U.S. MEDIA COVERAGE OF AFRICA: A CONTENT

ANALYSIS OF THE *NEW YORK TIMES*

FROM 2003 TO 2007

By

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

A casual observation of most major American news media sources appears to

suggest that the level of international coverage is less than it once was, and that coverage

of Africa is particularly lacking. Indeed, research has shown that Africa is one of the

least-covered regions of the world by the news media (Fair, 1993). There have been many

allegations of irresponsible and inadequate international coverage, particularly coverage

of Africa, from a wide array of journalists and mass communication scholars. Many

journalists and news editors agree that Africa is underreported (Hultman, 1992). The

Western media seems to have created an image of Africa as "the repository of our

greatest fears" (Hawk, 1992, p. 13): a place filled with natural disasters, political turmoil,

ethnic violence, disease and savagery.

Correspondingly, the average American's awareness of what goes on overseas

also seems to be deficient. Most crisis-related news media coverage of Africa comes to

the top of the headlines, but disappears quickly. Africa particularly receives a great deal

of "parachute journalism" – journalists are quickly in and quickly out during crises

(Hultman, 1992).This typically gives many Americans little understanding of Africa or of

the reasons behind such crises. Africa has been called the "dark continent", which may

refer to the skin color of its people as well as their ignorance of Western customs (Hawk, 1992). Yet this ignorance often seems thoroughly reciprocal.

The lack of news coverage in a region can have far-reaching social, cultural and diplomatic effects. If a crisis event is not given coverage, governments are less likely to send aid. If the citizenry is unaware, it cannot pressure the government for intervention or policy change (Zuckerman, 2004).

There has been dissatisfaction with U.S. news media coverage for a long time, and there have been many studies on U.S. media news coverage. In the twenty-first century, globalization and technology are making the flow of news information freer than ever. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to examine current *New York Times* news coverage to determine if there has been any improvement in coverage over the last decade.

The Decline of Foreign Correspondence

Newspaper foreign correspondence appears to be in decline as television news coverage has grown. Foreign correspondents' freedom to choose what articles were newsworthy has also diminished. In many cases, the question of what is newsworthy is now determined by editors in offices the United States rather than by journalists who are actually in Africa (Ellis, 2000).

Recently, many American newspapers significantly reduced their numbers of foreign correspondents. In the past, foreign correspondents were an important and extremely visible part of American news coverage. Some were quasi-celebrities. Now, the average American cannot name even one (Fenton, 2005).

From a business standpoint, some newspaper publishers believe that localized coverage is best, and that international coverage will be handled by other news media agencies. The result is a cumulative shift away from international coverage. Coverage of America's involvement in and impact on the world seems not to be considered as important as it once was (Rieder, 2007).

American Ignorance

It has been asserted that Americans understand Africa less than any other region in the world. American generalizations of African images and ideas tend to be predominantly negative, condescending, and stereotypical (Fair, 1993). This may be due in large part to poor coverage by the U.S. news media. Ebo (1992), arguing that the U.S. news media has the responsibility to give Americans a realistic and accurate picture of the world, said that due to the media's ethnocentric attitudes, this responsibility is unfulfilled. Africa is presented as "a crocodile-infested dark continent where jungle life has perpetually eluded situation" (Ebo, 1992, p. 15). Africa is presented as the worst place on earth, where natural and political disasters abound (Ebo, 1992).

Whatever the cause, the average American knows relatively little about Africa. Numerous times, Americans have had African crises brought to their attention by Hollywood movies rather than by news media agencies (Fields, 2007).

One of the reasons for both lack of coverage of Africa and the ignorance of Americans is general apathy. Many Americans have been apathetic toward the developing world for decades, in spite of numerous warnings about the dangers of such lack of interest. There are parallels here to William Lederer and Eugene Burdick's classic novel, *The Ugly American* (1958), which presciently forecasted America's trouble in

Vietnam by calling attention to many Americans' lack of interest in and lack of respect for the culture for foreign countries, particularly developing nations where the United States is considered by many to be helping.

<div align="center">The New York Times</div>

The *New York Times* was chosen as the sole newspaper for this study because of its vast influence, its long history as one of America's most reputable and trusted newspapers, and because it is considered a leader in its coverage of Africa. The *New York Times* also has a strong national and international readership.

The *New York Times* has the greatest influence of any American newspaper, and to a great extent, sets America's media agenda (El Zein & Cooper, 1992). Seth Mnookin, a former senior writer for Newsweek, wrote, "Every evening, when the *Times* sends out the next day's story list on its newswire, it sets the agenda for hundreds of other daily papers across the country. Every morning, the *Times*'s front page comes closer than any other single source of information to determining what will count as major news for the next twenty-four hours…and it continues to set the standard to which all other media outlets must aspire" (Mnookin, 2004, p. xiii).

The *New York Times* is on the whole, and has been for a century, trusted and reliable. Harold Evans, a former editor of London's *Sunday Times*, said, on the one hundredth anniversary of the Sulzbergers' ownership of the times, "Under the Sulzbergers, the Times has evolved into something more than a newspaper; it has become, over its century, nothing less than an ontological authority" (Evans, 1996, p. 9).

The *New York Times*, in addition to the *Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times*, is generally considered to be one of the leading U.S. media agencies in terms of

coverage of Africa. These papers have historically had fairly regular coverage of Africa and have, to varying degrees, had their own African correspondents, which is one of the qualities that have helped set these media agencies apart as quality newspapers (Ellis, 2000).

Because of all these factors, the *New York Times* is unparalleled among American newspapers in influence and trustworthiness, and is the ideal choice for study of print coverage of Africa.

Theoretical Approach

The theoretical approaches of this study are agenda setting, social construction of reality, cultivation, and media frames.

Agenda-setting holds that the amount of attention the media give to an issue, the more that issue will become important to the public. Conversely, if the media do not give an issue attention, that issue will be less important to the public. Research has shown that agenda-setting can be a powerful tool for media analysis (McCombs and Shaw, 1972; Herman & Chomsky, 2002; Lee, 2005).

Cultivation theory holds that heavy consumption of television may cause the cultivation of common worldviews and values in those who do not receive significant amounts of information from other sources. These heavy users can have an altered social reality (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli, 1980).

Social construction of reality is related to cultivation theory. It is the process by which people form views of the world. It also considers how the effects of mass communication may alter people's perceptions of reality (Adoni & Mane, 1984).

Media frames, by selection, emphasis, elaboration and exclusion, suggest to the audience what the issue is in a story and also helps establish its context. Frames by the U.S. news media can have powerful effects on how many Americans view foreign countries (Brewer, 2006).

Statement of the Problem

Studies have shown that U.S. media coverage of foreign countries, particularly of African nations, is severely insufficient, is often stereotyped or oversimplified, and primarily focuses on crisis events (Hultman, 1992; Fair, 1993; Osunde, 1996). This study will analyze what degree of coverage African countries receive, as well as the type and focus of that coverage, in order to determine whether the *New York Times*, as a leading U.S. news media agency, has experienced improved coverage of Africa from what previous studies have shown.

Significance of the Study

Osunde (1996) conducted a content analysis of the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* from 1990 to 1995 to evaluate U.S. media coverage of Africa. This study will replicate elements of Osunde's study to determine the current level of the *New York Times*' coverage of Africa, and to determine whether improvements in coverage have taken place since previous studies were conducted.

Methodology

This study replicates a large portion of Osunde's (1996) study of U.S. media coverage of Africa, and duplicates elements of that study's coding scheme. This study is a content analysis of the *New York Times* from January 2003 through December 2007.

The study's population consists of all editions of the *New York Times* published from January 2003 through December 2007.

Research Questions

This study will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What is the manifest content of the *New York Times* in its coverage of Africa from January 2003 through December 2007?

2. Does the *New York Times'* coverage of Africa devote more attention to crisis-oriented news than to non-crisis news?

3. Has the percentage of crisis news in the *New York Times'* coverage of Africa decreased since previous studies?

4. What is the dominant perspective or type of portrayal of the New *York Times'* coverage of Africa?

Limitations

This study was limited to coverage of the *New York Times* from January 2003 through December 2007, and the findings cannot be generalized to other newspapers or news media agencies. The findings also cannot be generalized to other periods of coverage. This study is also bound by the limits of content analysis – it can describe content, but it cannot be used to establish cause and effect.

Thesis Plan

Chapter Two contains a review of literature concerning U.S. media coverage of foreign countries, particularly African countries. It also contains overviews of the agenda-setting theory, social construction of reality theory, cultivation theory, and media framing.

Chapter Three outlines the methodology by which the *New York Times* was studying, and includes explanations of sampling and data analysis methods, coding schemes, and operational and conceptual definitions.

Chapter Four presents the findings of the content analysis, as well as statistical analysis of these findings.

Chapter Five summarizes the findings, and includes conclusions, discussion, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

U.S. Media Coverage of African Events

There is a long history of significant social and political events in Africa that

suffered from poor U.S. media coverage. Many such events were severely underreported.

Often, events were framed in the interests of the United States, particularly during the

Cold War, during which many African conflicts were framed as East versus West.

Additionally, a great deal of coverage was oversimplified or stereotyped, due to some

degree to American journalists' failure to understand events in the context of African

history and culture. Some coverage has also been racially stereotyped, indirectly or subtly

depicting Africans as dependent on and in some ways inferior to Westerners, that is,

white people (Ibelema, 1992). Africa on the whole is presented as helpless, inferior, and

backwards (Fair, 1993). Ebo (1992) maintained that this negative portrayal of Africa is

deliberate and systematic because of the U.S. news media agencies' bias, which is

reflected in the way these news media agencies select foreign articles. The following are

several of the more glaring examples of flawed news coverage.

