

4-2016

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### Citation Details

Kapoor, Priya, Adam Testerman, and Alex Brehm. (2016) Entrapment as a Threat to Community Peace in the Global War on Terror: An Analysis of Discourse in Local Press. *The Journal of International and Global Studies*, vol. 7, no. 2, pages 40-65

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Entrapment as a Threat to Community Peace in the Global War on Terror: An Analysis of  
Discourse in Local Press

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We walk around with media-generated images of the world, using them to construct meaning about political and social issues. The lens through which we receive these images is not neutral but evinces the power and point of view of the political and economic elites who operate and focus it. And the special genius of this system is to make the whole process seem so normal and natural that the very art of social construction is invisible. (Gamson et al., 1992, p.374)

**Abstract**

Our study tries to understand the phenomenon of *Entrapment*, which is an outcome of (a) security discourses that prioritize pre-emptive community strategies; (b) the ongoing military initiative of the Global War of Terror (GWOT); and (c) and the increased budgetary convergence of state agencies of the National Security Agency (NSA), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the military, impacting the legal and court processes that indict “homegrown” terrorists. We offer a critical discourse analysis of the events that led to the arrest and trial of Mohamed Osman Mohamud, covered in local newspapers *The Oregonian* and *The Willamette Week*, after he was held for the intent to use a weapon of mass destruction during a customary Christmas tree-lighting ceremony in downtown Portland, Oregon on November 26, 2010. The press and defense lawyers call this a case of FBI entrapment. Entrapments pose a serious threat to community peace and to contemporary understandings of multiculturalism. The coverage of Mohamud’s story does not create a critical shift in the tenor of public debate, which harshly judges any event that has overtones of an act of terror. Our high alert status regarding domestic terrorism, post 9/11, does not allow us, as the consumers of media, to act as a fair and compassionate jury, nor does it instill within us the alarm that might otherwise surround a judicial system that sentences race-d youth of little means to maximum life imprisonment.

**Keywords:** media and cultural studies, critical theory, Islam, Muslim diaspora, War on Terror, Muslim representations, Critical Discourse Analysis, local newspapers, local media

### Connecting GWOT, the State, Entrapment, and Media

The Global War on Terror (GWOT) doctrine disregards contemporary discourses of multiculturalism (Hall, 2006) and foments neither global peace nor freedom (Butler, 2006; Žižek, 2011). The GWOT entrenches discourses of fear and terror in the collective consciousness, through serial reportage of news and entertainment (Altheide, 2006). Since 9/11, FBI budgets have increased manifold<sup>2</sup> to reflect pre-emptive security tactics whose main method is entrapment—the practice in which law enforcement agents or their informant induce a target to commit a criminal offense—locating terrorists in mostly urban communities rich in immigrant populations (Aaronson, 2013; Said, 2015). These “homegrown terrorists” are identified by recruiting a cadre of self-selected informants who help the marked person chalk a terror plot, a fashioned fantasy of destruction that ultimately leads to the arrest of the homegrown terrorist in an FBI sting. There are over 500 cases of FBI stings documented by a project of the Columbia Law School and Human Rights Watch (2014; Said, 2015). A legal exceptionalism has arisen that has changed the way in which suspects in terrorism plots are brought to trial and subsequently convicted and sentenced (Said, 2015). Terms such as *weapons of mass destruction* (WMD) and *enemy combatant*, chosen carefully from the lexicon generated by the GWOT, are used primarily against Muslim-identified immigrants and refugees, who have tenuous social support structures and, some scholars assert, a tenuous hold on reality (Aaronson, 2013).

The phenomenon of *entrapment* is an outcome of (a) security discourses that prioritize pre-emptive community strategies; (b) the ongoing military initiative of GWOT, operating both domestically and internationally; and (c) and the increased budgetary convergence of state agencies of the NSA, FBI, and the military, with a resultant impact on the legal and court processes that indict homegrown terrorists. GWOT tactics such as entrapment have led statist agencies such as the FBI to reintroduce investigate methods that rely on fear, suspicion, and surveillance, reminiscent of the Cold War era. Entrapment involves the employment of covert tactics to mislead an otherwise law abiding citizen and to persuade or coerce him to commit a criminal act. A practice of questionable integrity, entrapment may, in fact, be used as a legal defense by the defendant against the law enforcement agents in question (*i.e.*, if the defendant can prove that he had no original intent to commit a crime and did so only upon the persuasion or coercion of the law enforcement agent, a conviction may be prohibited). Often, the criminal act in question is politically charged, that is, tied directly to a social or national scourge, such as drug trafficking, piracy, or terrorism.

The United States has had to re-envision its pre-9/11 security strategy and policies because several instances of violence and terrorism have occurred both internationally and domestically since 2001, precipitated by the US attack of Iraq. The Human Rights Watch and Columbia Law School’s collaborative report from 2014 states, “Terrorism entails horrifying acts, often resulting in terrible losses of human life. Governments have a duty under international human rights law to take reasonable measures to protect people within their jurisdictions from acts of violence.... However, since [the] September 11, 2001 attacks...the United States government has failed to meet its international legal obligations with respect to its investigations and prosecutions of terrorism suspects, as well as its treatment of terrorism suspects in custody” (Human Rights Institute & Human Rights Watch, 2014, p.1).

Instances of violence against civilians perpetrated by other civilian individuals or groups have grown in number alongside the increasing US military presence in the Middle East. Global violence has involved mostly non-state actors or terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda, Asa’ib Ahl

al-Haq (in Iran), AQAP (in Yemen), and more recently ISIS/ISIL (in Syria and Iraq). Embassy bombings and televised beheading of journalists have wreaked terror on expatriate, transnational, and local populations. To increase its hold on domestic populations, the US government instituted the Patriot Act,<sup>3</sup> enacted to deter and punish terrorist acts and to enhance law enforcement investigatory methods, a provision that was matched globally by similar legal enactments by governments in nations in Europe, South Asia, Canada, and Australia. As a result of this constraint on civil liberties, particularly on free speech, citizens have felt trapped in dominant war discourses. The phenomenon of *entrapment* illustrates this well.

While a small but growing number of scholars and legal experts (Human Rights Institute & Human Rights Watch, 2014; Aaronson, 2013; Said, 2015) have studied entrapment examining all of the current homegrown terrorism cases, we are looking at just one case of entrapment as covered by the local print press. *The Oregonian* and *The Willamette Week* are two of the most read newspapers in the state of Oregon. The disjuncture in the cultural fabric of a progressive metro region such as Portland, with the arrest and indictment of Mohamed Osman Mohamud in 2010, positions us to examine what makes a multicultural and tolerant urban community. The encoding of scripts of religion, fear, and terror in the local press coverage of the “Christmas tree lighting bombing episode” demonstrate how the equilibrium of cultural relations within a community is fragile. Cultural relations become all the more shaky when the GWOT links the local with larger, transnational terrorism discourses that have gathered momentum and historical weight. Security and multiculturalism are discursive, and, in that way, this paper may not be categorized as a study of the “local” alone. The local and the global are in constant interplay. The United State’s local security tactics and the discourse surrounding its security shed a critical light on the country’s global practices, including on-the-ground combat, the training of foreign armed forces and police forces, and drone warfare in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, among other countries of the Middle East.

