

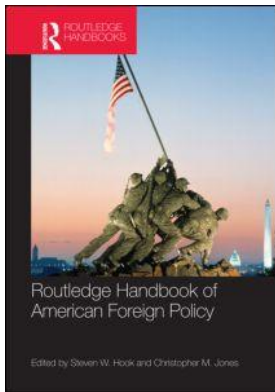
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News Media

Douglas A. Van Belle

In 1993, George F. Kennan (1993) coined the term “CNN effect” in an article arguing that the global news media had become the driving force behind U.S. foreign policy. This was a key turning point in the study of the role of the news media in U.S. foreign policy. Kennan’s cautionary tale of the horrors of a world where global powers were tossed about by the vicissitudes of the media, most notably its obsession with dramatic images, acted as something of a catalyst. In subsequent years, there has been a great deal of research into the role of the news media in U.S. foreign policy and today it is an all but necessary part of any summary of contemporary issues and research. In light of this sudden rise in the salience of the news media as a significant factor, scholars and students alike can probably be forgiven for approaching the media as if it were a new influence upon U.S. foreign policy. However, no matter how obvious those things might appear to be, what has become the common wisdom offers a very poor representation of the reality of news media and American foreign policy.

Any serious examination of the subject has to conclude that the influence of the media has been longstanding. In fact, with the role that the pamphleteers played in the revolutionary war, it is not that difficult to argue that the media’s influence on the foreign relations of the United States actually predated the formal establishment of the government itself. At the very least, any argument that the 1992 intervention in Somalia marked the point where news media suddenly became capable of driving a reluctant president to become involved in a foreign conflict must explain why the 1898 Spanish American War does not count as the first example. And if the influence of the news media did not become significant until the 1990s, how can it be that the televised images of the Vietnam War are so often cited as a critical element that eventually prompted withdrawal from the country?

The real key to understanding the role of the press in American foreign policy is to recognize the centrality of the press in the very structure of the U.S. government. Cook (1998) provides what is perhaps the best examination of the co-evolution of the U.S. governmental structures and the free press, but it is hard to miss the fact that the constitutional debates between the Federalists and Anti-federalists over the First Amendment centered on whether the freedom of the press needed to be codified as a right or whether it was such an integral part of the government structure proposed that there was no need to explicitly protect it. Well before Cable News Network (CNN) was even imagined, the U.S. press was commonly referred to as the fourth branch of government (Cater 1959). Clearly, if the news media are so closely connected with the politics and governing of the United States, they must also be significant

influences upon foreign policy even if they were excluded from most discussions or analyses prior to the 1990s.

One reason for the estrangement of the media prior to the most recent debates is the way that the analytical perspectives used to examine the early instances of the media's influence framed potential exemplar events. Even though the pamphleteers of the American Revolution offer what is probably the first clear example of just how powerful the press can be in the instigation and conduct of a war, they are seldom examined in terms of the role they played in the war. They are common textbook fodder (e.g., Barbour and Wright 2009), but in those texts the pamphleteers are presented in terms of catalyzing the decision to revolt or the later nation-building role of the press. The pamphleteers are not thought of in terms of foreign policy and the media despite the fact that many, if not most of the pamphlets of the period were produced after the Declaration of Independence and their content was focused on mobilizing the public support and the resources needed to sustain the war effort.

Perhaps a more notable and more significant reason for not thinking about the pamphleteers as the first example of the role that mass media can play in war and foreign policy is that few of the external actions of the United States prior to World War II are thought of in terms of foreign policy. In fact, many of the more popular textbooks on U.S. foreign policy ignore everything prior to World War II (e.g., Hook and Spanier 2010). This perspective can generally be attributed to the U.S. ideological commitment to isolationism, specifically a desire to avoid entanglement in the Eurocentric global politics of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. But for the study of media and U.S. foreign policy, it is still problematic.

