

THE MEDIA'S ROLE IN GENOCIDE IN THE CONTEXT OF
MYANMAR, DARFUR AND RWANDA

By

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ABSTRACT

How does media national and international coverage play a significant role in how events unfold throughout the duration of these mass killings as well as the overall outcomes of genocides? This thesis analyzes the genocides in Myanmar, Darfur, and Rwanda by examining the history of each genocide, the local and international media coverage, as well as the specific variables that can be seen throughout all three conflicts. The conflicts in Myanmar, Darfur, and Rwanda have found that the media's involvement creates conflicts that involve the following variables: the CNN effect, different agenda setting theories, historical baggage, the Coups and Quakes syndrome, and psychological numbing.

After examining each genocide from the most recent events to the older mass killings throughout history, we can conclude that there is a cycle of how media outlets frame genocidal events that has not changed. The lack of coverage when these genocides first take place and the time to intervene before it worsens passes before the media covers the conflict with full accuracy. Once the genocide does finally achieve media coverage, the topic of the genocide loses relevance competing with western media that captivates the attention of the public. Major changes need to be made when it comes to the coverage of these genocides and policy implementation because history keeps repeating itself with these genocides. While it is hard to tell what steps exactly need to be taken to make this happen, we do know that the change is very much needed.

INTRODUCTION

Genocides that have taken place throughout history have many variables that impact their overall outcome. While genocides and their media coverage have often been studied separately, there is an evident connection between these two subjects. Media coverage during and after a genocide takes place plays a large role in how the conflict is, or is not, resolved. It is important to question why genocides have received different levels of coverage when they have certain devastating variables and trends. But first, we must understand the full meaning of genocides and what they entail.

According to Article II of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Genocide is defined as any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- A. Killing members of the group
- B. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group
- C. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part
- D. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group
- E. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Since then, the United Nations has provided a more detailed definition of what genocide means in terms of qualifications. Essentially, the group of people inflicting harm on another group of people must have proven intent to eviscerate a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.

Another important element of genocide is that the victims are not chosen a random, but they are

rather targeted purposfully. Genocides have occurred various times throughout the course of history, regardless of how recent this definition of genocide is.

This paper will primarily focus on how the media, whether its national or international, plays a significant role in genocides and how the events unfold during these genocides.

Through the analysis of the genocides in Myanmar, Darfur, and Rwanda, we can begin to understand the ways in which media outlets have covered, and have not covered, genocides throughout history as well as how media plays a role in the outcomes of genocides. With each case study, the literature will focus on the history behind each conflict, the impacts of the national and international media that contributed, or did not contribute to, the massacres, as well as the different factors that play a role in how the media goes about their coverage of the conflict.

Each of these genocides I have chosen provides a clear analysis of how certain aspects of how the media impacts the events of genocide have and have not changed. The events in Myanmar began in October of 2016 and are still progressing today. The analysis of this genocide provides insight as to how modern technology and social media are hindering the crisis. The mass killings in Darfur began in 2003 and the Sudanese government officially agreed to have the perpetrators of the genocide to the ICC to face war crime and genocide charges. The longevity of this genocide provides insight as to how the events evolve over time and the media's role, or lack thereof, in the past 17 years. Finally, the Rwandan genocide took place from October 1st of 1990 and ended on July 28th of 1994. This genocide was infamously known for the blatant disregard from the by the international community in terms of political action, international aid, and a lack of accurate coverage of the crisis when the events were unfolding. While much action has been taken to improve the mistakes that were made during the Rwandan genocide, there are

still similarities that can be found in the mistakes made in more recent genocides such as Myanmar and Darfur.

The main goal of this thesis is to gain a better understanding about the media's involvement and how the media has created various different issues in each of these genocides. The literature and research will demonstrate how the cycle in which media outlets frame genocidal events has not changed. When each of these genocides are first covered by international media, the relevancy of the conflict is eminent for a short period of time before the media moves on to more recent news while the genocide prevails. The following characteristics can be found in each genocide and are explained in more depth throughout the case studies: the CNN effect, different agenda setting theories, historical baggage, the Coups and Quakes syndrome, and psychological numbing.

The genocides that are examined are in order from the most recent to the older conflicts in order to demonstrate how these characteristics mentioned above have not changed as well as the many parallels these conflicts have with their media coverage. More modern genocides have newer issues that have come to light as well as the same issues that can be seen in older genocides like Rwanda. In the case of Myanmar, the people have access to different social media platforms that allow for inaccurate information that is a result of a lack of support from the international community. This is an issue that could not be foreseen during the times of the Rwandan Genocide. One can see the various connections that take place throughout the analysis of Myanmar, Darfur, and Rwanda. While one might think the world has learned from the tragedies that happened in Rwanda due to the insufficient media coverage, these mistakes have remained and even more issues have developed. Taking the time to start with these present genocides and move back in time will allow us to see how and why change must be made.

MYANMAR

Myanmar: Who are the Rohingya and the discrimination they currently face

The Rohingya crisis in Myanmar includes modern technology and media coverage that plays a significant role in the events that take place along with newer perceptions of genocides that people had not seen in the past. Previous genocides and refugee crises have not always had large amounts of attention from the media and communication in general, the Rohingya crisis has had many more obstacles to overcome. These modern day interferences have the potential to be conceivably worse than the lack of media coverage that took place during the Rwandan genocide. Before exploring those obstacles, we must take a look at what the crisis entails and how it all began.

Muslims have lived in Myanmar since as early as the 12th century. The Rohingya represent the largest percentage of Muslims and Myanmar, numbered around one million people in the beginning of 2017. This ethnic group has their own language along with their own culture that comes from them being descendants of Arab traders that had been in the region for generations. However, the country itself is predominantly Buddhist and the government has attempted to remove the Rohingya for decades and this has sparked various conflicts between the two groups. After the 1962 military coup in Myanmar all citizens were required to have national registration cards. This military rule in Myanmar also meant that they could further discriminate against the Rohingya by refusing to recognize them as a people. The Rohingya were only foreign identity cards, which ultimately limited the jobs and educational opportunities they had access to. Ever since this military rule, the government has put various laws in place to further discriminate against this ethnic group. The government has recently denied Rohingya citizenship and has gone as far as to exclude them from the 2014 census. Significant numbers of the Rohingya have

traveled across Bangladesh fleeing from the discrimination they faced in Myanmar ever since the 1970s. In the more recent years, before the genocidal acts they face today, thousands of Rohingya have migrated out of Myanmar to escape large group violence and abuses they face from the government's security forces (*Myanmar Rohingya: What you need to know about the crisis*, 2020).

Why did they flee their homes?

These generations of grievances have emerged within the Rohingya communities gradually. Rohingya Arsa militants launched deadly attacks on over 30 police posts on the 25th of August in 2017, which initially contributed to the genocidal acts against the group along with yet another mass exodus. The Rohingyas that made their way to Bangladesh had stated that they had to flee after Myanmar troops that were supported by Buddhist mobs had burned down their villages and began killing civilians. This was done in response to this initial attack by the Rohingya militant groups. According to the medical charity known as the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), around 6,700 Rohingya were killed during this month of violence. The Myanmar military killed at least 730 children under the age of five along with raping the women and young girls. Recent images have shown the Rohingya villages were completely dismantled and reduced to rubble while neighboring Rakhine villages were left in perfect condition. One of the areas that had the most damage was the Maungdaw Township from August 25th-September 25th of 2017 (*Myanmar Rohingya: What you need to know about the crisis*, 2020).

What has the international response been? What is happening now?

The United Nations published a report in August of 2018 formally accusing the Myanmar military of mass killings and rapes of the Rohingya group with "genocidal intent". Myanmar's de facto leader, Aung San Suu Kyi rejected allegations of genocide when she appeared at the

International Court of Justice (ICJ) in December 2019. A month later in January 2020, the ICJ's ruling ordered Myanmar to protect the Rohingya from being persecuted and killed and that emergency measures needed to be taken. Meanwhile, the International Criminal Court (ICC) approved an investigation into the Rohingya case in November of 2020 to try individuals accused of war crimes or crimes against humanity. Even though the country of Myanmar is not an acting member of the ICC, the court had jurisdiction in this case because the Rohingya fled to the member state Bangladesh.

Unfortunately, nothing seems to have improved or changed for the Rohingya people since the United Nations identified the "killings, rapes and gang rapes, torture, forced displacement and other grave rights violations" in the year of 2017. The Rakhine province is currently experiencing ongoing conflict between the army and rebels from the Buddhist Rakhine ethnic group. While the United Nations has warned there is a "serious risk that genocidal actions may occur or recur", there has not been much done to put a stop to this conflict.

There has been a large refugee crisis in Bangladesh because of this growing conflict in Myanmar. While massive amounts of refugees that fled to Bangladesh in 2017, there were already hundreds of thousands of Rohingya who had previously fled Myanmar for the same discriminatory actions against them. According to the UNHCR, Kutupalong is now known as the world's largest refugee camp in the world, housing over 600,000 refugees. The refugee settlement had become far too large and the government of Bangladesh had to turn away the Rohingya fleeing Myanmar in March of 2019. None of the current refugees have returned to Myanmar because they refuse to return until they are guaranteed citizenship. An investigation from the BBC has shown that even those considering returning in the future may not be able to

because of the villages destroyed to make way for government facilities (*Myanmar Rohingya: What you need to know about the crisis*, 2020).