The objective of this paper is to study the FBI entrapment of Portland youth, Mohamed Osman Mohamud, a Somali immigrant living in the Pacific Northwest Oregonian city of Portland, a seemingly cosmopolitan and progressive center of the state. The 18-year-old college student’s arrest as a local terrorist becomes noteworthy due to the extant biopolitical discourse of the Global War on Terror. The authors of this paper will critically analyze the coverage of Mohamud’s trial in 2013 in local newspapers *The Oregonian* and *The Willamette Week*, after he was arrested, allegedly for intent to use a weapon of mass destruction during the annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony on Thanksgiving Day in November 2010. To study the reportage of the trial in *The Oregonian* and *The Willamette Week*, we employ Stuart Hall’s theoretical writings on multiculturalism and cultural identity, Lauren Berlant’s explication of citizenship, especially cultural and global citizenship (Berlant, 2007), Edward Said’s theory of Orientalism (1978), and Giorgio Agamben’s *Homo Sacer* (1998), among other relevant writings on the security state.

The enemies of the state in US politics are not always big state actors like Iraq and Afghanistan, toward whom considerable military resources are directed, or discursive terrorist networks like Al-Qaeda and ISIS/ISIL, with cells in different parts of the globe. The enemy, it turns out, can be a teenager hailing from Portland, attending a large state university. In recent years, FBI inquiries connected with the War on Terror have involved individuals,<sup>4</sup> usually disaffected youth, on the margins of refugee communities that have been violently displaced due to war and politics. The following section presents a profile of Mohamud drawn from media

reports and other written accounts. Scholars such as Aaronson (2013) believe this profile is common to that of a typical target of FBI entrapment.

### **Explicating Entrapment**

A legal definition of entrapment by Justice Roberts in 1932 in *Sorrells vs. United States* states that “entrapment is the conception and planning of an offense by an officer and his procurement of its commission by one who would not have perpetrated it except for the trickery, persuasion, or fraud of the officers” (cited in Scottberg, Yurcik, & Doss, 2002, p.390). While law enforcement agents and agencies can legally provide opportunities for suspected criminals to commit crimes (through undercover operations or “stings”), law enforcement agents cannot “manufacture” crimes (*i.e.*, by introducing the idea of committing the crime and persuading or coercing an otherwise unlikely target to commit it). An entrapment legal defense may subsequently prohibit the conviction of a citizen if the target can claim he was “not ready and willing” to commit a crime but was instead persuaded to do so. As such, a primary focus during entrapment operations, during which the police employ encouraging tactics to lure a citizen, is the creation of doubt as to whether the target *would* have committed a crime without the “encouragement activity” provided by law enforcement. “Affording the means for somebody to commit a crime is not the same thing as encouraging the crime” (Scottberg, Yurcik, Doss, & 2002, p.390). One must therefore ascertain *predisposition*, which is difficult to determine, before establishing entrapment. In times before GWOT discourse seeped into and modified court procedure, establishing credible predisposition would have been relatively simple since Mohamud had never been convicted of carrying out a terrorism plot.

In the most recent cases of terrorism, the entrapment defense has lost its potency and teeth. Legal scholar Wadie Said has said in his book *Crimes of Terror* that “the criminal terrorism prosecution is a phenomenon that wreaks havoc on the law from multiple angles.... Only now are we beginning to recognize, slowly and inexorably, the effect of the terrorism prosecution on ordinary criminal law and procedure, which has triggered the expansion of the government’s powers at the expense of a defendant’s rights” (2015, p.2). A background of Mohamud’s life places entrapment in context.

### **A Case of Entrapment**

#### **Case Details**

Mohamed Osman Mohamud was arrested by police in November 2010 for plotting to detonate a fake bomb at the annual Christmas tree lighting celebration in downtown Portland. The non-functional bomb was provided by informants in the pay of the FBI. Defense lawyers understand Mohamud’s arrest as entrapment. Mohamud was pronounced guilty by a federal jury in January 2013 for using a weapon of mass destruction. He was handed a sentence of 30 years in October 2014. According to *The Oregonian’s* Bryan Denson, “This case was the first to litigate a controversial portion of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (Section 702), which allowed the government to build its case against Mohamud through warrantless wiretaps of overseas communications” (Denson, 2014, n.p.). Despite the legal exceptionalism, District Judge Garr M. King and defense lawyers differed on the important matter of violation of constitutional rights, each defending their position.

The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) saw the light of day during President Carter’s tenure, in 1978, and was enacted to curb tendencies among agencies such as the FBI to

survey citizens and foreign nationals under suspicion for issues appearing to threaten national interests. The FISA was meant to protect citizens by targeting only those foreign nationals or agencies that “posed a risk” to national security, permitting electronic surveillance of such individuals. With the passage of the Patriot Act post- 9/11, FISA has undergone several changes whereby the provision allowing for the surveillance of foreign agents has encroached upon the lives of ordinary citizens—often those from marginalized communities of color. Legally, FISA surveillance can be used as evidence in criminal cases. Said’s investigations yield that “after the 9/11 attacks and the passage of the Patriot Act, closing the gap between foreign intelligence surveillance and law enforcement investigations was not a high priority” (Said, 2015, p. 76). Said has conducted extensive research on the New York Police Department’s program to monitor Muslim communities in New York, revealing “deep connections between religion, prejudice, and [the] functioning of the police force” (Said, 2015, p.28). FBI counterterrorism reports state that Muslim communities are seen as prone to “radicalization.” FBI reports also often conflate harmless activities with the threat of violence (Said, 2015).

**A brief profile.** Mohamud, a Somali American, grew up in Beaverton, a suburb of Portland, Oregon. He attended Oregon State University, in Corvallis, about 85 miles from Portland. His career goals were to be a doctor. His father is an engineer at Intel, and his mother a businesswoman; Mohamud’s parents separated while Mohamud and his younger sister were in high school. Mohamud espoused the ideals of Salafism, an extreme form of Sunni Islam, and attended the Salman al-Farisi mosque in Corvallis. Contradicting the beliefs of Salafism, however, Mohamud partied hard and was accused of date rape after a Halloween party in 2009. Although he was later acquitted of that crime, the police nonetheless administered a lie detector test and subsequently searched his computer, where it was learned that Mohamud had apparently contributed writings to an online Al-Qaeda publication known as *Jihad Recollections* and expressed the desire to train in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border terrorist camps. His immigrant middle class parents called the FBI and placed him on a no-fly list so he would not flee the country. The FBI enlisted two informants, “Hussein” and “Youssef,” to “catch” Mohamud committing an act of violence. Dramatic scenarios of wiping out several blocks of downtown Portland were envisioned and discussed among possible acts of violence for Mohamud to commit. Finding in Hussein and Youssef receptive listeners whom he trusted, Mohamud was intrigued by the possibilities suggested to him, and he finally agreed to a plan involving blowing up the Christmas celebration during the tree lighting ceremony on Thanksgiving day, 2010. Thousands of families would be present for the spectacle. All materials to build the fake bomb were provided by the FBI informants, who despaired briefly when Mohamud did not take the planning seriously. He frequently showed up late to meetings with excuses such as “I [had] to do my laundry.” When asked where he would park the van carrying the bomb, he said he had “planned” to park in the five-minute parking spot close to the Pioneer Courthouse Square, the site of the intended bombing. Despite the fact that his otherwise unremarkable life and non-existent criminal record did not fit the profile of a hardened terrorist, Mohamud was tried, convicted, and sentenced for possessing a weapon of mass destruction (WMD).

Terms such as *WMD*, *enemy combatant*, and *terrorist*, seem grandiose in comparison to Mohamud’s life as an Oregon teenager, yet his reported predilection for violence falls neatly under the rubric and purview of the state’s initiative of the Global War on Terror. Legal proceedings appeared to rush speedily toward conviction despite the legal defense team’s assessment that Mohamud had been the target of entrapment. During the trial, “Hussein” and

“Youssef” were offered disguises by the court.<sup>5</sup> The informants were not required to present transcripts of all recordings of conversations with Mohamud, including the initial meetings, which could have helped Mohamud’s legal defense team evaluate his predisposition to commit this crime—thereby determining whether entrapment could be entered as a legal defense on Mohamud’s behalf. The next section shows how the GWOT not only emerges as a political discourse overseas, in the Middle East, but also serves as U.S. domestic policy to legitimize finer details of the Patriot Act.

