

**Research Portfolio, American Studies Program,
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Academic Introduction, by Koen Peeters

1.1 - On a Personal Note:

As I am writing this essay, Donald Trump has just been inaugurated as the 45th President of the United States. A period of eight years under the leadership of Barack Obama has come to an end. My time as an American Studies student falls pretty much in line with those eight years of the Obama administration. Some of the earlier papers in this portfolio were written in the fall of 2009, not even a year after Barack Obama set his first steps in the White House as President. With my last paper written in the fall of 2016, I fully understand this portfolio spans a highly unusual timeframe compared to other collections of written works of American Studies students. My involvement in American Studies during those years can be described as an on-again, off-again affair. Most of the academic work was done during the first year of my master program, both at Utrecht University and the University of Oklahoma. After that initial period, I started working full time as a journalist, and the remainder of my study program took a bit of a backseat. Finishing the master program was always stuck in the back of my mind though. Even though it took an unusual amount of time, I am very glad to finally wrap up the program after all.

When looking at this portfolio it will quickly become clear that journalism is a recurring theme in my papers and essays. Something that is also visible in my choice of classes at the University of Oklahoma. The courses I took were a mix of political sciences and journalism/media studies. "Advanced Multimedia Journalism" was one of the most rewarding courses I ever participated in. Taught by two veteran print and broadcast journalists, I gained a lot of knowledge and experience from this class. Since the vast majority of work for this course consisted of making video reports, it does bring up some

difficulties regarding including those types of work in this written portfolio. While they might not be traditional academic papers or essays, I will include two video-items shot for this this class. This in order to give a complete picture as possible of my work as an American Studies student. Before I outline the essays and papers written for this program, I will start off with a brief introduction of the historic developments and main academic discussions within the field of American Studies.

1.2 - Introduction to American Studies

“What, then, is the American, this new man?” is the question J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur asked in 1782 in his *Letters from an American Farmer*.¹ Crèvecoeur, a Frenchman who migrated to the United States, described how he saw life in the emerging American society around him. In his twelve part ‘*Letters from...*’ he covered a wide array of topics, from slavery to everyday customs and manners. During the decades and centuries that followed, Crèvecoeur’s question kept playing a vital role in addressing the subject of American identity.² Crèvecoeur himself answered his “What, then...”-question in part by pointing out the common European background Americans had during those early days of the American nation. “In this great American asylum, the poor of Europe have by some means met together,... [...] It is here then that the idle may be employed, the useless become useful, and the poor become rich.”³

Nowadays, Crèvecoeur’s *Letters from an American Farmer* could easily be placed under the banner of American Studies. It was not till the late 1930s and early 1940s though that the first formal study programs were founded. In *American Studies: An Overview*,

¹ “Avalon Project - Letters From an American Farmer.” Web. 14 Feb. 2017.

² Campbell and Kean. *American Cultural Studies*. Routledge, 2006. Print. Second Edition. Page 2.

³ “Avalon Project - Letters From an American Farmer : Letter III - What Is An American.” Web. 14 Feb. 2017.

Michael Cowen describes the historic development of the study program. Cowen credits Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal as an important catalyst for institutional American Studies. "In addition to generating materials usable by scholars and teachers as well as others, these projects also implicitly taught the value of organized approaches to the study of American life. And the projects offered models for a handful of academics among the first generation of Americanists..."⁴

Since its inception, scholars in the field of American Studies have searched for a distinctive methodology that give them certain guidelines on how to operate. Given that American Studies is being considered as an interdisciplinary field of study, this proved to be quite difficult. American Studies borrows from many traditional academic disciplines such as literature, history, anthropology, and sociology. Finding its own shared methodology has been quite a challenge for Americanists. They are mostly connected to each other by the questions they ask about the United States and its role in the world.

The closest American Studies ever came to developing its own methodology was the Myth and Symbol School that started in the 1950s. Henry Nash Smith's essay *Can "American Studies" Develop a Method?* and his book *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* are seen as the starting point of the Myth and Symbol School. Scholars that followed the Myth and Symbol approach analyzed texts to find certain recurring themes that illustrated unique American cultural aspects. "Thus myths are the stories we tell each other as a culture in order to explain complicities and to banish contradictions, thus making the world seem simpler and more comfortable for us to inhabit"⁵

⁴ Kurian, George Thomas, American Studies Association, and Others. *Encyclopedia of American Studies*. Web. Grolier Academic Reference, 2001.

⁵ Campbell and Kean. *American Cultural Studies*. Routledge, 2006. Print. Second Edition. Page 9.

In the 1960s, not very long after the Myth and Symbol School became widely recognized, it came under scrutiny from several other American Studies scholars. Bruce Kuklick was one of those critics. He argued that the myth and symbol approach revealed empirical weaknesses and non-theoretical assumptions.⁶ Other critics such as Roland Barthes argued that the myth and symbol approach “actively promoted the values and interests of the dominant groups in society.”⁷ Barthes makes the case that minorities were being excluded and ignored when purely looking at texts with the myths and symbol method in mind. Despite all the criticism on the myth and symbol approach, it did manage to keep its role in the field of American Studies. Nowadays it is still used, in addition to several other methods and approaches.

An often heard term in the field of American Studies is “American exceptionalism.” The term can be attributed to Alexis de Tocqueville, who first described the concept in his 19th century book *Democracy in America*. Tocqueville argued that America held a special place in the world. According to him the country was “qualitatively different from all other countries”⁸ because the United States was “the first new nation.” The US was not based on the old hierarchical structures that European countries were based on. “As a new society, the country lacked the emphasis on social hierarchy and status differences characteristic of post feudal and monarchical cultures.”⁹ This allowed America to “start from the scratch” and do better than other countries had done before. As a so called “city upon a hill” that will be watched closely by the rest of the world. In recent history this has resulted in the belief that

⁶ Maddox, Lucy. *Locating American Studies: The Evolution of a Discipline*. JHU Press, 1957. Print. Page 193.

⁷ Campbell and Kean. *American Cultural Studies*. Routledge, 2006. Print. Second Edition. Page 9.

⁸Lipset, Seymour Martin. *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword*. W.W. Norton, 1997. Print. Page 18.

⁹ Ibid, Page 19.

America had a unique mission in the world by bringing American values such as freedom and democracy to other countries across the globe. David Mauk and John Oakland describe the effects of this idea: “This is the belief (rhetorical or sincere) that America’s foreign affairs, unlike those of other nations, are not self-interested but based on a mission to offer the world a better form of society characterized by the ideals of ‘the American creed’: the US version of a republican form of government, economic and political freedom egalitarian social relations and democracy.”¹⁰

Critics of American exceptionalism such as Francis Fukuyama argue that America is more and more becoming an “ordinary country in the sense of having concrete interests and real vulnerabilities, rather than thinking itself unilaterally able to define the nature of the world it lives in.”¹¹ What Fukuyama basically says is that America nowadays is acting primarily on its own interest instead of taking into account the interest of its allies. By ignoring the broader picture and solely focusing on its own national interests, America is not that unique anymore. In *A Double Edged Sword*, Seymour Martin Lipset argues that American Exceptionalism brings out both the best and the worst of the nation. The uniqueness of America (the exceptionalism) is based on five elements, 1: liberty, 2: egalitarianism, 3: individualism, 4: populism, and 5: laissez-faire. Whilst these elements bring out good aspects in people, the elements also have a dark side to them that can for example cause “rising crime rates, drug use, [and] the dissolution of the traditional family.”¹² During the last couple of decades it has been argued that traditional approaches of American Studies focused too much on the single national identity of America. Critics say that

¹⁰ Mauk, David, and John Oakland. *American Civilization: An Introduction*. Psychology Press, 2005. Print. Page 159

¹¹ “A Nation Apart.” *The Economist*. N.p., 2003. Web. 14 Feb. 2017.

¹² Lipset, Seymour Martin. *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword*. W.W. Norton, 1997. Print. Page 269.

nowadays the field of American Studies must be expanded by taking into account all the different cultures that exist within the continental US.

1.3 - Collected Works:

'Gentle Giant' or 'No Angel'; Media Framing in Newspaper Profiles of Michael Brown was written for the course "Topics in American Diversity" at Utrecht University. This research paper compares the choice of words print journalists used in memorializing Michael Brown. Brown, a black man, was shot to death at the age of 18 by a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri. His death caused riots and fierce racial discussions throughout the US.

The analysis of newspaper articles in this research paper was mostly done by applying techniques from the field of Media Studies. Individual articles were cross referenced with known methods of agenda-setting, priming, and framing. All three of these methods have seen vast as vast amount of research in modern day academia. In addition to analyzing the written texts, the paper also puts a large emphasis on the placement of visual elements; such as photos, highlighted quotes, and the placement of an article. The scope of this research paper is fairly small. Only a handful of articles from a select timeframe were analyzed. While there are clear differences between the two publications featured in this paper (*New York Times* and *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*), the scope is too narrow to point at a systematic difference in methods of dealing with how to handle profiling and memorializing victims of police crime. An expanded analysis of how various media outlets chose to cover Michael Brown's death could be achieved applying the methods used in this paper to a broader selection of articles.

The 'glocalization' of MTV and CNN was written as part of the course "American Cultural Influence," taught by Jaap Verheul at Utrecht University. This paper touches upon several aspects of Media Studies as well. A recurring theme in my written work. When *MTV* and *CNN* expanded from the United States to the rest of the world, they quickly found they had to make some adjustments to their formulas in order to be successful abroad. Solely applying the same formula that both media-organizations were already using in the US did not always prove to be a recipe for success. *The 'glocalization' of...* looks at how both *MTV* and *CNN* first managed to become a household name in the US, and then accomplished the same thing in Europe and other regions of the world. *MTV* opted for highly localized versions of its channel when it made the step across the pond. While a version of *MTV* can be found in almost any European country, those are relatively distinct channels. They have the name *MTV* and several other elements in common, but also have their fair amount of differences. *CNN* chose for a Pan-European approach by creating a single international version of its channel called *CNN International*. In *The 'glocalization' of...* it becomes clear that the American media-organizations not only adapted their content for an international audience, a movement the other way around is visible as well. The American editions of *MTV* and *CNN* picked up some elements from their European counterparts, just as those European channels did from the domestic versions. This kind of cross-pollination is a subject Robert W. Rydell and Rob Kroes have written about in *Buffalo Bill in Bologna*.

While Rydell and Kroes mainly focus on early elements of American (popular) culture in Europe, they also show that exporting American culture is not just a one-way street. Researching how American products are exported overseas is a common theme in American Studies. Lots of different case studies have been conducted on this topic. *The 'glocalization' of MTV and CNN* adds two fairly modern examples to this field of research.

For the course “The Presidency” at the University of Oklahoma I wrote a literature review that looked at the phenomenon that scholars call ‘the expectations gap.’ The expectations gap is the divide between what is realistic for a president to accomplish, and the large (and often unrealistic) expectations the public has set out for him. In *The Personal President* Theodore Lowi argues that it nowadays is almost impossible for any president to succeed. One could debate on what exactly is succeeding, but in Lowi’s case succeeding is defined as living up to the expectations of the American public. “The probability of failure is always tending toward 100 percent.” Lowi states in his thesis.¹³

While *The Expectations Gap and the American Presidency* falls definitely falls within the realm of traditional American Studies, it also heavily leans upon theories from the field of political sciences.

Mass Media & Breaking Taboos is a research paper written for the course “Race, Gender, and the Media” at the University of Oklahoma. This paper touches upon a lot of the same issues as the earlier mentioned analysis of newspaper coverage of Michael Brown's death. Agenda-setting is a topic that is visible in this essay, as well as it is in the paper about Brown. What this research paper does is reviewing the role mass media plays in selling products or certain political/social viewpoints. By choosing what kind of topics to cover, mass-media organizations are able to swing public opinion. Important to note though is that there always is a fair amount of interaction between these two aspects. Newspapers or TV-stations work as a catalyst for topics that are already seeing some interest from their readers or viewers.

¹³ Lowi, Theodore J. *The Personal President: Power Invested, Promise Unfulfilled*. Cornell University Press, 1986. Print. Page 11.

While not a very comprehensive essay, an untitled mini-essay for the course Race, Gender, and the Media is included in this portfolio as well. This to showcase yet another example of a subject that is closely tied to journalism and Media Studies.

The House on Mango Street & Mexican Americans is a short essay written for the course "Topics in American Diversity". As literature review this essay uses techniques from the field of Literature studies. The themes in this essay are not recurring in any of the other written works in this portfolio.

A Tale of Two Bridges; The Golden Gate's Shadow Over the San Francisco – Oakland Bay Bridge, is a paper that heavily focuses on the symbolism of monumental infrastructural works. San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge is one of the most famous and recognizable bridges in the world. The Bay Bridge is not, despite being longer and carrying more than twice the amount of traffic. This paper lists some of the reasons why the Golden Gate bridge managed to eclipse its bigger sibling. It is a case study of how much America values certain buildings and constructions as symbols of American greatness.

1.4 - Final thoughts

By spending a semester abroad at the University of Oklahoma I got to experience American Studies on 'both sides of the aisle'. Being an American Studies student in Europe means you are looking at the US as a relative outsider. Studying American Studies from within the US does not make you an insider straight away, but it does give you a different perspective from the one you are getting in Europe. I am glad to have had that experience. And I am

convinced that scholars in the US gain new insights as well when they have an outsider participating in their classes and debates.

While my papers and essays will probably not have an earth-shattering impact on the field of American Studies, they were most definitely an inspiration for me. Working on these topics has at sometimes been frustrating and challenging, but in the end I am convinced it made me grow professionally. ***

'Gentle Giant' or 'No Angel';

Media Framing in Newspaper Profiles of Michael Brown

‘Gentle Giant’ or ‘No Angel’; Media Framing in Newspaper Profiles of Michael Brown

‘That choice of words was a regrettable mistake. In saying that the 18-year-old Michael Brown was “no angel” in the fifth paragraph of Monday’s front-page profile, *The Times* seems to suggest that this was, altogether, a bad kid.’

Harsh words from *New York Times* public editor Margaret Sullivan about the paper’s profile of 18-year-old Michael Brown. The story, written by John Eligon, ran on August 25th 2014. This places the article sixteen days after Michael Brown – a black man – was shot to death by a white police officer. The shooting, which occurred on August 9th 2014, sparked weeks of protests and riots in Brown’s hometown Ferguson, Missouri. Protests re-erupted later that year when a grand jury decided not to indict Darren Wilson, the officer who fatally shot Michael Brown.

The New York Times public editor wrote about the use of the words ‘no angel’ after many people expressed anger and disappointment towards the paper for doing so. Although Sullivan writes that the use of these two words ‘was a blunder’, she labels the entire piece to be ‘solid and thorough.’ Sullivan concludes by saying ‘I came away from the profile with a deeper sense of who Michael Brown was, and an even greater sense of sorrow at the circumstances of his death.’

Academic discussion

Outcry and critique on how media cover and frame events like these is hardly new. The topic has seen extensive academic research. Bary Glassner for example has thoroughly examined the role of the media in cases of police brutality in his 1999 study *The Culture of Fear*. In Chapter 5 he even describes a case that shows a lot of striking similarities with the Michael Brown story. Glassner writes that in 1996 a white police officer in New York City was convicted of shooting a black man in the back. According to Glassner ‘reporters and columnists evidenced great sympathy’ for the officer.

In the field of media studies three important theories can be defined: agenda-setting, priming, and framing.

Agenda-setting is the theory that argues media do not tell us *what to think*, but rather tell us what to think *about*. By covering certain issues more extensively than others those covered more often and more frequently will be deemed more important by the public than others. This theory of agenda-setting is described extensively by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw (1972). They show that while the press might not be very successful in telling people exactly *what to think* about a certain topic, by covering that topic extensively people tend to think more *about* that particular topic than topics not receiving as much attention.