U.S. isolationism may have been far more of an ideological commitment to avoiding European alliances than anything that could be called true isolationism. After all, the United States was involved in several wars; it expanded across the continent; it built an empire out into the Pacific and Caribbean; it purchased the Louisiana territories and Alaska; and it quite nearly fought a war with Britain over a pig that got loose in a San Juan Island garden.¹

However, given the ideological commitment to isolationism, and perhaps because the international politics of that period were so intently focused on the European alliances and alliance dynamics that the United States shunned, the U.S. actions beyond its borders and its engagement with the rest of the world during this period are rarely considered elements of U.S. foreign policy. Thus, the Spanish American War of 1898, even though the popular argument is that the United States was all but forced into action by William Randolph Hearst's sensationalist coverage of the destruction of the *USS Maine*, is generally not considered in terms of media and U.S. foreign policy. If it had been, the entire history of U.S. foreign policy might have been centered on a discussion of the media. Instead, the analyses and debate remained focused on U.S. ideological commitment to isolationism, regardless of the evidence that contravened the rhetoric.

Similar to the Spanish American War, a variety of other events prior to the coining of the term, "CNN effect," such as the Vietnam War, the Iranian hostage crisis, and the Sahal drought of the 1980s are often overlooked as examples of the role of news media in U.S. foreign policy. As a result, the vast majority of policy analyses focus on recent cases, creating something of an ahistorical perspective that rarely considers events prior to the end of the Cold War.

Media and the Almond-Lippman Consensus

Much of the research on the role of the media focuses on the role that the news media does or might play in driving public opinion or connecting public opinion to foreign policy processes or decision making. The tight conceptual linkage of media and public opinion might also

be cited as a reason for the limited study of the media prior to the 1990s. With arguments that would later be reiterated by Kennan (1993), Walter Lippman—a journalist—painted an extremely pessimistic if not grim assessment of media coverage of international politics and the way it drove public opinion, particularly in regard to world affairs (Lippman and Merz 1920). As noted in the volume's chapter on public opinion, this perspective was combined with a classic analysis of public opinion and U.S. foreign policy (Almond 1950) to establish what became known as the Almond-Lippman consensus. Public opinion, which was so closely associated with media coverage that it was usually thought of as one and the same, was considered to be so volatile,² irrational, and uninformed that it was a potentially dire threat to effective foreign policy decision making. This consensus was so compelling that it was not until the Vietnam War began to provoke significant protests that academics returned to the study of public opinion. Beginning with the war itself (e.g., Verba et al. 1967) and later spreading to a more general interest in opinion on foreign policy (e.g., Mueller 1973) the 1970s and 1980s witnessed a growing array of challenges to the Almond-Lippman consensus. These challenges are well summarized by Holsti (1992). However, the key point for this discussion is that as the consensus on public opinion began to fracture, intellectual space was created for the examination, or reconsideration of the role of the news media.

Given the assumption of an intimate, if not inseparable connection between media and public opinion, it should not be surprising that the Vietnam War was also the catalyst for a reconsideration of the role of the news media. Hallin's *The Uncensored War* (1986) is particularly informative in regards to not just the topic of analysis, but also the coincident discussion of the political and social context surrounding the role of journalists and the media in the breakdown of the Almond-Lippman consensus. Depicted as a struggle between conservative political elites who claimed to be resisting the irrational forces generated by the whims of news coverage and news professionals who believed they were liberal democratic crusaders who were revealing truths that those in power would hide to preserve their positions, Hallin's analysis provides a good representation of how the Vietnam experience would frame subsequent political and academic debates on the role of the media in U.S. foreign policy.

Studies of the media in U.S. foreign policy can be divided along similar lines. The ongoing concerns over the how the media influences decision makers and how, through that influence it could be a threat to quality foreign policy decision making reflects the concerns of the conservative political perspective identified by Hallin. After the Vietnam War, this concern over the media's impact on the quality of policy was reinforced by the experience with the Iranian Hostage Crisis (e.g., Larson 1986) where it was commonly argued that President Jimmy Carter was himself held hostage by the relentless television coverage of the crisis. It is from this perspective that much of the concern that media is a mindless driver of foreign policy action arises (e.g., Cutler 1984; Hallin 1986).