### **Rumblings of the Global War on Terror**

The War on Terror is a blanket term, coined during George W. Bush’s administration, referring to State-initiated attacks by the US army in Iraq and Afghanistan and the mobilization of intelligence agencies that collect information on potentially dangerous citizens following the fall of World Trade Center in on September 11, 2001. The term the Global War on Terror (GWOT) possesses a simplicity in thought and practice that makes the discourse associated with it easy to appropriate by other nation-states, including those in Asia and Europe that are usually allied with the US in routing out home-grown terrorism. In this way, the GWOT gives a face to an unarticulated *other*, perceived as constituting a threat to sovereign power, often following a doctrine believed to originate in Islam or Islamic nations.

The GWOT becomes an artifact of the failure of multicultural philosophy and politics adopted both by the US and by other nations that use the GWOT to describe “the inexplicable” in their own societies. In an address delivered to the joint session of Congress on the evening of Sept 20, 2001, Bush said:

After all that has just passed, *all the lives taken* and all the possibilities and *hopes that died with them*, it is natural to wonder if America’s future is one of fear. Some speak of an age of terror. I know there are struggles ahead and dangers to face. But this country will define our times, not be defined by them. As long as the United States of America is determined and strong, this will not be an *age of terror*. This will be an age of liberty here and across the world . . . . *Freedom and fear are at war . . . .*” [emphasis added] (Bush, 2001, n.p.)

The use of passive sentence construction (“all the lives taken”) and personification (“hopes that died with them”; “America’s future is one of fear”; “this country will define our times”) in the presidential speech have an important story to tell. These constructions and notions of a stark lived reality (*i.e.*, one of fear and terror) are embellished and repeated in most public address through the end of George W. Bush’s tenure. Presidential and governmental discourse served to entrench the purpose of the multiple national wars being fought outside of the US. Countries affected by the GWOT are Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, Yemen, Libya, and the amorphous terror generating “cells” such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS/ISIL (Appadurai, 2007). Following the international war mongering, the Global War on Terror has become an important domestic mission to maintain Guantanamo and to appoint agencies such as the FBI to scoop up local terrorists and maintain surveillance at home. Security discourses maintain the state’s purview over borders, war, and transnational anti-terrorism activities. The following paragraphs engage with the tropes of security state, citizenship, sovereignty and identity.

## The Security State and the Maintenance of Governmentality

Security is the state's ability to maintain and control populations through discourse and occasionally through the use of directed violence (Crampton, 2010; Dillon, 2008; Evans, 2010; Neocleous, 2008). Fields such as political science have typically addressed security, diplomacy, and US strategy for international or domestic peace and violence (Straw, 2007). Philosophy has addressed the ethical domains of these areas. Numerous scholars interested in the critical traditions of the social sciences call upon Foucault's biopower (2008/2004) and governmentality to understand not only how a security state deploys its armed forces but also how the public understands such activity (Crampton, 2010; Dillon, 2008; Evans, 2010; Neocleous, 2008). Security is created and managed through social discourse (Campbell, 1992; Karampampas, 2009). The discourse of security is naturally compelling to a modern public, fed on the stories and spectacle of war and terrorism. As such, security is a pretext for the advancement of bourgeois interests (Žižek, 2002; Conley, 2010; Maggio, 2007). This makes security discourse not just a relationship of power and domination but one that captivates the American public. In this way, the American public fully participates in the consumption and creation of a media, news, and the entertainment apparatus that feeds off of the GWOT. As such, it is not peace and stability—the ideals of a security state—that are advanced by the GWOT but Western capitalist interests. By invoking the scholarship of Berlant, Said, and Agamben, we offer the next section on the intersections of citizenship, body, and identity.

## Citizenship, Body, and Identity

A series of recently documented FBI entrapments begin to reveal the lens through which central government bodies view ethnic minorities and first generation citizens (Aaronson, 2013). Several questions can be posed: Must the human rights of immigrant-citizens be negotiable at a time of crisis? Is citizenship a privilege? The question "who is a citizen" has been debated for centuries. Berlant (2007) reminds us that by its original definition a citizen is a particular resident of a Greek city, allowed the opportunity of leadership through self-governance. Citizenship can currently simply refer to one's legal status, or it can be described as an inheritance by virtue of birth (Berlant, 2007). Since citizenship has Greco-Roman roots, the notions of citizen and citizenship undergo tensions when the modern city and nation become contingent—an urban mass of business and political interests.

The actual lived political experience of citizens and non-citizens challenges the myriad understandings of citizenship granted by the nation-state influenced by the GWOT. Cultural and global citizenship are of interest to this project. Cultural citizenship, according to Berlant (2007), refers to the citizenship of members of non-dominant groups, especially refugees and border crossers, who are not protected by the legal, official, or political policies or discourses of the land. Global citizenship (Berlant, 2007; Israel, 2013), often synonymous with cosmopolitanism, refers to our ability to see beyond our own nation-state identity and citizen privilege, while embracing the concerns of a larger global community. Global citizenship derives a sense of justice from political movements and developments around the world. What happens *across* the border then, becomes a point of reference for action *within* borders. That is, our sense of justice and democracy is questioned by the actions and thoughts of our neighbors (Chandler, 2003; Held, 1995; Archibugi, 1998). Miller's volume on *Cultural Citizenship* argues that this crisis of belonging is held in check through "practices of government, consumption, risk, and moral panic in popular culture..." (Miller, 2011, p.2). He asserts, "We are in a crisis of belonging, a



population crisis, of who, what, when and where. More and more people feel as though they do not belong, and more and more people are not counted as belonging” (Miller, 2011, p. 1). Mohamud’s activities leading to his entrapment provides a cautionary tale of disaffected citizenship, covered by local press as undifferentiated from the sorts of acts of terror addressed by the Global War on Terror. While Stuart Hall theorizes multiculturalism and its discontents in the urban West, especially for new immigrants seeking participation in mainstream society, Said’s writings make us mindful of the unresolved dialectic between Christianity and Islam. Said’s treatise on the dominance of the West upon all aesthetic and political formations is best captured in his research from the late 1970s.

Said’s trilogy *Orientalism* (1978), *The Question of Palestine* (1979), and *Covering Islam* (1981, 1997) reminds us that Islam has always been featured in Western news outlets and in foreign policy as trigger for moral panic and personal safety. During the colonial period, Islam was given the sobriquet “Mohammedanism,” imagining the prophet as a god equal to the Christian God. Mohamud (the FBI captive), in part by association of his name, has to live with the symbolic, suggestive fear generated by the planned Christmas “bombing,” with Christmas being revered as the biggest holiday for Christians worldwide. A classic Orientalist dichotomy of Christianity versus Islam is easily generated. The equation of Islamic *piety* with *violence* is very persuasive (Said, 1998). He explains, “Even when the world of Islam entered a period of decline and Europe a period of ascendancy, fear of ‘Mohammedanism’ persisted” (Said, 1981, p.5). Western scholarship has not done much to lessen the fear and terror of Islam. Said opines, “There is no denying that a scholar sitting in Oxford or Boston writes and researches principally, though not exclusively, according to standards, conventions and expectations shaped by his or her peers...not by the Muslims being studied” (1981, p.19). Therefore, academia has been negligent of issues of power, access to publishing, and easy means of dissemination of information typically enjoyed by the West.

