responses to terrorism to their audience after 2009 even though the paper's circulation declined between 2008 and 2012. This reaction is unexpected from the newspaper that faced the most pressure of the four to produce quarterly profits for investors (Dunaway 2008, 2013).

The patterns of language usage at the *Times*, *USA Today*, the *Journal*, and the *Post* also appear to be unrelated to the partisan leanings of these newspapers. Research on news reporting about the US president suggests that the negativity of the news presidents receive is related to the partisan nature of the newspapers that report on their activities (Eshbaugh-Soha 2010), but this pattern does not emerge over this period on the terrorism beat.

If the partisan leanings of the newspapers influenced terrorism beat reporting, then the tone of the terrorism beat would be relatively more positive at the right-of-center *Wall Street Journal* than at the left-of-center *New York Times* and *Washington Post* during Republican George W. Bush's presidency and more negative at the *Journal* than at the *Times* or the *Post* during Democrat Barack Obama's presidency. Reporting at the centrist *USA Today* would fall between the *Journal* and the *Times* and *Post*. (I assigned newspapers to political categories based on data gathered by Hoff-

man and Jengelly [2020] based on the procedure developed by Ansolabehere, Lessem, and Snyder [2006].)

None of these expectations are clearly borne out. The *Journal*, the *Times*, and the *Post* produced their least negative terrorism beat news during President Bush's first term as president, and all three papers produced some of the most negative terrorism beat news during the Obama presidency. The Clinton years were the most negative for *USA Today*, while the Obama years got relatively less negative press from *USA Today* than from the other newspapers. These are not patterns that obviously fit a partisan model of reporting.

More than anything else, what stands out about the tone of terrorism beat reporting across the four newspapers considered here is their broad consistency with one another. No paper is exactly like any other in any given year, but across the entire study period the differences between these newspapers are smaller than the similarities. Between 1997 and 2014, the negativity of terrorism beat reporting fluctuated within relatively narrow bounds, and the reporting trends across the papers were similar: shifts toward more (or less) negative reporting at one newspaper also happened at the others. *USA Today* bucked the trend, although it, too, produced consistently negative reporting within a narrow net tone range.

This linguistic consistency across newspapers cannot be explained by the readership challenges they confronted or their different editorial bents (liberal to conservative). The September 11 attacks also ushered in a period of relatively more positive coverage even though they also created a more fearful public. Instead of taking advantage of this situation, major newspapers in the United States eased up on the negativity of their reporting. These responses look more like a media that tried to protect its audiences rather than frighten them.

The Terrorism Beat in Comparative Terms

Altheide's profit-seeking argument about changes to the terrorism beat reporting has not fared well in my tests, but one aspect of his argument remains partially unexamined: after 9/11, language use on the terrorism beat began to mirror language use on the crime beat.

In this section, I examine that idea by comparing the use of negative and positive language on the terrorism and crime beats published by the

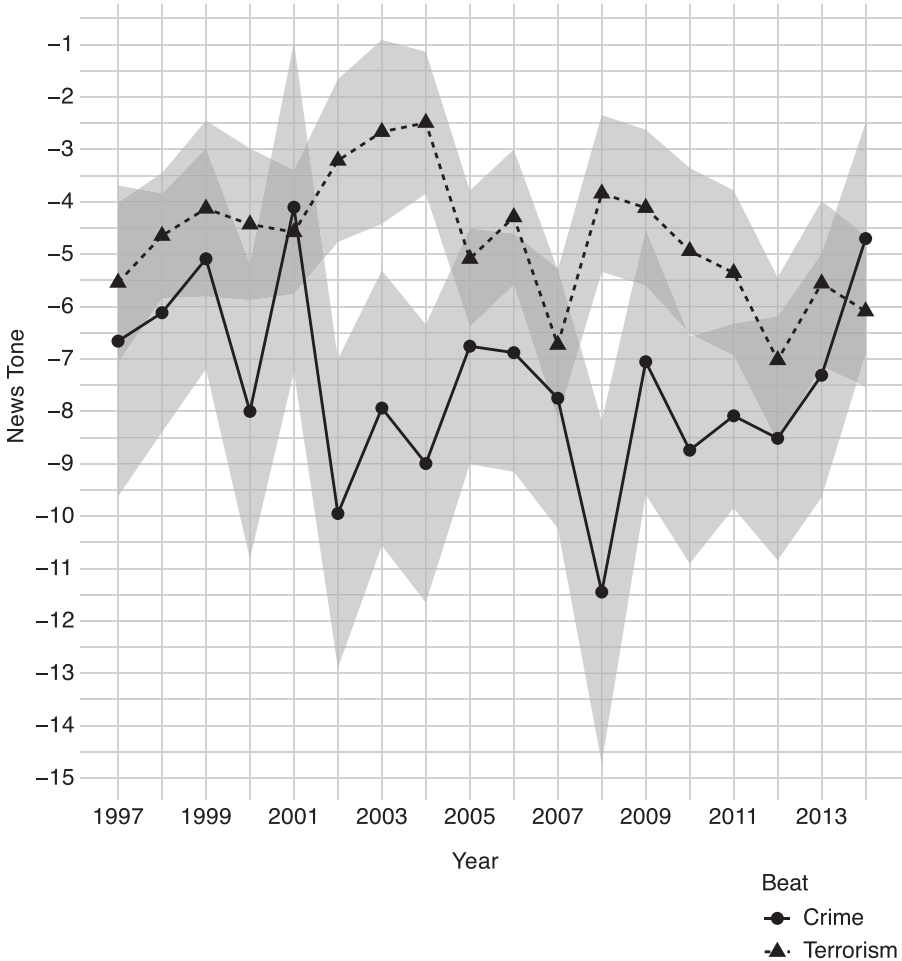


Fig. 6. Tone of terrorism and crime beat reporting by the *New York Times*, 1997–2014. (Note: Shading depicts the 95% confidence intervals.)

New York Times between 1997 and 2014. Given similarities between terrorism reporting in the *New York Times* and in the other newspapers I examined, this case study should provide insight into the relationship between the terrorism and crime beats in major U.S. newspapers.

Figure 6 displays the net tone scores per year for the *New York Times*' terrorism and crime beats, along with their respective 95% confidence intervals. These data tell an interesting story about language use on the terrorism and crime beats. First and foremost, the data in figure 6 suggests

that the negativity of the language used on the terrorism and crime beats is comparable over the historical period in question. In 13 of the 17 years I examined, the language used by terrorism beat reporters is statistically indistinguishable from the language used by crime beat reporters over the same period. This is indicated in the figure by the overlapping confidence intervals for the two series. Terrorism beat reporting appears to be less negative than crime beat reporting in every year but two (2001 and 2014). Nevertheless, the width of the confidence intervals for both series suggests that it is unwise to make too much of this. There is enough variability in the estimates to make it impossible with this data to rule out either the opposite pattern or one in which the relative negativity of the two beats change back and forth.

Altheide argues that the language of the terrorism and crime beats grew more similar after 9/11, but this conclusion is unsupported by reporting at the *New York Times*. The *Times*' terrorism and crime beats used negative language relative to positive language in roughly equal measure before 9/11 and after it.

With four exceptions. Between 2002 and 2004 and again in 2008, reporters at the *Times* reduced their reliance on negative language relative to positive language on the terrorism beat while they did the opposite on the crime beat. These twin movements produced a noticeably less negative terrorism beat in relative terms. Note the non-overlapping confidence intervals in figure 6 in in these years.

The timing of the shift toward relatively less negative terrorism beat news is notable. Within months of the worst terrorist attack in United States history and the start of a military invasion of Afghanistan by US forces, reporters at the *Times* were delivering substantially less negative terrorism beat news to their readers than they had at any time over the 14-year period I examined. This moderation lasted for three years and covers the start of a second war waged by US forces in Iraq.

Terrorism beat reporting in the *Times* also became relatively more positive compared to the crime beat in 2008. Like the 2002–2004 period, the gap emerged in response to both relatively more positive terrorism beat reporting and relatively more negative crime beat news. Unlike the 2002–2004 period, however, the shift in reporting that emerged in 2008 was not predated by a shocking act of terrorism rivaling 9/11. The Mumbai attacks, in Mumbai, India, which were carried out over several days in late

November 2008, were probably the most significant acts of terrorism in 2008 but were still a fraction of 9/11's size and influence.

The timing of the shifts in language use that produced differences in terrorism beat and crime beat reporting cast doubt on the idea that economic pressures were at the root of these changes. The relative decline in the negativity of terrorism beat reporting after 2001 contradicts the claim that terrorism beat reporters used the opportunity that 9/11 afforded them to drive sales of the *Times* by injecting their reporting with an aggressively negative tone. The crime beat's increased negativity over this time undercuts the idea that the shift in tone at the *Times* was part of a general reorientation of news coverage after 9/11.

Indeed, available public records suggest that the *Times* was not experiencing financial hardship between 2002 and 2004. In 2002, the *Times* announced proudly that it generated 3.1 billion in revenues (New York Times 2002). In 2003, the *Times* reached over \$600 million in circulation revenue, a company record (New York Times 2003). In 2004, revenues at the *Times* increased again, fueled in part by a doubling of advertising sales (New York Times 2004).

The *Times*' financial situation was quite different in 2008. In 2008, total revenue at the *Times* declined by 8 percent as the "seismic" changes to the media landscape started to unfold (New York Times 2008, 1). Nevertheless, the *Times*' terrorism beat coverage once again became more positive compared to the crime beat. If there is an economic motive at work here, it is not an easy one to detect.

Professionalism in Practice

Temporal variation in the terrorism beat's tone confounds the profit-seeking model's expectations. Does the record of reporting align with the professional model's basic claim that reporters follow time-tested principles and practices while they cover events? If the professional model offers a useful guide to terrorism beat reporting, then signs of professional practice will be manifest in terrorism beat news. That reporting will organize information hierarchically in descending order of importance, deliver accurate accounts of newsworthy events, be written in the third person, provide balanced coverage of contending perspectives on controversial issues, and

typically use moderate language. In short, professional principles dictate that events themselves dictate the character of the news. The influence of reporters' preferences and writing styles on the news must be minimized.

In this section, I evaluate the fit between the professional model's expectations and the record of terrorism beat reporting I amassed in a subsample of 500 articles I drew at random from my larger corpus of terrorism beat articles. I relied on a subsample of articles because assessing the performance of terrorism beat reporters, i.e., how well they follow the rules of journalistic practice, requires both qualitative and quantitative judgments (see Ryfe 2018 for a discussion of the concept of journalistic performance). For example, I am unaware of quantitative methods that can determine reliably whether articles are organized in an inverted-pyramid style. I also am unaware of practical ways to judge the tone of thousands of words qualitatively. Qualitative and quantitative approaches must work in conjunction with one another to produce an accurate account of terrorism beat news.

My conclusion from this work is that terrorism beat reporting in the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post* meets journalistic standards for quality news. The reporters and editors at these newspapers are skillful adherents to journalism's rules of professional practice. The professional model's account of the news production process provides a useful mapping of terrorism beat news at these influential newspapers.

The Inverted Pyramid

My initial assessment of the writing styles used at major newspapers began with a consideration of the organizational template that published terrorism beat articles followed. How information is sequenced by journalists in their written reports traditionally follows principles articulated by the norm of objectivity. The most important information in articles comes first, and less important information follows in descending order of significance. This formula is designed to get readers the essential facts they need to learn about current events immediately. The business of selling the news has been so lousy, however, that news organizations have experimented with narrative approaches that delay the presentation of essential information while using vignettes that are designed to draw readers in (Vicente 2019).

The question then is, To what extent are changes in the organization of terrorism beat articles taking place? I examined the degree to which journalists structured their articles using an inverted pyramid design by reading each of the articles in my subsample and asking whether this description of the inverted pyramid organizational style fit my cases. This approach is a little loose as research strategies go, but results of my analysis are so clear that it is unlikely that a more rigorous approach would produce substantially different conclusions.

I say this because virtually every article in the 500-article subsample I analyzed used the inverted pyramid organizational template. The headline and first three paragraphs of this 2009 article written by Bob Woodward (2009) for the *Washington Post* exemplify the pattern I found:

Detainee Tortured, Says U.S. Official; Trial Overseer Cites
“Abusive” Methods Against 9/11 Suspect

The top Bush administration official in charge of deciding whether to bring Guantanamo Bay detainees to trial has concluded that the U.S. military tortured a Saudi national who allegedly planned to participate in the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, interrogating him with techniques that included sustained isolation, sleep deprivation, nudity and prolonged exposure to cold, leaving him in a “life-threatening condition.”

“We tortured [Mohammed al-]Qahtani,” said Susan J. Crawford, in her first interview since being named convening authority of military commissions by Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates in February 2007. “His treatment met the legal definition of torture. And that’s why I did not refer the case” for prosecution.

Crawford, a retired judge who served as general counsel for the Army during the Reagan administration and as Pentagon inspector general when Dick Cheney was secretary of defense, is the first senior Bush administration official responsible for reviewing practices at Guantanamo to publicly state that a detainee was tortured.

Like the other articles in my subsample, the first paragraph contains the most important information in the article: a Bush administration official determined that the US military tortured a Saudi national. A person who read just the lead sentence would have a good summary of the article.

The second paragraph presents evidence supporting this claim: Susan Crawford's statement explaining the reason she declined to refer Mohamed al-Qahtani's case for prosecution. The second paragraph also explains how Crawford came to have the power to make decisions regarding US military commissions. This information provides readers a reason to believe Crawford's statement. Paragraph 3 provides additional background on Crawford, her credentials, and work history in the US government. All of this supports Crawford's credibility and the credibility of her conclusion.

Although each paragraph in this *Washington Post* article is informative, each paragraph is less important than the one before it in terms of conveying the story's central claim. An editor who cut the story down to size from the bottom up (as past practice has dictated) could be confident that the best material wasn't saved for last.

I found just eight articles that did not use this inverted pyramid organizational style. All eight began in a kind of storytelling mode, with lead paragraphs that did not reveal the central theme of the stories until paragraph 2 or 3. The following article ("Ignoring Pledge, Serbs Try Ethnic Albanian Suspects; Kosovo Peace Pact Included Amnesty"), published in the *Washington Post* (Smith 1998), exemplifies these story-telling articles:

Looking like the ruffled wheat farmer he is, 46-year-old Idriz Zhuta slumped and stared at the floor this morning as he heard the judge in a small courtroom assign him a prison term of 18 months. Zhuta's crime, which he had admitted, was to leave his field, pick up a rifle and briefly stand watch last July with some neighbors who feared an assault on their Kosovo village by government security forces.

Zhuta's conviction under a chapter of the Yugoslav criminal code barring involvement in terrorism came nearly two months after the government—acting at the insistence of the United States—promised a general amnesty for "crimes related to the conflict in Kosovo." But by all accounts here, that pledge has been ignored, and the pace of trials in Kosovo for ethnic Albanians accused of such offenses has accelerated recently.

In the first three weeks of November, 19 men were convicted in Pec and Prizren—Kosovo's second- and third-largest cities, of crimes related to the summer conflict between government troops and members of a guerrilla group known as the Kosovo Liberation

Army. A dozen or so other men are slated to be tried in the next week, and as many as 1,500 more are being detained, mostly without formal charges, while government investigators hunt for incriminating evidence, according to official and independent sources in Kosovo.

Unlike the article by Bob Woodward discussed earlier, the first paragraph of this article does not reveal the reporter's main idea. That piece of information does not appear until the second paragraph. Perhaps for this reason, these storytelling articles are uncommon.

Objectivity and Balance

A second element of norm governed reporting centers on issues of neutrality and balance. Journalists are frequently accused of injecting themselves into the news, becoming active interventionists in news stories rather than just passive and detached observers of events. Annalisa Quinn (2019), for example, criticized CNN reporter Jim Acosta for intervening in press conferences held by former US president Donald Trump and making himself part of the stories of those events. Reporters are also castigated for balancing competing perspectives even when there is little serious debate on a topic and then only consulting authoritative mainstream voices for their perspectives on current events (Boykoff and Boykoff 2004). Objective journalism requires reporters to avoid interventionism (Westerståhl 1983) but also to balance opposing viewpoints as a way of maintaining neutrality on controversial issues.

I assessed whether terrorism beat reporters maintained a noninterventionist stance in their reporting by examining whether articles were written in the third person, from the perspective of a detached observer of events, rather than from the perspective of an identifiable character that is involved in events or in their reconstruction. I looked for places in every article in my subsample where authors injected their opinions or perspectives into their articles or used the pronoun "I" to identify themselves.³

I assessed reporting balance by looking for instances in which perspectives on one side of a debate were not countered by perspectives on the

3. See Márquez-Ramírez et al. (2020) for the case that interventionist journalism is a product of the watchdog norm in some countries.

opposite side. I also noted the identity of the sources who journalists consulted to examine whether voices from outside the mainstream were making the news.

I concluded from these assessments that the terrorism beat articles I examined met journalistic standards of objectivity and balance. I found no articles written in the first or second person and just two articles in which the author clearly took a position on an issue or injected themselves into the events they described. In 2011, for example, the *New York Times* ran a piece titled “State of the Union: Obama’s Best, Worst” that listed the president’s successes and failures, as if these were universally accepted.

Instead, most articles conveyed events through the eyes of detached observers. An article by Michael Winter and Doug Stanglin (2013), published in *USA Today*, is indicative of the rest. It provides a detached narrative of an arrest in Canada of a terrorism suspect that is one of the hallmarks of objective reporting:

Canadian police and intelligence services arrested two suspects Monday who allegedly planned to derail a passenger train in the Toronto area in what the Royal Canadian Mounted Police called a “major terrorist attack.”

RCMP Assistant Commissioner James Malizia said at an afternoon news conference that Chiheb Esseghaier, 30, of Montreal, and Raed Jaser, 35, of Toronto, had received “direction and guidance” from “al-Qaeda elements” in Iran, but there is no indication they were “state sponsored.”

Neither suspect is a Canadian citizen. The RCMP would not identify their nationalities or say how long they had been in the country.

I did not find many articles that balanced competing perspectives on issues in the subsample I examined, but I also did not find many articles that covered topics that were framed as politically contentious. The largest number of articles that balanced competing perspectives focused on the intersection between counterterrorism and US domestic politics: articles about competition for the presidency between George W. Bush and John Kerry in 2004 (Rutenberg 2004) and Barack Obama and Mitt Romney in 2012 (*Wall Street Journal* 2012), and articles about competition between Republicans and Democrats for control over Congress (Pianin and Babington 2004). Some articles focused on intraparty disagreements among

Republicans, such as an article about disputes over the rules governing secret CIA interrogations and military trials of terrorism suspects (Jackson and Kiely 2006) and one article about disagreements over whether and how to overhaul the United States' intelligence services (Shenon 2004). One article focused on questions raised by justices of the US Supreme Court regarding Bush administration detention policies (Biskupic 2004). Otherwise, the 500 articles I examined were largely focused on the who, what, when, and where of events.

Critics of the norms of objectivity and balance are sure to counter that reporters always take a perspective on the news even if they refuse to acknowledge this practice. The 500 articles I examined undoubtedly view events through the lens of US foreign policy. Most articles in this batch of 500 focus on the US government and military. What happens to US interests matters most on the terrorism beat.

The press also operates with a narrow conception of balanced coverage. Balance is mostly understood in relation to US domestic politics, where the divide between Democrats and Republics is seen as the key fault line. The coverage I examined does not contemplate the possibility that there might be viewpoints outside of conventional US politics. The subsample I examined contains no interviews with people like John Mueller, Noam Chomsky, or even US senator Rand Paul, all of whom hold non-mainstream views of the US's war on terror. Fringe theories, like Democratic representative Cynthia McKinney's belief that George W. Bush had advance knowledge of the 9/11 attacks (Eilperin 2002) and antisemitic conspiracy theories, like Islamic cleric Mohammad Asi's claim that 9/11 was launched by "Israeli Zionist Jews" (Mintz 2003) get a bit of coverage in my sample (one article each), but not much.

This is what balanced news from the terrorism beat looks like: reporters focus on authoritative institutions and speak with a thin slice of elected and prominent officials within the US government. There is a case that this type of reporting does the public a disservice (Bennett 2016), but it does not violate the principles of quality reporting that journalists follow.

Minimally Tonal Reporting

In addition to relying on the third person and placing sharp limits on the ability of journalists to inject their own perspectives directly into the news, objective reporting demands a "just the facts" approach to describ-

ing events. Reporters must convey information about events accurately, without injecting unnecessary characterizations of those events. The tone of the news must reflect events, not what reporters want their audiences to think about those events.

Between accuracy and minimalism, accuracy is most difficult to assess. Historians often assess accuracy by comparing media reports to a narrative that has been constructed with the benefits of hindsight (Censer 2010). Such an exercise is impossible here, because I do not have access to more reliable and independent accounts of the events under consideration.

The most I can say about the accuracy of the reporting I examined is that I have evidence the newspapers I studied tried to correct mistakes they made. There is one correction in the subsample of articles I reviewed. Other than that, however, I cannot say whether journalists got their stories right or not.

Assessing the minimalism criterion is another matter. The idea that news reports are laden with unnecessarily sensational words, either positive or negative, is a verifiable claim. I did this by reviewing all 500 lead paragraphs in my sample, looking for positive or negative words that could be cut or changed to neutral alternatives without a significant loss of information. For example, an article about closing arguments in Timothy McVeigh's criminal case described McVeigh's defense team as portraying McVeigh as "the unwitting victim of an overzealous investigation and the treachery of his friends" (Kenworthy 1997). I edited this sentence, replacing the tonal phrase "unwitting victim" with the neutral word "target."

The premise of this editing-as-research-method approach is simple. News that uses minimally tonal language to describe events is difficult to make less tonal either by removing positive and negative words that are unnecessary to the sentences they appear in or by replacing tonal words with neutral alternatives. Sensational news, in contrast, can be made less tonal through careful editing. The more that published terrorism beat news can be made less tonal, the less it meets the minimally tonal ideal.

An advantage of this method of judging whether terrorism beat journalists use more tonal words than necessary to convey the news is that it controls for the events that reporters cover. Judging the sensational quality of the language used on the terrorism beat by comparing it to the language used in other areas of reporting does not do this. Inferences from these cross-beat comparisons, therefore, may be confounded by variation in the underlying events journalists report on.

My editing was guided by a couple of rules. I cut or replaced any tonal

word I could so long as doing so did not compromise the meaning or clarity of the sentences I edited. In the example I provided above, I did not cut the word “overzealous” because removing it degraded the meaning of the sentence it appears in, and I could not find an atonal synonym. McVeigh was obviously targeted by investigators. There is no reason for his lawyers to mention that as part of his defense. An overly aggressive investigation, however, makes more sense as a defense. Newspapers will not publish nonsensical sentences, and so I imposed the principle that edited sentences had to be comprehensible once my editing was complete.

I also avoided edits that made the sentences I examined longer than they were initially. Good journalistic writing is efficient. My edited sentences had to be as efficient as the originals. I could have, for example, eliminated tonal words by describing shooting victims as people who “had projectiles enter their bodies,” but euphemistic language would never get past a copy editor and is less clear than the simpler “shooting victims.” Since space is at a premium in newspapers, I rejected changes that traded tonality for verbosity.

I avoided replacing one tonal word for another. I could have described the investigation into McVeigh as “biased” instead of “overzealous,” but replacing “overzealous” with “biased” does not make the sentence less negative. I also avoided completely rewriting the sentences I edited. Instead, I tried to keep as much of the originals as possible. The point of this analysis wasn’t to show that news articles can be rewritten without tonal words at all. It was to examine whether the sentences journalists wrote contained more tonal words than necessary.

I made no changes to quoted text. Journalists do not edit the quotes they get, and therefore neither did I. Finally, I avoided using euphemisms to reduce the tonality of the language I edited. Journalistic writing should be clear and accessible. Euphemisms are used to soften or conceal taboos or unpleasant matters (Ren and Yu 2013), but they are a kind of coded language that not everyone understands. Such language is antithetical to the idea that journalistic writing should be approachable.

Assessing Minimalism

What I discovered through this editing process is that the news I reviewed does not rely on many excess tonal words. Lexicoder identified 2,187 tonal words in the original 500 lead paragraphs. I reduced this number by 9.5

percent to 1,978, but I was not able to get lower than this. Many of the sentences I examined could not be made any less negative or positive without compromising their quality.

The following sentence, printed in the *New York Times*, exemplifies the trouble I ran into: “A bomb exploded today on a train in Punjab, killing at least 36 passengers, the police and doctors said” (Associated Press 1997). This sentence is negative, filled with negative words like “bomb,” and “killing.” Nevertheless, I see no way of rewording this sentence to reduce its reliance on these negative words. The negative words in this sentence are necessary descriptors. Eliminating them makes the sentence unintelligible.

Now, not every sentence that I reviewed used a minimal number of tonal words. In 1999, the *New York Times* ran a story about an attack on a courtroom in Lebanon that killed four people (Jehl 1999b). Here is how I edited the *Times*’s work (my deletions are struck out and my insertions are italicized): “No one yet knows exactly who fired Kalashnikov rifles into a courtroom here two days ago, ~~in a massacre that killed~~ *killing* the chief judge and three other court officials. But the attack has focused attention on ~~a problem~~ *an issue* that Lebanon has long done its best to ignore.”

Often, the easiest words to cut in this exercise were the words “terrorist” and “extremist.” The content I reviewed consistently described Islamists as extremists even when the descriptor was superfluous. In 2013, for example, the *New York Times* reported that a “little-known Islamic extremist group released a video over the weekend providing evidence that it orchestrated a deadly car bombing here last month . . .” (Kirkpatrick and Sheikh 2013) even though the adjective “extremist” adds little information. Reporters also consistently described attacks as “terrorist attacks” even when simply referring to “attacks” would suffice.

Militarized language, referring to Bush spokesperson Karen Hughes as a “soldier” or competing political advertisements from Democratic and Republican candidates as an advertising “war,” was also common and often easily replaced with neutral terms. Journalists showed an affinity for describing bomb blasts as “ripping” through people and structures. This was another place where it was possible to reduce the number of tonal words in terrorism beat reporting.

Overall, though, the lead sentences I read did not contain more tonal language than was necessary to convey news about the events they described. Once journalists decided whether to frame the events they covered in negative or positive terms, they did not use an excess of evocative

words to convince their readers that the situations they covered were worse than they seemed.

Moderate Language

The final question I asked about the subsample of terrorism beat articles I examined focused on the intensity of the language reporters used to convey the news. Journalists might use a minimal number of tonal words, but the words they choose can still pack a punch. Objective journalism is supposed to favor the use of moderate language.

I examined the intensity of the language reporters on the terrorism beat use by turning to a database of valence scores for nearly 17,000 words catalogued by the English Lexicon Project. The English Lexicon Project is a multi-university effort to collect and describe more than 40,000 English-language words according to a range of lexical (e.g., length, part of speech) and behavioral characteristics, such as the time it takes people to recognize different words (Balota et al. 2007).

Included in the project's database are a subset of nearly 17,000 words that have valence scores associated with them. Most of these valence scores, nearly 14,000, were gathered by Warriner, Kuperman, and Brysbaert (2013), but the team of Kousta, Vinson, and Vigliocco (2009) contributed 1,800 additional words to Warriner et al.'s original database. I used both lists in my analysis.⁴

I relied on the English Lexicon Project's valence scores instead of continuing with Lexicoder because Lexicoder only classifies words into positive and negative categories. It does not offer information about the intensity of the words it catalogues. Lexicoder cannot tell the difference, for example, between the words "like" and "love" or "dislike" and "hate." In this case, though, a more finely tuned measure of differences between words is needed.

The English Lexicon Project database achieves this sensitivity to the intensity of words by grading the words it has valence information on using a nine-point "pleasantness" scale. Warriner, Kuperman, and Brysbaert (2013) developed the protocol for gathering valence scores for words in the English language project's database. Warriner et al. recruited par-

4. Thanks to David Vinson for kindly sharing the extended valence data with me.

ticipants through Amazon's Mechanical Turk website and asked them to rate 350 words based on how the words made them feel. Participants were asked to assign the lowest scores to words that made them "unhappy" and the highest scores to words that made them "happy." Participants were also told that words that had neutral effects on them, producing neither happiness nor unhappiness, should be assigned to the middle of the scale.

A drawback of the English Lexicon Project database is that words in it have not been scored with political uses in mind. The word "party," for instance, refers to a celebration in the English Lexicon Project rather than a collection of people organized around the goal of electing candidates and influencing government. Consequently, some of the words the English Lexicon Project catalogues are rated differently than they would be if they were scored with their political meanings in mind. There is no way around this limitation, but it is also easy to make too much of it. Words like "bomb" and "terror," common words on the terrorism beat, appear at the lower end of the valence scale where they belong, and the number of words that are rated improperly because their political connotations are ignored is small.

Results

With this in mind, I applied the English Lexicon Project's valence scores to the words in my subsample and subtracted five from every score.⁵ Reducing all the scores by five ensures that neutral words get a score of zero, negative words get negative valence scores, and positive words receive positive valence scores (the original scale varies from 1 to 9).

The result? The average valence score for words appearing in terrorism beat articles is .11 95% CI [.09, -.13], with a standard deviation of 1.36. In other words, the average word used on the terrorism beat has a nearly neutral affective intensity score and a distribution that implies that 68 percent of all the words in this analysis vary between the mildly negative -1.25 and the mildly positive 1.47. Figure 7 depicts this distribution of valence scores by year.

5. I lemmatized the words in this analysis (i.e., reduced them to their base forms) using the `hash_lemmas` package in R. The `hash_lemmas` package is based on Michal Měchura's English lemmatization list. See Měchura (2016).

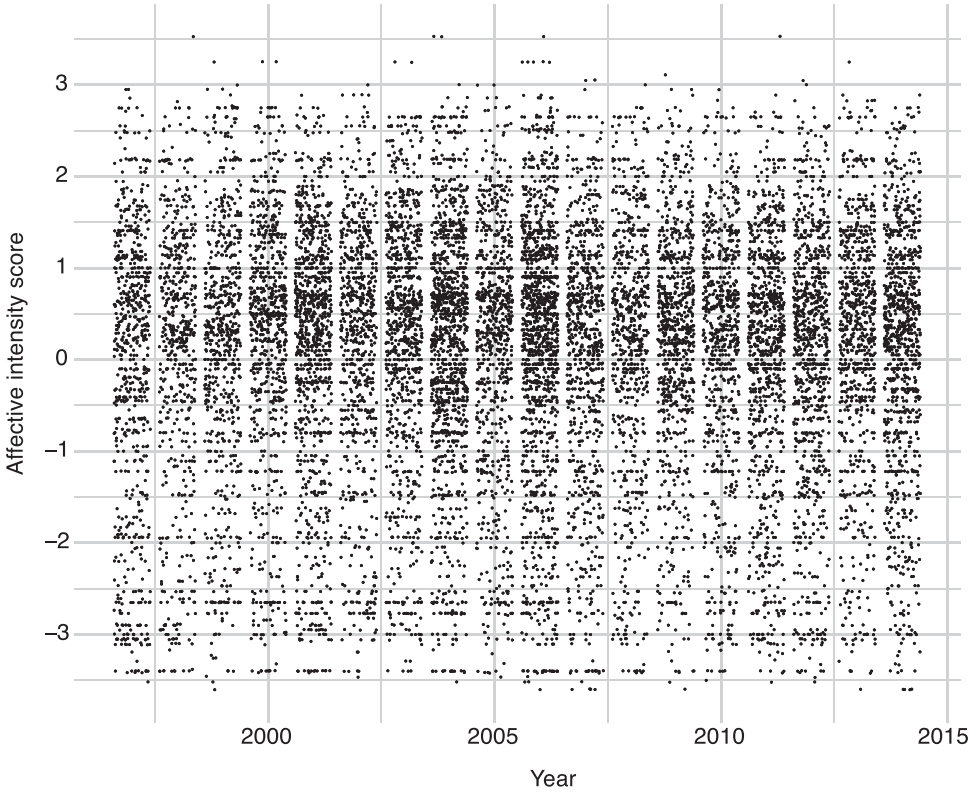


Fig. 7. Moderate and extreme language in terrorism beat news, 1997–2014.
(Note: Points are jittered for display purposes.)

While it is a bit surprising to find that, on average, terrorism beat articles rely more on positive words than negative ones (a result that could reflect the larger number of words the English Lexicon Project tracks relative to Lexicoder), the more important result relates to the concentration of words around the midpoint of the valence scale. Sensational negative words, like “terrorist” (valence score: -3.31) and “kill” (valence score: -3.9), and intensely positive words, like “happy” (valence score: 3.47) and “victory” (valence score 2.59), are relatively uncommon. Instead, the terrorism beat is filled with moderate words like “capture” (valence score: $.05$), “diplomacy” (valence score: 0.53), “lawyer” (valence score -1.06), and “military” (valence score: -0.1).

Figure 7 also leaves no doubt that the terrorism beat makes use of

extreme words. Some of these words could have been replaced with more moderate terms, but others are irreplaceable. In some cases, these words did not have to get used in the first place. The most positive word in the articles I examined is “vacation.” It appears five times in my sample but could have appeared less often. In one case, for example, prime minister Tony Blair could have been described as being “on holiday” instead of “on vacation.” This change, however, has two problems: the phrase “on holiday” is not one Americans use often, and the word “holiday” (valence score: 2.18) is not much more moderate than “vacation” (valence score: 3.53).

“Torture” is the most negative word my subsample. It appears thirteen times in the articles I examined. It is even harder to replace with more moderate language than the word “vacation.” The reason is that “torture” has a specific meaning that synonyms like “abuse” do not convey. “Torment” (valence score: -2.47) might be the best synonym for “torture” (valence score: -3.6), but it is not substantially less extreme than the word “torture” and does not refer specifically to acts that are expressly outlawed. Sometimes, extreme words are required even among journalists who pride themselves on reporting events coolly.

Headlines and Quotations

Two places where journalists can reduce the affective intensity of their work are in the headlines and quotations they use in their reporting. Headlines and quotations are both places where the standards for quality reporting permit journalists to rely on more provocative language.

I examined this premise by separating the headlines and quotations from the subset of 500 articles I sampled. Then, I applied valence scores from the English Lexicon Project to the words contained in these elements of each article.

The results are consistent with the idea that headlines and quotations use more extreme language than the rest of the news from the terrorism beat. The average affective valence score for the headlines I analyzed is $-.08$ 95% CI $[-0.15, -0.01]$ and the standard deviation is 1.48. The average affective valence score for quotations included in the articles is $.22$ 95% CI $[0.13, -0.31]$ with a standard deviation of 1.42.

All these scores differ significantly from the mean and standard deviation associated with the affective valence scores for the articles to which

these headlines are attached. On average, headlines are more negative than the paragraphs that follow them and quotations are more positive than the paragraphs that contain them. An F-Test that I conducted suggests that the valences of both headlines and quotations have significantly larger variances than the valence of article paragraphs. Headlines and quotations are where journalists generally place their most intense language. The F-Test implies that the latitude journalists have to include extreme language is greatest in headline and quotation writing.

Conclusion

Reflecting on the five years he spent as a participant-observer in Midwestern newspapers and on his expertise in news media research, David Ryfe (2006) argues that the field of journalism studies comes to one overarching conclusion about the nature of modern reporting: Despite all the differences across newspapers and reporters and efforts to change the culture of the newsroom, the news that gets produced each day maintains a stubborn consistency. The stories that different newspapers produce are not carbon copies of one another, but their similarities are more important than their differences. They are all recognizable as news.

This chapter arrives at a similar conclusion. The negativity of the language journalists use on the terrorism beat changes some over time, but there is little evidence that these changes are related either to opportunities for negative reporting that emerged after 9/11 or to the declining profitability of news organizations. The idiosyncrasies of events seem to have more to do with the ebb and flow of negativity than long-term economic trends in the news industry.

News from the terrorism beat looks a lot more like an informational product that is produced according to a set of clear norms and practices than a product that is designed to maximize sales. Language use on the terrorism beat language is negative, but not extreme. Positive words are not as common as negative ones, but positive words are used often enough to make a difference to the tone of reporting. The terrorism beat cannot be understood just by looking at negative language.

The terrorism beat also shows clear evidence of following widely recognized reporting principles. Articles are almost entirely written using the inverted-pyramid organizational style and in the third person. Journalists

rarely inject their own voices into their reporting, preferring instead to narrate events from the vantage point of neutral observers.

Taking this neutral perspective demands the exercise of restraint on the part of reporters. Highly emotional accounts are inconsistent with the sense of detachment that journalists use to demonstrate their separation from the events they cover. This restraint can be seen in the way reporters use language. The news journalists write up relies on a relatively small number of tonal words that are difficult to avoid without compromising clarity. The terrorism beat is not filled with unnecessary descriptors.

In addition, the descriptors journalists use tend to be moderate in their affective intensity. Sensational language is rare relative to sober language, with two exceptions: headlines and quotations from sources. These are the places in terrorism beat articles where journalists have more freedom to use words they otherwise cannot use in their reporting.

Overestimating Journalists, Underestimating Audiences

Counterterrorism coverage dominates the terrorism beat. Moderate language does too. What do these tendencies imply about the terrorism beat's effects on news audiences?

Once again, the answer to this question depends on a person's starting assumptions. The profit-seeking model represents the terrorism news beat as an intimidating area of news. People who are exposed to this content experience fear (Albertson and Gadarian 2015) and heightened levels of insecurity (Feick, Donnay, and McCabe 2021), which was the point all along. Fear and insecurity are reactions journalists try to provoke because frightened and insecure audiences demand more news (Trussler and Soroka 2014; Albertson and Gadarian 2015), helping profits (Arango-Kure, Garz, and Rott 2014).

The profit-seeking model's economic logic certainly cannot be dismissed out of hand. As I show in this chapter, a portion of the terrorism beat's content is provocative enough to make people who normally feel secure from terrorism change their minds. Some terrorism beat content is as bad as critics say.

Nevertheless, a much larger proportion of terrorism beat reporting—roughly 66 percent according to my estimates—is not negative enough to leave people with a sense of insecurity. This result is far more in line with the professional model's assertion that journalists consider the impact of their reporting on audiences, being careful to avoid doing their readers harm while covering a range of topics. The result is a reporting corpus that

provokes a variety of responses. Some terrorism beat content is alarming. Other news from the terrorism beat is not.

The research presented in this chapter starts from the observation that the terrorism beat's effects on readers are central to descriptions of this area of reporting. News about threats and attacks is thought to intimidate audiences. Counterterrorism reporting has a similar consequence, either because of its negativity or because it reminds people that terrorist activity remains a threat (Sunstein 2005). These effects are part and parcel of the terrorism beat's reputation for assisting perpetrators and undermining the public interest.

In this chapter, however, I show that conceptualizations of the terrorism beat as an alarming body of reporting overstates the amount of coverage that frightens people and underestimates the amount of coverage that people find reassuring. When it comes to negativity, the problem is that the archetype for terrorism beat reporting is stories that discuss extreme acts of terrorism. This exaggerates the negativity of terrorism beat news that people receive. Using news that more realistically represents the terrorism beat's actual negativity produces different conclusions about its consequences for readers.

