

The framing of 9/11 and Australian television's framing of the tenth anniversary

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Abstract

In this article, we analyse Australian television news programs' framing of the tenth anniversary of the events of 9/11. We found that television news programs in Australia have moved away from the conflation of terrorism with Muslims and Islam and that news about the tenth anniversary was framed around the themes of human resilience and resolution. Notably absent is the news frame of blame on Islam or Muslims for the attacks against the US.

Introduction

The tenth anniversary of the terror attacks in 2001 in the United States of America (the 2001 attacks henceforth referred to as 9/11) provided a unique opportunity to determine what frames were used by the media in reporting the associated events and whether these frames have changed over the intervening decade. In this article, we explore the frames and themes of free-to-air Australian news broadcasts about the anniversary. We take this approach because anniversary journalism may have the potential to affect sociopolitical representation of Muslims, and we wanted to determine if such a shift in representation was present within Australian television news coverage of the tenth anniversary of 9/11.

We wanted to see whether the frames of closure, resilience and progress were present in the Australian television coverage of the tenth anniversary, particularly because of the associated dedication of the 9/11 Memorial in New York. In identifying the news frames that informed the reportage of the tenth anniversary on Australian television news programs, we looked at the language used in the reportage. We also examined the use of symbols in the television coverage because they contribute to the construction of the themes, news frames and overall narrative of the tenth anniversary.

Scholars (such as Kitch [2002]) have argued that the media are central to the collective understanding of the past, and in America this is demonstrated through media coverage and storytelling around anniversaries of events such as the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and John F. Kennedy's assassination. The media coverage of these anniversaries helps people not only interpret the past, but also understand American ideals and identity (Kitch 2002, pp. 44–5). In the months after the 9/11 attacks, the American news media provided a national forum for grieving, and the media worked to make sense of 'even "senseless" news events by placing them within a broader, cultural grand narrative of resilience and progress' (Kitch 2003, p. 213). A similar process occurs in Australia with the commemoration and associated media coverage of Anzac Day. Events such as Anzac Day reinterpret the meaning

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of the events on which this commemoration is based and provide an interpretation of what it means to be Australian—that is, through their retelling, they embody and re-embodiment the cultural characteristics of Australians. These include mateship and determinism, tapping into one of the themes that informs Australian identity and culture: the ‘digger’ (Manne 2007).

Kitch found that the media define national memory through storytelling and recollection when reporting anniversaries of events such as 9/11 (Kitch 2002, p. 45). Edy (1999, p. 71) describes this process as collective memory making:

Collective memory, the meaning that a community makes of its past, is home to critical aspects of political culture, community tradition, and social identity. It informs our understanding of past events and present relationships, and it contributes to our expectations about the future.

Edy (1999, p. 72) emphasises the impact of television coverage on the ‘construction and maintenance of a national collective memory’ explaining that it makes stories more visceral, and the media more generally ‘may encourage the personal and emotional connections with the past that are associated with collective memory’. Just as significant is the power of the media to remind huge audiences collectively and simultaneously of past events. The power of the media for Edy is that its ‘depictions of the past have repercussions for the ways in which a community relates to its past’ (Edy 1999, p. 73). She elaborates:

The stories told by reporters may affect whether we see ourselves as one community or many groups, whether we think critically about our past or just accept it as “the way it was”, and whether and how we see the past as relevant to the present and the future.

(1999, p. 73)

However, Edy (1999, p. 83) warns that ‘journalists use our collective memory as a tool to analyse and dramatise without much concern for its construction and maintenance’. In other words, reportage can be decontextualised by the use of the dramatic news frame that typifies many news reports. Supporting this idea, Frow (1999) translates the work of Perle Nora, who describes commemorations as tending to

be made up of media events, tourism, promotions and entertainment; its medium is no longer the classroom or the public square but television, museums, expositions, colloquia, and it takes place not in official ceremonies but in television spectacles.

Television can be particularly powerful in relation to the presentation and positioning of commemorations and the remembrance of anniversaries. In examining the role that television journalism played in legitimating the invasion of Afghanistan post 9/11, Cottle (2011, p. 233) argues that ‘television journalism can perform a vital role in processes of public understanding and the deliberation of

collective violence'. He says television was the main form by which many people witnessed or saw the events of 9/11, but following these events there was a conspicuous absence on television news broadcasts of images of civilian death caused by US bombings. Cottle (2011, p. 234) emphasises the importance of television as a medium that brings audiences together and 'potentially gives vent to the clash of different political interests and cultural viewpoints that are the building blocks for wider public understanding and opinion formation'. Therefore, examining how Australian television news covered an event such as the tenth anniversary of 9/11 is important in terms of understanding the transformations, if any, in the public representation of groups that have been politicised partly as a result of the events of 9/11, and the transformations in our understanding of these events.

