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Homogenous Agendas, Disparate Frames: CNN and CNN International Coverage Online

Jacob Groshek

Although CNN and CNN International represent just a fraction of global news coverage, the networks are widely viewed, crucial agenda-setting agents the world over. This study found that the online versions of these 2 networks were remarkably consistent in telling audiences in America and abroad what to think about. However, American and non-American online audiences received disparate amounts of coverage and were cued how to think about issues in unique ways. These findings and the high level of news homogenization in this content analysis are evidence of the influence that American news values have in global media culture.

"International agenda-setting remains one of the least studied and least understood processes of international politics" (Livingston, 1992, p. 313). Certainly, this is partly a function of the difficulty in ascertaining the international media agenda given the large number of countries, interests, and media outlets represented. Nonetheless, major media organizations broadcast and publish specialized international editions for audiences abroad. Examples include the BBC, CNN, *Time*, and *Newsweek*, among many others. Some news organizations break down their editions on the basis of global regions, such as Europe and Asia. Likewise, many news agencies, including Al-Jazeera, produce local language editions and Web sites specifically for foreign consumption.

There clearly are a host of reasons for specializing content in order to best appeal to foreign news audiences. The notion of targeting specific regional audiences to sell copy has long been practiced by news organizations (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991). Therefore, there is nothing new in recognizing that the news intended for an American or an international audience varies. However, systematically studying the differences between the American and international media agendas is largely deficient in current research, even though this is clearly an important undertaking, specifically because American policies and actions continue to have a marked global impact. In the current geopolitical climate, "Understanding the nature of international news

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coverage by the news media is of great importance when considering its potential implications" (Wanta, Golan, & Lee, 2004, p. 366).

The rationale for separating American news coverage from international coverage in this study is driven by the fact that several major news organizations divide their editions on these terms. Moreover, this is an inquiry initiated to either verify or falsify claims that American-based media organizations provide less graphic, violent coverage for domestic than international consumption (Flint, Goldsmith, & Kahn, 2003). Critics have charged that in doing so, American media organizations with multinational audiences, specifically CNN, are actively and intentionally attempting to stifle dissent and debate in America (Goodman, 2003). Along these lines, recent research has found that American media are uncritical of American government policies, especially when compared with their European and Asian counterparts (Media Tenor, 2003a, 2003b, 2004; Rendall & Broughel, 2003).

Unlike previous research on international agenda setting (Livingston, 1992), the study conducted here was less concerned with how the agenda is set by whom, but more concerned with how the news agenda differs for American and international consumers. This inquiry also differed from previous research regarding the framing of international news events (Entman, 1991; Entman & Page, 1994; Lee & Craig, 1992; Wanta & Hu, 1993) and built upon other cross-national agenda-setting investigations (Allen & Izcaray, 1988; Malinkina & McLeod, 2000; Peter & de Vreese, 2003; Wanta, King, & McCombs, 1995) to examine a pressing question: How is news intended for America different from the news intended for the rest of the world?

Measuring the American and International Media Agendas

The vastness of the American and international media agendas renders adequate and perfectly generalizable samples improbable and beyond the scope of this particular exploratory study. For these purposes, coverage on the home pages of CNN and CNN International acted as proxies for their American and international media agendas, respectively. As an interview with a former writer and producer with several years' experience at CNN and CNNI revealed, Web content on CNN networks might not be entirely reflective of what is broadcast, but editors do try to repurpose their television content to the Web as much as possible (Grieves, K., personal communication, March 27, 2007). Also, recent research that has shown the synergy between online and print formats is steadily increasing, even across competitors (Boczkowski & de Santos, 2007). Thus, it is likely that even if CNN coverage online does not exactly mirror what is broadcast, it nonetheless carries the same range of topics in a similar fashion as their television networks. This seems especially true in the cases of CNN and CNN International since "Producers for each of CNN's news networks pick the reports they want for their shows from a 'menu' of stories" (Flournoy & Stewart, 1997, p. 4) to deliberately and proactively design content to appeal to their international

and American audiences, respectively. Also, because CNN and its international counterpart were explicitly singled out by critics, this sample serves the purpose of this study well, which was to examine how the geographical and editorial splits between CNN and CNNI affect the news agendas directed for their ostensibly American and non-American audiences to better understand how the American and international media agendas may differ.