Giorgio Agamben in *Homo Sacer* alerts us to the revival of a stripe of state sovereignty hailing from medieval time that marks oath-breaking persons as outlawed. This form of justice made sense before the *Habeas Corpus act* of 1679 changed the character of the modern Western legal system by allowing a citizen to plead innocent before being proven guilty. Following the argument extended by Agamben’s *Homo Sacer*, Mohamud becomes a dissenting contemporary political figure who is reduced to bare life. The news media, in the pre-trial period report him as a poet, a philosopher, an erudite captive, but he is denied subjectivity and voice. On Agamben’s account, “The operation of sovereignty *abandons* individuals whenever they are placed outside the law and in so doing, exposes and threatens them to a sphere where there is no possibility of appeal” (Agamben, 1998/1995, p. 29). Mohamud’s life reveals the paradox of sovereignty such that the accused youth finds himself outside the purview of common law with little redress. The GWOT is cleverly deployed as a discourse that reveals the “state of exception” within which Mohamud’s rights are denied. Mohamud is labeled a terrorist instead of a misguided teen. Ironically, Mohamud’s main crime is the *intent* to harm and cause “terror” with resources handed to him by the FBI. Mohamud’s crime has borne no casualties, and yet he will serve 30 years in prison. Agamben’s interpretation of Kafka’s enigmatic parable is suitable here: “The story tells how something has really happened in seeming not to happen” (Agamben, 1998/1995, p.57). The reading public is then urged to take notice of Mohamud. The following section establishes the importance of media in how we socially construct the world of politics as it pertains to the topic at hand.

### The Importance of Media Discourses

We, as authors, are particularly interested in the local press because it provides richer detail of community-based events, in keeping with news values of proximity-as-priority. For instance, the *The Oregonian* and *The Willamette Weekly* have laid bare a convoluted and involved legal issue for public consumption. The printed press seizes upon a reading habit among the public and apparently promises to be less evanescent or fleeting than the sound bites and aural stimulation provided by television or radio broadcasts. Policy makers prioritize the strengthening of relationships between governments and local press. However, TV, radio, and social media reflect news items similar to those reflected in the print press, often providing the issue at hand more ubiquity and greater permanence in the popular imagination. Given the funding models and budgets allocated to collection of news, the local press is not independent of the established standards of gathering and structuring news or received news frames (such as those pertaining to acts of terror) from national newspapers.

Media scholars have determined that the 9/11 tragedy polarized urban multicultural societies, globally, into Western cultures and Islam. Here, we see an important role the media have already played and will continue to play (Ruigrok & Atteveldt, 2007) in the portrayal of the Muslim diaspora and Islam. In a study on terrorism conducted after homegrown terrorist Timothy McVeigh's execution in 2001, Dimitrova et al. assert that terrorism is "national in nature," as it is aimed at people and values within a nation-state. Yet terror attempts are rooted in the *local*, as they touch the lives of communities and people who then have to cope with the aftermath (Dimitrova, Connolly-Ahern, Williams, Kaid, & Reid, 2003, p. 401). Papacharissi and Olivera (2008), in their study on news frames of terrorism in newspapers in the UK and US, argue that local and global policies align with news frames, establishing a symbiotic relationship between the policy agenda of the government and the press. They extend their argument thus, "The news process is set in motion via the policy solution that governments advocate, and the fact the policy solutions gain prominence as they are featured, sometimes exclusively, on the media agenda" (2008, p. 71). While Papacharissi and Olivera's research focuses on prominent national newspapers in the US and UK, their findings provide insight into how local newspapers are impacted by national agendas, just as the reading public is.

Gamson and Modigliani (1989) attend to the social construction of meaning and discourse to dismiss any causal relationships between news and public. The audience may be reliant upon media discourse to make sense of public affairs, but they are active interpreters—and not passive objects—when constructing meaning. When it comes to hot button issues, be it nuclear power or terrorism, the media presents suggested meanings that are readily available in a media-saturated society. Gamson and Modigliani argue that

media discourse is part of the process by which journalists and other cultural entrepreneurs develop and crystallize meaning in public discourse . . . . The media serve a complex role. They are . . . part of the process by which *issue cultures* are produced. Because their role is believed to be so central in framing issues for the attentive public, they are also, to quote Gurevitch and Levy (1985, p. 19), "a site on which various social groups, institutions and ideologies struggle over the definition and construction of social reality." [emphasis added] (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989, pp. 2-4)

In the case of press reports in which Islam is conflated with terrorism, the public has scant experience to weigh media discourse against lived experience. Unlike in Europe, the Muslim population in North America does not have a long history as a diaspora. As such, the struggle to construct a social reality that fosters a greater understanding among minority and majority

cultures continues. Gamson and Modigliani (1989) provocatively and aptly suggest, “Making sense of the world requires an effort, and [whichever means of doing so] are developed, spotlighted, and made readily accessible have a higher probability of being used” (p.10). This quote supports our argument that local news coverage of terrorism and the GWOT neither changes nor positively impacts community perception of terrorism or Islam. The following section takes a look at the method used to study the *The Oregonian* and *The Willamette Week*.

### **Critical Discourse Analysis: A Method**

In employing method, the researchers work with the central assumption that language “is a socially shared and reciprocal activity, already embedded in active relationships, within which every move is an activation of what is already shared and reciprocal or may become so” (Williams, 1977, p. 166). A media text, such as a press report, therefore, is never static or frozen in time. A text is rendered a cultural artifact that is discursive and interacts with the national, political, and socio-cultural discourses of the time.

A Foucauldian notion of discourse is most informative to this project. In Foucault’s *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), “Discourse constructs knowledge and thus governs, through the production of categories of knowledge and assemblages of texts, what it is possible to talk about and what is not (the taken for granted rules of inclusion/exclusion). As such, it re/produces both power and knowledge simultaneously” (Thomson, 2011, p. 250). Foucault understands discourse as more than just language, power as more than just hierarchy, and knowledge as more than information. *Power* in the Foucauldian frame is not simply top-down but circulates through several channels and intermediary circuits in society, all of which wield power in their own right.

The work of scholars van Dijk, Fairclough, and Wodak on discourse analysis, grounded in the Critical/Cultural tradition of the social sciences, foregrounds the intertwining of power, language, and society. Tuen A. van Dijk believes that critical discourse analysis (CDA) must “deal primarily with the discourse dimensions of power abuse and the injustice and inequality that result from it” (van Dijk, 1993, p.252). CDA, from a cultural studies standpoint, recognizes a multicultural politics and media pedagogy that sensitizes the public to the *encoding* of relations of “power and domination” in media and other cultural texts (Kellner, 2003, p.12).

People are deeply affected by the way in which they are spoken of, and often follow the roles that have been assigned to them; the prospect of media control of the discursive impact and political economy of media industries is ignored. Douglas Kellner has asserted that “media images help shape our view of the world and our deepest values: what we consider good or bad, positive and negative, moral or evil” (2003, p.9).

The post-September 11 era discourse of a War on Terror has generated the ideology of a hidden, domestic variety of terrorism that must be weeded out by any means necessary. The ideology of home-based terrorism then metamorphosed and aligned itself with several existing histories of race, gender, age, nationality, and immigration. The ideology of the War on Terror has maintained interest and support for external intervention as well, justifying the Iraq war during President Bush’s time and the Afghan war during President Obama’s time. Ideologies are expressed through discourse (Van Dijk 1995, 2001, 2006). By understanding why certain discourses are repeated, we are able to grasp the ways that society is constructed (Van Dijk, 1995, 2001, 2006). For this study, we conduct a critical discourse analysis of the coverage of two local newspapers from stories printed between November 2010 and December 2013 to study how tropes of terror, terrorism, violence, Jihad, immigration, refugee, community, and homeland

security are used to encapsulate Mohamud's deed in a mediated reality of the Mohamud story. We also study how the dialectic of self/other, insider/outsider work within these published reports in the media.