Why is modern technology/social media hindering the crisis?

The genocidal events taking place in Myanmar are different from the other genocides presented in this thesis because of how differently the media plays a role in its events. This is because of the modern technology the people in Myanmar have access to that were not around during the Rwandan genocide nor available to the Rwandan people. Cell Phones have played a significant role for both the Rohingya activists along with the Myanmar government. Rohingya reporters have developed their own communication systems with other Rohingya activists and use these devices to evade government censors. Avoiding these government restrictions is very important for the Rohingya to smuggle out news and video of the genocidal acts against the group to the outside world. Considering the Rakhine state has good control centrally of how information spreads within the country, the state also has a good grasp on how information is very slowly reaching other nations. It is also very interesting to note that it is a little surprising given that the state is so centrally controlled and information is often very slow in escaping the country. A 30-year-old Rohingya man that goes by the pseudonym of Ro Aung Zaw to protect his identity explained that they “communicate through phone calls, and through WhatsApp and through WeChat, and through IM, and through Messenger, Facebook Messenger”. He, just like many of the Rohingya, fled Myanmar when his village was attacked by Myanmar troops that are supported by Buddhist mobs. He now works in a closely guarded network of about 20 members that are trying to expose these atrocities. They are doing this in hopes of proving to the United Nations that these events are leading to a massive genocide if they do not intervene further.

Unfortunately, international aid workers and journalists have been blocked from the region and have even been arrested for trying to cover the crisis.

These phones have also led to a mass amount of mis-communication for both the Rohingya groups and the Myanmar government. This crisis is exacerbating largely because it is made up of systematic disinformation and persecution fueled by social media. David Mathieson, an independent analyst who has lived and worked in the region for years, agrees with the claim that social media has been one of the most damaging factors in the crisis. He elaborates on how the international community needs to understand this developing crisis:

“I think people internationally need to realize that five years ago, it cost a couple hundred dollars to get a sim card. Not many people had phones. And so, what we've seen in the past three or four years is this country getting online, everyone having a cheap smartphone and access to Facebook. And so there's not the media literacy, there's not the kind of ability to understand this medium, and the limitations of online speech.”

(Weaponizing social media: The Rohingya crisis, 2018).

All of these social media platforms allow for large amounts of false or inaccurate information that result in a lack of support from the international community because there is not enough accurate information for them to interpret. Facebook has played an obvious role in fueling the coverage of these atrocities against the Rohingya in Myanmar. The number of Facebook users in Myanmar has increased immensely from about 2 million users in 2014 to more than 30 million today. The Myanmar regime and its allies' monitor the events that take place on the new feeds along with interpreting the mindsets of the Rohingya groups. Facebook has also opened up more vocalized hatred against the Rohingya and this spread of malice for the group has only made these genocidal acts worse from the people of differing groups of Myanmar as well as the

regime. According to the BBC, Facebook has been heavily criticized after reports said it misdirected data from more than 50 million users, which then allowed for consulting firm Cambridge Analytica to access the data. Since then, Facebook has suspended the firm for violating its privacy policy.

The people in Myanmar are also relatively uneducated about their social media and technology because it has just recently been introduced in the past 5 years. Local Kyaw Kyaw, who says he faces virulent attacks online for supporting Rohingyas' rights, claims that the citizens of Myanmar frequently use Facebook, but “they don't know how to respect the people. They don't know what is private or public [information]. They need this education fast.” (*Weaponizing social media: The Rohingya crisis*, 2018).

What is news framing and what does it have to do with the Rohingya crisis?

News media plays a very important role in interpreting reality based on the idea that media coverage influences and is influenced by public opinion. News framing typically refers to the process in which some elements are made to be the key focus while obscuring others in order to produce intriguing content. Despite the fact that journalists' roles are important in framing construction, frames are specific and explicit factors in ideological processes that are embedded in cultural webs we know today. In order for framing to work and be interpreted by the audience, there must be a certain amount of cultural resonance. In the case of genocides, for example, international events are typically represented differently and placed in different systems of interpretation. As digital technologies began to develop in the late 1990s, copious amounts of news sources have been collected and new research developments have allowed for better ways to interpret and detect news framing.

A study was conducted by the University of Kansas to find the differences in frame use in the elite press from the U.S., Myanmar, and Bangladesh along with the ideological implications of these differences. Researchers Hong Tien Vu and Nyan Lynn studied between August 1st, 2017 to July 31st, 2018 because this was when over 700,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh and the issue sparked a certain amount of international outcry throughout the year. According to the study:

“After eliminating duplicates and articles that only mentioned the word Rohingya once, the final samples included 117 stories from The NYT, 374 from The New Nation, and 256 from The Irrawaddy. During the one-year period, The NYT published 82 news stories and 35 editorial and opinion essays. The respective numbers were 225 and 31 for The Irrawaddy and 228 and 146 for The New Nation. The final samples included 132,263 words from The NYT, 222,752 from The New Nation, and 207,125 from The Irrawaddy.”
(*Vu & Lynn*, pg 1288).

The results from this study concluded that there were differences in the coverage of the Rohingya crisis in the press from the three countries could possibly be motivated by the way journalists from these nations perceive their roles.

The NYT showed more interest in the conflict aspect of the Rohingya refugee crisis compared to The New Nation’s coverage. In framing the Rohingya crisis, the NYT’s coverage helped to reinforce the hegemonic discourse on the events in Myanmar and the involved parties. Past research typically finds that Third-World countries tend to be in the media spotlight only if there are natural disasters or upheavals that where the “bad news” is emphasized. Meanwhile, Irrawaddy's approach helped explain the negotiation between professional reporting practices and how to make prevalent information mainstream public opinions in the country on this issue

and the anti-Rohingya narrative into its news content. Even though more empirical evidence is needed to understand journalists' impressions in Bangladesh and Myanmar, previous research has shown that American journalists often see their roles as detached observers of the government and businesses. These journalists' reports, therefore, are skeptical of authorities (*Vu & Lynn*, pg. 1284-1304).

Another study conducted by Kasun Ubayasiri found that one of Bangladesh's most prominent English newspapers, *The Daily Star*, has framed the refugee migration into the nation. From this coverage, it is easier to understand how the movement of people across borders has inherently changed the nature of coverage of genocides. The study analyzed two random samples of the news stories published about the migration from 1 December 2011-31 November 2012 and 1 August 2017-31 October 2017. The Rohingya discourse in *The Daily Star* during these dates and this time period was framed in a way that demonstrated Bangladesh's relations with the new Myanmar government. Simultaneously, *The Daily Star* framed the Rohingya's otherness which further manifested overtime. The analysis of the frameset suggested the presence of three subsets: the Rohingya hindering Bangladeshi prosperity, the Rohingya as victims, and the Rohingya as intruders of Bangladeshi sovereignty. Essentially, the group was framed as a setback for Bangladesh's economic growth because these refugees were undeservedly benefiting from their economic growth. An article published by the *Daily Star* on September 21, 2017 citing a report produced by a Dhaka-based think-tank stated that "Bangladesh's future development hinges on some critical projects in Chittagong and the hill tracts areas, such as the Chittagong port, special economic zones and deep-sea ports, which are very close to Myanmar" and "A possible conflict with Myanmar can hamper Bangladesh's efforts for integration with Southeast Asian countries." While this approves of regional cooperation Bangladesh-Myanmar relations, it

also demonstrates the Rohingya as a barrier preventing Bangladeshi citizens from reaping economic benefits, which in turn rationalized the exclusion of Rohingya refugees from the benefits of growth.

With all of this being said, the movement of the Rohingya people across borders is the main reason for the changes in the nature of coverage. The Rohingya received a label as “economic migrants” from The Daily Star which further justifies the mistreatment of this group. The paper uses this economic narrative of Bangladesh's limited availability of economic surplus to show that these refugees are entitled to basic needs only if the economic needs of the state and its citizens are fulfilled. These statements further insinuate these refugees' needs are not seen as humanitarian assistance, but instead an economic perquisite at the state’s discretion. This is a very common tactic of many countries, including in the West to justify not helping the millions of migrants who cross international borders every year to escape poverty, conflict, and repression (*Ubayasiri*, pg. 8-13).

Local/National News Coverage:

The media within Myanmar plays its own role in how the crisis is being handled internally and externally. One of the key problems with the local media is how the news is often widely misinterpreted. The authoritarian government in Myanmar has created intentional misinterpretations of the genocidal acts amongst its own people. According to Lisa Brooten, identified that there are a limited number of locals that can provide accurate information in these conflict zones, which often leads to journalists relying heavily on a small group of people. For example, local producers tend to guide journalists to the pharmacy in the Thet Kel Pyin IDP camp, which is a clinic nearby and a well-known Rohingya lawyer and former political prisoner. In Sittwe, which is outside the camp, most journalists interview the same people. Several

journalists said they speak to those with mainly extreme nationalist viewpoints when trying to get a glimpse of the Rakhine Buddhist view on the situation. This is a prime example that demonstrates the unfair framing and image of the Rakhine Buddhist population who are mainly moderate Rakhine, but are reluctant to speak up in fear of being targets within their own community.