The Angolan Civil War

Many times, the media has sensationalized African conflicts (Maloba, 1992). U.S.

media coverage of the Angolan Civil War, which was fought from 1975 to 2002, was

poor, and suffered from U.S. media frames. Most American journalists used partisan sources for their articles. Because the Reagan administration supported Jonas Savimbi, leader of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) as an anti-communist freedom fighter, the U.S. news media relied heavily on rebel Savimbi's version of events despite counter claims from the complete local diplomatic community. The media played up Savimbi's anticommunist stance and glorified him as a freedom fighter, framing UNITA's cause in a Cold War context. The U.S. media essentially made Savimbi an anticommunist icon. During coverage of the Angolan Civil War, many visiting journalists also used information in their articles of which they were unable or unwilling to determine the veracity. Coverage of the war ended up being severely lopsided (Windrich, 1992).

The Second Congo War

The Second Congo War, also known as the Great War of Africa, took place from 1998 to 2003. It involved eight African nations: the Congo, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Chad, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi. Nearly four million people died in this war. In spite of this conflict's magnitude, however, the war received relatively little media coverage. It received no media coverage at all from some news agencies (Fields, 2007).

Ethnic Violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

In April 2003, hundreds of people were killed in ethnic violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Millions of people have died from this violence. Yet when these events were first reported, the *New York Times* ran only a short Associated Press story on page A6. Meanwhile, coverage of the war in Iraq dominated media coverage (Zuckerman, 2004). Zuckerman (2004) argued that the story was ignored

because The Democratic Republic of the Congo is a "non-elite" nation, and that no "elite people" were killed. Furthermore, there was little shared culture between that nation and the Untied States, and the conflict would have little meaning for Americans.

1994 South African Elections

A study of U.S. media coverage of South African elections in 1994 found that the media, specifically the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*, by framing issues according to the values of American democracy, presented issues in a way that encouraged negotiation, reconciliation, free elections, and all-inclusive government. U.S. media coverage also discouraged violence and put forth a favorable image of South Africa. The media also portrayed pro-election groups and individuals positively, and portrayed all groups that were against free elections and unified national government negatively. Coverage was also ethnocentric (Reta, 2000). As Africa goes, South Africa tends to receive the bulk of what is considered "positive" coverage. This coverage, which appears "positive" since it supports unity and democracy, was framed to emphasize America's influence on the spread of democracy.

<div align="center">Problems in Coverage of Africa</div>

There are many factors which may explain why U.S. news media coverage of Africa is so poor. It is true that Africa does have many problems, many of them political, which can make recovering from natural disasters difficult. There is also a relative lack of interest in Africa by Americans, who are also often ignorant and insensitive to Africa and African culture. Africa can be difficult to cover because of political, transportation and communication obstacles. Historically, Africa has had widespread opposition to U.S. foreign policy in many instances. There are also profound differences in media

philosophies: in Africa, the media are often considered tools for national development, while American media tend to be more adversarial (Winship & Hemp, 1992). Additionally, the number of U.S. foreign correspondents has declined significantly.

Points of contention on global communication between developed and developing nations have concerned the flow and presentation of news, the dominance of Western news media agencies, and the image of developing countries. Globally, the flow of news tends to be imbalanced because news media agencies in industrialized nations dominate the collection and distribution of news, and so these industrialized nations also tend to receive the bulk of news coverage (Akuta, 2001). U.S. news media coverage of foreign countries is also often dependent on those countries' economic, cultural and political ties to the United States. Countries with stronger ties tend to receive more coverage than countries with weaker ties, at times without regard for important developments there (Fair, 1993).

American journalists tend to analyze African news articles from American mindsets. Most journalists sent to Africa from the West are white and only speak English (Hawk, 1992). This socio-cultural disconnect means that often, American journalists are not sensitive to certain nuances of African culture. Because these correspondents do not have the requisite African experience or understanding, African news articles lose aspects of their value and social relevance. Meaningful articles on Africa require some dedication to cultural awareness of Africa, which is not often given (Ebo, 1992).

Sometimes, the root of coverage problems lies with the African news media agencies. For example, South African news media agencies did not accurately report the violence in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa in the 1980s and early 1990s because they did

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not put in the necessary journalistic effort. These African journalists lacked the enthusiasm to investigate the story thoroughly, and this kind of mediocre news coverage has become acceptable (Jones, 2005). People are becoming journalists, Jones (2005) argues, not because they want to make an impact on society, but because journalism is a steady, middle-class profession. Thus exposing and telling the truth through news coverage has been deemphasized (Jones, 2005).

<center>Newsworthiness of African Stories</center>

The amount of U.S. media coverage that foreign countries receive is dependent on social, cultural, economic, political and geographic factors (Fair, 1993). Ebo (1992) identified various commercial criteria by which U.S. news media agencies select articles. Because the U.S. media is open to commercial influences, maximization of profits affects the determination of what is newsworthy. On the whole, Africa is considered not particularly newsworthy from the standpoint of the economics of the news media. Institutional and contextual aspects of U.S. news media agencies affect their coverage (Dunaway, 2006). American news media are typically profit-driven, and there is only so much time and space available for news. Thusly African articles are often left out, particularly by television news media agencies. Additionally, there is extremely limited space and time for news articles, particularly on television, and so articles about Africa are often cut (Hultman, 1992; Fair, 1993). American journalists in Africa often look for the easiest articles to cover, and so are attracted to sensational and unusual news. Hence coups and natural disasters receive substantial emphasis. Meaningful development articles in Africa, by contrast, are relatively uninteresting and not commercially attractive, and so receive little coverage (Ebo, 1992).

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There are also political reasons why Africa is considered less newsworthy. Countries that are politically or geographically significant tend to be considered more newsworthy than less "relevant" countries. Thus there is an imbalance in the flow of news between the United States and the developing world. When significant political events arise that relate to the United States' political interests, then coverage increases in Africa (Ebo, 1992). The distribution of U.S. news media agencies' foreign correspondents supports the lack of emphasis on African news, as only eight percent of all American newspaper foreign correspondents were in Africa in 1986. These numbers continue to be in decline (Hultman, 1992).

Images of Africa

Many aspects of news media coverage of Africa are unique to coverage of that region. When Africa does receive U.S. news coverage, articles commonly have a narrow focus, due in some part to ignorance by journalists, media frames, and stereotyping. Africa is often depicted as immersed in ethnic violence and political and military fighting (Fair, 1993). African coverage also has a different vocabulary. Violence in Africa is termed "black-on-black", but violence in Bosnia or in Northern Ireland is never called "white-on-white" (Hawk, 1992). African coverage is a different paradigm than coverage of other regions.

There appear to be several African obstacles that prevent thorough coverage of Africa, and the presentation of an accurate image of the continent. These include inadequacies in the African news media, the lack of interest in Africa from the Western world, and many cases of government interference in African news media, which often led to self-censorship. In many African countries, the purpose of the press has been to

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serve the government as propaganda vehicles. Hachten (1992) asserted that Africa's image in the global community has also been damaged by government censorship of foreign journalists, because African governments indirectly censor news flow in the aforementioned ways (Hatchten, 1992).

U.S. television coverage, by the way crisis events are framed, has projected partial or incorrect images of many African events. A study of U.S. television coverage of Rwandan refugees in Zaire/Congo and Rwanda found that the coverage stripped the refugees of their cultural and historical identities by depicting them as either constantly moving or incarcerated. Thus the media framed these events as a humanitarian story with emphasis on African need and Western kindness (Fair & Parks, 2001).

U.S. media coverage of famine victims in Africa most often depicts images of women and children without men. By emphasizing these women and children's helplessness, this coverage reinforces Western ideas that Africa is chaotic and hopeless. This kind of coverage, which often does not take into consideration historical and local contexts of events, supports the concepts of Western superiority, and ultimately supports racial and cultural stereotypes (Fair, 1996).

AIDS news in Africa is primarily related to political events and international conferences. In 2000, sixty percent of the articles on AIDS and HIV on the evening news programs of CBS, ABC and NBC were aired during the World AIDS Conference in Durban, South Africa. Outside of these international political events, there is little coverage (Lehrman, 2004).

Content Analyses of African Coverage

In the latter half of the twentieth century, there were many studies of U.S. news media coverage of Africa. A large number of these were related to Cold War frames. After the Cold War, most studies of U.S. news media coverage were related to massive crisis events. There have been few studies of U.S. media coverage of Africa in the twenty-first century.

Bookmiller and Bookmiller (1992) conducted a content analysis of *Time*, *Newsweek*, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*'s coverage of the Algerian War of Independence from 1954 to 1962. Algeria, a French colony since 1830, rebelled in 1954, fighting for independence. Egyptian President Gamal Abd al-Nasser, who had a pro-Arab agenda, supported the resistance, and so clashed with Western powers who were friendlier to the European colonists. Nasser was portrayed in the media as being communist-friendly. The *New York Times* in particular portrayed him as an outside agitator. In this way, the media framed the Algerian War and its issues in Western terms. On the whole, the media's use of sensational labels prevented many Americans from understanding many of the real issues of the Algerian War (Bookmiller & Bookmiller, 1992).

El Zein and Cooper (1992) conducted a content analysis of the *New York Times'* coverage of Africa from 1976 to 1990. During this time period, coverage of Africa ranged from fifteen percent to twenty percent of all international coverage. Over half of the countries in Africa received no coverage at all. Crisis news was the predominant type of coverage, with 53.8% of coverage in 1976 was on crisis news, 73.2% in 1981, and

87.7% in 1985. Africa received extremely little front page coverage (El Zein & Cooper, 1992).

