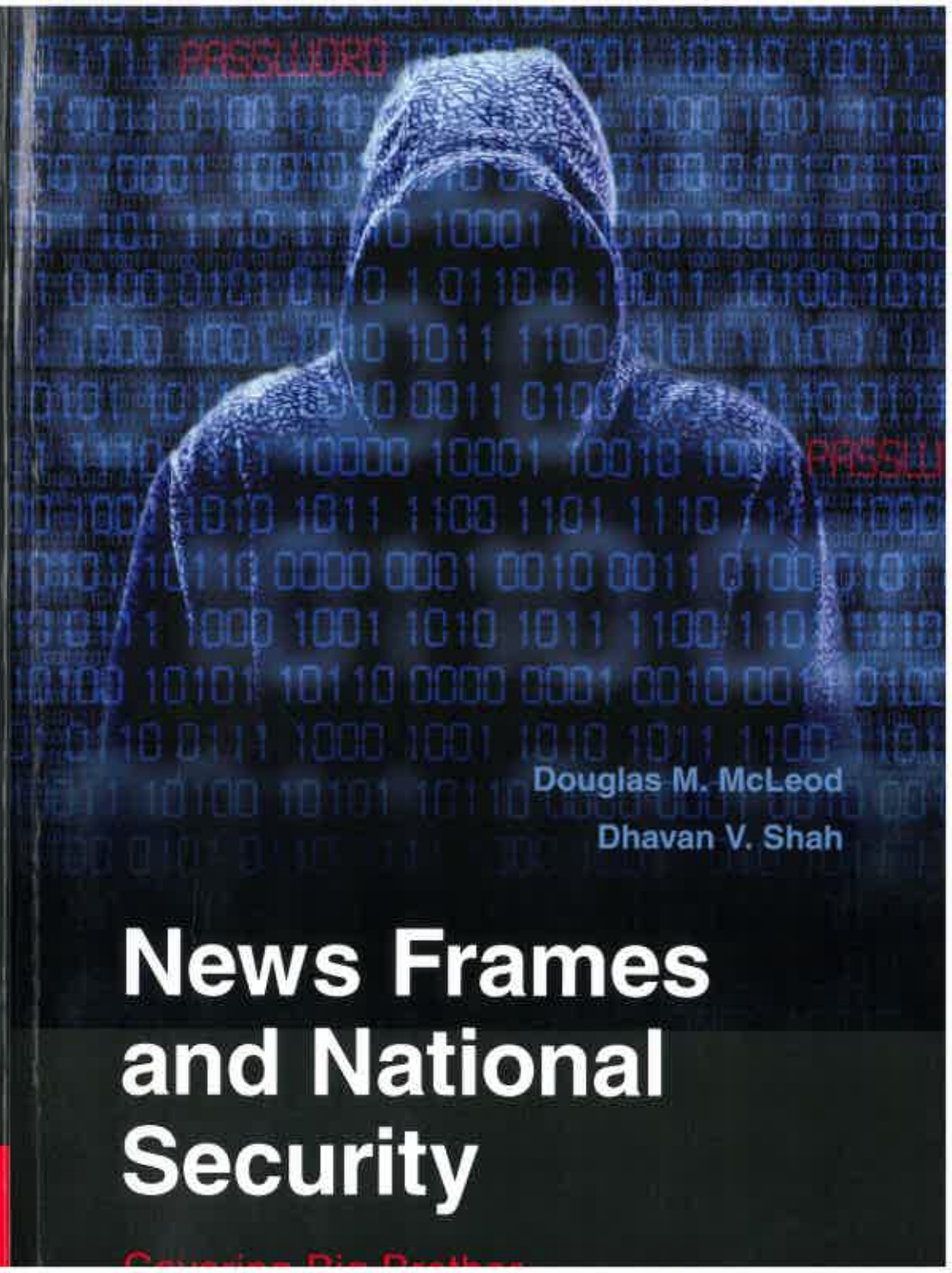Did media coverage contribute to Americans' tendency to favor national security over civil liberties following the 9/11 attacks? How did news framing of terrorist threats support the expanding surveillance state revealed by Edward Snowden? Douglas M. McLeod and Dhavan V. Shah explore the power of news coverage to render targeted groups suspicious and to spur support for government surveillance. They argue that the tendency of journalists to frame stories around individual targets of surveillance – personifying the domestic threat – shapes citizens' judgments about tolerance and participation, leading them to limit the civil liberties of a range of groups under scrutiny and to support "Big Brother."

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McLeod • Shah

News Frames and National Security

News Frames and National Security

Douglas M. McLeod

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response), taking into account the total number of conceptual categories listed. When more than one category was mentioned, coders judged whether the linkages between the concepts were evident (high integration) or not (low integration).

Summary

Using the data collected in these two online experiments, we were able to test a number of hypotheses as reported in Chapters 4 through 7. The results reported in Chapter 4, which are based on an analysis from the Arab Study, examine the confluence of frames and cues on attitude consistency and response latency, as they reflect an underlying spread of activation. The following three chapters use data from the Activist Study. Chapter 5 focuses on framing's impact on cognitive complexity as indicated by open-ended responses about the national security/civil liberties conflict. In Chapter 6, we examine the interaction between framing and individual predispositions as they influence tolerance judgments regarding the activists featured in the stimulus news story. Finally, Chapter 7 analyzes the differential effects of individual versus collective framing on readers' willingness to take expressive action supporting or opposing the featured targets of government surveillance. Through these experiments, we not only contribute empirical evidence to the literature on framing effects, but also illustrate how we can begin to put the framing effects models that we introduced in Chapter 1 into research practice.