Given the recent focus on journalistic cultures and news coverage becoming increasingly homogenous despite more and more media outlets being available to news consumers (Boczkowski & de Santos, 2007; Gans, 2003; Plasser, 2005) this study seems especially potent in examining news that is explicitly produced to be regionally heterogeneous. Thus, CNN and CNN International make excellent case studies for both practical and theoretical reasons. First, CNN has the largest cumulative American audience for broadcast cable news, at nearly 72 million unique viewers per month (Annual Report on American Journalism, 2007a). Online, an average of approximately 24 million original U.S. news users visited CNN online monthly in 2006 (Annual Report on American Journalism, 2007b) and in North America there were over 1.5 billion average monthly combined page views (Turner Webstats, 2006). Interestingly, CNNI is only available in broadcast form to one million television households in North America where its popularity sags in comparison to the domestic American version (CNN International Press Release, 2005).

Comparatively, CNN International is distributed to over 198 million households around the world (CNN International Press Release, 2006) and is the leading international news network in terms of viewership by almost 25% (Global Capital Markets Survey, 2006). CNNI has also had the largest broadcast news audience in Asia for the last 10 years and its Web site was visited by nearly 70% more Asian respondents in a month than its nearest competitor (Pan Asian Cross Media Survey, 2006) where there were over 58 million combined page views per month (Turner Webstats, 2006). Additionally, CNN's networks maintain a strong Web presence in Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East and Africa with over 90 million, 16 million, and 19 million combined page visits per month, respectively. More generally, CNNI is known to attract a loyal audience of elites and "influentials" around the world (Fournoy & Stewart, 1997, p. 196; Reese, in press).

Second, the structure of CNN is also an important consideration. CNN considers itself a global news organization that happens to be based in Atlanta (Fournoy & Stewart, 1997; Grieves, K., personal communication, March 27, 2007). Although this may be the image CNN would like to project, it is often seen as an American news corporation abroad (Natarajan & Xiaoming, 2003), even though CNNI has a substantial number of non-American staff members (Grieves, K., personal communication, March 27, 2007; Volkmer, 1999). There also exists an intra-corporate division between CNN and CNNI although coverage is shared, to some extent, between the two and any other CNN networks (Fournoy & Stewart, 1997). CNN International reports creating an average of 90% original or non-CNN/U.S. generated coverage, and each region receives unique, region-specific coverage at certain intervals to maximize

viewership (CNN International Press Release, 2006). Similarly, all CNN networks frequently use wire services and regional reporting in their coverage.

Third, although content and coverage decisions are being made within the umbrella of one single (American-owned) news organization, editors and producers at both CNN and CNNI need to be effective in providing coverage desired by their regional audiences. Precisely *because* these news networks are part of the same corporation (Time Warner), but they conceive disparate news agendas *within* divisions of the corporation, charges of systemic organizational bias are minimized. That is, any differences in coverage between CNN and CNNI are most likely *not* due to differences in ownership and organizational influences. Any such variations in coverage therefore may be seen as purposive editorial decisions based on regional appeal.

Finally, Natarajan and Xiaoming (2003) found that coverage from CNNI was generally equivalent to that of Channel News Asia, which is staffed and produced by Asians, located in Singapore, and whose news content is specifically aimed at an Asian audience. Additionally, Volkmer (1999, p. 4) argued that the "global political communication" of CNNI results in the formation of a "global public sphere" in which CNNI has been shown to have a profound impact on local newsgathering and production (Foote, 1995; Reese, in press). Considering the dramatic influence of traditional American news values and the socialization process that begets them (Gans, 2003; Plasser, 2005; Tuchman, 1978), the emergence of global television was largely concurrent with the increased reach of CNN networks. The resultant changes in policy relations and formation including "facilitating instant communication between states and leaders, and forcing leaders to adopt policies that they would not make otherwise" has been dubbed *the CNN effect* (Gilboa, 2005, p. 327). For purposes of this study, therefore, the online editions of CNN and CNN International are considered to be good benchmarks with which to begin examining U.S. and international media agendas.

Roberts, Wanta, and Dzwo (2002) discussed the importance of selecting appropriate surrogates to measure news agendas. This sample builds upon previous research (Livingston, 1997; Natarajan & Xiaoming, 2003; Robinson, 2000, 2002; Volkmer, 1999) that has used CNN networks in a similar capacity, and this study poses an important measure of the degree to which one of the leading, most influential news networks in the world may provide a specific online niche to its American audience in its otherwise global approach.