For the academic studies that built upon liberal perspective, Bennett's *News: The Politics of Illusion* (1983), even though it is not specifically focused on foreign policy, might best serve as early indicator of where this avenue of study would focus. The use or manipulation of the media by elite foreign policy actors and the related questions regarding the news media's ability to function in its Jeffersonian role as the fourth branch of government are central to a great number of these studies. In the intertwined avenues of research that follow from this and similar concerns, a few normative generalities are worth noting. First, there tends to be a presumption that the Jeffersonian, watchdog, fourth branch of government role of the news media is overwhelmingly important and other potentially significant political and social roles of the news media, such as serving as an elite-to-public conduit of communication, are excluded or criticized. Second, with a slight few exceptions, there is a presumption that news media should, first and foremost, play an educational role in society. Anything that impairs or limits the media's ability educate a democratic public, such as political, economic

or professional practices, structures or imperatives that drive the news media to entertain or otherwise impinge upon the media's ability to fully inform the public, is problematic. Alternative conceptualizations of the political and social role of the news media, such as serving an alerting and filtering function for its audiences (Zaller 2003) are generally excluded or considered to be radical.

For both the conservative and liberal conceptual perspectives, a close if not inseparable connection between news media and public opinion is still predominant. The recent work of Baum (2002, 2004) provides a clear example of the emphasis on interconnections, with Baum and Potter (2008) offering both a thorough review and attempt to frame a theoretical synthesis of the wide variety of conceptual arguments and empirical studies.

The CNN Effect

The CNN effect represents what is clearly the ultimate articulation of the idea that news media is a driver of foreign policy. As noted earlier, the term was coined by Kennan (1993) who, it is safe to say, represents both a political and conceptually conservative perspective on the topic. Not only was Kennan so closely associated with the Cold War policy of containment that he is often referred to as the intellectual father of the strategy, at the time that the Almond-Lippman consensus was being forged he was also the author of an analysis of U.S. diplomacy which included an extremely negative assessment of the role public opinion in U.S. foreign policy (Kennan 1951). Thus, the angst Kennan expressed in 1993 over the idea that the media drives foreign policy should not be a surprise.

The term "CNN effect" is used in contexts ranging from a loose if not casual reference to any instance where dramatic coverage of international events appears to influence foreign policy, to a narrow focus on Western involvement in complex humanitarian emergencies.³ What is consistent in all of these uses is the idea that the technological advances that enabled swift, if not instantaneous news media coverage of events anywhere on the globe altered the foreign policy environment in a way that made the global news media a significant, if not predominant influence.

The term and the idea it represents arose in response to the complex humanitarian emergencies of the early 1990s, exemplified by Somalia, where intense political and military conflicts were intertwined with famine, genocide or other catastrophic human tragedies. In the Somalia case, it seemed obvious that the swift if not instantaneous coverage of human suffering created a domestic demand for intervention that drove the United States and Western Europe to become involved. The result was an impression that the news media had risen in influence to the point where foreign policy was driven by the relentless coverage and saturation of images from a global, twenty-four-hour news cycle.

Gilboa (2005) provides a thorough review of the first decade of the CNN effect, but in considering Gilboa's effort at theoretical synthesis, it is important to note that the persuasiveness of Kennan's initial argument created an unusual circumstance for the academic research into the CNN effect. Unlike realism, world systems theory or any other theory about the nature of global politics and foreign policy, from the moment the CNN-effect was proposed it was immediately presumed that it represented a substantial phenomenon and it was believed that the rise of the news media's influence had suddenly altered the very nature of foreign policy (e.g., Mathews, 1994). From that starting point, instead of beginning with an idea and slowly building the evidence needed to convince skeptics and counter the arguments of critics, scholars were essentially confronted with a *fait accompli* and the result was a debate that skipped right past any concerted effort to explore the proposed relationship rigorously. For many observers, it was clear that the United States had entered into a period of media-driven foreign policy.

Despite this explosive entry into the debate over U.S. foreign policy, the likelihood that the CNN effect was overstated was recognized quickly. Even in the most prominent cases that might be offered as examples, the claim that leaders had lost control of policy to the whims of media coverage was immediately shown to be dubious (Livingston and Eachus 1995; Natsios 1996; Shattuck 1996; Strobel 1996). In the case of Somalia, Livingston and Eachus (1995) provide substantial evidence that most U.S. policy actions were not only driven by diplomatic, strategic, and bureaucratic considerations, they also preceded coverage, with most of the coverage coming in response to U.S. actions. This argument is further supported by recent interviews with relevant officials who, far from being driven by media coverage, had spent several months trying to generate public support for intervention by feeding dramatic images and related stories to the news media (Patman 2010).