Fair (1992) conducted a content analysis of the *New York Times'* coverage of food aid sent to Africa by the United States between 1980 and 1989. The *New York Times* had wide-ranging coverage of American food aid in twenty-three countries. However, media coverage was also given a Cold War framework, where Africa was used to highlight East-West opposition. Africa did not have an active voice in these events' positioning of Africa in the world community (Fair, 1992).

Osunde (1996) conducted a content analysis of the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* from December 1990 to December 1995, focusing on coverage of Africa. The study analyzed categories and subcategories of news, portrayal, position and length of story, and origin of news (Osunde, 1996).

Osunde's study determined that selected U.S. elite print media paid significantly less attention to Africa than they did to Europe based on the frequency of their coverage. One possible reason for this is that Africa is not considered an important influence on world politics. These U.S. media also gave significantly less in-depth coverage to Africa than they did to Europe. The majority of this coverage appears to be related to events that threaten American political interests. Furthermore, Europe, Asia and Latin America received substantial coverage of business-oriented news articles from the selected U.S. print media, while Africa received none. These selected U.S. elite print media's coverage of Africa devoted significantly more attention to crisis-oriented news than to development or human interest news, as wars, corruption, starvation and AIDS receive the most prominent coverage. Osunde also found significant differences between the

frequencies of the U.S. media's coverage of development and human interest news in Africa and Europe. The U.S. media seldom reported any progressive news from Africa, which is in keeping with trends that Western media typically devote the most attention to Third World nations in times of crisis. Africa also had significantly more negative portrayals in the U.S. media than positive portrayals, which Osunde attributed, to some degree, to cultural ignorance and stereotyping (Osunde, 1996).

Based on these findings, Osunde made several recommendations on how U.S. media coverage of Africa could be improved. Osunde suggested increasing diversity in the news decision-making process by giving blacks who value their African heritage a greater voice. Additionally, Africa needs an organized constituency in the United States to draw media attention. Osunde also suggested that the U.S. media train African journalists. Also, the U.S. media should increase reporting of news trends, rather than focusing on unusual and bizarre articles. Finally, Osunde recommended that the U.S. media should modify their perceptions of the media's role in society, and use the press as a tool for national development, as many African journalists do (Osunde, 1996).

Agenda Setting in the Media

Agenda-setting theory is focused on the public's perceptions rather than on its attitudes. The media has the ability to emphasize certain issues and articles over others. Agenda-setting theory holds that if the mass media give an issue considerable attention, that issue will become more important to the public (Dominick, 1996; Jeffres, 1997). The reverse of this theorizes that if the media do not give an issue attention, that issue will become less important to the public (Jeffres, 1997). Wanta, Golan and Lee (2004) determined that the more news coverage a nation receives, the more people were likely to

think that nation was important to American interests. They also discovered that negative coverage of other nations tended to lead to negative opinions about those nations.

The seminal study of agenda setting in the media was conducted on undecided voters in Chapel Hill, North Carolina during the 1968 presidential campaign by McCombs and Shaw (1972). The researchers' findings supported the agenda-setting theory, as they found strong correlations between media emphasis on issues and voter perception of the issues (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

Research has shown that agenda setting can be an extremely powerful technique for media analysis (Chaffee & Berger, 1987; Herman & Chomsky, 2002; Lee, 2005). However, agenda-setting typically features some degree of time lag, which could lead to inaccuracies in research; this seems to be the greatest weakness of agenda-setting theory. By analyzing the *New York Times'* coverage of Africa over a five-year period, this study will for the most part negate this weakness.

Media Frames

Framing theory has grown out of research into media agenda-setting. A frame, in the context of news media, is a central idea for media content that, by selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration, suggests what the issue is and determines its context. Framing can have a significant effect on how the media's audience interprets an issue (Jeffres, 1997).

Media coverage frames of other nations can significantly affect how favorably people view them. When media framed nations as sharing national interests, people tended to view those nations more favorably (Brewer, 2006). In this way, the media can be extremely influential. As Brewer stated, "If national interest frames can shape public

opinion – and if public opinion about international relations, in turn, can shape election and policy outcomes – then scholars, journalists and practitioners of foreign policy should pay close attention to the nature and quality of such frames" (2006, p. 99).

The media play a vital role in the framing of events that Westerners have not personally experienced. Over the course of five hundred years of Western expansion into Africa, representations of Africa as "black," "primitive," and "savage," have become popular, leading to modern ideas of Africa as "war-torn," "AIDS-ridden," and "impoverished." The media, by how they frame their coverage of Africa, replicate and reinforce these concepts (Fair, 1993).

For example, Western coverage of Africa has often depicted famine as a natural disaster that is beyond human control. This leads to oversimplified crisis coverage. If, however, famine is understood as a more complex, on-going process in certain parts of Africa that requires long-term attention, the media frame can improve and expand (Fair, 1996).

<div align="center">Cultivation Theory</div>

Cultivation theory was developed by George Gerbner and his associates. Cultivation focuses on television, and its influence on American society. Because so many people watch four hours or more of television each day, television may subsume other sources of ideas and consciousness. So much exposure to the same messages from the same medium produces cultivation, which teaches common worldviews, roles and values (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli, 1980). That is, television may create certain conceptions of social reality in viewers as they come to believe that what they see on television is real (Dominick, 1996). Differences between heavy and light consumers of

television are significant in many cases (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli, 1980; Jeffres, 1997).

It is possible that many Americans have had stereotyped views of Africa cultivated by the U.S. news media. The majority of coverage of Africa has been related to crisis events, and many Americans view Africa as a crisis-ridden place. Only recently has cultivation worked positively for Africa, as Hollywood films like Blood Diamond have drawn the public's attention to issues in Africa that the media had not (Fields, 2007).

Social Construction of Reality

Social construction reality is the process by which people develop their worldviews. Like cultivation theory, social construction of reality theory deals with how mass communication might alter people's perceptions of the world. Here, it is important to differentiate between brute facts and social facts. Brute facts exist whether people believe in them or not. Examples of brute facts are that the moon exists and that the sky is blue. Social facts are dependent on human agreement. Money, for example, is valuable only because people agree that this is so. Social facts are constructed from brute facts (Searle, 1995; Jeffres, 1997).

There are three parts to the process of construction of social reality. First, there is objective reality, which is made up of facts and which is reality experienced outside the individual, as the objective world. Second, there is symbolic reality, which is symbolic expression of objective reality. This includes art and literature, and may include media contents. Thirdly, there is subjective reality, which is constructed by individuals on the basis of objective and symbolic realities (Adoni & Mane, 1985; Jeffres, 1997). It has been argued that the only reality people can know is socially constructed (Nord, 2003).

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Similarly, if a person does not experience a given event, the only feeling he can have

about it is based on his mental image of that event (Lippmann, 1971).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Content Analysis

The methodology used in this study is content analysis, which is a systematic

method by which to analyze message content. It is an excellent way to describe mass

communication content objectively, systematically, and quantitatively, and so has

become one of the frequently-used methodologies for mass communication research

(Kaid & Wadsworth, 1989; Stempel, 2003). The role of content analysis in mass

communication research is to attempt to determine who says what to whom, how, and

with what effect. (Lasswell, 1971; Stempel, 2003). Content analysis, when used in

conjunction with attitude and demographic information, enables researchers to make

predictions about the communication process. Here, researchers are able to deal with

broader questions of process and effects of mass communication (Kaid & Wadsworth,

1989).

The roots of content analysis may be traced to theological and historical analysts

who applied content analysis, often informally, to spoken and written messages (Kaid &

Wadsworth, 1989). A great deal of what constitutes modern content analysis, including

emphasis on coding and reliability, was developed in the 1930s and 1940s, particularly

during Lasswell's continued research into the effects of propaganda (Delia, 1987; Kaid &

Wadsworth, 1989). The quantitative aspects of content analysis procedure originated

from the binary punch card system developed to do calculations with large data sets.

In content analysis, the researcher first determines the subject to be investigated.

Then the researcher defines the population that will be studied, that is, the media source

and time span. In the case of a prohibitively large population, a sample is taken.

Categories are defined for the purpose of classifying content, the sample's content is

objectively coded, and coders are trained. Reliability and validity are calculated. The

findings are then analyzed and interpreted according to accepted media theories (Kaid &

Wadsworth, 1989).

Content analysis is a set of research procedures. Worthwhile content analysis

must be objective and systematic. Content analysis is valuable as a quantitative method of

research because quantification increases the accuracy of the study's conclusions and is

able to better describe covariance between elements (Kaid & Wadsworth, 1989).

There are four methodological problems that content analysis must take into

account: selection of the unit of analysis, category construction, content sampling, and

coding reliability. The unit of analysis, that is, whether the study considers words,

sentences, paragraphs, or whole articles, is determined by the purpose of the study. In

selecting category systems, it is often advisable to use a system that has been used in

other studies, and which has been proven to be workable. A unique set of categories

should be developed if no existing system will serve to meet the objectives of the study.

Categories should be functional and relevant to the study's objectives, and the system

must be manageable. Content must be sampled in such a way that the sample accurately

represents the selected population of study. Time must be randomly sampled, and when

sampling daily media, each day of the week should be represented equally. Reliability in coding, that is, consistency of classification, is necessary for a content analysis to be objective and systematic. Inadequate definition of categories, lack of a common frame of reference between coders, and oversights can all affect intercoder reliability negatively. Thusly, categories must be precisely defined, and should be discussed with coders beforehand. The agreement between coders should be expressed as a percentage. (Stempel, 2003).