Agenda Diversity: For Whom and How Much?

Prior research has suggested that the media inform their communities as to *how many* issues to think about (Wanta et al., 1995). In most cases, "news media in democratic societies do not consciously and deliberately set the agenda" (McCombs, 1997, p. 433). Agenda setting, in fact, has traditionally been considered a byproduct of the journalistic method. "Through their day-by-day selection and display of the news,

editors and news directors focus attention and influence the public's perception of the important issues of the day" (McCombs & Bell, 1996, p. 93). Because there is only so much space on the front page of a newspaper and only so much time devoted to the news on radio and television, agenda setting is unavoidable. Even in instances of infinite space, as on the Internet, deciding *how many* stories to cover has a latent agenda-setting effect (Roberts et al., 2002).

Additionally, the public has a limited agenda capacity. In their 40-year study of American public opinion, McCombs and Zhu (1995) found that the public agenda had not substantially grown despite advances in education and information accessibility. Simply, even if the media agenda was expanded exponentially, the public agenda is not likely to demonstrate reciprocal growth. It has also been shown that items have a limited duration on the public agenda, with an average of 18.5 months (McCombs & Zhu, 1995). Although there are limits on the public agenda in terms of capacity and duration, the size and diversity of the media agenda play a key role in sustaining certain issues in the agenda and not others.

"Nominal agenda diversity," as described by Allen and Izcaray (1988, p. 32), is the number of issues made salient in news coverage. Conceptually, nominal agenda diversity is merely the number, or breadth, of issues found in news coverage. However, in cross-national comparisons, cumulative media agenda diversity is a vital indicator of public agenda diversity (Peter & de Vreese, 2003). Thus, the first two research questions began at this fundamental level.

RQ₁: How does the nominal agenda diversity of CNN and CNNI compare?

RQ₂: Is there variance between the total amount of news coverage on CNN and CNNI?

Issue Salience and the Global Public

In his seminal text, Lerner wrote that "There now exists, and its scope accelerates at an extraordinary pace, a genuine 'world public opinion'" (1958, p. 54). Indeed, the importance of the mass media in cultivating this phenomenon should not be understated. Beyond providing the "infinite *vicarious* universe" (Lerner, 1958, p. 53, emphasis in original), the "Media also tell people in a fairly uniform fashion which individual issues and activities are most significant and deserve to be ranked highly on the public's agenda of concerns" (Graber, 2002, pp. 206–207).

McCombs wrote that "the general proposition supported by this accumulation of evidence about agenda-setting effects is that journalists do significantly influence their audience's picture of the world" (2004, p. 19). At this point in agenda-setting research, it is widely accepted that the news media are incredibly successful in telling their audiences both *what* to think about and *how important* these issues are, relative to one another. In fact, years of subsequent research have shown the media agenda to be a strong, highly correlated predictor of the public agenda (Rogers & Dearing, 1988).

Media Tenor reported that 9 years of research described the transfer of issue salience as viewers seeing the world as it is shown to them in the media—and not that TV news “simply deliver on their audiences’ expectations” (2003a, p. 43). The impact of issue salience in the media agenda is, of course, that such issue salience is generally reflected in the public agenda, which has been the case since the McCombs and Shaw Chapel Hill study of 1972. Therefore, the following research questions were posed to understand the media agendas set by CNN for American and international consumption online, with the well-established theoretical proposition that any systematic differences across agendas may well translate into disparities in their audiences’ agendas.

RQ₃: Which issues are made most salient on CNN and CNNI?

RQ₄: Are there significant differences between the agendas of CNN and CNNI?

Attribute Salience and Issue Framing

Second-level agenda research has gone on to suggest that media also “tell us *how to think* about some objects” (McCombs, 2004, p. 71). Just as the issue salience is “undoubtedly a two-way, mutually dependent relationship between the public agenda and the media agenda” (Rogers & Dearing, 1988, p. 78), object attributes transfer similarly between the media and public agendas. Not only is the salience of an issue therefore an important consideration, the manner in which an issue is presented warrants consideration. As McCombs and Bell (1996, p. 106) wrote, “Both the selection of objects for attention and the selection of attributes, that is frames for thinking about those objects, are powerful agenda setting roles.” Indeed, the frame of a story has been considered “the most consequential decision that journalists make” (Zillmann, Chen, Knobloch, & Callison, 2004, p. 58). Although second-level agenda setting and framing originate from divergent paradigms, they identify and analyze similar features of news coverage: positive and negative valence, key words, pictures, and other symbols that transmit value judgments about issues or objects.

