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Covering Tahrir Square: Orientalism, American Mainstream News Media, and the Arab Spring in Egypt

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Submitted to the Committee on Undergraduate Honors at Baruch College of the City University of New York on April 29th, 2013 in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in History with Honors

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Acknowledgements

I extend my utmost gratitude to my professors, friends, and family who have all encouraged me, and given me direction on this project. I would not have been able to complete this thesis without you all believing in me. Firstly I thank my mentor, Professor Ervand Abrahamian for his unwavering support and encouragement throughout this process, for helping to break down the complexity of Orientalism and its changes through the centuries, and for unhesitatingly lending several books that were essential to developing my ideas for the thesis. He has helped me see Said and his theories in a new light.

I am especially grateful to Professor Michael Staub for not only for reading through my thesis, but also for his help in sowing the seeds of this project, and his encouragement for me to pursue writing an honors thesis. If not for his help with the proposal and his confidence in me, I likely would not have pursued writing a thesis. I thank Professor Julie Des Jardins for reading and providing helpful, constructive and encouraging feedback on my thesis draft. I also thank Keri Bertino, Roya Biggie, the rest of the staff at the Writing Center, and Stephen Francouer for their continual support and in helping me with research, and the organization of what seemed like a rather impossible project.

I thank my good friends Sara Dowd and Ksenia Pavlenko for their unending encouragement, feedback, and support throughout the most difficult part of this journey. I also extend my gratitude to my dear friend, Dariya Makhova for voluntarily being a “fourth reader” and continually believing in me. There are too many of you to thank, but I am eternally grateful for my friends for simply telling me to keep going. Your words are what kept me focused and determined during long nights of writing and analyzing text.

And finally, I thank Professor Edward Said for without him, I would not have discovered my passion for deconstructing narratives, and for studying the Middle East and how it is being represented from an American perspective. His work and deep care for humanity drove me to pursue this project. Professor, you continue to be a role model for me, and for others who are also “out of place.”

Abstract

Edward Said's major academic study, *Orientalism* details his argument of how Western literature and academic studies pertaining to the Orient, the Middle East and North Africa in particular, have purported an inferior, almost subhuman view of the Arabs. In his later volume, *Covering Islam*, he further elaborates on how Orientalism has changed through the 20th century and uses American news coverage of the Iranian Revolution as a case study to show how Orientalism is purported in a modern context.

My aim is to look how Orientalist rhetoric and imagery has evolved and changed since Said's original thesis was released, and to what extent Orientalism it has changed since. I plan to use a variety of American mainstream news outlets to compare and contrast their coverage of a given event, and use Said's thesis, as well as independent Egyptian news coverage of that event as a point of reference. I plan to use incidents that are considered influential in the progression of the Egyptian Arab Spring and have received significant news coverage in the American mainstream media, such as the "Maspero Massacre," the "Port Said Football Massacre," and the coverage on the election of President Morsi that have happened in Egypt as a part of the Arab Spring as case studies as to see how vastly of Said's definition of modern Orientalism has evolved. Through this project, I hope to show how modern Orientalism is manifesting in news on Egypt, one of the most influential countries in the Middle East in regards to American foreign policy, and how mainstream coverage of these incidents shows a significant shift away from typical Orientalist representations. I hope to prove that there is indeed, significant evidence to believe that Orientalist aspects are beginning to become less evident in news coverage, and more humanizing portraits and narratives are coming forth.

Introduction

The late scholar Edward Said's most significant and controversial work, *Orientalism*, originally published in 1975, argued that Western literature and academic texts have portrayed peoples of the East, or "the Orient," as exotic, innately irrational, erratic and as a subhuman "other." From the late eighteenth century through the nineteenth century, as colonialist pursuits were running high in North Africa and the Middle East, Orientalism itself was used as a justification for such expansion. Said states, "Orientalism can be discussed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient ... by make statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it, in short: Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient."¹ It was defined as a "network of interests," not simply a way to rationalize inferior views or colonial involvement in the East.² As we are well into the twenty-first century however, this notion does not hold nearly the same relevance as it did in the nineteenth century. In fact, Orientalist representations have taken on different forms. Twentieth century representations had a focus on representing Islam as a solid, tangible concept that can be used as a describing term for Middle Eastern peoples. This was extensively done with Iranians in 1979, and the concept of Islam as such was used to replace the use of political context or social context when covering a news story in the region. This has proven to severely generalize Iranians during the revolution, as Islam "... has always represented a particular menace to the West."³

Though Orientalism itself, as Said acknowledged, is difficult to define it as a set and straightforward term. It is essentially an institutionalized school of thought to exercise cultural

¹ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 3.

² Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 3.

³ Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), lii.

superiority over peoples of the East, whether it is for economic advantage, political hegemony, or cultural hegemony.

Said wrote a second installment to his series on Orientalism in 1981 titled, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World* after the Iranian Revolution and as the new Islamic theocratic government was taking shape in the country, as the definition of Orientalism change. This shift occurred from the exotic, “Oriental” images of the early modern European colonialist era, to perhaps, more subtle insinuations that portray the peoples of North Africa and the Middle East as culturally threatening. The notions that continue to carry over from nineteenth century depictions are the collective identity that is given to Middle Easterners and North Africans. For example, instead of referring to the peoples of that region as “Orientals” as was commonplace in the mid-twentieth century, Middle Easterners begin to be referred to as part of the “Islamic world.” This “Islamic world” is a term for a synonymous Muslim society, as portrayed in mainstream American news media. “Islam” as a term not only referred to its following but began to represent anything considered to be a threat to America, but also used as a concept to replace the need for context or background in a news story. The term, according to Said “has licensed patent inaccuracy [and] expressions of unrestrained ethnocentrism, cultural, and even racial hatred ... All this has taken place as part of what is presumed to be fair, balanced, responsible coverage of Islam.”⁴ This was apparent during the Iranian revolution as the term “Islam” referred to the ominous entity that turned a former ally nation into one ruled by a menacing, popular government. The core of Orientalism as viewing peoples of the Middle East as “the other” is still prevalent. However, aspects such as its purpose, and common terminology have proven to evolve post-World War II.

⁴ Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), li.

While aspects of Orientalist representation remain in modern American mainstream media is an ever-changing concept, a fact which Said recognized. “I really believe ... in the existence of a critical sense and of citizens able and willing to use it to get beyond the special interests of experts and their *idees recues* ... At that point, humanistic knowledge begins and communal responsibility for that knowledge begins to be shouldered. I wrote this book to advance that goal.”⁵ This means that Orientalism is a concept that changes with the time and historical context. Said uses the coverage of Iranian Revolution as an example of how Orientalism had manifested in the news media, quite different from Orientalist thought seen in nineteenth century literature and other written works by historians and authors. Orientalism at this time was always in the context of justifying particularly French and British economic and colonial pursuits in North Africa and the Middle East. Since World War II however, this view changed to portray the peoples of the region as foreign “others,” as potential threats to the West. In particular regard to covering topics regarding Islam or the so-called “Islamic world,” Said pointed out that,

“For the right, Islam represents barbarism; the left, medieval theocracy; for the center, a kind of distasteful exoticism. In all camps however, there is agreement that even though little enough is known about the Islamic world, there is not much to be approved of there.”⁶

Though still rife with generalizations when referring to individual nations, these characteristics in contemporary Orientalist representations have lessened. Many current representations are narrower in geographic scope, and place less emphasis on ideological factors playing a role, such as Islam, in newsworthy and historically significant events. Peoples within the region are beginning to be given active voices in the stories being reported from the region. Individuals and

⁵ Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), lix.

⁶ Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), lv.

different groups of people are being recognized by nationality, by political ideology, and are shown to have differences in opinion. This is one of the factors in modern day coverage that is showing a shift, even if a small one, away from Orientalist representations that would characterize the peoples of a nation or region as one monolithic, abstract entity. With the coming of the Arab Spring, and the overwhelming popular movement for self-sufficient government, current Orientalist representations are visibly lessening. These representations are portraying in various ways that Arabs and North Africans as intellectual, and capable of eventually establishing a flourishing, fairly governed society to the many Americans who consume mainstream media.

What the project itself aims to prove is that Orientalist representations in the mainstream American news media have indeed shifted in geographic scope. Geographic scope is the extent to which generalizations are made in terms of Egyptians' religious and national identity, and how these events are conveyed in how the consequences will affect American interests. Modern day Orientalist representations are lessening, and show recognition of a national identity, and different segments of the population within a given nation. As was seen with coverage of the Iranian revolution, there is a stronger proclivity to give political and social context to large-scale and devastating events, rather than place the blame on concepts such as Islam. Overall, news coverage is showing signs of disusing Orientalist representation. I will use three significant incidents during the beginning of the Egyptian Arab Spring that have received considerable news coverage by the mainstream American media as case studies to demonstrate how Orientalist representations take shape. Specifically, I will focus on Orientalist characteristics such as scope, use of context, or inclusion of how the case relates to American interests. Essentially I will attempt to answer through this thesis: what aspects of modern Orientalist representation are still

visible in mainstream media? To what extent are they potent in a piece of news coverage? In order to present a close reading and analysis, I will focus on news coverage from among the top three most widely circulated print publications in the U.S. in 2011 to 2012 specifically *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*.⁷ I will also be analyzing coverage from the two most viewed news channels in the country, *CNN* and *Fox News*.⁸

As a point of comparison, I will be looking at three Egyptian non-state sponsored independent media outlets. I will be presenting the accounts of these events from these sources not necessarily to point out “the truth” of what happened in these incidents, but rather to show how these outlets, run by Egyptians, choose to represent themselves in the context of these tragic events. One of these outlets is a citizen journalism collective called, *Mosireen*. They report on marches, protests, and the aftermath of violent altercations from a grassroots level, and derive their accounts entirely from filmed interviews with eyewitnesses. They also report on the lack of resources to the working class and villages within Egypt due to government shortcomings on a grassroots level. Since this is a source unfiltered by government influence, or in *Mosireen’s* case, run on public donations, or this is an appropriate resource to see how Egyptians on a grassroots level hope to represent themselves. I will also be using the most widely read independently funded print newspaper in Egypt *Al Masry Al Youm*. For the purposes of this project, I will be using its sister, English-language paper titled *Egypt Independent*. Lastly, I will use an English-language daily newspaper that is also among the widely read publications among English-speakers in Egypt, *The Daily News Egypt*. Because this source is aimed at an English speaking

⁷ Alliance for Audited Media, "AAM: Total Circulation for US Newspapers." Last modified Sept. 30, 2012. Accessed April 10, 2013. <http://abcas3.auditedmedia.com/ecirc/newstitlesearchus.asp>

⁸ Jesse Holcomb, Amy Mitchell, and Tom Rosenstiel, "The State of the News Media 2011 - Cable: By the Numbers," *Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism*, <http://stateofthemediamedia.org/2011/cable-essay/data-page-2/> (accessed April 21, 2013).

audience within Egypt and throughout the Middle East, this will be useful in looking at how Egyptians aim to portray themselves to a non-native or foreign audience.

I plan to focus on US mainstream media coverage of three major incidents that attracted global, including American media attention after the fall of the Mubarak government in February 2011. What makes the events that I plan to explore unique out of the other notable clashes and strikes that have happened is that they were each covered significantly in the American mainstream media. In addition, these events were each among the most violent since the initial January 25th uprising, and produced numerous casualties. I plan to focus on incidents that occurred particularly in Egypt over the last two years is because of varying discrepancies that have been presented between Egyptian non-state media coverage and American mainstream coverage and because each incident presents pressing issues in modern Orientalist representations in the media, whether it is the occurrence of sectarian violence, or the perception of Islam.

The first incident occurred in October 2011 and has become known by Egyptians as “the Maspero massacre,” when over twenty-five people were killed during a protest in front of the Egyptian State media building (known as the Maspero building). I plan to reconstruct how the US mainstream media typically portrayed this event as a sectarian Muslim-Coptic Christian conflict, whereas Egyptian independent media outlets portrayed the incident as a military-instigated attack on protesters, who were predominantly Coptic Christian, but included Muslims. One of the most notable features in how this incident was covered was the inconsistent account between Egyptian independent media and the American media, and even between the American news outlets themselves.

The second case I plan to focus on is the Al Ahly soccer riot which also occurred in February 2012. These riots attracted worldwide attention, though in the US media it was frequently reported that fans of one team (Al Masry) had instigated the violence against fans of the other team (Al Ahly) and that at least seventy-five people were killed. Independent media in Egypt, however, offered a contrasting interpretation of these riots, suggesting that hired thugs from within the crowd of Al Masry fans instigated the violence in an attempt to portray the riots as another sectarian conflict. The non-state sponsored Egyptian media saw it as a plausible explanation because of the Al Ahly fans' avid support for the ongoing protest movement.

The final case I will cover in this project is the election of President Mohamed Morsi in June 2012 and the beginning of his administration as the first elected president, and Islamist president in Egyptian history. With this election, many American news outlets expressed doubt, and uncertainty on the future of Egypt and how this reflects on Egyptian public opinion. Conservative and broadcast outlets saw his election as a premonition of the spreading influence of the Muslim Brotherhood in the region, and perhaps a growing popularity among Egyptians towards the Brotherhood and Islamism as a governing ideology. However, what is not covered thoroughly enough in this media is the context and background of the elections themselves, which segments of the population voted and had access to knowing who each of the candidates were, and how influential the Muslim Brothers were to Egyptians living in poverty. Print media also saw the election as a sign of the rise in influence of Islamist parties in Egypt, however in liberal print publications the context surrounding the elections and circumstances in which Mohammed Morsi won is made clearer.

Each of these newsworthy incidents tie into a significant characteristic of modern Orientalism that Said defines in his original thesis. The first deals with religious sectarianism,

and how American media portrays the relations between Muslims and Christians currently in the post-January 25th era in Egypt and what has changed from the coverage in 1979 when Muslims and Christians were referred to in broad, international terms. The second deals with sectarianism in terms of football club rivalries. We will investigate how a violent altercation at a football match was covered in American media and how the lack of detail and context in the coverage of the incident draws a depiction of mass thuggery among the fans in the football stadium at the time. The third deals again with the portrayal of the role of Islam in Egypt and public opinion with regards to politics in the midst of the Arab Spring.

When analyzing the coverage of each of these incidents, it is important to take note of certain keywords used in twentieth century representations. This will serve as criteria for determining what has changed in twenty-first century Orientalist representations. These keywords are words used with heavy frequency in the coverage of significant events in the region that often become associated with Middle Eastern peoples negatively as a result. “Mob” and “riot” were crucial keywords prevalent in the way the Iranian Revolution was covered in the Western media, and subsequent events in the region as was stated in Said’s *Covering Islam*. Such words were used to refer to mass mindless demonstrations, as opposed to referring to the people as “Orientals” as was done in early portrayals of Orientalism. One indication in looking for these heavily used words is that they are typically used in general contexts, serving as “umbrella” terms for subjects that require far more analysis. Other words that were also often used in covering the Iranian Revolution that we will find in some modern mainstream media reports are “militant,” “dangerous,” “anti-American,” and associating “anger” and “rage” to the bulk of the populations that are being covered.

Another criterion I will use to analyze the change in twenty-first century Orientalism is the Huntington notion, derived from Samuel Huntington's article published in *Foreign Affairs* in 1993 titled "The Clash of Civilizations?" Huntington argues that future interactions around the world will not involve ideology or economics (such as classifying nations in to first, or third world countries), but rather, culture, and that these interactions will be violent, to varying extents. In this article, Huntington characterizes nations by ideology. This is an example of one of Said's criticisms of characterizing a nation and people under umbrella terms. Whether he is referring to Muslim peoples of former Yugoslavia, North Africa, or in Central Asia, they are all characterized as "Islamic people." He even refers to Islam as if it is a physical region. In one example, Huntington states "Islam has bloody borders,"⁹ and he starts a sentence by saying "On the Northern border of Islam ..."¹⁰ when elaborating on tensions between Muslims and Christians in Eastern Europe. This insinuates that people belonging to religion factor into his definition of "civilization." Huntington's view in this article is perhaps the prime example of what Said would consider Orientalist thinking. However for this reason, I will use the characteristics stated in this article as a link to draw on when analyzing American coverage. The extent to how similarities are shared between Huntington's article and the representation of Egyptians in American coverage is telling in how much Said's definition of modern Orientalism remains in the media.