As a research method, content analysis has particular advantages. It is able to deal with large amounts of material. Materials for content analysis are often readily available, and content analysis can be implemented quickly. Content analysis is useful for evaluating patterns over time, and for retroactive measurement. It is unobtrusive – that is, it does not typically interfere with the sample. Content analysis does have several limitations: it is restricted to recorded communication, using it to isolate effects is problematic, and it tends to be bound to rigid categories and definitions (Kaid & Wadsworth, 1989).

Sampling

The *New York Times* was chosen for analysis because of its national circulation and international readership, because of its reputation, because it is a leader in the American news industry, and because it contributes to setting the agenda for the rest of America's newspapers (El Zein & Cooper, 1992; Mnookin, 2004).

The time period of analysis is five years, from January 2003 through December 2007. The study's population consisted of all editions of the *New York Times* published from January 2003 through December 2007. This study used a nine-week constructed

sample, which provides optimal representation of a daily newspaper's content for a five-year period. A constructed week consists of seven issues, one from each day of the week (Lacy, Riffe, Stoddard, Martin & Chang, 2001). So this study used nine Sunday issues of the *New York Times*, nine Monday issues, nine Tuesday issues, and so forth, all randomly selected. Random sampling was used to determine which dates were used.

<div align="center">Definitions of Major Terms</div>

This study defines its major terms based on the definitions of terms given by Osunde (1996).

Conceptual Definitions

Amount of coverage: quantity by volume or by number of items of information transmitted about news events.

Media coverage: media reporting of events.

Image: public perception in terms of positive, negative and neutral.

Depth of coverage: amount of detail in or length of the story.

Position of story: location in newspaper, in terms of section and page number.

Crisis news: news focusing on a negative event like war, famine, or natural disaster.

Development news: news focusing on or encouraging growth and progress.

Human interest news: news focusing on interests and values.

U.S. media: the press generally, particularly newspapers.

Operational Definitions

Amount of coverage: quantity of coverage in terms of low, moderate and high; also percentage of coverage.

Media coverage: articles that appear in the New York Times.

Image: public perception in terms of positive, negative, and neutral.

Depth of coverage: length in inches of story.

Position of story: location in newspaper, in terms of section and page number.

Crisis news: coverage with emphasis on violence, crime, disease and disasters.

Development news: coverage with emphasis on health, economy, agriculture and education.

Human interest news: coverage with emphasis on entertainment, sports, tourism and culture.

U.S. media: selected elite print media, the New York Times.

Coding Scheme

This study will duplicate Osunde's (1996) coding scheme. Coders will identify the primary topic of each news story. In the event of multiple topics in an article, coders will identify the topic that receives the bulk of the coverage. This study will code according to the following topics:

Apartheid/Racism

Democracy

Hunger/Starvation

Sports/Recreation

Culture

Health

Disasters

Population

Human Rights

Technology

Education

Crime

Terrorism/Guerilla Warfare

Economy

This study will use Date of Publication as an operational index of coding categories, and will use the following categories of analysis:

1.   *Type of News*

    Crisis news   1

    Development news   2

    Human interest news   3

2.   *Within* Crisis News

    Famine/Starvation   1

    Wars/Coups/Terrorism   2

    AIDS/Disease   3

Human rights	4	
Corruption	5	
Protest	6	

3. *Within* Development News

Education	1	
Agriculture	2	
Democracy	3	
Health/Social services	4	
Technology/Innovation	5	
Ecology	6	
Economics/Business	7	
Law/Justice	8	

4. *Within* Human Interest News

Entertainment	1	
Sports	2	
Travel/Tourism	3	
Culture	4	

5. New York Times *Desk From Which the Story Originated*

World/International	1	
National	2	
Business	3	
Editorial	4	
Letter to Editor	5	

	Sports	6
	Metropolitan	7
	Travel	8
6.	*Story's Focus by Nation*	
	Primary on Africa	1
	Secondary on Africa	2
	Global	3
7.	*Story's Focus by People*	
	Africans in Africa	1
	Africans outside Africa	2
	Non-Africans in Africa	3

Intercoder Reliability

The two coders for this study were both Caucasian, college-educated American males. The primary coder coded 100% of the articles. The secondary coder coded ten percent of the articles in order to establish intercoder reliability. All coding sheets were compared in order to address discrepancies, and one set of data was used for analysis. Intercoder reliability was tested with Holsti's (1969) method and was found to be .88.

Data Analysis

Data from the coding sheets was entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, which was then imported into SPSS and analyzed. Descriptive statistics including percentages, chi-squares and correlations were used to evaluate the findings of this study.

Limitations

This study only considered articles from the *New York Times* from January 2003

through December 2007. As such, the findings cannot be generalized and applied to other

media providers or to other time periods.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of this study was to explore levels and types of coverage of Africa in

the *New York Times*, with particular attention to the degree and percentage of crisis news.

A content analysis of nine constructed weeks in the *New York Times* from 2003 through

2007 revealed 2,396 international articles, 235 of which (9.8%) pertained in some way to

Africa. This study's primary research question was, what is the manifest content of the

New York Times in its coverage of Africa from January 2003 through December 2007?

Authorship

A relatively large number of Africa-related articles (54/22.6%) came from other

news agencies. 25 articles (10.6%) came from Reuters, 21 (8.9%) came from the

Associated Press, and 7 (3.0%) came from Agence France-Presse.

Michael Wines, the South Africa bureau chief for the *New York Times*, wrote 18

Africa-related articles (7.7%). Correspondent Marc Lacey contributed Africa-related 14

articles (6.0%). Lydia Polgreen, who is currently the West Africa bureau chief of the *New

York Times*, contributed 10 Africa-related articles (4.3%) and coauthored two others.

Of the Africa-related articles run during the study period, 28 (11.9%) were

editorial. Seven of these articles (3.0%) were editorials or op-ed pieces. 21 (8.9%) were

published letters to the editor.

In addition to news agencies, photos, and various types of editorials, there were 78 other authors of articles. This variety in authorship suggests diversified approaches to coverage of Africa. Also, it is valuable for newspapers to have correspondents stationed overseas, who can often provide more in-depth and more nuanced coverage because they are more culturally aware and because they see Africa from a more long-term perspective.
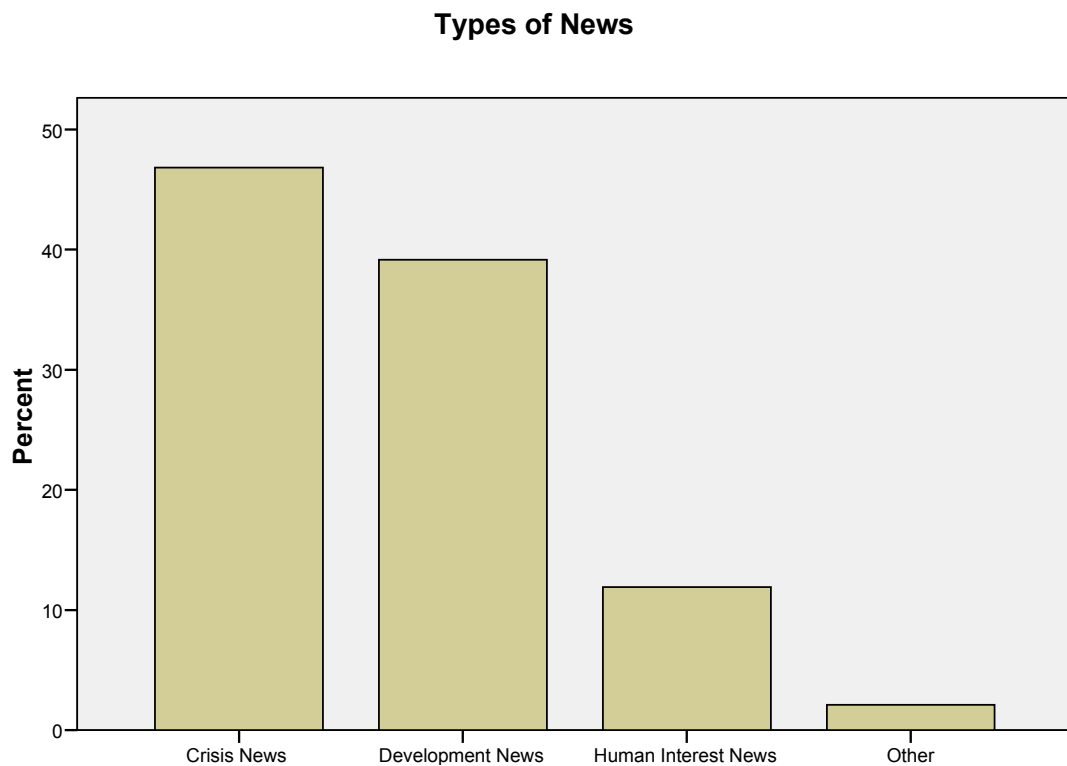
Types of News

The most common type of news was crisis news (110/46.8%). There were 92 articles on African development (39.1%) and 28 human interest articles (11.9%). Five articles (2.1%) were judged not to fit any of these categories. These included three articles on migration and immigration, one on the deportation of refugees, and one on a group of miners being rescued.

