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Un/Worthy: The US Print Media's Portrayal of the Kosovo and East Timor Massacres

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UN/WORTHY: THE US PRINT MEDIA'S PORTRAYAL OF THE KOSOVO AND EAST TIMOR MASSACRES

A thesis submitted

by

DEREK DE VRIES

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GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

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the requirement for the
degree of

MASTER OF ARTS
in
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WE HEREBY APPROVE THE THESIS SUBMITTED BY

Derek De Vries

ENTITLED Un/Worthy: The US Print Media’s Portrayal of the Kosovo and East Timor Massacres

AS PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN COMMUNICATION
Abstract

This study is a re-examination of Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman’s “Propaganda Model”, which hypothesizes that the market-driven, institutionalized filters determine the way in which the “agenda-setting” media in the United States cover and portray news. Further, the theory posits that these filters will reinforce the modes of control for the dominant elites in power. This evaluation concentrates on the treatment of so-called “worthy and unworthy victims” and relies on a content analysis of news coverage of the massacres occurring simultaneously in Kosovo and East Timor in 1999. In line with the “Propaganda Model,” the analysis showed that the volume of reporting on acts of violence increased when the perpetrators are affiliated with an “enemy” state and, conversely, decreased when the perpetrators are supported by the United States government. Analysis on whether political motivations affected the quality of analysis was inconclusive.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This paper is dedicated to my parents, Thomas and Cynthia De Vries. They were the role models who taught me the importance of critical thinking and social responsibility. If I am at all a success as an academic and a human being, it is entirely due their caring guidance and loving influence.
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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Situation Analysis

In the United States, the news media is influential as it is ubiquitous. From the Internet to the 24-hour-a-day news channels to news broadcasts to cellular phones, radios and miniature personal computers, it is a vital component of the basis for opinion in the US. Accordingly, it is no secret that there are a plethora of forces arrayed in the hopes of influencing the media in pursuit of their various goals. News programs are book-ended by trillions of dollars of advertising, and virtually all organizations employ public relations professionals to promote them within the news content itself. What is unclear to a majority of the population, is the extent to which the news content they receive is controlled by elites in power (Herman & Chomsky, 1988).

In 1988, Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky published Manufacturing Consent, a book in which they outlined their “Propaganda Model” (PM) theory to explain the way various subjects are treated by the news media in a manner that serves the interest of the elite interests in power while also affording a measure of concealment of this exercise of power. The elite interests are generally defined as those individuals or unaffiliated organizations with sufficient wealth and power to influence national policy to serve their interests. This is different from other countries where more authoritarian governments may maintain a monopoly over the media and overtly censor its coverage of the news, in which case it is obvious to see whom the news media serves. Differentiating
from the variety of media which exist in the United States, Chomsky and Herman are referring specifically to the “agenda-setting” media, which Chomsky defines as;

. . . the elite media, sometimes called the agenda-setting media because they are the ones with the big resources, they set the framework in which everyone else operates. The New York Times and CBS . . . their audience is mostly privileged people. The people who read the New York Times—people who are wealthy or part of what is sometimes called the political class—they are actually involved in the political system in an ongoing fashion. They are basically managers of one sort or another. They can be political managers, business managers (like corporate executives or that sort of thing), doctoral managers (like university professors), or other journalists who are involved in organizing the way people think and look at things (1997, n.p.).

Chomsky differentiates the “agenda-setting” media from the “popular media,” which includes recreational news media such as entertainment or sports journalism.

The title of Chomsky and Herman’s work comes from a concept first advanced by Walter Lippmann in the first part of the twentieth century. Lippmann advocated that propaganda had become “a regular organ of popular government” and that its purpose was for the “manufacture of consent” (as quoted in Herman & Chomsky, 1988, p. lix).

Problem Statement

For various reasons, there are invariably inequities in news coverage which result in the creation of “worthy” and “unworthy” victims who receive more or less coverage, respectively. As Chomsky and Herman observe, one factor contributing to the manifestation of this inequity in coverage is political ideology, in response to various
pressures exerted on the media in the free market system in which it operates. As Chomsky has explained:

all the media, agenda-setting and popular, are huge corporations. Like every corporation they have a product and they sell it to a market. The market is advertisers. The product is people, that is, audiences. So when you look at the agenda-setting media, the ‘product’ that they are ‘selling’ is privileged audiences. . . . Just on the most elementary free market principles, what you would expect is a picture that responds to the interest and concerns of the sellers, the buyers and the ‘product’ (all of whom are members of the American Elite), which is exactly what happens (Kwan, 1992, p. A15).

To this end, they summarized these factors as five “filters”:

(1) the size, concentrated ownership, owner wealth, and profit orientation of the dominant mass-media firms; (2) advertising as the primary income source of the mass media; (3) the reliance of the media on information provided by government, business and “experts” funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power; (4) ‘flak’ as a means of disciplining the media; and (5) ‘anticommunism’ as a national religion and control mechanism (Herman & Chomsky, 1988, p. 2).

Put another way, the propaganda model . . .

. . . postulates that the elite media interlock with other institutional sectors in ownership, management and social circles, effectively circumscribing their ability to remain analytically detached from other dominant institutional sectors. The
model argues that the net result of this is self-censorship without any significant coercion (Klaehn, 2002, p. 147).

One prominent example discussed in Manufacturing Consent is US opposition to Communism. As the fall of the Soviet Union precipitated a drop in the level of the threat Communism poses to the United States and the spread of democracy abroad, another aspect of the continued applicability of Chomsky and Herman’s propaganda model should be reviewed given that a principal feature of the fifth tenet of their theory, “anticommunism as a national religion and control mechanism” (Herman & Chomsky, 1988, p. 2). It should be noted, however, that Chomsky and Herman hinted at a broader definition of the fifth filter in Manufacturing Consent, when they wrote “this ideology helps mobilize the populace against an enemy, and because the concept is fuzzy it can be used against anybody advocating policies that threaten property interests or support accommodation . . . with radicalism” (1988, p. 29). Herman also later asserted that;

the fifth filter – anticommmunist ideology – is possibly weakened by the collapse of the Soviet Union and global socialism, but this is easily offset by the greater ideological force of the belief in the ‘miracle of the market.’ There is now an almost religious faith in the market, at least among the elite, so that regardless of evidence, markets are assumed benevolent and non-market mechanisms are suspect (Herman, 2002, n.p.).

The “miracle of the market” is a phrase describing the equity and progress purported to come from a free market system. The phrase is attributed to libertarian Leonard Read and has been adopted by neoliberals and political conservatives, most notably the Reagan Administration.
Later, in 1998, Chomsky made a similar observation and refined the theory further by noting that the filter still remains but that it has been replaced with a similar ideological filter that very closely resembles the United States following the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001. He describes the prevailing ideology as one which promotes . . .

. . . the idea that grave enemies are about to attack us and we need to huddle under the protection of domestic power. You need something to frighten people with, to prevent them from paying attention to what’s really happening to them. You have to somehow engender fear and hatred, to channel the kind of fear and rage – or even just discontent – that’s being aroused by social and economic conditions (Chomsky, 1998, n.p.).

An understanding of the propaganda model is helpful when studying geopolitical events, such as in the case of the massacres in Kosovo and East Timor in 1999 and their portrayal in the news media. Also important is an understanding of the role of propaganda in the resulting policy decisions adopted by the US government. As Chomsky contends:

The marching orders from Washington, however, are the usual ones: Focus laser-like on the crimes of today’s official enemy, and do not allow yourself to be distracted by comparable or worse crimes that could easily be mitigated or terminated thanks to the crucial role of the enlightened states in perpetuating them, or escalating them when power interests so dictate (Chomsky, 1999, n.p.).

There is no evidence that this modified incarnation of the fifth tenet negatively affects the use of PM theory to understand the behavior of the mass media and that the
same modes are still in operation. Accordingly, an analysis of a contemporary situation by those same methodologies should yield similar results; government policy, and media reporting, will focus on atrocities being perpetrated by an enemy state, while paying comparatively little attention to atrocities being perpetrated by nations backed by the United States.

