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THE MEDIA DEPENDENCE MODEL:
AN ANALYSIS OF THE PERFORMANCE AND STRUCTURE OF
U.S. AND GLOBAL NEWS

BY

ANDREW CHARLES KENNIS

DISSERTATION

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Doctoral Committee:

Research Professor John Nerone, Chair
Associate Professor Scott Althaus
Associate Professor Inger Stole
Professor Francis Boyle
Professor W. Lance Bennett
Institute Professor Noam Chomsky

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is an attempt to make sense out of the many questions surrounding news media performance and its inadequacies. Are journalists and their related professional practices to blame for the failings of news content or is it more a function of the structure in which they operate? What is the structure of today's news media? In the digital age, does the long documented domination of official sources over sourcing tendencies found in news coverage continue to persist in mainstream news media? Further, are the criticisms of the old, traditional media still applicable for new, global-oriented news media, including in foreign languages transmitted abroad?

These questions are answered by the positing of an original model of news analysis called the media dependence model (MDM). The name was chosen to emphasize the chief failing of the U.S. news media system: its reliance on corporate funding and ownership and the unfortunate result of this structure leading to a lack of independence from Washington (the White House and key Congressional leaders) and Wall Street (Madison Avenue and the public relations industry) positioning.

A main pillar of the MDM is the synthesis of two critical models of news analysis and the application of their respective strengths toward the other's weaknesses. The synthesis is based on Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky's propaganda model (1988, 2002, 2008) and W. Lance Bennett's indexing model (Bennett, 1990; Bennett, Lawrence, & Livingston, 2007). Indexing has particular methodological strengths, while the propaganda model has more theoretical robustness. Both complement the other.

While the scope of the synthesis is broad and substantial, and contributes much in terms of understanding news content, it still leaves important questions that this dissertation endeavors to address. The MDM answers how and why social movements garner news media attention and sympathy, while others do not. In several chapters, the tendencies of the news media to cover social movements in opposition to U.S. policy in a derisive fashion was illustrated through case studies on opposition movements based in Puerto Rico (Chapter 6) and Ecuador (Chapter 7).

The MDM theorizes ownership of the news media in a manner appropriate for the age of globalization, with findings based on a substantial and thorough content analysis of important events in Fallujah, where the most substantial military operation was

conducted during the occupation of Iraq (Chapter 4). This work does not leave domestic matters unaddressed or under-theorized. It does so by distinguishing between foreign and domestic news reporting and modeling domestic coverage, including a detailed case study on immigration which revealed dichotomized tendencies for the press to highlight certain unaccompanied minors over others (Chapter 8).

A number of political communication scholars have argued that the ending of the Cold War has brought about an era of press independence, which avoids the dichotomized coverage tendencies that were characteristic of the previous era. Findings from a case study (Chapter 5) on massacres occurring in similar time periods in Acteal, Mexico and Racak, Yugoslavia, purposefully selected for its occurrence *before* the “war on terror,” but *after* the ending of the Cold War, strongly suggest that we are still *not* in an era of press ambiguity.

Structure, as opposed to the norms and routines of professionalized journalism, is shown to be the leading variable in so far as impact on news content is concerned. A chapter documenting instances of “spiking,” the cutting of stories found to be too critical or incisive, as well as an assortment of other punitive editorial measures taken against journalists, all point to the influence of ownership and advertising as being more important than the particular practices of journalists when it comes to impact on news content (Chapter 9).

In spite of containing “bird’s eye” conclusions and critical analysis on news media performance and its respective tendencies, this dissertation also addresses the conditions and instances in which exceptions are most likely to arise, with references to scholarly literature I have grouped and termed as “press exceptionalism.” Exceptional content characteristics were found, and duly evaluated in relation to the MDM, in nearly every case study undertaken in this work.

The dissertation closes with an eye toward the future. In the midst of a volatile time for the journalism industry and U.S. news media, implications and future trends are taken into consideration. The “Fox effect” and the paradigm shift toward the journalism of assertion; the crisis in journalism and the critical juncture that the industry is currently undergoing; needed policies and reforms to rectify the poor state of press affairs are all considered in relation to the MDM.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the memory all of the victims of the many abuses noted in this dissertation: the many innocent civilians who were injured or killed; unaccompanied minors fleeing poverty and/or repression; activists and organizers who were ignored, vilified or even targeted; and journalists with pre-maturely ended careers (or lives). It is also dedicated to the memory of my grandfather, who passed away during the initial drafting stages of this work.

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(continued)

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The late John Ross taught me how to be better myself as an investigative journalist, in Cancún, San Cristóbal, México City and even when we weren't together in Palestine and Iraq. I thank him for his positive influence both when he was near and afar.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCING THE MEDIA DEPENDENCE MODEL	1
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL / HISTORICAL EXPLORATION OF THE MDM	22
CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL COMPONENTS OF THE MEDIA DEPENDENCE MODEL	97
CHAPTER 4: INDEXING STATE-CORPORATE PROPAGANDA? COMPARING CNN AND CNN en ESPAÑOL COVERAGE ON FALLUJAH	148
CHAPTER 5: ACTEAL & RACA: SIMILAR FATALITY COUNTS, FAR DIFFERENT NEWS COVERAGE	204
CHAPTER 6: EVALUATING THE MDM & NEWS MEDIA PERFORMANCE OF <i>THE NEW YORK TIMES</i> ON VIEQUES	247
CHAPTER 7: WAS THE SOCIAL MOVEMENT IN ECUADOR UNWORTHY IN U.S. NEWS COVERAGE?.....	291
CHAPTER 8: DOUBLE STANDARDS? THE CASE OF ELIÁN GONZALEZ AND NINE POTENTIALLY UNWORTHY VICTIMS	317
CHAPTER 9: MARGINALIZED CRITICAL NEWS CONTENT, SPIKED STORIES / SERIES AND CAREERS SUBJECTED TO THE BUZZSAW	364
CHAPTER 10: THE DIGITAL AGE, FUTURE OF NEWS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MDM	399
APPENDIX A	429
BIBLIOGRAPHY	435

Chapter One: Introducing the Media Dependence Model

Mexican-born Elizama Hernández González was a young six-month-old baby found in her dead mother's arms by U.S. immigration authorities. Her mother had succumbed to the scorching Arizona desert, but not before giving her baby her last drops of water which allowed Elizama to live. For six decades, the U.S. Navy occupied and test bombed the Puerto Rican island of Vieques before it was finally forced to depart by a vigorous social movement. Iraqi photo-journalist Ibrahim Jassam and blogger Abdul Kareem Nabeel Suleiman served years in U.S.-supported jails in both Iraq and Egypt, for merely practicing journalism. A movement in Ecuador, mostly led by its majority indigenous population, undertook a peaceful uprising, formed democratic parallel governments and successfully demanded the ouster of their President. In southeastern Mexico, the peaceful village of Acteal bears witness to the state-sponsored massacre of forty-five of its people, mostly women and children, while they were praying.

Every day, the news media is filled with compelling stories, dramatic events and important social and political developments such as the ones just mentioned. Key editorial decisions are made on how much emphasis should be put on certain or specific happenings at the inevitable expense of others. Some social movements and/or victims of abuses are highlighted, while others are relegated less importance or ignored altogether. To be sure, the cases briefly noted above were not covered by the news media with the level of prominence afforded to other, equivalent occurrences. During a time when non-profit and citizen-oriented outlets are taking the spotlight away from professional journalists, it is becoming more apparent that what the news media is not covering is often more important than what it is covering. This is especially the case if journalism is to prioritize the misgivings of its own government over that of others, considering the impact the citizenry can potentially exert when it has access to such critical news and information.

In a day and age where few people are satisfied with the content and performance of mainstream news media in the U.S. and beyond, a relatively large consensus can be found about the news media performing inadequately. However, when questions are raised as to why the news media performs in this manner, the ensuing answers and focus often diverge. Many people focus on an alleged bias of one sort or another inherent to the news media. Others simply distrust the news media as much as they do public officials.

In spite of this, leading news media outlets continue to grace the desks of heads of state across the globe, as well as their respective advisers, while also attracting millions of readers, viewers or surfers, whether it be through television screens, smart phones or iPads. One thing continues to remain the same in the digital age: the importance of elite news media outlets is persisting, arguably even increasing in light of the failure of dozens upon dozens of regional papers and the survival of the largest, branded, nationally-distributed dailies. Indeed, as Jones noted in a recent study, well over 90% of original reporting and news is produced by daily papers (2009), while new media and bloggers alike merely respond, comment and react. The additional and inevitable questions are thus raised.

Are journalists and their related professional practices to blame for the failings of news content or is it more a function of the structure in which they operate? What is the structure of today's news media? In the digital age, does the long documented domination of official sources over sourcing tendencies found in news coverage continue to persist in mainstream news media? Further, are the criticisms of the old, traditional media still applicable for new, global-oriented news media, including in foreign languages transmitted abroad?

The News Media Dependence Model

This dissertation is an attempt to make sense out of the many questions surrounding news media performance and its inadequacies. It does this by first synthesizing two critical models of news analysis and applying their respective strengths toward the other's weaknesses. The synthesis is based on the propaganda (Herman & Chomsky, 1988, 2002, 2008) and indexing models (Bennett, 1990; Bennett, Lawrence, & Livingston, 2007). While the scope of the synthesis is broad and substantial, and contributes much in terms of understanding news content, it still leaves important questions that this dissertation endeavors to address. It answers how and why social movements garner news media attention and sympathy, while others do not. This work does not leave domestic matters unaddressed or under-theorized. It does so by distinguishing between foreign and domestic news reporting and modeling domestic coverage. It theorizes ownership of the news media in a manner appropriate for the age of globalization, with findings based on a substantial and thorough content analysis of

important events in Fallujah, where the most substantial military operation was conducted during the occupation of Iraq. Lastly, in spite of containing “bird’s eye” conclusions and critical analysis on news media performance and its respective tendencies, this dissertation will also address the conditions and instances in which exceptions are most likely to arise.

The name I have given to the model of news analysis presented in this dissertation is the media dependence model (MDM). I chose this name to emphasize the chief failing of the U.S. news media system: its reliance on corporate funding and ownership and the unfortunate result of this structure leading to a lack of independence from Washington (the White House and key Congressional leaders) and Wall Street (Madison Avenue and the public relations industry) positioning.

Postulating a new and more robust critical model of news analysis which addresses patterns of the most important agenda-setting news media could not be timelier than the current historical moment. The crisis to professional journalism which the nation is currently witnessing is at an all-time high and journalism’s very existence is being threatened. Appropriately then, important and critical scholarship is identifying the roots of the crisis and proposing solutions to preserve journalism (McChesney & Nichols, 2009), especially in light of how most observers uncontroversially view journalism as being nothing less than essential to the democratic ethos of society. Critical analysis reflecting on both the present-day and historical record is most needed to assure that a transition to the new digital era is not wrought by the same institutional and systemic weaknesses that the traditional U.S. news media system contained in the past and continues to exhibit in the present.

The new digital era of journalism, conventional wisdom on the topic asserts, has significantly usurped prior tendencies in terms of the domination of news themes and sources by government and corporate officials. Scholarly inquiries and findings into the matter, however, have showed that this is simply not the case (Livingston & Bennett, 2003; Livingston & Van Belle, 2005) and that an era of hyper-commercialism is mostly to blame for a lack of news media independence (McChesney, 2000, 2004, 2008). While it cannot be denied that new media and online-based news outlets are increasingly producing exceptional content, the fact remains that the reach of this content is widely

dispersed and its subsequent influence is also dispersed, disparate and lacking in comparison to the traditional outlets. Most importantly, it is widely acknowledged that the leading agenda-setting and U.S.-based print sources – the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* – are by-and-large responsible for an overwhelming amount of news content, which are in turn re-sourced by alternative news sources in broadcast and online-based media.

The topic of my dissertation is especially timely in light of the dismal news media performance on what is arguably the most important current foreign policy issue to U.S. citizens – U.S. public policy in Western and Southern Asia. It is now widely accepted that the most elite and influential news media sources failed to deliver the kind of independent reporting that an informed citizenry needs in order to have kept its leaders in check during the buildup to the U.S.-led invasion and subsequent occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan (especially the former). Two of the leading nationally distributed dailies even issued official apologies for their coverage on the great “weapons of mass destruction” buildup to the invasion of Iraq (though interestingly enough, in the case of the *New York Times*, its apology was buried on page A10).¹

In spite of apologies on behalf of the media’s major agenda-setting dailies, this dissertation was not written with the assumption that the current state of affairs in journalism is unchanging and certain. Indeed, we are presently witnessing a critical historical juncture in which journalism’s future fate is literally at stake. Thus, if a change is to happen in the future to the dominance and importance of present-day media agenda-setters, the relevance of a critique based on institutional and structural characteristics, duly shown to lead to a lack of independent news content, will retain its value by serving as a reference to future news media creators, producers and entrepreneurs about the failings of the past. This work endeavors to be a guide in which future decisions made about the principal institutional and structural characteristics of the news media will be made with a strong deference toward the reasons behind present-day and recent past media performance failings.

Not only was this dissertation crafted with an eye toward the future, it was also written with a concrete idea of where the MDM is positioned in terms of academic fields of study. The MDM firmly locates itself within the subfields of political communication

and political science, which are respectively and traditionally housed within the disciplines of political science and communications. The theoretical argument on which the MDM is based on is that, in relation to work from these subfields on news media performance, elements and strengths emanating from both subfields complement the respective weaknesses of the other. This argument is based on the same logic used in positing the synthesis upon which the MDM is substantially based, which is precisely the first place to start in order to gain a greater understanding of the MDM.

News Media Performance and the IM/PM Synthesis

A substantial portion of scholarship on the news media concerns itself with the effects of media performance, as opposed to a focus on its actual content. However, a democratic society should concern itself with both matters, as wide reactions and concern in the West about the Soviet Union's iron-clad control over the press duly exhibited. A scholarly study which focused on how often USSR's citizenry turned to foreign sources despite the inherent risks and the illegality of such acts, strongly suggested that the effects of state propaganda were far less than was generally assumed (Millar & Donhowe, 1987). In spite of this finding, this revelation did not lessen the importance of forceful criticism against official USSR state propaganda, as widely distributed news sources which fail to deliver independent reporting and analysis still come up short in terms of opportunity costs, even when their content is not as influential as expected. Thus, even if an important source does not have a great impact on its citizenry, a problem still remains in terms of what kind of democratizing impact it *could* have had if it had delivered more independent information and autonomous content in its news coverage. Lastly, the degree of success of the USSR's news media says nothing about the extent that it was an organ of governmental propaganda.

These same concerns are as relevant to the performance of the U.S. and global news media system as they were to the USSR and comprise the principal reasons why I have chosen to analyze U.S. and global news media as the topic of my dissertation. Questions surrounding whether the U.S. news media systematically fails in its responsibility to function as an autonomous and independently functioning entity are widely held as crucial in terms of the media fulfilling the vital "watchdog" task of what is considered to be the "Fourth Estate" (Carlyle, 1905; Schutlz, 1999). In other words, news

media performance that is truly independent of powerful governmental and corporate interests is assumed to be essential for any healthy representative democracy.²

Past models of the news media have come close to accomplishing the vital task of sizing up our news media system, including the agenda-setting research posited by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw (1972).³ However, Todd Gitlin's criticism that agenda-setting's main shortcoming that it's "still too narrow and ahistorical: analytically it abstracts both media and audiences from their social and historical matrix" (Gitlin, 1981, p. 207) is precisely what media performance models should seek to avoid. Most notably, Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model (2002), as well as Bennett's indexing hypothesis (1990), have sought to properly contextualize their analysis of U.S. news media performance in the greater scope of political, social, economic and historical considerations and are comparable to past critical analyses of news coverage of important U.S. foreign policy issues and events (Jacobson, Fang, & Raffel, 2002; Kennis, 2003). However, these two models have only been used separately in past scholarly analyses and are firmly entrenched in distinct subfields of communication and political science studies.

Methodologically and theoretically, the propaganda model (PM) and the indexing model (IM) accomplish different ends that provide a fuller, more nuanced explanation of news coverage. The key link between the two models is how they both address the importance of sourcing tendencies in determining resulting coverage. This synthesis is based on the argument that the IM and PM are compatible and compliment one another in respect to their theoretical and methodological weaknesses and strengths. As a result, my dissertation will explore the synthesis of these two models into one, more comprehensive analysis modeling the news media.

The Propaganda Model

The PM's main postulate is that the structural characteristics of the mass media results in five content filters that limit the ability of the elite print media to be independent from the state-corporate interests to which they are beholden (Herman & Chomsky, 1988, 2002, 2008). The five content news filters then are characterized by two structural filters, corporate ownership and advertising, which account for the next three filters which have to do more with journalistic practice and convention. The third filter of the dominance of official sourcing tendencies in corporate journalism is arguably the

most frequently witnessed in the elite sources. The fourth filter of “flak” accounts for pressures exerted on the media by public relations firms, right-wing funded think-tanks, occasionally (though not often) from the public, and even from the government itself. “Flak” results on constraints to the ideological spectrum found in the U.S. news media, which Herman and Chomsky argue is extremely limited and quite disciplined to the needs and interests of the U.S. state-corporate nexus. The last filter, anti-communism, Herman and Chomsky argue still exists even through the post-Cold War era of the present (2002). However, Herman and other observers have written of its possible extension into other topics, such as the supposed “war on drugs” in Colombia and the widespread acceptance of the major assumptions and tenants of neo-liberalism. Herman has also written of the fifth filter including anti-terrorism (Herman, 2000).

The crux of the model is its worthy/unworthy victims thesis, which posits that the institutional structure of the news media results in a filtration process that dichotomizes news media coverage of important elections, atrocities, massacres and wars in a manner that is in line with the interests of the White House:

A propaganda system will consistently portray people abused in enemy states as *worthy* victims, whereas those treated with equal or greater severity by its own government or clients will be *unworthy*. The evidence of worth may be read from the extent and character of attention and indignation ... the U.S. mass media’s practical definitions of worth are political in the extreme and fit well the expectations of a propaganda model. While this differential treatment occurs on a large scale, the media, intellectuals, and public are able to remain unconscious of the fact and maintain a high moral and self-righteous tone. This is evidence of an extremely effective propaganda system (Herman & Chomsky, 2002, p. 37).

Put more simply: “What is on the agenda in treating one [unworthy or worthy victims] case will be off the agenda in discussing the other” (2002, pp. 34-35).⁴

In terms of sourcing tendencies for cases involving unworthy victims, Herman and Chomsky explain that “we would expect official sources of the United States and its client regimes to be used heavily – and uncritically – in connection with one’s own abuses and those of friendly governments” (2002, pp. 34-35). The volume and the quality of coverage are factors that characterize unworthy victims, as “evidence of worth may be read from the extent and character of attention and indignation” (2002, p. 37). As for worthy victims, the exact opposite is expected in all regards: extensive detail, significant

humanization, potential contextualization that can garner sympathy, and unofficial sources being prominently featured and trusted.

The propaganda model has used comparative analysis to illustrate systematic patterns in terms of how sourcing tendencies and the resulting tone of coverage have correlated with the kind of political relations that the U.S. holds with its foreign clients and adversaries. In this vein, the model used tables to illustrate patterns and differences in terms of the quality and the volume of coverage allotted to a given news event in the short term (e.g., the murder of Jerzy Popieluszko versus the murders of over 100 religious martyrs from Central America) or longer-running affairs (e.g., Vietnam War, coverage on the U.S-supported invasion and genocide in East Timor).

The Indexing Model

Lance Bennett posited the “indexing hypothesis” as a means to explain U.S. press-state relations and thus also, media performance (1990, p. 103).⁵ Bennett’s quite testable hypothesis on press-government relations was the following: “Mass media news professionals, from the boardroom to the beat, tend to ‘index’ the range of voices and viewpoints in both news and editorials according to the range of views expressed in mainstream government debate about a given topic”⁶ (p. 106). The indexing hypothesis thus posits that news dissent from the White House will be indexed according to official dissent in Washington, and that when such dissent is absent, it is the responsibility of the news media to cite other voices of dissent that counter the White House foreign policy line. When the indexing hypothesis is evidenced in instances that *lack* official dissent from the White House foreign policy line and no other voices of dissent are included to compensate for this absence, this is an example of how “the indexing norm” is being waged “at the expense of the democratic ideal” (p. 113). To Bennett, indexing is only acceptable when there is elite disagreement in Washington as the news media will then reflect such dissent, thereby fulfilling its responsibilities.⁷

Bennett points to analysis of media performance as the best means to detect “patterns of journalistic content,” and writes further that, “indexing can be best observed” in news content. By focusing on content, further understanding can be gained about “the existence of an underlying normative order.” If it is found through content analysis of media performance that the actual normative order is at odds with the “cultural ideal” of

how journalism should perform in terms of its watchdog duties and aspirations, this would point to the existence of serious and fundamental problems with our media system (1990, p. 111).

Bennett wrote that he expected the indexing norm to appear more prominently amongst issues involving, “military decisions, foreign affairs, and macroeconomic policy – areas of great importance not only to corporate economic interests but to the advancement of state power as well” (1990, p. 22). Indeed, during the two decades that have passed since Bennett first posited the indexing hypothesis, a whole range of indexing studies have long since advanced this initial hypothesis into a full-blown model,⁸ including work revealing how criticism is limited and shaped by domestic officials (Alexseev & Bennett, 1995; Bennett & Manheim, 1993; Dorman & Livingston, 1994; Eilders & Lüter, 2000; Nacos, 1990; Zaller & Chiu, 1996) and tends more toward a procedural variety, than a substantive one (Entman & Page, 1994; Hallin, 1986, 1994; Hertog, 2000; Mermin, 1996).⁹ Finally, Bennett has brought together much of this work in his own latest volume on indexing (Bennett et al., 2007). The most comprehensive evaluation of indexing to date, however, remains an extensive study undertaken by Mermin (1999).

Mermin summarizes the IM with this elucidation, “the spectrum of debate in the news, the IM asserts, is a function of the spectrum of debate in official Washington” (1999, p. 5).¹⁰ The implications of indexing are important,¹¹ as Bennett wrote, “Evidence supporting the indexing hypothesis would suggest that the news industry has ceded to government the tasks of policing itself and striking a democratic balance” (1990, p. 106).

Propaganda Model’s Strengths and Indexing Model’s Weaknesses

One of the chief strengths that the propaganda model offers to the IM is how to address the selective applicability of sourcing tendencies via the “worthy and unworthy victims” thesis. Indexing does not address, much less evaluate, this distinct and documented tendency. Conversely, the propaganda model has used comparative analysis to illustrate systematic patterns in terms of how sourcing tendencies and the resulting tone of coverage have correlated with the kind of political relations that the U.S. holds with its foreign clients and adversaries. Indexing has nothing to say about how the news media systematically switches to the use and dependence of unofficial sources for

coverage of atrocities and abuses in states that are adversarial with the U.S. The comparative analysis and selective applicability of sourcing is a crucial theoretical contribution that the PM provides in its key link with indexing.

The PM utilizes corporate criticism, which appropriately locates the root of the weaknesses found in the U.S. news media. As indexing does not contain an economic analysis, it falls into the same trap from which so many other analyses of news coverage have suffered: its recommendations, solutions and suggestions to solve the weaknesses and problems of the news media center on journalists (Mermin, 1999, p. 150) and/or the sociology of the newsroom (Schudson, 2003). These analyses, however, overlook key power differences between journalists and editors, editors and publishers and lastly between publishers and advertisers. A smooth functioning propaganda system, however, serves to obfuscate such institutional limits by having workers with as limited power as journalists, and also the editors and publishers they answer to, internalize the values and interests of the owners and funders of their commercial businesses. Such businesses are often transnational corporate conglomerates or their subsidiaries. In this manner, the PM significantly compensates for a glaring and classist theoretical weakness found in indexing.

Indexing Model's Strengths and Propaganda Model's Weaknesses

By including the presence or lack of a consensus in Washington amongst important policy makers as a factor of analysis, indexing helps explain how volume of coverage can differ across time even on the same topic, especially when positioning changes in Washington. The PM does not account for such shifts, while conversely, this remains as one of indexing's central foci.¹²

Methodologically, the frequent use of content analysis by indexing helps capture some of the nuances that the model lacks. For instance, the model does not address the relative differences between unworthy victims and worthy victims. Most strikingly, it cannot clearly classify where U.S. soldiers killed in combat fall in terms of being worthy or not. In several chapters on Vietnam, Herman and Chomsky do not address this point. Content analysis can help clarify the differences between those that are clearly unworthy victims (i.e. Iraqi civilians) and those that are less clearly unworthy victims (i.e. U.S.

soldiers) and whose status actually can fluctuate according to government attention brought to the matter.

The MDM and the synthesis

Despite the large scope of the case studies already evaluated by the IM and PM,¹³ none of these case studies tested, much less proposed a synthesis of both models. That is precisely what my dissertation will set out to accomplish, as case studies combining these two models into one more comprehensive model will include events that involve U.S. military intervention or support for intervention (Fallujah in 2003 and 2004 and East Timor in 1999); social movements opposing U.S. foreign policy (Ecuador's indigenous uprising and the campaign to evict the U.S. Navy out of Vieques, both occurring around the turn-of-the-century); and even immigration policy as well (Elian Gonzalez compared against nine cases of Haitian, Mexican and Central American children).

The MDM draws upon the PM by also showing how the news media's main structural characteristics results in a number of filters that significantly impact news content. The MDM breaks the filters down to two categories: institutional and journalistic standards, with the former impacting the latter. The two institutional filters, corporate ownership (i.e. media conglomerates or corporate-owned entities that dominate the news media) and advertising (also disproportionately corporate), result in subsequent filters impacting and distorting journalistic standards (or news norms) in ways that go beyond conventional principles for the profession. Furthermore, components of the MDM also expect there to be continued patterns of unworthy and worthy victims in accordance with the type of relations that a country from which the given victim hails has with Washington, largely dictating subsequent news content.

The IM shows how the extent of criticism that appears in the news will be highly dependent on the presence (or lack of) debate between major party officials in Washington. If there is more inter-party strife between high-ranking officials in Washington, a potential for more criticism in the news will exist (and vice-versa). Media scholars have identified two types of criticism that appear in news content: procedural and substantive. Procedural criticism calls into question only the execution of a certain policy or predicts failure in terms of the outcome of policy. Conversely, substantive criticism questions the fundamental basis of policies and sometimes conveys moral

judgments against such policies. The MDM is consistent with the IM in its expectations of substantive criticism to be sorely missing in the news.

There are both key points and major components, however, which illustrate how the MDM goes beyond a simple synthesis of the IM and PM. Rather than focus on the filter of anti-communism, the MDM focuses much more on the filter of anti-terrorism. Going beyond the PM, the MDM also emphasizes that government power over the press is more a question of *access*, than the marshaling of its financial resources over the press. In other words, MDM components assume that maintaining access (i.e. press credentials, exclusive interviews, etc.) with the same governmental officials whom the news media depend on is of greater importance than is indicated by the PM. Further, rather than dismiss crude interventions as being random and rare, the MDM documents and theorizes such occurrences in an attempt to demonstrate how both the IM and PM have either assigned disproportionate amounts of blame to journalists and or implicitly assumed a higher level of false consciousness than is actually held by them (chp. 9).

Even more substantially than the departures above, the MDM contains a number of original components upon which it attempts to fill in the remaining theoretical gaps left over by the synthesis of the IM and PM.

Original Components of the MDM

The largest weakness of both the IM and PM is the oversight and lack of theorization of social movements, in terms of coverage of them as well as the potential role they can play in fleshing out substantial and meaningful exceptions within news content. The MDM predicts that news coverage will be qualitatively different in terms dependent upon the relationship that a given social movement has to governmental positioning, the location from which it is from and the relationship the country has with Washington, and the threat it poses to state-corporate interests. A social movement which opposes U.S. macro-economic and/or an important foreign policy, and based in allied nations, will *not* be covered as thoroughly and sympathetically as a more powerful domestic social movement which is rallying around a social issue (i.e. abortion, police brutality, natural disasters, same-sex marriage and affirmative action).

Another original component of the MDM is the addition of nuance and dynamism to the unworthy / worthy victim dichotomy, resulting in a more sophisticated

understanding of the concept. It does this by distinguishing between different levels of worthiness and unworthiness for individual victims and laying the conditions in which one can expect to see such differences in, not only for individual victims, but for social movements as well.

Another important original postulate of the MDM is its identification of patterns in news content covering domestic issues differing from those of foreign affairs. It is argued that the latter suffers from institutional domination more than the former, in great part because of the nature of topics arising in the two realms. The MDM shows how coverage of U.S. foreign and international monetary policy, in contrast with its more social and domestic topic counterparts, is more salient to the same state-corporate interests to which the news media is largely beholden. Intensifying this effect is the fact that social issues are covered more frequently domestically, while military and international monetary policy is covered more frequently in foreign and international affairs. As a result, MDM components rely on the argument that military and international monetary shows the greatest lack of press independence from state-corporate interests.

MDM components are an attempt to be more dynamic and less static than its predecessors by specifying certain changes that can occur to news content and how they are attainable over a period of time. The more pliable aspects to news content include potential increases to how frequently procedural criticism is invoked and also with the volume of news coverage allotted. Again, social movements are strongly theorized in the MDM and are assumed to be one of the main determinant impacting the news in these ways (albeit still paying mind to how movements can impact the news in disproportionate ways, often largely depending on their worthy and unworthy status).

Continuing the theme of pliability and variability, MDM components also theorize the instances in which aberrations and exceptions are expected to occur. In contrast to the IM and PM, the MDM does not exclusively focus on general tendencies in news media performance and also pays heed to the reasons behind exceptional content, as well as the specific content characteristics that are most susceptible to change and exceptions. Notably, the MDM predicts that

Lastly, but most importantly, the MDM resolves remaining theoretical tensions between the IM and PM. The MDM relies on the postulate that the priority of a given country from where a news actor arises, its relationship with governmental positioning, and governmental attention combine as the most important factors for determining the volume of news coverage accorded to a given topic. The PM and IM contain simpler assumptions on this question, involving only the victims expected worthy or unworthy status or only governmental attention. Another important tension resolved deals concerns culpability for poor media performance. The IM relies on the notion that news standards and professional norms, and to a certain extent journalists themselves, are largely at fault for the lack of independence contained within news content. The PM, on the other hand, assumes structural constraints and the internalization of institutional necessities by journalists serve as sources of culpability for weaknesses in subsequent news content. The MDM favors the PM's explanation while also representing a departure from the notion that crude interventions by editors, publishers and advertisers *do not* play an important role in the process. Conversely, a case study on instances of spiked stories and ended or halted journalistic careers shows how crude interventions *do* play an important role. Case studies are what form the basis for the MDM's components and comprise the bulk of the chapters contained within this dissertation.

Case Studies and Theoretical Chapters

This dissertation is chiefly comprised by six case-studies which serve to assess, help develop, and evaluate the main components of the MDM, including both its synthesis as well as its original components. Before the case-studies, however, several chapters first address theoretical considerations.

Chapter 2 is dedicated to exploring the theoretical and historical foundations underlying the components of the MDM. This chapter accomplishes several purposes: it reviews the relevant literature on news media analysis, mostly stemming from the subfields of political communication and political economy, while also arguing that the relevant strengths of each of these subfields complement the weaknesses of the other; it explores the intellectual history behind these two subfields; it reviews the historical and theoretical foundations which underpin the MDM and closes with an attempt to fulfill various theoretical gaps which have been left by past work in political economy. It

accomplishes the latter by addressing and integrating the concept of cultural hegemony and respective theoretical work done by C.W. Mills, Alex Carey and Antonio Gramsci.

Chapter 3 is a detailed exploration and elaboration of the most important parts of the model. Primarily, this work attempts to demonstrate how the U.S. news media is *less* independent and more *dependent* on the state-corporate interests to which it has long been beholden. It does this by building on past scholarship, alluding to support from case studies and applying original improvements to bolster applicability in describing patterns of news content, especially from that of U.S.-based, elite agenda-setting media.

Chapter 4 is a comparative look at CNN & CNN en Español's coverage on the Iraq occupation. It does this through an extensive content analysis and case-study on all news coverage on major events in 2003 & 2004 in Fallujah by each network's respective flagship, nightly newscast . This is the most thoroughly empirically verifiable case study, as it uses a sophisticated coding scheme in an extensive content analysis. As is the case for chapters 5-7, inter-reliability statistics were generated in relation to coding of news content undertaken by trained coders.

Chapter 5 is another case-study and content analysis. It is a paired example case-study comparing news coverage by respective outlets of two massacres. One was located in Racak, a village located in a state deemed hostile to U.S. interests. Another occurred in Acteal, also a village where a massacre took place, but located instead in a client state of the U.S. Exactly the same number of people died in both of these massacres – forty-five – and they happened during time periods that were close to one another: Acteal occurring on December 22, 1997 and Racak just over a year later, on January 15, 1999. The results of the case-study shed light on the dubiousness of previous assumptions about substantial departures in press-content during the post-Cold War era.

The next two chapters focus on social movements. Chapter 6 is a case-study evaluating an “unworthy” social movement which opposed official U.S. Navy policy to continue its presence and training on the island of Vieques, which is part of the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico. News coverage appearing in the *New York Times* on the effort by the people of Vieques to evict the over four-decade long presence of a major U.S. Naval base was surveyed and analyzed. Vieques represented an opportunity to elucidate and

assess expectations of the MDM in relation to a case that involves changing policy positions effected by what would be expected to be an unworthy social movement.

Chapter 7 is a study of all U.S.-based print media coverage of the indigenous-led uprising in Ecuador which occurred in January 2000. As a result of having mobilized tens of thousands of Ecuadorans, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador managed to peacefully force the resignation of a President who had presided over one of the worst recessions in Ecuador's modern history. Nevertheless, most U.S. news dailies covered the affair as if it was purely a military coup and a threat to democracy, in spite of the existence of hundreds of citizen-led, participatory governing councils (called the "People's Parliament," by Ecuadorans). This article evaluates the extent that the MDM is instructive in the case of U.S.-based news media performance from not only nationally distributed sources, but also regional-level ones and some foreign coverage as well.

Chapter 8 is the lone domestic case-study contained within this dissertation, as the MDM is mostly focused on foreign affairs coverage. Nevertheless, the MDM's greatest applicability is for domestic topics containing systemic elements. Given the importance that an important trade-treaty holds in relation to immigration from Mexico, a case-study on immigration was expected to produce useful results. The chapter contains a comparative case-study of virtually all U.S.-newspaper coverage of Elian Gonzalez versus nine other analogous cases hailing from Central America and Haiti. Expectations in regards to unworthy versus worthy victims are assessed, but so is an important original component of the MDM, in terms of its predictions about regional and local-level coverage containing more exceptions than nationally-distributed sources.

Chapter 9 contains the last case-study, which is meant to evaluate one of the most important MDM theoretical components: its assumption that press subservience is more institutional in nature than a voluntary flaw on the part of journalists themselves. Documented instances of all of the following phenomena, dating back to the end of the Cold War, are included: marginalized critical news content, spiked stories / series, and careers subjected to firings and demotions. These instances were uncovered through press reports, anthologies containing interviews of veteran journalists, and reports by media watchdog groups.

The last chapter of the dissertation serves to address important implications that the model has for the future, while also touching on possible future areas of research and scholarship.

In sum, the MDM is the synthesis of the IM and PM, as well as an original elaboration and extension of the two models, and it strives to contribute a greater understanding of how the institutional flaws of the media are evidenced in news media performance. My dissertation will explore more deeply all of the aspects just noted of this new model. It will strive to apply the same rigorous standards for our own news media system that were employed in appropriately harsh critiques contained within evaluations of state propaganda during the Cold War. Positing the MDM should contribute to learning important lessons about the institutional characteristics responsible for the media's most notable failings, which in turn should go far in terms of advising news media producers, funders, creators, entrepreneurs and journalists on the cusp of crafting the contours of the new era of digital journalism. It also should serve as a useful guide for media activists and social movements in terms of increased understanding about the limits, as well as the opportunities, for impacting news media performance.

Endnotes

¹ See Howard Kurtz, "[The Post on WMDs: An Inside Story: Prewar Articles Questioning Threat Often Didn't Make Front Page](#)," *Washington Post*, August 12, 2004 (Page A01); and also, Editors, "[The Times and Iraq](#)," *New York Times*, May 24, 2004 (Page A10); Editors, "[The Times and Iraq: A Sample of the Coverage](#)," *New York Times*, May 26, 2004; Daniel Okrent, "[Weapons of Mass Destruction? Or Mass Distraction?](#)", *New York Times*, May 30, 2004, Okrent [wrote](#), "I do question the placement [of the official *NYT* apology]: as one reader asked, 'Will your column this Sunday address why the *NYT* buried its editors' note -- full of apologies for burying stories on A10 -- on A10?'"

² Thomas Carlyle is often held as the first scholar to posit the concept of the Fourth Estate. In his own words, Carlyle wrote:

Burke said there were Three Estates in Parliament; but, in the Reporters' Gallery yonder, there sat a Fourth Estate more important than they all. It is not a figure of speech, or a witty saying; it is a literal fact, Printing, which comes necessarily out of Writing, I say often, is equivalent to Democracy: invent Writing, Democracy is inevitable. Whoever can speak, speaking now to the whole nation, becomes a power, a branch of government, with inalienable weight in law-making, in all acts of authority. It matters not what rank he has, what revenues or garnitures: the requisite thing is that he have a tongue which others will listen to; this and nothing more is requisite (1905, pp. 349-350).

That this "Fourth Estate" served the function of "watchdog" in terms of its role in representative democracy, is scarcely in doubt. As one Australian media scholar put it: "Social responsibility became a buzz word in journalism and after the 1970s pursuing the Fourth Estate's watchdog role became central to the mission of many news organizations" (Schultz, 1999, p. 3). Stated even more bluntly: "The news media is traditionally the watchdog of democracy" (Schultz, 1999, p. i).

³ Previous scholarship on media performance that has proven in a variety of cases to serve as a useful predictive device and analytical tool for resulting news coverage includes: Boyd-Barrett, 2004; D. Chomsky, 2004; Friel & Falk, 2004; Hallin, 1984; Kumar, 2007; McChesney, 2004; Mermin, 1999, 2004; Solomon, 2005.

⁴ The "worthy" and "unworthy" victims thesis is summarized by Herman and Chomsky in the following manner:

Using a propaganda model, we would not only anticipate definitions of worth based on utility, and dichotomous attention based on the same criterion, we would also expect the news stories about worthy and unworthy victims (or enemy and friendly states) to differ in *quality*. That is, we would expect official sources of the United States and its client regimes to be used heavily – and uncritically – in connection with one's own abuses and those of friendly governments, while refugees and other dissident sources will be used in dealing with enemies. We would anticipate the uncritical acceptance of certain premises in dealing with self and friends – such as that one's own state and leaders seek peace and democracy, oppose terrorism, and tell the truth – premises which will not be applied in treating enemy states. We would expect different criteria of evaluation to be employed, so that what is villainy in enemy states will be presented as an incidental background fact in the case of oneself and friends. What is on the agenda in treating one case will be off the agenda in discussing the other. We would also expect great investigatory zeal in the search of high officials for abuses in enemy states, but diminished enterprise in examining such matters in connection with one's own and friendly states.

The quality of coverage should also be displayed more directly and crudely in placement, headlining, word usage, and other modes of mobilizing interest and outrage. In the opinion columns, we would anticipate sharp restraints on the range of opinion allowed expression. Our hypothesis is that worthy victims will be featured prominently and dramatically, that they will be humanized, and that their victimization will receive the detail and context in story construction that will generate reader interest and sympathetic emotion. In contrast, unworthy victims will merit only slight detail, minimal humanization, and little context that will excite and enrage (2002, pp. 34-35).

⁵ Before putting forth his hypothesis, Bennett felt it necessary to reveal what his ideal was of how the press should be, and as such, he proposed, “a guideline for press-government relations”:

Culturally speaking, it is generally reasonable for journalists to grant government officials a privileged voice in the news, unless the range of official debate on a given topic excludes or “marginalizes” stable majority opinion in society, and unless official actions raise doubts about political propriety. In these “exceptional” circumstances, it is reasonable for the press to foreground other social voices (polls, opposition groups, academics, political analysts) in news stories and editorials as checks against unrepresentative or otherwise irresponsible governments (1990, p. 104).

This guideline is highly problematic for a number of reasons. The most troubling aspect of the guideline has to do with when Bennett finds the indexing of news to be legitimate. Bennett reiterates this legitimate exception later on in his article, in stating that, “as long as an effective opposition bloc operated in the House (or anywhere else in the government, for that matter), the mass media were justified in indexing news content to the range of institutional debate” (p. 113).

Is this a legitimate exception made by Bennett though, considering the current (and long lagging) state of democracy in the U.S.? I would argue that it clearly is not, as does McChesney:

... professional reliance on official sources is justifiable as ‘democratic’ because the official sources are elected or accountable to people who are elected by the citizenry. This is not a dictatorship. The reporter’s job is to report what people in power say and let the reader / viewer decide who is telling the truth. The problem with this rationale for stenography is that it forgets a critical assumption of free press theory: even leaders determined by election need a rigorous monitoring, the range of which cannot be determined solely by their elected opposition. Otherwise the citizenry has no way out of the status quo, no capacity to criticize the political culture as a whole. If such a watchdog function grows lax, corruption invariably grows, and the electoral system decays (McChesney, 2003, p. 303).

Bennett’s formulation, however, implicitly suggests that a significant range of official debate in Washington even exists in the first place, as contrary circumstances and bi-partisan support for foreign policy is characterized as “exceptional.” Putting aside the problematic assumption that significant opposition party challenges exist to the White House policy line (when in fact, they often have not, especially on matters of foreign policy, whereby the Political Science literature overwhelmingly argues that the 20th century saw a strong rise in the power of the Executive, especially in terms of foreign policy making), there are still important weaknesses to Bennett’s exception. Important doubts remain and include the distinct possibility of the range of debate in Washington being extremely limited and representing a small portion of the population. Even from the most conservative and quantifiable of measures, such as voter turnout, it is quite clear that representatives in Washington were not elected by a broad swath of voters. Additionally, the lack of proportional representation in the U.S. and the presence of a winner-take-all electoral system further buttress the argument that public officials represent a relatively small segment of the population (and often times, severe problems of under-representation for the poor and people of color). Even in the Presidential election, which garners turnouts significantly higher (though still extraordinarily low relative to turnout rates abroad) than midterm Congressional elections, a meager 30% of the country’s eligible voters supported the re-election of President Bush.

On top of these sobering turnout statistics is convincing evidence that the parties have worked actively and deliberately towards preserving these troubling aspects of our already deeply flawed democracy, as amply revealed by Francis Piven and Richard Fox in their highly respected work (2000). All of these factors point toward the distinct possibility that public officials do not even adequately represent the limited constituencies of supporters that they have. Many argue, in fact, that powerful corporate and military interests hold much more sway over officials in Washington than citizens and public interest lobbies (i.e. see Thomas Ferguson's work in this regard).

The question is begged then: is it not a very dubious assumption to say that official debate in Washington on foreign policy does not often exclude "stable majority opinion in society"? Polling data, though unsurprisingly rarely cited in the mainstream media, do point to large differences between elected officials and U.S. citizens on a whole range of important issues, often involving some of society's most powerful economic and political institutions.

⁶ Important to note is that Bennett also predicts that "foreign affairs and monetary policy," will have a limited range of "social voices," while other issues such as "civil liberties and 'pocketbook' economics" will have a broader range of social voices in sourcing tendencies (1990, p. 107).

⁷ Bennett explains what he views as a legitimate exception in stating that, "as long as an effective opposition bloc operated in the House (or anywhere else in the government, for that matter), the mass media were justified in indexing news content to the range of institutional debate" (1990, p. 113). Is this a legitimate exception though? See note #6 about why it arguably is not.

⁸ One of the developments for the indexing model has been its incorporation of exceptional news reporting into its theoretical considerations and explanations. The following table was offered to explain this new component (Bennett et al., 2007, p. 63):

Table 2.1: A Model of Press Semi-Independence

Basic Axiom: "Indexing": News generally reflects the story lines of those with:

- Greatest *perceived power* to affect the situation or issue
- Greatest *institutional capacity* to engage government news "flywheels"
- Best *communications operations*

Indexing is reinforced by the *Washington culture of consensus* and the *tactical management of news sources*.

This core indexing dynamic can be modified and press independence enhanced by:

- Event-driven / technology-assisted news
- Leaks/investigative reporting
- Outsider counter-spin

I do not personally see this as an especially significant advance, especially since the analysis of the exceptionalism is not couched in a way as to directly benefit social struggles and movements in terms of lessons that can be learned and easily applied to real-world efforts. The concepts may, however, help journalists learn how to better exploit exceptional circumstances to give rise to marginalized voices.

⁹ There is a small, but formidable set of political communication scholars who argue that the press has become more independent, particularly following the end of the Cold War (Althaus, Edy, Entman, & Phalen, 1996; Entman, 2004; Fico & Soffin, 1995; Livingston & Eachus, 1996). The underlying assumption behind this literature, however, is challenged by the continuity thesis, which argues that essential North-South relations have not significantly changed even since the end of the Cold War (Stokes, 2003).

¹⁰ This postulate is coupled with the objection to, as Mermin wrote, that the news media merely define "what happened as what the government says happened" (1999, p. 145).

¹¹ Mermin wrote that the importance of the indexing thesis is at its highest when there is "evidence showing that critical perspectives do not just increase from a reasonable baseline in the news when there is debate in Washington, but instead are ignored or marginalized in the news if not first expressed in Washington." Elaborating further, Mermin adds, "If there is debate inside the American government over U.S. policy, critical perspectives appear in the news. If government policy has bipartisan support in Washington, however, critical perspectives expressed outside the government are not well reported" (5).

¹² At the same time, the PM's line of corporate criticism helped explain the complete oversight of a corporate related scandal to the Vieques struggle (Kennis, 2006). This scandal continues to be all but completely unknown to journalists and scholars alike, as it escaped the radar screen of news coverage. The 4th filter of the PM, however, explains that scandals involving public relations firms will simply not be a matter of great interest to the news media when they conflict with the interests of the White House.

13 Both the PM and the IM have been tested with a large array of case studies. The PM originally tested its worthy/unworthy victims thesis on dichotomized coverage of a host of issues: elections in Latin America (meaningless versus legitimate elections); killings of over 100 religious figures in Central America (unworthy victims) versus one priest in Poland (worthy victims); the Indochina wars (e.g., Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia and how the phrase "invasion of South Vietnam" never appeared in mainstream coverage); differing coverage of the genocides in East Timor (unworthy victims) and Cambodia (worthy victims); and more recently, dichotomized usage of the term "genocide" (see Table I in Appendix). In 1999, Mermin tested indexing against eight case studies of U.S. military intervention. Half of the cases were where bipartisan support was present in Washington: Libya in April 1986; the invasion of Panama in December 1989; the deployment of U.S. troops to Saudi Arabia in August 1990; and the Gulf War in January 1991. The other half were cases where parties split over their positions on the intervention at hand: the invasion of Grenada in 1983; the doubling of the American deployment in Saudi Arabia in November 1990; the raid on a faction hostile to U.S. forces in Somalia in October 1993; and U.S. intervention in Haiti in September 1994. Mermin's results presented strong evidence for a general indexing rule that was both comprehensive and included cases that occurred *after* the Cold War, a historical marker that is commonly (and I would argue misguidedly) pointed to as a possible departure from the lack of media independence. Out of the six case studies that had conditions that the indexing hypothesis would not expect an exception from, only one did not conform to expected results (see Table II in Appendix included above).

In the first amendment, the Founding Fathers gave the free press the protection it must have to fulfill its essential role in our democracy. The press was to serve the governed, not the governors. The government's power to censor the press was abolished so that the press would remain forever free to censure government. The press as protected so that it could bare the secrets of government and inform the people. Only a free and unrestrained press can effectively expose deception in government. And paramount among the responsibilities of a free press is the duty to prevent any part of the government from deceiving the people and sending them off to distant lands to die of foreign fevers and foreign shot and shell.

Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black, in his written opinion on the Pentagon Papers case, *New York Times Co. v. United States*, 403 U.S. 713 (1971)

The first task of the media should therefore be to help make human rights a living reality by ensuring that everyone knows what his rights are. Educators and communicators can shoulder this responsibility together so that individuals will come to respect human rights and will insist on their being respected.

MacBride Commission report (UNESCO 1980, p. 147)

Introduction

It can plausibly be argued that a relatively large segment of the U.S. public would agree that the U.S. news media does not achieve the ideals set forth in the two quotes above. On the other hand, there would probably be little agreement about why this is the case. The same is true within social science scholarship that addresses the news media performance found within the U.S., as it overwhelmingly points to a plethora of problems and shortcomings, but within a fairly significant and varying spectrum of analysis, criticism and methodological approaches. The communication and political science subfields of political communication and political economy have long held distinct places within academic scholarship and their related intellectual histories. This chapter will argue that this isolation is counter-productive in light of how their strengths and weaknesses complement one another and thus, represent a potential compatibility that should be further explored. In short, the methodological strengths of political communication scholarship complement the methodological shortcomings of work in

political economy. Conversely, the theoretical strengths of political economy scholarship complement the theoretical weaknesses of work done in political communication.

Unlike the assumptions made by many works of political communication, the MDM rests on the argument that news media problems are institutional and not merely about professional standards of journalism or related training. In spite of this key and irreconcilable difference, it will be demonstrated that the two subfields *are* compatible. Even if these two subfields *do* complement each other, and similarly even if press exceptionalism can indeed help clarify the limits to the hegemonic models of news analysis, the question may reasonably be asked: in an age of digital and instantaneous communication, why is this important?

The U.S. news media and its coverage of international affairs are important for a plethora of reasons. International news coverage often involves influential institutions and interests, such as the world's most powerful countries and corporations. Due to the wide-ranging nature of international news, topics often address matters that affect large swaths of people from many different countries and regions (and that frequently involve matters which hinge on human survival in light of continued invasions, wars and occupations). Because of the sheer expense and difficulty of foreign affairs coverage, the many nascent news outlets based online have rarely been able to marshal the resources necessary to cover this type of (expensive) news. Adding to the importance and difficulty of this type of news coverage is the fact that the very nature of international affairs coverage results in it often being the *only* reference point that U.S. citizens have for opinion formation on important matters of U.S. foreign policy. Further, this dependence on the news media as a means to find out about the most important happenings beyond the borders of one's country is something that holds true not only for ordinary citizens, but also for more elite segments of the U.S. public and even policy makers as well.

The news content that is produced by the nation's most influential news media outlets exposes the functional inadequacies of the press as opposed to containing more independent and critical reporting bringing light to the nation's most pressing and systemic-oriented issues. The current institutional makeup and structure of the press is functionally incapable of consistently challenging the viewpoints espoused by the government and corporations. This news media performance articulates a hegemonic

block based on firm tenets of neo-liberal ideology. The MDM rests on the argument that the press is incapable of challenging the cultural hegemonic order because the press is a dependent institution. The educated classes wind up being the most frequent victims of this poor media performance and related propaganda which serves to maintain and protect the hegemonic order from significant ideological challenge, much less political resistance from its educated sectors.

Previous models of news analysis have often lacked a more robust theoretical foundation, but this work seeks to avoid that by basing the MDM on a clearly stated theoretical argument, with references to timeless theoretical works. In this vein, this chapter dispels possible confusion over the implications of the MDM's theoretical components by historicizing and connecting them to influential scholarly works. Thus, the rest of the chapter will thus be dedicated to the following foci: a review of the relevant literature on news media analysis, mostly stemming from the subfields of political communication and political economy, along with the argument that the relevant strengths of each of these subfields complement the weaknesses of the other; an exploration of the intellectual history behind these two subfields; a review of the historical and theoretical foundations which underpin the media dependence model, closing with an attempt to fulfill various theoretical gaps left by past work in political economy, particularly by addressing and integrating cultural hegemony and work done by Gramsci (1975, 1994), Mills (1959), and Carey (1997).

While it may be the educated sectors who suffer most from the news media system's institutionally-related failings, important stances on the role of the public at-large should not be discounted. This chapter will begin by addressing the differing theoretical conceptions of the public in relation to the news media by surveying what is arguably the most important debate of the last century: Dewey and Lippmann's explorations of the public in what was then a burgeoning modern age of mass communication and society.

The Relevance of the Lippmann and Dewey Debate to the MDM

A timeless debate between Lippmann and Dewey continues to hold a deep relevance to the theoretical foundations underpinning the MDM. Traditionally, models of news analysis have neglected the task of establishing a more robust theoretical foundation

and base for which analysis of the news is steeped upon and this dissertation seeks to avoid this common trapping. In the past, scholars have correctly recognized the importance of addressing normative issues in relation to the news (Bennett, 1990, p. 104; Robinson et al., 2010, p. 17), and in this section a focus is paid to different conceptualizations of the public and what the role of the public *should* be in relation to news generation and press coverage of important public affairs. The MDM rests on the assumption that the news media *should* be responsive to an active public and seek to foster greater civic participation rather than serve as an accomplice to a passive and minimally informed public, which merely ratifies certain leaders in periodic electoral cycles.

Today's News Media in Relation to History and Theory

The “specialized class of experts” that Lippmann advocated for in the midst of his debate with Dewey has come to fruition in some important ways in terms of the makeup of the current media and political landscape in the U.S.¹ As has been amply demonstrated by previous research, access to the news media is routinely granted to official sources and experts (Bennett, 1990; Gans, 1979; McChesney, 2000, 2004; Robinson et al., 2010; Sigal, 1973, 1986; Tuchman, 1972, 1978). Even though Lippmann did not exactly envision the contemporary official sourcing domination over U.S. news media content in his famous work on public opinion (1921), it does come eerily close. This is because the influence of the “bewildered herd” over the media is vastly limited in comparison to that of leading corporate and governmental officials. In contrast, the “public” that Dewey advocated for in his day is presently either ignored, vilified or pushed to the margins, while a multi-billion dollar and highly influential public relations industry represent a band of, to borrow Dewey’s description, undesirable “publicity agents” who operate at the behest of commercial interests and at the expense of the “public.” Matters have developed to such an extent that for over a decade and a half, there have been more experts spinning the news than writing it (Stauber & Rampton, 1995, p. 2).

As democracy expanded in the early 20th century, the importance of the role of the educated classes markedly increased (Carey, 1997). The educated classes, who comprise much of what Mills termed the “power elite,” now serve the important role of being the “cultural managers” of the working class and operate within the complex bureaucratic

network of not only the most powerful sectors of the government, but also in what Solomon has appropriately named as the “military-media-industrial complex” (2005). Today’s corporate conglomerate-driven commercial media, which was constructed as a result of a concerted effort by business interests (Bagdikian, 1983; McChesney, 1993; Schiller, 1992; Stole, 2006), has also served the important function of shaping, influencing and constraining the ideology of the educated classes, with particular emphasis on fostering sympathies between ownership interests with that of the bourgeoisie or today’s modern “cultural managers.”

This phenomenon was first addressed in what Gramsci dubbed as the process of cultural hegemony. The on-the-ground application of hegemony is thoroughly elucidated in its resulting power structures and elaborate alliances, structures described in extensive detail by Mills (1959). Alex Carey, to whom Herman and Chomsky dedicated *Manufacturing Consent*, serves as a bridge between Gramsci, Mills and the MDM, with his work on the historical development of propaganda and the role it has played in U.S. society (1997). Collectively, there is a clear lineage that can be traced between the key questions that were first addressed by Lippmann and Dewey, the historical development of the commercial media, its resulting propaganda and its relationship with the educated classes in the U.S. The historical debate between Lippmann and Dewey has a relevance which continues to resound in today’s world and consequently, for the MDM as well.

The Lippmann / Dewey Debate

The intellectual exchange that took place between Dewey and Lippmann is commonly and correctly described as a debate. There were many key disagreements the two intellectuals had and because the same questions that Lippmann and Dewey were grappling with almost a century ago relate directly to the theoretical implications of the MDM and contemporary questions on the U.S. news media, they are worth addressing in greater detail.

According to Lippmann, maintaining faith in the ideal of the “omni-competent” citizen was giving in to “the original dogma of democracy,” and thus a danger to society to Lippmann. The newly formed power of the masses, instrumental in securing rights often taken for granted (such as weekends off from work and other basic labor rights), was characterized by Lippmann as a “bewildered herd,” to be feared and tamed (1921, p.

248). Lippmann justified his elitist notions toward ordinary people, i.e. the “bewildered herd,” by developing an idea that people in general were not capable of much more than having mere “pictures in our heads.” Indeed, the phrase “pictures in our heads” has become a well-known phrase in communications scholarship, which was meant to refer to people’s incapability to discern with any accuracy “matters that are out of sight, and have therefore to be imagined.” We can only decipher, at best, a “pseudo-environment,” as a result of our tendency to “define and then see” (as opposed to first seeing and *then* defining). To Lippmann then, people in general are not only incapable of rational thought, they are also incapable of understanding their outside environments (1921, pp. 24-29). Lippmann reasoned that only with specialized training could these universal weaknesses of human nature be muted and that such a task was nothing less than essential to making representative democracy function more smoothly (p. 31).

Given Lippmann’s hostility toward the untrained masses, it should come as no surprise that in terms of prescriptions, Lippmann stressed the need for ordinary people to “be managed only by a specialized class whose personal interests reach beyond the locality.” Lippmann’s “specialized class” is a complete necessity in the noble goal of maintaining “social order” among the “bewildered herd.” Noting further the special importance of the “specialized class,” Lippmann argues that this coordinator class should be responsible for setting policy and for “the formation of a sound public opinion” (1921, p. 310). Such “experts” would be trained and grafted from the recruits of “college graduates” and then given jobs with “dignity” that had a large scope of investigatory freedom in staffing a large array of “intelligence bureaus” (pp. 387-388). They must be free from interference by the general public, who are “ignorant and meddling outsiders.” The public must “be put in its place,” their “function” is to be “spectators of action,” not participants, apart from periodic electoral exercises when they choose among the “specialized class” (p. 310).²

The quotations noted above encapsulate much of Lippmann’s thinking on these matters, but relevant questions and issues surrounding Lippmann’s prescriptions still remain. What should the role of the public be in modern democracy? Should intellectuals guide or manipulate the public, or should they help educate them so as to become an informed citizenry?

Lippmann and Dewey answered these questions with nearly opposite postulates that emanate, to a large degree, from their differing viewpoints on the capacity of the public to participate in a meaningful way in public affairs. While Lippmann stressed the irrationality of the “bewildered herd,” Dewey blamed societal structures and the lack of democratic mechanisms, as well as the failure of intellectuals to educate the public for any possible failings on the part of the public in terms of conducting its own affairs. Community, which had been under attack (if not destroyed) as a result of the emerging mass society, was something that Dewey also stressed as needing to be rescued and further developed.

The result that these differing viewpoints had on Dewey’s and Lippmann’s scholarship was significant. Instead of favoring the fostering of skills with which elites could “manufacture consent” and properly “manage” democracy through the utilization of the burgeoning mass media in the new mass society, which the MDM shows as largely being the present-day state of affairs, Dewey focused on the responsibility of intellectuals. Dewey believed that intellectuals should help further the public’s understanding of important societal affairs and also favored increasing the role of the public in civil affairs and policy making. Instead of focusing on how existing structures should be used by the elite, supposedly for the common good, Dewey criticized such structures and emphasized the need for fundamental changes to society, such as the restoration of community as a central part of social organization. This was a purposeful contrast to Lippmann by Dewey, for if the public is hopelessly assigned the designation of a “bewildered herd” with mere inaccurate “pictures” in their minds, it makes sense to assign the role of decision making to informed elite. But what happens if the elite themselves, even if one dubiously assumes them to be properly informed, takes decisions not in the public interest but in favor of their own interests (or on behalf of other elites)? This problem was astutely identified by Crispin-Miller in relation to Bernays, largely considered the grandfather of the public relations industry, as he pointed out that Bernays and other propaganda theorists like him did not pay proper credence to how “those who do such work are also prone to lose touch with reality; for in their universe, the truth is ultimately what the client wants the world to think is true” (Crispin Miller, 2005, p. 23).³ This was the danger that Dewey was prophetically aware of and as a result, he railed against the rising power

of “publicity agents,” which he called a “social pathology,” a sickness. Dewey also decried the legitimacy of the idea of elite control and/or undue influence of public opinion:

... the smoothest road to control of political conduct is by control of opinion. As long as interests of pecuniary profit are powerful, and a public has not located and identified itself, those who have this interest will have an unresisted motive for tampering with the springs of political action in all that affects them (1927, p. 182).

There are many similarities between Dewey’s analysis, the alternatives and postulates he offered to the current status-quo (which Lippmann favored much more than Dewey) and the MDM’s theoretical underpinnings. The MDM’s critique of the existing corporate dominated news media in the U.S., and its subsequent compliance in avoiding fundamental and substantive questioning of an overwhelming part of the policies emanating from the White House, is *based* on an assumption that the public *needs* to not act as a mere ratifier of decisions taken from above, and instead be an active participant in decisions. The news media needs to be constituted in such a manner that would foster a responsibility to the public, *not* to powerful corporate and governmental interests, in helping to bring about this very different state of affairs. The fact that the news media fails in meeting this responsibility is reflective of its structural underpinnings, as opposed to a widespread failing on the part of journalists themselves, who are conversely merely limited by the rational interests of the institutions for which they work. To be sure, the assumptions and prescriptions of the MDM are overwhelmingly in line with Dewey’s.

The theoretical underpinning of the MDM is in line with Dewey on questions of the public, but it is also consistent with positioning on the role of intellectuals, another point on which Dewey and Lippmann differed. While Dewey extolled intellectuals to fulfill a moral responsibility in uncovering falsities propagated by society’s most dominant institutions, Lippmann advocated participation by intellectuals in specialized agencies to help powerful institutions uncover the truth so as to act upon their strategic interests.

As opposed to putting faith into the ability of intellectuals to manage society in a responsible manner, Dewey reserved harsh criticism for their track record in the social sciences. To Dewey, such scholarship produced next to no advances in the actual

improvement of societal conditions for the many (as opposed to the few, who often profited off of such advances). He wrote that the prominence of, “errors and half-truths . . . [in] social and human matters, especially, the development of a critical sense and methods of discriminating judgment, has not kept pace with the growth of careless reports and of motives for positive misrepresentation” (1927, p. 163).

Dewey favored combining praxis with truth and science. His goal was to apply knowledge and bring science to bear on public issues. In this sense, the elusive goal of obtaining an informed and connected citizenry, as opposed to a passive, atomized and disconnected public, could be obtained with the combined effort towards the restoration of the importance of community (and also educational reform, see Dewey, 1997). For Dewey, this objective was within the realm of possibilities and its obtainment was a responsibility assigned to intellectuals:

It is, indeed, conceivable that sometime methods of instruction will be devised which will enable laymen to read and hear scientific material with comprehension, even when they do not themselves use the apparatus which is science. The latter may then become for large numbers what students of language call a passive, if not an active, vocabulary (1927, p. 164).

Thus, instead of assigning intellectuals the role of specialized experts, Dewey assigned them the responsibility of educating and informing the public on the basis of a sound, pragmatic and accessible science. Conversely, many intellectuals who had similar viewpoints as Lippmann on the public – and examples abound, including influential figures such as Harold Lasswell, Edward Bernays and Samuel Huntington⁴ – put their faith into the public relations industry and policy making liberal intellectuals, arguably even more so than Lippmann. History, to date, wound up reflecting Lippmann’s postulates more so than Dewey’s.

As such, it is quite clear which side of the debate the MDM is in agreement. Dewey’s critical stance toward the undemocratic consequences of the mass media acting as a vehicle of propaganda on behalf of state-corporate interests,⁵ as opposed to directly serving the “public” itself and the necessities of democracy, is one that the MDM shares.

While the distinctions between Dewey and Lippmann’s thought bear an important theoretical relevance to the MDM, the intellectual and historical development of

scholarly work on news analysis since the 1970's serves as the backdrop for the theoretical foundations underpinning the MDM.

Tracing the Historical Progression of News Analysis Research

Theoretical frameworks with which to analyze consistent patterns of news coverage from U.S.-based news media have been posited by scholars for close to three decades (Bennett 1990, 2003; Entman, 2004; Hallin, 1986; Herman & Chomsky, 1988, 2002, 2008; Kumar, 2007; Lawrence, 2000). The “new sociology” literature found official sourcing domination to be prevalent in US news content (Gans, 1979; Sigal, 1973, 1986; Tuchman, 1972, 1978). Work done by Hallin (1986), Herman and Chomsky (1988) and Bennett (1990) developed these findings further, expanding it to a more general critique. Scholarship on event and technology-driven reporting, however, found exceptions to the general rules documented in earlier works (Birkland, 1997; Lawrence, 2000; Lawrence & Birkland, 2001; Livingston & Bennett, 2003; Livingston & Van Belle, 2005). The MDM, however, is based on the postulate that these *exceptions* should not be reacted to with broad judgments made about an end to an era of press dependence. Instead, the MDM serves as a synthesis of the most compelling theoretical findings of the political economy literature, as well as the empirical prowess of the political communication literature. Before exploring this synthesis further, however, it is useful to survey the intellectual history of political communication and news media analysis (both in this section), as well as the models of analysis that subsequently arose (next section).

Political Communication's Early Beginnings

The field of political communication has evolved greatly since its early beginnings in the wake of World War II. During that time, it was Paul Lazarfeld's limited effects model that was the “dominant paradigm” of the era, with its related, “search for specific measurable, short-term, individual, attitudinal and behavioral ‘effects’ of media content,” writes Gitlin. The consistent conclusion of this model and its related research was that the “media are not very important in the formation of public opinion” (Gitlin, 1981, p. 207). However, as Gitlin also pointed out, changes in the existing structures of the media did not comport well with a model that has limited effects as its thematic underpinnings:

Since the Second World War, as mass media in the United States have become more concentrated in ownership, more centralized in operations, more national in reach, more pervasive in presence, sociological study of the media has been dominated by the theme of the relative powerlessness of the broadcasters (1981, p. 205).

Given these changes, McCombs and Shaw argued on a rather timely basis that, “the mass media set the agenda for each political campaign, influencing the salience of attitudes toward the political issues” (1972, p. 177). Using an array of empirical research and survey data conducted by a team of researchers, McCombs and Shaw convincingly argued that a profound impact is made by the media on attitudinal and belief formation. Indeed, for many decades prior, communications research, railing from the significant influence of Lazarsfeld’s work and the misleading implications that the mass media had a minimal effect on public opinion and the general populace at large, ignored the effects of the media and its related ability to influence the nation’s political agenda. McCombs and Shaw’s “agenda-setting” research was considered ground-breaking and resulted in scholarly reverberations that would echo in the field for the better part of the next twenty-five years (McCombs & Shaw, 1993).

Ironically, agenda-setting’s largest weakness is similar in one sense to that of Lazarsfeld’s. A laser-like and overly specialized focus on attitudinal and behavioral analysis has blinded researchers to what is arguably a more appropriate focus on media institutions and its related content, especially in light of what is by now a highly concentrated industry in terms of ownership. This is a mistake that Gitlin appropriately identified and criticized when he wrote that agenda-setting was, “still too narrow and ahistorical: analytically it abstracts both media and audiences from their social and historical matrix” (1981, p. 246). In even still simpler terms, agenda-setting also makes the dubious assumption that the news media influences politics more than politics influences the content of the news media (Bennett et al., 2007, p. 54).

Intellectual History of News Media Analysis

A watershed moment in the intellectual history of news media analysis can be traced back to the new sociology literature. In important respects, much of scholarly news analysis that is being done today builds upon influential findings penned by scholars of the 1970’s new sociology literature, including luminaries such as Gans (1979),

Sigal (1973, 1986) and Tuchman (1972, 1978). These important scholars first advanced the idea that news norms and professional practices result in routinized news gathering, reporting and official sourcing tendencies.

Amongst the most influential works that followed the new sociology literature stands Hallin's exhaustive analysis of *New York Times* and network news coverage appearing during much of the Vietnam War. Before Hallin's groundbreaking work, both scholarly opinion and conventional wisdom about news coverage of the War had often ranged between a perception of an adversarial press to one with significant influence (Clarke, 1974; Ladd and Hadley, 1975; Robinson, 1975, 1976; Rothman, 1975), even to the point of perceiving press power as having been able to change the course of the War itself (Elegant, 1981). In light of powerfully symbolic events such as the release of the Pentagon Papers, it was also often assumed that adversarial news coverage impacted public opinion accordingly (Miller et al., 1976). However, Hallin's findings revealed that the exact opposite of these misinformed assumptions was actually the case, as the extent that news coverage was critical, it was also found to closely mirror governmental re-positioning and conflict in Washington (1986, pp. 10, 213). Such corresponding shifts in news coverage obviously could not be deemed to be adversarial or independent. Additionally, Hallin also found that public opinion toward the war was not independently affected by news content (1986, pp. 162-163, 213).

Two years after Hallin's dissertation was published, Herman and Chomsky put forth their own work on the U.S. news media (1988). Taking an even more critical stance than Hallin, Herman and Chomsky argued that not only did the U.S. news media lack independence from the official sources it prominently and regularly featured in its content, but that it also systematically favored victims of abuses hailing from enemy states of the U.S., while all but ignoring victims of abuses from client states of the U.S. (pp. 34-35).

Two more years after Herman and Chomsky's work, but taking more cues from Hallin's findings, Bennett formalized much of Hallin's theoretical advances into the indexing hypothesis (1990). Similar to Hallin, Bennett argued that beyond the Vietnam War, the U.S. news media "*index*" the range of its criticism (or lack thereof) according to the flows of inter-party consensus and conflict in Washington. Since its original formulation, the indexing hypothesis has resulted in a large amount of supporting

research and studies (Alexseev & Bennett, 1995; Althaus, 2003; Bennett et al., 2007; Bennett & Manheim, 1993; Dorman & Livingston, 1994; Livingston & Bennett, 2003; Mermin 1999; Nacos, 1990; Zaller & Chiu, 1996), and as a result, has spurred several models of news analysis including indexing itself (Mermin, 1999) and also the multi-gated model (Bennett, 2004; Bennett et al., 2007).

The common thread amongst these news analyses is that they all argue U.S. news media performance features official domination of sourcing tendencies, and that this in turn results in a lack of independence from governmental positioning on the issues in respect to its most important public policies. Since both the 1970's and 1980's, however, there have been many important social and historical developments that have encouraged researchers to explore additional sources of influence on press content. Such developments include the ending of the Cold War and the advancement of information and communication technologies (such as the advent of the internet, the handheld video recorder and the satellite telephone). These occurrences and developments have been responsible, it is argued, in an increase of technology and event-driven news reporting (Birkland, 1997; Lawrence and Birkland, 2001; Lawrence, 2000; Livingston & Bennett, 2003; Livingston et al, 2005; Livingston & Van Belle, 2005; Molotch & Lester, 1974).

As a result of this shift in news reporting and also of the historical developments just noted, more scholars have undertaken theoretical work on what I call *press exceptionalism*, instances where the news media have been autonomous and independent from the powerful state-corporate interests they are a part of and often report on (Althaus, 2003; Althaus et al., 1996; Fico & Soffin, 1995; Livingston & Eachus, 1996; Wolfsfeld, 1997; Wolfsfeld & Shaefer, 2006). Scholars who have undertaken this type of analysis often argue that this shift in news reporting and content reveals a more independent, cantankerous and autonomous press than what was previously observed during the Cold War era (Althaus, 2003; Entman, 2003, 2004; Livingston & Eachus, 1995, 1996).

Political Communication's Models of News Media Analysis

Most models of news analysis that have attempted to explain general patterns of press coverage by U.S. news media sources have been undertaken within the political communications literature. Entman's cascade activation model (2004), Bennett's indexing (1990), multi-gated (2004) and press semi-independence models (Bennett et al.,

2007), and Robinson et al.'s "three-tiered" model (2010), as I call it, are the most important models of news analysis in the political communication literature. An analysis of all of these models makes clear that these works are empirically strong, but light on theoretical development.

Entman's Cascade Activation Model

Entman says that his model makes unique contributions to the literature in terms of understanding the construction of media news, public opinion and policy making, which he argues are all intimately related. He asserts that his model "acknowledges variation and hierarchy" in terms of what he sees as the many nuanced differences of coverage patterns and also the different levels of attention certain elite sources receive in the media (2004, p. 12). Framing is central to Entman's analysis and he defined the oft-used concept in the following manner: "selecting and highlighting some facts of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation and/or solution" (2004, p. 5). For Entman, there are two classes of framing, substantive and procedural, and the former is what Entman focuses on (2004, p. 5-6). Substantive frames accomplish at least two of the following objectives: a) define effects or conditions as problematic; b) identify causes; c) convey a moral judgment or; d) endorse remedies or improvements. Entman says the first and last objectives are the most important and as such, are addressed more in his model. Procedural frames are narrower and evaluate the "technique, success and representativeness" of policymakers. Entman cites research that has revealed preponderance in the news towards procedural over substantive framing. However, Entman mostly concerns himself with the latter in his model (2004, p. 5-6).

Entman is interested in how the media impacts politics, more than the other way around and argues that the media's influence has been expanding since the Vietnam War (p. 5). He further explains that frames and "ideas cascade downward from the administration's first public expressions about an event" (p. 9). In his model, Entman emphasizes that, "some actors have more power than others to push ideas along to the news and then to the public," such as the "president and [his] top advisors," who possess, "the highest probability of having their thoughts become part of the general circulation of ideas" (p. 9).

Ambiguity looms large in Entman's analysis and he argues that ambiguity in U.S. foreign policy following the Cold War (2004, p. 16) explains a diminished influence by the White House (p. 20). This is reflected in changing coverage trends, which to Entman, surprisingly includes coverage leading up to the invasion of Iraq in this same vein: "The media promoted dissent* over Bush's proposal to project America's military might into Iraq. However, in another turn of the screw, just as in the earlier Iraq war, superior administration power and strategy generally diminished the prominence and political effect of dissenting views in the news" (p. 21). Entman further writes that polling data reveals ambiguity in public opinion shortly before the Cold War ended and before both wars in Iraq. This partially explains changing coverage trends, as Entman says that influence can flow from below as well (p. 21).

Bennett's Indexing Hypothesis

Bennett's indexing hypothesis was already reviewed in the opening chapter. Also noteworthy, however, is that internalization of the values of professional journalism is an important explanatory variable to Bennett. It serves as his explanation for how, "El Salvador dropped from the news because the story simply stopped qualifying as "news" in terms of implicit, paradigmatic understandings of the term . . ." With indexing then, internalization is reflected in how journalists, "just 'know' most of the time what is and what is not news . . . [as] news production goes forward much of the time with little self-conscious articulation of underlying assumptions" (1990, p. 111). The intricacies of internalization, crude intervention and false consciousness (or the lack thereof) of journalists are all topics which will be reviewed in both the next chapter (chp. 3), as well as the last case-study (chp. 9).

Since the most comprehensive evaluation of indexing was undertaken by Mermin (1999), a review of his work will now be undertaken.

Mermin's Evaluation of Indexing

One of the laudable attributes of the indexing model is that it leaves itself quite open to further testing and evaluation. Mermin sought to do just that by evaluating the extent that, "the spectrum of debate in the news . . . is a function of the spectrum of

* To be certain, Entman does *not* sufficiently demonstrate how the media promoted dissent in the lead-up to the Iraq war.

debate in official Washington”⁶ (1999, p. 5). Building on Bennett’s research though, the additional question that Mermin sought to answer was whether or not critical perspectives “on policies that win bipartisan support in Washington are simply outweighed or overshadowed,” or instead, are virtually “ignored or relegated to the margins of the news.” Mermin offers this additional dimension to the indexing hypothesis, terming the later the “marginalization version” and the former, the “correlation version” (pp. 5, 6).⁷

Mermin tested indexing against eight case studies of U.S. military intervention.⁸ Out of the six case studies that had conditions that the indexing model would *not* expect an exception from, only one did not conform to expected results (Somalia).⁹ The two case studies that were expected to be exceptions to the indexing rule (the Gulf War and Libya) still had results which lacked news media independence.¹⁰ In sum, Mermin’s findings serve as strong and convincing evidence of how indexing plays a prominent role in the performance of the US news media.

Following the official apology published by the *New York Times* in May of 2004, Mermin wrote that news coverage was now falling well within the expectations of even the marginalization version of the indexing hypothesis. Mermin’s appropriately harsh criticism for the news media performance of what is by now widely acknowledged (even by the agenda-setting newspapers themselves¹¹) as an example of poor coverage, appears to be the far more appropriate analysis when compared to Entman’s far weaker and inappropriately generous treatment of the press on Iraq coverage (2004).¹²

Bennett’s Multi-Gated and Press Semi-Independence Models

In Bennett’s multi-gated model, there are four conditions and factors that he posits as being in play in the selection and construction of news content and related narratives: “(1) the individual reporter’s news sense, (2) the routines and standards of the organization for which the reporter works, (3) the economic pressures that enter the newsroom, and (4) the technologies that facilitate gathering and transmitting information” (2004, p. 294). These conditions result in four ideal-types of gatekeeping principles, each with their own respective ethos: the reporter-driven ideal and its penchant for independence; the organizational ideal and its attempt at providing “balanced” and fair content; the infotainment ideal and its connections to economically-driven soft news; and the technological ideal and its tendencies toward eye-witness

immediacy and event-oriented reporting. The ideals are distinguishable between each other by differing information gathering techniques, journalistic roles, conceptions of the public, and press-government relations (p. 295). The reporter-driven ideal is exemplified by news coverage of the Bush domestic-spying scandal (Bennett et al., 2007, p. 66); the organizational ideal can be found in coverage of the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq (2007, pp. 14-28); the infotainment and economic ideal is reflected in the lessening of content diversity in pursuit of larger profits (2004, p. 299); and the technological ideal was shown during the eye-witness immediacy and event-oriented reporting of Hurricane Katrina news coverage (Bennett, et al., 2007, p. 64).

The multigated model is a more complex and comprehensive version of the condensed and simplified model of press semi-independence by Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston (2007). The former model zeroes in on the tensions and contradictions of the system which produce different types of journalism while the latter simply elucidates the conditions and factors that give rise to exceptional coverage. Both models do attempt to capture more nuance than indexing. While indexing explains that the news is dependent on “assessments of government power balances on issues, of government power balances on issues, it does not fully explain the tensions that exist within this system, and the conditions under which moments of relative press independence emerge” (Bennett et al., 2007, p. 61).¹³

Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston argue that three main factors and conditions give rise to exceptions in the news: technology-enabled driven reporting (2007, p. 63); investigative reporting and leaks (2007, p. 68); and outsider counter-spin (2007, p. 68). Journalists are able to give public earlier and more independent views of events because of modern and advanced technologies. Investigative reporting and leaks enable the press to fuel “enterprise journalism,” although it is pointed out that coverage tends to be sporadic and not long-term, because of “the prevailing norms of mainstream journalism” (p. 68). When opponents arise in a timely fashion and offer up a dramatic story, it can result in outsider counter-spin. The co-authors here mention Cindy Sheehan’s protest in front of President Bush’s Texas ranch and contend that subsequent news coverage began to question the “wisdom and costs of the war” (p. 70).

Bennett concludes his 2004 study by arguing that claims of an end to gatekeeping in the news media system are overblown. Instead, he argues that economic and technological factors only cause “disruptions” and “punctuations” to the news system (2004, p. 309), which is still dominated by the organizational ideal and its commitments to elite sourcing and agenda-setting by important officials. While exceptional news content is discussed more in Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston’s work (2007), including case studies and media analyses of Hurricane Katrina and the Abu Ghraib scandal, their assessments are tempered by the strong finding that “when democracy needs it most, the press is least capable of independent reporting” (2007, p. 71).

Robinson, Goddard, Parry and Murray’s “Three-Tiered” Model

The most recent of the comprehensive news analysis models in the political communication literature, is what I call the “three-tiered” model (simply because no clear name was offered by the co-authors themselves). Written by Robinson, Goddard, Parry and Murray (2010), the co-authors argue that one of three models of journalism is in place for the British press and its news coverage of wars and British foreign policy: “the elite-driven model, in which news media coverage is hypothesised to be supportive of government war aims; the independent model, where news media remain balanced towards events and produce negotiated coverage; and the oppositional model whereby news media offer a profound challenge to the legitimacy and conduct of a conflict and generate oppositional coverage” (10).¹⁴ Analyzing four British news broadcasters and seven national dailies,¹⁵ the co-authors argue that the following factors influenced which model was in place for the war-coverage surveyed: “the importance of ideology, uncontrolled events, patriotism, use of official sources by journalists, professional autonomy and news media system characteristics in shaping news media coverage of the war” (p. 11).

Of particular significance to the co-authors was the level of professional autonomy found in several elements of the British national press and Channel 4 in coverage of both the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq and the war itself. Coupling this finding with the unique system characteristics the British press exhibits (i.e. “a nationally-based, commercial and highly competitive press with a partisan and opinionated culture”), the co-authors argue that professional autonomy and system

characteristics act as prominent variables which influence otherwise constraining factors of press independence such as “patriotism” and “indexing” (Robinson et al., 2010, p. 206).

Robinson and his co-authors did not fail to note, however, that the example of the Iraq invasion, war and occupation was a “relatively hard case” in terms of assessing the elite-driven model (2010, p. 191). This was due to “unprecedented levels of political and popular dissent surrounding the conflict,” which led them to conclude that since the elite-driven model was *still* applicable in seven of the eleven British news sources they analyzed, that it would likely be even “more relevant” for “easier (less critical) cases of news media and war” where social resistance and public opposition was not as remarkably high as it was for Iraq (p. 191).

While it was laudable that Robinson and his co-authors brought needed attention to the impact that a social movement can have on news media coverage, the extent of theorization on social movements was significantly limited. Similarly, their work did not significantly address one of the main differences that the British system has with the U.S.: a much stronger and more active sector of public news media has long existed in Britain and many other parts of Western Europe, as has been recently and thoroughly documented (McChesney & Nichols, 2009). In spite of this, however, the work contained extensive empirical evidence and findings and in many ways, showed similar strengths to other works in political communication.

Empirically Strong, Theoretically Weak

The strongest aspect to the models reviewed above is the empirical findings they extract from an impressive amount of quantitative research and content analyses. The theoretical insights that are drawn from the plethora of data, however, are inconsistent with the facts revealed from the research and overly focused on the details as opposed to the big picture. To put it simply, theoretical arguments in political communication too often lose the forest for the trees.

These theoretical weaknesses consist of the following: social movements are never positioned as a key determining variable for resulting news content and if even addressed, are merely theorized as a mitigating factor; dichotomous tendencies in press coverage are ignored and uncovered; the institutional constraints acting upon news

content and relating to the economic foundations of news corporations (or the lack thereof, in the case of public media) are not theorized as explanatory variables. These shortcomings apply to the strongest models of news analysis in the literature: the multigated model (Bennett, 2004), the press semi-independence model (Bennett et al., 2007) and the “three-tiered” model (Robinson et al., 2010). Of those three models, Robinson and his colleagues provide the strongest theoretical material and thus is the most appropriate one to focus on, as even their work contains several theoretical shortcomings.

Duly acknowledged by Robinson et al., England saw “unprecedented levels of political and popular dissent surrounding the conflict [in Iraq]” (2010, p. 191). Not only were the protests unprecedented in England though, they were worldwide, as record-breaking massive global protests were organized (Reynié documented 36 million people participating in such protests, see 2009, p. 14). But instead of pointing to the influence of social movements as the main explanatory variable for opening up the news media and allowing for greater journalistic autonomy and exceptional reporting, Robinson et., al. favor explanations that center around journalistic initiative: “the field of journalism, possessing some level of autonomy, creates a degree of resistance ... to create, in some areas, outlets and instances, outright opposition to a war that had been supported by the two major political parties in Britain” (p. 208). But alas, the “creation” of opposition to the war was not done by journalists if not by organizers themselves, who worked many months in advance of the release of the more independent reporting identified in Robinson et Al.’s work. A vital theoretical connection is missed then between the opportunities created for journalists, and the lessening of institutional constraints that come along with it, created by social movements themselves.

It is harder to imagine the litany of spiking, firings, editorial cuts and institutional censorship in a political climate of unprecedented protest in England and throughout the world, than it is during other political moments where resistance is not as high. To be sure, during moments of lessened political resistance, journalistic autonomy has *also* been exhibited, but the consequences have been harsh and real (as thoroughly documented in Borjesson, 2004, 2005, as well as in chapter 10). There was an autonomous space that was opened up by social movements and in spite of a lack of elite

dissent, journalistic autonomy could thus be undertaken without the kind of consequences that would normally transpire (and unsurprisingly, more autonomy was indeed seen).

To Robinson's credit, proper theoretical respect *is* paid to the variable of news media system characteristics and numerous references are made to Hallin and Mancini's work (2004), especially in terms of explaining differing content analysis results between British and U.S. news media coverage of Iraq from that of other researchers (Aday, Livingston, & Hebert, 2005). But an in-depth exploration of the institutional and political economic characteristics of the very sources that were reviewed in the study was *not* undertaken and again, abstract references to journalistic autonomy and norms were mistakenly favored as more powerful explanatory variables.

A comparison between Robinson et Al.'s results along with some basic research reveals an important fact that went unidentified in their work: the news organizations that provided the most critical and independent reporting were the least commercially oriented. Channel 4 was the broadcast news source credited with the most independent reporting amongst the mainstream British broadcasters reviewed (2007, p. 206), but it is also a public media source that is a non-profit and much less commercially oriented than its counterpart in the BBC. Two of the three dailies also credited with the most independent and oppositional content are distinct from the much more corporate orientation of the most influential dailies in the States. In the case of the *Guardian*, a foundational trust was setup to manage the company, including the hiring of its editors until 2008 (thus well beyond the coverage period analyzed) (McChesney & Nichols, 2009, p. 176; Ponsford, 2008). The *Independent* is now a publicly traded and independent company, but had long been owned by an Irish family which retained the majority of its shares (Wray, Robinson, & Holmwood, 2009), until its sale just earlier this year (Deans, 2010). While both of these dailies' orientations are still technically commercial and for-profit, the lack of corporate character coupled with unprecedented protest opened the space necessary for journalists to be able to freely report and criticize what was arguably the least popular foreign policy in British history. Last, but far from least, the British press has a public and non-profit news media presence that far outweighs what exists in the States, as thoroughly documented by the leading political economist and his long-time co-author (McChesney & Nichols, 2009).

There are additional weaknesses and more to elaborate on in terms of the shortcomings just mentioned as well as those found in other political communication works. Moreover, empirical strengths are not fully laid out here. A subsequent section will explore further the argument that the two subfields of political communication and political economy should be synthesized, but first, a thorough survey of the most important news media analyses in political economy will be undertaken.

Political Economy

Political economy is a broad discipline that is divided by a split between those doing more marked oriented research and those who engage in a more critical approach. The latter is often marked by Marxian analysis and significant concerns about exploitation while the former concentrates more on resource allocation and factors of production. Ithiel de Sola Pool, was a major figure in political economic research who engaged in mainstream research associated with the Central Intelligence Association and other governmental institutions (1966).¹⁶ In their overview of the political economy of communication, Peter Golding and Graham Murdock maintain that what distinguishes critical political economy is that, “perhaps most importantly of all, it goes beyond technical issues of efficiency to engage with basic moral questions of justice, equity and the public good” (1991, pp. 18-19).*

In his extensively researched and documented book, Mosco defines the subfield of political economy of communications as:

The study of social relations, particularly the power relations, that mutually constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources. From this vantage point, the products of communication, such as newspapers, books, videos, films and audiences, are the primary resources (1998, p. 26).

Critiquing Professional Journalism and its Institutional Context

Leading political economist Robert McChesney writes that journalism is the one institution that is “expressly committed to this mission” of informing the public of the social world and politics (2003, p. 57). If that’s the case, then how does it seemingly fail

* This paper will concern itself only with critical political economy and when political economy is used without the leading adjective, it should be assumed that I am referring to critical political economy.

in fulfilling that mission so often? McChesney's answer to this nearly completely centers around structural and institutional explanations:

. . . the reasons for lousy journalism stem not only from morally bankrupt or untalented journalists, but from a structure that makes such journalism the rational result of its operations Hence if we are serious about producing a journalism and political culture suitable to a self-governing society, it is mandatory that there be structural change in the media system (2003, pp. 299, 324).

In terms of its coverage of international affairs, McChesney argues that professional journalism's greatest weaknesses are duly exposed, "especially when military action is involved. . . most major U.S. wars over the past century have been sold to the public on dubious claims if not outright lies, yet professional journalism has generally failed to warn the public" (2004, p. 74). While McChesney differs from his political communication counterparts in pointing to institutional characteristics as the source of professional journalism's failings, together with Bagdikian (who is a strong and noticeable influence on McChesney's work), he still describes the news value practices that result from such structural deficiencies.

According to McChesney (2004) and Bagdikian (1990) then, there are three deep seated biases of professional journalism: 1) its story selection emanating from an overwhelming amount of official sourcing (2004, p. 68); 2) its lack of contextualization (p. 71); 3) a pro-corporate bias, as evidenced in news content which strongly favors government scandals over revelations of corporate malfeasance. The first two biases result in a situation in the public relations industry having a prominent presence in news content, ranging from 40% to 70% of the news (71). Again, McChesney firmly argues that structure influences content more than media personalities and individual journalists (2004, p. 159); that owners have the most control over the professional codes of journalism and when taken with their constant need for increasing profit margins, often negatively impacts the substance of journalistic content (2003, p. 306); that news coverage must be shaped with the needs of major advertisers kept sharply in mind (2003, p. 307); and that lastly, the difficulties for committed journalists in overcoming these institutional constraints have only increased (2003, p. 307).

The latter point was initially supported by McChesney's exhaustively supported economic and policy analysis, in which he first advanced the concept of hyper-

commercialism as severely lowering the standards of news and of media in general. Hyper-commercialism, McChesney then explained, was largely a result of continued media concentration furthered by the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (1999). This has also resulted in corporate cost cuts which have decreased international reporting (Utley, 1997) and investigative journalism (Just et al., 2002). The result of these cuts, McChesney elucidates, is “an increased emphasis on trivial stories that give the appearance of controversy and conflict but rarely have anything to do with significant issues” (2004, p. 85).

The military-industrial-media complex

Long-time media critic and analyst Norman Solomon is chiefly concerned with identifying official justifications for war and criticizing their false premises, dubious information and how such falsities are deliberately propagated by Presidential administrations to drum up public support for war (2005). With this end, Solomon identifies systematic patterns of propaganda campaigns undertaken by numerous Presidential administrations and dutifully parroted by the corporate news media.

Solomon notes how foreign policy problems often covered as that of image, *not* policy problems (2005, p. 177), while criticizing a number of poor media performances over the last few decades on Nicaragua (p. 81); El Salvador (p. 79) and; East Timor (pp. 77-8). Deferring tough news coverage to a moment of time when the issues are of the past and perhaps with official concessions, is another age-old pattern of commercial news media, Solomon argues (p. 114).

These news reporting deficiencies are addressed by references to structural explanations. He links these patterns with institutional variables, such as the increasingly corporate makeup of the news media and its related subservience to state interests (2005, p. 91). Solomon’s original argument and main thesis is that there is a growing connection between media business interests and the military-industrial complex:

One way or another, a military-industrial complex now extends to much of corporate media. In the process, firms with military ties routinely advertise in news outlets ... Sometimes a media-owning corporation is itself a significant weapons merchant . . . NBC’s owner, General Electric, designed, manufactured, or supplied parts or maintenance for nearly every major weapons system by the United States during the Gulf War ... [in sum, there is a large] extent of shared sensibilities and financial synergies within what amounts to a huge military-industrial-media complex . . . (2005, pp. 113-114).

Is there enough built-in economic incentives and structures to justify arguments pointing to a military-industrial-media complex? Only further research will be able to more solidly confirm such a strong argument, but Solomon's case is convincing.

The Crisis of Journalism

The crisis of journalism has reached such heights and proportions that no work of research on the news media system should ignore it. The question has been addressed by McChesney and Nichols and their answers represent the most impressive scholarly attempt in not only explaining the crisis, but attempting to solve it as well.

The conventional wisdom on the crisis of journalism is that it was mostly precipitated by the advent of the Internet and the plethora of freely accessible news and information. McChesney and Nichols argue against this notion and instead point to the corporate abandonment of journalism as the principal cause and culprit of the crisis (2009, pp. 27, 33). The origins of the crisis go back to the early beginnings of news media company mergers and the burgeoning "media monopoly" (Bagdikian, 1983) and the subsequent ushering in of the dawn of hyper-commercialism with the advent of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (McChesney, 2000).

McChesney and Nichols' investigation into other news media systems in the developed world found that the U.S. ranked at the bottom of the developed world in terms of their investments into public media (2010, pp. 191-193). The U.S. was outspent by a factor of 101 by Finland and 8 by South Korea (p. 192). McChesney and Nichols conclude that a reinvigoration of journalism can be achieved by publicly funding and subsidizing non-profit journalism, including a variety of outlet types: new media, community, public interest, investigative, public broadcasting or magazine formats (pp. 175, 189, 199, 201). Daily newspapers are of significant concern to the co-authors and there is a proposal to transform for-profit corporate papers into non-profit (p. 175) or low-profit limited liability entities (i.e. the L3C model) (p. 183). Lastly, a "Citizenship News Voucher" is proposed whereby citizens get tax rebates of \$200 toward the non-profit news publications of their choice (p. 201).

Like other works in political economy, McChesney and Nichols analyze the crisis from a bird's-eye point of view and propose policy solutions in the public interest to solve serious problems in the communications industry.

Social Movements

One of the most recent and impressive works of political economy on social movements and the media was done by Kumar (2007). Kumar grounds her theoretical work in the tradition of critical political economy and takes a dialectical approach to analysis. Given the dialectical approach, Kumar unsurprisingly names her model of news analysis the dominance / resistance model.

Research grounded in political economy is appropriately criticized by Kumar for too often overlooking the instances that marginalized groups can influence media content and culture in general (p. 168). The PM is specifically pointed to as falling prey to this tendency in the discipline as well, as Kumar argues that its oversight of press exceptionalism in relation to social movements is its largest weakness and flaw (pp. 168-171). This is the vein in which Kumar posits a dominance / resistance model (pp. 33-53). The dominance half of the model mostly draws on previous research findings, while Kumar's more unique insights are displayed in relation to when resistance can make its way into the mainstream media (pp. 48-53).

Kumar's case-study is the 1997 labor strike waged by United Parcel Service's (UPS) workers, who are part of the Teamsters union, which was arguably the most successful strike in the U.S. since neo-liberalism first appeared on the global economic scene in the 1970's. Kumar documents how news coverage in the three major nationally distributed newspapers (2007, p. 90) and also on television newscasts (p. 111), generally shifted along with the growing success of the labor strike. As elites began to "switch sides" and public opinion gravitated more and more toward supporting the strike, so did news coverage, as content revealed a growing support for the strike and the workers (p. 113). But Kumar argues that this gradual shift was not caused solely by official positioning, if not by the successful message that resonated with the U.S. public, which forced such a shift in both elite positioning (in both state and corporate sectors) and subsequent news coverage (p. 114).

This is an exceptionally strong theoretical tenet in Kumar's work which is also contained within the MDM's theoretical foundations as well: both Kumar's model, as well as my own, argues that it *is* possible for social movements to impact public officials, who in turn can then impact the news media with critical positions and statements. While

it is true that there are other moments when social movements can directly impact the news media itself, especially when public media and non-corporate news outlets are in question (i.e., Robinson et al., 2010, p. 190), there is no more reliable way to do so than when important public officials begin to be impacted by political resistance undertaken by a social movement (as documented in chapter 6 in the Vieques case-study).

Although Kumar does not spell out in a formal model the type of historical and political conditions necessary for future resistance to garner success comparable to the UPS strike, the study's focus does point to a number of factors and variables in this regard.¹⁷ Previous critical analyses that point out historical moments are also cited,¹⁸ but additional examples of social movements having successfully impacted news content during a specific struggle go unmentioned, much less the dichotomous tendencies that have been previously documented for some social movements versus others. Such tendencies *do* exist, however, and the country from which the social movement hails, as well as the relationship that given country has with Washington, have been found to be of significant importance (Lee & Craig, 1992). This tendency is the unworthy and worthy social movement tenet of the MDM and is expounded on in the next chapter.

The Propaganda Model

The PM has already been described in the introduction to this dissertation, but there is an additional element to Herman and Chomsky's prior work which is worth noting herein, especially given its importance in the subsequent chapter.

Herman and Chomsky originally described three kinds of bloodbaths in a formulation that would actually serve to contribute in later years to the crafting of the propaganda model (1979). As Chomsky pointed out, the PM makes predictions about these bloodbaths in terms of official reactions:

“Constructive bloodbaths” are those that serve the interests of U.S. power; “benign bloodbaths” are largely irrelevant to these concerns; and “nefarious bloodbaths” are those that can be charged to the account of official enemies and are thus useful for mobilizing the public. The first-order prediction of a propaganda model is that constructive bloodbaths will be welcomed (with perhaps some clucking of tongues and thoughts about the barbarity of backward peoples), benign bloodbaths ignored, and nefarious bloodbaths passionately condemned, on the basis of a version of the facts that need have little credibility and that may adopt standards that would merely elicit contempt if applied in the study of alleged abuses of the United States or friendly states. The second-order prediction of the model is that within mainstream circles, studies of this kind will not be

found, and that is quite correct. But now we have an example that escapes these bounds. We therefore turn to the third-order predictions: what will the reactions be? ... exposure will be ignored in the case of constructive bloodbaths; it may be occasionally noted without interest in the case of benign bloodbaths; and it will lead to great indignation in the case of nefarious bloodbaths (Chomsky, 1989, p. 153).

In terms of the PM and news media coverage, however, the three kinds of bloodbaths could be described in the following fashion: “constructive bloodbaths” are atrocities that the U.S. media condones or does not object to (and whose victims are “unworthy,” while the perpetrators are usually client states of the U.S. or the U.S. itself); “nefarious bloodbaths” are atrocities committed by “enemy” states of the U.S. that elicit sympathy and are abuses that the mainstream media takes great interest in and is very concerned with (and whose victims are “worthy”); and lastly, “benign bloodbaths” are atrocities that the mainstream media simply takes no interest in (and whose victims are “unworthy”). One can think of a number of examples for each category based on recent news items alone; for nefarious, there is the “Free Tibet” movement (i.e. anti-communism); for constructive, there is the Colombia offensive that killed about two dozen people in a supposed strike against the FARC within Ecuador’s territory; and for benign, there are almost too many examples relegated to the “memory hole” to be able to fully mention, but a few include the dearth of coverage on Iraqi civilian casualties and also the lack of justice that continues to linger on for East Timor (i.e. no reparations, no trials of key Indonesian and U.S. figures involved in genocide, etc.).

The PM has garnered significant respect and recognition by other political economists, including Mosco, who described it as the “most systematic effort” in analyzing print content (1998, p. 89) and McChesney, who dubbed it simply as a “classic” (2004, p. 305).

Theoretically Strong, Empirically Weak

What political economic studies, analyses and reports sometimes lack in empirical robustness, which Mosco argues is a product of the lack of institutional support of their research (1996), compensatory strength is often found in the form theoretical prowess and critical analyses that can be found in many works of critical political economy. A more thorough analysis of these strengths will be undertaken in the section below analyzing the respective theoretical and methodological strengths and weaknesses of both

political communication and political economy. First though, a review and analysis of what I call “press exceptionalism” will be done in relation to the “hegemonic” models of news analysis.

Press Exceptionalism and the Hegemonic Models

On face value, it would seem that the divergent strains between those that research instances of press subordination and exceptionalism would sharply clash and accomplish little in terms of complementing one another and realizing theoretical advances. This section argues the opposite to be true and elucidates how the literature on press independence and event-driven reporting actually serve to usefully inform and assist critical theoretical frameworks, such as the IM, PM and MDM.

The literature on press exceptionalism has a definitive leaning toward domestic case studies, as opposed to international news topics. I will argue this is because domestic issues present less of an affront to the institutional interests of the news media.

Furthermore, even the exceptions found in scholarly studies on U.S. media performance in relation to U.S. foreign policy also have their own limitations. Nonetheless, exceptions such as these go far to clearly demarcate the limits of what have been called the hegemonic models (Entman, 2004): the indexing and propaganda models of news analysis.

In thoroughly surveying and critically analyzing this literature, a better understanding can be gleaned of limitations; that is, the limits that the general patterns of news reporting discerned by critical models of news analysis have *and* also the limits to press exceptionalism itself. This increased understanding aids one in the daunting task of constructing a more accurate and comprehensive model of news analysis, applicable to the post-Cold War era of advanced information and communication technology.

Limitations of the “Hegemonic” Models

The limitations of the hegemonic models have been expounded on by those associated and supportive of such works. Even in the first instance that indexing was posited, Bennett wrote what is perhaps the clearest statement on these limitations:

Among the issues in which indexing might be expected to operate most consistently are military decisions, foreign affairs, and macroeconomic policy – areas of great importance not only to corporate economic interests but to the advancement of state power as well (1990, p. 122).

These qualifications have not gone unnoticed by other political communication scholars, as Livingston and Eachus wrote, “Bennett noted that the indexing norm seems more readily applied to foreign affairs issues, or issues where considerable elite consensus exists,” adding further that, “A tight adherence to official views seems less likely however, when consensus is either lacking or poorly articulated by officials. This may be the case, of course, with a number of highly charged domestic political issues, such as abortion” (1996, p. 424).

McChesney argues that a number of social issues are reported on in a more critical manner because they do not threaten the state-corporate interests of the news media business. Included amongst these social issues are the common news themes of abortion, “gay and lesbian rights, gun control and affirmative action” (2004, p. 103). There is an important commonality amongst all of these issues though, and that is the domestic nature of these news topics. Mermin has pointed out that domestic news coverage may at times have somewhat different sourcing tendencies:

It is likely that more nongovernmental sources are consulted on domestic issues, and that viewpoints on policy decisions from outside of Washington appear more often in the news. The general pattern found in this study may hold for domestic policy, although in a somewhat attenuated form (Mermin 1996: 192).

All of these points fit in with the main argument of this section: patterns of domestic news content have important differences with international news content, namely in the respect that the latter suffers from institutional domination more than the former. A survey and critical analysis of the literature of press exceptionalism – specifically in relation to news coverage of the most important post-Cold War U.S. foreign policies and interventions; technology and event-driven reporting and the CNN effect – elucidates how this scholarship can potentially complement and further refine the insights garnered by the hegemonic models of news media analysis.

Press Exceptionalism on News Coverage of U.S. Foreign Policy

The most difficult challenge that the literature on press exceptionalism has had to contend with is news coverage of U.S. foreign policy and related international affairs. This is an area that has traditionally seen the most pervasive examples of the hegemonic models and as such, warrant close attention and treatment.¹⁹

One of the earliest works in this vein of the press exceptionalism literature can be found in a study done by Althaus, et al. (1996). The article coded a five month period of *New York Times* news coverage on the Libya crisis of 1985-1986. The content analysis found that, contrary to indexing's expectations, U.S. elites were outsourced by foreign elites by 1.6 times (Althaus et al., 1996, p. 410). Also contrary to indexing, Congressional debate was not reflected in as rich of a manner as what occurred and over-represented in volume (p. 416).

These results, however, were tempered by other findings: U.S. elites were still more likely to appear on front-page news (1996, p. 411) and furthermore, by the "timing and focus of policy debate" appearing in news coverage, which was mostly controlled by administration initiatives, not the press itself (p. 416). The authors concluded by writing that journalists were *both* "exercising some degree of independent choice within the parameters of official discourse," but were also "passively reflecting power relationships among elites" (pp. 415-416). News norms on achieving "balance" and event-driven reporting were pointed to for these mixed findings (pp. 417-418). Citing prior research by Entman and Page (1994) on relative power distinctions between official sources was also pointed to as an additional factor that indexing should consider (p. 416).

Livingston and Eachus undertook a content analysis of *New York Times* news coverage from 1980 to 1995 on paramilitary death squads operating in Guatemala and their connections to U.S. support. It was found that such connections were not revealed during the Cold War, but *were* noted afterward, even in ways comparable to critical press accounts found in independent media (1996, p. 431). This was correlated with prior news analysis findings on U.S. culpability not being covered significantly during the 1980's in respect to El Salvadoran death squads (1996, p. 427).

Arguably the most extensive work done on press exceptionalism is found in a study by Althaus (2003) on television news coverage of the lead-up to the Gulf War (August 1990 – February 1991). With close to 4,000 newscast stories coded, the content analysis was exhaustive.

The results of this extensive study painted a more nuanced picture of press performance than previous indexing works (pp. 392, 394-395).²⁰ Althaus criticizes past scholarship for an oversight of the importance of measuring means and contextual

criticism; a failure to code full populations of content during the duration of a given crisis period and; measures sourcing patterns for foreign sources (p. 388). Althaus conceded that newscast content was “still fairly supportive” of governmental objectives, but argued that content was “sufficiently critical to serve the informational needs of the American public” (p. 404).

Findings such as these could be construed as surprising in a prior Cold War era, but Althaus argues that his study’s results easily fall in line with the post-Cold War era of today. The new post-Cold War political realities have resulted in a period where it is, “the exception rather than the rule to see journalists clam when elected officials close ranks on foreign policy” (p. 404).