Within crisis news, the majority of Africa-related articles (56 articles; 50.9%) had to do with wars, coups and terrorism. There were 19 crisis news articles on AIDS and disease (17.3%), seven on protest (6.4%), five on corruption (4.5%), four on human rights (3.6%), and three on famine and starvation (2.7%). 16 crisis news articles (14.5%) were judged not to fit any of these categories. These included articles on poaching, inflation, sexual assault, espionage, education, the state of refugees, police brutality, illegal immigration, land mines, a plane crash, and an earthquake.

Within development news, there were 44 Africa-related articles on politics and elections (47.8%), 16 on health and social services (17.4%), 13 on law and justice (14.1%), 11 on economics and business (12.0%). There was one article on technology and innovation (1.1%) and one on ecology (1.1%). Six articles (6.5%) were judged not to

fit any of these categories. These included three articles on peacekeeping, one on the Peace Corps, one on the Anglican Church's first black archbishops, and one on the improvement of status for refugees.

Within human interest news, there were nine Africa-related articles on travel and tourism (32.1%), six on culture (21.4%), four on science and history (14.3%), and three on sports (10.7%). Six articles (21.4%) were judged not to fit any of these categories. These included three obituaries, one article about a dancer leaving the hospital, one about conjoined twins, and one about a man being caught with 1067 baby crocodiles in his car.
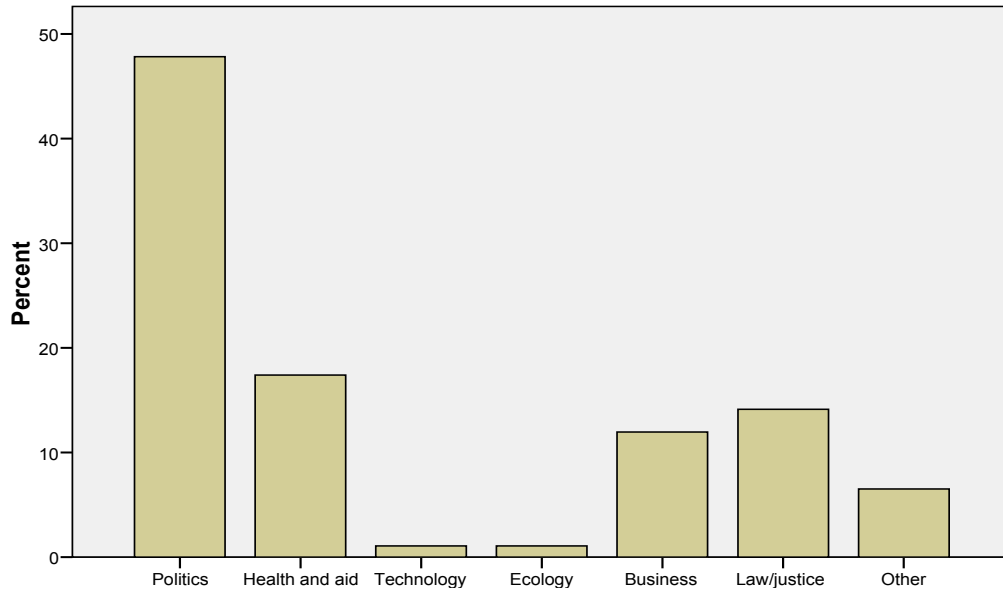
Types of News

Figure 1. Types of News.
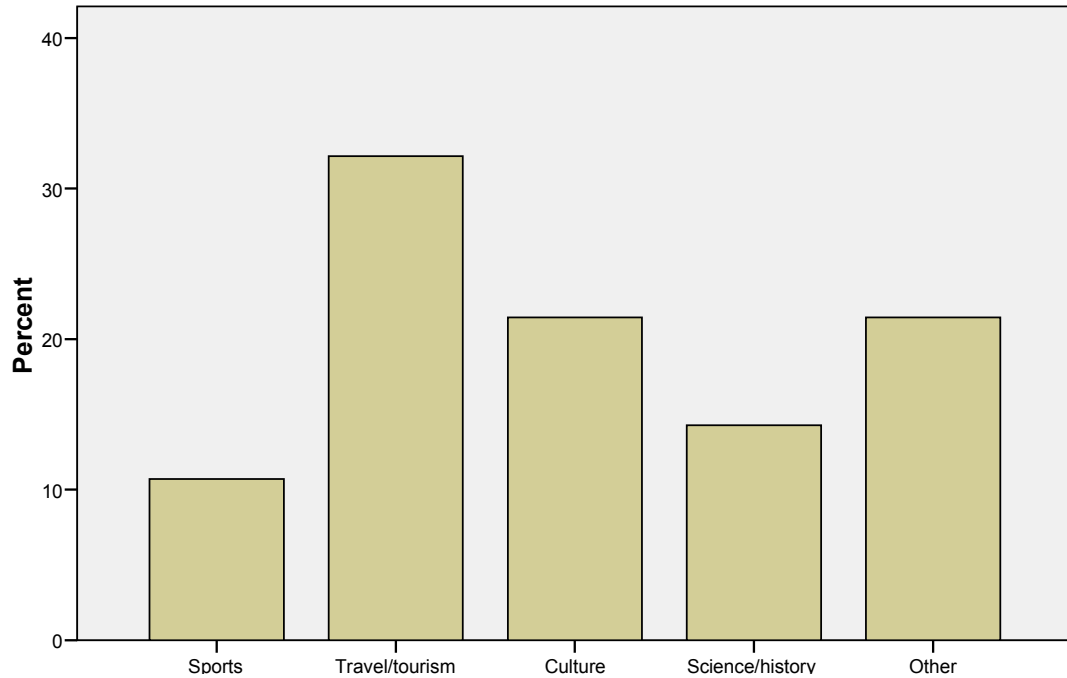
Types of Crisis News
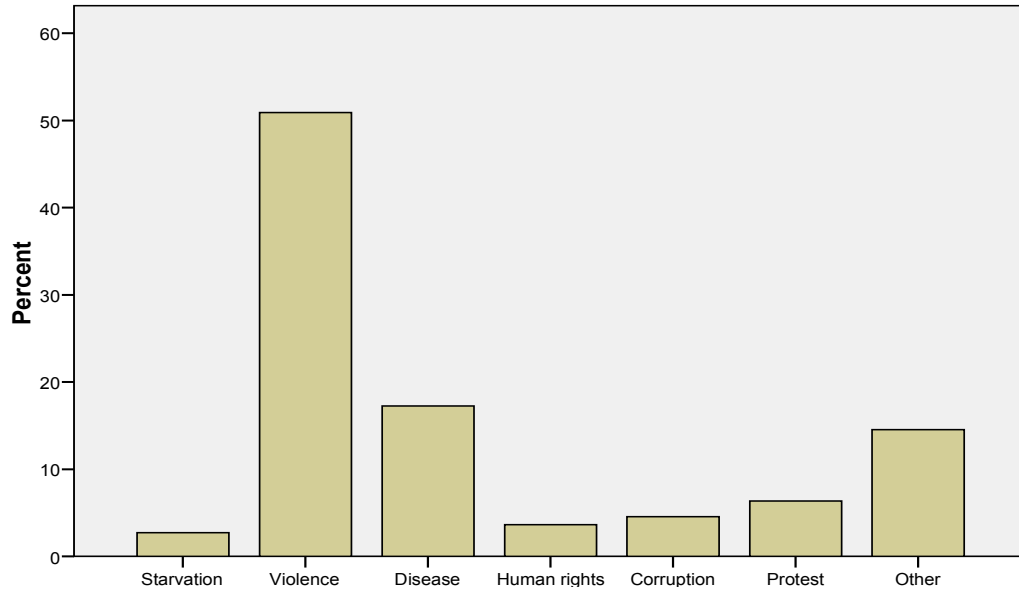
Figure 2. Types of Crisis News.

Types of Development News

**Figure 3. Types of Development News.**

Types of Human Interest News

**Figure 4. Types of Human Interest News.**

Day of Story

The most Africa-related articles, 41 (17.4%) appeared on Wednesday. There were

38 (16.2%) on Saturday, 37 (15.7%) on both Tuesday and Friday, 32 (13.6%) on

Thursday, 31 (13.2%) on Sunday, and 19 (8.1%) on Monday. Monday aside, this appears

to be a reasonably even distribution, although the total number of articles in the Sunday

issue of the *New York Times* is substantially higher than issues on other days. Each day of

the week was equally represented and chosen by random sample. This suggests a fairly

balanced day-by-day portrayal of Africa.