Grand narratives and 9/11

When the term *narrative* is invoked it is often used synonymously with *story*. But a narrative is a broader concept that encompasses

a coherent system of interrelated and sequentially organized stories that share of a common rhetorical desire to resolve a conflict by establishing audience expectations according to the known trajectories of its literary and rhetorical form.

(Halverson, Goodall & Corman 2011, p. 14)

When a narrative dominates, it is often referred to as a grand or master narrative, which is defined as 'a transhistorical narrative that is deeply embedded in a particular culture' (Halverson, Goodall & Corman 2011, p. 14). With respect to the terrorist attacks of 9/11, a grand narrative has formed over the past decade that positions evil forces inspired by a perverted interpretation of Islam as declaring war on the United States and attacking the nation's centres of political and economic might (Atkins 2011; Karim 2006). Those counted as supporters of the terrorists are enemies of not only the US but of freedom, democracy, and all the West in general, while the victims of the attacks are heroes who sacrificed their lives and are worthy of the nation's and the free world's highest honour (Atkins 2011; Karim 2006; National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004). This grand narrative was central to the discourse associated with the US-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq post 9/11 (Zelizer & Allan 2011). It has also been central to domestic anti-terror and security policy over the past decade. But our earlier analysis of Australian television's coverage of the ninth anniversary of 9/11 (Ewart & Rane 2011) suggests the construction of a subsequent chapter to the grand narrative that is based on reconciliation with those (read Muslims) who accept the American and broader Western values of freedom, democracy, tolerance and coexistence.

While the tenth anniversary of 9/11 will prompt a plethora of research into how it was publicly commemorated and how it was reported by the media, that work is yet to be published. In this literature review, we focus on the available research into

how the media has covered the preceding anniversaries of the events. Because there has been very little focus in the academic literature on this topic, we will also explore the research that assists in understanding how the original events of 9/11 were covered, and the types of narratives and news frames associated with their coverage and coverage of the preceding events.

US media coverage of 9/11 and subsequent anniversaries

Li (2007) studied the first 24 hours of US television coverage of 9/11 and found that rather than offering consolation and advice, television stations primarily provided information about the events. Li identified three stages in the first 24 hours of coverage, including the first stage, which involved the disaster, the second stage, which focused on making sense of the events, and the final stage, which included discussion of the long-term ramifications. The study revealed that human interest was not a dominant frame during the first 24 hours of television coverage, and where that frame was used, it was about collective groups of people rather than individuals.

Other research has identified that the American media quickly turned the events of 9/11 into a grand narrative about patriotism and courage. Kitch (2003) analysed the coverage of 9/11 in 20 editions of news magazines. She found that the national news media played a critical role in providing an entry point for millions of Americans to 'fully participate' in the funereal rituals and national mourning forums, making it 'become an "American" story in symbolic ways that went beyond the fact of war' (Kitch 2003, p. 222). This turned the story into a lasting one of 'courage, redemption, and patriotic pride—a narrative construction that occurred in and through American journalism'—rather than one of 'terror, death and destruction' (Kitch 2003, p. 222). Kitch identifies that the narratives associated with the news magazines' reporting of 9/11 (published in the three months after the event) provided a kind of 'closure to a national grieving process'. She finds grand narratives of 'courage, sacrifice, faith, redemption, and patriotism' (Kitch 2003, p. 213), and concludes that these news media were able to shift the grand narrative about 9/11 'from one of vulnerability and fear to one of strength and resolve' (p. 214). These narratives were also embodied in the photographs used by the same news magazines; the same set of images depicting 'heroes, victims, and witnesses' was consistently used, contributing to the development of the grand narratives associated with the story (Kitch 2003, p. 217). The similarity in the content and themes used by these news magazines suggested that 'even as they articulated the shock and disruption of the disaster, news media almost immediately began to search for common symbols that would lend social sense to the tragedy' (Kitch 2003, p. 217).

Another article, which examines how the websites of US network-affiliated television stations framed the second anniversary of 9/11, also identifies patriotism and nationalism as the grand narratives associated with photographs published on those websites. Greer (2005) finds the majority of news stories on these websites

were framed within the commemorative theme, with a focus on memorialisation and remembrance, and using a preponderance of images of patriotic symbols such as the American flag.

Our study builds on our earlier work (Ewart & Rane 2011), where we examined Australian television news coverage of the ninth anniversary of 9/11, which coincided with the Muslim Eid festival marking the end of the fasting month of Ramadan. We found the news frames used in the coverage aired had changed significantly when compared with the research about news frames used in reportage of the original event. There was a shift from demonising Muslims as terrorists, to a more conciliatory tone that was labelled as a narrative of 'moving forward'. Our earlier study revealed that the usual 'clash of civilizations' frame, which informs much media coverage of stories involving Muslims, was conspicuously absent from Australian television news coverage of the ninth anniversary of 9/11. We found there was very little use of the grand narrative of patriotism, and very few stereotypical images such as American flags and women in hijabs.