Significance of the Problem

The importance of timely and readily-accessible information for an educated populace is widely acknowledged to be a cornerstone of the democratic system of government. Thomas Jefferson, one of the principal founding fathers, noted in a letter to Edward Carrington in 1787 that;

The basis of our governments being the opinion of the people, the very first object should be to keep that right; and were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter. But I should mean that every man should receive those papers and be capable of reading them (Coates, 1999, n.p.).

In this context, it becomes clear how critical unfiltered information is to the ability of the citizens of the United States to participate in the process of governing their nation. This is especially vital as the world becomes more complex, and the public becomes increasingly unable to remain both informed and interested in the process of governance. The United States is constantly plagued by the specter of a government propelled by a powerful minority wielding undue influence. George Washington voiced this fear in his farewell address;
All obstructions to the execution of the laws, all combinations and associations, under whatever plausible character, with the real design to direct, control, counteract, or awe the regular deliberation and action of the constituted authorities, are destructive of this fundamental principle, and of fatal tendency. They serve to organize faction, to give it an artificial and extraordinary force; to put, in the place of the delegated will of the nation the will of a party, often a small but artful and enterprising minority of the community; and, according to the alternate triumphs of different parties, to make the public administration the mirror of the ill-concerted and incongruous projects of faction, rather than the organ of consistent and wholesome plans digested by common counsels and modified by mutual interests (Washington's farewell address, 2004, n.p.).

Adding a substantial degree of urgency to this particular problem of overcoming the limitations imposed on understanding by the various filters articulated in the propaganda model and their manifestations is the fact that the U.S. government has only just resumed funding the Indonesian military, in spite of twice reducing it for genocidal acts of aggression against civilians in East Timor (Perlez, 2005). Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 on the United States, President Bush took the opportunity to turn around over a decade of policy with Indonesia and pledge $700 million of aid to Indonesian President Megawati Sukamoputri, including military and police training from the Expanded-International Military Education and Training (E-IMET) program (Berrigan, 2001).
Purpose of the Study

The motivation for this study is to test the model advanced by Chomsky and Herman and its continued applicability in the modern era. If the propaganda model is able to provide even a small window of insight into the workings of the power structure in the United States (and elsewhere), it will be an invaluable tool in addressing the inequities of our world.

In autocratic states, where the modes of control are far more blatant and the propaganda is directly attributable to an easily-identifiable source, righting injustices perpetrated by that force is considerably easier. The identification of those in power, as well as their motivations, lay bare. Accordingly, the source of the problem is easier to spot and deal with. In the system described by the propaganda model, such convenience is not afforded those who are subject to the manipulation of the powerful elites. In such a case, the propaganda forms the institutional framework, blunting the ability of the populace to see the 'forest for the trees'.

For the purposes of this study, “violent acts” and “aggression” will be defined as the torture and murder of unarmed civilians by state armies or their surrogates and does not include warring between rival armies. Similarly, “enemy states” will be defined as those nations governed by powers hostile to US interests. Conversely, “friendly states” will be considered those states with governments amenable to adhering to the dictates of the United States.

Research Questions

This study will investigate the following questions:
Q1: Can a systems theory analysis of driving factors be predictive of media treatment of world events by the “agenda-setting” news media, previously defined by Chomsky as the dominant media outlets with large operating budgets and circulations that determine the framework in which news is defined for other media (1997), in the United States?

Q2: Does the propaganda model articulated by Chomsky and Herman offer insight into the motivations and behaviors that define news coverage?

Q3: In line with the contentions of the propaganda model, does the reporting of the agenda-setting print media differ on violent acts when perpetrated by states friendly to the US (Indonesia) from the reporting of similar violent acts perpetrated by enemy states of the US (Serbia)?

Q4: In line with the hypotheses of the propaganda model, is the quantity of reporting by the ‘agenda-setting’ media on the topic of victims of violence different in the case of East Timor (when perpetrated by a client state) versus Kosovo (when perpetrated by an enemy state)?

Q5: In line with the hypotheses of the propaganda model, is the degree of follow-up investigation by the “agenda-setting” media on the topic of victims of violence by terrorist organizations different in the case of Kosovo as opposed to East Timor?

Overview of Thesis

This paper asks whether, in line with certain fundamental motivations, the news media in the United States will emphasize violence committed by interests that oppose US foreign policy goals and simultaneously downplay violence by organizations within

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the government’s sphere of influence. This emphasis will take the shape of an increased amount of coverage, an increased level of detail in the coverage, and an increased level of follow-up on stories describing violence against civilians by enemy states, and the converse when the violence is inflicted by an ally or client of the US. For simplicity, this phenomenon is referred to as the designation of “worthy and unworthy victims” (Herman & Chomsky, 1988, p. 37). The assumptions that form the basis for this hypothesis are illustrated by Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman in their book *Manufacturing Consent*.

This contention will be tested by a content analysis of the print media’s coverage of nearly simultaneous and proportional massacres occurring in East Timor and Kosovo. It posits that victims of violence in Kosovo will be treated as “worthy” victims, meaning that their coverage in the media will be of a greater degree, quality and follow-up. Conversely, it posits that victims of violence in East Timor will be treated as “unworthy” victims, and be afforded little or no coverage and that the coverage will be characterized by less detail and follow-up.
CHAPTER II

Literature Review

The notion that the media's coverage of world events is colored by various interests is hardly a new one. As long as the mass media have existed, there have been critics and advocates of the power of that media to shape public opinion and direct the course of human events. The US media's treatment of violence in the similar situations of Kosovo and East Timor affords us a unique side-by-side case study to analyze its operations with the structural framework devised by the propaganda model.

Propaganda

Edward Bernays and the Post-WWI era

Perhaps one of the earliest and most highly-regarded figures to analyze the media and its ability to affect public opinion is Edward Bernays, widely regarded as the father of the public relations profession. His work Propaganda forms the basis for the discipline of public relations, and has had far-reaching influence on the operations of those who wield political and economic power in the United States ever since it was first published in 1928. Bernays summarizes the role of communication in governance with the provocative declaration "ours must be a leadership democracy administered by the intelligent minority who know how to regiment and guide the masses" (1928/2005, p. 127).

Bernays observes "the conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society" (1928/2005, p. 37). This vision of the governance of the United States is markedly different from the one generally held by the public; conventional wisdom holds that each
citizen forms his or her own opinion and votes accordingly, independent of any conscious efforts by elite interests to affect that opinion. For Bernays, such a system is impractical and idealistic and ought be supplanted by a different form of governance:

In theory, every citizen makes up his mind on public questions and matters of private conduct. In practice, if all men had to study for themselves the abstruse economic, political, and ethical data involved in every question, they would find it impossible to come to a conclusion without anything. We have voluntarily agreed to let an invisible government sift the data and high-spot the outstanding issue so that our field of choice shall be narrowed to practical proportions (1928/2005, p. 38).

Elsewhere in his book, Bernays explicates the role of the media further, offering a foreboding note for the future:

This invisible, interwining structure of groupings and associations is the mechanism by which democracy has organized its group mind and simplified its mass thinking. To deplore the existence of such a mechanism is to ask for a society such as never was and never will be. To admit that it exists, but expect that it shall not be used, is unreasonable (p. 44).

Having witnessed the specter of the first World War, and observing closely how effective mass communications could be for mobilizing public opinion, Bernays gained unique insight into the thought processes of the general public. He wrote that every significant social occurrence “…whether in politics, finance, manufacture, agriculture, charity, education, or other fields, must be done with the help of propaganda.”
Propaganda is the executive arm of the invisible government” (Bernays, 1928/2005, p. 20).

To be fair, Bernays had a different definition of “propaganda” than the pejorative version used today. For him, propaganda was more a technical term, referring to a “consistent, enduring effort to create or shape events to influence the relations of the public to an enterprise, idea or group” (Bernays, 1928/2005, p. 52).