Priming is somewhat similar to agenda-setting and is the practice of setting the context for a certain topic or issue. The effects of political priming were the subject of an often cited research by Shanto Iyengar, Mark Peters, and Donald Kinder (1982). We can speak of priming when the press suggests to its audience that it needs to use certain issues

as a benchmark for evaluating the performance of someone. It is therefore something we often see in political contexts, such as during elections.

Lastly, and most importantly for this paper, framing is the practice of providing a certain focus in a story. Thereby influencing how the audience will understand or interpret that story. An academic theory of framing was first put forth by Erving Goffman (1974). Goffman argues that how something is presented to someone influences the choices this person makes on how to process that information. Those choices can be either intentional or unintentional. For example: in the Michael Brown story newspapers may present certain facts in such a way that the reader is given a particular point of view or interpretation.

One of the most often cited studies on framing is the research by Todd Gitlin (1980). He describes media frames as: '[...] largely unspoken and unacknowledged, [they] organize the world both for journalists who report it and, in some important degree, for us who rely on their reports.' Gitlin argues mass media play a big agenda-setting role in our society.

Another important study in this field is the previously mentioned research of Barry Glassner. In *The Culture of Fear*, he shows multiple examples of how the media create (often unfounded) fears for certain issues. He lists many examples of where people have a different perception of an issue compared to the facts. 'Why, as crime rates plunged throughout the 1990s, did two-thirds of Americans believe they were soaring?' Glassner writes in his introduction. When the media extensively focus on certain kind of stories (violent crimes for example), people tend to believe they themselves are vulnerable to these crimes. This even though statistically this is not the case. According to Glassner many fears and concerns Americans have are largely unfounded.

In recent years, discussion of media framing has also focused on 24-hour cable news networks. FOX News is being seen as leaning to the conservative side of the political spectrum, while CNN & MSNBC are seen as leaning to the liberal side. Similar differences can be found in the newspaper business, where partisan views are often closely tied to the political views of the newspaper's owner. A 2013 study by Haley Devaney shows that individuals can perceive bias in content even when it is not really there. Devaney writes that when identical news content was attributed to either *FOX News*, *CNN*, or *MSNBC*; the outlet's label changed people's perception.

Michael Brown media coverage

As noted earlier, *The New York Times* profile of Michael Brown was published a little over two weeks after his death. The publication date coincided with Brown's funeral and the story appeared on the front page of the paper.

In this paper I will examine how another newspaper, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, has handled profiling Michael Brown. The *Post-Dispatch* is one of the most widely read newspapers in the St. Louis and Ferguson area. One day after the fatal shooting the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* published its profile of Michael Brown. This story is titled: 'Michael Brown remembered as a "gentle giant"'. These last two words, 'gentle giant' sound quite different

than the 'no angel' used by *The Times*. (It should be noted though that *The New York Times* did not use the words 'no angel' in the title of the article.)

In addition to the August 11th profile of Michael Brown this paper will also take into account a handful of other stories published by the *Post-Dispatch*. I will limit the scope to the first two days after Brown's death. The archives of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* are available through the *Lexis Nexis Academic* database.

The main question this paper will explore is: Did the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* show any signs of framing (as defined in popular academia), while covering the first two days of the Michael Brown incident? This question will be examined by cross referencing the articles with the theories of media framing described earlier. In addition, I will use the following criteria to achieve this:

- * Placement of the article;
(Front page? Editorial pages? First section, but not P1? Other?)
- * Background of the writer
(Gender? Race? Where is the author based; locally or elsewhere?)
- * Is the skin color of victim/officer named?
(If so, in what context?)
- * Description of victim/officer?
(How is the victim/officer being described? What kind of words are used for this?)
- * Selection of sources
(Official sources? Use of eye-witnesses? Anonymous sources?)
- * Photographs
(Was the story accompanied by photographs? How are they connected to the story?)

Coverage by the St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Michael Brown was shot and killed around noon on Saturday August 9th 2014. The following day the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* featured a story about the shooting at the top of its front page. The story was titled 'OFFICER KILLS FERGUSON TEEN'. Note: other stories on the front page did not feature a headline in all caps.

The story was accompanied by two photographs. The first one shows Brown's mother and stepfather grieving his death. The photo is captioned: 'A family in shock; Lesley McSpadden is comforted by her husband, Louis Head, on Saturday after her son, Michael Brown, 18, was fatally shot by police earlier in the afternoon.' The second photo shows a group of (seemingly angry) men shouting and protesting against a group of police officers lined up behind police tape. The caption of this photo reads: 'Outrage at scene, on social media; A crowd is blocked by police from the site in the 2900 block of Canfield Drive where Brown was killed earlier Saturday.'

It should be noted that the articles from the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* in the *Lexis Nexis* database are listed as being from the online edition of the paper. For this analysis I have also looked at a photo copies of the front page. There are minor differences between the printed

edition and the version archived by *Lexis Nexis*. The archived version for example has a different headline titled: 'Shooting of teen by Ferguson police officer spurs angry backlash'. Also, the online edition has seen a couple of corrections. For example: the print edition features an eyewitness account of a woman who is quoted as '[...] she saw a police officer attempting to place Brown in the rear seat of a squad car.' In the *Lexis Nexis* version 'rear seat' has been removed and the eyewitness is quoted as: '[...] attempting to place Brown in a squad car.' Overall, the differences between the archived version and the print edition are very minor. The story as printed on the front page of the paper is about 90 words long. The rest of the article continues on Page 5.

Two authors are listed for the article: Leah Thorsen and Steve Giegerich. Both authors have a profile listed on the website of the *Post-Dispatch*. Thorsen is a white female reporter,^[1] Giegerich a white male reporter.^[1] The relevance of their skin color is debatable, I bring it up though since *New York Times* public editor Margaret Sullivan specifically mentions the skin color of the author who wrote *The Times'* profile of Michael Brown.

The skin color of Michael Brown himself is not mentioned in this first *Post-Dispatch* story. Although the photos that accompany the article give a strong hint since his mother – who is clearly African American – is pictured.

An interesting observation: to the end of the article we read 'The St. Louis County NAACP is also asking that the FBI investigate.' The reference to *The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People* is another hint the victim is colored. It is however not specifically stated anywhere in the article. There also is no mention of the skin color of the police officer. He is only being described as an 'unnamed officer.' (The identity of the officer who shot Brown was only made public a couple of days after the shooting. Not including his skin color or any other details therefore was not a conscious choice, but rather the result of that information not being available at the time.)

The first *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* article about the incident contains a mix of statements from official sources and personal observations of Thorsen and Giegerich. Looking at the entire article and the way it is presented on the front page of the paper, it comes across as a rather neutral story. The sentence about asking the NAACP to investigate is an interesting one though. This seems to suggest to readers that there might be a racial element at play. Other elements of the story focus on the fact an *unarmed* man got shot by an *armed* officer, not so much on the fact a *black man* got shot by a *white officer*. By mentioning the NAACP this element suddenly does get brought up, although somewhat hidden from plain sight.

The next day, Monday August 11th 2014, the *Post-Dispatch* does specifically mention that Brown was a 'black teenager'. Almost the entire front page of the paper is now devoted to the shooting and its aftermath. Several large headlines in all caps are accompanied by three photos. Two of those show scenes of looting and riots in Ferguson, the third photo is a picture of Michael Brown. Brown's picture is featured alongside a profile of him. This is the profile titled 'Gentle Giant was ready for a new life, friends say.'

Contrary to the single story of the day before, in the stories published on August 11th the element of race does come up. 'Protesters complained that the killing was emblematic of deep tensions between black residents of North County and a predominantly white Ferguson police force.'^[III] Subtler references to racial tensions are also mentioned. For example: 'The Rev. Al Sharpton, a New York-based civil rights leader, called the shooting "very disturbing" [...].' By bringing up Sharpton, a person who is widely known for his role within the civil rights movement, the suggestion is made that we are dealing with more than an isolated shooting.

'Gentle giant'

In order to get a clear view of how the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* has handled profiling Michael Brown, we must pay close attention to one story in specific. This article, titled 'Michael Brown remembered as a "gentle giant"', is written by *Post-Dispatch* reporter Elisa Crouch. The first two paragraphs of the story appeared on the front page of the paper, the rest on Page 4. Crouch is a white female reporter, her profile on the *Post-Dispatch* website shows.^[IV]

Michael Brown's skin color is specifically mentioned in the article when summing up how he died. 'Some joined the crowds of mourners and protesters who had gathered there since the shooting in protest of how Brown had died: *black*, unarmed and from multiple gunshots.' Mentioning the skin color of a victim is not standard practice for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, a quick look at their online archives show.^[V] There are plenty of stories where only the name of a victim is reported. This leaves us wondering why they chose to include it in the 'gentle giant' story. It might have to do with the context of that event. At the time the *Post-Dispatch* published its story about Brown, we had already seen violent outbursts on the streets of Ferguson. By including Brown's skin color, the author is acknowledging that race is an element that is at the heart of this topic.

Crouch's profile of Brown features a lot of quotes and observations from Brown's friends and acquaintances. Crouch paints a picture of how Brown saw his future, and what kind of person he wanted to become. Persons quoted in the story talk pretty positive about him. For example, one of his friends is quoted as saying: 'He was going to get an education. He was going to make his life a whole a lot better.' The article reads as a story about a person who has had its share of problems, but also was looking to improve his life. The description 'gentle giant' is also something how *others* saw Brown. It is not Elisa Crouch's own observation. This is something to keep in mind when comparing this profile to the one *The New York Times* published.

'No Angel'

Why the outcry about 'no angel' in *The New York Times*' profile of Michael Brown? An important explanation might be the fact this is the author's own observation. To the contrary of 'gentle giant', the term 'no angel' is not a direct quote. Instead this is how the author himself chooses to label Brown.

By reading *New York Times's* public editor Margaret Sullivan's analyses of John Eligon's story we learn that he Eligon is 'a 31-year-old black man himself, [...] attentive to many of the issues in the Ferguson case.' The fact this is brought up shows us race is definitely an issue worth noting when it comes to stories about this topic. By telling that Eligon himself is black the public editor basically tells us: he knows what it is to go through similar issues and is not an outsider judging Brown.

To further explain the outcry about *The New York Times* its article we must also look at other factors than just the story itself. As a national paper *The Times* has a much bigger audience and readership than the *Post-Dispatch*. A controversial remark in a paper that is read more widely is therefore more prone to a large scale backlash. We should take the timing of the article into account as well. *The New York Times* story appeared when the nationwide discussion about the incident was at its highest. *The Post-Dispatch* article appeared when the outcry was not yet at full scale. The fact that the profile of Brown in *The Times* appeared several days after his death also means *The Times* had more time to do research and come up with additional facts that were not yet known one day after Brown's death. In addition to that, relatives of a victim are probably less likely to say something negative right after his death, compared to when some time has passed.

Times public editor Margaret Sullivan mentions the timing of the article in her analyses. She notes that the profile appeared on the same day as Brown's funeral: 'In my view, the timing of the article (on the day of Mr. Brown's funeral) was not ideal. Its pairing with a profile of Mr. Wilson seemed to inappropriately equate the two people. And "no angel" was a blunder.'

The bigger picture

As we can see Sullivan brings up a different critique as well. The placement of the story. This element is very important when we look for signs of framing. In the print edition of *The New York Times* Brown's profile appeared alongside a profile of Darren Wilson, the officer who fatally shot Michael Brown. This seems to suggest there is some kind of equation between the two. In an op-ed *Guardian* journalist Roy Greenslade writes this profile of Darren Wilson 'was considered by some critics to be softer in tone than the one on Brown.'^[VI] What we see here is not framing inside a single article, but framing when we look at the bigger picture in which that article is presented.

This element is something that I personally became quite aware of during the course of writing this paper. When comparing stories in the *Lexis Nexis* database to the actual front pages of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, it becomes clear that only reading the text does not give a complete picture. It is important to also look at other elements such as the photos that accompany a story. And article placement that plays to the subconsciousness of readers should be taken into account as well. A reader might not directly think: let's compare the two of them, but there is a high chance he/she is doing this subconsciously.

When we take a look at the coverage of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* there are some small elements that touch upon framing (and agenda-setting). References to the NAACP, Rev. Al Sharpton being quoted, and specifically mentioning Michael Brown's skin-color when listing *how* he died can be seen as such.

The headline of the first *Post-Dispatch* story is also something worth taking note of. This headline reads 'Officer kills Ferguson teen'. The word 'kills' is one of the stronger words that can be chosen to describe what happened. British newspaper *The Guardian* launched a website last year documenting all police killings in America.^[VII] For every case the website lists news articles from national and local media organizations. It is interesting to see there is a great variety of ways to describe other incidents that are somewhat similar to what happened in Ferguson. For example, an August 26th *Los Angeles Times* story describing a man being shot and killed in Compton is titled 'Man fatally shot by L.A. County sheriff'.^[VIII] 'Fatally shot' has a different ring to it than 'killed'.

Who sets the agenda?

At the time that most of the academic theories on framing and agenda-setting were introduced, newspapers had a position in society that differs from the one they have today. In the 1970's and 1980's newspapers were one of the primary sources for people to get information. A newspaper, alongside the (local) TV-news, was one of the places where the majority of people would first hear about a teen being shot by the police.

Smartphones and the rise of the (mobile) internet have changed this dramatically. Long before a newspaper is reporting on a teen being shot, people inform each other via text-message/Facebook/WhatsApp/Twitter/etc. News of course has been traveling by the word of mouth for ages, but the scale on which it is happening nowadays is so much bigger than ever before. News can travel faster and further without the help of a media-organization than it could a decade or two ago. This does not mean the role of traditional media has been replaced by social media, but social media has become an important addition to the entire spectrum of how news is being spread.

We see the evidence of this in the first *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* article on the killing of Michael Brown. 'Outrage at scene, social media' is one of the sub-headlines that the *Post-Dispatch* ran on Sunday August 10th. The paper not only noticed outrage at the location of the shooting, but also saw this outrage online. When a lot of people voice concern about an issue by posting publically about it on social media, it is safe to assume these messages catch the attention of the journalists covering that story.

The *University of Oslo* is one of the institutions that has looked deeper into this effect.^[IX] They found that inter-media agenda setting that traditionally took place between media-organizations also extends to postings on social media. The mainstream media actively reports on what is being reported on social media. A 2013 study by John Parmelee found that agenda-*building* in a political context is nowadays not only done by press-releases or political adds, but also by outings on social media such as Tweets.^[X]

Nowadays it is not just journalists who are framing and setting an agenda, but that audience is doing this *to journalists as well*. In a situation without social media a journalist could have been influenced by others as well, but the scale on which this is happening right now is completely different. This could make for an interesting follow-up study that looks into the modern aspects of *agenda-building*. ***

Front page of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch of Sunday August 10th 2014

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OFFICER KILLS FERGUSON TEEN

A family in shock

Lesley McSpadden is comforted by her husband, Louis Head, on Saturday after her son, Michael Brown, 18, was fatally shot by police earlier in the afternoon.



PHOTOS BY HUY MACH • hmach@post-dispatch.com

BY LEATHORSEN
 lthorsen@post-dispatch.com • 636-937-6241
 AND STEVE GIEGERICH
 sgiegerich@post-dispatch.com • 314-725-6758

FERGUSON • The fatal shooting of a teen Saturday afternoon by a Ferguson police officer outside an apartment complex sent angry residents into the street, taunting police and firing shots.

Michael Brown, 18, was shot at approximately 2:15 p.m. in the 2900 block of Canfield Drive. His mother, Lesley McSpadden, said the shooting took place as her son was walking to his grandmother's residence.

Piaget Crenshaw, 19, said she was waiting for a ride to work when she saw a police officer attempting to place Brown in the rear seat of a squad car.