4

Converging Cues and the Spread of Activation

"The USA PATRIOT Act and Homeland Security, while aimed at immigrants especially from the Middle East, is a threat to the civil rights and liberties of all people. How do you end racial profiling and stop police racist harassment in this atmosphere? How do you end racist discrimination when someone can be picked up, their phones can be tapped or they can be kicked off airplanes because they look Middle Eastern?"

– Jarvis Tyner
Executive Vice Chair, American Communist Party
February 16, 2002

"The federal government can and must protect Americans from the threat of terrorism without eroding our constitutional liberties. Today, Arab Americans are especially vulnerable to abuses of government power. Yet ultimately all Americans are put at risk when our rights come under attack. We must work to preserve our constitutional rights and roll back the most egregious infringements of our individual freedoms."

– Congressman Dennis Kucinich (D-OH)
2004

The above quotations share a common concern that the war on terrorism has exacerbated perceptions that people of Arab descent constitute a threat to public safety. Moreover, such threat perceptions have provided an impetus to generate public support for the policies of the USA PATRIOT Act that in turn has threatened the civil liberties of Muslims and Arab-Americans. For most citizens, the mass media provide the primary source of information upon which to base judgments about potential threats. As such, the nature of news coverage and its effects become important concerns for researchers seeking to understand the dynamics of political judgments.

In the discussion of our integrated Message Framing Model (Figure 1.2) in Chapter 1, we noted that news frames and cues have much in common in that they both describe ways in which journalists give meaning to text. They differ in terms of the unit of text to which they are applied. Both frames (i.e., organizing devices used by journalists to structure press accounts) and cues (i.e., the labels used to characterize issues, groups, and figures in the news) have received considerable attention from mass communication researchers interested in understanding how subtle changes in news reports influence audience understanding (Shah et al., 2002). Research on the cognitive effects of mass media find that both frames and cues can shape how people think about issues, groups, and figures by influencing mental activation and social evaluations (Domke et al., 1998; Kuklinski and Hurley, 1994; Mondak, 1993; Price and Tewksbury, 1997).

Most framing studies consider simple, direct effects of news framing and cueing on a range of social judgments, without considering how these content eleements might work together to influence the thinking of the audience. Some research has examined the nature of frame-cue interactions (e.g., Shah et al., 2004; Shah et al., 2010). In this chapter, we examine the interactive effects of the frame and cues from our Arab group study. Specifically, we examine whether certain cues in news texts may resonate with another cue and generate stronger reactions among audience members, and the extent to which news frames condition the effects of cue interactions, amplifying or attenuating the observed relationships.

As a context for this study, we explore the cues used to characterize Arabs in coverage concerning the war on terrorism in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. Criticisms of media coverage of Arabs had been made long before the events of September 11, 2001. For example, literary critic and social commentator Edward Said examined journalistic, literary, and academic representations of Arabs three decades ago. In his book, *Orientalism*, Said contended that portrayals of Arabs emphasize their traditionalism, even orthodoxy, and reinforce notions of "otherness" and opposition to Western ways of being and thinking. Since 9/11, according to Said's (2003) more recent analysis, Arabs are increasingly represented as backward, fundamentalist, unpredictable, dangerous, and at odds with the West.

Reflecting the images of Arabs portrayed in news (e.g., danger and otherness), our Arab Study manipulated different cues to simultaneously depict Arab groups as more or less threatening by presenting them in ways that highlighted their status as out-group or in-group and as extremists or moderates. Defining the subject of a story as an outsider or a radical seems likely to foster threat perceptions and trigger related thoughts. Guided by our Message Processing Model (Figure 1.3), we examine whether the co-occurrence of these cues fosters perceptions of threat, thus encouraging the spread of activation (a central feature of the model) to other tolerance-related judgments (i.e., intolerance for the group's expressive rights, and negative attitudes toward immigration and

minority empowerment). Further, we also consider whether news framed in *individual* or *collective* terms amplifies cue convergence effects.

Mental Networks and Associative Priming

Scholars concerned with interattitudinal structures argue for a conception of memory as a network of interconnected cognitions (Anderson, 1985; Anderson and Bower, 1973; Collins and Loftus, 1975). These scholars maintain that any one concept is associated with other constructs when encoded in memory, and the linkages between constructs are strengthened each time they are activated in tandem. Further, as the number of separate linkages between constructs increases, so does the likelihood that one will be activated indirectly by the invocation of the other due to an "implicational relation" (Judd and Krosnick, 1989).

As a result, Berkowitz and Rogers (1986) argue, "When a thought element is activated or brought into focal awareness, the activation radiates out from this particular node along the associative pathways to other nodes" (pp. 58–59), increasing the probability that related constructs will come to mind. Drawing from these perspectives, theories of "spreading activation" contend that the stronger or more numerous the mental pathways between constructs, the greater the chance that thoughts activated to process information about one construct will cascade through memory to other constructs, influencing subsequent evaluations and the formation of impressions (Lodge and Stroh, 1993).

Only a few scholars, however, have examined how cognitions activated by media coverage may spread to other constructs via mental pathways. Schleuder et al. (1991) examined how linkages among mental constructs influence the retrieval of information about candidates from memory; they concluded that media effects research should more thoroughly consider the outcomes of spreading activation. Building on these insights, Domke et al. (1998) found that individuals with well-developed cognitive connections among mental constructs produced more coherence among a range of evaluations when spurred by certain types of media content. That is, individuals exposed to certain message features displayed strengthened associations among directly primed and related elements, suggesting that for these individuals, activation spreads more readily among the nodes comprising their mental networks.