Another criterion that Said discusses is how national identity is characterized. The way that peoples of the Middle East were portrayed, in this case, the Iranians, were as one monolithic entity, all belonging to the umbrella of "Islam." Any other differences were not worth mentioning. Even when covering other newsworthy events on the 1950s-1980s, the notion of

⁹ Huntington, Samuel. "The Clash of Civilizations?." *Foreign Affairs*, 1993. <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/48950/samuel-p-huntington/the-clash-of-civilizations> (accessed April 10, 2013).

¹⁰ Huntington, Samuel. "The Clash of Civilizations?." *Foreign Affairs*, 1993. <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/48950/samuel-p-huntington/the-clash-of-civilizations> (accessed April 10, 2013).

Islam being an overarching cause to such events, Said stated in *Covering Islam*, that “... much of the dramatic, usually bad news of the past decade including not only Iran but the Arab-Israeli conflict, oil, and Afghanistan, has been news of ‘Islam.’”¹¹ The peoples involved in those conflicts or incidents are again generalized under the umbrella of Islam. Not only as an umbrella term was “Islam” used by the media, but also Said mentions that the term meant one of two things. “To Westerners, and Americans, ‘Islam’ represents a resurgent atavism, which suggests not only the treat of a return to the Middle Ages but the destruction of what is regularly referred to as the democratic order in the Western world.”¹² Cultural differences, languages differences let alone, socio-economic or political differences were not discussed in the mainstream news coverage at that time.¹³ We will notice that broadcast media outlets such as CNN and Fox News each share some common traits with Huntington’s article, whereas print media outlets such as *the New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* will prove to be much less prone to generalizations and older characteristics of Orientalism. Print outlets in some cases even prove to be similar to the Egyptian independent media coverage, which we will use as a comparison for how American mainstream media portrayed the incidents we will discuss. In the three cases covered, there is an evident gap in how mainstream print provides context to a news story and how broadcast cable news networks do so.

As we are well into the twenty-first century, Said’s definition of Orientalism and what makes up an Orientalist representation remains unchanged. One can expect to find differences however subtle from how the news was covered during the days of the Iranian revolution, and certainly from the early nineteenth century depictions of exoticism. While there are certainly still

¹¹ Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 83

¹² Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 55

¹³ Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 85

similarities between American coverage of Iran in 1979 and coverage on Egypt in the current day, several aspects are shifting. In older coverage of Iran, terms such as “the Islamic world,” or “the Muslim world” were common phrases used to describe uniquely Iranian issues. Such generalization has not happened in the coverage of Egypt, however generalizations do still appear on a much smaller scale. Print outlets delve into subdivisions among “Egyptian Muslims” and note the differences in opinion. Another evolving aspect of Orientalist representation is what these incidents in Egypt mean for the West. The only incident in which we see traces of this is when Mohamed Morsi was elected President and it is speculated on what it may mean for American interests in the Middle East. These incidents are seen in a different context. Additionally, “American” rather than “Western” terms are used, further indicating the narrower geographic scope. Also, the reasoning behind these incidents in the American media, though it varies between print and broadcast media and outlets within those realms, is no longer entirely blamed on “Islam” as an ideological or tangible entity as was done when covering the Iranian revolution. These are the most significant aspects that make up the new formula of Orientalist representations. We will explore how each of these aspects vary and how changes within these aspects show the beginning of a shift away from giving Orientalist representations.

CHAPTER ONE: The Massacre at Maspero, 10/9/2011

Background

The Maspero incident, often called by the Egyptian independent media as the “Maspero Massacre,” is perhaps most telling of the state of Orientalism in the contemporary American mainstream media. Varying and sometimes conflicting accounts have emerged between *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*, and *Fox News* and *CNN*. It was either portrayed as a sectarian conflict between Egyptian Muslims and Christians, or a massacre against a Christian-majority march. The incident itself was a tragic and bloody one. The currently widely accepted account among Egyptians is that on the night of October 9th, 2011, a group of mostly Coptic Christian protesters, along with Muslim supporters, held a march to protest the burning of a church in the southern city of Aswan the week before. The march intended to end at the Maspero building, the headquarters for the state-run media in Egypt, to protest the lack of coverage on the incident from the state-run media. Once the march reached the building, according to a firsthand account from one of the protesters, the military was standing in riot gear and began to attack the protesters.¹⁴ Military tanks also ran over many protesters and shot them using live ammunition. By the end of the incident, twenty-five protesters were killed from either gunshot wounds, or from the tanks running over their bodies. Among them was a well-known Coptic Christian activist, Mina Danial who participated in the January 25th uprising, and was known to advocate interactions between Egyptian Muslims and Egyptian Christians. The coverage by the state-run media, however, was contradictory. That night, it claimed that the protesters were armed and attacked the military and that the protesters were armed, and that the actions of the military were entirely in self-defense. What resulted was conflicting reports coming out about the incident, and

¹⁴ Mosireen. "The Maspero Massacre | 9/10/11 | What Really Happened," *Maspero*, Eyewitness account of the Maspero Massacre, Web, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00t-0NEwc3E>.

large discrepancies between the account of what Egyptian protesters claimed, what the state news agency claimed, and what the American news claimed.

Egyptian media coverage

The Egyptian, non-state sponsored media covered this incident as a massacre against protesters with little emphasis on the religious affiliations of the protesters marching to Maspero. *Egypt Independent* portrayed this incident as one that highlighted the brutality of the military against the Egyptian population as a whole, rather than against the Coptic Christian population alone. For example, one of the initial reports that came out from the *Egypt Independent* was a firsthand account from an Egyptian activist, Sarah Carr.¹⁵ She described the demonstrators as a unified group, rather than by sects always referring them as “the protesters.” Further in the report, she detailed the brutality by the military presence at Maspero, including APC’s running over protesters, and continuous gunfire. There is no mention of the religious backgrounds of the protesters or any sectarian language being used in the account. The account is a narrative report of the military attacking Egyptian protesters. In another one of the initial accounts published by *Egypt Independent*, a human rights lawyer, Khaled Ali stated, ““the army is responsible for this literal atrocity””¹⁶ Overall, *Egypt Independent’s* reports on the incident came across as one of the numerous atrocities committed by the military during this period.

Mosireen’s account of that night was derived from first-hand sources, as the *Egypt Independent* had, as well as images and videos taken by the protesters who were at the scene when the military arrived at the march. The two eyewitnesses, Loubna Darwish, and Sharif

¹⁵ Carr, Sarah. "A firsthand account: Marching from Shubra to deaths at Maspero." *Egypt Independent*, October 10, 2011. <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/firsthand-account-marching-shubra-deaths-maspero> (accessed April 21, 2013).

¹⁶ Osman, Ahmed Zaki. "Army is responsible for Maspero bloodshed, says human rights lawyer." *Egypt Independent*, October 11, 2011. <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/army-responsible-maspero-bloodshed-says-human-rights-lawyer> (accessed April 21, 2013).

Gaber, each gave their accounts as they recalled that day continually emphasizing that the military was the instigator to the clash. When describing the crowd at the protest, Darwish stated "... was most kids, families, older people"¹⁷ Darwish further stated as the march reached the Maspero building, "we found an APC running towards us, very fast. In the beginning it was just one ... and then we found another one joining it. They were both going in zig zags, hitting people, running them over back and forth about four times." Gaber then elaborated on how the state-sponsored news network of Egypt, housed within the Maspero building, issued a report saying the protesters were the instigators of the clash and encouraged viewers to assist the army in helping to quell the demonstration. Both these eyewitnesses conclude that the violence was instigated by the army, not from within the protest, and each does not mention religious background as a factor in the violence. This is telling of how the independent media aimed to represent Egyptians as a whole, nationalistic entity. In another one of their clips on Youtube, *Mosireen* also put out raw footage of what happened that night, which depicted military tanks running through the crowd of protesters and soldiers from on top of the tanks.¹⁸ These clear and vivid images, constructed chronologically give both Egyptian and foreign viewers a solid impression that the military was entirely responsible for beginning the violence, and that they clearly tried to violently stop a peaceful group of protesters from reaching the Maspero building.

That following May, seven months after the incident happened, *Egypt Independent* issued another report last May titled, "State TV admits to incitement during October Maspero violence."¹⁹ This report confirms that the Egyptian state news allegedly incited viewers to assist

¹⁷ Mosireen. "The Maspero Massacre | 9/10/11 | What Really Happened," *Maspero*, Eyewitness account of the Maspero Massacre, Web, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00t-0NEwc3E>.

¹⁸ Carr, Sarah, "Blood at Night, Grief by Day | Maspero 9/10," *Maspero*, Eyewitness account of the Maspero Massacre, Web, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mh5F0ot_p3s.

¹⁹ Al Masry al Youm. "State TV admits to incitement during October Maspero violence." *Egypt Independent*, May 15, 2012. <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/state-tv-admits-incitement-during-october-maspero-violence> (accessed April 21, 2013).

the military against the protesters. We can conclude from these several reports from independent sources that the Egyptians who took part or supported this protest, did not view the movement as a sectarian. Most importantly, they do not view the violent clash that happened at the end of the march as one instigated by religious based violence.

In *The Daily News Egypt*, the same account of what happened and similar views were reported, in that the protesters were portrayed as a group of Muslims and Christians marching for a national cause. Firsthand accounts were also used from the protesters present at the march. Darwish was cited again in the reports and included quotes from other activists who were present. Notably, in one of their original reports, it was stated “Omar Tarek, an activist and journalist, told DNE that the Coptic cause is the same as the Muslim cause. ‘You can’t demolish a house of worship,’ he said, ‘if someone told me they would demolish a mosque I would react the same way ... I am here as an Egyptian, supporting an Egyptian cause.’”²⁰ The reports also included other quotes by activists sharing the same sentiment of the protesters being a group of mixed Muslims and Christians focused on national interests. Sectarian interests are not seen, or at the very least, not emphasized in the reports by the *Daily News*, or the previously mentioned independent publications and outlets.

Overall, from what can be extracted from these reports of the massacre from these several independent sources in Egypt is firstly, the Egyptian military instigated the attack by attempting to disperse the march with armed vehicles. Secondly, the group of protesters is largely defined as Egyptian protesters, rather than simply Coptic protesters. Thirdly, the state-sponsored television incited viewers and average civilians to take part in the clash with the military, which brought

²⁰ Abdellatif, Reem, Amira Salah-Ahmed, and Dalia Rabie. "Death toll, injuries on the rise after Maspero march met with violence." *Daily News Egypt*, sec. Politics, October 09, 2011. dailynewsegyp.com/2011/10/09/death-toll-injuries-on-the-rise-after-maspero-march-met-with-violence/ (accessed April 21, 2013).

across this conflict as one between civilians. These details, regardless of which news source they are derived from, remain consistent and give the reader enough context to understand the background and purpose of the protesters that day, as well as how they identify themselves as a unified group. Through this one can get a grasp important trends in the mainstream American news when determining which reports carry Orientalist representations of Egyptians. One can know which traits to look for in American coverage that may convey dangerous, generalizing images of this incident and the people involved.

American broadcast media coverage: CNN

Unlike the Egyptian independent media, the American mainstream media seemed to be uncertain, and at times contradictory when reporting what happened on October 9th, 2011 in front of the Maspero building. Even within the same news report, the articles or news anchors would make contradicting statements. For example, the beginning of the report would directly call the incident a sectarian clash between Egyptian Christians and Muslims, and later in the report, the anchor would say the massacre was instigated by security forces attempting to quell the protest. There is subtle yet visible framing of the news report as being sectarian in the incident's causes and ultimately, paints the report with Orientalist connotations.

CNN in particular was one of the outlets that put forth contradictory reports that included language that is familiar to what was used during the time of the Iranian revolution. On the CNN Newsroom report dated on October 10th, 2011, the anchor gave mixed views as to whether the massacre was one based in sectarianism, or one based in deeper problems with the ruling security forces:

They felt targeted ever since the Arab Spring really. And that really escalated about a

week ago when a church, a Christian church, was burned down, and it all erupted really on Sunday ... The "Arab News" is saying Copts, troops in deadly clashes. As Egypt undergoes a chaotic power transition and security vacuum in the wake of this year's uprising, Christians are particularly worried about the increasing show of power by ultra-continental Muslims. "Daily Telegraph" though saying under its headlines, sectarianism will only get worse in Egypt. The army has inherited all the vices of Mubarak rule without any of the certainties of permanent or all-pervasive control."²¹

This singular report is perhaps the prime example of these kinds of problems Edward Said wrote in *Orientalism* and which continue to persist in coverage of the Middle East. The wording, sources, and generalizations made here are similar to how the region was reported in 1979. The first statement in this passage comments on how tension towards Copts has been an escalating phenomenon leading up to this incident. However, in terms of details as to what that tension entailed, what incidents happened that fostered this tension, and how this all culminated into this massacre is not delved into for accuracy. It's also important to note that how the Copts have been targeted, and who has been targeting them is left unclear here. An American viewer can conclude that Copts were not only being targeted by security forces or the government, but also by average non-Coptic Egyptians. Though there is no direct mention of this here, the ambiguity insinuates at the possibility of the perpetrators of this incident and even the ones responsible for persecution against Copts since the January uprising as non-Copts, in this case, Egyptian Muslims. The anchor gave a simplistic and Orientalist representation of this situation precisely from the lack of detail that is given, detail far less than was given by the Egyptian media.

Furthermore, the international publications selected were from no sort of Egyptian media source, but included a British based paper, and a Saudi based paper, owned by a member of the Saudi royal family, Turki bin Salman Al Saud. Each of these sources give ambiguous statements

²¹ CNN, "Transcripts: CNN Newsroom." Last modified October 10, 2011. Accessed April 21, 2013. <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1110/10/cnr.02.html>.

on “ultra conservative Muslims” being responsible for beginning the massacre. In the brief statement given from the *Arab News* paper, the clash is painted in a sectarian light more directly here as it is stated that “Christians” are concerned at the “show of power” by “ultra-continental Muslims.” There is no further clarification on who the “ultra-continental Muslims” are, and whether they are members of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Salafist movement or other Islamist groups who may or may not be associated with the ruling SCAF at this time. The “show of power” mentioned is also not elaborated. This potentially can leave one to conclude that these ultra conservative Muslims perpetrated the incident itself. In the portion from the *Telegraph*, though it is implied that security forces were abusive through the comparison with Mubarak, the emphasis on sectarianism again, further gives the viewer the impression of even stronger sectarian tensions between Muslims and Christians. The wording of each of the sources though brief, draws instances of generalizations that Said indicates as Orientalist in *Covering Islam*.²² The involvement of “ultra-conservative Muslims” becomes the context of the incident and it is implied in this clip that these Muslims committed the massacre. The inclusion of religious labels, “Muslim” labels here is a replacement for providing context. Overall, this frames the report as an Orientalist representation. The vagueness allows for viewers to fill in their own presumptions about what happened, which may likely lead to making dangerous generalizations about the Muslims involved in the incident, and even Egyptian Muslims as a whole.

Again, it is important to note that no Egyptian independent news sources were mentioned in this report, another parallel with the Iranian coverage as Said mentioned. During the Iranian Revolution, it was stated in *Covering Islam* regarding the coverage of the hostage crisis that,

“No expert, media personality, government official seemed to wonder what might have happened if a small fraction of the time spent on isolating, dramatizing, covering the

²² Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 41.

unlawful embassy seizure and the hostage return has been spent on exposing oppression and brutality in the ex-shah's regime."²³

Said makes this statement with the intention of posing a question about American coverage of the hostage crisis. He stated that if indeed there was time on mainstream news coverage devoted to covering *why* the Iranians who took part or supported the embassy takeover. This kind of analysis would provide context for the incident and would have shown that there are deeper circumstances behind the embassy takeover, that those involved did not take such action simply because of religious conviction or mere anger towards the United States.

One of the most common discrepancies that emerged with the coverage of this incident was about the vague nature of the portrayal of the clash itself. The greatest indicator of Orientalist representation here is the use of Islam and Muslims. In the brief clip provided from Arab news, the conflict comes across as a sign of increasing tension between Egyptian Muslims and Egyptian Christians without going into very much detail. The very last sentence of that clip, gives a confusing image to viewers in that it paints what happened as sectarian motivated. There is also no mentioning of the security forces that attempted to disperse the march violently as the Egyptian media reported. While some may argue that to point at the use of sectarian language is unfair given the understandable background behind the march, it is clear that there is simply not enough context here for an audience foreign to the political circumstances in Egypt for a viewer to draw that conclusion.