See SHOOTING • Page A5

Outrage at scene, on social media

A crowd is blocked by police from the site in the 2900 block of Canfield Drive where Brown was killed earlier Saturday.



Missouri teachers face new scrutiny

BY ELISA CROUCH
 ecrouch@post-dispatch.com
 AND JESSICA BOCK
 jbock@post-dispatch.com

Grading teachers is a tricky assignment.

Studies show that teachers are the most important school-based factor in determining how much students stand to benefit the most from highly effective instructors.

But getting teachers and administrators to agree on how to use standardized test scores to rate teacher effectiveness has proven difficult in states across the country.

Not so in Missouri. After decades of using evaluations that most educators felt were inequitable, Missouri school districts are rolling out new evaluations this year intended to help make good teachers better while at the same time flagging the bad ones.

See SCHOOLS • Page A7

Amendments to Missouri Constitution keep growing

BY VIRGINIA YOUNG
 vyoun@post-dispatch.com
 573-956-6181

JEFFERSON CITY • If you thought five constitutional amendments resulted in a crowded ballot for last week's primary election, get ready for November.

On the general election ballot will be four more amendments to the Missouri Constitution. They address subjects such as teacher tenure, the governor's budget-cutting authority and evidence in child sex offense cases.

It's the first time since 2006 that more than five constitutional amendments have made the ballot in a single year. Usually, there are just two or three.

See AMENDMENTS • Page A7



THE MEANING OF 'LIFE'

Some juvenile offenders across the nation with life sentences are getting a second shot at sentencing thanks to a Supreme Court decision.

But not Bobby Bostic.

He wasn't given a life sentence for armed robberies in 1995.

He got 241 years.

BY JENNIFER S. MANN
 jmanna@post-dispatch.com • 314-621-5804

ST. LOUIS • Bobby Bostic won't get much sympathy, given the nature of his crime.

A St. Louis judge certainly wasn't feeling any when she sentenced him to 241 years in prison for a set of armed robberies in 1995.

It was just before Christmas when Bostic and another young man held up a group delivering gifts to the needy in north St. Louis.

Nobody was significantly injured, although two victims easily could have been killed by shots that were slowed by their heavy winter coats before the bullets broke skin.

Bostic, 16, and his accomplice, Donald Hutson, 18, later kidnapped a woman, put a gun to her head, fondled her, stole from her, then dumped her back on the street.

A jury convicted Bostic of 17 counts ranging from robbery to armed criminal action. Circuit Judge Evelyn Baker stacked jurors' sentencing recommendations one atop another.

"You made your choice. You're gonna have to live with your choice, and you're gonna die with your choice because, Bobby Bostic, you will die in the Department of Corrections," Baker told him.

Across the nation, many juvenile offenders who committed even murder are now getting a second shot at sentencing.

ROBERT COHEN • rcohen@post-dispatch.com
 Bobby Bostic has served almost 20 years of a 241-year sentence — in effect, life — for armed robbery in 1995 when he was 16.

See SENTENCING • Page A13

<p>TODAY 70°/85° PARTLY SUNNY TOMORROW 71°/87° OVERCAST WEATHER A21</p>	<p>Learning curve Fission hasn't fizzled Ameren is still interested in nuclear project; and a decision is likely on Callaway extension. BUSINESS • E1</p>	<p>Living down under Earth homes can be cost-effective, and they don't have to leave you in the dark. HOME & AWAY • H1</p>	<p>EARN Reader Rewards ACTIVATE Visit digital.subscribe.com Visit www.1177002.com 3 M 0 30189 27100 3 Vol. 136, No. 222 82814</p>
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DAY OF PROTESTS

HUNDREDS GATHER TO MOURN UNARMED TEEN WHO WAS KILLED BY POLICE.

NIGHT OF FRENZY

AS THE HOURS WEAR ON, SOME IN FERGUSON TURN TO LOOTING, VIOLENCE.



A QuikTrip at 9420 West Florissant Avenue in Ferguson burns Sunday night as smoke rises from tear gas fired from a St. Louis County Police truck. **ROBERT COHEN** • rcohen@post-dispatch.com

PROTEST, PUBLIC MEETING PLANNED TODAY IN WARY CITY

BY STEVE GIEGERICH
sgiegerich@post-dispatch.com
AND JESSE BOGAN
jboGAN@post-dispatch.com

FERGUSON • A day of protests and vigils Sunday for an unarmed black teenager who was shot to death by a Ferguson police officer erupted Sunday night with confrontations, looting and gunshots. Authorities said that a police officer shot an unarmed black teenager Saturday after the teen attacked the Ferguson officer. But pressure for a deeper explanation grew locally and nationally throughout the day Sunday.

Hundreds of people gathered at the shooting site Sunday night for a vigil for Michael Brown, 18, who was to begin technical school classes today.

While some people prayed, others spilled onto West Florissant Avenue, choking off

See **FERGUSON** • Page A5



A man jumps through a broken window with bottles of wine in his hands as the QuikTrip is looted Sunday. The situation in Ferguson grew more tense as some who had gathered to protest the death of Michael Brown began looting and taunting police officers. **DAVID CARSON** • dcarson@post-dispatch.com

'GENTLE GIANT' WAS READY FOR NEW LIFE, FRIENDS SAY



BY ELISA CROUCH
ecrouch@post-dispatch.com
314-340-8179

Michael Brown posted a haunting message on Facebook last week as he prepared to enter a new phase in his life: college.

"If I leave this earth today," he wrote to a friend, "at least you'll know I cared about others more than I cared about my damn self."

Brown, 18, died Saturday after a Ferguson police officer shot him multiple times outside an apartment complex. Brown was

See **BROWN** • Page A4

THE DISPARITY OF DUE PROCESS

Michael Brown didn't get any. The police officer who shot him will get plenty. That's the root of righteous anger. **EDITORIAL** • A10

High schoolers can't hit 'snooze'

Early start times are counter to teens' biological needs.

BY JESSICA BOCK
jbock@post-dispatch.com • 314-340-8228

To survive the 6:30 a.m. start time at Edwardsville High, Alicia Terry started drinking coffee her freshman year. Matt Ney's beverage of choice to stay awake at Parkway North was a daily Monster energy drink.

"That was worst thing I could have done, but it was absolutely neces-

sary," said Ney, who had to arrive an hour before the 7:25 a.m. bell to be involved in water polo and singing groups. "It was either that or fall asleep in class."

When high schoolers head back to school this week, they'll also return to a daily schedule set up to steal hundreds of hours of their sleep during the year, and

See **SLEEP** • Page A3

Needy students tap online crowd

Social media funding drives grow as tuition resource.

BY KORAN ADDO
kaddo@post-dispatch.com • 314-340-8305

As hard luck stories go, Andrew Wagner's fortunes turned around pretty quickly.

About 10 months ago, he was a broke Webster University freshman estranged from his family back home in South Carolina. They'd cut him off financially the year before after he'd come out as gay.

After moving to the St. Louis area, Wagner found himself enrolled in school paying his way through freshman year with loans, grants and scholarships.

But when those dollars began to dry up, putting him in danger of missing his sophomore year, Wagner, 20, stayed true to his generation. He turned to social media. He put his education in the

See **CROWDFUNDING** • Page A3

TODAY
71°/85°
CHANCE OF STORMS
TOMORROW
65°/81°
PARTLY CLOUDY
WEATHER
A14



RACING TRAGEDY

Questions surround death of driver hit by Tony Stewart.

SPORTS • B1



CARDINALS REBOUND

After two losses to the O's, Cards win 8-3.

SPORTS • B1

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The 'glocalization' of MTV and CNN

Why did CNN and MTV had to alter their 'products' in order to become successful on the European market? What strategies and methods did they use in order to be successful in the European (and in MTV's case the Dutch) TV-landscape?

The 'glocalization' of *MTV* and *CNN*



Koen Peeters

Why did *CNN* and *MTV* had to alter their 'products' in order to become successful on the European market? What strategies and methods did they use in order to be successful in the European (and in *MTV's* case the Dutch) TV-landscape?

Class: American Cultural Influence

Professor: Jaap Verheul

Student number: 3298876

Date: 04/05/2012

1: Introduction

“We say we have 16 members in the [UN] Security Council: the 15 members plus CNN.” –
Boutros Boutros-Ghali, 1995^[I]

America’s mass media has managed to become one of the country’s biggest and most popular export products.^[II] Sociologist Todd Gitlin describes American popular culture as being “[...] the closest approximation there is today to a global lingua franca, drawing especially the urban and urbane classes of most nations into a federated culture zone. American popular culture is the latest in a long succession of bidders for global unification. Or, perhaps, the world is culturally bi-lingual with ‘American’ as its second language.”^[III] What Gitlin argues is that American popular culture has unified the world in a similar fashion as to how national mass media unified individual countries. Obviously the extent to which this has happened on a global scale is much smaller than what has happened within individual countries.

The effect of mass media on shaping a culture and national identity is being described by Mary Beth Norton, et al. in the book *A People and a Nation: a History of the United States*. Television sets became a common sight in American households during the 1950s and 1960s. These decades were the age of the American middle class. Something that was still relatively new at the time. Many people were not completely sure how they were supposed to behave and what exactly was expected of them. “They found instruction, in part, in the national mass media”^[IV] Norton et al. writes. “On television, suburban families like the Andersons (Father Knows Best) and the Cleavers (*Leave It to Beaver*) ate dinner at a properly set dining room table. [...] Every crisis was resolved through paternal wisdom – and a little humor. In these families, no one ever yelled or hit. These popular family situation comedies portrayed and reinforced the suburban middle-class ideal that so many American families sought.”^[V] Viewers who watched those shows started to model themselves after the behavior of the characters on television. Television did not only reflect what was going on in society, but also helped to shape that society itself. Something sociologists call a ‘mediated culture’. Mary Beth Norton, et al. concludes: “Television gave Americans shared experiences and helped create a more homogeneous, white focus, middle class culture.”^[VI] A middle class culture where television did not only shape people’s attitude and definition of what is important and what is not, but through advertising also influenced what products and brands those people buy. With only a handful TV-channels available in the 1950s and 1960s people all over the country were watching the same shows. Advertisers were drawn to this because they could quickly reach a large and diverse audience. Through advertising on national television companies like *Campbell’s*, *Marlboro*, and *Gillette* managed to strengthen their brand and position. They became part of American culture. Earlier forms of mass media such as newspapers and radio broadcasting also offered similar opportunities, but it was television that really spurred this development.

Todd Gitlin is hardly the only one who argues this trend is not confined to national borders but that American popular culture has also contributed to a more homogeneous

culture worldwide. Robert W. Rydell and Rob Kroes in *Buffalo Bill in Bologna: The Americanization of the World* in fact show this development already occurred before the age of broadcast television. It occurred as early as the mid-nineteenth century Rydell and Kroes argue by offering examples of how circuses, Wild West shows, and world's fairs "[...] doubled as agents of American cultural diplomacy abroad."^[vii] Nowadays mass media still fulfill this role.

Brands like *CNN*, *MTV*, *Discovery Channel*, *Nickelodeon*, *TIME Magazine*, *Newsweek*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times* are all widely known and available around the world. Yet, when Europeans tune in to *CNN* they get to see a completely different channel than Americans get to watch at their TV-sets when they tune to *CNN*. The *TIME Magazine* sold at newsstands in the Netherlands often has a different cover than the issue of *TIME Magazine* on sale in the US. Viewers of *MTV* in Germany will not only see a different version from the one in the United States, they get an *MTV* that is completely different from the *MTV* in neighboring The Netherlands as well. These are just a few examples of what could easily become a very long list of media organizations that have different editions/versions tailored to a specific country or area.

But why did American media companies adjust their products to tailor a specific – in this case European – audience? In some cases the reasons are more obvious than others. For *Nickelodeon* it seems quite logical to translate their cartoons into several European languages. Children and teenagers in Europe generally do not speak English well enough to understand TV-programs would they be broadcasted in English. But in the case of *MTV* the reasons seem less obvious. American video-clips are extremely popular in Europe as well. So why does *MTV* not simply air the exact same clips in Europe as they do in the US? Or perhaps the question should read: "Why didn't they?" Since nowadays *MTV*'s programming consists mainly of reality and entertainment programs instead of video-clips.

Each newspaper, TV-channel, or magazine has its own reasons to come up with separate editions tailored to a specific country or area. This research paper will focus on two of them: *CNN* and *MTV*. Both channels use a vastly different approach. *CNN* has one single feed that is shown in all European countries. *MTV* meanwhile opted to launch country specific channels that sometimes only have as little as their branding in common. Both brands have become international powerhouses on par with other big American multinationals such as *McDonald's* and *Coca-Cola*. *MTV* and *CNN* are not only part of American culture but have managed to become part of our global (Western) culture. Former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali once said: "We say we have 16 members in the Security Council: the 15 members plus *CNN*."^[viii] This quote is a playful example of how influential mass media (and in particular American mass media) has become in recent decades.

Another example that illustrates the influence of American mass media around the world comes from an US embassy cable titled "*David Letterman: Agent of Influence*"^[ix] which was leaked by *WikiLeaks* in December 2010. The memo describes a conversation between two Saudi media executives and an US official. The Saudis argue American programming such as *David Letterman*, *Desperate Housewives*, and *Friends* are among the most popular programs

shown on Arab satellite-channels *MBC* and *Rotana*. One of the officials is quoted saying: "It's still all about the War of Ideas here, and the American programming on *MBC* and *Rotana* is winning over ordinary Saudis in a way that '*Al Hurra*' and other US propaganda never could. Saudis are now very interested in the outside world, and everybody wants to study in the US if they can. They are fascinated by US culture in a way they never were before."^[X] When British newspaper *the Guardian* reported about the diplomatic cable they titled their story: "*Jihad? Sorry, I don't want to miss Desperate Housewives.*"^[XI]

[Note: *Al Hurra* is a satellite TV channel sponsored by the US government and therefore sometimes called 'an American propaganda channel'.]

For both *MTV* and *CNN* achieving their status of global media powerhouse was not something that went without some difficulties. For example, when *CNN International* launched in 1985 it was mainly focused on American expats and citizens travelling abroad. Its programming consisted mainly of simulcasts of *CNN USA*. In the early 1990s the channel started to feature more original programming tailored at its international audience. This was done not only because the channel had low ratings, but also because it had to deal with critique from its European audience: "[F]oreigners attacked *CNN International* for being essentially an insular, Atlanta-based English-language news service that merely recycled U.S. stories for Americans living or traveling abroad."^[XII] By focusing more on its international audience the channel managed to answer their critics. *MTV* serves as another interesting case study. Once the channel started airing more original Dutch programming in the Netherlands instead of British or American programming their ratings went up.

The research question of this paper therefore is formulated as: Why did *CNN* and *MTV* had to alter their 'products' in order to be successful on the European market? What strategies and methods did they use in order to be successful in the European (and in *MTV*'s case the Dutch) TV-landscape?

2: Television in the US: the Beginning

2.1: The Early Days

Television viewers around the world nowadays have a vast amount of channels at their disposal. Technological advancements such as cable-TV, satellite-TV, and more recently IPTV, have given us instant access to hundreds of channels. Those range from general entertainment channels aimed at a large and diverse audience to smaller channels tailored at niche markets. To fully understand our current TV landscape, it is vital to know how broadcast television got started and developed during the first decades of its existence.

Television is not something that was invented out of the blue. Many of the technologies required to make broadcast television work were based on those of radio broadcasting. Those on its turn were based, either directly or indirectly, on previous inventions

in a similar field of work. Inventions such as Samuel F. B. Morse's wire telegraph in 1835,^[xiii] Alexander Graham Bell's telephone in 1875,^[xiv] and Guglielmo Marconi's wireless telegraph^[xv] in 1895 all laid the groundwork for modern day broadcasting.^[xvi]

When we look at broadcast television we see that not only the technological foundations can be traced back to radio broadcasting, but also the business model. Especially during the first years of television in the US its business model was modeled very closely after that of radio broadcasting. Not surprisingly considering many of the driving forces behind the development of television were companies already heavily involved in radio broadcasting too.