These findings share some similarity with Neuman's (1981) notion of integrative complexity. Typically assessed using content coding of open-ended responses, Neuman's measures have been confounded with loquacity (Luskin, 1987). Other researchers have tried to develop alternate methods for assessing the interconnection between cognitive elements, including closed-ended measures (Eveland et al., 2004). For this study, we adopt an approach similar to that of Sniderman et al. (2004), who examine the intercorrelation among various perceptions under different experimental conditions, and to Fazio et al.

(1986), who assess response latency as an indicator of the degree of integration between objects and their evaluations.

We consider these two approaches to gauging the spread of activation as complementary; each one provides unique insights into the nature of spreading activation resulting from interaction with news texts. Specifically, measures of associational strength provide some indication of the degree to which cues trigger the cascade of activation to related cognitions, thereby offering some insight about the structure of the mental network, as a greater correspondence is seen between constructs activated through an "implicational relation." On the other hand, measures of response latency reveal whether the spread of activation resulting from situational triggers alters the actual accessibility of these cognitions as can be observed in more rapidly accessible cognitions.

Cue Convergence and Threat

The presence of particular cues, then, may encourage the application of certain cognitions, which then trigger other aspects of long-term memory as activation spreads through the cognitive network. The convergence of cues and the resulting activation of applicable constructs may encourage particular avenues of thought (Wyer and Srull, 1986; Wyer and Srull, 1989). This perspective is consistent with Edelman (1993), who argues that the public's understanding of political issues and social groups is often swayed by transparent "categories" offered up by political elites. These categories constrain a range of potential realities, shaping political "enthusiasms, fears and antagonisms" when presented as natural, self-evident, or simple descriptions rather than carefully constructed linguistic and rhetorical choices (Edelman, 1993, p. 232). These cues have the potential to shape evaluations beyond the issue or group at hand, providing criteria for a range of other judgments. As this suggests, media may broadly influence the nature of responses and the coherence among a range of elements.

Of course, the effectiveness of the cue depends on its construction – the more complicated the cue, the less effective it will be. At their most powerful, cues are "contestable metaphors" found in word choices such as "freedom fighter" (as opposed to "insurgent rebel") or "pro-choice" (as opposed to "abortion advocate"). In the case of Arabs, cues concerning residence status (*immigrant* versus *citizen*) and radicalism (*extremist* versus *moderate*) may be particularly powerful descriptors. Indeed, these cues may work in combination to shape a range of thoughts that are connected to evaluations of Arabs in the minds of audience members, including thoughts about civil liberties and multi-culturalism. In Europe, for example, a surge in Arab immigration has heightened these representations and sparked disputes over notions of nationality, civil liberties, and minority empowerment. As Sniderman et al. (2004) note, these changes have "triggered intense debate about the nature of citizenship" (Favell, 1998), "the claims – and limits – of multiculturalism" (Barry, 2001; Parekh, 2000), and

even "the scope of free speech" (p. 35). The connections among these discrete judgments further suggest that the presence of particular cues may align a range of judgments.

Drawing on the reviewed research, the analysis presented in this chapter explores the interplay of different news cues on the structural coherence of group evaluations, judgments on civil liberties, and attitudes toward immigration and minority empowerment, as well as the speed with which these judgments are made. Specifically, we contend that the convergence of cues that reinforce stereotypes of Arabs as the "radical other" creates a context in which activation resulting from evaluations of Arabs becomes particularly likely to spread to connected constructs such as intolerance for speech or opposition to immigration for those with existing linkages among these mental elements. This assumes that many individuals have cognitive connections between beliefs about Arabs, civil liberties judgments, attitudes toward immigration, and feelings about minority power in the United States. In this case, the co-occurrence of two cues, Arabs as immigrants (as opposed to citizens) and Arabs as extremists (as opposed to moderates), should trigger this associative priming effect and lead to greater coherence, indicated by stronger correlations, among unfavorable evaluations of the group, opposition to speech freedoms, reduced support for immigration policy, and negative feelings about minority power.

Likewise, if, as we expect, activation spreads through the cognitive network to related nodes, the convergence of stereotyping cues should not only lead to heightened correlations between the primary evaluation (i.e., group evaluations) and other judgments (i.e., opposition to freedom of speech, immigration, and minority empowerment), but also among these judgments, which we expect are all interconnected for many people. That is, under a situation in which an individual encounters the convergence of immigrant and extremist cues, associative priming will likely increase the degree of association among these previously mentally linked elements, such as the second-level correlation between immigration attitudes and minority empowerment that exists distinct from the linkage to group evaluations.

As noted earlier, we further theorize that the process underlying these predictions involves associative priming through the spread of activation. If in fact the effects of cue convergence on these evaluations are the result of an associative priming process, people should make related judgments more rapidly. As Fazio and colleagues (1986) observe, response latency should be facilitated when there is "a strong association between the attitude object and an evaluation of that object" (p. 229). That is, people should render speedier responses concerning civil liberties, immigration, and minority power if there is a strong cognitive connection between these constructs and the primary evaluative object, which should be most likely to occur when the two cues (immigrant and extremist) co-occur. In this study, we consider response latency for these related judgments to be unobtrusive evidence of the strength of their association with evaluations

of the targeted group. Accordingly, we predict that people will require less time to render judgments when there is a convergence of stereotyping cues.