Fico and Soffin also undertook a quantitative analysis to evaluate Gulf War news coverage amongst a large and disparate range of print sources during February 1991 (1995). Their findings were that: “pro-war sources dominated [only 33%] of stories [while] ... anti-war sources dominated [two²¹] times the number of stories that their numbers among the public would have suggested” (p. 627); 62% of the stories they had coded featured sources that were against the administration position on the war (p. 627); large-circulation newspapers were *not* a lot more balanced (p. 628) and; prestige, non-local / non-Michigan-based newspapers *were* found to be slightly more balanced on the Gulf War (p. 628).

Press Exceptionalism on Foreign Affairs Coverage: Theoretical & Methodological Shortcomings

The review of scholarly and quality literature detailing press exceptionalism in U.S. news media coverage of foreign affairs is scant and slim for an important reason: the exceptions are few and far between and far more exceptions can be found on domestic news topics, especially when the topics are about natural disasters, police brutality and other social issues that are not as economic and political in nature as other systemic oriented topics. As a result, there are a number of flaws present in the studies above.

Despite the quantitative nature of most of the studies just noted, serious methodological problems were at times still present. Livingston and Eachus spelled out the largest weakness of their own study themselves, when they wrote that their case study was for an incident that happened in the past and was covered well into the future (1995,

p. 434). But methodological problems were even more present for the Fico and Soffin (1995) analysis.

In Fico and Soffin's work, eighteen daily newspapers were surveyed, of which the overwhelming majority were arguably outside the scope of influential and powerful newspapers (1995). Of the eighteen newspapers, half were relatively small circulation dailies that hailed from Michigan. Only three of the five (a number that is in the present, down to four) nationally distributed dailies were included in the study (the *USA Today* & *Wall Street Journal*, quite conservative leaning papers, were left out) and many newspapers with locations that would facilitate less dependence on beltway sources and politics were included (beyond the local papers in Michigan, also were the *Baltimore Sun*, the *Milwaukee Journal* and the *St. Louis Dispatch*). Furthermore, the authors did not specify who the coders were; whether or not training was used (much less what it involved, if it was even present) and lastly; what reliability statistic was being used (it is only implied that raw agreement was reported, but not specified). Also, there was not any information about how exactly the authors established what was constituted as pro and anti-war sources (i.e. were public officials opposed to the war deemed as anti-war sources?). Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the authors did not explain why previous studies with contrary findings, some of which they ironically did cite, were flawed (1995, p. 13, n. 19) and less reliable than their own findings and study.

The study on Libya (Althaus et al., 1996) was criticized by Mermin (1999) for relying on a lone case study that featured exceptional political circumstances, namely, that of NATO procedural opposition to U.S. policy on the grounds that it was endangering the hostages (p. 106):

... it is only when the NATO allies made the point that U.S. policy threatened the well-being of Western hostages – an argument that had just as much force in the other cases [examined by Mermin] – that this angle is examined on the *Newshour*. The evidence of a single case is not enough to support general conclusions about the impact of European criticism on media coverage of U.S. foreign policy ... the NATO allies are unique in their credibility to elite commentators on U.S. foreign policy, and the Libya case is unique in the extent to which European opposition to U.S. policy manifested itself in a tangible form – the French denial of airspace – that made it a central element of the story ... NATO's opposition does explain the unexpected findings on Libya, and that Libya should therefore be understood as a special case (Mermin, 1999, pp. 106-107).²²

Early opposition to the Gulf War was far more significant than the Nico and Soffin article (1995) would have one believe, as only two polls were cited in support of their assertion that the U.S. public was overwhelmingly in support of the war. While it is true that most U.S. citizens supported the war efforts, it is also true that this is nearly always the case right before a war starts and at the beginning of it as well, when casualties are next to non-existent. Nico and Soffin neglected to mention that the Gulf War attracted mass demonstrations that were completely non-existent during the Vietnam War's early years, much less in its first few months (Mermin, 1999, p. 108). Lastly, and most importantly, the very sources and stories that Nico and Soffin were probably coding as being against administration positions were characterized by Mermin as stories that "often used sources in the crowd – instead of organizers or speakers – to frame stories that subverted the message of the demonstration" (p. 108). Elucidating further on the actual context of the reporting, Mermin wrote:

When there is consensus in Washington, journalists focus not on the wisdom or justification of U.S. policy, but on the ability of the president to execute it. Going into the Gulf War with Vietnam looming in American memory, there was concern that the public might not support a military engagement. It is in this context that reporters examined the antiwar movement in search of news. Could domestic opposition have an impact on the efforts of the White House to prosecute the war (p. 110)?

Finally, in contrast, Mermin had the amount of *substantive* criticism coded, as opposed to the more common procedural criticism that Nico and Soffin were probably more concerned and sensitive with. In so doing, Mermin found that the Gulf War January period (similar to Nico and Soffin's February period) was somewhat exceptional in comparison to other foreign policy events he coded. He explained this by alluding to the presence of the mass protests, but still emphasized the limits of both the protest coverage and the limited amount of substantive criticism (which totaled a meager 3.2%).

Indeed, Althaus pointed out that the different types of criticism being coded probably account for conflicting research findings (2003, p. 286). But the qualitative analysis Mermin undertook as well, points to a framing context that marginalized "nonofficial" and "oppositional" voices to the possible point of their inclusion serving the role of administration support, as opposed to the basis for genuine criticism (1999, p.

110). Finally, since Althaus defined nonofficial voices as including individual voices, poll results and reports of protests (p. 395), it becomes even clearer why his subsequent findings and related arguments differed significantly from Mermin's own analytical conclusions. It is not surprising that poll citations and reporting that features "persons off the street," as opposed to organizers and substantive movement demands, failed to deliver a substantial level of fundamental criticism and may have even inflated procedural criticism levels as well.

Event-Driven News Studies on Coverage of International Issues

The press exceptionalism literature is far more prominent, and successful in its claims, in more socially oriented domestic case-studies than the more political economically oriented international topics and case-studies. One of the most convincing examples of this is seen in how the event and technological-driven literature on international coverage has often squarely fallen in line with many of the findings of the hegemonic models. For the most part, scholarship has shown that not even the modern technological advances have facilitated greater press independence when it comes to foreign affairs reporting and especially in so much as official sourcing tendencies are concerned.

Livingston and Van Belle (2005) addressed the question of whether or not technological advances in satellite newsgathering technology have shifted news coverage away from institutional processes and more toward breaking and event-oriented news (p. 45).²³ But if international coverage of natural disasters abroad has increased in the U.S. press, has this resulted in more independent news content as well? Livingston and Bennett (2003) found that it has not. While the results of their study did indeed point to an increase of event-driven news, it also indicated that "the one predictable component of [event-driven] coverage is the presence of official sources" (p. 376). Based on nothing less than 8 years of international stories aired on CNN, the co-authors wrote that official sources "seem to be as much a part of the news as ever" (p. 376).

The question was also posed in respect to Iraq news coverage – where new and advanced information technologies have been used – by Livingston, Bennett and Robinson (2005). Has technological progress resulted in a qualitative change toward more independent news coverage on the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq? The answer was

yet another ‘no’ in terms of preliminary findings from a content analysis from the five leading U.S. television news networks (including Fox, CNN, ABC, CBS & NBC) (2005, pp. 46-47). Simply put, technology and event-driven news norms did not result in a change to the institutional domination paradigm. The analysis faults the Pentagon’s “embed” program with having successfully dominated the news, with an additional, albeit less important factor having been the sheer danger of reporting from Iraq (pp. 46, 48). Official sources were dominant in news content while protests against the war were “practically nonexistent” (p. 47).²⁴ Comparisons between news coverage on Iraq were even drawn to *Cops*, the “reality” television series that some have criticized for containing racist content (p. 50).

Event and Technology-Driven News Reporting

Lawrence is one of the leading authors on event-driven news (Bennett & Lawrence, 1995; Lawrence, 2000; Lawrence & Birkland, 2001). Most who sympathize with this line of research argue that it provides insights into the nuances of news content that institutional domination and hegemonic models fail to capture. While institutionally driven news sees its agenda set by political institutions, event-driven news is conversely driven by *reactions* to an already set news agenda. As Lawrence notes, event-driven news is, “more volatile and difficult for officials to control or to benefit from and are more open to challengers” (2000, p. 9).

Similar to arguments and analysis made by Entman (2004) and Wolfsfeld (2004), Lawrence and Birkland also argue that most news coverage is a, “product of the social negotiation of meaning, and it reflects the power of those who struggle to shape it.” Elucidating further, the co-authors state that news is more than just a product of elite conflict or consensus, and argue instead that content is related more to journalistic routines and the struggle of competing actors to impact news coverage (2001, p. 390).

While the argument that event-driven news is increasing in its importance and frequency is more recent, research into event-driven reporting goes back to the 1970s. Molotch and Lester were the first to posit this line of thought on news media performance (1974, 1975). Molotch and Lester studied a local accidental event – the Santa Barbara oil spill – which erupted into a national news issue, albeit it generating only limited news coverage from non-local sources. The co-authors, who come from a sociological

perspective, concluded that accidents and scandals can result in news coverage that can *potentially* break away from routinized news reporting norms and come closer to reporting on interests that run counter to the elites that ordinarily manage public events (1974, p. 111). They also found that powerful officials, such as President Nixon, received an inordinate amount of sourcing and press attention, despite his involvement consisting of little more than vague pronouncements (1975, p. 253). Results included a finding that non-local news sources tended to report the event in a manner consistent with the interests of the corporate oil elites and in a more dramatic, sensationalistic and less substantive tone (pp. 255-256).

Molotch and Lester's case study was on a domestic issue and indeed, most subsequent research into event-driven reporting has also focused on domestic issues (Bennett & Lawrence, 1995; Capella & Jamieson, 1997; Fallows, 1997; Lawrence 2000; Lawrence & Birkland, 2001; Patterson, 1993).

Recognizing Limitations as an Advance of Theoretical Understanding

The critical and analytical survey of the literature of press exceptionalism supported this section's argument that domestic issues are more plentiful and thoroughly supported than international topics in terms of U.S. news media coverage. The few serious and scholarly works of press exceptionalism that deal with U.S. news media coverage of its foreign affairs were shown to have serious methodological and theoretical problems (see sub-section above). It is thus not a coincidence that there is more research and case studies on domestic case studies in this regard, as elites more often conflict with each other on domestic issues than international ones. As has been revealed in this survey, accidents of importance to the U.S. news media are more often domestic based than international and only because of recent technological advances are international accidents even just starting to become covered slightly more often (Livingston & Van Belle, 2005). Social issues, as opposed to more macro-level topics, were also more prominent amongst the most convincing case studies of event-driven reporting. Lastly, and arguably most importantly, when issues can be framed as accidents and not as systematic occurrences, they represent a lot less of an affront to state-corporate interests that are intimately tied to the U.S. news media's structural foundation and thus can result in more nuanced and critical news reporting.²⁵

Recognizing these limitations is not a criticism in and of itself of these fields of research and instead should be seen as an advance. Press exceptionalism is most appropriate for describing and analyzing event and socially oriented domestic news topics. Conversely, hegemonic models are most appropriate for describing and criticizing the institutional constraints evident in reporting on systemic oriented issues, especially for topics such as “military decisions, foreign affairs, and macroeconomic policy” (Bennett, 1990, p. 122). The differences between the limitations of these two approaches to news media analysis, however, results in an opportunity to synthesize their respective strengths into a more robust model of news analysis. The MDM is based on such a synthesis and the respective strengths and weaknesses, as well as the compatibility of both subfields, is thoroughly considered in the next section.

Evaluating and Analyzing Political Communication and Political Economy

Scholarship in the subfields of political communication and political economy – which is an inter-disciplinary literature that straddles the disciplines of communications, economics and political science – provide significant insights into news coverage patterns. The analytical strengths and weaknesses of two different academic subfields can either be complementary, incompatible or somewhere in between. In addition to identifying the strengths and weaknesses of political communication and political economy, this chapter also argues that they are largely compatible and complementary and thus represent an opportunity for inter-disciplinary collaboration and research when it comes to modeling, analyzing and criticizing the patterns and tendencies of U.S. news media content and reporting. Up to this point, the subfields have quite largely operated in an isolated fashion from each other; it is the hope of the author, that this work will represent a possible starting point for an end to that isolation.

Analytical strengths of the political communication literature

The strongest analytical characteristic of the political communication literature is its methodological robustness and empirical verifiability. Political communication, much more so than its political economy counterpart, relies on extensive data-sets, that are often originally collected and compiled (Althaus, 2003); complex and sophisticated content analyses (Hallin, 1986); and multiple reliability statistics (Bennett, Lawrence, & Livingston, 2006). It is no coincidence that political communication scholarship also

concerns itself more with the nuances, variations, exceptions and changes over time that are found in news content.

In this vein, Bennett has argued in several co-authored works (Bennett et al., 2004; Bennett et al., 2007) that instances where news access have been granted to unofficial sources have resulted from exceptional circumstances. These exceptional situations included an instance whereby a significant level of social protest forced more activist issues into news coverage and less official sourcing domination than would normally be expected (Bennett, et al., 2004, p. 446); it also included an unexpected event that did not garner an immediate official reaction (i.e., Hurricane Katrina coverage). Both of these exceptional circumstances, it is argued, provided openings for more critical content and press independence.

Similarly, there is a significant wing of the literature that has exclusively concerned itself with what it argues as a growing amount of instances of press independence (Althaus, 2003; Althaus et al., 1996; Fico & Soffin, 1995; Lawrence, 2000; Livingston & Eachus, 1996; Shane, 2005; Toobin, 2006). Ironically, most of these references just noted are scholars from the indexing tradition, which has otherwise generally undertaken arguments in favor of a *lack* of press independence. The fact that these two contradicting points of view can harmoniously exist and even compliment one another within the same model of news analysis goes far in elucidating the focus and concern with analyzing nuance and exceptionalism, as opposed to getting lost in “big picture” debates and theoretical disagreements.

Unsurprisingly, however, political communication’s strength with its eye for exceptionalism and rather laser-like scientific focus, is also intimately related to what is quite possibly its greatest weakness. While focusing on such specific concerns and nuances, and while also often avoiding ideologically charged debates over more general concerns about press patterns, political communication often forgets the big picture entirely. In the worst of these instances, the analysis can tend toward ahistorical and/or lacking in critical analysis. This weakness, however, relates directly to what is arguably political economy’s greatest strength.

Analytical strengths of the political economy literature

Political economy, far more than political communication, attempts to understand the “big picture” (McChesney & Foster, 2003). General patterns in news media content are related not only to politics and public policy making, but also to economics and how that impacts news content (as well as politics and society in general) (McChesney et al., 1998). These news patterns are identified and when appropriate, criticized (Herman & Chomsky, 2002).

In particular and even more distinctive from its political communication scholarly counterparts, economics and their institutions are integrated into the mix of communications and news content analysis. Mosco, who undertook an extensive mapping of the field, points out how political economists have often undertaken revealing analyses in terms of capitalism and its related state-corporate interests (1998, p. 93). Such works undertaking these analyses of state-capitalism have pointed to state-corporate interests and their relationship with news media content (Schiller, 1992).

Its focus on the large picture is so unique within social science scholarship that political economy sometimes identifies trends that really should not have been as elusive and difficult to put a finger on in the first place. A prime example of this is Herbert Schiller’s pioneering work into the one-way flow of international communications and news distribution. For about a quarter century following the invention of television, the dominant model in terms of the flow of international communications within the audiovisual industry was indeed best described as a one-way street. Schiller was the first pioneer to appropriately advance the concept of “cultural imperialism.”²⁶ This concept described the general pattern, which occurred during an era best described as the period of the one-way flow of communications, and the myriad of related examples that illustrated the ways in which cultural imperialism manifested itself (1992). This critical concept relates to a second strength of political economy.

Political economy boasts analysis that overwhelmingly tends toward the critical end of the spectrum, firmly distancing itself from conventional perspectives that relate more to the distortions emanating from the sectors of power and wealth, as opposed to an accurate picture of reality that is independent from the power centers. In this vein then, political economic news analyses have focused not only on the general patterns found in

media performance, but also the dichotomous tendencies that amply reveal a lack of press independence from White House positioning.

Given their tendencies toward more critical analyses, it should perhaps come as no surprise that political economists attempt to make their work related to a social and political praxis of one variety or another (Mosco, 2005, p. 36). As Mosco elucidates:

Praxis is important to both the epistemological and substantive premises of political economy . . . Those schooled in the Marxian tradition explicitly united the role of political economist and activist in, for example, Gramsci's conception of the organic intellectual . . . [where] the intellectual [is] schooled in both the theoretical tools of analysis and the common sense of practical political struggle and resistance (Mosco, 1998, p. 38).

This focus on praxis is a far cry from most political communication scholars, which if anything, intentionally attempt to distance their works from praxis. If an impact or social change of some sort is sought by political communication practitioners, it is usually within the limited bounds of mainstream debate between the two political parties. Further, this emphasis on praxis is a more democratic form of scholarship and comes closer to fulfilling the noble ideals and goals advanced by John Dewey in terms of the social responsibilities of Western intellectuals.²⁷

Analytical weaknesses of the political economy literature

Most of political economy's weaknesses relate almost directly to political communication's strengths. This is all the more reason why more inter-disciplinary work between these two subfields is needed, given the promising potential to yield more comprehensive and robust theoretical work that has been previously lacking in both subfields.

Scholarship done within political economy too often lacks original studies and data. Scientific statistics (i.e. reliability) and content analyses are not used as nearly as often as they are in political communication works. There is a clear over-reliance on secondary literature and evidence within political economy, and while original research and study is still plentiful, it is too often not as scientifically extensive and as empirically extensive as the works in political communication.

This is not to say that political economic research is not empirically rich in and of itself, however. Indeed, it is vital to note that the reason for a lack of institutionally sponsored research is *not* related to an inherent weakness in the field's methodology or

analytical approach and instead, is a simple question of resources. As has been duly pointed out by Mosco, critical political economists are marginalized in terms of institutional support:

[Critical political economists] continue work largely as isolated individuals. It is hard to speak of research centers, since collaborative work is largely the product of mutual interests among individuals generally in the face of, at best, tepid institutional support and often outright opposition (1998, p. 70).

This resource-starved situation is especially distinctive of their more resource-rich political communication counterparts. Given this situation, it is probably no coincidence that political economists often focus on the larger picture at stake.

Even though the tendency toward a bird-eye analysis in political economy is its strength, it is indeed also a weakness. A loss of nuance and a lack of awareness of exceptionalism is too often seen in political economic work, especially when it is more critical in orientation. This goes against its concern for praxis and social advancement, as even though exceptions are by nature less important, they are still significant, especially for society's most vulnerable and exploited sectors (hence the tension between this weakness and praxis), as even small changes can make a significant difference in the lives of the most exploited. Identifying exceptions is a task that is direly needed for garnering more effective strategic and tactical analysis in terms of activist and movement decision making.

Ironically, this same line of criticism has been used by scholars within the political economist camp and a recent book even focuses exclusively on addressing one of the largest labor victories in recent years in relationship to its media strategies and related news coverage (Kumar, 2007). Other political economy scholars have also concerned themselves with this exceptionalism because of the related tactical and strategic concerns for political activism (Sparks, 2007). Both of these radical analysts have criticized Herman and Chomsky's work (2002) for overlooking exceptions and not having a component with which to analyze them or other more tactical considerations for activism (Kumar, 2007, p. 149).

Analytical weaknesses of the political communication literature

Political communication's over-attenuation to politics and scientific methodology at the virtually complete expense of an integrated economic analysis has some real and

damaging consequences in terms of resultant analytical faults and weaknesses. This can result in scholars placing a disproportionate emphasis on events, such as the ending of the Cold War, as being more influential than they really were on news content, as will be demonstrated in the case of Entman (2004). Similarly, an under-emphasis on media institutions and important public policies that impact them, such as the Telecommunications Act of 1996, results in a dearth of critical analysis too often found in the political communication literature. Lastly, incorrect sources of culpability (i.e. journalists) are too often inappropriately blamed in the literature.

Arguably the most important weakness with the political communication literature does not have to do with what is addressed by the authors, but instead, with what goes *unaddressed*. Thus, the question is what kind of missed opportunities does the literature suffer from in not having addressed news media performance in a more institutionally-oriented analysis?

The increasingly corporate character of the media and its concentration in the hands of a few media conglomerates has undoubtedly affected sourcing tendencies and resulting story content (McChesney, 2000, 2004), but the political communication literature does not address this as a significant factor in its analysis. In a rare instance where an author in the literature even addressed how the media is largely “market-driven,” it was done so in a manner that afforded considerable power and influence to media consumers (Massing, 2004), as opposed to the multi-billion dollar advertising industry or other entrenched and powerful institutional interests. The public relations industry and its power and sway over news content is all but completely unaddressed by the political communication literature, despite the fact that it has been a decade since the amount of people spinning the news surpassed the amount of people writing it (Stauber & Rampton, 1995).

Given the lack of identification of these institutional and economic factors, perhaps it is unsurprising that the literature often holds the notion that the lack of media independence is an incidental, not consistent problem. It is mostly the more critical indexing theorists that avoid this problem (Alexseev & Bennett, 1995; Bennett, 1991; Bennett & Manheim, 1993; Dorman & Livingston, 1994; Eilders & Lüter, 2000; Nacos, 1990; Zaller & Chiu, 1996), while other political communication scholars such as

Entman go so far as to assert that ever since the end of the Cold War, media performance has been more nuanced and challenging to Presidential policies.

Despite misperceptions to the contrary, institutional analysis of the media in no way overlooks the importance of newsroom values. However, it not only highlights such values, but also explains more fully how such values often *encourage* official sourcing tendencies (it is cheaper to undertake) *and* also *deter* investigative reporting (it is more expensive and riskier). Instead, the sourcing tendencies that *were* commented on extensively were done so without any substantive linkage to the overarching corporate structures and their interests. When such structures and interests were briefly mentioned, several authors (Bennett, 1991; Mermin, 1999) confused critical institutional analysis as having posited that crude interventions take place by corporate ownership over journalists.

The political communication literature is not the only one that displays this weakness. Even more critical accounts, such as Friel and Falk's exhaustive and well documented critique of the *New York Times* editorial performance (2004), also managed to overlook the corporate structure. Instead, the emphasis is on the editorial and managerial practices of the *New York Times*, suggesting then that a change to such practices could produce fundamental change to the *Times* as well.

One common strength in most political communication scholarship, and seen amongst all authors reviewed in this paper, is that they generally correctly identify the official sourcing tendencies of the U.S. news media. Even though there were some differences on the questions of how long these tendencies have existed and to what extent they were at work, in at least general terms, all authors critically identified such tendencies. At the same time, this common strength was directly related to a common weakness amongst the authors as well: attribution of such sourcing tendencies was almost exclusively given to that of working journalists and reporters without any connection or linkages made to the overarching media structures and institutions.

Mermin (1999, p. 145) uniformly faults journalists with official sourcing tendencies, while Bennett implicates both journalists and to a lesser degree, the public (1991, p. 124). Entman, to his credit, cites economic interests as being part of the mix that accounts for sourcing tendencies (2004: 92), but nonetheless directs most of his attention and concern to newsroom organization and sociological variables.

Identifying whom the authors assign their prescriptions and solutions to improve media performance reveals additional insight into where these authors assign culpability for sourcing tendencies. In Entman's case, he advocates enhanced polling techniques that would help public officials feel less "constrained" and less "fearful" of public opinion (2004, pp. 164-165); new editorial positions at newspapers meant to activate the further spread of ideas (pp. 165-166); and a new "independent" position for public officials that would be filled by former politicians, retired military officers, defense policy intellectuals and university professors (p. 167). Entman does not address media institutions themselves, despite the clear connection he draws between the news media business and the troubling official sourcing phenomenon. Bennett does not offer detailed solutions, but he does speak of journalism schools and their practices, as well as a radical shift to the left in public opinion, as being possible correctives to the media problem (1990, p. 124). Mermin explicitly faults journalists and just as explicitly prescribes solutions to them (1999, pp. 145-149).

None of the authors reviewed in this paper would probably take kindly to a comparison to "right-wing" critics of the media, who argue that the media's main problem is its "liberal" leanings. Indeed, most would agree that the commercial and corporate news media is only as "liberal" as its conservative business owners allow it to be. Distressingly true, however, is the fact that *both* "right-wing" critics of the media *and* the many political communication scholars focus their energies on "the actions of individual reporters and editors as the independent variable," to borrow McChesney's words in his description of "right-wing" media critics (1992, p. 2). While it is true that different conclusions are reached between the bulk of the authors reviewed here and "right-wing" media critics in terms of what the resulting weaknesses of the media are, the source of the problems are the same. This is a major weakness of the analysis largely offered by the political communication literature.

There is a small, but formidable set of political communication scholars who argue that the press has become more independent, particularly following the end of the Cold War (Althaus et al., 1996; Althaus, 2003; Entman, 2004; Fico & Soffin, 1995; Livingston & Eachus, 1995). While some of these studies display meritorious points backed up by extensive evidence and data (Althaus, 2003), others hinge much of their

analysis on dubious political analysis. In particular, Entman relies heavily on the assumption that “the fading Cold War paradigm” factors largely into resulting news coverage (2004, p. 19).²⁸ However, Entman makes the mistake of assuming that the indexing and propaganda models rely on the “Cold War” (2004, p. 4), in spite of the fact that one of the co-authors of the latter model has explicitly argued that the “Cold War” was mostly a distraction from North-South relations and the resource conflicts surrounding such relations (Chomsky, 1982). Others have echoed similar arguments in recent scholarship, whereby Entman’s underlying assumptions on the Cold War have been completely challenged by the continuity thesis, which argues that essential North-South relations have not changed even since the end of the Cold War (Stokes, 2003).

In addition to the well-written critique of the discontinuity thesis that the post-Cold War explanations are based on, the most recent research findings on news coverage of Iraq also serve as strong evidence against the post-Cold War thesis serving as a reliable factor of explanation for supposed additions to independent news content. In this sense, the “war on terrorism” has supplanted and even superseded in some ways the powerful frame and narrative of anti-communism that was dominant throughout much of the Cold War (but indeed, arguably continuing through today’s climate as well, especially given U.S. hostility toward Latin American social democracies).

Moeller undertook an extensive review of U.S. news coverage on the Bush administration’s WMD justifications for invading Iraq and found that such claims it were widely accepted without critical evaluation or questioning (2004). Livingston and Robinson conducted their own Iraq study and found that U.S. news coverage served to aid a successful propaganda campaign that inaccurately linked Al Qaeda to Saddam Hussein. They concluded their article by faulting internal institutional failings in the *New York Times*, and a hostile political environment against dissent and criticism of the Bush administration, for the subservient news coverage (2004, pp. 34-35). Entman described coverage of the invasion of Fallujah as nothing less than the “homogeneity of institutionalized news” (2006), while Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston strongly criticized the news media for euphemistically covering prison torture as “abuse” (2006). Can all of these news media performance failings be reconciled with the assumption that qualitatively different news content should be found during the post-Cold War era when

it comes to coverage of U.S. foreign policy? The findings from scholarly studies on Iraq coverage have at least suggested that the answer is a definitive ‘no.’

Most (not all) research findings still consistent with political economic analysis

In spite of these theoretical differences, some of the most important research findings in the political communications literature are nonetheless consistent with a political economic analysis of the current state of affairs in the news media system and its related performance and content. There are many examples that can be found in recent scholarship alone.

In Bennett’s work presenting his multi-gated model, he wrote that “under pressures of commercial profit and political spin, the most glaring result may be the dwindling space for serious political news itself,” (2004, p. 283) echoing the same concerns that were frequently raised in the most recent work done by McChesney and Nichols (2009). Bennett also found that an over-reliance on official sources and related indexing tendencies are present even in the digital age where the organizational gatekeeping model continues its dominance (pp. 285, 292) and that infotainment continues to be an important problem and is related to the increasingly commercial character of the journalism industry (pp. 292, 299). Hoge (1997) found that newspapers have drastically reduced international news coverage from the 1970’s (during a time of lessened corporate control of the industry, as political economists have noted) to the 1990’s (during the dawn of hyper-commercialism, as again, political economists have noted), mimicking similar findings by Norris (1995; 1997). A similar trend can be found in the national newsweeklies over the same periods of time, which also reduced foreign affairs coverage (Hickey, 1998). Lastly, while journalists may include procedural criticism in their content from time to time, often indexing the debate in Washington, substantive criticism continues to be sorely lacking (Robinson et al., 2010, pp. 130-131). In other words, when it comes to the specific and most important research findings of political communication and their compatibility with many of the theoretical tenets that are the most near and dear to political economy, there is no conflict between these two subfields.

One thing, however, is certain in terms of an irreconcilable difference between the two subfields. Enhanced polling techniques of public opinion for public officials (2005,

pp. 164-165); asking journalists to push the envelope with the false assumption that they have not done so before (Mermin, 1999, pp. 145-149); waiting for a radical shift to the left in public opinion (Bennett, 1990, p. 124); and assuming that the end of the Cold War will or already has brought on an era of cantankerous amongst journalists in spite of a lack of institutional change (Althaus et al, 1996; Althaus, 2003; Entman, 2004; Fico & Soffin, 1995; Livingston & Eachus, 1996) all are based on an assumption that changing journalistic standards and/or specific aspects of the news system is the main antidote needed to correct weaknesses of the news media system. This assumption is at odds with the criticism that the system itself is inherently flawed due to its commercial, corporate, conglomerate and for-profit character more so than professional journalist standards. News media problems are institutional and not merely about journalism training or standards. It is also at odds with the critique that the news media system fulfills an important function, beyond profit-making: maintaining and fostering cultural hegemony.

Cultural Hegemony

If the political economy of the press and its for-profit, corporate character is indeed the largest factor responsible for press dependency, what are the societal consequences? Insufficient theoretical work has been done on this question and not enough emphasis has been placed on the functional incapability of the press to challenge the “objective realism” espoused by the corporate news media system. News media performance articulates a hegemonic block which translates, in modern times, into a neo-liberal ideological hegemony and serves the function of making the world make sense to the educated classes. The MDM assumes that the press is incapable of this because the press is a dependent institution and thus contributes to cultural hegemony in this important sense. Cultural hegemony, however, is a dense theoretical concept that has a rich scholarly and theoretical history well worth exploring, which this section of the chapter will undertake.

Hegemony is comprised by a complex layering of social structures, each with its own logic and mission; however, each mission coalesces and produces a larger structure that has an encompassing overall mission that assumes and subsumes smaller missions. A relevant example of this is how the different parts of the news media, in spite of having differing agendas, ultimately coalesce to support state-corporate interests through

subservience to the state-corporate apparatus with which they are intimately linked. Prominent illusions of differing circumstances, diversity and the free will of individuals obscure the overlying structural realities that are intimately related to the larger phenomenon of the cultural hegemonic order (Gramsci, 1994, pp. 233-238).

Gramsci on the media and hegemony

Similar to how Dewey and Lippmann observed and identified the importance of the mass media and its impact on society even during its nascent stages, Gramsci also pointed to the vital role that the media played in relation to hegemony during the same historical period. Gramsci's notes on journalism had two main purposes, one was gaining a detailed understanding of how the "bourgeois press" was organized and another was providing an even more detailed layout of how the proletariat can marshal resources to oppose the press of the "dominant class" and the kind of organization required to do so. While Gramsci's layout for the opposition is described by editors of his cultural writings as that of "meticulous planning," this chapter's concerns lie more with Gramsci's analysis of the "bourgeois press" (Forgacs & Nowell-Smith, in Gramsci, 1985).

Much of Gramsci's analysis of the press is based on his own personal experiences as a practicing journalist in Turin, during a time when he witnessed the fusion of the press with finance capital and the political class in the first few decades of the 20th century. An increase of the dependence newspapers had on funding through advertising further strengthened the ideological parity between interests in the government and business to the point where Gramsci called the press the "real parties" in Italy (Gramsci, 1975b; Gramsci, 1985).

Gramsci intimately linked the press with ideology by having argued that the press served as the "most prominent and dynamic part" of the "ideological structure of a dominant class." This "ideological structure," to Gramsci, was nothing less than a "formidable complex of trenches and fortification of the dominant class." Gramsci called for a serious study of the press that would provide, "a living historical model of such a structure, [because] it would accustom one to a more cautious and exact estimate of the forces acting in society" (Gramsci, 1975b ntbk. 3, nt. 49). One of the principal objectives of the MDM is to be a "living historical model of [the news media] structure" and indeed, given the many parallels between hegemony and the theoretical implications of the MDM,

Gramsci would have likely deemed the MDM to be a modest attempt at waging such a “serious study.”

The editors of Gramsci’s cultural writings do not mince words in their own estimation of the importance Gramsci attributed to the press, which was considered to perform the, “crucial function of articulating policy and organizing consent around particular issues . . .” (Forgacs & Nowell-Smith, in Gramsci, 1985, p. 386). The phrase “organizing consent” is basically synonymous with the way that the PM and MDM both conceptualize Lippmann’s “manufacturing consent,” especially since the press in Italy during the time that Gramsci was writing had low circulation figures, but still had a considerable influence as a “powerful ideological and political force” (Forgacs & Nowell-Smith, in Gramsci, 1985, p. 385).²⁹ This is remarkably similar to a phenomenon synonymous with the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, the sources with which the MDM most concerns itself. The *Times* and the *Post* are indeed *not* the dailies with the highest circulation figures, as both have trailed consistently behind two other nationally distributed dailies in terms of circulation (the *USA Today* and the *Wall Street Journal*) (BurrellsLuce 2007; 2010).

Reading like an argument postulated by Alex Carey, one of the most important theoretical influences on the hegemonic models, several Gramscian scholars have noted Gramsci’s point that in representative democracies, “‘organs of public opinion’ always accompanies the use of force in order to assure wide approval of that choice, even if such consent can only be gained by fraud.” Such fraud tends to “mask the lack of consensus” by having the most prominent leaders “proclaim grand moral principles to justify the use of force” (Augelli & Murphy, 1993, p. 128).³⁰ One doesn’t need to look farther back than the U.S.-led invasion and occupation of Iraq, and the attempts made by the White House to foster consensus, to find examples of fraudulent rationalizations being utilized to justify war and invasion (Bennett et al., 2007; Livingston & Robinson, 2006).

The link between cultural hegemony and the media pre-dates the full development of the mass media. Thus, in terms of the application of hegemony to the relationship between transnational media and the international political economy of today’s world, analysis has been undertaken by contemporary scholars of Gramsci. Worth, a critical scholar in the field of international relations, argues that Gramsci helps us, “understand

how media and communications industries provide a key contribution towards the consolidation of hegemony.” Worth writes that particularly in the West, “the emergence of a secure transnational media system” has been integral to the propagandizing of “the common ideological goal that [transnational media corporations share with Western states and thus] propels them as additional agents for both the social-cultural preservation and the transportation of neoliberal hegemony” (2005, pp. 52-53). Worth points to evidence of this phenomenon in a variety of sectors, including the “widespread acknowledgements” amongst scholars on the homogenization of consumer products worldwide and the central role that advertising and transnational corporate media promotion has played in furthering the spread of such homogenized “global” products. To Worth, such occurrences exemplify how today’s form of hegemony is evidenced when multi-national corporations combine neo-liberal ideology with international trade and are able to exploit this powerful combination using their own news media in order to realize unprecedented profits (2005, pp. 50-51).

This form of hegemony has also been significantly aided by states that have gone out of their way to craft laws and reforms which encourage the expansion of this phenomenon, a trend amply documented by international economist Strange (1996) and criticized by Chomsky (1993) in terms of international trade. Leading political economists of communications, such as McChesney and Schiller, have gone a step farther arguing that the active role that national governments have taken in bringing about transnational media expansion, through integral legislative support of media concentration, can now justify characterizing such global media conglomerates as a central cornerstone of the current global economic order (2003). By extension, a Gramscian scholar could argue, as Worth largely does in his own work through extensive citation of Herman and McChesney (Worth, 2005, pp. 52-54), that this is a major reason why transnational corporate media conglomerates comprise a central part of global hegemony.

The “Facts of Domination”

The MDM draws a lot of its theoretical inspiration from a synthesis of political communication and political economy, and more specifically, of the IM and PM. However, one of the largest matters of confusion surrounding the “hegemonic models”

has simply been its focus and what it sets out to measure. In the case of the PM, Herman admitted that his co-author and him were partially responsible for this and should have been clearer that they were intending to simply measure media performance in relation to the structural basis of the U.S. news media's political and economic bearings (2000). Nonetheless, responses to the PM have often lobbied critiques of it as being too conspiratorial, deterministic, functionalistic and underestimating of opposition and resistance.³¹

Interestingly enough, similar reactions have been lobbied against the concept of hegemony as well, to the point that Williams felt compelled to address the issue (1973). Instead of conceptualizing hegemony as an oversimplified concept then, Williams argued that the complexity of hegemony should be appreciated as a penetrating influence on consciousness that is intimately tied to a structural and material basis. The relationship between hegemony and structure should be respected and understood in all social science research, Williams reasoned. In a tract written by Williams that harkens one back to similar points made in Chomsky's well-known critique of behaviorism (1959), he writes that:

. . . if ideology was merely some abstract imposed notion, if our social and political and cultural idea and assumptions and habits were merely the result of specific manipulation, of a kind of overt training which might be simply ended or withdrawn, the society would be very much easier to move and to change than in practice it has ever been or is. This notion of hegemony as deeply saturating the consciousness of a society seems to be fundamental. And hegemony has the advantage over general notions of totality, that it at the same time emphasizes the facts of domination (1973, p. 8).

It is precisely the "facts of domination" that all of the hegemonic models so concern themselves with in relation to news media performance and its related structures. In doing so, however, these models also concern themselves with facts that are intimately related to the process and phenomenon of hegemony in terms of its impact on the ideology of the educated classes, which unlike the PM, the MDM does not fail to elucidate in its supporting theoretical work.

It would be misleading to solely suggest, however, that all Gramscian-influenced intellectuals have fallen in line with the matter of focusing on the "facts of domination." Given the inherent complexities of the process of cultural hegemony, to which Williams

himself also alluded above, some intellectuals with admitted sympathies to Gramsci have taken an overtly critical stance toward the PM. The most important and relevant example to the MDM is the critique by Hallin of the PM (1994, pp. 12-13).

Hallin's critique

Hallin's Gramscian-oriented critique of the PM is that it is "perfectly unidimensional" and "flat and static, which gives us no way of understanding change or variation" (1994, p. 13). To Hallin, there have been both more nuanced Gramscian analyses and more rigid approaches. Hallin endeavors to undertake the former and criticizes the latter, which he implicitly attributes to the PM. Thus in this sense, Hallin did not deny the parallel that the PM shares with a Gramscian approach. But Hallin did criticize the PM for reflecting only one function of the media (p. 13) while also highlighting Althusser's Gramscian approach as being the "most extreme example ... of [Gramscian] functionalism" (p. 79). For Hallin, a more nuanced Gramscian approach to analyzing the media would find: "a process by which a world-view compatible with the existing structure of power in society is reproduced, a process which is decentralized, open to contradiction and conflict, but generally very effective" (p. 12). Hallin asserts that it isn't the case, which he quotes from Altheide (1984) as incorrectly suggesting, that "journalistic routines must be shown to 'negate any journalistic independence' ... if the 'hegemonic' perspective is to be confirmed." This misinterpretation fails to grasp "the entire intent of the concept of hegemony, [which] is precisely to explain how ideological boundaries can be maintained in modern capitalist societies *without* rigid control of political communication" (Hallin, 1994, p. 80).

In the midst of what admittedly are other substantive disagreements,³² Hallin fails to realize that the PM *does* take on a similar Gramscian view to his own when it comes to media content. Ironically, Hallin's endeavor to "explain how ideological boundaries can be maintained *without* rigid control" is very akin to the assumption made by Herman and Chomsky, duly revealed on the first page of their 2002 edition of *Manufacturing Consent*, when they clarified that, "... the performance of the U.S. media is normally not accomplished by crude intervention" (p. xi), and as a result of the lack of such rigid control, "individual and professional values [can] influence media work ... and that media policy itself may allow some measure of dissent and reporting that calls into

question the accepted viewpoint” (xii). Finally, both authors importantly *agree* “that the system is not monolithic,” which is its “beauty” (Herman & Chomsky, 2002, p. xii), incredibly similar to Hallin having stated that this is precisely the “evidence of the *strength*, not the weakness, of ideological hegemony” (Hallin, 1994, p. 80).*

As opposed to differences between Hallin’s and Herman and Chomsky’s analytical approaches to media content lying with opposing Gramscian theoretical components, instead, it is simply what content tendencies they intend to measure most which is distinctive. While Hallin finds a critique of “cultural institutions [being too] closely tied to the structure of power [to be] ... too obvious to be interesting,” (12) the PM conversely seeks to document just such a tendency, while not offering a more comprehensive model that takes into account press exceptionalism.³³ This was accurately described by one Chomsky biographer, who wrote that: “[undertaking a] kind of micro-analysis is not the task of the Propaganda Model. The model [simply] provides an overview of the system at work, making sense out of a confusing picture by extracting the main principles of the system” (Rai, 1995, p. 46). In other words, just because Hallin seeks to measure more than the “main principles” and prefers to also take into account when “the system is not monolithic,” does not mean that Herman and Chomsky more bird’s eye oriented critique negates that such variation can occur or that they take on a different Gramscian approach.

More important than the somewhat subtle theoretical distinctions outlined above, which the MDM does *not* see as being mutually exclusive, is the question of hegemonic ideology and how it is transmitted through the lack of independent content in the U.S. news media. On this matter, there is a broader agreement between Hallin and Herman and Chomsky, especially evident with Hallin writing that “the hegemonic process was in fact at work in Central America reporting,” (1994, p. 12) as it was “holding communication within limits relatively less threatening to the established order” (80). Directly addressing these matters, Herman wrote that “This is exactly what the propaganda model would forecast” (2000, p. 106).

* The simple factor of timing, however, may explain this confusion. Herman and Chomsky’s first edition of *Manufacturing Consent* (1988) was written before Hallin’s critique of the PM (1994). The *second* edition of *Manufacturing Consent* more clearly emphasized the existence of press exceptionalism and variation (2002, p. xii), but this more prominently stated clarification was indeed published *after* (and perhaps in part, in response to) Hallin’s 1994 critique in 2002.

Gramsci on the role of intellectuals

The role of intellectuals in the process of hegemony has been described by scholars of Gramsci as being nothing less than “essential,” as they are “actors in the ideological struggle” (Augelli & Murphy, 1993, p. 131). Gramsci himself wrote that, “The role of intellectuals is to represent the ideas that constitute the terrain where hegemony is exercised,” to such an extent where what is normally deemed as “‘politics’ to the productive class becomes ‘rationality’ to the intellectual class” (1975b: II, 1084; I, 134). Complete failure is predicted for “potential hegemons,” who do not inculcate, “other intellectuals with the dominant world-view,” in fulfilling the essential task of “assimilating them to the hegemon’s cause” (Augelli & Murphy 1993, p. 131).

Is the phenomenon of intellectuals being inculcated and assimilated to the hegemon’s cause present in modern society? Most scholars of Gramsci would probably concur with Arrighi, who in an anthology of specialists on Gramsci, argued that the current world hegemon is clearly the U.S. and the “instruments of world government” that it currently wields, which were defined as, “The Bank of International Settlements, the IMF, and the World Bank.” These instruments can be said to even “parallel the instruments of world government wielded by the United Kingdom in the nineteenth century” (Arrighi, 1993, p. 182). As a whole, Arrighi was describing neo-liberalism and corporate globalization as forming an essential part of today’s hegemonic force in the world.

The consistent support which intellectuals in the U.S. (and beyond, in many cases) have shown for neo-liberalism clarifies one of the central theoretical points of the MDM: the educated classes in the U.S., and intellectuals in particular, tend to be the most propagandized segment of society when it comes to foreign affairs reporting. Standing in sharp contrast to this kind of positioning on neo-liberalism is the general public’s well-known and long standing opposition to it. Just as importantly, the consistent support shown by U.S. intellectuals for neo-liberalism has been mirrored by the U.S. news media, which during the 1990’s was nearly euphoric in its support for “globalization” to the point that Herman wrote it should be part of the fifth filter of the PM, together with “anti-communism” (2000) and “anti-terrorism” (2007). With the example of neo-liberalism, we can see how Gramsci’s concept of hegemony and its vital requirement of garnering the

support of intellectuals has translated to the present state of affairs in the U.S. and beyond, while also then intimately tying itself to the propaganda model's theoretical conceptions and assumptions.

The support that intellectuals and educated classes have shown in the U.S. for neo-liberalism and corporate globalization is *not* mirrored by the support from the general population. This contrast is not an exception and has even been addressed and rationalized by intellectuals. The lead editorial columnist for the *New York Times*, Thomas Friedman, who is highly revered by liberal intellectuals, routinely derides public opposition to neo-liberalism. Writing in the wake of what is often cited as the most important protest in the northern hemisphere against corporate-globalization, Friedman described the protesters in Seattle as a "Noah's ark of flat-earth advocates," characterizing their proposals as nothing but "nonsense" (1999). The fact that a large portion of the U.S. agrees with such nonsensical proposals even resulted in a public relations crisis in the wake of massive protests and public opposition to the World Bank and IMF meetings in 2001, which in turn prompted many campaigns from PR firms offering a chance to their corporate clients to rehabilitate their badly tainted image.

Differences in terms of support for policies between the public and more educated sectors have unsurprisingly resulted not in a democratic stoppage of such damaging policies, but instead, in an even more fervent promulgation of them. In a growing proportion of some of Chomsky's most recent works, these differences are documented in relation not only to neo-liberalism, but also to policies relating to the Vietnam War and the invasion of Iraq (2003, 2006).

While the link between the importance of the support of intellectuals in Gramsci's conceptualization of hegemony and the MDM is clear and in concert with each other, there is an important difference which remains. Gramsci made no distinction as to whether hegemony would imbibe itself more on intellectuals or the masses, and if anything, was more concerned with the effect and impact it had on the masses.³⁴ In terms of the MDM, the argument is that hegemony's effect on the masses is one of distraction, as opposed to inculcation. A closer look at the specific historical circumstances surrounding the U.S. and its development beyond the scope of Gramsci's writings explains how this difference fostered itself and was reflected in historical developments.

The Power Elite

The crystallization of the modern-day bourgeoisie by the post World War II era, whose current form has essentially stayed the same up to the present, is elaborated in great detail with exhaustive documentary evidence and statistics by C. Wright Mills (1959). In a strikingly similar fashion to many of Chomsky's critical works on military and corporate power, Mills was especially concerned with unveiling the powerful structures and institutions that too often escape the critical lens of intellectuals.

Particularly during the era that Mills was writing in, his criticism was unique and original.³⁵ Not even Mills himself, who has been correctly dubbed as a "Radical Nomad" (Hayden, 2006),³⁶ would be surprised that his intellectual pursuits have been most relevant to struggles waged by social movements. Similarly, the MDM's applicability is particularly useful for social movements and civil society in general.

Tragically, Mills did not live long enough to write directly about the mass media, propaganda and culture, as a "projected volume on the 'cultural apparatus' was a casualty of his untimely death" (Gitlin, 2000, p. 238). Nonetheless, Mills's work is still important when addressing the development of propaganda, because he describes in vast and exhaustive detail the institutional consequences of hegemony for the modern-day state-capitalist system in the U.S. This is the idea of the power elite and its related interlocking structures and interests, to which the rise of the corporate media became an integral part. Mills wrote frequently of, "The new state of corporate commissars," a direct reference to the main function of today's educated classes, to act as "cultural managers" and administrators of the modern-day corporate-state (1959, p. 274).³⁷

Such concepts harkens one back to Chomsky and his first major published work dealing with politics, which was entitled "American Power and the New Mandarins." "Mandarins" was a reference to the ancient Chinese advisors of the monarchs from the age of dynasties. As such, it should come as no surprise that one of Mills' favorite targets is similar to that of Chomsky's, that of "liberal practicality." Mills wrote critically about liberal intellectuals and their "set of bureaucratic techniques which inhibit social inquiry by methodological pretensions, which congest such work by obscurantist conceptions, or which trivialize it by concern with minor problems unconnected to with publicly relevant issues" (1959, p. 20).³⁸

The methodological critique of Mills strongly parallels the MDM. The model is meant to principally address media *performance* and *behavior*, a very different measure than media *effects*. There is a reason behind this choice, as progressive and incisive scholarly critics of the media have long steered away from traditional effects research given its tendency to operate within sharp constraints. Despite the fact that Mills never wrote a comprehensive work about ideology and the media, this particular point was not lost on the ‘radical nomad’:

Many problems with which its practitioners do try to deal – effects of the mass media, for example – cannot be adequately stated without some structural setting. Can one hope to understand the effects of these media – much less their combined meaning for the development of a mass society – if one studies, with whatever precision, only a population that has been ‘saturated’ by these media for almost a generation? The attempt to sort out individuals ‘less exposed’ from those ‘more exposed’ to one or another medium may well be of great concern to advertising interests, but it is not an adequate basis for the development of a theory of the social meaning of the mass media (Mills, 2000, p. 52).³⁹

A lot of Mills’ critical energies were focused on the lack of independence that academics had from centers of power. Mills partially linked this weakness to the need for corporate propaganda, a connection that sounded resoundingly close to something that Carey (1997) would argue in terms of the U.S. news media:

The power of the modern corporation, for example, is not automatically justified in terms of the liberal doctrines inherited from the eighteenth century that are the main line of legitimate authority in the United States. Every interest and power, every passion and bias, every hatred and hope tends to acquire an ideological apparatus with which to compete with the slogans and symbols, the doctrines and appeals of other interests. As public communications are expanded and speeded up, their effectiveness is worn out by repetition; so there is a continuous demand for new slogans and beliefs and ideologies. In this situation of mass communication and intensive public relations, it would indeed be strange were the social studies immune from the demand for ideological ammunition, and stranger still were social researchers to fail to provide it (Mills, 2000, p. 81).

These substantive parallels between the scholarly work by Mills and the MDM help to elucidate further the theoretical implications of the MDM, namely that of cultural hegemony. The concept of cultural hegemony is a broad one, however, and it raises an important question: which is the group of people that the MDM most concerns itself when it comes to news content and related propagandistic tendencies?

Treetops Propaganda

In one of the more profound quotations from scholarship on communications in the last century, Carey argues that the growth of corporate propaganda was one of the most important trends of the 20th century:

When the twentieth century becomes history it will be seen as distinctive, I believe, for three developments in liberal Western societies: the growth of democracy; the rise of huge concentrations of economic power, known as corporations; and the professionalizing and institutionalizing of propaganda, especially as a means for safe-guarding the power of free-enterprise corporations against democracy. Perhaps our period will eventually be known as the Century of Propaganda. In any case the U.S., which led the growth of democracy and of corporations, has also led the rest of the world by at least fifty years in developing propaganda as a corporate counter to democracy .

Corporate propaganda emanates from what has increasingly become a highly concentrated and corporate-driven media (Bagidikian, 1983, 2004). These developments have only served to further constrain the extent that substantive and incisive public affairs programming make it onto the airwaves (McChesney, 2000, 2004). If anything, recent research shows that the phenomenon of corporate propaganda has become more pervasive and stronger, not less. Corporate propaganda has taken on a variety of forms, but can be chiefly grouped into two categories. Carey made sure to distinguish between two main types of propaganda: grassroots and treetops. This theoretical distinction carries a substantial amount of importance for the MDM and its theoretical implications.

Grassroots propaganda serves the primary purpose of influencing and manipulating public opinion of ordinary people, while also distracting and diverting them into relatively meaningless pursuits (i.e. the NFL and the celebrity “star” system). Carey notes that one of the most successful mass grassroots propaganda campaigns in the U.S. occurred shortly after World War II. Its chief aim was to garner sympathy toward business interests, a venture that was largely realized and documented (Fones-Wolf, 1994). Mills also identified and analyzed grassroots propaganda, whereby he criticized the media for the its tendency to:

... distract [ordinary people] and obscure his chance upon artificial frenzies ... usually by violent action of by what is called humor ... [prominent amongst media is the] chief distracting tension ... between wanting and the not having of commodities or of women held to be good looking. There is almost always the general tone of animated distraction, of suspended agitation ... (1959, p. 315).

As some critical communication scholars have argued, grassroots propaganda is a major element in an inorganic and manufactured “popular” culture that has been largely driven and shaped by corporate institutional interests. This includes Nielsen ratings used by broadcasters to inflate the funding they receive from yet another highly concentrated and corporate dominated industry – advertising (Meehan, 2005). Unlike many other studies of news and propaganda, however, the MDM rests on the assumption that it is not the “masses” which are the most adversely affected by poor media performances from the nation’s most influential news outlets.

Treetops propaganda, conversely to its grassroots counterpart, is aimed at the “traditional” intellectuals described by Gramsci and the “cultural managers” and “mandarins” criticized by Chomsky (1969). Important to note then is that by the 1970’s, Carey observed that “treetops” propaganda had become a major element in national propaganda campaigns as well, including the prominent rise and influence of D.C.-based “think-tanks” (1997, pp. 88-89). Carey elucidates further that *this* type of propaganda, often overlooked and under-studied, is aimed at a, “select group of influential people: policy makers in parliament and the civil service, newspaper editors and reporters, economics commentators on TV and radio” (1997, p. 90). With an agenda-setting purpose that “set the terms of debate,” treetops propaganda attempts to avoid the debate spilling into a question of “manipulative power of contemporary corporations,” (p. 90) a topic that is virtually “off-limits,” to borrow a phrase from the title of one of McChesney’s early (and unsurprisingly) marginalized critiques (1993). In short, treetops propaganda seeks to mold the terms of the debate so as to – as Orwell put it in his suppressed preface – help intellectuals know what facts “it wouldn’t do to mention” (1993, p. 99).

Emanating from the news media and think tanks that cater to the cultural managers of society and being received by the most avid consumers of commercial products,⁴⁰ treetops propaganda is exactly what the MDM will be marshaled to analyze and criticize, in no small part because of its importance in relation to the boundaries of acceptable thought and the related consequences for the extent of its restrictiveness.

The educated classes

The focus of the MDM on treetops propaganda, and the respective news media outlets in which this propaganda most often appears, is not only because they are the most influential outlets, but also because it is presumed that the most deep-seated victims of poor media performance and related propaganda are the educated classes. The theoretical foundations of the MDM concerns itself with the “facts of domination” noted by Williams (1973), criticizes treetops propaganda identified by Carey (1997) and connects these democratic failings to the larger phenomena of cultural hegemony first addressed by Gramsci (1994) and later expounded on by modern-day Gramscian scholars, such as Worth (2005), who pointed toward the neo-liberal hegemonic order.

However, it isn't only the big picture with which the MDM is attentive. Indeed, the specific boundaries between what it “wouldn't do to mention” in the mainstream press and what is routinely covered and present in the marginalized alternative and independent sectors of U.S. media, is far from an unimportant matter, as the demarcation of such boundaries has often resulted in nothing less than serious acts of violence and repression. In this sense, the more restricted the mainstream media is in the boundaries of its hegemonic process, the larger the potential is for state repression and violence (Nerone, 1994).⁴¹ It is this reason that the MDM, unlike other hegemonic models, *does* address when and how exceptions are possible within this system, as well as the broad tendencies for the press to function as a dependent institution which contributes to the hegemonic order.

Conclusion

This chapter argued that the literature of political communication and political economy are compatible and complement one another in respect to their theoretical and methodological strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, greater exploration should thus be undertaken to synthesizing these otherwise isolated subfields of research and study. This survey and review of the literature also served as evidence of the synthesis argument, which comprises a significant part of the theoretical foundation underlying the MDM, as strengths of one field were shown to complement the weaknesses of the other (and vice-versa).

Specifically, the exceptionalist literature on domestic news coverage contributes much empirical understanding in terms of news media performance (Bennett & Lawrence, 1995; Capella & Jamieson, 1997; Fallows, 1997; Lawrence, 2000; Lawrence & Birkland, 2001; Molotch & Lester, 1974, 1975; Patterson, 1993). Many valuable empirical findings have been garnered about high-profile cases of police brutality (Lawrence, 2000, pp. 93, 213); the Exxon Valdez oil spill (Lawrence, 2000, p. 180; Lawrence & Birkland, 2001); the crash of the domestic ValuJet flight in 1996 (Lawrence, 2000, p. 181); Ryan White and AIDS in some 1980s news coverage (Dearing & Rogers, 1996), the nuclear power plant accident of Three Mile Island (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989) and probably pretty soon, the B.P. oil spill into the Gulf of Mexico.

However, a prominent hole exists in this literature: criticism of the news media's failings in terms of its lack of substantive criticism and systematic analysis is scant, especially when it comes to fundamental shortcomings and failures of U.S. policy (as opposed to mere procedural shortcomings). Even more glaring is the lack of theorizing on the institutional and structural factors that often lay behind these media performance failings. Lastly, the exceptionalist literature on foreign news coverage is scant and that which exists is not without its problems, as noted above. The MDM's components, as presented in detail in the next chapter, attempt to fill in the gaps and holes left in the literature in this respects.

Undertaking a bird's eye point of view and analysis, political economy endeavors to understand and explain the "big picture" (McChesney & Foster, 2003). General patterns in news media content are identified, rather than micro-analyzed. Media performance trends are related not only to politics and public policy making, but also to economics and how that in turn impacts news content, as well as societal cultural trends in general (McChesney et al., 1998; Herman & Chomsky, 1988, 2002, 2008). Consequently political economy's focus on the large picture results in pioneering and impacting work, such as Herbert Schiller's scholarship into the one-way flow of international communications and news distribution. Schiller was the first to appropriately advance and criticize the concept of "cultural imperialism" (1992).

The political economy literature is not without its own weaknesses and gaps. A loss of nuance and a lack of awareness of exceptionalism remain at the heart of political

economy's shortcomings, especially when it is more critical in orientation. This goes against its concern for praxis and social advancement, as even though exceptions are by nature less important, they are still significant, especially for society's most vulnerable and exploited sectors (hence the tension between this weakness and praxis), as even small changes can make a significant difference in the lives of society's most vulnerable members. Identifying exceptions is a task that is direly needed for garnering more effective strategic and tactical analysis in terms of activist and movement decision making. Furthermore, scholarship done within political economy too often lacks original studies and data.

The strengths of both fields complementing the other's respective weaknesses should clearly be brought together and this is precisely what the MDM aims to accomplish in synthesizing the propaganda and indexing models together. A synthesis alone, however, does not fill in the remaining theoretical gaps or make the necessary theoretical clarifications that have been missing in the past. Precisely for this reason, this chapter focused on certain theoretical issues that have caused confusion in the past over postulates related to a number of the most prominent models of news analysis in both fields. Undertaking a thorough review of the literature and history behind both fields was one way this problem was combated while exploring necessary theoretical avenues and paths was another.

The literature in political economy has not sufficiently theorized and included hegemony within its theoretical work. While scholarship has gone far to document how the for-profit, commercial and corporate character is the largest factor for press dependency, the question of the societal consequences of this dependency has not been adequately addressed. There has not been enough emphasis placed on the functional incapability of the press to challenge the "objective realism" espoused by the mainstream news media system and its leading sources. As a result, a return to Gramsci was forged in this chapter.

Gramsci called for a serious study of the press that would provide, "a living historical model of such a structure, [because] it would accustom one to a more cautious and exact estimate of the forces acting in society." The MDM, as laid out in detail in the following chapter, ambitiously endeavors to serve as a "living historical model" of the

news media. The MDM's components on exceptionalism (see Tables 3.4 & 3.5 in chp. 3), inspired in grand part by the exploration of the literature surveyed in this chapter, is an attempt to compensate for Hallin's Gramscian-oriented critique of the PM. Hallin wrote that the PM is "perfectly unidimensional" and "flat and static, which gives us no way of understanding change or variation" (1994, p. 13). As a result, the MDM focuses on news media dependency, as well as exceptionalism.

In the end, the functional inadequacies of the press are incapable of challenging the dominant ideology emanated by what Mills aptly termed the "power elite." Alex Carey's theoretical work on propaganda distinguished between two types of propaganda and singled out how "treetops propaganda" was aimed at a, "select group of influential people: policy makers in parliament and the civil service, newspaper editors and reporters, economics commentators on TV and radio" (1997, p. 90). The MDM's components comprise an analysis of the press based on the theoretical premise that the most affected victims of news media performance failings are the educated classes of the U.S.

The MDM's analysis is based on the attempt forged in this chapter to compensate for previous theoretical gaps and weaknesses. It did this by developing arguments based on the following theoretical postulates: the need for the press, in a Deweyian conception, to be responsive to and help engender an active public; the victimization of the educated classes to the failings of the U.S. news media system and the hegemonic function this fulfills; and lastly, the synthesis of the political communication and political economy subfields of communications theory. The latter postulate is amongst the most important ones and is the very basis for the main components of the MDM.

Given that the theoretical strengths of political economy complement the weaknesses present in political communication, while the latter's methodological strengths also complement the weaknesses of the former therein, a complementary synthesis is clearly needed. Instead of having a counter-productive dichotomy between a laser-like focus on exceptions or merely on general patterns in news media content, the MDM is an attempt to capture the big picture while also revealing the many important and relevant details therein, when it comes to news media performance. Going beyond a simple synthesis of the two fields and the respective "hegemonic" models, however, the MDM also compensates for the remaining theoretical weaknesses of the two models,

including the lack of theorization and inclusion of the role and impact that social movements can have on news media content, as well as a number of other original components, all of which are detailed in the next chapter.

**Chapter Two: A Review of the Relevant Literature & Exploration
of the Historical & Theoretical Foundations of the Media Dependence Model**

Endnotes - Page 87

Endnotes

¹ In many cases, these developments have been observed beyond the U.S. as well, as Sussman has duly noted (2004) in terms of the exportation of the commercial model of political campaigning that the U.S. first put forth. The commercial basis of the U.S. news media was also exported many decades ago (Schiller, 1992).

² A worthwhile and extensive debate on conflicting interpretations of Lippmann's elitism and also on the propaganda model occurred between Kurt and Gladys Lang, who argue for a more sympathetic treatment of Lippmann, and Herman and Chomsky, who take a more critical stance. See Lang and Lang, "Noam Chomsky and the Manufacture of Consent for American Foreign Policy," *Political Communication*, 21, pp.93-101, 2004; Herman and Chomsky, "Reply to Kurt and Gladys Engel Lang," *Political Communication*, 21, pp.103-107, 2004; Lang and Lang, "Response to Herman and Chomsky," *Political Communication*, 21, pp.109-111, 2004; Herman and Chomsky, "Further Reply to the Langs," *Political Communication*, 21, pp.113-116, 2004; Lang and Lang, "Afterword," *Political Communication*, Volume 21, Issue 1 January 2004, 21, p.117, 2004.

³ Crispin Miller elaborates on this insightful point, which arguably reveals Bernays's greatest theoretical weakness, by quoting modern advertising and PR agents:

Whatever cause they serve or goods they sell, effective propagandists must believe in it – or at least momentarily believe that they believe in it. Even he or she who propagates commodities must be to some extent a true believer. "To advertise a product you must believe in it. To convince you must be convinced yourself," observes Marcel Bleustein-Blanchet, longtime head of Publicis, the giant French ad agency. "I guess I really believe all those schmaltzy things I say in the ads. It seems to have nothing to do with hardheaded strategies I can work out for marketing products," admits Shirley Polykoff, Clairol's legendary adwoman ("Does she Or doesn't she? Only her hairdresser knows for sure!") (Crispin Miller, 2005, p. 23).

⁴ Lippmann's influence on the communications and political science fields was quite significant and long-lasting. Even a cursory look at some of the most important research conducted on public opinion, voting studies and public relations research quickly reveals as much, as the concept of manufacturing consent as a means to limit democracy to elite management has been supported and developed further by an array of influential liberal scholars, including luminaries such as Harold Lasswell and Edward Bernays (considered to be the father of the modern public relations industry), and later on, Samuel Huntington (who currently edits *Foreign Affairs* and for decades has been one of the most influential scholars on policy making). See Harold Lasswell, "Propaganda," in *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (New York: Macmillan, 1933); Edward Bernays, *Propaganda* (New York: H. Liveright, 1928); M.J. Crozier, S.P. Huntington, and J. Watanuki, *The Crisis of Democracy: Report on the Governability of Democracies to the Trilateral Commission* (New York: New York University Press, 1975); Sir Lewis Namier, who stated, "there is no free will in the thinking and actions of the masses, anymore than in the revolutions of planets, in the migrations of birds, and in the plunging of hordes of lemmings into the sea," in Namier, *England in the Age of the American Revolution* (London: MacMillan, 1961).

⁵ Chomsky has often argued that Dewey's actual ideas and writings have been watered down by mainstream intellectuals. In the following passage, taken from, an excerpt of an interview he did with David Barsamian, Chomsky emphasizes the radical nature of Dewey's writings while relating its downplaying to an achievement of propaganda in terms of its impact on the educated classes, which in turn reflects his repeated conviction that it is intellectuals themselves who represent one of the most impacted segments of U.S. society in terms of being propagandized. This answer was prompted by Barsamian, who originally asked Chomsky about his ideas on Dewey and Russell in light of his focus on these two thinkers:

[Dewey's writings reflected] highly libertarian ideas . . . [as by today's reigning intellectual standards] what [Dewey] actually said would [have him dismissed as] some far-out anti-American lunatic . . . [even though] he was expressing mainstream thinking before the ideological system had so grotesquely distorted the tradition. By now, it's unrecognizable. For example . . . he agreed with the whole Enlightenment tradition that, as he put it, "the goal of production is to produce free people," . . . not to produce commodities. He was a major theorist of democracy [and] held that democracy requires dissolution of private power. He said as long as there is private control over the economic system, talk about democracy is a joke. Repeating basically Adam Smith, Dewey said, "Politics is the shadow that

**Chapter Two: A Review of the Relevant Literature & Exploration
of the Historical & Theoretical Foundations of the Media Dependence Model**

Endnotes - Page 88

big business casts over society” [and that] attenuating the shadow doesn’t do much, [because] reforms are still going to leave [major decisions] to tyrannical [institutions]. His main point was that you can’t even talk about democracy until you have democratic control of industry, commerce, banking, everything. That means control by the people who work in the institutions, and the communities.

These are standard libertarian socialist and anarchist ideas which go straight back to the Enlightenment, an outgrowth of the views of the kind that we were talking about before from classical liberalism. Dewey represented these in the modern period, as did Bertrand Russell, from another tradition, but again with roots in the Enlightenment. These were two of the major, if not the two major thinkers, of the twentieth century, whose ideas are about as well known as the real Adam Smith . . . which is a sign of how efficient the educational system has been, and the propaganda system, in simply destroying even our awareness of our own immediate intellectual background (Chomsky, 1996, pp. 27-31; available online at, “Education is Ignorance,” <<http://www.chomsky.info/books/warfare02.htm>>).

While Dewey represents a strand of radical Enlightenment thought that has been distorted and propagandized to Chomsky, Lippmann’s postulates reflect more of what has come actually to fruition in the present media and political landscape.

⁶ It is worthwhile to note that Mermin specifically objects to the idea that the U.S. news media merely define “*what happened as what the government says happened*” (emphasis in original) (1999, p. 145).

⁷ To Mermin, the correlation version of the indexing hypothesis, which was documented to an exhaustive degree by John Zaller and Dennis Chiu (1996, p. 385-405), “is not a matter of much significance,” (Mermin, 1999, p. 6) or even, “of such great interest” (p. 5). In this sense, Mermin is similar to Bennett, who also does not have a problem with the media parroting official sources when there is disagreement in Washington. Bennett justifies this by lauding the balance between the “buffer” that protects against the “whims and passions of an often ignorant (and unpropertied) mass public” and the “legacy of the press as democratic watchdog,” which reflects the same kind of balance between popular and representative democracy that Bennett admires the founders of the U.S. for having taken (1990, p. 104).

⁸ Mermin’s news media sources consisted of editorials and news reporting from the *New York Times* and also television broadcast news as well (ABC’s World News Tonight and the MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour). Half of the cases were with bipartisan support being present in Washington (between April 1986 and January 1991), while the other half were cases where parties had split over their positions on the intervention at hand (between 1983 and September 1994). Mermin’s independent variable in the study, “reaction to U.S. policy inside the government,” was thus kept to the simple dichotomous description of conflict or consensus (1999, p. 12).

⁹ The Gulf War was expected to be an exception because of the presence of mass demonstrations. Libya was an exceptional case because of the bi-partisan consensus in D.C. that existed alongside dissent amongst NATO allies. The exceptions were not found to be very compelling in terms of media independence, however, because the demonstrations were “framed in negative terms” (also citing Gitlin (1980) as additional evidence from other cases tested) and “the reaction of NATO allies [were reported as being] simply an extension of the definition of official debate.” In other words, the criticism was not fundamental or substantive and instead simply questioned the outcome or execution of the policy (similar to Entman’s concept of procedural and substantive framing, see 2005: 5-6).

**Chapter Two: A Review of the Relevant Literature & Exploration
of the Historical & Theoretical Foundations of the Media Dependence Model**

¹⁰ I drew up the following table to help make sense of Mermin's case studies in his evaluation of indexing open major U.S. Military interventions:

Short Description of Washington Conflict Cases	Short Description of Consensus Cases
1) Invasion of Grenada in 1983	1) Libya in April 1986
2) Doubling of the American deployment in Saudi Arabia in November 1990	2) Invasion of Panama in December 1989
3) Raid on a faction hostile to U.S. forces in Somalia in October 1993	3) Deployment of U.S. troops to Saudi Arabia in August 1990
4) U.S. intervention in Haiti in September 1994	4) Gulf War in January 1991

Appendix

TABLE A.1
Critical Coverage in *New York Times* News Section, Washington Conflict versus Washington Consensus

	<i>Critical Paragraphs</i>	<i>Total Paragraphs</i>	<i>Percentage Critical</i>
Washington Conflict			
Grenada	291	3,524	8.3
Gulf War (November)	154	1,951	7.9
Somalia	231	1,364	16.9
Haiti	127	1,784	7.1
Washington Consensus			
Libya	41	2,533	1.6
Panama	36	2,185	1.6
Gulf War (August)	60	3,756	1.6
Gulf War (January)	182	5,688	3.2

TABLE A.2
Critical Coverage on *World News Tonight*, Washington Conflict versus Washington Consensus

	<i>Critical Paragraphs</i>	<i>Total Paragraphs</i>	<i>Percentage Critical</i>
Washington Conflict			
Grenada	29	323	9.0
Gulf War (November)	21	344	6.1
Somalia	18	168	10.7
Haiti	28	293	9.6
Washington Consensus			
Libya	6	340	1.8
Panama	4	271	1.5
Gulf War (August)	3	856	0.4
Gulf War (January)	47	1,940	2.4

APPENDIX

TABLE A.3
Critical *New York Times* Editorials and Columns, Washington Conflict versus Washington Consensus

	<i>Critical Editorials/ Columns</i>	<i>Total Editorials/ Columns</i>	<i>Percentage Critical</i>
Washington Conflict			
Grenada	12	27	44
Gulf War (November)	10	29	34
Somalia	6	9	67
Haiti	7	18	39
Washington Consensus			
Libya	7	24	29
Panama	2	15	13
Gulf War (August)	1	38	3
Gulf War (January)	7	58	12

TABLE A.4
Critical *MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour* Guests, Washington Conflict versus Washington Consensus

	<i>Critical Guests</i>	<i>Total Guests</i>	<i>Percentage Critical</i>
Washington Conflict			
Grenada	7	18	39
Gulf War (November)	10	27	37
Somalia	11	28	39
Haiti	4	18	22
Washington Consensus			
Libya	6	17	35
Panama	0	17	0
Gulf War (August)	4	70	6
Gulf War (January)	2	46	4

¹¹ Official national newspaper apologies: Howard Kurtz, "[The Post on WMDs: An Inside Story; Prewar Articles Questioning Threat Often Didn't Make Front Page](#)," *Washington Post*, August 12, 2004 (Page A01); Editors, "[The Times and Iraq](#)," *New York Times*, May 24, 2004 (Page A10); Editors, "[The Times and Iraq: A Sample of the Coverage](#)," *New York Times*, May 26, 2004; Daniel Okrent, "[Weapons of Mass Destruction? Or Mass Distraction?](#)" *New York Times*, May 30, 2004; Okrent *wrote*, "I do question the placement [of the official *NYT* apology]: as one reader asked, 'Will your column this Sunday address why the *NYT* buried its editors' note -- full of apologies for burying stories on A10 -- on A10?'"

¹² Unsurprisingly, Mermin does *not* sympathize with the idea found in Michael Massing's series of articles (2004) that the coverage of the Iraq war was an aberration, and instead argues that the "critique of Judith Miller . . . [and] the problem . . . identified is nothing new." Citing Dan Hallin (1986, 1994) and his own work, Mermin refers to analysis of coverage on the invasions of Grenada and Panama, and states that, "Subsequent studies . . . have found that journalists continue to be incapable of focusing on an issue or perspective on U.S.

**Chapter Two: A Review of the Relevant Literature & Exploration
of the Historical & Theoretical Foundations of the Media Dependence Model**

foreign policy that has not first been identified or articulated in official Washington debate.” In terms of the Iraq war then, “the media coverage, except for some anxious journalistic chatter (seen also in the first days of the Iraq War) about how quickly the president’s necessary and just action would achieve its objectives, read much like a White House press release” (Mermin, 2004, p. 68).

¹³ The following table elucidates the model of press semi-independence (Bennett et al., 2007, p. 63):

Table 2.1: A Model of Press Semi-Independence

Basic Axiom: “Indexing”: News generally reflects the story lines of those with:

- Greatest *perceived power* to affect the situation or issue
- Greatest *institutional capacity* to engage government news “flywheels”
- Best *communications operations*

Indexing is reinforced by the *Washington culture of consensus* and the *tactical management of news sources*.

This core indexing dynamic can be modified and press independence enhanced by:

- Event-driven / technology-assisted news
- Leaks/investigative reporting
- Outsider counter-spin

¹⁴ The following table illustrates the co-author’s principal findings for their three-tiered model (Robinson et al., 2010, p. 190):

Table 8.1: Principal findings: Evidence for the elite-driven, independent and oppositional models

	Elite-driven model	Independent Model	Oppositional model
TV channels	Sky, ITV, BBC	Channel 4	
Newspapers	<i>Sun, Mail, Times, Telegraph</i>	<i>Mirror, Independent, Guardian</i>	<i>Mirror, Independent, Guardian</i>
News subjects	Battle, justifications for war (esp. humanitarian)	Civilian casualties, military casualties, humanitarian operations, law and order	Civilian casualties, military casualties, humanitarian operations, law and order
Case study	Jessica Lynch, Anti-war movement	Ali Abbas	Ali Abbas

¹⁵ Robinson, et Al., surveyed: “the principal news programmes of four key television broadcasters – BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Sky – and news coverage in seven national daily newspapers, together with their Sunday equivalents – *Sun News of the World, Daily and Sunday Mirror, Daily Mail/ Mail on Sunday, Independent/ Independent on Sunday, Guardian/ Observer, Daily and Sunday Telegraph, Times and Sunday Times* (2010, p. 14).

¹⁶ Media studies scholar Michael Griffin, quoting Pool, writes:

Back in 1963, Ithiel de Sola Pool, one of the leading exponents of anti-Communist modernization theory in the post-war period, and a regular contributor to government sponsored development studies of the time, clearly recognized that the global communication system he envisioned had implications far beyond particular American national interests. He was acutely aware that what he proposed was nothing less than the creation of a global media grid for a world capitalist system, globalized media that would work to construct the imagined communities and social relations of human life quite independently of national interests and visions. He presciently wrote:

The propaganda in favor of modernism contained in commercial communications is not solely intended to obtain sales for a particular brand of soap. It certainly aids this operation, but it would have neither audience nor effect if the communications media did not provide a product much richer in savor or excitement. Persuasion towards a particular choice is only part of a general argument for a totally modernized mode of life. The communications media, whose object is to open the market to new products and new interests, also present the image

**Chapter Two: A Review of the Relevant Literature & Exploration
of the Historical & Theoretical Foundations of the Media Dependence Model**

Endnotes - Page 91

of a new kind of man in a new kind of milieu. As Marx underlined, the businessman is a revolutionary, even though this is not his intention. It is the mass media which transform what would otherwise be the unrealized dream of a few modernizers into the dynamic aspiration of a whole people (Griffin, 2002).

¹⁷ Kumar clearly places a strong emphasis on the ability of mass movements and mass labor strikes to potentially influence both political outcomes and related news coverage. Much importance is attributed by Kumar to the ability of a given movement or labor union to resonate its message with the public. In the case of the UPS strike, a growing resentment and opposition to the effects of neo-liberalism were clearly present (Kumar, 2007, pp. 124-125), and the strike made efficient use of this opportunity to connect its message of struggle with this public sentiment (pp. 97-98). Thus, there are certain historical moments that are more conducive to message resonance than others. Last, but not least, the lack of governmental repression and intervention is also essential for even the mere opportunity to influence news content and coverage. The Clinton administration chose not to invoke the anti-labor and repressive Taft-Hartley laws during the UPS strike (p. 77). This policy decision was of particular importance, as the strike could have otherwise been simply ended outright by governmental intervention.

¹⁸ These other studies included Tiece (2001) on women's resistance to dominance media framing, Denning (1996) on the proletarianization of the world of art and culture, and Lipsitz (1994), on the creation of public space during the strike-filled post-World War II era.

¹⁹ While the propaganda model has long been applied and evaluated in terms of U.S. foreign policy, Herman and Chomsky did address additional areas of domestic and regional applicability of the propaganda model in the most recent edition of their work (2002, p. xlv). These areas included news coverage on the implementation of NAFTA (2002, p. xlv); labor issues and policy (2002, p. xlv); neo-liberalism (2002, pp. xlv-xlvi) and; the chemical industry (2002: xlvi-xlviii). Uncoincidentally, all of these areas directly address topics at a macro-institutional level of analysis and substantive criticism in these sensitive issues areas would represent a threat to the state-corporate interests of the U.S. news media. An elaboration of this point is contained in the next chapter.

²⁰ Althaus found the following: nonofficial sources and the extent of their opposition did not fall into line with the patterns of domestic government sources (2003, p. 394); nonofficial sources were responsible for almost a third of means criticism (p. 395) and; contextual criticism was deemed significant and surprisingly high at 28% (p. 392).

²¹ Fico and Soffin made a mathematical error, as the actual number was two times, not three, as errantly reported in their study (as revealed by their own data tables).

²² However, Mermin neglects to note that the Althaus et. Al study (1996) was quite measured in the conclusions it drew from its findings (1996, p. 419). Further, it was also noted by Althaus et. Al that:

Debate thus focused more on what should have been done than on what ought to be done; oversight of U.S. policy was conducted mostly through the rearview mirror. This supports Bennett and Mannheim's (1993) contention that policy debate is often too brief and too late to serve the public (1996, p. 411).

²³ Livingston and Van Belle contended that U.S. news coverage of natural disasters abroad was increasing, a trend the co-authors expected to see continue into the future (p. 58). But these findings are misleading when taken without the necessary consideration and context of the long-running trend of corporate downsizing when it has come to the lessened amount of: news-bureaus staffed abroad, international investigative reporting and international correspondents. For more information on these thoroughly documented trends, see Utley 1997. Additional sources also include: Fenton 2005 and McChesney 1999, 2004.

²⁴ The authors write that technology driven reporting can function under any of the other multi-gated parts of the gatekeeping model [see Appendix [?], for table], but that the economic and organizational models of news reporting were particularly dominant in relation to war reporting. Some exceptions, however, saw technology combine with investigative journalism, as was the case with Seymour Hersh and his breaking of the Abu Ghraib prison torture scandal (p. 50).

²⁵ Althaus pointed to a number of areas that domestic issues have seen higher levels of critical reporting (Althaus 2003, p. 385):

Journalists have long been known as producers rather than merely gatekeepers of critical discourse about election campaigns (Capella & Jamieson, 1997; Fallows, 1997; Patterson, 1993), policy debates

**Chapter Two: A Review of the Relevant Literature & Exploration
of the Historical & Theoretical Foundations of the Media Dependence Model**

Endnotes - Page 92

(Lawrence, 2000), and dramatic events (Bennett & Lawrence, 1995; Lawrence, 1996, 2001; Molotch & Lester, 1974).

These issues, however, are not macro level topics and do not represent significant threats to the state-corporate interests of the news media. Similarly, he also pointed out that (Althaus, 2003, p. 386):

[Scholars have long] observed in news coverage of American presidential elections, [how] journalists focus critical coverage on the political horse race and strategic intentions of the campaigns while neglecting fundamental disagreements about the policy positions taken up by each side, unless such disagreements are discussed by the candidates themselves (Page, 1978; Patterson, 1980, 1993).

²⁶ The lack of critical research in this area did not escape the attention of Nordenstreng and Varis, who wrote that: “Among the few social scientists who made serious approaches to the problem are Herbert I. Schiller (Mass Communications and American Empire, New York 1969) and Spartak Beglow (Millionaires Create the Opinion of Millions, Frankfurt am Main 1971)” (Nordenstreng and Varis, 1974, p. 7).

²⁷ In this regard, also see: Chomsky, 1967.

²⁸ Entman begins his analysis by all but completely dismissing some of the most important and groundbreaking research into patterns of U.S. news media performance. He sees this as justified because, “the hegemony and indexing models,” are largely dependent and based on, “events during the Cold War.” Entman argues that this dependence, never demonstrated or proven, explains why “the hegemony models cannot account for changes in international politics and media behavior since the Soviet Union began withering away.” The hegemony models, which include the PM and IM, neglect how “the collapse of the Cold War consensus has meant differences among elites are no longer the exception but the rule” (Entman, 2005, p. 4). This is why, Entman reasons, “Patriotic defence to the president does not come automatically or last indefinitely, and hegemonic control is a tenuous feature of some but not all foreign policy news” (2005, p. 5); the dismal news media performance that shortly followed Entman’s publication of his book, however, strongly suggests otherwise about one of the most important U.S. foreign policy endeavors of the last four decades (i.e. the invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq), as do all of the post-Cold War case-studies contained within this dissertation.

²⁹ See note #40 for more on this tendency, also noted by Lippmann (1921, pp. 323, 325).

³⁰ Augelli and Murphy were citing Gramsci himself when ‘organs of public opinion’ was quoted (see Gramsci, 1975: III, 1638).

³¹ Many critiques were cited and responded to in Herman’s widely published response (1996, 2000), but one of the few critiques that characterized the PM as being too deterministic *and* also refers directly to its actual postulates can be found in Philip Scheslinger’s [article](#) (1989, pp. 283-306).

³² Hallin *does* have a substantive difference with Herman and Chomsky that goes beyond the valid criticism of the PM seeking to measure only one function of the media, albeit limited by the modest intentions of the PM itself, and that also stands in contrast to any supposed distinctive Gramscian approaches to analyzing news media content. This key difference comes down to theoretical positioning on the question of news norms and the professional values of journalism, in which I see Hallin’s *real* contention boiling down to three important questions: 1) what is the importance and relevance of exceptions that occur to general news content tendencies in the U.S. news media; 2) what is the extent that such exceptions occur and; 3) if professional news norms are responsible for these exceptions, what is the principal origin of such norms?

The PM, as Hallin correctly charged, is not attuned to press exceptionalism and makes no attempt to account for the extent of as much. By contrast, indexing, which was largely inspired by Hallin’s initial work (1986), *has* over the course of its existence specifically addressed this question (Althaus, 2003; Althaus et al., 1996; Bennett et al., 2007; Livingston & Eachus, 1996). Hallin argues that it is important to account for exceptions because they show how “the relation of power to discourse [is] contestable and subject to historical change” (1994, p. 12). For Hallin, press exceptionalism is most frequent when elites are divided and debate between them is high (1986, 1994, p. 74), a finding echoed by many indexing theorists as well (Bennett et al., 2007; Bennett, 1990; Mermin, 1999). Beyond elite debate though, Hallin also argues that news norms and the professional values of journalism are even “central to understanding the way the media operate,” especially in regards to foreign affairs reporting (1994, p. 13). The last question is begged then, assuming that news values account for content as much as Hallin argues, what is the origin of these values ... do they lie squarely with journalists or instead, are they the simple result of the structural characteristics of the news media itself?

**Chapter Two: A Review of the Relevant Literature & Exploration
of the Historical & Theoretical Foundations of the Media Dependence Model**

Endnotes - Page 93

Although it has never been prominently highlighted, Hallin and many others in the indexing literature (Bennett, 2007, p. 183; Mermin, 1999, p. 150) have stated that professional news norms are crafted by journalists as much (if not more) than they are by the structural characteristics of the U.S. news media. The latter, more structuralist-oriented assumption has been favored not only by Herman (2000, p. 106), but also by Bagdikian (1983, pp. 178-180) and McChesney (2004). As Herman wrote, echoing historical research also undertaken by Bagdikian (1983), McChesney (2004) and D. Schiller (1981):

Professionalism arose in journalism in the years when the newspaper business was becoming less competitive and more dependent on advertising. Professionalism was not an antagonistic movement by the workers against the press owners, but was actively encouraged by many of the latter. It gave a badge of legitimacy to journalism, ostensibly assuring readers that the news would not be influenced by the biases of owners, advertisers or the journalists themselves. In certain circumstances it has provided a degree of autonomy, but professionalism has also internalized some of the commercial values that media owners hold most dear, like relying on inexpensive official sources as the credible news source (2000, p. 106).

Hall also echoes similar viewpoints:

Stuart Hall explains that preferred codes are “rendered invisible by the process of ideological masking and taking-for-granted”. . . . They seem to be, even to those who employ and manipulate them for the purposes of encoding, simply “the sum of what we already know” (Hall, cited in Winter, 1991, p. 44).

The question remains: is professionalism an autonomous set of values set by journalists or dictated more by the necessities of structural and institutional power? The matter will be tested with a case-study on spiking and other phenomena associated with institutional constraints (chp. 9). A primary test can and should be employed, however, and that is measuring news content to see the extent that it stays within the boundaries of the interests of power, which is precisely what is done with the MDM in this dissertation.

³³ The MDM, in contrast to the PM, does not limit itself to describing general tendencies and does offer specific theoretical explanations for exceptions to the general patterns of news content it endeavors to analyze and uncover (see Tables 3.4 and 3.5 of chp. 3).

³⁴ Perhaps it is no coincidence that one of the most influential Gramscian-oriented scholars, in one of his more well-known works, was primarily concerned with grassroots propaganda and its related impact on the mass public, as opposed to the educated classes (Hall et al., 1978). Hall et al. focus on some of the more complex characteristics of the hegemonic process and the English news media in relation to the “moral panic” (drawing from Cohen 1972, p. 9) that surrounded crime reporting on “muggings” (1978, pp. 221, 299). Hall et al. address the historical context of mugging and relate it to three interconnected social phenomena: economic conditions which generate street crime; State repression, in which mugging is disproportionately punished with “law and order” policies; and the ensuing hegemonic process, as facilitated by the news media, which equates mugging with a social and moral panic. The real meaning of “muggings,” Hall et al. argue, was “one of the key ideological forms” that the British state resorted to, along with a pliant news media, in the midst of a global economic crisis (p. 217). The news media transformed what Hall et al. assert is a quasi-political act of resistance (p. 156) into a “moral panic,” as official discourse made its way into the vernacular of ordinary people in a disguised manner, in the midst of a hegemonic process that was “inflected with dominance and consensual connotations” (p. 62).

³⁵ As one prominent communications scholar has pointed out, “In the muddle of Eisenhower’s America, the clustering of powerful corporations did not meet with cogent criticism” (Gitlin, in Mills, 2000, p. 237).

³⁶ Gitlin, Flacks and Aronowitz wrote about the interesting background of “Radical Nomad.” The following excerpts shed important light not only on the origin of this apt description of Mills, but of his tremendous influence on the student-led anti-war movement, which Chomsky was also a prominent part of:

In December 1960, cramming for a television network debate on Latin America policy with an established foreign policy analyst, Mills suffered a heart attack, and when he died fifteen months later he was instantly seen as a martyr. SDS’s Port Huron Statement carries echoes of Mills’ prose, and Tom Hayden, its principal author, wrote his M.A. thesis on Mills, whom he labeled “Radical Nomad,” a

**Chapter Two: A Review of the Relevant Literature & Exploration
of the Historical & Theoretical Foundations of the Media Dependence Model**

Endnotes - Page 94

heroic if quixotic figure who, like the New Left Itself, muscularly tried to force a way through the ideological logjam (Gitlin, in Mills, 2000, p. 230).

[...]

Tom Hayden wrote his M.A. Thesis while he was intensely engaged in the leadership of the early sixties New Left . . . The Port Huron Statement is a manifesto of democratic hope combined with strong criticism of the corporate power that had come to dominate American political culture . . . , In retrospect, one can discern the close connection between the Port Huron Statement and *Radical Nomad*. The thesis originally was written six years after the publication of the *Power Elite* . . . and at the apex of the civil rights movement. [The *Power Elite*] was widely reviewed and discussed, and it continues to attract younger scholars (Flacks & Aronowitz, in Hayden, 2006, pp. 1, 22-24).

³⁷ Despite his scathing structural criticism, Mills' analysis should not be simply classified as Marxian, as Weber's focus on bureaucracy and institutional power was equally (if not more) influential in Mills work, "Neither the idea of a 'ruling class' nor of a 'military clique' is adequate. The power elite today involves the often uneasy coincidence of economic, military, and political power" (Mills, 1959, p. 278).

³⁸ The disdain that both Chomsky and Mills held for liberal intellectuals is coupled by their sympathies to the Enlightenment and the scientific method. As Todd Gitlin has commented:

Mills thought the questions ought to come from values, but the answers should not be rigged. A crucial difference! . . . he also thought that good social science became good politics when it moved into the open and generated public discussion . . . To a degree that has come to seem controversial today, Mills was not cynical about the importance of reason – or its attainability, even as a glimmering goal that could never be reached but could be approximated ever more closely, asymptotically . . . With pre-postmodern rigor, he argued that the problem with the condition of the Enlightenment was not that we had too much Enlightenment but that we had too little, and that the tragedy was that the universal genuflection to technical rationality – in the form of scientific research, business calculation, and state planning – was the perfect disguise for this great default. The democratic self-governance of rational men and women was damaged partly by the bureaucratization of the economy and the state (Gitlin, in Mills, 2000, pp. 234-235).

³⁹ As at least one scholar of Mills has documented, statements like these are no coincidence in light of the history between Mills and Lazarsfeld. Mills was the lead researcher for Lazarsfeld and had endeavored to link Lazarsfeld's media effects research and his two-step flow argument to an analysis of the power structures and the culture surrounding such structures. Such an analysis never came to bear, due to sharp differences in analytical approaches (and even personalities, see below) between Lazarsfeld and Mills, which are duly reflected in the critical quotation just noted above. The fact remains, however, that Mills was definitely influenced by the idea that cultural hegemony can also be transmitted at an individual level, albeit the origins of such a transmittal owing in large part to society's structural and institutional characteristics. This is the essence of Mills's "macroscopic" research.

As revealed in a compilation of personal letters by Mills (2000b), the surprising professional partnership between Lazarsfeld and Mills did not outlive their theoretical differences which apparently led to a clash of wills and personalities:

Unhappy teaching at the University of Maryland, Mills moved on to Columbia University, doing quantitative research for Paul Lazarsfeld in the Bureau of Applied Social Research on the famous Decatur study of influence and mass communications. It seems strange given Mills' later works that he would work for Lazarsfeld, who was the epitome of a "captive academic." Lazarsfeld, as Todd Gitlin has argued, had a knack at gathering research funds, creating "uneasy but mutually indispensable partnerships" between universities, corporations, and foundations. The Decatur study created an awakening in Mills. Lazarsfeld, Gitlin wrote in 1978, became "alarmed at the reach and populist edge of Mills' rhetoric." When he tried to make Mills rewrite his analysis, Mills quit. "Thank God, I feel secure enough to resist this silly domination and manipulation of his.... I've worked on that crap more than on any other book with which I have been associated.... I'd rather not be associated with it. To

**Chapter Two: A Review of the Relevant Literature & Exploration
of the Historical & Theoretical Foundations of the Media Dependence Model**

Endnotes - Page 95

hell with professional acclaim I lose. Nothing is worth the continual feeling that you're not your own man" (2000b, p. 172).

Geary argued in a piece on Mills that his work was not as unorthodox as is commonly assumed, pointing to a history of traditional engagement with the sociological discipline previously largely overlooked in research on Mills:

The Decatur study that he was hired to conduct, however, Mills was unable to bend bureau research to his purposes. The Decatur study was designed to test the Bureau's theory of "two-step flow of communication" by investigating how individuals influenced the decisions of others in the areas of consumption of household goods, fashion, movie going, and politics. The two-step theory, first developed in bureau's study on voting behavior, *The People's Choice*, held that influence resulted from the flow of ideas from the mass media to "opinion leaders" who persuaded others in their primary groups. In the summer of 1945, Mills and his team gathered a "snowball sample" by interviewing all those whom the initial respondents listed as having influenced them in their decision making, conducting nearly 3,000 interviews for the project (Geary, in Lichtenstein, 2006, p. 147).

Elaborating, Geary writes further about the analyses Mills was hoping to attach to his data findings:

In his draft report, Mills ambitiously sought to combine Lazarsfeldian research methods with a left-wing concern to uncover the sources of power in American society. As Mills put it in a 1946 speech, unlike the "microscopic" research associated with Lazarsfeld, "macroscopic" research (such as that conducted in Robert and Helen Lynds' influential Middletown studies) sought to determine a "chain of leaders" in order to "grasp the power and influence structure." Mills suggested that integrating a concern with hierarchies of social power could improve upon the methods previously developed at the [Lazarsfeld-led] BASR. The Decatur study was promising to Mills because the technique of snowball sampling it developed could be used as "a bridge between macroscopic and microscopic conceptions of research." By tracing the flow of influence from one individual to another, researchers could learn not only about the process of influence, but also about structures of power. By doing so, empirical research could shed light on the nature of modern American society (p. 148).

As Geary explained, Mills would never get the chance to undertake these analyses under Lazarsfeld, as the media effects researcher was uncomfortable with what he called Mills's "radical" and "populist" character of his analyses.

⁴⁰ Lippmann, like Herman and Chomsky, interestingly enough, long ago identified the tendency of more profitable newspapers to try and "upscale" their readership to a upper-middle class composure, for the benefit of their most important clients: advertisers. This is revealed in the following quotation, taken from Lippmann's most influential and timeless work:

On the whole, there is no sharp dividing line, for in respect to most commodities sold by advertising, the customers are neither the small class of the very rich nor the very poor. They are the people with enough surplus over bare necessities to exercise discretion in their buying. The paper, therefore, which goes into the homes of the fairly prosperous is by and large the one which offers most to the advertiser . . . they are the clientele among whom it pays best to advertise in a newspaper (1921, pp. 323, 325).

⁴¹ Nerone's work points to an exceedingly real and tangible consequence of the hegemonic control that corporations possess when it comes to free speech, that of violence against the independent and alternative sectors of the press. That such sectors have been allowed to exist and have been able to operate in the U.S. is a well-known and indisputable fact. What Nerone's scholarship reveals with extensive detail and archival documentation, however, is that the most independent and "underground" sectors of the U.S. press are the most frequent victims of a consistent thread of violence against the press (both official and mob based). In Nerone's words:

**Chapter Two: A Review of the Relevant Literature & Exploration
of the Historical & Theoretical Foundations of the Media Dependence Model**

Endnotes - Page 96

. . . the boundaries of the mainstream arena of public discussion also demarcate the frontiers of official repression. Within these [mainstream] boundaries, harassment is not tolerable – hence Nixon’s forced resignation. Outside these boundaries, harassment is routinely tolerated and often encouraged: some Democrats may have considered the targets of COINTELPRO as fellow victims, but not that many (1994, p. 191).

Far from merely enjoying “free speech” rights, Nerone thoroughly documents how “the right to free expression often proved to be pretty flimsy where radicals were concerned,” whereby, “labor-related violence and antiradical violence have been frequent and consistently patterned in U.S. history” (1994, pp. 180, 195). “Radical publications in the 20th century have been frequent targets of violence,” Nerone adds, who explains that such attacks were later succeeded by “counter-intelligence” projects undertaken by the FBI (including COINTELPRO, just noted in the block quotation above), which were meant mainly to harass and splinter groups along with their related non-commercial media as opposed to protecting the public (1994, pp. 170, 180).

Free speech is much more of a negative right, than a positive one, when it comes to ordinary citizens in the U.S. Citizens have more of a right to not be thrown in jail for saying something as individuals, than they do in terms of functioning in as collectively organized groups unhindered (or supported, even) in their struggle to make their viewpoints and media more widely known and accessible by the public at-large. Far from being a “right,” Nerone shows that historically, when alternative sectors of the press have been organized and operated in a dissident manner in the U.S., violent repression from official quarters can often result. Thus, the limitation of these rights, and the extent of repression against media that go outside the official boundaries, is a modern and current example of hegemony.

Introduction

The media dependence model (MDM) is a critical, institutional analysis of U.S. news content which contains a number of predictions about media performance. The model expects that these predictions will continue within U.S. news media performance as long as its primary structural and institutional characteristics remain. The predictions that the MDM makes of patterns in U.S. news content serve as a foundation of critical analysis of its primary institutional characteristics, as the MDM demonstrates how these characteristics are most responsible for a general lack of independence from policies espoused by the most powerful governmental and corporate officials in the country. The MDM illustrates how the news media lacks the most independence when it comes to macro-oriented issues, such as U.S. foreign, military, international monetary policy and most recently, global environmental and energy policy.

The media dependence model draws heavily from a synthesis of the propaganda (Herman & Chomsky, 2002) and indexing models (Bennett, 1990; Bennett, Livingston, & Lawrence, 2007), but the scope of the MDM goes beyond these two well-tested analyses. To the same extent that the MDM is a synthesis, it also contains important theoretical components that have been gleaned directly from the findings and lessons learned from originally undertaken case studies, as well as from past scholarly work. Most importantly, the MDM shows how the following original theoretical arguments take place in U.S. news media performance: it shows how some social movements are deemed worthy by the news media while others are “unworthy”; it distinguishes between foreign and domestic news reporting by modeling domestic coverage and showing how foreign affairs coverage suffers from a lack of independence more so than domestic topics; ownership of the news media is theorized in a manner appropriate for the age of globalization, with a case study illustrating the argument that ownership is the most powerful institutional filter of news content; and lastly, the MDM accounts not only for general trends where independent news content is lacking, but also addresses the conditions and instances in which exceptions are most likely to arise.

Further, the MDM is a concerted attempt to resolve the theoretical conflicts which would otherwise persist within a simple synthesis of the two models. Namely, the MDM argues that institutional constraints, more than mere standards of professional journalism, are mostly responsible for a lack of news media independence from powerful government and

corporate officials. The phenomenon of “spiking” goes far to demonstrate this argument, as reporting that challenges or surpasses the institutional filters that are normally in place is often “spiked” out of existence. This disturbing trend has been present across time periods and leaves critical reporting unpublished and sometimes has even ended careers (Börjesson, 2004, 2005).

By documenting this trend which has persisted well beyond the Cold War, the MDM takes an important step toward showing how journalists are far from “dupes” and instead consciously react to the institutional constraints under which they are forced to operate by either: a) challenging them in spite of serious consequence to their work or career or by more often b) simply coping with them by acquiescing with their work in an understandable and reasonable act of career self-preservation. Instead, reporters more often opt to undertake reporting that is in more independent and critical within more flexible topics (namely, social ones, as opposed to military, foreign and monetary policy), news sources (regional dailies outside the scope of power in D.C. and NYC) and/or circumstances (when worthy social movements are in focus or when there is not a concerted governmental or corporate-run PR campaign).

In elucidating the MDM, I will first lay out major components and predictive tools were mostly drawn or inspired by a synthesis of the propaganda model (PM) and indexing model (IM). Secondly, there will be a focus on the most important and original parts of the MDM, which go beyond a mere synthesis of the PM and IM and result in a more theoretically robust and unique model of news analysis. Thirdly, I will specify how the MDM specifically resolves theoretical conflicts that exist between the PM and IM. In the fourth major section of this chapter, I will spell out the factors that the MDM expects will result in occasional exceptions and variations from the general patterns it predicts. Lastly, I will address how the MDM is timely even in the midst of an era of flux for the journalism industry.

All of the components and predictions of the MDM are tested with the case studies alluded to throughout this chapter. These studies are presented in greater detail in subsequent chapters. However, they are frequently referred to in this overview chapter to elicit evidentiary support.

The MDM's Major Synthesized Components and Predictive Postulates

The main components of the MDM that are drawn from the synthesis of the IM and PM include institutional filters that prevent more independent information from appearing in the U.S. press; expectations concerning the main variables that will account for the extent and types of criticism contained within press content; and lastly, dichotomous press treatment of “worthy” and “unworthy” victims.

Institutional and Resulting Professional Standard Filters

Adopting the PM's theoretical foundation, the MDM also shows how the news media's main structural characteristics will result in a number of filters that significantly impact news content. In this regard, the MDM also uses the PM's five news “filters” and breaks them down to two categories: institutional and journalistic standards, with the former impacting the latter. The two institutional filters, corporate ownership (i.e. media conglomerates or corporate-owned entities that dominate the news media) and advertising (also disproportionately corporate), result in subsequent filters impacting and distorting journalistic standards (or news norms) in ways that go beyond conventional principles for the profession.

In spite of the presence of these institutional filters, the MDM's components are consistent with Herman and Chomsky (2002), who noted in the lead paragraph to their revised edition that while the media may “serve, and propagandize on behalf of the powerful societal interests that control and finance them,” they do not do so by “crude intervention, but by the selection of right-thinking personnel and by the editors' and working journalists' internalization of priorities and definitions of news-worthiness that conform to the institution's” interests and needs (p. xi).¹ The MDM does not predict there to be systematic occurrences where an advertiser makes a direct threat to influence content or that high-level media executives enforce some code of censorship. Instead, as a result of the internalization of the institutional constraints imposed upon journalists and editors, evidence of such constraints are revealed more by the characteristics of news content and its observable tendencies and patterns. Nevertheless, as will be revealed in the concluding chapter of this dissertation and will be explained in greater detail below, the MDM is distinctive from the PM in acknowledging the occurrence of crude interventions as playing an important role in the internalization process of journalists and discouraging them from otherwise undertaking more enterprising and critical work.

Sourcing tendencies will be significantly favorable not only toward government officials, but also toward representatives of corporations and their public relations personnel. External pressure on the news media in terms of attempts to influence its content – what many industry experts call “flak” – represents another filter of information for U.S. news content. These pressures overwhelmingly come from the public relations industry and the government itself, as opposed to the public. It has long been the case that the “publicity agents” John Dewey once decried have outnumbered the amount of journalists writing the news. Indeed, since the mid-1990’s there have been more paid professionals dedicated to spinning the news than to writing it (Stauber & Rampton, 1995).

Going beyond the PM, the MDM also emphasizes that government power over the press is more a question of *access* than the marshaling of its financial resources over the press or any set of restrictive laws. Maintaining access (i.e. press credentials, exclusive interviews, etc.) with the same governmental officials whom the news media depend on is of vital importance. This dependence on access to these relatively cheap sources is used as leverage by officials to maintain more favorable coverage. While it has been amply demonstrated that official sourcing tendencies are cheaper, less expensive and result in greater corporate profits (Hamilton, 2004; McChesney, 2000, 2004), these economic incentives are only able to be maintained by continued access to these profitable sources. In avoiding the loss of access to official sources by restricting the amount of critical content present without elite divisions being present, maintaining reliable access to influential official sources is achieved. News media conglomerates and agenda-setting dailies² can even “compete” with each other, not to deliver the most hard-hitting and critically-inclined investigative journalism, but over which outlet can deliver the kind of media performance that most pleases influential public officials, resulting in increased access and privileges (i.e. exclusive interviews).

The fifth news filter defined by Herman and Chomsky posited an inability for the news media to deal with the taboo of anti-communism (1988, p. 29), falling prey consistently to governmental positioning on the matter on related news events, sometimes making the news media even look foolish (i.e. the Bulgarian “plot” to assassinate the Pope, 1988, pp. 143-168). Beyond the Cold War, Herman and Chomsky maintain that the anti-communism filter still retains residual force (2002, p. xvii). Herman and Chomsky expanded the fifth filter to also include a strongly ingrained and unquestioning belief by journalism in neo-liberalism, the

“miracle of the market,” and “market populism” (2002, p. xviii), as well as in the U.S. government’s purported and numerous campaigns of anti-terrorism.

Anti-terrorism is an important justification for an overwhelming amount of U.S. foreign policy initiatives, occupations and invasions, and is not fundamentally questioned with any regularity by the U.S. news media (Friel & Falk, 2004, 2007; Herman & Chomsky, 2002). The MDM’s components are in concordance with the PM on this point and evidence pointing toward powerful institutional constraints surrounding anti-terrorism, and what happens to reporting that challenges such notions, is unveiled in greater detail in chapter 9 (as is broadcast news coverage by CNN and CNN en Español in chp. 4).

On criticism

The IM shows how the extent of criticism that appears in the news will be highly dependent on the presence (or lack of) debate between major party officials in Washington. If there is more inter-party strife between high-ranking officials in Washington, a potential for more criticism in the news will exist (and vice-versa). Along similar lines, the MDM adopts this postulate *and* augments the IM by also arguing that if there is more disagreement between corporate positioning on a given policy issue and that of the dominant position in Washington, there will also be a potential increase in the level of critical content that appears in the news.

Media scholars have identified two types of criticism that appear in news content: procedural and substantive. Procedural criticism calls into question only the execution of a certain policy or predicts failure in terms of the outcome of policy. Conversely, substantive criticism questions the fundamental basis of policies and sometimes conveys moral judgments against such policies.