Some media scholars, producers, and critics have argued that Americans do not and will not pay attention to news that does not directly concern them. For example, “many American viewers are only interested in international news when it involves Americans” (Flournoy & Stewart, 1997, p. 200), reinforcing the view that the domestic version of CNN is not very interested in news that has little direct relevance to the United States (Grieves, K., personal communication, March 27, 2007). Others have also bemoaned the increasingly insular approach of the American media (McChesney, 1999). Further, charges have also been leveled that, specifically, CNNI portrays a much more gruesome, graphic, and conflict-heavy frame than does CNN (Flint et al., 2003; Goodman, 2003; Goodman & Goodman, 2004). The final research questions attempt to shed light on the framing practices for coverage intended for U.S.

and international audiences and also examine the extent to which these concepts interact with one another to produce the type of coverage suggested by critics.

- RQ₅: To what degree are stories framed in the interest of Americans in coverage offered by CNN and CNNI?
- RQ₆: Is there a significant difference in the level of violent imagery in conflict coverage between CNN and CNNI?
- RQ₇: Does American framing interact with violent imagery in such a way that coverage on CNN is significantly different from that of CNN International?

Method

A content analysis was conducted of CNN and CNN International. Specifically, the sample was drawn from the home pages of CNN (<http://www.cnn.com>) and CNN International (<http://edition.cnn.com>). The sample start date was March 1, 2005, and ended on May 31, 2005. The home pages for both CNN and CNNI were printed simultaneously each day at deliberately altered intervals (morning, afternoon, evening, early morning).

This random sample from these months created a simple constructed month of coverage that represented an "average" month-long news cycle, which is why these particular dates were chosen. Though there were significant world events during this period, including the Terry Schiavo euthanasia case, the death of Pope John Paul II, the ongoing war in Iraq, the Michael Jackson child molestation trial, and the confession of the BTK serial killer, Dennis Rader, there were not any monumental crisis events such as 9/11 that would have drastically altered news routines and coverage. Thus, the constructed month research design controlled for variance in certain stories that dominated the agenda at the time and thereby analyzed a sample that can be considered generalizable to other periods of routine coverage on the CNN networks under investigation.

Instead of focusing on contrasts between the "permanent" sections of the sites, which were minimal, this study focused on what essentially was the "front page" for CNN and CNNI on the Web. Coding was done by one person informed of the definitions and trained in data input only for the "top news of the day" section of the Web sites subject to reformatting and change on an ongoing basis. The coder was a recent graduate of a communication school who was selected because of her strong academic performance and interest in the topic. Training consisted of two separate pretest samples that were used to develop definitions and clarify any agreement issues with the author. After the successful negotiation in preliminary testing, the coder was equipped with a finalized codebook and proceeded to code all of the headlines in the sample independently. For reliability purposes a second coder, the author of this study, coded approximately 15% of the sample, which was selected at random.

The headline was the unit of analysis. There were a total of 967 headlines input and coded for various features. The rationale for using headlines was multifaceted. First

and foremost, due to the synergistic model of the CNN corporation, news is shared between all networks (Flournoy & Stewart, 1997). This means that the body of stories online is often almost exactly the same whether it appears on the American or international edition of CNN, which was evident during the course of this study. Therefore, there was little utility in comparing the same story to itself. Second, headlines are considered “the most important index for a news story” (Yang, 2003, p. 238) and thus, powerful framing agents in establishing and sustaining public interpretation of issues (Pan & Kosicki, 1993).

All photographs present in the sample were also coded and incorporated into the analysis because images, specifically antagonistic human-impact framed imagery, “may be particularly effective in bringing attention to the associated reports” (Zillmann et al., 2004, p. 61).