Terrorism and the media after 11 September 2001

Although there was significant interest in media coverage of terrorism prior to 9/11, after those events there was a surge of interest among researchers in relation to how the media frame and report acts of terror (Leurs 2007; Papacharissi & de Fatima Oliveira 2008; Ryan 2004; Norris, Kern & Just 2003a, 2003b; Schaefer 2003; Willcox 2001). Research post-9/11 has focused on the changing nature of journalism in relation to the attacks in the US (Zelizer & Allan 2002), how terrorists use media (Torres Soriano 2008), and the problematic nature of media coverage of terrorism (Cohen-Almagor 2005). Other research has focused on the negative nature of media portrayals of Islam and its adherents post-9/11 and the media's conflation of Islam with terrorism (Aly 2007; Tayob 2006; Martin & Phelan 2002).

Studies of the language used by media in their reportage of terrorism have identified that US editorial writers rely on positive terms to describe Americans and allied countries, while negative terms are used for other people and countries (Ryan 2004). Ryan also found that these editorial writers were heavily dependent on citing government officials.

Karim's (2006) study of American media treatment of Muslims is useful for our work because it highlights the way media use visual signifiers to denote 'Islamic fundamentalism'. Images of the hijab and the turban worn by religious scholars routinely accompany stories involving Muslims. News frames that are commonly used by the media include those that position Muslims as violent, and voices that offer alternative views of Muslims are commonly ignored.

Scholars have suggested that Said's (1979) theory of Orientalism provides an explanation for the negative and stereotypical portrayals of Muslims in mainstream media. The problem with Orientalism, or the more recently used term *Islamophobia*, is that it 'does not allow for diversity; contradictions and semiotic tensions are ignored as the homogenizing ethnocentric template of otherness assumes that there is only one interpretation of Islam' (Saeed 2007, p. 457). Saeed's

findings reveal that the discourse of Islamophobia was evident in the British media during the months following 9/11, through repeated calls for Muslims to attempt to integrate into British society.

In a study of the Dutch press, van Atteveldt, Ruigrok and Kleinnijenhuis (2006) note that the press made associations between Islam, migrants and terror in coverage of stories involving Muslims before the attacks of 9/11. While these findings are important, there is no evidence in their study to suggest how these frames and associations were taken up or rejected by audiences.

Clearly, research has identified the propensity of the mainstream news media towards negative news portrayals of Muslims, and the tendency to conflate terrorism with Muslims. Nonetheless, we believe an examination of television news reportage of a significant commemorative event—the tenth anniversary of 9/11—may reveal whether these trends persist over time or whether they change.

Framing theory

We chose framing theory to analyse the news broadcasts in our study because it can be used to identify explanations that are given preference in relation to certain events covered by the media. News frames, it is suggested, are highly influential, with media audiences using them as a way of comprehending events. New frames, therefore, can inform their reactions to those events. As early as 1980, Gitlin was using framing theory. He suggests that frames are 'persistent selection, emphasis, and exclusion' of information in news stories (Gitlin 1980, p. 7). Papacharissi and de Fatima Oliveira (2008, p. 54) support this, stating that frames define reality for people, bringing attention to preferred interpretations.

Another useful definition of framing is provided by Entman (1993, p. 52):

To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.

Reese (2001, p. 11) develops framing theory further, suggesting that frames are 'organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world'.

While the aforementioned works provide solid definitions of framing theory, they also identify particular aspects of framing theory that are useful for our study. For our study, framing theory and its elements allow the classification of grand narratives used in television news stories. In line with this, a particularly worthwhile approach to framing theory that we draw on is provided by Miller and Riechert (2001). They suggest that the following four stages make up the framing cycle: 'emergence', 'definition/conflict', 'resonance', and 'resolution' (Miller & Riechert 2001, p. 111). We looked for these in the news stories we analysed.

The emergence phase involves a concentration on the events at the centre of the news. The definition/conflict stage involves competing stakeholders trying to have their preferred point of view used as the frame for the story. The resonance phase

sees one frame dominate coverage because it taps into the values and understandings of media audiences. The final phase sees policy developed in response to a dominant frame.

In practice, news frames can be studied by looking at who appears in the story (Hertog & McLeod 2001) and then by finding the dominant narrative. Hertog and McLeod (2001) suggest the words used in news stories are an important contributor to the frames.