Again indicative of the historical post-war period in which he was writing, Bernays’ body of scholarship is particularly significant for this discussion as he described precisely the first fledgling efforts to use the tactic of creating “worthy” and “unworthy” victims as Chomsky and Herman observe in the modern era. Bernays notes during World War I that “. . . the manipulators of patriotic opinion made use of the mental clichés and the emotional habits of the public to produce mass reactions against the alleged atrocities, the terror, and the tyranny of the enemy,” continuing “it was only natural, after the war ended, that intelligent persons should ask themselves whether it was possible to apply a similar technique to the problems of peace” (1928/2005, p. 55). The manner in which the public will can be shaped is nearly endless, according to Bernays, who advised “there is no means of human communication which may not also be a means of deliberate propaganda, because propaganda is simply the establishing of reciprocal understanding between and individual and a group” (p. 161).

Walter Lippman and Public Opinion

Another significant body of scholarship, referenced heavily by Chomsky and Herman, is the work of Walter Lippman, specifically his seminal work Public Opinion. Lippmann coined the term “manufacturing consent,” which became the title of Chomsky
and Herman's seminal work on the process by which the will of the goals of the elites in power are adopted by the masses. Like Bernays, Lippmann was publishing his work following the first World War when propaganda truly became an industrialized operation, and wrote at length about the interplay between world governments and their interactions with the masses.

For Lippmann, there are two "visions" of democracy, one which is controlled by "the self-sufficient individual" and another in which "an Oversoul regulate[s] everything" (1922/1997, p. 146). Chomsky refers to the latter as a "spectator democracy" (Chomsky, 2002, p. 19). Like Bernays, Lippmann believes that true democracy is impractical when one considers the demands it places upon the system to adequately inform the participants;

... no amount of balloting can obviate the need of creating an issue, be a measure or a candidate, on which the voters can say Yes or No. There is, in fact, no such thing as 'direct legislation.' ... The citizen goes to the polls, receives a ballot on which a number of measures are printed, almost always in abbreviated form, and, if he says anything at all, he says Yes or No. ... You have to commit violence against the English language to call that legislation (1922/1997, p. 148).

He also observes, "it is no longer possible, for example, to believe in the original dogma of democracy; that the knowledge needed for the management of human affairs comes up spontaneously" (p. 158). In effect, Lippmann sees a coercion of opinion by a ruling elite to be a necessity in a democracy. As he continues,

It is not necessary, then to invent a collective intelligence in order to explain why the judgments of a group are usually more coherent, and often more true to form
Lippmann makes a number of observations about the manifestations of this picture of an elite group of decision makers which pertain directly to international affairs and the relative ease with which these interests can nose the public in the direction of the policies they wish to see put into place.

If those whom [the leader] needs in his plan are remote from the place where the action takes place, if the results are hidden or postponed, . . . the leader is likely to have a free hand. . . . That is one great reason why governments have such a free hand in foreign affairs. Most of the frictions between two states involve a series of obscure and long-winded contentions, occasionally on the frontier, but far more often in regions about which school geographies have supplied no precise ideas (p. 154).

In other words, factors such as distance and language/culture become barriers to accurate, critical and in-depth news coverage. The expense of maintaining foreign news bureaus and conducting investigations makes the news media increasingly reliant on the government as the primary source for information and perspective on foreign affairs.

Lippmann’s work formed a theoretical basis for the propaganda efforts of the Allies, which were so effective that they impressed even Adolf Hitler, who remarked, . . . the war propaganda of the English and Americans was psychologically sound. By representing the Germans to their own people as barbarians and Huns, they prepared the individual soldier for the terrors of war, and thus helped to preserve
him from disappointments. After this, the most terrible weapon that was used against him seemed only to confirm what his propagandists had told him; it likewise reinforced his faith in the truth of his government's assertions, while on the other hand it increased his rage and hatred against the vile enemy (Hitler, 1926/1998, n.p.).

Scholars frequently echo Lippmann's observation that "... what cannot be compromised must be obliterated[;] when there is a question on which we cannot all hope to get together, let us pretend that it does not exist" (1922/1997, p. 130). Lippmann challenges the de facto assumptions about democracy, asserting as Chomsky and Herman do that the collective will does not magically materialize in the minds of the people of the nation, rather it is guided there by elites who are responsible for shaping opinion.

One critical observation made by Lippmann is on the importance of semantics as a component of communication, in this case news coverage. Lippmann observes that "the unseen environment is reported to us chiefly by words ... a few words must often stand for a whole succession of acts, thoughts, feelings and consequences" (1922/1997, pp. 41-42). Terms like "genocide," "massacre," and "ethnic cleansing" carry powerful connotations and their use, or lack thereof, can be important features of reports on world events.

For Lippmann, responsible governance dictates that

... the mass is constantly exposed to suggestion. It reads not the news, but the news with an aura of suggestion about it, indicating the line of action to be taken. It hears reports, not objective as the facts are, but already stereotyped to a certain pattern of behavior (1922/1997, p. 155).
At his most prophetic, Lippmann describes the future of governance and the management of public opinion thusly;

The creation of consent is not a new art. It is a very old one which was supposed to have died out with the appearance of democracy. But it has not died out. It has, in fact, improved enormously in technic, because it is now based on analysis rather than on rule of thumb. . . . the practice of democracy has turned a corner. A revolution is taking place, infinitely more significant than any shifting of economic power (p. 156).

Chomsky and Herman

Chomsky and Herman’s “Propaganda Model” forms the basis for this project, as has been previously mentioned. For Chomsky and Herman, the propaganda model is . . .

. . . our view that, among their other functions, the media serve, and propagandize on behalf of, the powerful societal interests that control and finance them. The representatives of these interests have important agendas and principles that they want to advance, and they are not well positioned to shape and constrain media policy. This is normally not accomplished by crude intervention, but by the selection of right-thinking personnel and by the editors’ and working journalists’ internalization of priorities and definitions of newsworthiness that conform to the institution’s policy (1988, p. xi).

The propaganda model has been criticized by scholars such as Holsti and Rosenau as being “an almost conspiratorial view of the media” (Klaehn, 2002, p. 148). Chomsky and Herman respond to these criticisms by pointing out that their model is a “free market analysis” of the media in which the results are “. . . largely an outcome of the working
market forces” (1988, p. 94). This system is appealing to elite interests because “the logic is clear, propaganda is to a democracy what the bludgeon is to a totalitarian state” (Chomsky, 2002, p. 20). Put another way,

the structural factors that dominate media operations are not all-controlling and do not always produce simple and homogenous results . . . the beauty of the system . . . is that . . . 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 (Herman & Chomsky, p. xii).

Due to its broad applicability, the propaganda model has been widely applied across a variety of disciplines and contexts to analyze the origins of opinion and the driving forces that influence what is carried through the mass media (Baker; 1994, Gottfreid; 2001, McCombs & Shaw; 1991).

As previously established, the aspect of the propaganda model that this particular work focuses on is the phenomenon of “worthy and unworthy victims.” This aspect of the theory postulates that victims of violence by enemy states will be the beneficiaries of more “intense and indignant” coverage than those victimized by either the United States or its clients, in the same fashion predicted by this paper (Herman & Chomsky, 1988, p. xix). In addition to worthy victims receiving “greater indignation” on their behalf, the crimes against them will be accompanied by a greater “search for responsibility at the top” (p. xx). Another nuance of the control mechanism is that unworthy victims will receive “more antiseptic reporting of the abuse” against them (p. xx). One way in which these differences in treatment manifest themselves is in the use of the word “genocide” to
describe killings by one power or another. As Chomsky and Herman explain "genocide is an invidious word that officials apply readily to cases of victimization in enemy states, but rarely if ever to similar or worse cases of victimization by the United States itself or allied regimes" (p. xx).