Radio was at first primarily seen as a medium of point-to-point communication.^[xvii] It was used for example at sea by ships to communicate with each other. During World War I wireless radio communication – Morse code – was a very important strategic tool. After the war people quickly discovered the technology was not only suitable for point to point communication, but that it also could be used to broadcast a single message to a large audience. One of those pioneers was a young Russian immigrant named David Sarnoff.^[xviii] In 1915 Sarnoff worked as a technician for *American Marconi*, one of the leading radio companies in the United States at the time. Sarnoff wrote a memo to his bosses about the opportunities he saw in radio broadcasting. His "radio music box" memo describes what we now know as a radio set.

"I have in mind a plan of development which would make radio a household utility. The idea is to bring music into the home by wireless. The receiver can be designed in the form of a simple "radio music box," placed on a table in the parlor or living room, and arranged for several different wavelengths which should be changeable with the throwing of a signal switch or the pressing of a single button. The same principle can be extended to numerous other fields, as for example, receiving lectures at home which would be perfectly audible. Also, events of national importance can be simultaneously announced and received. Baseball scores can be transmitted in the air. This proposition would be especially interesting to farmers and others living in outlying districts."

– David Sarnoff, 1915?/1920?^[xix]

Sarnoff's memo has become quite controversial since critics argue it might have been written at a much later date when radio broadcasting already had taken off.^[xx] In 1993 historian Louise M. Benjamin published an article called "*In Search of the Sarnoff 'Radio Music Box' Memo*" in which she expressed skepticism about the date of the memo. Her quest to find the original 1915 document went unsuccessful. She found evidence the memo was written in 1920, when Sarnoff already was the commercial manager of the *Radio Corporation of America (RCA)*. In a follow-up article in 2002 Benjamin backtracked on her earlier conclusions when new evidence came to light. Benjamin and the curator of Sarnoff's papers discovered a previously misfiled memo from 1916 that did in fact mention a "radio music box". Louise Benjamin concluded that while the original 1915 memo has never been found Sarnoff did in fact present a plan for

a “radio music box” to his superior E.J. Nally, in 1916. The actual wording of the memo displayed above although is probably from 1920. What stands is that David Sarnoff had a revolutionary vision of broadcasting. While his “radio music box” plan received lukewarm response from his superiors in 1916 it did in fact become reality several years later. Sarnoff went on to become one of the most powerful figures in radio and television broadcasting as the head of the *Radio Corporation of America (RCA)* and founder of America’s first major radio and television network; *NBC (National Broadcasting Company)*.

2.1: Radio Broadcasting

Many scholars date the beginning of radio broadcasting in the US at November 2nd 1920.^[xxi] On that day radio station *KDKA* in Pittsburgh broadcasted the results of the Harding-Cox presidential election.^[xxii] While being one of the first, critics argue this broadcast was only heard by a few hundred people at most. Scholars in the field of media studies like Michele Hilmes and Susan Smulyan like to adapt the notion that the beginning of radio broadcasting was a more continuous evolution that spanned a period from 1920 till 1922.^[xxiii] During those years various stations located throughout the US received licenses that allowed them to start broadcasting. With the help of the Federal government patents and techniques required for radio broadcasting were put under control of the *Radio Corporation of America*. Companies such as *General Electric (GE)*, *Westinghouse*, and the *American Telephone and Telegraph Corporation (AT&T)* who were involved in the research of radio broadcasting all became partners in *RCA*. This construction made sure vital techniques and knowledge for radio broadcasting would not fall into foreign hands but instead were controlled by a strong national company.

The actual broadcasting of content itself was not put under government control, but was left to the commercial market. Broadcast licenses were handed out to thousands of interested individuals, nonprofits, religious organizations, and companies such as hardware stores, newspapers, and movie theaters. America’s position in allowing basically anyone to broadcast news, music, and other kind of programming was unique at the time. Almost every European country opted to institute state controlled broadcasters such as for example the *BBC* in the United Kingdom and *ARD* and *ZDF* in Germany. America’s policy not to institute one single state broadcaster resulted in a very locally oriented radio landscape. Every major city or metropolitan area has its own local stations, resulting in a very diverse media landscape. The same business model was later applied to television broadcasting. A broadcast station in the US is identified with a three or four letter call-sign. Those of stations east of the Mississippi River start with a *W*, for example *WMAC-TV* (Chicago) and *WAGA-TV* (Atlanta). Names of stations located west of the Mississippi River begin with a *K*, for example *KPIX-TV* (San Francisco) or *KFOR-TV* (Oklahoma City).^[xxiv]

2.2: Networks vs. Stations

In addition to radio and TV stations, radio and TV networks originated. While names of TV-stations such as *WMAC-TV* do not sound familiar to many American, the names of television networks do. Networks such as *NBC*, *ABC*, and *CBS* have become household names. A network is a group of stations who simultaneously carry the same signal at certain times during the day.^[xxv] This was achieved by sending the signal of one station to other stations over telephone lines. By linking various local stations (near) national coverage could be achieved. It was networking that allowed Americans to listen to the same programs all over the country. To the contrary of the *BBC* in the UK, in the US *NBC* does not have its own channel on which it can broadcast 24/7. *NBC* is depending on local stations – affiliates – in order to broadcast their programming. During prime time hours affiliates air network programming such as popular dramas, movies, and news broadcasts. *CSI*, *The Today Show*, *Friends*, and the *CBS Evening News* for example are all network programming. At hours on which a station does not air network programming the schedule is filled with locally produced shows and syndicated content such as daytime talk shows. A large part of locally produced programming consists of news bulletins which stations air at several times during the day. Oklahoma City TV-station *KFOR* for example has six hours of locally produced news programming during a day.^[xxvi] This mix of local and national content is characteristic for the American media landscape. While maintaining a local feel radio and TV-channels at the same time also helped shape a common national identity.

Radio networks like *NBC* and *CBS* were in fact America's first real mass media. Michele Hilmes and Michael Henry describe their influence in the book *NBC: America's network*: "[...] through its local stations, connect the scattered and disparate communities of a vast nation simultaneously and address the nation as a whole. Thus radio could become a powerful means of creating and defining a national public, sorely needed in those nation-building years between the two world wars."^[xxvii] At the same time this structure in which national networks were dependent on local stations made sure regional interest were also well represented. Something regulators and politicians valued and regulated so that localism was guaranteed by law. Currently the number of television stations allowed to be owned by a network can only reach 39% of the country (based on amount of viewers).^[xxviii] Business wise it would easily be possible for the big networks to own more stations, and technology wise they could also easily do without affiliates when it comes to distributing their programming. Having a sense of localism involved in broadcasting is something deeply rooted in American culture. And therefore the Federal government makes sure this is maintained at the moment when it comes to over-the-air broadcasting.

2.3: A More Visual Form of Broadcasting

NBC and *CBS* were some of the most important innovators in the field of television broadcasting. Both companies thought people would be interested in a more visual form of

broadcasting and invested heavily in the development of television. These developments already began in the late 1920s and early 1930s.^[xxxix] Several companies competed to get their technology approved as the national standard for broadcast television. The 1939 New York World's Fair is often credited as being the birthplace of modern day commercial television. The opening ceremony and events at the fair were televised by *NBC*. About 200 television sets in a 65 kilometer radius around New York City were able to receive the broadcast.^[xxx] The timing, occasion, and promotion of the event marked this as the first publicly available television broadcast in the US. However, experimental broadcasts already took place years before the 1939 World's Fair. *NBC's* parent company, *RCA*, just saw the event as a nice opportunity to promote *RCA*-manufactured television sets. Many eyes were focused on the World's Fair which made it a perfect occasion for *RCA* to show off its broadcasting technology. At the time there was no technological standard for broadcast television. While everything looked bright for a rapid expansion of television at the beginning of the 1940s, this was brought to a sudden halt by World War II. In 1942 the War Production Board ordered a halt to the manufacturing of television sets. This measure was taken to allocated resources to war production and stayed in effect until August 1945.^[xxxii] When World War II ended the popularity of television really began to take off.

For a long time the system used for television broadcasts was very similar to that of radio broadcasting. TV signals were transmitted over-the-air by large transmitters located in metropolitan areas. Signals could be picked up by rooftop antennas and TV sets had receivers built in that could decode these signals and show an image on screen. Over-the-air broadcasts were quite limited in their reach. A signal would only travel for about 100 to 160 kilometers^[xxxiii] before it would become unwatchable. Mountains, skyscrapers, or other large objects would further limit the reach of the signal. In Europe, where countries are relatively small, a couple dozens of transmitters were able to blanket an entire country with a working signal. In the United States however this was a much more difficult task. In order to have coast-to-coast coverage an enormous amount of transmitters would be needed. The investments of building such a network were so high they were not economically sustainable. Therefore, the business model of radio broadcasting was also applied to television broadcasting; a vast amount of local channels 'chained' together by three big networks.

"While network radio had effectively brought the nation together, the three television networks were even more powerful at uniting the social and cultural fabric of the USA. In 1969, millions were glued to their TV sets to watch a man walk on the moon; even more watched the Super Bowl the following January. TV was the one cultural force that everyone living in the USA, male or female, African American or white, rich or poor, Democrat or Republican, had in common. By May 1961 more homes in the USA had television sets than indoor plumbing. [...] By 1970 the *NBC* peacock and the *CBS* eye had become symbols better known than the *Coca-Cola* bottle and *MGM's* *Leo the Lion*." – Douglas Gomery – *A History of Broadcasting in the United States* (P.197)

2.4: Cable TV

Because over-the-air television was so limited in its reach, small towns far away from large metropolitan areas were often unable to receive a working TV signal. Rooftop antennas on individual homes were insufficient. Technicians and local entrepreneurs quickly discovered that on high-rise buildings – such as hotels – it often was possible to get a working signal. They would relay this signal by coaxial cable to television sets in households nearby.^[xxxiii] And so the very first cable TV networks, named *community antenna television* (CATV), originated.^[xxxiv] Another shortcoming of over-the-air television was the limited availability of frequency space. Initially there was only room for twelve broadcast stations in a single market. In areas where there was overlap in signals from neighboring cities the number of stations that were able to broadcast was even reduced further. Developments such as allowing stations to broadcast on another frequency range – UHF instead of VHF – later did something to ease this problem a little bit, but over-the-air- television did still not leave much room for growth. The marketplace was ripe for more channels than over-the-air broadcasting could technically deliver. And so it was that cable television came into the picture.

Until the late 1970s cable's almost exclusive function was to retransmit broadcast signals to households who would have been unable to receive those signals otherwise using regular rooftop antennas.^[xxxv] But in the late 1870s and early 1980s cable specific channels started to arise. Examples are *CNN*, *ESPN*, *HBO*, and *MTV*. These channels did not need local affiliates to carry their signal over-the-air, but instead delivered their signal directly to cable operators.

In 1975 *Home Box Office* (*HBO*) was the first TV channel in the United States to use satellite-technology to distribute its signal. *HBO* already existed for some years but was only available on cable systems in the Northeastern US. At the time *HBO's* signal got distributed to those cable systems via a network of microwave relay towers.^[xxxvi] Distribution was limited because of this since the cable systems could only receive the signal if they were along the microwave route. The microwave relay system was also difficult and expensive to maintain, especially in wintertime. By using satellite technology *HBO* was suddenly able to reach cable systems all over the country. The boxing match between Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier taking place in the Philippines was the first event *HBO* brought live to cable systems throughout the domestic United States. This “Thrilla from Manila” as the match is called is seen as the inaugural moment of satellite cable networks in the United States.^[xxxvii] It showed that by using satellite technology live images could be transmitted from around the world. Something that at the time was unheard of. On traditional network television it would have taken days before tapes from Manila had been flown in. ^[xxxviii] *CNN*, *ESPN*, *MTV*, *Discovery Channel*, *National Geographic*, and many other TV channels all followed *HBO's* example by utilizing satellite technology to distribute their signal.

These cable only channels are the ones that have expanded beyond their national borders to Europe and beyond. Broadcast networks did not, or at least not by launching European/Asian equivalents or their American broadcasting network. Many programs aired

on American network television such as *CSI*, *The Big Bang Theory*, and *Two and a Half Men* do show up on television in Europe, but almost always on national Dutch/German/Belgian/etc. channels. Those programs are sold to national European channels such as *RTL* by the production studio of a show.

3: European TV Landscape

3.1: The early years of television in Europe

As pointed out by Jean K. Chalaby in “Transnational Television Worldwide” for a long period of time television in Europe was closely bound to national territories. ^[XXXIX] Broadcasters only operated within their own national boundaries. In Europe almost every government set up state broadcasters funded by taxpayers. Television was seen as an important form of shaping national identity and spreading culture throughout an entire country. Commercial broadcasters were not allowed in most European countries until the 1980s. In many countries though there was a big demand for foreign channels.

International transmission of television signals happened purely by accident at first. An over-the-air-signal is not limited in its reach by geographical borders so people living in border areas were able to pick up signals from their neighboring countries. Especially in areas where countries shared the same language, watching foreign stations proved to be very popular. Cable operators began relaying these foreign TV-stations to their subscribers. This meant also people not living in border areas could receive foreign TV-stations. This practice is similar to what happened in the United States with CATV networks relaying over-the-air signals from stations in cities further away. The signal of the British BBC channels for example was picked up by a huge antenna near Calais which then transmitted the signal to Dutch and Belgian cable networks. This re-transmission of signals in foreign countries was something TV-channels initially never intended. One issue with re-broadcasting foreign channels is that there are sometimes legal copyright issues. Broadcasting rights for example for sport programming or movies are often sold on a country per country basis. When the channel is also seen in other countries copyright holders don't get compensation for this. Foreign channels proved to be very popular in small European countries that shared the same language with a much larger neighboring state. While estimates show that 'overspill channels' in the whole of Europe had an audience share of about 5 percent, in countries like Switzerland and Ireland it could reach up to 60 percent. ^[XL]

3.2 Pan European TV channels

The TV landscape in Europe changed drastically with the invention of satellite technology. The first system that utilized satellites to distribute a TV signal was built by the Soviet Union. In the mid-1960s the Soviet government realized it was far too difficult to reach remote and sparsely populated areas of the country using a familiar terrestrial broadcast

network. The Soviet Union at the time had a territory that was spread across eleven time zones. In October 1967 the Molnya communication satellite became operational and the world's first satellite TV system was born. It is important to note that customers did not need a satellite dish at their home themselves in order to gain the benefits from this new technology. The satellites were only used for transporting broadcast signals to different downlink stations across the country from where the signal then got distributed on cable networks.

Satellite technology not only changed the television landscape in the US, but in Europe as well. In a similar fashion as to how *HBO* in the US could distribute its signal to various cable operators, satellites made this possible in Europe for new channels. The first transnational channel to launch in Europe was *Satellite Television*, which later became the *SKY Channel*. Another popular satellite TV-station that started at the beginning of the 1980s was the *Super Channel* (later renamed as *NBC Super Channel*). *SKY* and *Super Channel* were transnational television stations in the sense that they were not only seen in various European countries but also carried programming originating from different EU countries. *Super Channel* for example carried the Dutch sitcom *Zeg 'ns AAA* with English subtitles.^[XLI] While having shows in various languages and from various countries adds to the transnationalism of a channel it didn't prove to be a huge ratings hit. A Dutch show on the *Super Channel* might be attractive to Belgian and Dutch audiences but for a German or French audience not so much. Experiments with *SKY* and *Super Channel* have learned us that people are more likely to watch programming in their own language than in a foreign language. Having one channel which is shown in entire Europe makes it difficult to take into account local habits and traditions. Prime time hours for example in Southern Europe are not the same as in Scandinavian countries.^[XLII] In Spain 22:00 is considered prime time while in Norway prime time is already at 19:00.