Indexing scholar Mermin has also distinguished two media performance tendencies dependent upon when there is conflict or consensus in Washington. The news media can either *correlate* levels of criticism mirroring the extent of *conflict* in Washington, or it can *marginalize* criticism when there is *consensus* in Washington. The extent that the news media parrots the levels of criticism present in Washington, in its content and performance, determines the extent that indexing is in effect in terms of criticism.³

The MDM is consistent with previous news models of analysis in its expectations of substantive criticism to be sorely missing in the news. It goes farther than previous models, however, by stating that this is also the case *even* when there is conflict in Washington. While

conflict in Washington and elite disagreements can result in *modest* increases to the levels of substantive criticism, such increases will only be *marginal* and *limited*, or even *non-existent*. This prediction is supported by previous research findings which revealed press tendencies to have limited or even non-existent amounts of substantive criticism (Althaus et al., 1996, p. 411; Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Entman, 2004, pp. 5-6; Jacobs & Shapiro, 2000; Molotch & Lester, 1975, pp. 255-256; Patterson, 1993; Tuchman, 1972, p. 676). MDM components assume this to be a result of the lack of substantive criticism emanating from high-ranking public officials (i.e. Congressional leaders, the President and top White House advisers, and Pentagon leaders), who wield far more weight in terms of influencing news content than less powerful officials. Further, since procedural criticism is far more commonly voiced than substantive criticism, there is less of a risk in offending important sources by repeating procedural criticism, than with substantive criticism.

The distinction between the two types of criticism is significant. It especially explains previous studies displaying contradictory findings simply because they were measuring one or the other type of criticism. In his study on the Gulf War (2003), Althaus was the first to astutely point out that:

One study focusing on the combat stage of the 1990–1991 Persian Gulf Crisis found that news coverage was overwhelmingly supportive of the Bush administration (Mermin, 1999), while another concluded that the news during this period was skewed lopsidedly against the Bush administration (Fico & Soffin, 1995). From whence does this confusion arise? One reason studies disagree on levels of critical coverage is that they disagree on what constitutes “critical coverage” (p. 386).

It is hard to underestimate the need to clearly distinguish and more thoroughly defend one’s theoretical stance toward procedural and substantive criticism, as well as the correlation and marginalization versions of indexing. It is the largest source of resulting disagreement between studies on this topic and no scholar has gone to the necessary length to defend their respective positions adequately. Does democracy require a news media system that undertakes substantive criticism of governmental and corporate authorities as often as it engages in procedural criticism? Is this a necessary prerequisite for an autonomous and independently functioning press?

The MDM’s components rely on the assumption that a representative democracy requires as independent and as critical a press as possible. As a result, the MDM significantly

concerns itself with substantive criticism and the marginalization version of indexing.⁴ Both matters will be extensively coded and accounted for in the study on CNN and CNN en Español coverage of Fallujah (chp. 4). This case study will include a finding that substantive criticism was insignificant and sporadic during a time when it was most needed (as meaningful dissent by public officials in Washington had not even started and a vacuum of criticism existed) in the case of both networks. Particularly low levels of substantive criticism is precisely what the MDM would predict for a major military policy that was lacking significant dissent and debate in Washington.

On Worthy and Unworthy Victims

The MDM synthesis draws significantly from the PM's argument that victims of human rights abuses will be covered more extensively, sympathetically and substantively by the mainstream U.S. news media for cases that are based from important countries that are antagonistic to the U.S. This is in contrast to some scholars of political communication who have otherwise argued that the end of the Cold War has brought an era of press cantankerousness (Entman, 2004), which one can assume has ended such dichotomous treatment. Conversely, the MDM shows how well beyond the Cold War, victims continue to be deemed "worthy" by influential U.S. policy makers and subsequently, by a pliant news media.

Worthy victims in recent years have included foreign victims of beheadings during the Iraq occupation (chp. 4); victims of the purported massacre that took place in Racak Yugoslavia (chp. 5); and the plight of Elián Gonzalez (chp. 8). By contrast, "unworthy" victims are inconvenient examples of abuse which could potentially expose culpability by U.S. policy makers and/or its client states and allies. Unworthy victims generally do not receive as much news coverage as their worthy counterparts (though important exceptions can exist, as detailed in chp. 5 and in Table 4.4) and even more consistently lack the attributions of high-level culpability responsible for their victimization. Recent unworthy victims include Iraqi civilian casualties (chp. 4); victims of massacres in Acteal (chp. 5); social movements in opposition to the U.S. and based in Ecuador and Vieques (chps. 6 and 7); and nine unaccompanied immigrant children who had the bad fortune to be from countries allied with the U.S. and victims of border crossings which resulted in the death of at least one of their parents (chp. 8).

Similarly, different sourcing tendencies are exhibited between unworthy and worthy victims, with the latter receiving coverage containing much more unofficial and non-governmental oppositional sources. Conversely, unworthy victims will be subjected to the same official sourcing tendencies that most often dominate the news media, with deference not only to the versions of truth propagated by U.S. officials, but also to important governmental officials from client states and countries closely allied with the U.S. These differing sourcing tendencies are also a powerful testament to the argument that institutional filters and constraints, more so than consistent professional standards, are responsible for a lack of press independence.

Documentation of the tendency for the press to showcase worthy victims and virtually ignore unworthy victims was amply established by Herman and Chomsky (1988), but has not been addressed extensively since. However, there are some studies that when coupled with the case studies present in this dissertation, serve as strong evidence that this phenomenon persists to the present.

One comparative case-study examined multiple aspects of *New York Times* and *Washington Post* editorial and op-ed treatment of coverage on the repression by the Iranian government and the Honduran coup regime during the summer of 2009 (Young, 2010). The two most well-known fatalities resulting from street protests in Iran and Honduras were found to have received dichotomous press treatment, with increased humanization and more frequent coverage being dealt out to Neda Agha Soltan of Iran, as opposed to her unworthy equivalent, Isis Obed Murillo of Honduras (2010, pp. 2-4). Similar dichotomous press treatment was also found for election coverage on Iran and Honduras (pp. 4-5), as well as for how culpability was assessed: critically against the regime present in Iran, while in Honduras, blame was shifted onto the overthrown President himself through a “provocation” thesis that was advanced in the editorial pages (pp. 6-7).

The worthy / unworthy victim phenomenon is also evident even when restricted to coverage of victimized journalists abroad. The leading U.S.-based dailies and television outlets have provided ample coverage and sympathy to journalists Euna Lee and Laura Ling and Roxana Saberi, jailed respectively by North Korea and Iran. In nearly complete contrast to these worthy victims, a near U.S.-news media blackout has occurred of photo-journalist Ibrahim Jassam and blogger Abdul Kareem Nabeel Suleiman (better known by his internet

pseudonym, Kareem Amer). Jassam was jailed by U.S. occupation authorities in Iraq without any charges dating back to September 2, 2008. He was not released until February 10, 2010 (Ahmed & Sly, 2010). Kareem Amer served a four-year jail sentence for espousing secular viewpoints on his blog by the Egyptian government, which along with Israel, continues to be the largest recipient of U.S. military aid. Kareem Amer did not garner more than a scant mention in the U.S. press and in the case of Jassam, there was no mention at all in terms of the leading dailies.⁵

Finally, press dichotomy has been found to be present when it comes to coverage of the plight of news media sources, as was the case for a Venezuelan corporate media outlet stripped of its public license, RCTV. The Venezuelan-based outlet RCTV received extensive coverage and sympathy in the U.S., but the dismantled Colombian-based public broadcasting station Inravisión received nearly no coverage, much less any sympathy by the U.S. news media. In terms of yet more contrasts between U.S. news coverage of Venezuela and Colombia, news content on Colombian President Uribe's bid for a term limit extension received virtually no criticism, while coverage of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's own bid for a term limit extension received scathing criticism (Young, 2008).

Similar to the PM, the MDM also documents individual occurrences of the Worthy / Unworthy victims phenomenon (chp. 5). Unlike the PM, however, the MDM extends the Worthy / Unworthy victims concept by evaluating the applicability of dichotomous news coverage for "worthy" and "unworthy" social movements (chps. 6 & 7) and also adds various gradations of worthiness / unworthiness for a larger set of victims in Iraq (chp. 4).

The MDM's Original Components

The synthesized components of the MDM coming from the IM and PM are important and their continued relevance is amply shown in this dissertation. The following postulates and original components, however, are a direct result of weaknesses and remaining holes *still* found in the synthesis of the IM and PM, areas that neither model has managed to adequately fulfill or address in either theoretical or empirical terms. The original postulates include dichotomous news content resulting in worthy and unworthy social movements; adding variation and nuance to the unworthy and worthy victim dichotomy; expectations concerning differing news treatments of domestic (social oriented or pocketbook economics) and foreign (macro economic or military policy-oriented) news issues; dichotomous content tendencies expected

for certain types of interventions versus others; and predictions surrounding the increased importance of the ownership news filter on resulting content.

These postulates are precisely how the MDM goes beyond a simple synthesis of the PM and IM. Instead, the MDM is a more theoretically thorough and empirically robust model of U.S. news media analysis.

Worthy and Unworthy Social Movements

The MDM develops the first theoretical argument on dichotomous patterns of U.S. news media content in relation to its coverage on *social movements* (see Table 3.2, below). The indexing literature has already found and appropriately argued that news content can be affected by actors which go beyond official sources that manage to garner the perception of journalists that they can affect political outcomes. In these instances, as Bennett first argued (1996, p. 378), journalists follow the “trail of power” and sometimes uncharacteristically cite and even highlight social movements as prominent sources. The MDM goes even farther, however, and also posits that such coverage will be covered in qualitatively different terms depending upon the relationship that the given social movement has to governmental positioning and the threat it poses to state-corporate interests.

A social movement abroad that opposes U.S. macro-economic and/or an important foreign policy (i.e. as was the case in Ecuador and Vieques, see chps. 6 and 7) will *not* be covered as thoroughly and sympathetically as a more powerful domestic social movement (i.e. the women’s or gay rights movements) that is rallying around a social issue (i.e. abortion, police brutality, natural disasters, same-sex marriage and affirmative action). Certain expectations will stand in the face of *both* of these cases (whether worthy or not), such as the persistence of a lack of both systemic and historically contextual content, as well as thorough exposure of official U.S. culpability and responsibility for such social problems. Nevertheless, a dichotomous pattern in news content, similar to the pattern noted above in relation to U.S. foreign policy and related human rights abuses, will *also* be observable for social movements. In other words, there will *also* be worthy and unworthy social movements, as there are worthy and unworthy victims, in the elite agenda-setting press.⁶

Table 3.1: Worthy & Unworthy Social Movements

Social Movements	Worthy	Unworthy
Relationship of movement to official U.S. foreign policy	Social movements with origins in countries that are opposed and/or independent of U.S. foreign policy. The more antagonistic the relationship is between the movement’s country and U.S. policy, and the higher priority it is given by the White House, the more “worthy” it will be in the news.	Social movements with origins in countries that are allied with U.S. foreign policies. The more important the relationship is between the movement’s country and U.S. policy, the more “unworthy” it will be in the news media.
Sourcing	Unofficial and oppositional sources will be used to a significant degree and at least more frequently than unworthy counterparts. Official U.S. sources may be used when available.	Official governmental sources (foreign and/or U.S.) will be used to a significant degree in contrast to unofficial sourcing, which will be minimal and at least significantly less than official source consultation.
Volume of Coverage	The higher the priority the origin of the movement’s country is given by the White House, the more news coverage it should receive. In the rare cases that inter-party conflict is present on worthy movements, news coverage will increase even further.	Oppositional social movements in allied countries of the U.S. will receive minimal coverage. However, news coverage should increase if governmental attention is brought to the matter. A further increase will be found when inter-party conflict is present in Washington.
U.S. Wrongdoing	Substantive criticism and notations of wrongdoing attributed to U.S. policy will be minimalized to non-existent.	Notations and substantive criticism of wrongdoing attributed to U.S. policy will also be minimalized to non-existent.
Substantive Issues	The central demands and substantive issues may not receive featured treatment, but will be covered and mentioned considerably more often than in their unworthy counterparts.	The central demands and substantive issues of the movement will not be highlighted or will be ignored. Instead, quotes from “persons on the street” (i.e. not main organizers) and alienating depictions of the movement will predominate when news coverage is even present. The methods of the movement will often be called into question.
Characterizations of Leaders & Policies of Foreign Governments	Government leaders will be demonized in news coverage and depictions of authorities as being illegitimate will predominate.	Depictions of government leaders will be that of peace and democratic loving authorities, legitimately representing and/or serving their own people.

Accounting for Variation

The MDM, in contrast to the PM, accounts for variation in many different ways. It develops and adds nuance to the worthy / unworthy victim dichotomy, resulting in a more sophisticated understanding of the concept. It does this by distinguishing between different levels of worthiness and unworthiness for individual victims and laying the conditions that one can expect to see such differences in, not only for individual victims, but for social movements as well.

Variation in news content can indeed be seen over time due to differing historical circumstances and changing political conditions and is sometimes affected by otherwise unworthy actors themselves (Britt, 2003, Kumar, 2007, Sparks, 2007, Wolfsfeld, 1997).⁷ The MDM, unlike the PM, makes predictions about and theorizes news coverage of casualties to U.S. soldiers abroad, involved with U.S.-led invasions and occupations.

Casualties to U.S. soldiers present a challenging theoretical scenario, as fatalities and injuries at the hands of armed forces opposed to the U.S. would normally result in an automatic worthy victims status. At the same time, the U.S. government has long attempted to minimize coverage and attention toward casualties to soldiers because of concerns that press attention to losses could serve to undermine support for an invasion and occupation. One example reflecting these concerns was the ban (only recently lifted, but not before a new administration and troop reduction plans were already in place) on press coverage of military casket ceremonies for the return of the bodies of soldiers killed in combat. The MDM thus hypothesizes that U.S. soldiers will be depicted in coverage in “slightly unworthy” terms as long as there is bi-partisan support for and a lack of opposition by influential public officials to important military policies. To the extent that there is either significant official opposition to such policies and divisions in Washington or a successful social movement that impacts public officials and policy, the coverage tendencies of U.S. soldiers would gain the potential for being changed from “slightly unworthy” to “slightly worthy,” or perhaps even “worthy.” The case study on CNN and CNN en Español coverage of Fallujah will lend strong support to this hypothesis, as data from an extensive content analysis reflected the “slightly unworthy” status the MDM would expect for U.S. casualties (chp. 4).

Variations in political circumstances and their expected impact on news content are tested in relation not only to individual victims, but also to social movements. A case study evaluating the MDM's expectations for social movements was conducted for a movement based on a struggle waged over the Puerto Rican island of Vieques (chp. 6). The movement to close down U.S. naval base operations in Vieques, which had been wrecking havoc on the island for over half a century with its military bombing tests, is a clear example of how a social movement can have its unworthy status change over time, especially in light of changing political and policy circumstances. Starting out as a marginalized and largely unnoticed social movement, albeit with mass support and participation, the "Free Vieques" movement gathered considerable steam and momentum over time, attracting the attention and support not only of the Puerto Rican public, but also of key public officials, policy makers (including most notably, the Governor of New York) and even Hollywood celebrities (who eventually took out a full-page advertisement in *The New York Times*).

The MDM specifies certain changes that can occur to news content and that are attainable over a period of time. The more pliable aspects to news content include potential increases to how frequently procedural criticism is invoked and also with the volume of news coverage allotted (see Table 4.4). Such changes will be largely determined and mitigated by the amount and type of attention a social movement can garner from official sources. The MDM predicts that changes to news content will still be constrained according to how threatening the movement is to state-corporate interests (the more threatening, the less substantive the coverage). Indeed, when media attention is increased reflecting the success of the movement to garner more official attention, other expected weaknesses were shown to persist in the case of Vieques: exposure of U.S. culpability and faults were largely and noticeably absent, instances of substantive criticism were not elaborated on or frequent and coverage of some of the movement's most important and critical demands was also next to non-existent. The MDM predicts that changes to these aspects of news content are extremely rare in cases involving military policy, even for successful social movements such as Vieques, sometimes portending very real and damaging consequences for the movement.⁸ Nevertheless, the Vieques case study is a good example of how unworthy social movements can become *less* unworthy as time passes as a result of changed political circumstances.

The lack of changes to specific areas of news content (aspects 4 and 5 in Table 4.5) supports the MDM's expectation that they are amongst the more difficult content characteristics to impact *when an unworthy social movement* is in question. Matters are qualitatively different when a worthy social movement such as the Free Tibet movement, is at stake. Movements that are based in states that are antagonistic to U.S. interests, or in opposition to it on certain political policies (as is the case with China when it comes to Tibet), will *not* be dealt with in the same manner as movements that even manage to become increasingly influential, such as the Free Vieques movement. Indeed, in the case of the latter, the movement was butting heads with U.S. military policy itself, one of the most difficult news topics to impact in terms of garnering independent content. The MDM expects journalistic standards to differ between worthy and unworthy social movements (see Table 3.1). These differing standards affect the extent that aspects of news content can be impacted. In other words, it is far easier for a movement such as the Free Tibet movement that is aligned with the U.S. in opposition to antagonistic states abroad, than it is for a movement like Free Vieques which opposed official U.S. military policy, to positively impact the volume of coverage allotted to the issue, the extent of humanizing details reported, garner favorable sourcing tendencies and substantive criticism of high-level official culpability.

Another good example of a social movement whose changing political status was reflected by changing media coverage was impressively documented by Kumar in relation to the UPS labor strike successfully waged in 1997 (2007). The MDM would expect most coverage of a labor conflict to prioritize the concerns of consumers and often deflect attention and potential sympathy away from workers (Lee & Craig, 1992; Martin, 2003). As Kumar has shown, however, these dynamics can change and resulting news coverage can in turn also change, largely depending on the extent of success that workers have in garnering the sympathy and attention of important political and economic officials. In this sense, Kumar's findings reflect the expectations of the MDM. The MDM predicts that changing circumstances and related news content is often related to the successes (or failures) of social movements in winning over the attention and sympathy of important public officials, and thus, of the U.S. news media as well.

In sum, the MDM brings to the fore an analysis that connects variation of press content to the extent of a threat that such coverage poses to the institutional interests to which the U.S.

news media are most beholden. When officials in Washington are forced to sympathize with the demands of social movements, the threat that critical content poses is greatly lessened and the potential for more critical news coverage is raised. Similarly, the status of certain types of individual victims can change as well and is often in accordance to the changing contours of the debate in Washington.

News Coverage of Domestic and Social Issues versus Foreign and Military Affairs

Another important original postulate of the MDM is that patterns observed in news content covering domestic issues differ from news coverage of foreign affairs; the latter suffers from institutional domination more than the former. The MDM shows how coverage of U.S. foreign and international monetary policy, in contrast with social and domestic counterparts, is more salient to the same corporate interests to which the news media is largely beholden. Intensifying this effect is the fact that social issues are covered more frequently domestically, while military and international monetary policy is covered more frequently in foreign and international affairs. As a result, military and international monetary shows a lack of press independence from state-corporate interests.

This important component of the MDM is based *both* on the case studies testing the model, as well scholarly findings that have long been documented. Scholarly findings include a qualifying statement on indexing, appearing in Bennett's first formulation:

... the issues in which indexing might be expected to operate most consistently are military decisions, foreign affairs, and macroeconomic policy – areas of great importance not only to corporate economic interests but to the advancement of state power as well (Bennett, 1990, p. 122).

This important point has not been lost on other communication scholars, such as Livingston and Eachus, who wrote, “Bennett noted that the indexing norm seems more readily applied to foreign affairs issues, or issues where considerable elite consensus exists,” adding further that: “A tight adherence to official views seems less likely however, when consensus is either lacking or poorly articulated by officials. This may be the case, of course, with a number of highly charged domestic political issues, such as abortion” (1996, p. 424). McChesney wrote that social issues such as “abortion rights, school prayer, flag burning, gay rights, [and] affirmative action” (2000, p. 51) are simply covered with more vigor and criticism by professional journalism. Mermin has pointed out that domestic news coverage may occasionally display different sourcing tendencies: “It is likely that more nongovernmental

sources are consulted on domestic issues, and that viewpoints on policy decisions from outside of Washington appear more often in the news” (1996, p. 192). If such scholarly findings are indeed taken as a given, the question on *why* this is the case is still begged.

The MDM shows how domestic social issues are reported on in a more critical and independent manner than foreign affairs coverage because they do not threaten the state-corporate interests of what by now, almost all scholarly accounts describe as a highly commercialized news media business. The case studies underlying the MDM further support this important postulate.

The study on CNN and CNN en Español’s news coverage of Fallujah (chp. 4) will show particularly strong official sourcing tendencies for both outlets, while analysis of issues with a more domestic footing were more ambiguous, as was the case for *New York Times* coverage of Vieques, Puerto Rico (chp. 7) and immigration coverage during the Elián Gonzalez affair (chp. 8). Likewise, Kumar’s study of the 1997 United Postal Service labor strike found varying and ambiguous tendencies when it came to press independence within U.S. news content (2007). The main thread that links most occurrences of press exceptionalism along these lines, however, is the presence of changing governmental positioning on these issues, often in reaction to significant pressure from popularly supported, mass-based social movements. For the MDM, the presence and success (or lack thereof) of social movements in terms of impacting governmental policy positioning is a very important factor determining subsequent press coverage. These are important tenets of the MDM, but will be reviewed in greater detail in the fourth section of this chapter, which details important exceptions and clarifications to the model’s main postulates.

Modeling Domestic Coverage

The IM and PM have not been applied toward domestic coverage of news content as much as that of foreign affairs.⁹ The MDM, with its focus on press dependence, also pays more attention to news coverage of U.S. foreign policy given the press’s tendencies to report on such matters less accurately and critically. While domestic news coverage will surely display more nuance, exceptions, criticism and independent coverage than foreign affairs coverage, any issue that pits a social movement against a macro-oriented policy interest (whether corporate or governmental) is expected to receive differing treatment and a lack of independence from elite positioning in a manner almost on par with that of foreign affairs news coverage. Matters will

differ depending on the extent that a given social movement *challenges* U.S. governmental positioning (unworthy) or is in line with it (worthy), particularly for instances where a given macro-oriented domestic topic (i.e. national health care policy, high-profile labor conflicts, domestic income distribution and national welfare and social security policies) is at stake. In the latter circumstances, news content will *still* display dichotomous tendencies between worthy and unworthy social movements. The MDM draws support for this postulate based on evidence drawn from the case studies presented in the chapters to follow (in particular, from chps. 6 & 8), as well as other scholarly findings.

Herman and Chomsky, in their revised introduction to the PM, cite an impressive array of content studies and analyses that support the MDM's expectations on domestic coverage: news content of protests by the global justice movement that was markedly pro-police and anti-protester on the issue of violence (Herman and Chomsky, 2002, p. xlv; citing ignored press releases from the ACLU); coverage of protests of the 2000 RNC and DNC conventions that was pro-major-party and pro-police (p. xlv; citing an array of studies by analysts at FAIR); the dichotomous treatment of the right for corporations to lobby in D.C., but not affording the same right to organized labor when it came to the consideration of NAFTA (p. xlv; citing content research by Chomsky 1994); the capitulating coverage to the whims of the corporate-dominated chemical industry (pp. xlvi-xlvii; citing several book chapters by Fagin & Lavelle, 1996); gross negligence in terms of coverage on the alarming redistribution of wealth from the lower and middle class upward to the top 1% of income earners in the U.S. from the 1970's onward (p. xlv); dichotomous press treatment of a U.S.-based miners strike versus much friendlier treatment of a Soviet miners strike (p. xlv; citing a comparative study, Tasini, 1990); the largely ignored and virtually uncovered attack on organized labor by Reagan during the 1980's (p. xlv); the pro-business coverage of the supposed Social Security "crisis" between 1992 and 1996 (p. xlviii; citing Bagdikian, 2000, pp. xxvii-xxix); and the near complete oversight of the single-payer option (pp. xlviii; citing several analyses by Canham-Clyne, 1993, 1994 and Navarro 1994), which was also observed about the latest round of health care coverage (Hollar & MacDonald, 2009).

The MDM, unlike the PM, attempts to explain why domestic coverage displays these patterns in greater detail and contains the following postulate: *all* of these domestic issues and their respective press treatment presented serious affronts to state-corporate interests and were

at odds with what was most often united elite positioning on the issue. Also, *all* of the news topics cited dealt with institutional and macro-oriented policy issues that were either national in scope (such as national policies on health care and social security issues) or dealt with labor conflict or social protest. *None* of these cited studies considered press treatment of natural disasters, abortion, affirmative action, gay rights, police brutality or flag burning, which are conversely all social and domestic issues that generally do not threaten influential state-corporate interests in as fundamental of a manner.

As has already been found in other scholarly inquiries, domestic social issues display different tendencies in terms of some limited increases of independence from state-corporate interests: high-profile cases of police brutality (Lawrence, 2000, pp. 93, 213); the Exxon Valdez oil spill (Lawrence, 2000, p. 180; Lawrence & Birkland, 2001); the crash of the domestic ValuJet flight in 1996 (Lawrence, 2001, p. 181); Ryan White and AIDS in some 1980s news coverage (Dearing & Rogers, 1996), the nuclear power plant accident of Three Mile Island (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989) and probably pretty soon, the B.P. oil spill into the Gulf of Mexico. All of these issues managed to feature either critical non-officials more often than in macro-oriented topics or *some* systemic claims against state-corporate interests. Further, Birkland argued that news coverage of “focusing events,” including natural disasters, oil spills and nuclear power plant accidents, tended to gain more sympathetic policy making on behalf of otherwise marginalized groups (1997). Bennett and his colleagues (2007) echoed similar sentiments in regards to press coverage of Hurricane Katrina and again, there is probably an academic study that will soon reveal as much in relation to the B.P. oil spill.

The thread that connects all of these events, however, is that they are essentially domestic social issues, many of which are event-driven or accidental in nature. This fits the pattern, which the MDM addresses, whereby domestic issues posing more of a threat to state-corporate interests tend to receive less critical coverage in the U.S. mainstream news media. Instead, news coverage that sides more with wealth and power than with the public interest is far more prominent and observable when it comes to more macro-oriented topics.

The case of Elián Gonzalez will represent an opportunity to test the MDM on the domestic issue of immigration, while also bearing international elements (chp. 8). As a result of such elements, this was a particularly unique opportunity to test not only a domestic issue, but also dichotomous expectations. A comparative analysis was undertaken between Elián and

equivalent cases of abandoned and undocumented immigrant children who were covered by at least some U.S. news sources. The MDM compared these cases and tested its expectations for the potentially unworthy victims, who were from Mexico, Haiti and a number of Central American states. Did the press cover the related systemic issues of the origins of the rise in immigration for these unworthy victims, especially in so much as they related to U.S. policy and culpability (i.e. NAFTA and its links to immigration), in a similar manner to which the systemic conditions were critically addressed in coverage of the Cuban-born Elián Gonzalez? The MDM expected and indeed, it was found that the cases *were not* covered similarly, in an occurrence of the unworthy and worthy victims phenomenon for a domestic issue. Similar dichotomous tendencies to what has been observed with foreign affairs reporting took place in this instance because of the fact that increased immigration from Mexico and Central America correlates significantly with the adoption and implementation of NAFTA, an issue of international monetary policy. This mitigates just how domestic and how social of an issue covering the unworthy, unaccompanied minors would have been and instead, points more to international and macro-economic elements. Recall that the MDM expects particularly low levels of independent reporting and coverage when it comes to these issues (especially for states that are allied with the U.S.). As a result, the nature of the issue at hand, coupled with the children hailing from allies of the U.S., certainly contributed to the unworthy status that the unaccompanied children were afforded. As for Elián, the fact that he came from a communist country that has long been antagonistic with the U.S. – in spite of the lack of governmental interest the matter being vetted by the press – contributed significantly to his status as a worthy victim.

In sum, another original component of the MDM is that for domestic issues which have a macroeconomic or geo-political character to them, such as was the case with immigration and NAFTA in the case of the other nine children surveyed, dichotomous tendencies in news content will be displayed in a similar manner to what has been observed in more purely international issues related to U.S. foreign policy.

The MDM on Foreign Affairs

The picture is often quite different when it comes to foreign affairs coverage. It is much more difficult for even broadly-supported social movements to make a dent on U.S. news content when it comes to military, diplomatic and international monetary policy. The MDM's components include the type of intervention at stake, and the nature of the relationship that the given country has with the U.S.

“Interventions” is defined here as including invasions, military occupations, bombings, diplomatic threats, massacres or genocides that the U.S. has directly undertaken, sponsored, supported or opposed. Diplomatic threats may seem like a strange inclusion amongst these other types of interventions, but when an embargo or military action is threatened by the U.S. toward a less powerful country, the MDM considers this a significant matter on the scale of an intervention. An example is when President Kennedy threatened to use nuclear weapons against the U.S.S.R., when it was attempting to ship arms to Cuba. Daniel Ellsberg has argued that this was one of several examples of “using” nuclear weapons through the threat alone. In much the same manner, the MDM also assumes diplomatic threats of military action or economic embargo to be an intervention as well.

Building on Herman and Chomsky's formulation for types of atrocities (1979), the MDM classifies interventions in terms of U.S. policy and subsequent press coverage as “constructive,” “benign,” or nefarious.” Constructive interventions are policies or incidents that the U.S. openly supports, condones or to which it simply does not object. Most, if not all of the resulting victims are “unworthy” in terms of media coverage, since the perpetrators are usually client states of the U.S. or the U.S. itself. “Benign” interventions generally do not attract significant governmental attention or press coverage, usually because of U.S. culpability in the matter, which also results in “unworthy” victims. “Nefarious” interventions are undertaken by “enemy” states of the U.S. and are abuses which the U.S. press takes great interest in and devotes significant attention to, including prominent inclusion of humanizing details of abuses toward “worthy” victims. The MDM lays out specific expectations in terms of the tone, volume, culpability and extent of humanizing details predicted to appear in press content, all in relation to the type of intervention at stake (see Table 3.2).

The MDM's expectations on interventions will be thoroughly tested and explored in case studies conducted on all three types of interventions: for major U.S. military operations

and incursions into the city of Fallujah during periods in 2003 and 2004 (chp. 4) and the U.S. diplomatic intervention which ended a grassroots, mostly indigenous Ecuadoran uprising (chp. 8; both cases are constructive interventions); for the massacre of forty-five indigenous people (mostly women and children) in Acteal (chp. 5), which is in the southeastern Mexican state of Chiapas, as well as the 1999 massacres surrounding the referendum on self-determination in East Timor (Kennis, 2000); and lastly, on the disputed 1999 massacre of Kosovars in Racak, Kosovo (chp. 5), purportedly by the Serbian army, which was used as the major pretext for the aerial invasion of Yugoslavia (a nefarious intervention). An array of news sources were tested in these studies, including the agenda-setting dailies *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, as well as an assortment of other U.S. dailies also evaluated; major network newscasts from ABC, NBC, CBS, CNN and CNN en Español; and lastly, daily newspapers published abroad, in a comparative analysis undertaken with U.S. dailies.

Table 3.2 expects a low level of press independence from the state-corporate interests at stake, which is also in line with the MDM's argument that the press particularly suffers from institutional limitations when it comes to foreign affairs reporting. Highly dichotomous tendencies suggest differing journalistic standards, with empathy toward victims largely falling in line with White House positioning on the issue at stake. Yet the MDM does not ignore changing circumstances and historical conditions and their potential impact on news coverage. The MDM accounts for exceptions to the general rule (see Tables 3.4 & 3.5, including "Clarifications and Exceptions" section below).

Table 3.2: Tone, Volume & Sourcing Tendencies of Coverage of U.S. Interventions / Abuses

Type of abuse / intervention (including invasions, occupations, bombings, diplomatic threats, genocides or massacres)	States involved; Blame & culpability	Type of victims; Tone of coverage	Volume of coverage	Sourcing tendencies	Extent of humanizing details
1) Constructive: Fallujah incursions (2004, chp. 4); Ending of Ecuador uprising (2000, chp. 7)	U.S. &/or ally; blame grafted onto victims themselves &/or terrorist forces	Unworthy; generally supportive tone for worthiness of mission	Variable: depending on attention from Washington & influence of officials most active on issue	High use of official sources (ally or U.S. in origin), with low use of unofficial / oppositional sources	Low
2) Benign: Ateal massacre (1997-1998, chp. 5); East Timor massacres (1999)	U.S. &/or ally; blame sometimes grafted onto indigenous actors or not given at all	Unworthy; mostly indifferent coverage, with only occasional regret expressed	Low: extent largely depending on attention from Washington & influence of officials most active on issue	High use of official sources (ally or U.S. in origin), with low use of unofficial / oppositional sources	Low
3) Nefarious: Racak massacre (1999, chp. 5)	Enemy state; blame overwhelmingly put on doorstep of high-ranking officials	Worthy; complete indignation & horror at large extent of atrocities, with occasional historical context	High: variability dependent on extent of hostility from the U.S. toward the enemy state at hand & attention given by gvt. officials	Liberal use of unofficial / oppositional sources, very low use of foreign official sources from enemy states , high use of official U.S. sources (if existent)	High

According to standard professional doctrine, U.S. journalism should not employ differing standards for the sourcing tendencies that are displayed in their content depending on the issue at stake. The MDM, however, reveals the presence of these dichotomous tendencies

in U.S. news media content. The relationship a given country has with the U.S. holds a lot of weight in determining whether official sourcing tendencies will simply dominate or if a significant use of unofficial sources will *also* appear in news content. Similarly, professional standards in journalism will be flipped in terms of culpability being found at high levels of government when states antagonistic with the U.S. are under consideration, but similar identifications of culpability will *not* be employed toward the U.S. and its allies. As previously noted by Herring and Robinson (2003, p. 554), other scholarly accounts have unfortunately failed to identify these dichotomous news tendencies. The MDM, however, designates such content patterns as being of significant importance in terms of revealing the structural deficiencies that lead to a news media that lacks independence from both the White House as well as Wall Street.

Theorizing Ownership and Applicability Abroad

Since the time that the IM and PM were first formulated, important structural changes have occurred to the political economy of the U.S. and global news media. As a result, the MDM offers stronger and updated postulates on the expected influences that ownership should have on content, as well as its applicability to press systems abroad.

A watershed moment, documented most extensively by McChesney (2000), was the passage of the 1996 Telecommunications Act. This facilitated the most recent push toward an oligopoly of media conglomerates which since 1996, have oscillated between five and six massive corporate conglomerates controlling the majority of U.S.-based media holdings. Bagdikian, who long ago predicted (1980) and went on to consistently document the increasing concentration of corporate entities owning the media, has also correctly predicted that the amount of ownership entities would not further diminish (2004, pp. 4-5). In other words, media concentration has reached its zenith and maintains only limited competition coupled with “cartel-like relations” between the remaining corporate conglomerates (Bagdikian, 2004, p. 5). Internationally speaking, the numbers are just as striking, as no more than a mere nine corporate conglomerates dominate media holdings existent across the world (McChesney & Schiller, 2003, p. 3). The economic power of the international media conglomerates has risen to such a level that leading political economists have argued that the international communications industry is now a cornerstone of the global capitalist framework (McChesney & Schiller, 2003).

Comparing the total revenues for some of the U.S.-based conglomerates versus the total gross domestic production of underdeveloped countries goes far to illustrate McChesney and Schiller's argument. Figures from the International Monetary Fund and the 10-K's filed by the six corporate conglomerates (GE, Time Warner, Walt Disney, News Corporation, CBS and Viacom), which continue to own the majority of the U.S. media, distressingly reveal the fact that the total gross domestic product (GDP) of 77 nations was less than that of the total revenues of these conglomerates in 2007. Even large media corporations who are not conglomerates are boasting annual revenues exceeding the GDP of many countries, as was the case with Google, which had revenues exceeding the GDP of 44 nations in 2007.

In terms of the news media, a growing trend amongst these powerful media conglomerates has been to globalize their operations. Subsidiaries such as CNN en Español provide the opportunity to test the extent that media ownership influences content. In the study to be presented in this dissertation (chp. 4), only minimal differences were found between broadcast content of CNN en Español and CNN domestic and their coverage on Fallujah, Iraq between 2003 and 2004. These limited differences were present in spite of sharply differing viewpoints on the invasion and occupation of Iraq by the U.S. and Latin American publics, as well as distinctive and even antagonistic policy stances by Latin American governments and the U.S. (including even important allies, such as Mexico). In light of this finding, coupled with the disturbingly small number of conglomerates that control the U.S. news media, the MDM's strongest institutional constraint is media ownership by mammoth corporate-conglomerates. In other words, one of the key components of the MDM will show (chp. 4) how this reinvigorated type of corporate ownership structure serves as the most powerful institutional variable in terms of influencing and constraining subsequent news content.

Herman and Chomsky have not directly addressed the extent that the PM applies abroad, but many scholars have debated its applicability. Corner (2003) argues that the PM brings only limited theoretical insight to the European context, while Goodwin (1994) and Sparks (2007) point to a stronger presence of progressive thought and policy, and more formidable labor / socialist parties to counteract what otherwise would perhaps also be a European propaganda model. Others, however, have seen the matter in different terms, pointing to applicability in the U.K. with slight modifications to adjust for distinctive ownership and political institutions (Doherty, 2005; Zollman, 2009). In yet more international

applications, Hughes and Lawson found the PM to be reflective of the Mexican news media (2004), Klaehn analyzed the way the PM works in Canada (2005), and Hearn-Branaman concluded the PM to be in play with Chinese media (2009). Similar to Herman's remarks on increased globalization leading to an intensification of the PM and applicability in the U.K. and beyond (2008), Hearn-Branaman argue that the continued dissemination of neo-liberal and market ideology world-wide considerably broadens the international applicability of the PM (2009).

In terms of the MDM's applicability to press systems abroad, the key expectation hinges on the extent that a public news media is present in a given media system. Globally, of course, there is no real public media and the field is dominated by mammoth corporate conglomerates, whose revenues often outstrip that of most of the world's countries' total annual gross domestic product outlays. As a result, the MDM's expectations for international television networks, as well as their respect web-based content, are that they would generally conform within the dominant components of the MDM to the extent that the given topic at hand does not fall into one of the exceptionalist components. Paying heed to leading research by Hallin and Mancini (2004) and Benson and Hallin (2007), it is important to keep in mind each particular system's and news source's institutional characteristics. Therefore, national news media systems with more public media will tend to have more exceptions, even within the commercialized sectors. Similarly, non-profit sources will tend to produce the most exceptions, especially those that are operating in more public-oriented news system environments, but also including those that are present within the U.S. The concluding chapter of this dissertation explores these issues in greater depth.

The MDM's resolution of theoretical conflicts between the PM and IM

Beyond filling the gaps that remain when the PM and IM are synthesized together, the MDM also resolves remaining theoretical conflicts between the two hegemonic models of news analysis. Indeed, there are a number of important conflicts between the PM and IM, which reflect general disagreements and tensions between the sub-fields of political communication and political economy. The theoretical foundations underlying the MDM are explained in this section and attempt to resolve these remaining disagreements. While *both* the IM and the PM are in agreement about a general tendency and problem of a lack of news media independence, they are not consistent on where culpability for these problems lies.

Similarly, while the IM points to governmental attention as a main variable for explaining editorial decisions about how much and what to cover for a given news topic, the PM focuses more on the worthy / unworthy victim dichotomy. Lastly, the discontinuity thesis adopted by some indexing scholars lies at odds with continued criticism of press dependency by the authors of the PM.

A number of theoretical arguments associated with the MDM and presented within this section resolve these remaining questions and disagreements. Criticism is undertaken of the idea that journalists, as opposed to the institutions they work for, are responsible for a lack of independent news content. This is in relation with a general argument that institutional constraints, as opposed to mere standards of professional journalism, explain weak news media performance. Attention from influential governmental officials is a more reliable and principal indicator of volume of coverage tendencies, even though the Worthy / Unworthy victim dichotomy does have some continued relevance in terms of enhancing these tendencies. The discontinuity thesis is a flawed one and criticism of it is undertaken. Lastly, the “trail of power” postulate important to the IM is addressed and improved upon.

Culpability for poor media performance and a lack of press independence

The most important theoretical tension between these two models is the conflicting arguments in terms of culpability for poor media performance and a lack of media independence. The PM, with its institutional filters, focuses solely on institutional responsibility for resulting news content. Conversely, indexing literature emphasizes professional standards of journalism (Hallin, 1986) and has even gone so far as to state that such standards are embodied by “self-imposed constraints,” or “limits” carried out by “intrepid reporters and editors,” whose “journalistic deference to power is almost entirely voluntary” (Bennett, Lawrence, & Livingston, 2007, pp. 46, 70, 179). The MDM represents an attempt to resolve this underlying theoretical tension.

Indexing theorists are mistaken to assume a “peculiar” and “voluntary” pattern of a “journalistic deference to power,” as there has long been evidence of journalists going beyond the indexing rule, with such efforts resulting in censorship, sabotage and/or harsh punishments to journalists’ careers and/or positions. The MDM demonstrates how most news media subservience is *not* voluntary and instead is more often a function of the institutional constraints inherently placed on journalists. These institutional constraints are a direct result of

powerful and influential state-corporate interests, the same state-corporate pressures that the news media is inherently a part of and subjected to as a for-profit, highly commercialized, highly conglomerated and corporate-based industry. Far from being aptly described as “curious,” or as a set of “oddly dependent relationships” which result in “journalistic deference” inappropriately dubbed as a “peculiarity,” (Bennett, Lawrence, & Livingston, 2007, pp. 46-47, 179), this dissertation will reveal that the constraints imposed on the U.S. press are institutional (chp. 9) and a rational result of the historical developments of a commercialized and highly concentrated news media system (chp. 3), as duly shown in its own media performance and content (chps. 4-8). Similarly, a case-study documenting the institutional constraints that have often victimized journalists (chp. 9) demonstrates that Herman and Chomsky were also mistaken to assume crude interventions by editors and media executives on behalf of advertisers, owners and powerful sources as being a rare occurrence (2002, p. xi), as documented occurrences alone are more than limited and even if they are not the norm, are nonetheless significant.

There is powerful evidence to support the MDM’s expectations for an institutional basis being responsible for the lack of press independence which does include interventions on behalf of the powerful as being a significant part of the mix. Beyond the many content studies that have been conducted in relation to the MDM and contained herein, a long-standing history is revealed of documented instances whereby editors and publishers have come down hard on their journalists and reporters, and have engaged in a phenomenon known within the industry as “spiking.” Indeed, hard-hitting and critical stories have been “spiked” out of existence across time periods and for many years, leaving such reporting on the cutting-room floor and unpublished (spiking will be amply documented in chapter 10). Many careers have in fact been lost and ended as a result of spiking (Börjesson, 2004, 2005), with one of the more tragic cases having been the late Gary Webb. Even more than lost careers and stories, however, an untold number of unwritten critically-inclined and truth-revealing stories have possibly been the most frequent victim of this form of institutional censorship, which the MDM assumes as being nothing less than an attack on democracy.

The “trail of power” postulate: strengths and weaknesses

One of the most compelling theoretical components found within the indexing literature is an argument about a “trail of power” figuring prominently into journalistic and news norms.

Bennett first put forth this postulate:

The development of a story beyond normal institutions and newsbeats suggests a third representation rule for journalists pursuing a complex developing story: follow the trail of power (1996, p. 378).

The “trail of power” argument is an especially convincing explanation for examples of press exceptionalism. In these instances, social movements manage to succeed in pressuring, influencing and impacting public officials and thus also, press coverage. This is a laudable finding within the indexing literature and is also an important part of the MDM. But the “trail of power” argument, without further qualifications about important dichotomous tendencies, is incomplete.

The weakness to the “trail of power” argument is that it does not account for the dichotomous tendencies often shown amongst worthy and unworthy social movements. Journalistic standards turn on a dime when it comes to movements in direct opposition to U.S. policy and highly contrast with those undertaken for movements in direct opposition to governments that are hostile to the White House. Even when powerful social movements flex their might, such as the unprecedented international resistance displayed in February 2003 in opposition to the pending U.S.-led invasion of Iraq (Bennett et al., 2008, p. 269), they will simply not be covered as substantively, as fairly, as sympathetically and as extensively as their “worthy” movement counterparts of both the past and the present: the Free Tibet movement; the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989; the Boston “Tea Party” protests of April 2009; and the efforts of the Miami-based family of Elián Gonzalez to have him remain in the U.S. in 2000 (*before* U.S. policy favored returning Elián to Cuba). The “trail of power” invoked by journalists then, is not a fairly applied perception of when outside actors manage to impact politics and policy, if not a news norm that sharply differs when it comes to movements in *opposition* to U.S. policy in comparison to those that are in accordance with or at least not threatening of official U.S. policy. The MDM is an attempt to go beyond the “trail of power” argument and once again, resolve the tension between conflicting arguments about professional practices and more institutional-oriented analyses.

Volume of Coverage: U.S. Governmental Attention or Worthy / Unworthy Dichotomy?

Another conflict between the IM and PM that the MDM resolves is on volume of coverage. The IM places more emphasis on governmental attention, while the PM places far more emphasis on whether or not the country involved with the issue is antagonistic or friendly with the White House (i.e. the worthy / unworthy dichotomy). Which model was right? The MDM demonstrates that governmental attention is generally the most reliable barometer for predicting the expected volume of coverage a news issue will receive. At the same time, this is not the only variable of importance, as there will still be Worthy / Unworthy tendencies in cases where a given state is important in terms of geo-strategic interests and/or governmental attention. In these “high-priority” instances, volume of news coverage tendencies will depend not only on governmental attention, but just as importantly (and sometimes more) on the type of relationship that the White House is maintaining with the country.

Table 3.3 lays out how U.S. governmental attention is the most reliable variable for subsequent volume of coverage. It also shows that attention from a client or allied state can still generate significant coverage as well (i.e. foreign indexing, see sub-section below). However, for occurrences when an important enemy, socialist or communist state does *not* receive governmental attention (or such governmental attention is not voluntary or willing), the potential for rights abuses or an oppositional movement to be sympathetically covered by the mainstream U.S. press still remains. Further, that potential will be markedly higher than cases for client states without governmental attention from the U.S. or the client / allied state itself. There are several examples to illustrate the point.

At the time of its occurrence at the turn of this century, the Elián Gonzalez affair was one of the most highly covered news items of the U.S. press, ranking behind only the O.J. Simpson and Princess Diana stories. Its coverage was significant to the point of going beyond explanations only pointing to governmental attention. Instead, it is a good example of how an enemy state, particularly one that is also communist, can generate a “worthy victim” in spite of the lack of correlation with governmental attention. It was not an issue the U.S. government necessarily desired a lot of media attention about, since “Elián” was a thorny and divisive issue (if not a threatening one), which wound up splitting even administration officials at the time (with Vice President, and then Presidential contender Al Gore opting to dissent by supporting the continued stay of Elián within the U.S.). However, given the antagonistic relationship that

Cuba has long held with the U.S. and its communist government, it was a prime candidate for explosively high press coverage. The case study duly illustrated the dichotomous comparison of the enormous volume of coverage allotted to the Elián affair and sparsely given to unaccompanied and undocumented minors who immigrated to the U.S. and lost a parent, but were from client (as opposed to enemy) states. Indeed, there were many forgotten “Eliáns” during the year of Elián, and probably since that time as well.

There are other issues this tendency has been on display for as well, including most prominently the Free Tibet movement. Tibet, by any standard, is not amongst the most important priorities for the White House. At the same time, the Free Tibet movement has attracted wide support amongst important Hollywood celebrities and significant backing from social movements related to the human rights community. Most importantly, Tibet is a struggle against a communist country that is antagonistic to the U.S., at least in diplomatic and rhetorical terms, on human rights issues (certainly including that of self-determination, as is also illustrated by the long-running dispute over Taiwan). Even without governmental attention, as the Tibet issue is definitely an uncomfortable one for the White House that puts economic and political interests into conflict with one another in relation to China, the issue has managed to generate considerable coverage. This was especially seen during the Olympics, where the issue generated considerable news coverage and attention.¹⁰

In other words, dichotomies will still apply when it comes to the volume of coverage between victims from enemy states (even without voluntary governmental attention) and the amount of coverage allotted to victims from client states, especially if the enemy state is communist (as was the case with Cuba) and/or important. In the case of China and Tibet, the issue involved both a communist nation that is also certainly important in terms of geo-strategic interests. Nevertheless, the overriding point stated above remains: U.S. governmental attention is still the most reliable indicator of volume of coverage. Prior scholarship also supports the MDM’s expectations in this latter regard.

Herman and Chomsky’s Worthy / Unworthy victims thesis, that the press will “consistently portray people abused in enemy states as *worthy* victims, whereas those treated with equal or greater severity by its own government or clients will be *unworthy*” (1988, p. 2), was stated without qualification in their work in terms of expected volume of coverage tendencies. There was no explanation beyond the unqualified expectation that worthy victims

should get more coverage and unworthy victims, less coverage. This prompted a number of scholars to inquire on the extent that Herman and Chomsky’s thesis applied to a year’s worth of news coverage during 1983 in *The New York Times*. The study paid particular attention to the volume of coverage allotted to an array of human rights abuses originating from 84 countries (Jacobson et al., 2002). The extensive content analysis and study found that the majority of stories in the *Times*, but *not* the majority of countries covered, correlated largely to the PM’s predictions. Jacobson et. Al. thus concluded the PM’s worthy / unworthy victim’s thesis should be modified to fit “‘high priority client [states],’ those at the top of the [U.S.] government’s foreign policy agenda” (2002, p. 23), as opposed to a catch-all, open-ended statement of the dichotomy applying to most countries, for most coverage, during most time periods.

The MDM incorporates Jacobson’s recommendations into its own critical components and expectations, albeit with the important modification to include corporations (see Table 3.3, below). The more important the issue is to the White House or a powerful U.S.-based corporation, the more subjected the news media will be to subsequent public relations and spin efforts and the more this will be reflected in subsequent coverage allotment. In the cases of less important countries for the U.S. policy agenda or influential corporations, volume of coverage tendencies will not necessarily conform to the dichotomous expectations of the Worthy / Unworthy victims thesis (see chp. 5 and Acteal on this point). Instead, in the absence of exceptional conditions, low-priority enemy states of the U.S. will rely more upon governmental attention to generate coverage for abuses relating to their countries.

Table 3.3: The MDM on Volume of News Coverage
(particularly applicable to mainstream U.S. news coverage of important human rights abuses, military, international monetary policy)

VOLUME OF NEWS COVERAGE	Attention from U.S. govt. &/or foreign client State / ally	Attention <i>only</i> from foreign client / ally	Inattention from both U.S. & foreign client
High-priority client state / ally ¹¹	High to medium-high	Medium to low	Low or non-existent
Low-priority client state / ally	Medium-high	Medium-low, low or non-existent	Virtually or literally non-existent (lowest)

Table 3.3: The MDM on Volume of News Coverage *(continued)*

VOLUME OF NEWS COVERAGE	Attention from U.S. govt.	Inattention from U.S. govt.
High-priority enemy state	Very high (highest)	High
Low-priority enemy state	Medium-high	Low or non-existent

The Flawed Discontinuity Thesis

There is a small, but formidable set of indexing scholars who argue that the press has become more independent, particularly following the end of the Cold War (Althaus et al., 1996; Althaus, 2003; Entman, 2004; Fico & Soffin, 1995; Livingston & Eachus, 1996). While some of these studies display meritorious points backed up by extensive evidence and data (Althaus, 2003), others hinge much of their analysis on dubious political analysis. In particular, Entman relies heavily on the assumption that “the fading Cold War paradigm” factors largely into current, post-Cold War news coverage (2004, p. 19). However, Entman makes the mistake of assuming that the indexing and propaganda models rely on the “Cold War,” in spite of the fact that one of the co-authors of the latter model has explicitly argued that the “Cold War” was mostly a distraction from North-South relations and the resource conflicts surrounding such relations (Chomsky, 1992). Instead, it is Entman that relies on Cold War assumptions, in spite of his premise being a highly questionable one, as revealed by Stokes in a strongly written critique terming such dubious political analysis as the “discontinuity thesis” (2003).

Stokes effectively argues that the notion that the ending of the Cold War has significantly changed the political landscape and U.S. policy positioning is overstated and misleading (2003). Particularly in relation to U.S. policy on the Third World and Latin America, Stokes sides with Chomsky in characterizing U.S. post-Cold War policy as one of continuity, as opposed to discontinuity, with earlier Cold War planning objectives. Using Colombia as his case study, Stokes shows how the continued preservation of U.S. access to oil in South America, and crucial military support for counter-repression of challenges to U.S.-led neo-liberal initiatives, significantly undercuts the discontinuity thesis. Support for Latin American governments who covertly fund and support paramilitaries that terrorize civilian populations was a tact taken by U.S. policy both before and after the Cold War and just as

importantly, aggressive pursuits of neo-liberal initiatives also prominently existed both before and after the ending of the Cold War.

The “discontinuity thesis” was previously heavily favored by most scholars of press exceptionalism, but interestingly enough, it has not been pointed to in recent years of published scholarship. This is undoubtedly a result of the electoral shift in Latin America and a further hardening of U.S.-Latin American relations, which are now even more clearly comparable and analogous to Cold War relations. The discontinuity thesis, if ever appropriate, is surely out of place in today’s reigning political climate within the U.S. policy arena on U.S.-Latin American diplomatic relations. Even with the recent election of President Obama to the White House, shifts in U.S. policy making toward Latin America and other socialist or communist nations have been more rhetorical than substantive.

In addition to the work done by Stokes (2003) which undermined the discontinuity thesis that the post-Cold War explanations are based on, the most recent research findings on news coverage of Iraq also serve as strong evidence against the post-Cold War thesis serving as a reliable factor of explanation for supposed additions to independent news content. In this sense, the “war on terrorism” has supplanted and even superseded in some ways the powerful frame and narrative of anti-communism that was dominant throughout much of the Cold War (but indeed, arguably continuing through today’s climate as well, especially given U.S. hostility toward Latin American social democracies, often mischaracterized as merely “socialist” or “communist-inspired” administrations). Moeller undertook an extensive review of U.S. news coverage on the Bush administration’s WMD justifications for invading Iraq and found that such claims were widely accepted without critical evaluation or questioning (2004). Livingston and Robinson conducted their own Iraq study and found that U.S. news coverage served to aid a successful propaganda campaign that inaccurately linked Al Qaeda to Saddam Hussein. They concluded their article by faulting internal institutional failings in *The New York Times*, and a hostile political environment against dissent and criticism of the Bush administration, for the subservient news coverage (2004, pp. 34-35). Entman described coverage of the invasion of Fallujah as nothing less than the “homogeneity of institutionalized news” (2006), while Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston strongly criticized the news media for euphemistically covering prison torture as “abuse” (2006). Can all of these news media performance failings be reconciled with the assumption that qualitatively different news

content should be found during the post-Cold War era when it comes to the most important coverage of U.S. foreign policy? The findings from scholarly studies on Iraq coverage, including those contained within this dissertation (chp. 5), have suggested that they cannot. The MDM's components firmly positions it along with the continuity thesis (Stokes, 2003) and is an effort at resolving the tension between conflicting arguments between the indexing and propaganda models about the post-Cold War era accounting for an era of "press ambiguity" (Entman, 2004). Nevertheless, while the MDM shows how we continue to not live in an era of "press ambiguity," it does not discount and in fact documents and explains how a number of exceptions to its postulates can occur.

Clarifications & Exceptions

Both the propaganda and indexing models have been criticized for being too "simple" or "functional" in their postulates. Some of this criticism is misguided, as the authors of these models did not intend their analyses to provide more than a general "bird's eye" picture of the consistent patterns that are present in U.S. news coverage, especially in terms of the PM (as the IM has since made some attempts at addressing this after it was first posited, see Bennett, Lawrence, & Livingston, 2007, p. 63; Bennett, 2004, p. 296). Herman's own admission about the PM is instructive:

... we should have made it clearer that [it] was about media behavior and performance, with uncertain and variable effects. Maybe we should have spelled out in more detail the contesting forces both within and outside the media and the conditions under which these are likely to be influential (Herman, 1997).

The MDM, unlike the PM, is a concerted effort to be more clear and detailed about the impact that contesting forces and certain political conditions have on resulting news coverage, as well as some issues related to media effects. By integrating past analyses, important historical developments (chp. 3) and recent polling data (chp. 10) into its analysis, the MDM shows how the dependence elite U.S. news media has on its corporate patrons and governmental sources impacts the U.S.'s college-educated population more than any other sector. Of equal importance, the MDM shows how past social movements and their political resistance coupled with polling data (chp. 10) convincingly reveal how leading U.S. news sources often do *not* reflect the type of news media that any sector of the U.S. public desires to see, a finding that verifies and builds on past scholarly conclusions (McChesney, 2000, 2004).

Furthermore, a greater attempt is purposefully made with the MDM to qualify and limit its predictions so that misinterpretations do not arise when inevitable exceptions appear in the news. Since these qualifications and limitations are also expectations in and of themselves, these will be evaluated in many of the case studies contained in the dissertation that have conditions which result in at least some exceptional aspects of news coverage (chps. 7-9).

Conditions and Factors Resulting in Exceptional News Content

The MDM goes beyond simplifying media analysis to an unshakable reflection of the priorities of officials, despite the significant importance of this variable. Instead, it also argues that a host of factors are important when it comes to bringing about exceptionally independent news content. Specifically, the MDM lays out five conditions and factors that it posits as accounting for exceptions to its most important predictions for mainstream U.S. news content.

1) Nature of topic at hand in relation to state-corporate interests

The most important factor when accounting for exceptions to the MDM is the issue at stake and the extent that it poses a threat to state-corporate interests. Simply put, the less threatening the issue is to these interests, the more exceptions to its major postulates and expectations can occur. Macro-oriented political and economic issues tend to be more threatening and thus produce fewer exceptions, whereby strictly social issues tend to be less threatening and thus result in more exceptions.

This tendency has been put on ample display in relation to war reporting. There are few topics in the news that contain more threats to corporate interests than critical and independent reporting on wars and occupations with which the U.S. has involved itself. Both the Afghanistan and Iraq invasions, wars and ongoing occupations contain a plethora of strong corporate and governmental interests. A number of powerful corporations, who are significant clients and patrons of the corporate media through advertising, are involved or benefit from these wars, including Halliburton, Lockheed Martin and Boeing. Oil interests are also wrapped into wars and major players such as Exxon / Mobil frequently advertise in the most influential corporate news media outlets. A given Presidential administration often stakes its continued existence on how a war is perceived as being handled, as is certainly the case with the Obama administration and Afghanistan or the Bush administration and Iraq. Efforts by both of these administrations to spin and impact news content on these wars, sometimes resulting in scandals such as “payola” (Free Press 2005) or revelations on compensating ex-military generals to be

media sources (Democracy Now!, 2008), are substantial and far reaching. As has already been noted, however, a different and far less threatening scenario is in place for a range of social topics which do not directly invoke corporate or even governmental interests to as substantial of a degree as other topics such as invasions and occupations. Included amongst such topics are natural disasters, abortion, affirmative action, gay rights, police brutality and flag burning.

2) Domestic versus foreign

The tendency for fewer or more exceptions in accordance with the extent that a topic is threatening to state-corporate interests is intensified depending on whether the issue is international or domestic in its scope. As elucidated in the previous section, news coverage of international issues suffers disproportionately from media dependence, especially when combined with a macro-economic or military policy element. Conversely, domestic issues show more variance when social issues are at stake.

Findings from case studies contained in this dissertation support both of these important components of the MDM. Instances of exceptionalism will be shown to be non-existent when it comes to news coverage of the most important event during the ongoing occupation of Iraq (chp. 4), while more elements of exceptionalism will be seen for domestic cases, such as the Elián Gonzalez (chp. 8) and Vieques (chp. 7) studies, two issues that were partially domestic and social in nature (i.e. immigration and a U.S. territory). Thus, the “Free Vieques” movement was able to exert more influence on news content than the anti-war movement opposing the invasion of Iraq, despite the latter’s unprecedented characteristics in terms of its size and international character.

3) News source under consideration

Nationally distributed news sources such, as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* or any broadcaster with a nightly national newscast (NBC, ABC, CBS or Fox), contrary to conventional wisdom, will actually lack independence from U.S. positioning as much as (and often more than) any other mainstream news media source.

The case study on Elián Gonzalez (chp. 8) will reveal strong evidence that regionally-based dailies outside of the New York-D.C. power centers generated more exceptional news coverage. In spite of the fact that such coverage was still relatively restricted, the finding that content existed outside of the most powerful spheres of economic and political influence in the U.S. was important and lent much credence to this original postulate of the MDM.

This postulate has significant practical implications in the face of a crisis to the newspaper industry that has resulted in many shuttered regional dailies. Such closings stand in sharp contrast to the continued survival of the two leading elite dailies based in Washington and New York. Since the crisis in journalism has had disproportionate effects on regional-based dailies, the extent that theoretical postulates related to the MDM which expect more independent content from these papers continues to be true will in turn relate directly to a further lessening of exceptional independent news content. In other words, if regional dailies continue shutting down and resulting in lessened alternatives to the most influential nationally-distributed papers, as predicted and expected by McChesney and Nichols (2009), intensification of the most worrisome aspects of the MDM will continue to exist far into the foreseeable future.

4) Inattention from Washington and K-Street

The less attention given to a certain issue, and the less attention given to it by influential public officials, the more exceptions will occur; with more attention, less exceptions will occur. Important to note, however, is that the lack of attention from *influential* public officials is important in opening opportunities for exceptions. A hierarchy in terms of the clout and differing abilities for public officials to command attention has long been observed and documented by scholarship (Althaus et al., 1996; Entman 2004; Entman & Page, 1994). These studies have found that it is often the case that non-leadership, rank-and-file Congresspersons hailing from the opposition party do not command nearly the kind of influence and power over news media content that the White House, or to a lesser degree, that majority party leaders enjoy. This is recognized by the MDM and accounted for within this component of potential exceptions. In other words, the MDM does *not* expect significant departures from its expectations merely as a result of dissent from officials with less influence and power (i.e. non-leadership, rank-and-file Congresspersons).

Attention from K-Street (i.e. the public relations industry) is also considered an important factor for exceptionalism, as the lack of a serious and significantly funded corporate public relations campaign also raises the chances for exceptional news coverage. Critical scholarship has long demonstrated the powerful impact that the public relations lobby can have on news content (Ewen, 1996; Fones-Wolf, 1994; Stauber & Rampton, 1995; Stole, 2006). Simply put, well-funded, well-resourced and organized corporate public relations campaigns

generally have a strong impact over news coverage of a given scandal or issue of particular interest. Thus, the lack of such a campaign can result in exceptional coverage. Sometimes, both of these tendencies occur, as was the case during the Gulf of Mexico oil spill of the summer of 2010. Initially, the spill did not have many spin efforts and extensive and critical coverage resulted. Later on though, BP organized a well-funded public relations campaign which managed to impact the news media on a variety of themes (Hart, 2010).

The MDM does not fail to incorporate such findings about the presence (or lack thereof) of public relations campaigns within its own components. This is an important advance over previous analysis within the indexing and political communication literature in general, which overlooked or underemphasized the power, influence and far-reaching impact this multi-billion dollar industry has long held over news content.

5) Significant social protest & mass movements in opposition to U.S. policy & foreign indexing

When mass movements rally against official U.S. policy, more exceptional news content is possible, including possible increases to procedural criticism and in less common cases, to substantive criticism as well. This effect is increased further when inter-party and elite conflict is present. U.S.-based mass movements will result in many more exceptions than movements abroad, but foreign-based movements can still exert influence and produce exceptions even in the U.S. news media. This can happen if they make an impact on their own states and domestic news media or even more so if the movement is aligned with White House positions and against a state antagonistic to U.S. official positioning. I call such instances “foreign indexing,” which occurs whenever social movements abroad *do* manage to influence their respective policy makers and governmental policies or rhetoric. Thereafter, the potential is raised for increased attention from client states abroad and possibly also then increased coverage in the news media abroad. In these occurrences, prospects are also raised for exceptional coverage in U.S. news media sources as well. This is precisely what is displayed in the Actéal case-study, as elucidated with some more detail below and fully elaborated in chapter 5.

Table 3.4: Conditions Related to Exceptionalism

Rank	Factors resulting in exceptions to news media dependence
1)	<u>Nature of topic at hand in relation to state-corporate interests</u> : the <i>less</i> threatening the issue is to these interests, the <i>more</i> exceptions can occur. Macro-oriented political and economic issues tend to be <i>more</i> threatening and thus produce <i>less</i> exceptions, whereby strictly social issues tend to be <i>less</i> threatening and thus result in <i>more</i> exceptions.
2)	<u>Domestic versus international issues</u> : domestic issues will result in more exceptions and nuances than international news coverage. Natural disasters and police brutality are a few examples of domestic topics given to exceptionalism.
3)	<u>News source under consideration</u> : nationally distributed elite news sources, such as the <i>New York Times</i> and the <i>Washington Post</i> as well as the leading newscast broadcasters, will <i>lack</i> independence from U.S. positioning on issues as much as any other news source. Sources outside of the New York-D.C. power centers will sometimes generate more exceptional news coverage, but still limited by institutional constraints.
4)	<u>Inattention from Washington and K-Street</u> : the <i>less</i> attention given to a certain issue by important and influential public officials, the more exceptions will occur; conversely, more attention by important public officials will result in fewer exceptions. Inattention from the public relations industry is also considered an important factor for exceptionalism, as the <i>lack</i> of a serious and significantly funded corporate public relations campaign also raises the chances for exceptional news coverage.
5a)	<u>Significant social protest and mass movements in opposition to U.S. policy</u> : when mass movements rally against official U.S. policy, more exceptions are possible. This effect is increased further when inter-party conflict is present, and even more, when such conflict is intensified. U.S.-based mass movements will result in many more exceptions than movements abroad, but foreign-based movements <i>can</i> still exert influence and produce exceptions even in the U.S. news media, provided they make an impact on their own states, policy makers and/or domestic news media.
5b)	<u>Foreign indexing</u> : when social movements abroad <i>do</i> manage to influence their respective policy makers and governmental policies or rhetoric, the potential is raised for increased attention from client states abroad and/or increased coverage in news media abroad; when this occurs, prospects are raised for increased exceptions and coverage in U.S. news media as well.

Content Characteristics Most Impacted by Exceptional Conditions

The MDM's components on exceptionalism include the specific aspects of news coverage that are expected to be impacted by many of the above-noted circumstances. In this vein, the following table lays out these aspects, which are listed in the order of importance:

Table 3.5: Aspects of Content Most / Least Affected by Exceptionalism

Rank	Aspects of News Coverage Impacted
1)	<u>Volume of coverage</u> : this aspect is the most vulnerable to influence to one (or more) of the exceptional conditions noted above (Table 3.4).
2)	<u>Extent of humanizing details</u> : humanizing details for cases of unworthy victims and social movements can sometimes appear as a result of exceptional conditions.
3)	<u>Sourcing tendencies</u> : unofficial and foreign sourcing can be used more frequently, while official sourcing may be concurrently lessened, correlating with the extent of exceptional conditions. The potential for these tendencies are increased when important U.S. public officials are not speaking much about the matter at hand to the press.
4)	<u>Systemic and historically contextualized analysis, substantive coverage of movement demands / victim issues</u> : this aspect is rarely impacted to a significant extent, especially in relation to unworthy victims and social movements, and a combination of exceptional circumstances will need to be present to lead to this aberration.
5)	<u>High-level U.S. culpability and responsibility</u> : this aspect is rarely impacted to a significant extent and a presence of nearly <i>all</i> the exceptional circumstances listed in Table 3.4 will need to be present to lead to this extremely rare aberration.

Acteal: A Closer Look at Exceptionalism

Acteal serves as an example of the potential ripple effect that can occur with news coverage when certain exceptional conditions and circumstances are in order. A small indigenous village in southeastern Mexico, Acteal was the scene of a massacre resulting in the death of 45 people, mostly women and children.

The unworthy victims in the massacre of Acteal received a bit more attention than might have normally been expected for unworthy victims (though still less than their worthy counterparts in Racak, Yugoslavia). The reason why this came about had to do with the absence of attention from officials in the U.S., but the presence of significant attention of the foreign client state's officials (Mexico's, in this case). As a high-priority client state, the weight

of the words of Mexican officials was significant in the U.S. press's eyes, especially if it meant deflecting attention (as it did) from the potential uncovering of U.S. responsibility. The affair was covered (misleadingly so) as a family feud between ignorant Indians. Within this inaccurate coverage, more unofficial sourcing emerged than what would normally be expected for a massacre of unworthy victims, but not without the line of the Mexican government still having been largely followed. Nonetheless, the emergence of these eye-witnesses as sources exposed how an exception can happen for a case with not much state-corporate interests being at stake. The U.S. government was not taking a strong line here on the massacre and there was not much investment at stake in terms of U.S. corporations, but there was a lot of attention in Mexico on this massacre, enough to give elite print reporters plenty of accessible official sourcing on the issue. Given the significant social resistance that the massacre had inspired in Mexico and its impact on the attention of Mexican policy makers, the MDM does expect coverage to result in some exceptional aspects of news content. Further, it is not a surprise that more coverage resulted in light of sustained governmental attention from the client, which tried hard to spin the affair over time as a mysterious family feud of which the government knew and understood little. The MDM addresses exceptional aspects of news content, and identifies the conditions that cause them, in ways that the IM and PM have not.

Taking a look at the case of Acteal in relation to the specifics of the MDM, the following results applied. Significant and sustained social protest forced the high-priority Mexican government to come up with a compelling response and related propaganda to a clearly low-priority impoverished locale (see conditions 4-6, in Table 3.4). This increased the amount of U.S. news coverage beyond what would normally be expected, as political resistance had an impact on an important client state (see condition 5 in Table 3.4 and aspect 1 in Table 4.5). Coupled with the continued lack of U.S. governmental interest (condition 4 in Table 3.4), reporters were consequently freed up more to report with more unofficial sources (aspect 2 in Table 3.5). However, certain aspects of the news coverage that are also in line with MDM expectations still persisted, such as a distinct lack of culpability found for higher-level Mexican officials and no revelations about U.S. culpability, in spite of the actual existence of both (see less common exceptions, aspects 3-5 in Table 3.5). Given the lack of U.S. governmental propaganda, the media outlets under analysis (primarily elite ones, condition 3, Table 3.4) and the issue at stake still being a foreign affairs issue on human rights abuses

(condition 2, Table 3.4), exceptions were limited to the aspects of coverage just noted: some parts of volume of coverage and some exceptional sourcing tendencies (aspects of news coverage 1 and 3, in Table 3.5). This is how the MDM “works,” as it seeks to identify and criticize the many instances of a lack of media independence, while simultaneously analyzing and explaining exceptional occurrences.

Foreign Indexing

Foreign indexing is another exceptional pattern in news content that the MDM expects will occasionally occur (see Table 3.4, condition 5b). Indeed, indexing can sometimes extend beyond Washington and include important allies as well. When an issue attracts significant attention by an important client state, indexing can occur in the sense that U.S. news content will potentially reflect the attention of the government of the allied country, even if Washington is not significantly addressing the issue to the press. Nevertheless, while foreign indexing may affect news coverage allotment and an increase in the use of foreign official sources, it does *not* result in significantly increased levels of substantive criticism or increased identification of U.S. culpability and faults in policy making. Those kinds of exceptions nearly never occur (see next sub-section).

Foreign indexing will be revealed in this dissertation, in terms of U.S. news coverage of Acteal (chp. 7). Therein, public pressure within Mexico on the Mexican government forced it to deal with the issue and obligated it undertake spin efforts with the Mexican news media. The sustained attention that was generated in the Mexican news media was coupled, to a certain degree, by U.S. news media attention as well. This was the case to the extent that it even managed to generate as almost much news coverage than a worthy counterpart (the massacre in Racak, Yugoslavia, which will be compared with Acteal in chp. 7) in terms of sustained coverage over a period of time. Acteal serves as a good example of how social movements and public pressure can produce exceptions, albeit limited ones, in terms of influencing news coverage allotment and attention both abroad and in the U.S. Stateside news coverage of Acteal also serves as an example of how foreign indexing can sometimes occur, certainly including instances of when an allied government is forced to deal with an issue it would otherwise prefer to ignore.

The case of Acteal will join other instances where scholars have documented and observed foreign indexing. In at least one case, foreign officials from an important ally

managed to garner news space even when U.S. officials were speaking about the matter. In the case of the hostage crisis in Libya, Althaus et al. (1996, p. 410) found that *The New York Times* split their sourcing tendencies rather evenly between U.S. and foreign official sources, with the latter even garnering slightly more sourcing space (though U.S. officials were more likely to appear on first page stories, 1996, p. 416). As a result, oppositional viewpoints expressed by NATO officials managed to find their way into news content.

The MDM theorizes such instances as exceptional examples of foreign indexing, which have the potential to occur when one of two circumstances are in place: when U.S. officials are not speaking about a matter that an important ally is dealing with *or* when important allies are in disagreement with a U.S. position that has consensus in Washington. For instances of the latter, the press is simply looking for an oppositional viewpoint on procedural grounds to give the appearance of balance to their stories, a news norm that incidentally has been criticized as not giving citizens the critical tools necessary to sufficiently evaluate policy decisions by their government (Tuchman, 1972, p. 676). This tendency was also at work to a certain extent during the aftermath to the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, where foreign-based sources led all source types in terms of critically inclined viewpoints expressed on the six leading U.S. newscasts, albeit still only comprising 6% of total sourcing (Rendall & Broughel, 2003). *Nearly Never Exceptional: identifying & substantively criticizing official culpability*

The MDM clearly specifies an aspect of news content that will be less independent from governmental positioning than any other: identification and substantive criticism of systematic tendencies of culpability by official U.S. policy. This expectation transcends nearly all of the conditions that can produce exceptions to the MDM's expectations of media dependence and also cuts across domestic and international issues. As a result, even domestic problems systematically linked to U.S. policy, such as crime and the prison-industrial complex (Parenti, 2008) or the news media and the military-media-industrial complex (Solomon, 2005), will not be covered prominently in the press. Nor will U.S. culpability be significantly covered in even exceptional circumstances that expose otherwise ignored genocides. One case that will be tested by the MDM in this latter regard is the quarter-century long, U.S.-supported occupation of East Timor, which resulted in genocide.

East Timor was not brought to the forefront of the U.S. news media until the eve of its national referendum, when it finally attracted leading nightly newscast stories in 1999.

Bringing a potential end to the occupation and genocide was an exceptional event that largely occurred as a result of long-undertaken political resistance and social movements in Indonesia (Timor's occupier), the U.S and East Timor itself. The MDM predicts that these exceptional conditions could bring exceptional coverage in terms of differences in the volume of news coverage and to a lesser extent, potential exposure of some humanizing details. Coverage during this period, however, served as a challenging test of the MDM's stronger prediction that even exceptional conditions like these should *not* bring significant exposure to U.S. culpability for the occupation and genocide. A case study of the coverage roundly revealed that the MDM's predictions were roundly met, as U.S. culpability went largely unexposed and lacked substantive criticism about such involvement and responsibility, while news coverage of East Timor was significantly increased over that of past years (Kennis, 2000). When East Timor's coverage results are compared with that of a massacre of expected worthy victims in Racak, Yugoslavia, expectations of dichotomous news coverage are met, as well as predictions about the extent and varying levels of press exceptionalism. A comparison of this type is extensively made between coverage of the Racak and Acteal massacres, with results providing strong support to MDM's expectations (chp. 5). In the case where unworthy victims were present, exceptional content characteristics were found in terms of volume of coverage and humanizing details in both Acteal and East Timor coverage. By contrast, however, the least likely exceptional news content characteristic, U.S. culpability and blame, was non-existent in the U.S. news coverage analyzed in this dissertation. This is despite the fact that U.S. policy actively supported, armed, funded and facilitated massacres that were committed by client states in both cases (by Mexico in Acteal and by Indonesia in many documented cases in East Timor).

Timeliness of MDM

The positing of the MDM is particularly timely in light of the crisis to professional journalism that the nation is currently witnessing (McChesney & Nichols, 2009). With well more than a 25% decrease since the 1990's in the amount of professional journalists currently employed, a plethora of regionally and locally-based daily newspapers shuttering their operations, and many more lay-offs expected to continue to occur as a result of a devastating economic recession, the contemporary crisis in journalism has no historical precedent. This is why critical analysis reflecting on both the present-day and historical record is most needed to

assure a transition to the new digital era which is not wrought by the same institutional and systemic weaknesses that the traditional U.S. news media system contained in the past and continues to exhibit in the present.

The MDM's institutional critique and analysis is bolstered by a number of scholarly studies which have been undertaken in both recent and past years. Such studies have amply revealed the extent that journalism has been attacked, undermined, cut out of existence or simply watered down. The disturbing findings have included sharp decreases that daily newspapers and mainstream newsweeklies have dealt to international news coverage (Hickey, 1998); the sharp shift away from "hard news" (i.e. public affairs and policy reporting) to "soft news" (i.e. infotainment without public policy content) (Patterson, 2000); and the significant cuts made to the presence of foreign news bureaus abroad (Fenton, 2004). All of these troubling developments could be fit into what has been aptly described as the advent of an era of "hyper-commercialism" (McChesney, 2000). By any fair measure, the current state of journalism is as subject to a lack of independence right now as much as any other previous time period and arguably even more so, in light of the continued economic crisis.

Contrary to conventional wisdom on the topic, it is far from the case that the new digital era of journalism has significantly usurped prior tendencies in terms of the domination of news themes and sources by government and corporate officials. The continued dependency and prominence of such official sources remains a major problem within U.S. news content. Dominance by official sources has persisted despite recent advances in satellite newsgathering technology (Livingston & Van Belle, 2005) and even in the face of increases to international coverage of natural disasters facilitated by new media technologies, which were not found to have resulted in more independent news content free of official source domination tendencies (Livingston & Bennett, 2003). The question of whether technological progress resulted in a qualitative change toward more independent news coverage was asked in regard to the lead-up of news coverage for the invasion of Iraq and the answer was yet another 'no' in terms of preliminary findings drawn from an extensive content analysis of the five leading U.S. television news networks (e.g. Fox, CNN, ABC, CBS & NBC) (Livingston, Bennett, & Robinson, 2005, pp. 46-47). Unsurprisingly then, new technologies have *not* been found to significantly impact news media gate-keeping tendencies and instead, it has been the historical

development of the heightened commercialization of the news media that has been found to have made a bigger impact on U.S. news media content (Bennett, 2004, McChesney, 2004).

Despite these findings, it cannot be denied that new media outlets are increasingly producing exceptional content. However, the fact remains that the reach of this content is widely dispersed and its subsequent influence is also dispersed, disparate and lacking in comparison to the traditional outlets. Power is still largely held, and arguably just as much now as before the digital era, by the major agenda-setters: Washington & K-Street and their avenues for distribution, starting chiefly with the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* and often followed by the other non-nationally-distributed, regional sources. Corporate consolidation has helped protect corporate media power and influence from the rise of new media, as the exceptional content produced by new media, while still meaningful, is nonetheless relegated to the sidelines and marginalized. Another large and related problem exists for new media as well, which carries a special weight and relevance to the MDM and its concerns: with its limited resources, the big trend and tendency of new media is strongly leaning toward what is called “hyper-local” coverage. New media often does not try, and arguably cannot even attempt, to professionally cover the large macro-oriented issues the MDM chiefly addresses: U.S. foreign and military policy, international monetary policy and global environmental and energy policy.

The continued power and influence of the leading agenda-setting sources, namely that of *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, are readily surviving a new media environment. The same is the case for major television networks and broadcasters, who have long since been joined by 24-hour cable news networks as well. Television news, in fact, continues to be the most relied-upon news source for the U.S. citizenry, *still* surpassing that of the Internet. Perhaps most importantly, it is widely acknowledged that the leading agenda-setting sources are by-and-large responsible for an overwhelming amount of news content, which are in-turn re-sourced by alternative news sources in broadcast and new media. At least for the foreseeable future, traditional outlets of journalism are still the first source of news and information to which alternative sources rely upon and react. For all of these reasons, the main focus of the MDM has important and relevant implications for the present and far into the future.¹²

Chapter Conclusion

Despite the large scope of the case studies already evaluated in past scholarly work,¹³ none of these case studies tested, much less proposed a synthesis of the propaganda and indexing models into one more comprehensive and inter-disciplinary model of news analysis. That is precisely what this dissertation sets out to accomplish, as case studies evaluating the MDM include events that involve U.S. military intervention or support for intervention (Fallujah in 2003 and 2004 and East Timor in 1999); U.S. military presence (the campaign to evict the U.S. Navy out of Vieques in 2000); social movements opposing U.S. foreign policy (Ecuador's indigenous uprising in 2000); and even immigration policy as well (Elián Gonzalez compared against nine cases of Haitian, Mexican and Central American children).

The MDM is an original and elaborated synthesis of the IM and PM and it strives to contribute a greater understanding of how the institutional flaws of the media are evidenced in news media performance. This dissertation explores more deeply all of the aspects just noted of this new model, including its own original postulates and theoretical components. It will strive to apply the same rigorous standards for our own news media system that were employed in appropriately harsh critiques contained within evaluations of state-sponsored propaganda during the Cold War. Positing the MDM is one crucial step that draws us closer to being able to fully understand the shortcomings of our news media system, which is nothing less than an essential facet to the democratic ethos of our society.

References

¹ While the MDM assumes a level of internalization amongst journalists and editors which prevent the necessity of more formally imposed constraints on the content they produce, it does not discount that many exceptions occur. In fact, the MDM is also in agreement with Herman and Chomsky that such exceptions are an important part of U.S. news media, with such exceptions going far to obfuscate its most common tendencies and patterns. Clarifying this very point, Herman and Chomsky wrote:

These structural factors that dominate media operations are not all-controlling and do not always produce simple and homogenous results. It is well recognized, and may even be said to constitute a part of an institutional critique such as we present in this volume, that the various parts of media organizations have some limited autonomy, that individual and professional values influence media work, that policy is imperfectly enforced, and that media policy itself may allow some measure of dissent and reporting that calls into question the accepted viewpoint. These considerations all work to assure some dissent and coverage of inconvenient facts. The beauty of the system, however, is that such dissent and inconvenient information are kept within bounds and at the margins, so that while their presence shows that the system is not monolithic, they are not large enough to interfere unduly with the domination of the official agenda (2002, p. xii).

The MDM is firmly in agreement with this clarification, but importantly, the MDM differs from the PM in that it offers theoretical explanations and supporting evidence on why and how exceptions to the rule occur, including the theorizing of social movements and what aspects of news content are most open to being influenced by them. While there is still a significant focus on news media subservience, the MDM also makes a concerted effort at explaining how exceptional occurrences in news content occur and what factors allow these occurrences to be exceptions.

² Because the concept of “agenda-setting” has been theorized in a number of different ways, it is worth distinguishing these distinctive conceptualizations and explain how they relate to the MDM. The first and original academic usage of the term was coined by McCombs and Shaw (1972) – and further developed in important works by Iyengar (1991), Iyengar and Kinder (1987) and McCombs and Shaw (2004) – was meant to refer to a phenomenon in which the news media set the political agenda according to what they chose to highlight and emphasize in their content. A second conceptualization refers to a different tendency in which the major, nationally-distributed newspapers, the *New York Times* being the most prominent example, simply set the *news* agenda (as opposed to the *political* agenda inside the Beltway) for other U.S. news media sources. These “agenda-setting dailies” wield their influence through their own choices of what to highlight and emphasize in their content. When local news aired in New York, on Time Warner’s *New York 1* channel, routinely reviews and reports on the headlines in the *New York Times* Sunday edition on their own Sunday morning news program, we can see an very clear example of this; most other examples are less overt, but nonetheless quite present. Lastly, a third way that the agenda-setting conceptualization has been documented and observed is called “reverse” agenda-setting, whereby the government sets the news agenda of the news media (Haarsager, 1991; Mermin, 1997; Robinson, 2002, p. 21). The MDM tends toward the second and third notions of agenda-setting far more than the first, in light of previous research findings. Indeed, Robinson amply revealed the sharp limits to when McCombs and Shaw’s original conception of agenda-setting actually takes shape in an extensive study recently published (2002). Robinson found that only in the rare instances that there are *both* policy uncertainties *and* elite conflict present in an issue, are television news outlets such as CNN able to potentially set and affect the political agenda with their news coverage (2002, p. 31).

In taking these stances, the MDM finds itself in sharp agreement with indexing scholars that, “in most matters of public policy, the news agenda itself is set by those in power” (Bennett, Livingston, & Lawrence, 2007, p. 54). Bennett et al. pointed to (2007, pp. 54-55) Hallin (1986), Mermin (1999) and Zaller and Chiu (1996) in supporting the well-founded and established postulate of indexing that the government sets the agenda of the news more than the other way around. Indeed, findings from the agenda-setting literature that have been the most convincing have to do more with the impact that news content has on what *people* think and talk about, as opposed to how government has been affected in its public policy making.

The MDM thus rests on the theoretical assumption that agenda-setting is most prominent in the sense that the government and/or the elite print press (including the *NYT* and *WP*) set the *news* agenda, as opposed to the latter being the more influential source in setting Washington's political agenda.

In light of all of this, when this proposal or my dissertation refers to the "elite agenda-setting press," it is referring to the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* in relation to the second type of notion of agenda-setting in which the news agenda is simply set by these sources.

³ Building on Bennett's research, Mermin offers an additional dimension to the indexing hypothesis. He sought to answer was whether or not critical perspectives "on policies that win bipartisan support in Washington are simply outweighed or overshadowed," or instead, were virtually "ignored or relegated to the margins of the news," terming the later the "marginalization version" of indexing. The "correlation version" of indexing occurs when news content simply reflects the levels of criticism present in Washington when there is conflict and inter-party strife on a given issue (1999, pp. 5, 6). To Mermin, the correlation version of the indexing hypothesis, which was documented to an exhaustive degree by John Zaller and Dennis Chiu (1996, pp. 385-405), "is not a matter of much significance," (1999, p. 6) or even, "of such great interest" (p. 5). In this sense, Mermin is similar to Bennett, who also does not have a problem with the media parroting official sources when there is disagreement in Washington (a position Mermin would later move away from, see Mermin, 2004). The MDM is different in this regard in that it concerns itself with *both* the correlation and marginalization versions of indexing. In the MDM's view, both of these versions of indexing are troublesome in terms of achieving an adequate level of media independence given the lack of adequate levels of substantive criticism in either version of indexing.

⁴ Within the indexing literature, several important scholars have accepted the legitimacy of the correlation version of indexing (Bennett, 1990, Mermin, 1999). For these scholars, when there is conflict in Washington between the major parties, and such conflict is reflected in the press with similar levels of procedural criticism (i.e. the correlation version), the matter is not one of "great interest" (Mermin, 1999, p. 5) or "much significance," (p. 6). To these scholars, the press is adequately independent in this scenario. The MDM's components *discourage* this flawed theoretical notion, however, since substantive criticism has consistently been missing amongst coverage during periods of consensus *or* conflict in Washington. As a result, the correlation version of indexing *is also* of importance and interest (and extensively documented by Zaller and Chiu (1996)). As was long ago pointed out in a classic study by Tuchman, substantive criticism *is* needed at a significant level in the press in order to help citizens question or oppose the fundamental basis of the policies it considers and adopts (1972, p. 676), something the MDM considers a vital function of democracy. Tuchman's invaluable argument about substantive criticism and the citizenry fortunately continue to be acknowledged even by scholars of today, with one of many examples including Entman (2004, p. 6).

⁵ Ibrahim Jassam Mohammed is an Iraqi freelance photo-journalist, who worked for many news outlets, including Reuters. As such, the MDM would predict his status to be unworthy and a search on Lexis-Nexis reveals as much: both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* failed to run any coverage on Jassam. In fact, there has only been one print piece run by two U.S. daily newspapers. It first originated in *The Los Angeles Times* as a back-page article about Jassam's plight. *The Virginian-Pilot* followed suit by reproducing the piece with A3 placement. As a result, no daily found Jassam's plight to be newsworthy enough for a cover story. The fact that a regional-based paper, however, ran the one piece on Jassam more prominently than any other paper lies squarely in line with the MDM's expectations about where exceptions will most likely arise in U.S. mainstream media (i.e. outside of Washington and New York, as outlined in greater detail in the "Clarifications and Exceptions" section).

In terms of U.S. news coverage of Kareem Amer, the Egyptian blogger who served a four-year prison sentence, results are disturbingly similar. From the time that he was jailed until shortly before his release, only 3 pieces were run by *The New York Times*: a 6/3/09 op-ed, written by a human rights activist reflecting on Obama's visit to Egypt; a brief mention of the blogger in a page 8 piece run on 02/18/09, whose lead sentence began by noting Egypt's "relative freedom to complain about and criticize the government"; and lastly, a meager 138-word, AP-wire brief announcing the blogger's initial imprisonment and run on page 6 on 04/13/07.

⁶ Despite the extensive research conducted within the agenda-setting literature, including notable luminaries such as McCombs and Shaw (1972, 1993), Iyengar (1991) and Iyengar and Kinder (1987), the MDM finds itself in sharp agreement with indexing scholars that, "in most matters of public policy, the news agenda itself is set by those in power" (Bennett, Livingston, & Lawrence, 2007, p. 54). Bennett et al.

(2007, pp. 54-55) pointed to Hallin (1986), Mermin (1999) and Zaller and Chiu (1996) in supporting the well-founded and established postulate of indexing that the government sets the agenda of the news more than the other way around. Indeed, findings from the agenda-setting literature that have been the most convincing have to do more with the impact that news content has on what *people* think and talk about, than on what the government does.

⁷ Wolfsfeld's research, however, should be qualified by the fact that he only analyzed the Israeli news media and very dubiously asserted that his findings were generalizable to other, far distinct media systems abroad.

⁸ While the residents of Vieques were finally successful in having the U.S. Navy and their operations removed from the island by 2003, residents never managed to garner any significant compensation for the extensive damage to their local economy (in particular, to the fishing industry), the local environmental damage and for the incalculable costs to tourism experienced as a result of the Naval presence. These were also the issues that were least covered by the *New York Times* and while a direct connection between news coverage and political outcomes should not be directly drawn without qualification, the cause of Vieques was certainly not helped by the lack of such substantive coverage.

⁹ There are some exceptions to this, however, as an offshoot of the indexing literature can be found in scholarly works on event-driven reporting (Lawrence, 2000), "news icons" (Bennett & Lawrence, 1995) and on natural disasters (Birkland, 1997), which are overwhelmingly comprised by case studies on domestic news issues. Furthermore, Bennett's multi-gated gatekeeping model is one of the best overall and flexible analyses, in my view, of domestic issues covered by the U.S. news media (2004, p. 296). Interestingly enough and in accord with the MDM's expectations, these studies point to different patterns in news reporting that are a bit more independent in nature than news coverage of U.S. foreign policy.

¹⁰ A simple scan using the Lexis-Nexis database of *New York Times* coverage alone illustrates the extent that this worthy movement has managed to capture the attention of the leading U.S. daily. From April 1, 2008 to June 12, 2009, sustained coverage consisting of 267 articles was run. At least one mention of the Free Tibet movement and related protests was made in these pieces. The high point of coverage came before and during the 2008 Olympics (July 6, 2008 - August 31, 2008), whereby 61 pieces were run. Coverage included front-page features on the protest movement (08/04/08; 08/05/08; 08/07/08; 08/16/08), sympathetic editorials (07/22/08; 08/14/08; 08/23/08; 08/27/08) and front-page articles that contextualized the protests within pieces addressing the Olympics as a whole (07/15/08; 07/21/08; 07/31/08; 08/02/08; 08/03/08; 08/07/08; 08/09/08; 08/21/08; 08/25/08).

¹¹ High-priority states receive or have a significant amount of any of the following: military assistance and/or significant military relations (i.e. bases in Colombia, training to Mexico, etc.); business trading relationships (i.e. Mexico, as opposed to Ecuador); geo-political considerations; or direct corporate investments from U.S.-based corporations (i.e. Exxon or Bechtel). High-priority states do not always get high-priority governmental attention though, which is significant for the MDM since attention from Washington is considered the most influential factor for determining volume of news coverage. The MDM does not specifically theorize what factors into governmental priorities in terms of the attention it gives to one state or another and is focused instead on news media content and related performance tendencies.

¹² It is worth noting that the MDM is meant to be a model of news analysis of the mainstream, commercial sector of the U.S. news media and is *not* intended to address any other media source outside of this scope. Furthermore, the MDM is particularly applicable to news coverage appearing in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, the two most influential papers that are commonly thought of as the elite agenda-setting press.

¹³ Both the PM and the IM have been tested with a large array of case studies. The PM originally tested its worthy/unworthy victims thesis on dichotomized coverage of a host of issues: elections in Latin America (meaningless versus legitimate elections); killings of over 100 religious figures in Central America (unworthy victims) versus one priest in Poland (worthy victims); the Indochina wars (e.g. Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia and how the phrase "invasion of South Vietnam" never appeared in mainstream coverage); differing coverage of the genocides in East Timor (unworthy victims) and Cambodia (worthy victims); and more recently, dichotomized usage of the term "genocide" (see Appendix I above). In 1999, Mermin tested indexing against eight case studies of U.S. military intervention. Half of the cases are where bipartisan support was present in Washington: Libya in April 1986; the invasion of Panama in December 1989; the deployment of U.S. troops to Saudi Arabia in August 1990; and the Gulf War in January 1991. The other half were cases where parties split over their positions on the intervention at hand: the invasion of

Grenada in 1983; the doubling of the American deployment in Saudi Arabia in November 1990; the raid on a faction hostile to U.S. forces in Somalia in October 1993; and U.S. intervention in Haiti in September 1994. Mermin's results presented strong evidence for a general indexing rule that was both comprehensive and included cases that occurred *after* the Cold War, a historical marker that is commonly (and I would argue misguidedly) pointed to as a possible departure from the lack of media independence. Out of the six case studies that had conditions that the indexing hypothesis would not expect an exception from, only one did not conform to expected results.

I find the fact that the United States doesn't even bother to keep an Iraqi civilian death count grotesquely disrespectful and wrong. I don't think that anything could more clearly send the message that these innocent people are viewed as expendable. The rage this engenders, of course, falls most heavily on American soldiers who – all the hype and formal statements of praise aside – barely escape finding themselves in the same category (Börjesson, 2005, p. 18).

Introduction

This case-study and chapter examines the extent of the congruity and usefulness of the media dependence model (MDM) and its synthesis of the indexing (IM) and propaganda models (PM) in explaining the Cable News Network's (CNN) and CNN en Español's coverage of the invasion of Fallujah, Iraq, during several key time periods from 2003-2004. Central research questions guiding this study included whether or not the synthesis of the IM and PM results in useful analytical tools for a comparative media analysis; what the differences and/or similarities are between different language sources operating under the same corporate media conglomerate and the related implications for competing claims between the IM, PM and MDM; and lastly, what lessons can be learned for further developing the MDM in terms of resulting coverage patterns for several major broadcast news sources that collectively span two continents. In more general terms, this study seeks to answer whether broadcast news coverage of Iraq is more a case of indexed state-corporate propaganda, as the MDM would expect, or a display of media independence (Althaus, 2003), going away from well-documented official sourcing tendencies (Zhaller & Chiu, 1996) during a post-Cold-War era of potentially more "nuanced" and "ambiguous" news coverage (Entman, 2004). Indeed, it has been previously argued by Entman that critical models of news analysis were more appropriate for the by-gone Cold War era (2004, p. 4), as the news media in the post-Cold War era has become more "cantankerous," "ambiguous" and "independent" (Althaus et al., 1996; Althaus, 2003; Entman, 2004; Fico & Soffin, 1995; Livingston & Eachus, 1996). This case-study intended to give a thorough empirical assessment of the validity of the post-Cold War argument of a purportedly more cantankerous and independent news media.

These questions are especially important in light of the corporate conglomerate framework of the new era of transnational media (Zhao & Schiller, 2001). Some scholars have argued that corporate conglomerate media serves as the economic and cultural base of corporate globalization (McChesney & Schiller, 2003). One important aspect of this era has been the

**Chapter Four: Indexing State-Corporate Propaganda?
Comparing CNN and CNN en Español Coverage on Fallujah**

Page 149

growing trend whereby such international divisions are increasingly seen within the same ranks of a given transnational corporate media conglomerate, with many such examples presently in operation (*Time* and *Time International*, *Newsweek* and *Newsweek International*, and CNN and CNN International). These important contemporary developments in the international communications arena beg questions that will also be addressed by this case-study, including whether or not international subsidiaries – in this case, CNN en Español – function independently of their conglomerate parents, in terms of their content and news media performance.

The time periods with the most important events associated with Fallujah were selected and all newscast coverage from the flagship news programs on CNN and CNN en Español was coded and subsequently analyzed. The results of the coding pointed strongly to the desirability of a synthesis between the PM and IM and also resulted in a number of useful lessons for the development of the MDM. As a result, this chapter shows how the synthesis the MDM is based on, results in original and useful tools of news analysis, as well as an increased understanding of patterns of U.S. news media performance.

An extensive content analysis was undertaken for this study to accomplish several ends. First, this study intended to further develop the MDM and test competing claims between the IM and PM. A thorough content analysis has not been applied toward the PM and it was expected that insights gleaned from such an analysis could help the MDM obtain more nuance to its theoretical components on news coverage of individual abuses. The content analysis performed was not only done to evaluate competing claims between the IM and PM, but to yield insights so as to further develop the MDM. The MDM's synthesis of the PM and IM was also posited to obtain a more critically inclined analysis that would avoid some of the classist tendencies seen in previous indexing studies. Indexing scholars have unfairly and disproportionately blamed journalists for news content (Bennett et al. 2007, p. 179), in spite of strong institutional constraints preventing content beyond such bounds, as evidenced by the victimization of journalists who made ill-fated decisions to go beyond such constraints (Börjesson, 2004, 2005; also see chp. 9). This case-study was also meant to be an assessment of the presence of these constraints (or lack thereof).

The data findings from the coding also shed further light on the extent of similarities found in news content between two important corporate entities that are both part of the Time

**Chapter Four: Indexing State-Corporate Propaganda?
Comparing CNN and CNN en Español Coverage on Fallujah**

Page 150

Warner media conglomerate. The results of the content analysis pointed to more similarities than differences in content from the CNN and CNN en Español, associated with newscast coverage of Fallujah. Accordingly, this paper further argues that corporate ownership of broadcast news media is as important of a determining factor of news content as any other influential variable. It is important to note that this argument directly clashes with a concept heavily favored by media executives, which is that the news media simply delivers what its consumer audience desires. This paper will demonstrate to the reader that familiar arguments made by media executives, duly supported by at least one important observer of the media (Massing, 2004), are not supported by facts relevant to the results of the content analysis of this case-study.

This chapter is divided into four sections. In the first section, the study will direct its attention toward Fallujah, including its importance as a case-study and background information on the important events analyzed by the content analysis. The first section will also survey CNN and CNN en Español. Subsequently, theoretical treatment of the MDM, the IM and PM and a synthesis between them, will be undertaken in the second section. The third section is dedicated to the content analysis that anchors this study. The fourth and concluding section contextualizes the resulting data and relates the findings back to the central research and theoretical questions of the study.

**SECTION 4.1:
Fallujah and CNN / CNN en Español**

Fallujah as an Important Case Study

U.S. news coverage leading up to the invasion of Iraq has been almost universally acknowledged as fundamentally flawed and inaccurate, even by the two most influential daily newspapers in the U.S.¹ What has not been as widely conceded, however, are the fundamental flaws that have persisted in news coverage during the occupation of Iraq following the fall of the regime of former U.S. ally, Saddam Hussein. This has been the case despite the fact that there has been more human suffering during the occupation than during the invasion. Indeed, far more civilians have died during the latter time period (Iraq Body Count).

In addition to the lack of critical analysis on media coverage during the occupation, there has also been a lack of scholarship comparing the differences (or similarities) in the manner that broadcast news sources operating under the same parent company, but distributed in different countries with different audiences, have covered Iraq. A widely cited comparative media analysis

**Chapter Four: Indexing State-Corporate Propaganda?
Comparing CNN and CNN en Español Coverage on Fallujah**

Page 151

found fewer differences than expected between networks across national boundaries that it analyzed (Aday, Livingston, & Hebert, 2005), though the study focused on news coverage during only the invasion phase (and not during the occupation phase looked at in this chapter and case-study). This analysis attempts to build on those findings, but will approach the matter more critically, and will address two networks within the same conglomerate.

In this vein, CNN's and CNN en Español's respective prime-time news programs, *Newsnight* with Aaron Brown and *Panorama Mundial*, were chosen as the sources under evaluation. The selection of these sources were purposeful, so as to test the veracity of claims that audience tastes and preferences account for sharply differing content, versus the more sensible expectation of the PM, which would be that the ownership filter would restrict such differences, more than expand them.

An Overview of Fallujah

Fallujah is located about 40 miles west of Baghdad. The city has suffered through the costs of war and occupation as much as any other Iraqi city and it is widely accepted that it has weathered the most violence and destruction since the occupation began. According to the U.S.'s own official figures, more than half of the city's 39,000 homes were destroyed in the two major offensives of 2004. Much of the city is still in ruins; arguably, it has the highest civilian casualty count of any city since the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003. As a result, Fallujah has garnered enough news coverage to evaluate the IM, PM and MDM. Like many other war-torn Iraqi cities, the real tragedy of Fallujah began with the occupation of the city by U.S.-led soldiers. In April 2003, the people of Fallujah had begun to voice their opposition to the occupation. On April 28, 2003, a protest was staged in defiance of a U.S.-imposed curfew against the use of a local school as a base from which the occupiers were conducting their day-to-day affairs. Seventeen Iraqi civilians were killed during the protest, as U.S. soldiers fired into an unarmed crowd that, besides a handful of rock-throwing teenagers, was peaceful. Matters were made worse as just a few days later two more Iraqi civilians were killed by U.S. soldiers during the funeral procession and protest of the initial killings. Dozens more were injured in both shooting incidents (Human Rights Watch, 2003; Price, 2003; Reeves, 2003).

By the end of the summer of 2003, the U.S. had moved its base of operations to a nearby resort just outside Fallujah named Dreamland, but Fallujans were still in deep opposition to a continued U.S. military presence inside the city. Four armed military contractors employed by

**Chapter Four: Indexing State-Corporate Propaganda?
Comparing CNN and CNN en Español Coverage on Fallujah**

Page 152

the Blackwater Security Consulting firm were killed. Their bodies were hung in protest from a bridge on the Euphrates River on March 31, 2004 (Barnard & Cambanis, 2004; Powell, 2004; Price, Neff, & Crain, 2004; Price & Neff, 2004).

The four military contractors, misleadingly described as “civilians” by both CNN and CNN en Español, were all from North Carolina, as detailed reports amply revealed in extensive and humanizing coverage by both networks. With then U.S.-proconsul Paul Bremer promising that the deaths would “not go unpunished,” the incident served as the major pretext for two major incursions by the U.S.-led forces into Fallujah in April and November 2004 (Bremer, 2006).

The incursions, however, resulted in many more than four “civilian” deaths. Estimates for April’s incursion alone range from the low estimate of 270, which was found by the Iraqi Health Ministry appointed by the U.S.-led occupying coalition, and included 52 deaths of women and children. The higher-end estimate was of about 600 fatalities, based on reports from local hospital officials and mainstream media accounts, as reported by the exhaustively documented Iraq Body Count project.² For the November 2004 incursion, the Integrated Regional Information Network (a U.N. Agency) estimated that more than 700 civilian fatalities occurred, with an alarming 550 deaths of women and children.³ The U.S. military, for its part, claimed that it killed more than 1200 “insurgents.”⁴

In light of these important events, news coverage of three important time periods from the flagship news programs of CNN and CNN en Español will be analyzed by this study: the Spring 2003 period (April 1 – May 28, 2003) when demonstrating Iraqi civilians in Fallujah were killed by U.S. soldiers; the Spring 2004 period (March 1 – June 1, 2004) when four Blackwater security contractors were killed in Fallujah; and lastly, during the Fall 2004 period (October 1 – December 30, 2004) when the U.S. undertook its then most extensive incursion of Fallujah.

Overview of CNN

First started by media mogul Ted Turner in 1980 under the company Turner Broadcasting System (TBS), CNN was the first 24-hour cable-network-based, all-news television network. It is thus widely credited with having jump-started the 24-hour news cycle, which also has important parallels to the online news world of today. CNN came to international prominence when it provided exclusive live coverage of the Persian Gulf War in 1991. Globally speaking,

CNN and its affiliates are on par with the British Broadcasting Corporation in terms of having the most news bureaus and staff journalists amongst any other news source in the world.

The media conglomerate Time Warner subsumed TBS in one of many major merger acquisitions seen in the wake of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (McChesney, 1999). Operating as a subsidiary under Time Warner, TBS (and as a result, CNN as well) was now part of the corporate media conglomerate framework.⁵

Overview of CNN en Español

CNN en Español first came onto the air in 1997 and like its original Atlanta-based counterpart, is also owned by the massive corporate media conglomerate, Time Warner. Initially distributed only in Latin America and mostly in the Southern Cone (Figueroa, 1999, p. 46), it has since expanded into the United States and its potential viewership is currently at 21 million households. Its three largest viewerships are in Mexico (5.1 million), Argentina (4.1 million) and the United States (3.7 million). The network is considered to have reached its maximum potential in terms of having gained the status of being a “mature market,” having achieved double-digit growth (personal communication, 2007).