On *The Situation Room with Wolf Blitzer*, during the exchange with CNN's Cairo correspondent at that time, Ben Wedeman stated that the march was "... planned, publicly

²³Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), lxiv.

announced, a large march of Christians. But also, Egyptian Muslims in solidarity,”²⁴ and further stated that,

“According to the eyewitnesses, several military vehicles drove madly into the crowds, killing at least 17 people, as many as 25. And of course this sparked a whole night of street battles in several parts of the Egyptian capitol. The government is [accusing] some Christian protesters of attacking military vehicles, taking weapons and shooting some of the soldiers.”²⁵

This account stands out from the previous CNN accounts in that it differs in the amount of detail and also seems to follow closely with how the Egyptian media reported this event. Also, it is worth noting that the protesters in this report, though identified by their religious backgrounds, are portrayed as a group of mixed Muslims and Christians protesting against what they perceive to be injustice perpetrated from the governing military junta. The details mirror what we previously saw in the Egyptian news reports. The fact that it is stated that military drove their armored vehicles into the crowd, killed about twenty-five protesters, and subsequently released a botched narrative of the events gives just enough detail to give viewers a clear picture of what happened, but also portrayed the event similarly to how Egyptian independent media did. The most troubling aspect about this report is the contradictory statements regarding which group of people were attacking the Christian protesters. The headline of the story regarding the Maspero incident is “Coptic Christians and Muslims Clash Violently in Egypt.” The ambiguous headline reflects the recurring problem within American broadcast media of oversimplifying and insinuating sectarian tension. The headline can lead one to insinuate that the military was attacking the protesters simply because of the fact that they are Christians, and it makes the military look as if it was motivated based on Islamic ideals. It leads one to question, whether the

²⁴ CNN, "Transcripts: The Situation Room." Last modified October 10, 2011. Accessed April 21, 2013. <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1110/10/cnr.02.html>.

²⁵ CNN, "Transcripts: The Situation Room." Last modified October 10, 2011. Accessed April 21, 2013. <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1110/10/cnr.02.html>.

American media continues to view Middle Easterners (Egyptians in this case) primarily as simply just people motivated by religious identity. While this report does indeed make the distinction that the protest included both Muslims and Christians, and that security forces were the ones who clashed with the protesters, what the viewer is supposed to derive from the report is unclear. As Said put it in *Covering Islam*, “Such statements tell us a bare minimum of what something is, as opposed to all other things. On this level we can distinguish an apple and an orange (as we might distinguish between a Muslim and a Christian) only to the extent we know they are different fruit.”²⁶

Broadcast Media: Fox News

More conservative American news outlets also put forth a similar, and a somewhat exaggerated representation of this clash being a sectarian motivated one, again with emphasis on the religious identities of the parties involved. In the case of *Fox News* this is no different. One of the initial reports that came out on *America's Newsroom*, prefaced the incident as a part of a “... continued violence against Coptic Christians in Egypt. The leaders of that group are blaming the military for not doing enough to protect them.”²⁷ There are several aspects to this statement that are problematic. Firstly, the incident was covered as a part of a string of violent events against Coptic Christians, however these events were never elaborated on. Also, unlike the Egyptian account of the incident, the wording of how the security forces were “not doing enough to protect them [Coptic Christians]”²⁸ The undertones in this statement give the impression that

²⁶ Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 10.

²⁷ "Violence Against Christians in Egypt," *Fox News Video Archive*, How is Egyptian military responding?, Web, <http://video.foxnews.com/v/1211457729001/violence-against-christians-in-egypt/>.

²⁸ "Violence Against Christians in Egypt," *Fox News Video Archive*, How is Egyptian military responding?, Web, <http://video.foxnews.com/v/1211457729001/violence-against-christians-in-egypt/>.

security forces were not instigators or actively attacking the protesters as was stated in the Egyptian media, but rather they were trying to protect the Christians from Muslim attackers but were incompetent in doing so. The report narrated the sequence of events that night, which was perhaps the point of this report that was most concerning.

The order in which the events were reported here are one of the essential aspects that make this report Orientalist in how it presented this massacre as a civilian clash with the military failing to stop the clashes. The first images that were shown were street clashes between different groups of plain clothed protesters, one would assume, Egyptian Muslims and Egyptian Christians. Then the similar images of the military tanks and APCs running through the crowds that were also shown in Egyptian coverage followed. However this sequence so far presents several problems. This can potentially make the viewer think that the military was coerced into doing so because the clashes that were shown prior to this image, were getting out of hand. Not only does this insinuate that the military allegedly appeared to attempt to quell the clashes, but also that the clashes were started between Muslim civilians and Christian civilians. This further implies of high sectarian tension in Egypt at this time.

The lack of adequate context on the treatment of Coptic Christians in Egypt in relation to the massacre in this report is troubling. As the report progressed it was stated that, “Coptic Christians have always been under threat, but enjoyed protection from former President Hosni Mubarak. Since Mubarak’s resignation, violence has increased, with reports of Muslim gangs raping Coptic women with impunity.”²⁹ This statement adds onto the already problematic report by emphasizing immense sectarian tension while providing little to no context. This implies to the viewer that the former government, before the Arab Spring protected Christians and enjoyed

²⁹ Violence Against Christians in Egypt," *Fox News Video Archive*, How is Egyptian military responding?, Web, <http://video.foxnews.com/v/1211457729001/violence-against-christians-in-egypt/>.

rights under Mubarak. This makes unclear what kind of rights Christians had previous to the interim government, and also disregards the various government restrictions on Christians that have reportedly happened under Mubarak's government. Most importantly, this suggests that the changes were happening from the Arab Spring up to this point were detrimental, especially to Christians. The constant use of religious adjectives here without solid premise is concerning. The strongest statement made in this report however, is the "... reports of Muslim gangs raping Coptic women." Again no context, no statistics, and no further information were given on why this was allegedly happening at the time. Also the fact that it this was included in a report that was about a violently quelled protest frames the report further to be one about strong tensions between Muslims and Christians, or even Muslims vilifying Christians.

As the report continued, even more intense sectarian and generalizing rhetoric was used. "The overwhelming military response used against the Christian protesters now, and the tacit approval of a violent mob that stormed the Israeli embassy in Cairo last month, shows a government scared of hard-line Muslim elements within the country."³⁰ The very high-reaching and arguably absurd conclusion here embodies many aspects of Orientalist representation that Said stated in his work. This is a classic example of the use of "Islam" as a tangible concept that can be replaced for meaningful context. No possible political or social causes were drawn in this clip, but rather a persistent blaming on "hard-line Muslims" and the fear of such Muslims in the interim period. When Islam is mentioned, "... you eliminate political complications like democracy ... and secularism, and you eliminate moral restraint."³¹ There is no elaboration on how the clashes began.

³⁰ Violence Against Christians in Egypt," *Fox News Video Archive*, How is Egyptian military responding?, Web, <http://video.foxnews.com/v/1211457729001/violence-against-christians-in-egypt/>.

³¹ Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 41.

In further reports, the references and implicit blaming of Islam for the incident become more overt. For example in a report on the same news program the following day, October 11th 2011, there are similar connotations here when they are prefaced by another, unrelated story in Iran of a Christian pastor who was set to be executed for his refusing to convert to Islam.³² The stories of the Maspero Massacre and the Iranian Christian pastor being held for execution, were told together in the same four-minute report. This by itself is misleading in that it can lead viewers to think that there is a widespread phenomenon of Christian persecution. The conjoined reporting here also diminishes the fact that different nations, with different political and social circumstances were involved here. Even the religious aspect that tied these two stories together in this report is misleading, as Egypt at this point was a secular government governed by a military junta, and Iran was (and continues to be) a theocratic government based on the Shi'a sect of Islam. These differences are completely overlooked here and instead, the report continued with John Bolton speaking about Iran's "complete lack of religious toleration,"³³ while a side graphic comes on the screen, stating various incidents on Christians in Egypt in the last two years. This aspect directly parallels the use of Islam in the coverage of the Iranian revolution as a term that eliminates the need for context, and a term that replaces national identity. Both these aspects make this report Orientalist in nature, the same kind of representations that were seen in the coverage of Iran as the revolution there happened.

Overall, the aspects of this short news clip by *Fox News* make the coverage of this event not only contradictory to the Egyptian media's account of the incident, but is joined in the reporting of other atrocities against Christians whether they are events that happened within

³² "Christians Under Attack in Egypt," *Fox News Video Archive*, Why is violence on the rise?, Web, <http://video.foxnews.com/v/1211920578001/christians-under-attack-in-egypt/>.

³³ "Christians Under Attack in Egypt," *Fox News Video Archive*, Why is violence on the rise?, Web, <http://video.foxnews.com/v/1211920578001/christians-under-attack-in-egypt/>.

Egypt, or a nation that is geographically and metaphorically speaking, as far as Iran. The characteristics of this report, though like *CNN's* reporting, indirect, carry heavy Orientalist connotations. The use of broad, religious adjectives, the undermining of national identity, as well as including other, unrelated incidents that have to do with religious persecution in their reporting are all examples of Orientalist representations that were typical during the Iranian revolution.

Print Media: The New York Times

We see a different pattern in the news coverage when looking at print media. One may associate broadcast news media as being sensationalist, and restricted to covering the news in time-limited sound bytes. There is a visible shift in how the Maspero incident was covered particularly in more high-brow print publications, such as *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*. In the *New York Times* coverage of the incident the language used to narrate what happened and the representation of the protesters was much more complex and similar to how the Egyptian independent media told the story of what happened. In one of the initial reports put out by the *New York Times*, the headline was “Church Protests in Cairo Turn Deadly.” It is worth noting here that unlike the previously mentioned broadcast media headlines, there is no comment on the groups of people involved, but rather on the event itself. Journalist, David Kirkpatrick stated in the article that the march was a “sectarian protest appeared to catch fire because it was aimed squarely at the military council that has ruled Egypt since the revolution.” The terminology with regards to sectarianism here, however, differs from previously mentioned examples. The disparity here is that he is not referring to a large monolithic group of “Muslims”

against “Christians.” The article delves into the intricacies of each group of Muslims involved in the incident, much unlike the broadcast media coverage of this event.

Kirkpatrick included quotes both from Christian and Muslim eyewitnesses at the event, their accounts on what happened, and how they identify themselves with respect to this incident and as Egyptian nationals. Quotes from these eyewitnesses not only all point to security forces as instigators of the violence, but also express a solidarity and fellowship with the protesters regardless of religious background. In one instance in the article a liberal Muslim protester reacted to the violence by saying “‘Muslims get what is happening,’ she said. The military, she said, was ‘trying to start a civil war.’”³⁴ Furthermore, when reporting on the environment several chants from various groups of protests that resulted as a reaction to the violence were quoted. Among them, were “The people want to bring down the field marshal,” “Muslims and Christians are one hand,” and among the crowds supporting the military, composed of Islamists and military loyalists, “The people want to bring down the Christians.”³⁵ There is a clear showing of different voices reacting to the atrocity of that night within the Egyptian Muslim community. This kind of reporting makes a clear distinction between the Muslims who supported the Copts and the protesters’ cause in the march. These groups are not simply painted as “the Muslims,” but as individualized people with different opinions and human voices. This is very much unlike the coverage of the Iranian revolution in which “... the American consumer of news was given a sustained diet of information about a people, a culture, a religion – really no more than a poorly defined and badly misunderstood abstraction ... represented as militant,

³⁴ Kirkpatrick, David. "Deadly Protests over Church Attack in Cairo." *The New York Times*, , sec. World/Middle East, October 09, 2011. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/10/world/middleeast/deadly-protests-over-church-attack-in-cairo.html?pagewanted=all> (accessed April 21, 2013).

³⁵ Kirkpatrick, David. "Deadly Protests over Church Attack in Cairo." *The New York Times*, , sec. World/Middle East, October 09, 2011. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/10/world/middleeast/deadly-protests-over-church-attack-in-cairo.html?pagewanted=all> (accessed April 21, 2013).

dangerous ...”³⁶ Due to such factors, it is undeniable that Orientalist representation with regard to this incident in *The New York Times* is essentially nonexistent.

Overall with regard to *The New York Times*, there was much deeper context put into the report and a visible presence of Egyptians who participated or witnessed in the event. This demonstrates a clear shift away from the use of generalizing terms, and can be used as a heavy marker of the changes happening in terms of Orientalist representation, and frequent it is being used in American news. The key indicator of this is the differentiation between different groups of Muslims in the article. There is a clear line drawn between the more liberal Muslims who participated in the march that night, or supported the cause of the march that was heavily attended by Copts, and the more conservative Islamists who saw the event as a provocation against the military and political stability in Egypt at the time. The slogans being chanted are huge indicators of how diverse the group of protesters were. The exploration of the nuances of the groups involved in this incident by itself shows the complexity of this particular situation, and the complexity of the state that the country was in. This kind of representation does not imply anarchy, but rather a kind of instability that happened due to corrupt forces at work, and was done with the intention of perhaps not only instilling fear in a religious minority group in the country, but to weaken the opposition movement against the interim government.

Print Coverage: The Wall Street Journal

Despite its much more conservative stance on domestic issue when comparing it to *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*'s coverage of the Maspero Massacre is similarly less Orientalist in its representation of the Maspero Massacre. In the initial coverage of the massacre,

³⁶ Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 83.

there is a clear narrative, a clear statement of how security force were involved, and a showing of varying voices and opinions within the Muslim community in Egypt. The headline, “Clashes Between Christians, Police Rock Cairo” unlike other examples we have seen do not give this incident an Orientalist framing, but rather frames it as a clash between security forces and civilians. It is important to note here that, as we have seen in previous instances, the headline of the story was prefaced by coverage of the clashes that happened after the massacre took place.

When looking at the beginning of the article, reminiscent elements of CNN’s coverage are present, as the massacre is called “... one of the worst incidents of sectarian violence since a revolution in February toppled Egypt’s former regime.”³⁷ There is already a subtle framing of the incident as a massacre fueled by civilian Christians and civilian Muslims. The further coverage of the reactionary clashes feeds into this notion. The clashes were described as “communal tensions,” that were suspected to be started by “a law enforcement void.” Even with the framing of this incident as a sectarian based one, it was implied that such tension was not long standing when it was stated, “Egyptians have long prided themselves on a shared citizenship that straddles religious boundaries.”³⁸ There was not enough context given in the beginning of the article, and no smooth narrative for readers to have solid footing on how events progressed that night. There is at least a visible recognition of varying voices, opinions and differences within Egyptian society, and more importantly, among Egyptian Muslims.

Despite the original report stating that the incident was one of sectarian violence, different voices conveyed that show diversity within the Egyptian Muslim community. For example it was stated, ““People are burning churches!” said Nasser Abdel Mohsen, a Muslim

³⁷ Bradley, Matt. "Clashes between Christians, Police Rock Cairo." *The Wall Street Journal*, October 10, 2011. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203499704576621184220609012.html> (accessed April 21, 2013).

³⁸ Bradley, Matt. "Clashes between Christians, Police Rock Cairo." *The Wall Street Journal*, October 10, 2011. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203499704576621184220609012.html> (accessed April 21, 2013).

who said he had joined the Christian protesters out of solidarity. ‘That’s never happened before. We always used to live peacefully as Copts and Muslims.’”³⁹ This man further said, “‘It’s a stupid thing that the army is coordinating with the thugs and Salafis ... these are the people who want to burn down the country.’”⁴⁰ In addition we see another point of view from an Egyptian Muslim who did not support the protesters, and stated “Christians were to blame for both the violence in Cairo and the church attacks in Egypt.”⁴¹ At the same time, this report put forth another point of view. “Mohammed Abdullah ... said he witnessed the violence, about 3000 Christian youth attacked the military with sticks and Molotov cocktails ... Mr. Abdullah said Christians were to blame for both the violence in Cairo and the church attacks in Upper Egypt.”⁴² Abdullah further stated regarding the cause of the march itself that, “‘It was against the law. They were building their church on land that belonged to a guesthouse.’”⁴³ Even with the characterizing of the massacre as one based in sectarian tension, the showing of different opinions among Egyptian Muslims ultimately shows recognition of different political factors were at play in how this massacre was handled. Further in the article, these various groups and sectors in Egyptian society were directly stated, and a clear difference was made between Islamists and the secular and liberal Egyptian Muslims who supported the cause of the Coptic Christians in the march. “Egypt’s political ferment has ushered in a powerful contingent of Muslims who adhere to the Salafi fundamentalist school of Islamic thought ... their rapid ascent

³⁹ Bradley, Matt. "Clashes between Christians, Police Rock Cairo." *The Wall Street Journal*, October 10, 2011. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203499704576621184220609012.html> (accessed April 21, 2013).

⁴⁰ Bradley, Matt. "Clashes between Christians, Police Rock Cairo." *The Wall Street Journal*, October 10, 2011. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203499704576621184220609012.html> (accessed April 21, 2013).