Salience Measures

Each headline on each home page fit into one of 16 possible categories outlined in a study by Natarajan and Xiaoming (2003). The categories were as follows: (1) Accidents/natural disasters, (2) Agriculture, (3) Business/economics, (4) Crime/criminal justice/law and order, (5) Ecology/environment, (6) Education, (7) Health care, (8) Military/national defense, (9) Politics, (10) Race/religion/culture, (11) Social problems/services, (12) Sports, (13) Technology, (14) War/terrorism, (15) Oddities, and (16) Undecided.

Research Questions 1 through 4 were addressed by the following measures: volume—the *total number* of headlines, category—*what* the headline was about, and salience—*how frequently* a specific headline category appeared. Each of these measures were cumulated and ranked as necessary to directly test the research questions posed, which are common measures frequently used in agenda-setting research.

Attribute and Framing Categorizations

Research Question 5 examined the prevalence of Amerocentric news coverage on both networks. There were four basic criteria for determining if the headline was framed in terms of American interests. Headlines with the following conditions were categorized as having an American frame. First, the headline mentioned America. Second, the headline included an American’s name or mentioned one or more subjects as being American. Third, the story took place in America. Headlines that did not have at least one of these characteristics were coded as not having an American frame.

This coding scheme made concrete distinctions in framing stories in an American fashion because many stories intersect in some way with America’s geopolitical and economic interests. Likewise, it also allowed for American framing in international

events where two or more countries were involved. Nonetheless, there were some stories that clearly exhibited American interests but this was not made clear in the headline and the story did not occur in America. For example, the headline "Two men charged in Aruba missing student case" clearly reflects an American interest, since the missing woman was an American. Similarly, another headline "11 killed in Iraq cop-ter crash" also intersects with an U.S. interests, and several Americans actually died as a result of this attack. Nonetheless, in such cases, the headlines were *not* coded as having an American frame, because these headlines were written without American-framed cues and generally focused on other, non-American aspects of the stories. Alternatively, the headline "3 U.S. troops among 27 killed in Iraq" was coded as having an American frame because the headline clearly mentions Americans; even though the events of the story are comparable to the previous example, the headline introduces the coverage differently. Thus, the coding scheme employed here modestly understates the Amerocentric emphasis in news stories, but all explicit references have been identified and coded.

Research Question 6 examined depictions of conflict. To study this question, all pictures were coded in terms of conflict and the level of violence. On the CNN Web site, only the lead story per day included an image. On the CNN International Web site, the leading 3 stories per day included pictures. Although this difference in page design inflated the number of pictures on CNNI, it was nonetheless a relatively straightforward task to select pictures to study. Within each picture, conflict was defined as "disagreements between or among parties" (Natarajan & Xiaoming, 2003) and needed to be obvious and clear from a casual viewing to avoid overinterpretation.

Images were coded not only for the presence or absence of conflict but also for the degree of violence. This coding scheme was based on a 5-point Likert-type scale of violence developed by Fishman and Marvin (2003). These categories were as follows.

First, No Conflict Frame indicated that a photograph did not show two or more parties in disagreement. Second, Conflict Frame/Not Violent image suggested conflict was addressed using diplomatic or nonviolent means. Third, Conflict Frame/Dramatic Violence included images that portrayed violence that occurred for "diversion or amusement," such as boxing matches or fictional murders like those depicted on television programs (Fishman & Marvin, 2003, p. 34). Fourth, Conflict Frame/Latent Violence images did not "show the immediate application of direct physical force" (Fishman & Marvin, 2003, p. 34) or violence, but indicated the seriousness and potential for violence. Examples of latent violence imagery were a soldier or policeman holding a rifle or setting up blockades against protestors. Lastly, Conflict Frame/Explicit Violence was "photographic representation of the direct, intentional application of physical force or its effects" (Fishman & Marvin, 2003, p. 34) and included bombed buildings and injured people as a result of violence, for example.

The final research question was concerned with the ways in which American framing and conflict coverage might interact in coverage. As such, there were no additional coding routines.

Reliability

The reliability scores between the first coder and the author, who coded a random 15% of the sample, were as follows when calculated using Cohen's Kappa. Headline category agreement was 0.87 and American focus agreement was 0.86. Conflict frame and degree of violence also earned an agreement score of 0.86. All of these reliability scores were well above the acceptable level of 0.70 laid out by Frey, Botan, and Kreps (2000).

