

Disease, War, and Famine in the Sudan and Haiti: A Crisis Noticed and a Crisis Ignored

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Dedicated to:

My amazing and loving Dad who always pushes me to be my best, my beautiful Mom whose constant encouragement and support gives me the ability to persevere, and my little brother who I have enjoyed many adventures with and can't wait to see what others we have ahead.

Abstract

The media acts as a gatekeeper and decides what material to cover and what not to cover. In order to better understand why one disaster receives media coverage and another crisis is virtually unnoticed by the media, the motives behind covering one story over another is analyzed in this study. Three major American newspaper articles concerning the Haitian earthquake and the crisis in Darfur are examined in order to discover the media's motives for covering Haiti over Darfur.

Key Words: rhetorical, criticism, Haiti, Darfur, crisis, disaster, agenda setting, gatekeeper, newspaper, media, communication, analysis

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Disease, War, and famine affect more than 1 billion children around the world (UNICEF). Many Americans are unaware of a significant portion of the disasters occurring throughout the world. The media plays a huge role in bringing awareness to all types of events occurring across our planet on a daily basis, including disasters. According to an article by Kok, Goh, and Holaday (2011), "Agenda: A Tool For Agenda Setting Research" the Agenda Setting theory states that the media influences what people think and talk about. Therefore, if the media covers a famine or earthquake, then the American public will be thinking and talking about it and this, in turn, will hopefully lead to action. What the media decides to cover is ultimately what people will be aware of and probably be concerned about. Media coverage seems to promote attention to an event and by default aid from the American people and the American government. However, just as disasters do not occur proportionately around the world, media coverage of disasters is not proportionate either. Waters and Tindall (2011) discovered that the more the media covered a disaster, the more people paid attention to it (29). Without media coverage, many disasters and the ensuing human suffering go virtually unnoticed and ignored. Two examples of this concept are the Haitian earthquake and the civil war in Darfur, Africa. Haiti has received a substantial amount of coverage, while Darfur, with hundreds of thousands of people dying and displaced, has not generated near the amount of media coverage as Haiti.

Therefore, the important question is why are certain crises recognized and embraced in the media, but other, equally ruinous crises, are not covered by the media. Johan Galtung and Mari Ruge (1965) presented numerous explanations as to why an event

will or will not receive coverage. Their theory suggests that newspapers will cover events that are straightforward, dramatic, and meet the public's expectations (Smith 34). By looking at British media coverage, Keith Somerville (2009) found that most stories on Africa focused only on tribal violence and not the actual policies and causes of said violence. Piers Robinson (2000) conducted a case study on two crises and discovered that policy may have a huge impact on the amount of media coverage a country receives.

Terence Wright (2004) argues that the type of disaster such as natural verses politically motivated ones, affects the amount and quality of media coverage. Imagery may also be a larger factor than death tolls (Wright 100). Jose Gutierrez and Rainer Garcia (2011) point out that most media coverage of Africa is from a Western point of view, and other foreign coverage or stories seem to also be from the Western perspective. While Ammina Kothari (2010) reveals difficulties reporters face when reporting on Africa; Susan Moeller (2006) indicates that timing could be the cause for many crises being ignored because the media cannot possibly cover everything. In truth, it is impossible to bring attention to everything.

Several studies have looked at media coverage and why a particular event receives media attention and another similar event does not. However, this research will delve deeper and look at the motives behind the media's coverage of one specific crisis over another. Many of the studies in the following literature review look more at reasons on the surface such as geography and policy. However, with the 2004 Tsunami, geography and policy are obviously not the only reasons. The two disasters, Haiti and Darfur, in American newspapers will be analyzed in order to try and determine why one is being deemed important enough for American media coverage and the other is not. This study is important because both crises took place recently with overlapping timelines, and by

discovering the media's motives, hopefully action can be taken to positively encourage media coverage of other crises that might be overlooked. A rhetorical analysis has not been conducted on newspaper articles concerning Haiti and Darfur. There have been many studies on media coverage of Africa and then on Haiti, but not comparing the two.

The purpose of this rhetorical analysis is to possibly discover the motives of American newspapers for providing more coverage of the crisis in Haiti than the crisis in Darfur. At this stage in the research, a crisis will be generally defined as a situation where great instability and serious danger are caused by natural or manmade disasters resulting in increased poverty, death, and disease. It is anticipated that there will be several causes, which motivate the media to cover or not cover a humanitarian issue. Some of these could be location, national interest, religious affiliation, and who is involved, such as celebrities. This study could help bring awareness to other tragedies occurring throughout the world, and why they are not receiving adequate media attention. Hopefully this will lead to increased public knowledge and therefore, more aid to those in desperate need. The following literature review presents various other studies and research concerning Agenda Setting and media coverage of disasters.

RQ: What are the American Media's motives for covering the Haitian earthquake more intensely and thoroughly than the conflict and crisis in the Darfur region of the Sudan?

Background

In order to understand the articles and disasters covered, they need to be analyzed within context. Therefore, a background and history of each country involved in the disaster are necessary in order to understand and shed light on the American media's

motives for covering one disaster over another. The history and relationship that each country has with the United States may play a role in the liberal American media coverage of each country's disaster.

Darfur is currently experiencing one of the longest running conflicts in Africa. A country of very diverse 6 million people making up 100 tribes, the conflict began in 1984 with a preventable famine ("Genocide in Darfur"). Since then, untold amounts of destruction and death have ravaged this section of the Sudan. Civil Wars have continuously ensued with only very brief amounts of fragile peace. These Civil Wars have been between different ethnic and religious groups, particularly Arabs verses Africans and Muslim verses Christian. Arab nomads tired to steal African livestock. The Africans retaliated by cutting the Arabs off from available pastureland. The troubles in the Sudan are not isolated. They are affected and provoked by the surrounding African nations. The war between Libya and neighboring Chad also helped fuel civil war in Darfur (Prunier 58).

In 1989, Sudan was taken over by General Omar Bashir. Conflict continued to escalate under this Muslim government ("Genocide in Darfur"). Much of the suffering in Darfur has been preventable. For instance, there were enough supplies and food for the people in this area, however there was no transportation to distribute it to the people. As a result, people starved. Guerrilla warfare against the Khartoum government popped up, especially around 1999. There was a huge clash between a people group called the Masalit and the Arab herders. Sudan's Muslim government sent helicopters and troops to Darfur. The government's tactic has been to target civilians. About 2,000 Masalits were killed in a matter of days. The tragedy did not end there. Around 100,000 people were displaced and 40,000 fled to Chad (Prunier 75). Osama Bin Laden had his base of operations in Darfur for

a time in the Nineties (Dagne). He had been an enemy of the United States for many years, and became number one on America's most wanted after 9/11. This most likely did not help shed a positive light on the Sudan for America.

In 2003, there was an insurrection in Darfur. The African farmers were frustrated with the Sudanese government for not addressing the issues with the Arab nomads. Two rebel groups formed called the Sudan Liberation army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) ("Genocide in Darfur"). The Khartoum government decided to suppress the rebels with a group of Arabs named the Janjaweed, also known as "Devils on horseback" ("Genocide in Darfur"). There were no rules for this group. The violence that Darfur experienced was raised to inconceivable levels. Aircraft first bombed the villages, then fighter-bombers and helicopters would come by and machine gun anything left standing in the village. Finally, the Janjaweed would come through the village and rape, kill, loot, burn and shoot any survivors who had been unable to run away. The cruelty that the Muslim government inflicted on its own citizens is simply incomprehensible. Small children were tossed back into burning buildings (Prunier 100-101). About 400 villages were destroyed ("Genocide in Darfur"). Their goal, however was not to kill everyone like Adolf Hitler had wanted to kill every Jew. The plan was to inflict large scale attacks to terrify people and displace many causing fear and confusion. Nongovernment organizations and aid were blocked from the country. Darfur was not on most people's radar because it was far away, complicated, and hard for Westerners to identify with. At the time, the media was covering the peace agreement between the North and South. The NGO's finally started to notice Darfur in 2003. In 2004, Darfur was finally classified as a genocide by President George W. Bush and the United States, however many countries

refrained from using such a strong term for the crisis in Darfur. When the U.S. declared genocide in Darfur, the media finally had an angle on this crisis. Heart wrenching pictures followed along with moral outrage. However, little information concerning the political situation was transferred to the American people. This led to a call for action, but no military intervention, which will reveal prove to not be very effective in promoting change in the Sudan. The attention on Darfur lasted until about 2004. Then the tsunami hit and the public's attention turned to Asia (Prunier 128).

This ongoing genocide has claimed at least 400,000 lives as well as displaced 2.7 million people ("Genocide in Darfur"). Additionally, 4.7 million people in Darfur rely on humanitarian aid. The Sudanese government denies these numbers and its connection with the Janjaweed. It says only about 10,000 people have died as a result of this conflict ("South Sudan Centre for Conflict Resolution (SSCCR)"). However, in 2005, the International Criminal Court (ICC) began an investigation into Darfur's genocide. The ICC has recently charged several Sudanese government officials with crimes. Arrest warrants have been issued for former Sudanese Minister of State for the Interior Ahmad Harun and Janjaweed militia leader Ali Kushayb. In March 2009, Sudanese President al Bashir was charged with "directing a campaign of mass killing, rape, and pillage against civilians in Darfur" ("Genocide in Darfur"). This makes him the first sitting president to be indicted by the ICC. The Sudan has been uncooperative with the ICC and has not handed any of the officials over ("Genocide in Darfur"). Several peace agreements and ceasefires have occurred throughout the years, especially in 2006, 2008, 2009, and 2010, but none have had a lasting, permanent impact on the region ("SSCCR"). It is a very unstable and unpredictable area. In 2010, the year this study looks at, Darfur is still a very bloody place.

In May alone, 600 people died. It is difficult to get the full picture of the war crimes occurring in Darfur because sometimes the only information about these attacks comes from the Darfurians who were there, since the Sudan has denied many peacekeepers and humanitarian workers from the conflict areas (hrw.org). The Status of Forces Agreement provides that peace keepers be allowed to go wherever aid is needed in Darfur, however the Sudanese government and criminals have hurt and blocked their efforts. It is a very dangerous area for peacekeepers and at times, deadly. The Sudanese government does not enforce the Status Force Agreement and no one makes the Sudan enforce it. The Sudan has even gone so far as to expel 13 humanitarian aid organizations in 2009 after the ICC indicted President al-Bashir (“Darfur: New Deaths, Other Abuses Underscore Need for Better Access, Improved Security”). Fighting and clashes between rebel groups and the Sudanese government have consistently left civilians in the middle and crushed beneath the ever mounting burdens of disease, starvation, and genocide.

Haiti’s history goes all the way back to 1492 when Christopher Columbus landed on the island. Native Americans inhabited the island at the time; however, they quickly died out after Columbus’s arrival due to European diseases and violence. African slaves were first brought to the island in 1510. The Spanish used the slaves to work in the plantations and mines. Slavery increased when France took over the island in 1697 (Juang and Morrissette 546). The Haitian War of Independence released Haitians from France’s rule in 1804. Haiti became the first independent black republic (Juang and Morrissette 548). Unfortunately, a succession of dictators ruled Haiti. This inevitable led to a country ravaged by civil wars. From 1843 to 1915 alone, Haiti experienced 102 revolts.

The majority of the population was black and poor, while the wealthy minority was mulattos, which did not ease tensions. The United States has stepped in and occupied its neighbor twice: 1915-1934 and 1994-2000 (Juang and Morrissette 548). When the United States marines first came to Haiti, they tried to provide stability to the country by building roads and schools. However, Haiti would not be able to maintain stability for any length of time. The U.S. helped Haiti reestablish free elections in 1930, which elected Stenio Vincent. Haiti was once again completely independent, but this new president changed the constitution and basically made the President's position one of authoritarian ("History of Haiti"). Francois Duvalier was elected President in 1957, although ballots were most likely tampered with. Many died under his oppressive rule, although, the United States continued to support this government because Americans did not want a communist government taking over. Haiti was an ally of the U.S. against communism in the region. As the case with many dictatorships, Duvalier was succeeded with an even more brutal dictator in Jean-Claude Duvalier. Haiti's economy and people suffered to an even greater extent under his rule. The Pope actually visited Haiti during the eighties and did not like the suffering and corruption he saw. The United States eventually assisted Haitians in expelling Jean-Claude in 1986 (*CBS News*). President Ronald Reagan said, "I can only tell you I hope we can be of help as this interim government goes forward and tries to introduce democracy to Haiti" (*CBS News*). Haiti never seemed destined to succeed in the quest for peace and stability. Fighting and natural disasters have continued to batter its shores.