Executives at CNN en Español have estimated that it is likely the least funded part of CNN’s cable networks (Figueroa 1999; there were 6 networks in 1999). Only 5, as opposed to 9 people (in CNN), are in CNN en Español’s control room. Video editing was streamlined with technology and less use of actual personnel than used at CNN (1999). CNN President Christopher Crommett admitted that CNN en Español did not invest in any audience research to find out what its audience “wanted” (2007), while network executive Madeline Wiener revealed that the network had to rely on “instinct” and “prior experience” in their programming determinations (Figueroa, 1999, p. 41). As a result of all of this, institutional constraints were seemingly strengthened by the lack of resources.

CNN en Español reaches households in Latin America through the pay television market. This market is particularly well-off in terms of its socio-economic composition and is described as “upper-middle” class by the President of the network (personal communication, 2007) and its public relations manager, who added that the audience was populated by “decision makers, politicians, business owners . . . savvy, interested in technology and [had] traveled frequently” (Figueroa, 1999, p. 41). This is far from surprising, considering the few households in Latin

**Chapter Four: Indexing State-Corporate Propaganda?
Comparing CNN and CNN en Español Coverage on Fallujah**

Page 154

America that have the means to purchase television programming. Nevertheless, there are some mechanisms that serve to diversify an otherwise more homogenous audience.

Although the network is viewed through the pay television market, its content is distributed through local news and television stations throughout Latin America (personal communication, 2007). It is able to do this through contractual agreements it holds with various affiliates, which amount to at least one per Latin American country, and result in reciprocal sharing agreements of programming (Figueroa, 1999, pp. 42, 43).

CNN / CNN en Español as Sources for Case-Study

The principal reason why CNN and CNN en Español was selected for this case-study was to have a control for media ownership and be able to assess whether corporate affiliates operating under the same media conglomerate showed significantly different news content. While the same media conglomerate parent company owns both CNN and CNN en Español, there are significant differences in audience demographics (including differences in public opinion tendencies on the war, more on this below) of both networks, thus once again, providing a desirable case to test for the apparent impact such differences have (or not) on news content.

There have been strong claims made by media executives and observers alike that audience tastes and preferences account for the most compelling explanation for the resulting news content, specifically when it came to war coverage of Iraq and the subsequent occupation. CNN International's executive vice president, Rena Golden, implicated the U.S. citizenry in explaining away the lack of critical content in coverage of the invasion of Iraq: "It wasn't a matter of government pressure, but a reluctance to criticize a war that was obviously supported by a majority of the people" (Börjesson, 2004, p. 16). Media observer and insider Michael Massing supported these claims in a compilation book he wrote on the war (2004, p. 23).

In terms of cable-based news, CNN is as watched of a news source as any other. It has consistently topped its highly-touted rival, Fox News, in terms of its cumulative audience (Pew, 2005; Pew, 2009). When viewers were asked in January 2002, July 2003 and August 2003 which television news source they turned to the most for, "news about national and international issues," CNN was the top answer in all three surveys, beating out the big three free-to-air networks (ABC, CBS and NBC), as well as Fox News, local news affiliates and MSNBC (Pew, 2003). In 2004, which was the year of two of the three time periods reviewed in this study, Pew found that CNN was "still the first choice for people trying to get a fix on the latest breaking

**Chapter Four: Indexing State-Corporate Propaganda?
Comparing CNN and CNN en Español Coverage on Fallujah**

Page 155

news” and that it boasted the highest cumulative audience figures amongst all its cable competitors (Pew, 2004).

There is a growing notion that online-based news is overtaking all other sources of news media consumption, but this perception is mostly overblown and exaggerated in light of the latest polls and survey data. Such findings show that television news continues to be the leading source of news for consumers in the U.S. The percentage of the citizenry that depend on the television for news is even higher in underdeveloped countries, including many countries in Latin America, where access to the internet is considerably lower. Even within the U.S., however, television news was a main source of information for 70% of those polled in one survey conducted in December 2008 (Pew, 2008), as compared to almost twice as less for those who turned to the internet as a main source (40%). Gallup revealed a similar preference for nightly network-based news, whereby 35% watched on a regular basis, compared to lower numbers for those who depended on internet-based news (22%) on a daily basis (Gallup, Newport, & Gallup Organization, 2008). In terms of specific data regarding cable-based television news, the numbers still favor television over the internet: 39% responded as watching cable television for news at least three times a week, as compared to 37% for online-based news. Even though online-based news sites show the fastest growth among all media sources in terms of news consumption, the Internet has still not overtaken television as a main source of news for the U.S. citizenry.

Additional facts also underscore the continued importance of cable-television newscasts, including the realities of convergent media. As McChesney has pointed out, corporate news sources online frequently engage in cross-promotion (2004). Simply put, corporate internet-based news sources cross-promote their television counterparts and vice-versa. CNN.com has arguably succeeded with this more than any other news source, as it ranks as either the second or third most visited source of online news, behind only Yahoo! and by some measures, MSNBC (Pew, 2008), while also boasting highly ranked television-based audiences (as just noted above). When both of these figures are taken into consideration, CNN is arguably the most turned-to national news source in the U.S.

The CNN Effect

CNN's power and influence was perceived as being so substantial that a growing impression was fostered in the 1990's that there was a "CNN effect" in place. The perceived "effect" was that CNN had an inflated impact on public opinion and policy making. The "effect" was seen as being firmly in place and was even roundly decried by realist scholars (Hoge, 1994; Kennan, 1993). A number of scholars researched whether or not the end of the Cold War era, advances in technology and a shift toward event-driven reporting had lessened the prominence of official sourcing tendencies resulting in a potentially heightened influence for the news media. Increased media influence, in accordance with the conceptualization of the "CNN effect," was assumed to result in the prompting and even initiating of governmental policy positioning and subsequent humanitarian military intervention. Such an assertion, however, was appropriately identified by Livingston and Eachus as an affront to "the findings of the last 20 years of media and foreign affairs research, the most important of which is that officials, not media, set and maintain news agendas" (1995, p. 415). Unsurprisingly then, when investigated further, a number of studies and scholars found that the "CNN effect" was actually often not in "effect."⁶ Nevertheless, the mere fact that the "CNN effect" was largely perceived and accepted by foreign policy scholars and much of the media itself, goes far to illustrate both the perceived and actual importance that CNN has long held as a major and influential source of television news.

SECTION II: Evaluating the Synthesis and Developing the MDM

The following section treats the theoretical aspects of the synthesis and will be followed up in subsequent sections by an empirical assessment based on a thorough content analysis.

Type of Intervention

One of the important components of the MDM is its expectation that the type of intervention the U.S. is undertaking, and the relationship it has with the country (or countries) in question, has an important bearing on subsequent press coverage. Of the three types of interventions, Fallujah is a clear case of a "constructive" intervention, as it was an intervention that had clear U.S. support, and in this case, direct participation (see chp. 3 for more on the other two intervention types, "benign" and "nefarious," both of which are seen in the comparative case study of chp. 5). As a result, the MDM expects that more victims in this conflict will be depicted in news content as unworthy, as opposed to worthy, as humanizing details will be low, infrequent and not present most of the time. A high use of official sources is also expected, at the expense

of the extent of unofficial sourcing. The worthiness of the mission will not be questioned, as will be shown by unquestioned assumptions and a lack of fundamental, substantive criticism. For this type of intervention, these are the aspects of news content that is expected by the MDM.

However, intervention type and subsequent expectations for news content is one of the more general components of the MDM and not much deviation is expected in this regard. To be sure, the MDM also has more specific expectations and components that need further development and evaluation, including the way the that the IM and PM work together.

Expectations for a Functioning Synthesis

As was elucidated earlier in this dissertation, the MDM assumes that the IM outperforms the PM empirically in terms of its predictive and explanatory power on the volume of news coverage that is allotted for given events and occurrences. In this sense, the IM is superior to the PM in these empirical terms. On the other hand, the MDM is also based on the assumption that the PM outperforms the IM in theoretical terms, in terms of where culpability and blame are placed for resulting content, as well as the existence of dichotomous tendencies in so far as differing levels of sympathy for victims are concerned. This case study serves as an important test of the PM's more structural-oriented theoretical argument versus the IM and its focus on journalistic norms and standards.

The MDM is predicated upon more than just the incorporation of the strongest facets of the IM and PM, however, and attempts to go beyond the remaining holes and weaknesses that the synthesis alone does not fulfill. In this sense, this case study is a key learning opportunity for the MDM to develop a more nuanced and original understanding of worthy and unworthy victims in terms of its changing and dynamic nature. This study also serves to develop original postulates for the MDM on ownership during the new era of conglomerated media and to evaluate original expectations of the MDM, namely on the impact that the type of intervention has on resulting news content.

Previous Scholarly Treatment on Ownership Influence over News Content

Almost three decades ago, Bagdikian alarmed communication researchers by alerting them that only about fifty corporations owned the majority of the U.S. news media and predicting that news media concentration would only restrict further and further as time went by (1983). Bagdikian's prediction turned out to be impressively accurate, as the zenith of news media concentration was reached shortly after the turn of the century, when as few as five

**Chapter Four: Indexing State-Corporate Propaganda?
Comparing CNN and CNN en Español Coverage on Fallujah**

Page 158

corporate conglomerates owned and controlled the majority of the U.S. media (Bagdikian, 2004) and only nine conglomerates dominated international media holdings (Schiller & McChesney, 2003, p. 3). This unprecedented wave of media concentration was facilitated by a key piece of legislation that was passed, the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (McChesney, 2000), which marked one of many neo-liberal initiatives of the Clinton administration. Subsequently, critical scholars pointed toward conglomerate ownership as giving rise to an era of hyper-commercialism rife with fluff, celebrity-oriented reporting and gossip, style over substance, over-concentrated media and sensationalism (Bagdikian, 2004; Baker, 2002; McChesney, 2004).

News media concentration is one of the main reasons why an array of scholars have concerned themselves with and documented ownership influence over news content. Starting with a classic treatment by Gans (1979, p. 277), it has often been argued that journalists are limited by their unconscious internalization of the institutional constraints necessary to uphold the interests of corporate ownership (Baker, 2002, pp. 899-900; Herman, 1996; Herman & Chomsky, 2002; Sparrow, 1999; Tompkins & Cheney, 1985). These scholars contend that constraints are not often transmitted as direct orders from above but instead are a natural result of the culture that is brewed in accordance with the needs of the corporate conglomerate – as practiced through journalistic norms and standards – all of which amount to institutional constraints on the extent that journalists can report critically. A few others have documented more direct forms of ownership control and interventionism in accordance with corporate needs (D. Chomsky, 1999, 2006; Gilens & Hertzman, 2000; Parenti, 1986; Thussu, 2004), but they remain in the minority compared to scholars who assume that the natural internalization by journalists of the necessary institutional constraints is more at work in determining content.

Political communication and indexing scholars have taken issue with the notion that constraints relating to corporate ownership is a strong factor at work in determining news content and have steered much more toward journalistic standards and norms as the chief explanatory variable (Bennett et al., 2007, p. 179; Entman, 2004, p. 4; Hallin, 1994, pp. 4, 13; Mermin, 1999, pp. 149-150). The earliest incarnation of indexing referred to the phenomenon by which it was unnecessary for *New York Times* editors to make explicit “policies that would ensure “all the news that fits” the interests of state and economy,” and instead, posited that an “indexing’ norm” accomplished just that. In this regard, some indexing scholars have missed the point that most researchers who have criticized ownership influence assume that internalization, as

opposed to direct orders from above, is what occurs most often in terms of corporate needs being met. Hallin, however, has criticized notions of internalization as being a misguided theory of false consciousness about journalists, to which he does not afford merit (2004).

This case-study seeks to get closer toward resolving this important and long-running debate in its development of the MDM.

Structure versus Norms, Audience versus Ownership Influence

The MDM expects that the more structural-oriented explanations pointing toward constraints relating to corporate ownership and its impact on coverage will be supported by empirical data, as opposed to journalistic norms and standards. In other words, institutional factors should prevail over journalistic norms as the greater influence over news content.

Journalistic norms between journalists speaking two different languages and reporting to distinctive cultures and audiences should not result in significantly similar news content, but institutional factors would suggest it may for this case-study, given the presence of the same owner. The specific standard of sourcing, if journalistic norms and standards were at play, would presumably differ in terms of which governments are sourced and which ones are not. For CNN en Español journalists reporting on Latin America, if they were completely free to operate on journalistic principles alone, would show at least a slight deference toward Latin American government officials. If no other institutional factors were at work beyond journalistic norms, there would be more incentives to source such officials. Similarly, if audience tastes and preferences were at work in significantly influencing content, as was claimed by media executives and concurred upon by one media observer (Massing, 2004), there would also be at least a slight deference toward Latin American governmental officials for a reporter from CNN en Español, especially given the high levels of popular support currently present for many Latin American administrations. Lastly, given the staunch opposition that Latin American governments displayed toward U.S. policy on the invasion and occupation of Iraq, substantive criticism should be significantly more present in CNN en Español content than CNN's domestic newscast content. The MDM does not have any of these expectations, however, and results should be born out by the data of the content analysis if its assumption about the PM's superior theoretical explanations are correct.

Journalistic norms would be evidenced more by the indexing of Latin American governments within CNN en Español news coverage, while institutional factors would point

**Chapter Four: Indexing State-Corporate Propaganda?
Comparing CNN and CNN en Español Coverage on Fallujah**

Page 160

more toward the dominance of U.S. officials, given the overriding ownership of Time Warner and CNN and its resulting deference toward U.S. officials. Beyond sourcing, the extent that humanization of victims was employed, as well as the presence of substantive criticism noted above, were also measured in the content analysis and compared between the two networks. Content analysis results that showed other content aspects to be more similar than different between the two sources would buttress the assertion that the PM can accurately back up its institutionalist arguments over that of the expectations of journalistic norms by indexing. The comparative content analysis of the two networks also serves other purposes as well, as the case study provides the chance to account for whether audience tastes and preferences claimed by Massing (2004) and news media executives can actually explain resulting content present in post-invasion coverage of the occupation of Iraq.

Volume of Coverage

While the MDM defers more to the PM for its theoretical explanations on news content, it conversely looks more toward the IM for empirical explanations when it comes to explaining the volume of news coverage that is allotted for given news events and occurrences. In short, indexing, as opposed to the dichotomy of the unworthy and worthy victims phenomenon that the PM posits, provides a better explanation for volume of news coverage and its related distribution. A key test in this regard will be with news coverage distribution between time periods and whether such distribution reflects differing levels of governmental concern and attention to the matter.

The most important events that occurred in Fallujah since the start of the invasion squarely fall into a two-year time frame which breaks down into three different periods: spring 2003, spring 2004 and winter 2004. As time progressed between the three periods, high-ranking U.S. officials sharply increased attention toward Fallujah following the killings of the Blackwater security contractors, with the height of such attention coming at the most extensive incursion in the third and final time period analyzed.

These three time periods made for an ideal focus for this study as one period consisted of a case of an unprovoked civilian abuse while another contained the killings of four military contractors, whom were importantly deemed as legitimate civilians in *both* CNN networks'

**Chapter Four: Indexing State-Corporate Propaganda?
Comparing CNN and CNN en Español Coverage on Fallujah**

Page 161

coverage,^{*} as well as an abruptly ended military incursion. Lastly, the third time period was during the most extensive military incursion into Fallujah, which was arguably the most significant incursion of any Iraqi city since the initial invasion.

It is expected that governmental attention will be a more accurate predictor of volume of coverage than simply the marker of worthy or unworthy victims being present, while the latter factor should nonetheless still exhibit importance. In tangible terms then, the 3rd time period (Winter 2004) should garner as much news coverage as any other, in accordance with related governmental attention. *Both* the Winter 2004 period and 2nd time period (Spring 2004) attracted significant governmental attention, but only one of them had worthy victims prominently highlighted (i.e. the Blackwater fatalities). Despite the advantage the Spring 2004 period has, the Winter 2004 period should still attract significant and comparable coverage given the importance of governmental attention.

Lastly, both the Spring and Winter 2004 time periods should certainly vastly more news coverage than the 1st time period (Spring 2003), which did not have governmental attention *or* worthy victims involved.

Nuanced Victimization

The PM, unlike the IM, correctly signals tendencies in the news media to favor some victims over others, most often in accordance with the type of relationship that the country the victims hail from have with the U.S. In sum, victims from countries allied with the U.S. will receive less sympathy than victims from countries that are on bad terms with Washington. The MDM, however, goes beyond the PM in this regard and attempts to measure the dynamic nature that victim portrayals often take on in U.S. news media content. This case study measured the extent that humanization was given to twelve different victim types, as will soon be detailed in the methodology section below.

The PM sidestepped the question on how U.S. soldiers in combat should be characterized within the worthy and unworthy victims thesis. The question is a complicated one because there are competing factors at work. On one hand, U.S. soldiers are victims of enemy forces, which under the normal terms of the PM would result in a worthy designation. However,

^{*} Important to note, however, is that this description is far from universally accepted. Investigative journalist Jeremy Scahill takes a sharp disagreement with this classification, arguing instead that the contractors were essentially mercenaries operating in Iraq with legal impunity for the Blackwater corporation, who he dubs as the “world’s largest mercenary army” (see Scahill, *Blackwater: The Rise of the World’s Largest Mercenary Army*, Nation Books, 2007).

**Chapter Four: Indexing State-Corporate Propaganda?
Comparing CNN and CNN en Español Coverage on Fallujah**

Page 162

the MDM recognizes the competing priority of bi-partisan *support* for war policies being present in Washington as an important factor as well. Since the news media often index important voices from Washington, if there is not strong opposition to a war policy in Washington, and if such opposition is not also backed up by grassroots resistance outside the Beltway that is sympathetic to the troops, U.S. soldiers should have an ambiguous status that is more unworthy than worthy resulting from the Washington consensus. Even though U.S. soldiers often experience fatalities at the hands of official enemies to Washington policies, it is not in the White House's interests to highlight the plight of the troops out of a fear of a subsequent depiction of a losing war effort, which in turn results in a lessened (if not all-out worthy) status for U.S. soldiers.

The MDM thus hypothesizes that U.S. soldiers will be "slightly unworthy" as long as there is bi-partisan support for and a lack of opposition by influential public officials to important military policies. To the extent that there is either significant official opposition to such policies and divisions in Washington and an extensively successful social movement that impacts public officials and policy, the coverage tendencies of U.S. soldiers would gain the potential for being changed from "slightly unworthy" to "slightly worthy," or perhaps even "worthy." This is the key to the dynamic nature that the MDM seeks to add to the unworthy / worthy victims phenomenon and what will be tested in this case study.

In terms of the presence of bi-partisan consensus in Washington, Fallujah represents a case where consensus was present throughout and official opposition to White House war policies was absent. Representative John Murtha's proposal for a phased in troop redistribution is widely and correctly seen as the first official display of opposition from within Washington. This small and modest beginning of a period of conflict within Washington on Iraq policy did not occur until November 2005, well after the period of coverage reviewed. Without significant opposition in Washington, the MDM would predict that U.S. soldiers would more unworthy than less as victims, but not as unworthy as other victim types such as Iraqi civilians, given that there is no propaganda value to highlighting casualties occurring either directly by U.S. forces or by the negligence and security failures of the U.S.-led occupation. The inclusion of additional nuance and the possibility of a varied unworthy / worthy victim status in this sense is what the MDM addresses in terms of the difficult question of casualties to U.S. soldiers.

The MDM also uses an institutional-oriented analysis on the question of casualties to U.S. soldiers. Why also are U.S. soldiers presumed to be less worthy than Iraqi civilians? The

**Chapter Four: Indexing State-Corporate Propaganda?
Comparing CNN and CNN en Español Coverage on Fallujah**

Page 163

assumptions of the MDM are that such differing treatments do not *solely* lie with a supposed concern by the press for higher levels of sympathy by the U.S. public for U.S. soldiers, as opposed to Iraqi civilians. Instead, detailed coverage of casualties of U.S. soldiers increases the likelihood of the press to only have to deal with procedural considerations, as opposed to more fundamental concerns that would invariably arise with increased and systematic coverage of Iraqi civilian casualties. It is one thing if a war is killing the soldiers of an occupying Army, but if the occupiers are covered as systematically killing the civilians they were purportedly pledging to protect, this invariably brings up more fundamental concerns and greater potential for substantive criticism. Inevitable questions about whether the U.S. had a right to invade and occupy Iraq in the first place (substantive) would crop up with significant coverage of Iraqi civilian casualties, more so than mere questions about whether the U.S. was conducting the occupation in a “correct” or “strategically sound” manner (procedural) in relation to coverage of U.S. casualties. As a result, Iraqi civilians are expected to be less unworthy than their U.S. soldier counterparts.

Iraqi civilians should be a clearer case of unworthiness because many Iraqi civilians have died at the hands of U.S. soldiers and U.S.-led air strikes. Humanizing coverage is thus expected to be significantly less than that of U.S. soldiers and certainly less than their worthy counterparts (i.e. U.S. military contractors and foreign civilians; there will be more details about person types and expectations for worthiness in the sections to follow). However, some Iraqi civilians were killed and/or injured by resistance fighters and this again, should produce some mixed results, if not the same level of humanization as U.S. soldiers. The picture will not be resoundingly clear, as the invasion and occupation of Iraq has been a complex affair and involved multiple actors and circumstances in terms of casualties. Nevertheless, as is expected with U.S. soldiers and coverage therein, at least some distinct tendencies should be observable, and that is precisely what is hoped to be gained by this case-study.

In sum, in a similar manner to how several important studies have found a much greater prominence of procedural than substantive criticism (Entman, 2004; Entman & Page, 1994), some unworthy victims are *more* unworthy because of the more fundamental and threatening issues that are brought up with additional and sympathetic coverage of them. This case-study seeks to measure these differences more precisely amongst a variety of person types and

compare them against expectations of the MDM in the development of its theoretical components.

**SECTION III:
Content Analysis of Fallujah**

Why a Content Analysis?

Was content within the bounds expected of a corporate media conglomerate, including content of a network subsidiary (CNN en Español)? Were there significant official sourcing tendencies and a minimal presence of substantive criticism? The hypotheses related to the synthesis of the IM and PM, as well as the MDM, are laid out below.

Hypotheses

Sourcing

It is true that the IM, PM and MDM all strongly posit a dominance of official sourcing. However, an added complexity is present in this study in terms of its comparative basis. This is purposeful as it is meant to serve as an opportunity to test the means with which the MDM attempts to resolve a theoretical conflict between the IM and PM in terms of differing explanations for a lack of independent news media performance.

Given the sharply differing stances taken on by Latin American governments and the Bush administration stance, if prevailing journalistic professional standards and norms explain coverage more thoroughly, there will be significant sourcing differences between the two networks. In spite of the differing stance that Latin American governments had on the Iraq war, they will be sourced in accordance with professional norms and standards. This would squarely be the expectation of the IM.

However, if the ownership filter and the institutional constraints that the MDM favors as having a larger impact on news content are in place, sourcing differences will be minimal and the parent CNN network's allegiances to U.S. sourcing tendencies will carry over into CNN en Español. While the PM similarly favors institutional constraints, it has never been theorized or tested in accordance with multi-national TV network coverage and its subsidiaries. Thus, this is a crucial test of the MDM's contention that institutional constraints are more pervasive than professional standards of journalism and that such standards will collapse when in conflict with overriding institutional interests. It also is a step toward theorizing global, conglomerate-owned

TV networks and the argument associated with the MDM that subsidiaries will not display a significant level of news media independence when it comes to macro-oriented issues, such as war reporting.

- **Sourcing Hypothesis**: official sources will be prominently and consistently consulted over those of unofficial sources and oppositional Latin American governmental sources will be minimally present in comparison to U.S.-based official sources, in the case of *both* networks.

Volume of Coverage

Another key test will be with news coverage distribution between the three time periods and whether such distribution reflects differing levels of governmental concern and attention to the matter *or* the unworthy / worthy victim dichotomy. The three time periods included the Spring 2003 period (April 1 – May 28, 2003) which consisted of low governmental attention and unworthy victims; the Spring 2004 period (March 1 – June 1, 2004) which consisted of high governmental attention and worthy victims; and lastly, the Fall 2004 period (October 1 – December 30, 2004) which consisted of high governmental attention and unworthy victims.

Recall that the MDM attempts to resolve the empirical tension between expectations of volume of coverage by the IM and PM, by favoring the variable of governmental attention as being stronger than that of worthy and unworthy victim expectations (see chp. 3).

- **Volume of Coverage hypothesis**: the extent of news coverage allotted to Fallujah during the important three periods analyzed will correlate roughly to attention toward worthy victims, but even more so toward attention by important Washington policy makers; the Fall 2004 period will garner as much coverage as the Spring 2004 period, and the least should be allotted to the Spring 2003 period.

Humanization

- **Humanization hypothesis**: due to the bi-partisan consensus in Washington on policy toward Iraq and the decreased political resistance in the U.S. to the occupation in Iraq, U.S. soldiers (despite being fatalities of combatants) are expected to be “slightly unworthy.”

As previously explained, the case of U.S. soldiers is a complicated one and is expected to produce mixed results in terms of the extent of humanizing details present in the newscasts analyzed herein. Without significant public pressure to end the occupation and corresponding

**Chapter Four: Indexing State-Corporate Propaganda?
Comparing CNN and CNN en Español Coverage on Fallujah**

Page 166

allies who had significant power in Congress, and instead *with* a Presidential administration which was resolutely in favor of continued occupation, humanizing details for U.S. soldiers should be *higher* than that of Iraqi civilians, but still *lower* than that of worthy counterparts (U.S. military contractors and foreign civilians).

Unlike the IM, the MDM theorizes worthy and unworthy victims. However, the MDM is also different from the PM in the sense that it nuances the unworthy and worthy victim dichotomy, adding levels of complexity to differing types of victims along with differing levels. Were these differing levels of worthiness in place in news content? The resulting data of the analysis will help the MDM paint a more nuanced picture of the extent of victimization and related sympathies (or lack thereof) in news content.

Substantive Criticism

- **Substantive criticism hypothesis**: the presence of substantive criticism will largely depend on how often unofficial sources are utilized and whether or not there is a consensus in Washington.

In the case of substantive criticism, there is a strong expectation for a lack of criticism in light of the lack of debate in Washington, as was duly elaborated above. Similar to the sourcing comparison, this test also serves as an opportunity to evaluate the means with which the MDM resolves the tension between the IM and PM. If substantive criticism was related more to professional standards than institutional constraints, there would be substantially higher levels of as much present in CNN en Español's coverage given its responsibility to source the high level of official governmental opposition in Latin America. But if a higher allegiance is shown to corporate institutional constraints, such standards would not apply for coverage results. The MDM expects differences to be muted to non-existent and that a lack of substantive criticism will ultimately win out even in CNN en Español's coverage. However, to the extent that there *are* exceptions in CNN en Español's coverage, the MDM would *not* expect such exceptions to duplicated as often in CNN's coverage, due to its closer proximity and dependence on sourcing by influential U.S. officials.

Methodology

The first step toward conducting this content analysis dealt with the generation of a population of articles to analyze. A standard criteria was used to distinguish newscast transcripts

**Chapter Four: Indexing State-Corporate Propaganda?
Comparing CNN and CNN en Español Coverage on Fallujah**

Page 167

that did not simply mention Fallujah, but actually treated it in a significant and meaningful way. Newscast transcripts that contained headlines with the word Fallujah were automatically qualified. If the word Fallujah was not in a headline, a second criteria was used: each qualifying article had to have at least 150 words of coverage within the newscast transcript *and* at least three mentions of the word Fallujah. The resulting coverage distribution can be seen in the table below.

The content analysis included the coding assistance of two extensively trained volunteers. Three coders, in total, undertook coding responsibilities: one person was a native English speaking graduate student, the second person was a native Spanish speaking graduate student and the third person was the principal investigator, who is bi-lingual.⁷

A sophisticated coding schema (see Addendum I) was used to assess coverage of Fallujah on the basis of four categories: 1) classifying sourcing types (official, unofficial and foreign-based sourcing); 2) the extent of humanization and personalization found in reporting of casualties; 3) the dominant themes of the coverage and; 4) the extent of substantive criticism.⁸ Trained coding volunteers used Microsoft Access to record all coding data.

The humanizing category of the content analysis was the most complex and as such, is explained in detail. Casualties were divided into 12 different person types. Half of these person types were found in resulting coverage and included: U.S. military (slightly unworthy); Iraqi civilians (unworthy); Iraqi security and police officials (unworthy); insurgents (unworthy); U.S. military contractors (worthy) and foreign civilians (worthy). Stories were coded closely to account for whether or not humanizing details of fatalities and injuries were present when such occurrences were mentioned (“details”); whether or not names and/or profile information of the victims were present (“profile”); and lastly, whether both details and profile information were included (or if neither was found).

Coding procedures for sourcing and substantive criticism were less complex. Source attributions were simply classified as being official, unofficial or foreign (see coding scheme, for detail on the definitions of these classifications). Coders were trained to define substantive criticism as including content that questioned the fundamental basis of the war, occupation or invasion and/or conveyed a moral judgment (based on political, social, legal or moral grounds) *against* the right of the U.S. to be in Iraq. Conversely, procedural criticism, which was not coded for in this study, would merely question the execution, technique, success, outcome and/or

sensibility of a certain policy or public official. With this clear definition of substantive criticism, partially inspired by Mermin's formulation (1999), two coders identified the amount of paragraphs in which this criticism appeared (or not) in each story by each of the two networks under consideration (further elaboration can be found within the coding scheme, see Addendum I below).

Inter-reliability statistics were calculated to verify the validity of the coding. Cohen's Kappa was used to evaluate reliability as it avoids penalizing smaller samples. Since this project was testing the full population generated of the newscast transcripts in the manner described above, and because of the shorter format of CNN en Español's news program (half an hour as opposed to a full hour), I wanted to avoid unfairly penalizing the analysis. The results of the Cohen's Kappa inter-reliability calculations were strong and showed an overall reliability of 0.90 for CNN and 0.94 for CNN en Español. Coding of the dominant themes present in coverage, however, were thrown out as a major categorical variable for the study due to initially discouraging reliability testing results.

The following categories for the hypotheses stated above guided the content analysis that served as the bedrock for this investigation: coverage distribution between the three time periods, sourcing tendencies, the extent substantive criticism and the extent humanization of the victims of occupation. They are coupled with related results and findings, also illustrated in a number of tables and graphs.

Content Analysis Results: Coverage Distribution

The results of the news coverage distribution for both networks supported the main components and postulates of the MDM. Expectations for the MDM in this key test was that governmental attention would prove to be a more reliable indicator of volume of coverage than unworthy victims (IM), but that worthy victims would still hold some weight in terms of generating coverage (PM), supporting the desirability of a synthesis between the two models (MDM). Table 4.1 illustrates the distribution results:

**Table 4.1: News Coverage Distribution for Primetime
CNN & CNN en Español Coverage on Fallujah**

NEWS COVERAGE BREAKDOWN	CNN <i>Newsnight, with Aaron Brown (1 hour)</i>	CNN en Español <i>Panaroma Mundial, with Patricia Janiot (½ hour)</i>
Time Periods of Coded Coverage	<i>Code-Qualifying Stories, Code-Qualifying Newscasts.</i>	<i>Code-Qualifying Stories, Code-Qualifying Newscasts.</i>
1) <u>04/1/03 – 05/28/03</u> <i>Spring 2003</i>	<i>3 stories (3% of total) from 3 newscasts. (1.00 story per newscast)</i>	<i>1 story (3% of total) from 1 newscast. (1.00 story per newscast)</i>
2) <u>03/1/04 – 06/1/04</u> <i>Spring 2004</i>	<i>54 stories (44% of total) from 34 newscasts. (1.58 stories per newscast)</i>	<i>18 stories (53% of total) from 15 newscasts. (1.20 stories per newscast)</i>
3) <u>10/1/04 – 12/30/04</u> <i>Fall 2004</i>	<i>65 stories (53% of total) from 39 newscasts. (1.67 stories per newscast)</i>	<i>15 stories (44% of total) from 14 newscasts. (1.07 stories per newscast)</i>
4) TOTALS	<i>122 stories from 69 newscasts. (1.77 stories per newscast)</i>	<i>34 stories from 30 newscasts. (1.13 stories per newscast)</i>

Both networks clearly and significantly favored coverage of the two incursions in 2004, which had a strong official pretext supported by the media's cooperation in classifying the military contractors as civilians. This coverage allotment sharply contrasts with that of the abuses of Iraqi civilians in 2003, which were lacking such a strong pretext.

When the coverage breakdown is looked at with even greater detail, expectations are shown to have been met even further. For example, 32 of the 34 broadcasts that covered the Fallujah story in CNN's Spring 2004 coverage, fell *after* the killings of the military contractors. This was in spite of the fact that a full third of the coverage period included the time *before* the killings (March 1 – March 31), yet this period garnered no more than 5.9% of the resulting

**Chapter Four: Indexing State-Corporate Propaganda?
Comparing CNN and CNN en Español Coverage on Fallujah**

Page 170

coverage on Fallujah. In CNN en Español's case, the matter was even starker, as not even one story on Fallujah appeared in news coverage during the whole month of March until the military contractors were slain. Coverage thereafter, however, sharply increased as 25 broadcasts covered Fallujah. Such distribution clearly illustrates the favoring of governmental attention and worthy victims being present, as opposed to merely fatalities of less worthy victims (the period beforehand), which also attracted less governmental attention.

As a result, by the end of April 2004, Fallujah had been depicted to millions of viewers of CNN in both English and Spanish as an important area of focus and newsworthy coverage, but only *after* the slaying of the military contractors, as opposed to *before* when it was Iraqi civilians who were the main victims in question. As the MDM would fully expect, coverage concurred with a time that government officials had much *more* to say about Fallujah following the slaying of worthy victims, including near universal condemnation by a plethora of high-ranking U.S. officials, both in the military and from the White House. Indeed, officials now had what became an oft-repeated pretext for the incursions of Fallujah in 2004 versus the lack of such an official pretext for the abuses of 2003. Such results were seen for *both* networks, when compared to the previous time period.

The gained official pretext that the slayings of the military contractors provided for important public officials catapulted their worthy status that much further, as did the lack of concern for attention to their deaths resulting in a depiction of a losing war effort. After all, the contractors were not soldiers and their deaths, as well as the manner in which they were killed, were unusual and could be depicted as such. This is why their level of worthiness was higher than that of U.S. soldiers.

More specifically, support was also lent to the MDM's emphasis of the strengths of indexing in terms of volume of coverage expectations. The Spring 2004 period featured governmental attention *and* coincided with the time that worthy victims were slayed, but the Winter 2004 period did not feature a time in which worthy victims were featured. Instead, it *only* featured governmental attention, as confirmed by database research conducted which found as many Presidential news conferences given on Fallujah (American Presidency Project, 2003). Nevertheless, governmental attention proved sufficient to garner comparable coverage in terms of CNN en Español's allotment, and even *more* coverage in terms of CNN's distribution, despite the lack of worthy victims being present. This suggests that indexing's strength as a more

**Chapter Four: Indexing State-Corporate Propaganda?
Comparing CNN and CNN en Español Coverage on Fallujah**

Page 171

reliable predictor of news coverage complements the PM's weakness of depending solely on the presence (or lack thereof) of worthy (more coverage) or unworthy victims (less coverage). The PM alone, for instance, would not expect as much coverage being given to a time period that did *not* prominently feature worthy victims (as was the case for the 3rd time period). The MDM departs from this expectation (see Table 3.3 in chp. 3) and favors governmental attention as a stronger predictor of news attention. Support for this departure was found in the results of this case-study.

In spite of these results sharply favoring indexing's predictive abilities in terms of volume of coverage, the 2nd time period (Spring 2004 and *with* a presence of worthy victims) *still* garnered significantly more coverage than the 1st time period (Spring 2003 and *without* a presence of worthy victims) for *both* networks. The spring 2003 time period, which featured Iraqi civilian casualties more than any other, only garnered *scant* attention from both networks. Neither network covered the 2003 time period with even a fraction of the volume of coverage dedicated to either equivalent time period in 2004. Thus, the lack of worthy victims present still accounts for some explanatory power for resulting news content, just not as much as governmental attention.

To be sure, both the Spring 2004 and Winter 2004 time periods featured significant levels of governmental attention, especially in terms of White House attention (recall that the MDM expects the press to disproportionately attend to what only the most important public officials say and do). Conversely, the Spring 2003 period did not. For the Spring 2003 time period, there were no publicly voiced statements on Fallujah. Only Ari Fleischer, the White House press secretary, mentioned Fallujah one time to the press on his own accord, when he criticized alleged Baath party loyalists for a grenade attack against U.S. soldiers on May 1, 2003 (American Presidency Project, 2003). In the Spring 2004 and Winter 2004 periods, however, there were over fifty-three instances where Fallujah was mentioned at least once amongst Presidential remarks, Presidential news conferences and press briefings. Presidential news conferences where Fallujah was mentioned by President Bush at least once were evenly split between the Spring 2004 and Winter 2004 periods at three a piece. There were nine instances where Fallujah was mentioned at least once in Presidential remarks during the Spring 2004 period and seven in the Winter 2004 period. In so far as the chief policy maker of the Iraq occupation was concerned, attention to Fallujah was essentially comparable between the Winter and Spring 2004 periods (especially in light of

the campaign season having fallen throughout the Spring 2004 period, but not in the Winter 2004 period) and far more than in the Spring 2003 period, which never mentioned Fallujah, aside from the Fleischer comment (American Presidency Project, 2003).

Content Analysis Results: Sourcing

CNN Sourcing

CNN utilized 66% of its total sourcing space, measured by the amount of transcript paragraphs, to official sources. Unofficial and foreign sources only accounted for 34% (unofficial, 28%) of the total sourcing space. Just under sixty-percent of the 122 stories that were coded had more official sourcing than any of the other four types (i.e. official, unofficial, foreign or a two or three-way tie between sources). Unofficial sources only predominated in 14% of the stories, while foreign sources had under 1%.

In sum, as expected by all three models (IM, PM & the MDM), CNN's sourcing tendencies displayed a strong deference toward high-level U.S. officials. Graphical representations of these data are contained below in Figures 4.1 and 4.2. Located in between the two figures, the sourcing data are also laid out in a tabular form (Table 4.2).

Figure 4.1 – CNN – Sourcing Distribution

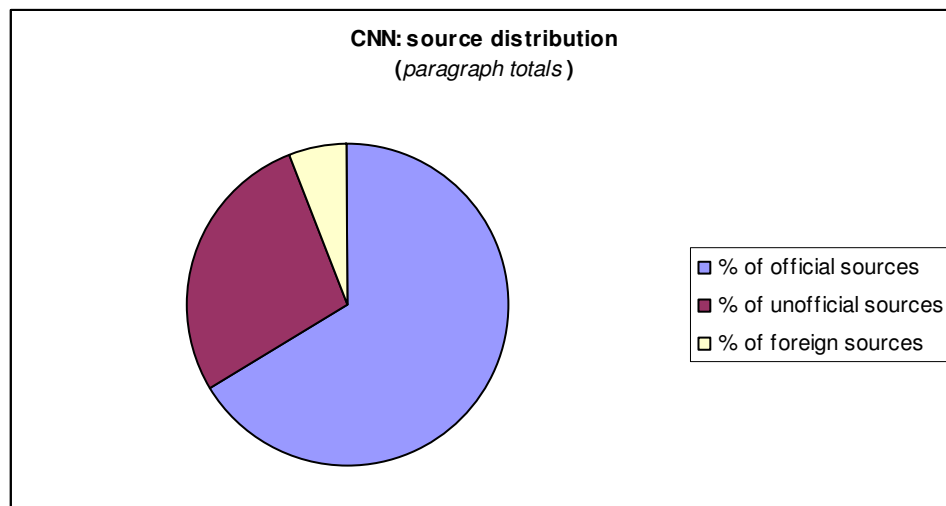
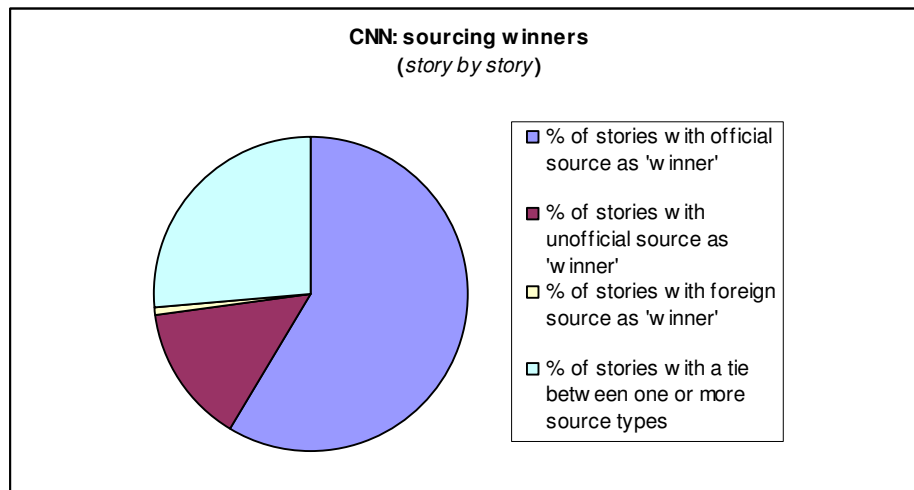


Table 4.2 – CNN – Sourcing Distribution

	Official	Unofficial	Foreign
Percentage (of total volume of attributed sourcing, amongst 122 stories)	66.0%	28.3%	5.7%
Story by Story, source winners (<i>Ties – 26.4%*</i>)	58.7%	14.1%	0.8%

Figure 4.2 – CNN – Sourcing Distribution



CNN en Español Sourcing

CNN en Español showed similar tendencies to CNN, but was slightly less marked toward official sources than CNN was in its coverage. 52% of its total space was dedicated to official sources, more than any of the three source types. In a story-by-story comparison, official sources were utilized more than unofficial sources 42% of the time and thus more often than any of the other four possible outcomes (i.e. official, unofficial, foreign or ties).

Expectations were met for the MDM in this category and even surpassed, in terms of foreign sourcing tendencies. As defined in the coding scheme, foreign sources were defined as any source was governmental and official, but with a nationality other than the U.S. While Latin American governmental sourcing was expected to be minimal, there was not one Latin American governmental official sourced in any of CNN en Español’s coverage and in fact, not one instance

* 69% of these ties were 3-way ties, with many having resulted from no attributed sourcing present in the story. 28% of ties were between official & unofficial sourcing, with just 3% of ties involving foreign sources.

**Chapter Four: Indexing State-Corporate Propaganda?
Comparing CNN and CNN en Español Coverage on Fallujah**

Page 174

of a person *from* Latin America ever appeared on coverage of Fallujah. Instead, Iraqi officials, many of whom were either appointed or influenced by the U.S. occupation authorities, dominated foreign sources. They comprised 58% of the total space allocated to foreign sources (more than any other nationality) and amongst five other nationalities that were foreign sourced, were present in 46% of the stories that had foreign sources in it (also more than any other nationality). As for the other foreign officials, important U.S. allies such as the U.K. and Japan (24% of total foreign sourced volume, presence in 31% of foreign stories) were present in twice as many stories with foreign sources and almost in twice as much of the volume as more officials from France and Iran (13% of total foreign sourced volume and a presence in 15% of foreign stories), which had policies more critical of the occupation. Including British and Japanese sources along with Iraqi officials account for even more dramatic figures, as 87% of the total volume for foreign sources and 85% were not dedicated toward countries with clearly critical policies toward the occupation.

Graphical representations of these data are contained below in figures 4.3 and 4.4. Table 4.3. Located in between the two figures, the sourcing data are also laid out in a tabular form.

Figure 4.3 – CNN en Español – Sourcing Distribution

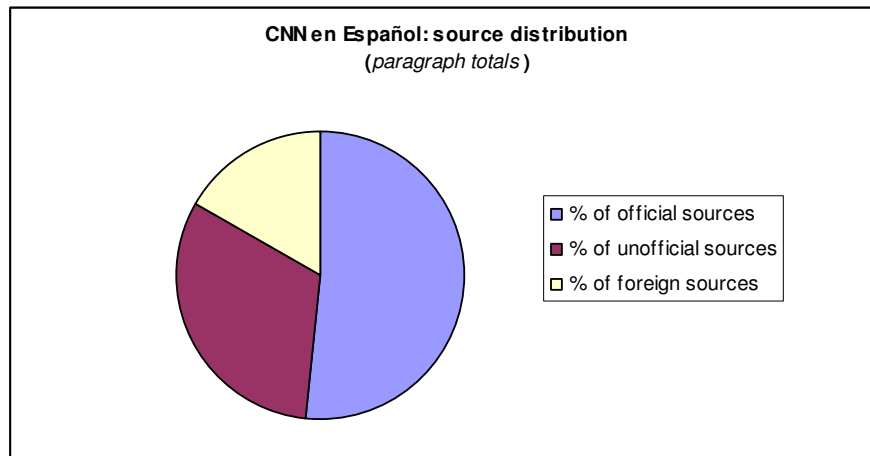
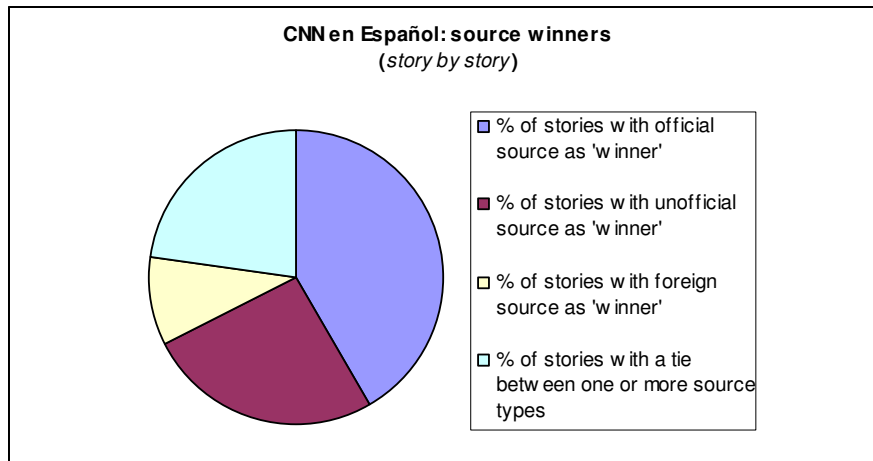


Table 4.3 – CNN en Español – Sourcing

	Official	Unofficial	Foreign
Percentage (of total volume of attributed sourcing, amongst 34 stories)	52.2%	31.9%	15.9%
Story by Story, source winners (<i>Ties – 23%*</i>)	41.9%	25.8%	9.7%

Figure 4.4 – CNN en Español – Sourcing “Winners”



Sourcing Comparison

CNN en Español’s sourcing tendencies diverged from that of CNN’s, whereby foreign sources were used more often; though in both cases, they comprised no more than a 1/6th of the total space allotted to sources. Foreign sources were still used almost three times as often CNN’s sparse utilization of foreign sources, *but* the most important comparative finding was an omission, as *no* Latin American government official was ever sourced in any news coverage of Fallujah that was coded for both networks. Further, amongst the foreign sources that were used, a strong deference was paid toward officials from allied countries with the U.S. (i.e. Iraq, the U.K. and Japan) over that of countries that were more critical toward the occupation (i.e. France and Iran). In this sense, the MDM’s expectations were not only met, but surpassed.

* 57% of these ties were between official and unofficial sources, meaning that foreign sourcing for these stories were less than official and unofficial sourcing. 3-way ties accounted for 28.6% of all ties, while ties involving foreign sources were only 14% of total ties.

**Chapter Four: Indexing State-Corporate Propaganda?
Comparing CNN and CNN en Español Coverage on Fallujah**

Page 176

While expectations by the IM and PM are similar to the MDM in this sense, the lack of differences in sourcing tendencies points toward the resolution by the MDM of the theoretical tensions between the IM and PM. Given the similarities overcoming the differences in the sourcing tendencies, institutional constraints over journalistic standards were found to be the more compelling influence on resulting news content when it came to sourcing tendencies. This was especially the case in terms of the striking result of no Latin American government sourcing being present in the case of CNN en Español. Further, given the higher presence of foreign sourcing, it was also striking that such sources were from nations overwhelmingly aligned with the war and occupation stances held by the U.S.

More questions persist beyond sourcing, however. Did official sourcing domination and lessened use of unofficial sources in both of the networks result in similar levels of substantive criticism? Or, did the foreign sourcing differences account for subsequent differences in this category? One of the key tasks of the MDM is to also assess the extent of independence from the government and one important measure of this is the extent of substantive criticism present.

Content Analysis Results: Substantive Criticism

Substantive criticism was the category with the most identical results between the two networks, reflecting a strong correlation of institutional constraints. Just under 80% of all newscast stories were without any substantive criticism in CNN's prime-time Fallujah coverage, as only 26 of 122 newscast stories had any substantive criticism aired. Similarly, for CNN en Español's prime time Fallujah coverage, almost three-fourths of all newscast stories were without any substantive criticism (9 of 34 newscast stories). Most stories that contained criticism on CNN en Español only contained one mention of substantive criticism, a result reflecting the glaring omission of Latin American sourced-criticism, as not one Latin American official voice, much less unofficial, was found in any coverage of Fallujah (criticism, or otherwise).

In short, both networks showed remarkably similar low-levels of substantive criticism, reflecting the consensus strongly present in Washington on Iraq policy. These results fulfill the MDM's expectations for prevailing institutional constraints to win out over journalistic norms. If journalistic standards were more at work in determining content, CNN en Español would have *prominently* sourced Latin American governmental officials in accordance with well-established norms. The fact that this did not occur at all is a strong indication that institutional constraints

were at work and that the MDM's deference toward the PM, as opposed to the IM, is correct in this regard.

Content Analysis Results: Humanization

CNN Humanization

Proportional to the allotment of coverage worthy victims received, there was over twice as much humanizing coverage in comparison to what unworthy victims garnered on CNN. 66% of the coverage that mentioned a death or injury of an unworthy victim contained neither humanizing details or the profile information of the victims. Without regard to total volume of coverage, which was again measured by transcript paragraphs in the same manner as was done with sources, and speaking strictly in terms of story-by-story measures, the differences are even higher: 78% of the stories mentioning a casualty were without any humanizing details for unworthy victims. Worthy victims, conversely, were without humanizing details in only 23% of the stories and 17% of the total coverage allotment (thus, 77% of stories and 83% of total coverage allotted *did* contain humanizing details for worthy victims). Well over two-thirds of either stories or total coverage allotment for the U.S. military contractors contained some or both types of humanizing details in the coverage of their casualties, a figure that led all other casualty person types.

The results indicate that for every single category measured in the study, the PM's expectations were met for CNN's coverage. Worthy victims received significantly more humanizing details than unworthy victims. Furthermore, the new expectation that the MDM hypothesized on U.S. soldiers was met, as results showed that casualties were depicted in a less unworthy manner than other victims, thus garnering its "slightly unworthy" designation. This reflects the ambiguous and more pliable status of U.S. soldiers in press depictions. During a time of governmental consensus (recall the introduction of Murtha's resolution, which did not come until the following year), U.S. soldiers are expected to get slightly *less* sympathy than more, but *more* sympathy than other unworthy counterpart. Results reflected this expectation and provided support for the MDM's original attempt to further nuance and develop the unworthy / worthy dichotomy, including the addition of person types and related expectations therein.

The following result tables (4.4-4.5) illustrate these numbers in greater detail, with significantly high numbers highlighted in green, and significantly low numbers highlighted in red. Graphical representations of the tables can be found in Appendix A.

Tables 4.4 – 4.5: CNN Newsnight – Humanization of Worthy & Unworthy Victims

Table 4.4.1 – Humanization for Unworthy Victims on CNN by Volume

PARAGRAPH TOTALS* UNWORTHY VICTIMS Person Types	% of total paragraphs - profile only**	% of total paragraphs - details only	% of total paragraphs - both details & profile	% of total paragraphs - neither details or profile	% of non-humanizing paragraphs versus % of humanizing paragraphs
<i>US Military</i> (61 stories)	8.2%	17.6%	23.4%	50.8%	50.8% // 49.2%
<i>Iraqi Civilians</i> (50 stories)	4.0%	22.7%	3.4%	69.9%	69.9% // 30.1%
<i>Insurgents</i> (17 stories)	0%	0%	4.8%	95.2%	95.2% // 4.8%
<i>Iraqi Security / Police</i> (10 stories)	0%	0%	0%	100%	100% // 0%
TOTALS	5.3%	16.1%	12.3%	65.7%	65.7% // 34.3%

Table 4.4.2 – Humanization for Unworthy Victims on CNN by Story

STORY APPEARANCES*** UNWORTHY VICTIMS Person Types	% of stories – profile only**	% of stories - details only	% of stories – both details & profile	% of stories – neither details or profile	% of non-humanizing versus % of humanizing stories
<i>US Military</i> (61 stories)	6.6%	14.8%	11.5%	67.2%	67.2% // 32.8%
<i>Iraqi Civilians</i> (50 stories)	17%	0%	8%	75%	69.9% // 30.1%
<i>Insurgents</i> (17 stories)	0%	0%	0%	100%	100% // 0%
<i>Iraqi Security / Police</i> (10 stories)	0%	0%	0%	100%	100% // 0%
TOTALS	3.6%	12.3%	6.5%	77.5%	77.5% // 22.5%

* Paragraph totals measure the extent that each casualty person type was referred to in each story. That is the basis for all ensuing %'s listed in this table, which represent the % of total paragraphs for each category.

** Percentage figures in casualty person type rows are %'s of stories within each respective person type.

*** Story appearances are raw figures that simply measure how many stories a given casualty person type made at least one appearance.

Table. 4.5.1 – Humanization for Worthy Victims on CNN by Volume

PARAGRAPH TOTALS* WORTHY VICTIMS Person Types	% of total paragraphs - profile only**	% of total paragraphs - details only	% of total paragraphs - both details & profile	% of total paragraphs - neither details or profile	% of non-humanizing paragraphs versus % of humanizing paragraphs
Foreign Civilian (3 stories)	14.3%	52.4%	33.3%	0%	0% // 100%
US Military Contractors (19 stories)	4.6%	56.9%	15.4%	23.1%	23.1% // 76.9%
TOTALS	7.0%	55.8%	19.8%	17.4%	17.4% // 82.6%

Table 4.5.2 – Humanization for Worthy Victims on CNN by Story

STORY APPEARANCES*** WORTHY VICTIMS Person Types	% of stories – profile only**	% of stories - details only	% of stories – both details & profile	% of stories – neither details or profile	% of non-humanizing versus % of humanizing stories
Foreign Civilian (3 stories)	33%	33%	33%	0%	0% // 100%
US Military Contractors (19 stories)	5.3%	57.9%	10.5%	26.3%	26.3% // 73.7%
TOTALS	9.1%	54.5%	13.6%	22.7%	22.7% // 77.3%

* Paragraph totals measure the extent that each casualty person type was referred to in each story. That is the basis for all ensuing %'s listed in this table, which represent the % of total paragraphs for each category.

** Percentage figures in casualty person type rows are %'s of stories within each respective person type.

*** Story appearances are raw figures that simply measure how many broadcasted stories in which a given casualty person type was mentioned at least one time.

CNN en Español – Humanization Results

The most noteworthy results in terms of the way CNN en Español coverage humanized victims included several exceptional results for Iraqi civilians and insurgents. As a result of three broadcasted stories filed by an unembedded reporter (April 29, 2003; November 15, 2004; November 16, 2004), more humanizing details emerged for Iraqi civilians and insurgents than the MDM would have expected. Iraqi civilians had humanizing details in 58.1% of the coverage dedicated to them when measured by volume and 53.8% by story. Insurgents generated an even higher proportion of humanizing details when measured by volume with 62.5% (albeit it being slightly lower when measured by story, with 50%).

These exceptions were not significant enough, however, to alter the overall sympathetic emphasis given toward worthy victims as opposed to unworthy victims. Whether measured by sheer volume (65.4%), or the frequency of story appearances (67.6%), unworthy victims received significantly less airtime mentioning humanizing details than instances that mentioned these casualties without any such details. Further, all other expectations were met in terms of individual results, as other unworthy victims (U.S. military and Iraqi security) received far less humanizing treatment than their worthy counterparts (foreign civilians and the U.S. military contractors). Last, but not least, when the three exceptional stories are not included in calculations, the results significantly change: Iraqi civilians then garner less humanizing details (only 45.4%) and insurgents are left without any humanizing details (see Appendix A for more details on this data, via tabular and graphical representations). Nevertheless, since the MDM has expectations about exceptions and when and how they can occur, a closer look is warranted and is taken following the tables and figures included below.

The following result tables (4.6-4.7) illustrate these numbers in greater detail, with significantly high numbers highlighted in green, and significantly low numbers highlighted in red. Graphical representations of the tables can be found in Appendix A.

**Chapter Four: Indexing State-Corporate Propaganda?
Comparing CNN and CNN en Español Coverage on Fallujah**

Page 181

Tables 4.6 – 4.7: CNN en Español – Humanization of Worthy & Unworthy Victims

Table 4.6.1 – Humanization for Unworthy Victims on CNN en Español by Volume

PARAGRAPH TOTALS*	% of total paragraphs - profile only**	% of total paragraphs - details only	% of total paragraphs - both details & profile	% of total paragraphs - neither details or profile	% of non-humanizing paragraphs versus % of humanizing paragraphs
UNWORTHY VICTIMS					
Person Types					
<i>US Military</i> (16 stories)	0%	16.1%	0%	0%	83.9% // 16.1%
<i>Iraqi Civilians</i> (13 stories)	7.0%	20.9%	30.2%	41.9%	41.9% // 58.1%
<i>Insurgents</i> (4 stories)	0%	62.5%	0%	37.5%	37.5% // 62.5%
<i>Iraqi Security / Police</i> (4 stories)	0%	0%	0%	100%	100% // 0%
TOTALS	1.5%	22.1%	10.2%	65.4%	65.4% // 34.6%

Table 4.6.2 – Humanization for Unworthy Victims on CNN en Español by Story

STORY APPEARANCES***	% of stories – profile only**	% of stories - details only	% of stories – both details & profile	% of stories – neither details or profile	% of non-humanizing versus % of humanizing stories
UNWORTHY VICTIMS					
Person Types					
<i>US Military</i> (16 stories)	0%	18.75%	0%	81.25%	81.25% // 18.75%
<i>Iraqi Civilians</i> (13 stories)	7.7%	23.1%	23.1%	46.2%	46.2% // 53.8%
<i>Insurgents</i> (4 stories)	0%	50%	0%	50%	50% // 50%
<i>Iraqi Security / Police</i> (4 stories)	0%	0%	0%	100%	100% // 0%
TOTALS	2.7%	21.6%	8.1%	67.6%	67.6% // 32.4%

* Paragraph totals measure the extent that each casualty person type was referred to in each story. That is the basis for all ensuing %'s listed in this table, which represent the % of total paragraphs for each category.

** Percentage figures in casualty person type rows are %'s of stories within each respective person type.

*** Story appearances are raw figures that measure how many broadcasted stories in which a given casualty person type was mentioned at least one time. It does *not* measure how many mentions were present in a given story.

Table 4.7.1 – Humanization for Worthy Victims on CNN en Español by Volume

PARAGRAPH TOTALS* WORTHY VICTIMS Person Types	% of total paragraphs - profile only**	% of total paragraphs - details only	% of total paragraphs - both details & profile	% of total paragraphs - neither details or profile	% of non-humanizing paragraphs versus % of humanizing paragraphs
Foreign Civilian (7 stories)	0%	34.5%	44.8%	20.7%	20.7% // 79.3%
US Military Contractors (7 stories)	9.1%	27.3%	54.5%	9.1%	9.1% // 90.9%
TOTALS	4.8%	30.6%	50%	14.5%	14.5% // 85.5%

Table 4.7.2 – Humanization for Worthy Victims on CNN en Español by Story

STORY APPEARANCES*** WORTHY VICTIMS Person Types	% of stories – profile only**	% of stories - details only	% of stories – both details & profile	% of stories – neither details or profile	% of non-humanizing versus % of humanizing stories
Foreign Civilian (7 stories)	0%	28.6%	42.9%	28.6%	28.6% // 71.4%
US Military Contractors (7 stories)	14.3%	42.9%	28.5%	14.3%	14.3% // 85.7%
TOTALS	7.1%	35.7%	35.7%	21.4%	21.4% // 78.6%

* Paragraph totals measure the extent that each casualty person type was referred to in each story. That is the basis for all ensuing %'s listed in this table, which represent the % of total paragraphs for each category.

** Percentage figures in casualty person type rows are %'s of stories within each respective person type.

*** Story appearances are raw figures that measure how many broadcasted stories in which a given casualty person type was mentioned at least one time. It does *not* measure how many mentions were present in a given story.

**Chapter Four: Indexing State-Corporate Propaganda?
Comparing CNN and CNN en Español Coverage on Fallujah**

Page 183

CNN en Español's Exceptional Results

There were essentially two incidents that generated the CNN en Español exceptions noted above. The first was the opening salvo of the whole Fallujah affair, already noted above, whereby unarmed 19 unarmed Iraqi civilians were shot and killed by U.S. soldiers and dozens more seriously injured in the span of just a few days in late-April 2003 (Human Rights Watch, 2003; Price, 2003; Reeves, 2003). This happening generated *one* exceptional story in which civilians were humanized and covered in an identical Penhaul piece that aired on *both* CNN and CNN en Español (April 29, 2003).

The second incident prompted coverage when Kevin Sites, a cameraman stringing for NBC, filmed a U.S. soldier killing an unarmed and injured Iraqi insurgent at point-blank range on November 13, 2004 (Democracy Now!, 2004). Major network editors who were pooling coverage and organized from Hotel Palestine decided to release the footage. Taking the decision was described as a “tough pill to swallow” in terms of hesitations by the editors to do so, according to the reporter who covered both incidents for CNN en Español, Karl Penhaul (Penhaul Interview, 2009). Such hesitations notwithstanding, the footage was released and covered by CNN en Español (anchorwoman Patricia Janiot from Atlanta: November 15, 2004; Karl Penhaul from Baghdad: November 16, 2004), as well as by CNN (Jamie McIntyre from D.C.: November 15, 2004 and November 16, 2004). CNN en Español did *not* show the footage, but carried a Baghdad-based report by Penhaul (the only one of the four stories run on the shooting that were from Iraq itself). In both of its stories, CNN showed the dialogue between the soldiers involved that led up to the shooting and pixilated the names of the soldiers involved, but did *not* show the shooting itself (as anchor Aaron Brown explained, this was withheld, “in the interest of taste”).

Penhaul was unembedded when he filed his stories for both of these incidents, according to an interview conducted over e-mail. As Penhaul explained, at certain moments during his time in Iraq, he would “disembed” in spite of it being against “our rules of embed,” which “was possible [to do] just working contacts that one built up during the conflict” (Penhaul Interview 2009). When Penhaul decided to go against the “rules of embed,” the effects were evident in the reporting, as unofficial sources outnumbered official sources by two to one. Three paragraphs of substantive criticism were present in the piece on the April 2003 shootings, as well as one of the two pieces on the November 2004 shooting (no other article surveyed received more than three

**Chapter Four: Indexing State-Corporate Propaganda?
Comparing CNN and CNN en Español Coverage on Fallujah**

Page 184

paragraphs, thus the piece garnered the highest totals of any other article during the three coverage periods). Iraqi civilians garnered more humanizing details in Penhaul's 2003 piece than any other piece from the 2004 coverage periods. Penhaul's 2004 unembedded piece for CNN en Español on the November shooting was the only piece to ever source someone from the human rights community.

These exceptional stories and instances do fit within the MDM postulates on exceptional conditions and affected aspects of news content, which also explain why it was not just Penhaul being unembedded that resulted in these stories. Penhaul's story on April 29th was filed during a time when governmental attention was at its lowest on Fallujah, as noted above in the time period comparison in terms of White House attention on Fallujah (American Presidency Project, 2003). Thus, as a result of the lack of governmental attention, Penhaul's "disembed" fielded far more civilian sourcing and accounts than was the case for any other story filed. An exceptional instance of unembedded reporting went unencumbered without a repeated official line to obfuscate unofficial sources and reporting. 2003 was also a year in which significant social protest against the war occurred, record-breaking in terms of massive, unprecedented global protests that were organized (Reynié, 2009: 14; Reynié documented 36 million people participating in such protests), and its effects in terms of opening up critical reporting space were evident in this instance. Adding to this effect, Penhaul was filing during a time that resistance against the war was *decreasing*. This was quite simply *not* a time period in which U.S. officials were going to go on the public relations offensive, as resistance and public concern with the war was already lessening and there was no need to risk garnering unwanted increased press attention. Uncoincidentally then, there was no other story filed on Fallujah during this time period that was aired on CNN en Español. Matters probably would have been different though, if officials opted to comment on Fallujah more often (which they did not) *and/or* if political resistance experienced a resurgence (as opposed to its actual gradual lessening). These exceptional conditions produced a window of opportunity for exceptionally independent reporting, which Penhaul amply exhibited in this particular report.

The November 2004 stories on the shooting filmed by Kevin Sites were forced by a decision taken by hesitant editors to release footage. Nevertheless, in the wake of the release, a once again unembedded Penhaul filed stories on the matter, and did so during a time that the White House did *not* comment on the incident (American Presidency Project, 2003). The

**Chapter Four: Indexing State-Corporate Propaganda?
Comparing CNN and CNN en Español Coverage on Fallujah**

Page 185

Penhaul story was *not* filed, however, before a preceding story only noting the Pentagon investigation of the incident was first aired (Janiot on November 15, 2004). The Pentagon released defensive statements, which were *not* directly quoted in Penhaul's November 16th filing aired on CNN en Español (though they were prominent in CNN's coverage, which *did not* pick up Penhaul's November 16th report and instead went with the report by the D.C.-based McIntyre). In light of governmental attention coming only from officials with less press influence – which was unsustainable attention – the unembedded Penhaul was once again freed up to report in an environment that was lacking in governmental posturing. Penhaul's reporting, however, *never* aired on CNN. This probably reflects the lack of resources at CNN en Español resulting in slightly less institutionalization, which in turn gave rise to a limited form of reporter autonomy. This notwithstanding, without the indisputable video, the hesitant decision for editors to release it within the collective footage pool, and the investigation by the Pentagon which acknowledged the incident, it is dubious whether or not reporting would have even been undertaken based on eye-witnesses and human rights sources alone.

In terms of the content aspects that were impacted the most, the MDM does posit that lessened governmental attention on a given matter can impact humanizing details (ranked 2nd in terms of exceptional aspects of news content most likely to appear, see Table 3.5), as well as sourcing tendencies (ranked 3rd, also see Table 3.5). However, *none* of the CNN or CNN en Español reports found or explored any responsibility at the top or systematic patterns for this abuse, which is in line with the least likely exception of the MDM. Without a variety of exceptional conditions first being present, the MDM does *not* expect responsibility to be found at high-levels. The unofficial sources found in Penhaul's exceptional reports *did not* generate continued coverage, humanizing or otherwise, on either the April 2003 or November 2004 shooting incidents.

Public Opinion

The most significant finding in this chapter is that the differences between CNN en Español and CNN were much less than the similarities. Given the ownership filter of the PM, CNN en Español's proclivity to *not* utilize sourcing of Latin American governments in opposition to the war is easily explained and actually well within the purview of the PM's expectations. Time Warner, the parent company and conglomerate of both CNN networks, does not stand much to gain in terms of adopting a lenient and costly sourcing approach involving anti-imperialist, Latin American-based administrations. This would potentially offend its mostly U.S.-based sourcing base and possibly result in a lack of subsequent access to the source it depends upon the most. The dubiousness of accepting the media executive line of being a "window to the world" (Meehan, 2005, p. 1) that "gives people what they want" (McChesney, 2000, p. 198) was called into question in light of polling figures and survey data taken from 2004, which instead pointed toward the impact that the ownership filter had in Fallujah coverage.

However, the question remains: what theoretical implications do these similarities have for the MDM's expectations on institutional constraints prevailing over journalistic standards and norms in terms of their influence on news content? Large ones, in light of the fact that the two networks have vastly differing audiences. CNN's audience in Canada and the U.S. is a far cry from CNN en Español's tendencies toward a bi-lingual, upper-crust demographic ranging across national boundaries and both the North and South American continents. If audience tastes and preferences were at work in deciding news content, presumably content tendencies should have been different and quite marked between these networks.

Strong similarities between the two networks in terms of content, however, does not alone prove a causal relationship between institutional constraints and related news content. Additional data should be consulted and namely, public opinion needs to be taken into consideration as well. After all, if public opinion was sharply on the side of government and the news was simply reflecting this, uncritical content tendencies between both networks could simply be said to have democratically reflected public sentiment. Was this indeed the case?

Consultation of a few of the key polls undertaken during 2004 suggest that public opinion was not clearly on the side of the White House when it came to Iraq and even arguably against it. While this was not a comprehensive survey of public opinion, such a survey was not necessary,

**Chapter Four: Indexing State-Corporate Propaganda?
Comparing CNN and CNN en Español Coverage on Fallujah**

Page 187

as the presence (or lack of) full-fledged public support was being assessed, as opposed to a complex measurement of an exact level of public opinion.

In mid-March, a poll conducted by the Annenberg Public Policy Center revealed that more Americans felt the war was not worth it and disapproved of the way that the President was handling the war, than those who felt otherwise (National Annenberg Election Survey, 2004a). By the next month, figures from the same source for both of those questions showed an 8% increase in the ranks of the opposition to the war and was clearly over a simple majority (2004b). The numbers did not stop rising either, as by the end of May, nearly 60% were responding that they disapproved of the way the President was handling the war and a clear simple majority thought the war was a mistake from the get-go (2004c). The U.S. citizenry was starting to distrust the President as well, as CBS reported: “By a large margin, Americans think the U.S. handover of power to Iraqis should occur on June 30th, as promised by the Bush Administration. But by an even greater margin, Americans see that as unlikely. 57 percent think the turnover should take place as scheduled, but 63 percent think it will not” (CBS, 2004). By the end of December, not even a few months after his re-election, the populace was continuing its opposition to Bush’s Iraq policies by still registering consistently high disapproval with 57% disagreeing with Bush’s handling of the war and 56% responding that the war was a mistake from the beginning. Iraq, by any fair measure, was not a popularly supported war.

Respected media analyst, journalist and *New York Times Review of Books* contributor Michael Massing wrote that media executives “believe when it comes to real war, Americans cannot bear to see bullet-ridden bodies and headless corpses ... In the case of Iraq, the conflict Americans saw was highly sanitized” (2004, p. 23). Massing explains that CNN news coverage was “sanitized” because “US news organizations gave Americans the war they thought Americans wanted to see” (p. 12). Massing does *not* criticize post-war coverage and sees such coverage as now being critical and probing, with his explanation behind the switch in news content having to do with “its pack mentality,” and as a result of when, “a president is popular and consensus prevails, [how] journalists shrink from challenging him” (p. 65).

Consultation of polling data throughout 2004, however, clearly showed that the President was anything but widely popular, and instead, barely managed to win re-election (when including non-voters, only 29% of the country voted for his re-election). When questioned specifically about Iraq, the U.S. citizenry was often opposed to the whole affair and disapproved

**Chapter Four: Indexing State-Corporate Propaganda?
Comparing CNN and CNN en Español Coverage on Fallujah**

Page 188

of the President's policies on Iraq. In light of these facts, the U.S. people arguably did *not* want to see a "sanitized" version of the leading issue of the day. As a result, the CNN media executive claim that the news media was simply responding to what the people "wanted," as opposed to operating under standard institutional constraints and necessities to depend on official sources and their related positioning, does not carry much legitimacy.

Matters become even starker when it comes to Latino public opinion on the war. When asked whether the war against Iraq was worth it or not, Latinos answered "no" at a rate 50% higher than Caucasians (75% versus that of 47% for Caucasians). When it came to approval of the way the President was handling the war, Latinos still opposed Bush by disapproving 66% of the time (National Annenberg Survey 2004c). Another poll, taken in December 2003, had recorded the same question as having a 57% response for "disapproval" of Bush's handling of Iraq policies (Pew Hispanic Center, 2004). The data is clear: throughout 2004, the U.S. public (and especially Latinos) ranged anywhere from a lack of support for the war in Iraq to direct opposition to it. Support also ranged from a lack of support to direct opposition to the way that Bush was handling Iraq. Public sentiment simply cannot be blamed for "sanitized" coverage from CNN *or* CNN en Español, as it was against the war and if anything, was hungry for information that supported such concerns and opposition.

Evidence of this desire, based on the public's skepticism about the war, is found within unusual viewing trends that were documented by the U.K.-based daily, *The Guardian*. Reporter Jason Deans showed how viewers were turning up in droves to watch BBC World news coverage and increasing PBS's audience by an average of 28%, just three weeks after the invasion of Iraq occurred. New York City posted three times as high of a viewership and Dallas, Texas, four times as high. Concurrently, CBS's nightly viewership fell by 15% and ABC's by 6% (Deans 2003).

Even if one ignored all of the aforementioned evidence, it is hard to get away from a relevant question that is raised: even *if* the U.S. public *did* support the war and CNN was indeed simply responding to public sentiment, is this the job of an independent press that is supposed to arm the public with critical information and analysis of public officials and their most important policies?

General Findings and Conclusion

This extensive content analysis was undertaken to test a number of components of the MDM, some more developed than others. In general terms, however, ownership as an influence on news content was evaluated, structural constraints versus standardized journalistic practices were tested, expectations on determinants of volume of coverage were assessed and additional theorization of expectations for unworthy and worthy victims was sought.

Corporate Ownership and Institutional Constraints

Both the IM and PM were posited *before* the era of hyper-commercialism and globalized corporate media conglomerates. This study was an opportunity to test the efficacy of ownership and its influence over news content during this new era. Similarly, it was an opportunity to test whether standardized norms and journalistic practices were more (or less) responsible for resulting news content. The MDM expected that ownership will prove to be a strong influence, and institutional constraints a stronger influence than journalistic norms, as a comparative analysis between subsidiaries which served different populations and audiences, from different continents and languages, with differing public opinion on the topic at hand, was undertaken to assess that expectation. The more similar the content between the two networks, the larger the influence could be attributed to ownership and institutional constraints. In the case of the latter, a debate between the IM and PM could be settled and expectations of the MDM could also be evaluated.

The ownership filter of the PM goes far to explain why and how differences between the two subsidiaries, with vastly differing audiences and potentially vastly differing governments to source from, wound up having more in common with their content as opposed to less. The presence of the filters in the PM compensates for a lack of critical analysis present in indexing and this study duly showed how such analysis can shed light on the findings herein. The same is true of the over-emphasis some indexing theorists have placed on journalistic autonomy and the sociology of the newsroom as overriding factors for news content. When public opinion was taken into consideration along with the results of the content analysis, there was little doubt that institutional factors far outweighed those of audience tastes and preferences when it came to influencing newscast content. Thus, this case study showed that the PM and its deference toward institutional factors were appropriate analyses, as much of the data in this study pointed to greater forces being at work than mere journalistic norms.

**Chapter Four: Indexing State-Corporate Propaganda?
Comparing CNN and CNN en Español Coverage on Fallujah**

Page 190

CNN and CNN en Español had similar news distribution tendencies, as both featured significantly more coverage in the latter two time periods tested, as opposed to the first one. Sourcing tendencies were similar as well, as both networks had significantly high levels of domination by official sources. Significant differences were found with foreign sourcing tendencies. Foreign sourcing tendencies resulted in a different emphasis on victims, as foreign civilians had higher levels of proportionally allotted coverage to them than what appeared on CNN.

It did not, however, generate more substantive criticism, especially as a result of CNN en Español having surpassed the MDM's expectations. Sourcing Latin American governmental opposition was *not* minimized, as was expected, and instead was *non-existent*. Further, most of the foreign sources that were used were allies of the U.S. Consequently, levels of substantive criticism were not raised as a result of differences in the use of foreign sources and in fact showed incredible levels of similarity. Similarities outweighed differences in news content, despite several other important factors not being the same: audience, language and public opinion. This not only pointed to ownership as a strong influence on news content, but also pointed to the strength that institutional constraints have over standardized journalistic practices as a determinant of news content.

Volume of Coverage

Another area the MDM sought to develop in its synthesis of the IM and PM, was that of expectations on volume of coverage. The results of the Fallujah study pointed strongly toward governmental attention, as opposed to the worthy and unworthy victims dichotomy, as being the stronger of the two factors determining news coverage allocation. Another important commonality seen between both networks' coverage of Fallujah was the similar coverage distribution found between time periods. Indexing complemented the PM in this sense, as it helped explain the differing volumes of coverage. This was the case because of the presence of an official and oft-repeated pretext for the incursions of Fallujah in 2004 versus the lack of such an official pretext for the abuses of 2003 (i.e. the slaying of the military contractors, who showed high levels of humanization and worthiness). The time periods of 2004, with a higher potential for official discourse and sourcing tendencies – amply revealed in the results of the content analysis – generated substantially larger coverage totals. Indexing and the propaganda model used in conjunction help provide the most robust explanation for such differentiation, as the IM

**Chapter Four: Indexing State-Corporate Propaganda?
Comparing CNN and CNN en Español Coverage on Fallujah**

Page 191

links sourcing tendencies to volume of coverage and the PM links volume of coverage to the status of victims, with unworthy victims generally resulting in proportionally less apportioned coverage and worthy victims generally resulting in more.

These results were clearly seen in the case study, as the 3rd time period evaluated in the study did *not* have worthy victims prominently featured in coverage, however, it attracted *more* newscast stories than the 2nd time period on CNN and nearly as much coverage as the 2nd time period in the case of CNN en Español. Nevertheless, worthy and unworthy victims were found to be important as well, as worthy victims were prominently featured in the 2nd time period and its volume far outweighed the 1st time period, which featured neither governmental attention or worthy victims. Ultimately though, governmental attention was found to be the most important variable and the IM's complementary strength of a weaker aspect of the PM, was shown to work well. The synthesis that the MDM is largely based on was thus also shown to work well, as the IM compensated for an empirical weakness of the PM.

Nuancing

The MDM had several original components that went beyond the mere synthesis of the IM and PM which were under consideration, evaluation and development as well. A higher level of nuance was sought for differing victims of a given conflict. This was one of the big learning opportunities gained from this study, as it was found that U.S. soldiers will only be slightly unworthy when there is consensus present in Washington. The conflicting realities of the propaganda value lost from highlighting the plight of soldiers, along with the fact that their casualties generally came at the hands of despised resistance fighters who were often labeled terrorists, resulted in this ambiguity. More testing is needed of this newer component of the MDM, but this study did suggest that worthiness of these victims will be mixed and ambiguous when there is consensus in Washington.

In the case of Fallujah's coverage in CNN, the PM unworthy / worthy victim dichotomy that the MDM borrows from, went far to explain differing treatments of victims of abuses by individuals opposed to U.S. occupation interests (worthy victims) and of victims of abuses by U.S. soldiers (unworthy victims). As expected, humanizing details were found for worthy victims, but much less so for unworthy victims. While it was true that there was a more nuanced picture to the worthy and unworthy victims that what the PM alone would suggest, the results still largely supported the general expectations of the PM. Indexing does not theorize such

**Chapter Four: Indexing State-Corporate Propaganda?
Comparing CNN and CNN en Español Coverage on Fallujah**

Page 192

differing levels of humanization, but the PM does and there were certainly different levels of humanization that correlated pretty reliably with the worthy / unworthy victims thesis.

Nevertheless, the results of the content analysis point to the need for a more nuanced version of the worthy and unworthy victims concept: some victims are less unworthy than others in the complex state of affairs which usually characterize military occupations. The MDM's components attempted to test and explain its expectations for a nuanced victimization to victims who have been casualties of *both* the Iraqi resistance and of U.S. soldiers themselves. Results reflected such nuanced results and it clearly was not the case that Iraqi civilians were always unworthy victims. Given the conflict of lost propaganda value through coverage and attention toward U.S. soldier casualties, but the fact that such casualties were still at the hands of the Iraqi resistance (who are official enemies of governmental sources) *did* result in the nuanced victimization that the MDM expected. U.S. soldiers were unworthy, but only slightly. The MDM helped to paint a more nuanced and explainable picture of victimization than the PM alone could achieve.

Furthermore, the study also helped the MDM develop expectations for other international news subsidiaries with its more nuanced look at victimization. In general, CNN en Español's humanization tendencies for certain person types were less marked than CNN's, unsurprising given its more liberal use of foreign sources. In terms of the two top worthy victims of Fallujah coverage, results of the content analysis reflected what one would logically expect in terms of differing emphases between a U.S.-bound network and a mixed U.S./Latin American, international network. A greater emphasis was placed on foreign civilians by the latter (CNN en Español), while the former opted for more details of the slain military contractors (CNN). Thus, when applied to other news networks that are internationally distributed and subsidiaries of conglomerates like Time Warner and related coverage of Iraq, the MDM is now primed to account for a greater emphasis on foreign civilians, as opposed to U.S. victims of "terrorist" groups and "foreign fighters" (ominously, a term never applied toward the occupiers themselves in either networks' coverage).

Exceptional Content

The MDM does not only contain expectations about dominant sourcing tendencies and a lack of independence from governmental positioning and instead, also contains components which attempt to explain exceptional news content. Expectations in this regard were also

**Chapter Four: Indexing State-Corporate Propaganda?
Comparing CNN and CNN en Español Coverage on Fallujah**

Page 193

developed and confirmed. While humanization levels for victims of CNN en Español and CNN were generally similar, some important exceptions did apply. Three exceptional newscasts in CNN en Español's coverage humanized Iraqi civilian casualties even more than U.S. soldiers. Closer examination of these exceptions revealed that lessened governmental attention resulted in several exceptional aspects of news coverage, including sourcing tendencies and increased humanization for an otherwise unworthy victim.

Additional Research

Additional research in this area is definitely needed though, as it may be shown that over time, the status of certain victims can change, with the MDM expecting such changes to coincide with changing governmental positioning on the matter. Generally, the more attention by high-ranking government officials toward U.S. soldier casualties, coupled with increased resistance to the war by the public, should result in higher humanization levels.

Indeed, additional research could very well also show an increased level of relevance for indexing for more recent coverage of the occupation of Iraq, given the changes in positioning in Washington. One of the strongest aspects of indexing is its penchant to account for changes in coverage that reflect changes in the debate in Washington. It is completely possible, if not probable, that the unworthy victims status of U.S. soldiers has changed in substantive terms and may have become more unworthy since the advent of the election of Barack Obama to the White House and related plans to scale down the occupation in half by 2010. Because of the lessened attention to the war by government officials, there is likely less news coverage of Iraq now than there was during the height of the Fallujah incursions of 2004. Some of the more humanizing reports that were filed on injured soldiers by CNN may be few to non-existent now, but only additional study and research can answer those questions.

In light of these findings, a synthesized version of the IM and PM was found to be applicable in the case of both CNN and CNN en Español coverage of Fallujah. The content analyzed in this case study shows that the ownership filter is pertinent to resulting content, as even differing sourcing tendencies only resulted in a modest amount of substantive criticism and some additional humanizing coverage, but no significant differences in content. Nor did such differing sourcing tendencies result in additional prominence for the governments of the nations in which the network most prominently broadcasts. Thus, the sourcing filter may need to be

**Chapter Four: Indexing State-Corporate Propaganda?
Comparing CNN and CNN en Español Coverage on Fallujah**

Page 194

slightly revised in its application to international news sources that are subsumed under conglomerates like Time Warner.

Additional research in verifying the findings of this study, as well as further theoretical development of a synthesized version of the PM and IM, would go far toward the lofty goal of positing an improved conceptual understanding of news media performance in the 21st century.

Addendum I: Coding Scheme

CONTENTS:

- 1) Quick Reference: Order of Coding
- 2) General Instructions, including detailed examples.
- 3) Detailed clarifications about major categories / variables, including some examples.

Exact Order of coding

HUMANIZATION	SOURCE	CRITICISM
<p>1) mark and/or track mentions of fatalities / deaths</p> <p>2) select person type</p> <p>3) select appropriate paragraph range for <i>this</i> person type</p> <p>4) code for personalization of this person type</p> <p>5) mark and/or track all mentions of injuries</p> <p>6) select person type</p> <p>7) select appropriate paragraph range for <i>this</i> person type</p> <p>8) code for personalization of this person type</p>	<p>9) mark and/or track all sources used, referred to, attributed</p> <p>10) select the source type of the first source seen in transcript, proceed to count paragraphs it was used in</p> <p>11) select appropriate paragraph range of source type; ONLY if source is foreign, note nationality too (otherwise, leave this blank)</p> <p>12) repeat steps 9)-11) for any subsequent source types present in story</p> <p style="text-align: center;">THEME</p> <p>13) Choose the theme of the story at this point too. BE CAREFUL here and remember to read the instructions on themes and theme limits (no more than two per story!!).</p>	<p>14) Identify and count the number of paragraphs containing substantive criticism. Type in just the number of paragraphs in the only field under the criticism tab.</p> <p>15) Proceed to create new record, by clicking on button located to the left of the record number in the bottom left-hand corner of the window (NOTE: please <i>do</i> this EVEN if you are finished coding, as this is THE ONLY WAY to assuredly save the data we just entered in)</p>

General Instructions

- 1) Be sure to read through the story completely *without* coding for anything. This will allow you to get a general feel for the story and understand what it was mainly about.
- 2) Code for only one variable, within one coding category, at a time.
- 3) Stick to the exact order of coding just noted for every story.
- 4) Code for *just* the person type and the amount of paragraph mentions of the person type. Two mentions within one paragraph in the transcript are *only* counted *once*. DO NOT CODE the amount of fatalities / injuries, we are not measuring this at all.
- 5) The person type can sometimes be masked by pronouns. Look for a clear identification of this pronoun in the context of the story beforehand. A clear identification of the pronoun should be found pretty close and only slight before it first appears.
- 6) The same person type can relate to a death and also an injury. If a death and injury are mentioned in the same paragraph, these can both be counted one time each. Here is a hypothetical example:

At least 15 people from Fallujah were killed and 10 were injured.

This one paragraph would be coded as, Iraqi Civilian / Fatality and counted as 1 paragraph mention. It would *also* be coded as, Iraqi Civilian / Injury and counted as 1 paragraph mention.

- 7) Name / profile information is not as simple as identification of the type of person (i.e. man, woman, boy, child or any other proper noun that is nothing more than a proper noun) and this in and of itself is NOT considered as counting for profile information. *HOWEVER*, if there is any other significant descriptive adjective, this *is* counted as profile information. Some examples include, but are not limited to: name, age, profession, family relationship (cousin, brother, etc.) or ethnic background. If it is *simply* mentioned where the person is from (i.e. Fallujah), this is not counted as profile information.
- 8) We do not code future conditionals for humanization. For example, if an Iraqi civilian predicts a death or an injury (i.e. "More Iraqis will die!"), this does not count as an actual death or injury to be coded for in the humanization category. However, it *would* count as one paragraph instance of an unofficial source. Iraqi civilians, unlike Iraqi government officials, are *not* counted as foreign official sources.
- 9) Details are meant to be *EXTRA* information about a certain death or injury and *not* merely how the person died or got injured. We are coding for something *IN ADDITION* to how the death occurred and NOT simply how the death occurred in and of itself. Here are some examples:

“The Americans shot me and cut my foot!” = This WOULD be coded as extra detailed information.

“The Americans shot me!” = This would NOT be coded as detailed information.

“The Iraqis shot me, while I was running away!” OR “The insurgents shot me, while I was trying to escape!” OR “The occupiers shot my brother and he bled to death!” = These WOULD be coded as extra detailed humanizing information.

10) Here are some difficult types of sources in terms of source classification: Military contractors are considered as *unofficial* sources. Iraqi civilians are considered to be *unofficial* sources. Iraqi government officials, however, are considered to be *foreign official sources*. Journalists, both from CNN and other media sources, are NOT coded in any way, shape or form. Even if they appear as analysts, if they are not identified OR if they are journalists, they are sources that we do NOT code.

11) Feel free to “code” by hand, as long as you make sure to be careful with your hard copy, are diligent in keeping such information in an organized fashion so as to facilitate easy transfer into Access later. Save whatever hard copy coding you generate, so as to check for errors later. This is OPTIONAL, however, and not required.

12) If you are interested in using the highlighting function in Word so as to help facilitate your coding electronically, you *can* do so. Simply save the electronic files for the stories in the broadcast under different file names and proceed to highlight away to your heart’s content.

13) Remember to carefully distinguish the difference between source attributions and when the story *talks* about a certain person or institution. Those are two very different things and we are only measuring one of them.

Detailed / Humanizing Coverage:
Fatalities / Injuries

Injuries & Fatalities	Does this story mention any injuries or fatalities? If so, make sure to identify and then select the appropriate person type. The different person types are noted below.
Person Types (see definitions, below)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) U.S. Military 2) U.S. Military Contractors 3) U.S. Civilians 4) U.S. Unclassified 5) Iraqi Unclassified 6) Iraqi Civilian 7) Iraqi Security (military or police) 8) Insurgent 9) Foreign Civilian 10) Foreign Military 11) Foreign Unclassified 12) Unclassified w/ non-Iraqi nationality or foreign nationality
Paragraph Counting	<p>How many paragraphs are there of at least one mention within a given paragraph of a specific type of person as having been killed? How many paragraphs are there of at least one mention within a given paragraph of a specific type of person as having been injured?</p> <p>We are not counting the amount of injuries or deaths. We are not counting the amount of times a specific person is mentioned, and instead, are counting any and all references to a person TYPE. Thus, if two different Iraqi civilians are mentioned in two different paragraphs, that would be for only ONE person type.</p>
Personalization	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Are names and/or profile information of injured / fatalities mentioned or not? Some examples include, but are not limited to: the person's name (first and/or last), age, profession, family relationship (cousin, brother, etc.) or ethnic background. If it is <i>simply</i> mentioned where the person is from (i.e. Fallujah), this is <i>not</i> counted as profile information. 2) Are details of how the death or injury mentioned occurred are present? Details are meant to be <i>EXTRA</i> information about a certain death or injury and <i>not</i> merely how the person died or got injured. We are coding for something IN ADDITION to how the death occurred and NOT simply how the death occurred in and of itself.

	<p>3) If both names AND details of the victims were code both mentioned.</p> <p>4) If both names AND details of the victims were code unmentioned.</p>
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<p>Person type definitions</p>	<p>1) U.S. Military: soldiers, commanders, captains, lieutenants, generals, military spokespeople who are CLEARLY identified as being from the U.S.</p> <p>2) U.S. Military Contractors: personnel contracted by the U.S. military and clearly identified as such.</p> <p>3) U.S. Civilians: people who are <i>not</i> employed by the military and are identified as civilians. Different adjectives can be used to describe a civilian, but something must clearly identify them as such.</p> <p>4) U.S. Unclassified: cases where a U.S. person is identified in nationality, but in instances where no clarity is present as to the type of person they are / were beyond nationality. <u>Example:</u> “11 Americans were killed,” WITHOUT any subsequent information helping to identify them as civilians. This is more likely present in shorter articles, but can hypothetically appear anywhere.</p> <p>5) Iraqi Unclassified: cases where an Iraqi person is identified in nationality, but in instances where no clarity is present as to the type of person they are / were beyond nationality. <u>Example:</u> “11 Iraqis were killed,” WITHOUT any subsequent information helping to identify them as civilians. This is more likely present in shorter articles, but can hypothetically appear anywhere.</p> <p>6) Iraqi Civilian: people who are <i>not</i> employed by the military and are identified as civilians. Different adjectives / nouns can be used to connote a civilian, including (but not limited to) these examples: townspeople; city-dwellers; person(s); people; woman; man; child and protesters.</p> <p>7) Iraqi Security (military or police): these are official Iraqi security or military personnel who are NOT identified as insurgents and are NOT identified as being against the occupation.</p> <p>8) Insurgent: these are CLEARLY identified Iraqis or “foreign fighters” who are violently resisting the occupation.</p>
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<p>Person type definitions (continued)</p>	<p>9) <u>Foreign Civilian</u>: civilians who <i>are</i> clearly identified as being NOT Iraqi OR American. British civilians, are included here for instance, as are other Asian or European nationalities.</p> <p>10) <u>Foreign Military</u>: any military soldiers, commanders, captains, lieutenants, generals, military spokespeople who are CLEARLY identified as being from the U.S.</p> <p>11) <u>Foreign Unclassified</u>: any foreign person who is NOT identified in any fashion. <u>Example</u>: “11 foreigners were killed,” WITHOUT any subsequent information helping to identify them as civilians.</p> <p>12) <u>Unclassified no nationality</u>: any instance where it is simply stated, “11 people were killed,” WITHOUT any subsequent information helping to identify them as civilians of a certain nation.</p>
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Sourcing Tendencies in Coverage:
Official, Unofficial and Foreign Sources

<p>1) Official source definition: U.S. government officials, British government officials, current or former military officials (NOT soldiers, but any military personnel with a rank higher than this), coalition officials / advisers, or corporate-public relations spokespeople. ALSO, if ONLY the “government” OR the “coalition” is attributed, this TOO counts. Other corporate media sources (i.e. journalists as guests for analysis) ARE NOT coded, period.</p>	<p>Code amount of paragraph usage of official sources. Remember, two mentions of an official source (whether or not it’s the same official person or two different official persons) in the SAME paragraph gets counted as only one instance. We are coding for source type, not for specific sources.</p>
<p>2) Unofficial sources definition: peace groups, non-governmental organizations, human rights groups, human relief organizations, Doctors, hospital workers, Iraqi civilians, Iraqi resistance / “terrorist” groups and U.S. citizens.</p>	<p>Code amount of paragraph usage of unofficial sources. Remember, two mentions of an unofficial source (whether or not it’s the same official person or two different official persons) in the SAME paragraph gets counted as only one instance. However, if they are in different paragraphs, it gets counted as two instances. We are coding for source type, not for specific sources.</p>
<p>3) Foreign official source definition: Any public official who is not from the U.S. or the U.K. and is quoted, *including* Iraqi governmental officials.</p>	<p>a) Code amount of paragraph usage in the story that mostly rely on Foreign sources. b) If foreign source is used, please note nationality. c) If nationality is unknown, please note unknown.</p>
<p>4) Note all nationalities of foreign source</p>	<p>Simply write out the nationality(ies) of all foreign sources mentioned, if known.</p>

Coverage Themes

Themes	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Stories with at least half the story addressing military action and/or insurgent action.2) Stories with at least half the story addressing Iraqi civilian strife and/or Iraqi human suffering.3) Stories with at least half the story addressing political developments and/or are <i>about</i> public officials and/or are political analyses.4) Stories with at least half the story addressing security problems OR insurgent action w/o mention of military action.5) Articles that focus on a different theme apart from any of these are to be coded as other. <p><u>MULTIPLE THEME instructions:</u> If any given story has more than one theme that gets approximately 25% of the story's word count, while not having a THIRD theme that also has at least 25%, two themes can be attributed to the story. No more than two themes can be attributed to any given story and if three themes have at least 25%, "other" should be selected.</p>
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Critical Paragraphs

Code and count the total amount of paragraphs that contain substantive criticism.

DISTINGUISHING SUBSTANTIVE FROM PROCEDURAL CRITICISM

Substantive criticism: paragraphs that question the fundamental basis of the war and/or occupation and/or the invasion; identify the causes of the violence in Iraq with the war or occupation; convey a moral judgment *against* the right of the U.S. to be in Iraq (i.e. citations of international law do count here); calling U.S. soldiers "terrorists"; or endorse withdrawal as a solution (WITHOUT reference to "failed policies) *ARE* to be coded as critical.

Procedural criticism: paragraphs questioning the execution, technique, success, outcome and/or sensibility of a certain policy or public official; or that attempt to *predict* the failure of a certain policy and again, its outcome; or that attempt to *predict* a possible predicament (basically that attempt to "predict" anything based on the same policy terms / political options *already* on the table), are *NOT* to be coded as critical.

Endnotes

¹ See “apologies”: Howard Kurtz, “[The Post on WMDs: An Inside Story; Prewar Articles Questioning Threat Often Didn’t Make Front Page.](#)” *Washington Post*, August 12, 2004 (Page A01); and also, Daniel Okrent, “[Weapons of Mass Destruction? Or Mass Distraction?](#)” *New York Times*, May 30, 2004.

² See [higher end estimate](#), at Iraq Body Count <http://www.iraqbodycount.org/details/x360_notes.php>.

³ See November 2004 [estimate](#), at the U.N. agency, IRIN <<http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=24527>>.

⁴ See the [military’s estimate](#), at <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Nov2004/n11182004_2004111803.html>.

⁵ In 1983, much to the alarm and surprise of communications scholars, Ben Bagdikian documented the fact that about only 50 corporations owned the majority of the media in the U.S. with the publication of *The Media Monopoly*. That number has fallen to six: General Electric; Time Warner; Disney; News Corporation; CBS; and Viacom. All of these six conglomerates boasted revenues higher than the total gross domestic production of 77 countries in 2007.

⁶ The “CNN Effect” has largely been discounted by scholarly work and studies. Livingston and Eachus found that “media content came in *response* to official initiatives, and not the other way around” (1995). Similarly, Mermin argued that the press’s cuing and attention to procedural criticism emanating from the Democrats (“and some Republicans”) may have influenced the Bush administration, but it was not television acting in an independent fashion that drove policies on Somalia (1997, pp. 402-403). In his study on the 1999 war in Yugoslavia and the extent that CNN news coverage actually affected US/NATO policies Livingston found that CNN coverage had no substantial impact in terms of contributing toward oppositional public opinion (2000, p. 379). If anything, CNN news coverage apparently contributed to the maintenance of a significantly high level of public support for the war by highlighting the plight of the Kosovo Albanians, while downplaying what Livingston called the “tragic irony” of the actual high count of casualties suffered by the very people NATO was claiming to help (2000, p. 381). Robinson found that the “CNN Effect” is strongest when there is elite conflict *and* policy uncertainty within government (2002, p. 31). The astute observer will quickly recognize, however, that there are only *limited* instances where both elite conflict and policy uncertainty are firmly in place. Robinson’s findings, drawn from both his own and past scholarly case studies, strongly pointed to such limitations (2002).

⁷ My immense appreciation and gratitude are owed to María Carmen Jiménez Rivera and Stacy Coyne. Both coders showed an impressive amount of patience, dedication and willingness to endure hours upon hours of training and examination in carefully classifying the content of the newscast transcripts.

⁸ Criticism that is not fundamental or substantive, and instead simply questions the outcome or execution of the policy, is a distinction made both by Mermin (1999) and Entman (via his concept of procedural and substantive framing, 2004, pp. 5-6).

Introduction

A formidable if not also small group of indexing scholars argues that the press has become more independent, particularly following and *because* of the end of the Cold War. Entman has arguably stressed this point more than any other scholar, asserting that: “the collapse of the Cold War consensus has meant differences among elites are no longer the exception but the rule”; “the [indexing and propaganda] models cannot fully account for changes in international politics and media behavior since the Soviet Union began withering away”; “ambiguity has become increasingly common in U.S. foreign policymaking [in the post-Cold War era]”; and “[in the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq] the media promoted dissent over Bush’s proposal to project America’s military might into Iraq” (2004, pp. 4-5, 16, 21).

Other scholars of political communication have essentially agreed with Entman’s post-Cold War analysis and have posited similar analyses themselves (Althaus et al., 1996; Althaus, 2003; Fico & Soffin, 1995; Livingston & Eachus, 1996).

In light of these post-Cold War assertions, this case study is intended to test the claims of a new era of “press ambiguity” (Entman, 2004) with a comparative case-study. The case study that will be undertaken is the massacres of Acteal (December 22, 1997), a small village located in the rugged and impoverished state of Chiapas in southeastern Mexico, and of Racak (January 15, 1999), also a small village but located in Kosovo, a republic within the Federated Republics of Yugoslavia. These massacres occurred *before* the Bush / Cheney administration’s “war on terror” began and thus presumably during what Entman would consider as “ambiguous” of a time period as any other.

In contrast to the assumption that a post-Cold War era and purportedly nuanced foreign policy making results in a subsequent “press ambiguity,” the MDM is theoretically consistent with work done by Stokes (2003). Stokes argues that U.S. post-Cold War policy is one of continuity, as opposed to discontinuity, and is more accurately characterized by earlier Cold War planning objectives and a persistently subservient press. This press subservience is evident not only with leading U.S. newscast broadcasters (ABC, CBS & NBC), but also clear when it comes to reporting by the agenda-setting papers of the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* on issues of U.S. foreign and military policy.

The massacres serve as an appropriate comparative case-study of the MDM for a number of reasons: both had the same number of victims; both occurred after the end of the Cold War about within a year of each other and also before the “war on terror”; both occurred in “high-priority client states” (Jacobson et al., 2002, p. 23); and both came from opposite relationships with the U.S., with one being an enemy state of the U.S. (Racak, in Yugoslavia) and the other, an important client state (Acteal, in Mexico). In terms of governmental attention, Racak received significant attention, while Acteal received less attention, providing ample opportunity to test MDM expectations in terms of expected correlative relationships between volume of coverage and the impacting variables of governmental attention and public pressure. Lastly, Acteal and Racak clearly fit in with the intervention types described in Table 3.1 and as a result, expectations can be evaluated and tested as well.

Before stating the expectations of the MDM and the synthesis it is based on in relation to this case-study and the subsequent analysis of the news coverage, I will briefly review the history of these two massacres.

Acteal

Acteal is a small indigenous village populated mostly by Tzotzil speaking Mayans, located in the southeastern Mexican state of Chiapas. It is one of the most densely populated indigenous states in the country. The uprising in 1994 by the *Ejercito Zapatista Liberacion Nacional* (National Zapatista Liberation Army, or EZLN) was a shock to the Mexican government, then headed by President Carlos Salinas de Gortari. The reaction of the Salinas administration was to institute a brutal military occupation (that exists to the present, but was subsequently toned down by the Vincente Fox administration) that was roundly condemned by international and Mexican human rights groups.

It is not, as one might reasonably expect, the Mexican military who has committed the most vicious human rights violations in southeastern Mexico. Instead, it has been the paramilitaries who have committed the most heinous crimes. The paramilitaries generally consist of impoverished indigenous people who are bought off with food, weapons, and military training. Paramilitary groups called *Paz y Justicia* (Peace and Justice, or P&J) and *Mascara Roja* (Red Mask) committed the worst of the

atrocities since the EZLN uprising and the subsequent military occupation: that was the massacre in Acteal on December 22, 1997.

The community of Acteal consists of two separate and distinct parts. *Las Abejas*, one half of Acteal, is pacifist and disagrees with the other half of the community—that is, the Zapatista half of Acteal—on their decision to be associated with the armed EZLN. Acteal's deep religious roots explain why nearly all of its residents who were not away working at the time of the massacre (mostly women) were praying in the middle of a weekday afternoon in the community church.

What happened on December 22, 1997 is best recounted by one of Acteal's most grief stricken residents; 13 year old Guadalupe Vázquez Luna, whose mother, father and 5 sisters were all killed in the massacre:

We were in the chapel praying for peace when about 90 men burst in and started shooting at everybody, even babies. Then they went through the village shooting.

The assassins ran after me and my father. When my father was hit by a bullet, he shouted, "Run, Lupita, run," but I couldn't. Again he told me, "Run, run," and I ran faster than the bullets until I couldn't run anymore. Forty-five people died that day in our village (Vázquez, 2000).¹

Many accounts note how the massacre was slow and systematic lasting from mid-morning until sunset, with a total fatality count of 19 women, 19 children and 7 men (Bellinghausen, 2009; Castillo, 2007; Fabela, 2000). This raises the question on why police were not dispatched. As it turned out, however, police were indeed already on the scene. John Ross, veteran correspondent and author on U.S.–Mexico relations, explains that at 11:30 in the morning, Cornelio Pérez, a resident of the Zapatista half of Acteal, ran down from the hills to plead with the police detachment (about 50 meters away from where the killings were taking place) to stop the bloodshed. *Comandante* Roberto Rivas decided instead to detain Pérez (Ross, 2000, pp. 242-250).

A large majority of the assailants have not been convicted. Only 20 people were sentenced to 35 years in prison, prompting the Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Human Rights Center (1999) to term the ruling "partial justice." In October 2009, sixteen of those convicted were released on good behavior.

Perhaps worst of all is the fact that the whole massacre could have easily been avoided before it even occurred. Local human rights groups in the small city of San Cristóbal de las Casas (about a two hour drive away from Acteal) desperately tried to contact local Mexican government officials to no avail, as they had received numerous tips and warnings about the imminent massacre, days before it occurred.

Ross criticized the Mexican government's version of Acteal as being "reflexive and instantaneous: the Acteal massacre was a local affair, almost a family feud . . ." and noted instead, that, "Military involvement in the Acteal massacre runs from top to bottom. In addition to the high brass, three retired military generals, two of whom have flown the coop, are implicated up to their eyeballs in the killings" (Ross, 2000, p. 249).

The female survivors of the massacre took great issue to the government's official characterization of the massacre and wrote a letter to the United Nations in which they vehemently argued, consistent with Ross's assessment, that, "This massacre was neither personal revenge, nor part of an ethnic or religious war. This war has been planned and directed at the highest levels of government and turned into confrontations between indigenous brothers by the paramilitaries" (Chenalhó Civil Society, 1998). They further argued that the massacre was an extension of a policy to occupy the land of indigenous people and terrorize them with the hopes of deterring organized resistance to continued oppression (in the case of *Las Abejas* pacifist resistance) (Castillo, 2007).

The bottom line is that a number of officials and authorities had ample time to act and lessen the death count at Acteal, but chose not to do so both before and during the massacre. Did the news media report this oversight as deliberate or an accident? What does the MDM expect in terms of culpability? These questions will be addressed in the sections to follow.