Another issue within the local media in Myanmar is the risk of interviewing people who have already spoken to many journalists before. These interviewees usually learn what kind of stories reporters are interested in and what stories end up in the media, so they tell them what they want to hear. Unfortunately, the people in Myanmar are living in a highly polarised climate in which they want to tell their stories and have their perspectives be understandable to others in the area.

There is also a huge safety risk for local journalists, producers, and interpreters to travel throughout these violent areas. Local reporters that work for foreign news agencies are often accused by local journalists working for Burmese publications along with a large portion of the public bias towards Muslims in Rakhine State. One local producer in Yangon, Myanmar, stated “I could disappear or get arrested, so I calculate my risk.” There is a large disparity between local and foreign journalists because the government treats them differently. There is also an alarming lack of transparency around government restrictions and regulations which further increase the safety risks for local journalists. These safety risks do not allow local reporters and journalists to provide the people of Myanmar with the proper information about the crisis that is going on throughout the country. Because of this, it leads to mass confusion about the situation.

The news production in Rakhine State is also predominantly perpetuated as a search for misery to demonstrate the conditions of the Rohingya in an arrangement that misconstrues the

situation by focusing only on the Rohingya as victims. A foreign journalist Verbruggen provided insight about the conditions of the camp and determined that “It is misleading when people only shoot dying babies, photos that have the most impact,” she said. When Verbruggen arrived at the IDP camp near Sittwe, she expected desperate misery because of all the photos she had seen that told a story of great despair. She then began to think that they had not actually entered the IDP area yet because she had only seen small villages that were not much different from other small towns in the country. Meanwhile, the Myanmar authorities limit which areas can be visited and reporters are not always sure that the areas that are accessible accurately represent the overall situation or are “showcase” sites. Access to the places where the conflict is most prevalent are often restricted and the rules around these restrictions are constantly changing without any notice. This can lead to a large dependence on sources that are considered secondary and tend to undermine the situation in the Rakhine State (*Brooten & Verbruggen*, p. 448-457).

International News Coverage:

Unfortunately, the events taking place in Myanmar can be attributed to systematic disinformation and persecution fueled by social media. The people of Myanmar first had access to Facebook in 2014 when roughly 2 million people joined the site. Facebook currently has more than 30 million members from Myanmar today. The regime and their allies leading the discrimination of the Rohingya have been able to express their views of the events taking place that permeate the outside viewer’s news feeds and ultimately their mindsets. The United Nations has stated that Facebook is largely to blame for the spread of hate towards Myanmar as well.

The coverage of the Rohingya crisis internationally is a direct result of the small group of key people from the local villages, especially the people who are considered entrepreneurs in these areas. These outside journalists who have been reporting on the Rakhine State are either

based in the country, fly in from neighboring regions working as correspondents from Asia or Southeast Asia, or from all over the world. When reporters from other nations come to Myanmar to assess the situation, they get in contact with the local producers and interpreters through colleagues. From there, the word of the reporters of being there spreads which leads to the networks developing. These networks then become construed and the information becomes biased to who these reporters come in contact with rather than everyone who is directly affected by the situation.

One journalist even stated that a Rohingya man had “tried to create a monopoly of fixing.” Another well known local producer that lives in one of the camps near Sittwe and has expanded his business and entrepreneurship by hiring what a journalist described as an “apprentice.” These journalists and reports have also contributed to an overarching perception among the Burmese population that outside journalists are biased in favour of the Muslim population and that they lack of engagement with the perspectives of the Rakhine Buddhists. This is a direct result of these correspondents solely relying on local people in their area to help them navigate through the country and gaining access to limited sites. More recently, a foreign journalist discovered it was no longer possible for outside reports to visit camps with a Rohingya interpreter or a local producer. This is just another prime example of the Rakhine state prohibiting the true stories of what is taking place from making its way onto international media outlets along with news framing that takes place to provide the story the government would like to be told. This journalist stated that when she visited an IDP camp in Sittwe in June of 2016, the government prohibited her from hiring a Rohingya interpreter inside the camp and had her hire an interpreter from outside instead. This was unlike her previous visits in which she was able to hire a Rohingya interpreter inside the camps of her choosing.

Amongst these obstacles, reporters also deal with unpredictable visa regulations for entering the country because they have changed in recent years. Most journalists were not asked questions nor asked for a copy of their visas in 2014. These less restrictive methods changed drastically in 2016. It was no longer possible to enter the camps on a tourist visa and all reporters were required to have specific journalist visas. Some of the restrictions made on journalists and reporters entering the country have political motives. The government restricted access to the country by giving out one-month visas to journalists rather than the three-month visas they were granted before that. This took place after a report was made about the alleged killing of Rohingya Muslims in Du Char Yar Tan village in 2014. These restrictions were supposedly a punishment for stories about the alleged killings that the government ultimately denied had taken place. While many journalists attempted to obtain access to the village to investigate these claims, they were refused entry. (*Brooten & Verbruggen*, pg 450-458).

This research on the events taking place in Myanmar help us to realize how the combination of the generations of grievances that have emerged within Rohingya communities and the systematic disinformation fueled by social media has led to the persecution of the Rohingya.

DARFUR

Basic genocide information

The genocidal events taking place in Darfur provide an interesting perspective on the media's role in conflict that has similarities to the coverage, or lack thereof, in Myanmar. The conclusions made in the analysis of Myanmar have led us to understand how the conflict arose from religious/ethnic tensions between two differing groups within the nation, one of these groups being backed by the government and not the other. The same conflict between groups as

well as the news framing that takes place can be seen throughout the analysis of the genocide in Darfur. This dynamic between the local news coverage and the international news coverage will prove its importance throughout this case study as well. All of this information is relevant to have whilst understanding the events that occurred in the Darfur Genocide.

Before diving into the genocide, we must discuss the history behind the conflict. Civil war between the northern and southern regions of Sudan has persisted for over a decade. These conflicts are deeply rooted in the exploitative leadership in the Government of Sudan along with an unequal distribution of power and wealth among the Sudanese population. The northern region is mostly made up of Muslims who are ethnically Arab while Christians and animists groups reside in the south. While a majority of the region is predominantly Muslim, these other groups created economic and tribal/ethnic differences in the region. The Arab groups had been nomadic herders and the African groups (the Fur, Maasalit and Zaghawa) were pastoralists. The Khartoum government under General Omar al-Bashir devised a plan to create a more Islamic-based government that was opposed by the southern groups which ultimately led to the civil war. The Sudanese government abused these differences by arming ethnic Arab militia groups, known as the “Janjaweed,” to attack the ethnic African groups. While the government would attack from the air, the Janjaweed forces burned villages and poisoned the wells.

In February of 2003, two anti-government groups rose up, spreading the message that Khartoum neglects the arid region and arms Arab militia against civilians. While the Darfur conflict continued, it began to see more international attention as the world watched the humanitarian crisis unfold. In 2004, the United States characterized the conflict as genocide and multiple United Nations Security Council began to create resolutions. While the International Criminal Tribunal began criminal proceedings, the African Union and United Nations attempted

to introduce forces to stop the violence and aid the internally displaced people in Sudan, along with the refugees who fled to Chad. The genocide prevailed for many more years, but In March 2009, the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir for directing a campaign of mass killing, rape and pillage against civilians in Darfur. This was all in addition to the outstanding warrants for former Sudanese Minister of State for the Interior Ahmad Harun and Janjaweed militia leader Ali Kushayb.

South Sudan became the world's newest country on July 9, 2011 and this was a major step toward ending the violence in Sudan. Nevertheless, civilians across Sudan still remain at risk. Systematic brutality against the people of Darfur, as well as the Abyei area and Southern Kordofan, has advanced further on a new political landscape that has been altered by the independence of South Sudan. According to UN estimates, 2.7 million Darfuris still remain in internally displaced persons camps, nearly 400,000 people have been killed, women have been systematically raped, and more than 4.7 million Darfuris rely on humanitarian aid. (*Genocide in Darfur*).

How Western Media Has Impacted the Conflict:

A study by Casey Bush at Clark University found that the media generally resorted to stereotypical and inflammatory language when covering the conflict in Darfur. Bush references an article by Joel Gruley in which he points out, “The evolving narrative of the Darfur conflict as represented in The New York Times and The Washington Post, 2003–2009,” media outlets tended to portray the conflict as “tribal,” “a trope that erases geographic and historical context, and discourages actions that could prevent or reduce violent conflict” (Gruley, 2010, p.29). Looking deeper into Bush’s analyzation of Gruley’s study of various New York Times (NYT) and Washington Post (WP) articles throughout the early stages of the Darfur conflict, she

discusses the various examples of the perpetuation of the idea that Sudan, and Darfur in particular, is an underdeveloped nation full of violent tribal wars. Gruley found 1,200 NYT and WP articles that came out between 2003 and 2009. 20% of these articles he found described the conflict using the term “tribe” and just 7% named any specific cultural group (Gruley, 2010, p.34). A paragraph from a New York Times article entitled “Scorched-Earth Strategy Returns to Darfur” stated:

“It was five years ago last week that an attack by rebels from non-Arab tribes like the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa, seeking greater wealth and autonomy for the neglected and impoverished region of Darfur, prompted the Arab-dominated government to marshal Arab militias in the region that ultimately evicted millions from their homes, burning, looting and raping along the way. The campaign effectively pushed many non-Arab people off their land and into vast, squalid camps across Darfur and Chad” (Polgreen).