When looking at the current television landscape in Europe we see a picture where the big general entertainment networks in each country is a non-transnational network. Public/state broadcasters are still some of the biggest and most popular channels around in Western European countries such as Germany (*ARD/ZDF*), The United Kingdom (*BBC*), Italy (*RAI*), and Norway (*NRK*). In addition to these public broadcasters there are several large European commercial networks. Some of them have a multi-country presence such as *RTL* which has channels in Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands. There is no big pan European TV-channel that is providing general entertainment and popular programming to an audience in various countries at once. The channels that have managed to become transnational channels are the ones that have adapted to local customs and languages.

4: CNN - Cable News Network

4.1 Ted Turner

CNN, at the time still referred to by its full name: *Cable News Network*, launched on June 1st 1980.^[XLIII] The channel was founded by businessman Ted Turner. Turner inherited his

father's advertising company in March 1963, after his dad committed suicide.^[XLIV] His first steps into broadcasting Turner made in the late 1960s when he acquired several radio stations in the Southern United States. He made the switch to television in 1970 when he purchased *WJRI-TV*, an independent station in Atlanta not affiliated with any of the big networks. Turner renamed the station to *WTCG*. During the first years under his control ratings of *WTCG* were low, and programming low-budget. Things started to change in 1972 when the FCC allowed cable operators to import and add distant stations to their system.^[XLV] This expanded the number of households that were able to receive the channel beyond the original Atlanta area, to cities in neighboring Alabama and South Carolina. Because the signal had to be relayed by traditional microwave broadcasting equipment it was costly to build a very large distribution network. Satellite technology completely changed that, and Turner fully embraced it. In 1976 he started distributing the *WTCG* signal via satellite to cable operators nationwide. *WTCG* grew from a small local station in Atlanta to a so-called 'superstation', that could be seen from coast to coast. It is this exact same satellite technology that allowed Turner to create the *Cable News Network*. *CNN* caused a fundamental shift in the American TV news. National news at the time was dominated by the big three networks: *NBC*, *ABC*, and *CBS*. Each network had its own 30 minute evening newscast at 6:30pm, and a morning show that also offered news updates. It might be hard to imagine with today's 24-hour news cycle in mind, but those 30 minutes at night (about 22 if you strip out the commercials), and a bulletin in the morning were the only moments during the day at which viewers would get their (inter)national news. Local news to the contrary could be seen at much more moments during the day. Ted Turner's vision for *CNN* was to bring viewers the news whenever they wanted and whenever it happened.^[XLVI] Satellite technology was not only useful for distributing *CNN*'s to cable operators, but it also proved to be very useful for actual newsgathering. Showing live events as they unfolded on its 24-hour network was a unique advantage over the traditional networks. *CNN* was not an immediate ratings hit. During the first years of its existence the channel lost a lot of money. While satellite technology made nationwide distribution possible, only 20 percent of US television households had access cable television at the time.^[XLVII] Not enough for Turner to make a profit with his channel. It took several years before the channel wrote black figures. *CNN* also had to fight for its journalistic reputation. The channel was sometimes referred to as the "Chicken Noodle Network"^[XLVIII] as it was seen as a low key competitor to the big networks. By offering compelling live reports of events that the big three network were not able to cover live *CNN* slowly but surely managed to become a reputable journalistic business. Two years after the launch of *CNN* Turner launched *CNN2* which was renamed to *Headline News* one year later. *Headline News* offered viewers a quick overview of the news compared to the more elaborate newscasts of *CNN*.

In September 1985 Ted Turner brought *CNN* to Europe with the launch of *CNN International*.^[XLIX] *CNN International* at first was primarily aimed at American expats and business travelers abroad. *CNN*'s programming consisted mainly of programs from *CNN* and *Headline News*. As time progressed *CNN International* became truly more international by having programs not only originate from Atlanta but also from its bureaus in Hong Kong and

London. In 2009 a fourth production center was added in Abu Dhabi. *CNN International* was regionalized into five separate regions in September 1997. Those regions are *CNNI* Europe/Middle East/Africa, *CNNI* Asia Pacific, *CNNI* South Asia, *CNNI* Latin America and *CNNI* North America.^[1] This system with separate feeds for various regions allowed *CNN* to adapt to different time zones around the world. In Asia for example it made sense to broadcast a business orientated show at the end of the business day to give a recap of all the market action. In Europe, where it is still morning at that time, a different type of show could be seen at that time. While being split into five different regions, actual differences between those five nowadays are very slim. A look at the schedule of *CNN International* shows that only for a couple hours a day programming is not the same in each and every part of the world. Despite having a single feed for Europe/the Middle East/Africa *CNNI* does show local advertisements in certain countries. In the Netherlands for example *CNN* has made a deal with *Triade Media*^[11] to air local Dutch advertisements. This technique is called 'local ad insertion'. By airing local ads in various countries instead of the same advertisements everywhere a channel is able to sell advertising space multiple times. In theory this allows a channel to make more profit. Prices for continent wide advertisements usually are much higher than prices for ads only shown in one country. By selling the same advertising space in several countries to different companies the income from these ads can be higher than it would otherwise be. Having local commercials also somehow helps in creating a local feel for a channel.

CNN USA and *CNN International* are two completely separate channels. They have their own shows and own anchors. Correspondents and reporters file reports for both channels. Often taking into account for what type of audience they are providing their news report. When comparing the two channels a clear difference in style can be discovered. Obviously *CNN International* is more focused on stories outside the US, but also the style in which stories are being reported is a little bit different. *CNN's* domestic channel has much more reporters appearing on screen as 'talking heads', and programs are clearly built around famous news-anchors. *CNN International* shows a lot more packaged news reports from its various reporters and correspondents around the world. 'Talking heads' appearing on the air as well but to a lesser extent than *CNN USA*. During breaking news situations anchors from *CNN USA* and *CNN International* sometimes co-anchor news coverage. This happens especially if there is a story with an international angle. If there is a breaking news story going on in the US, *CNN International* is more likely to simulcast coverage of *CNN USA*. Simulcasting is also convenient for correspondents in the field who otherwise would have to do phone-ins and live reports on two channels instead of one.

4.2 Case study

On July 22nd 2011 when a large explosion rocked the Norwegian capital Oslo *CNNI* stayed with this breaking news for many hours after the explosion took place. *CNN USA* continued with regular programming having anchors from *CNNI* deliver extended news updates on the story from time to time. At 18:00 (Central European Summer Time, CEST) on

that same day President Obama made a statement in the White House briefing room about debt ceiling talks that had broken down. *CNN* carried the statement from the president live while *CNN International* ran a special program on the Oslo/Utøya terrorist attacks. On *CNN USA* Wolf Blitzer anchored coverage from Washington DC. The *CNNI* program originated from Atlanta and was being anchored by Colleen McEdwards. *CNN International* did not mention Obama's statement until one hour later when at the top of the hour (01:00 CEST) they did a news roundup.

On August 23rd 2011 *CNN* and *CNNI* were simulcasting coverage on the War in Libya when around 19:45 CEST a minor Earthquake shook large parts of the North-Eastern United States. Both *CNN* and *CNNI* quickly switched from reporting about the war in Lybia to cover the earthquake. *CNN* domestic coverage could also be seen on *CNN International*. At 20:30 CEST *CNN International* broke away from their American sister network to cover the raid on Gadhafi's compound again. This is a clear example of *CNN* tailoring their content towards a specific audience. American viewers are more likely to be interested in the breaking news of the Earthquake while international viewers are probably more interested in the story of Libya's war. On days with large stories like these regular scheduled programming is often interrupted for special programming. During normal weekdays at midnight CET (6PM Eastern) *CNN USA's The Situation Room with Wolf Blitzer* is also being aired on *CNN International*. But on this day in August *CNNI* aired an extra program on the situation in Libya while *The Situation Room* only aired on *CNN USA* with much of the program devoted to the 5.8 earthquake. *CNNI* covered the quake as well but only after having covered the situation in Libya extensively first. In cases like these it clearly shows that *CNN* and *CNN International* each have to cater to a different kind audience.

4.3 Euronews

Euronews, *BBC World News*, *SKY News*, *Al-Jazeera English*, *France 24*, *RT (Russia Today)*, and several others all have joined the ranks of *CNN* and started a 24/7 news network. *Euronews* is a unique competitor to *CNN* in the sense that *Euronews* does not broadcast in one single language but in as many as eleven.^[LII] *Euronews* was founded in 1993 as a joint venture between several European Broadcasting Union members. The launch of *Euronews* was in large part a direct response to *CNN* which became a more and more influential in Europe during the beginning of the 90s. In 2007 *Euronews* was Europe's most watched international news channel.^[LIII] Media experts like Jean K. Chalaby point towards *Euronews* unique ability to broadcast in many different languages as the reason for this popularity.^[LIV] Having news reports in local languages give the channel a much larger potential audience. In countries such as France and Spain where English is not very commonly used as a second language, broadcasting in French and Spanish gives *Euronews* an advantage over networks broadcasting only in English. Because *Euronews* broadcasts in so many languages the channel does not have any anchorman appearing on air or programs hosted from studios. All reports on *Euronews* are edited packages of news where a voice over does the voice over in one of

the eleven languages. This puts *Euronews* in a serious disadvantage when it comes to covering breaking news stories where having a show hosted from a newsroom or studio allows a channel to react more quickly to incoming news. The fact that despite this disadvantage *Euronews* has managed to become more popular in Europe than networks like *Sky News* and *CNN International* shows that being able to broadcast into local languages is a serious advantage for the network.

In several countries such as India, Turkey, Chile, and Germany *CNN* is involved in local news channels through joint ventures. Germany is the only European country where *CNN* currently is operating a channel (*N-TV*) in addition to *CNN International*.^[LV] *N-TV* however is not a localized version of *CNN* but a completely different channel.

5: MTV – Music Television

5.1 Localization

MTV launched in the US on August 1st 1981.^[LVI] Its concept was to play video clips 24/7. The channel attracted a young audience, something very attractive to advertisers and cable affiliates who gladly carried the channel. Five years after its launch, *MTV* could be seen in 30 million homes nationwide.^[LVII] Exactly six years later after the launch of its American channel, on August 1st 1987, *MTV* launched a European version called *MTV Europe*. This channel at launch could be seen in seven European countries: the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, the UK, Switzerland, and Finland.^[LVIII] *MTV* was not the first music channel to launch in Europe. Two previous channels, *Music Box* and *TV6* also tried to win over European customers. Those channels, for various reasons, did not have a long lifespan and failed. *MTV* did manage to set up a sustainable television network for the European market, although ratings were not spectacular either.^[LIX] *MTV Europe* featured a lot of programs that were produced in the United Kingdom. The network figured that European based programming would be more popular than simply copying existing American shows.

Starting in 1997 *MTV* began to break up *MTV Europe* and began regionalizing the channel. The first regionalized channel was a one aimed specifically at the United Kingdom.^[LX] In the 1980s when satellite television began to rise, it was widely thought in corporate circles that boundaries between regional and national cultures were disappearing in return for one global culture.^[LXI] In the same way as to how radio helped shape a shared American culture there was a strong notion that transnational satellite TV stations would do the same in regions such as Europe. But cultural and especially linguistic differences were harder to overcome than many TV-executives at the time may have thought.^[LXII] The process of launching localized *MTV* channels continued with channels for Germany, the Netherlands, France, and Scandinavia. *MTV* did not stop its localization process by simply launching local versions of *MTV Europe*. *MTV* also acquired some existing channels in several European countries. In 2001 *MTV* purchased Dutch music channel *TMF*,^[LXIII] and three years later in 2004 *MTV* purchased German music channel *VIVA*.^[LXIV] Local channels had an unique advantage over *MTV Europe*

because they featured shows hosted by local presenters in their local language. When *MTV* acquired *TMF* both channels shifted strategy. VJ's who were once presenting shows on *TMF* were moved to *MTV*. Having ownership over those local channels gave *MTV* a valuable knowledge on how local markets operated. Therefore, the channel could more precisely predict what viewers wanted to see. Channels that *MTV* acquired did not always stick around. In the Netherlands *MTV* did not only acquire *TMF* but also *The Box* (through its acquisition of *VIVA* in Germany). *MTV Europe's* parent company replaced those channels with other channels in its portfolio. In this case *Nickelodeon* and *Comedy Central*. Bot *Nickelodeon* and *Comedy Central* are global channels, of which a localized version was launched in the Netherlands. This shift in strategy probably had to do with the fact that three music channels in one small country is quite a lot. Because of the rise of video clips on *YouTube* interest for those music channels began to diminish. Switching to an alternative format was a way maintaining viewership.

Despite launching local versions of its channel the *MTV* brand is still a very international brand. No matter where you go in Europe, people everywhere have heard of *MTV*. Former *MTV Worldwide* CEO Bill Roedy talked about this process in a 2011 interview with *CNN's* Becky Anderson. Roedy said: "The thing that really made us different from everything else was respecting and reflecting local cultures. So unlike one Cola or one burger, we have different products depending on where you go around the world. In Indonesia you'll see call to prayer. I just came from the Middle East; Qatar and Dubai. We have call to prayer. We have interpretation of Ramadan. In a youthful way. In India we play Bollywood songs. In China we have marching music. So it can be very different."^[LXV] While it should be noted that *McDonalds* has also launched specific products in certain countries (*McKroket* in the Netherlands) Roedy strikes an interesting point. Within the boundaries of the *MTV* brand, *MTV* has introduced local customs and traditions. American shows still play a large role in shaping the image of *MTV* (*Jersey Shore*, *The Hills*), but it is not limited to only American influences. *MTV* is a perfect example of an American brand that did not only 'Americanized' the world but also internationalized the world. In a similar fashion as to how *Coca-Cola* and *McDonalds* have become global brands, *MTV* achieved the same.

"I really believe passionately that the world is a diverse rich array and it shouldn't be one country dominating. It shouldn't be cultural imperialism."^[LXVI]

- Bill Roedy, former Chairman and CEO of *MTV Networks International*

Conclusion:

Why did CNN and MTV had to alter their 'products' in order to become successful on the European market? What strategies and methods did they use in order to be successful in the European (and in MTV's case the Dutch) TV-landscape?

CNN and *MTV* took two completely different paths when it came to picking a strategy for succeeding on the European TV-market. *MTV* settled on a strategy of regionalization after the company realized this allowed them to achieve higher ratings. *CNN* on the other hand stayed with the 'one single feed strategy' that many transnational channels originally started out with, but later abandoned. With news being *CNN's* core business, the costs and difficulties involved with regionalizing the channel are much higher and difficult than in the case of *MTV*. Having a single feed for the entire European market is not per definition a negative issue. It is because of, not in spite of, *CNN's* global image that the channel attracts a lot of viewers interested in global affairs and politics. *Euronews* shows that having a regionalized news channel can work, although this channel has a completely different vibe and appearance from *CNN* because of its decision not to have news bulletins presented from a studio setting. *CNN's* joint-venture with *RTL Group* in the German cable channel *N-TV* shows that *CNN* is also familiar with localization. The big difference with *MTV* is that *N-TV* does not carry any *CNN* branding (anymore) but is a completely separate channel from *CNN International*. *N-TV* does not replace *CNN International* in Germany but they exist right next to each other, each having a different target audience.