Methodology

We used news frame theory in our analysis because news frames are an important element in the construction of news narratives and in the construction of social problems. In particular, we examined data to see which, if any, of Miller and Riechert's (2001) four phases of the framing cycle—'emergence', 'definition/conflict', 'resonance', and 'resolution'—were present in the Australian television news broadcast coverage of the tenth anniversary. In relation to the first frame, 'emergence', we wanted to see if any new issues emerged from the tenth anniversary coverage, while also seeing if the second and third frames, 'definition/conflict' and 'resonance' respectively, were present. Most importantly, we wanted to determine whether the fourth phase, 'resolution', was employed as a framing device and, if so, how it was used.

We focused on the television news items broadcast on free-to-air stations in Australia on 11 September 2011 and 12 September 2011. Our sample included these two days to allow for coverage of anniversary events in both Australian and American time zones. We examined the coverage by Australia's five free-to-air television stations, analysing stories broadcast on their main evening news bulletins to answer the following questions:

1. What grand narratives informed the coverage of the tenth anniversary by Australian television news broadcasts on 11 and 12 September 2011?
2. How did Australia's five main television stations frame the tenth anniversary of 9/11?
3. Using the existing literature about the framing of 9/11 and subsequent anniversaries, was there any evidence of a change in the news frames used?

As part of our examination of the television coverage of the tenth anniversary, we wanted to see how Islam and Muslims were framed and whether and how mentions of Islam and its followers were included and situated in these stories. This was particularly important because of the influence that 9/11 has had in respect of relations between Islam and the West.

We analysed 32 news stories about the anniversary of 9/11, broadcast by Australia's five major television news stations, including the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), Special Broadcasting Corporation (SBS), Seven Network, Nine Network and Network Ten, on prime-time evening news. A significant amount of airtime was given to the tenth anniversary of 9/11 by the stations. The news stories were identified using the TVNEWS database. Of these stories, 18 were broadcast on 11 September 2011, and 14 on 12 September 2011.

The latter were included to correspond with marking of the occasion in the United States (east coast), which is 15 hours behind Australia's east coast.

Each story was viewed several times to identify its 'key concepts, dominant narratives and vocabulary' (Hertog & McLeod 2001) and the order in which they were presented. We looked closely at the images used in each story because, as Kitch (2003, p. 215) emphasises, journalism creates a national community and reinforces the nation's values and identity through 'symbolism and storytelling, devices that allow them [the media] to place the facts of even shocking events into recognizable frameworks'. We examined each news story to identify the key news frames, and the language used and its imputations. Sources used in each story and whether they spoke directly or indirectly in the broadcast, or if they were only mentioned in the news story, were noted.

Data and discussion

11 September 2011

The tenth anniversary of the attacks was the lead story on all five free-to-air channels on 11 September 2011. The dominant frame across all channels was remembrance of the victims. The coverage was primarily about the memorials constructed in New York, Pennsylvania and at the Pentagon, and the ceremonies at these three sites in honour of the attack victims. All channels ran stories that specifically focused on the memorials and the ceremonies. For example, Seven Network's lead story focused on the various memorials being held in the US:

Presenter: The world has paused to remember September the 11th on the tenth anniversary of the devastating attacks on America. Memorial services were held in Washington, Pennsylvania and New York, where almost 3000 people died.

News values of proximity and local relevance also informed the coverage on all channels. For example the first item on ABC News began with the following from the news presenter:

In Sydney, families who lost loved ones on September the 11th have also been commemorating the anniversary. An interfaith memorial service was held in the city.

Each of the free-to-air stations involved in our study focused on one or more Australians whose relatives had died in the 9/11 attacks.

There were some notable differences in the coverage by the various channels. ABC ran four stories totalling 12 minutes 23 seconds, framed around the Australia-US alliance. The main story featured highlights from the memorials and ceremonies in New York, Pennsylvania and the Pentagon, including interviews with Australians attending the events. It constructed strong links between Australia and the US through coverage of the war in Afghanistan, and a retrospective account of jihadist terrorism in Indonesia that culminated in the Bali bombings and a wave of terrorist attacks in Jakarta. For example, ABC's fourth item was a lengthy

piece that covered the war in Afghanistan, the Bali bombings and recent terrorist attacks in Indonesia:

Correspondent: The 9/11 decade has been a decade of war, and the US led coalition is still battling against insurgents in Afghanistan. It's cost thousands of lives and billions of dollars, and al Qaeda, the Taliban and other groups are continuing their fight. Afghanistan correspondent Sally Sara reports from observation post Mustang, on the Afghanistan–Pakistan border.

The shorter stories featured the Prime Minister speaking at a memorial service in Canberra, where the close relationship between Australia and the US was reiterated; a memorial service in Sydney; and South Australian firefighters commemorating the sacrifices of their US counterparts.