Day
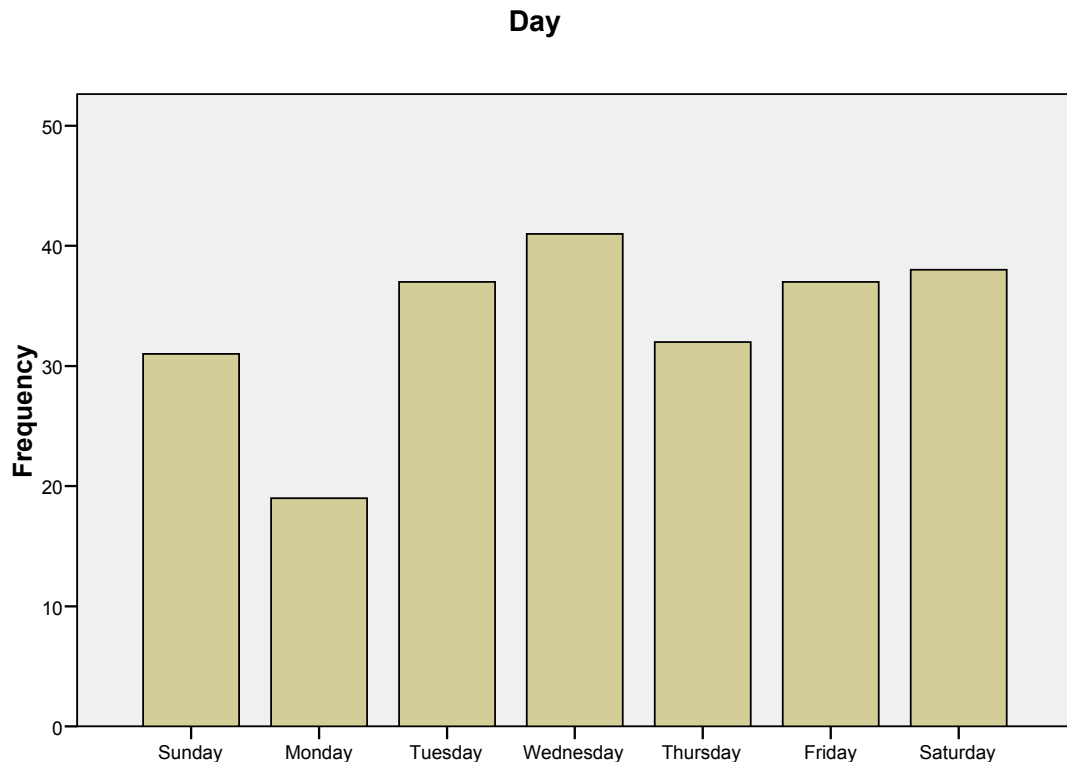
Figure 5. Africa-Related Stories by Day of the Week.

Length of Story

Examining the length of stories by words adds another dimension to describing the levels of coverage Africa and each type of news receives. The mean article length was 503.77 words. The shortest article was 14 words. The longest was 2796. The average length of crisis news articles was 487.39 words. The average length of development news articles was 430.08 words. The average length of human interest news articles was 853.96 words, which was significantly more than the other categories ($p = .005$). This was due in large part to the travel stories, of which there were nine, and which had an average length of 1198.11 words.
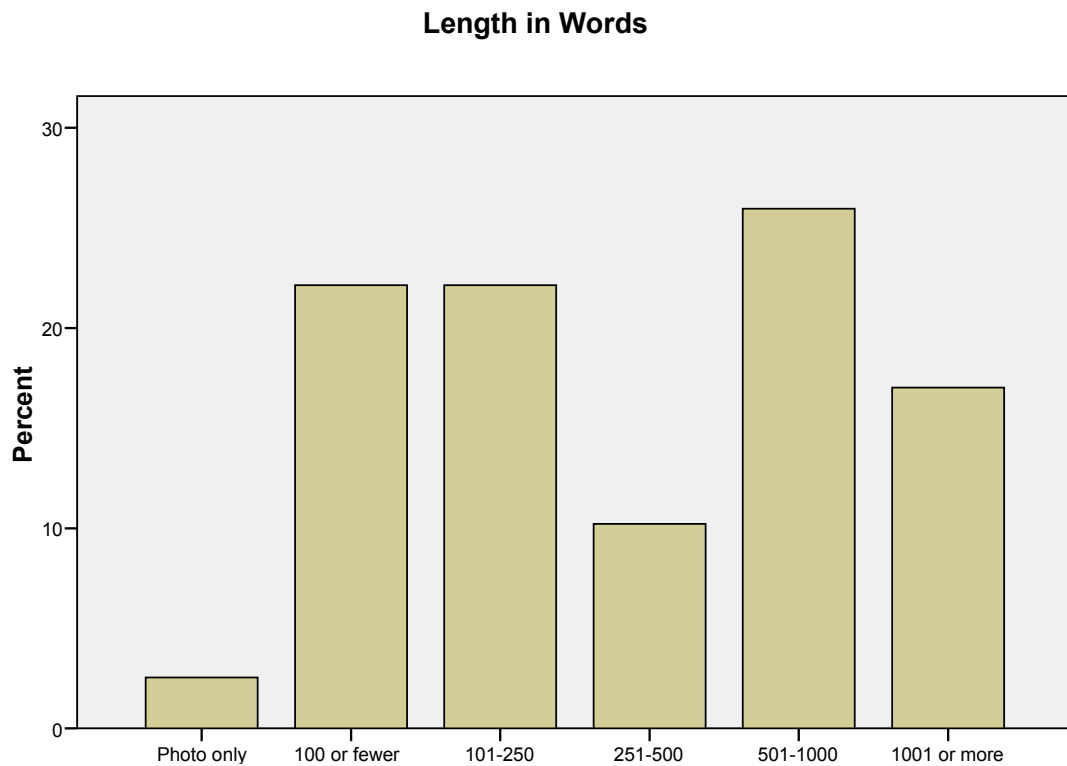
Length in Words

Figure 6. Story Length in Words.

Countries in Story

Specific African countries were mentioned in 210 of the 235 Africa-related articles. South Africa had the most articles, 32 (13.6%). There were 28 articles about Sudan (11.9%), 19 about Somalia (8.1%), 17 about Nigeria (7.2%), 16 about Egypt (6.8%), and 14 about Kenya (5.9%). The 235 articles featured 38 African nations in total. Clearly, some nations receive much more coverage than others, and some receive none at all. More developing nations generally receive less coverage overall, and receive a larger percentage of crisis news. Clearly, some nations receive much more coverage than others, and some receive none at all. More developing nations generally receive less coverage overall, and receive a larger percentage of crisis news.

New York Times Desk

The vast majority of the 235 Africa-related stories came from the *New York Times*' Foreign Desk (166 articles; 70.6%). 29 articles came from the Editorial Desk (12.3%), 9 each from the Business and Metropolitan desks (3.8% each), 6 from the Travel Desk (3.8%), 5 from the National Desk (2.1%) and 3 from the Sports Desk (1.3%). 8 articles (3.4%) came from other desks, including the Arts/Cultural Desk, the Science Desk, and the Style Desk. Thus a large number of the Africa-related articles not handled by the Foreign Desk were editorial, most of which were crisis-related.
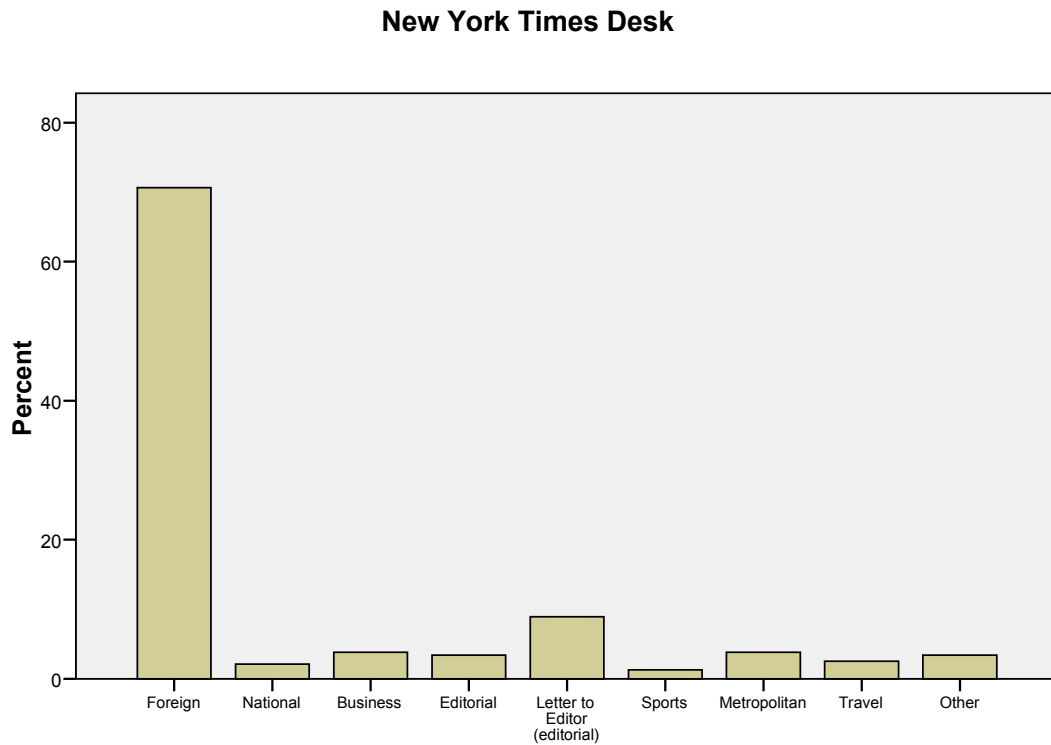
New York Times Desk

**Figure 7. Stories by *New York Times* Desk.**

Focus of Story

These foci were important to study to ensure that Africa is in fact receiving the coverage reported, and is useful to determine when Africa or Africans are being covered only peripherally.

In 195 of the Africa-related stories (83.0%), African nations or people received the primary focus of the article. In 16 cases (6.8%), African nations or people received the secondary focus of the article. In 24 cases (10.2%), the article had a global focus.