This article is a prime example of the characteristics of Western media that are, more recently, condemned for their simplified renditions of issues, unequal focus on specific issues, and misleading use of language and graphics. While this article happens to name the three major groups being persecuted, it categorizes the conflict into an Arab-non-Arab struggle that was instigated by tribes, with a small role attributed to the government. These articles written about the conflict in Darfur greatly impacted the way that policymakers viewed the issues and how they responded to them. Despite the fact that Sudan was classified as a “fragile” state at the time of the Darfur conflict, it was treated as a “failed” or sometimes even a “rouge” state in response to these claims. The muddled connotation of Darfur being a “failed” state changed the policies that were attributed to it. Rather than establishing an official title of state fragility, the perception of Sudan being a failed state to policymakers had implied that it is a state with a weak political or

economic system in which the government lacked control. Outside countries like the United States had taken the necessary steps to treat it as such in response to these negative connotations.

The people on the ground in Darfur is then minimized by these claims made by NYT and WP because the United States is so often considered the “savior” of Africa, and in this case particularly Darfur. The largest organization committed to advocating better policies for Darfur is known as Save Darfur. The title blatantly suggests that the people of Sudan are not capable of bettering their own country and the West must “save” them. While there is nothing wrong with the US taking action to help people around the world, it creates this perception of the conflict that further insinuates that belittles Sudanese agencies and that Sudan needs to be rescued (Bush, *Understanding Identity in Darfur: How Western Media Has Impacted the Conflict*).

International news: coverage of a genocide by three major US TV networks on their evening news/Lack of coverage

The lack of sufficient coverage of the killings in Darfur in the western media, specifically US news media outlets, has kept the public in the dark. Most people in the United States cannot demand for their government to get involved in the Darfur crisis simply because they are unaware of the killings. These television media networks have the capacity to impact US foreign relations by assembling a general public opinion to make international issues, such as the genocide in Darfur, a priority. Placing this pressure on policy makers allows for a public outcry from the international community to stop these killings in Darfur.

In a study by Chinedu Eke, he discusses the findings of the Rwandan Tribunal that the systematic rape of Tutsi women in Taba region promoted the genocidal acts of causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the targeted group. This was a pivotal announcement because it was the first time rape was considered a characteristic of genocide in an international

court. This was for the first time the Tribunal convicted three journalists with evidence that Hassan Ngeze, who was the owner and publisher of the newspaper *Kangura* “poisoned the minds” of readers against the Tutsi. The broadcasters of RTLM radio, Ferdinand Kahima and Jean-Bosco Barayagwiza, were condemned for calling for the extermination of the Tutsi by “luring them to the killing grounds and broadcasting the names of the people to be singled out” (LaFraniere 2004).

Sudan’s Khartoum-based government perpetuates ethnic and racial violence by having the Janjaweed militia take the role of proxies against the suffering individuals in Darfur who started a rebellion in early 2003. These government sponsored actions include exacerbating ethnic conflict, bombing civilians with government aircrafts, prohibiting international humanitarian access which has resulted in life threatening conditions of life for refugees, and the murdering and raping civilians. The people from Darfur who have fled the violence have given local media producers devastating testimonies. A refugee spoke to *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof and stated “the Arabs want to get rid of anyone with black skin . . . There are no blacks left [in the area I fled]”.

Darfur began to slowly gain the attention of the US press, primarily newspapers, in March and early April 2004. 83 editorials on the genocidal events in Darfur appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal* and the *Washington Times* during these months. However the main issue with this coverage is that the media hasn’t gone to Sudan much to provide accurate or significant information. Vivian (2005) discussed this idea further stating that:

“For years nobody outside Ethiopia cared much about a devastating famine (which unfortunately, is still going on). Not even after four articles in *The New York Times* was

there much response. The Washington Post ran three articles, and the *Associated Press* distributed 228 stories – still hardly any response. The next year however, disturbing videos aired by the BBC captured public attention and triggered a massive relief effort”

While there are many arguments that individuals tend to process information that have large amounts of audio or visual stimuli more quickly and with better accuracy than information without this stimuli, we cannot determine whether or not a public opinion and graphic pictures in the news media will produce a desired change or implementation of policies to aid the crises at hand. In the case of Darfur, we can see how these US media outlets have or have not impacted the genocide over time. The figures below from Eke’s study found that broadcasts took place over a five-year period on the three major US television networks: ABC, CBS and NBC. The figures from Vanderbilt TV News Archives found a total of 185 news stories broadcasted by all the cable and broadcast networks about the genocidal events in Darfur.

Results

Table 1: US Networks (ABC, CBS and NBC.) Evening news coverage of Darfur from September 2003 through September 2008.

Year	ABC	CBS	NBC
September 2003	0	0	0
2004	15	2	3
2005	10	3	4
2006	10	18	11
2007	14	17	5
September 2008	9	2	3
Total	58	42	26

Source: LexisNexis Academic, and Vanderbilt TV News Archives.

2006 was the year in which there was the greatest amount of coverage in Darfur according to the figure above. This figure from Eke paper clearly demonstrates that a certain amount of attention has been given to the events in Darfur, but specifically not in 2003 in which

the crisis began. The major events that took place during this time period went unnoticed by the international media. So then, we must once again pose the question: Are these stories sufficient in order to encourage the general public towards an outcry for policy intervention?

One of the many factors that have contributed to the minimal coverage of the events in Darfur is the international coverage of other events such as the war in Iraq, the aftermath of Hurricane Ike, and the presidential election in the United States. US news media outlets tend to devote most of their coverage to these events like these because they are closer and more relevant to US news audiences. There was also a significant reduction of foreign journalists from US news organizations which led to a lack of reporters on the ground to cover and give context on events occurring in places like Darfur (Eke, pg. 279-289).

What is the CNN effect and what does it have to do with the events in Darfur?

As we have seen in the cases of both Myanmar and Darfur, the media and television have the capacity to influence public opinion and action, or lack thereof, in times of international crisis. Chinedu Eke references Stroble in his piece describing this phenomenon as follows: “CNN got us into Somalia and CNN got us outis the popular explanation of television’s role in the US military intervention in Somalia, an explanation accepted by many in government and media leaders in the United States.” (Stroble, 2017). This phenomenon is known as the CNN Effect which suggests that television has the power to have international issues reach domestic audiences and can further shape public opinion to influence foreign policy (Eke, pg. 279-290).

The CNN Effect is more broadly known as the saturation of Western media public audiences with live news footage of wars and military interventions on television and the Internet. However, the CNN effect is not about whether the news media can prompt policy makers to get involved but rather who is responsible for creating the news agenda. Researchers

have found that the roles of the foreign policy makers and diplomats have been undermined by news media outlets agendas. These decisions tend to be made by the reporters, producers, and editors of news media sources. According to Livingston and Eachus (1995):

“The question at the heart of the CNN effect is, who controls that capacity [to influence]. Believers in the CNN effect claim that the roles of the professional policy expert and diplomat have been undermined by media. To the degree that foreign policy is reactive to news content, the key decisions are those made by reporters, producers, and editors. In this view, foreign policy decision has become epiphenomenal to new decision-making.” (*Livingston and Eachus*, pg 21)

The CNN effect would have been present regarding US intervention in Darfur, if it were the case that reporters alone had been setting the media agenda. However, if politicians or policy-maker were the ones setting the news agenda then the CNN effect would not be present in the case according to this definition. With all of these uncertain policy conditions being considered, media coverage can implement a certain level of bargaining power for those seeking a change in policy or places pressure on policy makers to respond with an action in the form of policies or else face a public relations disaster. The CNN Effect confronts the government with the possibility that public opinion can potentially be influenced by the negative media coverage and a damage to government image and credibility caused by the bad press.

In the case of Darfur specifically, the organization Save Darfur along with other organizations framed the history behind the conflict. Critics of Save Darfur tend to argue that the severe pressure for action on Darfur could have potentially fuelled the conflict because certain actions and steps were taken before an accurate assessment of the violence and the policy dynamics involved were made. However these critiques are not meant to determine whether Save Darfur were helpful or not in the how they contributed to resolving the conflict, but to show that

there were various deeply conflicting ways of how the narrative was presented, each of which provided a legitimate foundation for different stances regarding resolutions for the conflict.

These conflicting narratives throughout the Darfur genocidal events largely because there was a lack of opinions from the people suffering in Darfur a chance to both re-frame narratives from the international by highlighting different issues to avert from the CNN Effect. Personal stories would allow for evidence-based decision making which will further give the government the space to form their own policy course (Kogen & Price, pg. 110-121).