Contemporaries

Manufacturing Consent is not the only work that Lippmann's theories have provided titular inspiration for. Another recent work that follows up on his theories as well as those of Chomsky and Herman is B.A. Taleb's The Bewildered Herd, yet another work the name of which was derived from Lippmann's writings.

Taleb writes,

Two main notions can explain why the media has such an ability to set both the public and politico-economic agendas and why it has become such a prestigious and effective social change and social control agent in any given society. The first notion relates to the advantages and disadvantages the media has in its relationship with the public, and the second relates to the advantages and disadvantages the public has in its relation with the media. Since the media is an enterprise, an economic analogy is best to illustrate these advantages and disadvantages. In simple economic terms, this prestigious status of national media is that where the media (the enterprise) distributes the news (products) to the public (the consumers). Accordingly, the advantages national media has are its ability to select, package, focus on certain products, create demand for its products, encourage consumption of certain products over others because it is more profitable, and to massively distribute these products. The disadvantages
for the media in such a relationship is its own need to satisfy its public (consumers) and increase its market share of them, and the need to readjust its news (products) to constantly follow and respond to public tendencies and expectations. On the other hand, the disadvantage of the public in its relationship to the media is its growing need and dependence on these media products just as it depends on other products for almost every aspect of its daily life. The advantage the public has, in democratic societies, is that it can always have the possibility of sanctioning the media (the enterprise) and turning for its needs to another. . . . To set an agenda, issues have to be chosen and given priority. Since the public depends on the media to be informed of almost every aspect of the world around it, from international news to domestic traffic jams passing by national policies and events, then it is the media that presents the issues that this public depends on to set its agenda. In other words, the public, due to its dependence and need for orientation, sees the importance of issues through the importance given to these issues by the media. This is the effect of the media’s advantage of being able to select what it presents to the public. But selection of issues to be presented alone is usually not enough to be effective in setting the public’s agenda (Taleb, 2004, pp. 522-523).

While Taleb affirms the power of the media to influence public opinion, he, like Chomsky and Herman, is quick to point out that it is not all-powerful, nor all-encompassing, noting;

the media orientation ability of public opinion is certainly not an absolute and unviable reality. Though the media is extremely influential in forming, modeling,
and directing public opinion . . . this ability of the media is, nonetheless not without limitations” (Taleb, 2004, p. 457).

Testing the propaganda model, Taleb compared the coverage of the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina from 1991-1995 to the conflict in Chechnya from 1991-1996, adding the dimension of analyzing of coverage in the French news media in addition to the United States news media. This marks one of the first attempts to use the propaganda model outside of the context of the United States by drawing upon the intertwined interests of France and the United States. For Taleb’s analysis, the victims in Bosnia served as the “worthy” victims, for the same reasons that the Kosovar Albanians occupied this institutional role. As the propaganda model would predict that the elite interests in the United States would shy away from criticism of the Russian government for mistreating the Chechens for fear of having the Russian government point out similar actions by the U.S., the Chechens served as the “unworthy” victims for Taleb’s analysis. The two served as ideal case studies as, “. . . they both involved a repeated quest for independence,” “. . . were part of a ‘forced union,’” and “. . . shared the fact that the great majority of the population of the two concerned regions of conflict are of the Muslim confession” (Taleb, 2004, p. 157). In analyzing Le Monde and the New York Times, Taleb found that “in general, both newspapers used more tragic adjectives to describe the events in Bosnia than in Chechnya” (p. 330). Further, “ethnic cleansing” was mentioned 14 times between Le Monde and the New York Times in reference to Bosnia, but zero times in reference to Chechnya.
Case Study: Kosovo and East Timor

In the new introduction to their book *Manufacturing Consent*, Chomsky and Herman briefly explored a comparison of the media’s coverage of the situations in East Timor and Kosovo. In their qualitative analysis, they found a definite trend for the media to apply the word “genocide” for victims of enemy states, but not nearly as often for victims of the U.S. or its client states. Specifically, an analysis of the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *Newsweek* and *Time* found that, between 1998 and 1999, those publications applied the term “genocide” 220 times when referring to the Kosovo situation. Conversely, over a 10-year period from 1990 to 1999, they only used the term “genocide” in reference to the Indonesia/East Timor situation 33 times (Herman & Chomsky, 1988, xxi). Their analysis showed a similar result when comparing the treatment of the Kurds by Iraq and Turkey; Iraq (an enemy state) saw its treatment of the Kurdish population labeled as “genocide” 132 times, whereas Turkey (a client state) saw only 14 mentions of its mistreatment of its Kurdish population as “genocide.” Chomsky and Herman bolstered their analysis by comparing two specific massacres in Racak, Kosovo and Liquica, Indonesia. Despite the fact that some 200 East Timorese were murdered at Liquica, compared to 45 at Racak, coverage of the Racak killings far outstripped the Liquica killings by a measure of 4.1 to 1. Moreover, the use of the term “massacre” was more numerous for Racak by a measure of 6.7 to 1. Their research also found that “the greater length of accounts of the Racak event elevates the ratio to 14 to 1 as measured by word count” (Herman & Chomsky, p. xxiv).
About East Timor

East Timor is a small island nation between the Savu and Timor seas that was formerly a Portuguese colony before it was annexed by Indonesia in 1975 in a campaign that caused roughly 200,000 deaths (About Timor-Leste, 2005). It is populated primarily by Austronesians (Malayo-Polynesians) and Papuans, 90% of whom are adherents to the Roman Catholic religion. In 1999, the World Bank Group estimated its total population at 788,000, though other estimates put it as high as 900,000 (The World Bank Group, 2004). During the 1990s, East Timor was the victim of ongoing atrocities perpetrated first by the Indonesian military, and later by paramilitaries trained by and working closely with the Indonesian military. Another salient fact is that Indonesia has long been the recipient of military aid from the United States (among other nations) in the form of training, arms, and funding. In 1999, despite Indonesia’s decades of human rights abuses against the East Timorese, it still received $476,000 in military aid from the United States (Becker, 1999).

In the late 1960s, Indonesia became important to the United States for several reasons, chiefly because of the region’s oil reserves but also because East Timor controls a major shipping route. In documents declassified in 2004, it was confirmed that the U.S. has long intervened under a veil of secrecy in the region. The Nixon administration concluded that Indonesia rigged elections to subvert an independence movement in the western Irian Jaya province. “... despite this assessment, Henry Kissinger, the then national security advisor, counseled President Richard Nixon to express understanding about Indonesia’s annexation of the resource-rich area now known as West Papua...” (Sipress, 2004, p. A20). It was these factors that prompted the U.S. to train, arm and fund
the Indonesian military so that it can serve as a client state to represent U.S. interests in
the region. This support for Indonesia’s brutal regime is confirmed by Jay Solomon and
Thomas E. Ricks of the Wall Street Journal;

A move involving the militaries of Australia and the U.S. specifically would stir
resentment, because in 1975, those nations backed the Indonesian takeover of the
Portuguese colony, out of fear that an independent – and perhaps a communist –
East Timor could undermine the stability of Southeast Asia’s largest country
(Solomon & Ricks, 1999, p. A19).

US support of Indonesia did not merely take the form of diplomacy, however, as
millions of dollars of military hardware were sold to the Indonesian government in
addition to military training from US agencies. These practices continue today; in 1999
alone, and in spite of the history of unchecked human rights violations perpetrated by the
Indonesian military, the defense department spent $50 million on the International
Military Education and Training (IMET) program. Other notable examples of the IMET
program’s influence include El Salvador where the Atlactl special forces battalion
murdered six Jesuit priests in the late 1980s, in addition to considerable participation in
other horrors during that nation’s civil war.