Effects of Framing and Cueing in Social Judgment

Individual versus collective framing is likely to moderate cue convergence effects. As noted in Chapter 2, individual and collective frames invoke different conceptions of entitativity, which then moderate cue convergence effects on subsequent judgments. First, such judgments are more easily rendered when an entity is represented as an individual rather than as a collective. Thus, response times will be quicker and judgments more consistent in the individual-frame condition than in the collective-frame condition. Second, relying on these arguments, we expect that the individual-frame conditions will amplify the effects of cue convergence. That is, individual story frames will strengthen the correlations between group evaluations and associated judgments.

Testing cueing and framing effects on the structure of thoughts requires comparing the strength of associations among concepts rather than paying attention to mean differences across experimental conditions. Thus, Pearson correlations were calculated among the indices of group evaluation, expressive tolerance, support for immigration policy, and support for minority empowerment. The correlation coefficients (r) were statistically compared across the manipulations using Fisher's r-to-z transformation statistic. As described in Chapter 3, which provides the methodological information for our research, subjects in our experiment were allowed to continue reading more news stories after reading the main news story. This potentially different amount of self-opted exposure to experimental treatment could potentially affect the results of our research. To address this concern, we created a variable for the number of stories read after being exposed to the main story and included it as a control variable for all correlation analyses reported below.

Before testing our ideas formally, we performed a series of ANOVA tests to detect whether the experimental manipulations created any significant mean differences in the four variables of concern. Results showed no significant differences, indicating that the changes in the story did not have a notable influence on respondents' mean scores concerning evaluations of the group under FBI suspicion, tolerance for expression, support for immigration policy, or minority empowerment more generally. Thus, the manipulations did not sway the extent of these evaluations, though they did produce a more subtle set of effects.

Cue Convergence and Heightened Correlations

As predicted, the relationship between evaluations of the group and the other three variables – expressive tolerance, support for immigration, and minority empowerment – differed depending on the cue combinations to which the
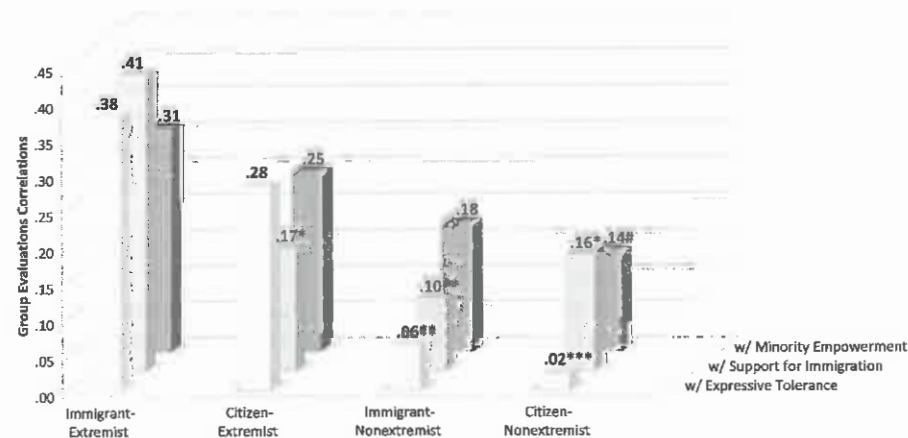
FIGURE 4.1. Correlations with group evaluation by condition, including difference tests. Correlations within outcome that are different from the immigrant-extremist condition at $p < .001$ are marked ***. Correlations within outcome that are different from the immigrant-extremist condition at $p < .01$ are marked **. Correlations within outcome that are different from the immigrant-extremist condition at $p < .05$ are marked *. Correlations within outcome that are different from the immigrant-extremist condition at $p < .10$ are marked #. All are one-tailed tests.

participants were exposed (see Figure 4.1). More specifically, the correlations in the Immigrant/Extremist (henceforth, IE) condition were higher than those in the other experimental conditions, suggesting that threat evaluations of this group were linked more strongly to speech intolerance, opposition to immigration, and minority disempowerment. We consider the correlations between group evaluations and each assessment in turn and test whether they are significantly different across experimental conditions. Note that case counts for each correlation ranged from $N = 131$ to $N = 148$.

Group Evaluation and Expressive Tolerance

Under the IE condition, the Pearson correlation between group evaluation and expressive tolerance was .38, while correlations for Citizen/Nonextremist (henceforth, CN) and Immigrant/Nonextremist (henceforth, IN) conditions were .02 and .06 respectively. Note that while this correlation is positive because of the affirmative coding of the variables, the implication of this stronger correlation in the cue convergence condition is that negative evaluations of the group were more strongly linked to speech intolerance. Once we compared the correlation score in the IE condition to those in the CN and the IN conditions, z-statistics indicated that the differences were statistically significant ($z = 3.18$, $p < .001$ for the IE and the CN comparison; $z = 2.87$, $p < .01$ for the IE and the IN comparison). When the story characterized the FBI target with cues of citizen and extremist (CE), the correlation between group

evaluation and expressive tolerance was .28. Although the correlation in the CE condition is weaker than that in the IE condition, the formal test comparing the two correlation coefficients did not achieve statistical significance. Overall, when the extremist cues were emphasized, the group evaluation and expressive tolerance correlations were stronger. But when "extremist" cues were used along with "immigrant" cues (IE condition), the strength of the correlation increased dramatically.