Seven Network framed its coverage of the anniversary in terms of moving forward, beyond the negative relations that characterised Islam and the West during the past decade. It aired three stories totalling almost seven minutes. The first was about the memorials and ceremonies in New York, Pennsylvania and at the Pentagon. The second story featured Australians who lost family members in the attacks, but focused on Simon Kennedy—an Australian whose mother, Yvonne Kennedy, was killed in the attack on the Pentagon—and his condemnation of revenge attacks against Muslim people.

Angela Cox (reporter): As a stand-up comic, Simon now uses laughs to spread the message of peace. Simon says his mum, a Red Cross volunteer of 25 years, would have condemned the backlash against the Muslim community since 9/11. Rais Bhuiyan was the victim of a revenge attack, shot in the eye for being Muslim. Remarkably, he tried to stop his attacker being executed.

The inclusion of this mention of a Muslim person who lost an eye in a revenge attack was followed by an interview with imam Zaid Shakir, a leading African-American Islamic scholar, who highlighted the need to find a 'way forward' in terms of relations with America's Muslim communities. Seven Network's third story covered memorial services in Victoria for two local victims of the attacks. The US Consul General was interviewed as part of this story, expressing the need to move beyond the grief.

Nine Network ran four stories of almost seven minutes in total, which, like the ABC's coverage, were framed in terms of the close connection Australia has with the US. The first story focused on the memorial sites and ceremonies in New York, Pennsylvania, and at the Pentagon. The second story featured an Australian who lost a relative in the attacks, while the third and fourth stories were about memorial services in Melbourne and Canberra. The US Consul General was featured acknowledging the strong bond between the US and Australia, while at the service in Canberra the Prime Minister was featured avowing Australia's strong bond with the US.

US Consul General (Frank Urbanic): And I think it's a tribute to the good partnership that we have that the feelings between our two peoples are so strong.

Network Ten ran one story of almost 15 minutes on the anniversary, more than double the time allocated by Seven and Nine Networks, and significantly longer than the stories run by the ABC and SBS. This lengthy piece was followed by a number of shorter stories of a further six minutes' in total, focusing on tributes and commemorations around Australia for the victims and heroes of the attacks. For example, in the third story:

Dan Sutton (US Correspondent): Saint Paul's became a home to weary firefighters and a place for grieving New Yorkers to pour out their emotions.

Ten years on, the fences of Saint Paul's are covered yet again with thousands of individual messages written on white ribbon. Many of them are personal—for loved ones who have been lost—but others are messages of hope. This one reads 'when everything else is lost, peace and love remain'.

Anne Rossi (interviewee): My ribbon's just up here.

Dan Sutton (US Correspondent): And what did you write?

Anne Rossi (interviewee): I just said that my thoughts are with all the survivors and the heroes of 9/11.

Network Ten's coverage was presented as a comprehensive retrospective featuring the memorial sites and ceremonies in both the US and Australia, as well as interviews with the Australians whose family members were victims of the attacks. Unlike the other channels, however, Ten also featured its own coverage of the original events of 9/11 and included interviews with its presenters and reporters who covered them. For example (second story):

Dan Sutton (US Correspondent): Alright, Hamish McDonald in Kabul. Thank you. Now, Network Ten was the first Australian network to break the news of the September 11 attacks. In what was to go on to become one her most renowned bulletins, late-news presenter Sandra Sully anchored live reports from the desk as pictures flooded in and the horror unfolded.

[Sandra Sully being interviewed on September 11, 2011]: The pictures didn't look real. You don't actually expect to see something like that, and, for a second, for a flash second, you worry that it's some sort of hoax.

SBS focused on Australia's shared suffering with the US on the occasion. It ran two stories totalling over 12 minutes. The first item detailed the memorial sites and services in New York, Pennsylvania, and at the Pentagon, while the second was about memorial services held in Australia. In both, an overriding theme was how the anniversary was bringing people together.

All five channels framed their coverage within the parameters of the official version of the events of 11 September 2001. There was no questioning of the official version or any reference to dissenting voices, in spite of the plethora of opinions that challenge various details of the events. Overall, the coverage was about honouring the victims. The 10 Australians who were killed were central to the framing of the anniversary in terms of Australia's shared experiences with and connection to the US. Within this context, the ABC and Channel Ten also included Australia's involvement in Afghanistan, focusing on the alliance with the US.