MTV's decision to go down the path of localization is a method nowadays used by almost every major American TV-network in Europe. While the European Union has created one single internal market, when it comes to media and television, cultural differences between members states are still huge barriers to overcome. Language is obviously the most important barrier. *MTV's* take-over strategy of local channels in the Netherlands and Germany shows that the channel was clearly afraid of these local competitors. By acquiring competing channels *MTV* did not only gain additional market share, it also allowed the company to learn how those local channels operated within their own country. Those lessons proved to be valuable for the company, because it allowed them to apply them to *MTV's* other channels as well. In the United States, cable-only channels such as *Discovery*, *ESPN*, and *MTV* are different from the big broadcasting networks (*ABC*, *CBS*, and *NBC*) in the sense that they do not offer any specialized local programming, but instead provide one single feed to the entire country (not taking into account time-shifted versions for the West Coast). In Europe to the contrary channels like *Discovery* and *MTV* nowadays are in fact heavily regionalized. Jean K. Chalaby describes this trend as "The creation of a network of local channels around a core broadcasting philosophy."^[LXVII] This quote is a perfect summary of the trend we have seen on the European TV-market during the last couple of decades. Our television landscape is nowadays shaped by global brands, but they operate on a national/local level. They were 'forced' to do so because despite of globalization, local differences remain huge. ***

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The Expectations Gap and the American Presidency

Literature Review

The Expectations Gap and the American Presidency

LITERATURE REVIEW

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The Presidential Expectations Gap

When Barack Obama was elected as the 44th President of the United States on November 4th 2008 people around the world celebrated his victory. In Harlem (NY) spontaneous parties erupted, in his hometown Chicago people went out en masse to see Obama's victory speech, and in many other US cities people went out to celebrate. Celebrations for Obama's presidential victory even went far beyond the domestic United States. Many world leaders called Obama to congratulate him with his victory, people in Indonesia danced on the streets, and Kenya even declared a national holiday. ^[1]

When the celebrations ended and the dust settled it quickly became obvious that Obama had a huge task in front of him. Obama was faced with a large international economic crisis, wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the healthcare debate, and many other difficult issues. The pressure on the shoulders of Barack Obama to handle all these issues in a good way was huge. The general public expected him to solve all the problems in a good and timely matter. A task that is almost impossible, many political commentators and journalists already warned. ^[1]

Now that we are little more than a year into Obama's presidency his approval ratings are beginning to diminish. While the press was generally positive towards Obama during the first months of his presidency, in more recent months they have become a bit more critical of his performances so far. It is becoming more and more obvious that the expectations people had of Barack Obama were incredibly huge and he is now having trouble living up to those expectations. Of course Obama is not the only president who had to deal with huge expectations when he entered office. Almost every newly elected president, regardless of which political party they are, has had to deal with the so called 'expectations gap'. The expectations gap is what is being described as the gap between what is realistic for a president to accomplish and the large (and sometimes unrealistic) expectations the public has for him.

Over the past couple of decades many scholars have written about the expectations gap. One of the most famous scholars who initially touched upon the issue was Richard Neustadt. His book *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents* is seen by many as large source of influence for the John F. Kennedy administration. In the book Neustadt examines the

decision making processes at some of the highest levels of government. He argues that the president on his own is pretty weak in getting things done. The president needs to work with Congress in order to accomplish things; and in order to be able to persuade Congress a president needs a combination of factors like his professional reputation and public prestige. Speaking on the subject of public expectations Neustadt claimed: "Everybody now expects the man inside the White House to do something about everything."^[III] Doing "something about everything" is an impossible task for any president (or other public figure). Before the 1940s and 1950s (midcentury) the American President was more focused on the so called Washington Community to get things done. The Washington Community includes members of Congress, Governors, foreign diplomats, lobbyists, etc, etc. Nowadays Presidents are more and more focused on public opinion. Instead of relying on the Washington Community presidents opt to go public more often in order to get the direct support from the masses. High public approval ratings are then used as a way of showing the Washington Community that the public is behind the president and thus the Washington Community is more likely to support him as well.

Neustadt defines five different groups who the president has to bargain with to get things done: "A modern President is bound to face demands for aid and service from five more or less distinguishable sources: from executive officialdom, from Congress, from his partisans, from citizens at large, and from abroad."^[IV] Most of the research scholars have done on the expectations gap is focused on the 'citizens at large'. A president nowadays immediately gets judged by the media and the public at large. It is no surprise that the expectations gap is a phenomenon that has gained strength during the last couple of decades. The role the media nowadays plays when it comes to presidential elections and the presidential system in general is obviously much bigger than several decades ago. Campaign promises are nothing new. What is (relatively) new however is that 'citizens at large' are being flooded with promises from the president and presidential candidates through the media.

While Neustadt raised the issue of public expectations there are others scholars who have done more thorough research on the subject. One of them is Theodore J. Lowi who supports the theory of Neustadt that it is (almost) impossible for a president to live up to all expectations because they are set so incredibly high. Lowi argues that "The probability of failure is always tending toward 100 percent."^[V] Even Ronald Reagan, considered by many

to be one of the most successful (modern) presidents has not completely lived up to his expectations Lowi argues. “Reagan began as the most programmatic president since Roosevelt. He went beyond Roosevelt in his willingness to convey before the election exactly what he was going to try to do. Virtually all of his actions in 1981 and early 1982 indicate his sincere commitment to the fulfillment of his campaign promises, and he delivered on a number of them.” While largely positive about Reagan’s accomplishments Lowi does point out some failures in Reagan’s presidency. For example, the Iran-Contra affair, and failure to get tax cuts exactly the way he wanted. These that are supposed to show that even Reagan failed can be considered pretty minor though. Settling for a smaller tax cut than he originally wanted and failure to abolish the Education Department are not the biggest failures a president can have. Of course it is impossible for a president to achieve every single goal he set during the campaign period. The public is educated well enough to know that it is impossible to achieve this. So whether Reagan really can be seen as a victim of the expectations gap remains questionable.

Leaving this issue aside though, Lowi comes up with some possible solutions to bridge the gap. For example: form a Presidential Cabinet so there are more people (and thus more public faces) around the president who personify the government. This would decrease the burden on the shoulders of the president. The most successful way according to Lowi however is to strengthen political parties so they become a sort of middle man between the public and the president. This would mean the US has to abandon its two party system that has dominated American politics for centuries. The solution Lowi proposes is a system that bears some similarities with parliamentary systems in Europe. European countries such as The United Kingdom, Belgium and The Netherlands who have a system in place in which the prime-minister can rely on his cabinet also have to deal with the expectations gap however. Therefore, it remains questionable if the solution Lowi proposes will really help to bridge the expectations gap.

Lowi is seriously concerned though about the current role of the American president. He calls it “a problem so profound that the future of national government itself rests upon its resolution.”^[VI] While it is true the role of the president has changed over the last couple of decades, it is questionable whether the impact of the expectations gap is really that big and important. Even at times when presidents mostly had to deal with the Washington

Community instead of the public at large they often failed to live up to their expectations. It's just that because of today's media society it has become more visible.

Several empirical studies have been conducted since the 1980s to proof and examine the expectations gap. One of the most comprehensive is a 1983 study by George Edwards. Edwards used public opinion polling data to proof the expectations gap in fact exists in presidential politics. Edwards took the results of two opinion polls, the first one conducted in December 1976 and the second in December 1980, to examine the expectations of president-elect Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan. In both cases the expectations of the president-elect were higher than their actual approval ratings. In the case of Jimmy Carter 72 percent of the people expected him to reduce unemployment and 81 percent thought he was going to increase government efficiency. Richard Waterman points out that in some instances the public's expectations are contradictory with each other. Of the poll's respondents, 81 percent expected Carter to strengthen national defense. At the same time 59 percent wanted that Carter reduced the cost of government. Two issues which are clearly contradictory to each other and hard to accomplish both.

An interesting finding in Edwards' research is that the public nowadays expects more from a president that it did in the past. Responding to a question asking whether "the public's expectations of the president are higher than [they were] in the past" ^[VII] 73 percent of the respondents answered they thought this was in fact the case. This indicating that even the public is aware of the expectations gap. Even though they might not all know the term they are aware of the fact that a newly elected president sets high expectations. Thus they might as well be aware of the fact that it is impossible for him to accomplish all of these issues. This fact can be used as an argument against scholars who argue that the public at large is having unrealistic expectations of the president and use these unrealistic expectations to judge him.

The Presidency is obviously not the only branch of the US government that has to deal with the expectations gap. Research has also been done on how this symptom has affected the United States Congress. A 1997 research by David C. Kimball and Samuel C. Patterson points out that "Citizens appear to make comparisons between what they expect their elected representatives in Congress to be like, and what they perceive these representatives actually

are like."^[VIII] Kimball and Patterson's research on the US congress is similar to the research Richard Waterman did on the expectations gap and the US presidency. Waterman acknowledges that many scholars have been able to prove that the gap in fact exists but he argues that it is still unsure *why* it exists.

Waterman, et al. conducted two surveys in 1996 that looked at the approval ratings and expectations of then President Bill Clinton. What they found is that the public in general had higher expectations of how and ideal president should behave (and act) than he is in real life. The survey asked respondents questions about the skills an "excellent" president should have and how they rated those skills in President Clinton. The four questions that respondent answered had to deal with "(1) sound judgment in a crisis, (2) experience in foreign affairs, (3) high ethical standards, and (4) an ability to work well with Congress."

The results showed that when asked what people looked for in an "excellent president" they all gave higher marks than they gave when asked to judge their current president. Proving the fact that the expectations gap exists however is only one part of Waterman's, et al. research. The more important question is how the gap affects presidential performance. Waterman, et al. concludes that: "The expectations gap both makes individuals less likely to approve of the president's job performance and less likely to vote for an incumbent president. Furthermore, our analysis indicates that the wider each individual's perception of the gap is, the less likely they will be to approve of or vote for an incumbent president."^[IX]

Prior to the 1960s only two twentieth-century presidents, Taft and Hoover, failed to win reelection. This fact is being used by scholars (Rose, 1977 & Lowi, 1985) to support the theory that presidents nowadays are more often likely to fail because they do not manage to live up to the high expectations that were set out for them. Lowi for examples states that five of the seven presidents between 1946 and 1980 were defined as failures. According to the theory they all retired from public office because they were no longer accepted by their own party or the public at large. The only exception is Eisenhower.

But while presidents might retire from public office after their term is up the public perception of their performances is not immediately set in stone. When years go by the way people think of a former president often changes quite a bit. George H. W. Bush told the New York Times once: "History is basically kind to American Presidents. Everybody looks better over time. Herbert Hoover looks better today than he did 40 years ago, doesn't he?

Time is generous to people.”^[X] It must be said though that what a president does when he is out of the office might influence this image. Bill Clinton for example who is still active on the world stage might be altering his presidential legacy by what he is doing after his actual eight-year term in office.

The biggest question throughout all the scholarly debate on this issue is how the public expectations impact the president and his behavior. *The President and the Public* by Doris A. Graber in 1982 is seen by many as one of the first works that thoroughly examined the impact of mass media and public opinion polling on presidential leadership. Graber covers media portrayals of presidents and presidential candidates. American presidents are seen nowadays as cultural icons. Their actions are shown in newspapers and television sets all around the world. This has led to an increased pressure on the president.

While it might sound like the expectations gap has only brought the presidency and the American public bad things, this is not completely true. There are several arguments that can be made in favor of the expectations gap. Because the President knows that all of his actions are watched very closely by the public at large there is a certain kind of extra pressure on his shoulders that could stimulate him to perform well. The President's job at the end of the day is not to make the decisions which benefit his position the most, but to make the decisions that are the best for the American voters. And that is exactly what the voters expect him to do. ***

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Mass Media & Breaking Taboos

Research paper for the course *Race, Gender, and the Media*

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

Mass Media & Breaking Taboos

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Mass Media & Breaking Taboos

Mass media nowadays play a large and multifaceted role in our society. Due to the rise of technological advancements such as satellites and cable television media outlets are able to reach a wide – and diverse – audience. How people interact with mass media is an interesting and important field of studies because people worldwide spend a lot of time consuming mass media every single day.

In 2009 the average American watched an astonishing amount of 141 hours of TV every month a Nielsen study reports.^[1] This comes down to approximately 4,5 hours of television every day. Add to this all the other forms of media consumption such as reading newspapers and surfing the Internet and it becomes clear that mass media are everywhere around us.

People use mass media to shape an image of the world around them. Even though they might not be personally present at a certain place or event mass media can help them shape a picture of the scene and make them at least feel like they know what is going on. The images of the 9/11 terrorist attacks for example are images that everybody over the age of 20 is aware of and vividly remembers. But only a small percentage of those people were actually present in New York City and Washington DC when the attacks took place. It was the (news)-media that shaped the image for the rest of us. And this effect goes beyond newsworthy events such as the example above. For people not belonging to a certain minority, say whites, it is the media who for a large part shapes their image of minorities. Of course this image is also based on personal experiences, but for a large part it is the mass media that is responsible.

But does the media really shape public opinion or is the media also shaped by it? In our society the media fulfills several different tasks. They inform, entertain, expose information, and try to set a certain public agenda.

One theory regarding mass media is that the various media outlets simply show what the public wants to see. If the public wants entertainment, they get entertainment. If there is a demand for music videos, there will be TV-stations that provide these videos. This theory can be explained by simple economics. If there is a demand for something there is often money to be made, so there will be corporations that cater to this demand. But who defines public demand? Often this is being done by the mass media itself. By focusing on certain issues the media can create a certain interest in a topic and thus a vicious circle is born.

This is especially the case when it comes to entertainment. The 2001 PBS Frontline documentary “The Merchants of Cool”^[2] studied the case of a commercial tie in between *MTV* and *Sprite*. *Sprite*, the soft drink, tried to associate themselves with the hip-hop culture in order to gain popularity with young consumers. One of the ways they achieved this was by

paying college-aged kids to show up at a launch-party for their newly designed website. At the party several popular hip-hop bands performed. These performances and the launch-event in general was featured on *MTV*. People watching at home saw kids partying and *MTV* being extremely positive about the event. All of this helping to increase the popularity of hip-hop music benefiting both *MTV* and *Sprite*. But what the people at home did not know was that those college-kids partying at the launch event got paid to show up there. It was the media creating a certain public image in order to commercially benefit from it.

When looking at news-media there is a theory similar to the one in entertainment that states they simply cater to public demand. This theory states that news media simply report what is 'news'. But simply reporting what is 'news' is a subjective decision and not that simple as it might seem at first. Along every step of the way there are decisions involved that shape the way news is seen and perceived.

Mass-news media can have a large influence on their audiences by choosing what stories to cover and how much time they spend on these stories. Covering a story for days, maybe even weeks in a row, will evidently raise public interest for the topic that is being covered. This process is being called agenda setting. The agenda setting theory was first introduced in 1972 by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in a research paper titled "The Agenda Setting Function of the Mass Media"^[11]. McCombs and Shaw looked at the correlation between the rate of which certain stories during the 1968 presidential election season were covered and the amount of people that deemed these issues important. They proved that in multiple instances there is a correlation between these two factors. When the media starts to cover a certain issue, the public starts to think it is important. Without the attention of the media they might not have deemed it important at all.

But why does the news media want to use agenda-setting? It could have to do with the political preference of the owners of a TV-station or newspaper. Nowadays people tend to think of FOX News as a news outlet that caters to people on the right side of the political spectrum, and MSNBC is seen as a station that caters to the left. FOX News might cover issues that interest conservatives because they know there is an audience for that. But it could also be the case that the journalists and owners of the station think it is important to cover certain issues that would otherwise not be touched upon. Politically biased news media is nothing new. During the time when newspapers were the big mass medium there also was a situation in which certain papers were owned by liberal businessmen and some by conservative. By choosing what to cover - and how often - they could get their own viewpoints out to a large group of people.

It is important to note that the news-media are not the only ones who practice and participate in agenda-setting. While news media make the final decision on what to cover this decision making process can be – and is – influenced by outsiders. Politicians and their

spin doctors for example try to influence what the media are covering. By getting the news media to cover issues that are favorable to them they are able to advance their own interests and careers.