⁴¹ Bradley, Matt. "Clashes between Christians, Police Rock Cairo." *The Wall Street Journal*, October 10, 2011. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203499704576621184220609012.html> (accessed April 21, 2013).

⁴² Bradley, Matt. "Clashes between Christians, Police Rock Cairo." *The Wall Street Journal*, October 10, 2011. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203499704576621184220609012.html> (accessed April 21, 2013).

to the political mainstream has alarmed liberal Egyptians and religious minorities.”⁴⁴ By stating that these groups exist, implies that while this is allegedly an incident of sectarian violence, by no means does it automatically become defined as a simple conflict between all Muslims and all Christians in the country. This not only paints an idea for the viewer that the incident was not a black-and-white clash of religious sectarianism, but gives the idea that such incidents are not long-standing, but are due to the increasing political presence of the Islamists.

While this is certainly a move away from typical Orientalist representation, there were aspects about this article that were included, and also excluded that could potentially give the reader a less of an Orientalist framing of the incident. Unlike in the representations the Egyptian media put forth, there is no direct indication of the military violently quelling the original march. It is stated, “Soldiers charged the protesters with armored cars, running over several people ...”⁴⁵ only after it was stated that clashes occurred. Overall however, despite *The Wall Street Journal's* shortcomings in failing to provide a concrete narrative in how the events at Maspero unfolded and became violent, there is undoubtedly a shift away from using generalizing terms in the groups involved in the incident, and even those that simply have an opinion on what happened. The use of generalizing terms was one of Said’s most significant criteria in look at Orientalist representation, and in this aspect, there is progress being shown. This conveys a promising view in humanizing the Egyptians, in what otherwise may have been, a black-and-white, Muslim vs. Christian clash that would have been seemingly typical to the region.

⁴³ Bradley, Matt. "Clashes between Christians, Police Rock Cairo." *The Wall Street Journal*, October 10, 2011. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203499704576621184220609012.html> (accessed April 21, 2013).

⁴⁴ Bradley, Matt. "Clashes between Christians, Police Rock Cairo." *The Wall Street Journal*, October 10, 2011. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203499704576621184220609012.html> (accessed April 21, 2013).

⁴⁵ Bradley, Matt. "Clashes between Christians, Police Rock Cairo." *The Wall Street Journal*, October 10, 2011. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203499704576621184220609012.html> (accessed April 21, 2013).

Conclusion

Though each of these outlets give different reports to varying extents, there is a clear shift towards providing concrete political context and humanizing the protesters. This is clear in how detailed the incident was portrayed and the different groups of Egyptians involved in it are portrayed. Print media provided a better sense of what exactly happened the night of the Maspero Massacre, and a clear picture of how various groups of Muslims thought and reacted to the incident. With the broadcast outlets, there was a stronger Orientalist framing by both the headlines that used generalizing, black and white terms, and in the case of *Fox News*, grouping incidents of Muslim extremism throughout the Middle East together in the same report. It is interesting to note, that we see more similarities among print publications and broadcast media that we do on outlets who purport a liberal view as opposed to a conservative view of the news. Next as we examine the massacre that occurred only a few months later after this one in a Port Said football stadium, a similar pattern of what types of outlets provide sufficient context to give the viewers and readers and understanding of how the incident unfolded will emerge, along with the political complexities surrounding the massacre. What is different here, however, is that this incident puts forth the notion of sectarian violence of another kind. Instead of religion, football fan rivalries, and hooliganism are at question, and like the Maspero Massacre, there is a strong need for a concrete narrative of the incident. Again, we will find this to be dangerously lacking in broadcast news outlets, but clear in print outlets. Though there will be apparent traits that humanize the news story, such as clear political context, vagueness and a proclivity to portray the incident as a fan club conflict gone awry emerges in broadcast media.

CHAPTER TWO: The Port Said Football Massacre

Background

This particular incident happened at Port Said on the night of February 2nd, 2012. It continues to be a sensitive one for Egyptians as many questions are left unanswered on how such violence erupted in the stadium, and why there was no security to prevent such an incident from happening. This incident is perhaps one of the starkest examples of how the American mainstream media covered this event in a vastly different fashion from that of the Egyptian independent press. The event started as a regular soccer match between the Al-Ahly team, the team with the largest fan base in Egypt based in Cairo, and the Al-Masry team, another well-known team based in Port Said. The Al-Ahly fan club, often referred to as the “Al Ahly Ultras” in Egypt, took a very active role in the January 25th uprising, and had continually been joining in various marches and strikes against abuses by the then-rulers of Egypt, the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) under the banner of the Ultras. The Ultras continue to claim that the massacre was a planned conspiracy to incite sectarian conflict among football fans with in Egypt, and to tarnish the image of the Ultras as playing a politically active role in the uprising.

Egyptian media coverage

Mosireen's coverage of the incident took place the day after the events, between Port Said where the massacre took place, and in the Cairo train station where returning Al Ahly Ultras were returning from the match. Eyewitnesses and lawyers of the injured and families of the victims commented on the nature of the incident as a possible planned and conspiratorial event to foster civil strife. Outside thugs came into the stadium with arms and came in to the stadium as fans of the Al Masry team. Those interviewed from both the Al Ahly Ultras and the Al Masry

Ultras further insinuated that because of the activity of security forces while in the stadium. One lawyer who was present at the aftermath of the incident stated, “One of the eyewitnesses ... said, and I quote ‘I went on the field after the match with a group of spectators to celebrate. Some of the fans carried Hossam Hassan⁴⁶ and we were shocked to find a uniformed police colonel telling us, ‘Go kill those bastards.’”⁴⁷ Another Al Masry fan who was interviewed testified the scene after the match finished before the massacre, “We took to the field ... and we wanted to check it out, posed for pictures ... No one saw these massive surges coming. We ran into Central Security Forces on our way and they were cursing and telling us to go attack the fans.”⁴⁸ The image that was shown from the incident in their video was fans attempting to run out of the stadium and security forces in riot gear standing in the field. From these accounts there is a clear view among the eyewitnesses that the security forces did not only take on the responsibility of stopping the thugs that were claimed to have begun the massacre, but also encouraged other Al Masry fans to join these thugs. Regardless of whether this was a premeditated attack, what we can take from this is that there is a view among Egyptians who follow the independent media that security forces went beyond simply neglecting their duty. According to the activists behind *Mosireen* this incident is one that is telling of deeply corrupt security forces, not hooliganism among football fan clubs.

In other eyewitness accounts from *Mosireen*, eyewitnesses commented on the unusual aspects of the match even before the massacre began. The usually tight security checks that happen to each fan entering the stadium was allegedly not done before this match. An eyewitness stated, “It’s never happened in an Egyptian club. They are extra careful about security. They

⁴⁶ A player on the Al Masry football team based in Port Said

⁴⁷ Mosireen, “Port Said Testifies,” *Port Said*, Eyewitness accounts of Port Said Massacre, Web, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYiYb9yT7bA>.

⁴⁸ Mosireen, “Port Said Testifies,” *Port Said*, Eyewitness accounts of Port Said Massacre, Web, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYiYb9yT7bA>.

confiscate lighters!” Another group of fans stated, “We came in and went out without tickets. No one checked our tickets.”⁴⁹ What it is important to note is how much context is given around the event. The emphasis on the strange and suspicious activity both during the match and afterwards, suggests that the incident was not instigated by angry football fans and not a case of simple neglect from security forces.

In *Egypt Independent*, the massacre was similarly covered with the use of fans in the stadium at the time. They also drew their sources on what happened from Port Said residents. In one of their original published articles, the first statement announced, “Port Said residents are adamant that the violence at Wednesday’s football match here was caused by infiltrators, not hardcore local football fans.”⁵⁰ In a quote from one of the Al Masry fans in the article, it was further stated, “They pointed out that the gate between the stands and the pitch was left open, while at the same time the exit to the area where Ahly fans were sitting was kept closed.”⁵¹ This reflects the similar view that the context behind what happened at the match to *Mosireen*’s account that the causes run much deeper than idle security forces, and in this case directly stating that this incident was a possible conspiracy against the Al Ahly Ultras. Furthermore in the article, an NGO worker for the Arab Network for Human Rights Information stated, “the SCAF has been working to sow division among Egyptians, stressing that the military council is the principal beneficiary of the current events.”⁵² In addition to *Mosireen*’s coverage, there was more coverage given to the possible causes of the event, and even possible motives by security forces and the ruling military council. Again this shows the kind of portrayal that *Egypt Independent*

⁴⁹ Mosireen, "Port Said Testifies," *Port Said*, Eyewitness accounts of Port Said Massacre, Web, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYiYb9yT7bA>.

⁵⁰ Hussein, Abdel-Rahman. "Port Said violence was work of infiltrators, not ultras, say locals." *Egypt Independent*, February 02, 2012. <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/port-said-violence-was-work-infiltrators-not-ultras-say-locals> (accessed April 22, 2013).

⁵¹ Hussein, Abdel-Rahman. "Port Said violence was work of infiltrators, not ultras, say locals." *Egypt Independent*, February 02, 2012. <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/port-said-violence-was-work-infiltrators-not-ultras-say-locals> (accessed April 22, 2013).

⁵² Hussein, Abdel-Rahman. "Port Said violence was work of infiltrators, not ultras, say locals." *Egypt Independent*, February 02, 2012. <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/port-said-violence-was-work-infiltrators-not-ultras-say-locals> (accessed April 22, 2013).

purported about this event. In this view, it was a tragic event that the security forces and military were to blame for, and that it was a possible conspiracy against the pro-opposition Al Ahly Ultras.

In an opinion article that was published the day after the massacre there is some insight on what kind of larger social and political factors could have contributed to the violence. The contributor, Fayrouz Karawya argued that the immense failure and corruption of security in the stadium was not an isolated event. She stated that the security vacuum had been a recurring problem not only since the January 25th uprising, but even since 1999 when an assassination attempt against ousted President Mubarak happened in the city. Since then she said, “... there was a systematic policy to ruin the city ... Port Said’s economy sank following the alleged assassination attempt due to state policies that aimed to end the city’s status as a duty-free zone. This has left many unemployed; some have been forced to make a living off of being paid thugs for state security.”⁵³ The fact that Port Said was a duty-free zone made its economy a functioning one. Without it, the city suffered and continues to suffer, Karawya argued. As was seen in *Mosireen*’s coverage, there is no mention of fan rivalries or any of the root causes of this incident being from such rivalries. In the coverage of this incident, *Egypt Independent* purported a great deal of speculation on the security forces’ failings in the stadium, the possibility that they may have been using this event to foster tension and divisions among average Egyptians, and the deeper problems within the Port Said itself that may have lent itself to contributing to this massacre. The use of eyewitnesses and NGO workers as sources for providing the narrative of the event and analyzing the context and causes conveys the image of the fans in the stadium that night as the victims and the security forces, as the perpetrators.

⁵³ Karawya, Fayrouz. "The regime gets back at Port Said." *Egypt Independent*, , sec. Opinion, February 02, 2012. <http://www.egyptindependent.com/opinion/regime-gets-back-port-said> (accessed April 22, 2013).

In the *Daily News Egypt*, we again see similar narrative of suspicious police activity in the stadium at Port Said. Keeping in mind again that this publication is meant for the English-speaking reader with non-Egyptian contributors, there are some additional points here that were not found in *Mosireen's* or *Egypt Independent's* coverage. For example, in their original article of the event published February 2nd 2012, the morning after it happened it was stated, "For the ultras, as for many politicians and ordinary Egyptians, the anger was not that soccer fans clashed but that security forces appeared to have done little to stop them. It has added to the mounting frustration at the army's failure to restore law and order almost a year after taking charge."⁵⁴ It is added here that the frustration against security forces are not shared only among the Ultras and those involved in the incident, but among other sectors of Egyptian society. This implies that the view of the incident was a suspicious one primarily caused by the idle activity of security forces is a widely held one among Egyptians, rather than it being an event that was caused from a rivalry between the Al Ahly and the Al Masry Ultras. Also, we see here unlike the previously mentioned publications that a prominent political figure was quoted for his input on this incident. The then-presidential candidate who was running as a liberal commented in the article, "What happened was black vengeance against the Ultras because of their role in the revolution."⁵⁵ Again, it is important to remember the active role the Al Ahly Ultras have played since the January 25th uprising. Their early involvement in the movement, and their continual participation in demonstrations against police and military brutality as a group, made them one of the leading voices of the opposition and synonymous with the image of revolutionary youth in Egypt. It is for this reason that the inactivity by the security forces at the incident is construed as an attack on the ideals and values for what Egyptians call the January 25th Revolution. The tragedy that

⁵⁴ "Egypt's 'ultras' soccer fans target ruling generals." *Daily News Egypt*, , sec. Politics, February 02, 2012. <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2012/02/02/egypts-ultras-soccer-fans-target-ruling-generals/> (accessed April 22, 2013).

⁵⁵ "Egypt's 'ultras' soccer fans target ruling generals." *Daily News Egypt*, , sec. Politics, February 02, 2012. <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2012/02/02/egypts-ultras-soccer-fans-target-ruling-generals/> (accessed April 22, 2013).

happened in Port Said that night for Egyptians was seen as an indicator of the incompetence and perhaps corruption of the security forces and the SCAF (Supreme Council of Armed Forces) in ruling the country after the end of the uprising.

Overall, what we can derive from news sources in Egypt is that it runs much deeper than tensions between soccer team fans, and even neglect on the part of the security forces present at the incident. There are larger complexities to the causes of this incident that have not yet been identified, with corrupt factors at play. The amount of context and speculation of what factors were behind the massacre is the major aspect of this coverage that gives readers and viewers the best sense of how Egyptians see this event, and how they portray the Ultras of both the Al Ahly and the Al Masry teams as the victims of this tragedy, rather than as two groups fighting each other or the perpetrators of the incident.

American media coverage: CNN

One of the most prevalent and consistent aspects in the coverage of the Port Said Football massacre is how the event overall was portrayed. Broadcast outlets as well as some print outlets characterized this as a “riot.” This was one of the most common keywords used in the coverage of the Iranian revolution according to Said, and is one of the indicators of Orientalist representations. In this case, there is a subtle framing of this incident being driven by the opposing fan clubs. The involvement of security forces were conveyed as secondary in the unfolding of the massacre. These factors together paint the incident as a clash between two groups of fans.

The first aspect of CNN’s coverage is that the incident was depicted in the headline of the initial report as a “riot.” On the *CNN Newsroom*, the headlines that came up regarding the

incident on the day it happened, February 2nd 2011, were: “Egypt’s Soccer Riot Fuels Concerns,” “79 Killed in Egypt Soccer Riot,” and “More Anger Flares After Soccer Riot in Egypt,” The very first report that day was prefaced by the anchor, Kyra Phillips, with the question, “Well, politics or just passionate soccer fans?” The implication made here with “passionate soccer fans,” and the headline calling the incident a “riot” here could lead American viewers to believe that the incident was simply a fan rivalry gone wrong. This reinforces the original Orientalist representation of Middle Easterners being impulsive and irrational enough to partake in a riot over a football match and kill dozens of people. The difference here is that it is never directly mentioned that these soccer fans were killing each other over the results of the match. However the language used implies a kind of mass hooliganism and mob activity that is typical of Orientalist representation. In this case with the *CNN Newsroom*, this is only insinuated. As the report continued, it covered the demonstrations in Tahrir Square that took place in reaction to the incident rather than the incident itself. It is covered as a smaller factor to a broader pattern happening in Egypt, the increasing discontent from the Egyptian public on the SCAF’s interim rule. Not considering the headline, this news story could have provided a brief but insightful report on the condition of Egypt’s security and governance and shown how this incident was a symptom of the failings of the SCAF as a governing force. However, implying that the incident was only a result of security being unable to stop fans of opposing teams from clashing could give the viewer the impression that these soccer fans resorted to barbarism. As was apparent with the coverage of the Maspero incident, there was insufficient context on the massacre itself to avoid viewers taking away that that the incident was a result of what happens when a stable government falls and when football fans in Egypt become passionate about how the results of a match turn out.

On *The Situation Room with Wolf Blitzer*, the coverage of the incident was direct about the incident being caused from angry fan club rivalries, thus portraying it as a clash between fans. The report of the massacre was first prefaced with the release of kidnapped American tourists and the alleged increasing dangers on the streets of Egypt. It was stated, “Two American tourists kidnapped in the southern part of the Sinai Peninsula were, in fact, freed today ... Abductions and daylight robberies are becoming increasingly common in Egypt.”⁵⁶ What came across as an isolated incident involving American tourists seems to turn to a broad statement that implies that such incidents are rampant. No other context is given to the “abductions and daylight robberies” that were “increasingly common.” This paints Egypt as a country nearly uninhabitable to American viewers. Putting these statements right before covering the massacre potentially gives the viewer an impression that Egypt was under a state of anarchy at the time this report was issued.