In 1991, a military government again took control of the island nation. The U.S. intervened when thousands of Haitians tried to flee to Florida. Over the next year, the U.S. Coast Guard rescued 40,000 Haitians at sea. The U.S. returned to Haiti to restore the

government and order. Haiti welcomed America back; however, all good things must come to an end and Haiti's government slid back into corruption once again. This time, the foreign aid community chose to enforce tough love by withdrawing all aid from this corrupt regime in 2000. This withdrawal led to a recession and more violence and riots in the country. By 2004, a humanitarian crisis was evident. The U.S. led other countries in a humanitarian aid effort. In 2006, President Preval was elected ("History of Haiti"). He would be President of Haiti when the devastating earthquake hit in 2010. Many countries, including the U.S. have been involved in Haiti's history, which has consisted of poverty and tragedy with glimpses of hope throughout the years.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The Haitian earthquake and civil war in Darfur are two horrific tragedies. Both involved loss of life, displaced peoples, and political turmoil. However, it is clearly apparent that the attention the media gave to each of these crises was not remotely equitable. As noted in the Introduction, the Agenda Theory tells the public what to think about, not necessarily though what to think. With the Agenda Setting theory in mind, a rhetorical analysis of newspaper articles concerning the Haitian earthquake and Darfur civil war might uncover the media's motives behind covering one crisis over the other. Several studies have been conducted trying to discover why some disasters are deemed worthy of media coverage and others are not.

Disasters occur throughout the world all the time. The media coverage is limited due to numerous legitimate reasons that include time, space, and public interest. As a result, the gatekeeper decides "what to cover and what to omit and how prominently it should be displayed and how often it should be repeated" (Graber 7). Editors and journalists are considered gatekeepers. Their decisions have been found to be "subjective and based upon personal values" (Kratzer). For instance, Kratzer (2003) looked at how the editors decided which 9/11 pictures to publish in the newspaper. The term gatekeeper is derived from the Agenda Setting Theory. McCombs and Shaw first proposed the Agenda Setting theory in 1968 in their study.

Agenda Setting theory explains that the media does not tell people what to think, but what to think about, and therefore, what is important. Waters and Tindall found that people paid more attention to the 2004 tsunami the more it was featured in the media (29).

The media also influenced donations, especially through the Internet. The media coverage was more effective if the story featured individuals and organizations dealing with the tsunami rather than just the tsunami as an overall and independent event (31). Heldman, using Agenda Setting theory, analyzed the two hurricanes Andrew and Katrina to see how the newspaper's portrayal affected the public's perception of the disasters. The frame in which the victims were portrayed affected how the public viewed the situation as well as how long the crisis kept the public's interest and attention.

Erickson, et al. (2008) used the Agenda Setting Theory to look at how four newspapers covered Hurricane Katrina. The way a story is framed directly affects how people think of the story. McCombs and Shaw (1972) illustrate that the media molds and filters what happens in the world through Agenda Setting. Furthermore, since the media only covers certain issues, this indicates to the masses that these are the most important issues.

Grainey, et al. illustrated the media's Agenda Setting practices when three newspapers set the tone for a local campaign. People thought more about the racial issues than the seven main campaign issues because that is what the newspapers decided to cover more fully (Grainey, et al. 362). Kodrich and Laituri dug deeper into media's Agenda Setting concerning the foreign election in Mexico that had implications for the U.S. The qualitative analysis revealed that newspapers highlighted the candidates' character and poll standing rather than policies (19). Therefore, people thought more about the candidates' character rather than their policies and what they stood for or how they might govern.

Galtung and Ruge compare the world to broadcast stations and identify several reasons why something may or may not make it in the agenda to be aired or published. These include: "If the frequency of the signal is outside of the dial it will not be recorded" and the stronger, more clear, unambiguous, meaningful, and unexpected the signal is "the more probable that it will be recorded as worth listening to" (Galtung and Ruge 65). Galtung and Ruge predict that events will be more likely to be included in the media's agenda if elite nations or people are involved, if the story is personalized, or if it has extremely negative consequences (Galtung and Ruge 68). An explanation for this is it sees itself as the center of the world (Galtung and Ruge 84).

Mohamed and Gunter's study also supported McComb's and Shaw's Agenda Setting Theory. The differing amounts of mass media coverage "influences what people think about, but not necessarily what people think" (Mohamed and Gunter 151). In Egypt, they found a positive correlation between the national newspaper agendas and public agendas, however they noted that there was not as strong a correlation between the national newspaper agendas and that of the reader agendas. On the other hand, the opposition newspaper possessed a very similar agenda to its readers. An explanation for this is that the reader viewed the national newspaper as just a voice or mouthpiece for the government and is therefore, more inclined to listen to the opposition newspaper, which will criticize the government at times (Mohamed and Gunter 154).

Ethnic problems and conflicts seem to be highlighted quite often in the media concerning Africa's overall troubles. This was the case in Kenya when British journalists focused mainly on the tribal and ethnic violence instead of the actual policies and issues surrounding the election (Somerville 530). There was a significant difference between the

articles written by reporters actually located in Kenya verses those back in London. Those working from England, with limited knowledge on Africa, wrote utilizing several standard clichés. Tim Butcher was told that he only needed to remember two things when writing about Africa: which tribe and how many killed (Somerville 531). Reporters regularly utilize labels to assist the readers to identify and better comprehend whom they are talking about. The term “Tribal” is commonly used in Africa, which can lead to desensitization to the actual people involved (Somerville 532). Labels such as tribes can also oversimplify the issues being reported and then as a direct result of the oversimplification, the reader is not fully or accurately informed (Somerville 539). Many journalists write in a manner or style that people expect, hence the way most journalists frame their stories on Africa. Again, Somerville points out that most journalists do not give the “why” a tragedy is occurring (532). Sensationalism gets media attention, not context. (Somerville 532).

The empirical evidence demonstrates that the media does not provide disasters with equal amounts of coverage. Robinson (2000) looked at how the media covered the two different crises in Bosnia and Kosovo in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* as well as in television. He found in these two case studies that uncertain policy within the U.S. government and critical media coverage could in turn influence the American government to ultimately intervene and provide required humanitarian aide. However, if governmental policy is well defined and set in stone, then the media will not successfully influence the American government to intervene in a crisis, even genocide. Perhaps if the media realizes that its coverage will not have an impact on the situation, it will be less likely to cover it. However, to counter this Graber (2007) contests that media coverage can change government action and even policies in his study on torture (23). Through his

research, he believes that if the media brought attention to the something as morally abhorrent as torture, then governments would be forced to stop.

Hawkins realizes that conflicts tend to either receive an intense amount of news coverage or none. There does not seem to be room for moderate amounts of coverage during a particular crisis, perhaps no interest (Hawkins 56). The CNN Effect and Agenda Setting theory were used for this study. He believes that policy makers can directly affect whether or not disasters receive aid. More importantly, in turn it is the media that can pressure the policy makers to bring awareness and aid to crises. If there is not national interest in the crisis, then pressure might be just what the policy makers need in order to act. The CNN Effect has not received a significant amount of support, but Hawkins argues that it is because military decisions have been analyzed, not humanitarian issues in general. Interestingly, it was discovered that in many of the crisis areas or events that were covered by the media, they were done so only because the U.S. was present there. Again, “the scale of the conflict is not a factor in the media’s determination of newsworthiness” (Hawkins 61). Nations’ interest, proximity, access, relevance, significance, sympathy, simplicity, continuity, and sensationalism are all factors that contribute to media coverage of a conflict (Hawkins 62). Livingston and Eachus also look at the CNN Effect and found that the officials set the agenda for the media. The officials use the media to promote their foreign policies instead of the media choosing the content to cover independently (Livingston and Eachus 427).

Olsen, Carstensen, and Høyen (2003) found that media coverage does not greatly or easily influence the amount of emergency assistance a country provides. Instead, it is the Western donors’ interest in that region, as well as the presence of humanitarian aid

stakeholders that determines this. This could help dictate what crises the media will cover then. Besides geographical distance, a crisis' coverage also depends on the imagery it can produce and whether or not other crises are occurring at the same time (Olsen, Cartensen, and Hoyen 112).

Not only is there an uneven distribution of disasters amongst poor and wealthy countries, but also uneven media coverage of these disasters. The CARMA report conducted a content analysis of the media coverage on crises all over the world. Size does not necessarily predict how much coverage a disaster will receive. Rather the "Western self-interest" also termed "national interest" seems to be a huge predictor (Franks 281). Unfortunately, humanity does not seem to be the biggest motivator in news media coverage. Even after the cries of "never again" at the end of the Holocaust, ideas such as economics, regional security, and national policies seem to set the international agenda much more so than human pleas for help and assistance. It is interesting to note that 17 percent of the Katrina coverage focused on the economical impact. In contrast, Hurricane Stanley did not have any economic or political twist; it only had suffering people, which "gives it the shortest possible shelf life." Galtung and Ruge (1965) found that cultural proximity, negativity, and sudden events all help contribute to media coverage. Therefore, it makes sense that natural disasters, which occur close to home would receive more attention than an event that is far away and taking place over a long period of time. Additionally, people tend to want straightforward stories, not overly complicated or difficult ones. Franks points out that the 2004 tsunami took place far away from the Western countries, however there were numerous Westerners killed, which in turn help promote its coverage in the western media. Interestingly, forty percent of the media

coverage focused on the Western victims, which only accounted for less than one percent of the total fatalities.

Along with gatekeeping, Jeong and Lee conducted a study to determine what factors surrounding a country predict its coverage of disasters in the American media. Contrary to other studies, they discovered that the death toll and economic factors were actually huge predictors in the first month and concluded that the American media was overall pretty fair in its coverage. As the crisis timeline progresses it was noted that political factors began to influence the media coverage, generally this began to occur sometime after the second week. They observed and reviewed 137 disasters in 56 countries over a 14-year period (Jeong and Lee 14).

Wright contends that some media coverage of a crisis is like a movie that starts off in the middle of the film and during an intense scene in order to hook the audience's attention. The terrorists' attack on 9/11 was the dramatic event that brought attention to the continuing tragedy of Afghan refugees (Wright 97). Natural disasters will receive media attention for different reasons than politically motivated cousins. Western interests are not as important in a natural disaster as the actual graphic imagery (Wright 100). Hence a more costly disaster may not receive as much media attention as another disaster if it is not very photogenic for television. Eaton gives a predictable pattern of how the media covers a disaster story on television: disaster strikes, search and rescue, Western aid effort, threat of hunger and disease, and the final miraculous story of someone getting saved (Wright 103). Interestingly, Wright points out that the Western media always seems to require the need to mold a disaster story into a form easily relatable to Westerners in order to justify covering the story (105). Also, many refugees or people involved in the

disaster do not have the ability to fully and adequately communicate their situation to the public and have to rely on the reporters to intervene and speak for them which “places the refugees in a child-like state, seemingly unable to stand up for themselves” (Wright 106). Wright proposes three things that determine news coverage of a disaster: the event must be too big to be ignored or have some Western interest, disaster must produce vivid imagery, and how innovative the style of news coverage is (108).

The disparity of uneven news coverage is not unique concerning disasters. Others have looked at the quantity of media attention on other issues as well as how it is covered. Kim et al. conducted a textual and content analysis of three female athletes. Themes emerged in the news about how each athlete was portrayed, and they found that the athletes’ actual success in competition (victories) were not proportionate with the media coverage (Kim et al. 315).

Gutierrez and Garcia studied how the media usually covers African issues from a Western point of view. From 2004-2005, the Spanish newspapers highlighted the humanitarian workers’ perspectives concerning the Darfur crisis as opposed to the people entrenched in the disaster. This type of reporter coverage dates back to 1968, when British journalist Alan Hart used Irish Priest Kevin Doherty to accurately discover find out what was really going on in Nigeria (Waters 697). The Catholic priests helped reporters bring attention to the crises occurring in Nigeria, but at the same time it was from their own Western and humanitarian point of view (Waters 698). The Africans remained mostly invisible in the media (Waters 709). Now back to Gutierrez and Garcia’s study in Spain, the summer of 2004, Darfur received the most press in Spain due to General Colin Powell and relatively little interesting competing domestic news at the time (74). The type of

humanitarian framing in newspapers concerning Darfur has led to the media's focus on the consequences, not the actual political, cultural, and religious causes of the crisis.