In 165 articles (70.2%), the focus was on Africans in Africa. In 32 articles (13.6%), the focus was on non-Africans in Africa. In 27 articles (11.5%), the focus was on Africans outside Africa. 11 articles (4.7%) had other foci, primarily having to do with international diplomacy.
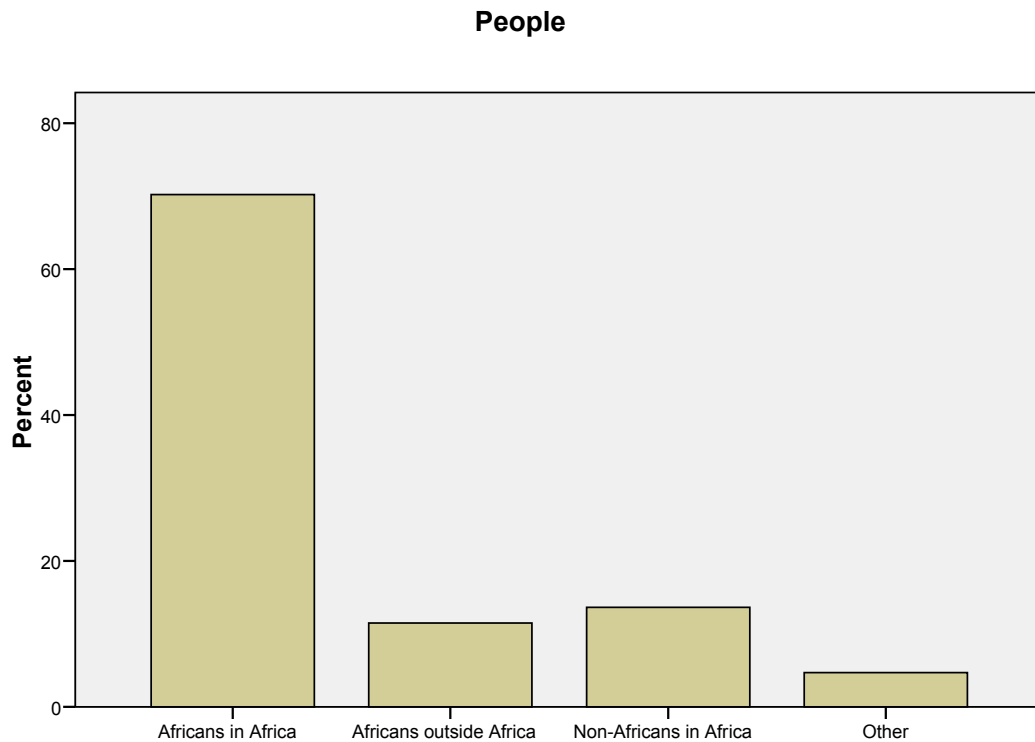
People

Figure 8. Focus on People.
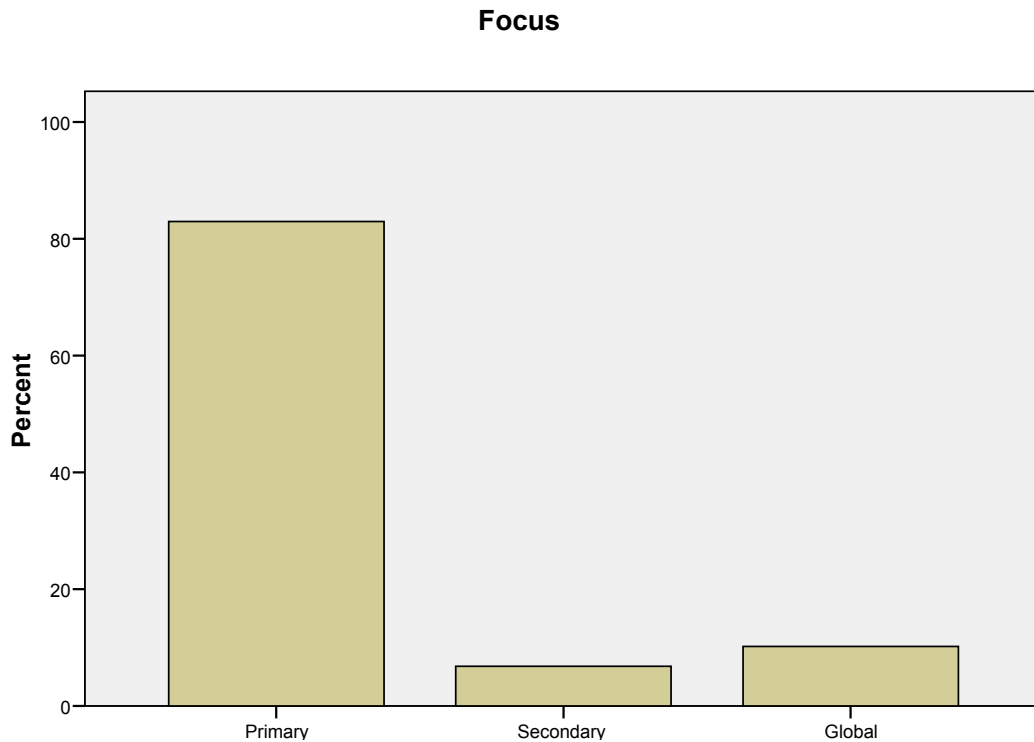
Figure 9. Focus on Africa.

It has been alleged that there is a burden on journalists to play up stories. This study found only a few obvious examples of this (most of them had to do with extreme inflation in Zimbabwe).

Crisis News

The second research question was, does the *New York Times'* coverage of Africa devote more attention to crisis-oriented news than to non-crisis news? This study found that the majority of African coverage (53.2%) was non-crisis news, and that 46.8% was crisis news.

The third question was, has the percentage of crisis news in the *New York Times'* coverage of Africa decreased since previous studies? The findings of this study show a marked difference in the degrees of the types of news covered. In his study of the *New*

York Times and the *Washington Post* from 1990 to 1995, Osunde (1996) found 77.6%

crisis news, 19% development news and 3.4% human interest news. In sharp contrast,

this study showed 30.8% less crisis news than Osunde found in the *New York Times* and

the *Washington Post*, with corresponding increases in the amounts of development news

and human interest news. This is also less crisis news than El Zein and Cooper (1992)

found in the *New York Times* (53.8% in 1976; 73.2% in 1981; 87.7% in 1985).

The fourth research question was, what is the dominant perspective or type of

portrayal of the New *York Times*' coverage of Africa? The most common perspective was

on crisis news (46.8%), followed by development news (39.1%), human interest news

(11.9%), and other types of news (2.1%). Although crisis news was most common, this

study showed a much greater balance than previous studies.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study used content analysis to explore the *New York Times*' coverage of Africa over a five-year period from 2003 through 2007, with specific attention to the types of news coverage Africa received in order to determine whether there has been a change in the degree of crisis-oriented news coverage as well as to determine what the *New York Times*' dominant portrayal of Africa was.

Limitations

This study was limited to a five-year period of coverage of the *New York Times* from January 2003 through December 2007, and the findings therefore cannot be generalized to other newspapers or news media agencies. The findings also cannot be generalized to other periods of coverage, whether by the *New York Times* or other news media agencies.

Content analysis also has certain limitations. It is unable to determine cause and effect, but rather merely describes content. As such this study cannot explain why such a substantial decrease in the percentage of crisis news has taken place. However, description of content is a necessary step in understanding readers' perceptions of Africa.

Discussion

This study appears to show profound changes in media coverage of Africa since previous studies. El Zein and Cooper (1992) conducted a content analysis of the *New York Times*' coverage of Africa from 1976 to 1990. The researchers found 53.8% crisis news in 1976, 73.2% in 1981, and 87.7%. This study found a much lower percentage (46.8%).

Osunde (1996) studied both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, and did not detail specific findings from each paper individually. Therefore the findings from this study cannot be directly compared to Osunde's study of the *New York Times*. However, a more general comparison of numbers and percentages may suggest changes in coverage trends.

In a study of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, Osunde (1996) found that coverage of Africa consisted of 77.6% crisis news, 19% development news and 3.4% human interest news. This study found that the *New York Times*' coverage of Africa consisted of 46.8% crisis news, 39.1% development news, and 11.9% human interest news. This is much closer to what Osunde found for all international stories (42.1% crisis news, 50.6% development news, and 7.2% human interest news). Perhaps this means that Africa is now being treated more fairly by the news media; that is, the way Africa is covered may now be more similar to the way Europe and Asia are covered.

Osunde found that 58 out of 541 international news stories (10.7%) covered Africa, while this study found that 235 out of 2396 international news stories (9.8%) covered Africa. While the percentages are close, Osunde's population size is only one quarter of this study's, and Osunde used both the *New York Times* and the *Washington*

Post. This relatively small sample may have led to skewed percentages in the types of African news reported. Certainly Osunde used a much smaller sample size than the nine constructed weeks recommended for optimal representation of a newspaper's content over a five year period (Lacy, Riffe, Stoddard, Martin & Chang, 2001). However, the reliability of Osunde's study is unable to be determined without replicating it on a larger scale.

Although the coding schemes were slightly different (this study added extra categories to the news subcategory variables for more specific description of content), the primary types of crisis news in Africa can be compared. There were substantial differences in the percentages reported for most types of crisis news. Osunde found 58% coverage of wars, coups, and other types of violence; this study found 50.9%, a difference of 7.1%. Osunde found four percent coverage of AIDS, disease and disaster; this study found 17.3%, a difference of 13.3%. Osunde found 24% coverage of human rights; this study found 3.6%, a difference of 20.4%.

Osunde's reported percentages of types of development news and human interest news in Africa are even more skewed. In development news, Osunde found that coverage was divided thusly: 91% politics and democracy, nine percent business and zero percent for all other categories. This study found 47.8% politics and 12% business, with substantial percentages in health and social services (17.4%) and law and justice (14.1%). In human interest news, Osunde reported 33% entertainment news and 67% sports news and zero percent for all other categories. This study found zero percent entertainment and 10.7% sports, with substantial percentages in travel and tourism (32.1%), culture (21.4) percent, and science (14.3%). Osunde had a total of 11 development news stories and,

according to his reported numbers (3.4% human interest news stories out of a total of 58 African stories), only 2 human interest stories. Osunde's percentages in these categories suggest more strongly that perhaps his sample size was too small to be truly representative, at least as far as the subcategories for the types of news.