Racak

What exactly happened on January 15, 1999 in the small village of Racak will never be known with any degree of certainty, for each of the two alleged versions is disputed by advocates of the other. Nevertheless, the events in Racak that day had an enormous impact not only on Racak, Yugoslavia and Europe, but also on the world and on history.

Writers for the *Washington Post* looked back on the massacre and wrote about it as the key catalyst that prompted NATO to invade and bomb Yugoslavia. They termed Racak the “Defining Atrocity” that “Set Wheels in Motion,” in having “convinced the administration and then its NATO allies’ that they must turn to war, soon initiating ‘a military campaign whose central objective was saving the lives and homes of Kosovo’s ethnic Albanians.’” Even in comparison to other atrocities, “Racak transformed the West's Balkan policy as singular events seldom do” (Gellman, 1999).²

Racak is a small village town that had a pre-war population of about 2,000 people. It lies within Kosovo, a province in which 40 percent of the territory had been in possession of the rebel group, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). There is little doubt that Racak was home to many KLA adherents. The KLA was well-known for their brutal tactics and human rights abuses (Human Rights Watch, 2001), as well as their Stalinist and Nazi competing factions.

The “picture which has subsequently alarmed the world,” as it was described by one French journalist (Girard, 1999), was broadcast over TV stations across the globe, with its image of over 20 dead corpses being shown in a gully. Amnesty International (1999) later stated that the dead “included three women, a 12-year-old child and several elderly men.” However, its sources were the members of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Verification Mission, which was led by former Ambassador to El Salvador, William Walker. Walker and the OSCE observers are governmental sources and thus held in high regard by U.S. mainstream news media.

The OSCE’s version of the day’s events became the dominant interpretation in the elite mainstream media and the major broadcast network reporting, which relied heavily on Walker and the OSCE observers as the primary source. A summary of the version is as follows: Serbian police officers came into the village of Racak on January 15, as armored vehicles of the Yugoslav army patrolled Racak the whole morning. The police broke into houses and ordered that women remain there while the men of the village were rounded up and then quietly shot to death in the afternoon. Before the assassinations, the men were tortured and mutilated. The characterization that Racak took on in the U.S media was equivalent to what Walker wound up calling a “crime against humanity”

(amongst the most serious of human rights violations and duly considered a precursor to genocide).

Although there certainly were good reasons to doubt the credibility of Walker and the OSCE delegation (Americas Watch, 1990; Ames & Taibbi, 1999), as will duly be reviewed below, there *were* eye-witness accounts from villagers which indicated that there were civilian fatalities (Associated Press, 1999c). This notwithstanding, there were many reasons to doubt whether Racak was completely a massacre of civilians, for there was also evidence that it may have been staged – that the victims may have been combatants of the KLA who died in a gun battle with army troops. Thus, initially in the foreign press and later amongst independent and non-commercial news media, theories surfaced that the KLA had gathered up their fatalities, removed their uniforms, changed their clothes to civilian outfits, left the newly dressed bodies in a gully and then called in Walker and the OSCE observers (Ames & Taibbi, 1999; BBC, 1999; BBC, 1999b; Châtelot, 1999; Cook, 1999; Girard, 1999).

The Serbian police issued their first official statement on Racak on January 10 stating that they had “encircled the village of Racak with an aim of arresting the members of a terrorist group which killed a police officer” (Châtelot, 1999). On the day of the massacre at 3:00pm, the first official Serbian report on the day’s events stated that 15 Kosovar Albanians were killed in the clashes. At 3:30pm, the Serbian police reportedly left the scene under the gunfire of a number of KLA combatants. At about 4:30pm, a French journalist arrived on the scene and saw international observers who had been searching for wounded civilians. No bodies had been found by the observers, he reported, and instead the OSCE verifiers were calmly talking with three young Albanians who were dressed in street clothes. The French journalist wrote that “the rather indifferent verifiers told me nothing in particular. Just that, ‘they were not able to give a definite statement on today’s battle’”(Châtelot, 1999; Girard, 1999).

MDM and Synthesis Expectations

The MDM draws upon a synthesis of the PM and IM, resolves theoretical conflicts between the two models and also posits a number of original expectations. In terms of the latter, the MDM posits that much of what determines news media content on foreign affairs topics that appear in the most influential news media sources is the type of

relationship a given country has with the U.S., from where the abuse being reported occurred. Racak is located in Kosovo, which during the time of the case-study, was a province warring with the Yugoslavian government in a struggle for independence. Since the U.S. and NATO aligned themselves with the Kosovo cause [CITE], the MDM expects that the massacre in Racak would generate coverage along the lines of the “nefarious” category. By contrast, since Acteal occurred in a client state of the U.S. (Mexico), coverage expectations would fall under the “benign” category. Given the differing relationships between the countries where the massacres took place and the U.S., there are a number of dichotomous expectations for content characteristics that will be evaluated.

If indeed these dichotomous reporting tendencies fall into play, it will serve as an additional piece of evidence that leading U.S. news media content on foreign affairs are influenced to a greater degree by institutional constraints as opposed to professional standards of journalism. After all, professional standards of journalism are not supposed to change in accordance with White House priorities. But if this case-study demonstrates as much, it will be another way that the MDM helps to resolve the theoretical conflict between the PM and IM.

Going beyond resolving theoretical conflicts about what explains the news media’s lack of independence, the MDM also addresses exceptional instances and variations in news content. All MDM expectations about the type of conditions which should trigger exceptional reporting will also be addressed.

Table 3.2 illustrates many of these expectations, while Tables 3.4 and 3.5 address exceptional conditions and aspects of news reporting; a run-down of what they translate into for this case-study is what follows. Specific coverage expectations that will be evaluated include volume of coverage, sourcing tendencies and lastly, dichotomous content surrounding the authenticity of the massacres and the culpability for them.

Expectations on Volume of Coverage

Similar to many other aspects of news content, when it comes to volume of coverage, the MDM has a number of expectations that stem from its synthesis of the IM and PM in addition to original expectations and its resolution of conflicts between the two.

In terms of original MDM expectations, as a “nefarious” massacre (Table 3.2) located in Yugoslavia, which was a high-priority enemy state (Table 3.3), coverage for the Racak massacre is expected to be significant and prominent in comparison with the case of Acteal. Conversely, Acteal is not expected to generate as much coverage as Racak, but the extent of the differential will largely depend on the amount of attention garnered from important U.S. and client state officials (Table 3.3), as well as any extenuating conditions (Table 3.4) that will possibly be uncovered through the case-study’s underlying research. This expectation is drawn upon the IM’s attributed importance to important officials determining the agenda of leading news outlets, but is also related to the dichotomous expectation of the PM in terms of worthy and unworthy victims. The MDM favors the IM’s attributed importance of governmental attention over the reliability of the unworthy / worthy victim dichotomy determining volume of coverage. This preference and its validity will be duly evaluated in this case-study.

Going beyond these expectations, however, the MDM also posits that exceptional conditions, such as social movements successfully challenging and garnering the attention of client state governments, can indeed generate exceptional volume of coverage tendencies and content (Table 3.4), albeit limited to certain aspects and not including others (Table 3.5). This is another way that the MDM favors IM expectations concerning volume of coverage, as it expects that the unworthy / worthy dichotomy, while still important, is influenced more by governmental attention and/or exceptional conditions (including that of foreign indexing which, as will be shown, did come into play for Acteal and Mexico). This case study will thus evaluate whether exceptional volume of coverage results were present along with the kind of conditions the MDM presupposes as being necessary for such exceptions to occur.

Expectations on Sourcing

One of the most important links between the IM and PM is their agreement on the high levels of official sourcing that dominates news content. These expectations were built upon findings first documented in the 1970's by important sociological works analyzing news content (Gans, 1979; Sigal, 1973, 1986; Tuchman, 1972, 1978). The MDM goes beyond these findings, however, and attempts to not only link the IM and PM on continued official sourcing tendencies existing into the post-Cold War era, but also to explain how certain conditions can lead to exceptional results.

Consistent with this focus on sourcing, the MDM would predict that a "nefarious" massacre like Racak would produce a high dependency on official U.S. sources, a liberal use of unofficial and/or oppositional voices and a low use of foreign official sources from Yugoslavia itself (Table 3.2). As for the "benign" massacre of Acteal, the MDM predicts that there will be a high use of official sources coupled with a much lower use of oppositional and unofficial sources.

However, similar to expectations in regards to volume of coverage, these predictions can also collapse into different ones under the influence of certain conditions. In the face of a lack of U.S. governmental attention, eye-witnesses may be called upon even in the case of Acteal. However, it is not likely that human rights groups will also be sourced in relation to criticism linking the client state to U.S. responsibility. This will especially be the case if there is a strong line taken by the client state, Mexico in this case, in addressing and attempting to spin coverage surrounding the massacre. Thus, similar to the expectations on volume of coverage, exceptional results will trigger an evaluation of the presence of the kind of conditions the MDM expects to produce such exceptions.

Expectations on Authenticity and Culpability

In terms of differing content expectations for worthy and unworthy victims, the PM has a number of predictions. The MDM is based upon the argument that these tendencies continue to persist well into the post-Cold War era.

As noted above, there were doubts about the authenticity of the massacre in Racak, of which the PM would definitely not expect prominent or extensive reporting. Racak was the type of massacre that the PM would expect to feature "worthy" victims whose plight will generate sympathy over doubt in almost any instance. As for culpability, high-

level responsibility will be explored and/or assumed by press coverage to a very significant degree. Conversely, for Acteal, the PM expects no high-level responsibility to be found and instead, blame should be shifted onto the “unworthy” victims themselves. The slightest hint of doubt or mystery about any aspect of the massacre in Acteal will not fail to be reported.

Dichotomous results like these would point toward institutional constraints acting upon news content more than professional standards of journalism. Such results would lend support to the MDM’s attempt to resolve the conflicts between the two models.

Methodology

The case-study of Acteal and Racak represented an opportunity to decipher thematic and narrative tendencies in content that quantitative methods such as content analysis can sometimes overlook. Especially because these incidents were massacres and involved the opportunity to assess where culpability was found, and the kind of treatment official and unofficial sources received in the differing cases, a strictly textual analysis was deemed as a desirable means to analyze content. Despite this method being qualitative in nature, strict guidelines were nonetheless established and followed in terms of assessing content.

Specific questions and a set of foci were established before any consultation, reading, coding or analysis of news content was undertaken. A coding sheet was drawn up and followed closely by several coders. Notes were taken separately by both the principal investigator and a graduate student about all articles, editorials and newscasts analyzed in the study. 64 news pieces were analyzed and consisted of 25 print stories, 7 print editorials and 7 newscasts for Racak and 20 print stories, 2 print editorials and 3 newscasts for Acteal (see Tables 5.1 & 5.2 below, for more details on the coverage breakdown). The other coder was not familiar with the hypotheses present in the study before the coding and her results were combined with my own. Any contradicting notes or analyses were thrown out of the results. No inter-reliability comparisons were undertaken, however, as this analysis was strictly textual. Quantitative data, however, was collected in terms of volume of coverage and duly analyzed herein.

The key questions that were addressed in coding included the following: was there a clear leading source for news coverage; how were independent sources utilized

(or not); which condemnations were made against the massacre, who issued them and where was culpability found (particularly whether the victims themselves were blamed, or high or low-level officials); was the authenticity of the massacre ever questioned and if so, what was the source of such questioning; what adjectives and descriptive devices were used when painting the picture of the massacre; and lastly, how was the National Human Rights Commission report covered.

Governmental Attention

U.S. and Mexican Governmental Attention on Acteal

There was a very small amount of attention given to Acteal by both the State Department and President Bill Clinton. This is in contrast to the higher levels of attention given to the affair by President Zedillo and the Mexican government in general, largely as a result of the public pressure and activism generated by the human rights community both in Mexico (Rovira, 2005) and internationally speaking as well (Sanchez et al., 1998). These contrasting levels of attention result in the MDM expecting only medium to low levels of press coverage by the elite agenda-setting dailies surveyed herein (Table 3.3).

Shortly following the massacre in Acteal, President Clinton did nothing more than release a prepared statement through a press secretary (*The Independent*, 1997) and a request of Mexico to open up an investigation (Wood, 1997). A survey of each time that Acteal was mentioned in a press conference by the U.S. State Department reveals very little attention given to the issue as well. Nevertheless, the issue had to surface in the news for a full week before even a State Department representative took the time to address the massacre.³ Aside Clinton's initial disapproval of the massacre, according to a simple search on the American Presidency Project's database, no U.S. President has ever even spoken or written the word Acteal in any public manner including press conferences, major and public addresses and press gaggles (American Presidency Project, 2011).

Exceptional news content characteristics are primed in the case of Acteal, as a result of the lack of U.S. governmental attention on the issue (see condition 4 in Table 4.4). In contrast to the PM, the MDM argues that governmental attention is a more important variable for predicting volume of coverage than its "unworthy" status. At the same time, the MDM also takes into consideration the extent that the client state itself

addresses the topic. Such attention should result in coverage stateside, as well, but with some exceptional content characteristics given the lack of U.S. attention on the matter.

U.S. Governmental Attention on Racak

The attention by the U.S. government given to Racak was completely different than that allotted to Acteal. President Clinton issued a statement that read: “I condemn in the strongest possible terms the massacre of civilians by Serb security forces that took place last night in the village of Racak in Kosovo. This was a deliberate and indiscriminate act of murder designed to sow fear among the people of Kosovo” (American Presidency Project, 2011). As will soon be seen in greater detail below, Ambassador William Walker was sent as the head of the OSCE verification team to give immediate and international press attention to the issue. Condemnations from important U.S. officials were routinely issued and repeated, including the President himself (American Presidency Project, 2011).

As a result of this strong and thorough reaction, U.S. governmental spin efforts should prevent any significant exceptions to normal expectations of the MDM, especially in light of the lack of public protest and movement opposition to leading governmental policy on the issue of Yugoslavia. Further, the synthesis underlying the MDM will be very evident in the case of Racak and serves as one of the instances where expectations by all three models converge and complement one another: dominant sourcing tendencies will strongly be in place and set the caliber of the news and its related volume (IM); culpability will be found at the top (PM) and a lack of exceptions all will be found in terms of Racak due to high levels of governmental attention for a high-priority client (MDM).

Extent of Coverage

The first and most basic test conducted was to determine the differences in the extent of media coverage dedicated to Acteal and Racak. The coverage period selected was the amount of time between the massacre in Racak and the start of the NATO-led air invasion of Yugoslavia. The same amount of time applied to Acteal as well, especially since it was covered as more of an ongoing affair than Racak. The exact date range for Acteal was thus from December 22, 1997 to March 1, 1998 and for Racak, was between January 15, 1999 and March 24, 1999. While Acteal had sustained attention that went beyond Racak coverage, the sustained attention did not last more than the 70 day time period (the content analyzed below goes far to explain why).

Table 5.1 Coverage Period (70 days*)	RACAK	ACTEAL	RACAK	ACTEAL	RACAK	ACTEAL
DAILIES	Story Count / Words	Story Count / Words	1st Page? & Dates	1st Page? & Dates	Editorials	Editorials
<i>New York Times</i>	18 / 13790	11 / 8571	4 (1/19/99, 1/29, 1/30 & 2/12)	1 (12/26/97)	2	1
<i>Washington Post</i>	7 / 6211	9 / 4742	4 (1/17/99, 1/28, 1/31, 2/21)	2 (12/25/97 & 01/02/98)	5	1
TOTALS	25 / 20,001	20 / 13,313	8 (dates - see above)	3 (dates - see above)	7	2

The first set of results does not squarely fall within a “normal” expectation of the MDM in terms of the comparison of the volume of coverage allotted to *both* of these massacres. A nefarious massacre hailing from a high-priority enemy state *should* garner a high volume of coverage and Racak was certainly covered thoroughly. It generated a slew of editorials, expressing much outrage, and even more 1st page stories. The exceptional result, however, was found in Acteal due to the Mexican government’s focus

* The exact date range for Acteal was from December 22, 1997 to March 1, 1998 and for Racak, January 15, 1999 to March 24, 1999.

on the massacre. Exceptional results, as expected by the MDM, were *not* in play for Racak.

A high-priority client state which only generates attention from the foreign client should *not* generate much more coverage than a medium to a low amount. However, in comparison to Racak, Acteal generated 80% of as much coverage in terms of sheer reporting. The matter becomes a bit clearer when placement is considered, as Acteal garnered far less editorials and front-page stories than Racak (in both cases, Racak received twice as many editorials and front-page coverage). Further, the results for newscast coverage (see Table 5.2, below) fall squarely along normal MDM expectations for differing massacre types (nefarious versus benign, see Table 3.1). Racak generated over twice as many stories, over 2.5 times as many words in newscast transcripts and over half of its stories were leads, whereas in Acteal, none of its stories led a broadcast. Nevertheless, there was clearly something at work in the case of Acteal that went beyond normal expectations of the MDM in having generated more print coverage than would be expected and all signs pointed toward the lack of governmental attention just noted. This finding lends dual support to the MDM's deference to the IM for governmental attention serving as the most reliable indicator of volume of coverage (in the case of print media), but *also* to unworthy and worthy victim expectations falling into play as well (in the case of newscast coverage). Ultimately, however, the MDM's deference to the IM's attributed importance to governmental attention was supported as it was the more reliable predictor of exceptional news content. But the MDM rests its theoretical bearings on there being more at work than mere governmental attention.

Table 5.2 Coverage Period (70 Days*)	RACAK	ACTEAL	RACAK	ACTEAL
NETWORKS	Story Count / Words	Story Count / Words	Lead Stories	Lead Stories
<i>ABC News</i>	3 / 1354	1 / 477	2	0
<i>NBC News</i>	2 / 585	2 / 490	1	0
<i>CBS News</i>	2 / 595	0 / 0	1	0
TOTALS	7 / 2534	3 / 967	4	0

Going beyond the lack of governmental attention (IM) as well as the factor of the presence of worthy (enemy state) versus unworthy (client state) victims (PM) in the case of Acteal, there were also important elements of social protest and related movement influence over policy making leading to the consequence of all of this: *foreign indexing*. The factors of social movements and related foreign indexing tendencies are amongst the most original components of the MDM and the contextual details surrounding the case-study lend strong support to MDM expectations. Specifically, support was lent to the kinds of exceptional conditions which the MDM posits as resulting exceptional aspects of elite news content. The ensuing textual analysis will touch on more details of content characteristics, but volume of coverage and foreign indexing will be reviewed herein.

There was a significant amount of social protest organized around Acteal and demonstrations were held on a regular basis throughout the country, including especially in Mexico City and also reaching far beyond its borders as well (*La Jornada*, 1997; Rovira, 2005; Sanchez et al., 1998). Public pressure was exerted upon Mexico by governments around the world, resulting in condemnations coming soon after the

* The exact date range for Acteal was from December 22, 1997 to March 1, 1998 and for Racak, January 15, 1999 to March 24, 1999.

massacre's

occurrence from regional governing bodies in Spain (Catalonia, Aragon and the Basque region), as well as Mayoral condemnations from Venice, Italy and Dublin, Ireland (Rovira, 2005). Pressure and criticism from many notable individuals soon followed as well, including the Pope and a long list of other luminaries (Fabela, 2000, p. 167).

This had an impact on the Mexican government, which not only thoroughly addressed the massacre, but also undertook a public relations strategy to try and control and influence ensuing Mexican press coverage (Ross, 2000, p. 246). Given the enabling factor of a lack of sustained U.S. governmental attention, the window was opened for exceptional coverage tendencies, and the social movement which forced the Mexican government's hand resulted not only in increased coverage domestically, but in the phenomenon of foreign indexing abroad. This is the context that was most responsible for the nearly equivalent reporting levels in terms of volume of coverage and the results of this analysis go far to lend weight to the expectations that underlie the MDM and go beyond its synthesis of the IM and PM.

Standards of Sourcing

Sourcing was evaluated for both massacres with a greater focus on the qualitative use of sources, as opposed to the quantitative extent. Nevertheless, word searches were conducted to get a general idea of just how much key official sources were used versus other unofficial ones. That notwithstanding, the focus on sourcing was *how* sources were used, going beyond just how much they were used.

Sourcing for Racak coverage

William Walker was the leading source in Racak coverage and his accounting of the massacre was entrusted by the news media reviewed in this chapter without any question or exceptions. He thus firmly established Racak as a massacre of civilians.

The day after the massacre was the day that U.S. Ambassador William Walker came to the scene and made statements that were broadcast around the world. Walker reportedly did not come onto the scene until mid-day at noon, while the OSCE observers arrived in the morning at 9:00am (Girard, 1999). The following sample is indicative of the manner in which Walker was often cited following his visit to Racak:

International observers -- including U.S. Ambassador William Walker, the head of the multinational force attempting to monitor the tenuous cease-fire -- immediately accused Serbian security forces of mass murder (Dinmore, 1999; this was a 1st page story and the 1st story run on Racak by the *Post*).

After seeing the Albanian bodies on Saturday, a shaken Mr. Walker, who served as American Ambassador in El Salvador in the 1980's, said he had never seen such deliberate carnage and called it a "crime very much against humanity" (Perlez, 1999a).

Visibly upset and his voice shaking after visiting the site of the killings, the American head of the three-month-old Kosovo Verification Mission, William Walker, called the killings a massacre, "an unspeakable atrocity," and "a crime very much against humanity" (Associated Press, 1999c).

In terms of sourcing beyond Walker and Kosovar Albanians, the matter was far different. A controlled experiment was available as a result of the way events unfolded in Racak that pit independent sources versus U.S. sources. Walker and the OSCE observers did not arrive on the scene until 12 hours after the massacre, a full news day afterward for the international media. As a result, the only sources available to the sources analyzed in this case-study were the Yugoslavian government and the Serb Media Center. These sources were indeed used in the first reports that were run out of Racak. However, the Serb Media Center, an independent source, was never used again in the context of the Racak massacre by any of the outlets surveyed in this chapter.

In no case was this clearer than the contrasting *Associated Press* dispatches run by the *New York Times* the day after the massacre and the second day after the massacre. In the first dispatch (dateline January 15, published on January 16) that was relayed from Pristina (*not* from the scene at Racak), the *AP* report actually cites the Serb Media Center and ran a headline that did not suggest a civilian massacre ("Serbs Said to Kill 15 Kosovo Rebels"). However, after arriving on the scene, the *AP* report changed its tune and depended nearly exclusively on the OSCE monitors and William Walker, neither of whom was in Racak the day of the massacre in question. The January 17 headline ran as follows, "Mutilated Kosovo Bodies Found After Serb Attack" (Associated Press, 1999c).

The Serb Media Center and William Walker were not present on the day of the massacre. But there were independent sources beyond the Kosovar villagers who were on the scene on the day in question. Two Associated Press Television (APTV)

correspondents were invited along with Serbian police to film the day's events, which they did do, starting from as early as 8:30am up until 3:30pm during the day in question. This was duly noted and documented by several prominently published articles in Europe and at least once in the U.S. independent media (BBC, 1999b; Châtelot, 1999; Cook, 1999; Girard 1999), but never by the *Times* or the *Post*.

In addition to the lack of sourcing of independent and unofficial sources, Serbian claims were not often cited. In the rare citations that existed, sourcing was most often found at the end of the article. Examples include a quote that appeared in the 22nd of a 25-paragraph story that was run in the *Washington Post*:

Serbian police, who were backed by tanks, said in a statement that they had sealed off Racak on Friday while searching for the killers of a policeman, but had been shot at by KLA rebels In the clashes, "several dozen terrorists, most of whom were in uniform with KLA insignia, were killed," the statement said. (Dinmore, 1999; quote cited in the 22nd of the 25 paragraph 1st page story)

Another example was when an *AP* wire report was run by the *Times*, which appeared in the 7th of a 10-paragraph article:

Mr. Dobricanin [a Serbian official] has said the wounds could have been inflicted after death to make it appear that the victims had been massacred. The Serbian police said the victims were guerrillas killed in fighting after they attacked policemen searching for killers of fellow officers (Associated Press, 1999a).

Thus, the experiment revealed what the PM's components of the MDM would expect: important U.S. official sources, whenever available, will win out over independent sources with competing interpretations of a massacre on the soil of an enemy state. When a different source *was* used to counterbalance the large dependence on U.S. sources (i.e. Walker), it was inevitably the Yugoslavian government – hardly a credible oppositional source on which to depend.

Sourcing for Acteal coverage

Unlike Racak, no U.S. official came to the scene at Acteal to condemn a crime against humanity. In fact, it was not until January 21, 2001 that any U.S. official ever visited Acteal following the massacre.⁴ As a result, there was a very large dependence on the Mexican government as a leading source for articles covering Acteal. Consequently, its position on the massacre was mostly reported as unquestioned fact.

Human rights sources that could have identified the relevant and noteworthy relationship between the U.S., the Mexican military and the paramilitaries in Chiapas were never cited. This was despite the fact that there were a plethora of online sources readily available both before and shortly after the massacre (Burns, 1998; Farah & Priest, 1998; Wilson 1998; Wood 1996-97). Furthermore, groups that work full time on the issue of tracking these connections were never consulted (i.e., School of the Americas Watch and the War Resister's League).

In spite of these sourcing tendencies, and going completely against the grain of expectations by the PM, it *was* the case that eye-witnesses and survivors of the massacre *were* consulted. In the absence of U.S. governmental attention, they were in fact often consulted, far more than what the MDM would normally expect for cases *without* the exceptional conditions that surrounded Acteal. However, there *were* a number of exceptional conditions present in relation to Acteal and the origins of this exceptional content characteristic will be explored and considered in greater detail in the findings section below, with a special eye toward whether or not they reflect what the MDM would specifically expect under such circumstances.

William Walker and his Unquestioned Past

William Walker was the leading source for the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*. He headed the OSCE verification team which was led to the gully where the bodies of the purported massacre occurred by the KLA and established Racak as a “crime against humanity.” As elaborated below, Walker’s credibility was highly questionable. Nevertheless, his background was never explored or mentioned in any of the coverage reviewed herein.

As an ambassador, Walker oversaw U.S. assistance to El Salvador that enabled the Central American government to carry out their own crimes against humanity. The peak was in November 1989, when an extreme show of violence included the murder of six leading Salvadoran dissident intellectuals and Jesuit priests, along with their housekeeper and her daughter. The U.S. trained Atlacatl brigade killed all of these civilians in the midst of a gory record of violence and horrific murderous acts (Whitfeld, 1994, pp. 90-92; Hague Justice Portal, 2008; Sal Truth Commission, 1993b). In earlier years, and also with U.S. guidance and support, Archbishop Romero was assassinated in

1980, which began a terrifying decade of U.S. assisted atrocities in El Salvador (Sal Truth Commission, 1993a).

Walker's own personal actions during this time were undertaken almost as quickly as they were in regards to the Racak massacre. After having personally undertaken the intimidation of the leading eyewitness to the murder of a number of Jesuit intellectuals by the U.S. Embassy and its Salvadoran client, who naturally sought to discredit her testimony (withdrawn under pressure), he then "told congressional investigators there was no evidence to implicate the military and hypothesized that leftist rebels might have committed the act while dressed in soldiers' garb," America's Watch reported in revulsion (1990). The report, by the respected human rights organization that covers Latin America, continued by noting that Walker's efforts to deny the atrocities carried out by Washington's client killers came "long after a Salvadorn colonel had told a U.S. major that the Army had committed the murders" (America's Watch 1990). Following a review of Walker's efforts to evade the obvious, an article (unsurprisingly) run in a non-commercial source noted how Walker subsequently recommended to Secretary of State James Baker that the U.S. "not jeopardize" its relationship with El Salvador by investigating "past deaths, however heinous" (Ames & Taibbi, 1999).⁵

Tone of Coverage

Racak: Authenticity of the Massacre and Attributed Culpability

The Racak story was not significantly reported as an atrocity with doubts or competing versions. Instead, official U.S. sources and Kosovar Albanians were prominently used to support the unquestioned version of the story of a massacre of Kosovar Albanian civilians by Serbian soldiers. Competing claims of the Serbian government were only occasionally mentioned, but without any support or citations of independent sources that were available. Often, Serbian governmental claims were noted with derision or dismissal. One of many examples includes the following instance:

Many had been shot at close range, and residents of Racak village said Serbian forces had rounded up the men, driven them up the hill and shot them. Twenty-eight bodies lay heaped together at the bottom of a muddy hillside gully . . . All the victims were dressed in civilian clothing, despite the insistence of the Serbian police that most of the "terrorists" wore uniforms of the rebel Kosovo Liberation Army (Associated Press, 1999c).

The *Times* preferred Racak villagers over official Serbian claims in terms of establishing culpability, a common trait seen in most reports surveyed. Another example in the *Times* read: “Other Government-sponsored newspapers said ethnic Albanians had staged the massacre and accused Mr. Walker of being a stooge for them” (Perlez, 1999c). Instead of further investigating the claims or allowing for the possibility of their validity, the *Times* went on to quote U.S. officials lashing out in response to this stance and against President Milosevic himself. The *Times* quoted the U.S. delegate at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Vienna, David Johnston, who said Milosevic, “yields no ground to Goebbels as the big lie’s propagandist.” Further, an anonymous U.S. official was quoted as saying that “we have not lost perspective of who is at the root cause of this,” referring to President Milosevic (Perlez, 1999c). There is of course nothing wrong with doubting the credibility of President Milosevic, but instead of exploring, independently verifying or disproving Yugoslavian claims, the *Times* briefly mentioned them and subsequently turned to frequent quotes of U.S. officials. Further, as will soon be demonstrated, these same standards were *not* undertaken in terms of reporting surrounding the massacre at Acteal.

This was not the first time that the *New York Times* parroted official claims about the Yugoslavian government, as in several instances in previous articles, the paper repeated claims of high-level responsibility for the unquestioned massacre:

The top international official in Kosovo, William Walker, a seasoned American diplomat who heads the monitoring mission there, said at the massacre site that he had no hesitation in accusing Serbian Government forces of the killings (Perlez, 1999a).

The massacre of 45 ethnic Albanian civilians by Serbian forces under the control of Mr. Milosevic on Friday refocused Western attention on Kosovo, but also served to underline the lack of appetite for the measures needed to halt all-out conflict, Western diplomats said (Associated Press, 1999c).

An Administration official said Washington remained firm in the view that Mr. Milosevic's forces were mostly responsible for the conflict in Kosovo (Perlez, 1999b).

A front page and detailed report (1,500 words) was published in the *Washington Post* immediately after an anonymous intelligence source from an unidentified Western government released telephone intercepts revealing a purported Serbian cover-up of the

massacre (Smith, 1999). Reporting had already accepted that President Milosevic held direct responsibility for the massacre and when these tapes of purported phone conversations between top-level Serbian officials surfaced, they were treated with extensive attention and credibility (the following headline was run by the *Post*: “Serbs Tried to Cover Up Massacre; Kosovo Reprisal Plot Bared by Phone Taps”). The lead paragraph noted that “telephone intercepts [were released] by Western governments.” However, there was no mention of the specific government involved or independent verification of the validity of the tapes. The *New York Times* followed suit on the following day running an abbreviated version of the *Post* article, as it did not break the story. But while the *Times* did not break the story, it too reported the news without any additional questioning or raised doubts as to the validity of the tapes, much less the source for their release (New York Times, 1999). The most important part of this coverage is that responsibility was consistently found by the press to come from high officials, going right up to Milosevic.

Conversely, when doubts arose as to the authenticity of the massacre by independent sources, their evidence, their findings and the articles themselves were never referred to within the agenda-setting outlets surveyed. The testimonies of two Associated Press Television (APTV) correspondents, and their footage, went unreported. On-the-scene reporters who were at Racak before William Walker got there, and who documented the APTV testimonies, was also not reported (Châtelot, 1999; Girard, 1999). Instead, intelligence findings from anonymous Western governmental sources, which implicated the Serbian government in an alleged cover-up attempt, were prominently used. While some could argue that fair reporting standards would require both interpretations to have been reported, as opposed to only one, the important finding here is the one in comparison with Acteal.

As will see soon be shown, converse to Racak, much of the reporting about Acteal focused on uncertainties surrounding it. Further, attributions of governmental responsibility in the case of Acteal only surfaced to the limited extent that the client state already accepted such responsibility, in spite of unreported evidence having been readily available. As the PM would expect, the standards were flipped. This is strong support to claims by the MDM that dichotomies such as these exist beyond the end of the Cold War.

Acteal: Authenticity of the Massacre and Attributed Culpability

Reporting by the *Post* and the *Times* often repeated governmental characterizations of the massacre without question. The tone of most articles painted a picture of turmoil, uncertainty and of a family feud gone awry. After governmental investigations turned up some responsibility and connections to local officials, some questions arose about responsibility at that level. But for the leading agenda-setting dailies and the networks evaluated in this study, higher-level responsibility was not explored and responsibility for the massacre remained a mysterious matter in most of the news coverage surveyed.

In this vein, in the first article covering the massacre, the *New York Times* reported: “Exactly what happened in Acteal is far from clear. The federal Government has taken over the investigation from Chiapas officials. Accounts of survivors paint a picture of an unprovoked surprise attack” (Fisher, 1997). Eye-witnesses were indeed quoted in *Times* coverage, but selected quotes pointed toward a family feud, as opposed to community leaders, who subsequently stated themselves that the massacre was far from a family feud and pointed toward responsibility at the top (Chenalhó Civil Society, 1998). One example of this read: “The paramilitary members are also poor Indians, and [an indigenous members of the community and eye-witness] Luna said he recognized several of the attackers as members of his own family” (Fisher, 1997). The *Washington Post* reported in a similar fashion:

[Acteal farmer] Vasquez and others said that their attackers were Catholics and members of the ruling PRI, while the victims were Protestant and, for the most part, members of the Democratic Revolutionary Party and Zapatista sympathizers. They said the attackers did not wear masks or disguises and that they recognized many as residents of a different section of Acteal (Anderson, 1997).

As soon as governmental characterizations surfaced, reporting parroted such characterizations. The *Washington Post* reported: “The federal attorney general's office blamed the massacre on feuding families in the poverty-stricken region. ‘These conflicts can validly be characterized as within communities, even families, as part of constant rivalries over political and economic power,’ it said,” (Washington Post, 1997). The *New York Times*, like the *Post*, also picked up Attorney General Jorge Madrazo’s spin of the massacre without question: “He described generations of conflict between the three

leading families in the area of Chenalho, which surrounds Acteal, the hamlet where the killings took place. That conflict has taken on political overtones and loyalties that have deepened and become more violent since last August, with killings, kidnappings and burnings of houses on all sides” (Fisher, 1997c).

The “family feud” characterization, to be sure, was one that was given out by the Mexican government and was in fact, fairly successfully distributed throughout the Mexican mass media. As Ross noted:

La Jornada columnist Julio Hernández was leaked a copy of TV Azteca reporters’ guidelines on how to bamboozle the general public: ‘(1) stress that the fight is between Indians. (2) the causes are land (i.e., blame the *ejido* system) and religion (i.e., blame the *diocese*). (3) Stress that the PRD [center-left political opposition party] is trying to shift blame [from the Zapatistas] by calling the paramilitaries PRIstas . . . we cannot approve of calling them PRIstas . . . We have to be very careful so as to not inflame the country’ (2000, p. 246).

To be sure, the themes of “turmoil” and an “out of control” massacre were often invoked (Anderson, 1997), even in cases where the government was ostensibly being criticized: “[officials have been accused of not having] done enough to resolve the Chiapas turmoil and allowed tensions here to simmer, ignoring numerous warnings that conflict was about to explode again” (Anderson & Moore, 1998). Even when a human rights group official was quoted, they were cited only when they painted a picture of an internal squabble between indigenous people: ““We found a pattern of the government turning a blind eye to abuses committed by pro-government people,”” said Joel Solomon, of the organization Human Rights Watch/Americas” (Moore & Anderson, 1998). However, “turning a blind eye” is far different than investigating and citing evidence that points to higher-level responsibility.

Similarly, the *Times* reported that, “The events today may again raise the question of why the government did not step in earlier” (Fisher, 1999c). Again, this is merely repeating the tone of the government in that responsibility did not go beyond local authorities and that the only governmental failure was that of a lack of intervention from above. Two days later, the *Times* ran an article headlined, “Governing Party in Mexico Denies Any Role in the Massacre of 45 Indians Last Week” (Fisher, 1997d). The second paragraph in the article was dedicated to a quote of a leading PRI official:

‘It’s like the guys in Oklahoma who blew up the Federal building,’ said the official, Alfredo Phillips, general coordinator for international affairs for the Institutional Revolutionary Party. ‘If they belonged to one of the political parties, is the Republican or the Democratic Party guilty of the bombing? Of course not’ (Fisher, 1997d).

On December 27, the PRI Mayor of Chenalho was arrested on charges of having provided the arms that the paramilitary used to commit the massacre (Anderson & Moore, 1998). Only at that point did reporting start to question some level of official responsibility. But high-level responsibility was still not pointed to or investigated. In the *Post*, it was only noted that responsibility for the massacre was by, “paramilitary gunmen connected to the local PRI leadership” (Moore & Ward 1998). A quote from a human rights group critical of the government’s strategy to “divide and conquer” indigenous people was also present, but since it lacked further context, the article only left readers with the “turmoil” and “family feud” themes describing the massacre.

When the *Times* finally referred to unnamed critics and an “angry public” in one article that followed the arrest of the Mayor, reporting still echoed the PRI official’s defense: “the party is no monolith, and any chain of command seems indirect enough for the federal Government’s denial of any role in the massacre to remain plausible ...” (Fisher, 1998). Further, the narratives of mysteriousness were used once again, with the article’s main headline reading: “Puzzle in Mexico Killings” (Fisher, 1998).

In a *Times* article headlined, “Mexican Indian Women Protest Army’s Search for Weapons,” governmental defenses were picked up again without question, as a new “search” program sponsored by the government to look for arms in Chiapas was noted. The paramilitary was described not as an organized operation that was armed, trained and funded by the Mexican Army and government, but as a “gang”:

In one of President Ernesto Zedillo’s first actions concerning the killings of 45 Indians in a Chiapas hamlet in December, he ordered the army out across the state to search for combat rifles, like the ones used by a pro-Government paramilitary gang in the slayings, and other large-caliber firearms -- which only the army and police officers are allowed to carry (Preston, 1998).

In spite of the *Times* own accurate observation that the arms were of the variety that army and police officers normally have in their exclusive possession, no question or possibility

was raised that the army may have passed the weapons directly onto the paramilitary themselves in an organized fashion.

In contrast to picking up characterizations of high-level responsibility from unofficial sources in the human rights community, as opposed to a mere “angry public,” it took an intra-governmental agency’s own internal criticism to bring at least some attention to official responsibility that went beyond “turmoil” resulting from a mere “family feud.” Even so, this attention was scant; an oversight that was enhanced by the lack of high-level Mexican officials backing up the report.

An official 220 page human rights report was published by the National Human Rights Commission (an agency of the Mexican government) on January 7, 1998. It contained critical findings, including one conclusion about prior knowledge of a pending massacre that was not acted upon. The report stated that, “The sum total of (irregularities) by state officials -- in the days leading up to the massacre and the day itself -- leads one to presume, if not their direct participation, then their knowledge and complicity of the armed group's actions” (Luhnnow, 1998).

The *Washington Post* article only dedicated the last paragraph of the article on the report and was published on the 10th page of the paper in the last paragraph of the article, which was the only paragraph that noted the report almost a week after it was published (Moore, 1998). The *New York Times* article, headlined “Mexico Accuses Policeman of Helping Arm Mass Killers,” mentioned the report more prominently (in its 3rd paragraph) than the *Post* article, but also dedicated only one paragraph to the report and was run on the 8th page of the paper (Preston, 1998b). No newscast of the major three networks covered the report. Thus, not even official governmental investigations prompted any of the news media sources surveyed in this study to take on more ambitious reporting or additional investigation.

For the Mexican government, Acteal was conveniently depicted as just another example of a long-running family feud between indigenous people. Connections to the government via investigation of the paramilitary involved went unnoted in news coverage until local and Chiapas state officials began to be arrested or resigned. That the press would report on what was already admitted by the government does not prove media independence.

Even though the media under evaluation finally began to report some of the connections between the paramilitary and the Mexican army, it never explored the relationship between the Mexican army and the U.S. training schools. Instead, the agenda-setting dailies failed to reveal high-level responsibility for the massacre and consistently painted a picture of “turmoil” and the “turning of a blind eye.”

Unreported Responsibility by Mexican and U.S. Officials

There was no attempt on behalf of the two most influential U.S.-based dailies to measure and document the responsibility of the Mexican military and high-level officials, much less connections to U.S. military assistance, for the massacre in Acteal. However, such connections clearly existed during and before the period of coverage analyzed in this chapter. It is startling that there *were* indeed ample and accessible online sources revealing and pointing toward responsibility at the top (Burns, 1998; Farah & Priest, 1998; Wilson, 1998; Wood, 1996-97) for the circumstances surrounding Acteal before, during and after the massacre (those that were available after the massacre were still within the coverage period analyzed). However, the groups and authors that documented this, and could have been relied upon as sources for such an investigation, were not cited or interviewed. While these authors were credible sources and included a researcher and specialist on the topic, a Professor who worked in Acteal, journalists and first-hand observers who documented their experiences online, they were all overlooked. As all three models would expect, sources from civil society (especially those that expose responsibility at the top, according to the PM) were marginalized and not consulted.

If such an investigation had been launched, the media could have found out that the U.S. had an indirect hand in the massacre because they trained a number of generals and commanders stationed in Chiapas who in turn trained and armed paramilitaries of indigenous people (Elizalde 1998; Rio, 1998). The intensity of the relationship between the Mexican military and the U.S. training centers (principally Fort Bragg in North Carolina and the School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia) greatly increased after the Zapatista rebellion and was in fact reaching its height shortly before, during and continuing through the time that the massacre occurred in Acteal.

As reported by Global Exchange *before* the massacre at Acteal had occurred, “the Mexican government ... relies on military and paramilitary forces to wage a campaign of

low intensity warfare,” which feature, “attacks by government supported paramilitary groups.” In the same report, Global Exchange revealed U.S. support and complicity, as “US-trained personnel and US equipment are used in carrying out attacks on indigenous communities.” Such support has occurred “Since 1997,” whereby “the US has provided \$1.12 billion dollars in military assistance to Mexico,” putting it amongst the ranks of the leading recipient in Latin America, Colombia (Global Exchange, 2007).⁶

S. Brian Wilson also researched and documented the relationship between the Mexican army and the paramilitaries as early as April 1997 (and duly published online, again, *before* the massacre in Acteal had occurred):

. . . the emergence of the paramilitary groups recruited, trained and armed by members of the Mexican military began to operate their terror campaign protected by the army which was located in numerous camps and convoys in and around virtually every Indigenous community. The October 1994 defense ministry document, “Chiapas '94,” outlined a comprehensive counterinsurgency plan which clearly identifies the importance of creating and maintaining paramilitary groups to “neutralize” the Zapatistas (Wilson 1998).

Online-based information revealing such connections from first-hand and outside observers also surfaced shortly after the massacre, such as one account in early January 1998. Allan Burns, an anthropologist at the University of Florida, reported that: “Afraid of losing their control on the countryside, the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party of Mexico) had been supporting paramilitary groups in those towns like Acteal” (Burns, 1998).

The office of Franciscans International and Dominicans for Justice and Peace, a non-governmental organization that has general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in Geneva, wrote the following on the connection between the Mexican military, paramilitaries in Chiapas and the U.S.:

The government of Mexico continues covertly to stimulate and allow paramilitary groups who attack indigenous communities. The leadership of the paramilitary groups has studied in Guatemala and at the School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia. The government is pursuing a strategy of transferring the war to civil society and dividing and pitting communities and groups against each other. At least a dozen paramilitary groups are protected by the government in a real war which has resulted in more than 15,000 displaced persons, more dead than in the 1994 war, many destroyed indigenous communities, a disrupted economy, and attacks on places of refuge such as Acteal where 45 persons including women and children were massacred by para-military groups on

December 22, 1997. The strategy used by the government is to start a fight and then send soldiers to help and build military camps, creating still more displaced persons. There are indications of 65,000 federal troops in Chiapas, 5,000 more since the massacre in Acteal. Further, the indigenous people are being terrorized by military helicopters given by the United States for use in fighting a drug war. This is a violent government war by a government that denies it is at war.⁷

Recently declassified U.S. governmental documents, unearthed by the National Security Archive, have also revealed damning evidence of the Mexican government and Army taking an active role in supporting the paramilitaries. Such recent discoveries could have been followed up on by reporters who were encouraged to investigate the matter from the get-go. As a result of several freedom of information requests, the Archive was able to discern a, “carefully planned counterinsurgency strategy that combined civic action programs – frequently trumpeted by the Defense Secretariat in statements to the press – with secret intelligence operations designed to strengthen the paramilitaries and provoke conflict” (Doyle, 2009).

What should have been even more important than high-level responsibility by the Mexican government to the U.S. news media surveyed in this study was U.S. responsibility and connections to the affair. Considering the long-running relationship between the U.S. and Mexico, which intensified greatly after 1994, such connections were far from infeasible and already had significant documentation.⁸

A watershed moment in U.S. – Mexican military relations occurred on October 23, 1995, when then U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry visited Mexico. The visit was the first time that a U.S. Defense Secretary had gone to Mexico in modern times and was marked in a grandiose fashion, complete with an impressive ceremony at the 1st Military camp by almost 10,000 Mexican staff officers, soldiers and cadets.⁹ Perry’s Mexican counterpart, General Enrique Cervantes Aguirre, made a visit of his own to the U.S. in April 1996 which more than paid its dividends. During the visit, a major agreement valued at \$50 million was signed involving extensive military training and arms sales between the neighboring countries (Steinberg 1998).

Given the publicly known intensification of U.S.-Mexican military relations, a clear question is begged: what is the U.S. responsibility for the massacre in Acteal? The answer is that the first level of responsibility had to do with the fact that key Chiapas-

based generals received training in the U.S. The second level is that the forces these Generals led have documented connections to the paramilitaries that carried out the massacre in Acteal.

General Mario Renan Castillo Fernandez is an alumnus of Fort Bragg. Darrin Wood, a specialist in U.S. – Mexico military relations, called General Castillo the “mastermind behind Mexico’s counterinsurgency strategy in Chiapas,” a reference to what Wilson identified above as “the October 1994 defense ministry document, ‘Chiapas 94,’ [which] outlined a comprehensive counterinsurgency plan.” Wood informs us that Castillo was “the ex-commander of the Mexican Army’s 7th Military Region in Chiapas.” The 7th Military Region in Chiapas includes Acteal.

Wood also writes that Castillo was an “‘Honorary Witness’ at a ceremony where the state government of Chiapas handed over half a million dollars to the paramilitary group Paz y Justicia.” Recall that *Paz y Justicia* is the same paramilitary group that was implicated in the massacre at Acteal, along with *Mascara Roja* (Wood, 1997).

General Jose Ruben Rivas Peña is another product of U.S. military training, a graduate of the School of the Americas who also was involved in the implementation of the low-intensity warfare that comprised the climate during the massacre of Acteal.¹⁰ He headed up several military zones in Southern Mexico during his career, including the 31st military zone in Chiapas. Wood dubbed the latter zone as “infamous” for its history, as it was the zone where:

... a group of mercenaries from Argentina were sent . . . in July of 1994 to help the Mexican Army perfect its counterinsurgency tactics. These same Argentines have worked for the CIA in the past in training US-backed death squads in Honduras led by SOA graduate Gen. Gustavo Alvarez Martinez (Wood 1996-97).

The headquarters of the 31st Military Zone is located at Rancho Nuevo near San Cristóbal de Las Casas, the second largest city in Chiapas and the closest major city to Acteal.

I found out about General Jose Ruben Rivas Peña through a telephone interview with Hendrick Voss, one of the researchers at the School of the Americas Watch. This could have been done by either of the dailies under investigation in this study, but Voss never heard from them. He had the following to say about Acteal and connections to the U.S.:

Before the Zapatista rebellion, there were very few SOA grads coming from Mexico. But after the rebellion, it skyrocketed. One-third of graduating class came from Mexico in 1997. One SOA graduate was Jose Ruben Peña. He took the staff and commander course. He is also the principal author of “Campaign Plan Chiapas 94.” It was an internal document in the Mexican army that openly calls for the buildup of paramilitary and other defense forces in southern Mexico. Peña has also gone on record sharply criticizing Bishop Luiz’s, liberation theology and the church.

There were 18 graduates who were involved with civilian targeted warfare, otherwise known as “low intensity conflict.” *Covert Action Quarterly* published a list of at least 13 military officials with connections to the Acteal massacre who were trained in the U.S. The weapons used in the massacre at Acteal were supplied by the PRI Mayor of the municipality that Acteal was located in.

Instead of exploring these connections, the *Post* and the *Times* only reported on *any* level of official culpability for the massacre, was when the government acted against lower-level officials (i.e. the arrest of the Mayor and the report by the Mexican governmental human rights commission). The lack of attribution to high-level responsibility lies well within the expectations of the PM and does not contradict tenets of the IM. However, the juxtaposing of the lack of investigatory zeal and high-level attribution contrasts with the approach taken in Racak. The MDM demonstrates that these cases persist well beyond the conclusion of the Cold War and stand in contrast to descriptions of a cantankerous press by other political communication scholars.

Racak: Doubts and Questions Never Revealed

Reports prominently published in the European press revealed doubts and questions in relation to the authenticity of the massacre that were not reported on by the *Times* and the *Post*. Two French reporters, on-the-scene on the same day of the purported massacre, published articles raising many doubts and questions about the massacre in two leading French dailies (Châtelot, 1999; Girard, 1999). Such questions included why two Associated Press Television correspondents were invited along with Serbian police to film the day’s events, if a massacre occurred (which they did do, starting from as early as 8:30am up until 3:30pm during the day in question). The APTV correspondents had differing testimony than the Racak villagers and “eye-witnesses,” including video footage that showed a deserted and empty village (witnesses claimed the village was populated). The reporters also pointed out bodies were only found in a gully the day *after* the

massacre: “It was only the next day, at about 9:00 a.m., that first journalists and then also the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) verifiers, spotted Albanian bodies, dressed in civilian clothes and packed next to each other in a ditch” (Girard, 1999). Further, as both journalists noted, it was the KLA – who had gained control of the village the day after the massacre – who led journalists and OSCE observers to the controversial ditch where the bodies were first discovered the morning after the massacre occurred.

While the *Times* and the *Post* never picked up and reported on these doubts, the BBC referenced them online hours later at night time, following the morning publication of the French articles (BBC, 1999). Days earlier, the BBC had also reported on a Yugoslavian pathologist, who stated that, “Not a single body bears any sign of execution” (BBC, 1999b). Given the public media bearings that the BBC has, such reporting is less extraordinary than it would be for the sources analyzed in this chapter.

These online-accessible and European-based reports and investigative pieces – which similar to the civil society sources overlooked above, also could have been cited by leading mainstream sources – were not alone in citing independent sources that served to cast doubt on the massacre. In the U.S., independent and non-profit media reported on these doubts as well. U.S.-national Diana Johnstone’s piece, “The Racak Hoax,” was widely distributed over the Internet and featured on the site, “Emperor’s Clothes.” Johnstone’s lead sentences read as follows:

French newspaper and television reports today feature evidence apparently ignored by U.S. media, suggesting that the "Racak massacre" so vigorously denounced by the U.S.-imposed head of the OSCE "verifiers" mission to Kosovo, William Walker, was a setup. This coincides with reports in the German press indicating strong irritation with Walker among other OSCE members.¹¹

Johnstone’s report was not mentioned in coverage surveyed in this study, and according to Project Censored, it was not mentioned in subsequent coverage either. Mark Cook also wrote an account that pointed to evidence suggesting that Racak was not a massacre of civilians. The article appeared in a U.S. publication as early as April 1999, but as Project Censored has documented, was *not* picked up by the mainstream media until a *Los Angeles Times* editorial finally covered the angle that Cook took. Cook later had the following to say about Racak:

Seldom has the power of mass media censorship been so graphically and frighteningly demonstrated as in the William Walker episode in Yugoslavia.

The Kosovo atrocity story Walker trumpeted in January 1999 was almost immediately discredited, not by a small political weekly somewhere, but by the leading newspapers in France. No matter—the discrediting was so completely suppressed in the United States that virtually no one could have heard of it. It was not as if anyone successfully answered the French journalists' claims; practically nobody even tried. As with Orwell's Ministry of Truth, it was found that the best way to kill the story was not to challenge it.

In contrast, Walker's dubious Racak story was loudly and unquestioningly repeated and became the propaganda justification for the bombing war (Cook, 1999).¹²

Ackerman's investigative report reveals how the U.S. media, even in later coverage, continued to perform poorly when it came to Kosovo. Ackerman addresses the findings of a team of Finnish investigators who performed laboratory tests of the physical evidence from the scene of the alleged massacre and concluded that there was no evidence of a massacre having occurred.¹³

The *Berliner Zeitung* also reports that these findings were completed as early as June 2000, but that their publication had been blocked by the UN and the EU. Except for one brief wire story from United Press International (1/18/01), not a single U.S. media outlet has run a story on the Finnish team's findings. News outlets continue to refer to the Racak massacre without qualification, despite the cloud of uncertainty hanging over the story (Ackerman, 2001).¹⁴

Ackerman found in this article, as well as a follow-up written six months later, that the media did *not* pick up Finnish autopsy findings that brought further doubts to the massacre.¹⁵

In sum, not one of these doubts, questions or reports ever surfaced in the coverage surveyed: video tape of the operation undertaken by the Serbian police by foreign journalists who were invited along with the police; French reports prominently published and raising doubts from on-the-scene reporting; the lack of physical evidence on-the-scene; and BBC coverage pointing to doubts of the massacre. Instead, the *Times* and the *Post* still chose to use Ambassador Walker and the OSCE monitors he led, as the leading source in determining what happened in Racak on January 15, 1999. Further, according

to other news studies that were undertaken, most mainstream U.S. media followed suit in failing to report on evidence that later arose as well (Ackerman, 2001; Kramer, 2000).

Findings

The results of this study lend support to several of the synthesized components of the MDM, its attempt to resolve theoretical dispute between the IM and PM and its original theoretical components on exceptions. A number of exceptions occurred but were nonetheless explainable by the components of the MDM, which go beyond the monolithic and static predictions of the IM and PM.

Exceptions were particularly present when it came to volume of coverage and sourcing tendencies in the coverage seen on Acteal. In spite of lessened U.S. governmental attention, volume of coverage levels was not a lot lower than what was allotted to Racak in the same time span, as would be expected for a benign massacre versus a nefarious one. Further, eye-witnesses and survivors of the massacre in Acteal were often called upon in the sourcing tendencies of the articles surveyed herein.

The differing placement and editorial priorities of print coverage, as well as the stark differences in all aspects of newscast volume of coverage, show that the worthy and unworthy dichotomy of the PM *still* holds some weight when explaining coverage priorities. It all illustrates how consistent standards of journalism do not fully explain coverage priorities. However, the MDM's preference for borrowing from the IM in favoring governmental attention as being a more reliable predictive variable found greater credence in these results, as more exceptions were found in Acteal which also had less governmental attention than in Racak, which had more governmental attention. In this important sense, governmental attention was once again found to have been a more reliable predictor of coverage priorities.

Going beyond both models and explaining the exceptional results on coverage priorities, the roughly equivalent priorities of the print media coverage reflect expectations the MDM has in terms of certain conditions leading to exceptional coverage results. Social movements, even unworthy ones, *can* impact the governments of client states which can in turn also impact volume of coverage results even in the face of a *lack* of U.S. governmental attention and also even in spite of unworthy victims being in place (as was the case in Acteal). Going beyond the synthesis of the IM and PM the exceptional

phenomenon of foreign indexing is yet another element that the MDM identifies as being important when it comes to volume of coverage and was duly evidenced herein, albeit within the placement limitations described above and with greater applicability toward print than newscast coverage. This suggests that exceptions are harder to come by when it comes to newscast coverage priorities, a possibility that goes beyond expectations of all three models and worth further exploration.

To rehash the details of what happened in the case of Acteal, public pressure within Mexico and on the Mexican government thus forced it to deal with the issue and obligated it undertake spin efforts with the Mexican news media. The sustained attention that was generated in the Mexican news media was coupled, to a certain degree, by U.S. news media attention as well. Thus, significant and sustained social protest forced the high-priority Mexican government to come up with a compelling response and related propaganda to a clearly low-priority and impoverished locale (see conditions 4-6, in Table 3.4). This increased the amount of U.S. news coverage beyond what would normally be expected, as political resistance had an impact on an important client state (see condition 5 in Table 3.4 and aspect 1 in Table 3.5) and resulted in foreign indexing.

Acteal serves as a good example of how social movements and public pressure can produce *some* exceptions in terms of influencing news coverage allotment and attention both abroad and in the U.S. Stateside news coverage of Acteal also serves as an example of how foreign indexing can sometimes occur in accordance with social movements, even “unworthy” ones located in client states. In this case, an important allied government was forced to deal with an issue it would otherwise prefer to ignore.

These conditions extended to exceptional sourcing results as well, but again, in limited ways. Coupled with the continued lack of U.S. governmental interest (condition 4 in Table 4.4), reporters consequently *had* to depend more on eye-witnesses than they normally would for a benign massacre (aspect 2 in Table 3.5). Given the lack of U.S. governmental propaganda and spin efforts, the media outlets under analysis (elite and national sources, condition 3, Table 3.4) and the issue at stake still being a foreign affairs issue on human rights abuses (condition 2, Table 3.4), exceptions were limited to the aspects of coverage just noted: volume of coverage and some exceptional sourcing tendencies (aspects of news coverage 1 and 3, Table 3.5).

Nevertheless, of significant importance is that certain aspects of news coverage *remained* sharply in line with the MDM's expectations, such as a distinct lack of revelations about U.S. culpability (see less common exceptions, aspects 4-5 in Table 3.5). This finding coupled with the dichotomous reporting in terms of culpability and authenticity support expectations regarding a *lack* of press independence on some of the most important characteristics of news content, as well as evidence for institutional constraints acting upon news content more than consistently applied standards of professional journalism.

While there were a number of exceptions in Acteal's content, there were no such exceptions for Racak's coverage. This is hardly surprising given the significant amount of governmental attention and spin efforts emanating from as high of an official as the President himself and a former Ambassador who the press could not stop quoting and relying upon. Furthermore, there was a dearth of public protest and opposition to U.S. policies toward Yugoslavia, not only during the coverage period, but far after it as well. When public protest and social movement activities are not in place and political resistance is not significantly odds with governmental spin efforts, journalists are lacking the empowerment that sometimes arrives when such political resistance is in place. As a result, the content on Racak *highly* favored official sources, accepted unofficial testimony by Kosovar villagers as unquestioned fact (i.e. that the massacre was indeed of civilians) and defenses and counter-charges lobbied by the Yugoslavian government either went ignored or were derided as a source lacking in credibility. Independent sources that provided accounts which raised the specter of doubts in terms of the authenticity of the massacre were prominently reported in Europe and in non-profit and independent sectors of media in the U.S., but copiously missing in the important coverage analyzed herein. Culpability for the massacre went right up to the doorstep of President Milosevic himself (the "blame" expectation for nefarious massacre in Table 3.1) and as soon as Western-based intelligence supplied "evidence" of a purported cover-up by top Milosevic officials, it was unquestionably reported as such. The exact opposite results were in place when it came to Acteal, however, as the massacre was largely reported as being shrouded with doubts and mystery along with a narrative of a personal family feud between indigenous people, as opposed to any official responsibility at the top. In an Orwellian turn of events,

a massacre (Racak) that had some significant doubts about authenticity was reported as unquestioned fact, despite such doubts being reported abroad and in independent outlets at home. This stood in stark contrast to a massacre (Acteal) that *did* have compelling evidence in terms of high-level official responsibility, including indirect connections to U.S. policy as well, but was instead reported as a family feud surrounded by fuzzy circumstances and uncertainties.

The fact that there were *more* exceptions in Acteal's coverage than in Racak's correlates with the larger amount of governmental attention given toward Racak, than was given toward Acteal, as well as the higher levels of resistance against governmental policies in Mexico than was present in the U.S. on policy toward Yugoslavia. This also in turn supports the deference that the MDM pays to the IM in terms of predicting volume of coverage and related exceptions. The MDM adds another element, however, by incorporating social movements into its theoretical mix and the fact that the anti-war contingent in the U.S. was pitifully low and lacking in influence over public policy was a significant determinant for ensuing coverage as well. Unsurprisingly, it also lacked influence over the ensuing press coverage, which was as subservient as possible in terms of the massacre in Racak.

It was precisely these dichotomous results that went far to support the MDM's contention that consistent and professional standards of journalism do not explain a lack of news media independence more so than institutional constraints. Exceptions, to the extent that they exist on foreign affairs topics such as these, are more reliably explained by the lack of governmental attention and/or the presence of social movement forcing such exceptions. In spite of such exceptions, the results of the news media performance in this case-study suggested that is still more time-consuming, more costly, more difficult and more risky to investigate high-level responsibility in the case of a client state where a benign massacre occurred, *even* with the phenomenon of foreign indexing firmly in place, than it is in an enemy state where a nefarious massacre happened. The implications of this disturbing contrast of news media performance are not slight considering the nature of human rights abuses and the real-life consequences of massacres that do not receive the kind of investigatory zeal and attention they deserve to prevent such atrocities from reoccurring.

Implications of Findings

The results of this study should serve as an additional piece of evidence, similar to the results found for the Fallujah study as well, that the press is not in the midst of an era of “ambiguity” that distinguishes itself greatly from the years during the Cold War. Given the lack of significant changes to the structural and institutional characteristics of the most influential news media sources, little else should have been expected. Other comparative news media studies in recent years have found similar results in terms of continued press subservience (Young, 2008, 2010).

This study suggests that the presence and strength of social movements are quite significant in their ability to produce exceptional content characteristics in the news, especially in the absence of U.S. governmental propaganda. Such victories, albeit limited in scope and character, are not insubstantial when one is considering massacres, military occupations, invasions and wars.

At the same time, while grassroots organizations and activists can and should take some solace in the results of this study, they should also pay close attention to the limits of such activism. As long as the most influential news media outlets remain commercial and corporate in character, there are limits to what even activism can achieve. U.S. responsibility will not be identified in any systematic manner for atrocities abroad. Similarly, high-level responsibility on the part of important client states for atrocities committed in their own countries will not be investigated and revealed in any significant manner by the agenda-setting U.S. news media, as duly revealed in this case-study.

Endnotes

¹ Chilling similarities can be drawn to an even more horrifying massacre which occurred in El Salvador in 1981, having killed between 200 and 1000 civilians which included dozens of women and children; see Mark Danner, *The Massacre at El Mozote* (Vintage, April 1994), Raymond Bonner, *Weakness and Deceit: U.S. Policy and El Salvador* (Times Books, 1984), and Leigh Binford, *The El Mozote Massacre* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996). The U.N. Truth Commission Report on El Mozote can be found online at: <http://www.parascope.com/articles/0197/el_moz05.htm>. General information and sources on the massacre can be found at: <http://www.parascope.com/articles/0197/el_moz04.htm>.

² A similar article by Gellman, was run as a cover story days earlier: "Slaughter in Racak Changed Kosovo Policy," *Washington Post*, April 18, 1999, A1. It can be found online at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/policy041899.htm>. Also see Jefferey Smith and William Drozdiak, *WP Weekly*, April 19, 1999.

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Press Briefings with James B. Foley, Deputy Spokesman
and Principal Deputy for Public Affairs

December 23rd, 1997:

<http://secretary.state.gov/www/briefings/9712/971223db.html>

QUESTION: Do you have any reaction to the massacre of some four dozen people, villagers in southern Mexico?

MR. FOLEY: I've not seen the report. Was that today? We would obviously regret that and hope that the Mexican Government will attach the highest priority in investigating the incident, if it has taken place, and finding the perpetrators. But I'd not heard about that before coming in here.

QUESTION: It offers allegations that forces allied with the ruling party or the government were responsible?

MR. FOLEY: Well, I certainly can't comment on something that I haven't seen and that we haven't had a chance to study, certainly.

December 30th, 1997:

<http://secretary.state.gov/www/briefings/9712/971230db.html>

QUESTION: Any new information on the massacres in Chiapas?

MR. FOLEY: I don't have anything new today on the latest developments in the case. *We note the swift and, we believe, very serious actions taken by the government of Mexico to bring to justice those involved in this heinous crime.*

Mexico Attorney General Madrazo has made clear that the investigation of this case is ongoing and will continue. We certainly expect the investigation now underway in Mexico to shed light on the question of how such an atrocity could have occurred, and to indicate what steps can be taken to prevent further incidents.

You'll remember President Clinton expressed his outrage at the massacre the day before Christmas. The President supported President Zedillo's swift action to investigate this massacre, and to bring the perpetrators to justice.

QUESTION: Would the US Government favor a federalization of Chiapas, at least temporarily, to bring order?

MR. FOLEY: A federal what?

QUESTION: The Mexican Government is considering making Chiapas federal - taking federal control over Chiapas.

MR. FOLEY: That's an internal Mexican matter --

QUESTION: That's their matter?

MR. FOLEY: -- that we wouldn't comment on. Any other questions? Thank you.

January 9th, 1998:

<http://secretary.state.gov/www/briefings/9801/980109db.html>

QUESTION: Do you have any answer to the reports that the Mexican army was involved in the creation of paramilitary forces in Chiapas that were involved in the recent massacre of Indians?

MR. FOLEY: Well, we've seen the reports, but we have no information on the allegations. The Mexican Government, as we've indicated and applauded, has undertaken a full investigation of the massacre. We support President Zedillo's determination to bring to justice all those responsible, but we can't confirm those reports (note: emphasis is mine / added).

⁴ While reporting on Acteal as a journalist, this was personally told to me by a State Department official. For a journalistic account of Acteal, see Andrew Kennis, "Ten Years Later, It's Time to Recognize the U.S. Government's Responsibility for Acteal," *Narco News*, December 30, 2007. URL: <http://www.narconews.com/print.php3?ArticleID=2948&lang=en>

⁵ See an interesting comparison between the Sal Truth Commission findings and Congressional testimony: Comparison of U.S. administration testimony and reports with 1993 U.N. Truth Commission report on El Salvador: report prepared for the Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, by the Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress (1993). Call #: Y 4.F 76/1:T 28 (in U.S. documents, available through the Congressional Research Service: <<http://www.loc.gov/crsinfo/>>).

⁶ Those totals increased even further after Acteal, as by, "1998, Mexico sent more military personal to the US for training than any country in the Western Hemisphere; in 1999, Mexico was second only to Colombia" (Global Exchange, 2007).

⁷ The quote comes from a report presented to the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, on August 3-28, 1998 at the Palais des Nations, Geneva. Full report can be seen at: <<http://www.franciscansinternational.org/print/node/2427>>. For more information on the organization, see: <http://www.franciscansinternational.org/about_us />.

⁸ There have been two main sites that Mexican soldiers and commanding officers have received training from in the U.S.; the first being the well known School of the Americas located in Fort Benning, Georgia. First started in Panama in 1946 and later moved to Georgia, the school had to change its name to the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation amidst revelations of manuals used to instruct students on torture methods amongst other "counterinsurgency tactics." The web site "Just the Facts: A civilian's guide to U.S. defense and security assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean," reports that while "legally closed in 2001, the WHINSEC [or SOA] is located in the same building, and offers many of the same courses, as the school it replaces." "Just the Facts" also states that in comparison to all other U.S. military training sites, the SOA "attracts the largest number of Latin American military students." See the web site, "Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (Former School of the Americas) Fort Benning, Georgia," *Just the Facts* (last updated October 28, 2003):

<<http://www.ciponline.org/facts/soa.htm>>. *Just the Facts* stated the following in summarizing the SOA's troubled history:

The School of the Americas had been questioned for years, as it trained many military personnel before and during the years of the "national security doctrine" -- the dirty war years in the Southern Cone and the civil war years in Central America -- in which Latin American militaries ruled or had disproportionate government influence and committed serious human rights violations. Training manuals used at the SOA and elsewhere from the early 1980s through 1991 promoted techniques that violated human rights and democratic standards. SOA graduates continue to surface in news reports regarding both current human rights cases and new reports on past cases.

Wilson documented that, "600 Mexican military officers were trained [at SOA] from 1946-1994." However, that number was virtually matched by 1995, as by then, a sharp increase resulted in, "approximately 500 military and police from Mexico [having] studied 'drug training' at the SOA in 1995-1996." Wilson points out that "Since the 1994 uprising in Chiapas, Mexico has contributed more military personnel for training at the SOA than any other Latin American country." Furthermore, "Mexico also furnishes a number of instructors at the SOA" (Wilson, 1998).

Another important source of U.S. training of the Mexican military is the JFK Special Warfare Center, located in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. In 1998, 157 of the 172 students that were trained there were from Mexico. Also, high ranking military officials have graduated from Fort Bragg courses and gone on to serve in Mexico [SOURCE "United States Department of Defense, Department of State, Foreign Military Training and DoD Engagement Activities of Interest in Fiscal Years 1998 and 1999: A Report to Congress" (Washington: March 1999)].

SOA is costing taxpayers millions of dollars, thus leading to the discomfoting fact that U.S. citizens are funding schools that train foreign soldiers to go on to commit human rights abuses. *Just the Facts* reveals the following finances of the SOA:

The cost of keeping the WHINSEC's [SOA's] doors open is currently \$5.6 million. According to an August 2002 WHINSEC document, \$1.2 million comes from security assistance funds (mainly IMET and INC) and Foreign Military Sales (FMS).[9] The document does not specify the origin of the remaining \$4.4 million, though much is probably Defense Department operations and maintenance funding.

Again, the full summary is available online, at: <<http://www.ciponline.org/facts/soa.htm>>.

⁹ Information on the historic Perry visit was first found in Carlos Fazio's book, *The Third Link*, referenced in Triunfo Elizalde, "Mexico is Now the Country Which Sends the Greatest Number of Forces to United States Military Schools," *La Jornada* (August 16, 1998).

¹⁰ I found out about General Jose Ruben Rivas Peña through a telephone interview with Hendrick Voss, one of the researchers at the School of the Americas Watch <<http://www.soaw.org>>. This could have been done by any of the major papers and/or broadcast networks under investigation in this study, but Voss never heard from any of them. He had the following to say about Acteal and connections to the U.S.:

Before the Zapatista rebellion, there were very few SOA grads coming from Mexico. But after the rebellion, it skyrocketed. One-third of graduating class came from Mexico in 1997. One SOA graduate was Jose Ruben Peña. He took the staff and commander course. He is also the principal author of "Campaign Plan Chiapas 94." It was an internal document in the Mexican army that openly calls for the buildup of paramilitary and other defense forces in southern Mexico. Peña has also gone on record sharply criticizing Bishop Luiz's, liberation theology and the church.

There were 18 graduates who were involved with civilian targeted warfare, otherwise known as "low intensity conflict." *Covert Action Quarterly* published a list of at least 13 military officials with connections to the Acteal massacre who were trained in the U.S. The weapons used in the massacre at Acteal were supplied by the PRI Mayor of the municipality that Acteal was located in.

¹¹ Diana Johnstone, "The Racak Hoax," *Emperor's Clothes* (January 20, 1999). Article accessible via the web at: <<http://emperors-clothes.com/articles/Johnstone/racakhoax.htm>>.

¹² Also see John Kramer, Andrew Botterell, Fera Byrd & Jeremiah Price, "#12: Evidence Indicates No Pre-war Genocide in Kosovo and Possible U.S./KLA Plot to Create Disinformation," *Project Censored: Censored 2000: The Top 25 Censored Media Stories of 1999* (2000). In the independent media and foreign press, Project Censored reports that this analysis was found in the following sources: Mark Cook, "William Walker: 'Man With a Mission'," *CovertAction Quarterly* (Spring/Summer 1999); Editorial, "My Multinational Entity, Right or Wrong," *The Progressive Review* (June 1999); Pablo Ordaz, "Spanish Police and Forensic Experts have not Found Proof of Genocide in the North of Kosovo," *El Pais* (September 23, 1999). The mainstream media did cover this story as well, albeit only in the following source: Editorial, *Los Angeles Times* (October 29, 1999). The report read as follows:

According to the New York Times, the "turning point" to NATO's decision to go to war against Yugoslavia occurred on January 20, 1999 when U.S. diplomat William Walker led a group of news reporters to discover a so-called Serb massacre of some 45 Albanians in Racak, Kosovo. This story made international headlines and was later used to justify the NATO bombings.

The day before the "massacre," Serb police had a firefight with KLA rebels that was covered by an Associated Press (AP) film crew. At the end of day, the village was deserted. Then, the next day the village had been reoccupied by the KLA, and it was the KLA who initially led foreign visitors to the alleged massacre site. William Walker arrived at noon with additional journalists, and expressed his outrage at a "genocidal massacre" to the world press.

Walker's story remains shrouded with doubt. "What is disturbing," remarks war correspondent Renaud Girard, "is that the pictures filmed by the AP journalists radically contradict Walker's accusations." Challenges to Walker's massacre story were published in *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro*: "During the night, could the UCK (KLA) have gathered the bodies, in fact killed by Serb bullets, to set up a scene of cold-blooded massacre?" (*Le Figaro*). Belarussian and Finnish forensic experts were later unable to verify that a massacre had actually occurred at Racak.

Walker's pronounced massacre fueled NATO's justification for the air attacks on Serbia as a means of preventing genocide. However, reports from various foreign offices state that genocide was not occurring in Kosovo.

The *Progressive Review* reported that according to internal documents from Germany's Foreign Office and regional courts on January 6, 1999, "No cases of chronic malnutrition or insufficient medical treatment among the refugees are known and significant homelessness has not been observed." On January 12, other records noted: "Even in Kosovo an explicit political persecution linked to ethnicity is not verifiable." In addition, records from February 4 state: "The various reports presented to the Senate all agree the often-feared humanitarian catastrophe threatening the Albanian civil population has been averted." February 24 records state: "Events since February and March 1998 do not evidence a persecution program based on Albanian ethnicity." Records from March: "Ethnic Albanians in Kosovo have neither been, nor are now, exposed to regional or countrywide group persecution in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia."

Additionally, *El Pais* reports that Spanish forensic experts have not found proof of genocide in the post-war region of northern Kosovo. NATO told the Spanish forensic teams that they were going into the worst part of Kosovo and to be prepared to perform 2,000 autopsies. Only 187 bodies were found in nine villages. They were buried in individual graves (most of which pointed toward Mecca to comply with the Albanian Kidovar religious custom) and without sign of torture.

Complete list of censored stories in 1999, which includes several others on the war in Yugoslavia, are available at: <<http://www.projectcensored.org/publications/2000/>>.

¹³ As Ackerman noted, “according to the Berliner Zeitung (1/16/01), the Finnish investigators could not establish that the victims were civilians, whether they were from Racak, or even exactly where they had been killed. Furthermore, the investigators found only one body that showed traces of an execution-style killing, and no evidence at all that the bodies had been mutilated.”

¹⁴ Also see follow-up report, “Update on Racak,” FAIR (July 18, 2001); full update accessible from a link in the original report (link reads, “See A update on Racak (7/18/01),” and can be found at the bottom of: <<http://www.fair.org/press-releases/racak.html>>).

¹⁵ See previous endnote.

Introduction

The relationship between social movement and news coverage of them has long been studied by an array of scholars. Important past studies have found that the “social disorder” theme tends to dominate news coverage, where themes are inter-woven with chaotic and out-of-control depictions (McLeod & Herto, 1999); that a “protest paradigm” negatively portrays and/or personalizes protesters (Schultz, 2000); strong support for the status quo and government intervention (Donohue, Tichenor, & Olien 1995), as recently evidenced in the deference toward globalization policy makers and officials over that of protesters, in a way that favored elites over citizen-activists (Bennett et al., 2004) and lastly; a skirting of substantive issues that the movement is trying to bring to attention (Gitlin, 1980).

While all of these works have amply demonstrated the poor manner in which U.S. news media have covered social movements, none of them have sufficiently focused on the overlying political and economic factors which shape and constrain news content. The MDM attempts to add theoretical weight to this literature by paying much more credence to these factors. A major component of the MDM is its expectation that the impact the movement has on the government or corporation it is opposing, as well as the type of relationship the given country has with Washington, will both be of extreme importance in terms of resulting news content for elite agenda-setting news media in the U.S. The thesis on social movements that is derived from the MDM is that these factors will largely explain dichotomous tendencies in news content in a similar manner to what has already been found in regards to individuals victimized by human rights abuses (see chapter 5 and Herman & Chomsky, 2002), albeit with some important and additional specifications (see chapter 3, Table 3.1). Most scholarly studies have also neglected to analyze U.S. news coverage of social movements based beyond the U.S.’s continental borders, which is largely why case studies in this dissertation have purposefully focused on such movements.

The synthesis of the IM and PM is a very important part of the MDM but is not adequate in theorizing the important role that social movements play in shaping news coverage. Namely, both models overlook this importance and only pay deferential attention to it, as has been appropriately criticized elsewhere in relation to the PM

(Kumar, 2007, pp. 168-170). While the IM has taken into greater theoretical consideration the role social movements can play in terms of their impact on the debate in Washington and thus in turn, on news media content (Mermin, 1999), it fails to look at the dichotomous content tendencies the MDM posits as being present. Thus, with the Ecuador case-study as well as this one, the MDM aspires to take a productive step in this direction.

The indexing components of the MDM should be useful – thanks to the differing time periods when there was both elite consensus and later on conflict in Washington over Vieques – in explaining coverage results and possible discrepancies in the amount of coverage attained at differing times, as well as possible differences in the amount of critical viewpoints referenced.¹ In the case of Vieques, corporate interests were definitely at stake and affected by the issues at hand. The U.S. Navy has a long history and close relationship with the powerful corporate military manufacturer Boeing. The *New York Times* has long accepted advertisements from Boeing that are often placed on the same pages as its editorials.

The case-study of Vieques is less clear-cut and simple as the Ecuador case-study. In Vieques, matters were a bit more complex, which poses a better opportunity to elucidate as well as evaluate the more subtle and nuanced parts of the MDM. Starting out as a marginalized and largely unnoticed social movement, albeit with mass support and participation, the “Free Vieques” movement gathered considerable steam and momentum over time, attracting the attention and support not only of the Puerto Rican public, but also of key public officials, policy makers (including most notably, the Governor of New York and eventually, the Clinton administration itself) and even Hollywood celebrities (who eventually took out a full-page advertisement in *The New York Times*).

Most importantly, Vieques represents an opportunity to assess expectations regarding *variation* over time and the passage of changing political and economic circumstances. With Vieques, the government changed its positions and had elite divisions. It also had a popular movement that managed to impact such positioning, one of the key exceptional conditions that the MDM posits will result in some exceptional aspects of news content. Vieques is also made further complex and nuanced by having featured elements of international issues tied into domestic politics. Vieques is part of

U.S. territory, but the conflict involved the U.S. Navy and its desires to continue training there in preparation for international conflict.

The case-study also represents an opportunity to test the limits of variation. The MDM does posit that changing political circumstances will result in changed news content as well, but not without limits when it comes to an unworthy social movement. Given the opposition that the social movement was taking to a major military policy, Vieques remains a firm example of an unworthy social movement. Even when changing political circumstances result in a transition to a less “unworthy” status, the MDM expects limits to nevertheless remain in place. Thus, this case-study will assess whether the kind of limits that the MDM expects come to fruition.

Vieques is a desirable case-study because there are a number of time periods with different circumstances that enable the MDM to be assessed on multiple fronts. Expectations without conditional circumstances, as well as with them, can and will be tested with this case-study. First, however, a detailed survey of the relevant history and background in the case-study will be reviewed.

History and Background

Vieques is an island that is located about 15 miles southeast of the main island of Puerto Rico. It has a population of about ten thousand residents and is one of Puerto Rico’s 79 municipalities. In 1941, Congress authorized the U.S. Navy to expropriate 22,000 of the 33,000 acres worth of land in Vieques (Ayala & Carro, n.d.; Backiel, 2003; Casa & Fresneda, 2006). Reportedly, residents were only given 24 hours notice to evacuate the expropriated areas. By 1948, bombing exercises commenced and lasted for the next 55 years.

In 1939, just a few years before the Navy expropriated much of Vieques, the Navy had also established themselves and conducted bombing exercises from another Puerto Rican island, named Culebra (Delgado Cintrón, 1989). Responding to pressure from protests that had culminated from 1971, a Presidential order issued by the Nixon administration in 1974 resulted in the Navy withdrawing from Culebra in 1975. This withdrawal, however, fueled public pressure in Vieques, primarily led by the fishermen, to also evacuate the Navy from its island. Viequenses suffered from low levels of employment and one of the few viable industries that was present for the island, was

fishing. The industry, however, had been severely disrupted by the Navy's presence, which resulted not only in environmental problems negatively impacting the fishing industry, but many other environmental and health-related problems that would be revealed in future years.

In May 1979, hundreds protested against the Navy while the fishermen maneuvered their small boats around to prevent a Navy ship from disembarking. The Navy eventually did disembark after having used a massive water hose against the fishermen boats. Twenty-one demonstrators were arrested (Robson, 1980). In one raucous scene that was photographed, a heavy-set marshal knelt on the back of an elderly woman while pressing her face into the sand (McCaffrey, 2002, p. 89). Some of the "Vieques 21" arrestees were convicted, such as Angel Rodríguez Cristóbal. Rodríguez died under suspicious circumstances in prison on November 11, 1979, two months into his six month prison term. Legal battles and debilitating developments such as these sapped a lot of the energy from an otherwise strong movement (McCaffrey, 2002, p. 90).

The Navy has a long history of acting against the public will in Vieques and mechanizing a variety of tactics to prolong its presence there. This would be seen in more recent years, but was also evidenced in the early history of resistance against a continued Naval presence, as is revealed by an internal memo from the Navy which contained plans to divide and conquer the movement. Such plans included a public relations official being assigned to the island along with more punitive measures (U.S. Navy, 1978).

Punitive measures took their toll on the movement of the 70's and significant organizing took a number of years to regenerate, reformulate and gain the power and strength to influence policy. By the Spring of 1993, however, signs of regeneration started to appear, as a new, broad-based, grassroots coalition was founded and called the *Comité pro Rescate y Desarrollo de Vieques* (the Committee to Rescue and Develop Vieques; McCaffrey, 2002, p. 126). Shortly thereafter, a newer and more broadly focused fishermen's group formed, called the *Grupo pro Derechos de los Pescadores Viequenses* (Vieques Fishermen's Rights Group) (Cotto, 1993). These groups laid the groundwork for the effective activism that followed in the wake of what wound up being a watershed event in Viequense history.

On April 19, 1999, two Boeing-manufactured F/A-18 Hornet jets mistook the navy's red-and-white checked observation post, at its Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility in Vieques, for a test-bombing target. Subsequently, the jets dropped two 500 pound Mark 82 bombs on the facility and killed Vieques resident and security guard David Sanes Rodríguez almost immediately after impact. The errant bombing also injured three other people,² leaving them all in serious condition (Backiel, 2003). The bombing fatality instantly galvanized the Vieques movement and raised the ante in terms of its actions and resistance.

For over a year, thirteen peace encampments were organized shortly following the death of Sanes, which successfully prevented the U.S. Navy from continuing its bombing exercises. Several large aircraft carriers, the U.S.S. George Washington and the U.S.S. Eisenhower, were forced to relocate because of the encampments (Ayala, 2001), which included a schoolhouse amongst over a dozen other resistance sites (McCaffrey, 2002, p. 108, figure 7). The movement was reinvigorated, as groups such as the *Alianza de Mujeres de Vieques* (Vieques Women's Alliance) were founded during these encampments. In the case of the Women's Alliance, the group was created by activists right in front of the chain-link fence of Camp García, which serves as the boundary point of the military-controlled land of Vieques (McCaffrey, 2002, p. 162). Indeed, the Vieques movement was growing in the midst of the encampments and in a dramatic fashion.

The coalition of grassroots groups that were part of the reinvigorated Vieques movement was broad and consisted of, "the Teachers Federation of Puerto Rico, students from the University of Puerto Rico, church groups with prominent support from the Catholic Bishop of Caguas in the island of Puerto Rico, women's groups and environmental groups to Christian Peacemaker Teams from the United States and other pacifists and antimilitarists" (Ayala, 2001). Steeped on the effectiveness of the encampments and the enlargement of the struggle, the Vieques movement would go beyond expansion of grassroots groups and also included prominent celebrities and public officials. The Vieques movement became not only a popularly supported movement, but a well-known and influential one as well.

Following the Sanes death and the encampments that prevented continued Naval bombing exercises, President Clinton charged Defense Secretary William Cohen on June

9, 1999 with the task of forming a special panel to study the Vieques situation and come up with recommendations. The panel, which was chaired by Frank Rush, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for force management policy, released its recommendations on October 19 and suggested that the Navy look for other locations than Vieques for its exercises and remove itself from Vieques within five years (CRS, 2003).

Following the Rush panel recommendations, the Clinton – Rosselló Plan was agreed to and announced on January 31, 2000. This also proved to be a galvanizing development for the movement, as the “compromise” that was part of the plan was not popularly supported and led to even more resistance. Until the Sanes fatality, the Navy had been conducting training exercises 180 days of the year, 120 of which were reserved for “integrated” (land-sea-air and ship-to-shore), live ammunition and bombing exercises (CRS, 2003, p. 2). The Clinton – Rosselló Plan did not halt the training or bombings, and instead, authorized their continuation for 90 days a year. Viequenses were not given the right to vote on the continued presence of the Navy until November 6, 2001. The only two options that residents would be given in the referendum, according to the plan, would be to have the Navy evicted no earlier than May 1, 2003. If voters chose against a continued presence, a \$40-million request would be made to Congress for community assistance. If voters chose to allow the Navy to continue its presence, a request was promised to be made to Congress for an additional \$50-million worth of funding for infrastructural development (CRS, 2003, p. 3).

Not even a month following the plan’s announcement, the largest demonstration in Puerto Rican history was organized in San Juan, as a means to express opposition to the brokered deal. According to local officials, the protest attracted upwards of 150,000 people, which was held on February 21, 2000 (McCaffrey, 2002, p. 169). Included amongst the major issues and demands raised during the protest were the following: an immediate departure by the Navy and an immediate cessation of training and bombing exercises (Rivera, 2000); environmental cleanup and repair (McCaffrey, 2008, 2009); economic development and increased job opportunities, in light of Vieques suffering one of the worst unemployment rates in Puerto Rico (McCaffrey, 2002, p. 12); reparation payments (International Tribunal, 2000); and adequate medical attention to the increased

cancer rates and related medical problems of many islanders (Ruiz-Marrero, 2001; McCaffrey, 2002, p. 7).

The many encampments setup on the Naval bombing range in Vieques continued during and after the San Juan protest, until 300 U.S. federal agents forcibly removed and arrested 216 protestors on May 4, 2000. Amongst those arrested included public officials, such as Robert Kennedy Jr., New York Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez, Chicago Congressman Luis Gutiérrez, New York City Councilman Jose Rivera, New York State Assemblyman Roberto Ramirez of New York (Backiel, 2003; McCaffrey, 2002, p. 170). Naval exercises and training resumed on June 5, 2000, albeit purportedly only with “inert” bombs. Resistance would continue, however, as more than 1,500 demonstrators were arrested trying to re-enter bombing area through September 2001.

While the summer time reigned in bombing exercises on Vieques once again, mass protests were still organized and continued. Thousands rallied against the continued presence of the Navy in San Juan again on August 6, 2000. In light of this, it was unsurprising that the incumbent governor of Puerto Rico, Pedro Rosselló, suffered a marked loss against challenger Sila Calderón of the Popular Democratic Party. Calderón, in contrast to Rosselló, supported the immediate and permanent end of all military activities on Vieques. Meanwhile, Damaso Serrano, was also elected and became the first mayor of Vieques to openly criticize the naval presence (McCaffrey, 2002, p. 172). Calderón was said to have ridden a “wave of anti-American sentiment” (McKinley, 2001).

The seat change in Puerto Rican politics in relation to Vieques was important, but of even greater importance was Republican Governor George Pataki’s (NY) decision to support the Vieques movement and its demand for immediate and permanent cessation. During an election year, many political observers deemed that Pataki had to support the movement, as most non-Latino voters were apathetic about the issue, while Puerto Ricans (and to a certain extent, it was assumed Latinos in general), cared a great deal about the fate of Vieques (McKinley, 2001). Pataki’s role proved to be nothing less than vital in brokering agreements with fellow-Republican party member, President Bush.

The first brokered agreement fell in the wake of private meetings between Governor Calderón, Governor Pataki and President Bush. On March 1, 2001, less than a year after the mass arrests facilitated the resumption of bombing exercises, the Pentagon

announced that it would suspend any further bombing in Vieques. Following the Pentagon announcement, Governor Pataki continued his support for the Vieques movement by visiting the island. During his visit, he spoke out against the Navy's presence, met with a Navy official, attended a state dinner at Governor Calderón's residence and raised Republican-party campaign funds (McKinley, 2001).

On April 24, 2001, Governor Calderón's bill to reduce noise restrictions in a way that would effectively prohibit the Navy from engaging in ship-to-shore gunfire was signed into law. A federal lawsuit was also introduced arguing that the Navy's training activities would threaten public health and violate both the new noise-restriction law, as well as the 1972 federal Noise Control Act (CRS, 2003). However, two days later on April 26, a U.S. federal judge ruled that military exercises could resume on Vieques, effectively reversing the temporary Pentagon suspension (Buncombe, 2001). Immediately, the movement mobilized for mass demonstrations. As the U.S. Navy resumed bombing exercises on Vieques, 56 protesters were arrested (Orlando Sentinel, 2001). With protestors routinely getting arrested, mass demonstrations being organized on a moment's notice, and two prominent Governors now supportive of the movement, matters were reaching a fever pitch.

In an attempt to convince President Bush to permanently cease Naval bombing exercises, Governor Pataki visited the White House on June 12, 2001. A day later, President Bush finally announced a policy that made the counter-productive Clinton – Rosselló moot by stating that bombing exercises would simply cease as of May 1, 2003 (Sisk & DeFrank, 2001). Governor Calderón and Pataki welcomed the plan, as far as it went, but both stated their continued position that training operations should end immediately (CRS, 2003).

On July 29, a referendum was organized by the Puerto Rican government. The residents of Vieques voted on whether the bombing should continue and if not, when it should discontinue. Opponents of the navy bombing and supporters of immediate cessation gathered 68% of the vote (BBC, 2001). Vote turnout was 80.6% percent of the island's 5,893 registered voters. About 30% voted to permit operations to continue indefinitely and about 2% voted for operations to cease by May 1, 2003. Once again, the public will of Viequenses was at odds with U.S. military policy, as Bush's announcement

was to continue “inert” bombing until May 1, 2003 (that is, the plan supported by only 2% of the island’s voters). Days later, the US Navy used tear gas and foam rubber projectiles to clear protesters and journalists, a practice that was reportedly common (McCaffrey, 2002, p. 171).

The following year brought a setback to the Vieques movement, as the federal lawsuit brought by Governor Calderón was dismissed. The denial, reached on January 2, 2002, stated that Congress never intended, “to create a private action for violations by a federal entity of the state and local environmental noise requirements” (O’Rourke, 2003). Before the end of a year that saw continued “inert” bombing exercises, one of the movement’s most moving symbols perished.

Milivya Adams Calderon, a young cancer patient from Vieques, died at Philadelphia Children’s Hospital on November 2, 2002 (James, 2002). Calderon had become the “poster child” of the Vieques movement, as she was diagnosed with cancer at the young age of 2, with high levels of chemicals having been found in her blood, a fate dealt not only to Calderon, but to many other women as well (Ginty, 2007). In spite of the death, an end was finally within sight to the continued bombing and naval presence.

The last scheduled round of weapons tests on Vieques was conducted on February 8, 2003. The official withdrawal of the U.S. Navy withdrew occurred on April 30, prompting festive celebrations (Campbell, 2003). On March 31, 2004, the remaining U.S. Navy ships and troops were scheduled to depart Roosevelt Roads Naval Station, Vieques, Puerto Rico. The complete withdrawal marked an end to its use for six decades.

Revelations came out in July 2005 about a scandal of significant proportion involving the U.S. government and a public relations firm it illegally contracted. Upwards of \$1.7 million dollars was paid to the Rendon Group by the U.S. Navy so as to influence the outcome of the non-binding referendum of 2001. The press release distributed by Judicial Watch, the non-profit and non-governmental organization that released documents, presented scathing evidence against clearly illegal activities by the Navy. One paragraph in the release read as follows:

The Navy contract tasks for The Rendon Group included: “. . . organize local leaders to build grassroots communications support . . . ensure the integrity of the voting process . . . develop methods and tracking procedures to increase support among citizens.” Federal law restricts the political activities of government

agencies and employees. Also, the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948 (22 U.S.C. ' 1461), forbids the domestic dissemination of U.S. government authored or developed propaganda or “official news” deliberately designed to influence public opinion or policy (Miller, 2005).

Also noteworthy is that Judicial Watch obtained the documents in a dramatic manner, as the watchdog group had to wage a legal battle for almost a year to force the government to honor various and previously denied Freedom of Information requests (Judicial Watch, 2005).

Source Under Evaluation

The source that was selected for evaluation in this study was the daily newspaper, the *New York Times*. This was done for many reasons. First off, the *Times* has a considerable influence, not only because of its elite readership, but also because many other newspapers look to the *Times* for story and theme selection of their news. As Mermin puts it, “the impact of the *New York Times* on what other papers report is at its height in the area of foreign policy” (1999, p. 13). For this reason, many other media analyses have focused their energies on analyzing the performance of this elite print medium.³

MDM Expectation and Hypotheses

The MDM has a number of expectations for a case study on an unworthy social movement like that of Vieques. The MDM has more ambiguous expectations for issues that have a more domestic footing. Given that Vieques is an island that is part of Puerto Rico, a U.S. commonwealth territory, the issues surrounding the social movement and Vieques are partially domestic in nature. They are partially domestic, however, because Puerto Rico’s status has been subject to an age-old debate. Some scholars argue that Puerto Rico, and certainly its impoverished islands of Vieques and Culebra, is more of a colony of the United States than a fairly treated territory (Caban 2000). Furthermore, the military that was training on the island of Vieques was doing so in preparation for international military policies being carried out abroad. Therefore, in many respects, Vieques was a mixed issue. In another key aspect, Vieques was ambiguous as well, as a result of changing governmental positioning. These will carry a certain set of expectations in and of themselves.

In table 3.1, the MDM states that social movements with origins in countries that are allied with U.S. foreign policies are expected to be deemed “unworthy” by news coverage. As a result of Puerto Rico’s stance aligning with U.S. policy (at least initially so), official governmental sources will be used to a large degree in contrast to unofficial sourcing, which will be minimal and significantly less than utilization of official sources. In terms of volume of coverage, the status of Vieques as an oppositional social movement to official military policy will result in minimal coverage.

However, the case of Vieques was selected purposefully as an ideal test of the MDM’s expectations on variation given the changing political and policy circumstances involved. The presence of this variation makes Vieques a preferable case study for the MDM’s more nuanced components. While the expectations just stated above do apply to a sizeable portion of Vieques coverage, it does not apply to all of it. Instead, when the Governorship of Puerto Rico changed hands in January 2000, along with its positioning on Vieques, inter-party strife and elite disagreement began to surface. Consequently, the movement to close down U.S. naval base operations in Vieques *should be* a clear example of how a social movement can have its unworthy status change over time, especially in light of changing political and policy circumstances.

The MDM expects certain aspects of news content to change because of these varying circumstances. News coverage should increase when additional governmental attention is brought to the matter. A further increase will be found when inter-party conflict is present in Washington. Even unofficial and movement sources will be less marginalized and have a larger presence in the news. On the other hand, weaknesses in news content are expected to persist in terms of a number of areas of news content.

As opposed to coverage of a “worthy” social movement (i.e. Free Tibet, the 2009 Iranian protests or the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests), news coverage of the movement’s most important and critical demands should be next to non-existent. Increases to unofficial sourcing will be limited in the sense that “person on the street” (i.e. not main organizers) quotations will still comprise a sizable portion of sourcing. Alienating depictions of the movement will still predominate when increased news coverage is present, while the methods of the movement will often be called into question as well. Exposure of U.S. culpability and faults should *still* be largely and noticeably

absent, while instances of substantive criticism should be rare and not elaborated on. The lack of changes to these latter two areas of news content (aspects 4 and 5 in Table 3.5) would support the MDM's expectation that they are amongst the more difficult content characteristics to impact when an unworthy social movement is in question. Even for social movements with some measure of success in influencing official policy, changes to these aspects of news content are extremely rare in cases involving military policy, sometimes portending very real and damaging consequences for the movement. As would be revealed in later developments, there were some definite consequences to the lack of attention given to the most pressing and substantive issues and demands of the Vieques movement.

In light of the expectations just noted above, the following is a list of specific hypotheses that will be tested and evaluated in this case-study:

- 1) the amount of coverage Vieques is granted will depend largely upon the kind of attention it attracts from public officials (IM);
- 2) detailed and humanizing coverage of the death of David Sanes Rodríguez will not be humanized and/or not highlighted, reflecting his status as an “unworthy victim” (PM);
- 3) official sources will be prominently and consistently consulted over those of unofficial sources (IM, PM, MDM);
- 4) articles that do rely more on unofficial sources will occur more prominently in periods where more governmental attention and/or elite division is present (IM);
- 5) splits in elite opinion over Vieques should result in increased coverage and a broader range of permissible opinion (i.e. increased unofficial sourcing and mentions of the social movement) (IM), but not without limits that are still narrow and confined (i.e. person off the street quotes off-setting or surpassing those of movement leaders) (MDM);
- 6) details surrounding the actual social movement which waged a campaign against the continued presence of the military will be overlooked or not highlighted; to the extent it *does* receive coverage, it will not highlight the movement's issues in the foreground, whether or not it garners the attention of important public officials, reflecting its continued status as an “unworthy social movement” (MDM);

7) the death of five-year-old Milivy Adams Calderon will not be accorded much attention or completely overlooked, reflecting her status as an “unworthy victim” (PM);

8) revelations concerning the scandal over the Rendon Group’s contract will be relegated to a superficial mentioning or completely overlooked, due to it implicating high ranking officials and eliciting little comment from influential public officials (MDM).

Methodology: Content Analysis

Content analysis, both qualitative and quantitative, is the main methodological tool that will be used in this study to evaluate media coverage on Vieques. Quantitative evaluations will be conducted through a content analysis that will compare the extent that official versus unofficial sourcing was utilized in coverage. The content analysis was based on a simple coding scheme (see addendum below). Qualitative inquiry will be utilized by answering key questions of the coverage under evaluation through textual analysis.

Was the *New York Times* able to report a significant amount of independent information? We will find this out by undertaking a number of tests, including analyzing the coverage distribution and placement of articles in relation to governmental positioning, attention from influential policy makers, policy stances and related changes. The extent that stories made the cover page of the front-page or metro sections will be considered. In addition to story placement and analysis of the volume of coverage related to the differing time periods, the content analysis will be anchored by textual analysis as well, as themes and narratives will be explored, especially in relation to how the social movement was depicted (or not). Were social movement demands and issues reported on and if so, in what manner, will be a question that will guide analysis of this case-study. (One of the critiques launched by the social movement was that the Naval presence was an example of colonialism, text will be analyzed to see if this theme was reported on at all.) Were narratives accepting of administration propagated themes of U.S. forces needing to be militarily “ready” and thus continue its presence at Vieques, ad-infinitum? Or, instead, did it cite critics (Blum, 2003; Chomsky, 2003, 2005, 2006; Johnson, 2004) who have criticized the growing US military presence around the world? Did coverage

buy into false claims by the U.S. Navy that it has contributed to the economic development of Vieques?

Sourcing will be a key factor evaluated in the analysis, and will go beyond only the content analysis, as I will look at how often the principal groups of the movement to get the Navy out of Vieques were used in articles. The existence of official sources against the presence of the Navy makes a distinction between official sources necessary (hence, the element of the content analysis that looks at supportive versus critical articles dominated by official sourcing). Independent sources will be looked for and coded as well, and a word search for key groups and activists will be conducted. Lastly, a comparison will be undertaken of the amount of coverage *before* Vieques received substantial attention from public officials with the amount of coverage it received *after* such attention was garnered, so as to further evaluate sourcing tendencies and story selection.

Cohen's Kappa was chosen to calculate inter-reliability coding statistics and to avoid unfair penalization of the smaller sample size used in this study. The two coders were the principal investigator and a trained, bi-lingual individual who has prior experience in having undertaken content analysis coding. Inter-reliability results were statistically valid and generated an average score of 0.81.

Time Periods

The time periods of the coverage that were selected for this analysis were purposefully based on the movement's most dramatic and important moments. As such, there were four time periods selected: 1) from April 1999 to September 1999, which included both the death of David Sanes Rodríguez and the revived social movement and encampments that followed it; 2) February 2000 to May 2000, which included a mass demonstration against the Naval presence in Vieques, that also happened to be the largest protest in Puerto Rican history; 3) from April 2001 until August 2001, which included the involvement of high-profile public officials and celebrities that rallied around the cause of Vieques, a much publicized trip by Governor George Pataki (R-NY), a key policy change announced by President Bush, and a non-binding referendum; 4) from November 17 until the present, which included the time following the death of Milivy Adams Calderon, a five-year old girl who died from cancer; and lastly, 5) from June 2005 until

the present, thus falling in the aftermath of revelations through a Freedom of Information Act request by Judicial Watch (originally contested by the government, but successfully won by the watchdog group) of the Navy's illegal contracting of the Rendon Group and their involvement in the non-binding referendum of 2001.

Content and Textual Analysis

Volume of Coverage: New York Times coverage from April 1999 to September 1999

The period following the death of David Sanes Rodríguez served to rejuvenate the movement to force the Navy out of Vieques. It also marked the first time in Vieques that a civilian had been killed as a result of Naval bombing practices in almost a half-a-century. Finally, it served to catalyze a campaign of civil disobedience and activism on a scale that Vieques had not seen since the 1970's (McCaffrey, 2002). Nonetheless, none of these facts were apparently sufficient to warrant significant coverage from the *Times*. The lack of coverage shown in table 6.1 below fulfilled the predictions of the MDM. The death of David Sanes Rodríguez was dramatic and served as a catalyst to the movement and could have easily served as a plausible news hook. However, Sanes was killed by the U.S. military and as the model would expect, there were no in-depth portrayals of Sanes, no portraits of his life and family, no interviews with his relatives, and no A1 cover page stories generating sympathy and outrage. Even Sanes's name was only mentioned a total of three times during the coverage period (an average then of less than one mention per story).

The table below illustrates how coverage broke down between all periods, along with official versus unofficial sourcing tendencies. Stories whose total sources were at least 60% official received that designation, as did stories which were comprised by at least 60% unofficial sources. Stories that fit into neither designation (less than 60% official or unofficial sources) were coded as ambiguous:

Table 6.1

Sourcing	Official	Unofficial	Ambiguous	Sec. Cover Story (A1/Metro)	Story Total
1) April '99 – September '99: period included both the death of David Sanes Rodriguez & the revived social movement & encampments that followed it.	3	1	1	0	5 (1 article, 4 briefs)
2) February 2000 – May '00: pd. included mass protest against Naval presence, as well as mass detention of protestors encamped on training ground; <i>protest received 0 pieces.</i>	5	3	1	0	9
3) April 2001 – August 2001: pd. included elite division of influential public officials, a trip by Governor George Pataki (R-NY), key policy change announced by President Bush, and a non-binding referendum.	27	9	0	10 (4 / 6)	36
4) Nov. 17 2001 – Present: search for any article mentioning the name Milivy Adams Calderon, a five-year old girl who died from cancer.	0	0	0	0	0
5) June 2005 – Present: search for any article mentioning Navy's illegal contracting of the Rendon Group and their involvement in the non-binding referendum of 2001.	0	0	0	0	0

For a full five months, the *Times* published a total of five pieces mentioning Vieques. Only one of the four was by a correspondent sent to the scene, while the others were merely briefs picked off the wires. Even a mere announcement of the death did not appear in the *Times* until May 10, 1999, almost a month after the killing. This happened because the first mention of the incident in the *Times* (04/20/99) did not even note that a fatality had occurred and no follow-up to the matter was undertaken. It wasn't until July

10, three months after Sanes had been killed, when the *Times* finally sent one of its correspondents to Vieques to write a piece on the topic.

The reason why the *Times* finally decided to start covering Vieques becomes clear in one of the lead paragraphs from its first article:

For the first time since its acquisition by the United States after the Spanish-American War, Puerto Rico, a self-governing commonwealth and an American military outpost in the Caribbean, is demanding that the Navy end all military activities in Vieques and return the land it acquired in the 1940's. Last week a special commission appointed by Gov. Pedro J. Rosselló concluded that the military training had caused disastrous economic and environmental damage and that it violated the human and constitutional rights of the 9,300 residents of Vieques. The panel recommended that the Navy clean up and leave (Navarro, 1999).

The timing of the release of this article, and reference to Governor Rosselló (as opposed to the social movement itself) and the more critical stance taken by him, suggests that the correspondent was sent out to Vieques because of Roselló and not because of the protestors. The article was published only a week after this changed tact, but conversely came *after* a two month absence of coverage of the kind of popularly supported and organized civil disobedience that had been undertaken in opposition to the Navy. This is a good example of the kind of sources that consistently generated coverage and stories from the *Times* (public officials, as opposed to the movement itself) in all time periods analyzed in this study.