Humanitarian framing avoids the political complexities (Gutierrez and Garcia 78).

Furthermore, it is seen as a local problem, which leads to little interest from Westerners.

The press is supposed to be unbiased and present the public with facts; however, as demonstrated in this study, the press actually helps to reinforce stereotypes of Africa. Most studies having to deal with Darfur have taken place a few years ago, however, there is still an ongoing crisis occurring there to this day.

Moeller contends that poor timing explains why many disasters fail to get photographed, documented, and published in the media. For instance, Katrina overshadowed the worst day in the Iraq War with 1,000 dead and 500 injured (Moeller 173). With literally millions of people dying all over the world due to AIDS, tuberculosis, and civil wars, numbers do not necessarily matter or are able to independently attract media attention. Something else must come with the crisis in order to sensationalize it for Western media and public. In 2005, the *Report* showed that natural disasters received the most news coverage. Swiss Re annually publishes two reports concerning disasters. One lists the most expensive disaster concerning lives lost, the other in terms of the overall economic impact (Moeller 176). The tsunami in far away Muslim Indonesia confounded people because it received so much media coverage. Possible explanations include Christmas, live action video and pictures, and rich Westerners (Moeller 179). Neal Gabler said, "acts of God are better than manmade disasters like Darfur. And things that happen in one swoop - one fell swoop are better for the media than things that happen drip-by-drip like AIDS and malaria" (180).

It appears to be the case, that reporters cannot seem to make a story fresh long-term and keep it in the media all by themselves. Natural disasters, even those of significant destructive size, are also seen as simple because the media can easily say what happened and what aid is needed (Moeller 180). On the other hand, manmade disasters include, political, social, and military issues (Moeller 185). England claimed the disaster victims are “in a global lottery, really. And they play every night to seek our attention and our support. And every night 99 percent of them lose. And one percent win” (Moeller 185). Americans live in a world that contains small attention spans, special effects, and adrenaline rushes. Moeller points out that the media only continues coverage of these big natural disasters as long as they stay simple or until the next big thing comes along. Reconstruction is monotonous and does not provide scintillating photos (Moeller 186). The media has made strides in improving its coverage of disasters by keeping the Tsunami and Katrina in the news when it transitioned to looking at the economical implications and government response. However, part of the problem for lack of follow-through on coverage is the reporters are no longer getting the information firsthand. They need context in order to affectively report. Moeller contends that the media’s target audience is more important than the significance of the issue (192). Suryanarayan utilized Agenda Setting and Framing to analyze three newspaper’s coverage of the 2004 tsunami that affected twelve countries. She found that the story remained a hot topic in newspapers for about a month and then it began to slip away into oblivion. However, many unknown third world countries enjoyed attention during this time that normally would go unnoticed by the media (Suryanarayn 16).

Many historians claim that hundreds of thousands of Jews died due to insufficient coverage by the media. George Santayana famously said, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" (284). Unfortunately, the U.S. media seems doomed to repeat this mistake. Agenda Setting and Gatekeeping decide what is important and newsworthy. The Nazi death camps, gas chambers, and the millions of Jews were considered "minor news" (Kennerly 62). Just like Darfur, the persecution of the Jews began years before anything was printed in the newspapers. Kennerly looked at the role of the reporters covering the Holocaust. She found one reason the media did not cover the prevalent anti-Semitism to its full capacity was due to the reporters actually over in Nazi Germany could have been deported or arrested for reporting the truth. Plus, American editors would not publish anything they felt was unreliable (Kennerly 63). With the Nazis and a large portion of the American media denying anti-Semitism, the public was confused with the mixed messages and Roosevelt did not feel pressured to change America's policy and offer help (Kennerly 64). It was not until 1944, that most Americans finally became aware of the genocide because newspapers simply did not desire to print what was thought to be "unbelievable" (Kennerly 65). Until Americans had seen the concentration camps with their own eyes, most people felt the atrocities being reported were too ghastly to be considered true. When the world was able to witness the carnages of the concentration camps, General Dwight D. Eisenhower invited congressmen and editors to tour the camps so that the public would know the media was not exaggerating (Kennerly 68). Kennerly contends, "in cases of human need, the ethic of objectivity should not be allowed to stand in the way of the ethics of compassion" (69).

Kothari conducted textual analysis of articles and interviewed journalists from the *New York Times* in order to see what influences journalists' frames and stories on Darfur. He points out that there are social norms and hierarchy that the media helps maintain through its journalists (Kothari 211). Writers look for the interesting angle when reporting which can lead to not disclosing all of the information or background context if it gets in the way. Dramatic news gains more attention so journalists tend to report more on crises in Africa rather than peace there or elsewhere (Kothari 212). There are several challenges reporters face when reporting on Africa, which includes making the story newsworthy, differences in language and cultural barriers, and accessibility. Therefore "comprehensive news stories about conflicts, which include both sides' perspectives, become a luxury only a few journalists can afford" (Kothari 212). Many argue that this superficial reporting of limited topics has led to a negative view of Africa in the West. Westerners do not understand the complex causes of the problems in Africa (Kothari 212). A good example of oversimplifying an issue is the recent "Kony 2012" video that went viral. From interviews, Kothari identified four factors that influenced journalists reporting on Darfur: "finding credible sources, maintaining relationships with existing sources, freedom to select the type of story to write, and the editing process" (217). For the most part, reporting about the underlying causes of the conflict gave way to state department officials and actual fighting. Mody and Hofshire found that each state reports differently on disasters depending on the economics, reporters, politics, and relationship with that nation. However, there were some similarities such as not highlighting the causes and remedies for the war as well as relying heavily on government official sources (Mody and Hofshire 22).

They argue that journalists all over the world are restrained by outside forces from shedding light and understanding on disaster issues (Mody and Hofshire 24).

Goodwin backs up the idea of simplicity in media stories. Rape is actually a form of genocide. In the Congo, a woman being raped is comparable to being shot because most end up being infected with AIDS. However, the media has not reported on this growing crisis. Bosnia and Rwanda both received coverage over this particular horrible devastation, but even with more rape victims than both these countries combined, the Congo is being largely ignored. Reasons presented for this by Goodwin include race, geopolitical interest, access to the country, and national interest in the country. "The Congo is not on the geopolitical map. And the major-league press follows that map" (Goodwin 21). However, that leaves the question of why Rwanda was covered. Simplicity of the situation is used to explain the differences in media attention. The Congo is very complicated and with the fact that Islamic Terrorists are also linked to the Congo makes it even more problematic.

Shaw also discovered that a primary reason for inaccurately framing the crises in Africa is due to a lack of understanding or comprehending the "real undercurrents of the conflicts on the part of the authorities of the Big Western Powers" (Shaw 366). He found that historical frames for a conflict create the distant idea that it is "their crisis," and "not ours" (Shaw 351). This, along with stereotypes, in turn affects humanitarian aid. Even today, Africa is still viewed as the 'Dark Continent' in Western eyes (Shaw 352).

Historically, the Westphalian norm of nonintervention kept the U.S. from intervening in several foreign crises. However, the media helped overrule this policy in some instances such as when the U.S. intervened to assist the Iraqi Kurds.

Bjorseth and Dickenson highlighted the top ten disasters in 2005 that received barely any media coverage. Of note, the rape and murder in Darfur and along with the violence in Haitian slums were both included on this list. The amount of aid and media attention attributed to a crisis was disproportionate compared to the amount of deaths. For instance, 91 billion dollars was raised for Hurricane Katrina, which suffered approximately 1,800 fatalities, while the Congo received 3 billion dollars in aid and yet suffered more than 3.8 million fatalities. Hurricane Katrina also received a significant amount of media attention while the very same media was virtually silent concerning the Congo. Kodrich and Laituri expanded upon this and observed how the Internet and social media is able to bring even more attention to disasters beyond the traditional media. The 2004 tsunami and Hurricane Katrina both illustrated how the Internet not only increased awareness, but also significantly the donations and aid. However, when the earthquake hit Haiti, the effects of social media were really magnified. In fact, some traditional media outlets were obtaining their information directly from the social media. Even the victims of the earthquake were able to report through the social media; in point of fact, some individuals were actually rescued due to cries for help through Facebook (Kodrich and Laituri 626). On the opposite side, people were also able to donate by simply texting, which in turn led to astronomical fund raising.

Just as there was genocide in the Holocaust and Rwanda, genocide is currently occurring in Darfur. The government has released the Arab Janjaweed on the local Fur, Zaghawa, and Masaalit ethnic groups for their own political gain. The Sudanese government on its own as well continues to exacerbate the ethnic conflict by blocking international aid, bombing, murdering, and raping civilians (Eke 280). Eke uses the Agenda

Setting Theory to look at why this genocide receives very little coverage in television news (286). In 2006, Darfur received the most coverage to date due to the presence of A-list celebrities' new interest in the region. The media covered Darfur a certain amount due to just the genocide occurring in the region. However, if another major event occurred in Darfur besides the genocide, this would lead to an increase in the media coverage of Darfur. An example would be when the President of Sudan became the first seated President to be indicted for crimes against humanity (Eke 288). This type of newsworthy story would lead to an increase in the media coverage of Darfur and the genocide. Overall, Eke argues that the standard coverage of a story is very shallow due to other "closer" news stories competing for airtime and the ever increasing American desire for entertainment. Bagdikian argues that if the media covers an issue, then the politicians will be much more likely to care about it and therefore promote some useful intervention. However, when an issue is not covered, it is easily ignored by everyone; after all, out of sight, out of mind.

Wozniak looks at Darfur by doing a thematic analysis of the frames in newspapers. Some of the standard possibilities for the limited coverage could be race, culture and religion, lack of access, other competing international events, and preconceptions. In 2004, the 10-year anniversary of Rwanda was extremely helpful in bringing greater attention to Darfur (Wozniak 13). Editorials due to their adversarial nature are more likely to have counter frames of administration policy than news reports, journalists write stories that have context familiar to the audience, and the national ethos and political culture affects the newspaper's framing (Wozniak 25).

Themes and tones can be derived from articles through qualitative analysis (Ray and Hinnant 10). Coding can help the reader identify the prevailing themes. This can then

lead to determining and understanding the motives behind the article. Stephens conducted a thematic analysis of Oprah's celebrity endorsement of Barak Obama. She accomplished this by identifying the source, author, and date. Next, she looked at the comments concerning Oprah and Obama to see if it was the focus or not. Then she looked at the value attributed to the endorsement (Ray and Hinnant 11). From this coding four themes emerged, however not all four themes were represented equally (Ray and Hinnant 20). Coding for themes can be a successful strategy for qualitative analysis of newspapers as well as other written works.

As seen throughout this literature review, numerous studies have looked at media coverage concerning manmade and natural disasters around the world. However, there is still not a single straight answer as to why one disaster receives more attention than another, and many of the findings are mixed. Yet a few themes absolutely do seem to stand out though among all of these studies. First, numbers do not matter in the overall catastrophic situation. Just because millions of people are suffering and dying, does not necessarily indicate they will ultimately be noticed. Simplicity and sensationalism seem to be the best advocates and indicators that a particular disaster will be adequately covered by the media. Other factors that seem to affect whether or not a crisis has media potential include celebrity interest or participation, Western interest, economics, geography, and politics. Ultimately, it seems to closely coincide with Moeller's observation of media coverage being comparable to the lottery. While everyone has a chance to receive appropriate media coverage; some people have more of a chance than others, and luck plays a large part as well.

A rhetorical analysis to find themes in articles from the top circulated newspapers in America concerning the Haitian earthquake and Darfur conflict during the same time period would provide more in-depth understanding on the Gatekeeper and Agenda Setting involved in catastrophic events. Qualitative analysis could reveal why Haiti received a substantial amount more of media attention as compared to Darfur's ongoing famine and war. With the motives of the media revealed, steps could be taken to offset the deficiency in media coverage.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Disease, War, and Famine in the Sudan and Haiti: why does one disaster receives media attention while the other goes virtually unnoticed? Media attention seems to lead to interest and sympathy from the American public and aid and assistance from the American government. Therefore, the useful or more appropriate question is why are certain crises recognized and embraced in the media, making the people aware of the dire situation or problem and thus motivating many to provide assistance, but other equally distressing crises do not receive the same media coverage.