We searched several academic databases using relevant search terms while trying to locate similar studies such as ours. Search terms "entrap," "entrapment," "terror," "terrorism," "domestic," "Oregon," "security," "Muslim," and "FBI" were used in different permutations and combinations on databases including Google Scholar,<sup>6</sup> Communication and Mass Media Complete, Academic Search Premier, and Columbia International Affairs Online. Mohamud's entrapment case is unrepresented in journal literature. Other FBI-related interventions are well represented in the research canon. We have reviewed some relevant studies in this paper.

In reading all 45 articles relevant to the Mohamud case printed in the *The Oregonian* and *The Willamette Week*, we see recurrence of thoughts and ideas related to influential social institutions, or structures of meaning, expressed in the reported stories. We call them themes. These outlined themes are *jihād*, *weapons of mass destruction*, *connection to the Middle-East*, *Muslim attack on Christians*, *not a real Muslim*, *connection with community*, *terrorism*, *entrapment and the FBI*, and *trial*. To consolidate the analysis of this study, these themes were further collapsed into two meta-themes: (1) *security supersedes community and social justice* and (2) *hopeless religiosity*. As researchers, we considered including two other local newspapers, *The Portland Mercury* and *The Portland Tribune*, in the analysis undertaken here. However, once the themes started to repeat themselves, we deemed this study to have achieved theoretical saturation based on the two original newspapers selected; therefore, we retained our previous sample selection.

Mohamud's story is one of the few domestic FBI sting operations that have sustained the interest of significant national press organizations, including The New York Times, Oregon Public Broadcasting (OPB), The Washington Post, and network TV channels, among other news outlets.<sup>7</sup> Despite coverage in the national level press, however, national outlets cover only the arrest and sentencing of Mohamed Osman Mohamud—with no explicit discussion of race, refugees, religion, or multiculturalism, or the situating of refugee communities within the broader community. Following are some visual patterns of the terms used by the *The Oregonian* and *The Willamette Week*.





**Figure 3:** Cloud of most frequently used words in only *The Oregonian*’s coverage of the Mohamed Mohamud case (names excluded). Larger font indicates greater frequency of use.

*The Willamette Week, The Oregonian* and word clouds. There are over a dozen publications available to Portland newspaper readers. For reasons of depth of coverage and general access, we chose two newspapers—*The Willamette Week* and *The Oregonian*. *The Willamette Week* is owned by the City of Roses Newspaper Company, local to Portland (Njus, 2012). The company’s proprietors are Portland-based Richard Meeker and Mark Zusman (Njus, 2012). This company also owns the *Santa Fe Reporter*, a New Mexico newspaper, and *The Independent Weekly* out of Raleigh, North Carolina. *The Oregonian* is owned by a media conglomerate, the Advance Publications, Incorporated. The company was founded in 1922 by the Newhouse family of New York and is currently headquartered there. Among its holdings are *Conde Nast*, *Golf Digest*, *The Discovery Channel*, and more than 35 newspapers across 25 states (AP, 2011). Therefore, one newspaper is locally owned, while the other is locally read but not locally owned.

Three word clouds, visual representations of the words used most frequently in the featured news items, provide a snapshot or visual context by which to gauge the importance given to particular terms, ideas, and discourses by the press.<sup>8</sup> Larger font sizes in the word clouds signal the words used most often in the newspaper articles. All proper nouns were excised to generate the word clouds. Figure 1 features the words used most often in both *The Willamette Week* and *The Oregonian*. The emphasis on the incidence of the FBI sting, its agents, undercover operations, the government, and the drama surrounding Mohamud’s capture commands the maximum word share of the word cloud. Other themes that dominate the combined word cloud are the court trial of Mohamud and the mention of Al-Qaida and the FBI-planted fake-bomb itself. The bomb is not often referred to as a “fake” or an FBI “plant” except on a few occasions. By way of divergence between the two newspapers, the *The Willamette Week* contains frequent reference to a research study on FBI stings by Aaronson (2013), titled the “Terror Factory: Inside

the FBI's manufactured war on terrorism." This sets *The Willamette Week* apart from the more mainstream journalism of *The Oregonian*, featuring primarily Mohamud's capture, full reportage of the trial, verdict, and sentencing. Nonetheless, *The Oregonian's* coverage of the Mohamud story is comprehensive and seeks voices from community, parents, and lawyers. The word clouds bring ideologies of entrapment and GWOT into sharper focus, as oft repeated words reinforce worldviews and opinions about terrorism within the larger public sphere. Following are select excerpts exemplifying the first round of themes from the newspapers studied. Appendix A holds additional excerpts from *The Willamette Week* and the *Oregonian*.

### Discussion of Themes and Meta-Themes

Most news stories in our sample refer or allude to "jihad"—a multifaceted term that does not, in Arabic, connote violence. Jihad refers to internal struggle, though its colloquial and religious meanings are manifold in disparate transnational Muslim communities. Jihad, as a media artifact in the West, however, is understood as "holy war" that all Muslims wage against the US. Omar (2011) writes, "Jihad or striving is not just a religious concept, it is a natural reflective process in learning to be human. Muslims are encouraged to engage in jihad by the Qur'an and yet the physical 'jihad of the sword' is largely obsolete today since humanity has learned many novel, nonviolent ways to conduct ourselves in the path for justice" (p. 710). *The Oregonian* states: "The government alleges that Mohamed was on a trajectory toward *jihad* [emphasis added] long before the FBI sent Hussein and Youssef to learn just how far the Somali-born teen was willing to go" (Denson, 2012, p. 1). A more affective turn in reporting jihadi tendencies is captured by this description of Mohamud's actions: "Mohamud wrapped a bright red scarf around his head and donned a camouflage jacket. He knelt on a prayer rug in front of a white sheet" (Denson, 2013, p. 1). The juxtaposition of a red head scarf, camouflage jacket, both suggestive of readiness for war, with *prayer*, which assumes every Muslim is religious, belabors the binary opposition of piety with violence. This theme recurs in most articles. The meaning of jihad, as chosen by the press, is in line with the ideological construction of the GWOT, as it does not refer back to extant meanings of jihad among Muslim communities worldwide.

While jihad is a theological concept, the recurring theme of "weapons of mass destruction" borrows from the language of modern warfare. Prior to Mohamud's case, a non-state actor had never been convicted of possessing a weapon of mass destruction. The possession and the intent to use a weapon of mass destruction (WMD) brings with it, if convicted, a term of life-imprisonment. The prosecuting team of lawyers made an effective case showing that Mohamud acquired a WMD arguing that he must not be absolved of his alleged crime. One report states:

During closing argument, the prosecutor asked the jury to consider the gravity of the crime—detonating a weapon of mass destruction during a popular holiday gathering in downtown Portland—and argued that no "otherwise innocent person" could be entrapped into committing a crime of this enormity," the government wrote. (Denson, 2013b, p. 1)

Although there were no casualties of Mohamud's scheme, the prosecutions' appeals to the jury invoked the jury's prior knowledge of the horrors of destruction of 9/11, by now a sacred endpoint in the GWOT. The thought of their city having experienced a "near miss" with the sort of violent specter that was 9/11 made the crime appear more heinous to the jury.

