

FRAMING AFRICAN GENOCIDE: LOCATION, TIME AND GENDER IN  
THE COVERAGE OF GENOCIDE IN RWANDA AND SUDAN

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A Thesis presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
University of Missouri-Columbia

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In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

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MAY 2007

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FRAMING AFRICAN GENOCIDE: LOCATION, TIME AND GENDER IN THE  
COVERAGE OF GENOCIDE IN RWANDA AND SUDAN

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am enormously grateful to the input of my chair, Yong Volz. You have been consistently kind, patient, helpful and generous with your time, and your input has always been insightful, wise, and much appreciated. I am also very grateful to the other wonderful people who made up my committee, Stephanie Craft, Mary-Kay Blakely and Tola Pearce. You have made my experience at MU smoother, easier and better. Thank you all.

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Winter Semester 2007

ABSTRACT

This paper explored how genocides in Rwanda in 1994 and Sudan in 2004 were framed in three American midwestern newspapers, namely the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* and the *Wisconsin State Journal*. Looking through the lens of postcolonial theory, the paper analyzed a sample of newspaper texts in both a quantitative and qualitative manner, describing some of the ways the frames used in the text evolved, with particular reference to time, gender and space. It was found that the papers examined covered genocide in Rwanda more prominently; there were more stories about Rwanda than Sudan, and those stories were longer and more detailed. The coverage of Rwanda was more intimate, personal, detailed and comprehensive than that of Sudan. Rwanda was also depicted in more gory and violent terms than Sudan. Sudan was framed in neutral, political terms. Women were overrepresented as passive victims of the violence.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION: COVERING GENOCIDE

In 1994 in Rwanda almost a million people were murdered because they were Tutsis. By 2006 in western Sudan, 400,000 people had been killed because they were black farmers. These people were killed solely because they were members of these groups; they were victims of genocide.

Genocide is the systematic destruction of a particular group by another group, during which members of the victim group are targeted solely because of their membership in that group (Hewitt, 2004). Genocide is an international crime, yet the international community took no action to prevent or halt genocide in Rwanda and Sudan beyond limited sanctions in the case of Sudan and post-genocide humanitarian relief in the case of Rwanda. Humanitarian and military intervention in the case of genocide is widely accepted as a legitimate action for states or the United Nations (U.N.) to take (Donnelly, 2002). In 1994, for example, western governments intervened militarily in the former Yugoslavia to stop Serbian targeting of Muslims in Kosovo (Hewitt, 2004). Genocides in Africa, however, have not yet warranted military intervention, and the humanitarian intervention undertaken is generally insufficient. The reasons for this are complex. In the case of Rwanda, for example, it has been suggested that the U.N. was distracted by events in the former Yugoslavia, and that the U.S. was reluctant to intervene after its failed intervention in Somalia (Williams, 2001). In the case of Sudan, difficulties in achieving international agreement and a lack of political will among Security Council



nations have been cited as reasons for the lack of robust intervention (Slim, 2004). The fact that both countries are poor and located in Africa is also relevant.

This study does not attempt to answer the larger question of what prompts the international community to extend help to the victims of genocide, but instead examines a small aspect of this question, specifically, the media coverage of genocides in Sudan and Rwanda.

In genocidal situations, there are many people and organizations with a stake in the outcome, some lobbying for intervention, some trying to prevent it. Journalists, international relief agencies and politicians are all relevant actors, as are the genocidal regimes and target populations involved. Media are key players in the unfolding events, influencing the actions and perceptions of both outsiders and those with a stake in the situation. In various ways, each of these actors seek to influence both the actions of other actors and the outcome of the situation. One of the ways in which they seek to influence events is by trying to alter the way the media cover events.

This paper explores the coverage of the genocides in Rwanda and Sudan by particular American newspapers. Some may question the usefulness of studying U.S. media framing of genocide. After all, there have been no official genocides in the U.S., so why study U.S. media representations? Furthermore, some may argue that media framing is not an important aspect of genocide. There are a variety of replies to these charges.

As the world's most powerful nation, the U.S. can use its global influence to intervene in genocide, either with aid and economic pressure or with military action. If the U.S. chooses to lobby international or multinational bodies like the North Atlantic

Treaty Organization (NATO) and the U.N. to act, action is likely to be taken. U.S. backing for a proposed course of action is vital to the success of that action. The hopes of many genocide victims, therefore, rest on convincing the U.S. of the merits of intervention.

Yet these victims are unable to directly influence U.S. government policy. Only the U.S. electorate is able to demand or prohibit action, by pressuring their representatives in government to act. There is an established relationship between public opinion and foreign policy in the U.S. (Powlick & Katz, 1998); therefore the only channel available to those seeking to influence U.S. policy in regard to genocide is to try to generate support among the American public in the hope that shifts in public opinion will precipitate shifts in policy.

The primary way international aid agencies, target populations and activists attempt to do this is through the U.S. media (Carpenter, 2005). There is an established relationship between media coverage of foreign affairs and public opinion; what the media covers tends to be what the public is concerned about, as agenda-setting theory argues (Wanta, Golan & Lee, 2004; Soroka, 2003). Brewer, Graf and Willnat (2003) further argue that audiences are particularly dependent on the media for news about foreign affairs, because they do not have direct access to these remote events. Foreign affairs coverage can therefore have a greater influence on public opinion than coverage of local affairs (Brewer *et al.*, 2003). Activists therefore try to influence media, and often succeed in affecting how the media cover events (Greenberg & Knight, 2004).