The purpose of this rhetorical analysis is to suggest the motives of American newspapers for providing significantly greater coverage of the crisis in Haiti as opposed to the crisis in Darfur. At this stage in the research, a crisis will be generally defined as a situation where catastrophic instability and danger are caused by a natural or manmade disaster resulting in increased poverty, famine, death, and disease. The Haitian earthquake and the civil war in Darfur will be analyzed.

In 2010, Haiti was hit by a 7.0 magnitude earthquake, which resulted in more than 160,000 deaths. The location became a hot spot in the media, and as a result, a large amount of relief aid was very quickly delivered to this small country not far from the U.S. Individuals could donate clothing, food, and money. In fact, people could make donations from their cell phones. Haiti is a very impoverished country, with the United Nation's Human Development Index ranking Haiti 145 out of 160 nations. Haiti was completely incapable and unable to deal with a crisis of this magnitude. Currently about 1.6 million people are homeless ("Sub-Saharan Africa."). The tragic story on Haiti and the devastating

earthquake was everywhere one looked, on television, the newspaper, magazines, social media, Internet, and the ongoing progress there continues to be covered. Due to the endemic poverty, large number of people killed, and joined with the massive number of people negatively affected by the earthquake, all combined, would certainly qualify Haiti as being a country in crisis.

On the other hand, thousands of miles away in Darfur, Africa, at least 400,000 people have become victims of the genocide and an additional 2.5 million people have been displaced (“Genocide in Darfur”). Currently it is estimated that about 100 people a day are dying in the Sudan as a direct result of the conflict (“Genocide in Darfur, Sudan”). This is a manmade disaster due to the fact that the famine, disease, and refugees are overwhelmingly a direct result of the constant fighting and the corrupt and unstable government. While ultimately the situation surrounding the Sudan is extremely complicated, these numbers certainly qualify Darfur as a horrible crisis as well. However, this manmade disaster of famine and disease has received only a fraction of the media coverage that Haiti received and cannot be explained by distance or geography alone. Nor does it adequately explain why the U.S. has not really or significantly involved itself in this crisis.

Through a rhetorical analysis of the body of newspaper articles concerning these two tragedies, I hope to gain an understanding of why one disaster receives more coverage than another. I will be utilizing the Agenda Setting theory as well as looking at the Gatekeeper concept. The media has the power at any given time to make the public aware of tragic events occurring all over the world. However, there is only so much that the media can cover and they have to choose what they believe to be that of greatest

importance. Agenda Setting does not tell people what to think specifically, but rather it directs what specifically it desires individuals to think about. I want to see why the longest running conflict in Africa does not make the headlines in the media and thus is unworthy to think about.

Three newspapers were analyzed: *USA Today*, *The New York Times*, and *The Washington Post*. These particular newspapers were chosen because according to the State of the News Media: an Annual Report on American Journalism, they were part of the top five most circulated newspapers in the United States in 2010, which is during the observed year. The most circulated newspapers were chosen because they are being read the most by Americans and therefore should have greater influence than less circulated newspapers. These three newspapers provided an exceptional quantity of material to represent the elite mainstream, liberal media in the United States. Newspapers are read by mostly individuals who possess a college degree or higher, have an earned income of \$40,000 or greater, are thirty-five years of age or older, and are Caucasian or Black (Edmonds, Guskin, and Rosenstiel). News coverage differs slightly from other media news sources. Newspapers provide more coverage of business, education, and health than other new medias, while providing less coverage of U.S. foreign affairs and crime. The economy receives approximately the same amount of newspaper attention (Edmonds, Guskin, and Rosenstiel). Other studies have looked at disasters in the media, but these statistics demonstrated that different media provide more coverage to a variety of different issues. Therefore, the reasons for media coverage of a disaster on television may be drastically different from the reasons for the same coverage found in a newspaper. All three newspapers are considered liberal. However *The New York Times* is considered the most

liberal, while *USA Today* and *The Washington Post* are considered slightly less liberal (Sullivan).

All of the articles on the Haitian earthquake and Darfur from January 1, 2010 to July 31, 2010 from those three newspapers were collected using the online database LexisNexis Academic. This online database provided through the University's library was the cheapest, quickest, and most efficient way to gather all of the articles. Different keywords were typed into the advance search option to systematically collect all of the articles. For the articles concerning the Haitian earthquake, keywords were "Haiti" and "earthquake" within the dates January 1, 2010 to July 31 2010, as well as the selected newspaper such as *The New York Times*. All of *The New York Times* articles concerning the Haitian earthquake were organized in one location and in chronological order. The same keyword searches and dates were used for the additional two newspapers. Next, the violent conflict in Darfur was examined. Using LexisNexis, the same dates as before were used, however, this time the keyword was "Darfur" and again this was done for each newspaper.

A six-month period was looked at because that provides an adequate span of time to mitigate the rapid highs and lows of the initial interest within news cycles while still being able to analyze the media coverage on both events. These particular six months include when the Haitian earthquake hit, as well as the recovery process afterwards. The disaster in Darfur has ravaged the Sudan for over two decades, the longest running conflict in Africa ("SSCCR"). Therefore, these six months will cover the ongoing tragedy in Darfur during a period of time when the fighting greatly intensified between the Sudanese government and the rebel forces despite a United Nations negotiated peace agreement in 2010 ("Darfur: New Deaths, Other Abuses Underscore Need for Better Access, Improved Security.").

The anticipation of numerous themes, motives, and trends throughout the articles would lead to ascertaining the media's purpose and motivation for covering one disaster more closely than another in the newspapers. Several themes immediately popped out at after examining all of the articles. Other studies such as Kothari, Mody and Hofschire, and Simey and Wellings all conducted some type of qualitative textual analysis of newspapers. These studies were used as a basis to discover what areas to focus research in and what appropriate questions to ask when conducting a rhetorical analysis of the three newspaper articles. Sonja Foss's book *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice* was also utilized as a guide for conducting research and knowing how to recognize what exactly to look for. As themes surfaced, each article was categorized under the appropriate theme. The Haitian earthquake articles had their own specific categories, and the Darfur conflict articles were placed in their own specific categories as well.

Next, all the various themes that had emerged were analyzed to see how they answered the research question.

RQ: What are the American Media's motives for covering the Haitian earthquake more intensely and thoroughly than the conflict and crisis in the Darfur region of the Sudan?

The motivations of the media and why they would cover this specific topic or theme were specifically analyzed. For instance, what purpose did this article serve, what did the article promote, or was there some other motivation present. In essence, the question is what is the media's motives behind coverage or lack of coverage of a particular crisis. This type of analysis followed closely to what Sonja K. Foss outlines in her chapter on "Ideological Criticism" in *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice*.

The main purpose of this research is to discover the motives behind the mainstream media coverage of one disaster over another through the themes in the articles concerning the Haitian earthquake and then the ones concerning the Darfur crisis. To accomplish this it was necessary to find out why each article was originally written. Foss addresses ideological criticism in her book, which her model was used as a guide to analyze each of these articles. The goal in doing this was to mitigate or minimize bias during the analysis of these articles, this was critically important in instances where one might disagree with a particular article's author, theme or conclusions. The first step she suggests is to look for what is plainly written and on the surface of a news story. Therefore when analyzing the articles, the first aspect looked at was to see what the topic is and who or what is the particular article about exactly; what is the focus of it and why was it written. Then the second step was to look at what is underneath the surface, what is the meaning behind it, and in this case what are the motives. Initially in this study, it was analyzed to see if there is any articulated national interest involved. Also, the overall tone of the article was looked at, for instance identifying if the article conveys fear, anger, misery, hope, a moral imperative, etc. The goal is to find the baseline motive behind the articles as they were written. An immediate success noted in this study was that there were several motives revealed not only for covering the crisis, but for not covering it as well. The final two things taken into consideration were the greater surrounding geopolitical influences as well as the origins and history of these two disasters and countries. Perhaps outside events independently affected the news coverage of each incident. It was taken into consideration and noted if any other major events occurred concurrently during this six-month time period that would influence the amount of interest and coverage. The overall regional or

national history may also have an impact on the amount and type of media coverage each disaster received. After all, just as the Irish band The Corrs sing, “You’re forgiven, but not forgotten,” and this collective memory may certainly influence the amount of coverage a disaster receives, one way or another. These questions and inquiries will help explain why the article was written.

It is reasonable to expect that themes will emerge from this research. After collecting all of the articles from each newspaper, categories were constructed for each theme identified. The way the categories were developed was by discovering what the article was fundamentally about. Articles with similar content were all placed in the same category. For instance, all articles from all of the newspapers that are addressing “Haitian tragedy and death” will be placed together in one category. Not unexpectedly, some categories possessed more articles than others. After all of the articles were placed in categories, the motives behind each category were looked at. The goal was to find the reason why the media decided to cover that issue or topic and the purpose of it. This shed light on what the media desires to promote and have the public think about. This also showed what the media does not want the public to think about; this perhaps more evident in the case of Darfur due to the fact that there were not near as many articles written about it as there were for the Haitian earthquake.

The results of this study could assist in bringing the awareness as to why other tragedies around the globe are not receiving appropriate media coverage. Additionally, this then may be a solvable dilemma, which can be reversed. Hopefully this will lead to increased public knowledge and therefore, more aid to those in desperate need. This is

inductive research because the researcher is looking at two specific events, but the results will prove useful and applicable to other disasters and media coverage around the world.

Chapter 4

Analysis and Results:

All three major newspapers, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *USA Today*, contained hundreds of articles concerning the Haitian earthquake and the crisis surrounding that event. There was plenty of rhetoric to analyze and at times the volume of material was a bit overwhelming. On the reverse side of the equation, the amount of articles specifically concerning the crisis in Darfur was exponentially fewer. *The New York Time* contained the most articles about Darfur's war with a total of thirty-three. *The Washington Post* came in second with eleven articles. *USA Today* had the least amount of articles concerning Darfur with a grand total of one. This is not a quantitative analysis, but rather a qualitative analysis so the research was not concerned with the exact number of articles that covered a crisis, but rather their actual content. However, there was quite a bit more text to analyze concerning the media's motives for the Haitian crisis over the Darfur crisis. This of course validated the initial basic theory or concern that in fact there is a significant imbalance of total news coverage. These are the results from the Rhetorical Analysis, designed to answer the research question: What are the American Media's motives for covering the Haitian earthquake more intensely and thoroughly than the conflict and crisis in the Darfur region of the Sudan?

Obvious Surface Themes

Multiple themes emerged from looking at the Haitian newspaper articles:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. American citizens involved in tragedy | 5. Future of Haiti |
| 2. Donations | 6. Celebrities |
| 3. Americans & US government assistance | 7. Haitians tragedy and death |
| 4. Haitian immigrants | 8. Foreign aid |
| | 9. Religion |
| | 10. Economy |

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 11. Haitian History | 15. Social media & media coverage |
| 12. Orphans | 16. Haiti Government |
| 13. Haiti spirit and hope | 17. Criticism of US |
| 14. What should the United States do | |

The first theme included any articles that dealt with American citizens being involved in some manner with the Haitian earthquake. This category also included stories about Americans who travelled to Haiti after the earthquake; which include a disproportionate number of stories concerning the Americans arrested for attempting to take children illegally back to the U.S. While this story of 10 Americans was tertiary to the overall suffering, it still became very prominent in the newspapers. The second theme covered all articles concerning all categories of donations for the Haitian people. They discussed the many ways to give money and how to do so safely, especially online or texting donations directly. The third category includes any stories, which discuss the ways that American citizens or the U.S. government provided aid and assistance to Haiti. Due to the proximity of Haiti as well as the Haitian population in the U.S., the eagerness to help was very apparent in many Americans, which led to many fundraising events and aid trips.

The Fourth category covered anything to do with Haitian immigrants. President Obama made a new law after the earthquake, which would allow illegal Haitian immigrants to stay in the U.S. for an extended eighteen months. The fifth category concerns the future of Haiti. These articles talk about what changes will be made in Haiti's future and what Haitians will have to deal with due to this tragedy. The sixth category includes any articles that are written simply due to the fact that some "celebrity" is involved. Some of the biggest names in Hollywood supported the Haitian relief causes including George Clooney, Beyoncé, Madonna, and Wyclef Jean, a Haitian-American.