More generally, even when the narrowest definition of the CNN effect is employed, the degree to which news coverage actually drove Western states to intervene in complex humanitarian emergencies is unclear, and probably overstated (Jakobsen 1996, 2000; Natsios 1996; Strobel 1997). Jakobsen (1996) in particular emphasized this point, concluding that the media's impact was largely limited to the timing of involvement or withdrawal and the nature of the intervention strategy. Given the influence of live global coverage, the United States and other Western powers engaged these combined disasters and conflicts when they were dramatic rather than at more quiescent times when resources could be more effectively applied to resolving the underlying causes of conflict. The way these conflicts were engaged, with air power and casualty-minimizing policies, was also shaped by the expected domestic political impact of coverage.

The most recent analyses of the CNN effect are squarely focused on how it is either limited or illusory. Robinson (2001, 2002, 2005) provides extensive critical and case analyses to challenge the claims of news media's influence, arguing that it shapes and limits policy choices far more than it drives foreign policy. Using contrasting methods that offer a different conceptualization but offer the same claim that the CNN effect was illusory, Van Belle (2009) empirically examines historical trends. The evidence provided suggests that the changes in the international system at the beginning of the 1990s actually caused a disruption in the news media's longstanding, significant and consistent influence on American foreign policy. For Van Belle, the illusion of a CNN effect is created by mistaking extremely rare, outlying cases like Somalia and Bosnia as the norm, thus creating a confirmation bias that led analysts to miss the significance of cases where news media would have historically had an influence upon policy, but in the 1990s did not. Similar perspectives are apparent in the articles scheduled for inclusion in a 2011 special issue of *Media, War and Conflict* that will focus on the CNN effect.

Bureaucratic Responsiveness to the Media

Integral to the idea of the CNN effect and most of the precedent or parallel avenues of research into the influence news coverage exerts over policy is the presumption of an underlying democratic or electoral mechanism connecting news media, public opinion, and the decisions of foreign policy actors. This link would appear to limit the influence of the news media to elected officials. A complementary model of media influence uses an extension of agency theory to argue that media will also drive bureaucratic aspects of democratic foreign policy. The result is an expectation that foreign policy bureaucracies will try to avoid political punishments by staying in step with public demands for their actions or services. Taking their cues from elected officials, the bureaucrats use domestic news media salience as an indicator of public demand and respond to it accordingly. The effect is particularly clear in the bureaucratically-

dominated foreign aid decisions (Van Belle and Hook 2000, Van Belle, Rioux, and Potter 2004; Drury, Olson, and Van Belle 2005; Van Belle 2009).

Agenda Setting

Many of the studies of the role of the news media in American foreign policy, including the analyses of the CNN effect, could be reconceptualized as questions of agenda setting. Agenda setting is often depicted in terms of the original thesis (McCombs and Shaw 1972), where the news media does not change opinions, but instead demand for action by influencing what people think about (e.g., Iyengar and Kinder 1987). The agenda setting research program is best described as an examination of the reciprocal influences of three distinct but interrelated agendas: the public's agenda, the media's agenda, and the policy agenda (Manheim 1986).

The relationships among these three agendas can be roughly depicted as they are presented in Figure 20.1, and the discussion of how each agenda influences the others could be used as a scheme for organizing all of the discussion of the domestic side of news media's role in American foreign policy. The classic idea of agenda setting focuses on the influence flowing from the media to the public's agenda, with levels of coverage correlating with the levels of importance the public places upon an issue or topic. There is relatively substantial evidence on this point. For a thorough review of the key studies defining the agenda setting literature, see Rogers and Dearing (1988) and Kosicki (1993). However, it should be noted that this influence is unlikely to be unidirectional. While often underappreciated in both the liberal and conservative approach to media's role in American foreign policy, the business imperatives of the independent news media, the need to capture audiences that can be sold to advertisers (Underwood 1993), creates the expectation of some degree of reciprocity in the media-public