Throughout history mass-news media have contributed to many important changes in American society. Issues that once were not being talked about and considered a taboo have become more public and open due to media attention. Examples of issues like this are homosexuality, women's rights, abortion, AIDS, and slavery. Over time they became more and more accepted. Due to sociological changes but perhaps also due to media attention.

Chromsky and Barclay (2006) examined the correlation between newspaper coverage of same sex marriages and public support for the same issue. Their research found that print media was more likely to shape public opinion rather than being shaped by it. What Chromsky and Barclay did was looking at newspaper reports on gay marriage in eight different states between 1990 and 2004. In states which newspapers reported positively about same sex marriages they found that public support also went up. Looking at editorials in *The Boston Globe*, *The New York Times*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle* there was a link between the amount of positive coverage and public support for same sex-marriages in Massachusetts, New York, and California. It should be noted that public support for same sex-marriages in these three states already was relatively high compared to several other US states such as Kansas.

An explanation for these differences between public opinion in various states can be found in a 1993 research by Erikson, Wright, and McIver.^[IV] They argue that public opinion for a large part is shaped by a state's demographics. States that have a higher percentage of college-degree graduates will have a different public opinion from states where the average education level is low. Chromsky and Barclay find proof for this notion in their research. "The more racially diverse a state and the greater the percentage of college-educated population in a state in any year, the higher is the expected support for lesbian and gay rights."^[V] Yet they argue that differences in public support cannot only be explained by just looking at demographics. When newspapers in the states they researched started posting editorials pro same sex marriage public support followed suit.

Why is it important to be aware mass media's ability to change public opinion? Often when public opinion changes this in its turn has an effect on policy makers. The issue of gay marriage is a perfect example of this. Since public opinion is shifting away from a completely negative stance policymakers feel more urged to legalize same sex marriages.

Some people might argue that mass media should not try to alter public opinion but simply report what is going on and newsworthy. But because mass media have such an enormous power and influence they often have to be the leader and the front runner. Simply reporting

on what is going on and not taking responsibility for their social role in society would negatively impact us. And being part of making our society a bit better is not only about what and how to report. Sometimes it is also about what not to report. Research (Pirkis and Blood 2001)^[VI] on the coverage of suicides finds that news coverage of suicides caused the amount of suicides to go up. This is one of the reasons why many news organizations refrain from reporting on suicides. This shows that the mass media itself is very much aware of its powers. It should be interesting to see what 'taboos' and difficult social issues the media will tackle in the future. ***

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Race, Gender, and the Media

Mini-Essay (University of Oklahoma)

Mini-Essay: Race, Gender, and the Media

Note: This essay was written as part of a take home exam for the course Race, Gender, and the Media at the University of Oklahoma. The assignment was:

Refer to the book, *Sexual Rhetoric*; Select one chapter and using the guidelines given about annotated summaries, write a 750-word analytical summary that summarizes the article's key points but ends with your evaluation of whether or not the same issues exist in today's media. Support your evaluation with specific examples from the text and from contemporary media portrayals.

Digital manipulation of photographs might be seen as a relatively new development. The truth however is that it has been around for more than a century. One of the first known examples of a tampered photograph is an 1860s portrait of former U.S. President Abraham Lincoln. The image shows Lincoln firmly standing in a room filled with an American flag and a desk with books and writing equipment on it. This portrait of Lincoln has become an almost iconic photograph. But Lincoln himself never actually stood in that room. The person that did was John Calhoun, a Southern politician. It is believed that Lincoln's head was mounted on the body of Calhoun because there were no actual photographs of Lincoln standing up in a 'stately' and 'heroic' manner. So they combined the body of Calhoun and a headshot of Lincoln to create the best of both worlds. In the decades that followed photographic manipulation has always been an issue. Altered images during the Stalin-era in the Soviet Union for example helped to manipulate public opinion. Nowadays the effects manipulated images have even influence public health.

Hitchon and Reaves raise some valid points in their article about the dangers of photographic manipulation of magazine shots and advertisements. Research has shown that young women are more likely to have a negative self-image because of the high and unrealistic standard that is being set by models in magazines. A negative self-image is not the only danger attached to the barrage of photoshopped photo's we encounter every day. Eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia are more common as well because of these images. Hitchon and Reaves are quite somber about a possible solution for this problem: "If we cannot persuade the fashion, advertising, and magazine industry to favor truth in images, then the only logical step is to educate the audience on technological deception."^[1]

Self-regulation of the magazine and fashion industry might indeed be difficult to achieve. So far only small steps have been taken in this direction. In The Netherlands several magazines in 2007 placed a logo near every photograph indicating whether it was photoshopped or not. None of the big glossy magazines such as *Playboy* and *FHM* participated in the onetime experiment though.

But perhaps the magazine industry will increase its efforts in self-regulation faced by increasing pressure from politicians and lawmakers. The debate on photoshopped images has gone beyond psychologists and dietitians. It has also reached politicians and lawmakers. In France members of parliament last year came up with a proposal for a law that would require photographs and advertisements which are digitally altered to be labeled as such. The reasons behind such a move are it would benefit public health and would protect consumers.^[I]

And some brands are now using the resistance towards photoshopped images in their advantage. *Dove*, a personal care brand, has launched an advertising campaign called Real Beauty in which it features 'real' women instead of skinny models. As part of the campaign Dove put up billboards and magazine ads featuring women "whose are outside the stereotypical norm of beauty".^[II] The company states it has started the campaign because "girls today are bombarded with unrealistic, unattainable messages and images of beauty that impact their self-esteem."

So far the Dove campaign seems to be one of the only ones that is taking a different stance when it comes to our vision of beauty. Hitchon and Reaves suggestion that we should educate kids on the dangers of photoshopped images is still a viable solution to make sure kids do not a shifted body image of their selves. Because what is really at the foundation of the problem outlined by Hitchon and Reaves is that we nowadays perceive thin as beautiful. If we learn to accept that thin is not the ideal image of beauty it might be possible that in some years from now the models on the front covers of the glossy magazines are a bit more 'fatter' than they are right now. ***

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Minority Authors: Bias & Prejudice

The House on Mango Street & Mexican Americans

Minority Authors: Bias & Prejudice

THE HOUSE ON MANGO STREET & MEXICAN AMERICANS

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Course: Topics in American Diversity
Professor: Derek Rubin

Date: 12 November 2009
Word Count: 928

Minority Authors: Bias & Prejudice

The House on Mango Street, written by Mexican-American author Sandra Cisneros, consists of a collection of vignettes which tell the story of Esperanza, a young Latina girl growing up in Chicago. The book has several recurring themes such as race, gender, the struggle for self-definition, and the power of language. Some of these themes are more obvious than others. For example, while race is definitely an issue in the book, at times it is not that obvious and visible. This can be explained by the fact that most of the story takes place in a Latino neighborhood in which contact between Latino's and non-Latino's is sparse. This made me think of David H. Hollinger's essay *An Attempt to Move Beyond Multiculturalism to a Postethnic America*, in which he states:

“... the significance of their whiteness diminished except in the contexts when black-skinned people were present.” – David H. Hollinger^[1]

Hollinger argues that the awareness white people have of their skin color deteriorates when they are surrounded by other white persons. Only when they are confronted with persons of another color, e.g. black, they are explicitly aware of their own skin color. To a certain degree the same is the case for Esperanza in *The House on Mango Street*. Esperanza lives in a low-income Latino neighborhood. Racial issues only become visible when she – or her neighbors – come into contact with people from outside the neighborhood. When playing on the streets in front of her home race is not a big issue for Esperanza because most (if not all) of her friends are Latino as well. It is only when they come into contact with non-Latino's from outside their neighborhood when race becomes an issue. For example: “Those who don't know any better come into our neighborhood scared. They think we're dangerous. They think we will attack them with shiny knives.”^[11] Would the entire story have taken place outside a Latino neighborhood, it is likely there would have been many more references to the issue of race. In Sherman Alexie's *Indian Killer* for example race is a big issue because the story deals with minorities in an area that is hostile towards them.

The Latino boys and girls in Cisneros' story (and Latino's in general) are more often being made aware of their skin color than their white peers. For centuries, white non-Hispanics have been the predominant ethnic group in American society. By being in the majority those white non-Hispanics have experienced many 'advantages' when it comes to racial issues. Stephanie M. Wildman makes this perfectly clear in her essay *Reflections on Whiteness: The Case of Latinos(as)*. Being white in the U.S. means that you are automatically seen as American and you will not be subjected to stereotypes and bias. Being Latino, African American, or Native American means you are automatically seen as the minority and thus you are being treated differently. There are some indications though that this situation could change in the years to come. Experts believe the upcoming 2010 Census will reveal that in some areas (e.g. California and Texas) white non-Hispanics will no longer be in the majority.^[111] Instead, the general population is made up by different ethnic groups in which no single one of them has an overwhelming majority. Of course this does not mean that the dominance of white culture will also end immediately, but it will become interesting to see how it develops in the near

future. Especially in large urban areas it is plausible that the privileges listed by Wildman will no longer be taken for granted. But for now, it still exists.

And this bias – or prejudice – that Wildman describes is not just something that only occurs in real life. It is also an issue and present when someone reads a book. While reading *The House on Mango Street* I realized that would I not have had some prior knowledge of the author and the book I would probably have experienced the story differently. Students who are reading this book as part of a class on minorities in the U.S. start reading the story from a different point of view than other readers. Not yet knowing the story takes place in a Latino-neighborhood I expected the chapter *Our Good Day* to progress quite differently than it in fact did. In the chapter Esperanza meets some of the other girls in her neighborhood, Lucy and Rachel. Characters with names that sound ‘white’, this to the contrary of Esperanza which clearly sounds like a Spanish/Mexican name. I initially thought Lucy and Rachel would reject Esperanza and would keep the bicycle to themselves.

There are certain clues that can give a person an indication of what to expect from a book without having actually started reading it. In the case of *The House on Mango Street* the preface written by Sandra Cisneros (25th Anniversary Edition) gives the reader a pretty good direction of what to expect from the actual story. Cisneros explains how the book came to be and gives the reader some insight in her own personal life. If someone were to start reading the book without even looking at its cover, not knowing the authors name, or reading the excerpts on the back of the book; he would probably experience the story differently than someone who does. Seeing a Latino name on the cover of a book gives people a certain kind of bias and prejudice towards the story. Just like it is in real life when people make an initial judgment based on someone’s skin color. ***

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American Cultural Influence

Take-Home Exam

American Cultural Influence

TAKE-HOME EXAM

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Course: American Cultural Influence

Instructors: Jaap Verheul & Rob Kroes

Date: November 12th 2009

- 1) Write an entry for an imaginary encyclopedia on the term “Cultural Imperialism.” Start with a short and comprehensive core definition. Then discuss various aspects and meanings of the term. It is essential that you refer to the relevant texts we have discussed (Pells, Kuisel, Gienow-Hecht etc.) to give the reader information about the different approaches to the term. End your entry with a brief overview of the limitations/shortcomings of the term.**

An Introduction to Cultural Imperialism

Cultural imperialism is a term often used to describe the process of one nation trying to enforce its own culture and way of life on other countries. During the last couple of decades cultural imperialism has become closely associated with the United States. American culture has spread all across the world and has managed to gain a strong foothold in areas outside the domestic U.S. In Europe for example American culture is visible almost everywhere. Streets are filled with American brand names, TV-channels broadcast American movies and TV-shows, and American authors have managed to become bestselling authors in Europe too.

Cultural imperialism however is much older than the eighty years or so in which the United States has been practicing it. For example, several hundred years ago European nations tried to enforce their own culture on their different colonies all across the world. By doing so they tried to create a more homogeneous society that was more receptive to their products and politics. The country that is the ‘imperialist’ (the one that forces their culture on others) is almost always an economical and militarily powerful nation. Countries that are being ‘imperialized’ (the ones on which a foreign culture is being imposed) are economically and militarily weaker than the imperialist country.

Nowadays cultural imperialism is mainly taking place by the constant spread of (American) movies, TV-shows, clothes, and food and beverage brands. Although these examples make it seem like cultural imperialism is being enforced by large corporations, it should be noted that specific government policy often goes hand in hand with commercial interest in order to successfully spread the American way of life. When France for example tried to limit the amount of Hollywood movies shown in its theaters the U.S. responded by using political pressure to overturn the import quotas. Would France not have done so they would have been cut back on Marshall Plan aid.

Cultural imperialism can be seen as the soft-power equivalent of regular hard-power imperialism. Instead of conquering a nation by military force, cultural imperialism ‘conquers’ a country by enforcing a new culture and new way of life. As Richard Nye points out in his essay *Soft Power*, hard military force is not always the best way to conquer a nation. Soft-power, the process of trying to get a country within your sphere of influence by cultural and commercial force is more successful in some cases.^[1]

So it is not very surprising that World War II proved to be a turning point in U.S. cultural diplomacy. Before the war not many U.S. officials and diplomats were bothered with

spreading America's culture abroad. But after the war this quickly changed and the United States started to expand their lifestyle to other countries.^[II] For a large part this was done to counter Soviet and communist influences from Eastern Europe.^[III] America started to believe that spreading their way of life would lead to a rise in democracy and, perhaps the most important factor, it would create economic circumstances favorable to American companies. If those companies succeeded in Europe (and elsewhere) the benefits for the domestic economy would be huge.

Various Aspects & Meanings

The term cultural imperialism has been the subject of a fierce academic debate. Scholars disagree about the specific meanings and interpretations of the term. Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht's essay *Shame on Us?* provides a great overview of the multiple definitions and discourses of the term. Gienow-Hecht quotes the definition that the 1977 edition of *Harper Dictionary of Modern Thought* gave to cultural imperialism as "the use of political and economic power to exalt and spread the values and habits of a foreign culture at the expense of a native culture."^[IV] This is an accurate definition but scholars have sometimes used alterations of this definition. After describing three successive stages which the debate on cultural imperialism went through Gienow-Hecht defines the specific meaning of the cultural imperialism by using John Tomlinson's four different discourses of the term. These are 1: Media imperialism, 2: Domination of one country by another. 3: Expansion and sometimes global dominance of U.S. consumer capitalism. 4: The critique of modernity.

Most of the texts for the course *American Cultural Influences* are written in the 1990s or 2000s. Gienow-Hecht points out that many scholars nowadays believe that local resistance "either modified or completely stymied imports as part of a global process."^[V] In texts written on the subject of cultural imperialism by Richard Pells, Victoria de Grazia, and Richard Kuisel one will immediately notice a lot of similarities. All of them seem to support the notion that the process of Americanization was not a 'one way street' but a more flexible relationship.

Richard Pells points out that it were mostly European leaders and intellectuals who resisted American cultural influence over Europe.^[VI] This despite the fact that the majority of the general population in Western-Europe did like American export products such as Hollywood movies and TV-shows. European intellectuals feared they would lose their own cultural traditions because of the ever growing American dominance. They tried to halt America's ever expanding cultural influence by for example imposing quotas on movies and music. Although some of these measures had effect (the limit on foreign songs on French radio stations for example) American influence on the Europe continent remained large.

Richard Kuisel also touches upon the critique of intellectuals in Europe who argued that their culture is being 'demolished' by Americanization. In his book *Seducing the French* Kuisel makes an argument to counter these critiques. Kuisel points out that Europeans did not

mindlessly copied American culture. Instead they took certain aspects of it and adapted those so they would fit into their existing culture.^[vii]

In an argument that is quite similar to Kuisel and Pells, Rob Kroes uses the metaphor of a 'black box.' He describes this process as follows: "If in this process there are obviously senders and receivers as well as modes and means of transmission, the black box is the semiotic dark room where messages undergo a process of translation [...] when they pass through the black box of semantic transformer, they do come out in different configurations."^[viii] Again, an argument for seeing the relationship between America and the rest of the world as a back and forth road instead of an one way street.