The seventh category covered articles that touched on the death, destruction, and ongoing tragedy due to the earthquake. The eighth category contained all articles discussing United Nations and foreign aid as opposed to U.S. aid. The Ninth category included any article discussing religion broadly. With Christianity being portrayed in a negative context while the “religion” of Voodoo was portrayed in a positive light. The tenth category had articles concerned about the Haitian economy and the need to rebuild it.

The eleventh category discussed Haiti’s history. It also discussed America’s role in Haiti’s history. Articles concerning the massive increase of Orphans made up the twelfth category and proved to be exceptionally sympathetic stories. The thirteenth category discussed the spirit and hope of the Haitian people and what was required to get them through this tragedy. Stories of miracles were included here, such as a baby being discovered alive several days after the earthquake. The fourteenth category had articles that examined and discussed the strategies and programs that the U.S. should enact and execute as a way forward for Haiti.

The fifteenth category included anything mentioning social media or the media directly. It is interesting to note that the media’s role was changing at this time and greatly affected the response to the Haitian crisis. The sixteenth category included articles that discussed the Haitian government. Even prior to the earthquake, the Haitian people did not trust the Haitian government; this was only exacerbated during and after the crisis. The final category included articles that were critical of the U.S. in some manner. Sometimes these criticisms were specifically aimed at President Obama or some other American leader or institution and generally concerned the overall ineffectualness of American policy or its aid programs.

It is interesting to note that the themes that contained the most articles directly support much of the Agenda Setting Theory by focusing upon Americans and the United States government helping, Haitian death and tragedy, and international foreign aid, followed closely by the celebrities' category. The categories with the fewest article included history, economy, and religion; yet it is these very categories that can provide the greatest foundational background for any particular regional dynamics, issues, or conflicts.

Themes concerning Darfur:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Celebrity | 6. International aid and involvement |
| 2. Tragedy & death | 7. Election |
| 3. Corrupt government & rebel groups | 8. President Omar Hassan al-Bashir |
| 4. The Obama Administration's role | 9. Immigrants |
| 5. Peace | 10. Christian verses Muslim |

The articles concerning Darfur generally contained more than one theme or category. Due to the fact that the articles covering Darfur tended to be of a greater complexity than the straight forward, single themed Haitian earthquake articles, it would prove a greater challenge in defining themes. However, this again substantiates the theory of unequal disaster coverage by the media. Many of the articles included historical context or content concerning the tragedy and death that had previously occurred in Darfur as well as what is currently occurring there. Only three articles mentioned a celebrity of some sort. The corrupt Khartoum government is a significant reason for the ongoing death and devastation in Darfur; therefore it was a reoccurring theme in the articles as well. Several articles mentioned the Obama administration's role concerning the instability in Darfur and the region as a whole. They discussed whether President Obama would move to get involved with the Sudan, and would that involvement be to support or punish them. An ongoing theme was how peace has constantly sidestepped the Darfur region of Sudan.

Whenever there was an imminent chance of peace and stability, it vanished as quickly as a vapor. During these six months, peace was constantly on the Horizon, the rebel forces and government attempted to negotiate some type of peace agreement, yet history proved to repeat itself and peace never lasted.

International non-governmental organizations have tried to address the crisis in Darfur. Unfortunately, the Sudan has closed certain “unstable” areas; generally these regions are the ones with the greatest need of assistance. Many aid workers were actually pulled out by their agencies because it was too dangerous for them to be there. Several articles discussed the foreign aid workers. One of the reasons Darfur was so dangerous during the studies time frame was the contested election. The Sudanese government decided to hold an election, which in turn fomented a significant amount of dissension between the people of Darfur and the government. Based upon a long violent history, Darfurians did not believe that it would be a fair election. The government however was determined to go through with the election, again using violent coercion to press their plans. Many of the articles mentioned the election in one-way or another. Even with the overall crisis, the election was arguably the biggest news event going on in the Sudan at this time.

Along with the election, President Omar Hassan al-Bashir was mentioned in a majority of the articles. Al-Bashir, unsurprisingly to all involved, won the election and remained Sudan’s President. He was also garnering significant international interest due to the fact that he is the first sitting president to be indicted on charges of Genocide by the International Court in The Hague. Not only is al-Bashir unpopular in Darfur, but the rest of the world as well. Additionally, unlike the large Haitian immigrant population in the U.S.

few Sudanese have come to America. The final category was Christians verses Muslims. Religion was little discussed outside of the fact that the government is Muslim and Arabic and they persecute the Africans who are either Christian or animists.

Reason Behind Theme

Even though there were a great deal fewer articles concerning the Darfur genocide, there were still numerous themes found in these articles just like those in the Haitian articles. These categories or themes outlined above are what the articles discussed or noted on the surface. This may seem to be what they are obviously concerned about. However, according to Foss, the next step to finding the ideology behind the artifact, and in this case the article, is to discover what that category represents. After organizing each article in a category, the next step was to look at what was underneath the surface of these articles. These articles' themes were analyzed to ascertain what the media wanted the reader to think about as well as maybe not think about, in other words what was underneath each obvious surface theme. Pointing a reader in one direction, as a byproduct will also, for any number of reasons, point the reader away from another direction on intellectual point of view. The motivations of the author will be significant to the overall study. It was necessary to discover why they would talk about a category as opposed another.

The first set of themes analyzed were Haiti's. The themes were looked at to see why the media was covering Haiti and what did they want the American public to think about. The first theme "Americans affected by Haiti" was covered due to the fact that there were 45,000 Americans in Haiti at the time of the earthquake. Additionally, there is a very significant Haitian immigrant population in New York and Miami. The sheer numbers of

American missionaries, diplomats, and family members, impacted by this tragedy forced the American media to cover this crisis, it could be ignored. The side stories of the Christian Americans who tried to abduct the Haitian children and bring them to the U.S., just created additional drama. The second theme was "Donations." This disaster became the easiest one to donate for due to emerging technologies such as texting, websites, and social media. The third category "Americans and the U.S. government helping" really promoted President Obama and his exceptional role in the whole disaster. He was praised for his effort and concern for Haiti. Back in America, this also led directly to the media pushing for President Obama's health care reform plan. The U.S. provided the most troops and military support for Haiti; again the media could not ignore this. Due to close proximity and family ties, many Americans were eager to go and help. Former Presidents Clinton and Bush both made huge efforts to assist and support Haitian relief programs. The U.S. government went so far as to forgive the outstanding Haitian debt. The U.S. shouldered a majority of the burden from this tragedy.

The fourth category "Immigration" has been a primary issue to the Obama administration. President Obama allowed illegal Haitian immigrants to remain in the U.S. for up to 18 months. Interestingly enough, not as many Haitians took advantage of this as the administration anticipated. The "Future of Haiti" remains uncertain due to drugs, corruption and other obstacles making change both problematic and highly unlikely in the near term. American society seems to pay attention when a "Celebrity," no matter how minor, is mentioned. Several professional athletes here in American are actually from Haiti, bringing awareness to their homeland. Additionally, numerous movie stars and

singers worked to bring attention to this crisis as well, celebrities are considered newsworthy.

The seventh category “Haitian Death and Tragedy” was highlighted in the media because vivid pictures of mass graves being circulated through Twitter just 711 miles from America’s shores again is something that cannot be ignored. Color images of children and schools in rubble played a huge part in the media this time around. One of the reasons the media focused as extensively as it did on “foreign aid” was because the United Nations lost 101 members of their aide team permanently stationed in Haiti at the time of the earthquake. This was the largest single loss of UN workers in the agency’s history. The American media took the opportunity to forward their belief that relief efforts were not up to par and changes needed to be made for future disasters. Religion, specifically meaning Christianity, was not mentioned frequently, however, when it was, it was generally with a negative connotation. The media did not appreciate Pat Robertson’s comments about Haiti and God’s judgment. Some compared him to the devil because Robertson said that part of Haiti’s problem was due to the false cultural religion of Voodoo. The media wanted to be politically correct and respectful concerning the Voodoo culture and history in Haiti.

A few articles discussed America’s history with Haiti. They also mentioned France’s role in Haiti. Both painted America in a negative light. Haitians were first brought to the island to be slaves by the Spaniards in the early 1500s. Haiti became the first black republic in the Western hemisphere after a slave rebellion in 1804. This current crisis was not the first time U.S. marines had been in Haiti; they governed the island from 1915 to 1934, preventing an anti-American dictator from taking over. The articles allude to very little supervision over the Marines and as a result there may have been an abuse of power

that may have occurred. On the reverse side, the Marines have a positive view of their previous time spent in Haiti because they brought order, fostered peace, and built up the nation. This included the infrastructure, buildings, roads, and schools during this time. Yet the Haitians viewed it as imperialism, with the result that they were unable to actually govern themselves effectively after the Marines left. The frame of these articles suggests that Haiti has always been oppressed in one manner or another and that is why they have never been a stable and successful nation. "Orphans" seem to be a good theme for articles since children in need tend to pull at people's sentimental heartstrings, equating to garnering greater attention. In order to be politically correct, a concept that Americans seem to be especially obsessed with, the media criticized the U.S. in numerous areas. For instance, part of the reason Haiti was so impoverished was due to the U.S.'s trade policies. Additionally, Americans buying drugs was another significant reason Haiti was in such a dismal state before the earthquake. Many of the drugs that come from other South American countries pass through Haiti before they reach the U.S. drug markets. The article suggests that if Americans stopped buying drugs then Haiti would be in a much better position. President Obama also promotes liberal political correctness both at home and abroad. He refused to fly the American flag in Haiti believing it would send the wrong message, yet all of the other aiding countries flew their flags. The Marines in Haiti strongly advocated that they should fly their flag during the aide operations. In these articles, there are attacks on conservatives and right wing individuals such as Rush Limbaugh, for their comments about the Haitian tragedy being linked to Obama, the Voodoo culture, and healthcare reform. It is interesting to note that much of this criticism has little foundational or empirical evidence to support them, they tend to very politically motivated and directed

at what is occurring in the U.S. political process as opposed to being concerned about what is occurring in Haiti. It was as if these articles used Haiti as a backdrop but were actually written for a U.S. political debate; Haiti at times seemed almost inconsequential to the articles.

Haitian spirit and hope are termed feel good stories. While it is true that bad news does sell, thus the phrase “if it bleeds, then it leads,” people also desire to hear about miracles and fairy tale endings. These articles really focus on people surviving and pulling through in the face of impossible odds. Social media has been rising extremely fast in America. The diversity of its uses was observed through this tragedy. Everyone is using and talking about social media; the media must stay up with these advances as well or be marginalized and left behind.

The media did an excellent job of documenting that the Haitian government is corrupt, which is largely why most of the people do not trust it. Instead they are relying mostly on the U.S. for help. The Haitian government however wants to gain back its credibility, power, and be a central force in the planning of Haiti’s future. The Haitian government decided one of the best things to do would be to hold an election. This would be attractive to the U.S. since it is a democracy and promotes democratic elections in other parts of the world. Through these articles, the Haitian government seems to shift from a negative light to a more positive one. The last category discussed “What the U.S. should do.” There is a premise of entitlement in these articles. Haiti deserves aid from the U.S. due to its history of oppression and the current drug problems arising from the American drug habit. Haiti deserves to be an American priority and receive long-term aid and assistance.

The Haitian immigrants in America now deserve help as well; again a greater domestic political agenda can be seen in these articles.

Next the Darfur themes were analyzed to see what motivated the media to write them and what the media wanted the public to think about. Again it was found that celebrities tend to make news and garner interest. Unfortunately, in this case there were not many celebrities interested in Darfur. George Clooney and the NBA athlete Manute Bol from Darfur were the only stars attempting to bring attention to that crisis, and with little initial success. Unlike Haiti, Darfur is not a region where many people in America are from or even possess knowledge of. There is not a “little Darfur” in New York City as there is a well-established “Little Haiti.” People desire to hear about their homeland and stay informed on the country they are from. This created a need in the media for news about Haiti, but this need is not overly evident or quite as great with Darfur, because the vast majority of the American population is ignorant of the region.