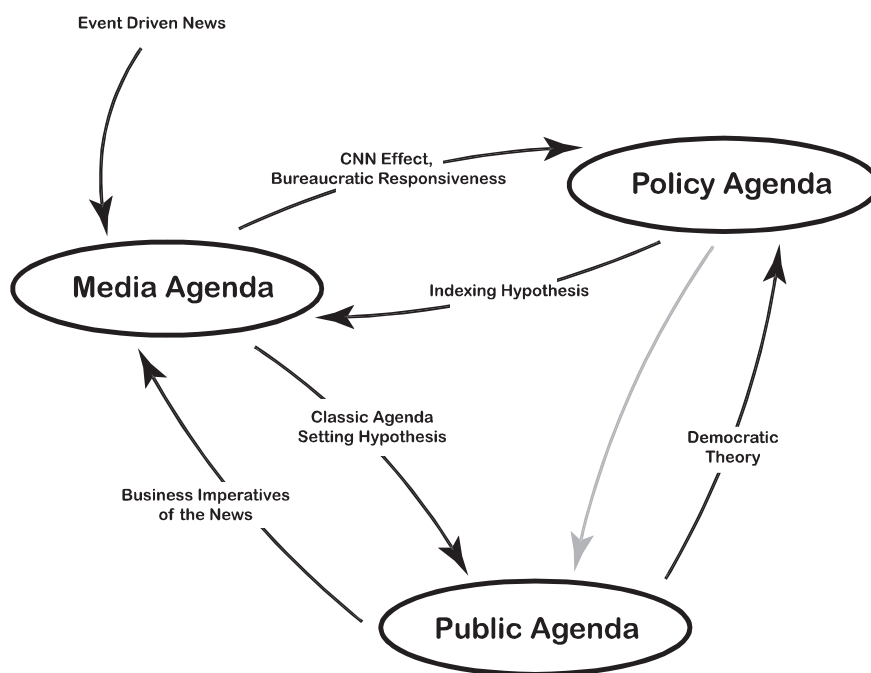


Figure 20.1 Three Agendas

agenda. The news media need to pay attention to the public's interests in order to present them with the coverage that they will choose to consume. This is a common point of focus in studies on the professional practice of journalism such as studies of newsworthiness (Schram 1949; Ahern 1984).

The conservative perspective on media and U.S. foreign policy focuses on the way that media coverage influences the policy agenda, both directly and indirectly. Interestingly, the influence of the media on the public's agenda is both central to these arguments, and also irrelevant. The threat of losing office through the expression of public discontent, the connection labeled democratic theory, motivates policy makers to ascertain and adapt to the public's agenda. Policy makers adjust the foreign policy agenda using input from the news media because they believe that the content of the news media either influences or reflects the public's agenda and thus the media is used as an indicator. However, the reality of the relationship between the news media and the public's agenda is also irrelevant. The policy maker's *belief* that there is a relationship between the media and the public agenda will shape the policy agenda regardless of whether or not there actually is a connection. Thus, questions regarding the actual influence of the media on public opinion are largely irrelevant to the analysis of the CNN effect and other aspects of foreign policy as long as the policy makers believe that the media agenda and public agenda are connected.

Placing this issue back into the context of the agenda setting literature, it could be argued that the news media sets the agenda directly for the decision makers through labeled as a third-person effect. Even if the decision makers' opinions are not swayed by coverage, they use the salience in the news media as an indicator of what the public or other officials are thinking about and consider important (Protest et al. 1991; Mutz and Soss 1997).

Mass media coverage of political issues may serve as a surrogate for more direct expressions or solicitations of public opinion. In this way, media attentiveness to policy issues may provide mass publics with an accessible, though fallible, means of monitoring their political environment, and it may aid elites in interpreting and anticipating public reactions. (Protest et al. 1991: 432)

This mechanism for direct influence is similar to the argument made in the bureaucratic responsiveness studies, where media serve as an indicator of actual or potential public interest and shapes what foreign policy officials, both elected and bureaucratic, believe the public will demand. The connection between the media and the public agenda, and through that the foreign policy agenda, is also central to the liberal perspective, but the key concern for the liberal perspective is not the influence on policy, but the influences on coverage that shape the public debates. Reflecting what Hallin (1986) noted about Vietnam, of particular concern from the liberal perspective are the ways in which elites can or do define the media agenda as a way of controlling or limiting the broader public debate.