Results

The first research question examined the nominal agenda diversity of CNN and CNNI. Subsequent data analysis found that of the 16 discrete categories outlined by Natarajan and Xiaoming (2003), CNN covered 13 categories and CNNI covered 15. For practical purposes, the lowest four categories in CNN and the lowest six categories in CNNI represented 2.5% or less of the total coverage for each network. Therefore, these categories were grouped together as "Other," which rendered the nominal diversity of CNN and CNNI exactly the same: 10 categories. Thus, the nominal agenda diversity between CNN and CNNI was equal. It can therefore be observed that the online American CNN audience received the same amount of news issues as the rest of the CNN-viewing world online.

The second research question examined the total volume of coverage offered to American and non-American news consumers. There were a total of 399 (41%) headlines on CNN, compared to 568 (59%) on CNN International. When examined using a difference of proportions test, the results were found to be statistically significant ($Z = 2.5, p < .01$).

What this finding illustrates is that Americans receive significantly fewer news stories than their international counterparts on online CNN networks. Although CNN and CNNI covered the same number of issues (10), Americans were apt to read, hear, or view these issues online with less frequency. The average number of headlines on CNN was 12.8, compared to 18.3 headlines on CNNI. This finding suggests that international CNN news audiences online receive richer news coverage, at least in terms of frequency.

Issue salience was the central inquiry of Research Question 3. This was measured by the frequency of each category that appeared in coverage. The relationships between issue salience on the two CNN networks can be seen in Table 1.

While there were differences in which issues were most salient on CNN and CNNI, the top three categories were the same for both: Crime, Politics, and War. This is not to minimize important differences between two media agendas, but the evidence here suggests that differences between the two are not glaring, but subtle.

The fourth research question asked if there are significant differences between the agendas of CNN and CNNI. A Spearman's rho correlation test was run between the

Table 1
Coverage of News Topics on CNN and CNNI

Category	CNN Rank	Percentage	CNNI Rank	Percentage
Crime/law and order	1	25.3%	2	17.3%
Politics	2	13.8%	1	19.4%
War/terrorism	3	13.0%	3	15.5%
Business/economics	4	10.3%	5	6.9%
Health care	4	10.3%	5	6.9%
Oddities	6	9.0%	8	6.0%
Religion/culture	7	6.0%	4	10.6%
Accidents/natural disasters	8	4.8%	7	6.5%
Sports	9	2.8%	9	3.0%
Others	10	4.8%	10	8.2%
Total		100%		100%

Note: Spearman's rho $r = .89$, $p = .001$.

agendas of CNN and CNNI to examine this. This test yielded an r value of .89, which was significant at the .001 level ($r = .89$, $p = .001$). This demonstrated a "very dependable relationship" (Frey et al., 2000, p. 360) between the agendas of CNN and CNNI on the Web, which in fact were strikingly *similar* and highly positively correlated with one another. It can therefore be stated that CNN's news agenda intended for Americans online was nearly *identical* to the news agenda prepared for the rest of the online world in terms of general news topics.

That being said, it is nonetheless important to look at the data to identify which categories are driving these differences. As indicated in Table 1, it is apparent that CNNI devoted substantially more coverage to religion and culture. This was almost certainly due to the events surrounding the passing of Pope John Paul II. Thus, there is little reason to be alarmed, at least in social and geopolitical terms that the online CNN International audience is being provided with more religious coverage than the online American CNN audience. In fact, this is rather predictable, since a majority of Catholics live outside the United States.

Examining the second-level media agenda, Research Question 5 was: To what degree were stories framed around American interests? This question was also tested with a chi-square and demonstrated a statistically significant relationship ($X^2 = 119.4$, $p = .000$). As might be expected, more American framing was found on *cnn.com* than on *edition.cnn.com*. In fact, 71.4% of all coverage on CNN had an American frame, compared to just 35.7% on CNNI.

The sixth research question sought to determine if there was a significant difference in the frequency of conflict coverage and its level of violent imagery between CNN and CNNI online. Again, this was tested using a chi-square, which yielded the

following results that only approached statistical significance at the .10 level: $X^2 = 5.2$, $p = .155$. Although CNN International on the Web had substantially more pictures due to a slightly different page design, the figures for violence frame were nearly equivalent. This evidence suggests that the international online audience does *not* receive a more violent, more graphic series of images on a daily basis. In fact, CNN-viewing Americans online were exposed to *more than double*, in terms of percent coverage, the latent and explicit violent conflict-framed images (29%) than their international counterparts (15%). This relationship can be seen in Figure 1.