Genocide is mentioned throughout the articles, especially in relation to President al-Bashir since, as previously noted, he was the first sitting President to be indicted of genocide by the International Criminal Court or ICC for mass killings of three of Darfur’s ethnic groups. When the ICC made this charge, it helped reinforce the U.S.’s position of genocide, because before this, the U.S. had stood alone on this issue in the international community. Now the greater international world was finally acknowledging horrific crimes taking place in Africa. However, some articles continue the debate articulating that the disaster may or may not actually be classified as a disaster. The article “New Study Estimates That Disease Caused 80% of Deaths During Years of Darfur Strife,” suggests that the numbers have been exaggerated concerning the genocide. The government has not

physically, with specificity, killed as many Sudanese as have disease and famine; which somehow removes the government's culpability. However, again much of the disease and starvation have been due directly to the government purposely displacing its people. Additionally, the many civilians targeted and killed by the Muslim government and Muslim militias cannot be considered trivial. People are still routinely and systematically being killed during the period of research, in May 2010 400 alone were killed. During this time frame there was a play called *In Darfur*, which tried to shed light on the genocide and plight in the Sudan. However, this may have gained more attention from the media if it had actually been a movie, which in turn would have most likely led to more viewers. Sound bites and video clips are both preferred and useful in today's media environment.

Many articles discuss the peace agreements being negotiated between the Khartoum government and rebel forces. Even though the peace is extremely fragile, at least the fighting has ceased. There are actually negotiations occurring between the rebel forces and the government, which the rest of the world likes to see: talking instead of force. Of course, this fragile peace does not last. Even with peace continually looming over the horizon, the fact still remains that hundreds of thousands of people are still homeless, displaced and starving.

The Presidential election that takes place during the six months studied was hoped to bring stability and peace to the land. Additionally, this election was probably the primary reason Darfur was even mentioned at all in the newspapers during this period. There was so much turmoil, fighting, and fraud surrounding the election that practically all foreigners had to be evacuated from the region or expelled by the Sudanese government. Again, the U.S. is a great advocate of free elections and this controversial election with

President al-Bashir sparked the U.S.'s interest. Again it was no surprise here or abroad that al-Bashir was reelected. Based upon suspected election fraud, the U.S. had actually wanted the Sudan to postpone its election. As the media points out though, the White House's opinion has little to no influence within the Sudan. Additionally, President Obama backed down after Sudan ignored the U.S.'s recommendation to postpone the election. It was clear that President al-Bashir does not fear the U.S. or the Obama administration. He goes so far to say that he has the U.S. in his back pocket. The Articles point out that there is a big difference between the previous Bush administration and the current Obama administration. President Bush had made the Sudan a priority during his time in office in 2004; consequently Darfur was in the media more during that time as well. President Bush refused to ignore the ongoing genocide in that area and he made it a huge issue during his presidency. At the same time, President Bush and his stance on genocide in Darfur were not popular with the media or the International Community. Especially since the rest of the world at the time did not recognize the situation over in the Sudan as genocide. A reason that the Obama Administration provides for not becoming involved in the violence in the Sudan is that they are too busy and there are too many other things going on so they cannot really focus on the Sudan. The media points out that depending on how the situation progresses in the Sudan, it could either be a great opportunity for President Obama or hurt him in the long run. President Obama has decided though to take a backseat instead of a leading role concerning the Sudan. He has left the U.S. with no leverage against the Sudan, which currently seems to be just fine with the international community. The international community tends to not like sanctions or pressures from one country to another if they are not all on board.

President Obama has chosen to not put pressure on the Sudan and ignore the war crimes being perpetuated upon its people. One article points out that in order for peace to persevere in Darfur, there must be negative consequences for not having peace; generally speaking this includes sanctions and possible military intervention at some level. However, this would mean the U.S. would really have to get involved and follow through on these negative consequences such as refusing to purchase petroleum, a major natural resource there and primary source of cash for the government to finance their war ("AboutSudan").

The election and impending peace emulate a type of hope, however small, over the crisis in Darfur. The media seems to want to portray to the American public that life is going back to normal, the rebel groups are not fighting, and people are going home. After all, the death toll is lower now in the Sudan. However, the numbers do not seem to support this theory with 2.7 million in camps and all peace agreements being relatively short lived. Besides the Obama administration, these are probably the biggest themes in the newspaper articles. One of the political reasons President Obama may have justified backing off of the Sudan was that at least they were conducting an election and that seems to be a step in the right direction. Along with the election, President al-Bashir must be mentioned because he, in fact, is the root of the election and the controversy surrounding it. Due to his recent ICC Civil Rights indictment, negative and inflammatory rhetoric towards the U.S., and open association with the terrorist Usama Bin Laden, President al-Bashir is not painted in a flattering light in the newspapers.

The situation between Muslims and Christians was very lightly touched on, only as an aside. The situation is that the Muslim government has been killing Christians or facilitating the Muslim militias to do it for them. This is not politically correct to discuss in

the U.S., or even a popular topic for that matter. As sad and unfair as it is, the media tends to be fairer to religions other than Christianity. The religion whose principles America was founded on, is not politically correct while an apologetic cult has risen up to protect Islam, whose own extremists committed mass killings in the U.S and continue to do so abroad. President Obama has a Muslim background. His Kenyan grandfather and father were Muslims, which has influenced President Obama (Pipes). From 1992-1995, the Muslim/Christian situation was reversed in Bosnia. The Christian Serbs committed genocide against the Muslims in Bosnia. The genocide included mass killings, rape, and concentration camps. Genocide is able to take place when the country believes that the international community does not care. The scenes from the Bosnian War were posted on the front page of *The Washington Post*. US Secretary of State James Baker described Bosnia as "...an outrage. We cannot sit back and do nothing. We are going to do what is right" (Curtiss). Bosnia became an unsafe place for foreign aid workers just like in the Sudan. The Serbs attacked UN workers and used them as human shields. By the time the War ended, more than 200,000 Muslims had been murdered, 20,000 missing, and 2,000,000 were refugees. This is an example of a genocide that the U.S. had to step in militarily and put an end to. Peace agreements were drawn, democratic elections set up, war criminals prosecuted, and the peace was preserved through NATO troops ("Bosnia-Herzegovina 1992-1995 200,000 Deaths"). The U.S. saw an injustice occurring half way around the world and decided that it was unacceptable for Christian Serbs to be killing Muslim civilians. Perhaps if the situation were reversed, the response would not have been the same. At least, that is the case right now in the Sudan. Muslims killing Christians does not appear to be a popular topic in the newspapers since it is not being written about.

Media's Motives

First the themes were discovered in all of the newspaper articles, and then it was discovered why they were written or in other words, the reason behind each theme. The next step was to suggest what ideologies or motives these added up to. What were the media's motives for covering one crisis over another one? For that matter, what did the media want the American public to think about and then vice versa, what did they not want the American people to think about.

Motives

1. Negative effects of racism, imperialism, and intolerance- making wrongs right
2. Promote the Obama administration and its policies concerning healthcare, immigration, and their neighbor Haiti's fate.
3. Emergence of social media as a prominent source for information and donations

A motive of the media concerning Haiti was pointing out wrongs that they felt passionate about and then trying to right them. The negative effects the American media's perceived racism, imperialism, and intolerance were behind the media's way of portraying the Haitian earthquake. Ultimately this is how they set their agenda of reporting. The other motive behind these newspapers was to promote the Obama Administration and its domestic social policies concerning healthcare, immigration, and lastly their neighbor Haiti's fate. Haiti's future seemed to depend on the U.S. according to the media and whether it succeeded or failed would be due directly and proportionately to the U.S. involvement. The media then criticized and condemned anyone who was critical of Haiti. The last motive of the media for covering Haiti was the emergence of social media as a prominent source for information and donations. Social media had been utilized in the

past, but never to this extent and its impact on this crisis was extremely significant both from total coverage and the sheer volume of donations given. Social media has changed the way people and the media will respond and view disasters both financially and as a source.

Parallel to the coverage, it became apparent that the media also did not want the American people thinking about certain issues concerning Haiti. The newspapers did not point out Haiti's role in its own tragedy, corruption, poverty, drug culture, and other negative cultural influences. Additionally, they did not want to showcase the positive influence of Christianity and missionaries had in Haiti for decades. It was not pointed out how much the U.S. had already done for the people of Haiti for decades before the earthquake devastated the island.

The first motive of the media, was pointing out what they felt were wrong doings or cultural insults toward the Haitian people. Racism was one of the three sins committed against Haiti by America and the greater international community. According to the media, it seemed Haiti was never provided the reasonable chance to really succeed and prosper. The media pointed out that Haitians originally came to the island to be slaves and replace the native workers on French plantations who had died. The Haitians began their journey in bondage and remain in bondage today, just with a different owner: poverty. Black history month occurred right after the earthquake in February. This brought more attention to the U.S.'s neighbor. The media pointed out that just as slaves in the U.S. had overcome racism and oppression, blacks in Haiti could do the same. They encouraged African Americans to step up and help their black brothers. The issue of racism is something that Americans can relate to since the U.S. only had civil rights 50 years ago.

There is a sense of entitlement that the media conveys to the public. Due to being oppressed and having ancestors that were slaves, then they deserve an outpouring of help. It becomes a moral imperative, but for reason independent of the ongoing crisis. It is not their fault that they are in this situation of poverty and depravity. Rather it is hinted that the French and even the U.S. are the primary reason Haiti is in this bad of shape. Others who oppressed Haiti in the past are also to blame for Haiti's current dire situation.

As studies in the Literature Review showed, proximity can play a part in whether or not the media covers a story. Since Haiti is a close regional neighbor, the U.S. possesses a deep historical connection with it since it was a young, new country. This is not the case with Darfur, which is half way around the world. The media mentions imperialism as part of the U.S.'s historical connection to Haiti, yet can articulate no known connection with the Sudan and Darfur.

The Marines viewed their time in Haiti in the early 1900s as a success mission and overall positive experience. However, the Haitians tell a different story and believe they exercised American Imperialism on their island, a de facto extension of the Monroe Doctrine. Yet, regionally the media is quick to recognize a legitimate national interest based upon proximity and the media seems to lean a sympathetic ear towards the Haitians on this issue. Today the Haitians are adamant though that they are very appreciative of the Marines returning now to help. However, in order to ensure that there are no imperialistic appearances or thoughts occurring this time around, President Obama denied the flying of the American flag in Haiti.

The promotion of tolerance was a big underlying motive for the American media. The positive and negative effects of Christianity are discussed throughout the articles.

Christianity is a huge reason why many Americans were in Haiti in the first place, beginning decades prior to the earthquake. It is thus interesting to note that prior to the calls for assistance, missionaries were already in Haiti trying to help the poor. Then in turn many more Christian organizations travelled to the region and to the aid of Haiti after disaster struck. Unfortunately, Christianity is mostly highlighted in a negative light throughout the articles, even though initially it was largely Christian relief organizations in the country for the day to day work. Christianity is politically incorrect and can be seen as intolerant for not accepting certain aspects of the world, again fly planes into buildings and your religion is tolerant, vote against same sex marriage and you are not. When Christians, specifically Pat Robertson, spoke against some of Haiti's practices such as Voodoo, the media quickly labeled him the devil. The media actually promoted Voodoo, and did not desire the American public to think that it was a contributing factor for the overall negative situation. Yet the Haitian governments of the Duvalier family routinely used the superstitions of Voodoo to control and manipulate its people. More specifically the Tonton Macoutes were Duvalier's personal secret police created in 1959, with Voodoo as their religion of choice. The Tonton Macoutes used Voodoo and the belief that their senior members were powerful Voodoo Priests to give themselves an air of invincibility and super-natural power to instill fear in the Haitian people allowing Duvalier to control the country. The Tonton Macoutes' Voodoo based reign of terror killed more than 60,000 Haitians, thousands more "disappeared" and an untold number of Haitian women and girls were raped and brutalized (Aponte). Yet American media gives Christianity a bad name. In the bigger scheme of things, the media promoted tolerance in all things non-Christian. A

huge topic in the media was the ten Christians who tried to smuggle orphans into the U.S. These stories again, highlighting the negative effects of Christianity in within the country.

The media did not just deal with religious tolerance. Several conservatives spoke honestly concerning Haiti's endemic cultural problems and why the country experienced terrible conditions separate and independent from what the earthquake had created. The media portrayed anyone who spoke out against the overall Haitian situation and America's lavish aid on the country as a bigot. The media promoted tolerance for what their agenda desired to portray as correct, and in turn attacked viewpoints that were counter to their agenda.