East Timor has suffered perhaps one of the highest death tolls proportionate to the
population of any nation in modern history, with an estimated 200,000 dead since
Indonesia annexed the province. “One in every three East Timorese was killed or has
died from starvation since the Indonesian invasion” (Husarska, 1999, p. 9). Atrocities
against the East Timorese have continued unabated for decades, but were made worse in
1999 with a vote for independence. In spite of already demonstrated threats of violence,
nearly 99% of the population turned out and voted by an almost 80% majority to declare independence from Indonesia (Emmerson, 1999). This vote prompted the massacres that are the primary subject of the East Timorese portion of this paper.

The contention of this paper, in line with the propaganda model, is that the unflattering nature of the history of U.S. involvement in Indonesia will be seldom discussed as it paints a negative picture of our reason for a lack of intervention on East Timor's behalf for the past two decades.

About Kosovo

Kosovo is bordered by several nations, including Serbia, Macedonia, Albania, and Montenegro and is populated by a majority of Muslim ethnic Albanians, and a much smaller minority of Christian Serbians. The United Nations Population Fund estimates Kosovo's population at just over 2 million (Profile: Kosovo, 2003). Originally formed as part of Yugoslavia in 1918, it participated in resisting German occupation during World War II, ultimately becoming a communist nation under Marshall Tito. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia fell apart during the 1990s, separating into independent states according to various ethnic groups; Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro (CIA - the World, 2005). During this time, Slobodan Milosevic attempted to unite ethnic Serbians in the various countries into a "Greater Serbia" which caused fighting between Serbian Forces and the Kosovo Liberation Army which fought for Kosovo's autonomy. In 1999, the a US-led NATO coalition intervened in Kosovo and bombed Serbia for 78 days following diplomatic failures in Rambouillet, France. This campaign also resulted in Yugoslavia's expulsion
from the United Nations and Milosevic’s indictment as a war criminal in the International Criminal Tribunal (CIA - the World, 2005).

Also in line with the propaganda model, it is the contention of the writer that the media coverage will favor the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo in order to demonize both Serbia and Russia as a means of focusing attention away from other U.S. pursuits abroad.

**Similarities**

In 1999, Kosovo and East Timor shared a surprisingly-similar station in the world. Both were small, ethnically-distinct nations that sought autonomy from the authoritarian regimes seeking to incorporate them. The Wall Street Journal even described the similarities a September article;

In 1999 a largely Christian alliance used force against a Christian country [Serbia] bent on persecuting, expelling and in some cases killing a small Muslim population [Kosovo]. That same alliance has, thus far, staunchly refused to do the same to a Muslim country [Indonesia] bent on persecuting, expelling and in some cases killing a small Christian population [East Timor]. The difference between Serbia and Indonesia is, of course, a matter of both size and distance. But the lessons to be drawn from either case are not, in the end, all that different (Cohen, 1999, p. A44).

These similarities are expounded upon by Anna Husarska of the Media Studies Center as she notes

both are provinces inhabited mostly by people whose religion, language and ethnicity differ from those of the powers trying to dominate them . . . in . . .
Kosovo, less than 10% of the 2 million inhabitants are Serbian and... in... East Timor, less than 10% of the 900,000 are Indonesian (1999, p. 9).

Differences

Dwarfed in population by Kosovo, East Timor proportionately suffered a similar number of casualties as a result of the violence inflicted on them by the Indonesian government, which makes the deaths much higher in proportion than in Kosovo.

According to In 1999, the TNI anti-independence campaign “... drove an estimated 750,000 of East Timor’s 880,000 people from their homes” in addition to destroying nearly 70% of the country (as cited in Chomsky, 2000, p. 26). This is but a small selection from East Timor’s bloody recent history.

In 1975, the Indonesian government invaded and annexed East Timor. This was done with the aid of the United States, France, Great Britain and Australia who have sold Indonesia over $1 billion in arms over the past three decades (Hartung, 1999). In addition, the United States has provided millions of dollars worth of aid and training to the Indonesian military through the International Military Education and Training program.

Another critical difference that separates Kosovo and East Timor is that, whereas Kosovars had the modest defense accorded them by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), the East Timorese had no such armed guerilla force to discourage violence against them. A significant number of casualties counted in the Kosovo crisis are Kosovo Liberation Army members who were killed in skirmishes with the invading Yugoslav Army.

The death tolls in East Timor and Kosovo are an interesting feature given the effort exerted in each case to locate bodies and collect evidence for war crimes.
prosecutions. In Kosovo, the international community dispatched hundreds of forensic experts to perform autopsies and study massacre sites. They found that the level of slaughter was not nearly as bad as had been predicted, and the figure of 10,000 dead quickly dropped when anecdotal accounts could not be confirmed. One Spanish pathologist remarked “Rwanda was a true genocide. Kosovo was ethnic cleansing light” (Pearl & Block, 1999, p. A1). By late November, the death toll had been revised downward significantly, a fact that was trumpeted by President Clinton’s political opposition at the time.
CHAPTER III
Methodology

The analysis performed for this paper is a content analysis of the news coverage given to the simultaneous conflicts in East Timor and Kosovo by the “agenda-setting” media. Specifically, the media outlets that are the subject of this analysis were the print media, and were measured for both the quantity of coverage that they devoted to the conflicts in East Timor and Kosovo for the purposes of comparing the disparity between the two.

Sample Selection

The media selected for analysis were chosen due to their high circulation; the daily newspapers (the Wall Street Journal, USA Today, the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, and the Washington Post) represent the top five highest circulation dailies (respectively) in the United States. The print weekly publications (Time and Newsweek) are the top two newsweekly magazines (respectively). This is in keeping with the definition of the “agenda-setting” media established by Chomsky and Herman (1988). For all variables analyzed, none of the articles were treated as mutually exclusive; that is to say an article that mentioned both Kosovo and East Timor was counted equally for each.

Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative analysis for this paper was performed using several online databases, using Boolean search operators to probe the databases for references to certain word combinations. The searches were limited to the period of dates between January 1, 1999 and December 31, 1999. The database services were selected based on their

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offerings; there is not one database which contains comprehensive, full-text archives of all of the print media used for this analysis. Lexisnexis was used to probe the archives of USA Today, the New York Times, the Washington Post, and Newsweek. Electric Library was selected to probe the archives of the Los Angeles Times and Time magazine. Finally, Proquest was used to access the archives of the Wall Street Journal.

The Boolean search operators used were, for example, “East Timor” when querying the databases for references to East Timor, and “Kosovo” when querying the databases for references to Kosovo. The search strings for combinations of key words were, for example, “East Timor” AND “Genocide”.

Duplicate entries, which arose (for example) when a database archived both the early and late editions of a given paper or magazine, were deleted and only the late edition version of the story was counted. Corrections to existing articles were treated as separate references. Further, non-U.S. editions of the news media sources were not included in the analysis; for example the International and Atlantic editions of Newsweek were excluded.

Qualitative Analysis

For the qualitative analysis of the articles published referencing East Timor and Kosovo, the same publications (the daily papers - the Wall Street Journal, USA Today, the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, and the Washington Post and the newsweeklies - Time and Newsweek) and databases (Lexisnexis, Electric Library, and Proquest) were selected. The same resulting lists of search results used in the quantitative analysis were also used for the qualitative analysis. For the purposes of the analysis, multiple letters to the editor contained in the same edition of the article were
counted as one article. Articles which referenced the two nations during the period were
counted regardless of what type of writing they were (i.e. letter to the editor, op/ed piece,
news story, correction, etc.).

For the analysis, the content of each article was analyzed to see if it contained
reference to any of five variables chosen to determine the depth or quality of coverage on
the events unfolding in both countries in 1999. Those five variables were: historical
context, details of the manner of death, mentions of the names of the deceased, follow-up
in the aftermath of the attacks, and articles mentioning the U.S. role in each of the
conflicts. The variables and their characteristics are subsequently explained in greater
detail.