Moreover, an independent samples *t* test actually found a statistically significant relationship where the average level of violent imagery on *cnn.com* was higher (2.26) than that of the international edition of CNN online (1.66). This finding ($t = 2.04$, $p = .04$) also refutes the notion that Americans are receiving censored news by turning to CNN (Flint et al., 2003; Goodman, 2003; Goodman & Goodman, 2004), at least relative to the international (CNNI) audience on the Web.

The final research question posited that attributes and framing practices might interact differently with one another on the two networks. A univariate analysis of variance examined this proposition and returned non-statistically significant results $F(1, 105) = .530$, $p = .468$, partial $\eta^2 = .005$, observed power = .111, which suggests that these concepts do not intersect with one another and that there are no meaningful differences in comparing coverage in this way. However, a main effect between level

Figure 1
Frequency of Conflict and Violent Imagery in Coverage
on CNN and CNNI

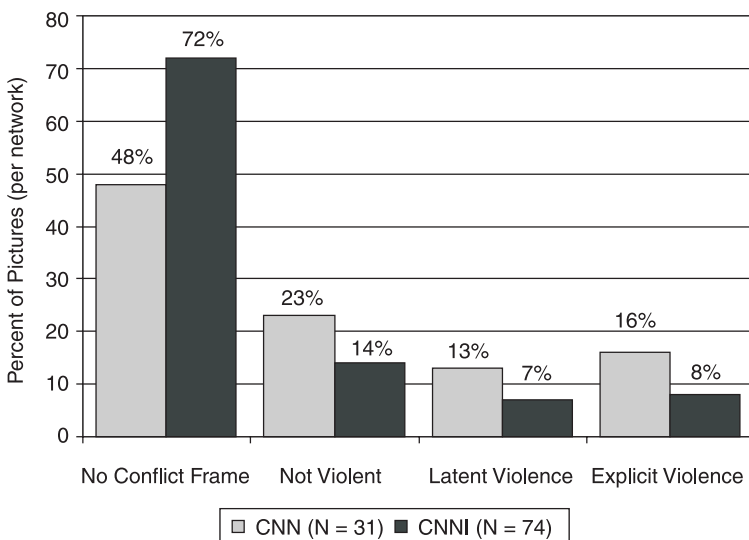
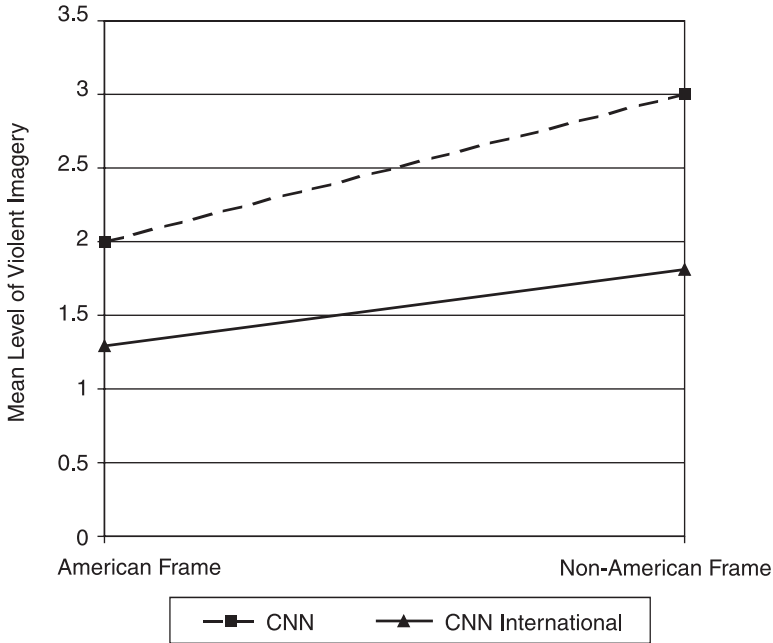


Figure 2
Relationships Between Levels of Violent Imagery, Frames,
and Networks



of violently depicted conflict and American framing actually indicated that American-framed images were *less violent* than images without an American frame $F(1, 105) = 5.49, p = .021, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .052, \text{observed power} = .640$. In fact, this was most true of CNNI's American framed coverage where the average level of violent imagery was lower (1.29) than it was on CNN (2.00), even though both networks demonstrated the same pattern of non-American-framed coverage being depicted in more graphically violent pictures online. These relationships are demonstrated in Figure 2.