The other motive behind the American media's coverage of Haiti was to promote the Obama administration along with its domestic policies. Former President Bush had failed with the Hurricane Katrina relief effort according to the media. This was President Obama's moment to shine through a disaster depending on how he handled it. The media praised Obama's role throughout the whole ordeal. He was portrayed to be active, informed, and a leader during this response. Overall the liberal media, which all three newspapers represent, for the most part supports President Obama and his policies. Regardless of actual results, the President has remained fairly popular throughout his presidency with the media. Again, this is complementary of the media's over agenda.

A current example of the media agenda of supporting the Obama Administration's policies despite what the public thinks is the recent gun control issue. The Obama Administration has issued 23 executive orders to implement more gun control laws (Hall). The media has supported the Obama Administration's ideas concerning gun control. One way has been highlighting any shooting that has caused tragedy such as the devastating

Sandy Hook shooting or the Colorado shooting in the theater. However, the media has ignored all stories where a gun has saved lives such as the Portland, Oregon Mall shooting, numerous academic studies, or even the FBI Crime Statistics. In the Portland incident, a man came in and shot two people and then turned the gun on himself. However, what the media, including *USA Today*, omits to the public is that the shooter shot himself only after a private citizen confronted him with a concealed weapon (Bacon). If the man had not had a gun, who knows how many innocent lives would have been taken by the shooter (Benner). The media has been constantly showing the NRA in a negative light but “despite constant hammering by the national news media, the National Rifle Association has a favorability rating of 54 percent in the latest Gallup Survey, slightly higher than President Obama's rating of 53 percent” (Hall). This survey was actually taken after the Sandy Hook shooting. The media ignores this and promotes Obama's policies instead. This survey “showed that only 38 percent of those surveyed have an unfavorable opinion of the NRA, while Obama's disapproval rating is three points higher at 41 percent” (Hall). Even though Obama's disapproval rating is slightly higher than the NRA's in the recent poll, the American public would not know this by listening to the media. President Obama is still painted as very popular and likeable in the media, while the NRA is shown as a bunch of “freaks” (Nolte).

The media published its article concerning Haiti to promote Obama and his administration as well as show what an excellent job he is doing over there. It also promotes his policies, specifically the ones concerning immigration and healthcare. Immigration becomes a huge issue when many Haitians want to come to the U.S. for refuge. It is even more of an issue because many Haitians are in the U.S. illegally and do not want to be deported back to their largely poor and devastated country. The devastation also

highlighted major problems with Haiti's own health care system. The media used this to bring attention back to the U.S.'s own situation with healthcare, even when there is no real comparison between a third world nation and a first world nation. The press still used these articles to promote universal healthcare in America. Obama's presidency has focused on bringing universal healthcare to Americans.

The media also rested Haiti's future fate on the U.S. If Haiti failed or succeeded it would be dependent on the U.S. This also leads one to understand why the media was strongly opposed to anyone that did not fully support Haiti. They were seen as a threat to America's neighbor and her success. In supporting the Obama Administration social agenda and Haitian social agenda in this way, it gives credibility to the argument that the media is in effect supporting their own social agenda. Again the media is directing the attention of their audience to that which they deem important.

The last motive discovered for covering Haiti was the emerging prominence of social media and how accessible this made providing the information to the public. Twitter and Facebook actually became a primary source for the media because people involved in the earthquake were able to continue to tweet or update Facebook during the disaster. The most up to date and current information came from people tweeting or updating their statuses. In fact, "many news sites made use of information initially posted by social media" and certain media sources such as CNN.com monitored "tweets from those in Haiti and created a page where they listed some of the most notable comments" ("SOCIAL MEDIA AID THE HAITI RELIEF EFFORT").

An example from CNN's web page:

(CNN) -- CNN is monitoring tweets and other messages from people in [Haiti](#) and reports from those who said they have been in touch with friends and

family. CNN has not been able to able to verify this material.

"This s***is still shaking! major earthquake in haiti!" -- *From Twitter user fredodupoux at 5:20 p.m. ET*

"Just experienced a MAJOR earthquake here in Port au Prince - walls were falling down. - we are ALL fine - pray for those in the slums" -- *From Twitter user troylivesay in Port-au-Prince, Haiti at 5:24 p.m. ET*

"words on the streets part of Hotel Montana Fell, exagone is cracked. houses in canape vert fell down #haiti #eq" -- *From Twitter user fredodupoux in Haiti at 6:05 p.m. ET (Simon)*

This event was credited as the turning point in social media history. This was the first time that social media had been seen for how much potential and good it could cause. Some of the tweets were like the ones above, however “most of the tweets were calls for direct action-specifically to give money-rather than links to other sources of information or news” (“SOCIAL MEDIA AID THE HAITI RELIEF EFFORT.”). Many of the re-tweets pointed to using text messaging to raise funds for the Red Cross or other organizations. For instance, “Haitian-born musician Wyclef Jean asked his 1.4 million Twitter followers to donate to his foundation by texting the word "Yele" (the name of his foundation) to the number 501501. He reportedly raised \$2 million” (“SOCIAL MEDIA AID THE HAITI RELIEF EFFORT”). As of January 19, text message donations surpassed \$22 million for the Red Cross (Washington Post). The Red Cross’s previous fundraising record using similar technology was \$400,000. The Washington Post reported that the “\$22 million is roughly one-fifth of the \$112 million total that the American Red Cross has so far raised for Haiti, most of which has come through more conventional sources such as corporate and online donations” (Heath). The article went on to explain how text message donations worked. The media’s motives behind covering social media, the donations, and the news associated with it were out of necessity. First of all, the media was actually reliant on the social media for firsthand accounts of what was going on in Haiti. Secondly, history was being made by

how much influence social media was having on people and how much people were utilizing it. Lastly, the required private aid necessary to really assist the Haitian people could never have been raised without the access to new social media. While true that social media had been in use for some time, as well as getting donations through texting, it had never been accomplished to this extent. The media, including the newspapers had to cover what social media was doing in order to maintain their own credibility and not get left behind. By joining together, the social media and traditional media were much more effective in aiding Haiti as a team. Young people, a demographic largely ignored during this type of event, now were much more likely to give due to the ready accessibility and ease of texting from their cell phones. Technology transformed giving and saved lives through the combined efforts of the traditional media and social media. As mentioned in the Literature Review, Wright discovered that the Western media seems to usually make the disaster story relatable to Westerners in order to justify covering the crisis (105). Social media definitely helped the media make Haiti more relatable to the public in America as a whole.

The motives behind the media's coverage of Haiti included righting wrongs by looking at the negative effects of racism, imperialism, and intolerance; promoting the Obama administration and its policies concerning healthcare, immigration, and their neighbor Haiti's fate; and staying up to date with the social media technology. This is what the media wanted the public to think and talk about.

At the same time, the American media's agenda did not include the public contemplating the positives that Christianity had brought to the country because in the media's narrative Christianity is a religion viewed as intolerant. Yet the fact remains that it was Christian organizations in Haiti decades prior to the earthquake that have assisted the

people more than the media has reported, and it is currently these same Christian organizations still working there now that the media has moved on to other stories. It also did not want the people thinking about how the U.S. had positively impacted Haiti during its time of occupation. The Marines built schools, dug wells for clean water, created an infrastructure, and provided roads, and ultimately brought order to the country at that time. However, when Haitian history is viewed through the optic of the media agenda it is seen as imperialistic only.

Motives for covering Darfur

1. Crisis in Darfur has diminished greatly
2. Genocide is being over exaggerated
3. Support the Obama Administration

The motives for the very few and far in between articles covering the crisis in Darfur are to show the American public that the crisis in Darfur has diminished greatly, and the genocide is being over exaggerated. Most of the articles covered either the election or the peace agreements, not the slaughter of Christians and non-Muslim locals. Both topics point towards an end to the long on-going civil war over in the Sudan. However, history keeps repeating itself. The peace talks prove to be short lived, just as they always have been. The rebel groups cannot work with or trust neither the corrupt government nor the Muslim militias it supports. Both groups prove to be unpredictable and dangerous to the people of Darfur.

The other topic, which is used to point towards an end of civil war, is the election. However, everyone, including the people of Darfur, realize that these supposedly democratic elections are a hoax and a fraud. It was absolutely no surprise to the people of

the Sudan that President al-Bashir won the election and remains President of the Sudan. In fact and largely ignored in the press' narrative, is that Darfur does not even participate in the election because they realize that their vote will not matter, as well as the fact that it is often dangerous or even fatal to even attempt to vote in Darfur. If one voted, they could literally have their hand removed, again this did not fit into the American media's agenda and was largely ignored. The elections and President al-Bashir actually heightens the tension between rebel groups and the government.

Next the media points out that most of the deaths that occurred in Darfur are from disease and not the government targeting and murdering its own people. However, even if most people are dying from famine and disease, the people are in this position due to the fighting between the rebel groups, the pro-government militias, and the government. If the media shows that the crisis in Darfur is diminishing, then this again helps justify President Obama's lack of involvement and concern for the disaster occurring overseas. The President remains popular with the media and the media usually supports the President's decisions and policies as documented above. The media supports the President's actions or rather lack of action, with its coverage of Darfur.

President Obama leans towards incentives instead, which to date have not been enough to sway the Sudan. The Obama administration has decided that it is best to stay out of the situation and remain in President al-Bashir's back pocket. It seems President Obama prefers to not stand against international opposition or offend anyone, this has been a key point in the Administration foreign policy, lead from the back while avoiding any direct action. Again President Obama has shown this same type of decision-making in other areas of his presidency. An example is how President Obama deals with terrorists. President

Obama considered the enhanced interrogation technique of water-boarding on terrorists utilized during President Bush's term to be torture and abolished its use with the Executive Order 13491. Therefore water-boarding was banned, and American CIA agents and military personnel could no longer utilize this tool to gain intelligence or cooperation from terrorists. Up until that point water-boarding had been a very useful tool, which allowed the CIA to gain pertinent information, which was then used against the terrorists to save countless lives. This technique was employed against the 9/11 terrorists. Interestingly enough, water-boarding would not be categorized as torture under American law, which defines torture as "physical pain amounting to torture must be equivalent in intensity to the pain accompanying serious physical injury, such as organ failure, impairment of bodily function, or even death. For purely mental pain or suffering to amount to torture (under U.S. law), it must result in significant psychological harm of significant duration, e.g., lasting for months or even years" (Thornton). Water-boarding is when a person is strapped to a board and their face is usually covered with a towel. Water is then poured over their face, which gives them the sensation of drowning. This is actually more psychological than anything. Many countries have utilized this technique for centuries. President Bush did receive criticism from the press for using this technique on high profile terrorists. On the other hand, President Obama has no problem utilizing killer drones against terrorists, even those who are American citizens. President Obama has used these drone attacks 300 times during his presidency, compare that to President Bush's 50 times. President Obama is not receiving a lot of negative feedback either for this anti-terror technique. In fact, the International Community, the media and both Democrats and Republicans are overwhelmingly in support of these executions of terrorists, as many as 80 percent have

shown support. There has been some concerns that these individuals need to go to court and be tried, because according to reports in *The Los Angeles Times*, “A government free to kill citizens at will is truly the worst kind of Big Government nightmare” (Horsey).

However, a couple of the major reasons the drone attacks have been popular is because they do not put American soldiers in direct harms way and they are very precise which minimizes civilian casualties. These are an “effective and politically popular weapon” for President Obama (Horsey). Overall, the media agenda is to support the Obama administration’s decisions and is not overly critical of him or the Democratic agenda.

No country has influenced international relations as decisively and at the same time as ambivalently as the United States. No society has more firmly insisted on the inadmissibility of intervention in the domestic affairs of other states, or more passionately asserted that its own values were universally applicable. No nation has been more pragmatic in the day-to-day conduct of its diplomacy, or more ideological in the pursuit of its historic moral convictions. No country has been more reluctant to engage itself abroad even while undertaking alliances and commitments of unprecedented reach and scope (Kissinger, 1995, 17–18). (Curtiss)

If the media covered more of the crisis, corruption, and tragedy occurring in that region, then the Obama administration may be forced to deal more with it and act appropriately. Currently the media reports that the administration says it is just too busy to focus any attention on Darfur. There are too many other more important things for the government to worry about; it does not have time for the crisis in Darfur. However, the American media paints this in a way that the American public can accept it. By showing

that through peace agreements, elections, and misinformed exaggerations, Darfur is not experiencing genocide still to this day.