Local News Coverage

Kenyan journalists have taken a majority of the local news that has been taking place in Darfur. Kenyan journalists have a grasp on how their narrative on Darfur is constructed by ensuring the information they produce discusses the important localized understandings of the impacts on these people while simultaneously addressing the framing of Darfur by the media agencies that have more power. These journalists also have the capacity to create a narrative and perspective of invisibility and eradication in how a global narrative is produced in Africa as a whole. Many sociologists have taken the time to address this construction of African conflict knowledge by media outlets, the research from Siguru Wahutu at Harvard Law school has further analyzed how African media fields frame barbarity in Africa. *The Daily Nation* published 444 news articles on Darfur while *The Standard* published 30 articles over the same period. This is just more proof of how dominant one media outlet, in this case *The Daily Nation*, is in influencing the image of Darfur in Kenya. The media coverage of Darfur was at its highest in 2004 with 144 articles, whilst *The Standard's* coverage of 10.4% of the total coverage of news by the two media sources. These two newspapers used two very different frames to address the genocidal events that had been taking place. *The Standard* framed Darfur as a humanitarian crisis

rather than a deeply rooted civil war. On the other hand, *The Daily Nation*, they used the civil war frame which further elaborates on the issue of framing for two very important and relevant media outlets. This difference can be seen in two different quotes from *The Daily Nation* and *The Standard*. For example, the following quote from a journalist from *The Daily Nation* in 2008 shows how the newspaper tends to emphasize the civil conflicts of the crisis rather than just the humanitarian issues it has led to:

“On February 5, hours after it emerged that Chadian rebels out to overthrow the government had been beaten back, Sudan's Darfur rebels reveled in the moment. The irony is not easily lost. A rebel group seeking to overthrow a government felt nauseated by another rebel's attempts to overturn another government.” (Diyan 2008)

This particular quote from *The Standard* demonstrates the different language the paper used to frame the events in Darfur as a humanitarian issue only:

“It seems that the government had a very dim view of people in that region. They had a very crude and expansionist approach towards what was taking place in Darfur and therefore the right of the people was being pushed aside to accommodate the priorities of the government and given that of course some people decided to push back leading to where we are now. I could be wrong but that is my perception of what took place.”

(Journalist interview, Kenya, 2012)

This research from Siguru Wahutu just briefly begins to explain how African media outlets actually function by analyzing the contexts and framing patterns throughout the newspapers.

This article demonstrates the benefits of institutions in Africa with very complex social contexts and historical issues rather than just nations that are in need of modernization and saving. This

element can further be seen in the media framing, or lack thereof, in the Rwandan genocide (Wahutu, pg. 465–481).

The events that have taken place in Darfur are classified as genocidal acts and can once again be seen throughout Darfur's history of grievances. However, it is important to note that the CNN effect has played a large role in how the conflict is being portrayed and how actions could have been taken to combat this narrative that was created for the people of Darfur.

RWANDA

Background/Pre-Genocide Tensions

The conclusions made in the analysis of Darfur have led us to understand how the conflict arose from religious/ethnic tensions between two differing groups within the nation, as well as the evident role of the CNN effect in Darfur specifically. The use of the CNN effect and the use of news framing can also be compared to the case of the events in Rwanda. Both of these case studies should allow us to better understand how historical baggage connects to these overlapping characteristics we are beginning to see throughout each of these genocides. Before diving into the complexities of the role historical baggage has in genocides, we must understand the history behind the Rwandan genocide, just as we did for the other genocides.

Part of German East Africa from 1897 to 1918, Rwanda turned into a Belgium trusteeship under a League of Nations order after World War I, alongside neighboring Burundi. Rwanda's colonial period, during which the decision Belgians supported the minority Tutsis over the Hutus, exacerbated the propensity of the couple of to persecute the many, making an inheritance of strain that detonated into violence even before Rwanda picked up its freedom. Tensions began between the two groups during the Hutu revolution of 1959 when Tutsis were forced to flee the country which, in turn, made them an even smaller minority than they already

were. There had been ethnically motivated violence along with biased Hutu powers in the government in the years that followed this revolution. As the colonial times came to an end, democracy in the provinces got synonymous with greater part rule. The tragedy of Rwanda is that the larger part of the decisions made came to be characterized by ethnicity alone (Thompson, 21). The Rwandese Patriotic Front, which was mostly made up of Tutsi refugees, then invaded Rwanda from Uganda. This then prompted anyone who was associated with this group to be arrested and further lead to the directed massacres of the Tutsi people. The main reasoning behind this civil war was the different beliefs in what ethnic group was more superior in the eyes of the government, which was largely made up of Hutus (“The Rwandan Genocide”).

The civil war officially began when forces of the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) invaded Rwanda from Uganda to fight against Rwandan Armed Forces, which was the Rwandan army. The RPF started a guerrilla war, which proceeded until mid-1992 with neither side ready to pick up the advantage. A progression of fights constrained Rwandan President Juvénal Habyarimana to start harmony exchanges with the RPF and household resistance groups. The war was deferred for practically two years until a ceasefire accord was marked July 12, 1992, in Arusha, Tanzania, fixing a timetable for an end to the battling which, provoking a peace accord and power-sharing, and favoring a nonpartisan military observer group under the help of the Organization for African Unity. A truce began and produced results July 31, 1992, and political talks began on August 10, 1992 (History.com, “The Rwandan Genocide”).

At the end of the civil war, a plane with Habyarimana and Burundi’s president Cyprien Ntaryamira was shot down over the capital city of Kigali. There were no survivors. Hutu militia groups and Rwandan Armed Forces set up roadblocks/barricades and began slaughtering Tutsis along with Hutus who didn’t prove their strong ethnic beliefs. During the first two weeks of the

civil war, local administrators central and southern Rwanda tried to resist these groups because these areas were mostly made up of Tutsi people. After April 18, national authorities evacuated the resisters and slaughtered a few of them. Different rivals at that point fell quiet or effectively drove the murdering. Authorities remunerated executioners with food, drink, medications and cash. Government-supported radio stations began approaching customary Rwandan regular people to kill their neighbors. After a quarter of a year, nearly 800,000 individuals had been butchered in these events which eventually led it to become known as the Rwandan genocide (“The Rwandan Genocide”). The Rwandan genocide finished 100 days after it started, yet the repercussions of such contempt and gore will take decades, if not hundreds of years, from which to recuperate.

The Genocide Begins

The end of the Rwandan civil war contributed to the Rwandan genocide for a couple of key reasons. The mass killings of the Tutsi people can be attributed to the exclusionary ideologies that had been deeply rooted in Rwandan History. The Rwandan Civil war took place from October 1st of 1990 and ended on July 28th of 1994. There was an overlap between the civil war and the genocide because the genocide began on April 7th of 1994. The tensions that occurred in Rwanda’s past sparked elements of both the civil war and the genocide.

In 1959 there was a social revolution that was the first attack on the Tutsi people. Before Rwanda gained its independence, Belgium had created a government that was composed entirely of Tutsis people. The Belgian leaders had thought highly of the Tutsis and had faith they would do well in leading the government. The Tutsi were given identity cards to create a legal distinction between them and the Hutu. This helped fuel the Hutu people’s hatred for the Tutsi because of the two groups’ history along with the Belgian leader’s favoritism to the Tutsi. This

autocratic rule created by Belgium had also contributed to the exclusionary ideology that had developed between the Hutu and Tutsi people. This deep-seeded hatred only got worse throughout Belgium's rule in Rwanda because of their blatant favoritism for the Tutsi people. Once Rwanda was able to gain its independence from Belgium, the Hutu people were able to take back the power that they felt they rightfully deserved and display their vengeance on the Tutsi people.

A new Hutu president, Grégoire Kayibanda, was elected in 1961 when Rwanda received independence from its authoritarian regime. He started the first anti-Tutsi campaign which sparked the purges of Tutsi people. These purges took place from 1963 until 1967 after the country had gained its independence from Belgium in 1962. Some of the Tutsi people were exiled and had then tried to return to Rwandan territory by use of force. These measures failed dramatically and had created more attacks on the Tutsi community. Around 20,000 Tutsis were killed and around 300,000 had fled the country. President Kayibanda eventually lost his power in 1973 after a military coup led by Juvenal Habyarimana. Juvenal Habyarimana had then become president and also used an anti-Tutsi rhetoric which helped strengthen his power with the Hutu people in Rwanda. President Juvenal Habyarimana was a Hutu himself and wanted to continue getting rid of the Tutsi people. These events that took place were largely considered a prior genocide that had taken place before the civil war had even begun ("Rwanda: From civil war to genocide"). These killings and pursuits against the Tutsi people were also forms of genocide. These events led the Hutu people to become more willing to go after the Tutsi people in the next genocide because they had accomplished it before and not all of the Tutsi people were removed the first time.