Despite a focus on the threat of Islamist terrorism during the earlier years of the post-9/11 decade, the tenth anniversary coverage made very few references to Islam or Muslims. This might be best explained in terms of the news frames employed. Coverage of the Islamist threat does not fit within frames based on honouring victims and moving beyond the pain of the original event. References to Islam and Muslims are telling in this regard. Only one story, broadcast by the ABC, made mention of Islam-inspired violence, which was presented in the context of pre-9/11 violence between Muslim and Christian communities in Indonesia. This formed the 'background' of the story's feature on Islamist terrorism in Bali and Jakarta post 9/11. By contrast, Seven Network and SBS positioned their references to Islam and Muslims with the dominant frames of shared loss, reconciliation and moving on from 9/11. The former focused on hate crimes against Muslims post-9/11, and the initiatives American Muslim leaders had taken to build bridges of understanding with the wider American society, while the latter focused on a memorial service that addressed the importance of interfaith dialogue post-9/11.

12 September 2011

Overall, 12 September 2011 provided less coverage of the tenth anniversary than the previous day. The Seven and Nine networks and the ABC each broadcast only one story on the event, of 2 minutes 45 seconds, 1 minute 50 seconds and 2 minutes 42 seconds respectively. Network Ten presented four stories, which amounted to 8 minutes 31 seconds. SBS broadcast five stories, which accounted for 22 minutes 56 seconds of airtime. These stories included a comprehensive recap of the original attacks, the memorial sites and services in the US, the responses of people attending the ceremonies, memorials taking place in Europe and a retrospective of the 'war on terror'. SBS featured a terrorism expert in its sixth story:

Presenter: So what has Australia learned from the attacks of September the 11th? The ANU's Clive Williams is an expert on terrorism, and former top government security official. He's reflected on the past, as well the possibility of a future attack here.

Clive Williams (speaking to camera): Well, the homegrown extremism issue is really related to our foreign policies. And I suppose what probably made us become more prominent was our involvement in Iraq initially, because there are only four countries involved in the combat coalition that was the US, UK,

Poland and ourselves. And I think obviously our close alignment with the United States and Israel is a factor.

It is noteworthy that the coverage on 12 September was not at the top of the news agenda as was the case the previous day. With the exception of SBS, on which the tenth anniversary was the lead story, the channels positioned the event third and even fourth place behind stories about a car chase, an Australian tennis player's (Sam Stosur) victory at the US Open, the escapades of an Australian football player (Brendan Fevola), and investigations into the death of a convicted Australian criminal (Carl Williams).

Across all five channels, the coverage focused on the memorial services held in New York, Pennsylvania and at the Pentagon, as well as featuring the Australian relatives of the victims killed in the attacks. The dominant frame was the remembrance of the victims, that they shall not be forgotten. Like the coverage of the previous day, the frame of honouring the victims did not involve blame or animosity towards people of the Islamic faith. Amid the tributes to the victims, sentiments of 'moving on' from 9/11 were repeated. Such framing was also a feature of the ninth anniversary coverage (Ewart & Rane 2011).

News frames

The Australian media coverage of the tenth anniversary of 9/11 was framed within the same grand narratives that have emerged in the US over the past decade. Australia has seen itself as a victim since the initial attacks, sharing a loss with the US. Ten Australians were killed in the attacks. The Australian Prime Minister at the time, John Howard, invoked the ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand, United States) Security Treaty and pledged Australia's support to fight those forces responsible for the attacks. The subsequent significant loss of Australian lives in Indonesia in attacks carried out by groups ideologically aligned with those responsible for the 9/11 attacks also reinforced a sense of shared loss with the US, providing justification for Australia to share the burden of the wars fought in Afghanistan and Iraq. Also noteworthy in this context is that more than 30 Australian soldiers have been killed in the US-led war in Afghanistan.

The frame of shared loss and heroic response is evident in the Australian media coverage of the tenth anniversary of 9/11. Most pronounced within the Australian version of this narrative is the Australia–US connection, which was emphasised across all channels in their news coverage of the relatives of US victims alongside relatives of Australian victims. The coverage also integrated images of memorials and ceremonies conducted in the US with those conducted in Australia. Excerpts of speeches delivered by the Australian Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, in the news stories are also instructive in this regard. The Prime Minister could be heard consistently emphasising the Australia–US alliance and shared experiences. Others, including the US Consul General, frequently reinforced her sentiments.

An underlying dimension of the grand narrative of 9/11 is the threat posed to the Western way of life by radical Islam. It is remarkable that there was limited reference to Islam or Muslims in the Australian television news media's coverage of

the tenth anniversary. Seven Network featured a Muslim man assaulted in a 9/11 revenge attack 'because of [his] Islamic faith'. The Muslim man said, in response to being attacked and not retaliating, that, 'my Islamic faith taught me not to take his life'. The story featured American imam, Zaid Shakir, who stated, 'It's easy to hate, it's easy to demonise, but we have hard work before us to build bridges'.