When it comes to the possibility that terrorism beat reporting might reassure people, the problem is twofold. First, the idea that the terrorism beat might be the source of positive articles has been ignored. Instead, research on the effects of exposure to terrorism beat content has focused entirely on negative terrorism coverage. Second, there has been a lack of appreciation for the reactions people have to information about effective counterterrorism. Governments that combat terrorism well can convince people that they are safer as a result.

I use two approaches to demonstrate the need for nuance when it comes to the terrorism beat. First, I simulated the effects of exposure to typical stories from the terrorism beat on people's sense of security using an equation between the negativity of terrorism beat news and people's reported levels of insecurity derived from Feick, Donnay, and McCabe's (2021) research on this subject. I find that when scores that realistically reflect the negativity of the terrorism beat are introduced, Feick et al.'s model implies that exposure to the terrorism beat mostly does not change people's fundamental sense of security from terrorism. In a minority of cases, the terrorism beat undermines people's sense of security, but I also find that some terrorism beat articles bolster people's sense of security.

Second, I confirmed that some content improves people's sense of security by conducting three experiments that examine the effects of information about effective counterterrorism. The findings of these studies suggest people are reassured by information that implies that governments are controlling terrorist activity successfully. These findings are consistent with research on "fear appeals," the messages people use to motivate prophylactic behavior with respect to health outcomes (Witte 1992). These findings are also consistent with the idea that counterterrorism coverage and threats-and-attacks reporting may produce different results. Counterterrorism news does not always exacerbate people's sense of insecurity. Under some conditions, counterterrorism reporting improves people's sense of security.

These results suggest two conclusions. First, representing the terrorism beat as a thoroughly alarming source of news equates the effects of its content with its most extreme reporting on terrorist threats and attacks. Some terrorism beat news provokes strong negative responses, but more of it does not produce these effects. Terrorism beat content is often moderate and varied, and often has moderate and varied effects.

The professional model, with its emphasis on diverse coverage and responsible reporting in the public interest can account for these results more easily than the profit-seeking model. The profit-seeking model's expectation that reporters always strive to enhance profits by sensationalizing terrorism beat news is too stark. The patterns reported in this chapter suggest that journalists routinely fall short of the profit-seeking ideal, but also that people are able to cope with a lot of terrorism beat material even when journalists fall short of their professional ideals.

Second, these results address the criticism that counterterrorism reporting has ironic effects (Grosskopf 2006): instead of reassuring people, counterterrorism coverage makes people more insecure by reminding them that there are terrorists who intend to do harm (Sunstein 2005). Consistent with research by Dalgaard-Nielsen, Laisen, and Wandorf (2016), Bausch, Faria, and Zeitzoff (2013), Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, and Shapiro (2011), and Zussman and Zussman (2006), I find that some counterterrorism reporting counteracts the negative effects of terrorism news. Rather than being the bane of effective counterterrorism, the terrorism beat can sometimes serve as an ally in the fight against terrorism.

The Distressing Terrorism Beat

Criminologists (Williamson, Fay, and Miles-Johnson 2019), economists (Jetter 2017), political scientists (Braithwaite 2013), and psychologists (Pfefferbaum et al. 2003) largely agree that exposure to material about terrorism via the mass media reduces people's sense of security. This result is clearest in experimental research: people who are exposed to content that depicts terrorist attacks express greater vulnerability than those who do not encounter this content (Avdan and Webb 2018; Breckenridge, Zimbardo, and Sweeton 2010; Huddy et al. 2021; Slone 2000).

Summarizing the findings in this way, however, understates them. The emotional and political responses to terrorism reporting are sizable. Emotionally, the more people watched coverage of the 9/11 and Boston Marathon bombings, the more they reported suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and PTSD-like symptoms (Ahern et al. 2002; Ahern et al. 2004; Holman, Garfin, and Silver 2014; Silver et al. 2002; Schuster et al. 2001). Politically, the coverage of threats and attacks encourage people to crave security even at the expense of liberty (Davis and Silver 2004), support hawkish foreign policies (Gadarian 2010), and gravitate toward charismatic leaders who promise to protect them from threats (Merolla, Ramos, and Zechmeister 2007).

These responses are triggered without much difficulty. It is possible to get people to report greater insecurity just by asking them to read short articles about terrorism—no frightening images necessary. Feick, Donnay, and McCabe (2021), for example, found that the negativity of the adjectives they used in hypothetical terrorism articles made a bigger difference to people's sense of security than whether the attackers were described either as Islamists (see D'Orazio and Salehyan 2018) or terrorists (see Baele et al. 2019), or whether the attack itself involved either a bombing or a vehicular attack (see Huff and Kertzer 2018).

There is less evidence about the effects of counterterrorism reporting but a lot of speculation that counterterrorism coverage also degrades people's sense of security. The reason is that counterterrorism efforts imply that terrorists pose a big enough danger to require protective measures. So, even though governments say that they are making their citizens safer, statements like these have the ironic effect of making people experience insecurity. People know that governments talk about counterterrorism suc-

cesses because there are dangers that must be addressed in the first place (Coaffee, O'Hare, and Hawkesworth 2009; English 2010; Mueller 2006; Wardlaw 1989).

This sensitivity to even subtle threat cues has its roots in human evolution: people are attuned to dangers that can kill them (Öhman 2000). Just the mention of counterterrorism is enough to make people feel insecure. This is why Cass Sunstein suggests that governments should avoid counterterrorism talk altogether. In Sunstein's view, the fastest way to restore people's sense of security is by "discuss[ing] something else and let[ting] time do the rest" (2005, 125).

The Case for Nuance

These concerns about the terrorism beat's deleterious effects provides a rationale for the research community's focus on the effects of threats and attacks. If counterterrorism coverage, the most common type of coverage on the terrorism beat, influences people the way articles about threats and attacks do, then there is little reason to take the effects of the terrorism beat's diversity into account.

At the same time, there are reasons to believe that the case against the terrorism beat is too pessimistic. Here, I lay out several reasons for believing that the profit-seeking model's depiction of the terrorism beat as a consistently intimidating area of reporting is overstated: the negativity of the terrorism beat is more variable than existing research recognizes; people are psychologically resilient; and reactions to counterterrorism coverage *are not* equivalent to reactions to news about threats and attacks. These points can essentially be taken as correlates to the professional model, because they depict news audiences as capable of coping with the news they receive and journalists as in tune enough with their readers to fulfill their professional obligations to them.

Variable Negativity

What we know about responses to terrorism beat news derives from studies that examine reactions to extreme acts of terrorism and the reporting

on those events. The terrorism news beat's subject matter, however, is more varied than this narrow database implies. People may react to news about threats and attacks differently than they do to other kinds of terrorism beat content.

Even if people do react similarly to all terrorism beat reporting regardless of its content, there are reasons to believe that existing studies exaggerate the severity of the reactions to terrorism beat news through their focus on the most provocative examples of terrorism beat news. Feick, Donnay, and McCabe (2021), for example, draw their conclusions about terrorism beat news using a terrorist attack that is as negative as articles in the lowest quartile of my sample. Merolla and Zechmeister (2009) base their conclusions on responses to images drawn from the 9/11 attacks. Huddy et al. (2021) use material about the Boston Marathon bombing. Gadarian's "scary visuals" video was rated by independent observers as more anxiety-producing than a video depicting a suicide terrorist attack (Hoffman and Kaire 2020). Breckenridge, Zimbardo, and Sweeton (2010) gave study participants a CNN video about a bus bombing in Israel that left many people visibly injured on the streets of Jerusalem. My own experimental research in this area (Hoffman and Shelby 2014; Hoffman and Kaire 2020) relies on some of these same images as well.

The emphasis on unusual acts of terrorism equates the terrorism beat to its most extreme content. As I showed in chapter 4, the net tone of terrorism beat articles varies widely, including everything from net negative content to net positive content. This negativity plays an important role in determining responses to information. More negative material provokes stronger responses than less negative material. The terrorism beat's variable negativity, therefore, is a reason to believe that the actual experience of reading the terrorism beat is also variable.

Psychological Buffers

The second reason to believe that people may cope with terrorism beat news effectively derives from a wealth of psychological research that shows people have defenses that enable them to manage the effects of a range of stressors (see Paton 2019 for a review of several theories). Whether these are called psychological buffers (Greenberg et al. 1990; Burke, Martens,

and Faucher 2010), defense mechanisms (Bowins 2004; Cramer 2000), coping mechanisms (Skinner and Zimmer-Gembeck 2007; Bux and Coyne 2009), or psychosocial resources (Bonanno 2004; Bonanno et al. 2006; Hobfoll 1989), people possess tools and strategies that help them regulate the effects of stimuli that would otherwise provoke severe anxiety. These stressors range from average life events, like academic examinations (Spangler et al. 2002), all the way to extraordinary events, like terrorist attacks (Bleich, Gelkopf, and Solomon 2003; Bonanno et al. 2007).

Observational studies of the reactions people have to actual terrorist attacks also suggest that processes of emotional regulation observed in laboratories operate under real-world conditions. Studies of reactions to the 9/11 attacks consistently show relatively low rates of maladaptive psychological behavior. People, including those who lived in New York City, demonstrated high levels of psychological resilience within just a few months of the attacks on the World Trade Center (Bonanno et al. 2007). Galea et al. (2002), for example, found that within four to six weeks of 9/11 80 percent of New Yorkers who lived near the World Trade Center showed few if any signs of PTSD. Rates of psychological resilience were even higher in a national sample reported by Schlenger et al. (2002)—nearly 96 percent.

Similarly, adaptive responses have been reported in studies of the Madrid train bombing, the Oklahoma City bombing, and in Israel during the Second Intifada (Rudenstine and Galea 2015). Londoners who lived through the London Blitz, during World War II, displayed resilience as well (Wessely 2005).

The ability to cope with anxiety-producing threats is not universal, but the inability to manage severe psychosocial dislocations appears to be atypical. Among New Yorkers who lived near the World Trade Center, for example, 20 percent experienced clinically concerning levels of psychological stress after 9/11, as did roughly 4 percent of all Americans.

There are exceptions. Palestinians living in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem and Palestinian citizens of Israel appear to suffer more psychological stress and display less ability to recover from repeated exposure to political violence than their Jewish counterparts (Hobfoll, Canetti-Nisim, and Johnson 2006; Hobfoll et al. 2011). These less resilient responses are a reminder that psychological defenses have their limits, even though most people buffer against threats effectively. Some fear-provoking stimuli are

capable are breaching people's defenses (Witte 1992, 1994; Witte and Allen 2000).

Here, I mean something specific. Saying that people's psychological defenses can be breached means that some stimuli produce phase changes in their psychological states, shifting people, for instance, from states of calm to states of apprehension or from feelings of security to feelings of insecurity. Phase changes involve a transition from one psychological condition to another.

In contrast, some stimuli only produce relative changes in people's psychological states. People feel either more or less secure than they otherwise would have in response to some stimuli, without shifting from a state of security to a state of insecurity (or vice versa). Strong stimuli break through people's psychological defenses, while weaker ones either whittle them down or gradually build them up.

The implication is that the strong doses of terrorism beat coverage people react to in experimental studies may be too strong for people's defenses. Weaker doses of terrorism beat reporting that are more consistent with what newspapers typically provide might be within what people are able to handle.

The Efficacy of Effective Counterterrorism

The final reason to think that the everyday terrorism beat does not have extreme effects on news audiences is that counterterrorism is an important part of the coverage audiences receive. Effective counterterrorism, in particular, has different effects than reporting about threats and attacks (Bausch, Faria, and Zeitzoff 2013; Zussman and Zussman 2006). Instead of leaving people the impression that they are vulnerable to the harmful effects of terrorism, messages about effective counterterrorism give people hope that governments can protect them from terrorist attacks.

One way people resist the transition from a positive to a negative psychological state is by having their psychological defenses strengthened. The question for the terrorism beat is whether any of the material that reporters usually deliver to audiences has the capacity to counteract the negative effects of reporting about threats and attacks? Research on the psychology of "fear appeals" (Witte 1992, 1994) suggests that reports about effective counterterrorism can do this.

Fear appeals are a common way of motivating people to take care of themselves in health contexts. The term “fear appeals” refers to messages that attempt to motivate people by highlighting the dangers that will materialize if the message is rejected (Tannenbaum et al. 2015). Anti-smoking messages, for example, often arouse anxiety to motivate behavior. Telling people that “smoking kills” is designed to make them afraid of the consequences of smoking to keep them from taking up the practice.

Like these anti-smoking messages, terrorist threats can be thought of as fear appeals. Terrorists use the threat of violence for coercive purposes (see Brown 2020 for more on threats). The threat of violence is the lever that perpetrators of terrorism use to extract concessions from their adversaries. The implicit bargain is that terrorists promise to stop using violence in exchange for gaining something of value from the other side.

Fear appeals do not always work, however. Rather than motivating behaviors that threateners desire, fear appeals can initiate unwanted behaviors (Peters, Ruiters, and Kok 2013). Instead of getting people to stop smoking, anti-smoking messages have been known to encourage smoking. Instead of forcing the United States to withdraw from the Middle East, the 9/11 attacks backfired in some important ways against Al-Qaeda. The United States intensified its presence in the region, increased its support for many of the governments Al-Qaeda considered corrupt, and initiated a war against the Taliban, one of the few regimes Al-Qaeda considered praiseworthy (Byman 2003).

According to the Extended Parallel Process Model (EPPM), whether people respond appropriately to fear appeals depends on the ability of these messages to stoke fear and to convince people that there are sensible ways to address those fears (Witte 1992, 1994; Witte and Allen 2000). “Smoking kills” is not necessarily a message that resonates with nonsmokers in the same way that threats by distant terrorist organizations against foreign lands do not necessarily resonate with Americans. The targets of fear appeals must have some connection to the threats these messages deliver; otherwise they will not motivate people to action.

Fear appeals also have to suggest reasonable strategies for addressing threats to be effective (Gore and Bracken 2005). If getting people to quit smoking requires smokers to enter treatment facilities that they cannot afford, smokers are unlikely to follow this advice. If the demands terrorists make are too outlandish, people will not give into them. When people are skeptical of the methods suggested for avoiding dangers, they will not avail themselves of those suggestions.

The EPPM's logic can be applied to the messages people receive about government counterterrorism efforts, with modifications. The EPPM is a theory about how individuals react to fear appeals. In the health contexts EPPM theorists are interested in, people either accept the advice embedded in fear appeals or reject it. Looking to a third party for help in situations of risk is not really part of the equation.

When it comes to terrorism, though, government action is often the first line of defense. Governments are among the few actors that possess the authority and the capability to confront terrorist organizations. Since individuals cannot challenge terrorists on their own, they look to powerful third parties for help (Merolla, Ramos, and Zechmeister 2007).

This means that when terrorists make fear appeals, the targets of these coercive demands turn to governments to provide them with protection against their assailants. People, in other words, prefer to look to governments for protection against terrorist threats than to give into those threats. The hitch is that governments must demonstrate efficacy. Governments that are unable manage terrorist threats will have difficulty reassuring people about their safety.

Less Negativity, Less Insecurity

To recap, the profit-seeking model suggests that the terrorism beat consistently intimidates news audiences. This is by design. Fear contributed to news consumption, improving the profitability of the news.

In contrast, the professional model suggests that the content of the terrorism beat is varied and news audiences are resilient and receptive to messages that suggest their security is improving. The implication is that the terrorism beat can be expected to produce varied responses—everything from negative responses to security-improving ones.

I used two strategies to think through these perspectives. First, I turned to Feick, Donnay, and McCabe's (2021) research to think about how the reliance on extremely negative news items may be biasing conclusions about the effects of the terrorism beat on news audiences. By exploiting the mathematical relationship Feick et al. found between negative terrorism news and reported levels of security, this framework enabled me to examine what Feick et al. might have found had they used less intense news treatments. These results speak directly to the idea that the relative

negativity of news plays a role in determining the direction and magnitude of news effects.

Second, I developed and conducted a series of experiments that focus on the consequences of exposure to news about effective counterterrorism efforts by governments. These experiments enable me to assess the claim that people respond to at least some forms of terrorism beat reporting differently than they respond to the coverage of terrorist threats and attacks.

The specific steps I took to execute both research designs are described in the following sections, beginning with the simulation I conducted on the relationship between negative terrorism reporting and people's sense of insecurity. This dimension of my work builds on Feick et al.'s findings.

The Negativity of Terrorism Beat News: Insights from a Typical Experiment

In an important article, Feick, Donnay, and McCabe (2021) found that the negativity of terrorism coverage, defined by the number of negative adjectives relative to positive ones in a written account about a hypothetical terrorist attack, influenced the level of insecurity readers reported. Study participants who read a negative account about the attack described themselves as feeling up to twelve points more insecure on a 100-point scale than participants who read a more neutral version of the same story.

Feick et al.'s work confirms what critics of the terrorism beat have long believed but have not demonstrated: the terrorism beat's negativity works to the disadvantage of news audiences by making people who read this work experience heightened levels of insecurity. These findings echo Altheide's (2017) and Moeller's (2009) claims that the intense language used by journalists successfully provokes audiences.¹

The consistency between Feick et al.'s work and the broader work on the effects of terrorism news is one of the reasons I built on this study. The effects Feick et al. report are both in the same direction and roughly the same magnitude as those reported in previous work on the effects of

1. Feick et al.'s (2021) work shows that the negativity of terrorism beat news has effects that are consistent with the negativity of other news beats. Negative news reduces confidence in the economy (Boydston, Highton, and Linn 2018; Damstra and Boukes 2018), enthusiasm for candidates pursuing political office (Fridkin and Kenney 2004), and support for social welfare programs (Gilens 2009).

terrorism beat news. Using Cohen's d , a standard estimate of effect size, I estimate that Feick et al.'s treatments (Cohen's $d = .14$) have roughly the same influence on participants as prominent studies by Merolla and Zechmeister (2009) (Cohen's $d = .13$) and Breckenridge et al. (2010) (Cohen's $d = .08$). Conservatively, this suggests that the effects Feick et al. found are about average for studies of media use and post-traumatic stress (Houston 2009). The only caveat is that Cohen's d tends to underestimate the magnitude of effects in conjoint experiments like the one Feick et al. used.

The other reason I focused on Feick et al.'s work is because their interest in the effects of negative language overlaps with my own. This shared focus made it possible for me to connect my findings to theirs in ways that would have been more difficult and tenuous had I relied on studies that did not make language the focus.

Feick et al. gave their participants, at random, one of two hypothetical news articles to read, a "negative" news article and a "neutral" one, and measured differences in responses to each. The articles differed in the number of negative adjectives they used to describe the same act of terrorism.

Using Lexicoder, I calculated the net tone for each of the hypothetical news items Feick et al. gave their participants. This procedure reveals that the net tone of the negative article they used includes 10.38% more negative words than positive ones. The neutral article they worked with uses 6.45% more negative words than positive ones.

These are strong doses of terrorism reporting. The hypothetical negative news article they used to study the effects of language exceeds the negativity of average terrorism beat articles in my sample of terrorism beat articles by at least 40 percent. The average lead paragraph in my sample uses just 3.87% more negative words than positive ones.

Simulation

Using these tone scores and the mathematical relationship Feick et al. found between negativity and insecurity, it is possible to examine the following hypothetical question: what conclusions about the terrorism beat would emerge had Feick et al. used treatments that were more reflective of the material that newspapers publish?

The formula that defines the relationship between tone and insecurity in Feick et al.'s research is: $y = 3.05x + 19.67$. I calculated this based on the

net tone scores for both the negative and neutral articles Feick et al. used and from their report that people who read their neutral article reported feeling 12 points less insecure than those who read their negative article.

This equation implies two conclusions. The first is that the negativity of terrorism beat news has a strong effect on people's psychological states. For every 1 percent increase in the net negativity of terrorism beat articles, people experience a 3 percent reduction in their sense of security. This is consistent with the idea that terrorism beat news is a powerful stimulant.

The second conclusion from this equation is that people have a nearly twenty-point (19.67) cushion between themselves and negative stimuli they receive that helps them deal with the consequences of negative information. So, even though negative information about terrorist threats and attacks erodes this buffer, it takes a terrorism beat article that is more than 6.45% net negative to overwhelm people's defenses.

Introducing less net-negative news into this formula is a matter of plugging in different net tone scores to the equation provided above. Doing this produces predictable but instructive results. The average *insecurity* score people are expected to report after reading average lead paragraphs from the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post* is 7.98, on a scale that uses zero as the dividing line between feelings of security and feelings of insecurity. This score is lower than what we would expect from a person who read a neutral terrorism beat article or who avoided the terrorism beat altogether, but it is not a score that suggests readers of the terrorism beat transitioned from a state of security to a state of insecurity.

Typical terrorism beat articles leave people feeling secure because on average, people possess psychological defenses that enable them to reduce the negative effects of terrorism beat news. Only articles in the 30th percentile for negativity are net-negative enough to overwhelm people's defenses and push them into insecure territory (insecurity score = -3.2). It is in this most extreme quartile that Feick et al.'s treatments are located.

Articles in the top 25 percent of the distribution of tone scores—these are articles that contain more positive words than negative words—can be expected to leave people with feelings of security that are equal to or greater than those experienced by people who avoid reading the terrorism beat altogether. Positive news from the terrorism beat, in other words, can boost people's sense of security from terrorism.

These results suggest that while some terrorism beat content produces

effects on par with Feick et al.'s results, news from the terrorism beat typically has milder effects on the insecurity of audiences than either Feick et al. or other existing research imply. Typical terrorism beat articles are less negative than the ones Feick et al. used, and people can cope with negative information. In most cases, terrorism beat articles are not strong enough stimulants to erode the buffer people have that enables them to cope with stressful information.

Subject Matter Differences

As I have argued throughout this book, it is important to draw distinctions between the different subjects that are covered on the terrorism beat. Equating the terrorism beat with reporting about threats and attacks misses the variety of stories that appear on the terrorism beat regularly and, in some cases, more often than content about threats and attacks.

Once again, Feick et al.'s work is helpful for thinking this claim through. Separating terrorism beat stories by subject underscores how different stories about threats and attacks are compared to other terrorism beat articles. The average net tone score from my sample of lead paragraphs about threats and attacks is -6.72 , meaning that typical stories about threats and attacks contain enough negative content to break through people's psychological defenses and make them feel insecure.

Average terrorism beat content focused on counterterrorism and community responses to terrorism does not have this same effect because it does not usually contain as much negative language relative to positive language. The average net tone score for counterterrorism reporting is -4.93 , and the average net tone score for material about community responses to terrorism is -3.76 . In other words, on average counterterrorism articles have about 5 percent more negative words than positive ones. Articles about community responses to terrorism have about 4 percent more negative than positive language in them.

These reduced levels of negative language mean that average articles about counterterrorism and community responses to terrorism may make people who read these articles feel less secure in a relative sense, but are unlikely to turn fundamentally secure news audiences into fundamentally insecure ones. Lead paragraphs that focus on topics other than terrorism

are even less likely to influence the public's sense of security. These leads have an average net tone score of -1.03 .

Stepping back, these results suggest some important conclusions. Critics are right to warn about the effects of terrorism beat news that focuses on threats and attacks. This material typically makes people feel insecure. At the same time, other terrorism beat subjects do not have the same consequences. Regular terrorism beat readers might feel somewhat less secure than they would if they avoided the news altogether, but that observation is not nuanced enough. Reporting on counterterrorism and community responses to terrorism is frequently incapable of making people question whether they are at risk from terrorism. Portions of the terrorism beat may even boost people's sense of security from terrorism.

Effective Counterterrorism

Of course, it is one thing to suggest that terrorism beat news does not always make people feel insecure using extrapolated values from a simulation and quite another to show that people react this way when confronted with actual content. In this section, I address this point by examining reactions to a subset of counterterrorism coverage focusing on effective responses to terrorism.

Three Experiments

Building on insights from the EPPM and work on the psychology of control, I examine two hypotheses about the ability of news about counterterrorism efforts to influence people's sense of security.

H1: Reports about efficacious counterterrorism efforts increase people's sense of security from terrorism.

H2: Reports about ineffective counterterrorism efforts either have no effect on people's sense of security from terrorism or make people feel more vulnerable to terrorism.

With the help of Will Shelby, I tested the internal validity of these propositions in three experiments. The focus on the internal validity of these hypotheses is appropriate given the state of knowledge about the effects of news about counterterrorism on attitudes and behavior. Other studies of the difference effective counterterrorism makes to people's behavior have largely relied on observational data. Zussman and Zussman (2006), for example, test counterterrorism's effects on data tracking the Israeli stock market.

These contributions imply that people are, in fact, reassured by information about effective counterterrorism, but extant studies cannot rule out threats to their validity. Zussman and Zussman's work (2006), which makes the most persuasive case for the impact of effective counterterrorism, cannot rule out the possibility that the increases in the Israeli stock market they observe are unrelated to the timing of targeted assassinations by the Israeli government. Since the Israeli government chooses the time and place of its assassination attempts, it is possible that their attacks are employed only when government officials believe that the strikes will not hurt Israel's stock market.

Similarly, Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, and Shapiro (2011) find a correlation between news reports about terrorism prevention and reduced levels of concern about terrorism reported in national polls, but once again it is unclear if this pattern is causal or coincidental. At a minimum, we need a technique that makes it possible to confirm that the people who are expressing changed levels of security are the same people who consumed counterterrorism news.

Research Design

Shelby and I addressed these weaknesses in observational research by developing three laboratory experiments that focus on the effects counterterrorism news has on feelings of insecurity. All three studies had Institutional Review Board approval.

Randomized experiments can address the weaknesses in the existing observational designs. Instead of permitting interested parties to select when or where counterterrorism news is generated or letting participants select themselves into control or treatment conditions, we assigned treatments to participants at random.

The resulting experimental groups can be expected to be statistically equivalent to one another. This helps rule out pre-treatment differences between groups as an explanation for post-treatment differences. In addition, this design provides more confidence that exposure to counterterrorism news influences responses because the people in this study who provided information about their sense of security from terrorism are the same people who were exposed to material about counterterrorism.

Each study examined whether depictions of effective counterterrorism influenced people's confidence in the ability of governments to (1) prevent future attacks and (2) protect citizens (e.g., "Please tell me if you are very confident, somewhat confident, not very confident, or not at all confident in the US government's ability to prevent future terrorist attacks"). In studies 1 and 2, participants were also asked to assess the likelihood of future attacks given the information they received about government counterterrorism efforts. In study 3, we asked whether information about effective counterterrorism influenced attitudes about foreign travel. All these questions are common ways of measuring the sense of security from terrorism. The online appendix contains details of the questions that served as dependent variables in these studies.

Each study was developed with an eye toward maximizing the realism of the treatments participants received. In study 1, participants received a hypothetical newspaper article detailing a terrorist attack and government response. Study 2 presented participants with CNN footage of the aftermath of a terrorist attack in Israel and a video created and distributed by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) touting their skill in dealing with terrorists. Study 3 used a tweet sent by the IDF promoting their success in killing a leader of Hamas's military wing. Using authentic treatments makes it easier to believe that elicited responses reflect the way in which people ordinarily react to counterterrorism news.

Volunteers for the studies were recruited from consumer sciences and political science courses at Purdue University in Indiana (study 1), and Amazon's Mechanical Turk website (studies 2 and 3). These samples are not selected at random from the US population, but they are still appropriate for examining reactions to information about effective counterterrorism. Extant research in the EPPM tradition provides few reasons to believe that subsamples of the US population are unaffected by the effects of information about effective action. Moreover, critics of counterterrorism news assert that people instinctively have negative reactions to this

coverage. People, in other words, on both sides of the controversy over counterterrorism news, believe that anyone we recruited would be appropriate for putting these ideas to the test.

Nevertheless, using convenience samples means that the magnitude of any effects we observed in the laboratory are likely to be unrepresentative of these effects in the population. What matters most here, though, is the direction of the effects we observed. The point of these experiments was to demonstrate that exposure to counterterrorism news can be expected to produce effects that differ from the effects of news about threats and attacks. The magnitude of these effects are less important.

Last, but not least, we analyzed responses to our studies using analysis of variance (ANOVA), a simple and easy to understand technique. In those cases when ANOVA was not the best choice given the dependent variables we used, we analyzed our results using more appropriate techniques and presented those results in the online appendix. In no case did those more sophisticated analyses produce substantively different results from those presented in this chapter.

Study 1

A string of bomb threats targeting college campuses in the United States in 2012 and 2013 inspired study 1. At the University of Pittsburgh, the Threateners, a previously unknown group, issued more than 100 threats against the university between February and April 2012 (Preston 2012). The threats forced many evacuations from campus buildings and drew the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force into the investigation by local authorities.

At the time, Americans held favorable opinions of the FBI's counterterrorism efforts. In 2002, 56 percent of respondents told ABC that the FBI was doing either a good or an excellent job dealing with the 9/11 bombing. In 2003, 52 percent of Americans said the FBI's performance in dealing with terrorism was either good or excellent; 49 percent of Americans said they had either a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the FBI's counterterrorism efforts.

In a study that ran from November 2012 to May 2013, we asked 282 students enrolled in classes at Purdue University whether news about effective FBI action in a case like the one that unfolded in Pittsburgh increased their sense of security. Students were presented scenarios at random that

described FBI efforts to deal with either (international) threats from Al-Qaeda or (domestic) threats from Sovereign Citizens on college campuses. We hypothesized that information about effective responses to these threats would increase our participants' sense of security from terrorism. Since Al-Qaeda was viewed as the terrorist organization that posed the greatest threat to the United States at the time, we further hypothesized that students who heard about threats from this group would experience more insecurity than those who heard about threats from Sovereign Citizens, a right-wing extremist group in the United States.

Volunteers received concocted wire-service reports designed to appear as if they were printed in newspapers. Those randomly assigned to the ineffective response conditions were told about a warning issued by the FBI about Al-Qaeda/Sovereign Citizens operating on college campuses. Participants in the effective response conditions were told that the FBI broke up a plot by one of these groups.

After receiving one of the resulting four scenarios (domestic versus international terrorism; effective versus ineffective responses) participants responded to questions focusing on their confidence in the US government's ability to "prevent future terrorist attacks" and "protect its citizens from attacks." Following Breckenridge, Zimbardo, and Sweeton (2010), we also asked participants to assess the likelihood of a terrorist attack "somewhere within the United States"; whether they will "experience an act of terrorism"; and whether someone they "know well will be the victim of a terrorist attack within the United States."

The study ended with several demographic questions. Women made up slightly more than half of our respondents (51%). The average age of our respondents was 20 (standard deviation [SD] = 3.26). An error on my part (Shelby was blameless in this) resulted in incomplete information on the political party identification of our respondents. Those we do have information on were more likely to identify as Republicans (40%) than Democrats (34%). The remaining 26% identified as either Independents or had other political affiliations.

Results

We restricted our analyses to those people who passed an attention check. Those that paid attention to the material presented to them in this study were indeed influenced by both messages about effective counterterror-

ism and the identity of the group presenting the threat to university life. We found a significant interaction between these two factors ($F(3, 197) = 2.04, p < .1$).

The interaction emerges because participants reacted to the threats from Al-Qaeda and Sovereign Citizens differently. When Al-Qaeda was presented as the threat, participants were unmoved by any information we gave them about FBI action. When we presented Sovereign Citizens as the threat, information about effective action by the FBI increased confidence in the US government's ability to prevent attacks ($F(1, 100) = 2.89, p < .09$) and to keep its citizens safe ($F(1, 99) = 4.84, p < .05$).

Under no circumstances did information about the FBI make the sense of insecurity worse. People who were told about ineffective FBI responses were no more anxious about the chances of terrorist attacks than those who were told about effective counterterrorism responses ($F(1, 197) = 0.37, p > .1$). The quality of FBI counterterrorism efforts also had no effect on people's sense of security from terrorism ($F(1, 197) = 0.49, p > .1$) or their concerns about the safety of friends and family ($F(1, 197) = 1.13, p > .1$).

Study 2

The conditional relationship between terrorist organizations and FBI responses suggests that information about effective counterterrorism influences people's sense of security from terrorism in some circumstances but not others. Presenting people with information about threats from Al-Qaeda might have set the danger bar too high. Asking people to place their faith in effective FBI action also may have asked a bit too much. Americans have more confidence in military responses to terrorism than criminal justice ones.

In study 2, we took these considerations into account and asked whether reports about effective military efforts by the Israeli government would encourage Americans to travel there as tourists? Danger avoidance is a common response to threats of all kinds (Lerner and Keltner 2001), and terrorism is known to influence the destinations to which people travel (Drakos and Kutan 2003). In this experiment, we examined the capacity of information about effective counterterrorism to diminish this avoidance response.

Three hundred volunteers, recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk for a study examining "attitudes about foreign travel," were randomly

assigned to one of three conditions. The baseline group received no information about either terrorism or counterterrorism. Participants assigned to group 2 (the terrorism condition) were shown a short (34-second) video clip produced by CNN depicting injuries caused by a bus bombing in Israel. (This is the same video Breckenridge et al. [2010] used in their research on the effects of terrorism news.) Those in the third condition (the counterterrorism condition) watched both the CNN clip and a video produced by the Israel Defense Forces demonstrating their skill in rescuing hostages captured by terrorists.

Participants were then asked to rate their willingness to travel to Israel (“If money were no object, please tell me on a scale of 0 to 100, with 0 meaning totally unlikely to visit and 100 meaning absolutely certain to visit, how likely it is that you would travel to Israel?”) and about their confidence in the Israeli government’s counterterrorism efforts. The confidence in government questions mirror those used in study 1.

The study concluded after volunteers answered a series of demographic questions. Men comprised about 59 percent of the volunteers. The average age of participants was nearly 34 years old (33.85, $SD = 11.68$) and nearly half identified as Democrats (49 percent). Republicans made up 17 percent of the pool, 28 percent identified as Independents, and 6 percent said they had “other” political affiliations. Just six participants said they were “Jewish.” We controlled for these six people in our analyses since Jewish participants might react to information about terrorism and counterterrorism in Israel differently than others, given Israel’s identity as the Jewish state.

Results

Participants in both the baseline and counterterrorism conditions expressed greater willingness to travel to Israel than those in the terrorism condition ($F(2, 297) = 6.40, p < .01$). Those in the terrorism condition ($b = 8.96, p < .05, 95\% \text{ CI } [-17.02, -0.91]$) were almost 9 points less interested in traveling to Israel than people in the baseline and counterterrorism video conditions. This finding controls for the responses of Jewish participants in our study, who were strongly motivated to visit Israel ($b = 38.22, p < .01, 95\% \text{ CI } [11.84, 64.61]$).

People in the baseline condition and people in the counterterrorism condition were statistically indistinguishable from one another in terms of their willingness to travel to Israel. This implies that the IDF hostage-

rescue video erased the effects of the terrorism video that participants in both the terrorism and counterterrorism conditions watched. Participants assigned to the counterterrorism condition responded to our questions about traveling to Israel as if they had not seen any of the videos at all.

Participants in the baseline and counterterrorism conditions also expressed more confidence in the Israeli government's ability to protect citizens from future attacks than those in the terrorism condition ($F(2, 287) = 2.50, p < .1$). We found no relationship, however, between exposure to information about effective counterterrorism and beliefs about Israel's ability to prevent terrorism. Responses by our Jewish participants account for the (marginally) significant F test ($F(2, 285) = 2.5, p < .1$) that we identified.

Study 3

The results of study 2 make a stronger case for the capacity of messages about effective counterterrorism to reassure people about their safety from terrorist attacks. In combination with study 1, the results point to the idea that news reporting on effective counterterrorism is unlikely to have the ironic effects experts worry about in all circumstances.

The results do not say much about how information on effective counterterrorism works during ongoing crises. Studies 1 and 2 modeled the experience people might have on a typical day, one without ongoing terrorist activity to churn up their emotions. But how do messages about effective counterterrorism fare during a crisis?

We got an opportunity to examine this question during a period of intense fighting between Israel and Hamas in November of 2012. On November 14, 2012, Israel announced, via social media, that the IDF "eliminated" Ahmed al-Jabari, who commanded Hamas's military. The strike and subsequent declaration marked the beginning of a seven-day offensive by the Israeli military against Hamas.

Counterterrorism efforts are frequently the subject of reporting when threats appear to be imminent. Recreating the sense of immediacy that accompanies these moments can be difficult, though, in laboratory settings. Quickly launching a study while fighting between Israel and Hamas Israel's offensive was ongoing made it possible to examine how

Israel's efforts to portray itself as efficacious influenced people who saw the communiqué.

Full disclosure: this study counts as “firehouse” research, hastily thrown together to take advantage of an unexpected, fleeting situation. We had to make compromises that we would have preferred to avoid. We were not in a position to get ethics approval for research with Israeli participants. Instead, we had to focus on Americans who could be recruited quickly through Mechanical Turk. We also had no treatment depicting acts of terrorism, as we did in study 2. This made it impossible for us to reproduce those results under different conditions.

Nevertheless, the chance to study people's reactions to counterterrorism messages issued during an ongoing operation made it worth pursuing. Polls suggest that Americans believe assassinations control the threat of terrorism (see Smeltz and Daalder 2014), but we do not know if these attacks influence people's sense of security directly.

With violence ongoing, we recruited 120 volunteers through Amazon Mechanical Turk for a study of their responses to “questions about current events.” A series of demographic questions administered at the start of this study revealed that our participants ranged in age from 20 to 62 years old ($M = 34.5$, $SD = 12.4$) and were predominantly men (60.7%). Nearly 76 percent of our volunteers had at least some college education. Politically, 52.6 percent self-identified as Democrats, 30.3 percent identified as Independents, and 10.7 percent said they were Republicans.

We also asked a series of preliminary questions about the amount of attention our participants were paying to ongoing events. Slightly less than 93 percent of those who took part in this research reported following the violence in Israel at least a little. Only about 10 percent of our participants, however, followed the controversy in the United States over the September 11, 2012, attack on the US embassy in Benghazi, Libya, that killed US diplomat Christopher Hill. Our volunteers, therefore, appeared to be the kind of people who follow some headline news but who would not be considered “news junkies.”

After completing these initial questions, we assigned our volunteers at random to either a baseline condition or a counterterrorism condition. Those in the baseline condition received a battery of questions about their confidence in the Israeli and US governments' ability to prevent future attacks and to protect their citizens against terrorism. We also asked par-

ticipants to rate the chances of future attacks by Hamas against Israeli and US interests (e.g., “In the past, Hamas has threatened to attack the United States in retaliation against Israeli strikes. On a scale from 0 to 100, with 0 meaning totally unlikely to occur and 100 meaning absolutely certain to occur, how likely do you feel it is that Hamas will attack the United States as a result of its support of the Israeli government?”). Those in the counterterrorism condition viewed the IDF’s tweet before answering the questions about the Israeli and US governments.

Results

Our analyses suggest that IDF’s message declaring its targeted assassination of Ahmed al-Jabari increased people’s confidence in the ability of the Israeli and US governments to deal with future terrorist activity. We found no evidence that the IDF’s message increased people’s anxiety about future attacks.