The word 'movement' did not appear in the article, but supportive claims by Navy officials comprised a large majority of the article's sources.⁴ At one point, the *Times* went so far as to historically erase previous civilian deaths in Vieques down the memory hole, when it errantly reported, "The security guard killed in the April accident, 35-year-old David Sanes, was the first civilian casualty since the training exercises began." In fact, however, Sanes was *not* the first casualty and was one of many others, as McCaffrey informs us with her highly informative ethnographic-based study on Vieques, where she wrote the following:

The forties, fifties, and sixties saw a string of civilian casualties in Vieques. In 1940, a man and his son were killed when they walked down a path and their horse stepped on a grenade. In the mid-sixties, the navy lost a "test bomb with nuclear characteristics" off the coast of Vieques. In the nineties there were a series of incidents. In 1993, the navy dropped five bombs on the border of the civilian

sector. In 1996, bombs exploded in the coastal waters by a group of fishermen, seriously injuring one. In 1997, the National Guard riddled a parked police car and a town school bus with bullets (McCaffrey, 2002, p. 149).

The *Times* essentially “parroted” what the government said without further questioning.⁵

Sourcing Results

While we already have seen that *Times* coverage of one of the more dramatic moments of the movement to stop Navy bombing exercises in Vieques was at a bare minimum, what were the sourcing tendencies of the article and the few briefs that were published? The lone substantive article in the 1999 period that was evaluated (Associated Press, 1999) did *not* use the movement as a prominent source, much less unofficial sources. With the exception of only one brief, not one piece run in the *Times* during this period referred to the movement in Vieques in any significant manner.

While none of the major groups that were most active in the subsequent campaign of civil disobedience were ever mentioned in the 1999 coverage period, Navy officials and representatives were cited many times, often times with unquestioned justifications for their presence. A common refrain was the following quote, “‘If the Navy lost Vieques, carrier battle groups would deploy with substandard training,’ said Capt. James K. Stark Jr., commanding officer at the Roosevelt Roads Naval Station in Ceiba, P.R., to which the Navy range here belongs” (Associated Press, 1999).

Navy and military officials were quoted without additional questioning and the premises to their rationale for the continued Naval presence in Vieques were left unexamined. Why does the Navy “need” such extensive and expansive training? Is it really for purposes of “national defense,” or does it have to do with the ever-increasing U.S. military presence around the world and a related increase in the aggressiveness of U.S. foreign policy?⁶ The movement itself had different answers to these questions than that of officials and had they been asked, they would have raised more substantive criticism.

***New York Times* coverage from February 2000 – May 2000**

In February 2000, the largest demonstration in Puerto Rican history occurred. The demonstration was largely organized by religious forces in an effort to stop the continued presence of the Navy in Vieques. The mass protest was a culmination of a long and dedicated campaign of civil disobedience and direct action which had resulted in hundreds of arrests.

The results of the search conducted on Lexis-Nexis showed that the *Times* did not cover the demonstration. It did not send a correspondent to it and did not run a wire piece (despite one having been available). In fact, the demonstration barely warranted a mention in the paper, as it only had a photograph of the protest run with a caption (Associated Press, 2000).⁷ Throughout the month of February, no brief or article mentioning Vieques was run. As a result, coverage expectations were surpassed for February, as the demonstration, for all intents and purposes, was effectively blacked out of coverage in the *Times*.

***New York Times* coverage from April 2001 to August 2001**

The beginning of the spring in 2001 marked a very important time for Vieques, in that the movement managed to attract elite support from high-ranking public officials and celebrities alike. Important divisions between influential policy makers and the major parties themselves were also present. On June 13, 2001, President Bush announced a policy change toward Vieques and pledged to end bombing exercises and a removal of the Navy base from Vieques by May 2003. Before the death of David Sanes Rodríguez, Governor Pedro Rosselló was not firmly supportive of the movement in Vieques and only pledged rhetorical support. He forged a deal with President Clinton that was very unpopular in Vieques – an issue that was “sold out,” the description that McCaffrey used for the perception of many Puerto Ricans on the brokered deal between Clinton and Rosselló (2002, pp. 169-172) – and that many have said cost him a subsequent re-election bid. Instead, Puerto Rico elected a new governor, Governor Sila Calderón, who ran a campaign that promised to be supportive of evicting the Navy from Vieques. This development coupled with the adoption of Vieques as campaign issue by Republican Governor George Pataki, changed matters greatly. After Pataki met with President Bush, bombing was suspended within a matter of days. Celebrities took out a full page ad in the

New York Times and some even began undertaking civil disobedience themselves. Despite Pataki's success, however, there was still a clear division between elites as President Bush enacted a policy of a delayed end to the bombing, while Pataki, Governor Calderón and then Senatorial candidate Hillary Clinton favored an immediate end to the bombing. There was still yet more division, in terms of *both* inter and intra-party strife, as many Congressional Democrats and Republicans opposed an end at all to the Naval presence in Vieques.

Volume of Coverage

The amount of coverage in the *Times* reflected these high-profile changes, in that media attention, story totals and publicity about Vieques reached its zenith during this period (see Table 6.1). When compared to the results for the 1999 period, the sheer number of articles is striking. There were 36 pieces run on Vieques, the majority of which were full fledged articles. This was considerably more than the 4 briefs and 1 article run during 1999 coverage period (which was the same length of time as the 2001 period) or the 8 articles and 1 brief for the 2000 coverage period surveyed (none of which being a cover story). The 2001 period also saw articles that highlighted the movement in ways that had not been done before. For the first time ever, Vieques was making the cover as it had four cover-page stories in the front section (i.e. "A1" articles) and six articles that were on the front page of the Metro section of the *Times*.*

In addition to volume of coverage, the placement and types of articles were also evaluated. As table 6.1 illustrated, cover stories were exclusively garnered in the third time period when governmental interest and elite divisions were at its highest. This fact notwithstanding, less than a third of the articles made the cover of either the front-page section of the *Times* or the Metro section. In fact, most of the cover stories that were run were placed in the Metro section, as opposed to the more prominent front-page section. Amongst the four cover stories that made the prestigious "A1" placement, two featured President Bush. For the other two cover stories, one was about the results of the non-binding referendum (July 30) and the other was about the protesters (April 28).

* Although other news media sources in this study were not evaluated, at least one scholar who undertook a media analysis of international sources during this same period noted that this was the "blitzkrieg" period of media coverage for Vieques (Jimenez, 2001, p. 209).

For the other six articles that were on the Metro section's cover page, half of those were on jailed political celebrities. The other two were featuring Governor Pataki and the Navy. None featured the movement itself. Thus, only one of the thirty-five articles that appeared in the *Times* was a cover story that featured the protesters. Analysis of this article, which was an on-the-scene report, will be undertaken after a look at the sourcing tendencies found in this coverage period.

Sourcing Results

As shown above in table 6.1, official sourcing tendencies dominated in every single source period. Official sourcing domination did drop, however, for the third time period, as the MDM expected. More pieces containing mostly unofficial sources existed for this time period than in any other (22%).

Additional coding was also conducted on the use of the sources in the stories that were surveyed. For stories that contained mostly official sources, coding was conducted to see whether the stance taken on the issue was supportive of prevailing policy (as was most often the case for military and administration officials), critical of it in both procedural and/or substantive ways (as was most often the case for Governor Pataki, Senatorial candidate Clinton and Governor Calderón), or ambiguous (as was most often the case for articles focusing on jailed celebrities for actions of civil disobedience).

Table 6.2

Criticism for Stories w/ Mostly Official Sourcing	Supportive	Critical	Ambiguous	Story Total
April 1999 – September 1999: period included both the death of David Sanes Rodriguez & the revived social movement & encampments that followed it.	3	0	0	3
February 2000 – May 2000: pd. included mass protest against Naval presence, as well as mass detention of protestors encamped on training ground; <i>protest received 0 pieces.</i>	4	0	1	5
April 2001 – August 2001: pd. included elite division of influential public officials, a trip by Governor George Pataki (R-NY), key policy change announced by President Bush, and a non-binding referendum.	5	7	15 (14 of these stories were about jailed celebrities, w/ 7 focusing on Al Sharpton)	27
November 17 2001 – Present: search for any article mentioning the name Milivy Adams Calderon, a five-year old girl who died from cancer.	0	0	0	0
June 2005 – Present: search for any article mentioning Navy's illegal contracting of the Rendon Group and their involvement in the non-binding referendum of 2001.	0	0	0	0

An important result of this coding was that 7 articles had official sourcing mostly characterized by criticism in the April 2001 – August 2001 time period, as opposed to support for the prevailing administrative policy. This was the *only* time period which registered any articles that had more criticism than support by officials. The effects of the movement on policy were being felt and news content responded accordingly in *Times* coverage.

Official sources still outnumbered unofficial sources by 3 to 1 in the 2001 coverage period. Only a smattering of articles even mentioned the movement at all, and never specifically referred to any of the major group’s actors, as revealed by coding of stories mostly dominated by unofficial sources. Many articles depended instead on “person off-the-street” (i.e. people who are *not* main organizers and random individuals interviewed) sources. As table 6.3 below reveals, only one more article cited movement leaders at least twice while all others relied exclusively on “person off-the-street” sources:

Table 6.3

Coding for Stories with Mostly Unofficial Sourcing	Movement leaders cited at least twice	“Off the Street” quotes	Ambiguous	Story Total
April 1999 – September 1999: period included both the death of David Sanes Rodriguez & the revived social movement & encampments that followed it.	1	0	0	1
February 2000 – May 2000: pd. included mass protest against Naval presence, as well as mass detention of protestors encamped on training ground; <i>protest received 0 pieces.</i>	1	1	1	3
April 2001 – August 2001: pd. included elite division of influential public officials, a trip by Governor George Pataki (R-NY), key policy change announced by President Bush, and a non-binding referendum.	4	4	1	9 (8 articles, 1 brief)
November 17 2001 – Present: search for any article mentioning the name Milivy Adams Calderon, a five-year old girl who died from cancer.	0	0	0	0
June 2005 – Present: search for any article mentioning Navy’s illegal contracting of the Rendon Group and their involvement in the non-binding referendum of 2001.	0	0	0	0

An additional breakdown to the 2001 time period was also done to capture the kind of nuanced results the MDM would expect for this period of policy changes. Recall that after April and before June 13, there were significant divisions amongst influential policy makers. Governor Pataki had taken a trip to Vieques and given very vocal and strong support to the movement, but was going up against important Naval officials, and important Congresspersons from both parties. Senatorial candidate Clinton had also taken a strong stance on Vieques as well. After June 14, policy making differences diminished when President Bush changed military policy from a possible continuation of the Naval presence to a definitive, albeit delayed exit. Nonetheless, Governor Pataki and candidate Clinton continued to voice support for an immediate exit, as did the social movement. The movement started to attract more attention itself after June 13, with the added attention from important policy making officials, continued elite division, and its ability to have successfully impacted policy making and garner press attention accordingly.

The results shown in these tables reflect these changes. Front-page cover stories increased following President Bush's policy change, as well as the proportion of articles dominated by unofficial sourcing. As important officials grew more vocally critical about the Navy's position on Vieques in April and beyond, news content included more of such criticism (see Table 6.5). When President Bush made his policy change and showed to the press that the movement was impacting policy, it cued the *Times* to cover and cite the movement more (see Tables 6.4 & 6.5), much along the lines of the "trail of power" concept first posited by Bennett (1995). These findings reflect MDM expectations in accordance with components drawn from the IM. But as an unworthy social movement, leaders in the movement were only quoted *slightly* more frequently than previous periods and *continued* to be offset by "person off-the-street" quotations (see Table 6.6). This finding reflects the original component of the MDM in terms of unworthy social movement marginalization, which occurs even within periods of variance and additional attention from important officials. Certain exceptions *can* and *do* occur when a social movement manages to impact policy and attract attention, but these exceptions are not without important limits, as duly demonstrated in this case-study.

Table 6.4

Sourcing	Official	Unofficial	Ambiguous	Sec. Cover Story (A1/Metro)	Story Total
April 2001 – June 12, 2001: pd. when Governor Pataki lobbied most heavily for immediate removal of the Naval base in Vieques.	16	2	0	5 (1 / 4)	18
June 13, '01 – August 5, '01: pd. following change of policy by President George W. Bush to supporting delayed removal of the Naval base in Vieques.	11	7	0	5 (3 / 2)	18

Table 6.5

Criticism for Stories w/ Mostly Official Sourcing	Supportive	Critical	Ambiguous	Story Total
April 2, 2001 – June 13 2001: period in which Governor Pataki was vocal in support of Naval departure, but <i>before</i> President Bush took any stance against Navy.	2	4	10 <i>(all of these stories were about jailed celebrities, w/ 6 focusing on Al Sharpton)</i>	16
June 14, 2001 – August 5, 2001: period of increased elite division, with movement leaders and some public officials calling for immediate Naval departure, President Bush changing administration policy to eventual departure, and other opposition calling for no departure.	3	3	5 <i>(4 of these stories were about jailed celebrities, w/ 1 focusing on Al Sharpton)</i>	11 <i>(this period saw an increase in unofficially sourced stories, thus decreasing official source total)</i>

Table 6.6

Coding for Stories with Mostly Unofficial Sourcing	Movement leaders cited at least twice	“Off the Street” quotes	Ambiguous	Story Total
April 2, 2001 – June 13 2001: period in which Governor Pataki was vocal in support of Naval departure, but <i>before</i> President Bush took any stance against Navy.	0	2	0	2
June 14, 2001 – August 5, 2001: period of increased elite division, with movement leaders and some public officials calling for immediate Naval departure, President Bush changing administration policy to eventual departure, and other opposition calling for no departure.	4	2	1	7

Additional Analysis

One of the critiques by movement organizers was that Vieques represented a clear example of colonial treatment by the U.S. toward Puerto Rico. However, the first time that the word “colonialism” (or its variants) appeared in any of the coverage analyzed from the *Times* in 2001 was July 15, months after Pataki’s visit to the island and days after Bush’s announcement. Even at that point, however, it only appeared in the following paragraph:

Vieques, simply, is an activist’s dream, offering something for everyone. It has the destruction of an ecological system, along with claims that the people are being exposed to toxic chemicals, which environmentalists are seizing upon. It has the specter of American colonialism that human rights advocates and Puerto Rican nationalists are pointing to. It has the suggestion of racism that civil rights activists and Hispanic leaders are up in arms over (Hernandez, 2001).

Much of the article, headlined appropriately “A Tiny Island, but a Cause So Celebre; From New York to Hollywood, Vieques Has Issues for Everyone,” carried the same tone throughout, in which Vieques was defined as a “dream,” instead of a nightmare. It was not the first time that the *Times* had cheapened the substance of the movement as it tried to define the driving force behind it as a mere opportunity for

outside activists to rebel, as opposed to a legitimate effort by local residents to stop the Navy from pummeling them further with resulting health crises, environmental decay and destruction, and economic misery.

Militarism and colonialism were referred to in a couple more instances, but in articles that came after President Bush's announcement (Gonzalez, 2001, p. A12; Hernandez, 2001, p. A25). In fact, the movement demand for self-determination was only referred to when Viequenses were about to go to the polls on a non-binding referendum. The article, however, failed to quote unofficial sources lamenting that Viequenses did not have a *binding* referendum that would bring about more meaningful self-determination than a non-binding referendum could achieve, a strong position that the movement had all along (in spite of it going unnoticed by the *Times*).

In a "Tiny Island Turns Into a Symbol of Discontent," the *Times* ran the following two paragraphs on April 27, which echoed some of the sentiments of the article just noted above:

But the campaign to turn Vieques into a cause celebre is not universally admired among the 9,400 residents of this 33,000-acre island off the eastern tip of Puerto Rico. While many residents have painted "No Mas Bombas" -- no more bombs -- on their car windows, there is a quiet contingent that resents the protesters, the politicians and the reporters.

The most persistent protesters, the locals point out, are from the Big Island -- as Puerto Rico is called by Vieques residents -- intellectuals and ideologues who did not care a wisp about Vieques until recently. "These big city guys are just playing with us, using Vieques for their own political end," said Juan Morales, a 56-year-old handyman, as he sipped a beer at a roadside bodega (Jacobs, 2001).

Not only is Vieques once again defined as nothing more than a "cause celebre," but the *Times* also refers to division on the island that simply did not exist. Subsequent results in a number of referendums confirmed that the *Times* was quite mistaken in referring to only "Big Island" activists who were against the continued presence of the Navy in Vieques and showed broad local support for the positions activists were advocating.⁸ Beyond the referendum results, McCaffrey's first-hand research into Vieques casts away doubts on the issue, as she clearly notes how, "The Navy has consistently portrayed the struggle in Vieques as an anti-American agitation, led by outside extremists." The reality of the matter, McCaffrey countered, is that "Despite highly confrontational tactics and

dramatic imagery, the Vieques struggle is one that has been characterized by political moderation “(McCaffrey, 2002, p. 10). McCaffrey’s scholarly and ethnographic-based observations appear more credible than the conclusions printed by the *Times*.

The concept of economic development was not breached before President Bush’s reversal. Indeed, it wasn’t until June 15, two days after President Bush’s announcement that the concept was even referred to and only in the context of a development aid agreement brokered between former Governor Rosselló and President Clinton, an agreement referred to again on July 29. No details of the kind of economic suffering and hardship the island had weathered as a result of the presence of the Navy (McCaffrey, 2002, pp. 11, 99-100, 116) were expounded upon, much less even touched on.

The most prominent groups and individuals involved with the local movement from Vieques included the following: Viequenses United, Fishermen’s Co-op (Fisherman’s War), Committee to Rescue and Develop Vieques, the Vieques Women’s Alliance, the Vieques Fishermen’s Rights Group, Dr. Rafeal Rivera Castaño, Mario Martínez, Dora Vargas and Amelia Mulero. There was not any reference to these important local groups and activists in any of the coverage surveyed for this case-study.* Instead of movement groups appearing at all in coverage, Governor Pataki, Al Sharpton and President Bush dominated the coverage in terms of sourcing and citations. Each of them were mentioned or cited well over 100 times, while Governor Calderón was mentioned 57 times. Such results reflect how more stories were written about political celebrities being jailed, than about the issues that the movement in Vieques was actually fighting for. In fact, not one article in the period surveyed or even featured any of the major issues that spurred the movement on; that is, there were no features on cancer, on the lack of economic development in Vieques that has resulted from the Naval presence, or on the death of David Sanes. While a lot of the *Times* coverage went into great detail about the internal political intrigues of the various public officials and political celebrities that involved themselves with Vieques (either by changing positions on the issue or by ostensibly supporting the removal of the Navy), no coverage went into any depth about the movement itself. Also left out of coverage was the omission of any mention made of

* In a search for the Committee to Rescue and Develop Vieques, it was accidentally found that the Senate’s and House’s Armed Services Committees were cited a total of at least a half a dozen times in the coverage.

the new and leading role that women played in bringing about the rejuvenation of the movement and its success in forcing public officials to take a stand against the presence of the Navy (McCaffrey, 2002, pp. 162-166⁹).

***New York Times* coverage for November 2002**

On November 17, 2002, a young cancer patient from Vieques died. Milivy Adams Calderon was only five years old when she died, but not before she became a symbol of the movement to stop Navy bombing exercises in Vieques. Milivy was diagnosed with cancer at the tender age of 2 years old, a rarity for a child at that young of an age. A high level of foreign chemicals was found in her blood and many people blamed the military's contamination of Vieques as the principal cause. She quickly became a national symbol of the struggle against the Navy and its stubborn refusal to honor the desires of the inhabitants of the island it had exploited for decades. Her picture would often be seen on the placards and posters of activists during the many demonstrations and direct action against the continued Naval presence.

The *New York Times* did not cover Milivy's death with any article or brief. The only paper to have covered Milivy's death was a regional paper within the Lexis-Nexis database was a regional-based daily newspaper (James, 2002).¹⁰ Previously, no other U.S. daily had ever even mentioned Milivy, save for one back-page piece run in the *New York Post* the previous May (Alvarez, 2001).

***New York Times* coverage for July 2005 to the present**

On July 25, 2005, a startling revelation was released by Judicial Watch, a non-profit organization that specializes in uncovering and prosecuting governmental corruption. Upwards of \$1.7 million dollars was illegally paid to the Rendon Group by the U.S. Navy so as to influence the outcome of the non-binding referendum of 2001. This was a scandal of significant proportion and gave the media a chance to highlight corruption that involved high ranking officials illegally using taxpayer funds.

The history of the Rendon Group is such that breaking the Judicial Watch story could have lent well to a deeper investigative piece of the Group's questionable history from its past public relations work. Source Watch has the following description of the multi-million dollar PR firm:

The Rendon Group is a secretive public relations firm that has assisted a number of U.S. military interventions in nations including Argentina, Colombia, Haiti, Iraq, Kosovo, Panama and Zimbabwe. Rendon's activities include organizing the Iraqi National Congress, a PR front group designed to foment the overthrow of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein (SourceWatch, n.d.).

Judicial Watch not only revealed a scandal of significant proportions, it had to invest significant resources, time and money into a legal battle with the government to be able to do so. After over 11 months of evasion by the government over a lawful open records request, Judicial Watch was finally able to obtain the documentation it needed (though not without several legal proceedings that were undertaken to successfully force the government to reveal the information). The Navy apparently did not need to worry, however, as what would have been quite a damaging and scandalous revelation was completely uncovered by the *Times* and most other dailies.¹¹

Comparative Analysis of Findings between Time Periods Surveyed

When the dramatic death of David Sanes occurred in April 1999, there was a very plausible "news hook" in terms of possible generation of news coverage and attention. Sanes's death was one of the first casualties resulting from Naval bombing activities in Vieques after many decades of no fatal accidents and instantly mobilized hundreds of activists and encampments. A dramatic news story and continued coverage were easily present.

The results of the survey of the 1999 coverage period confirmed MDM expectations that journalistic norms and standards (i.e. covering dramatic and important news stories) do *not* overcome the institutional obstacles of covering a social movement opposing a major military policy, at least not without exceptional conditions. This helps to resolve the theoretical dispute between the IM and PM on institutional constraints versus journalistic standards and norms. Since important public officials did not have much to say about the death and ignored it, the news media followed suit and did the same. It was not until the Puerto Rican governor adopted a significant policy change that

even a substantive article by the *Times* was published. Even *then*, however, critical viewpoints were largely ignored, as duly demonstrated. This serves as evidence for institutional constraints being in place over that of journalistic norms, as the added attention from officials should have enabled reporters to report on the critical viewpoints of the movement (which to be sure, differed from that of officials and was much more far-reaching). The news content revealed how reporters were not encouraged and/or prevented from undertaking explorations of these viewpoints and movement demands.

By February 2001, however, conflict started emerging between important public officials. Governor George Pataki began to strongly lobby in favor of the stoppage of the Navy's bombing exercises and possibly in their continued presence there. In April 2001, the governor even took a much publicized trip to Vieques. The results of the amount of coverage during this time period are a stark contrast to that of 1999 (even when the period after Governor Rosselló's measured policy change took effect is included). Further, the results of a comparison between the time period *after* President Bush's announcement of the ending of the bombing exercises with both 1999 and the other period analyzed in 2001 are also revealing.

Several important findings exist in relation to MDM expectations. First of all, even half of the coverage evaluated in 2001, present in either of the two sub-time periods (3a) and 3b)) included in table 6.1, dwarves the total amount of coverage of 1999. Second, the more conflict occurred between high-ranking public officials, the more opening there was for unofficial sources, as is evidenced by the gradual growth of articles that featured these sources (though, as was noted above, an analysis of the content of the coverage still revealed a rather stringent limiting that never swayed far from Washington and marginalized outside viewpoints, namely that of the movement in Vieques). Thirdly, the period following President Bush's announcement saw the most "open" period, in that more unofficial sources were used and more coverage was granted to Vieques (including more front page stories). Again though, additional coverage and attention does not prove much beyond IM expectations that coverage patterns will more or less reflect the interest and the amount of conflict a topic obtains in Washington. The additional question is whether or not the social movement's demands and substantive issues are *still* ignored and marginalized and indeed, analysis of this coverage period revealed that they were.

Evaluating Expectations of the Hegemonic Models

A brief review of the expectations and predictions that the hegemonic models of news analysis had in store for the coverage on Vieques is worth undertaking so as to facilitate an evaluation of the predictive power of the model for this case study. The following bullet points represent a summary of the predictions for the coverage evaluated in the *Times*:

- 1) the amount of coverage Vieques is granted will depend largely upon the kind of attention it attracts from public officials (IM);
- 2) detailed and humanizing coverage of the death of David Sanes Rodríguez will not be humanized and/or not highlighted, reflecting his status as an “unworthy victim” (PM);
- 3) official sources will be prominently and consistently consulted over those of unofficial sources (IM, PM, MDM);
- 4) articles that do rely more on unofficial sources will occur more prominently in periods where more governmental attention and/or elite division is present (IM);
- 5) splits in elite opinion over Vieques should result in increased coverage and a broader range of permissible opinion (i.e. increased unofficial sourcing and mentions of the social movement) (IM), but not without limits that are still narrow and confined (i.e. person off the street quotes off-setting or surpassing those of movement leaders) (MDM);
- 6) details surrounding the actual social movement which waged a campaign against the continued presence of the military will be overlooked or not highlighted; to the extent it *does* receive coverage, it will not highlight the movement’s issues in the foreground, whether or not it garners the attention of important public officials, reflecting its continued status as an “unworthy social movement” (MDM);
- 7) the death of five-year-old Milivy Adams Calderon will not be accorded much attention or completely overlooked, reflecting her status as an “unworthy victim” (PM);
- 8) revelations concerning the scandal over the Rendon Group’s contract will be relegated to a superficial mentioning or completely overlooked, due to it implicating high ranking officials and eliciting little comment from influential public officials (MDM).

Did the results of the analysis and survey of the coverage periods in the *Times* confirm the predictions and expectations listed above? The results of the content and

textual analysis showed that in all periods analyzed, there was not citation of some of the more problematic issues involved with Vieques. The *Times* even went so far as to essentially erase past casualties that civilians had suffered in Vieques by accepting the Navy's statement on this issue without any further questioning. The *Times* clearly failed in this regard and at the same time, fulfilled the expectations of the hegemonic models.

Was there detailed and humanizing coverage of the death of David Sanes Rodríguez? Indeed, there was not any such coverage in the *Times*, not even in its back pages. None of his grieving family members were quoted, his life was not profiled and the details of his death were never expounded on. Instead, the *Times* merely quoted the Navy's official reaction to the death months after it had occurred. Such a result is what the model would expect and predict for a case where "unworthy victims" are present.

Following the death of David Sanes Rodríguez, a long-standing social movement was rejuvenated and transformed. New tactics were undertaken (i.e. civil disobedience and peaceful direct action), as well as new leadership (namely, that of women and ordinary Viequenses who were not necessarily fishermen). A campaign that resulted in hundreds of arrests and courageous activism from locals as well as outside supporters would presumably have an even greater news hook. However, the *Times* only referred to the campaign in passing (noting the high arrest totals, but never referencing the groups involved, much less even detailing why such activism was undertaken) and had an extreme shortage of coverage during 1999. It took policy position changes and the involvement and support of Hollywood and political celebrities alike for the *Times* to even cover Vieques in a significant manner. Textual and content analysis reveal, however, that the movement's main groups and actors were never referred to by name or cited. In the rare instances that the *Times* ran articles that mainly consulted unofficial sources, "off-the-street" quotations of ordinary people (as opposed to activists and organizers) dominated the pieces. Such results more than qualify the predictions of the hegemonic models in this regard.

Were official sources prominently and consistently consulted? Also, were official sources highlighted *over* that of the movement with their premises going unquestioned? Indeed they were. Articles that depended on official sources always far outnumbered

those that consulted unofficial sources and consultation of table 6.1 clearly reveal as much, as does textual analysis.

Did the conflicting viewpoints that wound up occurring between Governor Pataki and the Navy result in increased coverage and a broader range of permissible opinion, as the IM would expect? Did the broader range still sideline critical perspectives that did not first originate in Washington? Coverage results and analysis of the *Times* reveal that it did. While the amount of articles that depended on unofficial sources increased, this reflected elite division on the issue and not a change in the tone or character of coverage. Official sources still significantly outweighed unofficial sources and articles of the later type often framed the movement in negative terms, overlooking the main issues it was trying to raise and often relying instead on “person off-the-street” sources as opposed to movement leaders. This reflects expectations of the MDM for an unworthy social movement, which while benefiting from increased coverage and attention, continued to have its main demands, issues and organizers relegated to the sidelines.

In cases involving “unworthy victims,” such as that of Vieques, the PM does not expect significant coverage and attention to people like that of five-year old Milivy Adams Calderon. Results confirmed this, as was the case with the scandal that was revealed by Judicial Watch. The Rendon Group’s illegal contract and the death of a child who was a strong symbol for the movement of Vieques were not “worthy” of any coverage by the *Times*. A blackout of these issues surpassed model expectations, in fact, as marginalized coverage would not have fallen out of the boundaries of the MDM’s expectations in regards to a scandal of this proportion.

Conclusion

The Vieques case-study is the strongest display of support for the MDM in terms of its expectations on exceptional conditions and resulting news content. The findings herein are important and go far to explain conflicting results in past news studies. As Althaus pointed out (2003: 386), confusion often arises from differing definitions of what constitutes critical content. This study tries to go beyond such confusion and points to the existence of critical content, but *also* to the sharp limits and constraints that it exists within. Indeed, public officials, when critical of existing policies during times of elite

division, are often pointed to in resulting content and exist along increased unofficial sourcing tendencies.

The MDM, however, interjects the additional element of social movements and the role they play in influencing news content. Vieques was a good example of how social movements *can* impact the news, even when it comes to elite agenda-setting sources that are otherwise hard to penetrate. This study also pointed to the sharp limits within which this influence can operate when it comes to an unworthy social movement. Going beyond past studies which have neglected to note the differences in social movements in relation to their positioning and the particular issue at stake, as well as the country or territory from which they hail, the MDM gives strong theoretical weight and credence to these factors. The results in this study provide support to these theoretical components of the model, as both qualitative and quantitative analysis duly showed in this study.

While the MDM shed light on the type of news media performance an unworthy social movement can garner, the limits to that coverage arguably had very real and tangible implications for the impoverished people of Vieques. In a little noticed and back-page article published in 2009 by *The New York Times*, an account is given of the protracted struggle against the many ways that the fallout of the decades-long Naval presence continued to negatively impact on Vieques (Navarro, 2009). Irreparable harm to the island's economic development and poverty continued to plague the island, as well as unexploded munitions which were littered about (McCaffrey, 2009). Furthermore, the Puerto Rican legislature was forced to pressure President Obama to uphold promises broken in the past on an environmental cleanup that never occurred and instead, was resulting in illnesses linked to lingering contaminants in the air (Navarro, 2009).

May have matters resulted differently for the people of Vieques if protracted news coverage and outrage was expressed in the same manner that is routinely done for worthy social movements? The question can only exist as a hypothetical one, as that type of coverage did not occur.

If certain social movements can impact the news, but only within sharp constraints when subjected to certain topics and when hailing from certain areas of the world (namely, allies and U.S.-controlled territories or client states), what kind of

institutional constraints are exerted upon journalists themselves? This is a major hole within the existing scholarly literature, as few studies have previously explored in any level of detail this important question. The MDM posits that the answer to the question provides important support to its institutional basis and the argument that journalists are victims of a corporate system that constraints their creative and investigative impulses. As chapter 9 will duly illustrate, those that learn the important lessons of mostly operating within existing constraints are rewarded handsomely, while others who do not “learn” such lessons have been subjected to their work winding up on the cutting room floor or in the worst cases, have their careers ended.

Addendum I

CONTENTS:

- 1) *Exact* Order of Coding
- 2) General Instructions.
- 3) Defining official and unofficial sourcing types.
- 4) Detailed clarifications about coding categories.

Exact Order of coding

SOURCE	OFFICIALLY SOURCED STORIES
<p>1) Mark and/or track all sources used, referred to, attributed.</p> <p>2) After marking all source types, calculate whether sourcing was mostly official (60% or more of article paragraphs), mostly unofficial (60% or more of article paragraphs) or mixed (50-59% of either). Articles without attributed sources should be coded as ambiguous.</p>	<p>3) Mark all instances of either supportive or critical remarks from official sources in the article.</p> <p>4) If supportive or critical quotations from official sources comprise at least 60% of the articles references, then code the article the article accordingly. Otherwise, code it as ambiguous.</p>
<p>UNOFFICIALLY SOURCED STORIES</p>	
<p>3) Mark any mentions of the social movement.</p> <p>4) Did any of these mentions cite a movement leader or instead, a “person off-the-street” quotation? If movement leaders are cited at least twice in distinct paragraphs, mark accordingly. If not, and “person off-the-street” quotations are present, code accordingly. If neither are present, code as ambiguous.</p>	

General Instructions

- 1) Be sure to read through the story completely *without* coding for anything. This will allow you to get a general feel for the story and understand what it was mainly about.
- 2) Code for only one variable, within one coding category, at a time.
- 3) Stick to the exact order of coding, just noted above, for every story.
- 4) Remember to carefully distinguish the difference between source attributions and *not* to note instances of sourcing that are from other journalists or media.
- 5) When running into difficult articles that are difficult to characterize, do *not* hesitate to simply mark N/A for ambiguous or mixed results.

Distinguishing Between Official and Unofficial Source Types

<p><u>1) Official source definition:</u> U.S. government officials, Puerto Rican government officials, current or former military officials or corporate-public relations spokespeople. Other corporate media sources (i.e. journalists as guests for analysis) ARE NOT coded, period.</p>	<p>Code amount of paragraph usage of official sources. If 60% or more of the article’s paragraphs are dominated by official sources, it should be coded accordingly. Remember, two mentions of an official source (whether or not it’s the same official person or two different official persons) in the SAME paragraph gets counted as only one instance. We are coding for source type, not for specific sources.</p>
<p><u>2) Unofficial sources definition:</u> movement leaders and people (i.e. representatives or leaders specifically identified from the Committee to Rescue and Develop Vieques, Vieques Fishermen’s Rights Group, the Vieques Women’s Alliance or any other group associated with the movement), non-governmental organizations, rank-and-file activists / members of groups and citizens and ordinary people.</p>	<p>Code amount of paragraph usage of unofficial sources. If 60% or more of the article’s paragraphs are dominated by unofficial sources, it should be coded accordingly. Remember, two mentions of an unofficial source (whether or not it’s the same official person or two different official persons) in the SAME paragraph gets counted as only one instance. However, if they are in different paragraphs, it gets counted as two instances. We are coding for source type, not for specific sources.</p>

Sourcing

If 60% or more of the article's paragraphs are dominated by official sources, the article should be coded as "official." If 60% or more of the article's paragraphs are dominated by official sources, it should be coded as "unofficial." If 50% to 59% of any given article's sourced paragraphs are either official or unofficial, it should be coded as "mixed." The table above should be thoroughly consulted (and re-consulted) as it will help you distinguish between official and unofficial source types.

After each story is established as being official or unofficial, you should proceed to a second sub-set of coding specific to this code. For officially sourced stories, coding will be done on whether or not the story was critical or supportive. For unofficially sourced stories, we will be looking at whether movement leaders were quoted and if not, whether person "off-the-street" sources were used instead.

On Coding for Officially Sourced Stories

For all articles coded as having been mostly dominated by official sourcing, the following coding procedure applied.

Throughout much of the time periods that contain the articles we are coding, there was elite division between important policy makers and public officials. Our task is to see if quotations from these officials were mostly supportive or not of the Navy's policy position to continue its presence and training at Vieques. Some articles may contain positions that are in contention with each other and contain both supportive and critical stances. For these articles, supportive and critical quotes must be tabulated to see if either has 60% of the article's total quotations and references. If neither critical nor supportive stances and quotations reach this benchmark, then the article should be categorized as "ambiguous."

On Coding for Unofficially Sourced Stories

For all articles coded as having been mostly dominated by unofficial sourcing, the following coding procedure applied.

The threshold for articles being coded as including the social movement opposing the government is very low: if only *two* mentions of social movement leaders are included in separate paragraphs, the article should be coded accordingly. "Mentions" are defined in lenient terms: if any of the leaders, organizers or anyone with a title from the organizations or groups that comprised the social movement in opposition to the Naval presence are mentioned in any context whatsoever, the paragraph should be coded as having mentioned it. Again, we are only looking for at least two mentions.

If there is not at least two mentions of movement leaders amongst cited sources, the next step is to code whether or not the article if it includes instead "person off-the-street" quotations or not. If it does, please code accordingly. If the unofficial sources do not follow under either of these two groupings, you should code it as being "ambiguous."

Addendum II

Timeline – Vieques¹²

- 1941** US Congress established two thirds of the island of Vieques as a military training ground. Residents were given 24 hours to leave their homes (SFC, 7/26/99, p.A3).
- 1978** Puerto Rico sued the US Navy for economic damages due to military testing on the island of Vieques (SFC, 7/26/99, p.A3).
- 1993** The US Navy dropped 24 bombs of napalm on a target practice area on the island of Vieques. After years of denial the Navy admitted the drops in 1999 (SFC, 7/26/99, p.A3).
- 1999 Apr 19:** Two US Marine jets in training dropped bombs over the island of Vieques and missed their targets. One civilian, David Sanes Rodriguez, was killed and 4 people were injured (SFC, 4/20/99, p.A3; SFC, 7/26/99, p.A3).
- 1999 Apr:** Protestors began occupying the US Navy range at Vieques following the death of David Rodriguez (SFC, 5/4/00, p.A3).
- 1999 Jun:** The US Navy conceded that it had fired 263 uranium shells on the island of Vieques in 1999 (SFC, 7/26/99, p.A3).
- 1999 Jul 4:** Anti US Navy protests drew some 50,000 people (SFC, 7/26/99, p.A3).
- 1999 Aug 11:** Pres. Clinton offered conditional amnesty to imprisoned Puerto Rican militants (FALN). The separatists were responsible for at least 150 bombings over a 9-year period that killed 6 people and injured over 70 (SFC, 9/8/99, p.A3; WSJ, 9/14/99, p.A22). Sep 7, In NY twelve Puerto Rican prisoners (FALN) agreed to accept Pres. Clinton's offer of conditional amnesty (SFC, 9/8/99, p.A3). Sep 10, Eleven Puerto Rican nationalists (FALN) were freed under the clemency deal offered by Pres. Clinton (SFC, 9/11/99, p.A1).
- 1999 Oct 18:** A four-member US presidential panel (chaired by Frank Rush, appointed by William Cohen at President's bequest) recommended that Navy gunnery on the Vieques Island of Puerto Rico be reduced and abandoned in 5 years (WSJ, 10/19/99, p.A1).
- 1999 Oct 19:** Gov. Pedro Rosselló told a US congressional committee that live firing exercises on Vieques could not be resumed (SFC, 10/20/99, p.A7).
- 1999 Dec 3:** Pres. Clinton offered to reduce bombing practice on Vieques in the spring and use only dummy bombs plus \$40 million in economic incentives with phase out in 5 years. Puerto Rico initially rejects offer (SFC, 12/4/99, p.A3).

2000 Jan 31: The US persuaded Puerto Rico to continue use of the Navy firing range off Vieques Island with dummy bombs in exchange for \$40 million. A vote by islanders to approve live ammunition would bring Puerto Rico an additional \$50 million. A no vote would require clean up and a halt to training by May 1, 2003 (SFC, 2/1/00, p.A3).

2000 Feb 21: The largest protest in Puerto Rican history is organized in San Juan in protest of Clinton – Rosselló agreement, which was brokered to allow a continued Naval presence at Vieques at least through the results of a referendum scheduled for 2001. Converse to the agreement, demonstrators called for permanent and immediate cessation of bombing exercises. According to San Juan officials, the protest attracted upwards of 150,000 people (McCaffrey 2002: 169).

2000 May 1: In Puerto Rico 2 US warships arrived off the coast of Vieques and some 50 protestors braced for the arrival of federal agents (SFC, 5/2/00, p.A5).

2000 May 4: In Puerto Rico US federal agents detained and arrested 216 protestors from the bombing range on Vieques Island (SFC, 5/5/00, p.A1).

2000 Jun 25: US Navy bombing in Vieques resumed with non-explosive dummy bombs after 37 demonstrators were arrested (WSJ, 6/26/00, p.A1; SFC, 6/28/00, p.A3; AP, 6/25/01).

2000 Aug 6: In San Juan, Puerto Rico, thousands rallied to protest new US military exercises on Vieques (SFC, 8/7/00, p.A3).

2000 Oct 13: A US federal appeals court ruled that residents of Puerto Rico cannot vote in presidential elections unless the island becomes a state or the US Constitution is amended (SFC, 10/14/00, p.A4).

2000 Nov 7: In local elections Sila Calderon (58), Popular Democratic Party, defeated Gov. Pedro Rosselló. Calderon opposed the US Navy bombing site on Vieques (SFC, 1/2/01, p.A4).

2001 Jan 2: Sila Calderon assumes Governorship of Puerto Rico (CRS, 2003).

2001 Jan: Clinton administration, in closing days in office, threatens to nullify results of scheduled November 2001 referendum if Calderon does not obey obligations of Clinton – Rosselló Plan (CRS, 2003).

2001 Jan: George Bush assumes Presidency of United States. The Bush administration supports the Clinton – Rosselló Plan (CRS, 2003).

2001 Feb: Republican Governor George Pataki (NY) raises his prominence as an outspoken opponent of a continued Naval presence at Vieques. He winds up meeting with President Bush in an attempt to lobby him to suspend Naval bombing exercises (NYT, 4/2/01, B1).

2001 Mar 1: In wake of private Bush, Pataki and Calderon administration talks, the Pentagon suspends Navy bombing on Vieques (WSJ, 3/2/00, p.A1).

2001 Apr 8: Governor Pataki visits Vieques for the first time, expressing active support to immediately and permanently end the U.S. naval presence on the island (NYT, 4/10, B5).

2001 Apr 24: Calderon's bill to reduce noise restrictions in a way that would effectively prohibit the Navy from engaging in ship-to-shore gunfire is signed into law by Calderon. Federal lawsuit also introduced arguing that the Navy's training activities would threaten public health and violate both the new noise-restriction law and the 1972 federal Noise Control Act (CRS, 2003).

2001 Apr 26: A US federal judge ruled that military exercises could resume on Vieques Island. Puerto Ricans mobilized for mass demonstrations (SFC, 4/27/01, p.A2).

2001 Apr 27: The US Navy resumed bombing exercises on Vieques Island where 14 protesters were arrested (SFC, 4/28/01, p.A3).

2001 Jun 12: Governor Pataki visits the White House, within a week of having visited Vieques, in an attempt to lobby President Bush to permanently cease Naval bombing exercises (NYT, 6/15/01, p. A1).

2001 Jun 13: Pres. Bush ordered a stop to the Navy bombing exercises on Puerto Rico's Vieques Island by May 1, 2003 (NYT, 6/15/01, p. A1). Cleanup was estimated to cost hundreds of millions and take decades. Bombing practice was set to stop by May 1, 2003 (SFC, 6/14/01, p.A3; SFC, 6/15/01, p.D3; WSJ, 6/15/01, p.A1). Governor Calderon welcomed the plan, as far as it went, but stated that she still wanted training operations to end immediately (CRS 2003).

2001 Jun 18: The US Navy dropped dummy bombs on Vieques island. A number of protesters were arrested for trespassing (SFC, 6/19/01, p.A3).

2001 Jul 29: The residents of Vieques island voted on stopping the practice bombing by the US military. Opponents of the navy bombing gathered 68% of the vote (SSFC, 7/29/01, p.A9; SFC, 7/30/01, p.A3). Vote turnout was 80.6% percent of the island's 5,893 registered voters, with about 30 percent voting to permit operations to continue indefinitely, and about 2 percent voting for operations to cease by May 1, 2003 .

2001 Aug 2: On Vieques, Puerto Rico, the US Navy used tear gas and foam rubber projectiles to clear protesters and journalists (SFC, 8/4/01, p.A3).

2002 Jan 2: A US federal judge dismissed Federal lawsuit to stop the resumption of bombing exercises on Vieques. The suit cited a 1972 federal Noise Control Act as well as a Puerto Rican law approved in 2001. Denial stated that Congress never intended, “to create a private action for violations by a federal entity of the state and local environmental noise requirements” (SFC, 1/3/02, p.A5; CRS, 2003).

2002 Jan 7: The Secretary of the Navy denied a November 2001 request from the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) and Commandant of the Marine Corps for a Navy battle group led by the carrier John F. Kennedy to train at Vieques (CRS, 2003). However, subsequent requests would be approved, including one for January 2003 (see below).

2002 Sep 4: In Puerto Rico US Navy security officers fired tear gas at protesters who hurled rocks over a fence during bombing exercises on the island of Vieques (AP, 9/5/02).

2002 Sep 7: U.S. Navy fighter jets dropped dummy bombs and inert missiles on Vieques in military exercises that have divided this outlying Puerto Rican island for years (AP, 9/7/02).

2002 Nov 17: Milivy Adams Calderon, a young cancer patient from Vieques, dies at Philadelphia Children’s Hospital. Calderon had become the symbol of the Vieques movement, as she was diagnosed with cancer at the young age of 2, with high levels of chemicals having been found in her blood (AP Online, 2002; Ginty 2007).

2002 Dec 13: U.S. Navy approves a battle group that will begin training operations on January 13, 2003, for a period of up to 29 days (CRS, 2003).

2003 Jan 13: Protesters waved Puerto Rican flags and shouted "Navy get out!" as fighter jets dropped inert bombs over Vieques in what the Navy says will be its last round of training on the island (AP, 1/14/03; also @ Defense.Gov: <http://bit.ly/4SFtov>).

2003 Feb 8: The US Navy conducted its last scheduled round of weapons tests on Vieques Island, Puerto Rico (SFC, 2/10/03, p.A9).

2003 Apr 30: The U.S. Navy withdrew from its disputed Vieques bombing range in Puerto Rico, prompting celebrations by islanders (AP, 4/30/04).

2003 Sep 23: Puerto Rico's congressional delegate said the United States will close its Roosevelt Roads Naval Station in eastern Puerto Rico within the next six months (AP, 9/23/03).

2004 Mar 31: US Navy ships and troops were scheduled to depart Roosevelt Roads Naval Station, Puerto Rico. The base had been used for 6 decades (AP, 1/6/04).

2008 Oct 27: A new study has found dangerous levels of toxic metals in produce grown on Vieques Island, Puerto Rico, formerly used as a Navy bombing range, despite US government claims that the soil there is safe (AP, 10/27/08).

Endnotes

¹ Furthermore, like the propaganda model, its postulates have been extensively tested against *New York Times* coverage (see Mermin, 1999, pp. 12- 13).

² None of the names of these three unworthy victims were ever discovered in any of the research I did on news coverage of Vieques.

³ See Bennett (1990); Mermin (1999); Herman and Chomsky (2002); Bennett and Pickard (2004); Jacobson, et. al. (2002); Entman (2004). These studies produced similar results to this one (with the exception of Entman), in terms of the weaknesses and the failings of the media performance of the *Times*.

⁴ The remaining coverage in this time period was completely comprised by briefs. The first brief (04/20/99) that the *Times* picked up was from Reuters and it quoted a Navy official. In the second brief (05/09/99), this one coming from the Associated Press (AP), referred to only the Puerto Rican Independence party and “protesters”; that is, *not* to any movement, much less any of the major local groups that had been struggling against the Navy for many years. In the third brief (07/18/99), “protesters” were written about *without* any reference to any connected movement or local group in struggle against the Navy. The AP wire report did not cover protester demands even superficially, and instead, “graffiti” and whether or not the protests could be characterized as “violent” was focused on. The last brief of the coverage period, also by AP, completely sourced Navy officials and spokespersons, and even referred to the reaction by the people to Sanes’s death as “resentment,” as opposed to the more accurate description (quite absent in nearly all coverage analyzed in this study) of it being an organized response by local public interest groups trying to force the removal of the Navy.

⁵ Although a the *Washington Post* was not comprehensively surveyed for this analysis, it did in fact commit the same error for the unworthy victims of Vieques: “The Navy says this is the first casualty on the ground in more than half a century of exercises. But Puerto Rico officials have decided that enough blood has been spilled at Vieques” (Ross, 1999).

⁶ The increase in the militaristic nature of U.S. foreign policy can be traced to a time that came *before* the September 11th attacks and not just during the Bush administration. Many commentators and observers on the left, for all of their justifiable criticism of the Bush administration’s disastrous policies abroad, were quite silent about the fact that President Clinton also undertook such policies including the bombing of five countries within the time span of just one year (1998 to 1999 saw the bombing of Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sudan and Yugoslavia, a feat never accomplished before in the history of human kind).

⁷ The caption read: “Thousands clogged the main highway in San Juan, P.R., yesterday to protest an agreement that allows the United States Navy to continue bombing exercises on the island of Vieques until a referendum next year.”

⁸ On July 29, 2001, over 68% of Viequenses voted in favor of the immediate withdrawal of the U.S. Navy with over an 80% turnout rate. Only 2% favored the Bush plan to have the Navy withdraw in 2003 and 30% opted for an indefinite continuance of U.S. Naval presence.

⁹ This isn’t the only instance where gender is left out of human rights issues in news coverage. See Carolyn Byerly (in Meehan and Riordan, 2001), on how gender is systematically erased in human rights reporting.

¹⁰ Interestingly enough, the version run by the Post-Dispatch was halved from the original penned by James. Cut out from the published were key lines such as this one: “Puerto Rican studies that indicate a higher cancer rate for Vieques than the rest of the U.S. territory are labeled biased by the Navy.”

¹¹ The lone exception to this came in a search conducted of all major dailies in the U.S., came from the *Chicago Tribune*, which did indeed pick up the story (see Hedges, 2005). One example from the independent news media includes the non-profit and public radio station KPFA, which broadcasted a segment picking up the story on its evening news (“Navy Hired PR Firm to Promote Bombing Range in Vieques,” July 22, 2005, Friday 18:00-19:00).

¹² Most of the entries on this timeline were taken from an online-based timeline repository, which was thoroughly documented and based on press accounts, the CIA Factbook and CountryReports.org (see <<http://timelines.ws/countries/PUERTORICO.HTML>>). I customized the timeline to focus only on Vieques and included many other entries based on press coverage unveiled during the course of this research.

Introduction

One of the most important and original components of the MDM is its argument that certain movements will be depicted as “worthy” in the leading agenda-setting papers of the U.S., while others will be depicted as “unworthy.” Social movements will not only be depicted in a dichotomous fashion, but will also have the opportunity to impact media coverage as well, depending on the relationship that the given movement has to governmental positioning, the relationship the country it hails from has with Washington and the threat it poses to the state-corporate interests at hand. The MDM expects that certain social movements will be far more limited than others in exerting their influence depending on these circumstances. The case-study that will be reviewed in this chapter is one such movement, as it was hampered by a number of obstacles and was most decidedly “unworthy” in the eyes of the U.S. government and subsequently the press.

The MDM’s key component on social movements is consistent with Kumar’s critique: the propaganda model does not address when and how the public can create exceptions to the constraints and limits found in the news that the model sharply criticizes (2007). To best understand the “exceptions,” however, one must also understand cases where significant limitations are highlighted as well. This case-study will attempt to evaluate the applicability of the MDM’s expectations on social movements in predicting and explaining coverage patterns of an “unworthy” social movement, a popular uprising that occurred in Ecuador during January 2000.

The social movement reviewed in this case-study can be described as “unworthy” because its aims run counter to the interests of powerful investors and businesses that U.S. policy is often guided by, as well as the interests of military planners (i.e., Plan Colombia). In other words, “unworthy” refers to the expectation that a lack of sympathy, attention and seriousness will be granted to the plight of the Ecuadoran social movement, in light of its opposition to key state-corporate interests. This movement was principally led by a group called the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), which managed to accomplish nothing less than unseating a sitting president (the short-lived Mahuad administration).

As discussed in Chapter 3, the MDM effectively utilizes structural factors to explain media performance, as opposed to putting disproportionate blame on journalists

(Bennett, Lawrence, & Livingston, 2007, pp. 46-47, 179; Fico & Soffin, 1995, p. 631; Mermin, 1999, pp. 149-150), distinguishing itself from the IM. The MDM also distinguishes itself from the PM, which has *not* been applied toward coverage of social movements, by theorizing and including them into the important mix of media analysis. The common thread amongst most of the PM's case studies is that they are directly or at least indirectly concerned with U.S. military policy, as opposed to coverage themes more oriented toward social movements. The IM, on the other hand, *has* been applied toward coverage pertaining to social movements with good results (Bennett et al., 2004; Mermin, 1999). But, the IM has not identified the dichotomous coverage that often occurs with certain social movements. Further, it has not included institutional analysis and puts disproportionate blame on journalists. This case-study is an attempt to further the kind of analysis that does not overlook social movements or inappropriately blame journalists for media performance patterns.

Before evaluation of the U.S. news media performance is undertaken in relation to expectations of the MDM, however, a survey of the history of the important events that occurred in Ecuador will first be undertaken.

Historical summary

Important events during start of Mahuad presidency

Jamil Mahuad was elected Ecuador's president by a narrow margin in a run-off election in 1998. He took office that August, but it was not long after that whereby massive popular protests were waged against his administration. In March 1999, the country was paralyzed by such protests and Mahuad gave in to demands to lower gasoline prices (Collins, 2000b). Months later in July, however, thousands of mostly indigenous protesters forced the president to promise additional economic reforms that he later reneged on (Reports from Ecuador, 2000b). By September 1999, Ecuador defaulted on a U.S. loan as it was saddled with a foreign debt of more than \$20 billion (Veash, 2000b). From the summer of 1999 through January 2000, the national currency, the sucre, began rapidly losing value relative to the dollar (Veash, 2000b).

On January 9, 2000, President Mahuad decided to "dollarize" the Ecuadoran economy. Pressure was mounting in the midst of what was nearly a complete meltdown of the economy marked by the alarming fall of the sucre, which had sunk in its exchange

rate with the dollar by more than 100% between January 1999 and January 2000 (Collins, 2000b). The many demonstrations being held led to a declaration of a “state of emergency” (Washington Post, 2000) only to be followed by *more* demonstrations and an oil workers’ strike (Reuters, 2000).

On January 9, President Mahuad “dollarized” the economy, linking the national currency to the U.S. dollar. As a Bloomberg News Report explained, dollarizing the economy means that “all money in circulation must be backed by an equal amount in dollar reserves” (Bloomberg News Report, 2000). This move was seen as drastic in part because it was something that Ecuador’s very own central bank had prohibited just days beforehand (Veash, 2000b). Argentina also dollarized, but besides them, only Central American countries forfeited their sovereignty over their currency.

The move by Mahuad was widely seen as an attempt “to take the steam out of people’s frustration with the government,” as one first-hand observer described it, though as events unfolded it was clear that this was a failed strategy (Collins, 2000b).

National protests and the People’s Parliament preceded Mahuad’s resignation

Days after the announcement by President Mahuad to dollarize Ecuador’s economy, massive protests were undertaken to oppose the plan and to demand Mahuad’s resignation. First-hand observers described a growing coalition of protesters who came (often from the rural parts of Ecuador) to demand the resignation of President Mahuad (Collins, 2000b; Veash, 2000a; Washington Post, 2000). Indeed, Ecuador had no fewer than six presidents in the previous six years as a result of overwhelming public opposition and resistance.

Many groups, most prominently the indigenous movement, also were demanding the dissolution of Congress and the Supreme Court – in effect, the whole political system. The indigenous movement, however, wasn’t advocating a lawless country without functioning political institutions. In fact, it was already carrying out its own favored alternative form of governance – the People’s Parliament.

Two days after Mahuad’s dollarization plan was announced, a major national grassroots political event took place that would have significant ramifications for Ecuador’s political future. Led by the CONAIE, “People’s Parliaments” were being set up and conducted all across the nation. Carlos Hamann wrote in detail about the People’s

Parliaments, noting that the key behind how the movement toppled Mahuad's administration, "lies in people like Carmen Yamberla, a leader in a centuries-old Andean community government system" (Hamann, 2000). Hamann described how Yamberla was elected and represented 180 indigenous communities, totaling over 60,000 people, and headed a quasi-parallel government that, "handles everything from justice to dealings with national authorities" and, "often has more real power than the mayor or even the provincial governor" (2000).

Indeed, while the democratic character of Ecuador's indigenous movement had long been in existence, this time it also became a powerful political force to be reckoned with even on peaceful terms alone. Jennifer Collins, writing for a non-commercial and independent source, described the alternative parliaments as, "forums [where] citizens have come together to debate what steps should be taken in the current crisis and what sort of economic plan they want to follow." A national parliament had been organized and installed on January 11, 2000. Collins, who was in attendance, called it "inspiring as an exercise in popular democracy ... [that was striving to achieve] a new type of democracy, a new economic model and a new ethic in government, in other words and end to corruption." Collins also described the organizing efforts as, "an important expression of the level of great frustration with the existing political establishment" (Collins, 2000b).

Mahuad's resignation

Resulting from overwhelming mass protests, strikes and non-violent civil disobedience, President Mahuad was forced out of office on January 21, 2000 (Agencia Informativa Pulsar, 2000a). Early in the morning of the resignation, the CONAIE and its supporters marched toward the Ecuadoran legislature. They were able to occupy the legislature, as the military guarding it stepped aside, and declared that the present government had been abolished with a People's Parliament now taking its place. Later in the day, a triumvirate was formed between Antonio Vargas (president of the CONAIE), Colonel Lucio Gutierrez, and Carlos Solorzano, a former Supreme Court chief justice. At around the same time, President Mahuad abandoned the seat of government after being informed by the general in charge of the troops guarding the palace that he could no longer assure the security of the building. General Carlos Mendoza (the armed forces

chief of staff and acting minister of defense) and other high ranking military officials had already asked the president to resign. However, in a television address later that night, in which he pointed at the camera and shouted, Mahuad insisted that he would not resign. Soon afterward, he was seen leaving in an ambulance escorted by security agents (Collins, 2000a).

At around midnight, and as a result of negotiations with Mendoza, it was decided that Colonel Gutierrez would leave the triumvirate and that Mendoza would take his place. That change proved to be fateful to the short-lived triumvirate and People's Parliament, as not more than three hours after Mendoza had entered the three-man junta, he declared that it was dissolved and that the vice president, Gustavo Noboa Bejarano, would be the new president (Hayes, 2000). Explaining his actions, General Mendoza was widely quoted as saying that he supported the junta (after having initially come out in support of the president) because it was the only way to prevent "a social explosion" and "the international isolation of Ecuador," a reference to intense diplomatic pressure by the United States (Associated Press, 2000a).

Despite condemnations emanating from Mercosur, South America's trade bloc, and the Organization of American States, it clearly was U.S. pressure that was the most influential factor in Mendoza's decision (which may have been made before he entered the junta). For example, Peter Romero, the State Department's top official for Latin America, threatened coup leaders on Quito radio, saying they faced "political and economic isolation" akin to Cuba's if they persisted, and that the U.S. would also pull its support for continued International Monetary Fund loan aid to Ecuador (Buckley, 2000; Rohter, 2000a).

MDM Expectations

The MDM emphasizes the *context* of a given news event, including the relationship between the countries and the social movement at stake, in terms of its expectations for resulting news content. This case-study is important not only because it is focusing on a social movement and evaluating its worthiness (or lack thereof, as is expected in this case), but also because it is an example of a "constructive" intervention. This is because the U.S. openly intervened with strong diplomatic threats and subsequently influenced the ensuing political developments at a crucial point. As a result

of this constructive intervention, there is an ensuing set of expectations that the MDM has for news coverage.

As opposed to the more static IM and PM, the MDM conversely places importance on taking into consideration exceptional conditions and circumstances to explain exceptional news coverage. In the case of Ecuador, however, there were *no* extenuating circumstances present. Since the movement strongly opposed the neo-liberal initiatives enacted by the Mahuad administration through its demand for his resignation, it represented a significant threat to the state-corporate interests that belie U.S.-based mainstream news media. The issue was clearly an international one, as opposed to a domestic issue that would have had more potential to have generated exceptional news content.

While U.S. governmental attention was certainly limited and resulting news media content was also limited – which the MDM would duly expect for a low-priority client state and the IM would also expect in terms of its mirror analysis emphasizing governmental attention – it is of extraordinary importance that the social movement in question was one that was squarely *against* the leading economic policies that the U.S. was actively propagating. As a result, any exceptions that might have resulted from lessened governmental attention opening up coverage possibilities are significantly decreased in probability, because of the strong opposition that the Ecuadoran movement was undertaking to official U.S. monetary policy. Further, unlike the case of Acteal, the Ecuadoran government was put under no obligation to generate spin (i.e. the “family feud” theme so prominent in Acteal coverage) or controversy in order to cloud doubts and uncertainties about official responsibility. Instead, a deposed President was merely replaced with a new one, who duly favored U.S. policies as much as the previous President. Since this was not a problem necessitating significant governmental spin on the part of the Ecuadoran government, foreign indexing is *not* expected in this case study.

In so far as news sources were concerned, consideration purposefully went beyond the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*. This was done in order to assess MDM expectations for exceptional coverage being more likely to appear in regional papers, versus nationally-distributed ones. One of the key postulates of the MDM for foreign affairs coverage is that daily papers located away from the power centers of

Washington and New York have less institutional constraints than their nationally distributed counterparts. This should not result in huge content differences, but subtle degrees of difference should be noticeable according to the MDM.

The following list lays out the expectations of the MDM, including those derived from its synthesis of the IM and PM:

1. Official sources will be prominently and consistently consulted over those of unofficial sources and their premises won't be questioned (IM / PM synthesis).
2. The rejuvenated social movement against President Mahuad will be overlooked or not highlighted, and to the extent it receives coverage it will not highlight the movement's issues in the foreground (MDM).
3. Detailed and humanizing coverage of the humanitarian crisis that revolved around the economic collapse, which was a principal impetus for the political resistance, will not be present, reflecting the "unworthy" status of Ecuador's indigenous-led social movement (MDM).
4. Ecuador's leaders, because they are U.S. allies, will be characterized as being dedicated to peace and democracy; the social movement opposing it will be characterized as dictatorial and anti-democratic; editorials will place blame for the uprising on the social movement, not the Ecuadoran leaders or the economic conditions to which their policies gave rise (MDM).
5. The amount of coverage Ecuador is granted will depend largely upon the kind of attention it attracts from U.S. public officials (IM).
6. Splits in elite opinion over Ecuador should result in markedly increased coverage and a broader range of permissible opinion, but not without limits that are still quite narrow and confined; editorials will be increased by a split in opinion in Washington, since no split in elite opinion occurred, there should *not* be any sharp increase in coverage or sustained coverage (IM).
7. To the extent that exceptional articles containing levels of media independence are found, they will appear in regional-based, as opposed to nationally-distributed, dailies (MDM).

It is important to remember that the news media is mostly comprised by large corporations, which are often times part of corporate conglomerates funded by other transnational corporations (i.e., their advertisers). In this case-study of Ecuador, state-corporate interests were clearly at stake. Given that the dollarization of Ecuador's economy was one of the main events during January's uprising, investors and

transnational corporations (TNCs) had much reason to be concerned with Ecuador. Many of these corporations are prominent advertisers in the major dailies reviewed in this study, and it is clear that their interests would not be served by coverage of a popular uprising that brings to light how Washington's foreign policies often deviate from the will of the Ecuadoran people and favoring instead, the interests of powerful TNCs.

It is not the case, however, that the influence which shared corporate interests has on news coverage is a result of direct orders or written and formalized rules. It is in specific expectations of news content and media performance where the MDM's postulates are most evidenced; hence, the "unworthy" social movement thesis is advanced as the basis to check and evaluate the expectations of the model for an uprising that is perceived to threaten U.S. business interests abroad. Since the institutional constraints that journalists operate under are enforced through spiking (which occurs in the industry an untold number of times) and/or internalized (consciously or unconsciously; which of the two is in operation is irrelevant to the news media performance concerns of the MDM), similar to past models of news analysis (including the PM and IM), the MDM uses the results of content analyses as its means for the evaluation of its efficacy. To be sure, the movement that was organized and led by the CONAIE in Ecuador in 2000 is precisely an example of a movement in direct confrontation with powerful U.S.-based, state-corporate interests and thus expected to be "unworthy" in the specific aspects of news content just mentioned above.

Methodology

Content analysis

Content analysis is the main methodological tool that was used in this study to evaluate media coverage on Ecuador. Evaluations were conducted by detailed coding of articles, including all of the following: comparisons of the extent that official versus unofficial sourcing was utilized in coverage; measuring attributions of culpability; typing characterizations of the events; and where concerns were directed within dollarization coverage. After preliminary and practice coding was conducted for training purposes, and to determine which categories were viable for adequate levels of inter-reliability, the draft coding scheme was finalized (see Addendum I, below) and coding ensued. The principal investigator undertook coding along with a bi-lingual graduate student, who was unaware

of the hypotheses throughout the coding process. Cohen's Kappa was chosen to avoid unfair penalization of the smaller population size used in this study, especially since the population represented the complete print news coverage of U.S.-based sources. Inter-reliability results were statistically valid and generated a score of 0.85.

Sources under evaluation

This study analyzes coverage from six major daily newspapers from the U.S. They include (in order of frequency of articles generated): the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Houston Chronicle* and the *Miami Herald*. These papers were selected because they were the only dailies that had at least two substantive articles covering the time period under consideration, but also because they provided a means of comparison between regionally-based and the more influential and agenda-setting nationally-distributed dailies.

Time period and population

The period of coverage analysis was January 1, 2000, through April 1, 2000. The "story" started petering out by the beginning of February, however, and unsurprisingly did not generate sustained coverage in most papers. In all, only the the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, the *Boston Globe*, the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, the Los Angeles Times, the *Seattle Times*, the *Miami Herald* and the *Houston Chronicle* covered Ecuador (thus, only eight papers within the major national dailies with full text access in Lexis-Nexis).

Among the dailies that picked up the story, the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* covered it the most consistently, but still lacked substantive coverage that went beyond early February. Nevertheless, the coverage still managed to generate a total of 71 hits off of the Lexis-Nexis database by using the word "Ecuador" as a basis for the search, which produced a codeable population of 30 documents (26 reports and 4 editorials). An article was defined as "codeable" if it had at least half of its total length relate directly to a major aspect of the affair under analysis (i.e., dollarization, the indigenous-based social movement, President Mahuad, etc.).

Coding

For the first prediction, coding was conducted to decipher the percentage of articles whose sources were mostly official sources (test #1). Official sources are defined as either U.S. governmental officials, OAS officials or representatives, or Ecuadoran governmental officials. This is compared to the percentage of articles that relied mostly on unofficial sources (the CONAIE, Antonio Vargas, trade union representatives and other dissident sources). Articles that had sources that were approximately split between official and unofficial sources were coded accordingly.

Of the articles that mentioned at least one of the key terms for coverage of the Ecuadoran social movement, coding was conducted to find out what percentage were mostly substantive in nature. This was done by coding the articles that highlighted the main issues and demands that the social movement was issuing. This is compared to the articles that were dominated by the “social disorder” theme or the “protest paradigm,” whereby the article negatively portrays and/or personalizes protesters, while supporting the status quo and government intervention and skirting substantive issues that the movement is trying to bring to attention (tests #2-3), as has long been documented in other scholarly cases (Donohue, Tichenor, & Olien 1995; .Gitlin, 1980; McLeod & Hertog, 1999; Schultz, 2000).

Articles were also coded to determine what percentage focused on *just* the dollarization of the economy. Of the articles that focused mostly on dollarization, coding was done to see what percentage concentrated on concerns more related to big business and governmental currency policy (i.e., banking industry, public monetary policy and inflation) as opposed to concerns more related to ordinary people (the effects of the economic downturn on the people, i.e., such as falling/stagnant wages, unemployment and increased poverty levels). Similarly, articles were also scanned for a focus that dealt with the effects of the economic collapse. Coding sought to answer whether such articles were more concerned with ordinary people or big business (tests #4-5).

Reports and editorials alike were coded so as to measure where blame was placed (tests #6-7). Was the social movement characterized as a military coup or as a popularly supported uprising? Were Ecuadorian and U.S. leaders depicted as being dedicated to peace and democracy, or were they framed as undemocratic, corrupt leaders who

rightfully were thrown out of office? Those were the questions coding sought to answer for these tests.

Lastly, coverage patterns were tracked so as to decipher whether there was a spike in coverage when there were more comments coming out of Washington.

Findings from Content Analysis

The coding results confirm all of the expectations of the three hegemonic models of news analysis, hardly surprising in the face of a lack of conditions specified by the MDM as being principal causes of exceptional news reporting. Official sources dominated coverage, dissident sources took a back seat, coverage of the Ecuadoran social movement was not substantive and Ecuadorian official leaders were characterized as democratic and peace loving, while the social movement that unseated an unpopular leader was characterized as militaristic, anti-democratic, unconstitutional, and as a general threat to democracy.

The following table lays out the results of all the coding that was conducted for the coverage that was analyzed.

<u>Table 7.1</u> Coding Tests	<u>Test #1:</u> Sourcing tendencies	<u>Test #2:</u> Movement Mentioned?	<u>Test #3:</u> Substance in movement coverage?	<u>Test #4:</u> Dollarization coverage
Codes	Mainly depended on official sources / unofficial sources / mixed	Not mentioned / Mentioned at least once	Lacking substance, issues / Had at least <i>some</i> substance & issues noted	Focused on dollarization / Not main focus
Total	74% official / 16% unofficial / 11% mixed	31% not at all / 69% at least once	67% did not / 33% noted issues, had some substance	36% did have focus / 64% did not
Prediction Analyzed <i>(from pg.7)</i>	Prediction #1 (IM / PM synthesis)	Prediction #2 (MDM)	Prediction #2 (MDM)	Prediction #3 (MDM)
<u>Table 7.1</u> Coding <i>(cont'd)</i>	<u>Test #5:</u> Dollarization Focus on Business or on the People?	<u>Test #6:</u> Characterization of Govt. Officials?	<u>Test #7:</u> Characterization of movement?	
Codes	Business concerns / effects on people	Democratic / anti-democratic	Military coup / Popular uprising	
Prediction Analyzed <i>(from pg. 7)</i>	Prediction #3 (MDM)	Prediction #4 (MDM)	Prediction #4 (MDM)	
Total	89% - business / 11% ordinary people	92% leaders as democratic / 8% as anti-democratic	85% as a military coup / 15% as a popular uprising	

As for editorials and coverage patterns, both conformed to MDM expectations as well. Among the handful of editorials that were present in coverage, to the extent that

they addressed culpability, all characterized the movement as anti-democratic and described it as a military coup while at the same time characterizing the public officials as peace loving and/or democratic. Overall, only eight newspapers covered the uprising at all, and coverage only increased when U.S. officials undertook a diplomatic intervention and started commenting on the situation to the press. With the absence of elite disagreement, there were no sharp increases of coverage during the main coverage period of January either, as the following table shows:

Table 7.2
Coverage Patterns:
Test of Prediction #6 (IM)

Time Period	Coverage %
Jan. 1 – Jan. 20	39%
Jan. 21 – Jan. 31	54%
Feb. 1 – April 1	7%

Nonetheless, there *was* a concentration of coverage during a period that U.S. officials were commenting on and interested in Ecuador. On January 21st and 22nd, U.S. State Department officials came out with their first strong statements on Ecuador, as the uprising was referred to as an attempt to seek “and establish an unconstitutional regime,” a quote from a *Washington Post* article citing State Department officials (Buckley, 2000). By the next day, State Department officials such as its top official for Latin America, Peter Romero, were being quoted¹ by the *New York Times*: “[Ecuador] faced ‘political and economic isolation’ akin to Cuba’s if they persisted” (Rohter, 2000b). There were no additional or compelling aspects that had arisen during the uprising at this time other than the new presence of strongly worded statements from U.S. public officials.

Coverage priorities were also reflected in terms of the placement of the articles covering the affair, as shown in the following table:

Table 7.3: Placement Analysis

Date Range	Prominent Articles	Back-Page Articles (<i>after A4</i>)	Word Count Average*	Editorials
Jan. 1 – Jan. 20	1 A4	9	639	0
Jan. 21 – Jan. 31	7 A1's, 1 A3	8	981	2
Feb. 1 – April 1	0	0	526	2

In accordance with expectations of the IM, the only period to garner front-page pieces was once again, *after* U.S. government officials released strong and frequent statements. The average word count of pieces sharply increased during this period as well. Both before and after the time in which U.S. government officials were addressing the developments in Ecuador, coverage lagged in terms of placement and prominence. Within a week of the State Department's strong line on Ecuador, editorials were condemning the move away from democracy in Ecuador and beyond. However, when there was less interest from Washington, there was less coverage as well. There were no significant statements on Ecuador from the State Department relating to the uprising after January and coverage patterns duly reflected this, as only two late-breaking editorials appeared shortly after January in regional papers, following the lead of the two *New York Times* editorials in January.

The largest opportunity for the Ecuadoran social movements to be highlighted was when they were not competing with Washington for coverage attention.² Nevertheless, social movements were not significantly highlighted in any period and only one article even had the movement as its main focus.³ The remaining coverage failed to consistently mention movement demands or issues, which fulfilled coverage predictions.

U.S. print news media analysis / criticism of coverage

Military coup or peaceful uprising?

Coverage overwhelmingly characterized the popular uprising as an anti-democratic military coup, despite foreign and independent reports which vividly characterized a peaceful, popular movement that unseated a profoundly unpopular president and was ultimately betrayed and sold out by the military. A number of respected reporters, analysts and editors went so far as to liken the "military coup" as a

* The word count average here includes *both* articles *and* editorials.

trend comparable to the U.S.-supported Central American military dictatorships that were commonplace during the 1980s (Lancaster, 2000; Rohter, 2000a).

These analogies, however, stood in stark contradiction to reports by first-hand observers coming from independent, non-commercial and foreign news media sources (i.e. Collins, Lucas, Weekly News Update on the Americas). Such sources consistently reported the overthrow of Mahuad as a peaceful popular uprising and only secondarily as an event that involved the military, which ultimately turned on the movement anyhow. Instead, the U.S. print media incorrectly analogized the described “military coup” as a new trend that harkened back to the 80s; however, the *only* similarity that it had with the 80s was that once again, U.S. foreign policy opposed Latin American popular forces and movements while *supporting* undemocratic actions undertaken by the military (that is, the unilateral military declaration that installed Vice President Noboa as the successor to Mahuad, which was only rubber stamped by Congress afterward).

Events leading up to the uprising did not garner even one editorial in any mainstream U.S. paper. The actual downfall of the Mahuad administration, however, did result in a number of editorials that uniformly sounded similar themes to that of the U.S. government.

The *New York Times* ran their first editorial on Ecuador, entitled “Ecuador’s Endangered Democracy” four days after the uprising (New York Times, 2000). In a lead paragraph of the editorial, one sentence read that there were “strong warnings from Washington against the establishment of a military regime.” The U.S. government line that the uprising was a coup that tried to establish a “military regime” was repeated without question. In the *Houston Chronicle*, a February 3 editorial headline read: “Just when you thought democracy was secure,” which was partially referring to Ecuador’s recent developments. By the time both of these editorials had been run, there had already been days of reporting that parroted this theme.

Describing the peaceful uprising as a “rebellion” (either casually referring to it as violent in nature or at least not mentioning its actual peaceful character) was also quite common in mainstream print reporting. A typical example can be found in the headline of the cover story from the *New York Times* the day after the uprising: “Day of Rebellion Ends with Ouster of Ecuador Leader” (Associated Press, 2000a). The *Times* headline of

this cover story, however, was very indicative of coverage found during the day after the uprising in mainstream U.S. print media.

U.S. role as unquestionably being that of restoring democracy

The U.S. diplomatic role in this whole affair became quite prominent after the uprising toppled the Mahuad administration. Most major papers recognized this and referred to the strongly worded threats emanating from the U.S. State Department. Coverage faltered, however, when the U.S. mainstream press reported without question the U.S. government line that their threatening role was an intervention on behalf of democracy.

The most prominent parroting of this theme was found in a cover story in the *Washington Post* run in the second day of coverage following the overthrow. The headline of the piece read: “Civilian Rule Is Restored in Ecuador; Vice President Takes Power After Foreign Pressure” (Dudley & Buckley, 2000). The day before this article, the *Post* ran a piece headlined: “Ecuadoran President Told to Step Down; Army Backs Indian Protesters” that also quite clearly stayed within the governmental line (Buckley, 2000).

The *Washington Post* was not the only daily which falsely reported civilian rule as having been “overthrown” (if anything, civilian governance was *enhanced* with increased civil society participation, particularly from under-represented indigenous sectors), as many other papers also followed suit in reporting this line of propaganda without question. One example was found in the *Los Angeles Times*, where an on-the-scene staff reporter describes the uprising as an “apparent coup d’etat” that “broke a 21-year tradition of respect for civilian rule” in a cover page reporting piece (Rotella, 2000).

The first editorial run on the events in Ecuador was found in the *New York Times*, which assumed Washington’s heavy-handed diplomatic intervention was motivated by a desire for democracy (New York Times, 2000). The important consequence of this consistent tendency of the coverage that was analyzed is that the reporting failed to identify any other possible motives for U.S. intervention beyond its own claims and “concerns” for democracy, such as Ecuador’s key strategic military location as a neighbor to Colombia. Indeed, exploring such possible political motivations could have served as a basis for investigatory pieces. Instead, as noted, the news analysis pieces that

were seen in the mainstream print media largely trumpeted only the U.S. government's own line of reasoning on the whole affair. While the PM and IM would duly expect such a result, the MDM goes farther and specifies that the absence of specific conditions such as political resistance at home or foreign indexing abroad further intensifies the expectations of all three of the hegemonic models of news analysis.

The CONAIE's important, but overlooked, role

The leading role that the CONAIE played in the uprising was widely acknowledged by the foreign and independent press. Some publications stated that "the CONAIE . . . was the leading factor in the January events . . ." (Weekly News Update on the Americas, 2000). Further, the U.S. print sources, analyzed and coded previously, failed to recognize the power of these social movements, which were duly noted by the foreign press both before *and* after the uprising that threw Mahuad out of office.

Before the uprising, Nicole Veash noted how, "Ecuador's Indian community talked about a power that Native Americans in the United States can only dream of . . . [to the point of being able to] cripple the South American country" (Veash, 2000a). After the uprising, Carlos Hamann wrote for a Montreal daily about how the movement's power and influence were on the rise: "the movement has gained international status and has come a long way from the days when Indians' voices were ignored" (Hamann, 2000).

Veash and Hamann were joined by many others in the independent and foreign press, where one finds the CONAIE described as being "the country's most important social force;" (Weekly News Update on the Americas, 2000) as the "leading force in one of Latin America's best organised native movements;" (Lucas, 2000) and how, in general, the indigenous people of Ecuador "awakened expectations and introduced the possibility of forging the necessary changes in Ecuador's social agenda" (Nueva Mayoria, 2000).

The ignored popular movement's parallel government

The failure to significantly report and cover the People's Parliaments was an essential omission of coverage that enabled the "military coup" frame that dominated coverage of the peaceful uprising. Only one article appearing in the *Miami Herald* even explained what the important event was (Bussey, 2000b). Had the U.S. print media covered this event significantly and in-depth, and had it accurately identified the direct

connections that this alternative government had with the social movements of Ecuador, it would have been possible to perceive the removal of President Mahuad as not an anti-democratic military coup but as a popular uprising enhancing civilian rule and participation. Given MDM expectations surrounding unworthy social movements and client states, however, the characterizations present in news content analyzed in this study were far from surprising.

Recall again Jennifer Collins' first-hand reports, which included detailed and humanizing descriptions (2000b). Such elaborate descriptions of what would surely be considered an important event if undertaken by a resistance movement within the borders of an enemy state of the U.S. (e.g., Cuba, Venezuela, North Korea), were not found within the coverage surveyed for this study. While the inauguration of the Parliament of the Peoples of Ecuador began on January 11, a system of "community government" had existed long before (as noted previously, Hamann's article published in Montreal referred to the "centuries-old Andean community government system"). This simple but important fact was unreported in the U.S., including the lone *Miami Herald* article, which failed to mention the "centuries-old" tradition of Ecuadoran participatory democracy.

Voids like these had ominous implications, as it would have been hard to adhere to the narrative which dominated coverage – that the indigenous movements spearheaded an undemocratic campaign to unseat the government – had coverage also significantly noted the prominence and long-standing importance of the People's Parliaments and the "community government system." Indeed, the existence of the People's Parliaments reflected the democratic nature of the indigenous movements, but such facts are often of little interest to U.S. mainstream papers if they reside in states friendly to U.S. interests, as the MDM expects.

Comparing Sources for Exceptionally Independent Material

While the MDM did not expect any significant exceptions in the general patterns of news content analyzed in this study, it is still a *model* of news analysis and not meant to describe every single article that appears on any given issue. There is always the possibility for *some* exceptional reporting taken on by reporters who may have more autonomy to do so. The MDM does expect, however, that regional papers are more likely than nationally-distributed dailies to contain more examples of exceptional reporting that veers off of the path of news media dependency on officialdom. In this study, exceptional articles were uniformly found outside of the elite-agenda setting dailies.

Regional papers produced several articles that were exceptional in a few aspects. The *San Diego Union-Tribune* was the *only* daily to have an article on the social movement as its main focus (Bussey, 2000a) and was also the only daily to have covered several protests, during a time the movement was at its height. Further, *The Miami Herald* was the *only* paper to have run an article on the peoples' parliaments (Bussey, 2000b). *The Boston Globe* was the only daily newspaper that picked up any of the on-the-scene reporter Nicole Veash's articles. None of these papers, however, provided sustained coverage which contextualized and noted the issues raised by the "unworthy" social movement in this chapter. Nevertheless, they were still the only papers to cover even these aspects.

As already noted (see sub-section above *The CONAIE's important, but overlooked, role*), non-profit news media sources also produced exceptionally independent coverage. Veash, a freelance journalist, also provided independent reporting on the movement and covered its demands in a substantive manner. Her articles, however, were mostly published abroad though and run by the Edinburgh-based daily, the *Scotsman*. Interestingly enough, the lone exception to this was a shortened (edited down over a ¼ from its originally published length in the *Scotsman*) and non-cover-page article picked up by the *Boston Globe* (a non-nationally distributed paper) which was entitled, "Indians Show Clout in Ecuador" (2000c). That Veash's on-the-scene coverage was relegated to the sidelines within U.S. news media illustrates an important part of the MDM: efforts by journalists to penetrate institutional barriers and restrictions on

unworthy social movements will not be rewarded and if anything, will only generate marginalized exceptions.

More extensive testing of regional versus nationally-distributed dailies will be undertaken in the next chapter.

Conclusion

U.S. print news coverage of the uprising in Ecuador in 2000 fulfilled the MDM's expectations for a case-study of this non-exceptional nature. The following is a point by point rundown of the results of the predictions from the coding that was conducted:

1. Official sources *were* prominently and consistently consulted over those of unofficial sources and their premises were not questioned, as 75% of articles depended on official sources and 92% of the articles characterized leaders as democratic and/or peace-loving (IM / PM synthesis, see Table 7.1).
2. The social movement against President Mahuad *was* significantly overlooked and did *not* highlight its issues in the foreground, as 67% of the articles that mentioned the social movement, were lacking mentions of any movement issues or demands (MDM, see Table 7.1).
3. Detailed and humanizing coverage of the humanitarian crisis that revolved around the economic collapse, which was a principal impetus for the political resistance, was *not* present, reflecting the "unworthy" status of Ecuador's indigenous-led social movement (MDM, see Table 7.1).
4. Ecuador's leaders, because they are U.S. allies, *were* characterized as being dedicated to peace and democracy 92% of the time; the social movement opposing it *was* characterized as dictatorial and anti-democratic 85% of the time; editorials *did* primarily place blame on the social movement for the uprising 75% of the time, as opposed to official Ecuadoran leaders and the economic conditions in which their policies resulted (MDM, see Table 7.1).
5. The amount of coverage Ecuador was granted *did* depend largely upon the kind of attention it attracted from public officials, as editorials and reporting *did* increase in frequency when Washington took notice of the issue (IM, see Tables 7.2 & 7.3).
6. Splits in elite opinion over Ecuador did *not* occur and as expected, there was *no* marked increase in coverage and no increased range of permissible opinion (IM).
7. When exceptional articles appeared, they not only more arose from regional-based papers, but *always* so (MDM).

All of the expectations stemming from its synthesis and original components were met in light of coverage results, as reporting was uncritical for a country that was a client state of the U.S. and downright hostile at times to a movement that was in resistance to the client government therein. Independent sources were completely overlooked or rarely utilized. Interest in Ecuador during January was very slight, as the MDM would expect for an issue that garnered scant attention from Washington, did not generate spin from the client itself (i.e. lack of foreign indexing) and did not receive any substantial coverage until the whole government was toppled. Events leading up to the overthrow of Mahuad, however, would have likely received substantial attention if they had occurred in a state on hostile terms with the U.S., such as the nearby island nation of Cuba, Iran or even the present-day Ecuador.

One does not have to look far to find recent examples of worthy social movements that have apparently generated different coverage. These examples account for future research opportunities along the lines seen in this case-study. Injured and killed civilians in Honduras during the summer of 2009, who were part of an ongoing protest movement against the coup which overthrew democratically elected President Zelaya, appeared not to receive nearly as much press attention, sympathy and substantive coverage as the protesters against the elections in Iran during the same time period. Similarly, the protesters in Iran were seemingly covered more extensively in their opposition to the purported victory of their incumbent President, than the demands of the indigenous movement surveyed in this case study. By strictly objective standards, the Ecuadoran movement actually had *more* political success *and* power in having succeeded in forcing the resignation of the administration they were opposing. This is precisely what the MDM has to offer, as it looks beyond the “trail of power” offered by Bennett (1995) and other indexing scholars by explaining dichotomous press treatment toward “unworthy” social movements with studies steeped in empirical evidence and institutional analyses of news media performance.

Addendum I: Coding Scheme

CONTENTS:

- 1) *Exact* Order of Coding
- 2) General Instructions.
- 3) Detailed clarifications about movement, dollarization and culpability categories.

Exact Order of coding

<p style="text-align: center;">MOVEMENT</p> <p>1) Mark any mentions of the social movement.</p> <p>2) Did any of these mentions also carry references to the issue's demands or issues?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SOURCE</p> <p>3) Mark and/or track all sources used, referred to, attributed.</p> <p>4) After marking all source types, calculate whether sourcing was mostly official (60% or more of article paragraphs), mostly unofficial (60% or more of article paragraphs) or mixed (50-59% of either). Articles without attributed sources should be marked mixed.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">DOLLARIZATION</p> <p>5) Was the article mostly about dollarization? Mark yes or no.</p> <p>6) <i>Only</i> if the answer is yes to 5), proceed to code whether or not concerns were mostly geared toward business and industry (60% or more of article paragraphs), mostly toward ordinary people (60% or more of paragraphs) or mixed / ambiguous (50-59% of paragraphs of either focus, or a focus on neither).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CULPABILITY</p> <p>7) Were government officials mostly characterized as democratic or anti-democratic? Ambiguous and/or mixed characterizations should be coded accordingly and as not having culpability.</p> <p>8) Was the whole affair characterized mostly as a military coup or as a popular uprising? Ambiguous and/or mixed characterizations should be as not having culpability.</p>
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General Instructions

- 1) Be sure to read through the story completely *without* coding for anything. This will allow you to get a general feel for the story and understand what it was mainly about.
- 2) Code for only one variable, within one coding category, at a time.
- 3) Stick to the exact order of coding just noted for every story.
- 4) Remember to carefully distinguish the difference between source attributions and *not* to note instances of sourcing that are from other journalists or media.
- 5) When running into difficult articles that are hard to establish dollarization as being the dominant theme, attributed culpability and/or democratic / anti-democratic characterizations, do *not* hesitate to simply mark N/A for ambiguous or mixed results.

Distinguishing Between Official and Unofficial Source Types

<p><u>1) Official source definition:</u> U.S. government officials, Ecuadoran government officials, OAS officials or representatives, current or former military officials or corporate-public relations spokespeople. Other corporate media sources (i.e. journalists as guests for analysis) ARE NOT coded, period.</p>	<p>Code amount of paragraph usage of official sources. If 60% or more of the article’s paragraphs are dominated by official sources, it should be coded accordingly. Remember, two mentions of an official source (whether or not it’s the same official person or two different official persons) in the SAME paragraph gets counted as only one instance. We are coding for source type, not for specific sources.</p>
<p><u>2) Unofficial sources definition:</u> indigenous leaders and people (i.e. the CONAIE and/or Antonio Vargas), trade union representatives, non-governmental organizations, rank-and-file labor union members, human rights groups, human relief organizations and U.S. citizens. Economists are <i>not</i> coded as being either official <i>or</i> unofficial.</p>	<p>Code amount of paragraph usage of unofficial sources. If 60% or more of the article’s paragraphs are dominated by unofficial sources, it should be coded accordingly. Remember, two mentions of an unofficial source (whether or not it’s the same official person or two different official persons) in the SAME paragraph gets counted as only one instance. However, if they are in different paragraphs, it gets counted as two instances. We are coding for source type, not for specific sources.</p>

Sourcing

If 60% or more of the article's paragraphs are dominated by official sources, the article should be coded as "official." If 60% or more of the article's paragraphs are dominated by official sources, it should be coded as "unofficial." If 50% to 59% of any given article's sourced paragraphs are either official or unofficial, it should be coded as "mixed." The table above should be thoroughly consulted (and re-consulted) as it will help you distinguish between official and unofficial source types.

On the Social Movement

The threshold for articles being coded as including the social movement opposing the government is very low: if only *one* mention of the social movement is included, the article should be coded as having mentioned it. "Mentions" are defined in the most lenient of terms: if any of the people, organizations or groups that comprised the social movement in opposition to the Mahuad administration is mentioned in any context whatsoever, the article should be coded as having mentioned it.

The next step is similar to the first one, but beyond the mere mention of the social movement itself, we are *also* looking for whether or not related issues and/or demands raised by the movement are mentioned as well. There is no qualitative judgment being made about the extent of the demand or the substance of the being referenced, and instead, we are once again looking for the mere mention. Quite simply: did the article reference any given issue or demand by the social movement or not? Similar to the previous coding category on movements, there is no ambiguous code here. Either the article referenced an issue or demand by the movement at least once or it did not.

Dollarization

We are only looking for articles that cover dollarization as the *main* focus under consideration. An automatic qualifier would be if the article at hand has the word "dollarization" included in the headline. Otherwise, at least more than half of the article's paragraphs have to have dollarization as the focus for it to be coded accordingly.

Only for the articles that qualify as having a dollarization focus under the terms above, we are looking for specific concerns of government officials, business and industry being addressed versus concerns along the lines of the people. Topics such as governmental monetary policy, reactions by the banking industry and inflation accounting for at least 60% of the article's paragraphs are to be coded as business concerns. Articles merely mentioning governmental monetary policy do not automatically qualify it as business concerns, however, if the effects of the economic downturn on the people are highlighted. Topics mostly concerned on ordinary people can include falling/stagnant wages, unemployment or increased poverty levels. Any article significantly dealing with dollarization in terms of the effects of the economic collapse should be coded as dealing with the concerns of ordinary people. These topics can be put in terms of past or current conditions, or even future possibilities. Again, the threshold

Chapter Seven: Was the Social Movement in Ecuador Unworthy in U.S. News Coverage?

Addendum I: Coding Scheme - Page 315

here is the same for business concerns: when 60% of the article's paragraphs are related to concerns most important to ordinary people, it should be coded accordingly.

The cardinal rule remains the following: when in doubt, simply code N/A for any ambiguous or mixed results.

Culpability

Coding for culpability can be difficult. Consequently, this scheme was designed to simplify matters. We are looking for *strict* attributions of culpability and specific descriptions along the lines of democratic, peace-loving and law-abiding officials or the opposite, repressive, authoritarian, dictatorial, unrepresentative, and elitist descriptions.

The articles and/or editorials need to have a clear line of culpability established in at least 60% of all of the paragraphs along the lines of the descriptions just noted above, for culpability to be established. If in doubt, simply code N/A for any ambiguous or mixed results.

Endnotes

¹ Here is a collection of quotes from news coverage that cited important government officials during their most outspoken moments:

January 22: "The State Department in Washington condemned the move against Mahuad and referred to the Indian protesters and their army backers as those who are 'seeking to establish an unconstitutional regime'" (Buckley, 2000).

January 23: "The U.S. State Department joined Gaviria and other Latin American leaders who warned the Ecuadorean military and insurgent protesters that any attempt to topple the president would be condemned and provoke economic sanctions and other forms of retaliation" (Dudley & Buckley, 2000).

January 23: "The U.S. State Department, in a statement issued by the American Embassy in Quito, said it was "watching closely" as events unfold in Ecuador" (Johnson, 2000).

January 23: "'While we regret the circumstances that led President Mahuad to call for public support for a Noboa presidency, his statement is a magnanimous gesture to pave the way to restore the country to constitutional order,' the State Department said" (Johnson, 2000).

January 23: "Peter Romero, the State Department's top official for Latin America, warned the coup leaders on Quito radio on Friday that they faced "political and economic isolation" akin to Cuba's if they persisted. Today, Mr. Romero, a former ambassador to Ecuador, described the situation as 'chaos'" (Rohter 2000b).

² Freelance journalist Nicole Veash's on-the-scene articles, which gave the most attention and careful treatment on Ecuador's mostly indigenous social movement, were largely picked up by the *Scotsman*, a foreign source based in Edinburgh. The lone exception was one short (edited down over a ¼ from its original length, originally published in the *Scotsman*), non-cover-page article picked up by the *Boston Globe* on January 14, entitled, "Indians Show Clout in Ecuador."

³ For the lone exception, see Bussey, 2000a.

Introduction

The PM, IM and MDM contain critical postulates on news media performance. However, the PM and MDM have only been applied to news coverage on international issues originating from locations abroad, while the IM has only sparingly addressed domestic coverage in its own analyses. Can these models be applied to a domestic issue as well? If so, how would each perform in terms of its respective predictions and expectations? Further, what can be learned in terms of the continued development of the MDM's respective components and its synthesis of the IM and PM? This paper seeks to answer those questions in regards to immigration and a case study involving a paired example suitable to test the unworthy / worthy victims thesis of the PM, the coverage tendencies expected by the IM, sourcing tendencies expected by all three models, and the kind of exceptional conditions which will lead to exceptional aspects of news content as predicted by the MDM. The case study will compare coverage of Elián González, a Cuban boy whose mother perished while trying to reach the United States, along with a plethora of similar cases where Mexican, Central American and Haitian children have crossed into the United States and lost one of their parents.*

Immigration was purposefully picked as an appropriate domestic case study for the models not only because it is an important and timely topic that is certain to continue in its importance for years to come, but also because it has significant connections to foreign policy as well. Thus, it could be reasonably expected that amongst all domestic issues in U.S. politics, immigration was the domestic policy issue that could be most compatible with the expectations of both models.

The MDM, IM and PM are all analyses that respectively posit institutional variables, such as market pressures and state influence over the bounds of acceptable criticism, as bearing considerable power on content within U.S. news media sources. Scholarly works have not taken this approach when it comes to analyzing immigration coverage despite the growing presence of critical political economic analyses within the communications literature (Mosco, 1996, 2005) and the present-day hyper-commercial era of media (McChesney, 2000, 2004, 2008). Instead, textual analyses exploring

* Details of the Elián González story are noted in a detailed timeline in the Addendum to this chapter.

metaphorical meanings, the depths of discourse and rhetoric, and how they relate to racism, dominate the critical literature on U.S. immigration policy (Chávez, 2001; Inda, 2006; Molina Guzman, 2005, 2006; Ono & Sloop, 2001; Santa Ana, 2002; Van Dijk, 2000). Conversely, too often, analysis done on an institutional level is largely accepting of U.S. governmental positioning on immigration, sticking sharply within the narrow ideological and doctrinal bounds of the debate in Washington (one example of this: Adams, 2006). Finally, comparative analyses which look at case studies ranging across different news sources covering immigration are noticeably absent (exceptional in this regard, is a lone MA thesis, Celeste, 2005).

It is apparent then that a definitive gap is present when it comes to critical institutional analysis of immigration and related U.S. news coverage. This study aims to serve as a first step toward closing that gap. In order to do so, the study in this chapter will undertake the following tasks: a survey of immigration policy, unaccompanied immigrant children and NAFTA as relevant background for the case-study; a literature review on scholarly work concerning news coverage of immigration; explore theoretical and methodological considerations as well as relevant expectations of all three models; evaluate database findings and the results of the predictions of the models; and conclude with an analysis of the results and the lessons learned from this study.

Immigration Policy

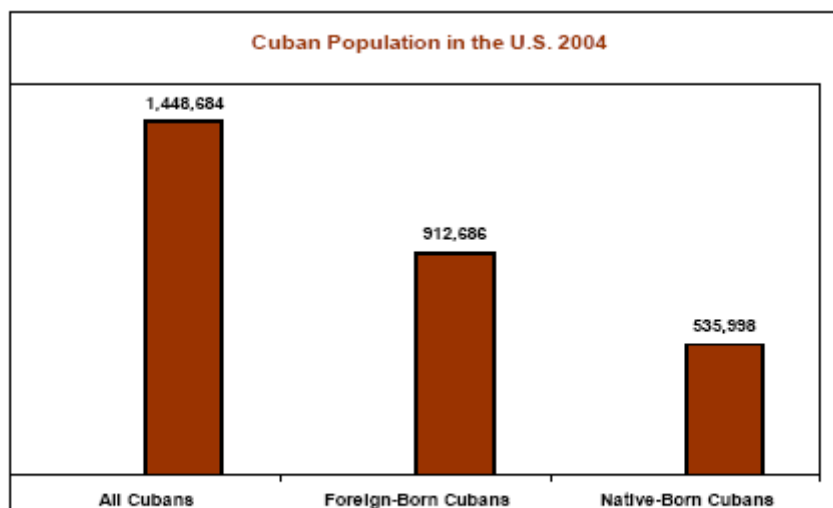
The history of immigration policy since 1965 towards Cubans, as opposed to Haitians and Mexicans, couldn't be more distinct. Cubans have enjoyed privileges in terms of immigration rights that Haitians and Mexicans can only dream of. Furthermore, the scholarly literature on immigration and media coverage shows a distinct pattern of racism and prejudice in terms of coverage of Mexicans and Haitians, while more nuanced and subtle coverage has prevailed for Cubans. In this study, it is argued that if the media is to be independent of the government, it cannot report within the strict boundaries drawn by the narrow parameters of the immigration debate in Washington. Indeed, if children suffer as a result of an attempt to immigrate by their parents, their cases should not be highlighted over one another based simply on their nationality and the positioning of their country with the U.S. government, much less the color of their skin.

The history of U.S. immigration policy is a long and complex one, but for the purposes of this study, we will try and simplify matters by keeping to the most important and relevant aspects in terms of Cuba, Haiti and Mexico (since a large majority of the news coverage analyzed in this study is about children hailing from those countries, with the only other countries being Guatemala and Honduras). For close to the entire first century of U.S. history, there was no immigration policy to speak of, much less any distinction between legal and illegal immigration. Federal immigration law started with the advent of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and from that point until 1965, immigration policy was directed towards keeping nationalities deemed as undesirable from crossing pass U.S. borders. The notion then, widespread and accepted in most U.S. news coverage, of a rich tradition and legacy of U.S. immigration policy is baseless, as in reality, immigration policy has been anything but pro-immigrant (Sarkar, 2006).

Cuba

About 1.5 million Cubans live in the U.S. (see table below, Pew, 2006). Around 600,000 Cubans live in South Florida, which is twice as many African-Americans and almost as many as Caucasians that live in the tri-county area (Soruco, 1996, p. 1). Cubans enjoy significant economic and political clout in Miami that includes their own Hispanic Builders Association; three of the ten largest businesses in Dade County; an ex-mayor (Xavier Suarez), an ex-county manager (Joaquin Avino) and ten Cuban representatives in the Florida state legislature; ownership of about 20,000 businesses in Dade county; 417 hold high level bank executive positions; and 80% of ownership or operation of all service stations; and have been fairly successful in terms of influencing policy through political action committees (Soruco, 1996, pp. 4-5, 9-10). As a result, Cubans are arguably the “model minority” within U.S. Latino/a nationalities, at least in terms of how they have been treated by U.S. immigration policy and possibly also in terms of wider-spread perceptions as well.

Table 8.1



Source: 2004 American Community Survey

The Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966 was a milestone in U.S. immigration policy towards Cubans., giving the U.S. Attorney General discretionary power to allot permanent residency to any Cuban in the United States for a year, including those who overstayed their visas. Until 1985, there was not even quotas on the amount of Cuban immigrants entering the U.S. even existed, quite a rarity in U.S. immigration policy, which is amongst the most restrictive in comparison to other industrialized nations. While refugees from other countries were required to demonstrate political persecution, as opposed to them merely being “economic” refugees, Cubans have always been assumed to be “political refugees.” Since 1966, Cubans have largely enjoyed this “special status,” with little modification (Wesem, 2006).

One important modification did occur during the Clinton administration, however, with the advent of the “wet-feet / dry feet” policy in 1995. Following several years of negotiations with the Cuban government, the U.S. Coast Guard began to enforce a policy by which they returned Cubans found at sea and who had not stepped foot onto U.S. soil (Wesem, 2006). This development was quite relevant to the Elián González story being that he was “found” at sea before being taken to non-immediate relatives of his family.

Mexico

The total population of Mexicans living in the U.S. is estimated as being between 13 and 20 million, with a bit over half of the total including undocumented immigrants.

When Chicanos (U.S.-born children with at least one Mexican-born parent) are included, the total raises to 26 million (Pew Center, 2005). Mexicans account for 1/3 of all new immigrants, both undocumented and documented (Adams, 2006, p. 52).

Remittances and the ability to undertake them is one of the primary motivations for emigration (Adams, 2006, p. 52), while NAFTA is one of the primary structural reasons for the huge increases in immigration. The latter is very rarely alluded to within news coverage about Mexican immigration, despite sound scholarship and evidence pointing strongly at such a phenomenon taking place, as was widely recognized, predicted and expected at the time of the adoption of NAFTA. More than a half of annual remittances sent from the U.S. went to Mexico (\$16 of \$30 billion). Remittances have oscillated between being the 2nd and 3rd leading source of foreign exchange generated in Mexico, sometimes followed by tourism and behind the Mexican export of oil revenues. Also, remittances represent between 2 to 4% of Mexico's total GDP (Adams, 2006, p. 52).

In terms of median income, Mexicans earned 25% less than their foreign counterparts and had the highest percentage of income earners with less than a \$20K annual income, despite boasting the highest group of foreign residents in the U.S. (Pew, 2005). Such statistics point towards support of the widespread findings of human and labor rights abuses of the millions of undocumented Mexican immigrant workers in the U.S.

Mexican immigration to the U.S. has long been an issue of contention. For starters, more than half of the Mexican territory was seized by a war of acquisition by the U.S. during the 19th century. Within the 20th century, however, a major change in immigration policy occurred with the guest-worker program known as the *bracero* program. The *braceros* were agricultural and railroad workers. The railroad program ended following the conclusion of World War II, but the agricultural half was extended until 1964, upon which time it was terminated in the wake of criticism stemming from reports of human rights abuses. Savings accounts that were linked to the wages and labor of the workers were never recuperated and even to this day, the *braceros* continue to wage a legal battle to recover such wages (Bracero History Project, 2006; Wesem, 2006).

Following the disastrous conclusion of the *bracero* program, the next milestone in U.S. immigration policy towards Mexicans is perhaps the only significantly positive one.

The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 granted amnesty to 2.4 million undocumented Mexicans living in the United States (Adams, 2006, p. 53). The 1986 legislation was short-lived however, and was not extended or renewed. Instead, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 passed in September of that year. This law was a repressive measure and a step backwards that included provisions that barred reentry from those who overstayed their tourist visas (Adams, 2006, p. 56).

A xenophobic push in California resulted in a referendum that is one of the more well-known amongst all immigration policies, the infamous Proposition 187. The measure required public employees to “turn in” undocumented immigrants to the appropriate immigration authorities and criminal punishment and prosecution could result if they failed to do so. Voters who actually showed up in a statewide referendum in Arizona passed a similar measure called Proposition 200,¹ the same state which saw its Governor sign into law legislation which critics charge as having legalized discrimination.

Quite clearly, immigration policy towards the U.S. client state of Mexico has had nothing in common with that of Cuba. Instead, the policies towards Mexicans bear at least some resemblance to those crafted towards Haitians.

Haiti

For over thirty years, Haitians have consistently fled to the U.S., as a result of U.S.-supported repressive regimes and poverty-ridden economic conditions that have been worsened by the onslaught of imposed neo-liberal policies. In what is uncontroversially accepted as the poorest nation in the Western hemisphere, Haitians have arguably been one of the largest victims of U.S.-supported aggression and debilitating economic policies.²

Cuba’s infamous Mariel boat lift in 1980, that resulted in 125,000 Cubans coming to the U.S., included tens of thousands of Haitians and coincided with a peak in Haitian immigration. However, immigration policies sharply differed for Haiti and Cuba, with the latter receiving the designation of “political” refugees as opposed to the former, who were merely considered “economic.” The distinction was a crucial one in terms of immigration policy as it resulted in Cubans being considered as legal refugees and Haitians as undocumented immigrants. The Washington-based Congressional Research

Service notes that, “Cuban migrants receive more generous treatment under U.S. law than Haitians or foreign nationals from any other country” (Wasem, 2006, p. 6).