*Unofficial Sources*

Another ancillary aspect of the articles that was measured was the number of
times a specific unofficial source involved in the conflicts was quoted. For the purposes
of this exercise, “unofficial sources” were defined as individuals or agencies not
governed by any external governments or agencies. For East Timor, 1996 Nobel Peace
Laureate and Bishop, Carlos Felipe Ximenes Belo, was selected due to his history of
outspoken pacifist advocacy for East Timorese independence. For Kosovo, current
Kosovo President Ibrahim Rugova was selected for his similar pacifist activism which led
him to co-found the Democratic League of Kosovo. Rugova was also the recipient of the

“Victims” were strictly defined as persons directly involved in the massacres in
East Timor and Kosovo. For example, violent reprisals against Serbians by ethnic
Albanians following the US-led NATO bombing in Kosovo were not counted, nor were
the deaths of Indonesian militiamen caused by East Timorese vigilantes. Similarly, deaths of ethnic Albanians caused by means other than the Serbian occupation (for example, by errant bombs dropped during NATO's aerial campaign) were not counted.

**Historical Context**

For historical context, the articles analyzed in the study were evaluated and judged on whether or not they devoted any time to explaining or referencing the historical background of the conflicts. To understand the events as they are reported, it is important to have an understanding of the historical context in which they are occurring. Historical mentions that did not pertain directly to the histories of either of the conflicts and their immediate geographic regions were not counted. References to the historical context were treated as one attribute of a given article, meaning that multiple references within the same article were counted as one.

**Manner of Death**

Very often the way in which an individual dies can determine how much news coverage that death receives. For example, one who passes on in their sleep of natural causes will certainly receive less attention than one who meets a violent end "hacked to death by machetes." As a measure of how detailed the coverage of the massacres was, the articles from each publication were analyzed for references to the manner of death of the victims. References to the manner of death were treated as one attribute of a given article, meaning that multiple references within the same article were counted as one.

**Naming the Deceased**

An attempt was made to measure whether or not the articles personalized the stories of the victimized populations by measuring how often the names of the deceased
were provided. References to the names of the deceased were treated as one attribute of a given article, meaning that multiple references within the same article were counted as one.

Follow-up

Each of the articles was assessed on whether or not it contained an element of “follow-up” on the resolution of the events. Specifically, articles were examined and recorded when they contained details about the status of the victims in both conflicts. Examples of references that meet the criterion included reports on the prosecution of war crimes, tallies of victims, and the status of refugees. Follow-up reports were treated as one attribute of a given article, meaning that multiple references within the same article were counted as one.

U.S. Role

Another measure of the quality of the articles used for consideration was whether or not they referenced the role of the United States in the initiation of or sustaining of either of the conflicts. For the Kosovo crisis, this meant references to the hard-nosed position adopted by the United States in negotiating with Serbia which forced, by many accounts, an unreasonable compromise on the Serbians. Though it received little coverage outside of the wire service accounts prior to the NATO bombing campaign, Serbia did offer a peace agreement that met NATO’s purported standards for diplomacy to continue in the face of the threat of bombing. The Serb National Assembly Resolution made a commitment

\[ \ldots \text{toward the reaching of a political agreement on a wide-ranging autonomy for [Kosovo], with the securing of a full equality for all citizens and ethnic} \]

As Chomsky put it, “NATO chose to reject diplomatic options that were not exhausted and to launch a military campaign. . .” (2000, n.p.). Others echoed this sentiment, including Alan J. Kuperman of the Brookings Institute who noted “The haunting question is whether such a deal could have satisfied Milosevic and achieved peace at Rambouillet if only the U.S. had offered it. We will never know because America’s secretary of state stubbornly refused to negotiate with the Yugoslavs and instead insisted on bombing without first offering Milosevic the compromise he ultimately accepted” (1999, p. 1).

For the East Timor crisis, this meant references to the U.S. funding of the Indonesian army which organized and armed the militias committing the violence against the East Timorese.
CHAPTER IV

Findings

Quantitative Analysis

There can be little doubt that far more attention was focused on Kosovo than on East Timor by all of the news media outlets analyzed. As illustrated in Table 1, coverage of the Kosovo crisis dwarfed the violence in East Timor by a substantial measure.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>East Timor</th>
<th>Kosovo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wall Street Journal</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA Today</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Times</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>2552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles Times</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Post</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>1394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsweek (U.S. Edition)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>5440</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Qualitative Analysis

Curiously, the overall quality of the coverage of both conflicts as measured in the aforementioned framework showed that, with a few exceptions, the coverage of the East
Timor was more comprehensive than the coverage of Kosovo. The findings suggest that quantity does not necessarily indicate quality.

**Use of Key Terms**

The first of the qualitative analyses of the data showed a slight bias in favor of Kosovo. Key descriptors like “massacre” and “genocide” were slightly more likely to be used when describing the Kosovo killings as opposed to those in East Timor. Though much of the data were mixed, certain publications were much more likely to have a bias toward Kosovo when using terms like “massacre” and “genocide”, including the Wall Street Journal, the Los Angeles Times, Time and Newsweek.

Table 2

**Use of Key Terms (Percent)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>“East Timor”</th>
<th>“Kosovo” and “Massacre”</th>
<th>“East Timor” and “Genocide”</th>
<th>“Kosovo” and “Genocide”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wall Street Journal</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>22 (4%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>11 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA Today</td>
<td>3 (8%)</td>
<td>13 (2%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Times</td>
<td>3 (1%)</td>
<td>42 (2%)</td>
<td>4 (1%)</td>
<td>25 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles Times</td>
<td>11 (13%)</td>
<td>115 (48%)</td>
<td>5 (6%)</td>
<td>75 (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Post</td>
<td>6 (3%)</td>
<td>32 (2%)</td>
<td>3 (1%)</td>
<td>19 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsweek</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>24 (32%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>2 (18%)</td>
<td>21 (84%)</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>11 (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>25 (4%)</td>
<td>269 (5%)</td>
<td>13 (2%)</td>
<td>145 (3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Use of Unofficial Sources

Another element that was measured was the use of “unofficial” sources by the media, described in Chapter III. All of the media outlets fared poorly by this measure, rarely quoting prominent figures associated with the victims of both conflicts. Combined, the unofficial dissident voices of Bishop Carlos Belo and Ibrahim Rugova appeared in less than 1% of all of the articles about both conflicts in 1999. Of those meager appearances, East Timor’s pacifist dissident leader, Bishop Carlos Belo, was quoted far less often than Kosovo’s Ibrahim Rugova. This finding is shocking considering that one of the most bloody massacres took place in the residence of Bishop Belo as East Timorese attempted to take refuge at the site, and that the Bishop has historically been a figure readily-accessible to the media.

Table 3
Unofficial Sources (Percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Carlos Belo (East Timor)</th>
<th>Ibrahim Rugova (Kosovo)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wall Street Journal</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (0.30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA Today</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Times</td>
<td>3 (1%)</td>
<td>6 (0.20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles Times</td>
<td>3 (3.70%)</td>
<td>7 (2.90%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Post</td>
<td>3 (1.50%)</td>
<td>4 (0.30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsweek</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>9 (1.30%)</td>
<td>20 (0.40%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Story Elements

Overall, 39% of the articles measured contained historical information about East Timor, as opposed to an average of 17% of Kosovo articles that contained the same detail (Table 4). With respect to describing the manner of reported deaths, 8% of East Timor articles offered this detail as opposed to only 6% of Kosovo articles (See Tables). Fifty-seven percent of the articles contained follow-up information for East Timor contrasted with 51% of the articles pertaining to Kosovo. Both sets of articles rarely provided detail about the unflattering U.S. role in each conflict, but again East Timor edged out Kosovo 4% to 1%. The only variable on which the two were equal was mentions of the names of the deceased, which amounted to 5% of all of the articles (Table 6).