In both newspapers, any "connection to the Middle-East" is deemed suspicious. A *Willamette Week* article declares, "[The] FBI believed that Mohamed had tried and failed, to

contact terrorists in Pakistan by email” (Mesh, 2013, p.1). *The Oregonian* is more pointed, saying, “Kohlman, ([the] prosecution’s star witness) noted, among other things, that Mohamud made plans to fly to Yemen to join the Mujahedeen,<sup>9</sup> had pre-existing ties to terrorists, and held extreme views about jihad in the name of Allah” (Denson, 2013c, p.1). The theme, “connection to the Middle-East,” emerges from articles that try to establish Mohamed’s links with the Middle-East, an assumed and stated seat of terrorism for the State department. However, Mohamud has never traveled overseas without his family since he came to the US as a child, and his father placed him on the FBI no-fly list as an adult. While Mohamud’s overseas associations are mostly online, the jury must imagine the danger posed by Mohamud’s foreign liaisons. The ideological threat of association with the Middle-East is tantamount to violating the sovereignty of the US. The insider/outsider dialectic interplays well in the trial coverage.

The themes “Muslim attack on Christmas” and “Not a ‘real’ Muslim” may seem contradictory, yet they serve, when juxtaposed in news articles, to make Mohamud appear both threatening and deviant. Mohamud’s choice of an intended attack on a Christmas tree during a popular US holiday entrenches him as a Muslim, *i.e.*, one who does not partake of the collective joy of a regular Christian holiday. One article describes the crowd as containing “Christmas revelers,” with a suggestion of passivity and blitheness to their imminent fate (Denson, 2013d, p. 1). Portraying him as a Muslim *other* makes Mohamud more threatening. This articulation stands in contrast to early newspaper articles that show him as deviant to the Islamic path. In college, Mohamed drank liquor, attended parties, and went out with women. These early newspaper stories show him as a regular college student trying to find his way in a majority White institution, the implication being that Mohamud could not possibly be “a *real* Muslim.” The *Oregonian* describes him as “a funny, even goofy, young guy who demonstrated no signs of Islamic extremism,” (Denson, 2013e, p.1). Another article paints a picture of partying and frivolity that is college-age-appropriate yet feels deviant: “His texts were peppered with talk of beer pong, brownies, blunts, and booze-induced dehydration, according to messages shown to jurors in the second week of his trial” (Denson, 2013f, p.1). Portraying Mohamud as deviant persuades the reader that he was “ready and willing” to commit a crime.

The theme “terrorism, entrapment and the FBI” asserts itself through the data. Defense lawyers for Mohamud used the entrapment defense to show that their client was treated in differential and leading ways. The papers reported extensively that “the FBI made its case against Mohamud by sending a pair of agents posing as Al-Qaeda” members (Tomlinson, 2013, p. 1) and that “the FBI finds a foreign-born teenage Muslim to carry out their scheme” (Pitkin, 2010, p. 1).

Had Mohamud been presented by the press, by the legal system, or the Portland community as a wayward dreamer, perhaps even a misunderstood poet, as he was in early *Willamette Week* reports, the FBI would be hard-pressed to portray the teenager as an experienced terrorist with a WMD—a portrayal the FBI worked extensively to achieve. Indeed, it was the FBI that employed two informants and provided the necessary support, supplies, money, and ideas for the plot to set off a bomb in Pioneer Courthouse Square; certainly, the FBI appeared to have “manufactured” the crime more than they did simply “set the stage” for a would-be criminal to be caught in the act. As *The Willamette Week* reported, “The 1800 pound bomb was a harmless fake rigged by the FBI...posing as terrorists” (Mesh, 2013, p.1).

Individualized attention over several months, some would agree, is willful indoctrination and dogged surveillance. The identities of “Youssef” and “Hussein” have been zealously protected by the FBI despite requests by the defense lawyers to reveal their true identities. Their



services for the Mohamud sting operation and other subsequent stings are in high demand. The newspapers report them as smug during the trial: “The veteran defense lawyer questioned the agent about his apparent mirth..., [and Hussein replied], ‘We were happy . . .because he got arrested’ ” (Denson, 2013g, p.1). As in other documented stings conducted by the FBI, “Youssef” and “Hussein” stand to be awarded a handsome dollar amount, contingent solely upon the arrest and conviction of Mohamud (Aaronson, 2013). These highly sought-after informants and how much they have profited personally from their involvement in entrapment cases is never a subject of discussion in the media.

The theme of “relevance of community” is significantly present in our data set. Portland has a small but growing Somali community that came to the city at the peak of the Somalian civil war and the US attack in the 1990s (St. John, 2009). The Somali community in Portland is still trying to establish itself, with members still seeking to establish themselves as citizens of the city and the US. They have felt increasingly targeted due to race, nationality, socio-economic status, and religion. Somali community leaders have talked about the vulnerability of their young boys and adults in the state’s public school system. *The Willamette Week* reports a local crime against the community: “FBI Agents are investigating an apparent attack on the Salman Al Farisi Islamic Center in Corvallis” (Stern, 2010, p.1) Mohamud attended the Al-Farisi mosque. A 24 year old Corvallis youth, Cody Seth Crawford, who was subsequently charged for a hate crime, tried to burn down the mosque with a home-made bottle bomb two days after Mohamud was arrested (Bernstein, 2011). This retaliation struck fear in the hearts of the American Muslim community throughout the state.

The Portland community is a collective that protects the identity of a single member by giving the individual a sense of purpose and belonging. Early newspaper reports on Mohamud present him as a local Portlander, an immigrant, a student, and a poet. His mother and father’s testimonials about his innocence are published in the local press. *The Willamette Week* reports, “The Muslim Educational Trust’s monthly meeting this weekend at Portland State University chose a discussion topic inspired by the recent attempted Christmas tree bombing in downtown Portland” (Lutjemeyer, 2010, p. 1). In the same story, it was reported that [city Commissioner] Fritz suggested summer internships for teens. In coming together, said Fritz, ‘We’re all similar in our community. [Mohamed Osman Mohamed] is in our community. He is in my community. He is Oregonian. We need to look after him’ (Lutjemeyer, 2010, p. 1).

This statement by City Commissioner Amanda Fritz is an authoritative avowal of community belonging. Once Mohamud stands on trial, however, he loses his subjectivity and belongingness to a community. He is seen as an offender and as the object of discussion by the prosecuting lawyers, his own team of defense lawyers, the judge, and the jury. The shift from being a member of a community to becoming a criminal is quick within the press narrative. This shift is the likely outcome of Mohamud being tried in a court of law as a terrorist.

Once Mohamud is arrested and charged with terrorism, the theme of “the trial” emerges and marks the next stage of the press coverage of Mohamud’s case. We see the prosecuting and defense lawyers brought to life as major actors. We hear their arguments during the trial, the details and investigations in the case, and the behaviors of the jury. The press reports, “US District judge Garr M. King let the agents testify against Mohamud using their pseudonyms ‘Youssef’ and ‘Hussein.’ He also allowed them to wear light disguises” (Denson, 2013h, p.1). The article recounts the words of Karen Greenberg from the Center on National Security from Fordham University: “ ‘Secret witnesses stack the deck against domestic terrorism suspects, for whom the deck is already stacked,’ she said” (Denson, 2013h, p. 1). She continued, asserting that

permitting FBI informants to disguise their identities represented “harm to the [judicial] system itself,” acting as “yet one more element that seems to favor security over constitutional rights” (Denson, 2013h, p. 1).

The coverage pertaining to the trial shows how substantive issues such as constitutional rights, national security, and jury objectivity are brought up at Mohamud’s trial. The prosecuting discourse of possession of a WMD and intent to blow up Pioneer Courthouse Square (one block from the trial location) becomes real for the jury, thereby overwhelming other humanistic and constitutional concerns about Mohamud.