Group Evaluation and Support for Immigration

Similarly, the correlation between group evaluations and support for immigration was strongest ($r = .41$) in the IE cue combination. Again, this positive correlation reflects the direction in which the variables were coded, with positive versus negative evaluations of the group positively related to support versus opposition to immigration. This relationship had much weaker correlations under the CN ($r = .16$), IN ($r = .10$), and CE ($r = .17$) conditions. When the IE correlation was statistically compared with the correlations obtained in the other experimental conditions, the z-statistics confirmed that differences were statistically significant ($z = 2.23$, $p < .05$ for IE vs. CN; $z = 2.81$, $p < .01$ for IE vs. IN; $z = 2.16$, $p < .05$ for IE vs. CE). Moreover, not even one of the z-statistic tests comparing the strength of the correlations among other three experimental conditions was significant, providing implicit support for our prediction.

Group Evaluation and Minority Empowerment

This general pattern continued in the correlations between group evaluation and minority empowerment. The correlation was strongest in the IE condition ($r = .31$). The other experimental conditions – CN, IN, and CE – revealed a somewhat stronger set of associations relative to the prior comparisons ($r = .14$, $r = .18$, and $r = .25$, respectively). As a result, z-statistics comparing the correlations did not achieve statistical significance. Thus, although the differences are directionally consistent with our expectations, formal tests do not provide support in this case.

To summarize, the pattern of results shows that the correlations between group evaluations and the other assessments were largely stronger in the condition where respondents were exposed to the combination of immigrant and extremist cues. Indeed, the formal tests indicate that the correlations in this condition are significantly higher than the other three conditions in five out of nine tests. As this suggests, under the condition where the stereotypic cues converged, liking or disliking for the groups became more tightly aligned with a range of other seemingly linked judgments about civic liberties, immigration, and minority power.

Further, we examined whether there was a difference between conditions in the strength of the correlations among expressive tolerance, support for immigration, and minority empowerment depending on whether the cue
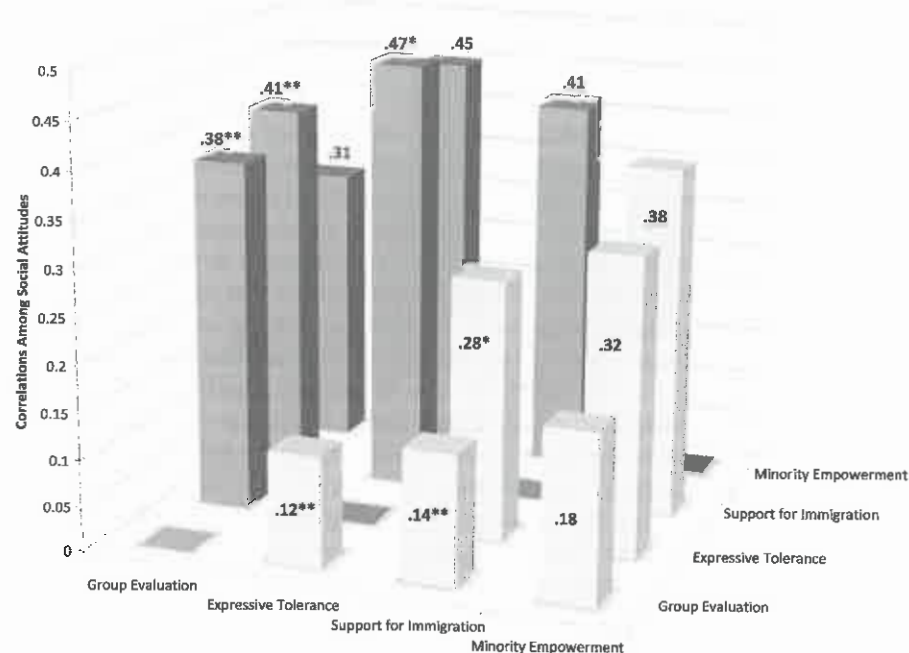
FIGURE 4.2. Correlations among social attitudes contrasting immigrant/extremists (cue convergence = above diagonal/darker) with others (cue divergence = below diagonal/lighter). Paired correlations that are different from one another at $p < .01$ are marked **. Paired correlations that are different from one another at $p < .05$ are marked *. All are one-tailed tests.

combination was convergent, as in the IE condition, or divergent, as in the other conditions. Figure 4.2 presents the patterns of intercorrelations, with the cue convergence condition above the diagonal ($N = 131$ to 132) represented by the darker columns, and the cue divergence conditions below the diagonal ($N = 431$ to 435) represented by the lighter columns.

First-Level Correlations

As observed earlier, the pattern of findings indicates that group evaluations were more strongly correlated with each of the other measures in the cue convergence condition than in the cue divergence conditions. Given the larger cell sizes, the differences in the size of correlations across experimental conditions achieved statistical significance for group evaluation and speech tolerance ($z = 2.22$, $p < .01$) and group evaluation and support for immigration ($z = 2.96$, $p < .01$). Likewise, the correlation between group evaluation and minority empowerment was stronger when cues converged ($r = .31$) than when they diverged ($r = .18$), but z-statistics for this comparison did not reach statistical significance. Again, all of these positive correlations reflect the association of favorable or unfavorable evaluations of the group with tolerance or intolerance for their speech, support or opposition for immigration, and minority

empowerment or suppression, respectively, with the cue convergence condition exhibiting strengthened connections between these judgments.