Table 4

Story Elements - History (Including Percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>E. Timor</th>
<th>E. Timor (Pct)</th>
<th>Kosovo</th>
<th>Kosovo (Pct)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wall Street Journal</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA Today</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Times</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles Times</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Post</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsweek</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>899</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5

*Story Elements - Manner of Death (Including Percentage)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>E. Timor</th>
<th>E. Timor (Pct)</th>
<th>Kosovo</th>
<th>Kosovo (Pct)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wall Street Journal</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA Today</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Times</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles Times</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Post</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsweek</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>52</strong></td>
<td><strong>8%</strong></td>
<td><strong>324</strong></td>
<td><strong>6%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6

*Story Elements - Named Deceased Victims (Including Percentage)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>E. Timor</th>
<th>E. Timor (Pct)</th>
<th>Kosovo</th>
<th>Kosovo (Pct)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wall Street Journal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA Today</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Times</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles Times</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Post</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsweek</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7

*Story Elements - Follow-up (Including Percentage)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>E. Timor</th>
<th>E. Timor (Pct)</th>
<th>Kosovo</th>
<th>Kosovo (Pct)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wall Street Journal</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA Today</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Times</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>1213</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles Times</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Post</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsweek</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>2772</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 8

**Story Elements - U.S. Role (Including Percentage)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>E. Timor</th>
<th>E. Timor (Pct)</th>
<th>Kosovo</th>
<th>Kosovo (Pct)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wall Street Journal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA Today</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Times</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles Times</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Post</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsweek</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>4%</strong></td>
<td><strong>63</strong></td>
<td><strong>1%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Individual Media Outlet Profiles

**Wall Street Journal**

In 1999, the Wall Street Journal ran 67 stories that referenced East Timor, while running 628 stories that referenced Kosovo. This disparity was typical of most of the media outlets, but a greater disparity emerges in the details of the Journal’s coverage of the conflicts. Whereas the Journal made reference to the words “massacre” and “genocide” 22 and 11 times, respectively in articles about Kosovo, it made zero mention of those terms when referring to the situation in East Timor.

Of the qualitative variables analyzed, the Wall Street Journal had poorer overall coverage of the Kosovo crisis than the one in East Timor. For example, 24% of articles...
pertaining to Kosovo contained historical information, compared to 36% of the articles about East Timor. Similarly, 52% of the Kosovo articles contained follow-up information, as opposed to 73% of East Timor articles.

Another *Wall Street Journal* commentary actually puts the blame for the Indonesian-sponsored atrocities on the western world and the push for human rights; Australian peacekeeping troops are already on the ground in East Timor but the debate over responsibility for the recent atrocities there continues to simmer. Human-rights groups blame 25 years of Western coddling of Indonesia. If only the U.S. had applied more pressure on Jakarta, they say, the violence could have been avoided. The reality, however, is almost exactly the opposite. Today’s suffering in East Timor is a direct result of too much Western human-rights pressure without any precautions against the tragic, and predictable, backlash (Kuperman, 1999, p. A1).

This sentiment mirrored the official editorial slant of the *Wall Street Journal* on the East Timor crisis, which also took the position that a push for Indonesia’s accountability on human rights was to be faulted.

*USA Today*

Quantitatively, coverage for Kosovo far exceeded coverage for East Timor with the mentions of each state totaling 529 to 36 respectively.

Qualitative results for *USA Today* were mixed, and the quality of articles for both East Timor and Kosovo was approximately even. While there was considerably more inclusion of historical information in the East Timor articles (44% as opposed to 17% for Kosovo articles, Table 4) there was dramatically less follow-up information (39% as
opposed to 63%, Table 7). As the table shows, the other variables were roughly similar and seemed to show no specific favoritism for either of the countries.

*New York Times*

Quantitative coverage of the two crises in the *New York Times* demonstrated one of the widest gaps between East Timor and Kosovo, with a total of 290 mentions for East Timor and 1394 mentions for Kosovo.

As measured by the five variables selected for the primary analysis, the *New York Times* had a performance in line with the other media outlets and which followed the trend of providing higher quality coverage on East Timor than on Kosovo. Thirty-seven percent of East Timor articles contained historical information as opposed to 17% of Kosovo articles (Table 4). In the other major variable, follow-up, 65% of East Timor articles met this criterion compared with 54% for Kosovo (See Table 7).

A striking feature of the bias contained in the *New York Times* coverage of the conflicts is that throughout the Kosovo conflict in 1999, the Times repeatedly ran listings of contact information for organizations helping the refugees in Kosovo. No such listings were published for refugees in any of the other conflicts going on around the world at the time, including East Timor, even though some of the organizations listed had ongoing efforts in those other nations.

*Los Angeles Times*

From a quantitative view, coverage of the two crises was slanted heavily in favor of Kosovo, with 238 articles mentioning that nation compared with 82 mentions for East Timor.
Of all of the papers, the *Los Angeles Times* tended to provide the most information that dissented from the official U.S. government position, though its treatment of the massacres in East Timor was less than ideal. Whereas 50% of the articles mentioned the history of East Timor, only 21% discussed the history of Kosovo. Similarly 61% of the Times articles about East Timor contained follow-up details, compared to 52% of the Kosovo articles (See Tables 4 and 7).

*Washington Post*

The quantity of coverage in the *Washington Post* was dramatically higher for Kosovo than for East Timor, with a total of 1394 articles to 201.

Coverage of the massacres in the *Washington Post* was mixed in terms of qualitative variables. Numerically, coverage of the Kosovo crisis was vastly higher than that of East Timor, though the story elements tended to be lower as a percentage of the total articles for Kosovo. Of the two most prevalent story elements, 49% of the Kosovo articles contained follow-up information and 43% of the East Timor articles contained the same. Conversely 39% of the East Timor articles contained historical information as opposed to 15% of the Kosovo articles that appeared in the *Washington Post* (See Tables 4 and 7).

*Time Magazine*

As with many of the other publications analyzed, results were mixed with *Time* magazine. Seventy-three percent of the articles that dealt with East Timor contained follow-up information about the situation as opposed to 36% of the Kosovo articles. Strikingly, though 27% of the East Timor articles provided historical information about
the conflict, none of the Kosovo articles provided similar historical context for that situation.

In addition to these statistical measures, *Time* printed a lengthy commentary by Charles Krauthammer which touched on many of the unspeakable realities that governed our inaction in East Timor and action in Kosovo, noting “When China oppresses Tibet, Russia ravages Chechnya or Indonesia reduces East Timor to rubble, we do not intervene. China, Russia and Indonesia matter. But Serbia doesn’t. So when Kosovo is overrun, we strike” (1999, p. 118).

*Newsweek*

The coverage of the massacres in *Newsweek* was perhaps some of the most mixed coverage of any of the media outlets included in this analysis. Twenty-four percent of the Kosovo articles contained historical descriptions, whereas 33% of the East Timor articles included that variable. Conversely, 82% of the Kosovo articles provided follow-up details on the situation as opposed to a paltry 17% of the East Timor articles. Another standout statistic was that 50% of the East Timor articles provided details about the manner of the victims’ death, compared to 14% of the Kosovo articles.

One *Newsweek* article of note appeared in the Atlantic edition of the magazine (which was not counted in the figures used in this assessment). In it, the writers rationalized inaction in East Timor by incorrectly noting “nobody would mistake East Timor for a major strategic asset, and nobody can argue that the vital interests of any major power are threatened” (Bartholet, Moreau, Hirsh, Roberts, & Roberts, 1999, p. 20).
CHAPTER V

Conclusions

Inherent in any qualitative analysis is a certain measure of subjectivity which may color the findings. Certainly, this analysis is in no way intended to provide comprehensive evidence for the validity of the propaganda model, rather its role is to serve as one more example to add to the growing body of documentation for the phenomenon of worthy and unworthy victims.

Perhaps the most consistent factor associated with the qualitative analysis of the media outlets is that their coverage consistently lacked depth and breadth. Worse still is the finding that much of the references to these conflicts that contained any substance were often letters to the editor or special commentaries; a significant level of detail was not present in the day-to-day reporting on the conflicts.