There was also an initial political upheaval when the civil war began along with the assassination of the President Juvenal Habyarimana. His plane was shot down on April 6, 1994

over the capital city of Kigali. There were no survivors on the plane. This sparked Hutu militia groups along with Rwandan Armed Forces to set up roadblocks/barricades and began slaughtering Tutsis along with Hutus who didn't prove their strong ethnic beliefs. This had taken place only an hour after the plane had crashed (History.com, "The Rwandan Genocide"). This leading political upheaval was very fundamental for the beginning of this genocide because it had initiated the Hutu people in the government to take action against the Tutsi people. This upheaval then sparked the rebel groups and Rwandan people to participate in the killings of the Tutsi people and helped make this deadly event in history the genocide that it is known for today.

In the initial two weeks, local administrators in central and southern Rwanda, where most Tutsi lived, had opposed the genocide. After April 18, national authorities removed the resisters and executed many of them. Different adversaries at that point fell quiet or effectively led the slaughtering of the Tutsi people. Authorities rewarded executioners with food, drink, drugs and money. Government-supported radio broadcasts began telling Rwandan citizens to kill their neighbors if they were suspected to be Tutsis. After all these events had taken place, around 800,000 of Tutsi people were killed in the mass killings that preceded the plane crash. The Hutu people had made it their goal to completely destroy the Tutsi people (History.com, "The Rwandan Genocide").

Finally, there was also an element of international isolationism. The United Nations had initially placed peace keeping forces in Rwanda to help deter or prevent problems like this from occurring. However, on April 21st of 1994, the United Nations had reduced its peacekeeping force from 2,500 to 250 troops. A couple days later on April 30th, the UN had demanded a cease-fire between the FAR and the FPR but was unsuccessful because the latter was already limited to diplomatic and humanitarian actions. The UN had also refused to call the events that

took place a genocide all the way through July of 1994 while more and more Tutsi people were slaughtered. The unsuccessful pursuits of the United Nations along with the lack of outside nations largely attributed to the 100 days of mass killing resulting in 800,000 Tutsi people dead (“Rwanda: From civil war to genocide”).

How the Media Framed the Rwandan Genocide/How it was Framed Incorrectly:

People have argued that the few journalists who were in Rwanda during the genocide did not accurately frame the crisis because of what is known as ‘ancient tribal hatreds’ between the Hutu and the Tutsi. Others have argued that the western media failed to recognize the meaning behind the events that happened in Rwanda because of a certain lack of importance about African nations and the language they used to describe any conflicts in these nations. Whatever the case, the Rwanda genocide is a direct result of a vast combination of media framing and historical baggage.

Tendai Chari, a senior lecturer at the University of Venda argues, carried out a study provided proof that the New York Times's framed the genocide with nineteenth-century Eurocentric ideologies which further let the genocide be represented another African tragedy that signified hopelessness. Chari found that the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) African journalist George Alagiah exaggerates how western media is biased. Many broadcasting networks like the BBC portray Africa as a distant place where citizens starve, inadequate people run the governments, and this is the result of chaos and anarchy being the norm. Chari discusses a four-point unwritten code that is used to guide how journalists covered Africa at that time. This code includes ideological leaning, national interest, historical baggage, and advertising. This ideological leaning takes place when citizens from a nation support political parties according to ideological compatibility. For example, western media has exposed specific government

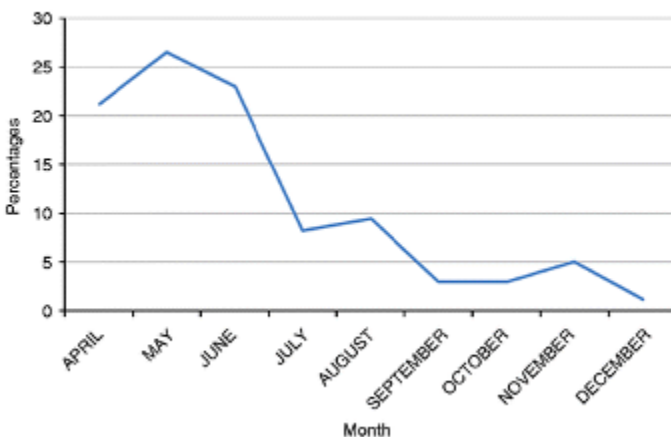
mistakes whilst maintaining good relationships with their governments. Chari describes national interest, or 'follow the flag' as a phenomenon in which western media is persuaded with the interests of their nation in their work. Typically, the foreign policy is guided by the home government's agendas. Historical baggage has played a significant role in African conflicts, more specifically the Rwandan Genocide. This term is essentially a twentieth-century view of Africa that has been influenced by nineteenth century stereotypes of Africans being portrayed as subjects rather than masters of their destiny. Finally, many advertisers and readers put pressure on western media which in turn forces the editors to cater to their impulses.

The New York Times portrayed the Rwandan conflict as a tribal conflict and which gave off the idea of the genocide not being worthy of world attention. This then led to the impression that Africa is still trapped in the dark ages while the citizens are seen as subhumans and "close to nature". Chari found proof of this view that Africans are "close to nature" is demonstrated in a New York Times story headlined "Gorillas still in Rwanda's mist" on August 31st, 1994 which compared differing sections of the Rwandese population, that had not been killed in the genocide, to gorillas in the Virunga Mountains. The article states:

"As Rwanda succumbed to the genocide this spring, dooming as many as 500,000 people, it seemed sadly likely that the slaughter would also doom 60 rare gorillas that have drawn tourists to the Virunga Mountains for the past fifteen years. For the moment, however, Rwanda's gorillas have escaped harm which is splendid news ... Amid so ghastly a human catastrophe in Rwanda; one may feel an uneasy twinge of guilt in worrying about the fate of non-humans. In truth, all living things are bound together in this calamity, and gorillas are a small evolutionary link away from Homo-Sapiens."

Statements made about the Rwandese people further promoted this stereotype of this group as primitive people. This also is a main reason why the genocide was merely projected as yet another African dream which has become a nightmare. Chari cites Livingston's piece in 2007 about how a large portion of the CNN news stories were not about the massacre of the Hutu people but rather about how the Hutu refugees were fleeing from the RPF. Some scholars, such as Chari, found that western media outlets typically emphasise humanitarian interventions instead of military interventions when covering African conflicts.

Figure 1 News coverage of the Rwanda genocide in 1994 in the *New York Times*.



Chari's research found certain aspects of the Rwandan genocide that the *New York Times* emphasized along with the events that downplayed in their work. Above is a figure that shows the coverage of the genocide in the newspaper in 1994. The figure demonstrates how the actual genocide in April 1994 received less news coverage than the refugee crisis that began in May and June 1994. Chari argues this implies that genocide in Rwanda did not receive enough attention in comparison to the refugee crisis in the months that followed. This ultimately indicates that if the genocide killings received the proper amount of media attention, there was a chance that the scale of massacres could have been reduced. Chari also addresses the small increase in stories during the month of August is connected to the increase in the amount of

refugees that fled Rwanda while the French military's deadline for withdrawal was close. Many of these Hutu refugees were afraid that the new government in Rwanda would deploy troops into these safe zones.

More examples of New York Times headlines include: "More Rwandan refugees begin the long, painful trek" (30 July 1994), "Out of Rwanda's horrors into sickening squalor" (8 May 1994), "Refugees flee into Tanzania from Rwanda" (1 May 1994), "Tutsi refugees reported in Rwanda" (30 June 1994), and "French in Rwanda discover thousands of Hutu refugees" (28 June 1994). One article even described the refugee crisis as a "slow moving column of refugees from Rwanda trudged into Tanzania today, stretching across 10 miles of roads and fanning out over the hills of elephant grass" (New York Times, 1 May 1994). (Chari, 2010).

Local News Coverage:

The media within Rwanda played a very significant role in how the genocidal events unfolded on a local level. In the initial two weeks of the killing, local administrators in central and southern Rwanda, where most Tutsi lived, had opposed the genocide. After April 18, national authorities removed the resisters and executed many of them. Different adversaries at that point fell quiet or effectively led the slaughtering of the Tutsi people. Authorities rewarded executioners with food, drink, drugs and money. Government-supported radio broadcasts began telling Rwandan citizens to kill their neighbors if they were suspected to be Tutsis. During the time of the genocide, nearly fifty percent of the population could not read nor write, which made the radio the primary form of public communication and it remains this way today. The radio was also widely trusted in Rwanda based on several surveys in the 1980s showing that a large portion of the population believed that "radio tells the truth".

Television was expensive and almost impossible at that time to receive a clear terrestrial signal given the locations of many of the villages. Contrastingly, the radio could reach nearly 90% of the country. Before the genocide in the 1980s, the production of radios was funded by foreign donors and the MRND government. These donors sold sets at a reduced price and gave them away to party administrators, even more so during election seasons. Some of these radios could only receive FM, which prohibited many listeners from hearing international broadcasters from outside the country who used Short Wave signals. Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM) began broadcasting on 8 July 1993, which was almost year before the start of the genocide. RTLM began using popular music to help win the Rwandan audience. The RTLM started to use their power to create different forms of subtle stereotyping.