Motives for not covering Darfur

1. Does not want to classify Darfur as genocide because then America would have to do something about it
2. President al-Bashir is an embarrassment to the Obama Administration
3. It is Muslims killing Christians

The media also has motives for not covering the crisis in Darfur. There are certain things that the media does not desire the American public to think about. It took a long time for people to call the situation in Darfur genocide. For the longest time, the U.S. stood alone in its declaration. The media has been reluctant to label the crisis in Darfur genocide once again; rather they seem to refrain from using this word in connection with the continuing crisis. Instead, the media uses that word mostly just to describe Darfur's past, as if the crisis is not on going. It also frequently uses the term genocide in conjunction with President al-Bashir since he was the first seated President to be indicted on these charges by the International Court. However, it is seen as a thing of the past even with him, even though he is still the President of Darfur. The media does not classify Darfur as an on-going genocide because then someone has to do something about it. It would be difficult for America to sit by and allow genocide to occur, even if it is half way around the world. President Clinton, on his decision to intercede in the Bosnia-Herzegovina Civil War, noted that he did not want to be known as the President who allowed genocide on his watch. Edmund Burke stated, "All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing." If the media does not present to the public that there is an evil occurring across

the Atlantic, then the American people will not realize that they are standing by and letting evil triumph. By the media ignoring a crisis and sweeping it under the rug, the public does not realize genocide is occurring. If they did, the Obama administration may be forced to make Darfur a priority.

Another reason or motive for limited coverage of Darfur is President al-Bashir. The articles do discuss his contempt of the U.S. and the requests for peace. There continues to be little coverage of al-Bashir's defiance in the face of U.S. and international pressure. It is embarrassing that another foreign power has the U.S., arguably the most powerful nation in the world, in his pocket. Too much coverage of this and perhaps then the Obama Administration would be forced to put President al-Bashir in his place. However, President Obama has shown that he does not like to project an elite or necessarily strong United States. This can be seen in something as simple as denying U.S. Marines flying an American flag in Haiti. However the country that is providing the most aid and leadership in Haiti will not fly their own flag in honor of what they are accomplishing. Nevertheless, the American media's agenda supports the Obama Administration, as a result it does not desire the American public reading about how President al-Bashir slaughters his own people and believes the U.S. is weak. With a different agenda, President Obama could be pressured by U.S. public opinion, outrage, and desire to make Darfur a priority again.

The last motive for not covering Darfur in the newspaper articles is because Muslims are killing Christians. As discussed earlier in this paper, Christianity is not a politically correct religion within the liberal media's agenda. Other religions tend to be looked at with incredibly greater tolerance than Christianity; even the Tonton Macoute's Voodoo receives more positive coverage. Bosnia was ethnic Christians Serbs killing

regional ethnic Muslims, and the international community did not tolerate that. However, devout Muslims killing devout Christians seems to be more of a touchy subject and something that the media does not desire to address and avoids all together in Darfur's case. Only one brief mention of Muslims killing Christians was found in these articles. The NBA celebrity Manute Bol recalls this persecution of the Muslims on Christians. Yet this is exactly how the killing and slaughter was divided, Muslims committed genocide upon the Christians and animists with impunity from the press. An interesting note here is how this point has been minimized in light of the fact that the government specifically let loose the Muslim militias upon the Christian population throughout Sudan.

It does not matter the amount of killing and oppression the Islamic religion has inflicted across the world and continues to do so to this day, in the media's agenda Islam is a religion of peace, despite the evidence to the contrary. In a conflict that is clearly sectarian, the international community knows this to be true and the people in the Sudan know this to be so as well; it was presented in passing, as if an afterthought. This is something that the media does not want the American public to think about at all.

There may be a reason for the media avoiding the coverage of Muslims murdering Christians besides it just being politically incorrect. Again this may point to what the Obama Administration supports. This current administration does not have strong ties to Christianity or causes normally associated with the conservative Christian movement. For instance, President Obama is not a vocal or strong supporter of Israel like other Presidential administrations have been in the past. The support of Israel has very close ties to Christianity. Christians believe that Israel is God's chosen people and therefore they need to support it. However, if one is not an advocate of Christianity, it follows then that

Israel may not be important to them either. President Obama has a significant family history within Islam, which seems to have given him at the very least ambivalence towards Israel.

Currently much of Islam in the Middle East and throughout the World possesses some semblance of hostility to the Jews as a people and Israel as a nation. This is a long running hostility; Adolf Hitler actually co-opted Arab Muslims to assist him with his rampage of genocide against the Jews. This is not to suggest that the Obama Administration desires genocide against Israel. This is merely to point out that they do not support Israel, they do not favor the term Muslim terrorist, and they are not strong supporters of Christianity. The Obama Administration and liberal media agendas tend to not support Christian goals or ideas. Therefore, the media does not cover the injustice and cruelty being inflicted upon Christian Africans in Darfur.

The media's motives for its limited coverage of Darfur is to demonstrate to the American public that the crisis in Darfur never was significant, has already ended, and the genocide was over exaggerated. They accomplish this by highlighting the peace agreements and election, mitigating evidence to the contrary. The media's motives for not covering Darfur is to not highlight that a genocide is occurring in Darfur, the U.S.'s weak presence overseas, President al- Bashir's demeaning view of the U.S., and Muslims killing Christians. Because doing the opposite could lead to public outrage and the Obama administration would most likely receive pressure to change their approach to Darfur.

Chapter 5 Conclusion:

Motives

Through a rhetorical criticism of newspaper articles, numerous motives of the media were discovered and identified affecting the coverage of one disaster over another. By looking at the articles discussing the Haitian earthquake and the noticeably fewer articles covering the crisis in Darfur, several themes emerged. From these themes, the reason behind each theme was extracted, or in other words answered why those articles were written. The final step was analyzing the motives behind these reasons. Therefore, the goal was to discover what the media wanted the American public to think about and likewise not think about. The goal was to answer the original research question:

RQ: What are the American Media's motives for covering the Haitian earthquake more intensely and thoroughly than the conflict and crisis in the Darfur region of the Sudan?

Through research, several motives were identified. The media's motives for covering the Haitian earthquake included the following:

1. Righting wrongs, specifically racism, imperialism, and intolerance
2. Promoting the Obama administration, specifically its policies concerning healthcare, immigration, and Haiti's fate
3. The emergence of social media becoming a prominent source of first hand information and how accessible this made donations and information to the public

The media had motives for not covering the certain aspects of the Haitian earthquake. Above is what the media wanted the public to think about. Listed below is what the media did not want the people to think and talk about.

1. The positive long term help that Christianity had brought to the country
2. The positives the American military brought to Haiti during its occupation

The media had several motives as well for covering the Darfur crisis, and even more so for not covering the crisis. The following are the media's motives for printing the few articles about Darfur found in the newspaper:

1. To assure the American public that the crisis in Darfur has diminished greatly by highlighting the election or the peace agreements
2. To suggest that the genocide is being over exaggerated today and blaming most of the deaths on disease
3. Support the Obama administration

Most importantly, the media does not adequately or accurately cover the crisis occurring in Darfur due to several motives:

1. They do not want to classify Darfur as genocide because that would mean the U.S. would have to act
2. The media does not want to portray the U.S., and by association the Obama Administration, as weak, which how President al-Bashir presents the U.S. by his rhetoric and actions
3. Muslims killing Christians

All of the motives listed above for not covering the crisis in Darfur fall in line with the Obama administration's policies and ideals. Perhaps at the root of the liberal media's motives are to promote the liberal president's administration's agenda.

Limitations

As with every study, there were limitations to this particular one. First of all the researcher did not have the luxury of having unlimited time to devote to research and writing this thesis. More available time could lead to even more in depth analysis, and perhaps other themes or motives would be discovered as a result. There was also the deadline for this thesis in order to graduate on schedule, which limited the amount of time available to research and conduct this study. Again, more time would perhaps lead to deeper levels of analysis and could allow more time for additional research of surrounding factors that affected the media's motives for coverage of one disaster over another.

A second limitation was resources. As a graduate student, the researcher was limited financially and had to rely on what was convenient and financially accessible. The university provides a library database free to all students, which made this research possible. However, was still limited to what the database offered. LexisNexis was utilized to gain access to the 2010 newspaper articles. However, the original five newspapers initially intended to be viewed was altered to three because the databases only contained three of the five, therefore only three newspapers were studied. To minimize the effects of this, the Internet was queried for any articles that could be found from the remaining two papers, while tedious, the sub-sample found and compiled did not differ in content from the complete sampling found in Lexus-Nexus. If finances, as well as time, were not a

concern, then the researcher would have been able to complete all the newspaper articles from all five newspapers with little difficulty. Instead this study utilized convenience.

Another limitation was the sheer volume of articles that had to be looked at, studied and analyzed. Analyzing the articles on Darfur was less problematic because they were fewer in number. However, when studying the Haitian articles, it was difficult to look at each one in depth because of the sheer volume of articles to go through. It was unexpected to look through rhetoric of that volume and density. As noted previously, if there had been more time to conduct this study, it may have been possible to look more closely at each article and perhaps discover more themes or motives behind the media.

A fourth limitation was the researcher's own personal bias of a conservative and evangelical Christian background. The Bible and the Holy Spirit have shaped her worldview and therefore the lens in which she views the world, including how she viewed the newspaper articles. It would be impossible as a human being to be completely unbiased however this was a qualitative study so human bias is expected to be present. It is necessary and imperative though to recognize this and understand how it shapes one's analysis.

Future Research

There is a lot of future research that can be done on the media and why it covers one crisis over another. This study only seems to have made a dent as to why a certain disaster is ignored and another one makes the front-page news. Since this study looked more at the liberal newspapers, it would be interesting to analyze more conservative newspapers. Perhaps the themes and therefore the motives would be different. Even more interesting would be to see if a disaster is highlighted in both conservative and liberal Medias equally,

and likewise a disaster not covered equally but both conservative and liberal medias. This would show whether or not liberal and conservative Medias have similar motives.

This study only looked at newspapers. However, there are so many media outlets in America today that it would be beneficial to analyze those as well such as television, magazines, social media, radio etc. In fact, newspapers have been on the decline, and a study utilizing one of the more popular media sources may be more beneficial and relevant to this generation.

Finally, it would be interesting to compare two disasters of the same nature, and relatively the same distance from the U.S. such as Haitian earthquake and Chile earthquake. If they are very similar in nature and approximately the same distance from the U.S., this may give more insight as to why one disaster is highlighted more than another. Not as many variables will be involved, the more similar the crisis. Darfur and Haiti are both considered a crisis however they are very different in nature and geography, which makes them a little more difficult to compare and contrast due to the vast differences.

Conclusion

This study uncovered several possible motives for the media covering one crisis over another. With an understanding of why the media chooses to highlight a disaster in the media and why another one gets ignored, the hope is that places hit with disaster can appeal to these motives in order to receive media coverage, which would most likely lead to more assistance or aid from outside sources. For instance, social media played a huge role in media coverage of the Haitian earthquake and as a result funds and aid came pouring in to assist the Haitian people. Perhaps if social media were utilized in Darfur and pictures were tweeted of the devastation occurring in that area, then the media may be

forced to acknowledge that particular disaster, make it more relatable to the Western audience, and cover it. The question then is how does one get social media involved in Darfur? The answer may be with the foreign aid workers who go there to help such as UN workers. However, it is a dangerous and unstable place, which is why many of the Foreign aid workers left or were forced to leave. Hence that might be another reason social media has not really been active in that region, no one stayed around to tweet. Nevertheless, understanding the media's motives for covering one crisis over another can lead to a crisis taking action to obtain the media's attention. Probably the most disturbing discovery was the press's predisposed hostility toward Christianity in both case studies. In both studies you had another religion at least partially involved in a reign of terror, mass killings, rapes and displacements of populations, yet it was Christianity that the press choose to focus criticism on. The goal of this study was to attempt to uncover the media's motives for covering or not covering a disaster so hopefully in the future when other inevitable disasters strike, they will not be forgotten.

Chapter 6

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