Indexing

A wide variety of forces are argued to influence the agenda and content of the news media but most of the work relevant to foreign policy focuses on the substantial role of government officials in shaping or setting the media and public agenda. For a variety of reasons, from the logistics of coverage to journalistic presumptions of elite newsworthiness, government officials and leaders are prominent sources of news media coverage and they clearly exert substantial influence over the content of the news related to foreign policy. At the forefront of many recent debates on the elite influence of coverage of foreign policy debates is Bennett's indexing hypothesis (1990). Bennett argues that the debates within official policy circles define

the breadth of the debate that will be covered by the media. Media professionals only seek voices outside of the official policy debate when there is significant conflict within official policy circles. When there is a consensus or a lack of vocal opposition in the official policy debate, media professionals will tend to ignore or exclude alternate voices that speak outside of the official debate, or voices that try to raise other topics or issues related to the point of debate. Particular emphasis has been placed upon the George W. Bush administration and the appearance of media complicity during the build up to the March 2003 invasion of Iraq and the first years of the war (Bennett and Paletz 1994; Bennett, Lawrence, and Livingston 2006, 2007; Hayes and Guardino 2010).

It is impossible to miss the way the indexing studies express a concern over an indexed or elite dominated media's ability to function as an effective democratic watchdog, but this is not unique to the studies specific to, or explicitly examining the indexing hypothesis. The title of Zaller and Chiu's (1996) article on media coverage of foreign policy crises "Government's Little Helper" is more explicit than most, but a reasonable reflection of the general perspective. Similarly, the following quote is more direct than most, but again is indicative of the more general literature on the subject of elite influences on foreign policy coverage.

Overall, this research indicates that the press act more as "guard dogs" of the foreign policy establishment than its watchdogs. (Donahue, Tichenor, and Olien 1995)

Concerns regarding the media's ability to fulfill its democratic function are also clear in Entman's cascade model (2004), where he tries to define more effectively when the news media can function as an independent, democratic foreign policy actor and when they serve a more passive, public sphere role as an arena for elite and public debate.

Technology

The mention of media as a public sphere and the discussion of elite dominance or influence over foreign policy coverage indirectly relates to questions regarding the rapid advances in communication technology over the last quarter century and the potential impact it has had on media's role in American foreign policy. The initial presumption was that advancing technology would serve to reduce elite's ability to control information and by doing so, further democratize foreign policy.

The idea of event driven news (Livingston and Bennett 2003; Livingston and Van Belle 2005) or the citizen journalist, or blogging all explore ways that technology was expected to open the global media to new and more democratic inputs. However, the actual effect that technology has had on media's role on U.S. foreign policy is questionable. Advancing technology has clearly lowered the logistical barriers and costs of gathering news around the globe (Livingston and Van Belle 2005) and in theory this could decrease the reliance on official sources of news on foreign policy issues or events. This emphasis would reduce policy makers' influence over the media's agenda and increase the ability of other sources to influence the policy agenda through the news media. In fact, the CNN effect was originally argued to be the realization of a substantial change in the influences on the media agenda and through that, a shift in the influences exerted on the policy agenda through the media. Still, there is little to indicate that it has created a significant change in the nature of the news media's role in American foreign policy. This is particularly clear by the dramatic rise and expansion of studies on topics like indexing, which reflect the liberal perspective's concerns with elite domination of the news.

Framing

Many of the indexing and other related studies regarding the influence of news coverage are intertwined with the study of framing (e.g., Bennett et al. 2006). Ironically, even though framing is central to the presumed impact of news media upon public opinion, an understanding of the nature of framing is often presumed in these articles and it can be difficult for a reader moving into that area of research to fully comprehend the subject or why it is so relevant to the media's role in public opinion and foreign policy.

Framing reflects concepts from the study of cognitive psychology. Specifically, it is based upon the idea that humans use cognitive frameworks to sort through the massive volumes of information that they constantly receive from the world around them. These logical structures are used both to filter incoming information and to interpret the information that comes through that filter in order to make sense of it. Information that does not fit within the logic of the cognitive framework is generally ignored or twisted to fit the logic of the framework. This process creates a selective and self-reinforcing understanding of the world and when it comes to decision making, including foreign policy, the range of options and the potential values placed upon them are defined by the frame applied to the issue. The best exemplar citations for framing focus on official debates rather than the media, and citations of them are infrequent in the media framing literature (e.g., Larson 1985) and (Khong 1992). These studies provide clear examples of the logic of framing that underlies the related studies of media framing. In both of these studies, substantial evidence is offered to support the argument that leaders find it all but impossible to think or act outside of the cognitive framework once it has been established. When applied to media foreign policy and public opinion, this leads to an intense interest in the way that the public's frames are established and sustained. It is generally assumed or argued that these frames are established with media coverage and this connects back to concerns regarding elite dominance of the sources of news related to foreign policy.