Similarly, the Jews in the Holocaust were accused of owning an inexcusable share of the wealth in Germany, and the Tutsi were also inaccurately portrayed on RTLM for having a majority of the money. This socio-economic exclusion had been used by both colonial and post-colonial leaders to have a certain level of control over the majority of the population. “With the crash of the coffee market in 1987, a resulting famine in 1989, overpopulation and a 40% currency devaluation in 1990, many Rwandans were suffering from serious economic hardship in the years before the genocide.” This anti-Tutsi rhetoric has been growing over a long period of time. Through songs and interviews in Rwanda, it reflected a greater message that the Tutsi had penetrated positions of power like 'snakes' to reestablish the old pre-1959 regimes where the Tutsi would control the country once more.

A witness claimed that the RTLM would broadcast the ten commandments and commented on them many times. He stated that the reason they broadcasted these things was to persuade all the Hutus in Rwanda to all have the same goal to develop relationships with Tutsis.

He also believed that these broadcasted commandments were one of many reasons why some “men started killing their Tutsi wives, or children of a mixed marriage killed their own Tutsi parents.” Other journalists thought these Ten Commandments potentially led to the Hutus seeing the Tutsi as their enemies rather than citizens, and the Tutsi starting seeing the Hutu as a threat as well. With all of this being said, the RTLM started a lot of commotion that spread throughout the country that eventually led to the spread of hatred and genocidal events (Mitchell, pg. 1-18).

International News Coverage

The international media, more specifically the western media, let Rwanda down by failing to understand the history behind these events leading up to the genocide and an ultimate lack of importance on Africa as a whole. For the most part, the stories about Rwanda during the three months of killings were focused more on the Hutu refugees who were trying to escape the RPF rather than the massacre of the Tutsi people by its own government. This is a common phenomenon throughout other genocides in history, like present day Myanmar. This phenomenon takes place when western media places a large focus on humanitarian interventions for things like refugee crises rather than actual military interventions that could put an end to conflicts in Africa. This, combined with the CNN Effect and historical baggage are the reason for the massive failure of the western media and the lives lost in Rwanda.

A key transition throughout the conflict in western media was at the beginning of the genocide, when the interim government created a process in which they gave the international media routined misinformation. This had many international news outlets initially portraying the genocide as a tribal conflict, that was a long pattern for these events between the Tutsi and the Hutus throughout their conflicts (Mitchell, pg. 1-18). This misinformation was taken as bait by the western media because of this historical baggage all conflicts in Africa had been assigned to

them. Many media referred to these events as an “ethnic bloodbath” and “ancient tribal hatred”. This promoted an underlying message that Rwanda was in a conflict that has led to an anarchic civil war in which the Hutu fought against the Tutsi because of the reemerged enmity. This was the message rather than the reality of Rwanda falling apart because its government was supporting a mass genocide. Along with this type of misinformation, many reporters did not have great access to truthful information about the conflict so they relied on the reports from non-governmental organizations, survivors and local media. While researchers now know how biased and unfair the local media was in Rwanda against the Tutsi, foreign journalists did not know during the genocide. Along with this, many Western and African journalists were in South Africa, covering Nelson Mandela’s winning the election that coincided with the threat of extremist right wing violence. According to Jeremy Sarkin and Carly Fowler (2010), “the media outlets did not have sufficient manpower in that region to appropriately analyze the events occurring in Rwanda. Most news companies did not have reporters stationed in Rwanda. Rather, journalists were based in Nairobi, which is several hours away.” Many foreign journalists were placed in Eastern Africa covering the civil war in Sudan and Zaire along with the political conflict in Kenya and Ethiopia (Sarkin & Fowler, 2010).

Sarkin and Fowler (2010) also addressed how “Rwanda is a textbook case of ‘Coups and Quakes’ syndrome, which argues that the Western media and media consumers are not interested in places unless great political or humanitarian disasters occur there.” While the Western media was aware of the humanitarian crisis slowly taking place in Rwanda, the killings were still ignored by the international media throughout the entirety of the genocide. The refugee crisis was the standard method for Western media to “sell” the story with images of starving children and crowded campsites were easier to show rather than call it a genocide.

DISCUSSION

Throughout the genocidal events in Myanmar, Darfur, and Rwanda, there are various overlapping similarities in the ways in which media outlets have covered, and have not covered, genocides throughout history. There are five key similarities that will be seen throughout the duration of this discussion section: CNN effect, different agenda setting theories, historical baggage, the Coups and Quakes syndrome, and psychological numbing. Whilst reading about these overlapping similarities between these three genocides, it is important to keep in mind that there are certain advantages and disadvantages of media coverage, the key actions that are missing from both the local media and the international media outlets, and the United Nations' role throughout these genocides.

There is a common element of psychological numbing that takes place throughout the duration of these genocides. Psychological numbing takes place when large-scale loss of human life influences and perpetuates genocides. In these cases in particular, media outlets tend to use imagery that provokes emotion from its audience. This method of appealing to people's emotions is not a productive way to elicit help from the general public. People become desensitized to the images they see and hear about genocides because of this overwhelming use of this method in the media. Psychological numbing can be seen in all three of these genocides. In the case of Myanmar, people have become so desensitized to the images they see combined with the current global pandemic that has taken away the focus that these refugees need. While the world apart from Myanmar has been hyper focused on the pandemic in their own nations, the killings in Myanmar have persisted. Government officials in Myanmar have been promoting nationalism to undermine the public health efforts to stop the coronavirus and to put these vulnerable ethnic groups at risk. The government also failed to recognize that Myanmar's lack of confirmed cases

was a result of a lack of testing for the Rohingya (Nachemson, *Racism Is Fueling Myanmar's Deadly Second Wave of COVID-19*).

Leader Aung San Suu Kyi has influenced inconsistent policies that are applied to different ethnic groups to promote racism against the Rohingya. Government officials have also threatened public shaming and legal actions to discourage people from seeking the medical help they need which spreads the virus even more. According to Andrew Nachemson from *The Diplomat* (2020) “Aung San Suu Kyi threatened to “severely” punish anybody crossing into the country illegally, as well as those who harbor undocumented arrivals. While she didn’t mention Rakhine state or the Rohingya specifically, her comments were a sharp deviation from previous government policy.” Aung San Suu Kyi’s actions instigated the spread of hate speech against the Rohingya. The Voice, a popular local media source in Myanmar, published a cartoon showing a Rohingya man with COVID-19 crossing the border labeled “illegal interloper”, which is a term that is commonly used to negatively describe the Rohingya. Essentially, the pandemic has been used as a tactic to take away money from the Rohingyas and target them in certain areas of Myanmar while the police avoid taking any action against Buddhists (Nachemson, *Racism Is Fueling Myanmar's Deadly Second Wave of COVID-19*).

The same could be seen in the international media during the Rwandan Genocide. Historical baggage and Coups and Quakes syndrome coincide to create the overwhelming amount of disregard for the killings taking place in Rwanda. Tom Powell (2016) defines Coups and Quakes syndrome as news that is only “fit to print or broadcast from the developing world has to do with death, disease or disaster”. Powell argued that the Rwandan genocide did not meet enough of the expectations that translates into valuable news. The journalists that were covering the events in Rwanda focused on framing them as tribal conflicts rather than personalized

accounts from the Tutsi people or unambiguously discovering the reasons behind the conflict. This expanded this cultural distance from Western nations and deferred efforts to find the root cause of the killings.

The Coups and Quakes syndrome combined with the psychological numbing that took place in the coverage of Rwanda can be seen very clearly today. When people from Western nations were shown graphic images of Rwandese people, it was misinterpreted how large the conflict had become which further promoted the biases about Africa as a whole. When these images of Rwanda came out, the OJ Simpson murders and his trial dominated the news over the crisis in Rwanda. This case ended up being one of the most publicized news stories that year in all of U.S. history (Powell, 2016).

As mentioned before, the CNN Effect confronts the government with the possibility that public opinion can potentially be influenced by the negative media coverage and a damage to government image and credibility caused by the bad press. The CNN Effect can be seen in the events that are currently happening in Myanmar along with the previous events in Darfur and Rwanda. While it is not plausible to assume what could have happened if the RTLM had not been overwhelmed with bias by the government, it is plausible to assume that if Radio Rwanda had different perspectives and accurate global content, the killings would not have gone on as long as they did. While there was no way to prevent the genocide from happening in its entirety, it might not have been as efficient or have so much of the events be motivated in fear or hate speech (Mitchell, pg. 1-18).

In the case of Darfur, the specific lack of coverage from CBS, ABC, and NBC promotes the story that these victims of genocide do not deserve a response from politicians. Telling the story of genocide today is even easier with newer communication technologies and globalization

that has resolved many nation's interconnectedness. Media outlets already use the agenda setting theory to present international issues with the intention of affecting the general public's opinions. These sources should attempt to use their power to spread awareness to ultimately create movements that will work towards ending genocides and to exploit the lack of actions outside governments take to prevent mass genocides (Eke, pg. 279-289).