However, as Stepick (1998) and many others have argued, the argument distinguishing Cuban and Haitian refugees does not “withstand even superficial scrutiny” (p. 102) and instead has everything to do with the makeup of the governments of the countries they left behind. Cuba is classified as a communist and an enemy state and Haiti (in 2000) as a right-wing led client state of the U.S. This crucial dichotomy has been overshadowed by attention toward the perceived differing racial makeup of Cubans and Haitians. As Stepick put it, the predominant perception is one of “predominantly White Cubans versus Black Haitians,” (p. 103), though the perception does not seem to have much of a basis in reality, considering the significant presence of Afro-Cubanos in Cuba and beyond. After significant public pressure about the inequitable immigration policies, there was a short period of relaxation of these distinctions during the last year of the Carter administration that would quickly be put back into place by the Reagan administration as of 1981 (p. 103).

About 400,000 Haitians were living in the U.S. during the 2000 census; a 33% increase then from the previous 300,000 total estimated to be living in the U.S., from the 1990 census (Newland, 2004; Stepick, 1998, p. 5). However, as many as 50 percent of the Haitian population was undercounted during the 1990’s (Stepick & Stepick, 1992), so it may be that as many as 450,000 Haitians were actually living in the U.S. during the 1990’s (Stepick, 1998, p. 5) and currently, 800,000 may be residing within the U.S.

The majority of the Haitian populations were found almost exclusively in two states during the time reviewed in this study: New York and Florida, each boasting about 150,000 as of the late 1990’s (Stepick, 1998, p. 5). Figures from 2000 revealed about 70,000 Haitians living in Broward (Ft. Lauderdale), 100,000 in Dade (Miami) and 50,000 in Palm Beach counties, according to Haitian organizations in Broward (Knight-Ridder, 2000). In the tri-country area of South Florida, the overwhelming majority are recent arrivals and young, with two thirds having come within the last decade, nearly half being between the ages of 30 and 44 years old, and 20% being less than 14 years-old, according to the 1990 U.S. Census (p. 6). The actual reproduction rate of Haitians is

comparable to the broader population at-large, displacing many myths about Haitian immigrants (Kerr, 1996; Stepick & Stepick, 1992).

With the issues mentioned above serving as the relevant policy and sociological backdrop to the case-study in this chapter, a survey will now be undertaken on important facts and figures behind unaccompanied immigrant children, given the focus of this study on news coverage of their plight.

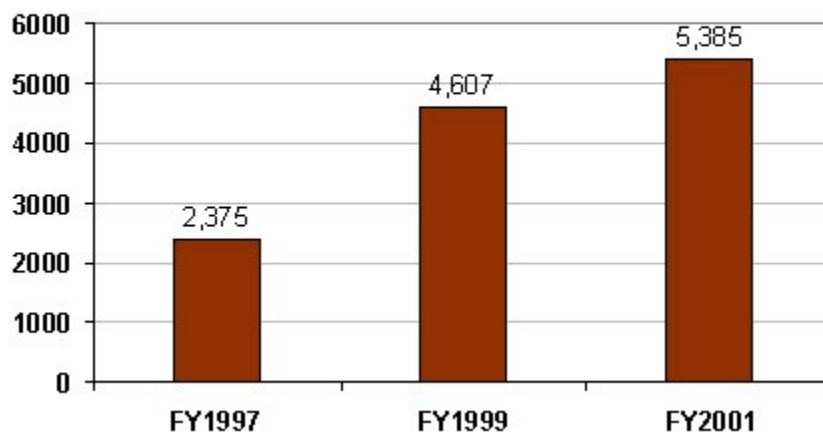
Unaccompanied Immigrant Children

The scope of the problem of abandoned and/or unaccompanied immigrant children was duly revealed, as numbers buried within news coverage (and virtually never featured) came to life during the course of the database research conducted for this study. Human rights studies, undertaken both before and after the Elián case, also present a similarly stark picture and show beyond a shadow of a doubt that the problem has persisted well into the 2000's of the new century (Amnesty International USA, 2003; Becker & Bochenek, 1998; Bhabha, 2004; Ehrenreich et al., 1997; Young, 2002).

Some of the harrowing statistics included, according to INS records, 5,385 undocumented and abandoned or unaccompanied children (i.e. under the age of 18) having been returned to their country of origin in 2001. In the previous years of 1998 and 1999, with 4,457 and 4,607 detained children were the respective totals. In 1999, 809 of these children were from Mexico, while another 1,055 unaccompanied children were from Honduras, 813 from El Salvador, and 721 from Guatemala (Reamy, 2000).

Table 8.2

Unaccompanied Children Detained by the INS
1997-2001



The numbers noted above showed no sign of decreasing following the Elián debacle, as all indications have been that the trend continues to increase. In 2002, 35,000 children were arrested while attempting to cross the U.S.-Mexico border with four fatalities resulting in 2002 and one, in 2001 (Watson, 2002). At the Ysidro port of entry alone, which is in San Diego and located across from Tijuana in Mexico, a 300% increase of the amount of children detained was registered for 2001 (4,228) in comparison to 1997's totals (1408). Some 1,800 children were detained in 2000 at the Mexicali-Calexico border (Cearley, 2001). Smugglers in 2001 were reportedly charging \$1,200 to \$1,500 to take a child across the a U.S. port of entry (Cearley, 2001).

Research related to this study did not come up with specific figures for Haiti, but one of the most important activists of the area, the unheralded hero Daniella Henry of the Delray Beach-based Haitian Community Council, remarked to a local paper that immigrant children are left behind "all the time" (Evans, 2000).

Of significant relevance to our study is the estimate that about 100 to 200 of the many thousands of detained unaccompanied or abandoned children have *no* relatives to care for them in the U.S. or their home country. The estimate was given by attorney Steven Lang, who is part of ProBar, a nonprofit immigration law project funded by lawyers (Pinkerton, 2000).³

NAFTA and Mexican Immigration

Several years before Elián González came upon the shores of Florida, peer-reviewed scholarship was being published that documented the clear-cut connection between NAFTA and increased undocumented immigration from Mexico (Andreas, 1998). Two years later, such connections were depicted even more plainly:

The examination of both short- and long-term demographic and economic trends indicates that Mexican migration to the United States will continue to increase through at least the next two decades. Although both U.S. and Mexican politicians have argued that NAFTA will substantially reduce illegal immigration, the reality has so far failed to match the promises of their political rhetoric. NAFTA has not generated enough jobs at sufficient wages to significantly deter the ever-expanding pool of Mexican migrant workers from seeking employment in the United States (Manning, 2000).

Manning was crystal-clear in his writing that the “NAFTA era” was best, “characterized by higher rather than lower levels of Mexican emigration” (2000).

After the year of Elián González coverage, scholars continued documenting the connections between NAFTA and undocumented immigration:

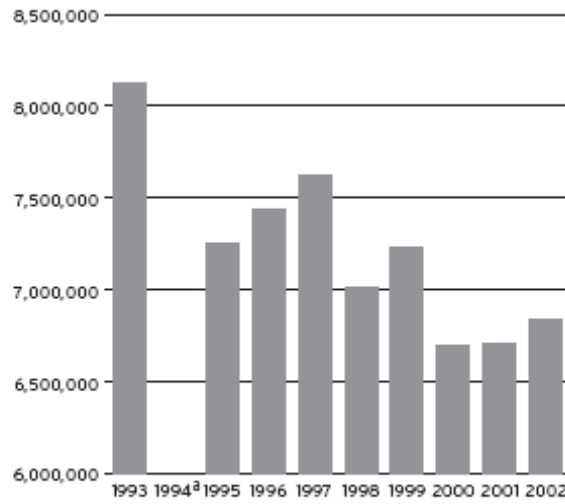
The signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1993 led to the formation of a social and economic area characterized by marked asymmetry between its members: the USA, Mexico and Canada. Seven years later the results in terms of salaries, employment and labor standards are not very positive, although they have not produced the catastrophic results foreseen by some. In Mexico several hundred thousand jobs were created, especially in the maquiladora export industry, but this has been associated with falling living standards and rising poverty. *Migration from Mexico to the USA has increased*. Poor labor standards and illegal employment have led to collaboration between NGOs and trade unions on both sides of the frontier (Hualde & Ramirez, 2001; *emphasis added*).

In 2003 as well, a long and detailed study was published by the Carnegie foundation, which again documented the continuing link between NAFTA and immigration. In the study, principally authored by Papademetriou, we read that, “By most measures, illegal immigration to the United States continued to increase after NAFTA came into effect (2003, p. 48) and further, that, “Migration from Mexico to the United States, both legal and illegal, has continued to grow. In the ten years that NAFTA has been in effect, vastly expanded investment in Mexico and regional trade in goods has not reduced the movement of people ...” (2003, p. 53).

An array of figures and tables taken from the detailed study (Papademetriou et al., 2003) illustrate the connections to a stark degree, including rising rates of unemployment in Mexico's devastated agricultural sector (Figure 8.1, "figure 4" in graphic); a growing militarization of the Mexican-U.S. border (Figure 8.2, "figure 1" in graphic); an increasing amount of border apprehensions (Figure 8.2, "figure 2" in graphic); sharp increases in the amount of Mexican-born people residing in the U.S. (Figure 8.3, "figures 3 & 4" in graphic); and last, but far from least, marked increases in rural migration from Mexico (Figure 8.4, "figure 5" in graphic):

Figure 8.1

Figure 4. Mexican Employment in Agriculture
 EMPLOYEES



Source: INEGI/STPS, National Employment Survey (ENE).
 Note: Agriculture actually refers to the primary sector, which also includes fishing, forestry, and trapping.
 a. Data for 1994 not available.

Figure 8.2

Figure 1. Southwest Border Officer Hours, Fiscal Years 1977–2003
 OFFICER HOURS

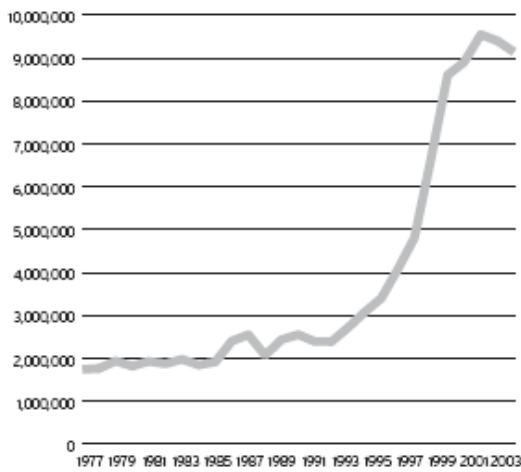
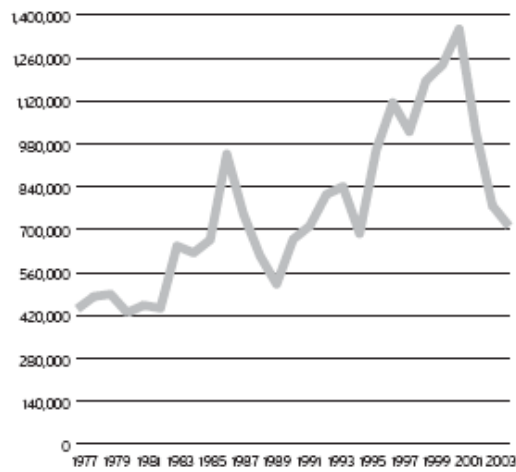


Figure 2. Southwest Border Apprehensions, Fiscal Years 1977–2003
 APPREHENSIONS



Source: Office of Immigration Statistics, Department of Homeland Security, provided in Frank Bean and B. Lindsay Lowell, *Unauthorized Mexican Immigration into the United States: IRCA, NAFTA, and Their Migration Implications*. Paper commissioned for this report, on file with the author, 2003.

Figure 8.3

Figure 3. Growth of the Mexican-Born Population in the United States
MILLIONS

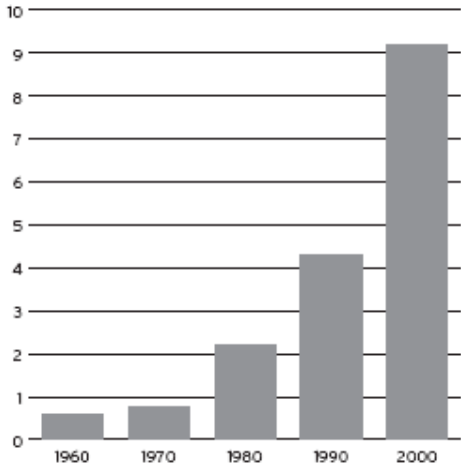
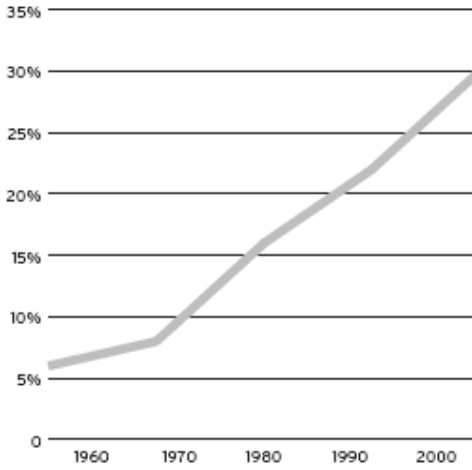


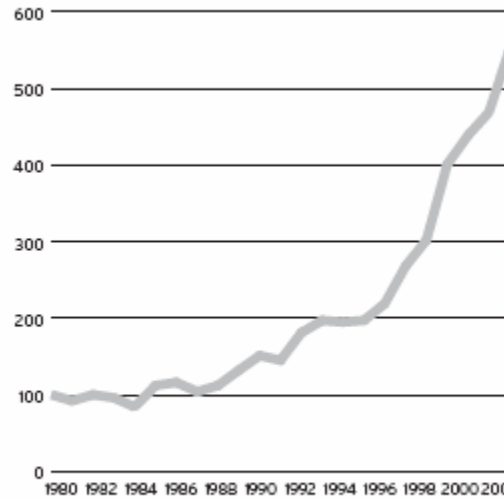
Figure 4. Percentage of Growth of the Mexican-Born Population in the United States



Source: Migration Policy Institute analysis of 2000 Census Bureau data and Campbell Gibson and Emily Lennon, *Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-Born Population of the United States: 1850-1990* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau, 1999).

Figure 8.4

Figure 5. Migration from Rural Mexico to the United States, 1980-2002
HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS: 1980=100



Source: Analysis of data from Mexico National Rural Household Survey of 2002, in J. Edward Taylor and George Dyet, *NAFTA, Trade, and Migration*. Paper commissioned for this report, on file with the author, 2003.

Such findings were so stark and obvious that even the *New York Times* took notice of this in a lone back-page, mid-week article that grimly reported how, “Real wages in Mexico

are lower now than they were when the agreement was adopted despite higher productivity, income inequality is greater there and **immigration has continued to soar**" (Dugger, 2003; *emphasis added*).

The findings before, during and after the year of Elián González relating to the many connections between NAFTA and immigration raise the question: did news coverage of both Elián and the potentially equivalent cases garner notice of the systemic conditions responsible for immigration? Before addressing that question, a review of the scholarship on news coverage of immigration will first be undertaken.

Literature Review of Scholarship on News Media Coverage of Immigration

With the backdrop of the immigration policies and related socio-economic realities just noted, scholarly literature has been consistent in a number of regards, most notably with the consensus amongst analysts on the persistent themes of racism often found in news coverage. This racism was most evident in metaphors and dominant themes that pervaded through much of the news coverage found in U.S.-based print sources.

In an analysis of 35 years worth of popular news magazine covers⁴ that addressed the topic of Mexicans or Mexican immigration, Chávez criticized the dominant metaphors found in his study as being predominantly xenophobic (2001). Such metaphors included conceptualizing the U.S.-Mexico border as a "war zone" (2001, p. 218); references to undocumented immigrants as "invaders" (p. 220); the "colonization" of Los Angeles by Mexico (pp. 225-226); an alarmist imagery (p. 260); the supposed explosive birth rate of Mexican immigrants (pp. 229-230); the "Disappearing Border" (p. 236); and how reproduction is depicted as a negative result of Mexican immigration while production is depicted as a positive (p. 252). Chávez actually links this latter metaphor to the rationale behind guest worker programs, which he argues are ideal because they avoid the perceived "reproduction" problem while capitalizing on all of the advantages of the "production" end of matters. This latter point is perhaps one of Chávez's most impressive and timely critiques, coming at a period where guest worker proposals are strangely considered as "pro-immigrant" (Sarkar, 2006).

Noteworthy and reflective of what indexing would expect for news coverage on immigration, is that following the adoption of the amnesty-legislation of 1986 (IRCA),

magazine covers addressing immigration and referencing Mexicans experienced a “hiatus” (Chávez, 2001, p. 240). No longer, all of a sudden, was immigration a “problem,” “invasion,” or “crisis.” From 1987 to 1992, only one cover addressed the issue in any of the magazines analyzed. Such a development clearly reflects the expectations of both the indexing and propaganda models, which would predict and expect cover stories to generally follow the bounds of debate found in Washington. When immigration was not being considered in Washington, it concurrently was not making the covers of some of the most important magazines of the U.S.

Santa Ana, a leading linguist and rhetorical analyst, had similar findings to Chávez in his study on the *Los Angeles Times*. Santa Ana argued that news coverage often acted in concert with white supremacists in their use of racist metaphors against Latino immigrants, differing only in the subtlety and nuance with which the metaphor was employed, but not in its substance (Santa Ana, 2002, p. 56).

Focusing on the newspaper coverage during the time of Proposition 187, Santa Ana found that some of the dominant metaphors are of immigrants as invaders or animals, with numerous articles referring to the “lure of immigrants” that public programs hold; of INS agents swooping in on “a third of their quarry;” and of the dire need to “ferret out illegal immigrants.” The process of immigration itself is portrayed as dangerous, but not to the immigrants, if not to the very social fabric and stability of the U.S. Still yet more articles refer to immigration as an invasion, a disease, a burden and as a torrent of waves flooding the nation (Santa Ana, 2002, pp. 65, 253, 290, 295, 321). The consequences of such racist language, Santa Ana argues, is to prop up a negative public perception of immigrants that covers up their humanity, individuality and their struggle for mere survival and/or improvement of their living conditions.

Similar conclusions have been reached by other scholars, including Ono and Sloop (2002). In their review of the predominant rhetorical themes surrounding the coverage of Proposition 187, Ono and Sloop found the following metaphors:

. . . a belief in bootstrapping; distinctions between good and bad immigrants and between us (citizens) and them (immigrants); constructions of immigrants as criminals (by definition as “illegals”) or potential criminals (e.g., if the paternalistic state cannot provide an education); representation of immigrants as economic commodities; anxiety over a health and, ultimately, cultural contagion;

commitment to the United States as a fixed nation with clear borders, fair laws, and an ideally protective Constitution; concern with nativist California issues, sometimes in opposition to an inattentive nation-state; and a racialization of contemporary immigrants that depends on racist stereotypes (2002, p. 158).

Ono and Sloop wrote that these metaphors painted a picture of people of color and immigrants as being “dysfunctional, assimilated, or simply inexplicably angry” (p. 163).

In a review of a study by Van Dijk, Uriarte points out some of his key findings: “In television news . . . minorities are overwhelmingly portrayed as deviants, criminals, illegal aliens or failures. In entertainment, they are assimilated to white middle-class lifestyles in harmonious environments, and issues of injustice are reduced to matters of individual conflict” (1994, p. 165). Many of these metaphorical themes and related criticism ring familiar in light of the findings by Chávez (2001), Ono and Sloop (2002) and Santa Ana (2002). Considering the wide range of sources they looked at and the long time span under analysis, there is a consistent analytical thread clearly present in the scholarly literature on immigration coverage: racist metaphors, descriptions and themes are found to be routinely invoked within immigration coverage undertaken by U.S. news media.

The consistency of racist themes spanning several generations, a span of mainstream news media sources and several immigration issues is remarkable, albeit disturbing. Indeed, the aforementioned media scholars and critics certainly can be classified under a similar research approach known as critical discourse analysis (CDA). The consistent findings of the CDA analyses do not address, however, the question of whether or not the U.S. news media is independent or not of being influenced by Washington’s alliances with its regional neighbors in terms of related immigration coverage. It could be argued, for instance, that the U.S. news media often invokes racist metaphors in its coverage of immigration but that such racism is independent of U.S. immigration policy. Indeed, none of the CDA analyses mentioned above, however, systematically compared coverage of immigration from at least one country on friendly terms with the U.S. along with another country characterized by a hostile relationship. This is an essential comparison to undertake in a comprehensive evaluation of the applicability of the indexing and propaganda models to current immigration coverage.

The only comparative media analysis taken up in the years following coverage of Elián González was a study that looked at the way that Cubans and Haitians were depicted in news coverage found within the *New York Times* spanning over a decade's worth of news (Celeste, 2005). The study used framing theory to guide its main research questions and used a randomized sample surveyed by three different coders. The analysis concluded the following in terms of the predominant frames that addressed the character depictions of Haitians and Cubans:

Negative frames of Haitians appeared almost ten times more than positive frames. Only 10% of the frames that appeared for Haitians were positive. Cubans fared much better. There is almost a one to one ratio of the appearance of positive frames to negative frames. As noted previously, Cubans are framed as having positive characteristics such as successful, courageous, educated and religious. Positive frames for Haitians consisted of politically active, resilient and hardworking, but again these frames were few (2005, p. 37).

The study also found that media coverage found that sourcing attributed to “the Cuban government was responsible for most of the negative frames, including character weakness” (2005, p. 36). Conversely, Haitians were shown, “with overwhelmingly negative and undesirable traits” (2005, p. 39), without such clear attributions to more systemic conditions, as was the case with Cuban coverage.

The actual breakdown of the character frames was as follows:

Figure 8.5

	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Cubans	70	78	22
Haitians	23	206	5

Such a finding is fully consistent with the expectations of the PM's fifth filter of anti-communism, as well as its worthy victims thesis. Such consistency notwithstanding, these findings are still not *direct* evidence that the models are applicable to immigration coverage surrounding the case and the time during the Elián case as found in the U.S. news media. The models would expect coverage to go beyond being racist text and to also reflect the policy contours present in Washington, as well as the kind of relationships it maintains with the countries that the migrant children come from.

The literature did not place any emphasis on policy and structural analysis of the kind that the MDM would undertake. However, in Santa Ana's work, we do find that there are greater forces at work beyond the mere presence of racist text. Santa Ana wrote about how "media owners attempt to bend the characterization of the world that their employees shape to their advantage at the expense of other social groups . . ." (2002, p. 52). Such statements raise larger research questions, however, including how stories like that of Elián González generate a manifold amount of attention and sympathy in contrast to a lack of similar treatment to Mexicans, Haitians and Central Americans. The answers, as this study reveals, go beyond explanations that limit themselves only to the racial makeup of the subjects at hand. While it is not even a question whether the variable of race accounted for a lot in terms of past news media coverage, there are also powerful institutional incentives for the media to report on stories like that of Elián González and *not* on the nearly invisible Mexican and Haitian victims, whom are expected to be far from "worthy" in the eyes of the news media and their state-corporate partners, sources and sponsors.

Theoretical Considerations

Immigration was selected as a topic because it is a domestic issue which bears international elements. As noted above, the issue of NAFTA looms large in connection to Mexican and Central American immigration and despite coverage tendencies overwhelmingly concentrating on the social aspects of immigration, there are important systemic elements when it comes to immigration and it is important to assess when these conditions are noted (and when they are not). As a result of these considerations, it was assumed that a case-study of this nature would produce interesting results and findings that could provide additional insights to how the synthesis of the IM & PM behind the MDM, as well as its more original components, can help expand understanding of news media performance on a domestic topic of this nature.

The case of Elián González was selected as an opportunity to test institutional models of news analysis that had not been extensively applied to domestic topics of news coverage. Do the critical postulates of the MDM, PM and IM apply to immigration? Was there dichotomous news coverage of unworthy victims during the principal year of coverage on Elián González? Was news indexed to attention given to the issue by public

officials and, as the MDM would add and expect, in accordance with their respective levels of influence? Was the volume of news coverage and its respective delineation reflective of consistently applied standards or more reflective of long-standing policy initiatives favoring immigrants hailing from certain countries over that of others? Were there exceptional tendencies within the news media performance on the coverage of Elián and his potentially unworthy and equivalent cases? Indeed, a host of questions arise when the MDM, PM and IM is applied to a domestic topic of this nature and these uncertainties are precisely what this study aimed to address.

As a result of the mixed domestic, foreign and systemic elements that are inherently part of the issue of immigration, this study was an opportunity to evaluate a number of original expectations of MDM components in terms of exceptional conditions producing exceptional aspects of news coverage and content, as well as dichotomous expectations relating to worthy and unworthy victims.

MDM

The most important factor when accounting for exceptions to the IM/PM synthesis that is a main part of the MDM is the issue at stake and the extent that it poses a threat to state-corporate interests. Immigration is not as potentially threatening of an issue as military or macro-economic policies are to state-corporate interests, but it does contain certain systemic elements of macro-oriented themes. In particular, the MDM would expect that NAFTA and its relationship to immigration would limit the extent of exceptionalism seen in the results of this study and produce dichotomous results as well, in spite of other conditions that typically would enable exceptional content. Because of the importance that the MDM attributes to systemic elements of issues in terms of limiting exceptions (see Table 3.4, condition 1) and the subsequent expectation that culpability being found with US policy serving as the least likely aspect of news content to be exceptional (see Table 3.5, condition 5), another prediction of the MDM is its expectation that NAFTA will *not* be prominently mentioned in coverage of unworthy victims while systemic conditions *will* be an important part of coverage of Elián.

Given that immigration coverage often generates attention from an assortment of daily news sources, this case-study represented an opportunity to test MDM expectations in regard to exceptionalism based on the type of news source at hand. Especially when

coupled with the presence of other conditions prone to exceptionalism, the MDM expects that regional papers *will* contain more exceptional news content than nationally distributed sources.

Beyond MDM expectations in regards to the manner in which systemic conditions (such as NAFTA) are noted (or not) and regional coverage bearing more independent content, there *were* certain conditions present in this case-study that should enable exceptions. Since the MDM and PM have not been applied to domestic coverage, and the IM has only been applied sparingly, this case study represented an important learning opportunity to see the extent that certain exceptional conditions would produce exceptional content. At face-value, a case study involving immigration limits the threat it represents to state-corporate interests, because of the domestic nature of the topic. However, due to divided governmental policy positioning on the topic (again, with then Vice President and Presidential contender Gore opting to dissent with Attorney General Reno) and some activism undertaken in relation to immigrant advocacy (at least in regards to Elián), these are additional conditions expecting to produce exceptions. However, exceptions should be limited as well, due to the news filter of anti-communism being at work, as well as the sharp constraints that an important macro-economic treaty (i.e. NAFTA) would normally portend for resulting news content. As a result, these exceptions *should* still contain sharp limits that would resemble, in many ways, dichotomous results normally seen for unworthy and worthy victims seen in foreign affairs news coverage. Learning to what extent exceptions are limited is precisely the increased understanding being sought as a result of this study.

PM and MDM

In the case of this comparative study, there is a clear test of worthy and unworthy victims. If the PM can be successfully applied to international coverage, it should also account for most media performance and coverage patterns for major domestic issues that involve international actors. Furthermore, there are systemic elements involved with the issue as well, given the connection to NAFTA and the factor that poverty in Cuba plays as well. Quite clearly, if worthy victims from enemy states garner significant coverage in international affairs, a case such as that of Elián González should garner increased attention and coverage.

At the same time, the PM would expect a significantly different picture of similar cases involving abandoned Mexican and Haitian children. Their names will not be highlighted, their cases will not be known, and sympathy will not be generated, at least not if the postulates of the PM have any significance and relevance in regards to immigration. Haiti and Mexico, of course, are major client states of the U.S. and what was on the agenda in terms of Elián will be off the agenda in terms of these cases. More specifically, coverage of systemic conditions should result in sharply dichotomous results, with such conditions being linked to Elián's plight but not to that of unworthy victims, especially due to the policy culpability that would arise in relation to NAFTA (recall Table 3.5 and the least likely exceptional aspect of news coverage being U.S. culpability when it comes to its own policies). In short, Mexican, Haitian and Central American immigrant stories involving children, to be certain, should be generally "unworthy" in terms of resulting news coverage.

The MDM, however, combines its components with a number of the PM's own components, while also modifying some PM components as well. The MDM includes the factor of exceptional conditions and resulting exceptional content in terms of its own coverage expectations. Due to the inclusion in this study of a plethora of regional and local-level sources, along with other conditions prone toward exceptionalism, there should be *some* exceptional results in terms of at least *some* attention and even potential sympathy given toward unworthy victims. Regional and local level coverage should be a bit distinctive, in this specific regard, from national press coverage. This is an important part of this study's expectations as well and is not mutually exclusive of dichotomous results in terms of the comparison of other aspects of coverage between worthy and unworthy victims.

IM and MDM

The IM seeks to explain coverage patterns and to a certain extent, it has done this better than the PM (i.e. the Fallujah case-study in chp 4 & the Vieques case-study in chp. 6). The IM would also have certain expectations surrounding volume of coverage in terms of Elián González and the equivalent and potentially unworthy cases. The "Elián" story, thanks to the worthy social movement that erupted in Elián's defense in South Florida, was forced to be a story to which Washington's policy makers and related immigration and law

enforcement agencies *had* to respond (in spite of it being a divisive and inconvenient issue for them). Hence, the rather high volume of coverage we already know as having occurred. However, indexing would not expect much attention to the related Central American, Mexican and Haitian cases, unless it became of some concern to Washington. That is precisely the main expectation in regards to the IM: the extent that officials in Washington take on a given case will be reflected by subsequent coverage priorities.

There is an additional element that the MDM includes in relation to its components inspired by indexing. The extent that a given public official is influential will also be reflected in coverage results in terms of garnering national coverage (or not). This case-study will provide the opportunity to test such expectations given the array of local and regional level daily news sources.

MDM and IM/PM Synthesis

At the time of its occurrence at the turn of this century, the Elián González affair was one of the most highly covered news items of the U.S. press, ranking behind only the O.J. Simpson and Princess Diana stories. Its coverage was significant to the point of going beyond explanations only pointing to governmental attention and precisely relates to the MDM's synthesized components related to expectations on volume of coverage. This case should be a good example of how an enemy state, particularly one that is also communist, can generate a "worthy victim" in spite of the lack of correlation with a topic that the government desired to generate spin about. Again, if anything, governmental attention was forced by a raucous social movement vehemently in favor of Elián being granted permission to remain with extended family members in Dade County. Further, "Elián" was a thorny and divisive issue (if not a threatening one) that wound up splitting important and influential Clinton administration officials at the time. However, given the antagonistic relationship that Cuba has long held with the U.S. and its communist government, it was still a prime candidate for explosively high press coverage (see Table 3.3 and the "high" coverage level expectation for a high-priority enemy state, in spite of cases of lessened governmental attention or interest). This case study should duly illustrate the dichotomous comparison of the enormous volume of coverage allotted to the Elián affair and sparse attention given to unaccompanied and undocumented minors who immigrated to the U.S. and lost a parent, but were from client (as opposed to enemy)

states. Indeed, the MDM would expect there to be forgotten “Eliáns” during the year of Elián.

Hypotheses and Related Predictions

There are many questions that this case-study sought to address in accordance with the first major evaluation of the MDM, PM or IM on the issue of immigration. Were the results of database searches indicative of expectations on volume of coverage relating to national versus regional and local-level coverage? When was an equivalent unworthy victim case covered by the national press? When was an equivalent unworthy victim case covered by the regional press? Did these results correlate with expectations relating to the MDM component of the press indexing influential officials in accordance with national sources and less influential officials appearing more in the regional press? Did coverage patterns reflect expectations in relation to unworthy and worthy social movements? Were the conditions that led to both Elián and the equivalent cases fleeing cited and highlighted and if so, how frequently? The MDM, IM, PM and the synthesis of all three models have clear expectations addressing U.S. news coverage of foreign affairs, the kind of coverage that these models were largely posited and based on. The question this study seeks to answer is whether these same expectations are appropriate and applicable to a domestic case study of immigration coverage.

Applied to immigration coverage about Elián and cases like that of Elián, the IM would have two key expectations. First off, the volume of coverage about such cases should closely parallel the amount of interest generated in Washington. If key public officials addressed the case, more press coverage should be present. The extent that officials addressed the case and how powerful and prominent such officials were should be reflected by the amount of news coverage that is generated. For example, if a congressman from the minority party in the House of Representatives is the lone official to take up the case of a child, this would not generate the amount of coverage expected by a case that attracted the continued attention of a high ranking Clinton administration official.

The PM would expect that the volume of news coverage for a Cuban child would far outstrip equivalent cases hailing from client states of the U.S. Similarly, and inspired by the PM, no significant and ongoing national press coverage would be expected by the

predictions of news coverage of the MDM. Further, the PM would predict that the conditions that led to Elián and his mother fleeing would be highlighted much more prominently than the conditions back home of the equivalent cases being cited. Even stronger than this prediction is the firm expectation of the MDM that U.S. responsibility for such conditions would garner next to no mention in news coverage, if any mention at all, in the absence of extraordinarily exceptional conditions (which were not present in this case).

The following list lays out all of these predictions:

- news coverage patterns should be indicative expectations on volume of coverage in terms of national versus regional and local-level coverage (MDM);
- the volume of news coverage delineated between unworthy and worthy victims should reflect dichotomous expectations (PM);
- the volume of news coverage should be reflective of the priorities of public officials (IM);
- equivalent unworthy victims should not garner substantial national press attention and to the extent press attention is exceptionally garnered, it is more likely to be given by regional or local-level news media sources (MDM);
- the systemic conditions that led to both Elián and the equivalent cases fleeing will be highlighted in a dichotomous fashion in accordance with worthy or unworthy victim status (PM/MDM).

Methodology and Considerations

The most important aspect of this comparative news media analysis was the search for equivalent cases to the plight of Elián González with that of other children who suffered through similar circumstances. However, the Elián González case was unique in one aspect: there was a dramatic custody battle between his father and other Cuban relatives in South Florida. Indeed, authorities from the border state of Arizona confirmed in 2000 that custody battles over unaccompanied minors were far and few between, as the last case that had occurred in the state at the time was in 1996 (Steller, 2000). It is far from surprising that such cases would be rare considering that undocumented immigrant children are usually fleeing with or without their parents from horrific conditions back home that virtually no one would want to subject them to, not even a parent fighting for

custody (Amnesty International USA, 2003; Becker & Bochenek, 1998; Bhabha, 2004; Ehrenreich et al., 1997; Young, 2002).

History rarely provides controlled experiments and as a result of the lack of equivalent cases that also had the custody battle aspect, there were two additional measures that were undertaken. Rather than comparing a case that was exactly like the Elián one with a different one from a client state of the U.S., equivalent cases were searched for that garnered print news coverage in the year of 2000 that had *all* of the other aspects of the Elián case less the custody aspect. To compensate for the lack of the custody aspect, all cases of unaccompanied minors being abandoned by at least one relative noted in print news media coverage ranging from hundreds of sources were recorded.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the Elián case was the dramatic nature of his arrival. A nine-year old boy survives his attempt to flee into the U.S. in shark-infested waters despite the fact that his mother died. Were there related cases to the Elián case, that even without the custody aspect, managed to mimic all other aspects of the Elián case? Were there children hailing from countries that were U.S. clients that had lost or been abandoned by a parent, that could in turn serve as a test of key predictions of all three models by comparing coverage to Elián's coverage? In sum, our key questions were whether a variety of detained undocumented immigrant children, under the circumstances noted above, could obtain as much coverage as that which Elián was able to obtain and also whether or not dichotomous tendencies were present in compared coverage.

To control for variations in news themes and the subsequent impact that this could have on coverage, we limited our search to the year 2000, the main year that the Elián case occurred. The search terms that were used for the database searches were "immigrant," "death," and the given country the immigrant hailed from (as noted, this included Cuba, Mexico, Haiti and Central American nations).⁵ The national search produced very few results and the decision was made to consult regional and local sources found in the Newsbank database.

Lexis-Nexis draws from 550 different U.S. daily news sources, while the sources we searched from Newsbank drew from 347 dailies. Because Newsbank and Lexis-Nexis had some overlap in terms of the news sources from which they drew, it is hard to

pinpoint the exact amount of sources searched for our within study, but the approximate amount was at least 724 different sources and could not have exceeded 897 sources.

Certain minimal conditions were required for the equivalent unworthy victim cases, as well as their related articles, for inclusion in our study. The person in question had to be a minor under the age of 18 years old. One or both of the parents of the minor must have perished or willfully abandoned their child. Lastly, the nationality of the child in question had to be from Mexico, Central America or Haiti.

The decision to *not* restrict our cases and related articles to cases involving a custody battle, as noted above, had to be made as a result of the lack of such cases. However, this study compensated for the lack of a custody aspect by including *many* cases to compare with Elián's, as opposed to just one. The logic was that several equivalent cases to Elián's, minus the custody aspect, should have garnered somewhat comparable numbers in a news media system that was independent from policy positioning in Washington and applying objective and consistent standards of coverage.

Database Findings

Did our database search manage to uncover news reports of related cases to the Elián case, that even without the custody aspect, managed to mimic all other aspects of the Elián case? The answer was not an easy one to come up with, as extensive database searches drawing from over 550 U.S.-based major daily newspaper sources came up with only *one* equivalent case to Elián's. An even more extensive search into additional regional and local daily newspaper sources, however, came up with eight additional cases. Of all the nine equivalent cases that managed to generate any coverage, only *one* of the cases received coverage in a nationally distributed daily newspaper and even this case only generated one article (Pianin, 2000).

Thus, only nine different cases of children hailing from client states in Central America, as well as Mexico and Haiti, were found noted in U.S. news coverage from at least 724 daily news sources. This is a significant finding, as *all* daily news sources drawn upon from the Lexis-Nexis and Newsbank databases were surveyed in the database searches conducted for this study.

While it is true that only a portion of the many thousands of children who are detained each year for undocumented immigration have been lost or abandoned by one of

their parents, immigration lawyer Steven Lang estimated during the year surveyed in this coverage that at least 100 to 200 detention cases a year involve a child that, for whatever reason, has *no* parent or relative in the U.S. or their country of origin (Pinkerton, 2000). Using this figure then, the U.S. print news media covered as little as 4.5% of the cases that were either largely equivalent to (less the custody battle) or potentially *worse* off (in terms of the conditions the unaccompanied child is subjected to, such as detention) than the Elián case, since again, only nine cases were found to be covered by the news media in the database research.

The following table lays out the results of all the database searches and the corresponding equivalent cases that were found:

Table 8.3: Nine Unworthy Victims

Name	Date of Coverage	Nationality	Description	Original Source
1) Carlos Chima Beceril	1/14/2000	Mexican	4 y/o with father who dies during crossing and mother in Atlanta, who is possibly undocumented.	<i>Arizona Daily Star</i>
2) Eber Sandoval Andino	1/18/2000	Honduran	11 y/o abandoned orphan discovered and detained.	<i>Christian Science Monitor</i>
3) Jose Luis Oliva-Rosa	1/18/2000, 2/01/2000	Honduran	16 y/o twin & orphan discovered and detained by authorities.	<i>Houston Chronicle</i>
4) Jose Enrique Oliva-Rosa	1/18/2000, 2/01/2000	Honduran	16 y/o twin & orphan discovered and detained by authorities.	<i>Houston Chronicle</i>
5) Pedro Sandoval Sanchez	2/23/2000	Mexican	13 y/o not cared for & later rejected by mother discovered and detained by authorities.	<i>Salt Lake Tribune</i>

Table 8.3: Nine Unworthy Victims (continued)

Name	Date of Coverage (all are in 2000)	Nationality	Description	Original Source
6) David Juan Sebastian	3/30, 5/26 (edt)	Guatemalan	13 y/o indigenous boy abandoned by guardian mother while crossing; biological mother was already dead.	<i>Arizona Republic</i>
7) Sophonie Telcy	4/5, 4/9, 4/23, 4/29, 4/30, 5/15	Haitian	6 y/o girl comes to FL with Mother (Sana Romelus), who dies a few months after having arrived undocumented. Before dying, however, she decided to leave child with someone she barely knew.	<i>Palm Beach Post</i> (broke story), <i>Sun-Sentinel</i> , other local Florida-based papers and <i>Washington Post</i> .
8) Elizama Hernández González	6/7, 7/8	Mexican	6 month old baby, found in dead mother's arms, who had given her baby her last drops of water that allowed Elizama to live.	Associated Press & <i>Arizona Republic</i>
9) Santana Zavaleta Salgado	12/22	Mexican	2 y/o left in coma after father & aunt died in speeding car crash crossing border on 12/01/00 (not reported till 12/22); boy is from Guerrero, but will be sent back, despite relatives residing in the US, including undocumented mother who works in Tennessee.	<i>Arizona Daily Star</i>

The database searches unearthed how in some instances, cases had even *more* dramatic aspects than the case of Elián. The last three cases are highlighted within the table above precisely for this reason, as they were the most dramatic of the nine cases. In particular, the case of the two year old baby boy, Mexican-born Santana Zavaleta, has many parallels to Elián including his deportation and the fact that he missed out on the opportunity to stay with relatives in the U.S. (even more dramatically than Elián, as the relatives included his own mother). Elizama González's story, who was a six month-old infant and also Mexican-born, was at least equally and possibly more dramatic than that of Elián's considering the fact that her mother saved her life by giving her the remaining amount of water she had with her before succumbing to the scorching hot Arizona desert. Lastly, six year-old Sophonie Telcy had so many parallels to Elián's, and in some ways was in a harsher situation, that she managed to garner the attention of a South Florida lawmaker, Representative Alcee Hastings (D-FL). Telcy was brought over from Haiti as an undocumented immigrant by her mother who died after having arrived to Florida. Because Telcy had no relatives to return to in Haiti, her case was particularly moving and she was immediately compared by local press accounts to Elián.

Figure 8.6

Nationality Breakdown of Equivalent Unworthy Victim Cases:

Mexican:	4
Central American:	4
Haitian:	1

The following fifteen daily news sources covered the equivalent unworthy cases: *The Arizona Daily Star*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Houston Chronicle*, *Salt Lake Tribune*, *Arizona Republic*, *The Palm Beach Post*, *Sun-Sentinel* (Fort-Lauderdale, FL), *Daytona Beach News-Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *The Florida Times-Union*, *The Boston Globe*, Cox News Service, *The Stuart News*, *Tallahassee Democrat* and *Richmond Times Dispatch*. Amongst the dailies, 18 different pieces were written and picked up in 21 instances (as some articles from wire services were picked up by more than one paper).

Not one of the nine cases attracted significant news coverage and only one of the cases was covered by a nationally distributed paper. The lone exception was one article run by the *Washington Post* on Sophonie Telcy (Pianin, 2000). No follow-up article was filed, despite the fact that the Telcy story did have a happy ending, as the legislative efforts waged by Hastings were finally successful by September 2000 when the INS allowed Telcy to stay in the States, granting her a refugee status. The *only* news coverage beyond the lone article in the *Post* was that of regional coverage by newspapers that are not nationally distributed. There was also one article run in the *New York Times*-owned *Boston Globe* (Walker, 2000). Besides the lone articles run by the *Post* and the *Globe*, however, none of the other newspapers which covered the equivalent cases were even located within the top ten dailies in terms of paid circulation and most were well outside of the scope of even the top twenty distributed dailies (BurrelsLuce, 2007; BurrelsLuce, 2004).

Results of Predictions

The following sub-sections present the results of the predictions of all of the models analyzed about: the extent (or lack thereof) in which systemic conditions of the countries that the immigrant in question hailed from, were reported on; the volume of coverage for Elián González versus the nine equivalent cases of unworthy victims; and the breakdown in terms of which papers covered which cases and under what conditions.

Systemic Conditions

Were the systemic conditions that led to both Elián and the unworthy victim cases cited and highlighted? If so, how frequently? The PM, in particular, would not expect socio-economic conditions leading to immigration for unworthy victims to be cited with any frequency. Conversely, the PM *would* expect sufficient and possibly even ample coverage of the same conditions for a worthy victim such as Elián González. Lastly, any U.S. responsibility for such cases will be either played down or more likely completely and systematically overlooked. Again, part and parcel of this oversight is the complete lack of mention of U.S. connections to the conditions in the countries that result in immigration, even under great risks that sometimes lead to parents dying. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) looms most largely in this regard. This is a

strong expectation of the MDM, which accounts for exceptions, but also expects next to no exceptions when it comes to coverage of U.S. policy culpability.

Whether NAFTA is a significant factor that has led to continued increases in Mexican immigration is not a fact that is in doubt. As already noted, scholarship and exhaustively detailed studies alike have respectively revealed the strong connection that exists between the ill-fated trade treaty and immigration, which continues to the present in spite of increased risks and desert deaths. Elizama's dehydrated mother who died in the desert was actually one of many examples of such fatalities, but she was not one of many examples that was linked in U.S. media coverage to NAFTA policies.

A comprehensive word search was undertaken of *all* of Elián's coverage in the *New York Times* to look for key terms which signal that systemic conditions were noted in the articles. Dozens upon dozens of hits showed up during the full period of Elián's stay in the States (between arrival coverage on November 25, 1999 and departure coverage on June 29, 2000), as amply revealed in the following table:

Figure 8.7

SEARCH TERMS		HIT RESULTS
Elián González and Cuba and communism	=	23 hits
Elián González and Cuba and repression	=	15 hits
Elián González and Cuba and lack of freedom	=	3 hits
Elián González and Cuba and poverty	=	9 hits
Elián González and Cuba and authoritarian regime	=	1 hit
Elián González and Cuba and dictator	=	21 hits
Elián González and Cuba and Marxism	=	4 hits
Elián González and Cuba and socialist	=	4 hits
Elián González and Cuba and political prisoners	=	6 hits
Elián González and Cuba and unemployment	=	1 hit
TOTAL COVERAGE of Elián González and Cuba	=	466 hits

While many systemic conditions were noted independently in coverage, a closer look is necessary to see if these mentions were done *alongside* one other. By combining search terms within Lexis-Nexis, "communism" was mentioned in articles along with "repression," "dictator," "unemployment" and "Marxism" within *New York Times* coverage of Elián. However, "poverty" was *not* mentioned along with "communism," "dictatorship" or "Marxism." There were limits, in other words, to the connections drawn between systemic conditions.

In terms of similar systemic terms for unworthy victims being contextualized in a similar and as systematic manner as Elián coverage, the results were indeed different:

Figure 8.8

(all searches conducted with name of unworthy victim, country of origin & respective term listed below)

NAFTA	= 0 hits	dictatorship	= 0 hits
poverty	= 5 hits	coup	= 3 hits
neo-liberalism	= 0 hits	authoritarian regime	= 0 hits
party dictatorship	= 0 hits	repression	= 0 hits
		one-party rule	= 0 hits
unemployment	= 0 hits		
military occupation	= 0 hits		
TOTAL IMMIGRATION COVERAGE of unworthy victims = 21 hits (stemming from regional <i>and</i> nationally distributed news dailies in Lexis-Nexis & Newsbank)			

To be sure then, the limits in terms of connecting systemic conditions were even sharper when it came to unworthy victims. Even the mere term NAFTA was *never* mentioned in coverage and as a result, systemic conditions were never contextualized in terms of the leading U.S.-brokered trade treaty.

Despite the fact that Mexico had suffered under the iron-clad rule of what was a 70-year unprecedented reign of just one-party through July 2000, the term party dictatorship was *never* mentioned in relation to Mexico. One-party rule was thus noted by the U.S. news media when it occurred in a country deemed hostile by the U.S., but not for allied countries when it came to news coverage surveyed in this study. Haiti's suffering under military coups produced a meager 3 hits in *all* coverage, but with *no* mention of the rather significant role that U.S. foreign policy played in supporting such regimes. Further, all 3 hits came from the same Associated Press article (Cherfils, 2000) simply run in three different regional papers, all of which were based in Florida (the *Daytona Beach News-Journal*, *Sun-Sentinel* and *Tallahassee Democrat*). The only instances in which the terms "dictator" or "dictatorship" appeared in coverage of the unworthy equivalent cases ironically occurred in references to Cuba, as opposed to Haiti.

These results point to the necessity of the MDM, as it helps explain mixed results and can account for limited dichotomies such as these. The PM would expect a sharper delineation than what was seen here between worthy and unworthy victims. However, the

MDM provides for lessened results when the government lacks attention (see Table 3.4, condition 4) and thus generates less spin on the matter. Public officials desired for this issue to end, especially given that White House positioning, which was at times ambiguous, mostly clashed with a worthy social movement rallying around a very worthy victim and eventually differed with Vice President Al Gore's campaign positioning on the issue as well. As a result, the usual condemnations about Cuba's repressive policies came more from the movement supporting Elián, as opposed to also coming from the mouths of important public officials.

Nevertheless, it was clear that the presence of a worthy social movement made an impact on coverage. As a result, some dichotomous tendencies between coverage of unworthy and worthy victims were present, as just noted. The lack of a stronger movement drawing attention to the plight of the equivalent unworthy victims surveyed herein still resulted in the lack of connections drawn between systemic conditions back home and immigration, much less any culpability found with U.S. policy in regards to NAFTA. There is still significance to how some systemic conditions were related to one another within coverage of Elián, while next to none was done in the unworthy cases.

While the extent of dichotomous results may have been less than what the PM would expect and necessitated reference to the exceptionalist components of the MDM to explain the lessened dichotomy, the question still remains about what kind of exceptions, if any, were present within coverage.

Systemic Exceptions Analyzed

An article run in the *Arizona Republic* focusing on Sebastian David, one of the unworthy victims, not only noted systemic conditions for David but also compared these conditions with that of Cuba and in relation to the Elián case:

Elián left a Communist country that's run by a dictator. David comes from a region of Guatemala still reeling from the aftermath of a protracted civil war that killed thousands.

[...]

Lawyers for Elián González have argued it would be unfair to send the boy back to a Communist dictatorship. Eric Popkin, a sociology professor specializing in Cuba and Guatemala at Sarah Lawrence College, said the conditions in Guatemala are worse (González, 2000).

This kind of exception was just the kind of coverage that the PM would *not* expect with any kind of consistency in the news coverage under analysis. Systemic conditions are not only noted in both countries, but are compared and in one instance, the unworthy victim garners more sympathy in terms of one source being quoted on conditions being even worse than those found in Cuba. Nonetheless, no U.S. responsibility was noted even in this exceptional piece.

Another one of the few occurrences of systemic conditions being mentioned in an unworthy case occurred in coverage of the Telcy case. The plight of the young Haitian girl attracted the support and attention of a local Congressman, as noted above. Consequently, a local activist was quoted when it came to the mentioning of Haiti's coup regime in an Associated Press article picked up by three local/regional-level Florida-based papers:

“These refugees were running from an intolerable situation after the coup that toppled former president Jean Bertrand Aristide and left thousands dead,” said Marleine Bastien, head of Haitian Women of Miami. “These bona fide refugees had to flee which ever way they could” (Cherfils, 2000).

Nevertheless, as the MDM would expect, the exception was not without limits or explanation. In addition to having attracted the backing of a local Congressman, as opposed to a state or nation-wide policy maker, the Telcy case was mostly covered by regional papers (as was literally the case when it came to the exceptional content just noted).

Were there additional exceptions that provided substantive coverage linking systemic conditions? One passage found in a back-page article run in a regional paper, the Fort Lauderdale based *Sun Sentinel*, read as follows:

... there are only four TVs and 41 radios per 1,000 Haitians. Only a third of adults can read. In a country of 8 million, only a few thousand newspaper copies are distributed daily -- and few can afford them. Haiti's annual per capita income of \$250 is the lowest in the hemisphere; an estimated 60 percent of the workforce is unemployed. Misery cascades into every aspect of life, and death. Infant mortality is a whopping 74 per 1,000 births. Life expectancy is around 55 (Perry, 2000).

Again, these instances were exceptional and the majority of news coverage analyzed in this study did not link systemic conditions in Mexico, Haiti and Central

America to failed and unjust immigration policies, despite more frequently linking such conditions in coverage of Elián.

Volume of Coverage

Were the results of the database search indicative of the expectations of the PM, IM models in terms of the volume of coverage generated and the type of newspapers that covered such cases? Results were mixed and pointed more to the exceptionalism components that are part of the MDM, as well as the dichotomous expectations of the PM.

As noted above, there were several factors the were behind leading officials in Washington *not* wanting the cumbersome issue of Elián to dominate the news media as much as it did. Nevertheless, indexing did not occur in regards to Elián and coverage mentioning the affair in the *New York Times* garnered 649 articles (466 of which specifically mentioned Cuba) between arrival and departure coverage. In this case, the government was *not* setting the news media's agenda and instead, a worthy social movement coupled with a worthy victim was successfully impacting content priorities. By contrast, amongst all major daily newspapers *and* regional dailies sourced in the Lexis-Nexis and Newsbank databases, there was only 21 instances of coverage on the nine cases that were uncovered for the entire year of 2000. As noted earlier, only one nationally distributed source covered any of the unworthy victims at all, coupled with another prestigious daily which is *not* nationally distributed (Pianin, 2000; Walker, 2000). These results reflect MDM expectations in regard to two exceptional conditions (a worthy social movement coupled with inattention by the government) overcoming a lack of interest on the part of important officials, along with PM predictions about worthy and unworthy victims.

MDM expectations were also met in regards to the breakdown of regional and national-level sources, as the *Post* and the *Globe's* scant coverage of the Telcy case met just such an expectation. Alcee Hastings, a long-time representative of a district where tens of thousands of Haitians live, was disconcerted about the amount of attention and care given to the Elián case when he knew of many such cases, often times worse than Elián's situation, in his own district. As a result, he decided to take on the Telcy case and seek more equitable treatment for immigrants who were children and who lost a parent while immigrating to the U.S. The legislation wound up not being successful, as Hastings

had hoped, but eventually the INS agreed to let Telcy stay on as a permanent resident with refugee status.

Despite the happy ending, Telcy's case did not result in continued coverage by the *Post* or any other nationally distributed news source (the *Boston Globe* also stopped coverage after just one article). The only source which covered the actual result of the Telcy case amongst 550 news sources in Lexis-Nexis's database, was a 140-word brief in a Virginia-based news service (Media General News Service, 2000). Nevertheless, it was a regional-level source that undertook the follow-up coverage while other local and regional-level sources had covered the affair prior to its conclusion.

The results for Telcy's case reflects precisely what the MDM would expect in terms of volume of news coverage because unlike all the other unworthy victim cases, it managed to attract the attention of a nationally distributed source as a result of the attention Telcy got in Washington. At the same time, a Congressman with no significant standing in terms of a leadership position within what was the minority party at the time in Washington, and who also was a member of the marginalized Congressional Black Caucus, is not going to get the kind of news coverage that a White House official or a higher ranking Congressperson can attract. Telcy was thus "important" enough to get an article in the national press, but she was still "unworthy" and unable to attract more attention than just that. Hastings was simply bringing up too inconvenient of a truth about official U.S. immigration policy that went too much against the grain of long-time and dominant U.S. immigration policies. As a result, little notice was paid beyond local and regional coverage, confirming MDM expectations.

Additional Analysis and Opportunity for Further Research

This case-study largely focused on analyzing database research and comparing specific and relatively simple aspects of news content, including volume of coverage tendencies and systemic conditions, between worthy and unworthy victims. In the course of this research, various instances were noted involving sourcing tendencies in *New York Times* coverage for Elián and occurrences of substantive and procedural criticism within the news content for unworthy victims. While these variables were not the main ones of this study, and were thus not quantified, there were some interesting examples related to all three models that are worth reporting.

Criticism

As noted in previous chapters of this dissertation (see chp. 6, in particular) procedural criticism is defined as content which does one or more of the following: questions the execution, technique, success, outcome and/or sensibility of a certain immigration policy or public official; attempts to *predict* the failure of a certain policy and again, its outcome; or attempts to *predict* a possible and upcoming problem. The indexing literature has extensively documented the tendency of the U.S. news media toward criticism of a procedural variety, as opposed to a more substantive one (Entman & Page, 1994; Hallin, 1986, 1994; Hertog, 2000; Mermin, 1996). As for substantive criticism, any content that questions the fundamental basis of immigration policy; identifies the causes of immigration with exploitative economic and/or political practices by U.S. policy; conveys a moral judgment *against* the right of the U.S. to restrict the flow of labor to the extent that they do (i.e. citations of international labor law did count) would be considered substantively critical.

The IM expects that the presence of substantive and procedural criticism will largely correlate the extent that a given issue is debated and disagreed upon in Washington. Given that the Elián case and immigration in general was certainly one of sharp disagreement between both major parties and even between prominent officials in the White House at the time, procedural and substantive criticism was expected by the MDM unworthy victim cases. However, the MDM expects that the least likely source for criticism of this nature to be present would be in the national press.

Substantive criticism was found prominently in two pieces. One piece was from the *Christian Science Monitor*, a newspaper that is non-profit, and thus not subject to the MDM's predictions and expectations, which are hinged on for-profit news sources. The other piece was from a regional-level newspaper that had exceptional immigration coverage, the *Arizona Republic*. The *Republic*, however, is a regional paper and not nationally distributed and was not even amongst the top 15 most widely circulated dailies in the U.S. at the time in question. The examples of substantive criticism uncovered were as follows:

“We have two immigration policies in this country: one for Cuba, and one for every other country,” says Mark Krikorian, director of the Center for

Immigration Studies, a Washington-based think tank that advocates lower immigration levels. “But the special case of Cuba is eroding.” As Cuba ceases to be a military threat, “it's becoming more like everyone else” (Baldauf, 2000).

Although Elián has been showered with media attention, David's plight is far more representative of the thousands of minors apprehended by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. For the most part, immigration lawyers and human-rights activists say, unaccompanied minors apprehended by the INS are quickly returned to their countries. Otherwise, they languish in detention centers, sometimes for months, until their status is sorted out away from public scrutiny and with little or no legal representation. "It's a real problem," said Jo Becker, advocacy director of the children's rights division of Human Rights Watch (González, 2000).

Without the strong disagreements that were present in Washington, it is dubious whether this kind of fundamental and substantive criticism would have appeared in any print media coverage found in the U.S. Nonetheless, even with the debate in Washington looming, substantive criticism appeared to be kept to a minimum and more often found in back-page op-ed pieces and letters to the editor, than in news analyses and ongoing reports.

Given the divisions in Washington, journalists quoted public officials in disagreement (procedural criticism). Procedural criticism found in unworthy victims coverage included noting and explaining the break that Vice President Gore took with the White House (Pianin, 2000); noting differing types of treatment for Elián and Mexican children without any fundamental criticism of inequitable immigration policy itself (González, 2000; Steller, 2000); and criticism of just the case of Haiti and Cuba immigration policies largely in the same manner that Representative Hastings was criticizing such policies (Evans, 2000).

Editorial coverage contained examples of procedural criticism as well. The most common example was found in regional coverage where a lack of clout associated with the plight of unaccompanied minors was pointed to as the main cause for the Elián “problem.” However, no fingers were pointed at even more entrenched economic and political policies toward the U.S.’s own allies, a topic that indeed U.S. citizens and their government alike can exert far more control and influence over than an issue such as how much “clout” a given group has or not. In this vein, a typical line of procedural criticism

read in much the manner as one *Miami Herald* piece: “Cubans, to their credit, have a lot of political clout. Unfortunately, the color of the Haitians' skin has something to do with the way they have been treated over the years” (Olkon, 2000). An opinion piece run in the *Arizona Republic* bemoaned that “We Have ‘Eliáns’ All Around But Most Have Little Clout” (Diskin, 2000).

Sourcing

An interesting question on sourcing is whether the use of unofficial sources in the Elián case was different *before* the deportation decision, when policy was a bit more ambiguous and doubts about the eventual outcome of the case were present, as compared to coverage *after* the deportation was undertaken. MDM expectations, based particularly on its synthesis of the IM and PM, would be that treatment of unofficial sources in relation to Elián coverage would be more generous before official policy was executed, with depictions of such sources veering more along the lines of being “irrational” *after* the implementation of the deportation decision. Key moments in *New York Times* coverage suggest that this is precisely what took place, prompting an opportunity for additional research and analysis.

One of the crucial developments taking place in the Elián case was when his Miami relatives were officially granted temporary custody in January 2000. In the leading *New York Times* article covering the development, unofficial sources were used frequently, not given irrational adjectives and also had their substantive points often highlighted (González, 2000b). Immediately following the deportation decision and the raid that took Elián away from his Miami relatives, the political conflict and division in Washington was coming to a fever pitch and as a result, unofficial sources were still able to maintain a *limited* level of legitimacy with supporting quotes from important officials who were dissenting in Washington. Nonetheless, keeping in line with past protest coverage that goes against White House positioning, protesters were *still* depicted in an irrational manner and their issues were now less prominently highlighted, with headlines describing opposition as being that of “Angry Crowds” (McFadden, 2000).

Conclusion

The question of greatest importance for this study was whether or not expectations by the MDM, IM and PM could be applicable to news coverage not only of foreign affairs and events, but one that essentially was a domestic issue, that is, U.S. immigration policy. Most factors tested in this study suggested that models were indeed reliably applicable in their expectations and predictions of news coverage for both the “worthy” and “unworthy” child victims of immigration on an issue that drew significant conflict and disagreement in Washington. Nevertheless, not all expectations were met and this study served as a learning tool to gain a better understanding about the limits and extent in which exceptionalism is at work in regards to the MDM.

Systemic conditions were noted for the Elián case, but routinely ignored or decontextualized for unworthy victims without even a hint of U.S. responsibility for these conditions and thus, for immigration as well. Nevertheless, the extent to which systemic conditions were linked to Elián was a *limited* one. While this particular finding went against PM predictions, it confirmed MDM expectations about exceptionalism and helped increase understanding about the kind of conditions necessary to garner such an exception, albeit it being a limited one. The presence of a worthy social movement, with a worthy victim as its rallying cry and divisions in Washington (see Table 3.1) were all factors limiting the extent that dichotomy was found with systemic conditions. By the same token, in the case of the nine unworthy victims, the *lack* of a strong social movement (even an unworthy one, at that) coupled with a lack of support by influential public officials were MDM factors resulting in the complete oversight of U.S. culpability, much less any notations of the negative effects of NAFTA on immigration. In the one case that an exception *was* found, links were made with supportive positioning by a local Congressman within regional (as opposed to national) coverage. This finding validated an IM inspired expectation of the MDM which links the level of influence a given public official has to their ability to produce exceptional news content. It also validated the MDM expectation that exceptions will be harder to penetrate into national coverage than it will into regional and local-level coverage. This last finding was on prominent display in a number of regards and will be returned to below.

Findings for all three models were gained on volume of news coverage seen in this case-study. In terms of the IM, the priorities of public officials were *not* reflected when it came to Elián González. MDM components explain this given the presence of a worthy social movement, a worthy victims and the PM filter of anti-communism. In terms of the unworthy victims, however, expectations by all three models were validated. An extremely low allotment of coverage was found for unworthy victims and support was drawn for a MDM component predicting exceptions to be most frequently found at the regional and local-levels of coverage. By contrast, nationally distributed newspapers covered Elián with regularity and devotion, while they completely ignored all of the unworthy victims. The only nationally distributed print source to cover any of these cases did so in regards to the Telcy case in just one article, which headlined its story with mention to the Congressional Black Caucus addressing the case (Pianin, 2000). Five days later, the *New York Times*-owned *Boston Globe* followed suit and also covered the Telcy case (Walker, 2000).

Regional coverage had more exceptions in terms of the extent and character of coverage than the nationally distributed dailies. The MDM emphasizes how elite media sources, especially the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, will display less exceptional tendencies. This is quite sensible in light of the model's emphasis on political and economic structure as highly influencing content, because more locally and regionally-oriented news sources deal with less powerful and constraining interests. As opposed to all-encompassing predictions by the PM, the MDM's more measured qualifications were found to be more appropriate here. This is not to say that the PM is inapplicable to these sources as well, especially given the significant influence that the nationally distributed and elite print sources have over regional and local sources. However, that influence is not all pervading, as confirmed by this study. There are small, albeit significant differences and such differences should be noted and theorized into models of news analysis.

Insights into the MDM and IM were found as well, in terms of distinguishing between national and regional dailies. Indeed, one of the reasons that Sophonie Telcy generated at least a little bit of news coverage in Florida, and more so than any other unworthy victim analyzed in this study, was because a Congressional representative from

South Florida took her on as a cause. The incentive to use official sources seems to be as great at more locally oriented papers, as it does for nationally distributed dailies as well. However, for the same reason, the MDM and IM should account for differences in sourcing tendencies between national and local / regional news sources. This finding suggested a needed modification for the MDM: the type of official sources that will be covered should differ depending on the extent that a given paper has a regional, local or national focus, as well as the level of their respective influence. This in turn would affect other aspects of news content and explain exceptions, as was especially evident in the Telcy coverage in South Florida (i.e. Evans, 2000) and also in exceptional coverage found in the *Arizona Republic* (i.e. González, 2000).

More regionally-based sources will be more apt to cover issues taken on by local politicians, marginalized or not. As a result, indexing should be expected to be seen in different degrees when it comes to national and local news sources. One of the ways that the MDM goes beyond the IM is how it notes that if there is variation in news content, it will probably occur amongst more local and regional sources which would be more likely to deviate as a result of local politicians who may not attract as much attention from more elite sources. This can result in a marginalized issue being covered locally, but not in significant ways nationally. As a further and related result, it can also result in greater levels of substantive criticism being found locally and regionally, but again, not necessarily nationally. When coverage for unworthy victims is more frequent at local and regionally oriented sources, and there is also conflict for a related issue to the topic at hand in Washington (i.e. over immigration policy stemming from the Elián debacle), it is probable that more substantive criticism will be found in local and regional sources than in elite ones. Once again, the distinction between local and regional sources, as opposed to more elite and influential sources that are distributed nationally is in place and should be emphasized when it comes to the MDM. This study helped us learn that this emphasis is valid even in relation to domestic coverage bearing either international or macro-level and systemic themes (i.e. NAFTA).

Another important lesson and insight gained from this study is that PM and dichotomous expectations are more applicable to national-level sources, while indexing can occur irrespective of the victim at hand when it comes to regional and local-level

sources. At a larger level, this shows once again how governmental positioning can have a more powerful effect on volume of news coverage than PM expectations on worthy and unworthy victims. Otherwise unworthy victims which attract the attention and/or support of local officials showed a greater ability to show up in regional and local-level news than they did in national-level ones. By contrast, a worthy social movement coupled with a worthy victim showed its ability to penetrate the national press during moments of division by influential officials in Washington.

This study produced many lessons and findings which served as direct inspiration for many of the MDM's major components: favoring governmental attention and positioning as being the stronger variable for impacting volume of news coverage; the importance of the presence of a worthy social movement, coupled with divisions in Washington, to be able to impact coverage; the inability for unworthy victims to attract press attention in the absence of enabling exceptional conditions and dichotomous tendencies that result therein; and the extent that regional and local-level sources will contain exceptional aspects in its content, as well as the limits to those exceptions (i.e. a lack of culpability being found in U.S. coverage).

The implications of these findings are important and suggest the need for further study. Local and regional coverage would seem to have greater latitude to use unofficial sources more often than elite and nationally distributed sources do, especially when and if a local politician was going against the grain in Washington. This factor is a study in and of itself.

While the tests above suggested a strong level of applicability for all three models, this study had the significant methodological limitation of a lack of news coverage that could be compared amongst the same news sources. Additional case studies will have to be researched and conducted before more definitive links can be made between the applicability of these models toward a greater scope of immigration coverage than the more specific focus on children that was present in this study. At the same time, this study does provide strong evidence for the MDM's applicability to domestic news coverage to go along with the foreign affairs news coverage which it is mostly based upon. Thus, the conclusion that there is strong evidence for additional applicability of three critical models of news media performance in a domestic case-study is one that

results in disturbing implications in terms of the plight of unworthy victims, as well as the lack of culpability found in U.S. policy in relation to their struggle.

Addendum I

Timeline 8.1

a chronology of the elián gonzalez saga

SOURCE: from PBS's *Frontline* web site:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/elian/etc/eliancron.html>

- November 25
1999** A five-year-old Cuban boy, Elián González, is found on Thanksgiving Day clinging to an inner tube three miles off the coast of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. Fishermen rescue him and he is taken to a hospital for treatment. But his mother and 11 others on the raft had drowned in their attempt to come to the U.S. from Cuba.
- November 26
1999** Elián is released from the hospital into the custody of his uncle, Lazaro González, and other relatives in Miami. The Cuban government sends a note to the U.S. mission in Havana requesting Elián's return to Cuba.
- November 28
1999** Juan Miguel González, Elián's father, files a complaint with the UN to get attention for his custody demands.
- November 29
1999** The U.S. State Department recuses itself from considering the custody of Elián. It is left up to the Florida courts.
- December 10
1999** Attorneys for Elián's relatives in Miami file a request for his political asylum.
- January 5
2000** INS Commissioner Doris Meissner announces a decision that Elián's father in Cuba is responsible for his custody, and that arrangements will be made to return Elián to Cuba by January 14.
- January 7
2000** Elián's relatives in Miami file suit in state family court to have Lazaro González declared the boy's guardian.
- January 10
2000** A Circuit Court judge grants emergency custody of Elián to Lazaro González.
- January 12
2000** Attorney General Janet Reno rejects the family court jurisdiction, tells the González family it must file in federal court and she lifts the January 14 deadline to return Elián to his father in Cuba.
- January 28
2000** The U.S. government asks the judge to dismiss Miami relatives' federal lawsuit.
- March 9
2000** U.S. District Judge dismisses political asylum lawsuit.

Chapter 8: Double Standards? The Case of Elián Gonzalez and Nine Potentially Unworthy Victims
Addendum I - Page 362

- March 30
2000** Vice President Al Gore, the Democratic candidate for President, says he supports legislation that would allow Elián to remain in the U.S. while the lawsuit is resolved in family court.
- April 3
2000** The U.S. State Department approves visas for Juan Miguel González and other close relatives to come to the U.S.
- April 6
2000** Juan Miguel González arrives in the U.S.
- April 7
2000** After meeting with Juan Miguel González, Attorney General Janet Reno announces that U.S. officials will move to transfer Elián to his father.
- April 12
2000** Reno meets with Elián's relatives in Miami about the process for transferring the boy to his father, but there's no agreement from the relatives. Over the next several days negotiations continue between the family, Reno and representatives on both sides.
- April 19
2000** The 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals grants a request by Elián's Miami relatives to block his return to Cuba.
- April 22
2000** In a pre-dawn raid, armed U.S. federal agents seize Elián González from the home of his Miami relatives. Elián is reunited with his father a few hours later. But it will take two months before Eilan and his father would go back to Cuba--two months of court procedures and demonstrations and counter-demonstrations in Miami.
- June 1
2000** A federal appeals court upholds the U.S. government's authority to deny Elián a political asylum hearing.
- June 28
2000** Elián Gonzales and his father, stepmother and half brother arrive in Cuba to a jubilant reception. Their return comes just hours after the U.S. Supreme Court rejects a last-ditch effort by the Miami relatives to keep him in the U.S.

Endnotes

¹ Boasting the second-lowest vote turnout in the nation, Proposition 200 did not garner more than even half its registered voters at the polls for this ballot initiative. In the 2000 Presidential elections, in fact, only 41% of the voting-age population voted in the 2000 Presidential elections (Scripps Howard News Service Study of Official 2000 Election Returns).

² See Noam Chomsky, "The Tragedy of Haiti: 'The First Free Nation of Free Men,'" *Year 501: The Conquest Continues* (Cambridge: South End Press, 1993); Retrieval from <http://www.zmag.org/chomsky/year/year-c08-s01.html>. For a more recent update, see Chomsky, (2010, March 11). Haiti Post-Earthquake. Z-Net. Retrieved from <http://www.zcommunications.org/haiti-post-earthquake-by-noam-chomsky>

³ The project is called ProBAR for short, but its full name is the South Texas Pro Bono Asylum Representation Project and its web site is: <http://www.abanet.org/publicserv/immigration/probar.shtml>.

⁴ Chávez analyzed the following magazines: *American Heritage*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News and World Report*, the *New Republic*, the *Nation*, the *National Review*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Business Week* and the *Progressive*. Thus, his review spanned both commercial news magazines, as well as non-profit independent periodicals with progressive political leanings. Unfortunately, Chávez did not attempt to distinguish any possible differing tendencies between these two types of periodicals.

⁵ Database searches were conducted both by a library studies doctoral student, Caroline Nappo, and myself. Caroline's research assistance and advice were both vital for this project.

Introduction

The concluding case-study in this dissertation focuses on all major and reported post-Cold War instances of anti-democratic phenomena occurring within the U.S. news media industry: the “spiking” of news stories and investigations with critical inclinations; demotions to enterprising journalists or editors; cancellations of TV programs due to critical content and forced resignations of journalists; independent and wire-based stories overlooked by mainstream media; and investigative series whose follow-ups are either marginalized out of existence or simply spiked altogether. The reported occurrences are based on a plethora of damning evidence and documentation: testimony by journalists and/or their newsroom colleagues; audio-recorded conversations between editors and journalists; documented pressure by advertisers and/or powerful public officials; and documented meetings between editors and high powered officials, with subsequent decisions to spike stories and/or follow-up reporting. This underlying evidence shows a clear pattern of institutional constraints resulting in varying forms of censorship.

Collectively, there are over two dozen *reported* examples (mostly from other press outlets and also often noted by media watchdog groups), dating back to the end of the Cold War alone, of these type of occurrences. Careers and/or enterprising journalistic projects being subjected to the “buzzsaw,” as well as the “spiking” of stories, are two of the major phenomena negatively impacting an array of journalists and teaching powerful lessons to their colleagues. They are also terms that have been used and studied sparingly within scholarly works. Kristina Börjesson, a former CBS award winning producer and investigative reporter, defined the “buzzsaw” as being: “what can rip through you when you try to expose anything this country's large institutions - be they corporate or government - want kept under wraps. The system fights back with official lies, disinformation and stonewalling” (BuzzFlash, 2005). Stories can be subjected to the buzzsaw through spiking, as can one’s position or career altogether. This chapter is primarily about those instances.

The focus on these occurrences, which the MDM characterizes as not only being an attack on journalists but an attack on democracy as a whole, is of significant theoretical importance. As elaborated in chapter 3, the most important theoretical tension between the IM and PM is a conflicting attribution of culpability for poor media

performance and the subsequent lack of news media independence. The PM, with its institutional filters, focuses solely on institutional responsibility for resulting news content, arguing that journalists naturally internalize the institutional constraints of their employers (Herman, 1996). Conversely, the indexing literature emphasizes professional standards of journalism (Hallin, 1986) and has even gone so far as to state that such standards are embodied by “self-imposed constraints,” or “limits” carried out by “intrepid reporters and editors,” whose “journalistic deference to power is almost entirely voluntary” (Bennett, Lawrence, & Livingston, 2007, pp. 46, 70, 179). The MDM represents an attempt to resolve this underlying theoretical tension by criticizing the disproportionate fault attributed to journalists themselves, as well as the underestimation by the PM of the role of “crude intervention” resulting from institutional constraints.

The tendency for the indexing literature to disproportionately fault journalists is also shown in how prescriptions offered by indexing theorists to solve the lack of media independence most often deal with correcting journalistic behavior. In one concrete example, Mermin wrote:

If journalists endeavored to put into practice the changes suggested here, and corporate ownership vetoed the changes, we would have evidence that structural reform of the American media system is required before the problem of indexing can be addressed. But until there is evidence that journalists have in fact tried to get beyond the indexing rule in their foreign-policy reporting, the concern that change might not be possible within the existing media system remains a theoretical one (1999, pp. 149-150).

Mermin, however, was sorely mistaken. There has long been evidence of journalists going beyond the indexing rule, only to have their efforts be stopped, censored, sabotaged or severely punished. Thus, the MDM demonstrates how most news media subservience is *not* voluntary and instead is more often a function of the institutional constraints inherently placed on journalists. These institutional constraints are a direct result of powerful and influential state-corporate interests, the same state-corporate pressures that the news media is inherently a part of and subjected to as a for-profit, highly commercialized, highly conglomerated and corporate-based industry. Far from being aptly described as “curious,” or as a set of “oddly dependent relationships” which result in “journalistic deference” inappropriately dubbed as a “peculiarity,” (Bennett, Lawrence,

& Livingston, 2007, pp. 46-47, 179), this chapter reveals that the constraints imposed on the U.S. press are institutional and often crudely enforced.

The MDM is not only critical of indexing theorists who have falsely assumed the voluntary submission of journalists in a manner that is arguably full of classist assumptions as opposed to actual evidence, but is also critical of the assumption that a mere internalization by journalists of institutional constraints overwhelmingly explain subsequent news media subservience. While the MDM is consistent with the notion that crude intervention is perhaps the exception as opposed to the rule, the case-study herein demonstrates that there is still a significant amount of occurrences where harsh measures are taken to prevent journalists from actualizing their natural instincts to report in a critical manner in order to deliver the truth to the public. Furthermore, there is also significant evidence pointing to a rather conscious phenomenon of internalization as being at work, one that does not sit well with journalists, but is something they are forced to accept.

McChesney's well-documented and widely accepted argument that we have entered a hyper-commercial era of concentrated corporate media ownership in the U.S. (2000, 2004, 2008) is the probable explanation for a climate where crude interventions are not rare and instead have become significant and possibly more common than in previous eras.

Before exploring examples of spiking and showing how the buzzsaw is actively at work in a post-Cold War era of continued press dependency, a thorough survey of various polls amply displays a rather high awareness on the part of journalists of these phenomena. This awareness suggests that internalization, while certainly being at work and very real, is not so much an example of false consciousness, as Herman and Chomsky have been criticized for implying (Goodwin, 1994; Hallin, 1994), but instead an occurrence of how journalists rationally and consciously limit their behavior to comport with the institutional constraints to which they are subjected and on a significant amount of occasions, by which they are victimized.

On Internalization

To be sure, the internalization by journalists of the institutional necessities and constraints emanating from corporate-owned and for-profit news outlets is a very

powerful and real phenomenon. Several high-profile journalists, such as Judith Miller of the New York Times and Ted Koppel of have referred in frank terms to the necessities of operating within these constraints and acting more as stenographers of officials sources than as critical purveyors of information. However, this phenomenon is not a “voluntary” one nor is it properly characterized by rare interventions and a subsequent false consciousness. The institutional censorship of journalists occurs as a result of actions much more important than what previously scholarly works would have us believe, and although such instances are rightly characterized as the exception rather than the rule, there is still a significant amount of these occurrences.

These interventions, and examples of institutional pressures successfully influencing news content, act as powerful lessons for the overwhelming majority of mainstream news journalists who are forced to act within the resulting constraints (or forced to pay the consequences for resisting them). This is demonstrated by a significant awareness of the institutional constraints that are at stake, which in turn also reveals either conscious restraint or resistance to the constraints to which journalists are subjected (resistance in the instances of needed interventions). A review of a number of important polls and surveys, going back to 1997, demonstrates this awareness and how the situation does not sit well with journalists.

Academic researcher Lawrence Soley surveyed over 100 investigative reporters and editors at commercial TV stations and received stark responses. 75% of large-market respondents reported that advertisers “tried to influence the content of news stories,” with 74% responding affirmatively at small-market stations. 60% reported instances where advertisers attempted to kill stories altogether, with 56% responding affirmatively to having experienced pressure from their own employers to craft stories that were pleasing to advertisers (Soley, 1997).

Another survey reported over a third of local TV news directors revealing pressure to stray from stories that contained negative information about advertisers. The researchers concluded that internal pressure may be even higher due to some external commercial pressure to produce positive stories and avoid negative ones and noted how both pressures were increasing (Just & Levine, 2000). Sure enough, in the subsequent year, “more than half, 53%, reported that advertisers pressure them to kill negative stories

or run positive ones” (Just, Levine, & Regan, 2001). These types of polling results, however, are far from being confined to television.

In 2000, a poll of 287 media professionals revealed that “about one-in-five local and national reporters say they have faced criticism or pressure from their bosses after producing or writing a piece that was seen as damaging to their company's financial interests” (Pew, 2000). Amongst investigative reporters, who were polled separately, a super-majority (61%) responded that a significant amount of influence was exerted by owners on news content. Even non-investigative reporters responded affirmatively to the same question 41% of the time. The study also revealed how news broadcasters viewed, “market forces ... as the primary reason why worthwhile stories are not pursued.”

A few years following these polling results, however, the numbers began to paint an even starker picture which reflected a growing awareness of the increased external pressures that are indicative of the hyper-commercial era. A widespread survey of non-management media journalists and professionals, sponsored by four labor unions, found a high awareness of these pressures (Lauer Research, 2004). 83 % responded that “the most serious problem facing the industry [is] too much emphasis on the bottom line” (Lauer Research, 2004: summary p. 1). 86% reported feeling that increasingly, “control of news and programming decisions will [continue to] be concentrated in too few corporate hands” (Lauer Research, 2004, summary p. 2). Similarly, 79% reported a, “growing corporate bias in the news” (summary p. 2). The sentiments of the journalists polled above were corroborated by veteran researchers conducting a major survey for the Pew Center in 2004, in which they summarized their study by noting a growing and significant amount of, “cases of advertisers and owners breaching the independence of the newsroom” (Kovach, Rosensteil, & Mitchell, 2004).

By 2008, Rosenstiel and Mitchell continued to find similar results, with strong majorities in not only the television and press outlets, but also Internet-based ones as well (albeit with most of the latter being employed by the same media outlets employing the TV/press journalists that were surveyed). In their report, which was sub-titled, “Financial Woes Now Overshadow All Other Concerns for Journalists,” the researchers describe how *both* the operating climate *and* actual content was being negatively impacted by outside commercial pressures: “two-thirds of internet (69%), national and local

journalists (68% each) say that increased bottom-line pressure is seriously hurting the quality of news coverage, rather than just changing the way news organizations operate” (2008, p. 5). More than half of the journalists polled from all sectors said that their respective management gave a higher priority to their “organization’s financial performance” than to the “public interest,” in terms of the priorities of their reporting (p. 8).

On Crude Intervention

The MDM settles theoretical disagreement between IM and PM, and to a larger extent, between political communication and political economy. One way it does this is through several of the case-studies just detailed in the preceding chapters. One of the most important arguments underlying the MDM is that institutional constraints are more powerful than standardized journalistic norms and practices in ultimately determining news content and the general degree of news media independence from powerful governmental and corporate interests. In order to assess the validity of this argument, a detailed survey was conducted in this chapter of documented examples of spiked and marginalized stories, as well as careers being ended or demotions being suffered as a result of enterprising journalistic work that challenges powerful interests. Since documentation of these instances are potentially damaging to the reputation of both journalists and/or the news outlets for which they work, it is more than plausible to assume actual instances as outnumbering documented instances (similar to how rape and sexual abuse investigators assume the same within their own line of work).

If institutional constraints are indeed going against the natural instincts of journalists, who as demonstrated above are far from mere “dupes,” there should be examples of journalists pushing beyond the envelope, contrary to assumptions made by many political communication scholars. The MDM rests on the assumption that journalists are the victims of institutional necessities, which are deep-seeded and omnipresent within the industry, and therefore examples of journalist victimization should nonetheless be observable.

MDM Expectations in Relation to Spiking and Buzzsaw Occurrences

This chapter is a theoretical test of the MDM’s contention that institutional constraints are more responsible for resulting news content than a voluntary submission

by journalists or a result of mere standards of professional journalism. Thus, the collected examples of interventions on behalf of institutional interests are organized along the lines of the expectations and relevant hypotheses of the MDM.

The MDM would assume a group stories to face marginalization or retraction resulting from the undermining of key U.S. foreign policy positions and thus, this is the first section of the chapter. Stemming from its synthesis component, the MDM also assumes that the renewed fifth filter of the PM, the anti-terrorism filter, would be evident by spiked stories and footage related to the inability of the press to penetrate anti-terrorism propaganda by leading public officials. Also related to synthesis components on the PM's advertising filter, in addition to expectation of interventions in an era of hyper-commercialism, the MDM would predict advertising pressures to result in the spiking of stories as well. Lastly, in relation to the MDM assumption that maintenance of cheap and efficient *access* to important and official sources is of significant importance, there should be examples of investigative series killed by editors in the wake of pressure from influential public officials or powerful local sources often connected to advertising.

Methodology and Occurrences

Over two-dozen examples of documented instances of a variety of interventions were found through a variety of research means. Searches using the Lexis-Nexis database looked for news reports noting occurrences of spiking, demotions, firings, investigative stories and series being killed, retractions of varying degrees undertaken by editors and canceled TV programs. Some news reports reflected examples found in several volumes edited by Börjesson (2004, 2005). Many of these instances were also noted, documented and duly criticized by the long-standing and non-profit media watchdog group, Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (Ackerman, 2000; Cohen & Solomon, 1998; FAIR 1998; Hart, 2005; Hart, 2006; Hollar, Jackson & Goldstein, 2006; Jackson & Hart, 2002).

Important to note is that the list is not necessarily an exhaustive one and that many other unreported instances of spiking and journalists being subjected to the buzzsaw surely exists. Their collective existence points to the distinct probability that there were more unreported examples which also exist.

Table 9.1 shows a comprehensive picture of *all* the instances discovered in this study of reported examples of institutional constraints resulting in crude interventions

**Chapter Nine: Marginalized Critical News Content,
Spiked Stories / Series and Careers Subjected to the Buzzsaw**
Page 371

that marginalized news content or eliminated it altogether (most of the instances are described in greater detail herein, beyond only being listed in the table):

**Table 9.1: Marginalized Critical News Content and Instances of
Spiked Stories, Series, or Careers Subjected to the Buzzsaw**

	News Outlet(s)	Story topic	Author(s)	Date
1)	Reuters	Written story on WikiLeaks release of video revealing U.S. soldiers shooting unarmed civilians, including two Reuter staffers, spiked and only selectively reproduced in subsequent video report, <i>without</i> the most critical remarks contained in original story.	Luke Baker (Reuters Deputy Bureau Chief, Brussels)	Apr.'10
2)	<i>Summit Daily News</i> (CO)	Column criticizes local ski resorts; journalist subsequently fired.	Bob Berwyn	Dec. '09
3)	<i>Hartford Courant</i> (CT)	40-year veteran journalist fired following criticism of advertiser and mattress manufacturer.	George Gombossy	Aug.'09
4)	U.S. News Dailies (accessible via Lexis-Nexis)	Polling firm reveals over a million Iraqis died at hands of U.S. forces, only one U.S. daily carries full-length article from <i>Reuters</i> wire.	Baker	Sep. '07
5)	CNN	Video footage of potential war crime, where teenage boy is shown being shot by U.S. soldiers and left untreated to die, spiked out of existence and never shown elsewhere.	Michael Ware	Spring '07
6)	<i>Los Angeles Times</i>	Editor kills cover-page story on Armenian genocide, purportedly as a mere result of the nationality of the reporter.	Mark Arax	Apr. '07
7)	<i>New York Times</i>	Editors deliberately delay story on illegal wire-tapping out of fear of influencing election results.	Various	Feb.'06

**Chapter Nine: Marginalized Critical News Content,
Spiked Stories / Series and Careers Subjected to the Buzzsaw**

Page 373

Table 9.1 (continued)

8)	<i>San Francisco</i> (SF-based magazine)	Story spiked on sexual harassment lawsuits against the Sacramento-area Thunder Valley casino; pressure by advertiser suspected.	Peter Byrne	Jan. '06
9)	<i>Washington Post</i>	Known information on locations of secret prisons spiked, as revealed by <i>Post</i> 's own reporting.	Dana Priest	Nov. '05
10)	<i>Washington Post</i>	Reports doubting existence of WMD in Iraq marginalized and relegated to the back-pages of the paper.	Walter Pincus	Nov. '02 – Mar. '03
11)	MSNBC	The TV program <i>Donahue</i> , an outwardly “anti-war” show, was canceled in spite of garnering highest ratings of the network.	Phil Donahue	Feb. '03
12)	MSNBC	Story headlined, “White House: Bush Misstated Report on Iraq,” wiped off of MSNBC’s web site hours after first appearing.	Robert Windrem	Sep. '02
13)	<i>Daily News</i> (New York)	Editor demoted following his publishing of story series (9/28/01, 10/9/01 & 10/26/01) on toxins in lower Manhattan far exceeding safety levels following 9/11 attack.	Editor Richard Pienciak & reporter Juan González	Oct. '01
14)	<i>Democrat & Chronicle</i> (Rochester, NY)	Reporter taken off ongoing story, follow-up reports killed, on 500 mishandled felony cases in Monroe County, NY.	Michele Locastro Rivoli	Oct. '01

**Chapter Nine: Marginalized Critical News Content,
Spiked Stories / Series and Careers Subjected to the Buzzsaw**

Page 374

Table 9.1 (continued)

15)	<i>Daily News</i> (Los Angeles)	Story spiked on Valley Presbyterian Hospital (CA) being threatened with loss of Medicare eligibility due to 22 violations revealed in state audit; reporter quits in protest over spiking.	Jason Takenouchi	Nov. '01
16)	<i>Arlington Star-Telegram</i> (TX)	Story spiked about Dillard's department store undertaking excessive force and racial profiling in their security operations.	Tanya Eiserer	Jul. '01
17)	<i>Boston Herald</i> (MA)	Follow-up articles and reports to how consumers were paying extra fees following bank merger, spiked; suspension without pay and demotion suffered	Robin Washington	Apr. '00
18)	Associated Press	Story series revealing details about soldiers shooting civilians upon orders by superiors in the No Gun Ri massacre held-up for 14 months, despite series subsequently garnering Pulitzer; additionally, follow-up reports not picked up by overwhelming majority of U.S. dailies and none of the nationally distributed papers.	Robert Port	Sep. '99
19)	CNN	"Valley of Death" report on Vietnam air mission that dropped poison gas on defectors, loses support of CNN & results in three firings.	Producers April Oliver and Jack Smith, as well as Pamela Hill	June '98

**Chapter Nine: Marginalized Critical News Content,
Spiked Stories / Series and Careers Subjected to the Buzzsaw**

Page 375

Table 9.1 (continued)

20)	<i>San Jose Mercury News</i> (CA)	Article series detailing LA street gangs, Nicaraguan Contras, & CIA responsibility for significant crack cocaine importation to LA; after significant pressure and backlash, <i>SJMN</i> apologizes for publication and demotes Webb, leading to resignation.	Gary Webb	Aug. '96
21)	<i>People Magazine</i>	"Bohemian Grove: The Story People Magazine Censored": A story detailing secret meetings of some of San Francisco's most powerful political and economic officials gets spiked.	SF Bureau Chief, Dirk Mathison	Aug. 5, '91
22)	CBS & NBC	"CBS and NBC Spiked Footage Of Iraq Bombing Carnage"; Executive Producer Tom Bettag was fired for his initial (and later over-turned) decision to air footage	TV Producers Jon Alpert & Maryanne Deleo	Mar.'91
23)	<i>San Francisco Examiner</i>	Anti-war columnist has piece critical of govt. positioning on the war spiked; subsequently, he is forced to take 3-month forced leave starting from the time the war began.	Warren Hinckle	Jan.'91
24)	ABC – KABC (Los Angeles, CA)	Station employees report that coverage of peace demonstrations, after the Persian Gulf War began, was banned.	KABC directive	Feb.'91
25)	<i>Patriot</i> (Kotztown, PA)	Columnist who writes a pro-peace, anti-war column fired; subsequent editorial explaining the firing, noted that, "the time for debate has passed."	Joe Reedy	Jan. '91

Nineteen of these twenty-five examples are detailed below in the following five categories: 1) spiked stories or footage related to the PM's anti-terrorism filter; 2) careers plunged into the buzzsaw as a result of critical reporting reflecting the important "lessons" related to MDM components on institutional constraints; 3) marginalized or retracted stories undermining key foreign policy positions reflecting both PM and MDM expectations; 4) spiked stories from advertising pressure reflecting the PM's advertising filter; 5) investigative series killed by editors following pressure from official sources, again reflecting MDM components on institutional constraints.

Spiked Stories / Footage & Canceled Shows Reflecting PM's Anti-Terrorism Filter

Stories or footage that undermines powerful U.S. foreign policy initiatives and governmental interests are prime targets for potential spiking given the persistence of the anti-terrorism filter of the PM. The MDM's components are consistent with the PM in this regard, as substantive criticism of U.S. foreign policy is often lacking on the most important issues and initiatives (chp. 4, chp. 5). As noted, most spiking examples go unreported and undocumented, but some should exist if the MDM's contention that journalists are victims of institutional constraints holds validity.

As is evidenced in the following sub-section, examples of spiking occurring in the post-Cold War era, as well as both before and after 9/11, and that are along the lines just described above, do indeed exist. Their existence puts on prominent display to other journalists important lessons about what happens to those who dare to go beyond such constraints. What follows is a survey of such examples, starting with the most recent documented occurrence in this first of five sections.

Reuters Story on WikiLeaks Iraq Video Held Up and Most Critical Passages in it Spiked

A harrowing leaked video revealing a probable war crime where at least 18 civilians were killed and 2 children wounded in occupied Iraq, was posted on the web site run by WikiLeaks on April 5, 2010. Video taken by one of the helicopters shows multiple air strikes emanating from several Apache U.S.-helicopters. The strikes occurred on July 12, 2007. Amongst the civilians killed included two Reuters news staffers, Saeed Chmagh and Namir Noor-Eldeen, whose cameras were purportedly mistaken for

weapons. During the video, soldiers can be heard mockingly commenting on the killings they were undertaking (McGreal, 2010).

On April 7, 2010, Reuters' deputy Brussels bureau chief, Luke Baker, wrote a bristling account of the video WikiLeaks entitled as, "Collateral Murder." Baker's original report quoted Clive Stafford-Smith, a human rights lawyer, saying under no uncertain terms that, "I don't think there's any question that this is a violation of the Geneva Conventions" and also referred to a principle in the Geneva Conventions requiring protection to be given to those wounded in war conflict and how "lawyers said that principle appeared to have been abandoned in this case." Baker's original report also paraphrased Reuters lawyer Thomas Kim as having said that, "further investigation may be required" into the incident. However, this version of the report was held up for several days and the critical comments about war crimes were abandoned altogether – reportedly by Reuters editor-in-chief, David Schlesinger – including the direct accusation lobbied by Stafford-Smith, as well as the Reuters lawyer calling for a possible investigation (Cook, 2010a). Baker's written report was never published and instead, only portions of it were culled for a subsequent Washington-based report (Entous 2010), with omissions being of the more critical parts just noted from Baker's original report.

CNN & Vet War Correspondent Has Footage Spiked of Iraqi Boy Being Fatally Shot

Michael Ware had covered the invasion and occupation of Iraq as much as any other western journalist before finally returning to his native home in Brisbane, Australia in 2010. As one military officer put it, Ware had completed the equivalent of "eight to nine combat tours, there is no soldier in our military that has done that. Michael Ware has done that." During his extensive coverage of Iraq, Ware revealed how he filmed a possible war crime. Ware filmed footage of a teenager being shot in the back of a head, who subsequently was not attended to or assisted medically for about twenty minutes before finally succumbing to death (Fitzgerald 2010; Veis 2008). Ware noted how the fatal shooting occurred after the insurgents had already fled and in the spring of 2007 in a village north of Baghdad in the Diyala province (Veis, 2008).

Ware and John Martinkus, his colleague, explained that since the footage was owned by CNN and was judged to be "too graphic" (Tencer 2010), the tape has "never seen the light of day" or even garnered a written report on CNN's web site. This went far

to prevent any watchdog pressure resulting in the opening of an official investigation (Dennehy, 2010).

The spiking occurred in spite of objections by Martinkus, who remarked, “The footage should be shown so people know how callously U.S. soldiers treat the Iraqis” (Dennehy, 2010). Ware has long echoed such sentiments and gave similar comments in a 2008 interview, where he explained why his work should not have been spiked and why work like his should be shown to many people: “It’s my firm belief that we need to constantly jar the sensitivities of the people back home” (Veis, 2008). To be sure, however, Ware’s footage was not spiked because of any sentiments he may have harbored against U.S. foreign policy in Iraq, as he made it clear that he supported the indefinite continuation of the U.S.-led occupation (Veis, 2008). Instead, the mere content itself, in spite of its revelation of a potential war crime, served as sufficient reason for the footage to be censored by CNN.

Washington Post Admits to Spiking Known Information on Locations of Secret Prisons

A report run in the *Washington Post* admitted (Priest, 2005) to spiking known information it had on the locations of secret prisons (Hollar, Jackson & Goldstein, 2006). In spite of the help that such information could serve to human rights organizations and investigations, the *Post* revealed in its own reporting that the locations of secret prisons created by the CIA to interrogate terrorism suspects would not be released.

The *Post* noted that unnamed senior officials “argued that the disclosure might disrupt counterterrorism efforts in those countries and elsewhere and could make them targets of possible terrorist retaliation” (Priest, 2005). The report surfaced in the wake of revelations of prisoner abuse at Guantánamo Bay and Abu Ghraib, but the *Post* reasoned that revealing information about the sites would leave the U.S. open to possible legal challenges and “increase the risk of political condemnation at home and abroad” (Priest, 2005). One of the two most influential U.S. dailies allowing concerns about undermining governmental initiatives and/or news content resulting in legal repercussions affect content is a clear example of how the anti-terrorism filter of the PM persists to the present. It also serves as an important example of deterrence from journalists pursuing such ends in their own work, especially when employed by a leading daily.

Phil Donahue’s Show Canceled in Spite of Garnering Highest Ratings on MSNBC

Phil Donahue's TV program on MSNBC, *Donahue*, was an outwardly anti-war show that was canceled in February 2003. The cancellation occurred in spite of the show garnering the highest ratings of the network (Media Matters, 2004), edging out even the widely watched *Hardball with Chris Matthews*, which remains on the air to the present.

An internal memo that was leaked to Rick Ellis, a veteran broadcast news journalist, revealed an outside study that contained a number of recommendations to NBC, some of which had already been implemented (Ellis, 2003). One of the recommendations included dropping Donahue's show, as it was deemed to present a, "difficult public face for NBC in a time of war ... [Donahue] seems to delight in presenting guests who are anti-war, anti-Bush and skeptical of the administration's motives" (Ellis, 2003). The report continued its criticism by saying the show provided, "a home for the liberal antiwar agenda at the same time that our competitors are waving the flag at every opportunity." The report is corroborated by accounts from former employees of the program. Jeff Cohen, who was one of the producers for the show, told the *American Journalism Review* that the program was: "ordered to book more right-wing guests than left-wing, more pro-war than antiwar to balance the liberalism of host Phil Donahue" (Hart, 2005).

While TV programs are routinely subject to a volatile industry, the cancellation of *Donahue* was significant as the program was a rare exception in terms of its anti-war content and guests, especially during a time of war. The treatment of this exceptional program was revealing, however, in showing that such exceptions do not last long, especially when nationally broadcasted on television. The program *Donahue* exemplified the sharp institutional limits for a critical program which consistently undermined important anti-terrorism planks of the Bush administration, as it was first stifled and soon thereafter, canceled altogether.

MSNBC Report Noting False Statements by Bush, Spiked Soon After Publication

August and September 2002 was one of the most intensive periods of spin efforts in terms of charges being lobbied that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The Bush administration, U.K. Prime Minister Tony Blair and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon were making frequent claims to this effect. On September 7, 2002, it was further asserted by both Bush and Blair that the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) report revealed that Iraq was within six months of developing a WMD (Office of the White House Press Secretary, 2002).

The problem with this claim, however, was that it was patently and verifiably false. Weeks later, IAEA spokesman Mark Gwozdecky explained why:

There's never been a report like that issued from this agency... There is no evidence in our view that can be substantiated on Iraq's nuclear-weapons program. If anybody tells you they know the nuclear situation in Iraq right now, in the absence of four years of inspections, I would say that they're misleading you because there isn't solid evidence out there (Curl, 2002).

Börjesson pointed out that there was only one mainstream news media exception in terms of reporting that initially checked Bush and Blair's claims against the actual report, which was headlined, "White House: Bush Misstated Report on Iraq" and written by NBC's Robert Windrem (2004, pp. 25-26). The fate of the report goes far to explain why no one else wrote it: the article was spiked out of existence within hours of its release (Krugman, 2003).

Story by Veteran Videographer, Detailing Iraqi Civilian Deaths, Spiked by NBC & CBS

Jon Alpert had been working for thirteen years as a videographer filing stories for NBC from far-flung locations ranging from El Salvador to Iraq. Nevertheless, even this working relationship and professional background could not stop his footage of civilian killings in Iraq during the first Gulf War from being spiked off of both NBC's, as well as CBS's respective nightly newscast programs in February 1991 (Börjesson, 2005, pp. 495-505; personal communication, September 22, 2010). Furthermore, initial acceptances of his footage by network producers from both networks led to their dismissals (pp. 502, 503). The spiking was so dramatic that it did manage to garner the attention of a story run on one radio program, but the story was aired on NPR, a non-commercial and public radio network.

Alpert's account of what he had to go through to get the footage is nothing short of dramatic and eye-opening. While in the midst of trying to leave Iraq with the footage in tact, one insurgent tried to kill him and were it not for the gun malfunctioning, Alpert might not have survived. Alpert explained the reason why he risked his life to deliver the footage was because he felt that footage showing that smart bombs were in fact resulting in significant civilian casualties was too important to be kept from the U.S. viewing public in the midst of a war. The graphic footage Alpert captured was described by him in the following terms: "We were able to visit suburban neighborhoods in Baghdad and in Basra that had been leveled by American weaponry. We talked to people whose fathers and neighbors had been killed. We saw the bodies" (Börjesson, 2005, p. 498).

Steve Friedman, a producer at NBC, lauded the videos shot by Alpert and said: "This is amazing. Nobody in the United States knows this is happening and this will be our lead story tomorrow night on NBC News." Soon thereafter, however, Friedman informed Alpert that not only were the stories spiked, but that his contract with NBC was going to be terminated and that he would be fired. Alpert then successfully pitched the stories to CBS, where executive producer of CBS's evening newscast, Tom Bettag, called the videos "astonishing." At 2am in the following morning, however, Bettag was fired and Alpert's footage was once again spiked (Börjesson, 2005, pp. 502-503).

The only mass outlets that Alpert's tapes were shown on were located in Japan and Europe, garnering Alpert the Italian Peace Prize and a meeting with the Italian President (p. 504). Alpert explained the lesson he learned as a result of his experience with the commercial mainstream news media:

... when your report contradicts what the American government is saying, it's the death penalty. And we got the death penalty ... there's no room for forgiveness in a situation when American troops are actually involved in combat ... This not only tells me, this tells everybody who is reporting, that they better be darn careful because consequences are going to be paid if you see the American government doing something wrong and you feel the American people need to know (Börjesson, 2005, p. 507).

Careers Adversely Affected by the “Buzzsaw”

Spiked stories are one way journalists are shown the institutional constraints in which mainstream news outlets operate within, but there are exceptions where critical stories make it onto the airwaves or the printed pages. The MDM’s components attempt to capture the most common factors behind such exceptions: domestic social issues that are non-threatening to state-corporate interests, a lack of attention from Washington or K-Street, regional-level dailies insulated from institutional pressures from Washington and Wall Street, significant social protest, foreign indexing or all of the above acting together. Whether or not these common exceptional conditions are present when incisive news reporting is aired nationally on commercial networks or printed by dailies, serious consequences often follow as a result. In a phenomenon that can be described as a backlash of sorts, Börjesson has termed the backlash the “buzzsaw” (BuzzFlash, 2005).

When the backlash or buzzsaw occurs, demotions, cancellations, forced resignations, retractions, editorial withdrawals of support and firings often also occur. Some of those, such as the firings of the CBS and NBC producers, have already been noted above. Several more examples follow herein, as their existence serves as further evidence of the MDM’s contention that institutional constraints are powerful and include position ending consequences.

CNN Fires Producers of “Valley of Death” Report Following Governmental Flack

CNN Producers April Oliver and Jack Smith spent months conducting research and interviews into a story that revealed how a mission called “Operation Tailwind” undertaken by U.S. special forces targeted U.S. defectors during a then secret and illegal war in Laos in 1970. It was reported that sarin nerve gas was used to kill the defectors based on the testimony of several Tailwind participants (Oliver and Smith 1998).

While the evidence and revelations were clear, there were some veterans and experts who disputed the account. Producers Oliver and Smith included these disputes in their report, but higher-ranking CNN executives axed one of the doubts raised in final editing. Henry Kissinger, Colin Powell and former CIA chief Richard Helm all attacked the report and subsequently, a sizable segment of the news media parroted much of the criticism, according to a news analysis done by FAIR. In the face of this pressure, CNN retracted the story and fired both Oliver and Smith (Bennett 2004, pp. 303-304; Cohen &

Solomon, 1998). The subsequent retreat by CNN in supporting the story, as well as the firings that ensued, had strong reverberations. It was pointed to as the main culprit for Bob Port's story on the No Gun Ri massacre having been spiked for fourteen months, as will soon be detailed below.

Investigative Reporter Demoted, Forced to Quit, Following "Dark Alliance" Series

For almost two decades, Gary Webb had won a variety of awards for his investigative journalism. Webb noted that he never had a story lose the support of a paper for which he worked and only had one inconsequential piece previously spiked (Börjesson, 2004, pp. 142-143). Webb professed that he previously held an unflinching faith in the U.S. press, but said that his faith was based on investigative pieces that weren't "important enough to suppress" (p. 143). After Webb wrote a series that was "important enough," however, he was thrown into the buzzsaw to a startling degree.

Webb's three-day story series, entitled *Dark Alliance* and published in August 1996, exposed connections between L.A. street gangs, Nicaraguan Contras, and the CIA and their responsibility for a significant amount of crack cocaine importation to Los Angeles occurring during the 1980's. Following significant pressure and backlash, the *San Jose Mercury News* apologized for its publication and fired Webb.