Entman (2004) provides what is probably the best and most comprehensive application of media and framing to the study of American foreign policy. The combination of evidence and argument are especially compelling and it is difficult to avoid the impression that American foreign policy is all but defined by framing. This perspective is further magnified by a general paucity of studies that are critical of media framing or studies that seriously challenge the limits of its applicability to U.S. foreign policy. It should be kept in mind that mediated competition to frame foreign policy debates often results in multiple, competing frameworks in the public. Further, even within a single cognitive frame, the frame sets the logic that will be used for the evaluation of information and decision making, but it does not determine which specific option will be chosen out of the many possible policy options that fit within that framework. Just as there are several foreign policy options that fit a given international event or context (Most and Starr 1984), a frame can exclude some options, but there will usually still be a variety of options that fit any general conceptual framework that might be established. Also, the elasticity of reality is limited (see Baum and Potter 2008) and a constructed frame can only deviate so far from other indicators of objective reality.

Overall, framing is most likely limited to a menu setting role, or a menu limiting role rather than a determinative role. Menu setting approaches to American foreign policy are not common, although the foreign policy substitutability argument of Most and Starr (1984) provides one model and Van Belle (1993) offers a menu of choice model specific to domestic imperatives and the role of the news media in foreign policy. Another concern regarding the media framing literature is that the emphasis on the media and elite efforts to use the media to frame issues and events, may underappreciate other sources of framing, such as personal experience, education, family, or social networks.

Mediated Construction of Self and Other

It is important to mention constructivism here, but this is more to reference its surprising absence from much of the study of American foreign policy rather than to emphasize it. Constructivism arose as a challenge to realism, and for a time was considered significant enough to displace Marxism from several international relations textbooks. Several of its early exemplars (e.g., Doty 1993) examine the United States and the central constructivist conceit, that policy choice and action are limited or enabled by the way self and other are constructed or conceived, is remarkably similar to the central conceptual conceits of the framing literature. The arguments regarding the mediated construction of cognitive frameworks for understanding foreign policy issues, events and how that affects foreign policy decisions are so similar to the constructivist arguments that it is reasonable to expect that it would be a significant aspect of the study of media and American foreign policy. However, this is not the case. Despite the fact that they share critical basic elements of their conceptual foundations, framing and constructivism appear to be estranged. It could be argued that Entman (2004) is a constructivist analysis, and it would certainly be reasonable to say that, conceptually at least, it fits. However, one of the most recent analytical overviews of the constructivist approach to foreign policy (Houghton 2007) references the cognitive psychology works on framing (Larson 1985; Khong 1992) but does not reference Entman or any other work on media framing or the media's role in foreign policy. The causes of this estrangement are not clear, but may reflect the broader, methodological divide in the study of politics and international relations. The studies of media and framing, even when conducted with qualitative methods, clearly position themselves within the context of a social scientific approach while constructivism is clearly associated with a critical theory approach.

Still, given the centrality of the media in constructing the broadly held conceptualizations of the self and the other in constructivism, it would be reasonable to expect a significant, independent constructivist contribution to our understanding of media and U.S. foreign policy. This does not appear to be the case. There are some analyses of European foreign policy, but there are few efforts to apply constructivism to the role of media in American foreign policy, or even to American foreign policy in general, with Nabers (2009) offering a rare example.

Media and International Information Flows

To this point, this overview has focused almost entirely on media's role in the domestic aspects of American foreign policy. Part of this emphasis is because of the close association of media with domestic public opinion as a factor in American foreign policy (Baum and Potter 2008) and the way that that has generated several related or dependent avenues of study. However, this also partially because the two key aspects of how the media's might influence foreign policy from outside of the state are seldom analyzed with an explicit focus on the U.S. case. The way international information flows influence foreign policy and the way press systems influence global politics are usually conducted as large-N comparative studies, such as the dehumanization and war study of Hunt (1997) or the study of press freedom's influence on foreign policy (Van Belle 2000). These and other comparative studies, such as is found in the transparency literature (e.g., Lord and Finel 2000), have significant implications for American foreign policy, and often include the United States as an exemplar or point of discussion, but they are seldom specific to the United States. One exception to this generalization is public diplomacy.