Participants who saw the IDF’s social media announcement expressed more confidence in (1) Israel’s ability to prevent attacks ($F(1, 103) = 5.56, p < .05$), (2) the US’s ability to prevent attacks ($F(1, 103) = 4.28, p < .05$), and (3) the US’s ability to protect its citizens ($F(1, 103) = 2.82, p < .1$). The tweet had no discernible effect on confidence in the Israeli government’s ability to protect its citizens ($F(1, 103) = 0.71, p > .1$).

Those who saw the IDF’s message did not, however, express more concerns about future attacks than those who did not see it. Those in the baseline and counterterrorism conditions expressed similar levels of concern about the chances of future attacks by either Hamas ($F(1, 103) = 0.04, p > .1$) or Al-Qaeda ($F(1, 103) = 1.65$). The IDF’s intentionally provocative message apparently did not raise concerns about retaliation.

Discussion

Considered together, these three studies present a case for the proposition that information about effective counterterrorism, whether it comes through the news or via social media, can reassure people about their security from terrorists. Study participants who were informed about effective counterterrorism expressed greater confidence in government efforts to deal with terrorism than study participants who did not receive these messages.

News conveying information about effective military actions against suspected terrorists reassured people the most, but messages about effective criminal justice efforts worked too. This result is important for at least two reasons. First, there is a debate about the efficacy of criminal justice responses to terrorism (Dershowitz 2002). Second, these results suggest that governments can reestablish the public's sense of security from terrorism without necessarily engaging in military action.

We know from a range of studies that feelings of insecurity motivate a series of problematic political responses, including increased ethnocentrism (Kam and Kinder 2007), more pronounced gender stereotyping (Greenberg and Kosloff 2008), stronger authoritarian attitudes (Merolla and Zechmeister 2009), and a greater willingness to support hawkish foreign policies (Gadarian 2010). The research presented in this chapter suggests, however, that whether these responses emerge also depends on the other information that people receive. Effective counterterrorism can undercut some of these reactions in ways that are not being recognized in extant research.

Despite its potential, news about effective counterterrorism does not emerge as a panacea to insecurity in these studies. Study 1, in particular, suggests that there are limits to the ability of messages about effective counterterrorism to improve people's sense of security from terrorism. At the same time, these studies offer little support for the claim that exposure to information about counterterrorism of any kind alarms the people who receive it. Fear may not be a natural response to counterterrorism.

The non-effect of counterterrorism news also strengthens the idea advanced in this book that the terrorism beat has varied effects on people and that viewing all terrorism beat content through the prism of threats-and-attacks coverage provides a misleading view of this content. Instead of seeing the terrorism beat as a consistently intimidating one, the terrorism beat is better described as a news beat that produces some alarming content, some reassuring content, and probably a lot of content that has neither positive nor negative effects on people.

Conclusion

The findings discussed in this chapter undercut two of the conventional assumptions about the terrorism beat. The first is that the terrorism beat

reliably produces strong feelings of insecurity. The simulation I conducted strongly suggests that this conclusion is driven by a singular focus on the coverage of terrorist threats and attacks. When the most extreme descriptions of terrorism are replaced by less extreme descriptions or the coverage of other terrorism beat subjects, people can be expected to respond in less intense ways. In most cases, this means experiencing a relative decline in their sense of security from terrorism rather than a shift from feeling secure from terrorism to feeling insecure from terrorism.

The simulation also suggests that there are some reports from the terrorism beat that make people feel more secure than they did before reading the news. A result like this is not reflected in the research on the terrorism beat at all. Instead, terrorism beat coverage is routinely described as advancing the interests of terrorists by making people feel insecure.

Complimenting these findings are the results of three experiments I conducted on the coverage of effective counterterrorism. By volume, counterterrorism coverage is the most reported-on subject on the terrorism beat. That reporting bias, however, is not reflected in research on the terrorism beat's effects. The evidence from this chapter suggests that a subcategory of counterterrorism coverage—reporting about effective counterterrorism—is part of the portion of coverage identified in the simulation that reassures news audiences about their safety.

This chapter does not offer enough evidence to conclude that all counterterrorism reporting has reassuring effects, but it does offer enough evidence to force a reconsideration of the strongest claims against counterterrorism reporting: that it cannot reassure and that it necessarily makes people more fearful. Counterterrorism reporting in the studies I presented here did little to change people's perceptions of their danger from terrorism.

The evidence presented in this chapter favors the view of the terrorism beat advanced by the professional model. The terrorism beat's effects vary. This is consistent with the idea that reporters on the terrorism beat stimulate a wide range of responses to the wide range of news they produce. In this sense, the terrorism beat is just like other news beats. Some of the content from the terrorism beat is clearly alarming enough to frighten people into paying attention to the news. The imbalance between truly frightening news and mildly unsettling content, however, is too great to conclude that journalists spend their time trying to frighten audiences in order to make their newspapers profitable.

CHAPTER 6

Near and Dear

Spatial Variation in the Coverage of the Boston Marathon Bombing

The news on April 16, 2013, was grim and predictable. One day after bombs placed near the finish line of the Boston Marathon killed three and injured 140, the news media once again proved its commitment to the old saying “If it bleeds, it leads.”

The *Boston Globe’s* coverage of the marathon bombing was so graphic Barbara Marriott Waltham (2013), a Bostonian reader of the *Globe*, wrote to complain that the newspaper was irresponsibly re-terrorizing its readers. Sadly, this is what we have come to expect from the news media, even from the responsible press. When reporters have the public’s undivided attention during moments of crisis, they deliver sensational news that plays on the public’s emotions instead of providing sober coverage of serious issues.

In contrast, the relatively measured reporting on the marathon bombing that appeared in the *Globe* starting on April 17 is hard to explain because it does not fit the sensationalism mold. Stories about those injured and killed in the attack continued, but Boston’s most important newspaper also started covering the investigation by authorities into the bombing, as well as acts of fellowship, heroism, and resilience that were carried out during the crisis. The inclusion of these other stories certainly does not make the *Boston Globe* look like a newspaper that was doing everything it could to maximize profits during the week of April 15, 2013.

National and international journalists paid less attention to these good-news stories, but this, too, raises questions about the profit-seeking model.

The economically efficient practice of pack journalism (Fengler and Ruß-Mohl 2008) suggests consistent coverage of the marathon bombing and its aftermath across news outlets. Instead, the news published in the most distant newspapers was more negative than the news produced by proximate newspapers. This curious outcome also confounds what we know about local journalists who usually accentuate bad news more than other reporters (Kaniss 1991; Gartner 2004).

In this chapter, I examine the reporting on the Boston Marathon bombing starting from the assumption that journalists are guided in their reporting by a set of principles and practices, one of which, the do-no-harm principle, calls for moderation in times of crisis. Building on the work of Sandman and Paden (1979b) and Trope and Liberman (2010), I argue that reporting on crises brought about by acts of terrorism reflect concerns about the potential for public panic during these events. Instead of pouring on the negativity during crises, newspapers moderate the tone of the reporting they publish.

Some newspapers, however, temper their reporting more than others. Journalists who serve communities that are physically distant from the places where crises take place report on crisis events more negatively than journalists who serve communities that are physically proximate to crisis events. This variation arises because crises disrupt the standard operating procedures that journalists follow, forcing reporters to consider their audiences more carefully than usual. Journalists who serve distant audiences rely on negative language more than their proximate counterparts in order to drive the relevance of distant events home to their readers. Proximate journalists, in contrast, report less negatively than their distant counterparts out of concern that their normal reporting styles could spark panic.

The tendency of journalists to moderate their reporting during crises is one of the reporting patterns the complicit-media thesis does not anticipate the patterns I describe. This finding suggests that journalists tune their reporting to their audiences during crises, offering some readers more reassuring messages than others rather than being either insensitive to the needs of audiences or committed to the use of negative language under all circumstances.

Crisis Reporting on the Three Mile Island Nuclear Disaster

The inspiration for this account of the coverage of the Boston Marathon bombing can be traced to an event that took almost thirty-five years earlier

in Pennsylvania. At 4:00 a.m. on Wednesday, March 28, 1979, the nuclear reactor at Three Mile Island, Pennsylvania, experienced partial meltdown. Feedwater pumps designed to cool the reactor failed, causing the reactor to heat up (US Nuclear Regulatory Commission 2018). As pressure within the reactor increased, a release valve malfunctioned, allowing the reactor's coolant water to leak out.

Employees at Three Mile Island misread the situation. Unaware that a pressure release valve failed to close, plant workers cut the flow of water to the reactor's core (World Nuclear Organization 2022). The error pushed temperatures in the plant's nuclear core to dangerous levels.

News of the accident broke at 8:25 a.m., when a reporter for local station WKBO heard on his CB radio that firefighters were heading to the Three Mile Island plant. The reporter alerted Mike Pintek, his station manager, who called the plant about the developments. A communications director for Metropolitan Edison (Met Ed), the company that operated the reactor, told Pintek that the accident posed no risk to the public (Pell 2020). This assessment was echoed later by Met Ed vice president Jack Herbein, who downplayed the situation as well. "I wouldn't call it a very serious accident at this point," he said (Ayres 1979).

An unexpected turn of events on May 30 called these rosy assessments into question. The surprise release of two radiation bursts from the plant made public officials worry that the reactor might explode. Pennsylvania governor Richard Thornburgh advised pregnant women and all school-age children within a five-mile radius of the plant to evacuate the area. Approximately 100,000 people fled while warning sirens in nearby Harrisburg announced an escalating emergency (Ayres 1979).

Three Mile Island in the Eyes of Local and National Reporters

The contingent of more than 300 reporters who set up in Harrisburg to cover the developing story at Three Mile Island were not among the evacuees (Sandman and Paden 1979b). Despite the apparent danger, the press would not pass up the opportunity to cover the worst nuclear accident in US history. The palpable sense of threat, combined with the perception that consequential decisions had to be made quickly under conditions of uncertainty, virtually compelled the press to take note of this unfolding disaster.

According to Peter M. Sandman and Mary Paden (1979b, 1979a), the Three Mile Island nuclear accident disrupted standard journalistic rou-

tines. Journalists who worked for the Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, *Patriot and Evening News* produced notably cautious reporting out of concern for the impact it might have on the local community. Each of the local reporters Sandman and Paden spoke to told them the same thing: “We don’t want to start a panic with an inaccurate story. Or even, perhaps, an accurate one” (Sandman and Paden 1979b). When the Associated Press (AP) broke a story that the reactor might explode, the local television channels refused to report it. Joseph Higgins, the general manager of WHP, the local CBS affiliate, even called CBS News to complain that the network was trying to “make the story as dramatic as possible, much to the detriment of the local viewing public” (Sandman and Paden 1979b).

In contrast, some national journalists accentuated the danger at Three Mile Island. Walter Cronkite opened his Friday evening broadcast ominously, saying, “The world has never known a day quite like today” (Sandman and Paden 1979). Nevertheless, alarmist stories like this were unusual. Reporters mostly provided sober accounts of events surrounding the accident.

Explaining Spatial Variation in Crisis Coverage

Sandman and Paden attributed variation in the coverage of the Three Mile Island nuclear accident largely to the responses of local journalists who moderated the tone of their reporting in response to concerns about panic in the communities they served. National journalists did not have the same concerns and covered the Three Mile Island crisis more negatively. Sandman and Paden’s argument about the behavior of local journalists is appealing. Local journalists may think of themselves as advocates for and protectors of the communities they work in (Hatcher and Haavik 2014). Moreover, their argument does a good job of explaining both the behavior of local journalists during the Three Mile Island crisis and their stated motives for reporting more cautiously.

Nevertheless, the variation in reporting Sandman and Paden observed cannot be explained just by examining the behavior of local journalists. Even though some reporters covered Three Mile Island more provocatively than others, most of the reporting Sandman and Paden considered was unusually muted. This implies a change on the part of most journalists, not just local ones.

Sandman and Paden's argument also does not clearly demarcate the boundary between local and national journalists. If reporters in Harrisburg (12 miles from Three Mile Island) were concerned about panic in their community, surely reporters in Lancaster (24 miles from Three Mile Island) were as well. Philadelphia's and New York City's journalists might be concerned too. Comedian Johnny Carson's quip on national television about Thanksgiving at Three Mile Island—"two-pound turkeys and fifty-pound cranberries"—suggests that concerns about the crisis resonated across the country, making it hard to figure out precisely where the perspectives of local and national journalists diverged.

The Threat of Public Panic

Here, I suggest that a better way to zero in on the behavior of reporters during a crisis is to assume that during crises journalists try to deliver the highest quality reporting they can under trying circumstances. Reporters want to gather the facts and deliver them to audiences, and they want to do so while honoring their professional obligation to do as little harm as possible. In general, this means reporting more cautiously than they otherwise would.

Crises like Three Mile Island raise the specter of public panic (Clarke and Chess 2008). During the Three Mile Island crisis, for example, Pennsylvania governor Richard Thornburgh came to believe that the credibility of the governor's office was to become much more than simply a political asset for its occupant. That credibility was to become, perhaps, the last check against a possible breakdown in civil authority and the chaos and panic such a breakdown surely would ignite. Thornburgh later commented on the moment, "Obviously, we were determined to preserve that check" (Thornburgh 1989, 10).

Reporters who cover these crisis events are susceptible to the idea that their reporting could alarm the public, and they temper their reporting in response. Journalists do this because they recognize an ethical responsibility to minimize the harm they cause through their reporting. This obligation is one of journalism's bedrock principles.¹ The principles of good reporting also call for moderation during crises. As the Society of Pro-

1. See <https://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/who-we-are#Mission> (accessed May 31, 2022).

fessional Journalists advises, “Journalists also should recognize that news of grief and tragedy circulates quickly. The news will draw attention no matter the presentation. In other words, media will receive higher marks if they present the stories in responsible fashion without resorting to sensationalism in words or photos” (Pumarlo 1996).

Physical Distance and the Negativity of News: Insights from Construal Level Theory

The sensitivity of journalists to the needs of their audiences also plays a role in crisis reporting. As the distance between news audiences and events increase, the language journalists use in their reporting gets more negative, largely because journalists believe that distant audiences can cope with bad news during crises more effectively than proximate audiences. The closer audiences are to the sites of terrorist attacks, the more likely they are to be affected by them.

This relationship between physical distance and the language of news has its origins in the cognitive connections people have to distant events. Generally, distance promotes detachment. People can only experience directly that which is in the immediate grasp of their senses. The rest gets understood through mental representations of distal objects, called *construals*, that vary in their levels of abstraction (Henderson et al. 2011).

According to Yaacov Trope and Nira Liberman (2010), the developers of *construal level theory*, physical and temporal distance between people and events increases the psychological distance between them and those events (see also Liberman, Trope, and Stephan 2007). The greater the distance between people and distal objects in either space or time, the more abstractly they represent those objects in their minds. In contrast, the smaller the distance between people and objects in either space or time, the more concretely people think about those objects.

When it comes to terrorism, for example, only those who are at the site of an attack experience its effects directly and can access memories of minute details of these events: what people around them were wearing, smells and sounds they detected, the looks on the faces of others who were nearby, maybe even the weather at the time. Everyone other than the immediate victims experience the attack vicariously, but with an intensity

and immediacy that declines with their proximity to the location of the event. During this process of construing the attack, distant observers overlook inessential or transient features of the event in favor of more general representations. Exactly what the attacker yelled before striking might not get much attention from the distant observer, but the number of casualties caused by the attack will be noted.

The detachment that results from construing distal objects and events is why studies repeatedly find the consequences of terrorism diminish as they radiate outward (Silver et al. 2002; Bonanno et al. 2006; Getmansky and Zeitzoff 2014; Avdan and Webb 2019). Psychological responses to 9/11 are illustrative of this relationship. After 9/11, 61 percent of people living within 100 miles of the World Trade Center suffered some form of acute stress. In contrast, 48 percent of people living 100 to 1,000 miles away and 36 percent of people living more than 1,000 miles from New York suffered similar distress (Schuster et al. 2001).

Abstract Thinking and the Negativity of News

Famed Pulitzer Prize–winning crime reporter Edna Buchanan explained that an excellent news lede makes someone eating breakfast with his wife “spit out his coffee, clutch his chest and say, ‘My god, Martha. Did you read this?’” (quoted in Bloch 2016). Coffee-spitting moments, however, are hard to generate with detached audiences. This is why the distance between events and audiences presents a challenge. Distant audiences are less invested in events than proximate audiences, making it more difficult for reporters who serve distant communities to get their audiences’ attention.

Distant journalists implicitly understand the challenge of connecting their audiences to events they report on, often resorting to the strategy of finding a “local angle,” some aspect of an event that directly impacts the distant community or individual members of it, to establish relevance. There is, however, another strategy for breaking down the psychological distance between their readers and the events they cover: journalists can give events urgency by using more negative language.

Negative words and phrases help people think about the consequences of otherwise abstract events in personal terms because these words con-

vey that which people are inclined to attend to: threats and their consequences. This is arguably why news stories containing more negative words than positive ones get more attention on social media (Ng and Zhao 2018) and among newspaper readers (Albertson and Gadarian 2015; Trussler and Soroka 2014).

The challenge of connecting audiences to events is less daunting for local journalists. Their audiences experience reported events directly. The sense of danger during crises and the significance of events is manifest to local residents without the help of reporters. In fact, crisis situations can seem so tenuous that local journalists temper their normal reporting patterns to avoid contributing to public panic (Sandman 2004).

Confounding Explanations

Starting from the assumption that journalists are rule-bound professionals who report more cautiously during crises and use negative language in proportion to the detachment of their audiences creates the following expectations: (1) the average news item during a crisis is less negative than the average news item reported from the terrorism beat in a non-crisis period, and (2) the balance between negative and positive language in the news varies inversely with distance: the closer news organizations are to the focal points of crises, the less negative the news they publish.

The profit-seeking model, in contrast, implies either continuity in reporting between crisis and non-crisis periods or increased negativity during crises. Since the economic incentives to use negative language persist during crises, newspapers continue to rely on the same revenue-generating formula they use during non-crisis periods. The main changes news organizations might make would be in the direction of greater negativity, because competition for audiences increases during national crises. During these intense periods, the eyes of the world often turn to the crisis point.

There are two other explanations that must be considered as well: the coverage of crises is affected by the ability of reporters to find local angles for their stories and by the reliance on wire services for information. Each of these explanations might account for variation in the reporting on the Boston Marathon bombing independent of the two larger theories at issue in this book.

Local Angles in the News

Rather than being influenced by norms that suggest journalists should do no harm in their reporting, variation in the coverage of the marathon bombing might be influenced by the efforts of journalists to connect the stories they cover to people and events that are meaningful to the communities they serve. Journalists have the challenge of making events intelligible to their audiences. This includes convincing readers that the events journalists cover are worthy of their attention.

One way that journalists accomplish these goals is by localizing their reporting (Galtung and Ruge 1965; Shoemaker et al. 2007; Gartner 2004; Gartner and Segura 2000; Althaus, Bramlett, and Gimpel 2012; Karol and Miguel 2007; Kriner and Shen 2012). Journalists refer to this as finding a local angle, a practice that involves drawing connections between events and local audiences. For instance, “Boston Blast: Nine Weld Runners Lived through a Day That Was Supposed to Be One of Excitement Not of American Tragedy” is the headline the *Greeley Tribune*, a newspaper serving Weld County in Colorado, ran about the Boston Marathon bombing on April 16, 2013 (Boston.com 2013).

This impulse to find local angles is strong. Many other local papers used formulas like the one the *Greeley Tribune* used to cover the marathon bombing.² Whether acts of terrorism are covered at all appears to be influenced by the location of attacks, with attacks in more salient regions crowding out attacks from less salient ones (Weimann and Winn 1994; Chermak and Gruenewald 2006). Localizing the news also affects the way the news is framed, with journalists searching for ways to tie even major events, like the 9/11 attacks, to the local communities they serve (Ruigrok and van Atteveldt 2007).

Research on the effects of localizing the news confirms that this strategy influences how audiences understand and relate to the world (Kriner and Shen 2012). Work on “local casualties” further suggests that attention to the local impact of news influences the amount of time newspapers attend to distant events (Gartner 2004).

2. See <https://www.boston.com/travel/travel/2013/04/16/how-newspaper-front-pages-covered-the-boston-marathon-bombings/> for a look at how newspapers across the United States covered the marathon bombing.

Precisely how localizing events like terrorist attacks influences the language of the news is unknown, however. Gartner's (2004) research suggests that newspapers that find local angles during wartime tend to dwell on sad stories about people killed in battle. In contrast, Sandman and Paden's (1979b) work suggests that journalists temper their reporting the more directly events impact local audiences. Either way, the use of local angles is thought to play a meaningful role in coverage (Hayes and Myers 2009).

Reliance on Wire Services

Variation in the quality of crisis reporting also may be influenced by content provided by wire services like the Associated Press (AP) and Reuters. Wire services provide subscribers with reporting on domestic and international events that subscribers may publish in their own outlets either in part or in total. Newspapers, for example, often augment their own coverage of events with reporting provided by a wire service.

News outlets rely on wire services because these services enable news organizations to extend their reporting to events and places that they otherwise would be unable to cover. The wire services, for example, provide the lion's share of international news reported in US newspapers (Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen 1998).

Writing for such a large and varied audience is likely to influence the negativity of the news that wire services provide their subscribers. Unlike the reporters who write for a particular community, the news from the wire services must appeal to a much wider audience, most of whom are not proximate to the sites of attacks. This suggests that the reporting from the wire services may be more negative than what newspaper reporters ordinarily provide.

Local and National Coverage of the Boston Marathon Bombing

How well do these arguments anticipate coverage of the Boston Marathon bombing? This section relates the qualitative assessment I developed of local coverage of the Marathon bombing. I focus on local coverage because it is the place where the greatest differences in reporting are expected. The profit-seeking model expects reporting that is either as negative as or more

negative than what newspapers publish in non-crisis periods. The professional model suggests that reporting during crises is less negative than the terrorism beat reporting produced during non-crisis periods.

Just like the Three Mile Island nuclear accident, the Boston Marathon bombing sparked local and national crises. At approximately 2:50 p.m. on April 15, as runners completed the 117th running of the Boston Marathon, two deadly bombs exploded twelve seconds apart, killing Martin Richard, Krystle Campbell, and Lingzi Lu. Many others were injured, some seriously. Massachusetts governor Deval Patrick and Boston police commissioner Ed Davis counseled people to stay indoors, while authorities searched for additional bombs. Cell phone service to the city of Boston was cut off, to prevent unexploded bombs from being activated remotely (Berry 2013).

President Barack Obama ordered the full resources of the federal government be used to ensure the safety and security of Boston after the attack. A no-fly zone was established in the vicinity of the attacks, local airports were shut down (Gabbatt, Lovering, and Pilkington 2013), and response teams from the FBI and Department of Homeland Security were sent to Boston. The president also consulted congressional leaders about the US government's response to the attack (Obama 2013).

The attacks produced a sense of insecurity in Boston and in cities around the world. A mysterious fire at a library on the campus of Harvard University that broke out roughly one hour after the bombings contributed to the sense that more attacks might be coming Boston's way. Bostonians reported feeling "shaken" by the attack (Lazar, Johnson, and Wen 2013) and nervous about the future. Boston's police commissioner asked for calm while the criminal investigation unfolded (Gabbatt, Lovering, and Pilkington 2013). WBUR, a local radio station in Boston, tried to calm its listeners' nerves by playing classical music. Marathon organizers in London and in other cities expressed concern as well and began reviewing their security protocols for the upcoming London Marathon. If an attack could happen at the Boston marathon, it could happen at other marathons too.

Meanwhile, the investigations launched by the Boston police department and the FBI aimed at apprehending the perpetrators of the Boston Marathon bombing bore fruit. On April 17, just three days into the crisis, investigators announced they had video footage showing two men carrying large backpacks near the race's finish line.

As police searched for suspects, Bostonians licked their wounds. The rallying cry, “Boston Strong,” lead by local sports heroes, became a focal point for the city. The sale of shirts carrying this phrase generated \$1 million in support for charities in Boston (Marcelo 2019). An interfaith healing service attended by US president Barack Obama on April 18 was a signature event in the city’s healing process.

The crisis ended five days after the bombing with a frenzied chase of the suspected bombers by authorities that was conducted under shelter-at-home orders by the Massachusetts governor. The first bombing suspect was killed on April 18, 2013, during a shoot-out with police. Police captured the second suspect on April 19, 2013, at approximately 8:46 p.m., ending the citywide manhunt for the perpetrators.

The Boston Marathon Bombing in the Boston Globe

National and international audiences followed the news media to keep abreast of these developments. The *Boston Globe*, the most widely read newspaper in Massachusetts, became a go-to source for up-to-the-minute reporting on the crisis for people around the world. 4.3 million unique visitors checked Boston.com, the *Globe’s* sister website, on the day of the bombing. BostonGlobe.com received 1.2 million unique visits, six times what that site normally gets (Ellis 2013). As I detail below, reporters for the *Boston Globe* made sure that people who followed them had a varied set of stories to contemplate.

Day One

The *Globe’s* initial reporting on the marathon bombing focused on the shock, confusion, and sense of vulnerability that acts of terrorism generate. The *Boston Globe* ran a front-page picture of an injured spectator receiving help near the finish line on a blood-soaked section of Boylston Street under the headline “Marathon Terror.” The paper’s lead story described the attack (Arsenault 2013a). Other front-page articles included a firsthand account of the bombing (Abel 2013) and a story about a woman whose two sons both lost legs in the blast (Wen 2013).

Articles appearing inside the paper underscored themes of threat and tragedy and raised questions about when a sense of normalcy would return

to Boston. An interview with an internist at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center highlighted the magnitude and severity of the injuries people suffered (Lazar, Johnson, and Wen 2013). Kevin Cullen, one of the *Globe's* metro section columnists, lamented that Boston would get through the tragedy but would “never be the same” (2013b).

Not all the first-day coverage was negative, however. By my count, 11 of the 38 stories the *Globe* published on April 16, 2013, found silver linings in the chaos. Scot Lehigh's (2013b) editorial, for example, made the case for resilience: “Yes, we have to learn from this. And we will. We'll need to examine the security plan for the marathon and ask whether this could have been prevented. And we'll have to apply the lessons we learn to other public events. But life here will go on. We won't be paralyzed by fear. We'll take reasonable precautions, yes. But we won't take cover. And we won't cower. This, after all, is Boston.” Other positive articles focused on the heroism of first responders (Powers and Allen 2013) and President Obama's expressions of confidence that justice would be served (Viser and Bierman 2013).

Day Two

Anyone who simply glanced at the *Globe's* front page would surely conclude that April 17, 2013, was another bad news day. The front-page headline, “A Grim Hunt for Answers,” and a picture of investigators perched on a roof above the site of the second explosion underlined the continuing sense of confusion and uncertainty in Boston. Heart-wrenching stories about eight-year-old Martin Richard (Allen and Russell 2013) and twenty-nine-year-old Krystle Campbell (Marquard 2013), who were both killed in the attack, appeared just below the image.

Cover-to-cover readers, however, would have found a broad mixture of reporting on day two. By my count, 31 of the day's articles were dominated by negative sentiments, but 27 articles contained more positive sentiments than negative ones. Arsenault and Murphy's (2013a) front-page story on the criminal investigation illustrates this interplay of negative and positive information. On the one hand, the two reporters described the scene of the attack as “grim,” reminding readers that 70 people remained in local hospitals, including 24 who were in critical condition. On the other hand, Arsenault and Murphy reported that investigators identified the materials used to fashion the bombs used in the attack—a significant

step in the investigation. They also reported on displays of solidarity with Boston that occurred across the United States: even the New York Yankees, Boston's bitterest of baseball rivals, declared "United We Stand" (Arsenault and Murphy 2013a, A1).

The tenor of the material appearing on the opinion pages also differed from those published the previous day. As a counterpoint to the essays suggesting that Boston would never be the same, the *Globe* published a piece with the headlines "Things Will Be the Same Again" (Jacoby 2013, A11) and "Runners, the Race Still Matters. It Must. Celebrate What Can Never Be Taken Away" (Bernstein 2013). Another contribution to the opinion pages called on Bostonians to create a charitable foundation in order to "turn a day of tragedy and trauma into something that can help those whose lives were irrevocably altered in a few seconds" (Lehigh 2013a).

Day Three

The theme of community resilience persisted on the third day of coverage alongside articles expressing sentiments like resolve and hope. In all, the *Globe* published twenty-nine articles with predominantly positive themes. This positivity was evident on the paper's front page. Instead of highlighting damage done by the attack, the paper's lead story on April 18 focused on the identification of suspects. Unnamed sources said that authorities were "'very close' in their pursuit of the bomber" (Arsenault and Murphy 2013b).

Predominantly negative news stories still appeared in the *Globe* on April 18, but there were fewer of them (14) than predominantly positive stories. Allen Evan (2013) profiled Lingzi Lu, the third person killed in the bombings. The *Globe's* editorial board reported that Massachusetts attorney general Martha Coakley's office cautioned Bostonians about the existence of fraudulent charities that were duping people out of their money (A16). The *Globe* also ran a letter from a New Yorker living in the Boston area that lamented, "Once the heart has a hole in it, it is there. How we try to fill it back up again is up to each of us, and it is a very personal process. But it won't happen any time soon, if ever. I can tell you that from experience" (Hingham 2013).

In the end, though, the day's news was dominated by upbeat stories. Callum Borchers (2013) described advances in prosthetics that might

allow bombing victims who lost limbs in the bombings to resume active lifestyles. Letters to the editor offered inspiration from Martin Luther King Jr. and lessons about resilience from the Battle of Lexington. Kevin Cullen (2013a) wrote about a student who refused to let the bombing scare her away from her Brookline home.

Day Four

Continuing the previous day's pattern, the *Globe's* marathon bombing coverage on April 19 had more positive than negative news in it. Above the fold on the front page, the *Globe* announced that a manhunt was underway for two bombing suspects (Arsenault, Murphy, and Valencia 2013). A second, larger headline, highlighted President Obama's reassurance during an interfaith service in Boston that the city would "run again" (Wangsness 2013). Below the fold, the *Globe* published stories about an outpouring of financial support for a newly married couple who both lost legs in the attack (Moskowitz 2013). An article about people who, looking for solace, attended the interfaith service involving the president also appeared on the front page (Powers and Lowery 2013).

In a special section devoted to the bombings that the *Globe* ran throughout the week, Peter Demarco (2013) reported that marathoners were signing up in record numbers for a half-marathon traditionally held over Memorial Day weekend. A police officer's heroic efforts to help those injured in the attack was detailed on page A25 (Irons 2013). Boston mayor Thomas Menino's grit—against his doctors' advice, Menino left his hospital bed shortly after leg surgery to help manage the crisis—was detailed on the first page of the metro section (Ryan 2013b).

Negative news stories appeared as well. A police officer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology was murdered (Johnson, Abel, and Lazar 2013), although at the time it was unclear if the attack was related to the marathon bombing (it was). The *Globe* reported that Muslims around the country feared for their safety (Sacchetti 2013). A "person of interest" in the investigation, whom the *New York Post* identified publicly, reported being afraid to leave his home (Miller 2013). Congregants from Trinity Church were unable to enter their sanctuary because of its location inside the crime scene (Fox 2013). Nevertheless, only 7 of the 34 bombing-related items the *Globe* printed on April 19 were dominated by negative themes.

Day Five

The *Globe's* front page on April 20, 2017, the fifth and final day of crisis coverage, started with a misdirection. The headline, "Nightmare's End," seemed to say it all. Authorities caught the second of two bombing suspects and announced the death of the first (Arsenault 2013b). The largest photograph on the front page showed a woman flanked by others on Arsenal Street in Boston cheering and waving an American flag.

Details of the evening's events, however, told a different story. Residents lived through a harrowing night during which they were under orders to remain inside while police searched for the suspects. One reporter likened the experience to being "gripped by martial law" (Ryan 2013a). The *Globe* included interviews with child development specialists, who offered strategies for talking to children about the night's events (Woolhouse 2013).

Uplifting material appeared in the *Globe* on the last day of the crisis, but negative stories outnumbered positive ones. I found only 13 items in the newspaper on April 20 that contained mostly positive content. Twenty-nine of the 43 stories about the attack were dominated by negative sentiments like anger, anxiety, and grief. (I rated one story as having a neutral tone.) The end of the crisis, it seems, brought a return to usual journalistic practices.

Coverage of the Boston Marathon Bombing: A Quantitative Examination

Like local reporting on Three Mile Island, local coverage of the Boston Marathon bombing by the *Boston Globe* emphasized the positive to an unexpected degree. Reporters at the *Globe* could not make the pall that hung over Boston the week of April 15, 2020, disappear, but they found "silver linings" (McIntyre and Gibson 2016) that provided hope.

The *Globe's* reporting certainly looks moderate, but gauging that requires comparative research into two questions. Was coverage of the crisis more or less negative than the routine terrorism coverage that newspaper readers normally receive? And, did news outlets outside the Boston area report on the Marathon crisis more negatively than the *Globe* did?

I answered these questions using a different research strategy. Instead of the qualitative approach I used to examine articles in the *Boston Globe*, I

used Lexicoder to assess the positivity and negativity of the words appearing in articles about the marathon bombing.³ Specifically, I used Lexicoder to compare content about the bombing published in the *Globe* to a random sample of articles on the marathon bombing that appeared in other newspapers during the crisis.⁴ I did this to systematize my analysis using a set of transparent and replicable rules.

Consistent with my qualitative analysis, articles published in the *Globe* used positive and negative words in relatively equal measure during the marathon crisis. Negative words, like “bomb” and “attack” appeared most often, but positive words, like “friend” and “cheer,” can be found in the coverage as well. In all, there was slightly more than a 1 percent difference in negative and positive words on the first and last days of the crisis and less than a one percent difference between negative and positive words on days two, three, and four of the crisis (see fig. 8).

Reporters who worked for other newspapers relied on negative words over positive ones more heavily than their *Globe* counterparts. In fact, articles appearing in out-of-town coverage varied from roughly 2.5 percent more negative than positive on the first four days of the crisis to 3 percent more negative than positive on the last day of the crisis.

These differences in the tone of the reporting produced by *Globe* reporters as compared to the reporting produced by out-of-town journalists are statistically significant ($t(9.01) = -3.11, p = 0.012$). They are also consistent with Sandman and Paden’s observations about reporting about the Three Mile Island nuclear accident.

There are other parallels between the reporting on the Boston Marathon bombing and on the reporting about Three Mile Island. Terrorism beat news during the marathon crisis was less negative than usual. In the case of the marathon, the average difference in negative versus positive words in the coverage I examined is about 2 percent. In contrast, the average difference in negative and positive words used in the coverage of terrorism I examined in chapter 4 is approximately 4 percent.

In addition, the available evidence suggests that the change in the tone of reporting on the marathon bombing occurred at least partly in response to concerns journalists had for their audiences. Reporters from outside

3. Lexicoder’s assessment of the tone of the news comports with my own reading of articles in the *Globe*.

4. I drew fifty articles per day at random from LexisNexis using the search terms “terror” and “Boston.”

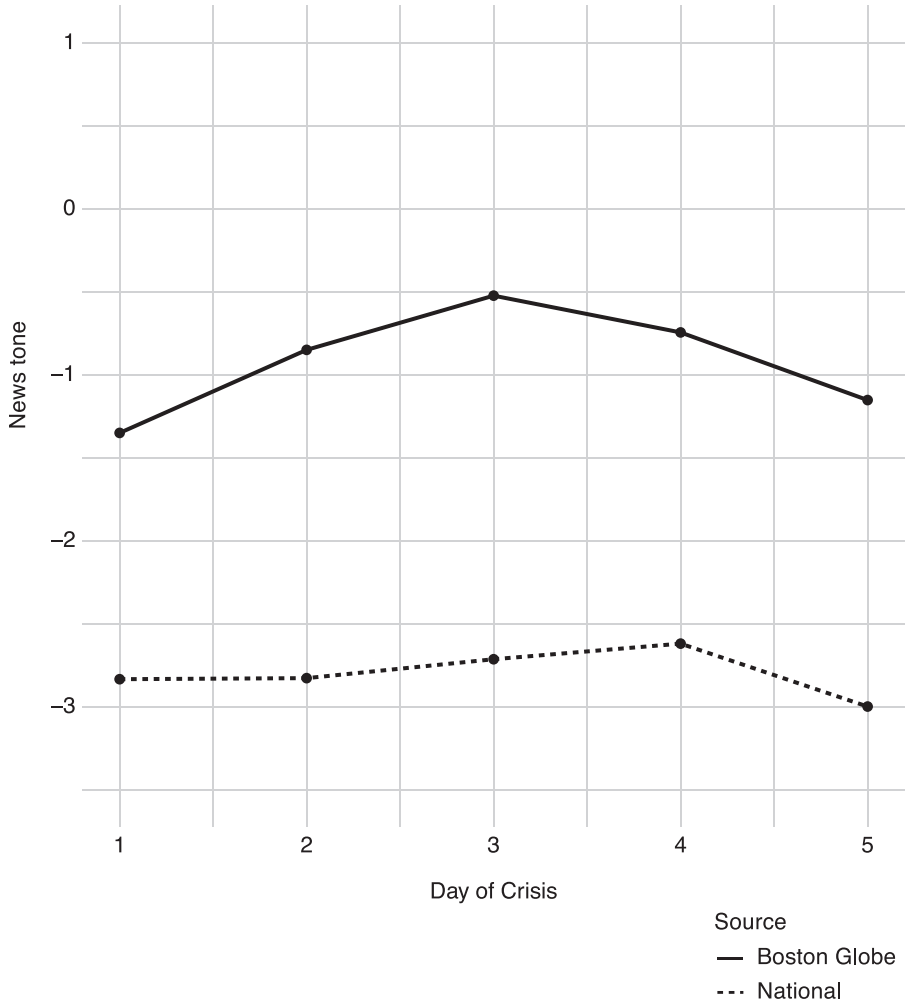


Fig. 8. The *Boston Globe* covered the Boston Marathon bombing less negatively than other newspapers

the Boston area emphasized the importance of caution during the crisis (Sullivan 2013). Newspapers that failed this test were the target of public criticism (Shafer 2013).

Reporters for the *Boston Globe* echoed these sentiments while underscoring the special challenges of covering breaking news in their own community. Teresa Hanafin, Director of Engagement and Social Media for Boston.com and BostonGlobe.com said she felt a special “responsibility to the extended friends and family of the people who lived in Boston” the day of the attack (C-Span 2013). Hanafin was not alone in this feeling. Reflecting on Boston’s news media during the crisis, the *Globe*’s Kevin Cullen said, “Everybody in the business in our town, I thought responded with incredible professionalism because it was personal to everybody. It’s rare in the business that you get something that’s personal and you have to do your job” (C-Span 2013).

The Inverse Relationship between Distance and Coverage

So far, what we’ve seen suggests that the reporting patterns found during the Three Mile Island nuclear accident repeated themselves in the coverage of the Boston Marathon bombing. In this section, I extend what we know about crisis reporting by focusing on spatial variation in the coverage. Specifically, I consider whether there is an inverse relationship between the tone of the marathon coverage and the distance between the city of Boston and the location of the newspapers that published articles about it.