After this statement, the report progressed with beginning to cover the protest in Tahrir Square that took place in reaction to the violence at the Port Said stadium. The focus here was on the various chaotic incidents and protests that were happening in and around Tahrir Square at this time. Cairo correspondent, Ben Wedemen stated on the show, “... on the roads leading to the interior ministry, there are still clashes. In fact, there was a fire at the Egyptian tax authority.”⁵⁷ Furthermore, Wedemen continued to state what happened at Port Said, “... is much more than just sports.”⁵⁸ However, rather than elaborate on this, there continued to be more

⁵⁶ CNN, "Transcripts: The Situation Room." Last modified February 03, 2012. Accessed April 22, 2013. <http://edition.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1202/03/sitroom.02.html>.

⁵⁷ CNN, "Transcripts: The Situation Room." Last modified February 03, 2012. Accessed April 22, 2013. <http://edition.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1202/03/sitroom.02.html>.

⁵⁸ CNN, "Transcripts: The Situation Room." Last modified February 03, 2012. Accessed April 22, 2013. <http://edition.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1202/03/sitroom.02.html>.

coverage on the protest and clashes in Tahrir Square and the chaos that is happening due to discontent with the government, and perhaps more specifically, the SCAF.

Firsthand accounts were given in short and almost cut-off statements. For example, an Egyptian man interviewed gave his opinion on both the incident and the resulting protests. “‘I hate football,’ ... ‘but those innocent boys have made Egyptians sympathize with them because they’re our children.’”⁵⁹ It is interesting to note that there is an indication of context behind the incident here since the man quoted sees the fans as “innocent,” however again, this is not followed up by any other additional context.

The report restated the tension within the country over the Port Said incident and perhaps other government failings as insinuated in this report. This is most evident as the report comes to a conclusion with, “A year after the revolution, the culture of protest and clashes with the authorities has become deeply embedded in Egypt ... despite the fact there’s an elected parliament, this is the way many Egyptians like to work out their politics.”⁶⁰ This statement gives a depiction of a large, angry, and even irrational crowd, a depiction of a common Orientalist view of Arabs.

Broadcast Media Coverage: Fox News

With *Fox News*, there was similar rhetoric of the mob-mentality at play as the cause of the massacre. Their initial headline in covering the incident on the program, *The Fox Report*, was “Egyptians Deal with Soccer Riot Aftermath.”⁶¹ When the report itself began, the anchor Shep

⁵⁹ CNN, "Transcripts: The Situation Room." Last modified February 03, 2012. Accessed April 22, 2013. <http://edition.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1202/03/sitroom.02.html>.

⁶⁰ CNN, "Transcripts: The Situation Room." Last modified February 03, 2012. Accessed April 22, 2013. <http://edition.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1202/03/sitroom.02.html>.

⁶¹ "Egyptians deal with soccer riot aftermath." *Fox News Video Archive* Recorded February 02 2012. Fox News. Web, <http://video.foxnews.com/v/1430285758001/egyptians-deal-with-soccer-riot-aftermath/>.

Smith began by saying, “A day after the soccer riot that left dozens dead, outraged Egyptians are responding with more violence.”⁶² This statement by itself, when considering the preceding headline and the stated statistic of seventy-five dead fans from the incident, this statement could make the viewer think that those “outraged Egyptians” were displaying the same kind of violence that killed the fans in the stadium. As the report continued, the anchor stated the nature of the reactionary protests and clashes with the police and how the protesters believe that security forces were responsible for the massacre in the stadium. He continued, “Witnesses say fans of one team cornered the fans of the rivals, attacking them with stones, clubs and knives.”⁶³ Again the minimal and fragmented eyewitness accounts and context here further purports the image of the massacre being started from something as simple as fans of one team provoking another.

However, despite this suspicions in the role of security were further explored as the report continued when the anchor referred to the correspondent. The correspondent said, “The violence was planned for several days and the police was complicit in it.”⁶⁴ It was further stated that it was believed that the police helped the fans of the winning team enter the stadium with weapons, and the police let the violence happen. It’s important to note here that unlike *Mosireen*’s report of the incident, it was not thugs, but the fans themselves who were responsible for killing the fans of the opposing team, painting this as a black-and-white fan rivalry gone awry. After this statement however, political reasoning is given as to why those fans, and as correspondent later calls them, the “Ultras,” and their involvement in the January 25th uprising.

⁶² "Egyptians deal with soccer riot aftermath." *Fox News Video Archive* Recorded February 02 2012. Fox News. Web, <http://video.foxnews.com/v/1430285758001/egyptians-deal-with-soccer-riot-aftermath/>.

⁶³ "Egyptians deal with soccer riot aftermath." *Fox News Video Archive* Recorded February 02 2012. Fox News. Web, <http://video.foxnews.com/v/1430285758001/egyptians-deal-with-soccer-riot-aftermath/>.

⁶⁴ "Egyptians deal with soccer riot aftermath." *Fox News Video Archive* Recorded February 02 2012. Fox News. Web, <http://video.foxnews.com/v/1430285758001/egyptians-deal-with-soccer-riot-aftermath/>.

However, even when considering the amount of context given on what the fans stated about the conditions in the stadium at the time, the prefacing of this story with characterizations of the protesters as outraged and violent alters the viewer's perception of the story and downplays the significance of the security forces in perpetrating the massacre. This could be viewed as a story of what happens when Egyptians become passionate over football, or how things such as mentality and murder could be becoming commonplace with the former regime out of power. One could easily see the fans involved in the incident as hooligans, and willing to murder over something as trivial as football team loyalties`.

Overall, with Fox News' coverage, the framing of the story to reflect mob-like behavior and intense passion over football loyalties make these aspects building blocks to a story with Orientalist connotations. What can be considered promising about the news story is that context was given as to why the incident happened, and that the role of security forces was made essential in painting this incident as one that was instigated by outside factors, not simply fan club loyalties. This aspect demonstrates a subtle shift away from the Orientalist notion that Middle Easterners, Egyptians in this case, are compelled by irrational urges and passions.

Print Coverage: The New York Times

Unlike the pattern with the Maspero Massacre, *The New York Times* coverage of the incident shared similarities with how CNN covered the tragedy at Port Said. The headline of their initial article covering the incident was "In Clashes with Police, Egyptians Unleash Fury over Soccer Riot Deaths."⁶⁵ Though the headline sounds similar to the headlines from CNN, the type of context put in the article gives the incident depth. The article began by covering the

⁶⁵ Kirkpatrick, David. "In Clashes With Police, Egyptians Unleash Fury Over Soccer Riot Deaths." *The New York Times*, sec. World/Middle East, February 02, 2012. http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/03/world/middleeast/egypt-mourns-lethal-soccer-riot-and-many-blame-military.html?_r=0 (accessed April 23, 2013).

protests in Tahrir that were in reaction to the event and subsequently went on to cover what happened that night in the Port Said stadium. While Kirkpatrick here stated how violent the incident turned out to be, there was significant focus on the circumstances around the massacre, who the fan clubs were, the odd occurrences that happened that night, and huge question of what the security forces were or were not doing.

“Rumors that the police had deliberately abetted the violence at the match on Wednesday circulated through the crowd but were impossible to confirm. Protesters charged that the police had neglected to search fans for weapons, or had opened gates for the Port Said fans while closing them on the Cairo contingent or had turned out the lights to give the home fans cover.”⁶⁶

While not confirming the truth of the police deliberately escalating the attack and encouraging fans to join the attackers, Kirkpatrick acknowledged this as one of the potential instigators of the violence. Also, unlike either of the broadcast outlets we examined, the odd conditions surrounding the match, such as there being no ticket attendants, no security checks upon entering the stadium, and stadium lights suddenly turning off at the end of the match were made clear. This also conveyed that Kirkpatrick was using firsthand accounts from fans who attended the match. This insinuates that the massacre may not have resulted from simple incompetence by security forces, but rather from their active participation in the massacre.

As the article progressed, there was less of a focus on the protests that were occurring at the time, and more of a focus on the casualties, and immediate steps that the SCAF and local government in Port Said took to investigate the perpetrators. There was also detailed background given on who the Al Ahly Ultras are and what their role was in the January 25th uprising as well as anti-SCAF demonstrations that followed throughout that year. The article included rumors from the Ultras who stated “... the Interior Ministry meant to retaliate against the Cairo soccer

⁶⁶ Kirkpatrick, David. "In Clashes With Police, Egyptians Unleash Fury Over Soccer Riot Deaths." *The New York Times*, sec. World/Middle East, February 03, 2012. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/03/world/middleeast/egypt-mourns-lethal-soccer-riot-and-many-blame-military.html> (accessed April 23, 2013).

fans because of their leading role in several violent battles with the police at protests over the past three months.”⁶⁷ These statements made throughout the article mirror the Egyptian coverage of this event as it again showed how much more complicated the circumstances behind the match were. This shows that there are deep problems with security forces in the country, and that the incident is not only a “riot” of angry soccer fans with rivalries. It is implied that there were corrupt forces at work with regards to this incident. What is important to note here is that there were many unconfirmed statements about what happened in the stadium, what security forces were doing, and whether the attack was at all premeditated, this article stated how these accounts from protesters differed due to the fact that they showed how complicated the incident was and how it was a symbol of problems with the SCAF. They also showed the continuing problem of corruption, especially when it comes to the safety of civilians.

Print Coverage: The Wall Street Journal

In *The Wall Street Journal*, we see similar traits in the style of reporting as we did in the reporting of the Maspero Massacre. Different groups of Egyptians, whether they are football fans from either team, security forces, politicians or activists, all had an acknowledged presence in the investigation of the incident and were all given voices in terms of who was to blame for the massacre, and how the events unfolded that night. There are elements in this article that make the incident come across as an attack in which Al Masry fans attacked Al Ahly fans, however the covering of the reactions of politicians, lawmakers, and activists give enough of a political context to show that the massacre was a result of political complications rather than a brawl over the results of a football match.

⁶⁷ Kirkpatrick, David. "In Clashes With Police, Egyptians Unleash Fury Over Soccer Riot Deaths." *The New York Times*, sec. World/Middle East, February 03, 2012. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/03/world/middleeast/egypt-mourns-lethal-soccer-riot-and-many-blame-military.html> (accessed April 23, 2013).

The article began by prefacing the coverage of the incident itself with coverage of reactionary protest that took place in front of the Interior Ministry in Cairo. The article also included brief coverage of the parliament's unruly emergency session over the incident. Quotes from parliamentary members, liberal activists, as well as eyewitnesses at the football stadium were stated either directly or indirectly in the article, all expressing their resentment towards the security forces. This preface and the emphasis on the attempted actions by the parliament to investigate what happened at the stadium show that the incident was more than a skirmish between fan rivalries. The article stated the circumstances behind the incident are complex, as at this time, the country was going through was a "... shaky postrevolutionary transition."⁶⁸ It is implied that the incident was a manifestation of the instability in the country, and the strong possibility that corrupt influences were at work in the causes of the massacre. The shortcoming of this article from an Orientalist perspective is that it stated "Thousands of Al Masry supporters invaded the Al Ahly bleachers and tossed fans from the nine-meter-high stands."⁶⁹ This phrasing makes it seem as though all Al Masry fans took part in the massacre. There is no distinction between the fans and the thugs who participated. This wording has the potential to make this sound like the fans were indeed acting on exaggerated and impassioned fan rivalries.

Despite this, here is a strong emphasis throughout the article of the shortcomings of the security forces in how devastating the massacre turned out. Statements from eyewitnesses that the police "... had abetted the bloody events of Wednesday night"⁷⁰ are made clear and even restated. In another statement that reflected the opinion of activists, "... liberal political parties

⁶⁸ Bradley, Matt. "Egypt Police Face Riot Fallout." *The Wall Street Journal*, , sec. Middle East News, February 03, 2012. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB30001424052970203889904577198550002991014.html> (accessed April 28, 2013).

⁶⁹ Bradley, Matt. "Egypt Police Face Riot Fallout." *The Wall Street Journal*, , sec. Middle East News, February 03, 2012. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB30001424052970203889904577198550002991014.html> (accessed April 28, 2013).

⁷⁰ Bradley, Matt. "Egypt Police Face Riot Fallout." *The Wall Street Journal*, , sec. Middle East News, February 03, 2012. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB30001424052970203889904577198550002991014.html> (accessed April 28, 2013).

that are more closely aligned with Egypt's street-level protest movement aimed their barbs at the ruling military council."⁷¹ Again these different views reflect the extent to which this incident is not only difficult to investigate and draw conclusions from, but also how complex the political situation on the grassroots level is between average Egyptians and the police. One of the final statements in the article directly reflected what eyewitnesses in *Mosireen's* account continually implied by the strange circumstances of that night. "In a confusing move that many activists say proves an orchestrated police conspiracy, guards at the match closed the exit gates to the Port Said stadium, penning in escaping fans ..."⁷² The conclusion of the article, similar to the *Egypt Independent* article discussed earlier, gave an insight on the significance of this incident, and what it symbolizes for Egyptians. It was stated: "The average Egyptian is extremely disappointed, seeing this as another chapter in this history of the collapse of Egypt's police forces."⁷³ This quote from a political science professor gave a voice for average Egyptians in this article. The use of direct quotes from eyewitnesses shows a strong move away from typical Orientalist representation. The presence of different voices, such as politicians, college professors, eyewitnesses, and activists all of whom were native Egyptians gives this incident a strongly realistic and human impression to American readers. When considering these traits in the article, we can see a huge leap from the typical generalization that Orientalist representations are known to purport.

⁷¹ Bradley, Matt. "Egypt Police Face Riot Fallout." *The Wall Street Journal*, , sec. Middle East News, February 03, 2012. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB30001424052970203889904577198550002991014.html> (accessed April 28, 2013).

⁷² Bradley, Matt. "Egypt Police Face Riot Fallout." *The Wall Street Journal*, , sec. Middle East News, February 03, 2012. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB30001424052970203889904577198550002991014.html> (accessed April 28, 2013).

⁷³ Bradley, Matt. "Egypt Police Face Riot Fallout." *The Wall Street Journal*, , sec. Middle East News, February 03, 2012. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB30001424052970203889904577198550002991014.html> (accessed April 28, 2013).

Conclusion

Overall, with *CNN's* and *Fox News's* coverage, the framing of the story to reflect mob-like behavior and intense passion over football loyalties make these aspects building blocks to a story with Orientalist connotations. What can be considered promising about their is that context was given as to why the incident happened, and that the role of security forces was made essential in painting this incident as one that was instigated by outside factors, not simply fan club loyalties. This aspect demonstrates a subtle shift away from the Orientalist notion that Middle Easterners, Egyptians in this case, are compelled by irrational urges and passions. There is a different pattern with the *Times* and the *Journal* in that a narrative is constructed from the voices of the eyewitnesses and Port Said residents who were present at the stadium. From this narrative, the involvement of the security forces, and suspicious circumstances are made clear, indicating this to be an incident larger than just fan rivalries. It is made clear as a massacre made possible from corrupt, and powerful forces possibly targeting the Al Ahly Ultras.

CHAPTER THREE: Mohammed Morsi's Election to the Presidency

Background

Mohammed Morsi's election to the presidency was an unforeseen one given several circumstances. The Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) a party founded by members of the Muslim Brotherhood, after Hosni Mubarak's ouster in 2011 stated that they would not be running a candidate for president when the time came to run elections. In the first parliamentary elections in November 2011 months after the SCAF came to power, an overwhelming amount of Islamists ran for seats. Members of the FJP won over 70% of the seats in parliament and the remaining seats were held by Salafists and a small number of left-wing liberals. Nearly a year later, after the first parliamentary elections in November 2011 in which they gained the majority of the parliamentary seats, and presidential elections were announced to be held in May 2012, the Muslim Brotherhood announced that they would be running Khairat al Shater, a leading figure of the Brotherhood for President. Omar Suleiman, the Vice-President under Hosni Mubarak, and considered by many Egyptians to be one of the most corrupt officials of the Mubarak regime, also ran for president. These two candidates stirred concerns among the liberal opposition movement. Despite the running of other liberal and big-name candidates such as liberal Nasserist, Hamdeen Sabahi, former head of the Arab League Amr Moussa, among others, calls to boycott the elections were made. After complications with the judicial system, Shater was deemed legally unfit to run for President and the FJP put Mohammed Morsi as their candidate for the presidency. This appeared to many in Egypt as if Morsi was simply a back-up candidate rather than someone who was a confident, first choice to propel the Brotherhood's ideology in political office. When this occurred in March 2012, there was already an increasing divide occurring between liberal camps and the Islamist camps.