With all of this being said, it is important to address the advantages and disadvantages of media coverage throughout mass genocide in the past as well as the present. The information Eke (2008) discusses on CBS, ABC, and NBC suggests that "the distribution of information by the news media may influence agendas of citizens and of policy-makers, and those agendas may in turn influence the flow of resources." Essentially, accurate information displayed by international media outlets can lead to the public calling for action and outside governments intervening in the crisis before it worsens. This form of mass communication and the agenda setting theory throughout the media may have flaws, but if it is enhanced and used correctly, crises can be averted. Unfortunately, these processes also promote influence from specific interest groups which in turn leads to news outlets prioritizing media that will get a reaction from the public, rather than all of the information about the story. This also leads researchers to believe that these media outlets use a combination of public, policy, and media agendas which is entirely different from using one of these angles to tell the stories of genocides as they are taking place. Either way, researchers can all agree that the media plays a large role in how policy makers and the public perception of conflict are correlated (Eke, pg. 279-289).

In all three of these genocides, there are key actions missing from both the local media and the international media covering these crises. These three actions include not calling these events genocides early enough and only focusing on the refugee crises that result from them,

local media outlets misconstruing the stories of the events to the outside world, and inaccurate portrayals of the crises and framing these with historical baggage. So then what are we to take from this? What can be done to prevent these crises from worsening? In the case of Rwanda, there needed to be more coverage and a deeper understanding of the history of conflict between the Tutsi and the Hutus. As discussed beforehand, the crisis was largely seen as a tribal conflict that was inevitable because of the nations lack of resources and education. While we now know this to be false, media outlets let this story prevail rather than taking the time to understand how history between these ethnics groups resulted in conflict time and time again in Rwanda. If this knowledge about the conflict was known to neighboring nations, potential radio jamming technology could have been used to stop RTLM's broadcasts.

According to a report in 2000 by the Organisation of African Unity, they "suggested that silencing RTLM during the genocide would have had limited impact. The international community should have moved to address the hate propoganda before the killing started. It should have recognised the broadcasts as an essential part of the preparation for the genocide." Grzyb also suggested the UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda that was deployed by the Security Council in 1993 could have been used to counteract the RTLM's hate propoganda. Grzyb acknowledges that the UN Mission's radio broadcast equipment that could have been used to prevent further hate speech was never shipped to Rwanda. This communication tool could have prevented the lose of so many lives by the end of the genocide (Grzyb *Debate continues about the media's role in driving Rwanda's genocide*).

Media outlets and news resources need to set agendas that appeal to specific audiences and people who are capable of making a difference in these genocides. If the general public does not know the severity of the genocides or does not know what they need to be demanding of their

leaders, the conflicts will continue to worsen. Of course, these conflicts have typically been outshined by other world crises, such as the Covid-19 pandemic in the case of Myanmar, or celebrity news in outside nations. It is then important for media outlets to keep people updated on the events that take place throughout the conflict, and to introduce new methods that will prevent the psychological numbing our society has become accustomed to. Media outlets should strive to use their framing techniques differently to stimulate change in the public's perception of these conflicts as well as educate the public of what needs to be done to help. While this is all very ambitious to suggest, attempting to make these changes could potentially save the lives of many (Grzyb, *Debate continues about the media's role in driving Rwanda's genocide*).

Of course, it is important to point out that the United Nations has attempted to adjust how they respond to events that lead to genocides since the massacres in Rwanda. More specifically, the organization has been more proactive in responding to human rights violations that typically result in genocides. The seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations from Ghana, Kofi Annan, stated at the international forum in Stockholm, "We must attack the roots of violence and genocide. These are intolerance, racism, tyranny and the dehumanizing public discourse that denies whole groups of people their dignity and rights. We must protect especially the rights of minorities, since they are genocide's most frequent targets." The current UN action plan for genocides involves the entirety of the UN systems and there are reforms being made to improve the way the UN responds to armed conflicts. This action plan was implemented after the Rwandan genocide through an independent commission of inquiry by former Swedish Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson (*How Decisions are Made at the UN*).

It is also important to address the United Nations peacekeeping missions and to assess whether they do more harm than good in the case of genocides. According to the UN website:

“UN Peacekeeping helps countries navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace. We have unique strengths, including legitimacy, burden sharing, and an ability to deploy troops and police from around the world, integrating them with civilian peacekeepers to address a range of mandates set by the UN Security Council and General Assembly.” However, recent research has found that peacekeeping missions can actually increase criminal violence. According to a new study by Dr. Jessica di Salvatore of the University of Warwick, these peacekeeping missions can inadvertently improve the security means that allow organized crime to prosper with a “peacekeeping economy”. Dr. Jessica di Salvatore analyzed data from 58 countries that have undergone a civil war whilst looking at the impact UN peacekeeping missions in South Sudan had on local homicide rates. Dr. Salvatore found that the nations with prevalent military missions led by the UN undergo higher levels of homicide than nations with little to no UN interventions. On the other hand, Dr. Salvatore found that when the UN police, or peacekeepers, are working simultaneously with the local police, both political and criminal violence are reduced (Kiggins *Peacekeeping missions can actually increase criminal violence, research finds*).

While the tragic events in Rwanda and Darfur have already come to an end, there is still time to turn around the conflict in Myanmar. The UN’s appointed panel for the conflict has found that “the evidence that infers genocidal intent on the part of the State...has strengthened, that there is a serious risk that genocidal actions may occur or recur”. Other appointed human rights experts have expressed concerns about the restrictions in the Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh that have been a direct result of the pandemic (*Genocide threat for Myanmar's Rohingya greater than ever, investigators warn Human Rights Council*).

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has ordered authorities to prevent people from getting rid of evidence that has to do with the genocide allegations in Myanmar. The ICJ has

established “provisional measures” against Myanmar by demanding that the nation complies with rulings made under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Essentially, the nation has been told to prevent the killings of the Rohingya including the military. While this is a step in the right direction, maybe there is more that can be done in terms of the media’s involvement in the crisis (Bree *Top UN court orders Myanmar to protect Rohingya from genocide*).

Promoting accuracy from international news reporters in Myanmar and creating a network of people who provide international organizations with information regularly is the best way to avoid the major issue in the reporting of the Rwandan and Darfur genocides. Reporters should also take a deeper look into how Facebook has approached the information coming out of Myanmar. One of Facebook’s biggest issues is a lack of staff that is capable of minimizing the false information and a lack of Burmese-speaking content monitors. There were issues with Facebook’s software that was confusing for mobile users in Myanmar to understand how to report posts that were troublesome. However, in 2018, Facebook removed 18 accounts and 52 pages that were traced to Burmese officials. Facebook said it “found evidence that many of these individuals and organizations committed or enabled serious human rights abuses in the country.”

CONCLUSION

The events in Myanmar, Darfur, and Rwanda have found that the media’s involvement creates conflicts that are starkly different. In the case of Myanmar, the systematic disinformation and persecution fueled by social media has created a new type of issue that cannot be found in the Rwandan genocide. The people of Myanmar have access to different social media platforms that allow for inaccurate information that is a result of a lack of support from the international community. This happens because there is not enough accurate information for outside nations

to assess. The Rakhine state also has the capability to control how information spreads within the country as well as how information reaches other nations in a slower manner. In Darfur, the blatant reduction of foreign journalists from US news organizations led to a lack of reporters in Darfur to cover and give context on events of the genocidal events that occurred. Organizations like Save Darfur began as an outcome of a pressure for action against the killings in Darfur, and the organization has been said to have worsened the conflict by taking action before an accurate assessment of the violence and the policy dynamics involved were made.

While the media's involvement in each of these genocides has created various different issues, there is a cycle of how media outlets frame genocidal events that has not changed. When the genocide is first being covered by international or western media, the killings are relevant for a brief period of time and they are typically highlighted from a refugee crisis that is a result of the massacres. We can conclude that there is not coverage when the genocide events were first taking place and the time to intervene before it worsens has already passed. After the refugee crises are covered, the topic of the genocide loses relevance competing with western media that captivates the attention of the public. From this point forward, the genocides continue to prevail, without the adequate coverage needed to put an end to the killings. As discussed beforehand, the CNN effect, different agenda setting theories, historical baggage, the Coups and Quakes syndrome, and psychological numbing are some of the key factors that can also be seen throughout each of these genocides. Psychological numbing plays a role in how easily people react so nonchalant to graphic images of violence from outside nations, and Rwanda was one of the earlier genocides in which this phenomenon took place and in which the media was insufficient.

Of course, there are some limitations in the research and questions that still remain. While there are clear problems in the approaches that have been made in the media's involvement in genocides, *how will we combat modern media/ social media? Does outside political involvement, such as peacekeeping missions, actually help or does it worsen these conflicts? How might this be fixed? Finally, what should be done to prevent this phenomenon from reoccurring?*

Reporters and journalists need to curbe the psychological numbing the public has been accustomed to. This will allow for people to demand action better and to know what they are demanding. Media outlets must also take the time to educate themselves and the public to learn the deep history of suffrage for the targeted ethnic groups such as the Rohingya in Myanmar and the Tutsi in Rwanda. Knowing about this history can allow policymakers to take accurate action that could put an end to the killings before the progress. Reporters might also benefit from using agenda setting to attempt to appeal to specific audiences and leaders who can make a difference. While it is hard to tell what steps exactly need to be taken to reverse psychological numbing, we do know that changes need to be made because history keeps repeating itself with these genocides.

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