Criticism

Blurred nation-state boundaries are not necessarily a bad thing. In Europe for example mass culture and globalization (or Europeanization so to speak) has caused European Union nations to become more similar and closer to each other. While some nationalists might argue this is a bad development because it destroys national identities, it has also brought us many benefits. Having a common European identity allows our businesses to more easily operate outside our national borders, and we feel more connected to the people in our neighboring countries. Having a shared culture and being economically dependent on each other reduces the risk of nations going to war with each other.

Of course this process of globalization takes place at a larger scale outside the European Union as well. By describing this trend as cultural imperialism it gets earmarked as something bad and evil. The word imperialism has a negative feeling attached to it. Critics such as Richard Kuisel for example have pointed out that cultural imperialism is often a two sided exchange. Thus the word 'imperialism' is not an accurate word to describe the process that is taking place and therefore the term has been questioned in recent years.

"In line with the poststructuralist approach scholars from a variety of disciplines have suggested that the term "cultural imperialism" should be replaced with one that avoids the simplistic active-passive dominator-victim dualism." Gienow-Hecht writes.^[ix] Suggestions for other terms are "artistic sharing," "transculturation," and "cultural transmission." Especially the term "cultural transmission" is gaining in popularity nowadays. Adapting this term would seem fairly logical considering the current consensus amongst scholars that Americanization is in fact a process that works both ways.

2) The concepts of consumption, modernization and Americanization are closely linked, yet different in scope and meaning. Using De Grazia and other authors such as Kuisel, Pells and Roholl, argue to which extent the advent of modernization and consumerism in Europe can be seen as a form of Americanization. What are the important differences?

Since the end of World War II the earth has more and more become a so called 'global village.' Technological advancement such as the invention of jet-airlines, television sets, satellites, and the internet have brought people from all over the world closer together. Many of these technological advancements have originated in the U.S. When the Second World War was over Europe lay in ruins and America had an economy that started to flourish. Because America's domestic economy was mostly untouched by the war it had a huge strategic benefit over other countries, for example in Europe.

The 20th century is being described by Victoria de Grazia in her book *Irresistible Empire* as the so called Market Empire.^[x] An era in which the U.S. dominated the world and shaped the lives of many citizens far outside its own domestic borders. American corporations and policymakers saw the benefits of bringing the American way of life to other countries across the globe. The political advantage was if foreign countries had a society similar to the U.S. they would become more willingly to accept the viewpoints of the America. And for businesses the advantage was that a society equal to the one at home would make it easier to conquer new markets. Political and economical interests often went hand in hand in the decades after the Second World War.

The spread of American culture towards (Western)-Europe was met with some fierce resistance mainly by upper class intellectuals in countries such as France and Italy. People feared that American mass culture would destroy their existing forms of high-culture. Yet the majority of the population in Europe did quite willingly accept most of the American cultural influences.

Until the 1920s the term Americanization was mainly used in the U.S. to describe the assimilation of foreign immigrants.^[xi] In the 1920s Europeans started to use the term to describe the process of ever increasing American cultural domination. Since then the term has been used to describe this process. In the 1960s for example it was applied to the practice of American media-companies targeting audiences in Third World countries.^[xii]

In more recent years scholars have begun questioning the term Americanization. Gienow-Hecht describes this group the "post-cultural imperialists."^[xiii] While it was quite common to view cultural imperialism as Americanization in the 1960s and 1970s this changed in the 1990s. John Tomlinson in 1991 argued that cultural imperialism "[.] is simply the spread of modernity, a process of cultural loss and not of cultural expansion. There had never been a group of conspirators who attempted to spread any particular culture. Instead, global technological and economic progress (and integration) lessened the importance of national culture. It is therefore misleading to place the blame for a worldwide development on any one culture."^[xiv]

Many of the texts we read for this course in large part reflect the more global discourse of the term Americanization. In *Not Like Us* Richard Pells points out that European citizens did not relentlessly accept every aspect of American culture the U.S. was trying to force on them. “This account of how mass culture functions in people’s lives is much too simplistic. Audiences are not merely containers into which the media pours its instructions and images.”^[xvi] Instead what Europeans did, according to Pells, is adapting parts of the American culture and made it their own. “What emerged was a hybrid culture, part American and part European. Thus, American products and attitudes were not directly imposed upon Europe. The influence of America’s exports depended instead on how easily they could be integrated with the social and cultural folkways that existed in each of the countries on the other side of the ocean.”^[xvii] In *Seducing the French* Richard Kuisel shares a similar point of view. He points out that it are mainly the cultural elitist who oppose the Americanization of Europe and that despite the many cultural influences France has managed to keep its own identity. “Americanization has transformed France – has made it more like America – without a proportionate loss of identity.”^[xviii] What Kuisel basically states here is that some forms of American cultural influence are not necessarily Americanization but they can be part of a larger process of modernization. Because the U.S. is one of the front-runners in this modernization process it is often confused with Americanization. But not every aspect of modernization is automatically Americanization. Gienow-Hecht brings up the example of post war Germany in which the British and French “[M]ade at least as much of an effort to display their culture as their American counterparts.”^[xviii] But since France and Britain were not as powerful as the U.S. these efforts attracted much less attention.

Lately we have seen many European brands (e.g.: fashion, furniture) expand beyond their home country. Although those companies might be based on an American style of doing business they are certainly unique to their own cultural heritage. They are as much part of modernization and the consumption society but they are not part of Americanization.

Marja Roholl offers a striking conclusion in her essay *Uncle Sam: An example for All?* She writes: “America continued to be a most attractive country, but lost its monopoly position. The Netherlands gradually became more and more a part of the world as opposed to being simply a partner in an unequal partnership.”^[xix] The example she gives of the Netherlands is true for almost every single other country. Europe has defiantly become partly Americanized, but at the same time European nations also have influenced the American society. So it seems fair to conclude that as well as Americanization the world has gone through a process of globalization. And Americanization played a large part in this process but the two are vastly different from each other.

3) Is knowledge of American cultural influences and Americanization really essential for our understanding of contemporary European society? Discuss both the actual existing forms of influence/presence and the perceptions/opinions of Europeans (including anti-Americanism). You can use Kuisel as starting point but should also discuss other perspectives. Make sure to discuss the relation between the cultural domain and other spheres of influence (economical, political, military etc.).

Since American cultural influence is still very visible in Europe I would argue that in order to fully understand our current European society it is indeed absolutely essential to have a certain knowledge of the effects of Americanization. The U.S. has shaped many aspects of our current society. A walk down the street or a glimpse at our television-sets is sufficient to notice this.

The relationship between Europe and the United States is a complex one that goes back many centuries. Perhaps even to the day on which Christopher Columbus set foot on the American continent. Although one could argue that in these days the interaction between the two continents was still fairly limited on a day to day basis because of slow means of transportation and communication.

Europe's and America's relationship went through many different phases. At certain times it was stronger than at others. In between the First and Second World War for example the U.S. had a policy of not getting actively involved in foreign issues. However, after World War II all of this changed. The U.S. did not return to its former policy of isolationism but became the most important player on the field of world affairs. A title that it still holds today.

Large scale American influence in Europe started right after World War II with the erection of the Marshall Plan in 1948. It was in America's own interest that Western-Europe would be reconstructed since it did not want Western-European countries to turn to the Soviet Union instead. But the U.S. made it perfectly clear to Europe that they were not just giving them a 'carte blanche.' America wanted to see something in return for all the money they invested in Western-Europe. The U.S. benefited from the Marshall Plan because it enabled American companies to do business in Western-Europe. At times when national European governments started to protest the rising influence of American businesses the U.S. could use the Marshall Plan as a strong bargaining chip.

Since World War II American cultural presence in Europe has only expanded. The most obvious signs are visible in European cities where Coca-Cola, Marlboro cigarettes, Levi's jeans, and McDonalds restaurants are a common sight. Signs of American cultural influence are also visible on European TV-channels. American shows have managed to become a great export product of American culture across the Atlantic.

Some countries were more open to American cultural influences than others. France is a notorious example of a country which has often resisted Americanization. Richard Kuisel's book *Seducing the French* is filled with many great examples of American products and

institutions like the NATO and Coca-Cola to which the French originally opposed themselves. But despite initial resistance in many instances they eventually did give in to the process of Americanization. Coca-Cola entered the French market, import restrictions on American movies failed, and France also fully rejoined the NATO. In order to understand why the French society initially resisted these products but later relentlessly accepted them it is necessary to have a certain knowledge of American cultural influences.

The invasion of American products such as Coca-Cola and Hollywood movies has damaged certain countries national pride. Instead of consuming local products with a great heritage consumers suddenly picked American product that were seen as imperialist and damaging to the existing culture. This process of Anti-Americanization was often used by Europeans to define their own culture. Scholars have argued that Europeans needed a foreign culture to define their own culture. By arguing that American culture was low culture made only for the masses Europeans indirectly stated that their own culture was of much higher quality. Thus they used Anti-Americanism as a method to define themselves.

Knowledge of Americanization is also necessary to fully understand the youth culture in many European countries. American products were often used by teenagers and other youngsters to rebel against the older generation. Youngsters associated themselves with American products because this were exactly the products their parents disapproved and saw as imperialist.

By now it has become clear that European nations have given their own twist to certain aspects of Americanization. As explained in the answers on the previous two essay questions almost every author seems to agree on this. One could see these adapted forms of American culture as new European forms but I feel it is important we also take into account why certain aspects have changed. Exploring why this has happened can tell us a lot about certain societies. And this can only be done with some basic knowledge of Americanization and American cultural influence. ***

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A Tale of Two Bridges

The Golden Gate's Shadow Over the San Francisco – Oakland Bay Bridge

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The GOLDEN GATE'S Shadow Over the SAN FRANCISCO – OAKLAND BAY BRIDGE

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A Tale of Two Bridges

“If bridges had feelings, the San Francisco – Oakland Bay Bridge would be experiencing one of the biggest, and most justified, inferiority complexes in history.”^[I]

New York has its Empire State Building, Washington D.C. has the White House, Los Angeles has the famous Hollywood sign, and San Francisco, San Francisco has the Golden Gate Bridge. All of these structures, icons on their own, have become to symbolize the city they are part of. When seeing images of the Golden Gate people immediately think of San Francisco, and vice versa. But San Francisco has another bridge. A bridge that is actually four times as long, carries twice the amount of traffic, and opened to the public several months before the Golden Gate.^[II] That other bridge is the San Francisco – Oakland Bay Bridge. Or as locals simply call it, the Bay Bridge. It is the Golden Gate however that has managed to become an American icon. The Bay Bridge meanwhile has been notorious for its rush hour traffic jams.

San Francisco, located on a narrow peninsula, is surrounded by the Pacific Ocean on the West, the Golden Gate Strait on the North and the San Francisco Bay on the East. The city has long relied on ferry services to connect with neighboring communities. At times which road and railroad connections were sparse the city was in a unique position to handle the large amount of ships and boats that accessed the San Francisco Bay. But once it became clear that automobiles and trains were the future of transportation San Francisco’s geographical location began to play in its disadvantage. It was the city of Oakland, located on the Eastern side of the Bay, that received all the benefits of the newly constructed Transcontinental Railroad. As early as the 1870s plans for a bridge across the San Francisco Bay were raised.^[III] Plans for a bridge across the narrow Golden Gate Strait came to fruition at this period in time.

It wasn’t until the 1930s though before both plans came to realization. Construction on both the Golden Gate and Bay Bridge started in 1933. Work on the two bridges was under way simultaneously for almost four years. At the time it was the Bay Bridge that was considered the biggest engineering challenge.^[IV] Consisting of two separate spans linked together in the middle by Yerba Buena Island it was the Western span that was the most iconic. In the mid-1950s members of the American Society of Civil Engineers picked the Bay Bridge as one of seven modern civil-engineering wonders of the United States. However, when a similar poll was conducted in 1994 it was the Golden Gate instead of the Bay Bridge that made the list.^[V]

Why exactly the Golden Gate has taken the spotlight over its bigger sibling the Bay Bridge is a complex story. In the 1920s San Francisco merchants started an agency called Californians, Inc. to promote Northern California as a tourist destination. Once the construction of the bridges started in 1933 they narrowed their focus to solely promote the city of San Francisco.^[VI] Their idea that the bridges would create a more attractive city for commerce and tourism proved to be right. During the construction of the Golden Gate and

Bay Bridge the city saw a huge increase in tourism. The influence of local merchants did not stop at promoting and advertising the two bridges. They even were involved in the actual planning and design. Bay Bridge engineers for example wanted to paint the bridge black. But the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce suggested silver, a visually more appealing color. That same Chamber of Commerce even rejected one of the earliest design for the Golden Gate because they found it “aesthetically unappealing.”^[VII]

Aesthetics probably played a large role in the popularity of the Golden Gate. The silver and gray Bay Bridge connects San Francisco with the industrial waterfront of Oakland. A city often described as the less glamorous blue collar neighbor of San Francisco. The Golden Gate Bridge, painted in vividly red/orange, connects a park at the tip of San Francisco with the Marine Headlands. Combined with the iconic San Francisco fog that often surrounds the Golden Gate it just makes a better postcard. Both bridges were great engineering achievements but the Golden Gate was better marketable.

The Bay Bridge’s biggest moment of fame was ironically also one of its darkest moments. During the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake that caused massive devastation in the Bay Area one of the Bay Bridge’s upper deck sections collapsed on the deck below. Images of the damaged bridge that indirectly killed one person went across the world.

As strange as it may sound this earthquake could also signal the revival of the Bay Bridge as an American icon. Currently the Eastern span of the bridge is being replaced with a more modern and earthquake resistant version. Initial designs for this span failed to gain broad public support. In similar fashion to the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce in the 1920s that wanted an visually appealing Golden Gate Bridge the public pressed for a so called signature span.^[VIII] A bridge that is not only practical but also a landmark. After much debate it was decided that the new Eastern span of the Bay Bridge in fact would get a signature span.

Already businesses in Oakland have begun using artist renditions of the new bridge as a promotional tool. And Oakland’s basketball team is considering a new uniform that has the new Eastern span of the Bay Bridge pictured on it. The *San Francisco Chronicle* described the bridge’s landmark status as “burgeoning.”^[IX] It is highly unlikely that the Bay Bridge will ever take away the spotlight from the Golden Gate. But perhaps it could become an icon on its own. Being a symbol for the city of Oakland as is the Golden Gate to city of San Francisco. The case study of the Golden Gate and the Bay Bridge is a perfect example that Americans not only want a bridge that is useful, but also one that is visually appealing and can serve as an icon. Something Alan Trachtenberg already noticed when writing about the symbolism of the Brooklyn Bridge. ***

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Advanced Multimedia Journalism

Selection of audiovisual productions produced
at the University of Oklahoma

Advanced Multimedia Journalism

The class “Advanced Multimedia Journalism” at the *University of Oklahoma* focused on various ways of online storytelling. In addition to writing articles and shooting video-reports, graduate students like myself were tasked with overseeing the journalistic output of undergraduate students.

This course at the *Gaylord College of Journalism* was taught by Mike Boettcher and John Schmeltzer. Schmeltzer worked as a print journalist for the *Chicago Tribune*. Boettcher has decades of experience as a war correspondent for *CNN*, *NBC News*, and *ABC News*. He received four Emmys and a Peabody Award. It was a gift to work with these two experienced journalists.

To showcase some of the work done for this course I have included two video-reports:

* WPA Exhibit Tour: <https://youtu.be/WadhS8KAf0U>

* Paddlefishing (in collaboration with Graham Lee Brewer): <https://youtu.be/z2YTvONnpKg>