Second-Level Correlations

The first-level correlations indicate that cue convergence strengthens the association between negative group evaluations with intolerance, opposition to immigration, and minority suppression. The results also reveal that the intercorrelations among the second-order variables (i.e., intolerance, immigration opposition, and minority suppression) were also stronger in the cue convergence condition than in the cue divergence conditions, but not always to an extent that was statistically significant. Specifically, the cue convergence condition produced stronger correlations among expressive tolerance and support for immigration in $(r = .47)$ than the cue divergence conditions $(r = .28)$, with the z-statistic being statistically significant $(z = 2.25, p < .05)$. Similarly, the correlation between expressive tolerance and minority empowerment was stronger in the cue convergence condition $(r = .45)$ than in the cue divergence conditions $(r = .32)$, but the z-statistic comparing these two coefficients was not statistically significant. The correlation between support for immigration and minority power exhibits a similar pattern, with correlation between the two variables slightly higher in cue convergence conditions $(r = .41)$ than in cue divergence conditions $(r = .38)$, though this small difference did not achieve statistical significance and is likely not meaningful.

Nonetheless, the overall pattern is consistent; participants who read news stories with convergent cues – that is, featuring an immigrant presented as an extremist – exhibited a stronger relationship between the four variables than those who read news stories with divergent cues, strengthening ties between their evaluation of the group and their judgments about speech tolerance, immigration, and minority rights. In addition, statistical comparisons of the size of the correlations found that they were significantly different in three out of six tests.

Cue Convergence and Response Latency

Furthermore, time measures recorded in the web experiment log file were analyzed to test whether participants in the cue convergence condition (IE condition) would generate faster responses to the postmanipulation survey questions tapping the four variables of interest than those in the other experimental conditions. As reported in Figure 4.3, the results of a series of t-tests indicate a clear pattern in which participants spent less time answering questions under the cue convergence condition than under the cue divergence conditions.[1] Specifically,

[1] The only exception to this pattern was found for *group evaluation*; time spent answering the questions of group evaluation was virtually equal in the two experimental conditions, cue convergence and cue divergence. This finding was not reported in Figure 4.3 because the comparison
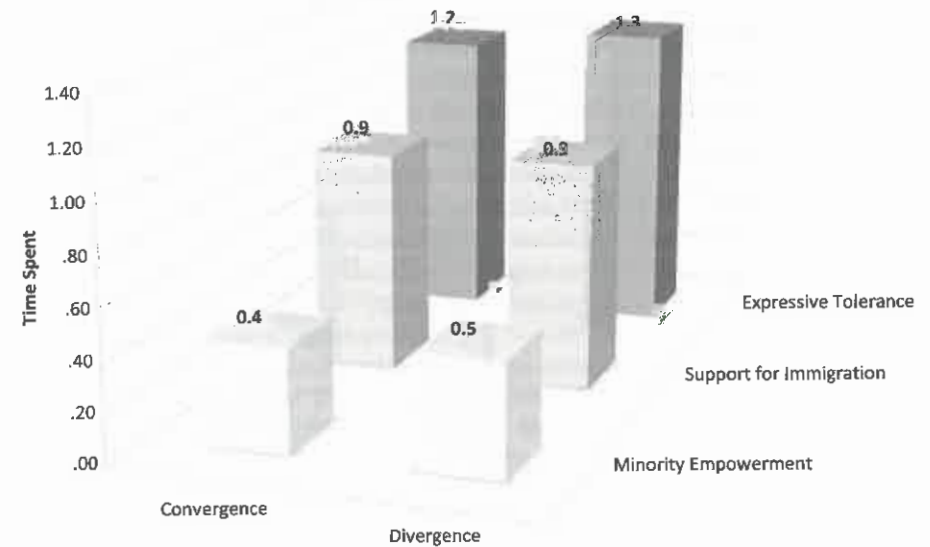
FIGURE 4.3. T-tests examining the difference in time spent between cue convergence and divergence conditions. Entries are normalized seconds calculated by dividing time spent responding to item battery by time spent answering preexperimental items. T-tests: The differences for "Minority Empowerment" and "Expressive Tolerance" were statistically significant.

responses to the items tapping *expressive tolerance* were reported faster under the cue convergence condition than under the cue divergence conditions $(t = 1.7; df = 575; p < .05,$ one-tailed). Similarly, participants in the cue convergent condition spent less time responding to the *minority empowerment* items than those in the cue divergence conditions $(t = 2.58; df = 575; p < .001,$ one-tailed). Although the t-test for *support for immigration* was not statistically significant, the result of mean differences in time spent was consistent with the expected pattern in that responses were faster under the cue convergence condition than the cue divergence conditions.

The Individual Frame, Cue Convergence, and Correlations

Figure 4.4 presents correlations between group evaluation and each of the other three variables across the different cue-frame combinations. If, as we expect, individual frames contribute to more extreme judgments, the correlations between group evaluation and each of the other three variables should be stronger when convergent cues coincided with individual frames.