I examined this question by using the random sample of articles about the marathon bombing I relied on above. This sample is somewhat biased against the inverse spatial hypothesis because it includes no articles from the *Boston Globe* at all—the outlet that is among most likely to have published positive stories during the crisis. Stories from Lowell Massachusetts (about 30 miles from Boston) are this sample’s stand-in for nearby coverage.

Once again, I calculated the tone of each article in the sample using Lexicoder. I measured the distance between the newspaper that published the article and the city of Boston by miles. I used air miles for overseas newspapers, drawing on data from www.distancebetweencities.com.

I also coded each article in the sample for evidence that the publisher relied on reporting from a wire service and for the use of a local angle in

each story. I identified stories relying on wire service reports by examining information on each story provided by the publishers. I coded any article that listed the author of the article as a reporter from a wire service (e.g., AP) as using wire service content (two outcomes: 0 = no; 1 = yes). I also counted articles that included notes pointing to their use of wire service content in this category. The one exception is when the content referred to photographs supplied by wire service photographers. I did not count these articles as relying on wire service content, since this analysis focuses on text rather than pictures.

I identified the use of local angles by searching the text of each article for quotes by and/or references to people from the same city or state as the newspaper published in. Since the question of safety at subsequent marathons was raised in the coverage of the marathon attack, I also counted articles that discussed this issue with their own local marathons in mind as having a local angle. As with the information about wire services, I measured the presence of local angles using a dummy variable (0 = no; 1 = yes).

Distance and Tone

I analyzed this data using ordinary least squares regression. The results of the bivariate relationship between distance and tone appear in figure 9. As the figure shows, the tone of articles about the marathon bombing become more negative as the distance between Boston and the reporting newspaper increases ($p = .001$).

The strength of the relationship between distance and tone persists once covariates for the use of wire service content and local angles are included in the regression model. In the multivariate case, the relationship between distance and tone is significant at the .05 level ($p = .04$). These results persist even after influential outliers (identified using Cook's D) are removed. This suggests that the results are not largely the product of a few unusual cases.

The relationship between distance and tone also persists when the day of the crisis is considered. Time is another form of distance that can affect the tone of coverage, but it appears to be unrelated to the tone of reporting in this analysis. The same is true for content from wire services.

Local angles, however, make a difference. Articles about the marathon bombing that included a local angle were substantially more nega-

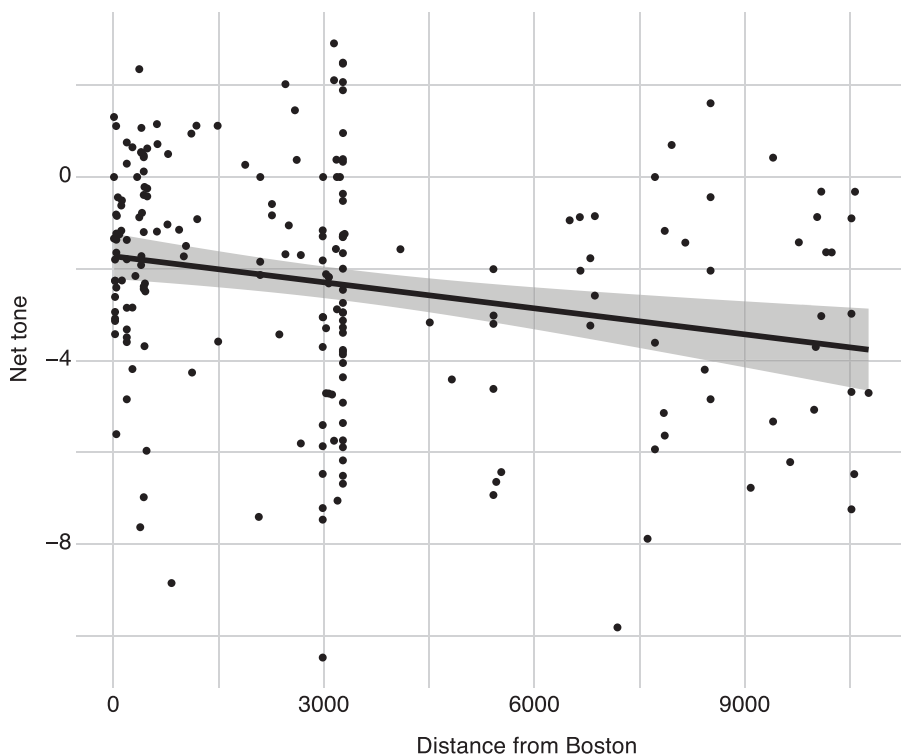


Fig. 9. Relationship between proximity to Boston and tone of reporting on the Boston Marathon bombing

tive than articles that did not include this information ($b = -250.20$, $p = .01$). Indeed, finding a local angle made a bigger difference to the tone of the observed coverage than the physical distance between Boston and the newspaper's place of publication.

Conclusion

Although news audiences far and wide got graphic stories about the marathon bombing and the toll it took on people, thinking about this reporting in comparative terms reveals a more complex picture than the news media's "if it bleeds, it leads" mantra suggests. The public got less negative terrorism beat reporting than it does in non-crisis periods. Instead of laying the

negativity on thick and increasing the sense of vulnerability in the communities across the country, news organizations showed restraint.

Local reporters were the most restrained, particularly on days two, three, and four of the crisis. Proximate audiences received less negative news about the crisis than distant audiences. This is consistent with the idea that reporters tune their reporting to what they believe their audiences can take. Audiences that had the most at stake during the crisis got the least negative news about the attack and its aftermath. Audiences that had the least at stake during the crisis got the most negative news about the crisis.

Once again, the profit-seeking model fails to anticipate this variability in reporting. Negativity is presumed to be a dominant strategy for profit-seeking reporters, because audiences far and wide demand negative news. The empirical record, however, suggests otherwise. The tendency to produce negative news varies more than the profit-seeking model admits. Thinking about reporters as followers of professional rules that create obligations to audiences and news audiences as reacting to events in variable ways provides a more accurate description on reporting on the Boston Marathon bombing. Whether these patterns are common occurrences during terrorism crises is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7

Distance and Media Coverage in Five Terrorism Crises

In chapter 6, I provided evidence consistent with the idea that journalists moderated their reporting while covering the Boston Marathon bombing. Overall, reporting of the marathon bombing from the initial attack through the search and eventual capture of the perpetrators was less negative than the terrorism beat coverage that newspapers typically supply. This result comes as something of a surprise since the immediacy of the threat to US news audiences was higher during the week of April 13, 2013, than normal.

In chapter 6, I also identified variation within the reporting on the marathon crisis. The least negative news appeared in newspapers serving audiences living near Boston. The negativity of reporting increased as the distance between news audiences and Boston increased.

In this chapter, I examine whether reporting patterns evident in the coverage of the Boston Marathon bombing emerged in reporting on other terrorism crises as well. I do this by examining the coverage of five additional terrorism crises: the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Park bombing, the 2001 September 11 attacks, the 2002 DC sniper case, and the 2016 Dallas police shooting.

The results of this analysis suggest that the reporting patterns seen in the Boston Marathon bombing are detectable in other terrorism crises. Reporters moderated the tone of their reporting during these crises relative to the typical terrorism beat coverage that appears in newspapers. Within each crisis, the least negative reporting appeared in newspapers proximate to the point of attack. Coverage got more negative as the distance between

a given newspaper audience and a given point of attack increased. I also found evidence of a temporal effect on coverage: reporting on the five crises got less negative the longer each crisis lasted. Reporting on the last day of each crisis tended to be less negative than reporting on the first day of each crisis.

In line with the thesis of this book, the results in this chapter suggest that reporting from the terrorism beat varies quite a bit. Rather than being fear-promoting, it appears that crises are situations in which newspapers cover terrorism in more subdued terms. This is consistent with the professional model of news production that assumes journalists moderate their reporting during crises out of concern for their audiences. These results also cast doubt on the utility of models that treat reporters as profit maximizers for the newspapers that employ them.

The Oklahoma City Bombing

The Oklahoma City bombing took place on April 19, 1995, when a van carrying a nearly 5,000-pound bomb exploded at the north entrance of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. The explosion killed 168 people, injured almost 850, and damaged more than 300 buildings in a forty-eight-square-block area (Linenthal 2009).

At the time, the Oklahoma City bombing was the largest act of terrorism in US history. The attack produced a cascade of protective action across the country. Teams from the FBI, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF), US Army, Secret Service, and Tulsa Police Department descended on Oklahoma City to investigate. The Oklahoma National Guard was deployed to assist in controlling the area and evacuating injured survivors (Reno 1995).

Tensions were also high in other parts of the country after the attack. In New York City, a bomb threat forced the evacuation of 10,000 federal workers and visitors from the Jacob Javits Federal Building. The John F. Kennedy Federal Building in Boston was evacuated after workers found unlocked doors that should have been locked. Federal buildings in other cities were also evacuated (Lewis 1995). A daycare center in the federal customs house in Denver shut down in response to worried parents (Gersenzang 1995). The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* explained in an April 20, 1995 editorial (“A Terror Bombing in Oklahoma”), “Up to now, most Ameri-

cans probably thought of Washington and New York as likely targets, but not their own communities. If terrorists can strike in such an unlikely place as Oklahoma City, then no other place in the country—St. Louis, Indianapolis, Memphis, Kansas City—can consider itself immune.”

Shortly after the bombing, local police and the FBI issued an all-points bulletin for three men believed to be of Middle East origin. Unbeknownst to both the public and to authorities, Timothy McVeigh, the true culprit, was already in custody following a routine traffic stop. The car he drove did not have a license plate, and McVeigh had an unlicensed firearm in his possession when he was stopped.

A day after issuing the all-points bulletin, federal investigators realized they were looking for two, not three suspects. One day after that, federal investigators realized that their prime suspect was already in custody. The immediate crisis ended on April 21, 1995, when authorities announced that they arrested McVeigh and were questioning two others, Terry Lynn Nichols and his brother James Douglas Nichols (Walsh 1995).

Olympic Park Bombing

Eleven years later, on July 27, 2006, the Olympic Park bombing occurred during the Twenty-Sixth Summer Olympiad. A pipe bomb exploded in Centennial Olympic Park in downtown Atlanta, killing two people (one of whom died of a heart attack while running to take pictures of the scene) and injuring more than 100.

The park was a focal point for attendees of the games and Atlanta's other residents to gather and celebrate. Eric Rudolph, the attack's perpetrator, picked the park for this reason. As Rudolph explained to *Sports Illustrated*, he hoped a bomb in Centennial Olympic Park would be enough to “create a state of instability in Atlanta, potentially shut the Games down or at least eat into the profits that the Games were going to make” (Zaccardi 2012).

Rudolph failed in his bid to shut down the Olympics, but he succeeded in creating a sense of instability in Atlanta. Soldiers and police lined the streets of Atlanta (Jacobs 1996), turning “downtown into a ghost town” (Newberry 2020), while bomb threats forced evacuations at several locations across the city and the closure of a light rail station (Humphries 1996).

The attack unnerved people around the United States. For the first time, a shopping mall in Portland, Maine, evacuated at least 8,000 shoppers in

response to a bomb threat it received. Americans across the country began reporting feelings of unease. CBS's Bob McNamara (1996) described the attack in Atlanta as shattering the sense of invulnerability from terrorism Americans enjoyed.

Authorities investigated the bombing for three days before a report by the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* identified Richard Jewell as a suspect in the attack (Scruggs and Martz 1996). Jewell worked as a security guard at Centennial Olympic Park during the Olympics. While on duty, he found the bomb Erik Rudolph left in the park and cleared the area of people. This quick-thinking response saved lives, earning Jewell hero status in both local and national press outlets. Unexpectedly, Jewell's celebrity quickly turned to notoriety after FBI investigators came to believe, erroneously, that Jewell was complicit in the attack. The crisis ended with suspicion for the attack falling on Jewell. Unbeknownst to authorities, the actual culprit remained at large.

9/11 Attacks

September 11, 2001, began unremarkably in New York City. The weather was good and the morning news was slow: a grand jury rejected a flight attendant's claim that former congressman Gary Condit pressured her to sign a false affidavit denying the two had an affair; flight attendants for Delta prepared to vote on whether to join a union; Senator Joseph Biden criticized President George W. Bush's stance on missile defense; the Yankees put outfielder Paul O'Neill on the disabled list; and rumors swirled that Michael Jordan was preparing to come out of retirement to restart his professional basketball career (Angelo 2011).

The tenor of the day began to change around 8:46 a.m. In what appeared to be a tragic accident, an American Airlines flight crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center. People began evacuating the neighboring South Tower of the World Trade Center for precautionary purposes but were soon told they could safely return to their offices (911memorial.org).

United Airlines Flight 175's collision into the South Tower at 9:03 a.m. changed everything. What initially seemed like terrible misfortune now appeared to be a coordinated attack. This conclusion was punctuated at 9:37 a.m., when a third jet crashed into the Pentagon, and again

at 10:03 a.m. when a fourth plane crashed into a field in Pennsylvania. Aaron Brown of CNN reported that the fourth plane's real target was the White House.

Federal response to the ongoing attack was swift and far-reaching. At 9:59 a.m. continuity-of-government procedures, designed to protect constitutional government during national emergencies, were implemented for the first time in US history (Gladstone 2021). On September 12, President George W. Bush began discussing preparations for war with his national security advisors. Within one week of the attack, the US Congress began drafting the legislation that would eventually become the USA PATRIOT Act, an act that authorized, among other things, a change in the US government's ability to curtail civil liberties while investigating suspected terrorist activity. Just one month after the attacks, US forces started the first of two wars initiated under the banner of the "war on terror."

The US public reacted strongly as well. Roughly 50 percent of people polled reported that their personal sense of safety and security was reduced "a great deal" or "a good amount" (Traugott et al. 2002). Further, 71 percent of people reported feelings of depression, and nearly half said they were having trouble concentrating (Hartig and Doherty 2021). People also started taking steps to protect themselves from another attack, traveling by car instead of airplane (Gigerenzer 2006), and purchasing more guns (Smith 2002).

Exactly when the 9/11 crisis ended is hard to say. Unlike the other crises considered here, the emergency created on September 11, 2001, did not subside with the capture or containment of suspects. The 9/11 hijackers all died in the plane crashes they engineered, and Osama bin Laden, the main financier of the attacks, went into hiding and was not found until 2011.

For my purposes, though, the crisis ended on October 3, 2001. This is an admittedly arbitrary date that was chosen to manage the demands of data gathering and analysis, but it is also a date that encompasses a shift in the United States' orientation after 9/11. By October 3, the US was pivoting to a war footing from the defensive crouch it was in after the 9/11 attacks. Tony Blair, the United Kingdom's prime minister at the time, announced that he had seen "incontrovertible evidence" that Osama bin Laden was behind the attacks. The announcement was widely seen as an effort to convince US and British allies to support an impending war in Afghanistan (Cowell 2001, A4). The Taliban, Afghanistan's ruling party, saw the writing on the wall as well and signaled its willingness to negotiate

about turning Osama bin Laden over to a third country “apparently in an effort to avert a military attack by the United States and its allies” (Frantz 2001, A1). By October 7, 2001, the United States had started the first of two wars it conducted in the name of defeating terrorism.

DC Sniper Case

In contrast to 9/11, the challenge with the DC Sniper case involves figuring out when it started. Reporters often mark the start of John Allen Muhammad and Lee Boyd Malvo’s killing spree with their attack on Paul LaRuffa in Clinton, Maryland, on September 5, 2002. The pair shot Mr. LaRuffa, a restaurant owner, five times as he got behind the wheel of his car (Block 2012). Malvo, however, confessed to murdering a woman in Tacoma, Washington, in February 2002 (Associated Press 2003) and told authorities that he and Muhammad committed dozens of crimes while traveling across the country. In total, the pair were tied to at least eleven more shootings, including five murders, that came to light only after Malvo and Muhammad were in custody.

For my purposes, the DC Sniper case began on October 3, 2002, when Malvo and Muhammad intensified their murderous activities, and public panic began its sharp rise. That day, Muhammad and Malvo killed four people in under three hours during the morning rush hour in the DC area. The dead included James L. Buchanan Jr., who was killed while he mowed the lawn; Premkumar A. Walekar, who was killed at a gas station while filling his car with gas; Sarah Ramos, who was killed near a post office; and Lori Ann Lewis-Rivera, who was killed while vacuuming her car at a gas station (CNN 2021). At 9:20 p.m., Muhammad and Malvo then killed a fifth person, 72-year-old Pascal Charlot, while he stood on a street corner (Horwitz and Ruane 2004).

In all, Muhammad and Malvo killed ten people and wounded another three between October 3 and October 24, 2002, while also bringing life to a standstill in the Washington, DC, area. Sporting events were canceled. Tarps were placed around gas stations to shield customers from view (Censer 2010). Recess and outdoor activities at local schools were suspended. Stress around the DC beltway was so high that academic performance declined in schools within five miles of the attacks (Gershenson and Tekin

2018). Out-of-town motorists were cautioned against driving to the DC area. Residents were finally able to rest easy on October 24, 2002, when Muhammad and Malvo were captured by the FBI, Maryland State Police, and Montgomery County Police (Horwitz and Ruane 2004). With suspects in custody and the killing apparently over, the nearly three-week state of emergency ended too.

Dallas Police Shooting

The last crisis I considered was the shortest of all, lasting less than one day. The Dallas police shooting began on July 7, 2016, at 8:58 p.m., as a demonstration against police brutality ended (CBS11 2017). Roughly two hours earlier, Black Lives Matter protesters gathered to express their outrage at the killing of two African American men by police officers in Minnesota and Louisiana earlier in the week. The deaths were the latest in a string of high-profile police shootings of Black men that sparked protests in major cities around the United States and contributed to deteriorating race relations in the US.

As protestors dispersed, Micah Johnson, a former US Army reservist and veteran of the US war in Afghanistan, walked from his car toward police officers who were blocking traffic for marchers. Johnson, who was armed with a semi-automatic rifle and a handgun, began shooting. Within roughly fifteen minutes, five officers were dead and nine more were wounded. Two civilians were hurt as well (Fernandez, Perez-Pena, and Bromwich 2016). Officers in the area returned fire during the attack while police stationed around the city rushed to the scene. The shooting sent demonstrators fleeing down the street in a panicked search for safety. Protest participants described the scene as pandemonium (Stump 2016). Meanwhile, Johnson sought safety inside an El Centro Community College building, where he continued to exchange shots with police. Johnson told police negotiators that bombs were planted around Dallas (Fernandez, Perez-Pena, and Bromwich 2016), prompting police sweeps of the area (Karmi, Shoichet, and Ellis 2016).

The standoff between Johnson and police finally ended at 1:28 a.m., when police detonated a bomb that they had loaded on a robotic vehicle and delivered to Johnson's hiding place, killing him. It was the first time a police department in the United States used a robot to end a shoot-out.

Typical and Diverse Cases

I chose these five crises deliberately, based on the idea that a mapping of the terrorism beat in US newspapers that cannot account for reporting during the United States' most important terrorist events is of questionable value. I avoided selecting events that took place outside the US because even significant attacks on Americans in foreign countries, like the bombing of the USS *Cole*, have not created the sense of emergency that significant acts of terrorism inside the US produced. It is this sense of emergency that I am interested in, because that is what disrupts normal reporting patterns. I do not expect reporters to behave the same way during non-crisis periods.

I also decided against studying crises like the 1999 Columbine or 2017 Las Vegas shootings that do not clearly fit the definition of terrorism I use in this book. As emerging research makes clear, people respond to acts of violence differently based on their sense of whether those events are instances of terrorism or not (Huff and Kertzer 2018). Neither of these cases produced the security concerns that the crises I studied did.

The five crises I selected are typical of the larger class of terrorism crises that have taken place in the United States, such as the 1993 World Trade Center bombing in New York and the 2016 Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando, Florida. Both of these crises could have been part of this research but were left out because of the time it takes to amass the necessary information to examine reporting patterns during each event. Changes to LexisNexis, now called Nexis Uni, that took place after I began this research also complicated the article gathering process.

Another strength of using these five crises derives from the diversity of conditions they took place under. These five crises occurred during different decades (1990s, 2000s, 2010s) and in different regions of the United States (Northeast, Southeast, Southwest). The local governments in power where the attacks took place were headed by both Republican (e.g., Ron Norick in Oklahoma City) and Democratic (e.g., Mike Rawlings in Dallas) politicians. The attacks also occurred during both Republican (George W. Bush) and Democratic (Bill Clinton, Barack Obama) presidential administrations. None of the cases involve an extended hostage crisis, but these types of terrorist events are unusual in US history.

These cases make it possible to take measure of the robustness of the relationships between the tone of terrorism coverage and the physical and temporal distance between audiences and events. If the relationships between physical and temporal distances and the tone of coverage persists

across all five crises, then there will be reason to believe that the initial conditions that spark crises do not affect coverage strongly (see Seawright and Gerring 2008 for a discussion of case selection).

Research Design

For each crisis, the strategy I used to examine the relationship between physical and temporal proximity and the tone of coverage follows the recipe I used in chapter 5. For each crisis, I drew random samples of approximately 50 articles per crisis-day from English-language newspapers published in the United States and around the world.

In each case, article collection began with news published the day after the start of each crisis. In every case except the DC Sniper case, my data collection began the day after the main act of terrorism that precipitated each crisis. For example, the first articles in my database on the 9/11 attacks are dated September 12, 2001. In the case of the DC Sniper attacks, the first articles I gathered are dated October 4, 2002, after Malvo and Muhammad had already killed several people. As I explained earlier, public panic about the DC Sniper's activities did not begin until early October.

I stopped gathering articles on each crisis the day after each one ended. For example, in the case of the DC Sniper, I gathered articles from October 4, 2002 until October 25, 2002, the day after Malvo and Muhammad were captured. In most cases, I marked the end of each crisis with either the identification or capture of the principal suspect or suspects in each matter. The one exception is the 9/11 crisis, where I discontinued gathering after 21 days of reporting. The start and end dates for each crisis along with information about the length of these events and the cities I counted as the epicenters of the crises appear in table 2.

Dependent Variables

The dependent variable in this analysis is *tone*, measured as the difference between the number of positive and negative words in each article as a percentage of the total words in the text. As in the previous chapters, I used Lexicoder to judge the negativity and positivity of the language in the reporting I studied.

TABLE 2. Study Start Dates, End Dates, and Epicenters in Five Terrorism Crises

Crisis	Epicenter	Coverage starts	Coverage ends	Length
Oklahoma City bombing	Oklahoma City, OK	April 20, 1995	April 22, 1995	3 days
Olympic Park bombing	Atlanta, GA	July 28, 1996	July 30, 1996	3 days
9/11 attacks	New York, NY	September 12, 2001	October 22, 2001	21 days
DC Sniper	Washington, DC	October 4, 2002	October 25, 2002	21 days
Dallas police shooting	Dallas, TX	July 8, 2016	July 8, 2017	1 day

Independent Variables

I examined variation in the tone of the coverage in these terrorism crises using three variables. I measured the *physical distance* between newspapers' places of publication and the epicenter of each crisis using air miles, based on data provided by the website www.distancebetweencities.com. For the 9/11 attacks, I set the crisis location as New York City and for the DC sniper case, I used Washington, DC, as the site of the crisis. Although I could have made other choices in these two cases, in both instances the epicenter cities I selected were used by journalists as the focal points of their reporting.

I used a count of days from the start of each crisis until the end of each crisis as my measure of *temporal distance*. This variable ranges from a low of one day, for the Dallas police shooting, to a high of 21 days for the 9/11 and DC Sniper crises. The Oklahoma City bombing (3 days) and Olympic Park bombing (3 days) fell between these extremes.

Last, I controlled for those articles that drew on *local angles* to connect their audiences to each crisis. Any article used in this analysis that referenced persons, places, or things that connected each crisis to the newspaper's local audience was classified as containing a local angle. In the case of US newspapers, "local" referred to any person, place, or thing connected to the US state in which the newspaper was published. This means, for example, that an article from a newspaper in New York City that mentioned a resident of Albany, New York, in its reporting on the Olympic Park bombing would be classified as having a local angle. In the

case of international newspapers, “local” referred to any person, place, or thing connected to the country in which the newspaper was published. For example, a former police officer from Vancouver, British Columbia, played an investigative role during the DC Sniper case. Any article from a Canadian newspaper that mentioned this police officer was counted as having a local angle.

Using this framework, I tested the following four expectations:

1. The tone of reporting on the terrorism beat is less negative during domestic terrorism crises than it is under normal circumstances.
2. Within crises, the tone of terrorism coverage varies as a function of physical distance between newspaper places of publication and crisis epicenters: as physical distance between newspapers and crisis epicenters increases, the tone of coverage becomes more negative.
3. Within crises, the tone of terrorism coverage varies as a function of the number of days between the start and end of crises increases: the longer crises last, the less negative coverage becomes.
4. Crisis coverage that contains a local angle is more negative than crisis coverage that lacks a local angle.

Results

I examined expectation 1 by comparing of the average tone of articles published during the five crises examined in this chapter and the average tone of terrorism beat articles examined in chapters 2 and 3 using a *t*-test. Consistent with the idea that reporters are sensitive to the situations they report on, I find that news from the terrorism beat published during non-crisis periods is more negative than published reporting about terrorism crises. Articles published on the terrorism beat between 1997 and 2019 are about 4 percent more negative than positive, while articles published about the five terrorism crises are about 2.5 percent more negative than positive. The difference between the two means is statistically significant ($p < .001$). Even though crises are more threatening situations than reporters typically cover, the news they produce during crises is less negative than the news they produce during non-crisis periods.

Reporting within Crises

Whether physical and temporal distance between a given newspaper's place of publication and the epicenters of terrorism crises influences coverage of these events is a more complex question to answer. I examined the relationships between the distance between newspaper cities and the site of attacks and the tone and concreteness of crisis coverage using fixed effects panel regression.¹ Fixed effects control for the durable, unique characteristics of each crisis that might influence reporting (e.g., the cities the attacks took place in).

Variation in the Tone of Crisis Coverage

Using this approach, I find an inverse relationship between physical distance and the tone of crisis coverage. As distance between newspaper cities and crisis epicenters increases, the more negative the reporting becomes. Figure 10 depicts this relationship for each crisis in this study. This result is consistent with expectation 2. Here, I find that every mile between the epicenter of a terrorism crisis and the newspapers that report on it adds approximately .00012 more negative words than positive words as a share of total words to crisis coverage. A correlation of this size implies that articles published by newspapers 10,000 miles away from the epicenter of a crisis are roughly 1.2 percent more net negative than articles published by newspapers located proximate to the attack.

This difference in the tone of reporting is small, but it is also reliable. It emerged in each of the five crises I examined. It also persists after taking the square root of distance, a data transformation designed to reduce the influence extreme distances have on the results (not shown). Finally, the relationship between distance and the negativity of reporting emerges in the presence of controls for other factors that influence reporting.

Table 3 provides the complete results. Consistent with expectation 3, I find that the passage of time from the start of terrorism crises is associated with an increase in the relative positivity of reporting. Each day a crisis lasts is associated with a 6.5 percent increase in the relative positivity of reporting. Articles published several days after the start of crises still con-

1. I used the *plm* package in R for this analysis (see Croissant and Millo 2008).

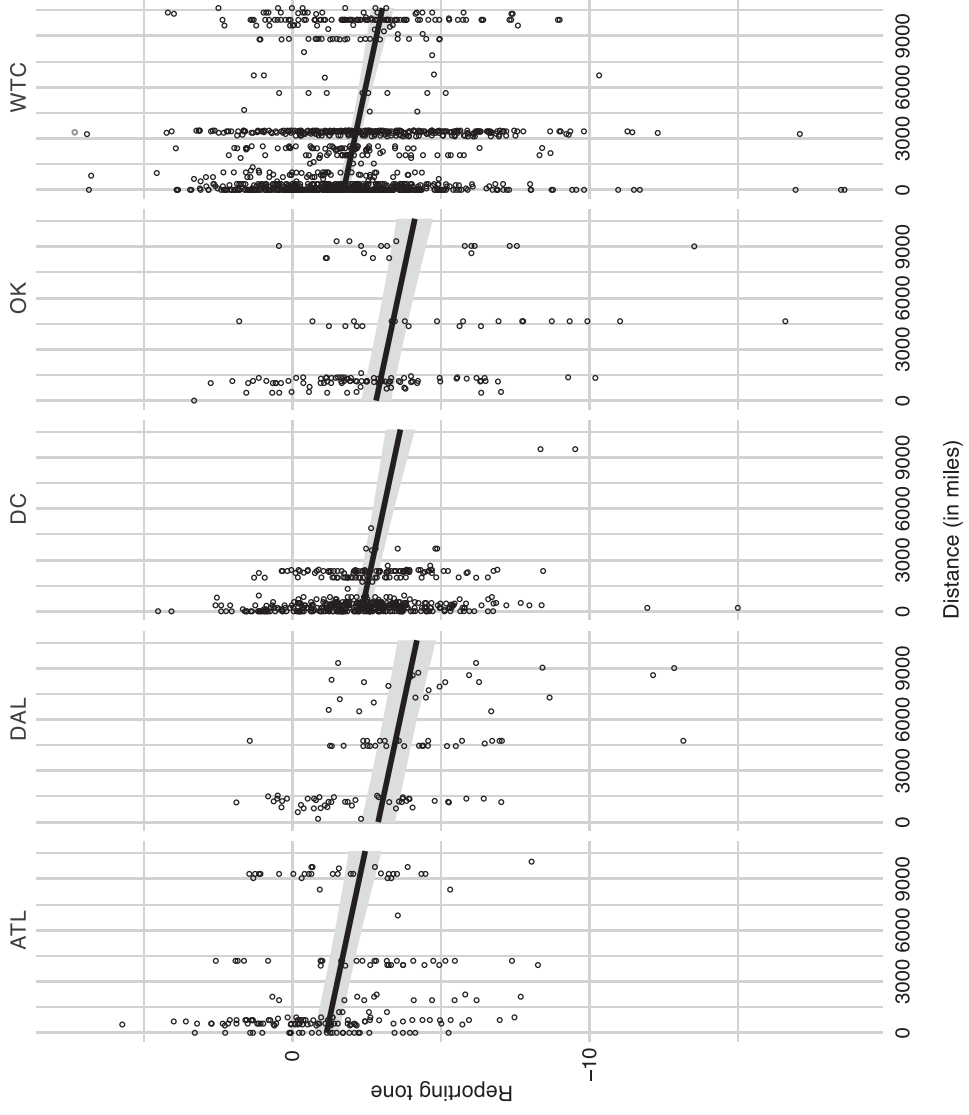


Fig. 10. Relationship between physical distance and news tone in five crises

TABLE 3. Panel Regression Results: Distance and the Tone of Crisis Coverage

	News Tone	
	Model 1	Model 2
Distance (miles)	-0.0001*** (-0.0002, -0.0001)	
Distance (square root)		-0.014*** (-0.018, -0.010)
Local angle	0.596*** (0.362, 0.830)	0.552*** (0.317, 0.786)
Days	0.065*** (0.043, 0.086)	0.060*** (0.038, 0.082)
<i>N</i>	2,037	2,037
<i>R</i> ²	0.051	0.056
Adj. <i>R</i> ²	0.048	0.053
F Statistic (df = 3; 2029)	36.592***	40.161***

****p* < .01; ***p* < .05; **p* < .1

tain more negative words than positive ones, but the gap between negative and positive words shrinks the longer crises last.

Articles covering the crises that contained local angles tended to be less negative than articles that did not rely on local angles in their reporting. The presence of a local angle in an article is associated with about 1.7 percent more negative words than positive words, whereas articles without a local angle had about 2.3 percent more negative words than positive words. This result is consistent with expectation 4.

Conclusion

Like my analysis of the Boston Marathon bombing, I find evidence that suggests two broad conclusions: The first conclusion is that reporters change the way they cover the terrorism beat during terrorism-induced crises. The degree of negativity that characterizes reporting of non-crisis events is replaced by a less negative style of coverage during crises. Terrorism crises, it seems, encourages reporters to report the news somewhat more cautiously than they normally do.

The second conclusion from this research is that there is variation in the degree to which reporters rely on negative language during crises. Reporters who work for newspapers that are the most physically proximate to the

sites of terrorist attacks report on those attacks less negatively than reporters who work for newspapers that are more physically distant from crisis epicenters. Temporal distance from attacks also seems to matter. The longer crises last, the less negative the reporting about those events becomes.

Once again, anticipating these results starts from the assumption that journalists follow professional norms and practices and are influenced in their reporting by the ways their audiences construe distant events. Reporters must break through their audiences' detachment from crisis events. Negative language is the way they do this.

Identifying this variation in the coverage of terrorism crises advances what we know about the terrorism beat. Terrorism crises instigate a more restrained style of reporting than Americans normally receive. This happens even though reporters' first impulses are to highlight the worst news on the front pages of their newspapers.

Conclusions about a Surprisingly Sober News Beat

October 7, 2023. A brazen attack by Hamas militants based in the Gaza Strip leaves at least 250 Israelis dead and approximately 1,400 injured. Roughly 250 more people, mostly Israelis, but also French, Philippine, Nepalese, Thai, and US nationals, are taken hostage. In the ensuing days, Israelis and the world will learn that the attack was even worse than they realized: in just over a month after the attack, the Israeli government's official death tally will sit at almost 1,200, and shocking accounts of atrocities committed against Israelis will become part of the public record.

The broad outlines of the severity of this attack were already clear on October 8, 2023, when US newspapers went to press with their reports. Nevertheless, coverage in the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post* focused on Israel's military response to the attacks rather than the grisly details of the attack itself (*USA Today* was not published on October 8). The *New York Times* wrote, "Israel battled on Saturday to repel one of the broadest invasions of its territory in 50 years after Palestinian militants from Gaza launched an early-morning assault on southern Israel, infiltrating 22 Israeli towns and army bases, kidnapping Israeli civilians and soldiers and firing thousands of rockets toward cities as far away as Jerusalem" (Kingsley and Kershner 2023, A1). The *Wall Street Journal* reported that Israeli troops "struggled into the early hours Monday morning to regain control of swaths of the country's south and prevent further incursions, a day after the Hamas militant group launched a surprise coordinated attack from Gaza that killed hundreds and triggered deadly counterstrikes as well as a declaration of war" (Kalin, Lieber, and Baba 2023,

A1). The *Washington Post* told its readers that “Israel formally declared war against the Palestinian militant group Hamas on Sunday as it reeled from a surprise attack that killed more than 700 people, opening the way for a major escalation in fighting that already threatened to engulf the region. A swelling counterattack by Israeli forces in Gaza also killed more than 400 people, including 78 children, as residents braced for a more punishing campaign that some feared would include an Israeli ground invasion” (George, Dadouch, Parker, and Rubin 2023, A1).

The *Times*, *Journal*, and *Post* could have covered this act of terrorism by concentrating on Hamas. This was the approach the *New York Post* took on its front page, under the headline “War Crime”: “In the worst attack on Israel in 50 years, Hamas terrorists fired rockets from Gaza into Israeli cities and settlements and thugs went door-to-door gunning down the innocent and taking hostages, including many young women who were paraded down streets in horrifying videos.” Instead, the *Times*, *Journal*, and *Washington Post* did what they usually do: focus on counterterrorism.

The decisions by the *Times*, the *Journal*, and the *Washington Post* to frame their coverage around Israel’s response to Hamas would not have surprised those who treat journalists as if they are professionals whose reporting follows established disciplinary norms. Important principles, like the watchdog norm that train journalists’ attention on the behavior of governments, suggest that Israel’s counterterrorism response would be a likely entry point into the events of October 7 for these paragons of journalistic practice.

But institutional accounts of the terrorism news beat are unusual. More common are analyses that assume the terrorism beat is a vehicle for attracting readers and, hence, profits. Journalists who cover this area of news understand their jobs to be developing terrorism-related content based on what sells. This profit-seeking model of reporting has produced a view of the terrorism beat that emphasizes sensationalism. Proponents of this view suggest that threats and attacks dominate reporting on the terrorism beat. Counterterrorism gets attention only when governments use force or fail in their efforts to protect their citizens from attacks. Ordinary citizens draw the press’s attention when they are most vulnerable and afraid. Otherwise, newspapers ignore the public.

According to the profit-seeking model, reporters lean heavily on frightening and extreme language chosen for the express purpose of making the news even more menacing. Words like “fear” and “victim,” which reporters

field-tested on the crime beat, amplify the sense of insecurity audiences experience while reading the paper. This impulse to ensure that terrorism seems dangerous is especially evident during terrorism crises. Instead of showing restraint during these already anxious moments, as professional ethics demand, reporters double down on their use of frightening prose.

The trouble is that this profit-seeking model of the terrorism news beat produces a distorted picture of what the United States' most widely read newspapers publish and what public reactions to this content look like. Using random samples of published articles, a simulation, and three laboratory experiments, I found that the reporting from the terrorism beat is less intimidating than the prevailing wisdom suggests. I even found conditions under which the terrorism news beat may help news audiences cope with terrorism negative psychological effects.

Terrorism Beat Topics

The biggest gap between terrorism beat image and terrorism beat reality becomes evident when considering the terrorism-related topics that national newspapers in the United States publish from day to day. Terrorist threats and attacks are thought to dominate the terrorism news beat but, the US's most-read newspapers spend most of their time reporting about counterterrorism.

Between 1997 and 2014, the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post* provided audiences about three times more counterterrorism content than material focusing on threats and attacks. The disparity between counterterrorism and threats and attacks was largest in 1998, during the Clinton administration and before the start of the United States' war on terror, and smallest in 2014, during the Obama administration and after the war on terror was well underway. At no point during this stretch did the frequency of counterterrorism coverage ever come close to being overtaken by reporting on terrorist threats and attacks.

The predominance of counterterrorism reporting can be found at each of the four newspapers I studied, as well as in all four newspapers combined. The subject of counterterrorism dominated reporting at the editorially liberal *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, at the editorially centrist *USA Today*, and at the editorially conservative *Wall Street Journal*. Partisan-

ship plays no obvious role in determining the balance between counterterrorism and threats-and-attacks coverage.

Discussion of violent events is also surprisingly rare in counterterrorism reporting. News about militarized counterterrorism efforts is less common than stories about criminal-justice and diplomatic responses to terrorism. This pattern emerges even though the profit-seeking model identifies militarized counterterrorism as the one type of counterterrorism that is sure to capture reporters' attention. Nevertheless, the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post* routinely reported on day-to-day developments in criminal cases against alleged terrorists, legislative efforts by the US Congress to enhance US security against terrorism, and meetings between US presidents and other world leaders dedicated to the discussion of antiterrorism cooperation between their countries. There is also a small but clear stream of news on the politics of counterterrorism: Which party is doing more to keep terrorists at bay? What are the policy proposals being offered to make the United States safer, and how do those proposals position candidates vis-à-vis the electorate?

Fear is certainly a theme on the terrorism beat, but it is an exaggeration to say that the terrorism beat is preoccupied with unnerving news. There is an abundance of terrorism beat reporting that covers miscellaneous subjects tangentially related to terrorism-related subjects. Most of the time, the counterterrorism reporting newspapers provide is incremental in the sense that it offers updates on government efforts to deal with terrorist threats. Judgments about the success of these incremental changes appear infrequently in the news.