Research Questions

Research Question 1

To the first question, “can a systems theory analysis of driving factors be predictive of media treatment of world events by the news media in the United States,” it can affirmatively be concluded that this is the case from an analysis of the data. As the propaganda model predicted, coverage of the two conflicts was indeed skewed dramatically in favor of Kosovo. Additionally, the qualitative analysis illustrates that market pressures corresponded with an overall poor quality of coverage of both of the conflicts as measured by the standards outlined above. Important contextual and historical information, as well as dissident voices were consistently missing from the articles analyzed.
Research Question 2

To the second question "does the propaganda model articulated by Chomsky and Herman offer insight into the motivations and behaviors that define news coverage," it can be concluded that indeed, the data produced demonstrated that the propaganda model was valuable in being predictive about the behavior of the agenda-setting media. As the propaganda model would dictate, the quantity of coverage was dramatically higher for the Kosovar Albanians (victims of an enemy state) than for the East Timorese (victims of a client state). However, the qualitative analysis was less conclusive. Though the qualitative variables were numerically higher for Kosovo articles, they were roughly the same as a percentage of the total articles in both situations. It is possible that the deficient quality of coverage is attributable to market pressures which tend to sacrifice quality for expediency and profit, as opposed to being the result of manipulation by the political elite. Even if this is the case, the end result is still in line with the propaganda model and affirms much of the media criticism of the modern day.

Research Question 3

The third question asked "does the reporting of the 'agenda-setting' print media differ on violent acts when perpetrated by states friendly to the US (Indonesia) from the reporting of similar violent acts perpetrated by enemy states of the US (Serbia)." Here again, the data indicate that this is the case. Even when accounting for certain differing contextual variables, there was overwhelmingly more coverage for the Kosovo crisis than for the one in East Timor.
Research Question 4

The next question asks “is the quantity of reporting by the ‘agenda-setting’ media on the topic of victims of violence different in the case of East Timor (when perpetrated by a client state) versus Kosovo (when perpetrated by an enemy state).” The data showed that this was overpoweringly the case; in terms of sheer numbers, and in spite of accounting for differentiations between the East Timor and Kosovo crises, the Kosovo atrocities received vastly more coverage than those in East Timor from all of the agenda-setting media outlets measured.

Research Question 5

The final research question posed was, “is the degree of follow-up investigation by the “agenda-setting” media on the topic of victims of violence by terrorist organizations different in the case of Kosovo as opposed to East Timor?” The data produced by this analysis produced inconclusive results that did not affirmatively answer this question. Generally, the inclusion of important information in the articles analyzed was poor overall for both Kosovo and East Timor. It should be noted, however, that these results are possibly attributable to some mitigating circumstances resulting from limitations of the analysis, which are subsequently described in greater detail. Further, this finding is still in keeping with the propaganda model, as it appears to be a systemic failing common to all of the publications. In this instance, the pressure producing the lower quality of coverage comes not from ideological pressure applied from political elites, but rather from a system in which the news media outlets are required to turn a profit, necessarily constricting how many resources will be applied toward costly follow-
up investigation in these overseas conflicts in order to challenge the official view presented by the US government.

Criticisms / Limitations of Research

Racial Disparity

It cannot be discounted that race played a role in the reporting of this conflict. Kosovar Albanians are, for the most part, Caucasian and previous studies have shown the effect of this bias in news reporting is minimized to an extent in print media, given its textual nature and minimized use of imagery. Such bias is exaggerated to a greater degree in the television media, where visuals form the basis for the news reporting. In a commentary for *Time* magazine, Charles Krauthammer rebutted "... on this issue, the Clinton Administration, which at home is irreproachably antiracist and which abroad intervened forcefully in Haiti and Somalia, deserves the benefit of the doubt" (1999, p. 118). Accordingly, it is doubtful that racial differences could completely explain the massive disparity between the coverage of East Timor and Kosovo.

US-led NATO Presence

US intervention in Kosovo, too, played a role in driving up the amount of coverage of that situation. In addition to being observed by experts like Bernays and Lippman, it stands to reason that when a nation goes to war, that nation's news media will focus a significant amount of attention on the conflict. This was certainly the case in Kosovo, as detailed accounts of military technology and lengthy exposes about daily life as a soldier in the Balkans were published. Accounting for this additional coverage as a result of the NATO bombing campaign however, still leaves the period before and after
the campaign in which coverage of the atrocities in Kosovo routinely drew more attention than the ongoing atrocities in East Timor.

Access to Information

Another possible explanation for the disparity of coverage between East Timor and Kosovo is the availability of up-to-date information as each story was breaking. East Timor is a less technologically-advanced nation than Kosovo, and does not benefit from Kosovo's proximity to the technological innovation centers in Europe. In addition, many foreign journalists and UN representatives were forced to flee East Timor to escape the Indonesian paramilitaries. This conclusion, however, is inadequate when one considers that the same was true in Kosovo. Moreover, several stories filed by the various news media wrote specifically about the surprising flow of information coming out of East Timor via the Internet in spite of the violence. For example,

With East Timor still roiled by violence, most foreign journalists have fled. The BBC's site, however, has some of the most comprehensive coverage of both East Timor's vote to break away from Indonesia and the conflagration that has erupted since. Choppy video shows burning buildings in Dili. A first-person report by Dutch journalist Irene Slegt, who was holed up in the United Nations compound, revealing some of the horrors... There is also footage of Indonesian President B.J. Habibie's attempts to reassure the international community, and audio excerpts from an interview with the bishop of Dili, Carlos Belo... (Petersen, 1999, p. B11).
Time Frame

One possible explanation for some of the mixed results from the analysis of qualitative variables is that the time period selected was too short, and that a longer-range analysis would afford us a more well-rounded picture. The situation in East Timor, for example, has been characterized by decades of near total inattention by the U.S. news media. Another important consideration is that the forensic investigation and subsequent war crimes trial of Slobodan Milosevic continued well into 2002, whereas attention to the plight of the East Timorese dropped off considerably after the 1999 series of massacres.

Technological Advances

It is undeniable that technology, particularly the Internet, has radically impacted the news media and the market forces exerted on the press. Another possible explanation of the mixed results from the qualitative analysis is the advent of the Internet which has given activists and others outside the journalistic establishment the opportunity to publish their findings and receive international attention as a result. One article published during the period remarked specifically on the evolving role of the various news agencies;

slowly, however, that great divide – between the once-a-day multicourse meal of original material served up by newspapers on the Web and the quickly changing menus of original fare of the cable and broadcast series – is beginning to narrow (Barringer, 1999, p. C14).

Sample Selection

One possible explanation for the inconclusive results of the qualitative variables is that the analysis was not detailed enough at weighing references to facts which elite interests would rather suppress. This analysis did not take placement of the stories about
the two crises into account, so it is possible that the qualitative features that defined higher quality coverage of the conflicts was emphasized more in more prominent sections. Put another way, all articles were weighted the same no matter where in the particular publication they were placed, meaning that a front page story received as much credit as a letter to the editor. Anecdotally, the writer found that, with few exceptions, the anti-establishment rhetoric that provided richer contextual information about the situations was confined to the “letters to the editor” page of most of the publications. It is possible that, in the face of an energized activist community, the publications forced dissident views to the margins by relegating those voices to the “letters” section where they receive less attention.

Recommendations

Though Chomsky and Herman did a small measure of analysis on the broader scope, it would be valuable to expand the frame of this analysis to include more of the coverage preceding and following the massacres in order to capture a fuller picture of the U.S. media’s coverage of the conflicts. Another valuable addition would be a rubric by which placement of the stories within the various publications could be analyzed so that a weighted analysis could be established. Given the decline of the collective readership of the print news media and the growth of the television news viewing audience, another valuable expansion of the topic would be a companion piece focused on analysis of the television coverage of the two crises. As visual representations tend to elicit more potent emotional responses, and due to the enhanced economic pressures inherent to the medium of television, a comprehensive companion analysis would be immensely valuable at evaluating several of the tenets of the propaganda model.
References