of time spent for group evaluation, a judgment directly grounded in the manipulated news story, was not of interest to this study.
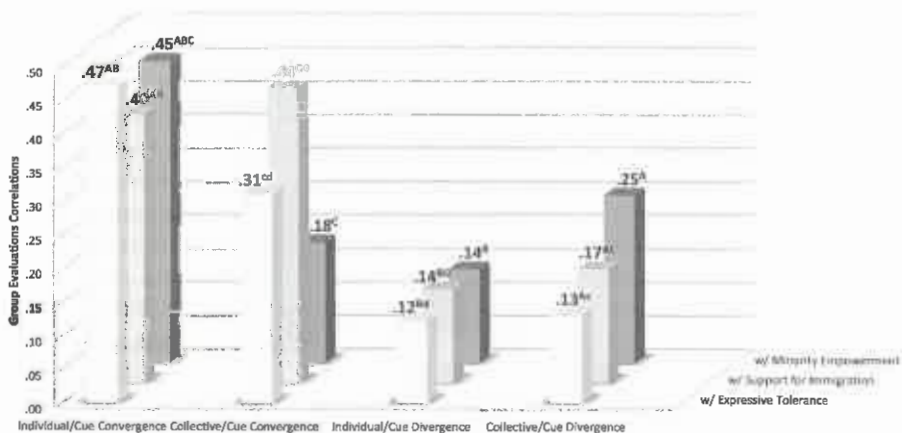
FIGURE 4.4. Correlations with group evaluation by frame and cue conditions with difference tests. Correlations within outcome that are different from one another at $p < .05$ share the same uppercase superscript; correlations within outcome that are different from one another at the $p < .10$ share the same lowercase superscript. All are one-tailed tests.

Group Evaluation and Expressive Tolerance

The correlation between group evaluation and expressive tolerance was strongest when the FBI target was described as an individual member of an extremist group founded by Arab immigrants ($r = .47$). When compared with correlations in the other cue-frame combinations, the correlation in the cue convergence and individual-frame condition was significantly higher than those in the cue divergence, individual-frame conditions ($r = .12$, $z = 2.75$, $p < .01$) as well as in the cue divergence, collective-frame conditions ($r = .13$, $z = 2.72$, $p < .01$). The correlation between group evaluation and expressive tolerance in the cue convergence, collective-frame condition was somewhat tempered ($r = .31$) and its difference from those in the cue divergence conditions, regardless of whether they received the individual or collective frame, was weaker ($z = 1.33$, $p < .10$ for the cue divergence, individual-frame condition; $z = 1.29$, $p < .10$ for the cue divergence, collective-frame condition).

Group Evaluation and Support for Immigration

The correlation between group evaluation and support for immigration in both of the cue convergence conditions ($r = .44$ for the cue convergence, collective-frame condition; $r = .41$ for the cue convergence, individual-frame condition) were found to be higher than those in the cue divergence conditions ($r = .17$ for the cue divergence, collective-frame condition; $r = .14$ for the cue divergence, individual-frame condition). Z-statistics indicate that the correlations in the two cue convergence conditions were significantly different from their counterparts in the cue divergence conditions, confirming the findings from Figures 4.2 and 4.3.

Group Evaluation and Minority Empowerment

For this last pair of variables, the pattern becomes more distinct. The most robust correlation between group evaluation and minority empowerment was found in the cue convergence, individual-frame condition ($r = .45$). The rest of the cue-frame combinations, the cue divergence, collective-frame condition; the cue divergence, individual-frame condition; and the cue convergence, collective-frame condition, revealed associations that were much more moderate ($r = .25$, $r = .14$ and $r = .18$, respectively). Z-statistics confirmed that the correlation in the cue convergence, individual-frame condition was significantly different from those in cue divergence, collective-frame condition ($z = 1.65$, $p < .05$); the cue divergence, individual-frame condition ($z = 2.46$, $p < .01$); and the cue convergence, collective-frame condition ($z = 1.67$, $p < .05$).

Overall, the results observed across these comparisons provide some support for the expectation that individual framing amplifies the effects of cue convergence. In seven out of nine tests, the individual-frame, cue convergence condition combination yielded statistically stronger correlations than the other frame-cue combinations. In contrast, the collective-frame, cue convergence condition produced correlations that were stronger than other conditions in only two of nine tests. As such, it seems that framing moderates cue convergence effects, with the individual frame amplifying convergence effects. In other words, subjects' evaluations of the group aligned more closely with their attitudes about speech tolerance, immigration, and minority rights when encountering individual framing and the presence of convergent "othering" cues.

Conclusions

People who encountered the Arab portrayal with the convergent cues of the immigrant extremist most closely connected their evaluations of the group featured in the news story to other judgments involving civil liberties, immigration, and minority empowerment. Specifically, when these two cues were present together in the stimulus story, favorable group evaluations became more closely aligned with tolerance for mediated expression of extreme perspectives, opposition to restrictive immigration policies, and minority empowerment, whereas unfavorable evaluations of the group became more closely linked to intolerance for such expression, support for immigration restrictions, and opposition to minority empowerment. The results further revealed that the correlations among these other variables grew when the cues converged to portray the Arab as the "radical other," such that intolerance, immigration opposition, and minority disempowerment were more tightly interrelated.

When coupled with the fact that we did not observe differences in mean scores on these variables across experimental conditions, these findings become more interesting. Traditional approaches to analyzing experimental data would not have revealed these effects. We examined these effects because of the expectation that spreading activation (see Figure 1.3) and associative priming would

tighten the intercorrelations among these related evaluations. Many individuals appear to have mental networks that contain cognitive connections among these constructs, yet it was under the conditions of cue convergence that we observed more coherence among these evaluations. Thus, measures of associational strength provide some evidence of the degree to which cues and frames can trigger the cascade of activation to related cognitions, offering insights about the structure of the mental network, as a greater correspondence is seen between constructs activated through "implicational relations."