The profit-seeking model suggests that when counterterrorism policies can be assessed, journalists are mostly interested in the efforts that fail rather than the efforts that succeed. I find no evidence in support of this claim, however. Clearly effective counterterrorism is covered at least as much if not more than clearly ineffective counterterrorism.

Critics are on firmer ground when they say that newspapers give community responses to terrorism short shrift. This coverage gap means that news audiences find it difficult to get information about how their fellow citizens cope with the threat of terrorism. Nevertheless, the relative frequency of reporting on community responses to terrorism varies over time and across newspapers. In some years, material about community responses to terrorism appears as much or more than material about ter-

rorist threats and attacks. This pattern certainly played out in *USA Today* in 2005 and 2011, the *Wall Street Journal* in 2005, and the *Washington Post* in 2001 and 2005. The *New York Times* is the only paper I examined that between 1997 and 2014 never reported on community responses to terrorism more than terrorist threats and attacks.

What newspapers do report suggests responses can be quite varied. Some citizens arm themselves. Others turn to prayer. Some citizens live in fear of attack. Others refuse to be cowed. Journalists assigned to the terrorism news beat covered all these responses, not just the ones that depict people as helpless victims of terrorist activity.

It is also worth singling out the *Wall Street Journal's* coverage of community responses to terrorism. None of the other newspapers in my sample cover the economic consequences of terrorism in their main news sections to the same degree or depth as the *Journal*. The *Journal's* omission from studies of the terrorism beat, therefore, is partly responsible for the sense that reporting on community responses to terrorism is depressing. The *Journal's* reporters, however, routinely identified economic winners and losers. Some companies struggled mightily after 9/11, while others profited handsomely. This variability in reporting at the *Journal* is an underappreciated dimension of the terrorism beat news in the United States.

The Language of the Terrorism Beat

The profit-seeking model's account of the language journalists use on the terrorism beat is also at odds with my results. This way of thinking about news production suggests that journalists write about the news in ways that are designed to boost news sales. The implication is that the terrorism news beat relies almost exclusively on negative and extreme language that reporters select for the express purpose of intimidating their audiences. Just like my findings regarding subject matter, however, the prevailing wisdom's expectations about the use of language on the terrorism news beat are not borne out in the reporting I studied.

My data lends little credence to the notion that the language of fear took over the terrorism beat after 9/11. The specific allegation here is that terrorism beat reporters took a page out of the playbooks of their crime beat colleagues and began injecting their terrorism-related reporting with the words "fear" and "victim." This shift was designed to increase their

audiences' sense of insecurity. Its effect was to make the terrorism and crime beats linguistically similar (Altheide 2017).

In reality, the words "fear" and "victim" were never used all that much by terrorism beat reporters. Just 2.8 percent of the more than 9,000 paragraphs I examined contained either one of these words. Moreover, reporters used the words "fear" and "victim" relatively more often on the terrorism beat before the 9/11 attacks than after them. It is this reduction that accounts for Altheide's (2017) observation that the terrorism and crime beats converged in their use of language. Prior to 9/11, terrorism beat reporters used the words "fear" and "victim" more often than crime beat reporters, not the other way around.

Similar conclusions emerge when the focus expands from uses of the words "fear" and "victim" to the overall tone of terrorism beat reporting, defined in terms of the relative number of negative and positive words used as a share of total words. Like most news, the terrorism beat is a negative news beat: it uses more negative words than positive ones. In relative terms, however, the terrorism beat's negativity declined after 9/11 from the levels observed in the late 1990s. It is not until about 2011 that terrorism beat reporters start delivering readers content as negative as they produced before 9/11.

Once again, this reduction in the terrorism beat's negativity distinguishes it from the crime beat—at least at the *New York Times*. Although the tone of both the terrorism and crime beats published by the *Times* fluctuated after 9/11—in some years the gap between the two beats was smaller than others—in general the terrorism beat was less negative than the crime beat. Crime beat reporters relied on negative language relative to positive language more than their terrorism beat colleagues did.

It is unclear why language use on these two news beats converged some years and diverged others. The profit-seeking model points to a relationship between the tone of coverage and the profitability of newspapers, but this claim is inconsistent with the data. Bottom-line pressure at news organizations is supposed to make the news more negative, not less. Reporting from the terrorism beat confounds this assumption.

The profit-seeking model's relentless focus on the use of negative language as a strategy to grab readers' attention also leaves it incapable of anticipating the nearly 25 percent of terrorism beat content that either perfectly balances negative and positive language or that uses more positive words than negative ones. There are stories about the terrorists who are

convicted of crimes, articles covering the diplomatic bargains that leaders strike to keep terrorism at bay, and news items about people who refuse to be terrorized, among others.

The profit-seeking model also has little to say about the audiences that these stories are designed to fascinate or the reasons journalists vary the mixture of negative and positive words they use according to the subjects they cover. Reporting about terrorist threats and attacks consistently generates the most negative terrorism beat news, followed by reporting about counterterrorism, and community responses to terrorism. “Other” subjects, the terrorism-adjacent material that appears frequently in terrorism beat articles, yield the least negative reporting in all terrorism beat news.

Declining profits are also supposed to make extreme words more attractive to journalists because of their power to grab readers’ attention. But I find no evidence to suggest that reporters rely on extreme words when they have more moderate options available. Instead, what stands out most about the language journalists use is how temperate it is. Words that independent observers place near the midpoint of a 9-point scale that measures how “happy” or “unhappy” the terms make them (see Brysbaert et al. 2014) dominate. This midpoint corresponds to the conclusion that the words in question make readers “neither happy nor unhappy.”

When provocative words are used by reporters, they often have few alternatives, given the circumstances they are reporting on. “Torture” is the most extreme negative word in the terrorism beat content I examined. Independent observers say it is the word that makes them the most “unhappy.” It is also a word that reporters cannot avoid when covering abuse of that magnitude. The word “torture” has no synonym that both captures the severity of the crime in question and that is significantly more moderate in tone. When reporters cover allegations of torture, as they did during the war on terror, they had no choice but to use this provocative term.

Reporters had a bit more leeway when it came to the word “vacation,” the most positive word in the coverage I examined. “Holiday,” a slightly less cheerful word, could have been used instead. The difference between “vacation” and “holiday,” however, is negligible.

There is always the possibility that reporters can just forgo many of the negative and positive words they use. This claim is at the heart of the idea that journalists use provocative language gratuitously, but I find little evidence for this claim either. About 10 percent of the words that journalists wrote in the lead sentences of their articles could be edited out without

making the resulting sentences unintelligible. There is, in other words, some tendency among reporters to use words unnecessarily—variations on the words “terrorist” and “extremist” were always the easiest to cut—but not a pronounced inclination toward excess.

Underestimating People

The reactions readers have to negative information operates alongside claims about how newspapers identify and produce the news they deliver to audiences. Market savvy journalists must know what kinds of stories drive audience demand. Journalists who focus on their professional obligations to readers must know this as well. Journalists also have a professional obligation to know what audiences can tolerate. What does terrorism beat content look like in light of these considerations?

The profit-seeking model portrays news audiences as sensitive to the terrorism beat reporting they receive. The negativity of terrorism beat news makes people insecure, a psychological state that encourages information-seeking. This is the formula that profit-seeking journalists rely on to keep interest in the news high.

The alternate view suggests that news audiences are more resilient to the terrorism beat news they receive. The negativity of terrorism beat news does not necessarily encourage feelings of insecurity. This conclusion is rooted in research on the psychological consequences of exposure to both actual and mass-mediated terrorism. That work (e.g., Bonanno 2004) supports the view that people can cope with the stress of terrorist attacks. Their attitudes change and their emotions are heightened, but these effects are sometimes small and often temporary.

Consistent with work on psychological resilience, my research suggests that the terrorism beat is not intimidating enough to turn readers who feel secure from terrorism into readers who feel insecure from terrorism. People who read news from the terrorism beat certainly experience relative declines in their sense of security, but these changes are often insufficient to push average readers of the terrorism beat across the security-insecurity threshold. Most of the change people experience takes place within the category of security, not between the categories of security and insecurity.

Reporting about threats and attacks appears to be the topic that is most likely to make secure people feel insecure. This is in line with a wealth of

evidence about the effects of exposure to this content. It is also consistent with the profit-seeking model's predictions about the effects of terrorism beat content on news audiences.

The profit-seeking model appears to be less reliable when it comes to recognizing differences in the subjects that the terrorism beat covers. News about counterterrorism and community responses to terrorism provoke much less severe responses than reporting about threats and attacks. These subjects do less damage to people's sense of security than reporting about threats and attacks.

This result makes sense considering the range of material journalists cover when they address counterterrorism and community responses to terrorism. These content categories include material about successful counterterrorism efforts, companies that thrive in the shadow of terrorism, and people who perform heroically during terrorism crises. Saying that this material does less damage to people's sense of security, however, appears to undersell articles like these. The reason is that positive-valence content may add to the sense of security people have rather than always eroding it to greater or lesser degrees. In this way, the terrorism beat might work to the public's advantage rather than the public's detriment.

Examining the robustness of these results is a project for future research. These findings about the sensitivity of news audiences to different types of terrorism beat news rely upon a simulation based on the findings from an experiment, rather than on observations of actual people engaging different kinds of terrorism beat content. In a series of experiments, however, I showed that people are inclined to report higher levels of security from terrorism after consuming information about effective counterterrorism. These results underscore the idea that terrorism beat content can be security-enhancing, not just security-reducing.

Crisis Reporting

Finally, there are undulations in the tone of the terrorism beat news that the default map of that reporting does not register. The profit-seeking model suggests that crises are opportunities for newspapers to increase the dose of negativity they usually administer to audiences. In chapters 5 and 6, however, I show that reporters use less negative language during terrorism-inspired crises than they use in their non-crisis reporting. Since

the severity of crisis events are self-evident, reporters are more cautious about using negative language to impress the seriousness of events upon their audiences.

This less negative reporting pattern emerged across six separate terrorism crises. It occurred in the reporting on the Oklahoma City bombing, the Olympic Park bombing, the 9/11 attacks, the Boston Marathon bombing, the DC Sniper attacks, and the Dallas police shootings. The repetitiveness of this outcome across a range of crises suggests a robust result. Journalists reported on these crisis events less negatively than they normally reported on terrorism during non-crisis periods.

Within each of these crises, I also found a second layer of spatial and temporal variation in the negativity of the news newspapers deliver. Reporters who write for audiences that are physically proximate to the site of crisis events create less negative news than their counterparts who write for more distant audiences. During the Boston Marathon bombing, for example, reporters who wrote for newspapers headquartered in cities closest to Boston delivered the least negative news about the attack. Journalists located in more distant cities wrote more negatively about the bombing.

A similar pattern emerges with respect to time in the other five crises considered here. Reporters who covered the other crises tended to write less negatively as time passed. Reports about the attacks tended to be the most negative the day after attacks themselves. News about the crises tended to be more positive as events unfolded.

This within-crisis variation in the language reporters use to report on crisis events is consistent with what we know about how people think about distant events. As the physical and temporal distance between people and events increases, the inclination to think about these events in abstract terms increases. In contrast, physical and temporal proximity promotes concrete thinking about events.

The challenge for journalists is to get distant audiences to appreciate the importance of the distant events they cover. This is why it makes sense to expect an inverse relationship between physical distance and the negativity of coverage. Reporters who serve more distant audiences write as if they are aware of the challenge of driving the significance of distance events home to people who are inclined to see those events in abstract terms. Reporters, however, are also subject to the same psychological forces that audiences are. This accounts for the reason reporting tends to get less negative as crises progress. The badness of the events reporters cover

decline through time and the inclination of reporters to think about those events in abstract terms increases. These patterns suggest that the commitment of journalists to negative news is contingent upon events themselves. Providing negative news is not simply a dominant strategy on the terrorism beat. Reporters moderate their tone in response to the conditions they report on.

The Craft of Journalism

The profit-seeking model of news production does a poor job of describing the terrorism beat accurately. It does other things well. The profit-seeking model helps explain why terrorism captures the attention of journalists with relative ease (threats are attention-grabbing). It anticipates the news media's tendency deny coverage to more minor acts of terrorism in favor of reporting on more serious acts of terrorism (newspapers operate with space limitations). It identifies a motive behind the news media's "if it bleeds, it leads" philosophy (shocking news draws readers in). Describing the day-to-day content of the terrorism news beat, however, is not the profit-seeking model's forte.

Describing the terrorism news beat's content is easier using a model that takes seriously the professional norms and principles that journalists rely on to guide their work. Journalists have long seen the business of news as posing a threat to the integrity of their work. Many of the professional principles they rely on are specifically designed to insulate them against the short-term demands of the marketplace in order to fulfill their underlying obligations to the public. The profit-seeking model assumes these principles do not influence the calculus of reporting. The professional model suggests the opposite.

The watchdog norm directs journalists' attention to the behavior of governments. It is fealty to this principle that provides the basis for the idea that counterterrorism plays an important role in terrorism news beat reporting. Governments do not have to use violence to outbid terrorists for press attention. Attention to government activity is the press's default position. This is why the wide range of counterterrorism reporting comes as little surprise to the professional model. Journalists believe government actions are newsworthy whether they are violent or not, involve diplomatic or coercive actions, or take place within courtrooms rather than battlefields.

The norm of objectivity directs journalists to prioritize the facts in their reporting, to write about events as detached observers, and to cover the news dispassionately. All these principles can be found in terrorism beat news. Nearly every story I examined relied on the inverted pyramid organizational style that places the most important pieces of information in the first paragraph of a news story. All but one article was written in the third person. The language that journalists used tended to be temperate rather than extreme.

The conditions under which journalists used extreme language further suggests that professional principles were at work. The most provocative words that appeared in terrorism beat news (e.g., “torture”) often did not have substantially less provocative synonyms to replace them. Journalists used these words out of necessity.

Extreme language also tended to appear in professionally permissible places: in headlines and in quotations from sources. Headlines are the one place journalists allow themselves to advertise to their work. There is undoubtedly an economic dimension to this, but it is also true that the news does not speak for itself. People who are unaware of events cannot learn about them. Provocative headlines are a way to alert the public to significant developments. Journalists also permit provocative language to appear in their reporting via sources they quote. The rules that bind journalists do not extend to sources. This is for good reason: Journalists want to portray world events and the people who have things to say about them faithfully. Imposing rules on what can and cannot be said violates that interest in authenticity.

The professional model also accounts for other reporting patterns. Journalists report less negatively during terrorism crises than they do in non-crisis settings, a result that emerged in the coverage of the Oklahoma City bombing, the 1996 Olympic Park bombing, the 9/11 attacks, the Boston Marathon bombing, the DC sniper attacks, and the Dallas police shootings. More moderate reporting at intense moments is consistent with journalists’ professional obligation to minimize the harm they do to others through their coverage of events.

Beneath this overall shift in the negativity of terrorism beat news is the more subtle spatial variation in crisis reporting. Journalists who work for newspapers that serve communities that are proximate to the epicenters of crises report less negatively on crisis events than their more distant counterparts. This result is consistent with an understanding of journalists

as concerned for the welfare of their audiences—during crises, journalists often worry that negative news will spark public panics—and with an understanding of audiences as varied in their taste for negativity. Proximate audiences possess the most finely grained understanding of crises. They know where the danger spots are and the tensions that pervade their communities. They do not need journalists to report this to them in sharp relief. Distant audiences, on the other hand, lack firsthand experience with crisis events. They may know little about the local geography where the crisis is unfolding or about the pressure residents experience. Journalists who serve these distant communities must convey these details to readers. Reporters do this by accentuating negative information.

These accomplishments do not make the professional model infallible. The professional model provides no clear basis for expecting periods in which stories about community responses to terrorism to appear more frequently than stories about terrorist threats and attacks. The professional model also offers little reason to expect that the *New York Times* would be both the newspaper least inclined to cover community responses to terrorism and the newspaper that consistently provided the most negative terrorism beat news relative to *USA Today*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Washington Post*.

What the professional model does do is treat journalism as if it is a craft and journalists as if they are professionals. Both claims are controversial as descriptions of journalism as a field and as descriptions of journalists as laborers. As assumptions, though, they enable the professional model to provide not only a more accurate description of terrorism beat news than the profit-seeking model but also a set of observations that the profit-seeking model does not consider. Questions remain about whether these same assumptions are also capable of producing a superior causal account of the production of terrorism beat news, but that is a task for future research. For now, it is clear that the professional model makes it possible to see the terrorism beat in new and interesting ways.

A Matter of Design

Two methodological decisions I made early in the research for this book also played a role in producing an unconventional mapping of the terrorism news beat. Instead of focusing on the reporting that followed

terrorist attacks, I drew random samples of terrorism news beat content over many years.

In the past, researchers effectively designed their research to examine how the news media covered terrorism contingent upon the commission of a significant act of terrorist violence—the 9/11 attacks, the Mumbai attack, etc. This way of approaching the terrorism news beat appears to produce biased inferences about the universe of terrorism beat reporting. The clearest manifestation of this bias can be seen in analyses of the language used by terrorism beat reporters before and after 9/11. According to Altheide (2017), the 9/11 attacks produced a sharp increase in the use of the words “fear” and “victim” in terrorism beat news, but it is likely that this is not the result of a change in the rate at which reporters used these words. Instead, the apparent increase reflects an increase in the number of terrorism beat articles newspapers published after 9/11. The rate at which newspapers used the words “fear” and “victim” in their terrorism beat reporting actually declines once the increased number of terrorism beat articles is taken into account.

To be clear, this is not a call for abandoning purposive sampling in terrorism beat research. Specific acts of terrorism operate as focal points for both public and scholarly understandings of terrorist activity and counterterrorism responses. A research community that cannot provide insight into news coverage of major attacks is not doing its job.

It is insufficient, however, to focus on the coverage of specific attacks without also assessing how this reporting differs from the norm. That is what the research on the terrorism beat has been missing: a sense of the relationship between the reporting on particular attacks and the terrorism beat news that appears every day, whether threats and attacks are covered or not.

Expanding the temporal focus of terrorism beat research is the other decision I made that influenced the conclusions of this research. Claims about the terrorism beat often depend on some implicit historical baseline. Claims about the increasing proportion of stories devoted to reporting about threats and attacks, for example, imply comparisons to past reporting practices on the terrorism beat. Concerns about the consequences of digital technologies on the newspaper industry reference the period before the widespread distribution of news via the internet.

It is rare, though, for these baselines to be used in research explicitly. Sometimes comparisons are drawn to periods that are treated in vague

terms. In other cases, the time frames that delimit extant research on terrorism beat reporting are too short to provide useful comparisons to previous reporting eras. Both practices played a role in perpetuating the idea that the terrorism news beat is sensationalized.

Terrorism beat reporting changed after the 9/11 attacks, but in unanticipated ways: It got relatively less rather than relatively more negative. Comparing post-9/11 reporting to reporting published in the late 1990s made this observation possible. Trends in the use of language on the terrorism beat also changed from year to year, just not in tune with changes to the business of news. This conclusion depended on gathering a lengthy sequence of articles covering the period before and after the news industry began experiencing significant financial problems.

The combination of random sampling and a lengthy study frame influenced the conclusions that could be drawn about the terrorism news beat. This is not a combination that is used often in terrorism beat research, but the evidence presented here suggests that it may be a potent addition to future work.

If Not the Media, Then What?

Looking at terrorism news beat articles over nearly twenty years through the lens of the professional model suggests that major newspapers gave readers a surprisingly sober take on terrorist threats and attacks, counterterrorism, and community responses to terrorism. Suggestions that US newspapers deliberately sensationalized the terrorism news beat appear to be unfounded.

This conclusion creates a conundrum. If the terrorism beat's reputation for sensationalism is unwarranted, what accounts for Americans' inflated sense of danger from terrorism? Americans are more likely to die by drowning in bathtubs (Mueller and Stewart 2012), falling off ladders (Kristof 2017), getting struck by lightning (Todd 2017), or being involved in automobile accidents (Mueller 2005) than they are to be killed by foreign terrorists. Nevertheless, large portions of the American public consistently tell pollsters that terrorists pose a serious danger to their health and well-being; the chances of mass casualty terrorist attacks in the US are high; and the possibility of being victimized by terrorists worries them (Mueller and Stewart 2018).

These fears are unjustified, which has led observers to draw analogies between Americans' fear of terrorism and Americans' fear of crime. The fear Americans express about crime is disproportionate to the likelihood that they will be victimized. So it must be with terrorism as well. How else to explain the public's response to a risk that neither they nor their friends and family are likely to experience firsthand?

Blaming the news media for inflating Americans' fear of terrorism is harder to do once the terrorism news beat's content is examined closely. The terrorism beat mainly delivers news about counterterrorism to audiences and does so in relatively moderate terms. Deliberately provocative language is rare in terrorism beat news. This pattern of reporting suggests that many of the studies that find a relationship between exposure to terrorism beat news and heightened fear of terrorism are not accounting for the counterterrorism coverage that people receive. Indeed, I am aware of just two studies that examine the effects of counterterrorism news on audiences (Hoffman and Shelby 2017; Grosskopf 2006).

There is no denying, of course, that Americans are unjustifiably afraid of terrorism; and since most of the information people receive about terrorism comes from the mass media, it is reasonable to consider whether reporters are frightening their audiences. The news media is a varied industry, so one way to find fault with reporters while keeping the findings in this book in mind is to distinguish between news sources. Newspapers and the news media are not coterminous. Televised news sources might be responsible for the disconnect between terrorism fear and terrorism reality.

This possibility is worth examining, but it is worth noting that comparisons between television and newspaper crime coverage have not uncovered clear differences between the two that obviously account for the public's exaggerated fear of crime. Studies of crime coverage across newspapers and television news suggests that newspapers report on crimes in greater depth than television news (Chermak 1994), but television news uses more provocative language in its reporting (Grosholz and Kubrin 2007). Perhaps for these reasons, research in this area has not definitively identified whether newspapers or television make people more fearful of crime.

The equivocal findings regarding crime coverage in newspapers and television might indicate that the content responsible for stoking public fear of terrorism rarely appears in traditional hard-news presentations.

Instead, opinion pieces and news entertainment shows might disproportionately contribute to the American public's fear of terrorism.

There is clear evidence that opinion pieces and news entertainment shows influence public attitudes (Baum 2003; Coppock, Ekins, and Kirby 2018). Both have large audiences and both place a premium on conveying strong positions. The opinion pages in newspapers are a place where strongly worded warnings about terrorism might appear. Soft news programs often turn their attention to hard news stories when dramatic kinetic events take place—a terrorist attack, a violent military reprisal. Both could contribute to public attitudes about terrorism.

Popular culture also might be a source of inflated terrorism fears (Riegler 2010). Shows like *24* and *Homeland* depict terrorists as evil geniuses, despite evidence to the contrary (Mueller and Stewart 2012). These depictions may rub off on audiences since popular culture is often the only connection people have to terrorism.

There are other reasons that Americans might have exaggerated attitudes about terrorism that have nothing to do with the mass media. The “rational expectations” argument (Bapat and Zeigler 2016) suggests that overreactions to terrorism reflect people's desire to nip terrorist organizations in the bud, before they become intolerably strong later. Exaggerated levels of terrorism fear, in other words, reflect the rational concern that, left unchecked, terrorists might become more dangerous in the future.

A Darwinian explanation of Americans' exaggerated fear of terrorism (Gilbert 2006) similarly suggests that people overreact to the prospect of terrorism regardless of how the news media covers the terrorism beat. On this account, reactions to terrorism reflect the survival instincts that people developed during the process of human evolution. Immediate threats, like a bomb on public transportation, instinctively trigger disproportionate, defensive responses. The fear of terrorism that Americans express simply reflects the activation of their survival systems.

Whether these hypotheses are borne out remains to be seen, but the reasons for deepening the search for explanations of the public's terrorism fears are clear. The content supplied by the news media's major producers of terrorism beat content does not fit the profile of intimidating news. How relatively moderate coverage of counterterrorism efforts produces widespread fear is difficult to understand.

Final Considerations

Even if major newspapers report about terrorist threats and attacks, counterterrorism, and community responses to terrorism more responsibly than critics admit, the findings reported in this book do not imply that the terrorism beat is beyond reproach. In the United States, the terrorism beat is often seen through the eyes of the US government. Alternative perspectives inform terrorism beat news less often.

Among other things, thinking about the terrorism beat the way the US government does create coverage blind spots. Consistent with the US government's attention to transnational terrorism, journalists overlooked the threat of domestic terrorism. Only the combination of Black Lives Matter protests of the killing of George Floyd and the January 6 Capitol riots got reporters to start asking sustained questions about racially motivated terrorism that has afflicted US cities for years.

The US news media also spends too much time thinking about terrorism through the eyes of elected leaders and not enough time considering outsider perspectives. John Mueller's massive influence on academic terrorism research, which has raised serious questions about the wisdom of spending billions of dollars to defend against terrorism, is hard to find in the pages of US national newspapers. Other anti-establishment views are excluded as well.

Major US newspapers, however, are not guilty of turning the terrorism beat into a dystopian horror show. Americans who read these papers typically get what they pay for: carefully reported stories that relay news about a range of terrorism related subjects. This is what the rules of professional journalistic practice demand and what professional journalists supply.

References

- ABC News. 2007. "The 'Fear Industrial Complex.'" February 7. <https://abcnews.go.com/2020/story?id=2898636&page=1>
- Abel, David. 2013. "Amid Shock, A Rush to Help Strangers." *Boston Globe*, April 16, A.
- Aber, J. Lawrence, Elizabeth T. Gershoff, Angelica Ware, and Jennifer A. Kotler. 2004. "Estimating the Effects of September 11th and Other Forms of Violence on the Mental Health and Social Development of New York City's Youth: A Matter of Context." *Applied Developmental Science* 8 (3): 111–29. https://doi.org/10.1207/s1532480xads0803_2
- Ahern, Jennifer, Sandro Galea, Heidi Resnick, and Dean Kilpatrick. 2002. "Television Images and Psychological Symptoms after the September 11 Terrorist Attacks." *Psychiatry* 65 (4): 289–300. <https://doi.org/10.1521/psyc.65.4.289.20240>
- Ahern, Jennifer, Sandro Galea, Heidi Resnick, and David Vlahov. 2004. "Television Images and Probable Posttraumatic Stress Disorder after September 11: The Role of Background Characteristics, Event Exposures, and Perievent Panic." *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* 192 (3): 217–26.
- Ahern, Jennifer, Sandro Galea, Heidi Resnick, and David Vlahov. 2005. "Television Watching and Mental Health in the General Population of New York City After September 11." In *The Trauma of Terrorism: Sharing Knowledge and Shared Care, an International Handbook*, edited by Yael Danieli, Danny Brom, and Joe Sills, 109–124. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Maltreatment and Trauma Press.
- Albertson, Bethany, and Shana Kushner Gadarian. 2015. *Anxious Politics: Democratic Citizenship in a Threatening World*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Alexander, Jeffrey C. 2004. "From the Depths of Despair: Performance, Counterperformance, and 'September 11.'" *Sociological Theory* 22 (1): 88–105. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9558.2004.00205.x>
- Alexander, Jeffrey C. 2015. "The Crisis of Journalism Reconsidered: Cultural Power." *Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences* 8 (1): 9–31.
- Alexander, Jeffrey C. 2016. "Introduction: Journalism, Democratic Culture, and Creative Reconstruction." In *The Crisis of Journalism Reconsidered: Democratic Culture*,

- Professional Codes, Digital Future*, edited by Jeffrey C. Alexander, Elizabeth Butler Breese, and Maria Luengo, 1–28. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Allen, Evan, and Jenna Russell. 2013. "Martin Richard, Symbol to Many." *Boston Globe*, April 17, A.
- Althaus, Scott L. 2002. "American News Consumption during Times of National Crisis." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 35 (3): 517–21.
- Althaus, Scott L., Brittany H. Bramlett, and James G. Gimpel. 2012. "When War Hits Home: The Geography of Military Losses and Support for War in Time and Space." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56 (3): 382–412. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002711422340>
- Altheide, David, L. 2017. *Terrorism and the Politics of Fear*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Anderson, Christopher William. 2013. *Rebuilding the News: Metropolitan Journalism in the Digital Age*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Anderson, John Ward, and Ellen Knickmeyer. 2006. "Bank of England Freezes the Assets of 19 Arrested in Plot." *Washington Post*, August 13.
- Angelo, Megan. 2011. "These Were Supposed to Be the Big Headlines on September 11, 2001." *Business Insider*. <https://www.businessinsider.com/september-11-2001-2011-9>
- Ansolabehere, Stephen, Rebecca Lessem, and James M. Snyder Jr. 2006. "The Orientation of Newspaper Endorsements in US Elections, 1940–2002." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 1 (4): 393–404.
- Arango-Kure, Maria, Marcel Garz, and Armin Rott. 2014. "Bad News Sells: The Demand for News Magazines and the Tone of Their Covers." *Journal of Media Economics* 27 (4): 199–214. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08997764.2014.963230>
- Archetti, Cristina. 2013. *Understanding Terrorism in the Age of Global Media: A Communication Approach*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Arsenault, Mark. 2013a. "3 killed, 130 Hurt by Bombs at Finish Line; Area Locked Down." *Boston Globe*, April 16, A.
- Arsenault, Mark. 2013b. "Second Marathon Bombing Suspect Captured after All-Day Hunt That Brought Boston Area to Standstill; Alleged Accomplice Dead." *Boston Globe*, April 20, A.
- Arsenault, Mark, and Shelley Murphy. 2013a. "Bomb Pieces, Circuit Board Found; FBI Requests Tips." *Boston Globe*, April 17, A.
- Arsenault, Mark, and Shelley Murphy. 2013b. "Bombing Suspect Shown on Camera, Official Says." *Boston Globe*, April 18, A1.
- Arsenault, Mark, Shelley Murphy, and Milton J. Valencia. 2013. "Authorities Release Videos, Photos of Two Suspects in Marathon Bombing." *Boston Globe*, April 19, A.
- Associated Press. 1997. "World News Briefs; 36 Killed in Bombing of Train in North India." *New York Times*, July 9.
- Associated Press. 2003. "Prosecutors: Malvo Confessed to Slaying of Keenya Cook in Tacoma." *Seattle Times*, December 9. <https://archive.seattletimes.com/archive/?date=20031209&slug=webmalvo09>
- Associated Press. 2011. "Lawyer: Norway Suspect Sees Self as a 'Savior'; Defense Says Breivik Sought a 'War Against Democracy'." *USA Today*, July 27, 2A.

- Associated Press. 2012. "Letter: U.S. Ignored Warning Signs in Libya; Republican Lawmakers Question Whether Security Was Adequate." *USA Today*, October 3, 8A.
- Atwater, Tony. 1987. "Terrorism on the Evening News: An Analysis of Coverage of the TWA Hostage Crisis on 'NBC Nightly News.'" *Political Communication* 4 (1): 17–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.1987.9962805>
- Austen, Ian, and Rick Gladstone. 2014. "Gunman's Attack on Parliament Shakes Ottawa." *New York Times*, October 23.
- Avdan, Nazli, and Clayton Webb. 2018. "The Big, the Bad, and the Dangerous: Public Perceptions and Terrorism." *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict* 11 (1): 3–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17467586.2017.1414276>
- Avdan, Nazli, and Clayton Webb. 2019. "Not in My Backyard: Public Perceptions and Terrorism." *Political Research Quarterly* 72 (1): 90–103. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912918776118>
- Azam, Jean-Paul, and Véronique Thelen. 2008. "The Roles of Foreign Aid and Education in the War on Terror." *Public Choice* 135 (3–4): 375–97.
- Ayres, B. Drummond, Jr. 1979. "Three Mile Island: Notes from a Nightmare." *New York Times*, April 16, A1.
- Bacon, John. 2011. "Four in Ga. Militia Charged in Ricin Plot." *USA Today*, November 3.
- Baele, Stephane J., Olivier C. Sterck, Thibaut Slingeneyer, and Gregoire P. Lits. 2019. "What Does the 'Terrorist' Label Really Do? Measuring and Explaining the Effects of the 'Terrorist' and 'Islamist' Categories." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 42 (5): 520–40. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2017.1393902>
- Bakker, Gerben. 2015. "Paying for Crisis News: The Dilemmas of News Organizations." In *The Media and Financial Crises: Comparative and Historical Perspectives*, edited by Steve Schifferes and Richard Roberts, 215–28. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Balota, David A., Melvin J. Yap, Keith A. Hutchison, Michael J. Cortese, Brett Kessler, Bjorn Loftis, James H. Neely, Douglas L. Nelson, Greg B. Simpson, and Rebecca Treiman. 2007. "The English Lexicon Project." *Behavior Research Methods* 39 (3): 445–59.
- Bandler, James. 2002. "Accused Shoe Bomber Had Help from at Least One 'Confederate.'" *Wall Street Journal*, May 24.
- Bapat, Navin A., and Sean Zeigler. 2016. "Terrorism, Dynamic Commitment Problems, and Military Conflict." *American Journal of Political Science* 60 (2): 337–51. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12211>
- Bartone, Paul T. 2006. "Resilience under Military Operational Stress: Can Leaders Influence Hardiness?" *Military Psychology* 18 (Suppl): S131–S148.
- Baum, Matthew A. 2003. *Soft News Goes to War: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy in the New Media Age*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Baum, Matthew A., and Tim J. Groeling. 2010. *War Stories: The Causes and Consequences of Public Views of War*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Baum, Matthew A., and Philip B. K. Potter. 2008. "The Relationships between Mass Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis." *Annual Review of Political Science* 11 (1): 39–65. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.11.060406.214132>

- Baum, Matthew A., and Yuri M. Zhukov. 2019. "Media Ownership and News Coverage of International Conflict." *Political Communication* 36 (1): 36–63.
- Bausch, Andrew W., Joao R. Faria, and Thomas Zeitzoff. 2013. "Warnings, Terrorist Threats and Resilience: A Laboratory Experiment." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 30 (5): 433–51. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0738894213499489>
- Becker, Lee B., and Tudor Vlad. 2009. "News Organizations and Routines." In *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*, edited by Karin Wahl-Jorgensen and Thomas Hanitzsch, 59–72. New York: Routledge.
- Bennett, W. Lance. 1990. "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States." *Journal of Communication* 40 (2): 103–27. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1990.tb02265.x>
- Bennett, W. Lance. 2016. *News: The Politics of Illusion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Benoit, Kenneth, Kohei Watanabe, Haiyan Wang, Paul Nulty, Adam Obeng, Stefan Müller, and Akitaka Matsuo. 2018. "quanteda: An R Package for the Quantitative Analysis of Textual Data." *Journal of Open Source Software* 3 (30): 774.
- Bernstein, Matthew. 2013. "Runners, the Race Still Matters. It Must. Celebrate What Can Never Be Taken Away." *Boston Globe*, April 17, A11.
- Berry, Conor. 2013. "Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick on Boston Marathon Explosions: 'We've Had a Horrific Attack Here in Boston.'" *MassLive.com*, April 15. https://www.masslive.com/news/boston/2013/04/massachusetts_gov_deval_patric.html
- Biskupic, Joan. 2004. "Justices Question Denying Detainees Hearing." *USA Today*, April 29, 1A.
- Bleich, A., M. Gelkopf, and Z. Solomon. 2003. "Exposure to Terrorism, Stress-Related Mental Health Symptoms, and Coping Behaviors among a Nationally Representative Sample in Israel." *Journal of the American Medical Association* 290 (5): 612–20. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.290.5.612>
- Bloch, Hannah. 2016. "A Good Lead Is Everything—Here's How to Write One." NPR Training. Accessed May 31, 2022. <https://training.npr.org/2016/10/12/leads-are-hard-heres-how-to-write-a-good-one/>
- Block, Melissa. 2012. "DC Sniper Victim: 'Mentally, I Went Through Hell.'" National Public Radio, October 5. <https://www.npr.org/2012/10/05/162393890/d-c-sniper-victim-mentally-i-went-through-hell>
- Boczkowski, Pablo J. 2014. *News at Work: Imitation in an Age of Information Abundance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bolt, Neville. 2012. *The Violent Image: Insurgent Propaganda and the New Revolutionaries*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Bonanno, George A. 2004. "Loss, Trauma, and Human Resilience: Have We Underestimated the Human Capacity to Thrive after Extremely Aversive Events?" *American Psychologist* 59 (1): 20–28. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.59.1.20>
- Bonanno, George A., Sandro Galea, Angela Bucciarelli, and David Vlahov. 2006. "Psychological Resilience After Disaster: New York City in the Aftermath of the September 11th Terrorist Attack." *Psychological Science* 17 (3): 181–86. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2006.01682.x>

- Bonanno, George A., Sandro Galea, Angela Bucciarelli, and David Vlahov. 2007. "What Predicts Psychological Resilience After Disaster? The Role of Demographics, Resources, and Life Stress." *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 75 (5): 671–82.
- Borchers, Callum. 2013. "Advances in Prosthetics Will Aid Bomb Victims." *Boston Globe*, April 18, A20.
- Boston.com. 2013. "How Newspaper Front Pages Covered the Boston Marathon Bombings." April 16. https://www.boston.com/travel/travel/2013/04/16/how-newspaper-front-pages-covered-the-boston-marathon-bombings/?utm_source=pocket_shared
- Bowins, Brad. 2004. "Psychological Defense Mechanisms: A New Perspective." *American Journal of Psychoanalysis* 64 (1): 1–26.
- Boyd-Barrett, Oliver, and Terhi Rantanen, eds. 1998. *Globalization of News*. London: Sage.
- Boydston, Amber E., Benjamin Highton, and Suzanna Linn. 2018. "Assessing the Relationship between Economic News Coverage and Mass Economic Attitudes." *Political Research Quarterly* 71 (4): 989–1000. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912918775248>
- Boykoff, Maxwell T., and Jules M. Boykoff. 2004. "Balance as Bias: Global Warming and the US Prestige Press." *Global Environmental Change* 14 (2): 125–36. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2003.10.001>
- Boyle, Kris, and Jordan Mower. 2018. "Framing Terror: A Content Analysis of Media Frames Used in Covering ISIS." *Newspaper Research Journal* 39 (2): 205–19. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739532918775667>
- Braithwaite, Alex. 2013. "The Logic of Public Fear in Terrorism and Counterterrorism." *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology* 28 (2): 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11896-013-9126-x>
- Branigin, William, and Robin Wright. 2004. "Iran Says It Will Try Al Qaeda Suspects." *Washington Post*, January 13, A13.
- Breckenridge, James N., Philip G. Zimbardo, and Jennifer L. Sweeton. 2010. "After Years of Media Coverage, Can One More Video Report Trigger Heuristic Judgments? A National Study of American Terrorism Risk Perceptions." *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 2 (3): 163–78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19434471003768826>
- Brenan, Megan. 2022. "Americans' Trust in Media Remains Near Record Low." Gallup, October 18. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/403166/americans-trust-media-remains-near-record-low.aspx>
- Brighton, Paul, and Dennis Foy. 2007. *News Values*. London: Sage.
- Brinson, Mary, and Michael Stohl. 2010. "From 7/7 to 8/10: Media Framing of Terrorist Incidents in the United States and United Kingdom." In *The Faces of Terrorism: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, edited by David Canter, 227–44. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Bronner, Ethan. 2012. "Israel Says Iran Is Behind Bombs." *New York Times*, February 14, A1.
- Brooks, David J. 2010. "What Is Security: Definition through Knowledge Categorization." *Security Journal* 23 (3): 225–39.