Similar to many of the other investigative series noted in this chapter which have been spiked, marginalized or subject to withdrawn support, Webb backed up his pieces with a lot of investigative work and documentation. Working closely with a Nicaraguan-based journalist for over a year, Webb pieced together extensive documentation and supporting evidence, based on:

Spanish-language undercover tapes, court records ... [translated] newspaper articles ... Interviews in foreign prisons ... Documents pried from unwilling federal agencies or specially declassified by the National Archive ... Ex-drug dealers and ex-cops persuaded to talk on the record ... and Chronologies [based on] heavily censored government documents and old newspaper stories [coming from] archives [located in] Managua to Miami (Börjesson, 2004, p. 144).

The initial reaction to the piece was one of silence, as only Seattle newspapers and other local publications covered the expose. However, since Webb's piece also had an online presence, over a million hits on the web site featuring the work were recorded (Börjesson, 2004). Subsequently, public coast-to-coast pressure undertaken by media

watchdog and outraged community groups, taking place from coast to coast, succeeded in forcing the national press to pay attention to the series. However, the attention was resoundingly negative. One analysis uncovered how the attacks by the *Washington Post*, *New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times* on Webb's expose were mostly based on CIA "obligatory denials"(Solomon 1997). Webb himself would also later publish a book that was based on the series (Webb 2003), which followed an investigative book that criticized the press for its handling of what became a national affair (Cockburn & St. Clair, 1999).

In the end, the negative national press reaction was too much for Webb's editors to handle. In January 1997, follow-up articles by Webb were spiked (Osborn 1998) By May, a column by an editor that significantly criticized the series was printed (Ceppos, 1997). The column earned editorial praise from the *New York Times* and a month after it was run Webb was demoted and was no longer an investigative reporter (Osborn, 1998). Subsequently, a settlement between Webb and the paper led to his departure (Osborn, 1998).

Several years later, the December 1997 findings of a CIA internal investigation into the matter were declassified and released (CIA, 1997). The results vindicated Webb's series, as one of the main criticisms of his work was that he did not have enough proof that CIA officials knowingly overlooked the "dark alliance." Nevertheless, one report noted how the released findings were not of significant interest to the same national sources that attacked Webb's work (FAIR 1998).

Webb concluded that his work was an illustration of the relationship that exists between the national and regional press:

... the *San Jose Mercury News* was not a member of the club that sets the national news agenda, the elite group of big newspapers that decides the important issues of the day, such as which stories get reported and which get ignored. Small regional newspapers aren't invited. But the Merc had broken the rules and used the Internet to get in by the back door, leaving the big papers momentarily superfluous and embarrassed, and it forced them to readdress an issue they'd much rather have forgotten. By turning on the *Mercury News*, the big boys were reminding the rest of the flock who really runs the newspaper business, Internet or no Internet, and the extends to which they will go to protect that power, even if it meant rearranging reality to suit them

Webb's critique, and his experience as a whole, holds many parallels to MDM components. Similar to Webb's experience, the case studies in this dissertation have also shown how the national press will generally take a much closer line to official positioning than regional papers. When those lines are crossed in meaningful and significant ways by investigative series that manage to be published in regional papers and the national press and/or influential officials negatively respond, the consequences can be significant. As the title of one analysis reads, Webb's experience forced other reporters to ask themselves, "Are You Sure You Want to Ruin Your Career?" (Olson 1998).

In the wake of being unable to pay the mortgage on his house and forced to sell it, Webb would eventually commit suicide in 2004. Webb's ex-wife, Sue Bell, told the *Sacramento News and Review* that Webb "had been distraught for some time over his inability to get a job at another major newspaper" (Stanton 2004).

Editor Demoted Following Publishing of Series on Toxins in Following 9/11 attack

Juan González is a long-time reporter for the New York-based *Daily News* and wrote a book detailing an experience that involved the demotion of an editor for whom he wrote. González explains how a series of articles he wrote on unsafe levels of toxins being found in lower Manhattan following the 9/11 attacks received a powerful backlash to the paper from EPA administrator Christine Whitman, the head of the New York City Partnership and Chamber of Commerce and Rudolph Giuliani's deputy mayors. The article series was almost spiked, but González wrote about how his editor "refused to buckle under the pressure" (2002, p. 19). Metropolitan editor Richard Pienciak's insistence overcame a "marked reluctance" by other editors for the article series to continue, but not without him suffering a demotion as a result. Days after a four-person team of reporters was formed, Pienciak was terminated from his position without explanation, the reporting team was disbanded and the former editor was relegated to being an enterprise reporter for the Sunday edition of the paper (Jackson, Hart and Coen, 2003).

Reporter Reveals Extra Fees from Bank Merger: Indefinitely Suspended, Then Demoted

Robin Washington wrote about a sensitive topic, sensitive because the matter involved a major advertiser with the paper for whom he wrote. Washington detailed how 700,000 Bank Boston customers were going to be subjected to higher fees after a planned

merger with Fleet (Washington, 2000). According to press accounts on the matter, Washington suggested that the bank's existence as an important advertiser with the paper influenced the decision to pull him from the story, suspend him indefinitely without pay and eventually demote him to a general assignment reporter (Jackson & Hart, 2001). In the wake of significant protests by the Newspaper Guild and the Boston Association of Black Journalists, Washington was eventually reinstated to his original job (Jackson & Hart, 2001). However, the reinstatement did not come before a powerful lesson about institutional constraints was already learned by Washington and an untold amount of other journalists, considering the exposure the case garnered in light of it having been reported in several influential dailies including the *Boston Globe* and *Washington Post*.

Stories Undermining Key Foreign Policy Positions, Marginalized or Ignored

The MDM rests on the premise that when stories surface in the press and serve to undermine key U.S. foreign policy positions, marginalization will often occur and will happen with a frequency that at least matches, if not surpasses any other topic covered by journalism. A number of documented instances of this tendency on major occurrences were simply blanked out by the U.S. mainstream news media, reflecting MDM expectations for institutional constraints to deter journalists from pressing on with reporting that serves to significantly undermine key U.S. foreign policy positions and initiatives.

Stories Focusing on Million Dead Iraqis Marginalized and Passed up by MSM

Critical reporting that appears in a wire service, but lacks a powerful Washington official for support and attention, completely escapes the U.S. mainstream news media radar regardless of its intrinsic importance. The phenomenon is enhanced when unworthy victims are in question. In light of chapter 4 and how Iraqi civilians were found to be the most unworthy of all victims involved with the Iraq invasion and occupation, the fate of several stories detailing the full brunt of Iraqi casualties is consistent with the conclusions of chapter 4.

When a reputable British polling firm released findings that over a million Iraqis had violently died at the hands of U.S. forces, and updated those findings with even a more extensive survey in January 2008, *Reuters* ran a news brief on the subsequent release (Baker, 2008). According to researchers at Project Censored (Stanton, LeDonne

& Crespán 2009), however, not one commercial news media outlet in the U.S. ran the wire story in a substantive fashion. McElwee had similar findings in terms of reporting on the 2007 original release, when he wrote:

... with the exception of a story in the *Los Angeles Times* (9/14/07), a five-minute segment on National Public Radio (9/18/07) and one-paragraph briefs buried in *Newsday* (9/14/07), the *Seattle Times* (9/14/07) and the *Houston Chronicle* (9/14/07), major U.S. newsrooms did not report the ORB findings. They were not mentioned on any of the major TV networks or cable news channels (McElwee, 2008).

The story had also been reported on by two other non-commercial outlets in the previous year (Holland, 2007; Schwartz, 2007). Subsequent to the virtually ignored *Reuters* wire report, the non-commercial Inter Press Service picked up the story in March 2008 and published a feature piece about as much (Jamail, 2008).

Reports Doubting Existence of WMD in Iraq Marginalized and Relegated to Back-Pages

Walter Pincus is a veteran reporter who has been covering the intelligence community for decades. His incisive reporting for the *Washington Post* during the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq revealed a plethora of evidence undermining the Bush administration position on WMD and Iraq from November 2002 right up to the invasion in March 2003 (Börjesson, 2005, pp. 224-225). His work, however, was consistently relegated to the back pages of the newspaper. This demonstrated an important lesson to other reporters and journalists about the marginalizing effect that institutional constraints has on the most critical reporting which, even if not spiked, can be significantly marginalized. As investigative reporter James Bamford put it, “Walter Pincus had a choice, and he decided that telling the truth was far more important than being on page one” (Börjesson, 2005, p. 307).

Pincus told Börjesson in a frank and open interview about the consistent marginalization of his reporting. A story Pincus wrote undermining claims made to the United Nations by then Secretary of State Colin Powell was relegated to page A21 (2005, p. 225) and another article raising serious doubts about the existence of WMD, a piece Pincus deemed to be his best on the topic, was sent to page A17 even though it appeared *before* the invasion occurred in March 2003 and thus retained its relevance (p. 226). Pincus added that virtually none of his prior articles raising doubts about WMD claims

were run with any prominence (p. 224), while also elaborating that the *Post* had invested heavily in covering the start of the invasion in a supportive fashion, positioning reporters at the Kuwait border waiting for the war to begin (p. 227). Pincus also spoke about how investigative reporting he undertook detailing the transformation of a reconnaissance drone into a “hunter-killer” as a reflection of new administration policies was threatened to be killed in favor of coverage of the Terry Schiavo case. Instead, the piece was simply relegated away from the cover page yet again (p. 239). Pincus criticized how “most newspapers are now in monopoly situations in most cities,” and, “the growth of public relations,” in pointing to some of the problems plaguing journalism (p. 241).

Pincus was not alone in his observations about this issue, as several other mainstream news reporters reasoned that they were able to write incisively about the WMD debacle because they were not affiliated with nationally-distributed outlets based in Washington or D.C., lending support to one of the expectations of the MDM. As was noted in chapter 3, veteran Knight-Ridder journalist Jonathan Landay explained why his own investigative and critical reporting on WMD was able to be run: “I don’t think people really cared as long as it wasn’t being read in Washington. As long as it wasn’t having an impact here politically, than we could write what we wanted. If it had been in the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post*, then you would have seen a whole different reaction” (Börjesson, 2005, p. 373). Warren Strobel, Landay’s writing partner, elaborated on the differences between their reporting in the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq and that of the most influential papers: “the *New York Times* and others were fed stuff to make the administration’s case, and they would present that at the top of their stories ... we’re not just stenographers and this was a question of war and peace and lives and troops and everything else, and we felt that the way we should handle it was to put our emphasis on the critique” (Börjesson, 2005, p. 373).

Investigative Series on No Gun Ri Massacre in South Korea Spiked for 14 months

After months of work and well over a year of hold-up, on September 30, 1999, veteran investigative reporter and Associated Press editor Bob Port was finally able to run a story he led a research team in documenting. Port’s article used first-hand and eye-witness testimony by U.S. war veterans in revealing how they deliberately committed a massacre, ordered by higher-ranking U.S. officers, of hundreds of South Korean civilians

in No Gun Ri in 1950. The veteran testimonies matched up U.S. military documents as well as with the testimonies of South Korean survivors.

The story was of such high-quality that it won a Pulitzer prize in April 2000 and resulted in several official investigations opening up. In spite of its award-winning stature, the story's follow-ups was ignored by most dailies in the U.S., the premise of the series was attacked by several national outlets and Port wound up eventually leaving the Associated Press. The fate of the story goes far to illustrate the institutional constraints that even prize-winning journalists are up against when they publish revelations pointing toward U.S. culpability.

When Port and his team finished their work on the series, Associated Press executives William Ahearn and Louis Boccardi prevented its publication for 14 months. Other AP executives reportedly spiked the piece in March 1999 as well. AP's Ahearn was quoted as saying that Port's work could have resulted in "another CNN," referring to Operation Tailwind's fate and that, "this is what can happen if you don't get it right" (Brill's Content, December 1999). Operation Tailwind was a 1998 CNN report that received backlash from powerful government officials resulting in the firings of several of its producers. The incident is detailed below as one of the "buzzsaw" examples.

The reaction to the piece by the rest of the U.S. news media was revealing. Port's article first garnered front-page access to the nation's two most influential dailies during the absence of any influential U.S. officials disputing the claims (*The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, both on September, 30, 1999). However, a few news outlets began to attack the piece in the wake of it garnering the Pulitzer and other news media outlets quickly followed in kind, as revealed in a detailed analysis by Ackerman. However, a few news outlets began to attack the piece in the wake of it garnering the Pulitzer and other news media outlets quickly followed in kind, as revealed in a detailed analysis by Ackerman (2000).

Further revealed by Ackerman, was how both the *Times* and the *Post* failed to run numerous follow-up reports run by the Associated Press, which featured writing by Port's investigative team pointing toward the massacre being part of a systematic military policy, as opposed to an aberration. Of the three follow-up reports, only one major newspaper,

the Long Island edition of *Newsday*, ran just one of the three pieces. Additional coverage of the reports only appeared in a limited amount of smaller, local dailies.

When editorializing about the matter, leading papers downplayed questions into the broad implications of the massacre or ignored them altogether, as duly noted by Ackerman (2000). The *Washington Post* editorialized the massacre as one that must be measured against, “multiple crimes against civilians on both sides” (October 2, 1999), while the *New York Times* completely overlooked the broader implications (October 2, 1999).

Investigative Series / Stories Spiked following Pressure from Powerful Sources

The MDM expects that Investigative articles and story series which contain revelations that threaten the institutional interests of the business interests of a particular news media outlet, whether it is its own business interests or that of one of its principal advertisers, will most often face a variety of consequences: the story or series will be spiked out of existence or discontinued. There are many examples of this occurring in relation to powerful sources, the same official sources which news outlets depend upon to garner profits by maintaining cheap, accessible and efficient access to these sources. Sometimes sources also double as investors and other times they serve as invaluable resource for ready-made news content material. The following examples reflect both of these instances and MDM assumptions that the institutional constraints of U.S. mainstream news media outlets will often significantly restrict or destroy the efforts of ambitious investigative reporters.

Reuters Spiked Investigative Story on Insider Trading of One of its Investors

Several editors at *Reuters* spiked a story in mid-December 2009, when investigative reporter Matthew Goldstein led a research team reporting on hedge fund trader Steven Cohen and illicit insider trading activities that he engaged in during the 1980’s. The story killing occurred in the wake of a phone call by Cohen alerting his discontent with the investigation and possible publication of as much. Staffers at *Reuters* who were involved with the story released taped conversations with their editor and other information to several high-traffic Internet sites, and the spiking was exposed (Roush 2009; Cook 2010b).

Goldstein's story was based on documentation that was approved by lawyers and other editors at *Reuters*. However, following a phone call for comment by Goldstein to Cohen, the CEO of the market division of Reuters, as well as the second-ranking executive, was contacted by Cohen who complained about the piece on multiple occasions. Cohen, as was revealed by reporting, held stock in Reuters worth millions of dollars. The complaints were communicated to editors David Schlesinger and Jack Reernik. (As noted above, Schlesinger had also been associated with a spiking of a more critical version of a report on an April 2010 WikiLeaks video.) The two discussed the matter for three days and Reernik made the final decision to ax the piece (Cook 2010b; Roush 2009).

The audio recording of a conference phone call between Schlesinger and a number of Reuters staffers about the killing of the story did not reveal any journalistic justifications for the editorial decision. "We're not going to do news editing by plebiscite...so I'm not going to go into the details of it. The story could have run. I mean, it was not a bad story. It could have run. But I had questions about it," said Schlesinger during the phone call. When pressed about why the story was killed in spite of it having supportive documentation, Schlesinger simply said, "Because we don't write every story that we have a document about" (Cook 2010b).

What was left certain by the affair was that Reuters was definitely not running a story with supportive documentation about a sensitive matter for one of its investors. The spiking certainly left a valuable lesson to be learned in its wake, not only by the investigative team at Reuters, but quite likely by many others given the Internet-based exposure and attention the incident garnered.

*Award-Winning Story Detailing Problems Related to Hundreds of Felony Case
Dismissals Results in Spiking of Follow-Ups & Reporter Losing Assignment Altogether*

A year and a half worth of reporting into problems that led to the dismissal of over 500 felony cases resulted in a state review and an award ceremony by her editors. Those accolades were not enough to prevent the reporter, Michele Locastro Rivoli of the *Democrat and Chronicle* (Rochester, NY), from being pulled off the story and having several of her follow-up reports be spiked in the Fall of 2001.

Editor Karen Magnuson justified the decision to the *Washington Post* by explaining that it was common practice for reporters to be taken away from stories (October 20, 2001). But Magnuson also admitted to having received complaints from the district attorney's office, which is precisely what Rivoli charged as being the reason behind the decisions. Tape recorded conversations by Rivoli of a conversation between her and another editor explaining the decision support Rivoli's contention. The editor is heard saying that he didn't "want it to be thought that [the district attorney] killed the story. We've got to do this for business reasons" (Jackson and Hart 2002). Regardless of the motive, the end result of the subsequent stories being spiked out of existence is not in contention.

Story Unveiling Failings of Hospital Spiked After Meeting with Board of Directors

Jason Takenouchi was hot on the trail of a local hospital. He wrote an investigative story about it running the risk of losing its Medicare eligibility in light of almost two-dozen deficiencies at the hospital, as documented by a state audit. In spite of its clear value as a public-interest story, a report by a local paper revealed that the story was spiked out of existence following a meeting between publisher Ike Massey, the paper's editors and members of Valley Presbyterian's board of directors. Takenouchi resigned in protest and was forced to publish his killed piece in a publication with an audience far more specific and limited than his former daily paper employer (Jackson & Hart, 2002).

Spiked Stories from Advertising Pressure

Documented instances of advertising pressures leading to spiked stories are yet another important component of the institutional constraints that mainstream journalists must operate within. Their existence shows how institutional constraints have a bigger impact on limiting news content than any "voluntary," "peculiar," or otherwise unnecessary submission by journalists themselves. These lessons are typically learned early on, during the cub-reporting phase that many journalists pass through on their way up to nationally distributed sources. The "lessons" learned from these incidents are gleaned from firings of veteran reporters and spiked stories coming as a result of crude interventions undertaken by advertisers to protect their business interests against the investigative impulses of journalists.

Several Journalists Fired in 2009 Following Pieces Critical of Advertisers

In 2009, several reported examples of firings occurred after advertising pressure. Bob Berwyn was terminated from the *Summit Daily News* merely days following his column criticizing local ski resorts (Hart, 2010). The CEO of Vail Resorts reportedly threatened reconsidering advertising with the daily paper before Berwyn was fired.

Earlier in the year, the *New York Times* reported how veteran journalist George Gombossy was fired by the *Hartford Courant* following critical columns he wrote of a mattress manufacturer which also advertised with his employer (Clifford, 2009; Hart, 2010). Gombossy was described as “one of a kind” by the state attorney general. Nevertheless, he was terminated immediately following the spiking of another article critical of an advertiser, with the new editor explaining to the *Times* that investigative work was going to be replaced at the *Courant* with a “different” style of reporting: “We said we wanted to go to more helpful news, and less gotcha news ... he just wasn’t interested in the direction we were going” (Clifford, 2009).

Story on Excessive Force & Racial Profiling by Department Store Gets Spiked

In the summer of 2001, Arlington Star-Telegram reporters told Forth Worth Weekly’s reporter Jeff Prince about a story by Tanya Eiserer which would have looked further into legal allegations concerning excessive force and racial profiling on the part of security guards at a department store (Prince, 2001). The store, named Dillard’s, had fatal incidents involving their guards in three states, including during June 1999 in Arlington itself, as well as Texas and Tennessee (Jackson & Hart, 2002). Despite the story having been deemed fair and comprehensive by Eiserer’s colleagues, it was spiked.

Star-Telegram reporters interviewed by Prince were certain that advertising pressure was chiefly responsible for the decision. Prince’s story about the spiking also pointed to a previous instance where Dillard’s pulled ads from CBS following a March 2000 expose which aired on its TV magazine program, 60 Minutes (Prince, 2001).

Spiked Expose on Sexual Harassment Lawsuits against Casino Advertiser

Peter Byrne’s investigative report on sexual harassment lawsuits against the Thunder Valley casino based near Sacramento was spiked by an executive editor at *San Francisco* in January 2006. Modern Luxury Media, which had recently bought the magazine previously well known for its investigative reporting, accepted a full-page ad in

its December issue for a resort subsiding in the same chain as Thunder Valley (Hart, 2006). The CEO of Modern declined to comment about whether one of the factors for killing the story had to do with advertising pressure. However, a former editor of the magazine did not harbor doubts about advertising having been a factor, and told the *Chronicle* that: “if you're going to do that, why do journalism? Why not just put out catalogs?” (2006).

Findings

Principally, this study was undertaken to assess the validity of an attempt to settle a key theoretical dispute between the IM and PM with the MDM's assumption that institutional constraints, as opposed to voluntary deference on the part of journalists, serving as the principal reason for content lacking independence from Washington and Wall Street positioning on key issues. However, a number of interesting findings also came about in the course of this research, which point to the need for more research on a topic that has attracted way less scholarly attention than it deserves.

Amongst the topics revealed in relation to the stories and newscast topics that were spiked, discontinued or retracted, none attracted more sharp reactions than potential war crimes and civilian killings on the part of U.S. troops. More research and studies are needed to verify this finding, which to be sure, is sharply in line with MDM expectations. The MDM shows how important U.S. foreign policy positions are amongst the most difficult to penetrate in terms of exceptional and independent news reporting, especially in the nation's leading agenda-setting sources, and a topic as sensitive as that of potential war crimes and abuses by U.S. troops was clearly shown to be as constrained and controlled as any other topics that arose in this study.

Another finding uncovered in this chapter was that advertising pressures are felt most explicitly and directly when it comes to more local and regional-level news outlets. Thus, in spite of their ability to sometimes show more independence on national policy issues than nationally distributed news media, as duly shown in the previous chapter in relation to immigration, local and regional-level news media appeared to be more vulnerable to direct influence and crude interventions by powerful sources and advertisers at a local level. Similar to how the MDM demonstrates that nationally distributed sources close to the power centers in D.C. and New York are more vulnerable

to outside influence and thus suffer more from a lack of independence on key national policy positions, the findings from this study show how more locally oriented news media in this study were more vulnerable to such influences at a local level.

This finding, however, did *not* preclude direct interventions and pressure from powerful sources or officials exerting their influence on larger-level news outlets. Indeed, one spiking example described above noted how Reuters buckled relatively easily by killing an investigative story after one of its investors personally called the agency. Clearly, however, more research on these differences is needed.

These findings do, however, validate the perceptions of journalists noted earlier in the study. Consistently, in polls ranging over a decade, journalists complained of more direct influences and crude interventions by editors and news executives, on behalf of the news outlet's own business and/or advertising interests, occurring more often at local and regional level outlets. These findings are consistent with both of the PM and MDM's main theoretical assumptions on the matter. It was chiefly through news content itself that Herman and Chomsky found institutional constraints to be most evident, as their research chiefly focused on nationally distributed U.S. news sources, such as the three major newscasts and the two leading dailies. Nevertheless, the MDM is distinctive from the PM in this regard in that it showed, namely with this study, that there are also significant instances of spikings and crude interventions at the level of nationally distributed sources as well, often rearing its head through the ending of careers, or investigative series or TV programs as part of the "buzzsaw" process vividly described by Borjesson's books. Since Herman and Chomsky's work is focused on national-level sources, this finding suggests that internalization is working to a larger extent on journalists at that level. This would be sensible because reporters are rarely directly hired at national level papers and once valuable lessons are learned at lower-level papers, either through direct or indirect experiences, internalization of institutional constraints can be more fully learned. In this sense, direct interventions, such as what was documented above, are less necessary. It also explains in greater detail how institutional constraints are at work: *both* through internalization of such requirements *and* also through direct interventions.

The MDM is distinctive of the PM, however, in that its theoretical assumptions do not presuppose any false consciousness and instead, bases its components on a more

learned and conscious process of internalization, as evidenced in the findings from this chapter. Journalists do not appear to voluntarily submit themselves to the institutional interests of their employers and instead, are forced into the constraints that the business interests of the news outlets for whom they work have to operate within in order to maintain their very existence.

Furthermore, the findings on crude interventions happening in a significant amount of documented occurrences in a variety of ways is consistent with characterizations of the current economic climate in U.S. news media. McChesney's work has extensively shown how we have long since entered a hyper-commercial era of concentrated corporate media ownership in the U.S., dating primarily back to the passage of the Clinton-approved 1996 Telecommunications Act (2000, 2004, 2008). McChesney's bird's eye characterization of the industry is supported by a number of other scholarly works as well (Bagdikian, 2004; Hamilton, 2004) is the probable explanation for a climate where crude interventions are not rare and instead have become significant and possibly more common than in previous eras.

To be certain though, the most remarkable finding of this study was that there are scores of examples of journalists deliberately going against the institutional constraints of their employers, even when their stories, their investigative series, their TV programs and sometimes their very livelihoods, suffered as a result. Far from Mermin's unfair characterization of this merely being hypothetical scenario (1999, p. 150), as well as that of many other indexing theorists, examples of many journalists sacrificing much in the search for the truth can indeed be found and were duly noted in this chapter.

Conclusion

This study provided an empirical basis for the claim that institutional interests, as opposed to voluntary submissions by journalists, are a larger basis for a lack of media independence by mainstream U.S. news media outlets. Such a finding is especially important in that previous scholarly inquiries into the matter are lacking. Further, differing theoretical responses on what the actual source of culpability is for news content lacking independence is singularly the most important theoretical tension between the PM and IM, and by extension, between the subfields of political communication and political economy as a whole. In light of the over two-dozen examples that were

uncovered, however, of spikings, firings and journalists subjected to the buzzsaw since the end of the Cold War alone, it is clear that institutional constraints are more crudely enforced than what was previously assumed by indexing theorists, as well as by the authors of the PM. Furthermore, journalists by-and-large do *not* have a false consciousness about this and simply implement the lessons they learn from direct experience or from those of others, as duly demonstrated by the surveys and polls conducted over a ten-year period and noted above.

A number of the MDM's components garnered support from the findings of this study. Assumptions about institutional constraints playing a strong role in the crafting of news content found support. There are a number of examples that were noted in this chapter that served as such "lessons" to other journalists: careers plunged into the buzzsaw as a result of critical reporting, such as Gary Webb and a number of other veteran journalists; canceled TV programs; marginalized or retracted stories undermining key foreign policy positions; and investigative series killed by editors following pressure from official sources. All of these important "lessons" are leading examples of how institutional constraints and crude interventions serve as leading factors for the restraints applied to subsequent news content.

This chapter contained empirical support for the PM's renewed fifth filter on anti-terrorism, while also providing additional insight into how the fifth filter can operate in a more direct manner than what was previously assumed. A half-dozen examples of this phenomenon were noted including the following examples: critical stories on Iraq being held-up and watered down, footage shot by a veteran CNN correspondent and containing a possible war crime being held and never released, locations of secret prisons being deliberately withheld by the *Washington Post*, and evidence of war crimes, shot by a veteran videographer who had long strung for NBC, being spiked out of existence and coupled with the firing of a producer who wished to show as much. Crude interventions occur and prove the validity of the postulate that institutional constraints are responsible for resulting news content lacking independence from official positioning, as opposed to a voluntary deference by journalists.

Crude interventions in relation to advertising happen with a regularity that is seemingly greater than what Herman and Chomsky were assuming with their own work.

Examples of this nature have included spiked stories, as well as terminations of employees, and have been reported with regularity when it comes to more local and regional news media sources, though have also been seen with international-level sources (i.e. Reuters). In just the last year alone, several veteran journalists were reportedly fired from daily papers following critical pieces about advertisers and subsequent meetings and pressure exuded by those advertisers.

It is always easy to blame the victim and this is often and regrettably done in regards to a number of social phenomena. This study, however, will hopefully serve as further impetus for scholars to more closely document and further theorize occurrences whereby crude interventions are made as a result of the institutional interests to which the news media are beholden. If more research of this sort is pursued there can be appropriately more attention on the structural problems that belie the news media, as opposed to disproportionate attention and influence on placing culpability at the doorstep of journalists, whose power does not exceed that of the top editors, employers and the business patrons which finance them.

Introduction

Extensive evaluations were conducted on every aspect of the MDM, as well as many of the components underlying the IM and PM. The main weaknesses of the IM and PM were improved upon by the MDM, as well as filling in theoretical gaps left over by the synthesis. The resolution of remaining theoretical tensions arising from the synthesis was addressed by the MDM as well.

Despite the thoroughness of the many case-studies undertaken upon which the MDM is based, there are remaining questions and issues which need to be addressed. In the midst of a volatile time for the journalism industry and U.S. news media, what kind of implications do future trends have on the MDM? How will the MDM fit in with phenomena such as the “Fox effect” and the paradigm shift toward the journalism of assertion? What are some of the most important aspects of the crisis in journalism and the critical juncture that the industry is currently undergoing and how does this relate to the MDM? What kind of policies should be undertaken in order to rectify the poor state of press affairs that the MDM describes? What is needed to be done to realize these policies and media reform?

This concluding chapter will be divided into two main sections. The first will contain a synopsis of the major findings related to both the synthesis of the MDM, as well as its original components. The second section of the chapter will answer the questions just noted and contextualize the MDM in terms of the future of news, while also surveying solutions to the state of press affairs critiqued by the MDM.

Findings Related to MDM’s Synthesized Components

An important part of the MDM is its synthesis of the IM and PM. However, even within its synthesized components, the MDM has certain variations and subtle, but important differences with the IM and PM. Focus will now be paid to the ways that the MDM builds on the synthesis, both through its findings related to the synthesis, as well as those related to its own original components.

Substantive Criticism

Procedural and substantive criticism is an important part of the MDM and IM. However, the MDM departs from the IM in documenting a *lack* of substantive criticism *even* in cases where Washington is in disagreement. During important points of the Vieques case-study, which saw influential Washington public officials in disagreement, substantive criticism levels were

still found to be marginal. Similarly, for both CNN and CNN en Español's coverage of the most important locale during the occupation of Iraq, substantive criticism was insignificant and sporadic during a time when it was most needed given the lack of meaningful dissent by public officials in Washington and the vacuum of criticism which existed. Findings such as these verified the MDM's expectation that low levels of substantive criticism will be present for a major military policy that was lacking dissent and elite division in Washington, with only marginal to non-existent increases during times of disagreement.

Variation and Indexing

One of the strengths of indexing that the MDM draws on is its ability to account for variation in news content due to changing political circumstances over time. Variations in political circumstances and dynamics in Washington, and their expected impact on news content, were tested in relation to a concern more specific to the MDM: social movements.

The movement to close down U.S. naval base operations in Vieques was a clear example of how a social movement can have its unworthy status change over time, especially in light of changing political and policy circumstances. Starting out as a marginalized and largely unnoticed social movement, in spite of mass support and participation, the "Free Vieques" movement gathered considerable momentum and influence over time. MDM components helped explain how the changing status of Vieques was reflected in news content: while volume of coverage and procedural criticism was indeed increased, exposure of U.S. culpability and faults were largely and noticeably absent, instances of substantive criticism were not elaborated on or frequent and coverage of some of the movement's most important and critical demands was also next to non-existent. Indexing helped explain some of these variations, as support from public officials and elite disagreement began to brew. The MDM's components on exceptionalism, however, also explain the conditions that were responsible for specific aspects of news content changing, with others remaining unchanged (exceptionalism will be addressed more, below). The Vieques case-study was a good example of how unworthy social movements *can* become *less* unworthy as time passes as a result of changed political circumstances.

Worthy and Unworthy Victims

The continued existence of leading press sources dichotomizing news coverage of worthy and unworthy victims, even in a post-Cold War, fragmented and digital era of journalism, is one

of the main components that the MDM draws from the PM. Findings from several case-studies provided the basis for this synthesized MDM component.

The comparative case-study of two massacres with the same fatality counts, Acteal in allied Mexico and Racak in Yugoslavia, produced dichotomous results. While the results were not without exceptional characteristics relating to MDM components, as foreign indexing was spurned by political resistance and pressure from an otherwise unworthy social movement, most findings revealed dichotomous news coverage. Dichotomous aspects included responsibility not being found “at the top” in the case of Acteal, as opposed to Racak, while the Mexican government was consistently relied upon as a trustworthy official source, in contrast to Yugoslavia.

In an extension of the PM into the domestic realm, the MDM uncovered nine unaccompanied immigrant children who were quite clearly unworthy victims in terms of daily newspaper media coverage. Elián Gonzalez received disproportional attention in coverage, including heightened identification of the systemic conditions that were linked to the crisis (i.e. poverty and repression in Cuba). The word NAFTA, however, did not make an appearance in all of the immigration coverage of the unworthy victims, nor did repressive regimes and trade policies in Haiti.

Results like these mimic findings seen in other studies on recent topics, including dichotomous op-ed treatment by leading dailies on the repression waged by the Iranian government and the Honduran coup regime during the summer of 2009 (Young, 2010). Further, the worthy / unworthy victim phenomenon was evidenced with victimized journalists abroad, as ample coverage and sympathy were given to Euna Lee and Laura Ling, and Roxana Saberi, jailed respectively by North Korea and Iran in 2009. In complete contrast to these worthy victims, a virtual U.S.-news media blackout occurred of the Iraqi photo-journalist, Ibrahim Jassam and the Egyptian blogger, Kareem Amer during the same period of time (see endnote #5 in chp. 3, for results of U.S. news media coverage).

Armed conflicts related to occupations, however, present more complicated scenarios for worthy and unworthy victims, as was the case in the Fallujah case-study in chapter 4. This is one of many ways that the MDM serves as both an evolution beyond a simple synthesis of the IM and PM, as well as a resolution for theoretical conflicts between the two.

Findings Related to MDM's Original Components

The case-studies in this dissertation provided support for synthesized components of the MDM and its related variations, as well as the original components of the MDM itself. The following sub-sections focus on the support found for the MDM's original components.

Worthy and Unworthy Social Movements

One of the most important and original components of the MDM is its focus on social movements and the case studies undertaken in this dissertation demonstrated how there is not only dichotomous news coverage of individual victims of abuses, but also of movements. Further, MDM components theorize how movements can make an impact on public officials and subsequently news content itself, as evidenced through the phenomenon of foreign indexing (see sub-section below, for more on this). Unworthy social movements were analyzed in several instances, including one case where variation was at-stake (Vieques and chp. 6), and another where no significant variation was expected or found (Ecuador and chp. 7).

In the case of Ecuador, most U.S.-based news dailies covered the mostly indigenous social movement as if it had undertaken nothing more than a military coup. Editorials criticized what was seen as nothing more than a threat to democracy, in spite of the existence of hundreds of citizen-led, participatory governing councils, called the "People's Parliament" by Ecuadorans. As for the former, the movement in Vieques struggled for many years to get the kind of notice from public officials and the news media that it needed to end the decades-long use of their island as a bombing testing ground by the Navy. When notice was finally garnered by some important public officials, coverage began to change and procedural criticism increased. However, in an illustration of the limits that the MDM expects for an unworthy social movement, substantive criticism did not substantially increase and key movement demands were never reported. Subsequent scandals were virtually ignored, as well as one of the movement's key victims. The victory the movement in Vieques finally won in forcing the Navy off of its island did not result in any of the other movement demands being met and deplorable conditions continued on the island, including unexploded munitions, illnesses related to environmental contamination, poverty and a fishing industry that has still not fully recovered.

Unworthy social movements like that of Vieques and Ecuador stand in sharp contrast to worthy social movements such as the Free Tibet movement; the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989; the Boston "Tea Party" protests of April 2009; and for the period before U.S. policy

avored returning Elián to Cuba, the efforts of the Miami-based family of Elián Gonzalez to have him remain in the U.S. in 2000.

Increased Importance of Ownership on News Content during the Global Age

The PM was penned during a time that the full effect of corporate globalization had not come to bear on the news media, while the PM simply overlooks the impact that economic structure has on resulting news content. As a result, MDM components attempted to theorize the effect that ownership structures behind global news media conglomerates can potentially have on resulting news content. One of the key original components of the MDM is its expectation that the corporate conglomerate ownership structure serves as the most powerful institutional variable in terms of influencing and constraining subsequent news content. This finding was derived from the most extensive content analysis undertaken in this dissertation (chp. 4), a bi-lingual comparative media analysis on CNN and CNN en Español's coverage on what was arguably the most important conflict during the Iraq occupation.

The study found only minimal differences between broadcast content of CNN en Español and CNN domestic in their coverage on Fallujah, Iraq between 2003 and 2004. These limited content differences were present in spite of sharply differing viewpoints on the invasion and occupation of Iraq by the U.S. and Latin American publics, as well as distinctive and even antagonistic policy stances by Latin American governments and the U.S. (including even important allies, such as Mexico). In light of this finding, coupled with the disturbingly small number of conglomerates that control much of both the U.S. and global news media, the MDM's strongest institutional constraint was found to be media ownership by mammoth corporate-conglomerates. This is not to say that this constraint happens all the time and instead, the MDM simply expects it to exert itself more often than other types of institutional constraints.

Exceptionalism

Unlike the main focus of the IM and PM, the MDM attempts to uncover and theorize exceptional instances of news coverage and content. Tables 3.4 and 3.5 in chapter 3 laid out in detail expectations that the MDM has on exceptionalism. Subsequent case-studies illustrated the type of conditions that the MDM found to have given rise to exceptional coverage and the specific aspects of content which wind up being most affected.

Acteal served as one of the more insightful case-studies in terms of fully illustrating how many of the MDM's components on exceptionalism. Significant and sustained social protest

forced the high-priority Mexican government to come up with a compelling response and related propaganda to a clearly low-priority impoverished locale (see conditions 4-6, in Table 3.4), which thus fulfilled several of the key conditions that the MDM expects to result in exceptional content characteristics. The first exceptional aspect that was observed was a volume of coverage that came closer to what would normally be seen to a worthy massacre, as political resistance had an impact on an important client state and forced continuing coverage (see condition 5 in Table 3.4 and aspect 1 in Table 4.5). Coupled with the continued lack of U.S. governmental interest shown to the press (condition 4 in Table 3.4), reporters were consequently freed up more to report with more unofficial sources (aspect 2 in Table 3.5). Nevertheless, certain non-exceptional aspects of the news coverage still persisted, such as a distinct lack of culpability found for higher-level Mexican officials and no revelations about U.S. culpability, in spite of the actual existence of both (see less common exceptions, aspects 3-5 in Table 3.5). Given the lack of U.S. governmental spin on the matter, the media outlets under analysis (primarily elite ones, condition 3, Table 3.4) and the issue at stake still being a foreign affairs issue on human rights abuses (condition 2, Table 3.4), exceptions were limited to the aspects of coverage just noted: some parts of volume of coverage and some exceptional sourcing tendencies (aspects of news coverage 1 and 3, in Table 3.5). Similar to the findings found within the Vieques case-study, Acteal showed how public pressure, even from within an allied state, can result in *some* exceptional content (and foreign indexing, in its case), but not without sharp limits that normally prevent revelations of high-level U.S. and allied government culpability.

Regional and Local-Level Exceptionalism

One of the most important findings in regards to exceptionalism and MDM components was the uncovered tendency for exceptional content to often appear in regional and local-level coverage at a frequency that was greater than the more influential national outlets. This result was seen in several case-studies, including most prominently with the domestic daily newspaper coverage for Elián Gonzalez and nine unaccompanied immigrant children. The latter children clearly had an unworthy status and whose cases were only picked up by regional or local newspapers. The only exception was Sophonie Telcy, a case of a Haitian girl which managed to draw the attention of a local Congressman; but even then, there was only one article run in the *Washington Post*. Beyond that lone exception, all the attention that the unworthy cases were able

to get was concentrated in local and regional papers, including even the particularly dramatic and gripping cases of Elizama Hernandez Gonzalez and Santana Zavaleta Salgado.

The implications that regional-level exceptionalism has for the digital age are nothing short of ominous. Given the disproportionate level that the shuttering of daily newspapers has had on regional and local-level outlets, and the continued importance that surviving daily newspapers have in serving as original producers of news content to which online-only-based outlets often reply, these MDM findings portend a future with even less news media independence and content. At the very least, the findings point to what is becoming an increasing need in terms of outlets producing such exceptionally independent content, given the lack of exceptionalism present in leading national outlets.

CNN and CNN en Español are illustrations of the *lack* of exceptional content that is found within coverage undertaken by national and international-level news outlets. Just a few exceptional stories surfaced on both CNN and CNN en Español's flagship newscast coverage of Fallujah and only during a time in which governmental attention on the matter was at its lowest. Matters were exacerbated by exceptional conditions, including the space opened up by massive global protest and also by a rare display of unembedded reporting. As a result, Iraqi civilian sources were cited, Iraqi casualties were profiled and footage was even aired of a U.S. soldier killing an unarmed and injured Iraqi insurgent at point-blank range. Nevertheless, these exceptions occurred in just several of the hundreds of articles duly analyzed in the Fallujah case-study in chapter 5 and were the most significant exceptions uncovered.

Dichotomous Content Tendencies Related to Certain Types of Interventions versus Others

The MDM's components are mostly based on military, diplomatic and international monetary policy. As a result, theorization of specific expectations surrounding news content is done through MDM's expectations on how intervention types, and the nature of the relationship that the country at-stake has with the U.S., will come to significantly impact resulting news coverage.

The MDM's expectations on interventions were tested and explored in case studies conducted on all three types of interventions: constructive and benign interventions, for cases where the U.S. or one of its allies are involved and nefarious interventions, for instances where an enemy state is involved. Coverage on major U.S. military operations and incursions into the city of Fallujah during periods in 2003 and 2004 (chp. 4) found a number of unworthy victims

(Iraqi civilians, being the most unworthy), a generally supportive and unquestioning tone for the worthiness of the mission involved (as evidenced through a lack of substantive criticism) and a high dependence on official sources. Similar results were found in another constructive intervention, in terms of coverage on the U.S. diplomatic intervention which ended a grassroots, mostly indigenous Ecuadoran uprising (chp. 8). The benign intervention of Acteal (chp. 5) contrasted with the nefarious intervention of Kosovo (chp. 5), as dichotomous results were found in a number of aspects, including most prominently the finding of culpability for high-level officials in Racak versus the lack of such conclusions drawn for Acteal, as well as an array of doubts being raised about the details surrounding the massacre in Acteal contrasting with the lack of such doubts raised in Racak.

Variation and the MDM

The MDM, unlike the PM, makes predictions about and theorizes news coverage of a variety of casualty types involved with U.S.-led invasions and occupations. It also accounts for variation in regards to social movements, especially in terms of the social movement's relationship to the debate on Washington (as noted above). An original advance over a gap left by the PM, however, was its theorization on coverage of casualty types and how such coverage is subject to change.

The MDM expects that to the extent that there is either significant official opposition to such policies and divisions in Washington, *or* a successful social movement which impacts public officials and policy, the coverage tendencies of U.S. soldiers would gain the potential from being changed from "slightly unworthy" to "slightly worthy," or perhaps even "worthy." The case study on CNN and CNN en Español coverage of Fallujah lent strong support to this hypothesis, as data from an extensive content analysis reflected the "slightly unworthy" status the MDM would expect for U.S. casualties (chp. 4), given the circumstances of lessened public pressure from political resistance and no significant divisions in Washington.

On the Role of Crude Interventions

The MDM is consistent with the PM in its presumption of crude interventions not serving as the norm in terms of crafting news content. Distinctive of the PM, however, is how MDM components *do* assume that crude interventions will nonetheless play an important role in terms of teaching journalists valuable lessons about institutional constraints and what will happen if such constraints are broken. Also distinctive of many indexing theorists is how MDM

components point toward institutional constraints as opposed to a voluntary form of self-censorship, in terms of real culpability lies for content lacking independence. In other words, the MDM theorizes crude interventions as playing an important part of the internalization process of journalists.

As opposed to presuming a type of false consciousness held by journalists, as implied by the PM, chapter 9's case-study on spiking, demotions, firings and cancellations documented consistent (if not systematic and frequent) interventions as playing an important role in limiting the scope of news content and deterring journalists from pursuing enterprising stories and critical work which would otherwise undermine the institutional interests of a given news outlet. Most importantly then, the presence of crude interventions serves as evidence for how institutional constraints are at work more than an unnecessary form of self-censorship, as is wrongly and inappropriately pointed to by many indexing theorists. This case-study thus served as a step toward resolving the tension behind differing assumptions on culpability between the IM and PM, with the MDM pointing toward institutional constraints and awareness on the part of journalists to avoid such constraints with their work.

A Critical Juncture and the Crisis of Journalism

Media historians often speak of and identify critical junctures that are present throughout history and most scholars agree that we are currently in the midst of one. Given the advent of the digital age, the deep crisis of journalism in the U.S. and the volatility that has come with a global recession spurred by the failure of a neo-liberal economy, what kind of implications does this have for journalism in the future?

The Future of Network and Broadcast News

In the midst of significant cutbacks to staff, such as the recent lay-offs of 25% of the staff of ABC News [SOURCE], declining viewership and a deep and lasting recession, many have speculated that the end of the nightly newscasters may be in sight. While it is distinctly possible that nightly newscasts may be moved from their long-standing free-to-air channels to cable-only outlets, as many have surmised (Friedman, 2009; Schechner & Dana, 2009), the possibility of *all* three free-to-air major newscasters (i.e. ABC World News, NBC Nightly News and CBS Evening News) ceasing to exist in any form is quite unlikely. Furthermore, many overlook the fact that amongst news consumers, television-broadcast news retains a rather important market share.

As recently as December 2008, television news was a main source of information for 70% of those polled in one survey conducted (Pew, 2008), as compared to almost twice as less for those who turned to the Internet as a main source (40%). Gallup revealed a similar preference for nightly network-based news, whereby 35% watched on a regular basis, compared to lower numbers for those who depended on Internet-based news (22%) on a daily basis (Gallup, Newport, & Gallup Organization, 2008). In terms of specific data regarding cable-based television news, which as noted above, many assume to be the future home of the three major newscasters, the numbers still favor television over the Internet: 39% responded as watching cable television for news at least three times a week, as compared to 37% for online-based news. Even though online-based news sites show the fastest growth among all media sources in terms of news consumption, the Internet has still not overtaken television as a main source of news for the U.S. citizenry.

Nevertheless, it is nearly inevitable that Internet-based sources *will* eventually completely overtake broadcast news as the leading news provider in the U.S., given the consistent growth and movement in that direction. What are the implications for journalism, if that is the case? More specifically, what are the implications for the MDM? Both will be considered, but first, a closer look at the crisis in journalism and the leading providers of original reporting and news content.

Dailies in the Midst of the Crisis of Journalism

In a recent study penned on the future of news, the director of Harvard's Shorenstein Center on the Press estimated that at least 85% of all professionally reported news originates from daily newspapers and pointed to other estimates being as high as 95% (Jones, 2009, p. 4). There is little doubt that daily newspapers continue to be important sources of information which, in the dearth of resources that so often plague online-only-based news outlets, should come as little surprise. Furthermore, this dependency not only translates to one between the Internet relying on dailies, according to the authors of an extensive account on the future of journalism, this translates to networked news as well: "arguably [to] a larger extent than two decades ago, broadcast journalism takes its cues on what stories to cover and how to cover them from daily newspapers" and in the few cases where public attention is drawn to important stories, "[TV news] producers rely on print journalists for their hard digging and genuine expert analysis" (McChesney & Nichols, 2009, pp. 15-16).

McChesney and Nichols thoroughly address the leading victims of the crisis of journalism: newsweeklies, which comprised the majority of newspapers folding in 2008; dailies based in mid-size cities, such as *The Rocky Mountain News* and *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*; continued losses to what was an already alarmingly low-degree of investigative journalism being undertaken amongst surviving papers; and even the trade of science journalism (pp. 20-22, 24-25). Most analysts predict that nationally branded papers (i.e. *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today*) will survive the challenging times and continue to run their print editions (Sokolove, 2009). Regardless if they decide to do so, as will be reviewed below, most of the national dailies rank amongst the top global news sites and are increasing their online-readership by dozens of percentage points every year.

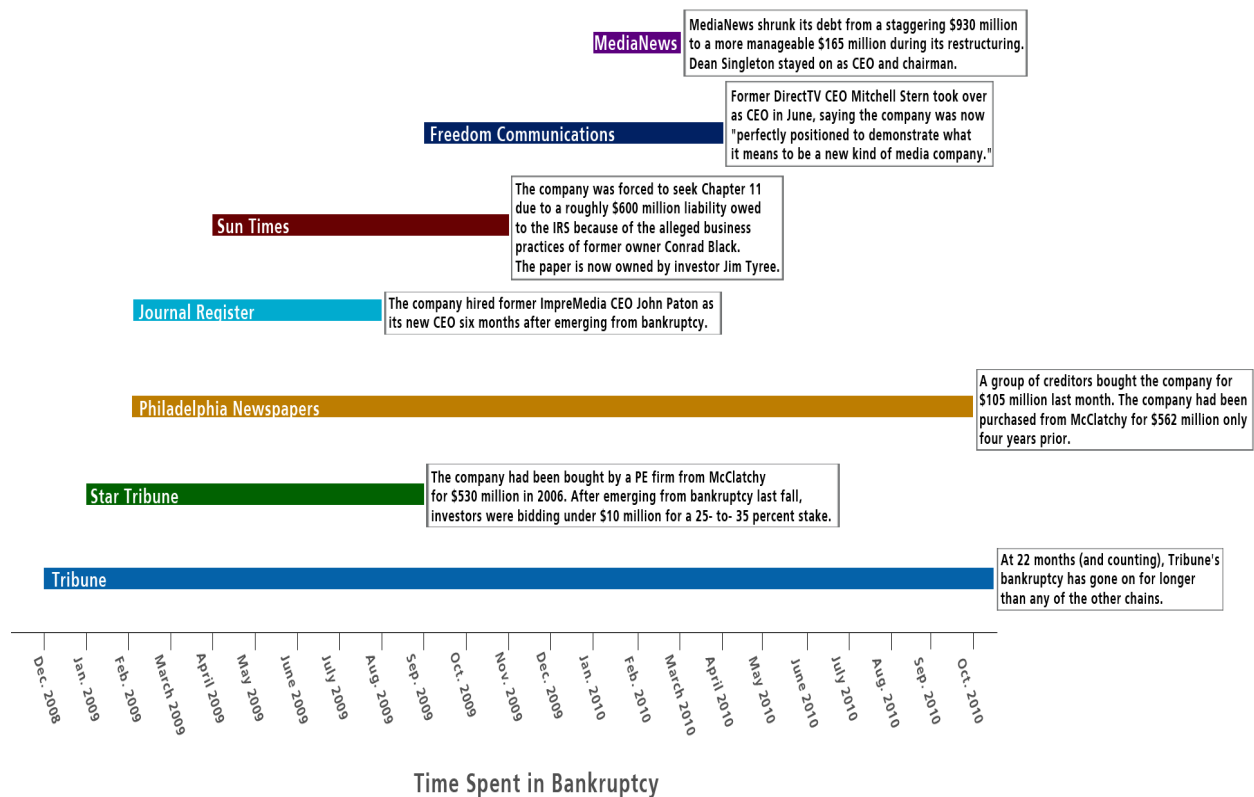
When considering the devastating recession that has been in place in recent years, economic indicators are better than what may have been expected for both the New York Times and Washington Post Companies, especially in light of both companies having turned up billions of dollars of profits. In the case of the Times, profits over \$200 billion and never dipping \$142 billion were posted (WikiInvest, 2010), while the Post actually *increased* their profits over the last five years (WikiInvest, 2009b). A plethora of major regional dailies have either declared bankruptcy or altogether shuttered their operations. Indeed, what has happened to regional dailies remains a stark contrast to the trajectory of the nationally distributed dailies.

In the last two years, seven of the most important and influential regional dailies have declared bankruptcy. As illustrated by the graph below, the companies that owned these papers, which in previous times were thought of as venerable and unshakable institutions, have gone through significant financial problems. Of interest, however, and quite reflective of the hyper-commercial era that continues to define the digital realities of the latest critical juncture, *none* of the papers were reporting losses in their profit columns. In many of these cases, the regional dailies were burdened by debt-ridden and corporate-oriented owners whose investments went beyond newspapers and were thus disproportionately affected by the recession. Worsening the effect still further was the continued trend of media concentration, long documented by Bagdikian (1983, 2004); in this incarnation of media concentration, many of the owners of regional papers had recently bought over-valued papers *before* the recession. As the recession hit, the values of these newly bought papers fell drastically. One by one, the companies owning the papers began to declare bankruptcy as a result, in spite of most of the dailies themselves

continuing to realize impressive profits, especially when considering the advent of the recession (see Figure 10.1, below).

In the midst of all of this, surviving news media often wrongly gave disproportionate blame to the Internet (Weissman, 2009). The Internet certainly was a factor in the demise, as Patterson documented, the continued fall amongst young readership in consuming dailies in contrast to their consumption with online-based news, was and continues to be staggering (2007). Nevertheless, McChesney and Nichols convincingly argue that the corporate takeover of journalism, and its subsequent abandonment of it, preceded the Internet merely exacerbating the inevitable slide toward the grim realities we are currently witnessing (2009, p. 30).

Figure 10.1¹



Online-Based News Sites

In terms of online-delivered news, the current statistics on news consumption reveal that many traditional outlets continue to control the main portals for online news distribution and information. MSNBC and Yahoo! comprise two of the three leading global online-based news sites and exclusively rely on commercial wire agencies. CNN's site is consistently ranked in the

top three in this regard as well and unlike its competitors, at least produces original content. However, CNN is *still* a television-based news media source and as such, has much of its content driven by and inspired by leading daily papers.

In fact, over a third of the top global news sites are the online mirrors and equivalents of U.S.-based daily newspapers, sporting consistent and considerable yearly increases amongst its unique visitors. Furthermore, the site of the *New York Times* itself ranks quite highly amongst global news sites, generating millions upon millions of unique viewers from all around the world and consistently ranking in the top five amongst leading major global news sites.

Figure 10.2: Top Global News Sites by Unique Visitors

Top Global News Sites, by Unique Visitors: March 2009			
Rank	Site	Unique Audience	YOY Change
1	MSNBC Digital Network	39,900,000	9%
2	CNN Digital Network	38,724,000	4%
3	Yahoo! News	37,902,000	16%
4	AOL News	23,604,000	1%
5	NYTimes.com	20,118,000	7%
6	Fox News Digital Network	16,791,000	48%
7	Tribune Newspapers	16,513,000	16%
8	Google News	13,668,000	18%
9	McClatchy Newspaper Network	12,508,000	20%
10	ABCNEWS Digital Network	12,189,000	4%
11	Gannett Newspapers and Newspaper Division	11,609,000	(-11%)
12	USATODAY.com	9,961,000	(-7%)
13	CBS News Digital Network	9,599,000	(-7%)
14	washingtonpost.com	9,367,000	5%
15	BBC	9,022,000	61%

Source: Nielsen Online

Implications of the Digital Age of Journalism on the MDM

The changes to journalism and the industry noted above are important and bring up a question that should especially be asked of any model of news analysis currently being posited: what kind of implications does the digital age have for the future? There are many answers to this question, but future trends indicate an increased relevance of the MDM in a variety of ways, even in the midst of the many changes that are currently taking place and the critical juncture that is arguably occurring.

The crisis of U.S. journalism, along with the explosive change currently taking place as a result of continuing developments related to the digital age, have both resulted in much

conventional wisdom being assumed about what the tumultuous present will portend for the future. The notions often read in the following terms: newspapers will *all* become extinct as a result of the Internet; new media, online-based and non-traditional outlets have already become and will increasingly be the new conduits of information and news and; both of these developments will be game changers in the grander scheme of media matters.

While there certainly is much truth to the notion that game changing tendencies are rapidly occurring in the news media and telecommunications in general, the devil is certainly in the details in terms of what reliable deductions and predictions can actually be made about the future. Namely, those include the future of daily newspapers and their role in crafting and delivering the news agenda, the “Fox effect,” a paradigm shift where the “journalism of assertion” has become increasingly important and the future of network news. All of these matters will be addressed in relation to the MDM, but first, it is important to contextualize the leading structural characteristics of the digital age.

Continued Media Concentration, Conglomeration and Commercialization

The leading economic characteristics of the digital age of media overwhelmingly tend to *intensify* the institutional constraints which serve as important parts of the MDM. This in turn lessens the opportunities for examples of the MDM’s exceptional components and media independence. Coupled with the crisis of journalism, these trends only serve to intensify the most worrisome aspects of the MDM.

Neo-liberal policies continue to characterize much of media policy making, regulatory policies (better prefaced, as the lack thereof) and the news media system’s leading modern-day characteristics. Bagdikian’s expectation that media concentration had reached its zenith six years ago (2004) continues to be true to this day, with the only major change having occurred since that time consisting of the CBS and Viacom split, increasing the amount of corporate conglomerates owning the majority of the U.S.’s media holdings from a mere five to half a dozen. Joint venture arrangements amongst the largest corporate conglomerates (Bagdikian, 2004, p. 9), continued mergers and recent acquisitions (McChesney, 2008, p. 312) and more product placement and intrusive advertising (Turrow & McAllister, 2009) all serve to mold a hyper-commercial media climate which furthers a lack of news media independence. The case-studies underlying the MDM reflect trends of news media performance indicative of the economic characteristics of the hyper-commercial, digital era. Findings of the MDM are compounded by

scholarly accounts of all of the following related trends: more cautious news and editorial policies (Bagdikian, 2004), a reduced ability to challenge establishment and party positioning (Bennett et al., 2007), increasing dependence on wire service reporting (McChesney & Nichols, 2005; this is further exacerbated by the migration to global news sites, with many of the leading sites wholly depending upon wire services), leading global news sites being found to have their news content reflect their commercial imperatives (Bhayroo, 2009) and historic lows in the dearth of investigative reporting (McChesney & Nichols, 2009).

Net Neutrality: the end of the Internet, as we know it?

Many observers rightly point to the Internet as an exceptional counter-balance to some of the worst consequences by economic trends on news media content just noted. However, the very nature of the Internet itself is increasingly under threat. In a quiet and little noticed fashion, largely as a result of a pliant news media whose agenda is especially vulnerable to influence by Wall Street and Washington when corporate interests are most at stake, net neutrality has come under increasing attack. The largest organization of the media reform movement, Free Press, has long documented the attempt by the nation's leading corporate Internet service providers – AT&T, Verizon and Comcast – to end net neutrality altogether, but their impressive grassroots campaign contains all of the leading characteristics of an unworthy social movement and lacks consistent mainstream news media attention, sympathy and coverage. Consequently, the overwhelming majority of Americans have not even been informed of the basic facets underlying net neutrality, much less the fact that it may soon cease to exist. Under the basic principles of net neutrality, Internet service providers (ISPs) are currently disallowed to charge different tiers of access to different sites, so as to maintain the Internet as a “neutral” environment in terms of what content can be accessed. Providers are not allowed to facilitate faster access to some web sites and slower access to others. This is what differentiates the Internet from cable and satellite television, which is based on pre-selected programming packages that the provider, as opposed to the user, decides upon. In the midst of an intense and ongoing lobbying campaign being undertaken in an ongoing attempt by all of the three major corporate ISPs (most recently joined by Google) to end net neutrality, serious doubts are raised about the impact this would have in regard to the continued increases in online news consumption.

The possible end of net neutrality, and the very open environment of the Internet as we have come to know it, is simply part and parcel of the many neo-liberal policies which continue

to characterize the majority of the news media structure during today's digital age. All of these policies, economic trends and developments are only stymied by continuing public involvement, awareness and resistance, which are always the greatest antidotes to the most damaging characteristics of the MDM. However, the economic recession has *not* resulted in increased resistance, and instead has injected a climate of fear and hate-mongering that has resulted in more media attention and momentum being given to the worthy Tea Party "movement," as opposed to any other countervailing source. As a result, most of the leading economic trends of the day have gone unabated and have only served to exacerbate the main characteristics of the MDM.

Digital Age Dynamics of News Distribution, Content Producers, Agenda-Setters & the MDM

The MDM focuses on the most important and systemic oriented issues at stake in public policy and how they are covered in the news. Foreign affairs coverage is of special importance to the MDM, as there is more macro-oriented news topics contained in foreign affairs reporting than in its domestic counterparts. While many have pointed to news outlets espousing the "journalism of assertion" (i.e. Fox News), as well as online-based outlets, in terms of defining the future direction of news and the agenda itself, one must not lose sight of the dynamics of foreign affairs reporting in the digital age. Leading daily newspapers, as noted above, play a significant role in crafting and producing much of the original content to which most other news sources respond and rely upon (Jones 2009). Nightly newscasters continue to have a very far reach in terms of their audience share. Lastly, the five leading global news sites either rely upon content produced by wire agencies or journalists from either CNN or *The New York Times*. As a result, the main dynamics of news distribution in the U.S., and to a large extent globally as well, rely on content subject to the same institutional constraints to which the MDM, PM and IM have always addressed.

All of these dynamics are exacerbated when one takes into account foreign affairs reporting *and* domestic coverage of national policy and systemic issues, the topics that with which the MDM most concerns itself. The leading national dailies, as well as the nightly newscasters to a lesser extent, serve as the main providers of original content for new media outlets and even cable television news, a phenomenon which is only heightened further when it comes to the topic areas just noted. It is with *these* coverage areas that Washington and Wall Street continue to most effectively impact the leading papers and successfully minimize their

independence, in ways that not only were documented by the MDM, but also long documented by the PM and IM. Even a cursory observance of the way news media now works in the digital age reveals the following phenomenon: news outlets exclusively based online *react* accordingly through blog posts, social networking sites and interactive forums *to* the news agenda *produced* and *set* by the nationally distributed sources. To the extent that the non-exceptional components of the MDM are at play, particularly for coverage of foreign affairs and national policy issues, that news agenda is largely initially set by Washington and Wall Street. However, in the digital age, the continued dominance of the White House, Congressional leaders, the firms on K-Street, Madison Avenue and Wall Street on the leading dailies has a particularly damaging, if not often acknowledged effect in light of the crisis in journalism.

The economic viability of the leading dailies, and the probable chances of continued survival for most nightly newscasters given the option to go to cable, contrasts with the fate of regional dailies and newsweeklies, whose operations have been shuttered at alarming rates. The trend bears no end in sight, as most analysts agree that it is the national “branded” papers whose fate are most promising (Sokolove, 2009).

In light of these leading trends and the grim possibility that most regional dailies will cease to exist in the coming decades, the importance of the sources that the MDM most concerns itself with is only set to *increase* even further. One of the most significant exceptionalism components of the MDM is the propensity of regional and local-level dailies to contain exceptional reporting and content. As these sources continue to disappear or scale-down their operations, the most disturbing and undemocratic elements of the MDM are set to be exacerbated. Given these indicators and subsequent dynamics, the MDM’s most immediate relevance will continue far into the foreseeable future.

Looking even farther into an era that may not see the nationally distributed dailies maintaining their importance in the news system and foreign affairs coverage, it is quite feasible that many of the similar funding and structural tendencies can persist into a digital era overwhelmingly defined by online-based news outlets: corporate funding through a dependence on advertising can lead to a stifling dependence on official sources and public relations agents, along with a disproportionate governmental influence stemming from the ebb and flow of the narrow contours of the debate on Washington. During a moment that many correctly argue as being a historical critical juncture in communications, where an assortment of new business

models of journalism are being debated and considered, the MDM serves as an important reference point to what went wrong before, what continues to be wrong now and what should be avoided well into the future.

The “Fox Effect” and the MDM

The “Fox effect” and the related paradigm shift where the “journalism of assertion” has become increasingly important, both present important implications for the MDM, namely in exacerbating certain components (worthy and unworthy social movements, as well as flak) while also illustrating the lack of impact on others (the continued veracity of “treetops” and nationally distributed sources).

Fox News attracts millions of viewers, which in some aspects has more than any of its cable / satellite-based competitors, and continues to increase its profits all the while. The most important aspect of the related “Fox effect” in terms of the MDM is on social movements. The dynamics associated with worthy and unworthy social movements are exacerbated with Fox’s sympathetic coverage of the Tea Party movement coupled with either its derision of progressive social movements or its complete oversight of them (as is often the case for movements resisting U.S. policies abroad). Further, as Herman noted (2008), much of the gains made with the advent of the Internet by the “new blue media” (i.e. Jon Stewart, Michael Moore and MoveOn.Org), and other long-standing progressive media sources (i.e. ZNet, *CounterPunch*, *Dissident Voice*, the Independent Media Center, Information Clearing House, Center for Economic Policy Research, *Just Foreign Policy*, *UpsideDownWorld*, *Stopnato* and Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting), tend to be greatly diminished, out-resourced and simply outmatched by the powerful right-wing echo chamber generated by Fox News and its subsequent flak-producing impact on the rest of the news media (Boehlert, 2006; Brock, 2004).

Given the steep growth and large audience share that Fox News has, it is tempting and all-too-easy to overestimate its ability to set the agenda. While there is little doubt that the network has had an effect on other news media, it is important to keep in mind that content analyses coupled with extensive empirical data undertaken by Robinson, revealed that the predecessor of the “Fox effect” – the “CNN effect” – only appeared to set the media agenda in *limited* instances where policy ambiguities by important public officials were present *along with* elite dissensus (2002, pp. 31, 118-119). Given the bi-partisan policy making and consistent nature which particularly characterizes foreign affairs, military and monetary issues, the Fox

effect is arguably least observable when it comes to the very issues with which the MDM is most concerned. This is a large reason why the “treetops,” nationally distributed and leading daily newspapers, which produce a large degree of the original reporting depended upon by much of the rest of the news media, continue to hold a high degree of relevance even during an age where the Fox effect is present. Instead, the Fox effect is most evident when it comes to the limits it places on the ability for other sources to undertake exceptional reporting (i.e. “flak,” as enumerated by the PM), as well as its important role in worthy and unworthy social movements.

Additional Research and the MDM

One of the main tenets underlying all of the MDM’s components is that a commercialized, corporate-oriented and for-profit news media system is mostly responsible for resulting content lacking the kind of independence from Washington and Wall Street that a democratic society would need from its press. In light of this assumption, coupled with the leading characteristics of the digital age mentioned above, there is a demonstrated need for comparative news media analyses to be conducted on the MDM into the future.

The growth and trend towards all of the following tendencies spell out important implications for future studies on the MDM: a formidable and growing sector of non-profit and online-based news outlets (i.e. ProPublica and the Bureau of Investigative Journalism); the continued importance of the nationally distributed and “treetops” agenda-setting dailies (i.e. *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The Wall Street Journal*) and; the growing importance of global news sites and the wire agencies which they often depend upon (i.e. Yahoo! MSNBC.com, CNN and NYTimes.com). Comparative news media analyses between outlets from each of these segments of the new digital media on macro-oriented coverage topics, with an eye toward assessing the assumption that structure and institutional constraints are mostly behind news media performances lacking independence, comprise the kind of studies needed to continue to assess the MDM.

Recent Developments and Policy Solutions

The picture painted in this overview of a hyper-commercial digital age, and the continued relevance of the MDM, certainly present a grim outlook. However, given the advent of the digital age and the critical juncture that journalism is in the midst of, there are definitely ripe opportunities for change and reform. Most promising amongst those is the continued existence and growth of the media reform movement. Further, interesting and recent developments have occurred in regards to non-profit, online-based, public-interest oriented and investigative journalism. If the media reform movement can coalesce with the latter development in journalism, real and meaningful progress with news media may be on the horizon. Given the central importance that the overwhelming majority of democratic theorists give to the existence of an independent and free press, such developments are inextricably linked to the health and future of democracy itself.

Non-Profit and Public News Media

News media that nearly runs counter to most of the MDM's critical postulates include sources that are non-profit, public-interest oriented and sometimes publicly funded. These sources, as opposed to the leading agenda-setting dailies, tend to undertake journalism in a far different way. The "lead" is often captured by organizations and members of civil society, while official sources are cited in a manner which exposes inaccuracies or inconsistencies, as opposed to mere "parroting" or stenographer-like journalism. These news media sources are not free from weaknesses or shortcomings, however, and often times the lack of resources prevent them from accomplishing as much as they would prefer. Nevertheless, in comparison to their counterparts who are much plusher with resources and support than they are, non-profit and public news media have undertaken remarkable reporting and produced impressive and independent journalism.

Included amongst such sources is a plethora of growing news outlets. Indeed, non-profit, online-based and investigative oriented journalism is one of the few growth areas in the industry. Both new startups, as well as long-running existing ones, comprise the leading news outlets in this exceptional segment of journalism. As has come to be recognized by even *The New York Times* (Vega, 2010)², as well as others (Skowronski, 2009), these outlets are filling a few of the holes left by the abandonment of commercial news sources of investigative journalism (which ironically includes the *Times* itself). Online-based and non-profit examples include ProPublica

(NYC), the Center for Public Integrity (D.C.), the Center for Investigative Reporting (SF), the Huffington Post Investigative Fund, Investigate West, the Chicago News Cooperative and the Bureau of Investigative Journalism (London). Non-profit outlets whose budgets partially consist of public funding include National Public Radio and the Pacifica Foundation, with its flagship TV / radio magazine-oriented show, Democracy Now!. The international news agency, the Inter-Press Service, is another important non-profit news source which has grown over the years during its long-standing existence. Almost all of the above-named outlets have shown consistent development and growth, even in the midst of a global recession.

In spite of this promising development, illusions should not be held that left to their own devices, these resource-strapped organizations can completely fill in the holes that mainstream news media have long left behind, much less fulfill a vital function of democracy. The problem is that these outlets still reach a limited part of the population and operate on limited budgets. Further, none of the outlets named above take on a significant amount of original reporting on the most systemic and important issues and the lion's share of their focus is on domestic issues. While some of these topics are national in scope, their reporting output does not match that of the *Times* much less the *Post*. The vacuum is being partially filled, in other words, but is still quite empty.

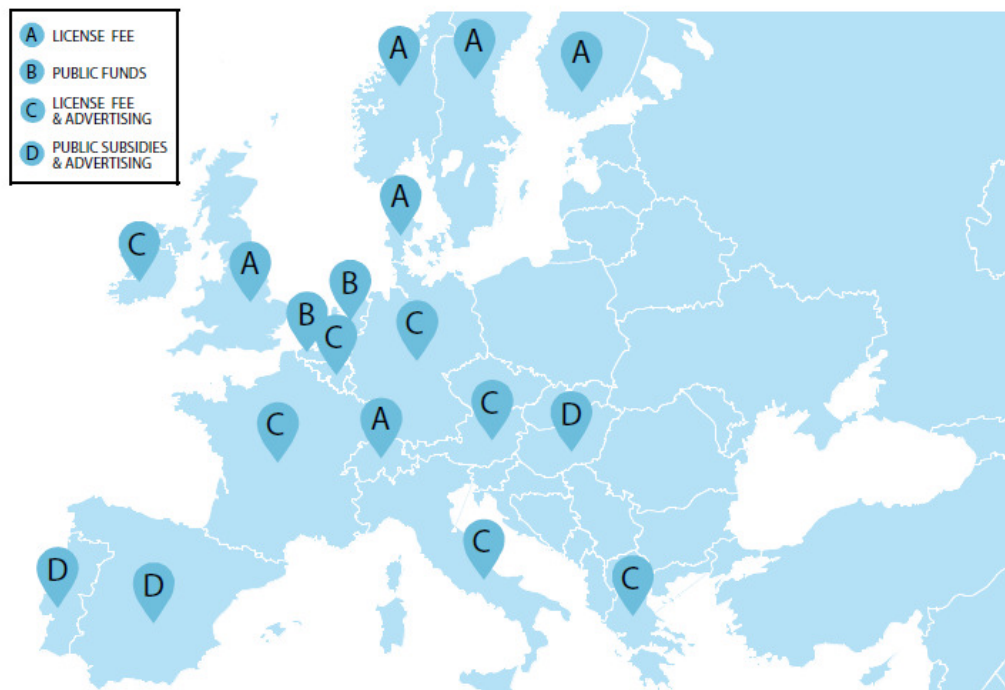
Western Europe, Public Media and Subsidizing the Press

Quite clearly, more is needed, as a number of scholars have duly pointed out (Herman, 2008; McChesney & Nichols, 2009, p. 88). Looking to Europe, one finds how matters work quite differently. As found in relation to the IM, there is limited applicability to its postulates in Western Europe (Archetti, 2007). The same is true for the PM and its limited applicability to Western Europe, as news media systems with significant public media investitures operate differently than that of the U.S. news media (not merely because there is more public news media, but *also* because of the positive effect this has on commercial news media as well). While it is true that ownership was shown to be an important institutional constraint in the Fallujah study and this does not portend positive implications for the growing importance of outlets like CNN, whose web site is one of the leading global news sites in the world, Western European news media systems continue to function on a much more democratically healthy and independent basis than the U.S. news media system. The results of an extensive study by Robinson et al. on Iraq war coverage (2010) stood in stark contrast to the news media

performance seen here in the U.S. and illustrate what occurs when an active public is coupled with a system containing more public media.

To be sure, Western Europe *does* have more public media and a number of scholars are in agreement about the consequences. In a comparative media analysis between *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro* and *The New York Times* which spanned decades, Benson and Hallin found that the more “commercialized” *Times* was outstripped by its French counterparts in terms of “critical coverage and a greater representation of civil society viewpoints” (2007). McChesney and Nichols also found this to be the case with their own work in regards to systems with higher levels of press subsidization, particularly with Scandinavian countries (2009, pp. 166-167). Indeed, there are a variety of funding methods used in many European countries to sustain public news media which are simply not being undertaken in the U.S, as indicated by the figure below:

Figure 10.3:
Public News Media Funding Methods in European Countries



Source: Research by Stylianos Papathanassopoulos in *Changing Media, Changing Europe*.

Furthermore, globally speaking, newspapers are not nearly in as bad of shape as the regional papers are here in the U.S. A recent international study pointed toward optimistic forecasting for newspapers on a global basis, in having noted, “a large and thriving industry

world-wide, despite the impact of the global recession and the rise of digital media” (World Press Trends, 2010).

The question is thus raised: what is needed *here* in the U.S., where the crisis is greatest in light of the corporate takeover and subsequent abandonment of a large chunk of journalism, leaving the nationally distributed papers to dominate the landscape more than ever before? The answers to complex problems are rarely simple and this matter is no exception. Nevertheless, the combination of an invigorated media reform movement and the possibility of demanding and attaining large-scale and institutional support for the innovative and dynamic models of news media noted above, through significant press subsidization, serve as attractive goals. The promise of significant and lasting reform, if fulfilled, just may be able to salvage the vital democratic role that the Fourth Estate of democracy should already be fulfilling (Schultz, 1999). To be sure, both public interest and policy initiatives in the present, as well as past ones and their eventual fate provide important lessons.

Public Interest Media Policy Initiatives in the Past and the Present

Policy analysts at Free Press have published several reports which analyze the crisis in journalism and recommend a number of policy initiatives. The focus of most reports has squarely been on saving journalism through public expenditures and investment in order to construct a new system of public media. Amongst the many policy recommendations included enforcing public interest obligations on the airwaves; democratic reforms to the structure of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting; funding low-power, community radio stations, community-oriented digital media projects and non-profit news media; and lastly, proposals to garner the public revenue needed to undertake these initiatives from spectrum use fees and taxing advertisers and consumer electronics (Silver, Clement, Aaron, & Turner, 2010; Silver, Strayer, & Clement, 2009). Reforms and policies along these lines are quite sensible and certainly are more innovative than the lack of ideas and initiatives on how to save and reinvigorate journalism coming out of the commercial and for-profit sectors.

Internationally speaking, there have been historical efforts worth noting and taking a look back upon. Seán MacBride, one of the founders of Amnesty International and the only person to have ever received both the Nobel Peace Prize (in 1974) and the Lenin Peace Prize (in 1976), chaired the International Commission for Study of Communication Problems (sometimes referred to by its French acronym, CIC and also largely known by the moniker, “the MacBride

Commission”). The resulting report from the Commission was submitted to the President of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in February 1980 and by 1984 had been published in ten languages. Indeed, the report’s findings contained significant implications for international communications and information policy, and international politics in general. The report’s measured findings included the following general recommendations:

- 1) The goals of realizing a more democratic social order, in light of the “arms race” and “unacceptable global inequities,” depends on heightened tolerance and understanding, gains that the CIC saw as largely depending on achieving a “free, open and balanced communications” (UNESCO, 1980, pp. 191-192);
- 2) Nothing less than the “utmost importance” should be given to the priority of implementing reforms for the elimination of the inequitable international distribution of information flows, of which the CIC paid particular focus to the “one-way flow.”
- 3) Freedom of information, defined as the right to “seek, receive and impart information,” should be considered as a fundamental human right. The CIC added that this right is particularly important as it is a prerequisite for many other rights. The full realization of this right is best achieved by the democratization of communication at both the national and international levels (pp. 192-193);
- 4) National communication policies need to be connected to other essential societal objectives, including a full battery of social, cultural and economic development goals. National communication policy making needs to garner a higher priority in terms of both planning and funding (p. 193);
- 5) Inequities amongst national communication systems, internationally speaking, is as large of a problem as social, economic, cultural and technological disparities. Intra-national disparities, as well as international ones, are significantly problematic and the fate of resolving the latter actually depends in large part on resolution of the former (pp. 193-194).

The fate of the MacBride Commission’s report did not have a happy ending.

Recommendations from the report revealed facts that uncomfortably pointed to a number of the structural flaws related to both the commercial based U.S. media system and its negative influence on international communication flow. These recommendations, one can infer, were a great cause for the ensuing furor and near hysterical reaction of the U.S. news media.³ Many scholars agree that the propagandistic news coverage which followed the report’s published recommendations resulted in preventing the eventual realization of most of the recommended

policy initiatives (Fore ,1981, p. 442; Giffard, 1988; McChesney & Herman, 1997, p. 25; Ray & Schaap in Preston et al., 1989, p. xiv).

The question is raised then, what needs to be done to get beyond the grim realities documented by the MDM, obtain a more just and independent U.S. press system and realize communication policy initiatives along the lines recommended by the Free Press for the U.S. and in international terms, the MacBride commission?

Looking Forward

The evidence and related scholarly findings are clear: a vibrant press serving democratic functions needs resources and a level of independence that the commercialized U.S. news media system has not provided in the past, is even more clearly not providing in the present, and will likely not provide in the future. As is often the case with social and political objectives in relation to solving difficult societal problems, the solutions will not come from insights conjured up and implemented by elite and powerful leaders in isolation from social movements. Instead, media reform will need to come at the heels of an active, cantankerous and involved public empowered by a mass-based social movement.

To be sure, the media reform movement represents such a hope in many ways. However, in its present state, matters will need to go even farther and beyond the power currently contained by the media reform movement to adequately address the problems documented in this dissertation. As Piven and Cloward revealed in a classic work of sociology, history and political science, the spontaneous disruptiveness of a cantankerous public achieved far more results in terms of meaningful and lasting social reform, than did highly disciplined and organized membership organizations (1977).

If the media reform movement can fully tap into the fervor of the people currently being felt during the worst recession since the Great Depression (which, shortly before the library / deposit submission of this dissertation, has already been put on ample display⁴ during the fast-growing and globally spreading “occupy” / 99% movement⁵), and also avoid getting too mired in the trappings of D.C. politics and widen their scope to include other economic, social and political reforms, chances may be brighter than in previous eras to achieve the lofty goal of permanently unseating the worst characteristics of the MDM. Thus, realization of a just and independent press realizing the objectives contained in the policy initiatives reviewed above may be possible. Otherwise progress may be slow to non-existent or even worse, matters could

continue to deteriorate into a state of press affairs including little more than the journalism of assertion along with the dominance of Wall Street and Washington over the agenda-setting national daily papers. Whether matters will ultimately lean more toward one result or the other will foreshadow nothing less than the very fate of one of the main pillars of democracy, which by any reasonable measure certainly includes the existence of an independent and vibrant press.

Endnotes

¹ Source taken from: <<http://paidcontent.org/images/editorial/original/newspapers-bankruptcy-timeline-draft6-o.png>>.

² A quote from the article contextualized the matter: “I do feel like we’re filling a void on the for-profit side that’s being filled on the nonprofit side,” said [William E. Buzenberg, the executive director of the Center for Public Integrity. He added:] “Because of cutbacks, they have fewer people and less time to do that” (Vega, 2010).

³ The recommendations stemming from the MacBride Commission are available at: <<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0004/000400/040066eb.pdf>>. The following is a self-collected selection of specific recommendations that in my view, were largely responsible for the dismal U.S. news media performance. These suggestions cut at the heart of too many of the fundamental problems related to the structure of U.S. news media institutions, and thus, unsurprisingly resulted in the rampant inaccuracies and distortions:

Strengthening Cultural Identity

Promoting conditions for the preservation of the cultural identity of every society is necessary to enable it to enjoy a harmonious and creative inter-relationship with other cultures. It is equally necessary to modify situations in many developed and developing countries which suffer from cultural dominance (1984, p. 204).

30. “Introduction of guidelines with respect to advertising content and the values and attitudes it foster in accordance with national standards and practices. Such guidelines should be consistent with national development policies and efforts to preserve cultural identity. Particular attention should be given to the impact of children and adolescents. In this connection, various mechanisms such as complaint boards or consumer review committees might be established to afford the public the possibility of reacting against advertising which they feel inappropriate” (1984, p. 205).

Reducing the Commercialization of Communication

The social effects of the commercialization of the mass media are a major concern in policy formulation and decision-making by private and public bodies (1984, p. 205).

31. In expanding communication systems, preference should be given to non-commercial forms of mass communication. Promotion of such types of communication should be integrated with the traditions, culture, development objectives and socio-political system of each country. As in the field of education, public funds might be made available for this purpose (1984, p. 205).

32. While acknowledging the need of the media for revenues, ways and means should be considered to reduce the negative effects that the influence of market and commercial considerations have in the organization and content of national and international communication flows (1984, p. 205-206).*

*Additional comment by Mr. E. Abel [the lone CIC member from the U.S.]: “At no time has the commission seen evidence adduced in support of the notion that market and commercial considerations necessarily exert a negative effect on communication flows. On the contrary the commission has praised elsewhere in this report courageous investigative journalism of the sort that can be sustained only by independent media whose survival depends upon their acceptance in the marketplace, rather than the favors of political leaders. The commission also is aware that market mechanisms play an increasingly important role today even in so called planned economics.”

Access to Technical Information

The flow of technical information within nations and across national boundaries is a major resource for development. Access to such information, which countries need for technical decision-making at all levels, is as crucial as access to news sources. This type of information is generally not easily available and is most often concentrated in large techno-structures. Developed countries are not providing adequate information of this type to developing countries (1984, p. 206).

37. At the international level, consideration should be given to action with respect for (a) systematic identification of existing organized data processing infrastructures in various specialized fields; (b) agreement on measures for effective multi-country participation in the programs, planning and administration of existing or developing data infrastructures; (c) analysis of commercial and technical measures likely to improve the use of informatics by developing countries; (d) agreement of international priorities for research and development that is of interest to all countries in the field of informatics (pp. 207-208).

38. Transnational corporations should supply to the authorities of the countries in which they operate, upon request and on a regular basis as specified by local laws and regulations, all information required for legislative and administrative purposes relevant to their activities and specifically needed to assess the performance of such entities. They should also provide the public, trade unions and other interested sectors of the countries in which they operate with information needed to understand the global structure, activities and policies of the transnational corporation and their significance for the country concerned (p. 208).

Towards Improved International Reporting

The full and factual presentation of news about one country to others is a continuing problem. The reasons for this are manifold; principal among them are correspondents' working conditions, their skills and attitudes, varying conceptions of news and information values and government viewpoints. Remedies for the situation will require long-term, evolutionary action towards improving the exchange of news around the world (p. 210).

47. The press and broadcasters in the industrialized world should allot more space and time to reporting events in and background material about foreign countries in general and news from the developing world in particular. Also, the media in developed countries -- especially the "gatekeepers", editors and producers of print and broadcasting media who select the news items to be published or broadcast -- should become more familiar with the cultures and conditions in developing countries. Although the present imbalance in news flow calls for strengthening capacities in developing countries, the media of the industrialized countries have their contribution to make towards the correction of these inequalities (p. 212).

Human Rights

Freedom of speech, of the press, of information and of assembly are vital for the realization of human rights. Extension of these communication freedoms to a broader individual and collective right to communicate is an evolving principle in the democratization process. Among the human rights to be emphasized are those of equality for women and between races. Defense of all human rights is one of the media's most vital tasks (p. 215).

Removal of Obstacles

Communication, with its immense possibilities for influencing the minds and behavior of people, can be a powerful means of promoting democratization of society and of widening public participation in the decision making process. This depends on the structures and practices of the media and their management and to what extent they facilitate broader access and open the communication process to a free interchange of ideas, information and experience among equals, without dominance or discrimination (p. 216).

37. Effective legal measures should be designed to: (a) limit the process of concentration and monopolization; (b) circumscribe the action of transnationals by requiring them to comply with specific criteria and conditions defined by national legislation and development policies; (c) reverse trends to reduce the number of decision-makers at a time when the media's public is growing larger and the impact of communication is increasing; (d) reduce the influence of advertising upon editorial and policy and broadcast programming; (e) seek and improve models which would ensure greater independence and autonomy of the media concerning their management and editorial policy, whether these media are under private public or government ownership (p. 219).*

*Comment by Mr. E. Abel [again, the lone CIC member from the U.S.]:
“Regarding (a) and (c), anti-monopoly legislation, whether more or less effective is relevant only in countries where a decree of competition can be said to exist. It is a travesty to speak of measures against concentrations and monopolization in countries where the media are themselves established as state monopolies, or operate as an arm of the only authorized political party. Regarding (b) transnational corporations are expected to comply with the laws of the countries in which they do business. Regarding (d) where it can be shown to exist, the influence of advertisers upon editorial content or broadcast programming would warrant careful study. But a sweeping demand that such influence be reduced without pausing to examine or attempting to measure that influence in particular circumstances, is a symptom of ideological prejudice.”

⁴ Interesting enough, the “99%” or “occupy” movement attracted the scorn of the news media instantly after it started. Many commentaries and coverage typically read in the following fashion (from even the liberal end of the spectrum, see <<http://prospect.org/article/follow-no-leader>>), with an all too familiar focus on protester bashing, featuring overly personalized depictions of the protests and a distinct aloofness from the many substantive issues and criticisms the movement was raising. An amusing satirical cartoon (see <<http://s3-ec.buzzfed.com/static/enhanced/web05/2011/10/18/11/enhanced-buzz-21736-1318953532-34.jpg>>) made light of the fact that the news media was overwhelmingly reporting that the movement had little to no direction or focus, in spite of the consistent themes of corporate criticism and the litany of complaints against economic inequality. By the time the White House took notice and expressed sympathy toward the protesters in early October (see <<http://motherjones.com/mojo/2011/10/obama-biden-occupy-wall-street>>), the tune of the press largely changed and some substantive coverage began to appear. The initially unworthy social movement managed to achieve such a critical mass status in such a short time, quite obviously tapping in on the raw nerve of the nation, that its unworthy status was lessened as a result of the official recognition and at least rhetorical respect it garnered from the Obama administration (and subsequently impacted / modified news coverage). Nevertheless, in a fashion quite similar to the trajectory of the unworthy Free Vieques movement, the 99%'ers still struggle to garner mainstream and elite news media attention and focus on its most substantive issues, concerns and in the case of Chicago, its demands (see <<http://occupychi.org/2011/10/07/our-proposed-demands/>>).

⁵ The movement has displayed impressive qualities and garnered significant achievements (including most notably, a number of policy reforms issued through Executive Orders by the Obama administration), especially considering that it essentially still is a nascent mass movement. It has tapped into the opposition to the economic realities of the nation that a very large segment of the U.S. population has long felt, which

have been particularly exacerbated by the ongoing recession; a recession that continues to show no end in sight. The movement went global almost instantaneously, in part, through incredibly effective utilization of the tools of the Internet, a tactic that harkens back to the height of the global justice movements at the turn of the century. Active protest movements, staging daily activities, have already spread to well over a thousand U.S. cities at the time of this writing. This is literally the kind of movement that media reformers need to actively involve themselves in and support, for nothing less than the very fate of the press system and thus, of democracy itself, is at stake.

Appendix A

Figure A.1

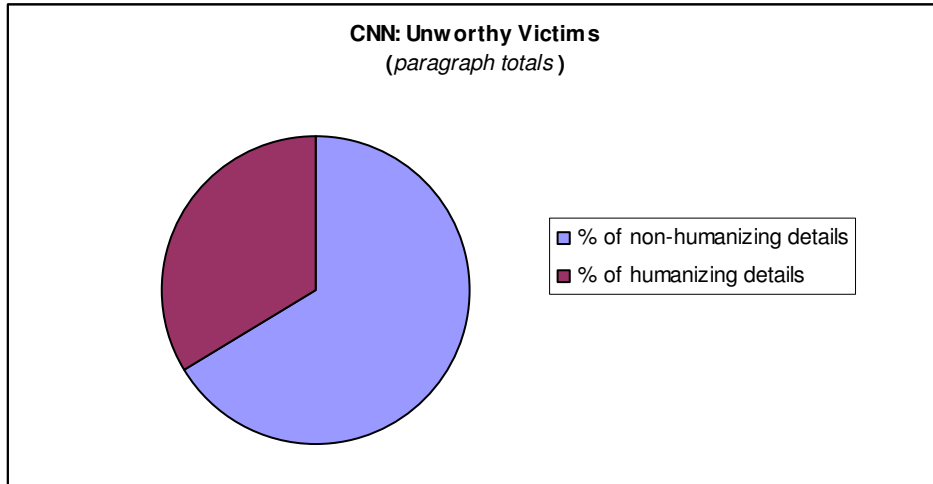


Figure A.2

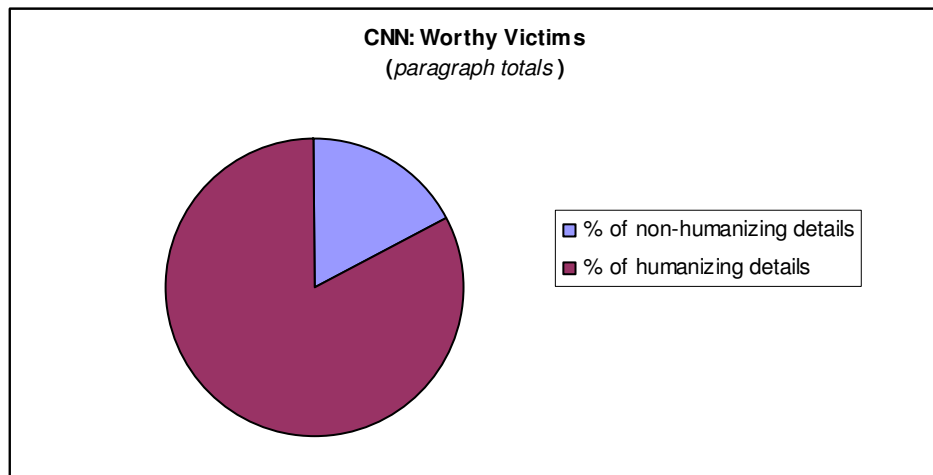
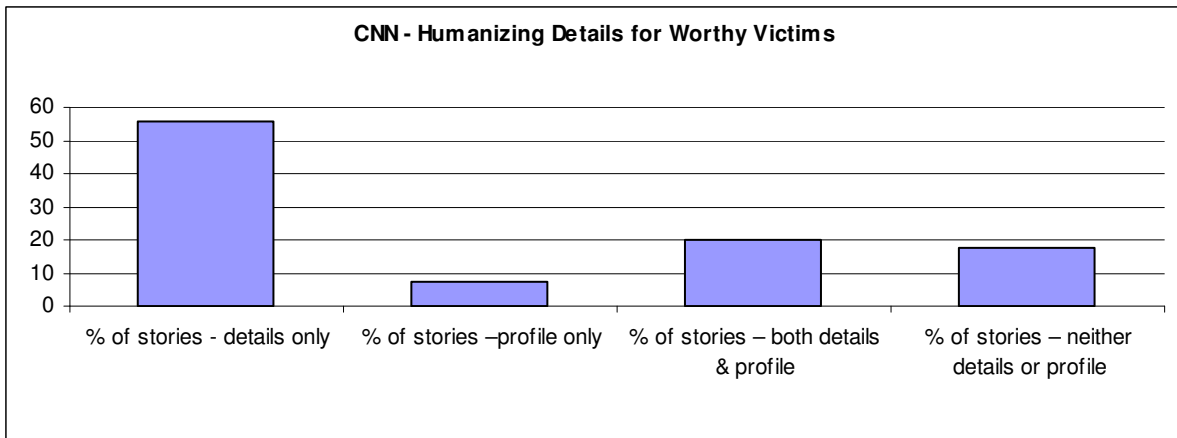
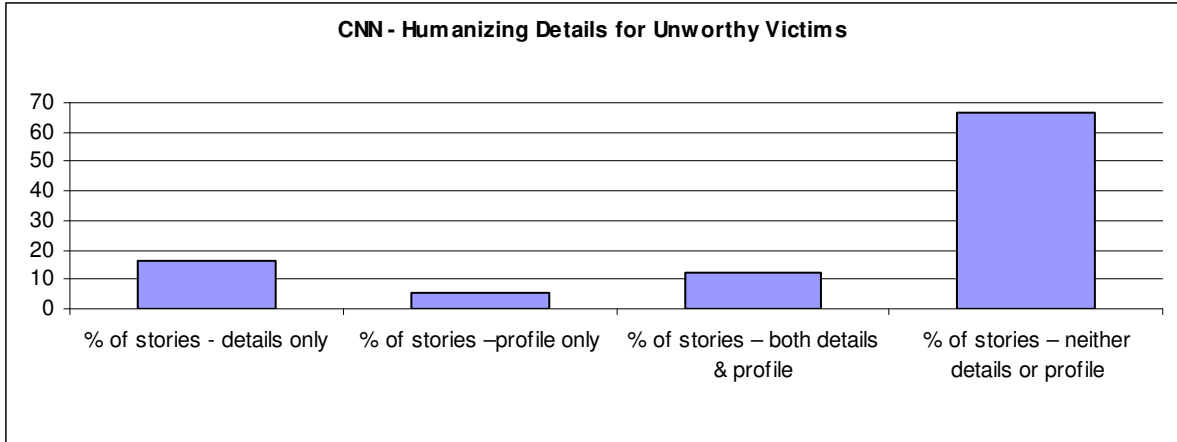


Figure A.3



**Table A.1 - CNN en Español –Without unembedded 2003 story
(ADJUST FOR INSURGENTS TOO)**

PARAGRAPH TOTALS	% of stories – profile only	% of stories - details only	% of stories – both details & profile	% of stories – neither details or profile	% of non- humanizing versus % of humanizing paragraphs
UNWORTHY VICTIMS					
Person Types***					
<i>Iraqi Civilians</i>	9.0%	27.3%	9.1%	54.6%	54.6% // 45.4%
TOTALS (adjusted w/ Iraqi civilian figures)	2.65%	24.8%	2.7%	69.9%	69.9% // 30.1%

Table A.2 – CNN en Español – Without unembedded 2003 story

STORY APPEARANCES	% of stories – profile only**	% of stories - details only	% of stories – both details & profile	% of stories – neither details or profile	% of non- humanizing versus % of humanizing stories
UNWORTHY VICTIMS					
Person Types					
<i>Iraqi Civilians</i>	9.1%	27.3%	9.1%	54.5%	54.5% // 45.5%
TOTALS (adjusted w/ Iraqi civilian figures)	2.7%	21.6%	2.7%	73.0%	73.0% // 27.0%

*** All other person types were unaffected by the 2003 story, since Iraqi civilians were the only casualty type mentioned.

Figure A.4

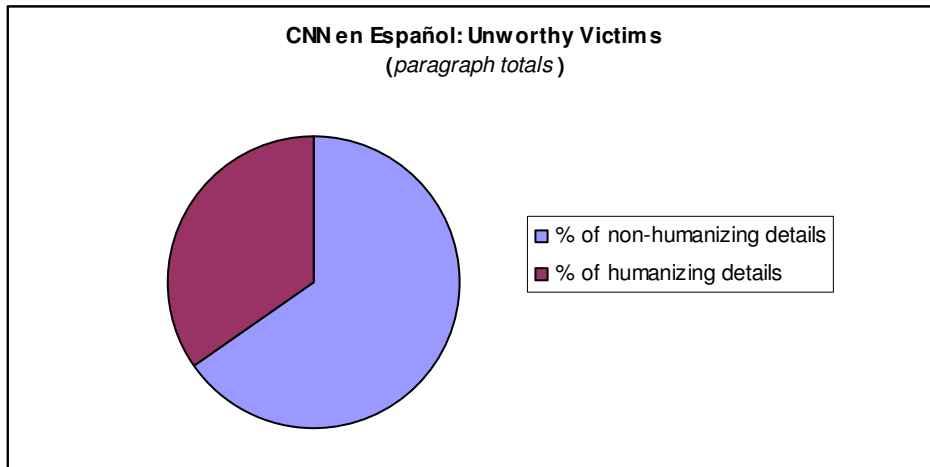


Figure A.5

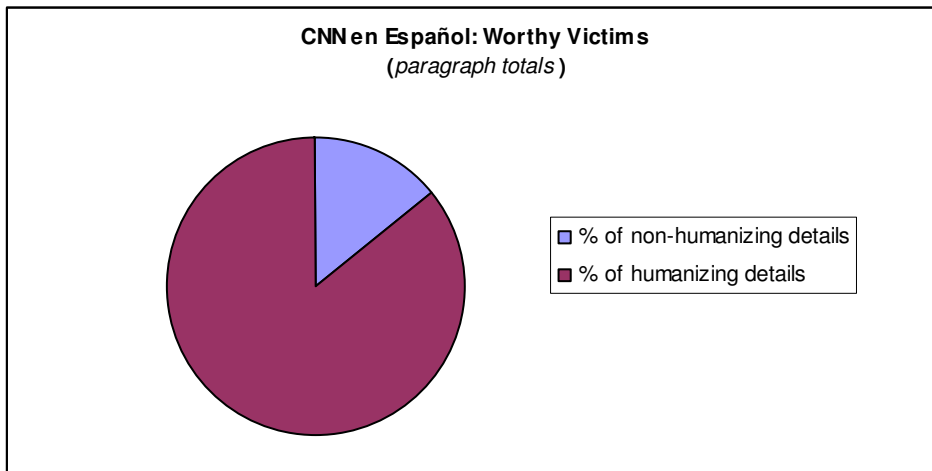


Figure A.6 & A.7

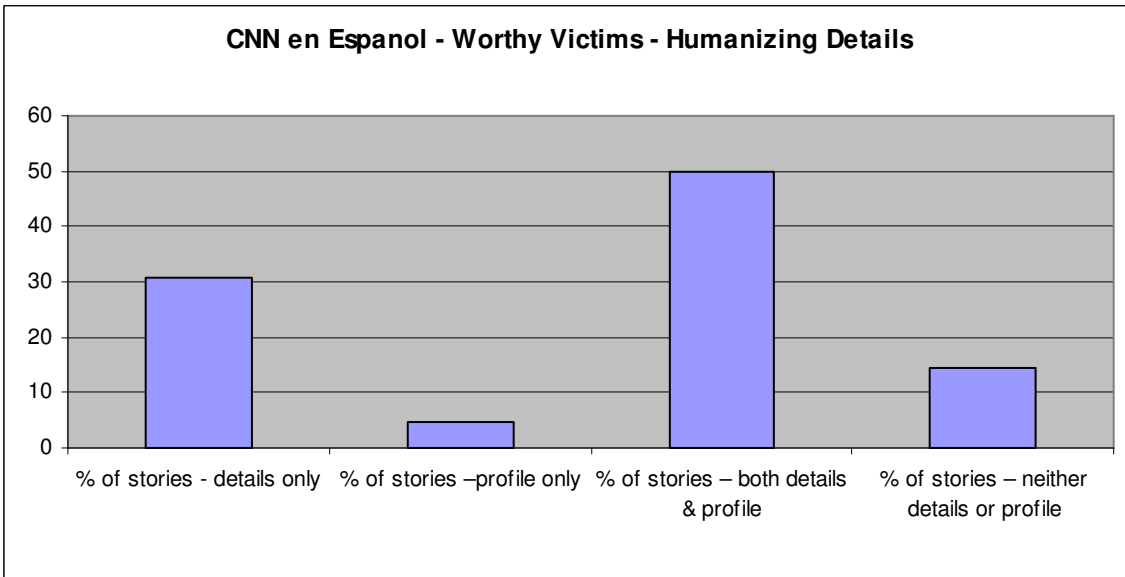
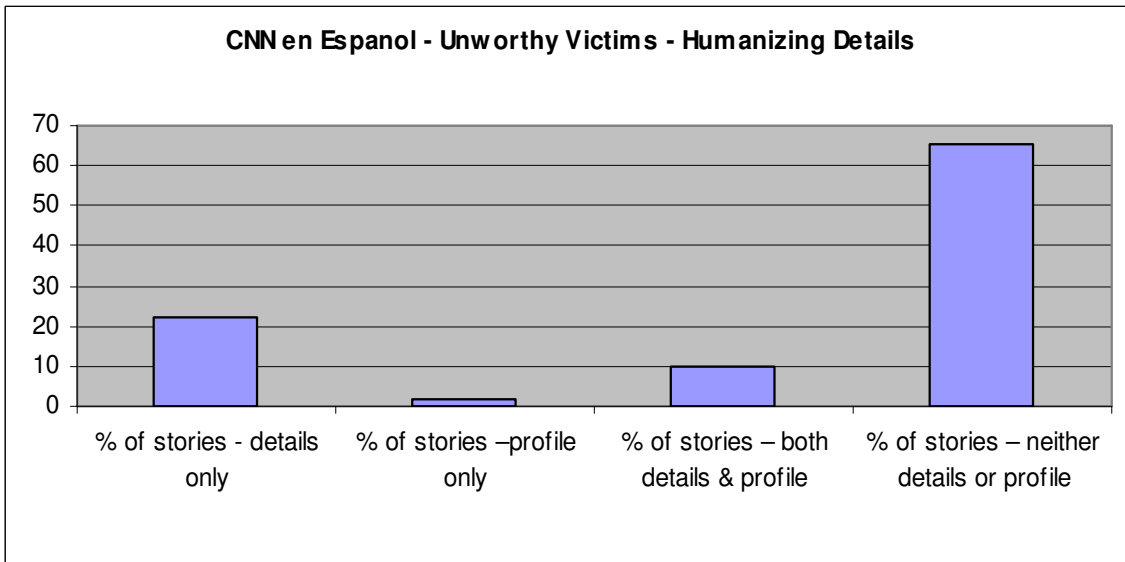


Figure A.8

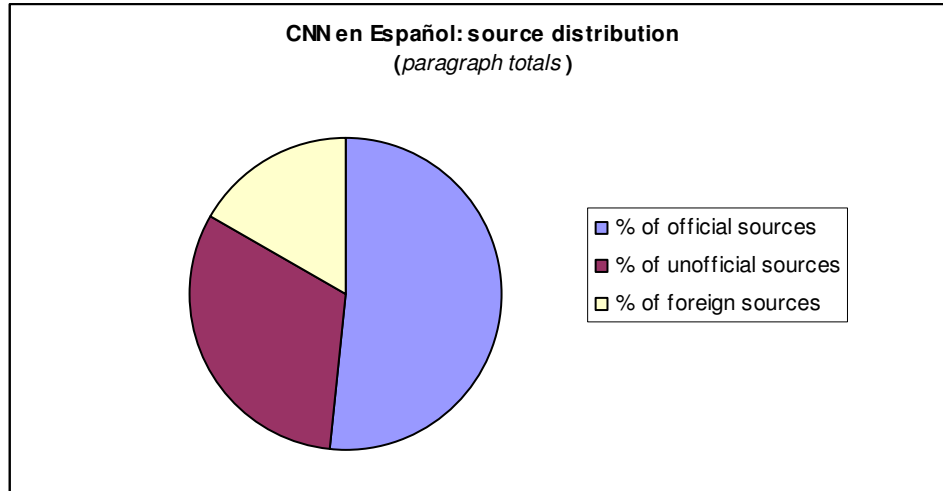
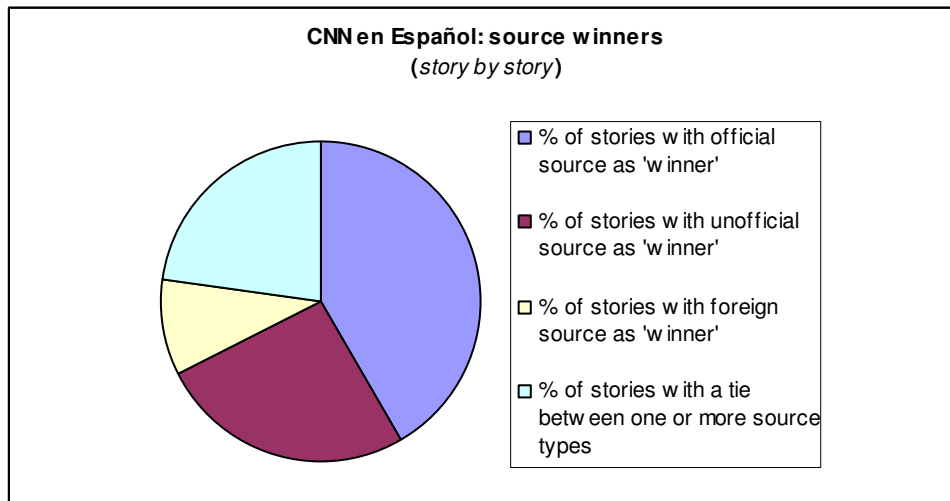


Figure A.9



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Page - 442

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Page - 466

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