SBS also positioned its references to Islam and Muslims with the frame of reconciliation and working together. SBS featured a 9/11 memorial service held at Saint Mary's Church in Sydney, attended by Jewish, Christian and Muslim leaders. The theme of the service was the importance of interfaith dialogue, and the Muslim leader was shown addressing the audience. SBS also focused on the difficulties faced by Muslim communities in the US as a consequence of 9/11. The correspondent in New York, Brian Thomson, started the segment with the words:

Well, the tenth anniversary of the attacks marks a particularly difficult time for Muslims here in the United States. Attacks on the community continue, and a recent report has revealed that thousands have been subjected to extensive surveillance by the New York Police Department. Even moderate Muslim leaders are questioning the direction in which the country is moving.

The story went on to present the perspective of a number of Muslim leaders, including the imam of the New York mosque, about whom the correspondent stated:

Imam Shamsi Ali, originally from Indonesia, is a renowned moderate. His message is one of tolerance, understanding and engagement. And it is not just directed at his own community. He says he has viewed with dismay the recent political discourse here—in particular the US Presidential debates.

Following comments from the imam, the correspondent then added:

Many Muslims see the situation as now worse than it was in the immediate aftermath of the attacks. They say the hostility to the election of President Obama, and the divisive debate last year over the so-called Ground Zero mosque—which is in fact some distance from where the Twin Towers once stood—has made a bad situation worse.

The story was framed so as to elicit some degree of identification, sympathy and understanding from audiences. In this regard, Teaneck, New Jersey, Mayor Mohammed Hameeduddin (a Muslim) was featured stating:

We're Muslim Americans, we're neighbors, we're politicians, we're doctors, we're lawyers. You know we're teachers. We're part of the American fabric. And to single us out and to put out these bills that are unconstitutional, saying you can't practise your religion, and anti-sharia bills and things like that—these Pavlovian triggers that the Islamophobes are very good at putting out there. That's something that our community really, ... I'd say we are hurt by.

In terms of a grand narrative in media coverage on the tenth anniversary, Islam and Muslims were not framed as part of an Islamic threat or 'Islam versus the West'. Rather, they were presented within the frames of reconciliation, as identified in our previous research (Ewart & Rane 2011) or they were shown as victims of the events.

Integrated into the grand narrative of the tenth anniversary coverage is Australia's close connection with the US, characterised by a shared loss, subsequent alliance and war against those deemed responsible for the 9/11 attacks. All channels featured relatives of Australian victims of 9/11 in attendance at memorial services in the US and in Australia.

Conclusion

Collective memory, the meaning that a community makes of its past, is home to critical aspects of political culture, community tradition, and social identity. It informs our understanding of past events and present relationships, and it contributes to our expectations about the future.

(Edy 1999, p. 71)

As Edy suggests, media representations and interpretations of the past impact not only on how a community views and engages with its past, but also on how it approaches its future. Anniversary journalism is one of the mechanisms through which this is made possible—and it is a powerful device in this respect. Television news and current affairs are significant in relation to their role in building the foundations of public discussion and debate (Cottle 2011). Therefore, examining how Australian television news reported and represented the tenth anniversary of 9/11 is important for our understanding of the events and how we remember and make sense of them now and in the future.

Australian television news reportage of the events of 11 September 2001 was characterised by narratives that emphasised the courage, patriotism and sacrifice of those who lost their lives in the attacks, the families of the victims and the emergency response workers who attempted to prevent further loss of life. Moving on, the dominant frame on the five free-to-air Australian television news broadcasts on 11 September 2011 was that of remembrance. The central focus was on the sacrifices made by the victims of the attacks as well as emergency workers, especially firefighters, who were hailed as heroes. The Australian television news coverage endorsed these elements of the grand narrative of 9/11 that has developed in the decade since the attacks.

Coverage also focused on the ideal of mateship, a common theme in media coverage of significant Australian anniversaries such as Anzac Day, to highlight the continuing importance and strength of the relationship between Australia and the US. A focus on mateship is a significant part of the traditional narrative of Australian identity, and this is a narrative that suggests Australia stands by its allies regardless of the circumstances. In focusing on the memorialisation of those killed in the events of 9/11, the television coverage provided personal and emotional

connections with the past (Edy 1999), thus recreating Australia's collective memory of the events. This narrative was most evident in the news coverage of statements by Australia's Prime Minister and the US Consul General that reaffirmed the close connection between Australia and the US. Other channels reinforced this narrative with reference to the war in Afghanistan involving US and Australian armed forces.