The greatest difference between this study and Osunde's is the percentage of total crisis news reported. Osunde found 77.6% crisis news; this study found 46.8%. This is a difference of 30.8%, and it cannot readily be accounted for. Even though the accuracy of Osunde's percentages are in question, they are similar to previous studies of African news content (El Zein and Cooper, 1992).

Fair (1996) argued that Americans view Africa in a distorted way because of famine coverage. If, as it has been widely alleged, a heavily predominant emphasis on crisis news has created or contributed to ignorance and stereotyped images of Africa as a violent, disease-plagued, famine-racked area, the evident decrease in the percentage of crisis news reported may help to alleviate this problem. Since negative coverage of a nation results in more negative opinions about that nation (Wanta, Golan & Lee, 2004), the presence of less negative coverage of Africa might then create less negative opinions of these African nations.

A related issue is Americans' interest in what takes place in Africa. Hultman (1992) suggested that if coverage of Africa increased, perhaps interest in Africa would increase as well. He also pointed out that Americans need to understand that what happens on other continents is important, and they should be educated to be self-motivated to find out (Hultman, 1992). Additionally, the more media coverage a nation receives, the more likely Americans are to believe that nation is important to American

interests (Wanta, Golan & Lee, 2004). From this point, it is likely that increased interest from the populace will result. Perhaps the *New York Times*' greater emphasis on reporting development and human interest stories will help to increase that interest.

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in a study of the differences in communication and media resources between developing nations and wealthier nations, made many recommendations on how the gap might be bridged, including the following. UNESCO encouraged the growth of the media in developing nations, as well as the establishment of regional networks for the increase of news flow. Production and distribution of print media should also be increased. Journalists should be more responsible, and show increased personal ethics. UNESCO also suggested that in the name of progress and globalized communication, those nations developing mass communication technology should share that technology with the developing nations, and as such encouraged more lenient patent and copyright laws (UNESCO, 1980). Due in large part to the capitalistic economic nature of the Western media, particularly the American media, many of UNESCO's suggestions, particularly those having to do with the reduction of commercialization in communication and the democratization of communication, received harsh opposition.

<div align="center">Recommendations</div>

There are few new recommendations that need to be made on how American news media coverage of Africa can be improved. Rather, there have been extensive recommendations made in the past which are yet to be taken, including some of those made by UNESCO.

Winship and Hemp (1992) and Osunde (1996) recommended that U.S. news media organizations train African journalists to improve coverage by eliminating American misconceptions of Africa on the part of journalists. This may be happening in some cases, but by and large, it does not appear that African journalists are reporting African stories for the *New York Times*.

Osunde (1996) also recommended the increased reporting of trends rather than breaking news stories only, with the goal of lessening the emphasis on "stereotypically bizarre" stories (p. 143). Further research into the U.S. news media's coverage of Africa should examine the reporting of trends versus the reporting of breaking news only.

This field is ripe for future research. Content analyses could be done on other American news media agencies to determine whether other media cover Africa similarly to the *New York Times*, as well as on news media agencies in other countries to determine whether coverage of Africa differs by nation.

It would be beneficial for studies to be done in order to determine the cause of this substantial decrease in crisis news. Has journalism become less sensational? Is coverage more in-depth? Has Africa, perhaps, become more stable? Does *the New York Times* have fewer reporters in crisis areas?

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it would be beneficial to study whether this more balanced, less crisis-oriented coverage is related in any way to interest in and knowledge of Africa. Logically, balanced coverage of Africa would increase the spectrum of knowledge readers have about Africa, and should, to some extent, serve to break down stereotypes of Africa as a disease-plagued, war-torn continent.

Summary

This study of the *New York Times'* coverage of Africa appears to show a substantial decrease in the percentage of crisis news from what previous studies of U.S. news media have shown, and a more balanced portrayal in total. Other research methods could be used to determine the reasons for this change, as well as to explore any change in the average American's levels of knowledge and interest in Africa.

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APPENDIX A

Coding Sheet

Story #:   Coder: Length (in words):

Headline:

Author:

Date of story: Day of week:

African countries in story: _____

LENGTH OF STORY (in words)
____1. Photo with caption only   ____2. 100 or fewer   ____3. 101-250
____4. 251-500   ____5. 501-1000   ____6. 1001 or more

TYPE OF NEWS
____1. Crisis   ____2. Development
____3. Human interest   ____4. Other

WITHIN CRISIS NEWS
____1. Famine/starvation   ____2. Wars/coups/terrorism ____3. AIDS/disease
____4. Human rights   ____5. Corruption   ____6. Protest
____7. Other

WITHIN DEVELOPMENT NEWS
____1. Education   ____2. Agriculture
____3. Politics/elections   ____4. Health/social services
____5. Technology/innovation   ____6. Ecology
____7. Economics/business   ____8. Law/justice   ____9. Other

WITHIN HUMAN INTEREST NEWS
____1. Entertainment   ____2. Sports   ____3. Travel/tourism
____4. Culture   ____5. Science/history   ____6. Other

NEW YORK TIMES DESK
____1. World/international   ____2. National   ____3. Business
____4. Editorial   ____5. Editorial (Letter to Editor)

_____6. Sports   _____7. Metropolitan
_____8. Travel   _____9. Other

FOCUS
_____1. Primary   _____2. Secondary   _____3. Global
_____4. Other

PEOPLE
_____1. Africans in Africa   _____2. Africans outside Africa
_____3. Non-Africans in Africa   _____4. Other

APPENDIX B

Codebook

STORY #: Each story has a unique number assigned sequentially and arbitrarily. Enter this number.

CODER: Enter your initials.

LENGTH (IN WORDS): Enter the number of words from the body of the story only. Do not count the headline, the abstract/summary, or the story classification information.

HEADLINE: Enter the headline of the story.

AUTHOR: Enter the author of the story.

DATE OF STORY: Enter the date the story appeared. Use numbers for month, day and year, placing a zero in front of single digits (Example: January 13, 2008 = 01/13/08).

DAY OF WEEK: Enter the day of the week the story appeared (Sunday through Saturday).

AFRICAN COUNTRIES IN STORY: List all African countries mentioned in the story.

LENGTH OF STORY (IN WORDS): Check the blank corresponding to the number of words in the story.

TYPE OF NEWS: Check the blank corresponding to the primary type of news in the story.

WITHIN CRISIS NEWS: If you checked Crisis (1.) under TYPE OF NEWS, check the blank corresponding to the primary type of crisis news in the story.

WITHIN DEVELOPMENT NEWS: If you checked Development (2.) under TYPE OF NEWS, check the blank corresponding to the primary type of development news in the story.

WITHIN HUMAN INTEREST NEWS: If you checked Human Interest (3.) under TYPE OF NEWS, check the blank corresponding to the primary type of human interest news in the story.

NEW YORK TIMES DESK: Check the blank corresponding to the *New York Times* Desk from which the story originated, which is found at the bottom of the story.

FOCUS: If Africa or Africans are the primary focus of the story, check (1.). If Africa or Africans are the secondary focus of the story, check (2.). If this is a global story, check (3.).

PEOPLE: If this story is primarily about Africans in Africa, check (1.). If this story is primarily about Africans in non-African countries, check (2.). If this story is about non-Africans in Africa, check (3.).

VITA

Joshua Adam Danker-Dake

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: U.S. MEDIA COVERAGE OF AFRICA: A CONTENT
              ANALYSIS OF THE *NEW YORK TIMES* FROM 2003 TO 2007

Major Field: Mass Communications

    Personal Data: Born in Saint Louis, Missouri on February 21, 1981, the son of
        Norman Dake and Kathleen Danker.

    Education: Graduated from University City High School, Saint Louis, Missouri in
        May 1999; received Bachelor of Arts in Theology from Oral Roberts
        University, Tulsa, Oklahoma in May 2004; completed requirements for
        the Master of Science degree at Oklahoma State University in May 2008.

    Experience: Freelance writer since 2001; employed by Oklahoma State University
        as a graduate research assistant, 2008.

Name: Joshua A. Danker-Dake   Date of Degree: May, 2008

Institution: Oklahoma State University   Location: Tulsa, Oklahoma

Title of Study: U.S. MEDIA COVERAGE OF AFRICA: A CONTENT
                         ANALYSIS OF THE NEW YORK TIMES

Pages in Study: 57   Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science

Major Field: Mass Communications

Scope and Method of Study: The purpose of this study was to examine the manifest
       content of the *New York Times*' coverage of Africa from January, 2003 to
       December, 2007. A content analysis was conducted of a randomly-selected
       sample of nine constructed weeks. The study examined each article's length, type
       and subtype of news, its *New York Times* desk of origin, and its focus on Africa
       and on the African people.

Findings and Conclusions: This study showed a substantial decrease in the percentage of
       crisis news reported in the *New York Times*' coverage of Africa compared with
       previous studies of the *New York Times* and other major U.S. newspapers. The
       percentages of types of news coverage Africa received appear to be closer to the
       percentages of types of news coverage other regions receive, suggesting that
       perhaps Africa is now receiving more balanced coverage. Nevertheless, crisis
       news remained the predominant type of coverage Africa received.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: Jami A. Fullerton