These conclusions are bolstered by the results of the response-time analysis, which revealed that participants who encountered the Immigrant/Extremist cue combination generated the fastest normalized responses to the postmanipulation survey questions concerning civil liberties, immigration, and minority power. This assessment of response latency suggests that the spread of activation resulting from situational triggers altered the actual accessibility of these cognitions as can be observed in more rapid accessibility. Specifically, participants spent significantly less time responding to items pertaining to expressive tolerance and minority empowerment under the IE condition as compared with the other experimental conditions. In sum, when coupled with the results of correlation analyses, these findings that people spend less time rendering judgments under certain cue combinations lend additional support to our claim of cue convergence effects on knowledge activation and associative priming.

Finally, this study finds that frames and cues can have interactive effects in a manner consistent with other recent framing research. That is, framing news about civil liberties restrictions in individual terms amplified the effects of cue convergence, with correlations between group evaluations and the other assessments strongest under these circumstances. This result suggests that media effects may be enhanced when journalists integrate consistent and mutually reinforcing frames and cues within news stories. It also implies that researchers who adopt the idealist approach (see Figure 1.1) to studying framing effects may underestimate the true power of news frames by stripping them of associated textual elements that convey particular meanings through the framing of smaller linguistic units (i.e., cues), elements that enhance the effect of the story frame and contribute to its power.

There are two possible reasons why certain frames and cues may have interacted to influence the connections individuals made between attitudes: (1) certain combinations may have caused research participants to consciously feel more motivated to think about and respond consistently with a range of activated constructs, and (2) certain combinations may have triggered increased associations with existing mental structures, thus activating a greater number of constructs when responding more or less automatically, absent the motivation to process. The most likely explanation of the data seems to be a combination of the two.

Regardless, these data indicate that the interaction between frames and cues has implications for cognitive responses. Research on media framing and

cueing has only begun to discover how subtle elements of news content interact to produce effects (see Chong and Druckman, 2007a,c; Shah et al., 2004; Shah et al., 2010). A recognition that multiple frames and cues exist in all news stories – especially in contexts where democratic competition involves elites offering different labels for issues – and a dedicated effort to understand how they may interact with one another are clearly required.

On a related point, examinations of communication framing and cueing effects are aided by looking beyond mean scores to consider the associations among variables and the latency of responses under different experimental conditions. These approaches allow the researcher to observe the most basic consequences of framing and cueing on cognitive processing and attitude expression. They provide some insight into the structure of expressed thoughts and the cognitive processes underlying these expressions. A particularly important innovation of this research is the application of response latency techniques outside the laboratory, which provides a new direction for future survey and survey-experimental work in communication.

In addition, these findings suggest that content analyses of media should determine the relative frequencies and co-occurrence of various cues and frames. If the relationship among frames and cues within news stories is important, then analyses that identify frame-cue patterns and determine the relative frequencies and co-occurrence of such content are also necessary. Indeed, in environments featuring elite competition over issue framing and journalists working to cover different story angles, this sort of co-occurrence is to be expected.

These findings also obviously have implications for media portrayals of Arabs and research on minorities and the media. In the wake of September 11, 2001, media representations of Arabs have varied widely, presenting a range of Arab and Muslim groups as more or less threatening. Our finding that cues highlighting their status as an outgroup rather than as an ingroup and as extremists rather than as moderates interact with audience members' existing cognitions to produce the observed effects is notable on a number of fronts. First, it seems that a range of intolerant, xenophobic, and prejudiced attitudes are linked to the notion of the Arab as the radical outsider. While portrayals of Arabs were simply the context for this study, this certainly has implications for those interested in how media coverage of Arab groups may be reinforcing intolerant beliefs. Second, and perhaps more important, this research suggests that the cueing of race and ethnicity can have important, albeit subtle, effects on audience thinking.

As a whole, this analysis provides a promising avenue for future research. It remains to be discovered whether such interactions occur across other topics and for other groups, as well as whether the co-occurrence of these cues can be systematically cataloged in the media production process. Nevertheless, it is clear that frames and cues, acting together, have effects that go beyond what would be predicted by examining the individual outcomes of the components.

This lends a new layer of complexity to our understanding of how the choices and patterns present in media texts may contribute to the cognitions and ultimately the behaviors of individuals. It also underscores the utility of factorial designs that allow for the layering of frames and cues in experimental research for examing framing and cueing effects.

5

Cognitive Complexity and Attitude Structure

"Our enemies operate secretly and they seek to attack us from within. In this new kind of war, it is both necessary and appropriate for us to take all possible steps to locate our enemy and know what they are plotting before they strike."

– U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez
Testimony before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee
February 6, 2006

"I know for an absolute fact that we have not been involved in anything related to promoting terrorism, and yet the government has collected almost 1,200 pages on our activities. Why is the ACLU now the subject of scrutiny from the FBI?"

– Anthony. D. Romero
ACLU Executive Director
July 16, 2005

As the United States government took actions to engage in surveillance of activist groups, the discourse surrounding this action straddled both sides of the national security/civil liberties dichotomy. Some officials, such as Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez (quoted above), made the argument that such government activities are necessary to protect the safety and security of the American public. On the other hand, civil rights advocates such as Anthony Romero, the ACLU's Executive Director, questioned whether activist group surveillance wasn't motivated by political rather than security concerns. As discussed earlier, this national security/civil liberties debate was played out for public consumption through the mass media. Audience members seeking to understand the debate over government surveillance activities had to make judgments about what was happening on the basis of information reported in the media. This led us to ask questions about how the audience would make sense of this controversy in response to the news stories that they encounter.