- Brown, Joseph M. 2020. *Force of Words: The Logic of Terrorist Threats*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Burgoon, Judee K., Michael Burgoon, and Miriam Wilkinson. 1983. "Dimensions of Content Readership in 10 Newspaper Markets." *Journalism Quarterly* 60 (1): 74–80.
- Burke, Brian L., Andy Martens, and Erik H. Faucher. 2010. "Two Decades of Terror Management Theory: A Meta-analysis of Mortality Salience Research." *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 14 (2): 155–95. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868309352321>
- Bux, Shahid M., and Sarah M. Coyne. 2009. "The Effects of Terrorism: The Aftermath of the London Terror Attacks 1." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 39 (12): 2936–66.
- Byman, Daniel L. 2003. "Al-Qaeda as an Adversary: Do We Understand Our Enemy?" *World Politics* 56 (1): 139–63. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/54763>
- C-Span. 2013. "Media Coverage of Terrorism Issues." <https://www.c-span.org/video/?314488-1/journalists-talk-covering-terrorism-stories>
- Carlson, Matt. 2015. "The Robotic Reporter: Automated Journalism and the Redefinition of Labor, Compositional Forms, and Journalistic Authority." *Digital Journalism* 3 (3): 416–31. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2014.976412>
- Carson, Andrea, and Kate Farhall. 2018. "Understanding Collaborative Investigative Journalism in a 'Post-Truth' Age." *Journalism Studies* 19 (13): 1899–1911. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2018.1494515>
- Catan, Thomas, and Susana Ferreira. 2009. "World News: Suspected ETA Bomb Kills 2 Policemen." *Wall Street Journal*, July 31, A11.
- CBS11. 2017. "Timeline of July 7 Dallas Police Ambush." *CBS News*, July 7. <https://www.cbsnews.com/dfw/news/timeline-july-7-dallas-police-ambush/>
- Censer, Jack R. 2010. *On the Trail of the DC Sniper: Fear and the Media*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.
- Chermak, Steven M. 1994. "Body Count News: How Crime Is Presented in the News Media." *Justice Quarterly* 11 (4): 561–82. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0741882940092431>
- Chermak, Steven M., and Jeffrey Gruenewald. 2006. "The Media's Coverage of Domestic Terrorism." *Justice Quarterly* 23 (4): 428–61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07418820600985305>
- Clarke, Kevin A., and David M. Primo. 2012. *A Model Discipline: Political Science and the Logic of Representations*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Clarke, Lee, and Caron Chess. 2008. "Elites and Panic: More to Fear Than Fear Itself." *Social Forces* 87 (2): 993–1014. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20430900>
- CNN. 2021. "DC Area Sniper Fast Facts." November 4. <https://www.cnn.com/2013/11/04/us/dc-area-sniper-fast-facts/index.html>
- Coaffee, Jon, Paul O'Hare, and Marian Hawkesworth. 2009. "The Visibility of (In) security: The Aesthetics of Planning Urban Defences against Terrorism." *Security Dialogue* 40 (4–5): 489–511. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26299830>
- Coddington, Mark. 2015. "The Wall Becomes a Curtain: Revisiting Journalism's News-Business Boundary." In *Boundaries of Journalism: Professionalism, Practices,*

- and Participation*, edited by Matt Carlson and Seth C. Lewis, 67–82. New York: Routledge.
- Committee to Protect Journalists. “Explore CPJ’s Database of Attacks on the Press.” n.d. cpj.org (last accessed August 27, 2024). https://cpj.org/data/killed/all/?status=Killed&motiveConfirmed%5B%5D=Confirmed&type%5B%5D=Journalist&tart_year=1992&end_year=2024&group_by=year
- Coppock, Alexander, Emily Ekins, and David Kirby. 2018. “The Long-Lasting Effects of Newspaper Op-Eds on Public Opinion.” *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 13 (1): 59–87.
- Cotter, Colleen. 2010. *News Talk: Investigating the Language of Journalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cramer, Phebe. 2000. “Defense Mechanisms in Psychology Today: Further Processes for Adaptation.” *American Psychologist* 55 (6): 637.
- Croissant, Yves, and Giovanni Millo. 2008. “Panel Data Econometrics in R: The plm Package.” *Journal of Statistical Software* 27 (2): 1–43. <https://doi.org/10.18637/jss.v027.i02>
- Cowell, Alan. 2001. “Blair Says He’s Seen Proof of bin Laden Role.” *New York Times*, October 1, A4.
- Cullen, Kevin. 2013a. “On Newbury Street, a Defiant Homecoming.” *Boston Globe*, April 18, A19.
- Cullen, Kevin. 2013b. “A Perfect Day, Then the Unimaginable.” *Boston Globe*, April 16, B1.
- Dalgaard-Nielsen, Anja, Jesper Laisen, and Charlotte Wandorf. 2016. “Visible Counterterrorism Measures in Urban Spaces—Fear-Inducing or Not?” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 28 (4): 692–712. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2014.930027>
- Damstra, Alyt, and Mark Boukes. 2018. “The Economy, the News, and the Public: A Longitudinal Study of the Impact of Economic News on Economic Evaluations and Expectations.” *Communication Research* 48 (1): 26–50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650217750971>
- Das, Enny, Brad J. Bushman, Marieke D. Bezemer, Peter Kerkhof, and Ivar E. Vermeulen. 2009. “How Terrorism News Reports Increase Prejudice against Outgroups: A Terror Management Account.” *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 45 (3): 453–59. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2008.12.001>
- Davis, Darren W., and Brian D. Silver. 2004. “Civil Liberties vs. Security: Public Opinion in the Context of the Terrorist Attacks on America.” *American Journal of Political Science* 48 (1): 28–46. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1519895>
- Dawsey, Joshua, Evan Perez, Barrett Devlin, and Jennifer Levitz. 2013. “Manhunt Ends with Capture.” *Wall Street Journal*, April 20.
- Delli Carpini, Michael X., and Bruce A. Williams. 1987. “Television and Terrorism: Patterns of Presentation and Occurrence, 1969 to 1980.” *Western Political Quarterly* 40 (1): 45–64. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/448552>
- Dell’Orto, Giovanna. 2016. *AP Foreign Correspondents in Action: World War II to the Present*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- DeMarco, Peter. 2013. “Record Numbers Sign Up for Hub’s Next Road Race.” *Boston Globe*, April 19, A.

- Dershowitz, Alan M. 2002. *Why Terrorism Works: Understanding the Threat, Responding to the Challenge*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Dietze, Carola. 2022. "The Invention of Terrorism in Nineteenth-Century Europe, Russia, and the United States." In *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Terrorism*, edited by Carola Dietze and Claudia Verhoeven, 187–213. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Dor, Daniel. 2003. "On Newspaper Headlines as Relevance Optimizers." *Journal of Pragmatics* 35 (5): 695–721.
- D’Orazio, Vito, and Idean Salehyan. 2018. "Who Is a Terrorist? Ethnicity, Group Affiliation, and Understandings of Political Violence." *International Interactions* 44 (6): 1017–39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050629.2018.1500911>
- Downie, Leonard, Jr., and Robert G. Kaiser. 2003. *The News about the News: American Journalism in Peril*. New York: Vintage.
- Drakos, Konstantinos, and Ali M. Kutan. 2003. "Regional Effects of Terrorism on Tourism in Three Mediterranean Countries." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 47 (5): 621–641. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002703258198>
- Dugger, Celia W. 1999. "Pakistan-Backed Force Leaves Indian Kashmir." *New York Times*, July 14, A9.
- Dunaway, Johanna. 2008. "Markets, Ownership, and the Quality of Campaign News Coverage." *Journal of Politics* 70 (4): 1193–1202. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381608081140>
- Dunaway, Johanna. 2013. "Media Ownership and Story Tone in Campaign News." *American Politics Research* 41 (1): 24–53. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1532673x12454564>
- Eggen, Dan. 2003. "Palestinian Demands That U.S. Release Abbas Are Rejected; Klinghoffer Family Applauds Capture of Chief Plotter of Cruise Ship Hijacking." *Washington Post*, April 17, A12.
- Eggen, Dan, and Paul Kane. 2008. "Surveillance Bill Offers Protection to Telecom Firms; Deal Would Extend U.S. Wiretap Power, Shield Providers Facing Privacy Lawsuits." *Washington Post*, June 20, A1.
- Eilperin, Juliet. 2002. "Democrat Implies Sept. 11 Administration Plot." *Washington Post*, April 12, A16.
- Eligon, John, and Michael Cooper. 2013. "Blasts at Boston Marathon Kill 3 and Injure 100." *New York Times*, April 16, A1.
- Ellick, Adam, Adam Bryant, A. G. Sulzberger, Amy O’Leary, Andrew Phelps, Elena Gianni, Louise Story, Charles Duhigg, Jon Galinsky, and Ben Peskoe. 2014. *Innovation*. *New York Times*, March 24. <https://sriramk.com/memos/nytimes-innovation-report.pdf>
- Ellis, Justin. 2013. "Double Coverage: How the Boston Globe Used Its Dual Sites to Cover the Marathon Bombing." Nieman Lab, May 6. Accessed October 26, 2021. <https://www.niemanlab.org/2013/05/double-coverage-how-the-boston-globe-used-its-dual-sites-to-cover-the-marathon-bombing/>
- Enders, Walter, and Todd Sandler. 1993. "The Effectiveness of Antiterrorism Policies: A Vector-Autoregression-Intervention Analysis." *American Political Science Review* 87 (4): 829–844. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2938817>

- Enders, Walter, and Todd Sandler. 2006. *The Political Economy of Terrorism*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- English, Richard. 2010. *Terrorism: How to Respond*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- English, Richard. 2016. *Does Terrorism Work? A History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Entman, Robert M., Jörg Matthes, and Lynn Pellicano. 2009. "Nature, Sources, and Effects of News Framing." *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*, edited by Karin Wahl-Jorgensen and Thomas Hanitzsch, 175–90. New York: Routledge.
- Eshbaugh-Soha, Matthew. 2010. "The Tone of Local Presidential News Coverage." *Political Communication* 27 (2): 121–40.
- Evan, Allen. 2013. "Student's Life Ends in the City That She Had Grown to Love." *Boston Globe*, April 18, A1.
- Feick, Lukas, Karsten Donnay, and Katherine T. McCabe. 2021. "The Subconscious Effect of Subtle Media Bias on Perceptions of Terrorism." *American Politics Research* 49 (3): 313–18. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1532673x20972105>
- Fengler, Susanne, and Stephan Ruß-Mohl. 2008. "Journalists and the Information-Attention Markets: Towards an Economic Theory of Journalism." *Journalism* 9 (6): 667–90. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884908096240>
- Fernandez, Manny, Richard Perez-Pena, and Jonah Engel Bromwich. 2016. "Five Dallas Officers Were Killed as Payback, Police Chief Says." *New York Times*, July 8, A.
- Ford, Bev, Ben Chapman, and Ginger Adams Otis. 2013. "Bloodbath in Boston: Terror Bombs Hit Race's Finish Line, Killing 3. Boy, 8, Among the Dead—Many Lose Limbs." *New York Daily News*, April 16, 2.
- Forero, Juan. 2010. "Rebel Leader Reported Dead in Colombia." *Washington Post*, September 24, A8.
- Forst, Brian. 2011. "Managing the Fear of Terrorism." In *Criminologists on Terrorism and Homeland Security*, edited by Brian Forst, Jack R. Greene, and James P. Lynch, 273–99. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Fox, Jeremy C. 2013. "Trinity Finds a Way to Give Voice to Faith." *Boston Globe*, April 19, A.
- Frank, Thomas. 2010. "TSA List Eyes Fliers from 14 Countries; More Screening for Some Bound for U.S." *USA Today*, January 4, 1A.
- Frantz, Douglas. 2001. "Taliban Say They Want to Negotiate with the U.S. Over bin Laden." *New York Times*, October 2, A1.
- Frey, Bruno S. 2004. *Deal with Terrorism—Stick or Carrot?* Northampton: Edward Elgar.
- Fridkin, Kim Leslie, and Patrick J. Kenney. 2004. "Do Negative Messages Work? The Impact of Negativity on Citizens' Evaluations of Candidates." *American Politics Research* 32 (5): 570–605. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1532673X03260834>
- Fuller, Jack. 2010. *What Is Happening to News: The Information Explosion and the Crisis in Journalism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Fulton, Janet, and Phillip McIntyre. 2013. "Journalists on Journalism: Print Journalists' Discussion of Their Creative Process." *Journalism Practice* 7 (1): 17–32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2012.657901>
- Gabbatt, Adam. 2020. "US Newspapers Face 'Extinction-Level' Crisis as Covid-19

- Hits Hard." *The Guardian*, April 9, 2020, sec. Media. <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2020/apr/09/coronavirus-us-newspapers-impact>
- Gabbatt, Adam, Daniel Lovering, and Ed Pilkington. 2013. "Two Blasts at Boston Marathon Kill Three and Injure More Than 100." *The Guardian*, April 16. Accessed May 31, 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/apr/15/boston-marathon-explosion-finish-line>
- Gadarian, Shana Kushner. 2010. "The Politics of Threat: How Terrorism News Shapes Foreign Policy Attitudes." *Journal of Politics* 72 (2): 469–83. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381609990910>
- Galea, Sandro, Jennifer Ahern, Heidi Resnick, Dean Kilpatrick, Michael Bucuvalas, Joel Gold, and David Vlahov. 2002. "Psychological sequelae of the September 11 terrorist attacks in New York City." *New England Journal of Medicine* 346 (13): 982–87. <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMsa013404>
- Galtung, Johan, and Mari Holmboe Ruge. 1965. "The Structure of Foreign News." *Journal of Peace Research* 2 (1): 64–90. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002234336500200104>
- Ganor, Boaz. 2005. *The Counterterrorism Puzzle: A Guide for Decision Makers*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.
- Gans, Herbert J. 1979. *Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek, and Time*. New York: Parthenon.
- Gans, Herbert J. 2003. *Democracy and the News*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gartner, Scott Sigmund. 2004. "Making the International Local: The Terrorist Attack on the USS Cole, Local Casualties, and Media Coverage." *Political Communication* 21 (2): 139–59. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600490443859>
- Gartner, Scott Sigmund, and Gary M. Segura. 2000. "Race, Casualties, and Opinion in the Vietnam War." *Journal of Politics* 62 (1): 115–46. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-3816.00006>
- Gaye, Tuchman. 1978. *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality*. New York: Free Press.
- George, Susannah, Sarah Dadouch, Claire Parker, and Shira Rubin. 2023. "Israel Formally Declares War against Hamas as More Than 1,000 Killed on Both Sides." *Washington Post*, October 8.
- Gerring, John. 2012. "Mere Description." *British Journal of Political Science* 42 (4): 721–46. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123412000130>
- Gershenson, Seth, and Erdal Tekin. 2018. "The Effect of Community Traumatic Events on Student Achievement: Evidence from the Beltway Sniper Attacks." *Education Finance and Policy* 13 (4): 513–44. https://doi.org/10.1162/edfp_a_00234
- Gerstenzang, James. 1995. "Terror in Oklahoma City: Terror Acts Fuel Rumors, Public Fears." *Los Angeles Times*, April 22, part A.
- Getmansky, Anna, and Thomas Zeitzoff. 2014. "Terrorism and Voting: The Effect of Rocket Threat on Voting in Israeli Elections." *American Political Science Review* 108 (3): 588–604. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055414000288>
- Gigerenzer, Gerd. 2006. "Out of the Frying Pan into the Fire: Behavioral Reactions to Terrorist Attacks." *Risk Analysis* 26 (2): 347–51. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1539-6924.2006.00753.x>

- Gilbert, Daniel. 2006. *Stumbling on Happiness*. Toronto: Vintage Canada.
- Gilens, Martin. 2009. *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Antipoverty Policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gladstone, Alexander. 2021. "9/11 Timeline: How the Day Unfolded." *Wall Street Journal*. <https://www.wsj.com/story/911-timeline-how-the-day-unfolded-acbc78e3>
- Goldberg, Bernard. 2014. *Bias: A CBS Insider Exposes How the Media Distort the News*. Washington, DC: Regnery.
- Gomez, Alan. 2008. "9/11 Suspect Finally Goes to Trial in Military System; Questions, Criticism Surround Proceedings." *USA Today*, June 3, A1.
- Goodman, Giora, and Sandrine Boudana. 2019. "The Language of Objectivity: Reuters' Internal Editorial Discussions on Terminology in the Arab–Israeli Conflict, 1967–1982." *Journalism* 20 (3): 410–26.
- Gordon, Michael R. 2000. "The Warship Explosion: Military Analysis; Superpower Suddenly Finds Itself Threatened by Sophisticated Terrorists." *New York Times*, October 13, A11.
- Gore, Thomas D., and Cheryl Campanella Bracken. 2005. "Testing the Theoretical Design of a Health Risk Message: Reexamining the Major Tenets of the Extended Parallel Process Model." *Health Education and Behavior* 32 (1): 27–41.
- Greenberg, Jeff, and Spee Kosloff. 2008. "Terror Management Theory: Implications for Understanding Prejudice, Stereotyping, Intergroup Conflict, and Political Attitudes." *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 2 (5): 1881–94. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9004.2008.00144.x>
- Greenberg, Jeff, Tom Pyszczynski, Sheldon Solomon, Abram Rosenblatt, Mitchell Veeder, Shari Kirkland, and Deborah Lyon. 1990. "Evidence for Terror Management Theory II: The Effects of Mortality Salience on Reactions to Those Who Threaten or Bolster the Cultural Worldview." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 58 (2): 308–18. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.58.2.308>
- Grosholz, Jessica, and Charis Kubrin. 2007. "Crime in the News: How Crimes, Offenders and Victims Are Portrayed in the Media." *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture* 14: 59–83. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2028162>
- Grosskopf, Kevin R. 2006. "Evaluating the Societal Responses to Antiterrorism Measures." *Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management* 3 (2): 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.2202/1547-7355.1170>
- Halbfinger, David. 1997. "Alone, William McVeigh Begins Task of Survival." *New York Times*, June 16, A12.
- Hall, Mimi. 2005. "Chemical Plants' Vulnerability at Issue." *USA Today*, April 26, 3A.
- Hall, Todd H., and Andrew A. G. Ross. 2015. "Affective Politics after 9/11." *International Organization* 69 (4): 847–79. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818315000144>
- Hallin, Daniel. 1990. "Whatever Happened to the News?" *Media and Values* 50. Available at <https://www.medialit.org/reading-room/whatever-happened-news>
- Hamilton, James T. 2006. *All the News That's Fit to Sell*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Hampton, Mark. 2009. "The Fourth Estate Ideal in Journalism History." In *The Routledge Companion to News and Journalism*, 3–12. New York: Routledge.

- Harden, Blaine. 2007. "Marked for Duty; Navy Pursues Dolphin, Sea Lion Patrols in Puget Sound." *Washington Post*, February 25, A3.
- Hartig, Hannah, and Carroll Doherty. 2021. *Two Decades Later, the Enduring Legacy of 9/11*. Pew Research Center, September 2. <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2021/09/02/two-decades-later-the-enduring-legacy-of-9-11/>
- Hatcher, John, and Emily Haavik. 2014. "'We Write with Our Hearts': How Community Identity Shapes Norwegian Community Journalists' News Values." *Journalism Practice* 8 (2): 149–63. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2013.859828>
- Hayes, Andrew F., and Teresa A. Myers. 2009. "Testing the 'Proximate Casualties Hypothesis': Local Troop Loss, Attention to News, and Support for Military Intervention." *Mass Communication and Society* 12 (4): 379–402. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15205430802484956>
- Henderson, Marlene D., Cheryl J. Wakslak, Kentaro Fujita, and John Rohrbach. 2011. "Construal Level Theory and Spatial Distance." *Social Psychology* 42 (3): 165–73. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1864-9335/a000060>
- Herman, Edward S., and Noam Chomsky. 1988. *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. New York: Pantheon.
- Herszenhorn, David M. 1997. "Bombs in Brooklyn: The Security; Police Pledge Extra Patrols and Assure City of Safety." *New York Times*, August 24, A1.
- Hilgartner, Stephen, and Charles L. Bosk. 1988. "The Rise and Fall of Social Problems: A Public Arenas Model." *American Journal of Sociology* 94 (1): 53–78. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2781022>
- Hingham, Katie M. Griffin. 2013. "From NY to Boston, Haunted by Memories." *Boston Globe*, April 18, A16.
- Hinshaw, Drew, Solomon Moore, and Patrick McGroarty. 2012. "Rising Nigeria Violence Imperils Stability—Muslim Militants Claim Responsibility in Killing of 150, Fueling Religious Tensions and Threatening Economic Overhaul." *Wall Street Journal*, January 23, A10.
- Hobfoll, Stevan E. 1989. "Conservation of Resources: A New Attempt at Conceptualizing Stress." *American Psychologist* 44 (3): 513–24. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.44.3.513>
- Hobfoll, Stevan E., Anthony D. Mancini, Brian J. Hall, Daphna Canetti, and George A. Bonanno. 2011. "The Limits of Resilience: Distress Following Chronic Political Violence among Palestinians." *Social Science and Medicine* 72 (8): 1400–1408. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2011.02.022>
- Hobfoll, Stevan E., Daphna Canetti-Nisim, and Robert J. Johnson. 2006. "Exposure to Terrorism, Stress-Related Mental Health Symptoms, and Defensive Coping among Jews and Arabs in Israel." *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 74 (2): 207–18. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-006x.74.2.207>
- Hoffman, Aaron M. 2025. Appendices and Data for *The Terrorism News Beat: Professionalism, Profit, and the Press*. Summit Research Repository. <https://doi.org/10.48410/s70w-b059>
- Hoffman, Aaron M., and Dwaine H. A. Jengellely. 2020. "Does Bottom-Line Pressure Make Terrorism Coverage More Negative? Evidence from a Twenty-Newspaper Panel Study." *Media, War and Conflict* 14 (4): 459–75. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750635219896001>

- Hoffman, Aaron M., Dwaine H. A. Jengolley, Natasha T. Duncan, Melissa Buehler, and Meredith L. Rees. 2010. "How Does the Business of News Influence Terrorism Coverage? Evidence From the *Washington Post* and *USA Today*." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 22 (4): 559–80. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2010.493778>
- Hoffman, Aaron M., and José Kaire. 2020. "Comfortably Numb: Effects of Prolonged Media Coverage." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 64 (9): 1666–92. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002720907675>
- Hoffman, Aaron M., and William Shelby. 2017. "When the 'Laws of Fear' Do Not Apply: Effective Counterterrorism and the Sense of Security from Terrorism." *Political Research Quarterly* 70 (3): 618–31. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912917709354>
- Hoffman, Bruce. 1998. *Inside Terrorism*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Holman, E. Alison, Dana Rose Garfin, and Roxane Cohen Silver. 2014. "Media's Role in Broadcasting Acute Stress Following the Boston Marathon Bombings." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 111 (1): 93–98. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1316265110>
- Hopper, K. Megan, and John Huxford. 2015. "Gathering Emotion: Examining Newspaper Journalists' Engagement in Emotional Labor." *Journal of Media Practice* 16 (1): 25–41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14682753.2015.1015799>
- Hopper, K. Megan, and John Huxford. 2017. "Emotion Instruction in Journalism Courses: An Analysis of Introductory News Writing Textbooks." *Communication Education* 66 (1): 90–108. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03634523.2016.1210815>
- Horovitz, Michael. 2023. Review of *750 Global Journalists Say Media Should Cast Israeli Actions as "Genocide, Apartheid."* *The Times of Israel*, November 11. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/750-global-journalists-say-media-should-cast-israeli-actions-as-genocide-apartheid/>
- Horwitz, Sari, and Michael E. Ruane. 2004. *Sniper: Inside the Hunt for the Killers Who Terrorized the Nation*. New York: Ballantine.
- Houston, J. Brian. 2009. "Media Coverage of Terrorism: A Meta-Analytic Assessment of Media Use and Posttraumatic Stress." *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 86 (4): 844–61.
- Huddy, Leonie, Stanley Feldman, Charles Taber, and Gallya Lahav. 2005. "Threat, Anxiety, and Support of Antiterrorism Policies." *American Journal of Political Science* 49 (3): 593–608. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2005.00144.x>
- Huddy, Leonie, Oleg Smirnov, Keren L. G. Snider, and Arie Perliger. 2021. "Anger, Anxiety, and Selective Exposure to Terrorist Violence." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 65 (10): 1764–90. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00220027211014937>
- Huff, Connor, and Joshua D. Kertzer. 2018. "How the Public Defines Terrorism." *American Journal of Political Science* 62 (1): 55–71. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12329>
- Humphries, Tom. 1996. "Atlanta Struggles to Revive Exuberant Spirit of the Bomb-Shattered Olympics." *Irish Times*, July 29. <https://www.irishtimes.com/sport/atlanta-struggles-to-revive-exuberant-spirit-of-the-bomb-shattered-olympics-1.71720>
- Illman, John. 2016. "Sleeping with the Enemy." *British Journalism Review* 27 (1): 49–52. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956474816636822>

- Irons, Meghan. 2013. "Officer's Effort to Aid Boy Captured." *Boston Globe*, April 19, A25.
- Iyengar, Shanto, Helmut Norpoth, and Kyu S. Hahn. 2004. "Consumer Demand for Election News: The Horserace Sells." *Journal of Politics* 66 (1): 157–75. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1468-2508.2004.00146.x>
- Jackson, David, and Kathy Kiely. 2006. "Deal on Suspects Closes GOP Rift; Agreement Covers Trials, Interrogation." *USA Today*, September 22, 1A.
- Jacobs, Jeff. 1996. "In Atlanta, Fear Roams Hand in Hand with Anger." *Hartford Courant*, July 27. <https://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-xpm-1996-07-28-9607280085-story.html>
- Jacoby, Jeff. 2013. "Things Will Be the Same Again." *Boston Globe*, April 17, A11.
- Jehl, Douglas. 1999a. "For Palestinians in Syria, What Price Peace?" *New York Times*, August 8, Section 1.
- Jehl, Douglas. 1999b. "Killing Highlights Lebanon's Palestinian Problem." *New York Times*, June 11, A3.
- Jenkins, Brian. 1979. "Areas of Consensus, Areas of Ignorance." In *Terrorism: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, edited by Burr Eichelman, David Soskis, and William Reid, 153–77. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association.
- Jenkins, Brian M. 1982. "Statements about Terrorism." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 463 (1): 11–23.
- Jenkins, Chris. 2003. "At the Forefront of Emergency Preparedness." *Washington Post*, September 7, C4.
- Jetter, Michael. 2014. "Terrorism and the Media." IZA Discussion Paper No. 8497 (September). Bonn: Institute for the Study of Labor. <https://www.iza.org/publications/dp/8497/terrorism-and-the-media>
- Jetter, Michael. 2017. "The Effect of Media Attention on Terrorism." *Journal of Public Economics* 153 (September): 32–48. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpube.2017.07.008>
- Jetter, Michael. 2019a. "The Inadvertent Consequences of al-Qaeda News Coverage." *European Economic Review* 119: 391–410. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euroecorev.2019.08.004>
- Jetter, Michael. 2019b. "More Bang for the Buck: Media Coverage of Suicide Attacks." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 31 (4): 779–99. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2017.1288112>
- Johnson, Carolyn Y., David Abel, and Kay Lazar. 2013. "Slain MIT Officer Sean Collier Remembered as Brave, Devoted Policeman." *Boston Globe*, April 19, A.
- Johnson, Kevin. 1998. "Nichols Gets Life Term for His Role in Bombing." *USA Today*, June 5, 3A.
- Johnson, Kevin. 2000. "Millennium Anxieties Put Security Companies in Demand." *USA Today*, January 4.
- Johnson, Kevin, and Richard Willing. 1997. "McVeigh Guilty: Jury to Decide Whether to Impose Death Penalty." *USA Today*, June 3, 4A.
- Johnston, David. 1998. "17-Year Search, an Emotional Discovery and Terror Ends." *New York Times*, May 5, A24.
- Johnston, Jane, and Caroline Graham. 2012. "The New, Old Journalism: Narrative Writing in Contemporary Newspapers." *Journalism Studies* 13 (4): 517–33.

- Jones, Charisse. 2002. "His Life Was Stolen, Then His Name." *USA Today*, November 15, 3A.
- Kalin, Stephen, Dov Lieber, and Anas Baba. 2023. "Israel and Hamas Battle, Death Toll Rises—Militants' Incursions from Gaza Trigger Counterstrikes and Declaration of War." *Wall Street Journal*, October 8, A1.
- Kalman, Matthew. 2000. "Israel Says Syria to Blame for Making Airstrikes Necessary." *USA Today*, February 9, 25A.
- Kam, Cindy D., and Donald R. Kinder. 2007. "Terror and Ethnocentrism: Foundations of American Support for the War on Terrorism." *Journal of Politics* 69 (2): 320–38. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2007.00534.x>
- Kaniss, Phyllis. 1991. *Making Local News*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kaphle, Anup. 2015. "The Foreign Desk in Transition." *Columbia Journalism Review*, March 2. https://www.cjr.org/analysis/the_foreign_desk_in_transition.php
- Karmi, Faith, Catherine E. Shoichet, and Ralph Ellis. 2016. "Dallas Sniper Attack: 5 Officers Killed, Suspect Identified." CNN, July 9. <https://www.cnn.com/2016/07/08/us/philando-castile-alton-sterling-protests/index.html>
- Karol, David, and Edward Miguel. 2007. "The Electoral Cost of War: Iraq Casualties and the 2004 U.S. Presidential Election." *Journal of Politics* 69 (3): 633–48. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2007.00564.x>
- Kearns, Erin M., Allison E. Betus, and Anthony F. Lemieux. 2019. "Why Do Some Terrorist Attacks Receive More Media Attention Than Others?" *Justice Quarterly* 36 (6): 985–1022. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2018.1524507>
- Kenworthy, Tom. 1997. "Jury to Get McVeigh Case Today; Final Arguments Paint Conflicting Images of Bomb Defendant." *Washington Post*, May 30, A1.
- King, Neil, Jr., and John D. McKinnon. 1999. "U.S. in Bind over Airing Terror Threat." *Wall Street Journal*, December 22, A4.
- Kingsley, Patrick, and Isabel Kershner. 2023. "'We Are at War,' Netanyahu Says after Hamas Attacks Israel." *New York Times*, October 7, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/07/world/middleeast/israel-netanyahu-hamas-attack.html>
- Kirkpatrick, David D., and Mayy El Sheikh. 2013. "Video Offered to Back Claim of Cairo Attack." *New York Times*, October 28, A6.
- Korte, Gregory. 2011. "Cheney: Obama 'Clearly Deserves Credit.'" *USA Today*, May 3, 7A.
- Kousta, Stavroula-Thaleia, David P. Vinson, and Gabriella Vigliocco. 2009. "Emotion Words, Regardless of Polarity, Have a Processing Advantage over Neutral Words." *Cognition* 112 (3): 473–81. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2009.06.007>
- Kovach, Bill, and Tom Rosenstiel. 2007. *The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect*. New York: Three Rivers Press.
- Krause, Peter, Daniel Gustafson, Jordan Theriault, and Liane Young. 2022. "Knowing Is Half the Battle: How Education Decreases the Fear of Terrorism." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 66 (7–8): 1147–73. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00220027221079648>
- Kriner, Douglas L., and Francis X. Shen. 2012. "How Citizens Respond to Combat Casualties: The Differential Impact of Local Casualties on Support for the War in

- Afghanistan." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 76 (4): 761–70. <https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfs048>
- Kristof, Nicholas. 2017. "Husbands Are Deadlier Than Terrorists." *New York Times*, February 12, 11, SR.
- Kumar, Hari. 2005. "India's Premier Says Pakistan Must Do More to Stop Attacks." *New York Times*, November 6, A6.
- Kunreuther, Howard, and Erwann Michel-Kerjan. 2004. "Policy Watch: Challenges for Terrorism Risk Insurance in the United States." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 18 (4): 201–14.
- Lane, Anne B., and Kim A. Johnston. 2017. "Bridging the Writing Gap between Student and Professional: Analyzing Writing Education in Public Relations and Journalism." *Public Relations Review* 43 (2): 314–25. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2017.02.008>
- Laqueur, Walter. 1999. *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Laqueur, Walter. 2017. *A History of Terrorism*. New York: Routledge.
- Lazar, Kay, Carolyn Johnson, and Patty Wen. 2013. "Hospital Scene Was Like a Battle Zone." *Boston Globe*, April 16, A6.
- Lehigh, Scot. 2013a. "We Won't Take Cover." *Boston Globe*, April 16, A11.
- Lehigh, Scot. 2013b. "Turn Grief into Charity for the City." *Boston Globe*, April 17, A14.
- Leinwand, Donna. 2003. "Sea Lions Called to Duty in Persian Gulf." *USA Today*, February 17, 7A.
- Lerner, Jennifer S., and Dacher Keltner. 2001. "Fear, Anger, and Risk." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 81 (1): 146–59. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.81.1.146>
- Lewis, Neil A. 1995. "Terror in Oklahoma City." *New York Times*, April 20, B.
- Lewis, Seth C., Kelly Kaufhold, and Dominic L. Lasorsa. 2010. "Thinking about Citizen Journalism: The Philosophical and Practical Challenges of User-Generated Content for Community Newspapers." *Journalism Practice* 4 (2): 163–79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616700903156919>
- Lieberman, Nira, Yaacov Trope, and Elena Stephan. 2007. "Psychological Distance." In *Social Psychology: Handbook of Basic Principles*, edited by Arie W. Kruglanski and E. Tory Higgins, 353–83. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Linenthal, Edward Tabor. 2009. "Oklahoma City Bombing." *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture* (online). Accessed February 1, 2018. <https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry?entry=OK026>
- Lippman, John. 2005. "Weekend Journal; Hollywood Report: Live from Baghdad (Almost); Studios Risk War Projects Even as Events Change; 'General' Harrison Ford?" *Wall Street Journal*, February 18, W7.
- Livingston, Steven, and W. Lance Bennett. 2003. "Gatekeeping, Indexing, and Live-Event News: Is Technology Altering the Construction of News?" *Political Communication* 20 (4): 363–80. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600390244121>
- Loci, Tony. 2004. "Ruling on Evidence Favors Moussaoui." *USA Today*, April 23, 3A.

- Lyall, Sarah. 2005. "3 Main British Parties to Back Tougher Antiterrorism Laws." *New York Times*, July 27, A5.
- Lynch, Colum. 1999. "U.S. Seeks Embargo on Taliban; Russia Joins in Effort to Seize bin Laden." *Washington Post*, October 7, A25.
- Lynch, Colum. 2000. "U.S. Campaign Against Terrorism Denies Sudan U.N. Security Council Seat." *Washington Post*, October 11, A32.
- Madhani, Aamer, and Paul Singer. 2013. "Obama Vows to Levy 'Full Weight of Justice'; Warns Not to Rush to Conclusions." *USA Today*, April 16, 3A.
- Marcelo, Philip. 2019. "With Every New Tragedy, Another 'Strong' Campaign." ABC News, August 8. <https://www.abc27.com/national/with-every-new-tragedy-another-strong-campaign/>
- March, James G., and Johan P. Olsen. 1989. *Rediscovering Institutions*. New York: Free Press.
- Marin, Ion. 2011. "The Coverage of Terrorism in the News." *Geopolitics, History, and International Relations* 3 (2): 254–59.
- Marquard, Bryan. 2013. "Krystle Campbell, Ever Reliable." *Boston Globe*, July 17, A.
- Márquez-Ramírez, Mireya, Claudia Mellado, María Luisa Humanes, Adriana Amado, Daniel Beck, Sergey Davydov, Jacques Mick, Cornelia Mothes, Dasniel Olivera, Nikos Panagiotu, et al. 2020. "Detached or Interventionist? Comparing the Performance of Watchdog Journalism in Transitional, Advanced and Non-democratic Countries." *International Journal of Press/Politics* 25 (1): 53–75. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161219872155>
- Marsden, Sarah V. 2013. "Media Metrics: How Arab and Western Media Construct Success and Failure in the 'Global War on Terror.'" *Perspectives on Terrorism* 7 (6): 10–26. <https://pt.icct.nl/article/media-metrics-how-arab-and-western-media-construct-success-and-failure-global-war-terror>
- Matthes, Jörg, Desirée Schmuck, and Christian von Sikorski. 2019. "Terror, Terror Everywhere? How Terrorism News Shape Support for Anti-Muslim Policies as a Function of Perceived Threat Severity and Controllability." *Political Psychology* 40 (5): 739–57. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12576>
- McBride, Kelly. 2023. "The Audience Has a Lot to Say about Coverage of the Israel-Hamas War. We're Listening." National Public Radio, November 2. <https://www.npr.org/sections/publiceditor/2023/11/02/1210335919/the-audience-has-a-lot-to-say-about-coverage-of-the-israel-hamas-war-were-listen>
- McDonald, Ian R., and Regina G. Lawrence. 2004. "Filling the 24 × 7 News Hole: Television News Coverage following September 11." *American Behavioral Scientist* 48 (3): 327–40. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764204268989>
- McIntyre, Karen Elizabeth, and Rhonda Gibson. 2016. "Positive News Makes Readers Feel Good: A 'Silver-Lining' Approach to Negative News Can Attract Audiences." *Southern Communication Journal* 81 (5): 304–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1041794X.2016.1171892>
- McLeod, Douglas M., and Dhavan V. Shah. 2015. *News Frames and National Security: Covering Big Brother*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- McNamara, Bob. 1996. "Atlanta Olympics Bombing Makes Americans Feel Vulnerable." CBS News Transcripts.