Egyptian Coverage

The first presidential election drew various types of coverage and analysis from various newspapers and broadcast networks. This was largely because of the increasing gap between the Islamists and Muslim Brotherhood supporters, and the liberal and secularist bases in the country, on the other. However, since this was the first democratic election of a head-of-state in Egyptian history, there was widespread optimism for two reasons. One is that it was perceived to be the first democratic election and second because Ahmed Shafiq, the last man to serve as Prime Minister under Hosni Mubarak's reign lost to Morsi in the final run-off. As Morsi's rule began, the rift between those who supported the Brotherhood, and those who did not only increased. *Mosireen*, as a grassroots news outlet did not cover the election itself, however it covered what came about from the point of view of the working class and activists who opposed the Muslim Brotherhood's policies because of their actions as members of parliament. Though they did not cover this event directly, it is still essential to analyze their coverage of the indirect outcome of the election.

Mosireen put up reports and raw footage of protesters in Tahrir Square before and after Morsi's election which expressed an extreme discontent with the Brotherhood's alliance with the military. It was portrayed as implicit support for continuing military trials against civilians and other atrocities that liberal groups claimed to be rampant at the time. In addition, they posted several videos of worker's strikes that began due to low wages, extreme and hazardous working conditions, and verbal abuse by company directors. There was also footage posted of neglected but functioning public hospitals that were severely lacking in resources, and could not adequately provide care for Egyptians who could not afford to seek care elsewhere. These videos were all filmed during the time in which the Brotherhood-majority parliament was in session, and during

and after the presidential elections. Though *Mosireen* did not publically and directly denounce Morsi and the Brotherhood until months after the election when the new constitution was being drafted, these informational videos show the inadequacy of the ruling government, and how the status quo remained even after an allegedly stable government was put into place.⁷⁴

In *Egypt Independent*, there was a similar tone of discontent toward Morsi and the Brotherhood. In the days leading up to the election, there were several articles published on the discontent about the primary election results that turned out Morsi and Shafiq as the front-runners. In one such article published the day after the election primary, results were announced in which Shafiq and Morsi won, it was stated “‘The election was rigged,’ claimed Assem Ali of the April 6 Youth Movement, adding that they came to protest as individuals and not as members of political movements or parties.”⁷⁵ In another instance, it was stated that there were “... several irregularities, notably lack of access in the final aggregation of national results.”⁷⁶ This indicates that the elections were not as free and fair as they were promised to be, according to the article. On the day that it was officially announced that Morsi won the presidency there was a comprehensive listing of voting statistics published. These showed that most of Morsi’s votes came from various cities and towns in Upper Egypt and rural areas on the Nile Delta, indicating that many of Morsi’s voters may have been people who may not have had accessible information to the other presidential candidates, or voters who were illiterate. Overall, the problems with the elections portrayed in the *Egypt Independent* showed a deeply critical view of Morsi.

⁷⁴Mosireen, "We Inherit Disease," *Egyptian Workers*, web, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hsbww19cerg&list=PL5EA888C2959BD689&index=7>.

⁷⁵ Egypt Independent. "Hundreds march from Shubra to Tahrir to protest Morsy and Shafiq." *Egypt Independent*, May 29, 2012. <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/hundreds-march-form-shubra-tahrir-protest-morsi-and-shafik-news-1> (accessed April 28, 2013).

⁷⁶ Egypt Independent. "Hundreds march from Shubra to Tahrir to protest Morsy and Shafiq." *Egypt Independent*, May 29, 2012. <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/hundreds-march-form-shubra-tahrir-protest-morsi-and-shafik-news-1> (accessed April 28, 2013).

In *Daily News Egypt*, there were similarly negative representations of Morsi's rise to power. In one of the articles published on the day election results were announced, it was emphasized that Morsi won about 51% of the vote as opposed to his opponent, Ahmed Shafiq who won 48%, hardly a large majority win. In an article published the week prior to the announcement, it was stated that due to disenchantment about the elections, the severe lack of information about the candidates, and other problems contributed to the low turnout.⁷⁷ The article narrated one illiterate man's struggle to vote. "... his confidence in choosing was further challenged by his illiteracy. He struggled to find his name in the registration list, he wasn't able to write his voter ID number ... was only sure of the candidate he finally decided upon by their symbol."⁷⁸ This shows how inaccessible the elections were to a significant portion of the population given Egypt's 88% literacy rate among men and 82% literacy rate among women.⁷⁹ Even the enthusiasm according to the article was quite low, with only 15% turnout among those eligible to vote in the primary election. This paints the elections as a failed attempt at fulfilling the demand for fair and accessible government, and highlights the wide opportunity for corrupt and illegal practices to take advantage of illiterate voters. This in turn, delegitimized Morsi and gave reader skepticism on what his actions would be as president.

Overall what we can gather from the information from these Egyptian sources is that Morsi was an unpopular candidate from a liberal standpoint, and more importantly, there were many inherent problems with the elections that likely had many voters confused, and unable to make an informed vote. The confusion among these voters, as one can infer, allowed opportunity for corruption and illegal practices among hard-line supporters for any candidate. Whether it was

⁷⁷ For illiterate candidates, symbols of animals representing a candidate were used for them to cast their vote.

⁷⁸ Ishani, Maryam. "Disenchantment keeps Egyptians home." *Daily News Egypt*, sec. Politics, June 18, 2012.

⁷⁹ UNICEF, "Egypt - Statistics." Last modified 2011. Accessed April 28, 2013. http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/egypt_statistics.html

his affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood or the legitimacy of the elections, we can conclude in regards to the secular and liberal point of view among Egyptians, that Morsi's election was problematic.

In regards to how the American mainstream broadcast and print media covered Morsi's election, there are several promising aspects that show a shift away from older and typical Orientalist representations. We can parallel this event, an Islamist head-of-state coming to power with the rise of Ayatollah Khomeini to power after Iran's revolution. There are many signs of progress in use of language and depictions about Morsi as an Islamist, and Egyptian voters. Instead of perceiving him as a threat, there was a tone of optimism and even excitement as witnessing the first of such elections in Egypt after the January 25th uprising. As we saw in the previous case studies, we will see an exploration of the nuances in Egyptian public opinion regarding Morsi's election.

Broadcast Coverage: CNN

In *CNN's* coverage of Morsi's election, there was excitement and optimism exuded in the initially reports of his victory. There was a heavy focus on the celebrating crowds in Tahrir Square, and on the historical significance of the election, that it was the first democratic election in Egypt's history. On *CNN Newsroom* on June 24th 2012, the day of the official announcement that Mohammed Morsi had won the presidency, there was a positive tone regarding the results, and even an exuberance in reporting on the historical significance of the election and the growing celebratory crowds in Tahrir Square. The report began with a tone of excitement on Morsi's election. The anchor, Fredricka Whitfield, referred to the Cairo correspondent Ben Wedemen who was present in Tahrir Square for the celebration of Morsi's victory. Wedemen

noted the exuberant crowd in the square, the cool weather, and the significance of his victory. He stated, “The only time I'd heard louder roars was ... when Mubarak resigned ... this definitely is a landmark day for Egypt, the first time in more than 7,000 years when the people were ... able to elect democratically their leader”⁸⁰ Interestingly, during the reporting of this announcement, there was only minimal mentioning of Morsi’s affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood, or speculation on how an Islamist dominated executive and legislative government would affect American interests, much less, be considered a threat. The only speculative moment, though brief, in the report is whether Morsi would keep true to his stated promises of maintaining equality among various sectors of Egyptian society.

Additionally, there was coverage on the fact that Morsi was indeed not a widely popular candidate among voters. This is very much unlike typical Orientalist representations of how Ayatollah Khomeini was viewed among ordinary Iranians. At the time of the revolution, the media portrayed the rise of an Islamist government as something akin to being doomed to savagery and backwardness. In fact, a phrase often used when referring to the revolution at the time in the news media was that Iran “fell” to “Islam,” as if it were a physical entity. In this case however, the opposite seemed to be conveyed. The Egyptians were seen to have varying opinions across a wide spectrum of political affiliations. Wedemen continued,

“ ... if you look at numbers ... Only 50 percent of the electorate turned out and Mohammed Morsi only won 52 percent of that ... somewhere between 25 percent and 26 percent of those Egyptians eligible to vote actually voted for him. And many Egyptians were unhappy with the choice that they were given in the second round.”⁸¹

This quote when considering typical Orientalist representation is meaningful in determining not only how much support Morsi had and even the Brotherhood had among the voting population,

⁸⁰ CNN, "Transcripts: CNN Newsroom." Last modified June 24, 2012. Accessed April 28, 2013. <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1206/24/cnr.01.html>.

⁸¹ CNN, "Transcripts: CNN Newsroom." Last modified June 24, 2012. Accessed April 28, 2013. <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1206/24/cnr.01.html>.

but this is also an important recognition on the part of CNN that he was by no means a popular selection for president. The statistics put forth help the viewer understand exactly how much of the voting population, much less the wider Egyptian population actually favors Morsi. Additionally, the direct quotes from the voting population construct a comprehensive portrait of the varying opinions among Egyptians. For example, Wedemen stated, “I know one Egyptian who told me that he would vote in this election, but he would do it wearing surgical gloves and holding his nose because he didn't like the choices that were being presented.”⁸² The inclusion of this quote serves two functions here in straying from typical Orientalist representation. It shows the amount of differences in opinion among Egyptians that even with two run-off candidates, there were a significant number of voters who did not at all favor Morsi or Shafiq for the presidency. The disuse of generalizing terms here when it comes to how favored Morsi really is among the general public is another sign of a clear shift away from typical Orientalist representation that may paint the entire Egyptian public as a group that would favor Islamist rule.

Despite this and considering his background with the Brotherhood however, when covering Morsi's comments and there is an unusually positive highlighting of his progressive values. It was stated that “... all Egyptians, men or women, have the same rights. And the other day he did say ... when choosing his vice president, he would be considering people outside of the Muslim Brotherhood. He said he might choose a woman”⁸³ It was even stated that he would consider selecting Coptic Christians or those from liberal parties on his cabinet. When considering the image that is portrayed of Morsi as an Islamist and Brotherhood member, as

⁸² CNN, "Transcripts: CNN Newsroom." Last modified June 24, 2012. Accessed April 28, 2013. <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1206/24/cnr.01.html>.

⁸³ CNN, "Transcripts: CNN Newsroom." Last modified June 24, 2012. Accessed April 28, 2013. <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1206/24/cnr.01.html>.

opposed to the rise of Ayatollah Khomeini, we see a significant shift in how an Islamist head-of-state coming to power is viewed by American media. We see considerably less attention on the fact that Morsi was the candidate backed by the Muslim Brotherhood, and even a portrayal of Morsi as a possible progressive leader who may bring secular values into his rule. Also, Egyptian voters were not characterized as one monolithic entity with one opinion. All these traits signify a moving away from the Orientalist representation of 1979, which would have characterized this incident as a threat to the United States perpetuated by Islamist leaders and a monotonous group of voters who would blindly choose such a leader.

In terms of stating American interests in this significant election, there was also minimal emphasis in this initial report put on how the United States would be affected by his election. The focus in this piece was how Morsi's election would affect Egyptians, and their goals to establish a fair government in the post-Mubarak era. This report did not cover how this story relates to American interests, but had a focus on breaking down the Egyptian voting population to various groups who favored, and disfavored Morsi as a presidential candidate. What is arguably most important in the coverage of the election in this report is the portrayal of Morsi himself. Even as a man with Islamist convictions, he was presented as a man who had the potential to carry out progressive reforms as president. The covering of the "gray areas" with regards to voting Egyptians, and Morsi himself, we can call this another sign of a clear shift away from Orientalist representations that would have otherwise painted Morsi as a menacing figure as was done with Khomeini, and the Egyptians as people acting blindly towards voting for an Islamist candidate, as the Iranians were portrayed in their support for Khomeini. Overall, these points of focus in the coverage show a shift from typical Orientalist representations to giving humanizing portrayals of voters and of Morsi.

Broadcast Coverage: Fox News

On *Fox News*, throughout May and June of 2012 as the first general presidential election and final run-off elections were taking place, there was doubt and concern over Morsi's advances in the election and even over Shafiq's advances. In a report dated May 25th 2012 on *America's Newsroom*, there was a subtle image put forth of Egyptian voters that most either simply preferred an Islamist leader or going back to the old regime. "... [W]ho a lot of people have real concerns about from what he has said about Israel, or Egypt's relationship with the United States, and what he has said about bringing 'Shari'a or Islamic law to Egypt.'"⁸⁴ Vittert further stated that Ahmed Shafiq, the other frontrunner who was projected to likely face Morsi in the run-off election was a member of the "old guard" or the old Mubarak regime. The anchor then asked Vittert, "Where is their candidate? Why do they not have someone who is in a prominent position in this race?" Vittert answered by saying that "there is a lot more support for the establishment, to go back to the way things were than you saw on the street."⁸⁵ Here he was referring to the liberal candidates the January 25th youth supported at the time. It was stated that the liberal candidates "did not have the ability to get out the vote that the Muslim Brotherhood had," while not elaborating exactly why or that the notion of multiple political parties was a new concept in Egyptian political life.⁸⁶ Without these details, the overall impression the viewer could get from a report like this is that Egyptians simply wanted stability, or the right to choose

⁸⁴ "Historic presidential elections in Egypt," *Fox News Video Archive*, Two days of voting narrows the field before election run-off, Web, <http://video.foxnews.com/v/1655744481001/historic-presidential-elections-in-egypt/>.

⁸⁵ "Historic presidential elections in Egypt," *Fox News Video Archive*, Two days of voting narrows the field before election run-off, Web, <http://video.foxnews.com/v/1655744481001/historic-presidential-elections-in-egypt/>.

⁸⁶ "Historic presidential elections in Egypt," *Fox News Video Archive*, Two days of voting narrows the field before election run-off, Web, <http://video.foxnews.com/v/1655744481001/historic-presidential-elections-in-egypt/>.

an Islamist leader with anti-American convictions. Though this statement is not as overtly made as it was in 1979 about the Iranians, we can interpret this as a watered-down version of saying that Egyptians are going to opt for a dictatorship or for Islamism with anti-American convictions.

As for the coverage on the day the run-off election results were to be announced, the image purported of the event had a similar tone of emphasizing Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood background, the possibility of turning Egypt into a theocracy, and what kind of implicit threat his rule would impose on American interests in the Middle East. The first report of Morsi's victory came on the *Fox News*' regular news program, *America's Newsroom*, and began by reiterating on four occasions within the first thirty seconds of the report that an "Islamist" or "Muslim Brotherhood" candidate had won the presidency in Egypt. Subsequent to this, the distinction between Brotherhood supporters who voted for Morsi and opposition supporters was made clear, as Rittert stated that the supporters celebrating Morsi's victory in Tahrir Square were "mostly of supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood group, and the Salafists."⁸⁷ This implies recognition on the part of *Fox News*, that Mohammed Morsi was not a widely popular leader. In consequence, this puts forth an image of Egyptians as people who did not favor Islamists representing or ruling over them, an image contrary to the Orientalist view of Iranians.

As the report progressed, it offered greater context on Morsi's background as an Islamist, his educational background in the United States as an engineer, and as a political prisoner under ousted president, Mubarak's regime for his involvement with the Brotherhood. Though not as detailed as the *Times*, or as the Egyptian independent media sources, the amount of context presented can be enough to give viewers the impression that the Egyptian voters did not unanimously support Morsi in these election, and as a consequence, did not support the

⁸⁷ "Mohammed Morsi wins Egypt's presidential election," *Fox News Video Archive*, Muslim Brotherhood candidate wins presidency, Web, <http://video.foxnews.com/v/1704229841001/mohammed-morsi-wins-egypts-presidential-election/>.

Brotherhood taking positions in government at the time. Other indications made about the diversity in opinion among Egyptians in this report were delving into the demographics of Egyptians who voted, and their thoughts on Morsi as an Islamist president. During the report, it was emphasized that the election was a very close one between Morsi and Shafiq, “... less than two and a half percent of the country” actually voted in favor of Morsi. Rittert then elaborated on the concerns among the wealthy, the secular, as well as the educated sectors of Egyptian society that may be concerned about having an Islamist as their president of turning the country into an “Islamic state.”⁸⁸ Though this potentially frames Morsi as a threatening figure with insufficient evidence, Egyptians are humanized and shown to be thinking individuals.