Public Diplomacy

Public diplomacy is largely an applied field, focusing on studies of the practice of intentionally using the international media to influence the domestic public opinion of other states. From an academic perspective, public diplomacy is particularly interesting in the way it reverses the public opinion emphasis of media and foreign policy. Instead of media acting as a connection between the public and the government, or as a proxy measure for domestic public opinion, the media is treated as an external foreign policy tool for manipulating that aspect of another's foreign policy. Public diplomacy can range from marketing style media and advertising campaigns aimed at altering the image of the United States in foreign countries, to cultural exchanges, to explicit propaganda campaigns, to the political economy of the export of U.S. entertainment products.

The prominence of applied orientations in public diplomacy programs can make it difficult to sort through to the underlying academic ideas. This applied focus is probably also why public diplomacy is so seldom mentioned in the various studies of U.S. foreign policy and virtually non-existent in American foreign policy textbooks. The best resource for engaging or exploring the academic side of this literature is probably the University of Southern California's Center on Public Diplomacy, which maintains a substantial collection of web-based resources for engaging the extensive literature, including an archive of book reviews. A few of the most recent books that are particularly relevant to the academic include Cull's book on the U.S. Information Agency (2008) and Seib's book on al Jazeera (2008). However, these are merely entry points for a vast body of research.

Models of the Media/Policy Nexus

Perhaps indicative of the general state of the study of the news media in American foreign policy is the limited number scope of efforts to model the media/foreign policy nexus. An early attempt (Van Belle 1993) was limited to redefining leadership expectations of the political costs and benefits of foreign policy options in terms of their expectation of news media coverage levels and content and subsequent domestic political costs and benefits. Entman's cascade effect (2004) could be considered an attempt at a comprehensive model; and some argue that the indexing hypothesis, which was introduced as a step toward a theory of state press relations (Bennett 1990), has grown into an applicable model, but the information marketplace model (Baum and Potter 2008) is probably as close as anyone has come to actually establishing an explicit description of the structure of the relationships and processes that define the role of the news media in U.S. foreign policy. However, it should be noted that the cautions of Baum and Potter about the limitations of their model are more than professional modesty. Baum and Potter present the marketplace as a conceptual framework from which a full model might be constructed and that is a reasonably accurate self-assessment. It is also a reasonable assessment of the subfield. There are numerous first steps, interesting ideas and valuable studies, but there is still a great deal of work left to be done before anything like a coherent conceptualization or modeling of the subject will appear.

Conclusion

The relatively recent appearance of media as a significant factor is more of a reflection of the nature of the study of U.S. foreign policy than it is a representation of the subject itself. The press has been part of U.S. government and foreign policy from the moment the country was

founded; and the recent rise in attention to the role of media represents several factors coming together to bring recognition of the media into the mainstream of research and analysis. Fairly distinct conservative and liberal perspectives are apparent in the recent studies with the former focused largely on policy quality arguments and the latter focused largely on the media's role as democratic watchdog. To a great extent, media's role in U.S. foreign policy is still in the process of being normalized as part of the field of study and until that produces clearer outlines of how media fits in and interacts with other topical areas, it is difficult to predict where things are headed. Still, a few things are clear. The constant reigning in of the scope and extent of CNN effect suggests that extreme claims will find less and less traction in the debate. The lack of dialogue between different ideological and theoretical perspectives will continue to be problematic, as is the case with most areas within the study of U.S. foreign policy, but normalization should slowly reduce the gaps between these perspectives and we should see media slowly woven into a more general understanding of U.S. foreign policy.

Notes

- 1 The event was actually a flash point in a longstanding border dispute and is succinctly summarized by the U.S. Park Service, which maintains a park on the site (<http://www.nps.gov/sajh/history-culture/the-pig-war.htm>). Few note that Henry Martyn Robert, who built the fortifications that many people believe played a key role in forcing a diplomatic resolution, was the man who wrote *Robert's Rules of Order*, rules for running meetings and organizations, first published in 1876.
- 2 Almond's emphasis on the volatility of public opinion is intriguing in that it is directly superimposed upon his arguments regarding the public's unshakable preference for isolationism and withdrawal from world politics (Almond 1950: 85).
- 3 For a definition and discussion of complex humanitarian emergencies, see Albala-Bertrand (2000).

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