Other themes that have characterised earlier reportage of the events of 9/11, namely those concerning the threat of radical Islam, were not part of the tenth anniversary coverage. The dramatic 'heroes and victims' narratives associated with the television coverage preclude important questions about the current state of relations between Islam and the West. It was notable that any references to Islam or Muslims in terms of responsibility for the 9/11 attacks were absent from the grand narratives that informed Australian television news coverage of the tenth anniversary. While a number of the television news stories made reference to the Taliban and al Qaeda, Muslims in general were not conflated with such organisations, nor was the ideology of these groups presented as a mainstream interpretation of Islam. Likewise, the coverage did not make reference to an Islamic threat. Rather, the few mentions of the religion and its adherents appeared in the context of bridge-building, moving on and reconciliation. For instance, the fourth news frame phase of 'resolution' (Miller & Riechert 2001) was strongly evident in the news stories we analysed. The dominant themes of reconciliation and moving on conform to Miller and Riechert's resolution phase, or frame, in which one frame comes to dominate media coverage, but, while they warn that this can be problematic, we believe it offers a potentially positive impact for media representations of Muslims and Islam. But more systematic work needs to be undertaken to determine if this is the case.

Anniversary journalism provides powerful ways to rethink and reconceptualise events in the past and our relationship with them, both now and in the future. The anniversary journalism of the tenth anniversary of 9/11 in the television news items we examined hints at a reinterpretation of the events of a decade ago. This has the potential to facilitate ongoing change in media representations of Muslims and Islam, at least in Australia. This is significant because, as Edy (1999) suggests, collective memory making via the media informs our understanding of the past and expectations for the future.

More broadly, our findings suggest that anniversary journalism has the power to reconstruct meanings, identity and social memory. In the material we analysed, this relates to the reconstruction of 9/11 as a story primarily about courage and sacrifice rather than the clash of Islamic and Western civilizations. In creating narratives that de-emphasised the conflict associated with the events of 9/11 and the events and actions that followed, the Australian television news media may have started a process of reworking and refocusing collective memory of the original events. This is also a part of the cycle of framing of anniversary journalism, which, as identified, concludes with the resolution phase.

It will be interesting to see if the narratives we identified in our study continue to inform future reportage of significant anniversaries of the events of 9/11, at least on

Australian television news programs. Their continued use and the absence of conflict as a frame could have significant implications for Australians' sense of national identity and relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in Australia, and this would be a useful focus of future study.

We acknowledge that an analysis of Australian television news coverage of the tenth anniversary of 9/11 has some limitations though. The absence of news frames or particular narratives such as the demonisation of Muslims, does not preclude the possibility that such frames continue to resonate with some media audiences. It would be useful in future research to see if the findings we have reported here were consistent across other forms of media in Australia on the tenth anniversary and how they compared to the themes that characterised news coverage both in America and elsewhere internationally, particularly television coverage of the tenth anniversary.

The preparedness of Australian television news broadcasts and the journalists who reported on the tenth anniversary of 9/11 to focus on themes other than conflict in their coverage could be related to the geographical distance of this country from the site of the terror attacks in the US, but additional research is needed to confirm this speculation.

Importantly, while a discourse that emphasised the threat that Islam posed to Australia and other Western nations was very evident in media coverage and public discourse in the years immediately following the events of 9/11, that appears to have been less evident in Australian television news coverage in the past two years at least (Ewart & Rane 2011; Rane & Ewart 2012). Part of the explanation for this shift in media representations of Islam and Muslims could be a corresponding shift in political discourse that occurred in the US with the election of Barack Obama in 2008, and in Australia with the election of the Labor Government in 2007—then led by Kevin Rudd. Both leaders were elected in part due to public frustration with the 'War on Terror' and their commitment to bringing troops home. More importantly, Obama's policy of a 'new beginning' with the Muslim world, which he initiated in his inauguration address and followed up with his historic addresses in the parliament of Turkey and the Cairo University, is likely to have encouraged a more inclusive and reconciliatory discourse towards Muslims. In Australia, the election of the Labor Government also marked a shift towards more inclusive political and media discourse in respect to minority groups, including Muslims.

Despite the significance of the original events of 9/11 and ensuing public remembrance of them, there has been relatively little research into how the media have narrated the anniversaries of 9/11 during the past decade. We have shown that the original narratives of courage and sacrifice continue to be used as a storytelling device by Australian television news programs. The other grand narrative commonly associated with the original events of 9/11, that of the 'clash of civilizations' between Islam and the West, was notably absent.

There is little doubt that the impacts of 9/11 and the events that followed it will continue to make this an area of research interest. In Australia, research could focus on whether similar patterns of thematic development, as per those our study has identified, appear in other types of Australian anniversary journalism, particularly

in the coverage of anniversaries of significant events such as the Bali bombings or disastrous events on our home soil. While it is heartening that some Australian media organisations appear to have been shifting the frames through which they present anniversary coverage of 9/11, presenting exciting prospects for future representations of anniversaries of this event and representations of Islam and Muslims, the focus on more negative framing of this event in the first few years may have a long-term impact.

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