- McNeil, Donald G. 2000. "Lockerbie Trial Put Off to Hear New Evidence." *New York Times*, October 10, A12.
- Měechura, Michael B. 2016. "Lemmatization-Lists/Lemmatization-En.txt at Master Michmech/Lemmatization-Lists." GitHub [data file]. <https://github.com/michmech/lemmatization-lists/blob/master/lemmatization-en.txt>
- Mellado, C., ed. 2020. *Beyond Journalistic Norms: Role Performance and News in Comparative Perspective*. New York: Routledge.
- Merolla, Jennifer L., Jennifer M. Ramos, and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister. 2007. "Crisis, Charisma, and Consequences: Evidence from the 2004 U.S. Presidential Election." *Journal of Politics* 69 (1): 30–42. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2007.00492.x>
- Merolla, Jennifer L., and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister. 2009. *Democracy at Risk: How Terrorist Threats Affect the Public*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Milkovits, Amanda. 2013. "3 Dead, More than 140 Missing." *Providence Journal*, April 16.
- Miller, Ben. 2000. "Albright Seeks Ways to Help Terror Victims Collect Damages." *Washington Post*, February 17, A6.
- Miller, Bill, and John Mintz. 1998. "Once-Supportive U.S. Fights Family Over Iranian Assets." *Washington Post*, September 27, A8.
- Miller, Joshua. 2013. "Revere Teen Scared after New York Post Splashes Him on Front Page." *Boston Globe*, April 19, A13.
- Miller, Vincent, and Keith J. Hayward. 2019. "'I Did My Bit': Terrorism, Tarde and the Vehicle Ramming Attack as an Imitative Event." *British Journal of Criminology* 59 (1): 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azy017>
- Mindich, David T. Z. 2000. *Just the Facts: How "Objectivity" Came to Define American Journalism*. New York: New York University Press.
- Mintz, John. 2003. "U.S. Keeps Close Tabs on Muslim Cleric; Officials Suspect Activist Has Close Ties with Iranian Regime." *Washington Post*, January 1, A1.
- Mitnik, Zachary S., Joshua D. Freilich, and Steven M. Chermak. 2020. "Post-9/11 Coverage of Terrorism in the *New York Times*." *Justice Quarterly* 37 (1): 161–85. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2018.1488985>
- Mitra, Antara. 2009. "All for Brownie Points! Reappraising the New Commercial Media and Media–Terrorism Nexus in the Context of the Mumbai Attacks of 26/11." *Asia Europe Journal* 7 (3): 433–47. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10308-009-0235-1>
- Moeller, Susan D. 2009. *Packaging Terrorism*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Molek-Kozakowska, Katarzyna. 2013. "Towards a Pragma-linguistic Framework for the Study of Sensationalism in News Headlines." *Discourse & Communication* 7 (2): 173–97. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750481312471668>
- Moskowitz, Eric. 2013. "Newlywed Victims' Plight Tugs at Hearts Online." *Boston Globe*, April 19, A1.
- Mueller, John. 2005. "Six Rather Unusual Propositions about Terrorism." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 17 (4): 487–505. <https://doi.org/10.1080/095465591009359>
- Mueller, John. 2006. *Overblown: How Politicians and the Terrorism Industry Inflate National Security Threats, and Why We Believe Them*. New York: Free Press.

- Mueller, John, and Mark G. Stewart. 2012. "The Terrorism Delusion: America's Overwrought Response to September 11." *International Security* 37 (1): 81–110. https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00089
- Mueller, John, and Mark G. Stewart. 2018. "Public Opinion and Counterterrorism Policy." Cato Institute. <https://www.cato.org/white-paper/public-opinion-counter-terrorism-policy>
- Myre, Greg. 2005. "Suicide Bomber Kills an Israeli Security Officer in Gaza." *New York Times*, January 19, A1.
- Nacos, Brigitte L. 1990. *The Press, Presidents, and Crises*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Nacos, Brigitte L. 1994. *Terrorism and the Media*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Nacos, Brigitte L. 2007. *Mass-Mediated Terrorism: The Central Role of the Media in Terrorism and Counterterrorism*. 2nd ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Nacos, Brigitte L., Yaeli Bloch-Elkon, and Robert Y. Shapiro. 2011. *Selling Fear: Counterterrorism, The Media, and Public Opinion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Nagourney, Adam, and Janel Elder. 2004. "Bush's Rating Falls to Its Lowest Point, New Survey Finds." *New York Times*, June 29, A1.
- Nakamura, David, and Andrew Higgins. 2010. "Nervous Afghans Pull Money from Kabul Bank, Raising Fears." *Washington Post*, September 2, A10.
- Nellis, Ashley Marie, and Joanne Savage. 2012. "Does Watching the News Affect Fear of Terrorism? The Importance of Media Exposure on Terrorism Fear." *Crime and Delinquency* 58 (5): 748–68. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128712452961>
- Newberry, Paul. 2020. "AP Was There: 1996 Atlanta Olympics." *Associated Press*, originally published July 27, 1996. <https://apnews.com/article/woody-johnson-munich-atlanta-2020-tokyo-olympics-bombings-b876d5439cfb1def4c97d2fea8147065>
- New York Times*. 1997. "Politician Abducted by Basque Rebels Is Found Badly Wounded." July 13, A1.
- New York Times*. 1998. "Former Premier Defends 2 Allies in Spain Courts." August 22, A5.
- New York Times*. 2002. "The New York Times Company 2002 Annual Report." https://nytco-assets.nytimes.com/2020/06/2002_Annual_Report_and_10-K.pdf
- New York Times*. 2003. "New York Times Company 2003 Annual Report." https://nytco-assets.nytimes.com/2020/06/2003_AR_10-K.pdf
- New York Times*. 2004. "The New York Times Company 2004 Annual Report." <https://nytco-assets.nytimes.com/2020/06/2004NYTAnnual.pdf>
- New York Times*. 2008. "The New York Times Company 2008 Annual Report." <https://nytco-assets.nytimes.com/2020/03/2008NYTAnnual.pdf>
- Ng, Yu-Leung, and Xinshu Zhao. 2018. "The Human Alarm System for Sensational News, Online News Headlines, and Associated Generic Digital Footprints: A Uses and Gratifications Approach." *Communication Research* 47 (2): 251–75. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650218793739>
- Nichols, Bill. 1998. "U.S. Strikes Back, Hits Sudan, Afghanistan." *USA Today*, August 21, 1A.
- Nissenbaum, Dion, Jennifer Levitz, and Davi Gauthier-Villars. 2014. "World News:

- Journalist's Death Exposes Debate Over Ransom's Role." *Wall Street Journal*, August 22, A6.
- Norris, Pippa. 2014. "Watchdog Journalism." In Mark Bovens, Robert Goodin, and Thomas Schillemans, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Public Accountability* (online ed., Oxford Academic, 4 Aug. 2014), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199641253.013.0015> (accessed July 9, 2024).
- Obama, Barack H. 2013. "Obama's Statement on Boston Bombings." *USA Today*, April 15. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2013/04/15/obama-statement-text-boston-marathon-explosions/2086129/>
- Öhman, Arne. 2000. "Fear and Anxiety: Evolutionary, Cognitive, and Clinical Perspectives." In *Handbook of Emotions*, edited by Michael Lewis and Jeanette M. Haviland-Jones, 573–93. New York: Guilford Press.
- Oliver, Pamela E., and Daniel J. Meyers. 1999. "How Events Enter the Public Sphere: Conflict, Location, and Sponsorship in Local Newspaper Coverage of Public Events." *American Journal of Sociology* 105 (1): 38–87. <https://doi.org/10.1086/210267>
- Page, Susan. 2012. "Biden More Aggressive Than Boss; Ryan Doesn't Back Down in Feisty Faceoff." *USA Today*, October 12, A5.
- Paletz, David L., Peter A. Fozzard, and John Z. Ayanian. 1982. "The I.R.A., the Red Brigades, and the F.A.L.N. in the *New York Times*." *Journal of Communication* 32 (2): 162–71. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1982.tb00503.x>
- Palmer, Michael. 2017. "News-Agency Output, Quality Control and Competition." *Journalism Practice* 11 (5): 645–64. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2016.1175962>
- Papacharissi, Zizi, and Maria de Fatima Oliveira. 2008. "News Frames Terrorism: A Comparative Analysis of Frames Employed in Terrorism Coverage in U.S. and U.K. Newspapers." *International Journal of Press/Politics* 13 (1): 52–74. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161207312676>
- Parker, Laura. 2007. "Prosecution: Padilla Helped Terrorists Overseas." *USA Today*, May 15, A5.
- Parks, Perry. 2019. "Textbook News Values: Stable Concepts, Changing Choices." *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 96 (3): 784–810. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699018805212>
- Paton, Douglas. 2019. "Disaster Risk Reduction: Psychological Perspectives on Preparedness." *Australian Journal of Psychology* 71 (4): 327–41. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajpy.12237>
- Patterson, Thomas E. 2011. *Out of Order: An Incisive and Boldly Original Critique of the News Media's Domination of America's Political Process*. New York: Vintage.
- Patterson, Thomas E., and Wolfgang Donsbach. 1996. "News Decisions: Journalists as Partisan Actors." *Political Communication* 13 (4): 455–68. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.1996.9963131>
- Pell, Hannah. 2020. "Three Mile Island and Lessons in Crisis Communication." *Physics Today*. <https://doi.org/10.1063/PT.6.4.20200505a>
- Perez, Evan. 2009. "U.S. News: Plan to Seek Detainee Law Is Dropped." *Wall Street Journal*, September 24, A6.

- Perlez, Jane. 1999. "Clinton Urges Sides to Pursue Peace in Ulster." *New York Times*, March 18, A8.
- Peters, Gjalt-Jorn Ygram, Robert A. C. Ruiter, and Gerjo Kok. 2013. "Threatening Communication: A Critical Re-analysis and a Revised Meta-analytic Test of Fear Appeal Theory." *Health Psychology Review* 7 (Suppl 1): S8–S31. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17437199.2012.703527>
- Pfefferbaum, Betty, Thomas W. Seale, Edward N. Brandt Jr., Rose L. Pfefferbaum, Debby E. Doughy, and Scott M. Rainwater. 2003. "Media Exposure in Children One Hundred Miles from a Terrorist Bombing." *Annals of Clinical Psychiatry* 15 (1): 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.3109/10401230309085664>
- Pfeiffer, Christoph P. 2012. "Terrorism and Its Oxygen: A Game-Theoretic Perspective on Terrorism and the Media." *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 4 (3): 212–28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19434472.2011.594629>
- Pianin, Eric, and Charles Babington. 2004. "Democrats Struggle in Campaigns to Retake House." *Washington Post*, October 25, A1.
- Picard, Robert G. 1986. "News Coverage as the Contagion of Terrorism: Dangerous Charges Backed by Dubious Science." *Political Communication* 3 (4): 385–400.
- Picard, Robert G. 1993. *Media Portrayals of Terrorism*. Ames: Iowa State University Press.
- Pickard, Victor. 2020a. "The Answer to the Media Industry's Woes? Publicly Owned Newspapers." *Washington Post*, May 18. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/05/18/answer-media-industrys-woes-publicly-owned-newspapers/>
- Pickard, Victor. 2020b. "Journalism's Market Failure Is a Crisis for Democracy." *Harvard Business Review*, March 12. <https://hbr.org/2020/03/journalisms-market-failure-is-a-crisis-for-democracy>
- Plaisance, Patrick Lee, and Joan A. Deppa. 2009. "Perceptions and Manifestations of Autonomy, Transparency and Harm among US Newspaper Journalists." *Journalism and Communication Monographs* 10 (4): 327–86. <https://doi.org/10.1177/152263790901000402>
- Powell, Kimberly A. 2011. "Framing Islam: An Analysis of US Media Coverage of Terrorism since 9/11." *Communication Studies* 62 (1): 90–112. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10510974.2011.533599>
- Powers, Martine, and Evan Allen. 2013. "Confusion, Leavened by Kindness." *Boston Globe*, April 16, A.
- Powers, Martine, and Wesley Lowery. 2013. "Bearing Witness to Tragedy—and Healing." *Boston Globe*, April 19, A1.
- Preston, Jennifer. 2012. "Group Says It Has Ceased Bomb Threats on Campus." *New York Times*, April 24. http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/25/us/group-says-it-has-ceased-bomb-threats-at-university-of-pittsburgh.html?_r=0
- Pumarlo, Jim. 1996. "Reporting on Grief, Tragedy, and Victims." Society of Professional Journalists. SPJ Ethics Committee Position Papers. Accessed May 31, 2022. <https://www.spj.org/ethics-papers-grief.asp>
- Quinn, Annalisa. 2019. "In *The Enemy of The People*, CNN Reporter Recounts His Time Covering President Trump." National Public Radio, June 11. Accessed December 8, 2023. <https://www.npr.org/2019/06/11/731593232/in-the-enemy-of-the-people-cnn-reporter-recounts-his-time-covering-president-tru>

- Rather, Dan. 2012. "Media's Balancing Act with Terrorism." CNN. September 11. <https://www.cnn.com/2012/09/11/opinion/rather-media-and-terrorism/index.html> (accessed September 11, 2021).
- Reich, Zvi. 2012. "Different Practices, Similar Logic: Comparing News Reporting across Political, Financial, and Territorial Beats." *International Journal of Press/Politics* 17 (1): 76–99. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161211420868>
- Ren, Chi, and Hao Yu. 2013. "Euphemism from Sociolinguistics Perspective." *Studies in Sociology of Science* 4 (4): 45–48.
- Reno, Janet. 1995. "Terror in Oklahoma City: Official Response; Statements by the President and Attorney General." *New York Times*, April 20, B12.
- Riegler, Thomas. 2010. "Through the Lenses of Hollywood: Depictions of Terrorism in American Movies." *Perspectives on Terrorism* 4 (2): 35–45. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26298447>
- Risen, James. 1998. "U.S. Seeks Means to Bring Suspect from Afghanistan." *New York Times*, August 20, sec. World.
- Risen, James. 1999. "A Much-Shunned Terrorist Is Said to Find Haven in Iraq." *New York Times*, January 27, A1.
- Ritter, John. 2000. "Students Decry Idea of Monitoring." *USA Today*, June 8.
- Rohner, Dominic, and Bruno D. Frey. 2007. "Blood and Ink! The Common-Interest Game Between Terrorists and the Media." *Public Choice* 133: 129–45.
- Rohter, Larry. 1999. "Colombia Rebels Reign in Ceded Area." *New York Times*, May 16, Section 1.
- Rubin, Alissa J. 2007. "9 U.S. Soldiers Killed in Iraq as Suicide Bomber Hits Base." *New York Times*, April 24, A1.
- Rucker, Frank W. 1958. *Newspaper Circulation: What, Where, and How*. Ames: Iowa State College Press.
- Rudenstine, Sasha, and Sandro Galea. 2015. "Terrorism and Its Impact on Mental Health." In *Violence and Mental Health: Its Manifold Faces*, edited by Jutta Lindert and Itzhak Levav, 267–86. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Ruigrok, Nel, and Wouter van Atteveldt. 2007. "Global Angling with a Local Angle: How U.S., British, and Dutch Newspapers Frame Global and Local Terrorist Attacks." *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 12 (1): 68–90. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1081180x06297436>
- Rutenber, Jim. 2004. "A Bush Ad Will Question Kerry's Commitment to Troops." *New York Times*, April 15, A5.
- Ryan, Andrew. 2013a. "After a Wild Night, a Haunting Calm." *Boston Globe*, April 20, A13.
- Ryan, Andrew. 2013b. "Taking a Stand." *Boston Globe*, April 19, B1.
- Ryfe, David M. 2012. *Can Journalism Survive? An Inside Look at American Newsrooms*. Malden, MA: Polity.
- Ryfe, David M. 2018. "A Practice Approach to the Study of News Production." *Journalism* 19 (2): 217–33. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884917699854>
- Ryfe, David Michael. 2006. "The Nature of News Rules." *Political Communication* 23 (2): 203–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600600629810>
- Saad, Lydia. 2022. "Military Brass, Judges Among Professions at New Image Lows."

- Gallup. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/388649/military-brass-judges-among-professions-new-image-lows.aspx>
- Sacchetti, Maria. 2013. "Embassies, Islamic groups fear attacks against Muslims." *Boston Globe*, April 19, A13.
- Sandler, Todd. 2015. "Terrorism and Counterterrorism: An Overview." *Oxford Economic Papers* 67 (1): 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oeq/gpu039>
- Sandman, Peter M. 2004. "Three Mile Island: 25 Years Later." *Safety At Work*: 7–11.
- Sandman, Peter M., and Mary Paden. 1979a. "At Three Mile Island." *Columbia Journalism Review* (July/August): 43–58.
- Sandman, Peter M., and Mary Paden. 1979b. "Local Media Feel the Heat." *Columbia Journalism Review* (July/August): 56–57. <http://www.psandman.com/articles/local-m.htm>
- Saunders, Robert A. 2015. "Media and Terrorism." In *The Routledge History of Terrorism*, edited by Randall D. Law, 428–41. London: Routledge.
- Savage, Charlie. 2011. "Senate Offers Revised Rules for Suspects of Terrorism." *New York Times*, June 24, A8.
- Schatz, Amy. 2004. "Airline Disclosure of Traveler Data Exceeded Prior Acknowledgments." *Wall Street Journal*, May 3, A4.
- Schlenger, William E., Juesta M. Caddell, Lori Ebert, B. Kathleen Jordan, Kathryn M. Rourke, David Wilson, Lisa Thalji, J. Michael Dennis, John A. Fairbank, and Richard A. Kulka. 2002. "Psychological Reactions to Terrorist Attacks: Findings from the National Study of Americans' Reactions to September 11." *Journal of the American Medical Association* 288 (5): 581–88. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.288.5.581>
- Schmid, Alex P. 1989. "Terrorism and the Media: The Ethics of Publicity." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 1 (4): 539–65. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546558908427042>
- Schmid, Alex P., and Janny de Graaf. 1982. *Violence as Communication: Insurgent Terrorism and the Western News Media*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Schudson, Michael. 2001. "The Objectivity Norm in American Journalism." *Journalism* 2 (2): 149–70. <https://doi.org/10.1177/146488490100200201>
- Schudson, Michael. 2002. "The News Media as Political Institutions." *Annual Review of Political Science* 5 (1): 249–69. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.5.111201.115816>
- Schuster, Mark A., Bradley D. Stein, Lisa H. Jaycox, Rebecca L. Collins, Grant N. Marshall, Marc N. Elliott, Annie J. Zhou, David E. Kanouse, Janina L. Morrison, and Sandra H. Berry. 2001. "A National Survey of Stress Reactions after the September 11, 2001, Terrorist Attacks." *New England Journal of Medicine* 345 (20): 1507–12. <https://doi.org/10.1056/nejm200111153452024>
- Scott, John L. 2001. "Media Congestion Limits Media Terrorism." *Defence and Peace Economics* 12: 215–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10430710108404985>
- Scruggs, Kathy, and Ron Martz. 1996. "FBI Suspects 'Hero' Guard May Have Planted Bomb." *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, July 30, 1.
- Seawright, Jason, and John Gerring. 2008. "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options." *Political Research Quarterly* 61 (2): 294–308. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912907313077>

- Segalla, Michael. 2017. "Five Decades of Reporting Terrorism: Has There Been Too Little or Too Much Coverage?" *The Conversation*. Accessed June 16, 2022. <https://theconversation.com/five-decades-of-reporting-terrorism-has-there-been-too-little-or-too-much-coverage-73882>
- Sengupta, Somini. 2008. "Terrorism's Impact Grows as Indian Election Nears." *New York Times*, September 24, A6.
- Shafer, Jack. 2013. "Shameless Paper in Mindless Fog." *Reuters*, April 18. <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSBRE93H1DY/>
- Shaya, Gregory. 2012. "Roundtable: The Myth of the Fourth Estate." *Lapham's Quarterly*, April 3. <https://www.laphamsquarterly.org/roundtable/myth-fourth-estate>
- Shelton, Crystal, Erik Cleven, and Aaron M. Hoffman. 2018. "Deadly Foreign Terrorism and the Rank-Ordered Tournament for Foreign Press Attention: Implications for Counterterrorism." *International Interactions* 45 (2): 344–68. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050629.2019.1529668>
- Shenon, Philip. 1998. "Bombings in East Africa: In Washington; Focus on Suspects in Past Attacks." *New York Times*, August 8, A1.
- Shenon, Philip. 2004. "With Recess Imminent, Intelligence Bill Remains Tied Up." *New York Times*, December 6, A21.
- ShIPLEY, Amy. 2001. "Olympic Bid Still Viable; D.C./Baltimore, 7 Others Face USOC Decision Oct. 26." *Washington Post*, September 21, D1.
- Shoemaker, Pamela J., Jong Hyuk Lee, Gang Han, and Akiba A. Cohen. 2007. "Proximity and scope as news values." In *Media Studies: Key Issues and Debates*, edited by Eoin Devereux, 231–48. London: Sage.
- Silver, Roxane Cohen, E. Alison Holman, Daniel N. McIntosh, Michael Poulin, and Virginia Gil-Rivas. 2002. "Nationwide Longitudinal Study of Psychological Responses to September 11." *Journal of the American Medical Association* 288 (10): 1235–44. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.288.10.1235>
- Silver, Roxane Cohen, Michael Pulin, E. Alison Holman, Daniel N. McIntosh, Virginia Gil-Rivas, and Judith Pizarro. 2005. "Exploring the Myths of Coping with a National Trauma: A Longitudinal Study of Responses to the September 11th Terrorist Attacks." In *The Trauma of Terrorism: Sharing Knowledge and Shared Care, an International Handbook*, edited by Yael Danieli, Danny Brom, and Joe Sills, 129–141. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Maltreatment and Trauma Press.
- Silverman, Daniel, Daniel Kent, and Christopher Gelpi. 2022. "Putting Terror in Its Place: An Experiment on Mitigating Fears of Terrorism among the American Public." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 66 (2): 191–216. <https://doi.org/10.1177/100220027211036935>
- Simon, Scott. 2013. "Lessons Learned from the Media's Coverage of Boston Bombing." National Public Radio, April 20. <https://www.npr.org/2013/04/20/178090655/lessons-learned-from-the-medias-coverage-of-boston-bombing>
- Simpson, Cam, and Laura Meckler. 2009. "U.S. Weighs Blacklisting North Korea." *Wall Street Journal*, June 8, A8.
- Skinner, Ellen A., and Melanie J. Zimmer-Gembeck. 2007. "The Development of Coping." *Annual Review of Psychology* 58: 119–44. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.58.110405.085705>

- Slavin, Barbara. 1999. "Libya May Be Taken Off Terrorist List; Removal Would Reward Gadhafi for Turning in Bombing Suspects." *USA Today*, July 8.
- Slone, Michelle. 2000. "Responses to Media Coverage of Terrorism." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44 (4): 508–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002700044004005>
- Slone, Michelle, Anat Shoshani, and Inbar Baumgarten-Katz. 2008. "The Relation between Actual Exposure to Political Violence and Preparatory Intervention for Exposure to Media Coverage of Terrorism." *Anxiety, Stress, and Coping* 21 (3): 243–261. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10615800701510124>
- Smeltz, Dina, and Ivo H. Daalder, with Craig Kafura. 2014. "Foreign Policy in the Age of Retrenchment: Results of the 2014 Chicago Council Survey of American Public Opinion and US Foreign Policy." Chicago Council on Global Affairs (accessed January 6, 2015). https://globalaffairs.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/2014_CCS_Report_1.pdf
- Smith, R. Jeffrey. 1998. "Ignoring Pledge, Serbs Try Ethnic Albanian Suspects; Kosovo Peace Pact Included Amnesty." *Washington Post*, December 3, A33.
- Smith, Tom W. 2002. "Surge in Gun Sales? The Press Misfires." *Public Perspective* (July/August): 5.
- Solomon, Jay, and Mariam Fam. 2006. "Air Battle: Lebanese News Network Draws Fire as Arm of Militant Group; After Bombing, Al-Manar TV Keeps on Broadcasting; Sign of Hezbollah Resolve; Treasury Bans U.S. Advertising." *Wall Street Journal*, July 28, A1.
- Soroka, Stuart N. 2003. "Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy." *International Journal of Press/Politics* 8 (1): 27–48. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1081180x02238783>
- Soroka, Stuart N. 2012. "The Gatekeeping Function: Distributions of Information in Media and the Real World." *Journal of Politics* 74 (2): 514–28. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s002238161100171x>
- Soroka, Stuart N. 2014. *Negativity in Democratic Politics: Causes and Consequences*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Spangler, Gottfried, Reinhard Pekrun, Klaudia Kramer, and Hubert Hofmann. 2002. "Students' Emotions, Physiological Reactions, and Coping in Academic Exams." *Anxiety, Stress and Coping* 15 (4): 413–32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1061580021000056555>
- Spinner, Jackie. 2001. "Insurance Uncertainty a Threat, O'Neill Says." *Washington Post*, October 25, A6.
- Squitieri, Tom. 1997. "IRA Shoots Rocket at Belfast Court." *USA Today*, January 7, 1A.
- St. Louis (Mo.) Post-Dispatch*. 1995. "A Terror Bombing in Oklahoma City." April 20, 6B.
- Stohl, Michael. 2008. "Old Myths, New Fantasies and the Enduring Realities of Terrorism." *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 1 (1): 5–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17539150701846443>
- Streckfuss, Richard. 1990. "Objectivity in Journalism: A Search and a Reassessment." *Journalism Quarterly* 67 (4): 973–83. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107769909006700453>
- Strom, Stefanie. 2000. "Japanese Police Arrest Founder of Violent 70's Radical Group." *New York Times*, November 9, A6.

- Stump, Scott. 2016. "Dallas Shooting Witness Describe 'Fear, Terror, Frustration' of Protest Attack." *Today*, July 8. <https://www.today.com/news/dallas-shooting-witnesses-describe-fear-terror-frustration-protest-attack-t100635>
- Sullivan, Margaret. 2013. "A Model of Restraint in the Race for News." *New York Times*, 2013, SR.
- Sunstein, Cass R. 2005. *Laws of Fear: Beyond the Precautionary Principle*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tannenbaum, Melanie B., Justin Hepler, Rick S. Zimmerman, Lindsey Saul, Samantha Jacobs, Kristina Wilson, and Dolores Albarracín. 2015. "Appealing to Fear: A Meta-analysis of Fear Appeal Effectiveness and Theories." *Psychological Bulletin* 141 (6): 1178.
- Taylor, Helen. 2019. "Domestic Terrorism and Hate Crimes: Legal Definitions and Media Framing of Mass Shootings in the United States." *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism* 14 (3): 227–44. <https://doi.org/10.1080/18335330.2019.1667012>
- Thomson, Elizabeth A., Peter R. R. White, and Philip Kitley. 2008. "'Objectivity' and 'Hard News' Reporting across Cultures." *Journalism Studies* 9 (2): 212–28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616700701848261>
- Thornburgh, Dick. 1989. "Three Mile Island: Remarks of Dick Thornburgh, Attorney General at the National Press Club, Washington, DC." U.S. Department of Justice. Available at <https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/ag/legacy/2011/08/23/03-28-1989.pdf>
- Todd, Richard. 2017. "The Freakonomics of Extreme Extreme Vetting." *Huffington Post*. Accessed October 12, 2020. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/the-freakonomics-of-extre_b_11821634?guccounter=1
- Traugott, Michael, Ted Brader, Deborah Coral, Richard Curtin, David Featherman, Robert Groves, Martha Hill, James Jackson, Thomas Juster, and Robert Kahn. 2002. "How Americans Responded: A Study of Public Reactions to 9/11/01." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 35 (3): 511–16. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1554679>
- Trofimov, Yaroslav. 2001. "U.A.E. Served as a Base for Terrorists—Immigrants and Cash Raised Little Notice in Rich Regional Hub." *Wall Street Journal*, October 1, A12.
- Trope, Yaacov, and Nira Liberman. 2010. "Construal-Level Theory of Psychological Distance." *Psychological Review* 117 (2): 440–63. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018963>
- Trussler, Marc, and Stuart Soroka. 2014. "Consumer Demand for Cynical and Negative News Frames." *International Journal of Press/Politics* 19 (3): 360–79. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161214524832>
- Twomey, Steve, and Arthur Santana. 2001. "Bodies Pulled from Pentagon; Troops Patrol District Streets." *Washington Post*, September 12, A1.
- Tyler, Patrick E. 2002. "Traces of Terror: News Analysis; A Message in an Arrest." *New York Times*, June 11, A5.
- United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission. 2018. "Backgrounder on the Three Mile Island Accident." Last Modified June 21, 2018, accessed May 31, 2022. <https://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/fact-sheets/3mile-isle.html>

- USA Today*. 1998. "Casualties Mount in Battle against Right to Choose." October 27, 14A.
- USA Today*. 1999. "Russian Military Strikes in Chechnya Continue." September 24.
- USA Today*. 2012. "SEALs 'No Easy Day' Doesn't Lend Itself to Easy Judgments." September 18, 8A.
- Vicente, Paulo Nuno. 2019. "Ledes and Story Structure." In *The International Encyclopedia of Journalism Studies*, edited by Folker Hanusch and Tim P. Vos, 1–5. Boston: Wiley Blackwell.
- Viser, Matt, and Noah Bierman. 2013. "Obama Vows 'Full Weight of Justice' for Any Responsible." *Boston Globe*, April 13, A.
- Wahl-Jorgensen, Karin. 2013. "The Strategic Ritual of Emotionality: A Case Study of Pulitzer Prize-Winning Articles." *Journalism* 14 (1): 129–45. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884912448918>
- Wahl-Jorgensen, Karin. 2016. "Emotion and Journalism." In *The Sage Handbook of Digital Journalism*, edited by Tamara Witschge, C. W. Anderson, David Domingo, and Alfred Hermida, 128–43. London: Sage.
- Wall Street Journal*. 2001. "Microsoft Repurchased 89 Million of Its Shares During Fiscal 2001." September 19, B6.
- Wall Street Journal*. 2003. "Retail Brief—Burberry Group PLC: Net Rises 23% on Strong Sales; Estimates Expected to Be Met." May 23, B6.
- Wall Street Journal*. 2012. "World-Wide." October 29, A1.
- Wallace, Lewis Raven. 2019. *The View from Somewhere*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Walsh, Edward. 1995. "One Arraigned, Two Undergo Questioning." *Washington Post*, April 22, A.
- Waltham, Barbara Marriott. 2013. "Placement of photo Traumatizes Readers Anew." *Boston Globe*, April 17, A10.
- Wan, William, Kafia A. Hosh, and Christian Davenport. 2009. "Unassuming on the Surface, but Roiling Within." *Washington Post*, November 7, A1.
- Wangsness, Lisa. 2013. "To Calls Both Resolute and Reflective, a city Unites." *Boston Globe*, April 19, A.
- Ward, Stephen J. A. 2009. "Journalism Ethics." In *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*, edited by Karin Wahl-Jorgensen and Thomas Hanitzsch, 295–309. New York: Routledge.
- Ward, Stephen J. A. 2011. *Ethics and the Media: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wardlaw, Grant. 1989. *Political Terrorism: Theory, Tactics, and Counter-measures*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Warriner, Amy Beth, Victor Kuperman, and Marc Brysbaert. 2013. "Norms of Valence, Arousal, and Dominance for 13,915 English Lemmas." *Behavior Research Methods* 45 (4): 1191–1207. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.3758/s13428-012-0314-x>
- Washington Post*. 1998. "Argentina, U.S. Pledge Cooperation." May 24, A26.
- Wax, Emily, and Rama Lakshmi. 2008. "Last Gunmen Killed in India, Ending Siege; Operation Conducted by 15 Assailants Who Arrived by Sea, Officials Suspect." *Washington Post*, November 29, A1.

- Weimann, Gabriel, and Hans-Bernd Brosius. 1991. "The Newsworthiness of International Terrorism." *Communication Research* 18 (3): 333–54. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009365091018003003>
- Weimann, Gabriel, and Conrad Winn. 1994. *The Theater of Terror: Mass Media and International Terrorism*. White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Wen, Patricia. 2013. "A Mother Reels as 2 Sons Lose Legs." *Boston Globe*, April 16, A.
- Wendt, Alexander. 1999. *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wessely, Simon. 2005. "Don't Panic! Short and Long Term Psychological Reactions to the New Terrorism: The Role of Information and the Authorities." *Journal of Mental Health* 14 (1): 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09638230500048099>
- Westerstahl, Jörgen. 1983. "Objective News Reporting: General Premises." *Communication Research* 10 (3): 403–24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009365083010003007>
- Wilkinson, Paul. 1997. "The Media and Terrorism: A Reassessment." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 9 (2): 51–64. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546559708427402>
- Williamson, Harley, Suzanna Fay, and Toby Miles-Johnson. 2019. "Fear of Terrorism: Media Exposure and Subjective Fear of Attack." *Global Crime* 20 (1): 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17440572.2019.1569519>
- Wilson, Michele, and John Lynxwiler. 1988. "Abortion clinic violence as terrorism." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 11 (4): 263–73. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10576108808435717>
- Winkler, Carol, Kareem ElDamanhoury, Aaron Dicker, and Anthony F. Lemieux. 2018. "Images of Death and Dying in ISIS Media: A Comparison of English and Arabic Print Publications." *Media, War and Conflict* 12 (3): 248–62. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750635217746200>
- Winter, Michael, and Doug Stanglin. 2013. "Canada Collars Two Suspects in 'al-Qaeda' Rail-Terror Plot." *USA Today*, April 23, 2A.
- Wiseman, Paul. 2002. "Doctors, Engineers, Teachers Light Philippine Fight for Muslims' Trust." *USA Today*, January 28, 9A.
- Witte, Griff, and Haq Nawaz Khan. 2009. "Intense U.S. Drone Strikes Kill 16 in North Waziristan." *Washington Post*, December 18, A12.
- Witte, Kim. 1992. "Putting the Fear Back into Fear Appeals: The Extended Parallel Process Model." *Communication Monographs* 59 (4): 329–49. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637759209376276>
- Witte, Kim. 1994. "Fear Control and Danger Control: A Test of the Extended Parallel Process Model (EPPM)." *Communication Monographs* 61 (2): 113–34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637759409376328>
- Witte, Kim, and Mike Allen. 2000. "A Meta-Analysis of Fear Appeals: Implications for Effective Public Health Campaigns." *Health Education and Behavior* 27 (5): 591–615. <https://doi.org/10.1177/109019810002700506>
- Woodward, Bob. 2009. "Detainee Tortured, Says U.S. Official; Trial Overseer Cites 'Abusive' Methods Against 9/11 Suspect." *Washington Post*, January 14, A1.
- Woolhouse, Megan. 2013. "With Chaos at Doorstep, Families Burrow In." *Boston Globe*, April 20, A8.

- World Nuclear Organization. 2022. "Three Mile Island Accident." Modified April 2022. Accessed May 31, 2022. <https://www.world-nuclear.org/information-library/safety-and-security/safety-of-plants/three-mile-island-accident.aspx>
- Yang, Liu, and Huailin Chen. 2018. "Framing Terrorist Attacks: A Multi-Proximity Model." *International Communication Gazette* 81 (5): 395–417. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048518802245>
- Yoder, Sharon Logsdon, and Glen L. Bleske. 1997. "The Media Ethics Classroom and Learning to Minimize Harm." *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* 12 (4): 227–42. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327728jmme1204_4
- Young, Lori, and Stuart Soroka. 2012. "Affective News: The Automated Coding of Sentiment in Political Texts." *Political Communication* 29 (2): 205–31. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2012.671234>
- Zaccardi, Nick. 2012. "An Oral History of the Bombing That Rocked the 1996 Atlanta Games." *Sports Illustrated*, July 24.
- Zulaika, Joseba, and William A. Douglass. 1996. *Terror and Taboo: The Follies, Fables, and Faces of Terrorism*. New York: Routledge.
- Zussman, Asaf, and Noam Zussman. 2006. "Assassinations: Evaluating the Effectiveness of an Israeli Counterterrorism Policy Using Stock Market Data." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 20 (2): 193–206. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30033656>

Index

Note: Page references in *italics* indicate tables or figures.