**Security supersedes community and social justice.** The meta-theme of “security supersedes community and social justice” emerges from collapsing the previous round of thematizations. All news stories occur within a post-9/11 discourse, with no room for negotiation around issues of social justice. The coverage of the trial actually seeks to erase Mohamud as embodied and denies the humanity afforded to him in pre-trial press accounts. Mohamed is mentioned only in the context of the crime he is being tried for. He is portrayed as a terrorist—barely human. The discourse of security becomes the most dominant mode of discussion in the media texts. The meaning of security spans *concern for self* to *concern for national security*. The FBI’s involvement in the entrapment of Mohamud wards off local politicians, who had initially come forward to declare their support of Mohamud and the burgeoning Somali community in the Northwest. The FBI stake also wards off other prominent members of the community who might ordinarily have come to Mohamud’s rescue. No friends or family are provided press coverage when the media texts invoke the familiar post-9/11 security inflected GWOT discourse.

**Hopeless religiosity.** The second meta-theme, “hopeless religiosity,” is significant, as it is ever-present in the press coverage of the Mohamud case. Given the context of war, Islam is not rigorously engaged (Ilesanmi, 2011; Loughlin, Boudeau, & Hoskins, 2011). In fact, Islam is grossly misunderstood in public discourse (Ilesanmi, 2011). Furthermore, Islam is constructed as a demonic voice in opposition to Judeo-Christian religions. Any public talk of terrorism or *radicalization* is attributed to Islamic religiosity (Loughlin, Boudeau, & Hoskins, 2011). Scholars remark that in the post-9/11 political culture, “Huntington’s infamous ‘clash of civilizations’ thesis, in which diverse protagonists, assuming extreme positions, have developed binary oppositions between the so-called democratic... and the putative ‘Islamic’ worlds” (Harindranath & Tebbutt, 2011, p.147) has been adopted as an organizing principle. An oppositional relationship between religion and democracy is seldom made for non-Muslim terrorists or local terror acts committed by non-Muslims such as school shootings or the Oklahoma City federal building bombing. Ciftci (2012) documents the phenomenon of Islamophobia as hate mongering directed toward Muslims living in the US and European nations. Ciftci’s study of data from five countries (Germany, Britain, Spain, France, and the US) shows that of all countries, the US-based respondents display the strongest sense of religious and national identity. A strong religious and national identity leads many US American citizens to think of Muslims as violent and “naturally” inclined to support terrorism (Ciftci, 2012). The meta-themes demonstrate that war time tests cultural acceptance among citizens of the security state. The historical determinism of religious and social scripts overtakes the imperatives of social justice. The next section extends the discussion of the previous meta-themes to evaluate citizen-level participation in societies that espouse multiculturalism.

### Discontinuous Multicultural Dialogues

Multicultural societies are an ideal of the modern Western state. The multicultural society becomes a vital geo-political space for many nationalities, which chance upon living together for reasons not entirely in their control. Mary Catherine Bateson (1993) proposes that culturally hybrid societies employ the notion of the *cannon of human experience* as the center of our existence. Elevating human experience to canonical heights subverts the exalted meaning of *canon* in academic literature. Bateson (1993) believes that multiculturalism does not mean that role models or historical figures are represented from all communities or ethnic groups but that members of all groups are exposed to the models and figures of all *other* groups. Multiculturalism allows for debate and dissension as long as the core values of the modern-Western society are upheld. Discourses of religious nationalism, the recent GWOT, patriotism, ethnic singularity, and racism, among other powerful discourses often seek to question not only the role of multi-culturalism but also the authority, harmony, and smooth governance of the nation-state.

Krueger's (2008) study on traits of "homegrown Islamic terrorists" in the United States does not significantly set homegrown terrorists apart from a representative body of Muslim Americans. Educated Muslim Americans are often judged harshly if implicated in terror plotting. "The term homegrown terrorist should be taken with a grain of salt . . . One could question whether some were serious plotters or instead were entrapped by overly zealous law enforcement officials" (Krueger, 2008, n.p.). Lichtblau (2005) writes a comprehensive overview of FBI entrapment in a *New York Times* article. In this article, defense lawyer Henry Klingeman is quoted as saying, "These are people who express a willingness to [commit violent acts], but either they have not done so, or they couldn't even if they wanted to. In my view, all the man-hours and money the FBI is devoting would be better spent on real threats" (Lichtblau, 2005). Klingeman explains that from a legal perspective, the entrapment defense that he used with effectiveness prior to September 11, 2001 no longer holds up in court due to perceived heightened threats posed by terrorism. This is a significant legal juridical shift that other researchers mark as well (Aaronson 2013; Said, 2015). This shift confirms Agamben's critique of an authoritarian state that presents a paradox in the state of exception, in which "it is impossible to distinguish transgression of the law from execution of the law" (Agamben, 1998/1995, p. 57). The judgment at the end of the trial must not be the end of the public conversation about justice and minority communities.

The Huerta (2013) study exemplifies how academia is impacted and implicated by the GWOT. Huerta's (2013) analysis of FBI sting operations yields recommendations for public awareness such that he wants the American Muslims to embrace state surveillance within the community. It does not seem untoward that the academy often gives legitimacy to FBI maneuvers. Huerta comes out as an advocate of FBI sting operations and believes that the American Muslim population should embrace them. His central argument is based on the fact that the majority of sting operations withstand legal scrutiny.

Even though the Mohamed Osman Mohamud story gained national attention, it was the local media that sustained the public dialogue on entrapment. However, the articles in the local press are squarely aligned with and invested in the language of security and terrorism. Therefore, the local media failed to engage in a holistic debate on race, refugees, religion, and multiculturalism, disregarding the fact that the Mohamed Osman Mohamud case was not an isolated FBI sting operation. A vibrant public debate would have included an ongoing

conversation about minority refugee communities, their leaders, and their cultural and economic contributions and, most of all, would have presented Mohamud as a member *in situ* rather than as an object of juridical proceedings.

### Conclusion

Mohamud's story of adolescence, failed desires, and FBI entrapment could have "precipitated a sort of propitious moment" (Hall, 2000, p.1), a political opening for a local debate of a different kind. Stuart Hall would question this kind of a multicultural community in which we learn to see ethnicities of all kinds and think, "Things must be getting presumably better on the race relations front. And society must have somehow shifted almost unobtrusively in a multicultural state" (Hall, 2000, p.1). If local newspapers are to maintain viability, they must be more than just a source of news for their reading public. The news value of objectivity would not be abrogated if local press were to try to maintain and mirror its core values in synchronicity with the diverse urban communities in which they are situated.

The final judgment of Mohamud and the failure of the legal defense team to move the jury in favor of Mohamud's innocence are symptomatic of the fissures in multicultural dialogue that is hinged upon the need to maintain the sovereignty of the nation state. Even legal arguments in favor of Mohamud's innocence do not bridge the inherent suspicion that emanates from discourses of terror that permeate our everyday life. Recent debates on multiculturalism celebrate diversity of human experience, ethnicity, and nationality. Yet societies are unable to moderate their responses to critical events (such as the entrapment of a Somali youth by the FBI) that require understanding the political contexts of situated refugee communities or what it might mean to be a young male, rehabilitated in a new community that already faces issues ranging from economic disempowerment to racial prejudice.

Mohamud's story bespeaks an era of war-generated patriotism, immigration-initiated xenophobia, and the Patriot Act, facilitating the entrapment of a dissenting (read: immigrant) body and held hostage to failed promises by a nation in the throes of economic disarray and unemployment. Mohamud's capture purports to assuage a nation's shame by representing the successful capture of a "domestic terrorist," a pivotal victory within the rather unsuccessfully waged battle against global terrorism. The local boy-terrorist ploy thrusts the mighty national rhetoric of a larger battle, waged in Iraq and Afghanistan, into the popular imaginary.