Despite these promising elements of showing a detailed, contextual picture of the presidential election, who Morsi was as a presidential candidate, as well as how Egyptians from various sectors of society voted and reacted to the results, there was a consistent looming tone of the Brotherhood potentially turning Egypt into a state run by “Shari’a” and much speculation on how this election would affect American interests, and other nations, particularly Israeli interests, would be affected. The first subtly Orientalist element that was the continual speculation of how Morsi, along with the parliament elected a few months prior to the presidential election, would turn the country into an “Islamic state.” Without citing any of Morsi’s promises, or policies he claimed to have put into place if elected. Rittert mentioned concerns such as making hijab mandatory for women, “social democracy ... all these kinds of things are now in play.” As he continued there were several mentions of how American interests, and even on Israeli interests would be threatened. During the report Rittert stated, “... the world has to redraw its power map with the Middle East now that the mother of the Arab world is controlled by the Muslim

⁸⁸ "Mohammed Morsi wins Egypt's presidential election," *Fox News Video Archive*, Muslim Brotherhood candidate wins presidency, Web, <http://video.foxnews.com/v/1704229841001/mohammed-morsi-wins-egypts-presidential-election/>.

Brotherhood.”⁸⁹ These statements with their vague information presented several problems that could make viewers misunderstand the geographic scope in which this election would have an impact on, as well as how Morsi will have an impact on his constituents. For example, the possibility of Morsi instituting the wearing of the hijab as a mandate for women is put forth as a certainty, and therefore gives a false impression that instituting “Shari’a” as the law in Egypt was itself a certainty. There is a clear association between Islam and “Islamic” law here that appear to be one and the same when an Islamist comes to power. This assumption fed into the Orientalist notion of Islam deciding what will happen to a political system. This can be interpreted as a kind of context, in speculating how Islam will always be associated with establishing a form of Islamic law. Though this is not stated directly, viewers who were not familiar with the politics in Egypt at this stage can certainly assume that the election of an Islamist leader automatically means the coming of strict, and harsh Islamic law.

Though this report delved into the nuances of Egyptian society, it failed to cover how Morsi’s proposed policies would affect them on a grassroots level, and what this meant for the groundbreaking movement they began almost two years prior to this election. This lack of attention on what this election means for Egyptians downplayed the importance of this election for Egyptians. Though it came across subtly, this aspect of the report is Orientalist in that it emphasized the importance of the election for foreign interests, rather than Egyptian interests for the people who would be affected by Morsi the most. The perpetual speculation of how American and Israeli interests, and allegedly the entire power dynamic of the region would be affected made Morsi come across as a threat. Despite this Orientalist portrayal, there was also a

⁸⁹ "Mohammed Morsi wins Egypt's presidential election," *Fox News Video Archive*, Muslim Brotherhood candidate wins presidency, Web, <http://video.foxnews.com/v/1704229841001/mohammed-morsi-wins-egypts-presidential-election/>.

promising change in how Egyptians themselves are portrayed. While not as detailed as the *Times*, *Fox News* still the distinctions between Islamists and secularists clear, between Brotherhood members and Salafists clear, and even the wealthy and educated sectors of Egyptian society. These statements along with statistics of the election results provided a human and realistic image of the Egyptian people as they continued to struggle with getting their demands for fair government met.

Print Coverage: The New York Times

The trend with the *Times* to portray individual, news-making incidents as a result of deeper complexities within Egyptian society in the post-uprising era, and give extensive context behind a given incident remains true with the coverage of Mohammed Morsi's election to the presidency. Again, there is arguably no sign of Orientalist representation in the initial article released announcing Mohammed Morsi's victory in the election titled, "Named Egypt's Winner, Islamist Makes History."⁹⁰ We can draw a direct comparison to how the *Times* covered the Ayatollah's installation as head of state. In one case Said cites in which *The New York Times* covered the state of Iran after it "fell" to Islamists. In the article, "... scholars were trying to subdivide 'Islam' into its more important components whereas the *Times* recomposed these components to power wither 'inimical' or 'friendly' to United States interests."⁹¹ The coverage of Iran's transformation was juxtaposed with how their changes would affect American interests. A type of filtered, Orientalist lens was used in this case. However, we can be optimistic here in

⁹⁰ Kirkpatrick, David. "Named Egypt's Winner, Islamist Makes History." *The New York Times*, sec. World/Middle East, June 24, 2012. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/25/world/middleeast/mohamed-morsi-of-muslim-brotherhood-declared-as-egypts-president.html> (accessed April 28, 2013).

⁹¹ Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 91

that such a portrayal of Morsi's election, another kind of Islamist leader over forty years later in Egypt.

In the portrayal of Morsi as a public figure and president elect, there was extensive coverage of his educational background, his history with the Mubarak regime of being imprisoned, as well as his position with the Muslim Brotherhood prior to his election to the presidency. In this article, Morsi is portrayed as someone who is a leader who would attempt to instill equal rights to all Egyptians, regardless of faith, and one who would not pose a threat to the surrounding region, as well as the United States. Kirkpatrick included a quote from Morsi's acceptance speech in the article stating, "'We are all equal in rights, and we all have duties towards this homeland,' he added. 'But for me, I have no rights, I have only duties.' He also repeated his pledge to uphold all international agreements"⁹² He is portrayed as a new head-of state who seeks to fulfill the hopes of the youth who began the January 25th uprising, rather than "Islamize" the country. The second part of that statement implied his willingness to abide by international relationships with the United States, and even with Israel given the peace treaty with Egypt. However, it is important to note here that he is not portrayed through the lens whether he would be "good" or "bad for American interests. Throughout the article, this is the only reference to how Morsi would deal with the United States. The remainder of the article focuses on what Morsi himself claimed his goals would be for the country, and an exploration of his own history and qualifications.

In addition, the article continued by stating that, "Mr. Morsi resigned on Sunday from the Brotherhood and its political arm ... He has promised that the prime minister and an advisory

⁹² Kirkpatrick, David. "Named Egypt's Winner, Islamist Makes History." *The New York Times*, sec. World/Middle East, June 24, 2012. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/25/world/middleeast/mohamed-morsi-of-muslim-brotherhood-declared-as-egypts-president.html> (accessed April 28, 2013).

council would come from outside the Brotherhood as part of a unity government based on a rebuilt alliance with liberals and other secular activists.”⁹³ This statement in a way, detaches Morsi from the Brotherhood from the explicit mentioning that he has decided to resign from the organization itself. This potentially paints Morsi as a non-Islamist, or at least one who would not consider Islamist values in policy making. This implies of his intentions to form a secular government, with the inclusion of liberals and secularists in his government. This image of Morsi is an idealistic and majestic one. To American readers he comes across as one of the leaders who may uphold the values of the Arab Spring. This is perhaps reflective of the view on the part of the *Times* that Egypt at this point had great potential to become a self-sustaining, and fairly governed country on its way to developing into a modern nation. When considering this image alongside the image of Khomeini, we can conclude that there are no discernible aspects of Orientalist representation regarding Mohammed Morsi’s image as radical Islamist who intends to spread his ideology throughout Egypt and the surrounding region. There is minimal emphasis on how he would impact American foreign interests, and his quotes included in the article gives him the image of a “people’s leader.” His portrayal as a man attempting to rebuild a country based on what a popular movement demands shows a kind of humanity not only on Morsi’s part but also towards the Egyptians, Islamists or not, who voted for him.

Again as we have seen in previous cases, the *Times* elaborated on the various demographic groups who were in the square celebrating the victory, whether for Morsi’s victory or Shafiq’s defeat. In the article Kirkpatrick quoted a young, liberal opposition activist who was from the April 6th Movement. “He was celebrating, he said, but not because he supported Mr.

⁹³ Kirkpatrick, David. "Named Egypt's Winner, Islamist Makes History." *The New York Times*, sec. World/Middle East, June 24, 2012. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/25/world/middleeast/mohamed-morsi-of-muslim-brotherhood-declared-as-egypts-president.html> (accessed April 28, 2013).

Morsi. 'I hate Ahmed Shafik,' he said. 'He is from the old regime.'"⁹⁴ Neither of the broadcast outlets we explored delved in to the fact that many may have voted for or supported Morsi in the run-off election simply because they did not want any remnants of the old regime to hold a position in government, much less the presidency. This quote poses the possibility that many were celebrating the loss of Ahmed Shafiq, rather than Morsi's victory. This also implicitly poses the question of how much support at this stage of the post-uprising era in Egypt of how much support the Muslim Brotherhood actually has in the country.

The numbers of people going out to protest against Morsi and perhaps the Brotherhood dominance in government as well as the hundreds of thousands of protesters who reportedly went to Tahrir Square to celebrate Morsi's victory shows how wide of a gap there is among various sectors of Egyptians, such as liberals, Islamists, Coptic Christians, and supporters of the military. Egyptian society again in this article is conveyed as the opposite of a monolithic group who chose an Islamist leader simply because they are, as Said put it, "ruled" by Islam. The inclusion of the fact that Morsi won only 51.7% of the votes in the run-off reaffirms the notion implied that Morsi was not a widely popular leader among Egyptians. The complexity behind the election itself and the unorganized circumstances that allowed Morsi and Shafiq to be the frontrunners in the run-off election allow the reader to see that the vast majority of Egyptians did not necessarily favor the Brotherhood or the old regime.

Overall, the portrayal of Morsi in the *Times*, as well as the portrayal of the Egyptians who did and did not vote for him come together to form a portrait of a complex society reacting to the results of a historic election in a variety of ways. This is yet another example of the shift away

⁹⁴ Kirkpatrick, David. "Named Egypt's Winner, Islamist Makes History." *The New York Times*, sec. World/Middle East, June 24, 2012. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/25/world/middleeast/mohamed-morsi-of-muslim-brotherhood-declared-as-egypts-president.html> (accessed April 28, 2013).

from typical Orientalist representation that may have painted this story as a popular election of an Islamist leader who appears to be a threat to American interests in the region. The article presents a humanizing representation of Mohammed Morsi and Egyptian citizens as a whole that demonstrates this shift.

Print Coverage: The Wall Street Journal

The *Journal* similarly to the previous cases, as well as to the *Times* coverage, conveyed this event as a historic one, and covered it through the lens of how his election affected both Egyptians and the international community. Despite their coverage being largely diluted in Orientalist representation as we have seen with the previous two case studies, there is some reason to believe in this case that there are some Orientalist aspects expressed in the article in how Morsi may affect foreign policy was stated. The phrasing in this article implies that Morsi could have proclivities to threaten American interests in the region and specifically, break ties with Israel. However with the portrayal of the Egyptians who voted for Morsi as well as those who did not, it makes clear with explicit reference to the official count of how many votes he received compared to his opponent, Ahmed Shafiq. In clarifying the diversity in thought among Egyptians, and putting Morsi's popularity in perspective, this article shows progress away from the kind of Orientalist elements that were rife in coverage during the Iranian revolution.

Nonetheless, certain statements can give the reader the impression that this election was more significant on an international scale than a domestic one. Within the beginning of the article it was stated, "The election of an Islamist introduces a moment of anxiety for secular-

minded Egyptians, Western governments and Egypt's powerful neighbors.”⁹⁵ This statement could be interpreted in two ways. It highlights the fact that Morsi was not by any means a popular leader and came to power at a time when liberal opposition groups and Islamists were facing a growing divide. However, the inclusion of “Western governments and Egypt’s powerful neighbors,” more than likely meaning Israel and the Gulf states, outdoes the beginning of the statement in that the emphasis on the West and “powerful neighbors” makes this election an international issue rather than an Egyptian one. When considering this statement, there is inadequate focus put on the Egyptians and how this election would affect them as they were going through a post-uprising, interim period. This ultimately frames the article with Orientalist connotations, connotations that this election would be potentially threatening to not only American interests but interests of other countries in the region.

The threat to the west mentioned in a more direct way than we have seen in American news coverage so far. It was stated, “A Morsi presidency threatens to upset a fragile U.S.-backed diplomatic balance. Along with the U.S., the oil-rich Gulf states helped underwrite Mr. Mubarak's military-backed, secular rule that safeguarded a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel and ensured a measure of stability in the volatile region.”⁹⁶ This quote here can be easily construed as problematic when looking through an Orientalist lens because of the heavy focus on foreign interests. This is the first time in coverage of Morsi’s rise to the presidency that we see he is portrayed directly as “threatening” to American interests. The multiple issues brought up here, such as the treaty with Israel, the relationship with the Gulf states and of course the United

⁹⁵ Bradley, Matt, Charles Levinson, and Tamer El Ghobashy. "Islamist Wins Egyptian Vote." *The Wall Street Journal*, , sec. Middle East News, June 25, 2012. [http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304458604577486420858304122.html?KEYWORDS=Islamist Wins Election For Egypt's Presidency](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304458604577486420858304122.html?KEYWORDS=Islamist+Wins+Election+For+Egypt's+Presidency) (accessed April 28, 2013).

⁹⁶ Bradley, Matt, Charles Levinson, and Tamer El Ghobashy. "Islamist Wins Egyptian Vote." *The Wall Street Journal*, , sec. Middle East News, June 25, 2012. [http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304458604577486420858304122.html?KEYWORDS=Islamist Wins Election For Egypt's Presidency](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304458604577486420858304122.html?KEYWORDS=Islamist+Wins+Election+For+Egypt's+Presidency) (accessed April 28, 2013).

States portrayed his election to be one that would directly determine the future of the entire Middle East. The tone makes this passage come across to the American reader that because of Morsi, the entire, “volatile region” could possibly turn out to have a series of new problems. However it is important to note the trend of being implicit with this accusation. In *Covering Islam*, Edward Said stated that language used when covering the Middle East was often blatantly direct and repetitive when saying how the Middle East, especially as a region “owned” by Islam was a direct and extreme threat to America itself, not only its interests. One of the prime examples that Said cites of this is when “... the *Times* published a series of four long articles by Flora Lewis, all attempting seriously to deal with Islam in crisis.”⁹⁷ According to Said, though Lewis did provide context, there was no reference to religious diversity in the Middle East, and went so far as to call the Arabic language a “rhetorical and declamatory” language.⁹⁸ Statements made to these extremes are not seen here. In fact, in terms of how Egyptians themselves are portrayed, this article the case is quite the opposite. Muslims, let alone Islamists are not at the center of the article, but Egyptians of different political and religious affiliations are portrayed and given a voice regarding their views on Morsi’s election.

Despite the ominous tone regarding how his election would change foreign relations in the region in a disadvantageous way, the portrayal of the people is to a certain extent comparable to how the Egyptian media sources portrayed them, though not as detailed as those sources or the *Times*. The *Journal* in this case, acknowledges their presence, and their apprehension of Morsi as an Islamist head-of state. This is further highlighted as the statistics from the final run-off with the secular contender Ahmed Shafiq winning 48.3% of the votes and Mohammed Morsi winning 51.7% of the votes, according to the article, showing a wide gap in opinion, and the amount of

⁹⁷ Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 91.

⁹⁸ Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 91.

people who actually support the Islamists holding a position in executive government. We are also seeing Egyptian scholars being quoted on the election as legitimate sources for analysis, and what this election means for average Egyptians. It was stated by Khaled Fahmy, an Egyptian historian in the article that, “It is a revolution against the very nature of the Arab state that is not accountable to its people ... For the first time, we have the people in the largest Arab country having and dictating their say despite ferocious opposition.”⁹⁹ This quote from a native Egyptian scholar highlights the notion of this election being not only a historic one, but one that affirmed Egyptian academics are legitimate sources for information and analysis on such events. This is a huge shift from news coverage in 1979 when rarely, if ever, was there a native Iranian academic quoted to elaborate and analyze what was going on with the immense changes and upheaval in Iran.