- abstract thinking, negativity of terrorism
 - beat and, 146–48
- accountability, of governments, 4
- accuracy, of terrorism beat, 21, 28, 51, 53, 100, 106–9
- activism, of pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinians, viii
- acts, of terrorism, 63, 85, 120, 170, 191.
 - See also specific acts of terrorism*
- advancement, of terrorist interest, 3, 17, 64–65
- advertising platforms, digital news, 30
- Afghanistan, 6, 64, 71, 92, 98, 167, 169
- alarmist views, on news media coverage, 24, 139, 144
- Albanians, 102
- alteration, of coverage by newspapers, 31
- Altheide, David, 87–90, 96, 98, 191
- Amazon, Mechanical Turk, 110, 131, 134, 136, 137
- American public, terrorism and, 23, 83, 84, 127, 145–46, 192–94; pessimism of, 14, 119; politics 9/11 attacks and, 58; resiliency of, 2, 6–7, 49, 121, 141, 154; sensitivity of, 10, 66, 119, 173, 186
- American Society of News Editors, 40
- analysis of variance (ANOVA), 131–32
- Anderson, Christopher, 39
- angles, in terrorism news beat, 147, 148, 149–50, 160–61, 172–73, 176
- annual variation, in terrorism news beat, 92–93, 93
- ANOVA. *See* analysis of variance
- antisemitism, viii, 105
- anti-smoking messages, as fear appeals, 122–23
- anti-terrorism, 21, 32, 59, 68–69
- anxiety, from terrorism, 23, 122–23, 134, 137, 156, 180; in American public, 121
- AP. *See* Associated Press
- arousal, in readers, language causing, 50–51
- Arsenault, Mark, 153–54
- articles, terrorism beat, 59, 104–5, 128, 171, 172–73, 176; *Boston Globe*, 152–61; classification of, 62–63, 72, 84; inverted-pyramid organizational style of, 8, 41, 42, 100–103, 113, 189; neutral, 4, 23, 41, 91, 110, 114, 126
- assessment minimalism, in terrorism beat reporting, 106–9
- Associated Press (AP), 144
- assumptions, about journalism, 19, 29, 35, 38, 148, 190; terrorism beat, 115, 139–40

- Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 166
- attacks, of terrorists, viii, ix, 2, 3, 5, 6, 58; attention on, 64, 68, 108; counterterrorism prevention and, 12; models of reporting in threats and, 73–74; in Mumbai, 98–99, 191; news beat dominated by, 35, 58, 180; newspaper subjects on, 75, 78, 80; safety from, 136; stories on, 31, 48–49, 59, 63–66, 128; successful and unsuccessful, 15; threats and, 7, 10, 11, 13, 20, 21; in US history, 19, 63–66, 123, 170
- attention, in terrorism beat, vii, viii, 2, 4, 5, 6; of audiences, 24, 29, 36, 53; to counterterrorism, 11, 46, 79; of journalists, 7, 26, 44, 48, 188; of press, 15, 32, 73, 179; of readers, 33, 45, 183, 184; to terrorist attacks, 64, 68, 108
- audiences, terrorism, 10–11, 15–16, 20, 34, 37, 148; attention of, 7, 24, 29, 36; in Boston Marathon bombing, 160–62; construal level effect and, 52; distance *versus* local, 53, 146–47, 149, 187; fear and insecurity in, 23, 115, 117, 122, 138–39, 185–86; influence on, 55–56, 150, 193, 194; reassurance of, 116
- avoidance, of danger, 134
- balance, as reporting strategy, 9, 71, 148; objectivity and, 103–6
- Bali bombing (2002), 92
- Basic Laws, of Israel, vii
- behaviors, of journalists, 19, 26, 37, 39, 42–43, 145
- Beslan school siege (2004), 92
- biases, in terrorism beat, 42, 60–61, 86, 139–40, 191
- Biden, Joseph, 166
- bin Laden, Osama, 3, 9, 64, 167–68
- Black Lives Matter protests, 169, 195
- Blair, Tony, 167
- Bloch-Elkon, Yaeli, 22, 32, 117, 130
- bombings, 118, 132–34, 152; Bali, 92; Madrid train, 92, 121; Oklahoma City, 9, 19, 23, 55, 65, 68, 121, 164–65; Olympic Park, 9, 19, 23, 55, 165–66; World Trade Center, 170
- Borchers, Callum, 154–55
- Boston Globe*, 1, 5–6, 141, 152–61, 158
- Boston Marathon bombing (2013), 1, 5–6, 9, 19, 23, 55; analysis of, 176; reporting on, 143, 148, 150–62, 158, 161; variation in coverage of, 141–42, 149, 163
- Brybaert, Marc, 109
- Buchanan, Edna, 147
- buffers, psychological, 120–22, 127
- Bush, George W., 68–69, 77, 78, 83, 96, 101; Kerry and, 104; 9/11 attacks and, 166–67
- business decisions, separation in newsrooms for, 38–39
- cases, typical and diverse, on terrorism beat, 87–89, 170–71
- categories, terrorism of reporting, 63, 65–66, 70–71, 72; criminal justice responses and militarized counterterrorism, 81–83, 85
- causal inference, models for, 28
- challenges, newspapers facing economic, 31, 38
- characteristics, of industry-wide principles and practices, 46
- charities, in support for Boston Marathon bombing, 152, 154
- Cheney, Dick, 101
- Clarke, Kevin, 28
- classification, of articles, 62–63, 72, 84
- Clinton, Bill, 7, 72, 78, 96, 180
- CNN, 103, 120, 131, 135, 167
- coding team, for article classification, 62–63, 72, 84
- Cohen's *d* (standard estimate of effect size), 126
- college campuses, activism on, viii
- Committee to Protect Journalists, ix
- communication crisis, 52–53
- communities, biases of journalists in, 42
- community responses, to terrorism, 16, 32–33, 48, 59, 60, 181–82; articles, 128; Boston, 152, 154; reporting on,

- 70–71, 74, 75, 78, 80, 83–85; threats and attacks, 7, 119
- complicit-media thesis, 17, 19, 20, 22, 47, 85; Altheide and, 89
- conditions, to terrorism experiments participant responses, 132–33, 135
- confidence intervals, of news reporting models, 73, 97, 97, 98
- congressional testimonies, terrorism beat coverage of, 68–69
- consequences, of reporting, 7, 11, 12, 42–43, 56, 66; of encouragement effect, 21
- construal level effect, of event and audience proximity, 52, 146, 147
- content and language expectations, about terrorism beat, 12, 54, 179
- copy-editing, as research method, 12
- corporate biases, in journalism, 42
- counterterrorism, reporting on, vii, viii, 2–3, 5–6, 11, 66–70; articles on, 128; attack prevention and, 12; Clinton administration and, 7; domination of topics in, 73–75, 76, 84, 115; effectiveness of, 122–25; effects of, 23, 117, 118, 119; experiments, 129–40; focus on, 179; frequency of stories on, 46, 58–59, 71; governments, 35, 48, 66, 67, 123–24, 188; in newspapers, 75, 78, 79, 80, 180; patterns in, 77, 79, 83–84; politics of, 69, 78, 83, 181; reassurance from, 56; terrorist threats and attacks *versus*, 31–32, 180–81
- coverage, news media, 1, 13, 14–15, 31, 116, 149; alarmist views in, 24, 139, 144; American public and, 83, 84; of Boston Marathon Bombing, 150–62, 158, 163–64; crime, 193–94; criminal justice and military responses in, 82–83; crisis, 144–45, 156, 173, 174, 176; fluctuations in counterterrorism, 77; Israel response to Hamas, 179; negativity of, 125–26; of terrorism, 21, 48; of threats and attacks, 63–66, 79, 85, 124, 184
- craft, of journalism, 188–90
- Crawford, Susan J., 101, 102
- crime beat, in contrast to terrorism beat, 8, 33–34, 87, 88–89, 90, 96–99; coverage of, 193–94; news tone of, 97, 183
- criminal code, in Yugoslavia, 102
- criminal justice, terrorism and, 6, 46–47, 68, 81–83, 85, 139
- crisis, 18, 34, 52–53, 151, 156, 176; epicenters of, 172, 172, 173, 174, 177, 189–90; journalism, 55; proximity effect in reporting on, 10, 65, 161, 171; reporters work, 30; reporting on, 36, 142–47, 148, 159, 163
- criteria, in terrorism beat reporting, 20, 106–7
- critics, of terrorism reporting, 6, 16, 17, 128, 181, 195; of objectivity and balance norms, 105
- Cullen, Kevin, 153, 155, 159
- Dallas police shooting (2016), 9, 19, 24, 55, 169
- danger avoidance, 134
- Darwin, Charles, 194
- data, on terrorism beat reporting, 74, 76, 79, 93–94, 94, 171
- databases, for news content, 12
- DC Sniper case (2002), 9, 19, 24, 55, 168–69, 171
- defenses, psychological, 122
- demand, from audience on crisis reporting, 34
- Demarco, Peter, 155
- democratic societies, liberty and security in, 71
- dependent variables, in research design, 171
- description, of terrorist attacks by newspapers, 1, 138
- descriptive models, of news reporting, 27–29, 53
- design, of terrorism beat by researchers, 28, 130–32, 171–73, 190–92
- detachment, in terrorism beat, 4, 8, 41, 104, 114, 189; in audiences, 146, 147, 148, 177
- “Detainee Tortured, Says U.S. Official” (Woodward), 101

- devices and services, as protection from terrorism, 7
 differences, in newspapers and reporters, 113; subject matter, 128
 digital news, advertising platforms in, 30
 diplomacy, terrorism responses and, 69, 83
 disagreements, on terrorism beat, 72–73
 disconnection, between subject matter and terrorism beat, 59–60, 193
 discourse, of fear in terrorism beat, 89–90
 distal objects, 52, 146, 147. *See* construal level effect, of event and audience proximity
 distance and coverage, relationship between, 159–61, 163–64, 170, 176
 distance audiences, in terrorist attacks, 53, 146–47, 187
 distortion, of news media coverage, 11, 16–17, 21, 34, 85; from profit-seeking model in journalism, 180, 182
 distress, and terrorism beat, 118–19
 distrust, of journalists, 1–2
 division, in reporting and business of newspapers, 38–39
 domestic politics, in Israel, vii
 domestic terrorism, 65, 173, 195; international terrorism *versus*, 132–33
 domination, of topics in terrorism beat, 5, 7, 35, 48, 58, 180; of counterterrorism, 73–75, 76, 84, 115
 Donnay, Karsten, 116, 118, 120, 124, 125
 drama, in terrorism beat, 1, 3, 11, 12, 15, 16; qualities of, 17, 31, 44, 51

 economic benefits, of portraying terrorist threats, 3, 7, 22, 26, 29, 86; cases against, 87–89; challenges to, 31, 38; influences of, 77; pressures on, 35, 36, 57, 81, 92, 99; terrorism impact on, 71
 economic health, of Israel, vii
 editors, rules of reporting for, 37–38, 107
 effectiveness, of counterterrorism reporting, 122–25, 129, 136
 effective responses to threats, ineffective *versus*, 132–33
 effects, of terrorism beat on American public, 23, 116, 119, 127, 149–50, 164; of counterterrorism experiments, 129–40; of media on human psychology, 13–14, 22, 117–18; of war on terror, 81–82
 efforts, militarized counterterrorism, 67–68, 136
 emergency, reporters during, 143–44
 emotional and political, responses to terrorism, 118
 emotional material, reaction of audience to, 10
 encouragement effect, in terrorism, 21
 English Lexicon Project, 109–13
 epicenter, of crisis events, 52–53, 172, 172, 173, 174, 177, 189–90
 EPPM. *See* Extended Parallel Process Model
 evidentiary approach, to terrorism reporting, 60–62
 exaggeration, in terrorism reporting, 2, 11, 16, 73, 116, 194
 expectations, of terrorism beat, 22, 35–36, 46–47, 49, 54
 experiments, on effective counterterrorism, 129–40
 exposure, terrorism beat, 10–11, 56, 124–25
 Extended Parallel Process Model (EPPM), 123–24, 129, 131

 failures and successes, counterterrorism, 47, 49
 families, of terrorist victims, 71
 FBI, 91, 132–33, 134, 151, 165, 166
 fear, in terrorism beat, 23, 115, 117, 122–24, 181, 186; reporters using, 33–34, 36, 87–90, 179–80, 182–85, 191; social media, 24, 136, 138, 148, 159, 193–94
 federal investigators, 165
 feelings, of security or insecurity, 122, 127–28, 129, 133–34
 Feick, Lukas, 116, 118, 120, 124, 125–27, 128
 firewalls, 38–39
 first responders, heroism of, 6, 49, 59, 70, 141, 153

- fluctuations, in counterterrorism coverage,
 news media, 77
 focus, on counterterrorism reporting, 179
 Foley, James, 70–71
 Folkenflik, David, 5
 foreign policy, of US on terrorist threats
 and attacks, 65
 formula, for relationship between negativ-
 ity and insecurity, 126
 frequency, of terrorism reporting, 15, 48,
 72, 77, 83, 84; of counterterrorism
 stories, 46, 58–59
 F-Test, 112–13
 Fuller, Jack, 37

 Gadarian, Shana Kushner, 120
 Gartner, Scott Sigmund, 150
 gatekeeping, of media, 11, 15–16, 61–62
 Gates, Robert M., 101
 Gaza Strip, vii, viii, 178–79
 good-news stories, 3, 49, 141
 governments, terrorism and, 4, 40, 46,
 87, 130–31, 195; counterterrorism of,
 48, 66, 67, 123–24, 188; nonviolent
 responses by, 83; terrorist violence man-
 aged by, 12, 32, 35, 47, 137–38
 graphic depictions, of terrorism, 1, 141
Greeley Tribune, 149
 grief and tragedy, news of, 43, 156
 Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, 82, 101
 guide, for terrorism beat, *USA Today* as, 95

 Hamas, terrorism of, vii, viii, 131, 136,
 137, 138; Gaza Strip base of, 178–79
 Hanafin, Teresa, 159
 hard news, writing conventions and,
 44–45
 harm minimization principle, 4–5, 7, 40,
 42–43, 45, 52
 Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 143, 144
 headlines, of terrorism article, 9, 55, 62,
 63, 72, 76; F-test of, 112–13; lead
 paragraphs and, 81, 82, 88, 108; writing
 rules for, 45
 heroism, of first responders, 6, 49, 59, 70,
 141, 153; police officers, 155

 hierarchical structure, of news, 4, 99
 Higgins, Joseph, 144
 hijackers, 167
 hostages, vii, 134, 135, 170, 178, 179
 hypothetical news articles, 126

 IDF. *See* Israel Defense Forces
 imagery, of terrorism beat, 25, 152
 imbalance, of counterterrorism reporting
 on threats and attacks, 76
 implications, of news production models,
 35, 46–47
 inaccuracy of profit-seeking models, in
 journalism, 188
 incentives, economic, for journalists, 86
 independence, in newsrooms, firewalls
 creating, 39
 independent variables in research design,
 172–73
 individual newspapers, terrorism beat at,
 93–96, 94
 industry archetypes, deviation of reporters
 from, 38
 industry-wide, principles and practices, 46,
 49, 113–14, 142, 188
 ineffective *versus* effective responses to
 threats, 132–33
 inference, of political science models, 28
 inflation, of fear in American public, 193,
 194
 influences, on terrorism beat, 4, 13, 18,
 19, 29, 39; audience, 55–56, 150, 193,
 194; newspapers, 29, 39, 40, 95, 195
 influential producers, of terrorism beat, in
 US, 61, 75, 87, 93, 94
 “infotainment,” of terrorism beat, 58
 insecurity and fear, in audiences of terror-
 ism beat, 23, 115, 117, 122, 138–39,
 185–86; negativity and, 124–25, 126
 insecurity score, 127, 128
 Institutional Review Board, 130
 inter-coder, reliability of, 62–63
 interests of terrorists, media advancing, 3,
 17, 64–65
 international terrorism, 64, 69; domestic
 terrorism *versus*, 132–33

- internet, 25, 30
- internet age, newspaper viability and, 29–31
- inter-rater, reliability, 62–63
- inverted pyramid, writing style, 8, 41, 42, 100–103, 113, 189
- investigation, into Boston Marathon bombing, 151, 153
- investigative journalism, 40–41
- investment, of governments in counterterrorism activities, 48
- Iraq, 6, 64, 92, 98
- Islamophobia, viii
- Israel, vii, viii, 62, 120, 121, 129–30; Hamas attack in, 178–79; traveling to, 134–35; violence in, 137
- Israel Defense Forces (IDF), 131, 134, 135, 136, 137–38
- al-Jabari, Ahmed, 136, 137
- Jennings, Peter, 30–31
- Jewell, Richard, 166
- Jewish, participants in counterterrorism experiments, 135
- Johnson, Micah, 169
- Johnston, David, 91
- Joint Terrorism Task Force (FBI), 132
- journalism, ix, 3–4, 5–11, 13, 42, 43; accuracy in, 51; assumptions about, 19, 29, 35, 38, 148; craft of, 188–90; crisis, 55, 142, 145; gatekeeping in, 15–16, 61–62; investigative, 40–41; objectivity and balance reporting in, 103–6
- journalistic practices, 14, 18, 20, 28, 41–42, 107–8; objectivity norms in, 189; professional, ix, 3–4, 5–10, 22, 99–100, 192; standards for, 27, 37
- journalists, in terrorism beat, ix, 1–6, 8, 13, 19, 42; attention of, 7, 48, 188; behaviors of, 37, 145; governments involvement with, 40, 47; language use of, 20, 50, 86–91, 98, 182–85; local angles of reporting by, 149–50; moderation of terrorism beat by, 142, 144, 159, 163; news value of, 43–44; provocative language used by, viii, 9, 33, 189; reporting rules for, 26–27, 52; responsibilities of, 38–39, 145–46; strategy for, 9, 23, 41; writing rules for, 45
- “just the facts,” organizational approach of, 45, 105–6
- Kerry, John, 83, 104
- Koppel, Ted, 15
- Kosovo, 102–3
- Kristof, Nicholas, 86
- Kuperman, Beth Victor, 109
- language, journalists use of, ix, 1, 2–3, 4, 7, 108; arousal in readers from, 50–51; expectations of, 49, 54; Lexicoder and, 171; localization of terrorism and, 142, 144, 150, 157, 158, 187; moderate, 45, 109, *III*, 111–13, 115, 193; negative and positive, 8, 9, 23, 35–36, 95; sensationalizing, 33–34, 106, 114, 179–80, 192; of terrorism beat, 20, 86–91, 182–85
- LaRuffa, Paul, 168
- lead paragraphs, article headlines and, 76, 81, 82, 88, 108
- Lebanon, 108
- legislators, terrorism responses of, 68
- Lehigh, Scot, 153
- Lexicoder, 90–92, 93, 93, 95, 107–8, 109; *Boston Globe* and, 157, 158–59; Feick and, 126; negativity and positivity judged by, 171
- Lexis Nexis, 54–55, 61, 88–89. *See also* Nexis Uni
- Lieberman, Nira, 52, 146
- liberty and security, in democratic societies, 71
- Libya, 65
- literacy, terrorism, and newspapers, 15
- local angles, in terrorism news beat, 147, 148, 149–50, 160–61, 172–73, 176
- localization, of news reporting, 53, 149–50; journalists, 142, 144, 148, 150, 157, 187
- London Blitz, 121
- London Marathon, 151

- Madrid train bombing (2004), 92, 121
- Malvo, Lee Boyd, 168–69, 171
- management, of terrorist violence by governments, 12, 32, 35, 47, 137–38
- mapping, of terrorism beat, 53, 170, 190–91
- maps, as news reporting models, 18–20
- margin of error, for news reporting models, 73, 74, 91
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 155
- materials, of terrorism beat, 24, 37, 61, 62, 63, 89; emotional, 10; on threats and attacks, counterterrorism and, 66, 76, 85, 186
- McAuley, Davis, 38
- McCabe, Katherine T., 116, 118, 120, 124, 125
- McNamara, Bob, 166
- McVeigh, Timothy, 106, 107, 165
- Mechanical Turk, 110, 131, 134, 136, 137
- media, in terrorism beat, ix, 2, 11, 15–16, 61–62; interest of terrorists advanced by, 3, 17, 64–65
- media reports, proximity of attack and tone of, 10, 52, 65
- media thesis: complicit, 17, 19, 20, 22, 47, 85; professional, 18
- Menino, Thomas, 155
- Merolla, Jennifer L., 120, 125
- Met Ed. *See* Metropolitan Edison
- methods of tone, qualitative and quantitative, 100, 156–59
- Metropolitan Edison (Met Ed), 143
- Mexico, newspapers in, 26
- militarized counterterrorism, 67–68, 81–83, 85, 108, 136, 181; nonmilitary counterterrorism efforts *versus*, 32
- military: invasion of Afghanistan, vii, viii, 98; of Israel, vii, viii, 134, 136, 178, 179
- minimalism, of terrorism beat reporting, 106–9
- models, of news reporting, 18–20, 27–28, 53, 57, 72–75, 106–7; margin of error for, 91; partisan, 27, 95–96; professional, 44, 100, 140, 188, 189, 190; profit-seeking, ix, 17, 22, 29, 35, 55; propaganda, 27
- moderate language, journalists use of, 4, 9, 20, 45, 50–51, 113; negative language *versus*, 55, 142; terrorism beat dominated by, 115, 117, 193; valence scores for, 109–10, 111, *III*, 112
- moderation, of terrorism beat by journalists, 142, 144, 159, 163
- motivation, of reporters, for profit, 26, 36, 117, 184
- Mueller, John, 195
- Muhammad, John Allen, 168–69, 171
- Mumbai attacks (2008), 98–99, 191
- murders, reported in terrorism beat, 26, 57, 63, 69, 155, 168
- Murphy, Shelley, 153–54
- Nacos, Brigitte L., 22, 32, 117, 130
- narrative of reporters, viii, 3, 11, 16, 17, 20
- National Public Radio (NPR), viii
- negative language, journalists using moderate language *versus*, 55, 142
- negative words, in journalistic language, 8, 9, 33, 35–36, 51, 88; *Boston Globe* using, 153, 154, 156, 158, 161–62; Lexicoder identifying, 90, 91; *New York Times* using, 97–98, 99; terrorism beat using, 113, 183–85; valence scores for, 110–12, *III*
- negativity, in terrorism beat, 23, 119–20, 124, 125–26, 127, 146–48
- Netanyahu, Benjamin, vii
- net tone scores, 90–91, 93, 94, 127, 128; crime beat contrasted with, 96–97, 97, 99
- neutral articles, in terrorism beat, 4, 23, 41, 91, 110, 114, 126
- news articles, hypothetical, 126
- news content, databases for, 12
- news media, coverage by, 1, 14–15, 21–22, 24, 40, 76; distortion of, 16–17, 85; terrorism beat reporting in, 13, 182; tone of, 10, 41, 93, 105–7

- news outlets, 12, 38, 50, 142, 150, 156;
hierarchical structure of, 4, 99
- newspapers, on terrorism beat, 24–25, 27–
28, 33, 93, 113, 192; on counterterror-
ism, 75, 78, 79, 80, 84, 180; on criminal
justice and terrorism, 6; description
of terrorist attacks by, 1, 138; individual,
93–96, 94; influence of, 29, 39, 40,
56, 194, 195; internet age and, 29–31;
literacy and terrorism in, 15; local,
149–50; materials on counterterrorism
and terrorism for, 66, 76, 85, 186; in
Mexico, 26; opinions pages in, 194;
profit of, 36, 60; significance of US, 24,
25; on suffering in Gaza, vii, 178–79;
on terrorism and economy, 7; on terror-
ist threats and attacks, 48; variation over
time of, 49–50
- news production models, 27–29, 35, 36–
38, 46–47, 53, 57
- news reporting, sociology and psychology
of, 18, 19
- newsrooms, staff separation in, 38–39
- news sources, terrorism reporting role of,
25
- news value, newsworthy content and, 4, 5,
6, 43–44
- New Years Eve, and terrorism beat, 64
- New York Daily News*, 1, 6
- New York Post*, 5, 179
- New York Times*, 1, 5–6, 9, 39, 61, 69;
Clinton in, 72; community responses
in, 84–85; counterterrorism in, 79,
80; crime beat in contrast to terrorism
beat in, 88–89, 90; on Gaza attack,
178; negative and positive language in,
97–98, 99; Obama in, 104; terrorist
threats and attacks in, 81; tone of ter-
rorism beat reporting in, 94, 97, 108;
unabomber article in, 91
- Nexis Uni, 88–89, 170
- 9/11 attacks, 8, 9, 13–14, 19, 23, 26,
166–68; American politics and, 58;
journalists language and, 88, 89–90, 98,
182–83; psychological effect of, 121,
147; reporting on, 33–34, 36, 51, 67,
92, 192; sample coverage of, 55, 191
- non-crisis periods, of terrorism beat, 36,
173, 176
- non-effect, of counterterrorism, 139
- nonmilitary counterterrorism efforts *versus*
military, 32
- nonviolence politics, politics of violence
contrasted with, 83
- nonviolent responses, of governments, 47,
83
- norms, in journalistic practices, 12, 23, 27,
36–38, 44, 50–51; objectivity, ix, 4, 7,
41–42, 103–5, 189; watchdog, viii–ix,
4, 40–41, 46, 179, 188
- NPR. *See* National Public Radio
- nuance, in terrorism beat, 116, 119
- nuclear reactor, at Three Mile Island, 143
- Obama, Barack, 7, 69, 77, 78, 96, 104;
administration of, 180; Boston Marath-
on bombing and, 151, 152, 153, 155
- objectivity norms, in journalistic practice,
ix, 4, 7, 42, 103–6, 189
- obligations and roles, of news organiza-
tions, 37, 40
- October 7, 2023, Hamas attack, vii, 178,
179
- Oklahoma City bombing (1995), 19, 55,
65, 68, 121, 164–65; coverage of, 9, 23
- Olympic Park bombing (1996), 9, 19, 23,
55, 165–66
- operationalism, of objectivity principles,
41
- opinions pages, in newspapers, 194
- “other” subjects, on terrorism beat, 72,
74, 75
- pack journalism, 142
- Paden, Mary, 142, 143–45, 157
- Palestine, 62, 121, 178, 179; college
campus support for, viii; humanitarian
disaster in, vii
- panel regression results, on distance and
tone of crisis coverage, 176
- participants, in counterterrorism experi-
ments, 131–32, 137

- partisan models, of news reporting, 27, 95–96
- pattern analysis, in terrorism beat, 19, 56, 77, 78, 78–79, 83–84; Lexicoder assessment of, 92, 93, 93, 95; professional model using, 189; terrorism crisis reporting, 163, 187; Three Mile Island and Boston Marathon bombing, 159
- perpetrators, of terrorism, 16, 21, 31, 48, 83, 116; Boston Marathon bombing, 151, 152, 163; Olympic Park bombing, 165; threats from, 123
- perspectives, news articles with competing, 104–5
- pessimism of American public, terrorism and, 14, 119
- Philadelphia Daily News*, 39
- Philadelphia Inquirer*, 39
- physical distance, and negativity in terrorism beat, 146–48, 161, 187; news tone and, 170–74, 175
- Pintek, Mike, 143
- police officers, 155, 169, 173
- political and emotional, responses to terrorism, 118
- political balance, as reporting strategy, 83
- political science models, inference of, 28
- political violence, 65, 83, 121; of subnational actors, 6, 12, 13, 58–59
- politics, in America, 27, 58, 69, 78, 104, 105, 181
- politics of violence, contrasted with politics of nonviolence, 83
- popular culture, causing fear, 194
- population parameters, samples for, 54
- positive words, in journalistic language, 8, 9, 33, 35–36, 90, 91; balance of negative and, 148; *Boston Globe* using, 153, 154, 155, 156; *New York Times* using, 97–98, 99; reporting over time using, 174, 176; valence scores for, 110–12, 111
- post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), 118, 121
- power, of violence, 2
- practices, journalistic, ix, 5, 14, 18, 20, 28; industry-wide principles and, 46, 49, 113–14, 142, 188; normative standards for, 27, 37; objectivity norms in, 7, 41–42, 103–6, 189; professionalism in, 3–4, 5–10, 22, 43, 99–100, 192
- press attention, in terrorism beat, 15, 32, 73, 179
- pressures, on journalists, economic, 35, 36, 57, 81, 92, 99
- Primo, David, 28
- principles, of journalism industry, 41, 46, 49, 113–14, 142, 188; harm minimization, 4–5, 7, 40, 42–43, 45, 52
- problems, of biases in random sampling, 60–61
- procedure, for random sampling, 61
- process, of editing as journalistic writing practice, 107–8
- professional journalism, ix, 3–4, 5–10, 22, 99–100, 192
- professional-media model, of news production, 36–38, 46–47, 55, 57, 72, 115–16; criminal justice reports and, 83; profit-seeking model *versus*, 73–75, 86–87, 117, 124
- professional-media thesis, 18
- professional models, of news reporting, 18, 44, 140, 188, 189, 190
- professional norms, writing conventions relying on, 44
- professional practices, terrorism beat and, 5–10, 188
- profit, reporters motivation for, 26, 36, 60, 117, 184
- profit-seeking models, in journalism, ix, 17, 22, 29, 35, 55–57; crisis reporting and, 148, 162; distortion from, 180, 182; impact on audiences, 115, 185; inaccuracy of, 188; militarized counterterrorism and, 181; negative language used in, 183–85; professional model *versus*, 72–75, 86–87, 117, 124; as terrorism beat guide, 95
- propaganda models, of news reporting, 27
- protection, from terrorism, 7, 46, 70, 118, 124, 137–38

- Providence Journal*, 1
- provocative language, of journalists, viii, ix, 9, 33, 86, 184, 189
- proximate journalists, 52, 142
- proximity effect, in crisis communication, 10, 52–53, 65, 161, 171, 187, 190
- psychological buffers, 120–22, 127
- psychological responses, to terrorism beat, 13–14, 22, 117–18, 121, 147, 180; resiliency of public in, 185
- psychology and sociology, of news reporting, 18, 19
- PTSD. *See* post-traumatic stress disorder
- public interest, journalists serving, 44
- publicity, of terrorists from news media, 14–15
- public panic, threat of, 145–46
- Pulse nightclub shooting (2016), 170
- punishment, of reporters by US courts, 21–22
- Purdue University, ix, 131, 132
- Al-Qaeda, 64, 68, 123, 132, 133, 134
- al-Qahtani, Mohammed, 101–2
- qualitative and quantitative, tone analysis methods, 100, 156–59
- qualities of drama, in terrorism beat, 17, 31, 44, 51
- questions, about terrorism beat, 53, 54
- quotations and headlines, F-Test of, 112–13
- quoting sources, writing rules for, 45, 52
- radiation bursts, on Three Mile Island, 143
- random sampling, of terrorism beat, 14, 55, 60–61, 62, 88, 157; crisis reporting, 171; on 911, 55, 191, 192
- Rather, Dan, 26
- rating, of words in English Lexicon Project, 110
- ratio, responses to terrorist threats and attacks, reporting, 7, 77, 83
- RCMP. *See* Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- readers, of news, 33, 45, 50–51, 180, 183, 184; attention of, 185; terrorism beat effect on, 116, 117, 118, 119, 128, 141
- reassurance, of terrorism beat audiences, 56, 116
- Reid, Richard C., 67
- relations, of Israel and Palestine, 62
- relationship, between terrorism beat and news reporting, 191–92, 193; distance and coverage in, 159–61, 163–64, 176; FBI in, 134; physical distance and news tone in, 170–74, 175
- reliability, of coders and raters, 62–63
- reliance, on negative language by journalists, 90
- reporters, 18, 30, 113–14, 143–44, 176–77; *Boston Globe*, 159, 162; extreme language used by, 179–80, 184–85; industry archetypes and, 38; sensationalism narrative of, viii, 3, 11, 16, 17, 20; using “victim” and “fear,” 33–34, 36, 87–90, 179–80, 182–83, 191
- reporting, news media, 34, 40, 70–71, 163, 173, 174; confidence intervals of, 73, 97, 97, 98; consequences of, 7, 11, 12, 42–43, 56; counterterrorism, 66–69, 79, 180–81; on crisis, 36, 142–43, 146, 148, 159, 186–88; localization of, 149–50, 157, 187; minimalism in, 106, 107–9; third person style of, 103, 105, 113
- reporting, on terrorism and counterterrorism, vii, viii, 2–6, 11, 13, 23; 9/11, 33–34, 36, 51, 67, 92, 192; criminal justice and, 82–83; economic influence on, 77; evidentiary approach to, 60–62; imbalance of, 76; rules for, 26–27, 36–38; volume of, 59
- research design, for effective counterterrorism experiments, 130–32
- researchers, design of terrorism beat by, 28, 130–32, 171–73, 190–92
- research methods, techniques for, 12, 13, 18
- research strategies, for journalists, 53–56
- resiliency, of American public, 2, 6–7, 49, 121, 141, 154; psychological, 185
- responses, to terrorism, 69, 118–19, 121,

- 122, 132–33, 179; community, 7, 32–33, 48, 59, 60, 83–85; criminal justice, 46–47, 68; psychological, 13–14, 22, 117–18
- responsibilities, of journalists, 38–39, 145–46
- restraint, of sensationalism of reporters, 40, 146
- results, from English Lexicon Project, 110
- Reuters style guide, 45
- revenue, internet and newspaper differences in, 30; subscriptions, 34
- revision, of norm of objectivity, 42
- robotic vehicle, in Dallas Police shooting, 169
- roles and obligations, of news organizations, 37, 40
- Romney, Mitt, 104
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), 104
- Rudolph, Eric, 165
- rules, 4, 9, 13, 18, 19, 26–27; of coding team for articles, 62; of crisis communication, 52–53; of journalistic writing, 45; norms and practices, 36–38, 107
- Ryfe, David, 113
- safety, from terrorist attacks, 136
- samples, newspaper coverage strategies for, 54, 60
- Sandman, Peter M., 142, 143–45, 157
- Santos, Juan Manuel, 26
- scores, based on net tone, 90–91, 93, 94, 127, 128
- sea animals, in counterterrorism, use of, 69–70
- security, in terrorism beat, 10–11, 56, 71, 138, 151, 186; feelings of, 121–22, 127–28, 129, 133–34
- security and liberty, in democratic societies, 71
- sensationalism, news narrative of, viii, 3, 11, 16, 17, 20; Boston Marathon bombing and, 141; images and, 25; language, 33–34, 86, 87, 106, 114; profits enhanced by, 117; restraint on, 40, 146; sobriety dominating, 50–52; terrorism beat and, 30–31, 59, 179, 192
- sense of emergency, in US, 170
- sense of security, from terrorism, 14, 115–17, 118, 119, 121–22, 186; 9/11 attacks effecting, 167; simulation effecting, 10–11
- sensitivity, in terrorism beat, 10, 66, 119, 146, 173, 186
- separation, of staff in newsrooms, 38–39
- “17-Year Search, an Emotional Discovery and Terror Ends” (Johnston), 91
- Shapiro, Robert Y., 22, 32, 117, 130
- Shelby, Will, 129, 130
- significance, of US newspapers on terrorism, 24, 25
- simplification, of profit-seeking model, 29
- simulation, of exposure to terrorism beat, 56, 126–27, 129, 139, 140, 186; sense of security from, 10–11
- sober language, in terrorism beat, 114
- sobriety, sensationalism dominated by, 50–52
- social media, fear in terrorism and, 24, 136, 138, 148, 159, 193–94
- Society of Professional Journalists, 5, 37, 39, 42, 43
- sociology and psychology, of news reporting, 18, 19
- Soroka, Stuart, 90
- Sovereign Citizens, threats from, 132
- spatial variation, in crisis coverage, 144–45, 159–60, 187, 189–90
- Sports Illustrated*, 165
- standard definition, of terrorism, 11–12
- standard estimate of effect size (Cohen’s *d*), 126
- Stanglin, Doug, 104
- state sponsorship, of terrorism, 64–65
- stimulus, response to, 10–11, 121, 122, 127
- St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 164–65
- stories, on terrorism beat, 3, 59, 67–70, 71, 128, 141; on terrorist threats and attacks, 31, 48–49, 63–66, 128

- strategies, for journalists, 8, 9, 23, 41, 53–56, 83; fear appeals, 123, 182–85
- students, at Purdue University, 131, 132
- studies, on terrorism beat, 31, 120, 121, 122, 130–31, 132–40
- study, start dates, end dates, and epicenters in terrorism crises, 172
- subject matter, of terrorism beat, 46–47, 59–60, 72, 75, 128, 193; 1997–2014, 78, 80; threats and attacks as, 74–75, 75, 78, 80, 80; variation of, 48–49, 50, 128
- subnational actors, political violence of, 6, 12, 13, 58–59
- subscriptions, newspapers revenue in, 34
- successes and failures, counterterrorism, 47, 49
- successful and unsuccessful, terrorist attacks, 15
- Supreme Court, Israel, vii
- survey, on journalistic coverage of governments, 40
- symbiotic relationship, of journalists and terrorists, 2
- symptoms, of PTSD, 118
- Taliban, 167
- techniques, for terrorism beat reporting, 2, 8, 12–13, 14, 18, 42–43
- television, sensationalism of images on, 25, 193–94
- temporal distance, 146, 170–71, 172, 174, 177, 187
- terms, of terrorism beat, 96–99
- terrorism, 8, 10–12, 15, 18, 24, 120; anxiety from, 23, 122, 134, 156, 180; attacks in US, 19, 58, 63–66, 123, 170; community responses to, 7, 32–33, 48, 59, 83–85; critics on, 6, 16, 17, 195; economic impact of, 71, 87; encouragement effect in, 21; evidentiary approach to reporting, 60–62; graphic depictions of, 1, 141; harm from reporting on, 22, 149; *New York Times* reporting on, 97, 97–98; protection from, 46, 70, 118, 124, 137–38; reporting on, 2, 13, 25; sense of security from, 14; simulation of, 56, 126–27, 129, 139, 140, 186; victims of, 2, 21, 68, 70–71, 146–47; war on, 32, 67–68, 81–83, 104, 167, 180
- Terrorism and the Politics of Fear* (Altheide), 87
- terrorism beat. *See specific topics*
- terrorism crisis, in US, 55, 163–74
- terrorists, 2, 14–15, 21, 64–65, 67, 124; attention on, 64, 68, 108; in Canada, 104
- terrorist violence, governments management of, 12, 32, 35, 47, 137–38
- third person, news media reporting in, 103, 105, 113
- Thornburgh, Richard, 143, 145
- threats, of terrorists, viii, 3, 5, 6, 75, 78, 80; attacks and, 7, 10, 11, 13, 20, 21; bomb, 164, 165, 166; counterterrorism *versus*, 31–32, 180–81; economic interests and, 22, 26, 29, 86; effective and ineffective responses to, 132–33; models of reporting in attacks and, 73–74; news beat dominated by, 35; panic in public caused by, 145–46; stories on, 31, 48–49, 63–66, 128; of violence, 122–23
- Three Mile Island Nuclear Disaster (1979), 142–46, 151, 156, 157, 159
- time, terrorism beat reporting over, 49–50, 99, 174, 176
- tonal language, on terrorism beat, 90–93, 93, 94, 94–96, 144, 183; wording of, 106–14, 111
- tone, of news reports, 10, 41, 93, 94, 105–7, 108, 154; crime beat and terrorism, 94, 95, 97, 97, 98, 183; in crisis terrorism, 173, 174, 186–87; distance and, 160–61, 161, 170–71, 175, 176; qualitative and quantitative methods of, 100, 156–59; scores based on, 127; variation in, 96, 99, 144, 172, 174, 176
- topics, of terrorism beat, 180–82
- torture, vii, 9, 112, 184, 189; of Saudi national, 101
- tragedy and grief, news of, 43, 156
- training camps, terrorists, 67

- traveling, to Israel, 134–35
- trends, in terrorism beat, 76–81, 82, 83, 192
- triggers, in terrorism beat readers, 118
- Trope, Yaacov, 52, 146
- Trump, Donald, 103
- Tsarnaev brothers, 3
- Unabomber, 91
- unbiasedness, in random samples of terrorism beat, 55
- United States (US), 18–19, 24, 25, 27–28, 58, 105; counterterrorism politics in, 69, 83, 181; influential producers of news in, 61, 75, 87, 93, 94; journalistic practices in, 4, 5; military involvement in, 32, 98; punishment from courts of, 21–22; sense of emergency in, 170; studies on bomb threats in (2012 and 2013), 132–34; terrorism in, 48, 56, 63–66, 67, 123, 195
- unsuccessful and successful, terrorist attacks, 15
- US. *See* United States
- USA Today*, 61, 64, 79, 80, 81, 84; detached narrative in, 104; as guide for terrorism beat, 95; tone of terrorism beat reporting in, 94
- valence scores, English Lexicon Project database of, 109–10, 111, 112–13
- variation, in terrorism beat, 48–50, 92–93, 93, 128, 187; of Boston Marathon bombing coverage, 141–42, 149, 162, 163; negativity and, 119–20; of tone, 96, 99, 144, 172, 174, 176
- verbosity, contrasted with tonality, 107
- viability, of newspapers, 29–31
- “victim” and “fear,” reporters using, 33–34, 36, 87–90, 179–80, 182–83, 191
- victims, of terrorism, 2, 18, 21, 68, 70–71, 146–47
- violence, as terrorism beat focus, 2, 10, 20, 21, 31, 122–23; acts of, 63, 85, 120, 170, 191; in Israel, 137; political, 6, 58, 65, 83, 121
- violence politics, contrasted with nonviolence politics, 83
- volunteers, for studies on counterterrorism experiments, 131, 135
- Wall Street Journal*, 7, 50, 61, 79, 81, 84; community responses to terrorism in, 182; counterterrorism in, 80; on Gaza attack, 178; tone of terrorism beat reporting in, 94, 94, 95
- Waltham, Barbara Marriott, 141
- war on terror, 32, 67–68, 81–83, 104, 167, 180
- Warriner, Amy, 109–10
- Washington Post*, 50, 58, 61, 68, 69, 79; community responses in, 84; on counterterrorism, 80; on Gaza attack, 179; inverted pyramid style article in, 102–3; on terrorist threats and attacks, 81; tone of terrorism beat reporting in, 94; Woodward article in, 101
- watchdog norm, of journalistic practices, viii–ix, 4, 40–41, 46, 179, 188
- Webb, Patrick, 91
- West Bank, vii, 121
- Winter, Michael, 104
- wire services, 150, 160
- Woodward, Bob, 101, 103
- wording of tonal language, on terrorism beat, 106–14, 111
- work crisis, for reporters, 30
- world knowledge, newspapers contribution to, 24
- World Trade Center: 9/11 attacks on, 26, 121, 166; bombing (1993), 170
- writing, rules for, 8, 41–42, 44–45, 52, 107–8; styles of, 100–103, 113, 189
- Young, Lori, 90
- Yugoslav criminal code, 102
- Zechmeister, Elizabeth J., 120, 125
- Zhuta, Idriz, 102–3
- Zussman, Asaf and Noam, 129