Mohamud's story is primarily local news fare, yet it is significant for the insight it provides into how the powerful GWOT discourse manages governmental directives and public panic about security, economics, and terror. Local news is often seen as having less value to national or world news than that which is dispensed by conglomerate newspapers, broadcasting businesses, and social media industries. However, local news, by virtue of its reach and audience, is equally significant for its political coverage; therefore, locally generated and read news shifts the central meanings of commonly understood discourses generated by global media. Because of this unequal dichotomy between local and national/world news, we would like to recoup the idea of "minor literature," as studied by Kafka and later by Deleuze and Guattari (1986). Deleuze and Guattari posit that Kafka stood for minority rights especially when minority voices were using a majority language to assert themselves. This meant that Kafka valued *minoritization* as an important literary endeavor. Any voices that are smaller or marginal are not "lesser than" but are, rather, highly significant. The idea of minor literature gives some agency to local press, which strives to survive in an increasingly commoditized mediascape. *The*

*Willamette Week* and *The Oregonian* persisted in serially covering a momentous local news story: the entrapment of a young Muslim male refugee, and, in so doing, illustrated a larger, widely subscribed-to discourse of the GWOT. The two local newspapers fall short, however, of achieving the status of re-interpreters or critics of current discourses of terror---though they both made an attempt at an ethical, ideological, and political analysis of the GWOT (Bensmaïia, 1986). The local newspapers instead succeeded in concretizing the discursive ways in which the GWOT wreaks havoc on minority communities' sense of identity and safety. These local narratives illustrated the potency of the discourse that has helped maintain the military and economic sovereignty of the US over other parts of the world, especially the Middle East.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> The authors would like to thank Jonathan Miller and Gyanu Gautam Luintel for their research assistance. The release time for writing this article was made possible through a Faculty Enhancement Grant at Portland State University.

<sup>2</sup> Aaronson has researched that the FBI's budget was raised to 8.1 billion dollars, of which 3.1 is allocated to counterterrorism initiatives. Said (2015) has cited the same budget figures in his latest book, *Crimes of Terror*.

<sup>3</sup> The Patriot Act or the USA Patriot Act expands governmental authority and authorizes powers for the federal government to prevent terrorism. The Patriot Act, is an Act of Congress and came into effect soon after September 11, 2001, on October 26, 2001. It was signed into law by President George W. Bush. President Barak Obama signed the Patriot Sunsets Extension Act of 2011 on May 26, 2011, a four year extension of three provisions of the Patriot Act: wiretaps, a search of business records, and surveillance of persons suspected of terrorism. Several citizen and civil society groups have questioned the infringement of privacy, and constitutional rights in the case of individuals, especially immigrants, refugees, and communities of color.

<sup>4</sup> Lisa Monaco, the assistant to President Obama, said in a speech at the Harvard Kennedy School at the first anniversary of the Boston marathon bombing, "...Stemming domestic radicalization to violence has been a key element of our counterterrorism strategy from day one.... we must rely on the partnership of those who are most familiar with the local risks, those who are in the best position to take action—local communities."

<sup>5</sup> Witnesses are normally protected by disguise only if their lives are in danger. In the case of FBI informants, however, disguises are provided to protect the identity of informants so that they may continue to act as informants in the future. "Hussein" and "Youssef," who were in the FBI's employ, would not have needed disguised unless they were planning to act as government informants in the future.

<sup>6</sup> A Google Scholar search using terms *entrapment terrorism FBI 2001-2014* revealed over 3,000 sources. Many articles featured in law and law-related journals, discussing entrapment defense in court with no direct bearing on our study. None discussed Mohamed Osman Mohamud.

<sup>7</sup> A search conducted on December 8, 2014 through the Lexis Nexis database on Portland State University's Library homepage yielded 182 articles in national and international press, published between November 2010 and November 2014. Of these articles, 74.7%, or 136 articles, were published in 2010, possibly due to Mohamud's arrest and the subsequent incidence of arson in the Corvallis mosque that Mohamud attended. Many of the news items reference the Mohamud case when discussing terrorism.

<sup>8</sup> We used the website [wordle.net](http://wordle.net) to generate the word clouds. We pasted in text from the articles in question and the website automatically generated clouds. The greater the frequency of the words, the larger the text appears in the cloud. The only modification that we made was deleting words that were not of interest (including pronouns and conjunctions). If such words had not been omitted, the most common words would have been "he" and "and."

<sup>9</sup> Mujahedeen, also spelled as Mujahideen literally means one who engages in jihad, in Arabic. During Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, this term was adopted by freedom fighters against Soviet occupation. The Afghan mujahids were later funded by the US, during the Reagan administration. The US press has adopted this term to refer to guerrilla rebels in the Middle East. Adapted from <http://www.britannica.com/topic/mujahideen-Afghani-rebels>.

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## Appendix A

This Appendix provides additional examples of text appearing in *The Willamette Week* and *Oregonian* that reflect the themes presented in the body of this study.

### Jihad

Example 1: “Before the FBI stepped in, Mohamud frequented pro-jihad chat groups, wrote for online jihadist publications...” (The Oregonian, 29 November 2012).

Example 2: “But the Christmas tree non-bomb is reported as a federal level terrorist plot against thousands of innocent Oregonians by a Muslim jihadist brainwashed by foreign websites” (Willamette Week, 6 December, 2010).

Example 3: “Agents arrested Mohamud and pretended to arrest Hussein, who kept yelling ‘Allahu Akbar!’...Mohamud too, yelled the Arabic phrase. Mohamud kicked an agent and spit on them” (The Oregonian/OregonLive, 18 January, 2013 ).

### Weapons of Mass Destruction

Example 1: “Government prosecutors say the night ended with Mohamud’s attempt to detonate a weapon of mass destruction” (The Oregonian, 26 January 2013).

Example 2: “... attempting to blow up thousands of people in a Christmas tree lighting ceremony in Portland” (Willamette Week, 8 April 2011).

### Connection to Middle-East

Example 1: “He had tried to obtain a visa to join his friend Alali in Pakistan, the government alleges” (The Oregonian, 29 November 2012).

Example 2: “It hasn’t taken long for the apparent backlash to begin after the arrest of a 19-year-old Somali-born Corvallis man alleged to have plotted a bomb attack Friday in Pioneer Courthouse Square at the annual holiday tree lighting” (Willamette Week, 28 November 2010).

### Muslim Attack on Christmas

Example 1: “...describing the accused Somali American as a man hoping to wipe out a downtown square full of Christmas revelers...” (The Oregonian, 31 January 2013).

Example 2: “But the Christmas tree non-bomb is reported as a federal level terrorist plot against thousands of innocent Oregonians by a Muslim jihadist brainwashed by foreign websites” (Willamette Week, 6 December, 2010).

### Not a “Real” Muslim

Example 1: “He was drinking to excess in college, smoking and perhaps selling small quantities of marijuana – way out of bounds for a serious Muslim” (The Oregonian, 26 January 2013).

Example 2: “Mohamed, however, led a life at odds with that of his religion, drinking alcohol and engaging in premarital sex, two activities prohibited under most interpretations of the Koran” (Willamette Week, 9 January 2013).

### Terrorism, Entrapment and the FBI

Example 1: “While the bomb was phony, secretly prepared by an FBI bomb technician, the act of pressing those buttons changed everything” (The Oregonian, 30 January 2013).

Example 2: “But the room fell silent for several minutes while Mr. Holder defended the sting operation in an Oregon bombing case last month, calling it a ‘successful undercover operation’ and not a case of entrapment,” *The Times* reported. “Those who think otherwise, he said, ‘simply do not have their facts straight’ ” (Willamette Week, 13 December 2010).

### Relevance of Community

Example: “Here's the FBI's news release, including a promise by the FBI that it ‘will not tolerate any kind of retribution or attack on the Muslim community’ ” (Willamette Week, 28 November 2010).