Discussion

This study set out to examine if, and how, news for America is different than news intended for the rest of world. To answer simply, yes, Americans (or at least CNN-viewing Americans online) do receive different news coverage than their online CNN-viewing international counterparts, but the topic agenda is very similar. The American coverage on *cnn.com* contains fewer stories overall, more American-framed coverage, and a *greater* percentage of latently and explicitly violent photos than coverage on the home page of CNNI. Indeed, Web coverage found on CNN do-

mestic had significantly higher levels of violent imagery than that of comparable CNN International coverage on the Internet.

Although these findings are substantial, this study revealed that the American CNN media agenda is strongly, positively correlated with the international CNN media agenda. Importantly, this study adds to a growing body of evidence that suggests a certain level of news homogenization (Boczkowski & de Santos, 2007; Natarajan & Xiaoming, 2003) and a global media culture that is "represented by central features of the American media system" (Plasser, 2005, p. 65; Volkmer, 1999) while still not disputing the fluctuations demonstrated on television networks within nations (Bae, 2000; Kull, Ramsay, & Lewis, 2003) even though Web-based analyses might not be generalized with certainty to their broadcast counterparts. Nonetheless, this data analysis still contributes an important measure of understanding to an increasingly popular news medium that may well become the dominant format in the future.

The attributes measured in this study, American framing and violent imagery in conflict coverage, varied distinctively across networks. Interestingly, the decreased level of American framing on CNNI may well suggest that producers are intentionally trying to avoid a pro-American stance, which might reflect the attitudes of their audiences. However, the decreased levels of latently and explicitly violent coverage of conflict involving America on CNNI does not square with the notion that international or non-American media coverage is unique from American coverage insofar as critics have suggested CNN proffers censored news to its U.S. audience. This unexpected finding is actually quite unique and contrary to much academic research that implicates modern media systems—specifically American ones—for overzealously and prematurely adopting administration or other official claims (Aday, Cluverius, & Livingston, 2005; Kaufmann, 2004).

Actually, in an analysis capable of integrating framing practices that were shown to be disparate, there is no evidence of "censored" or uncritical content being produced specifically for American audiences even as the war in Iraq (and other events) continued. In fact, this analysis seems to suggest the opposite: that CNN International framed coverage of American initiatives and individuals in a less explicitly violent and hence, less critical manner. The coverage on CNNI's Web site evaluated in this study was not only less graphically violent than that of Amerocentric coverage on the CNN Web site, but also less violent than its own coverage of other regions and events without American-framed cues.

The value of this study seems equally divided between the similarities and differences in coverage found across American and non-American news agendas. It is worthwhile to note that the news agendas vary only slightly in issue salience, yet other trends such as the diminished redundancy and Amerocentric framing bias found in American coverage may have meaningful effects not only on both American and international public opinion, but also regional intermedia agenda-setting effects. Though these results have important theoretical and practical implications, empirically establishing such linkages was outside the scope of this inquiry into a relatively unexplored area.

Moreover, the statistical analysis of how framing practices interacted revealed a profound influence of American news values, specifically on CNN International, where journalists are socialized to "adapt to a certain level of sensitivity" (Grieves, K., personal communication, March 27, 2007) common to American journalism regarding graphic and violent coverage. Implicit in this coverage is the acceptance of a certain way of doing news in an American manner, which is evidence of the influence of traditional American news routines and news values pervading an organization specifically designed to be non-American. Thus, the homogenization of news agendas in this study and the less critical framing practices of CNNI can be interpreted as meaningful evidence that specialized media outlets, even when explicitly produced and promoted as being unique, might not present substantively *different* news even though news frames may not be applied uniformly. With a growing body of evidence supporting this notion (Boczkowski & de Santos, 2007; Plasser, 2005; Reese, in press), media producers and scholars must be cognizant of how this might endanger Habermasian-type conceptions of the public sphere in the global media culture such as the failure of the marketplace of ideas described by Kaufmann (2004).

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