While diversity in thought is made clear, there is no mention of specific groups within the “secular minded” Egyptians mentioned in the article. In fact, with the way the wording is, the article makes it seem like officials of the former Mubarak regime and those who supported it, and the liberal youth who helped to begin the January 25th uprising against him. The term “secular minded” is used vaguely, and potentially gives readers a black and white impression of the demographics involved, that “secular minded” people are all one group within Egypt, regardless of whether they favored or were against Mubarak or the ruling military council at the time. Furthermore, Morsi was portrayed, as a leader to be concerned about in regards to American interests, and much of the article, viewed Morsi through the lens of how his rule would change the power dynamic in the region, and what it would mean for the United States. While this can be construed as lighter Orientalist elements in how this election was covered on the part

⁹⁹ Bradley, Matt, Charles Levinson, and Tamer El Ghobashy. "Islamist Wins Egyptian Vote." *The Wall Street Journal*, sec. Middle East News, June 25, 2012. [http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304458604577486420858304122.html?KEYWORDS=Islamist Wins Election For Egypt's Presidency](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304458604577486420858304122.html?KEYWORDS=Islamist+Wins+Election+For+Egypt's+Presidency) (accessed April 28, 2013).

of the *Journal*, the subtlety of these statements, as well as the voice of native Egyptians, and the clarity of how many voters actually supported Morsi in these elections demonstrate an awareness of how diverse Egyptians are in political thought and opinion. This in itself shows a shift away from a modern Orientalist representation.

Conclusion

In terms of how Islamism, particularly with an Islamist in a position of power, and how Egyptians as a whole perceive such a ruler coming to power, there are still solid aspects of Orientalist representation present in American coverage. This is particularly true since it was apparent that the election was covered in relation to how the result would affect foreign, particularly American interests, and how Islamism would take shape. The *Journal* and *Fox News* portrayed this as such. Interestingly, *CNN* seemed to cover the election with a much less emphasis on how it would affect foreign interests, and instead, put forth statements made by Morsi on what he planned to do in office, including what kind of relationship he hoped to establish with liberals and the Coptic Christian minority. What is interesting here is that unlike in the other two cases, there is more of a visible similarity in coverage in how traditionally conservative outlets and traditionally liberal outlets than there is in how print and broadcast outlets covered this election. The *Journal* and *Fox News* each focused their coverage on how Morsi's election would affect the United States and nations they invested interests in the region, whereas *CNN* and the *Times* focused on the reactions of different demographic groups within Egypt at the news of Morsi's election. With both cases, even if to different extents, there is an evident shift away from Orientalist representation in that in all cases, there is a recognition that Morsi was not at all a widely popular candidate, and that various and sizeable segments of the

Egyptian population had varying opinions on the election, the candidates running in it, and the winner of the election.

Conclusion

Through these case studies, one can see the wide spectrum of representations that are taking shape through different forms of media and different types of incidents. It is clear that while many aspects of Orientalist representation remain prevalent in current day American mainstream press coverage, representations of Egyptians, and perhaps peoples of the greater Middle East are continuing to evolve. Generalizations continue to be present in mainstream American news coverage. There are still instances of Muslims being generalized and spoken for as one large and monolithic group in Egypt. However, in other aspects such as the scope, the use of Islam as context, and how American interests with regard to these incidents were conveyed, there is an obvious shift towards humanizing the subjects of the Egyptian Arab Spring.

There have been several promising shifts that give way to less barbaric Orientalist representations, and perhaps a sign of American news coverage moving forward in portraying human concerns in their realistic context in regards to the Middle East. We are seeing Muslims being put into subgroups in the print media. Readers are shown that “Muslims” are not one large group that has monolithic beliefs, opinions, and behaviors throughout the region, let alone within a nation such as Egypt. We are seeing much less of an emphasis of how the outcomes of these cases would affect “the West,” or in a narrower sense, American foreign interests. With the initial reports of Mohammed Morsi’s election to the presidency there was nearly no mentioning of how a head-of-state with deep involvement with the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood would

affect American foreign policy in the Middle East, or pose a threat to American interests. Overall, across news mediums and news outlets within those mediums specifically for broadcast media, shifts appear to be sporadic. It is clear however from close examinations of these case studies and the news coverage of these exhibits that common generalizations in Orientalist representation are at least beginning to be less frequent.

Geographic/Ideological Scope

In geographic and ideological scope, there is a visible difference in the progress made between mainstream print publications and mainstream broadcast news outlets. With the broadcast outlets, *Fox News* and *CNN*, the massacre was painted as a simple Muslim against Christian conflict. Many details were stated in a different order than in the Egyptian sources, which made the incident appear as if it was started by civilians in a clash, in which the military attempted to quell violently. In turn, the parties involved in the incidents were conveyed in a black-and-white manner. However, there was recognition that the incident was an issue that stemmed from Egyptian political strife. In the case of *Fox News*, the story was conjointly reported with other incidents of “Muslim extremism” that were completely unrelated to the march in Egypt. This purports the view of “Muslims” regardless of national identity or other distinctions are all a monolithic group.

Despite the still-rampant, even if more subtle generalizations of Muslims in broadcast media coverage of the massacre, there are evident leaps away from typical Orientalist generalizations when examining the print media coverage. One of the most striking shifts we saw when looking at the print coverage, of the Maspero Massacre was the delving into various groups and sectors within the Egyptian Muslim community. Especially with *The New York Times*, the

coverage succeed in acknowledging the distinctions between Islamist Muslims, liberal Muslims, Muslims who supported the cause of the march that night and Muslims who did not. These nuances demonstrate a clear break away from the Orientalist notion that would categorize Egyptian Muslims into one large, monolithic sector of Egyptian society.

The other case study we examined in which we saw the ideological scope narrowing with how Egyptian Muslims, their roles, and their opinions being portrayed through a realistic lens in both print and broadcast media was the election of Mohammed Morsi, a Muslim Brotherhood member, as the first democratically elected president. In nearly all the news outlets explored, there was common recognition that Mohammed Morsi, the Islamist president-elect at the time, was not a widely popular choice for Egyptian voters and that the Muslim Brotherhood was an unpopular organization among various sectors of Egyptian society at the time. In all outlets, Morsi's narrow win, and the low voting turnout was all covered and implied as possible contributors to Morsi's win. The portrayal of Egyptian Muslims as a whole being in favor of a leader from the Muslim Brotherhood, and being in favor of Islamist rule in Egypt is not present, as was the case during the Iranian revolution. This coverage shows a promising shift away from generalizing the people out of the election results. The coverage also did not portray Islamism being a widespread phenomenon as a result of the Arab Spring, and made no outside associations with Egypt. The narrow geographic scope based on national identity, and an even narrower scope on religious and political terminology here shows promise in the news media beginning to disuse language that may be construed as Orientalist.

When considering the considerable lessening use of generalization when it comes to differentiating between Egyptian Muslims, and in some cases Middle Eastern Muslims in general, much progress has been made in exploring the nuances in demography within these groups.

When looking at the similarities between the Egyptian media coverage and American coverage, print in particular, we can safely conclude that American media outlets are at least beginning to move away from using Orientalist images in their coverage, and are beginning to cover incidents in Egypt in a humanistic light, recognizing nuances and differences among groups of people within the country.

“Islam” as Context

Another trend to take note of in each of these cases, particularly with the Maspero Massacre is the use of Islam as an ideology or general behavior of Muslims as the rooted causes to an incident. One of the largest trends with coverage of the Iranian Revolution as Said stated was that, “Muslims ... react only because it is historically, and perhaps genetically, determined that they should do so; what they react to are not policies or actions ... What they are fighting on behalf of is an irrational hatred of the secular”¹⁰⁰ Though we have seen hints of this in *Fox News* coverage, and arguably in *CNN’s* coverage, there is a much more considerable shift away from using Islam as the context for the case studies covered in this project. With the *Times* and the *Journal*, political and social context to all three of the incidents were given. In the case of the *Times*, extensive context was given to explain the Maspero Massacre, the Port Said Massacre, and Morsi’s election. In these cases, it was the only news outlet to give such extensive background on the groups of people involved in each incident, and using eyewitness information as sources to give such context.

With coverage of the Maspero Massacre, the *Times* out of the four mainstream outlets explored gave the best context in that the nature of the protest was thoroughly explained by

¹⁰⁰ Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), xxxiii.

giving a brief history of the church demolition in Aswan, and indicated that it was not merely a protest of Coptic Christians, but also of Muslims who supported their cause and denounced the church demolitions that was believed to have been carried out by the military council. Even in the aftermath, the many slogans among the Coptic and supporting Muslim protesters make clear that from their point of view, the military had instigated the massacre by attempting to violently quell the march. The account given by the *Times* was almost identical to the one given by Egyptian independent media. As a result, readers were able to visualize chronologically what happened, and to be able to see that the conflict was not merely a sectarian one, but rather as one that was possibly instigated by security forces, aiming at a crowd of protesters, rather than a crowd of Christians. The use of Islam or extremist Muslims was not cited as a cause, but the tension and relationship between liberal opposition groups consisting of Muslims and Christians and the ruling military council was emphasized. Similarly in *The Wall Street Journal*, though a clear, chronological narrative of the incident was not apparent in the initial coverage, there was a thorough depiction of the groups of people involved, including Islamists who supported the military, secular Muslims who supported the Christians. The inclusion of active and native Egyptian voices in the coverage gives the reader an understanding of the complex circumstances surrounding the massacre. For this reason, the coverage does not generalize the massacre, but gives context of Egyptian public opinion, and shows the diversity in opinion among Egyptian Muslims. In both sources it is made clear that there is suspicious activity on the part of the security forces, not inherent Muslim erraticism that is cited as the cause. This detailed showing is a shift towards realistic representation of such incidents in Egypt.

We can clearly see a promising move away from slapping the label of Islam onto these incidents to cite it as one of the root causes to these incidents. With the Port Said massacre, all

news outlets showed recognition that the incident had confusing and suspicious circumstances surrounding the condition of the stadium as well as the idleness of the security forces in the stadium. In addition, especially with the *Times*, the presence of active, eyewitness voices were also present here with the statements made by some that the police actively participated in carrying out the massacre. Though these statements might seem conspiratorial to American readers, the inclusion of such statements shows that the incident was not simply a matter of one fan club being angry at one another. Other factors, even if they were unknown, were at play in the instigation of the massacre. Irrational and impulsive behavior that were associative traits in Muslims according to Said, are downplayed in favor of substantial concerns of corruption at the backdrop of the massacre.

The use of political and social factors as context in American coverage is also evident in the coverage of Morsi's presidential election. With the *Journal's* detailed statistics, and the *Times'* it was made apparent that Morsi was elected not simply because of his popularity or the Muslim Brotherhood's popularity. In fact, it was made clear in all outlets that Morsi's win was very narrow and that voter turnout was very low. What is essential to understand in the coverage with not only print, but the broadcast outlets as well was that Morsi was not painted as a copy of Ayatollah Khomeini, a menacing Islamist leader who hates the West and aims to spread Islamism throughout the region. On CNN and the *Times*, he could be construed as a social, even secular leader with his quotations on establishing an inclusive and equal society alongside liberal opposition supporters and Coptic Christians. Morsi was at worst portrayed as an influential figure, one who could determine the future of the region in terms of Egypt's relationship with Israel, the United States, and the Gulf states. There is an incredible shift in how an Islamist head

of state is portrayed in contemporary US media. Instead of menacing, Morsi was conveyed to show some promise for the post-uprising Egypt.

Prevalence of American Interests

One of the promising things about the news coverage in nearly all the outlets explored here is the lack of presence of the self-absorbed mentality on the part of the media, of: “how will this affect us?” particularly with the election of Mohammed Morsi as president. With *The New York Times*, these questions were virtually nonexistent in the coverage. Instead, there was a heavy focus on the election results themselves, and what the reactions of Morsi’s victory were among his supporters, liberal opposition groups, and other sectors of Egyptian society. The focus was clearly on the Egyptians involved in the election and how they would be affected by the elections. American interests in Egypt were only covered in reference, and not in nearly much detail as the election itself, the reaction of Egyptians, and what possible domestic policies Morsi would carry out according to his acceptance speech. This kind of coverage emphasizes the importance of covering Egyptian public opinion and how significant event that happen domestically may affect them.

There is a very promising shift from portraying this event through a Western lens in particular with contemporary media. The Maspero Massacre and the Port Said Football riots were each heavily traumatic incidents in Egypt and affected political discourse in terms of how the security forces and police. Many saw these incidents as indicative of the political instability within Egypt. However despite this, there was no speculation or over-exaggeration of how influential these incidents are on an international scale, and no fears of how this instability may translate into strained relations with the United States or Israel. In this aspect, domestic incidents

in Egypt are treated purely as internal concerns, and therefore are telling of an acknowledgement that average Egyptians are the focus of these stories. This focus humanizes them in the eyes of American news consumers and allowed for the capacity to empathize with them. In contemporary news there is a visible increase in this kind of coverage, another sign of a shift away from viewing these incidents through an Orientalist lens.

Continuities in Modern Orientalist Representations

Among one of the most prevalent consistencies with regards to Orientalist representations of Egypt, the depiction mob mentality and riotous behavior continue to be present, even if in subtler ways. This is particularly true with broadcast media. In the original thesis, *Orientalism*, this is one of the base criteria in Orientalist depictions. According to Said there is, “No individuality, no personal characteristics or experiences. Most of the pictures represent mass rage and misery or irrational ... gestures” within older and typical Orientalist depictions.¹⁰¹ With the broadcast coverage of the Port Said Football Massacre and with the Maspero Massacre, this was present. Unlike the Egyptian coverage and even the print coverage of the incident, there were no personal testimonies, no narrative as to what the course of events were or why such large crowds were protesting, setting government offices on fire, or even detailed reasons as to why the fans in the stadium and the protesters supporting them were angry at security. In the coverage from *CNN* and *Fox News* in particular, the video shown in each were of groups of people clashing with inadequate context given behind these clashes. The use of generalizing representation continues, and as we saw with *Fox News*, has the power to shape a news story in a completely different light than what eyewitnesses claim what happened.

¹⁰¹ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 287.

In the coverage of the Port Said Massacre, there was an apparent disregard for the use of eyewitness accounts of what happened in the stadium during the incident, particularly from *CNN*. This lack of context framed the incident as one that was catalyzed by hooliganism, from one group of football fans being angered at the opposing group of fans. Political context was introduced eventually in all outlets, however this type of framing can prove to be dangerous in that it sets the consumer's perception that the people involved, in this case the "rioters," instigated the massacre through their irrational, mob-like behavior. Considering the heavy casualties of this massacre, this framing makes the football fans look even more like irrational and erratic masses. This kind of representation sets a tone for American viewers on what their perceptions of Egyptians are. One may very well derive that the uprising on January 25th was started from such mob-mentality.

With Morsi's election, the speculation on how influential he would be and what kinds of ominous actions he may break the peace treaty with Israel and change the "power dynamic" in the region was rife in *Fox News* coverage. This continual association of Islamism with fear and anti-Americanism is still rife in broadcast news outlets and give American viewers a dehumanizing view not of Morsi, but of Egyptians as a whole.

Afterword

Throughout our case studies, we see a wide gap in how and to what extent Orientalist representation is utilized between mainstream broadcast media and print media. One reason to note why this may be is because of print journalists' exposure to Edward Said's work. After Said published *Orientalism* he grew in prominence with his subsequent works such as *Covering Islam*, and *Culture and Imperialism*, that further addressed how Orientalist representations were

manifested in contemporary news coverage. As a result, higher-brow print news publications such as *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* are likely to be much more aware of Orientalism and aspects of Orientalist representations, and therefore, much more likely to put effort against putting forth such representations. By no means does this mean that Said's work is beginning to lose relevance. In fact, this slow transformation in how the Middle East is being covered, particularly Egypt as it undergoes many sudden changes and traumatic incidents from their Arab Spring, shows most strongly that Said's work is relevant. Because he exposed the absurd methods of simplifying and generalizing the Middle East in the news media, the steps being taken to prevent such representations are manifesting, even if gradually, to portray Middle Easterners as humans with intellectual capabilities, concerns, and individual personalities.

In our day and age, when many depend on mainstream news media often cover news to cater to audiences with certain viewpoints or to corporate sponsors, it is becoming increasingly important to be aware of aspects that can distort a news story. Said stated in *Covering Islam*, "Every man interprets what he observes ... but the terms of his interpretation are not his own; he has not personally formulated or even tested them ... most of what he calls solid fact, sound interpretation, suitable presentations, every man is increasingly dependent upon the observations posts, the interpretation centers, the presentation depots ..." ¹⁰² In other words, news is often not reported objectively. There are filters that the news goes through and for this reason it our duty to be aware of, and look language and images that may paint Middle Easterners in an Orientalist fashion. Without such awareness, we will be subject to viewing the incident and the people involved in any given story as incapable of rational thought, and most frighteningly, not human. Especially with how rampant Orientalist representations were in the mainstream media not too

¹⁰² Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 47.

long ago, this is as important as ever as Egypt, along with Syria, Tunisia, Libya and other countries in the region are undergoing their own unique uprisings to establish their own fair government in a postcolonial world.

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