Activists are not the only players interested in influencing media coverage. The U.S. government itself must walk a narrow line in determining how it will respond to genocidal situations. While it may feel pressure to take action, it also understands the consequences of an intervention that goes awry (Campbell, 2001). It too, then, attempts to influence media coverage in such a way as to protect itself both from appearing unwilling to act and from being criticized for rash actions. There is much evidence that suggests that government has a strong influence on how the media frame events, particularly foreign affairs events (Entman, 2003; Callaghan & Schnell, 2001; Merskin, 2004).

Media themselves have internal priorities, norms, values, and processes that influence the news products they create. News values, such as timeliness, proximity, importance, impact, interest, conflict, prominence, and novelty, shape the selection of events for inclusion in news coverage (Shoemaker, Danielian, & Brendlinger, 1991). Additionally, U.S. journalists are prone to report from the perspective of their cultural values, values like altruism, equality, freedom, Judeo-Christian morality, materialism, liberty, individualism, self-sufficiency, democracy, and patriotism, all of which influence the manner in which they structure stories (Beaudoin & Thorson, 2001). The interests and interpretations of journalists, activists, government officials, and many others color how genocides are reported. Government, media, the public, and activists are involved in a complex interdependency, in which there are multiple lines of influence and power, and through which media texts are produced, providing particular interpretations and views of events.

Given the importance of the U.S. in international affairs, the importance of public opinion to U.S. foreign policy formation, the relationship between media coverage and public opinion, and the priority accorded to U.S. media coverage by activists and government officials, this study analyzes how U.S. newspapers framed the genocides in Rwanda and Sudan. Specifically, the paper asks if there was a change in the framing of African genocides from the Rwandan genocide in 1994 to the Sudanese genocide starting in 2003 in the *St Louis Post-Dispatch*, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* and the *Wisconsin State Journal*? Was the Sudanese genocide framed in a different way to the Rwandan genocide?

In conflict situations, media texts are often sites of struggle, where different interpretations of events fight for ascendancy (Entman, 2003; Callaghan and Schnell, 2001; Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes and Sasson, 1992). There is often a victor, a dominant interpretation that colors the majority of reporting on a given set of events. The process of defining and creating this dominant interpretation, and the analysis of its effect on an audience, is the subject matter of a particular communication theory, namely framing. Frames are organizing concepts that give stories structure, coherence and meaning through the use of symbolic language, metaphors, images, narratives and word choice (Gamson et al., 1992; Entman, 1993).

This study explores how genocides are framed in the media through the lens of postcolonial theory. Postcolonial theory and criticism developed as a critique of the way that colonizers used their power to create knowledge about subjugated people (the colonized) in such a way as to inscribe the inferiority of the colonized. It is primarily

concerned with the study of texts. It examines books, paintings, journals, histories and other cultural products to uncover how colonial power relations play out in those texts (Gandhi, 1998). Postcolonial theorists argue that westerners, who for the purposes of this study are broadly conceptualized as Anglo-Americans (including Canadians and Australians) and Continental Europeans, developed a body of knowledge about those they colonized which served to, first, keep the colonized in a subordinate position; second, to rationalize the colonial enterprise; and third, to define the values and status of the colonizers (Gandhi, 1998; Chrisman & Parry, 2000; Moore-Gilbert, 1997). Colonial texts created and defined the character of the colonized and the colonizer in a complex relationship of desire, envy, fear, and hatred. Postcolonial theory argues that, even though literal colonialism has ended, colonial-era power relations nevertheless endure, and that the values and beliefs that sustained colonialism still dominate the attitudes of many westerners and people in former colonies. These power relations are not only cultural; they are also political and economic in nature. The study of cultural products is one route to understanding these relations, and is thus the focus of much postcolonial research.

Postcolonial power relations are a factor in how the media cover instances of genocide. Many of the countries in which genocide has occurred, including Cambodia and Iraq, are former colonies, and most of them, including Bosnia, Rwanda and Sudan, are poor and non-western. Moreover, those who decide whether or not to intervene are frequently powerful western nations and/or former colonizers including the U.S., the U.K., France and Germany. Colonial and neocolonial power relations are important to

understanding genocidal events and are therefore considered in this analysis of the framing of genocide in Rwanda and Sudan.

The genocides in Rwanda and western Sudan were chosen because both occurred in African countries that were former colonies; Sudan was a colony of Britain, which ruled the vast country through an Egyptian governor-general, while Rwanda was ruled first by the Germans and then, in a much more hands-on manner, by the Belgians. As such, there are enough similarities between the two countries to try and tease out how the framing of these two genocides changed over time. There are also, however, important differences between them.

More than a decade passed between the genocide in Rwanda and that in Sudan; during this time, the face of international politics changed dramatically. Among the factors changing the global power structure were with the events of September 11, 2001, in which terrorists hijacked airplanes and used them to destroy the World Trade Center buildings in New York City and to attack the Pentagon and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The purpose of this study is to identify some ways in which the framing of African genocides changed and evolved over time, with particular reference to gender and location.

The following chapter provides some historical background to the genocides in Rwanda and Sudan. Chapter three discusses the theoretical framework provided by framing and postcolonial theory and its application to the study of media coverage of genocide in Rwanda and Sudan in more detail. Some expectations are discussed in

chapter four. Chapter five lays out the methodology used. Chapter six presents the main findings of the study. Finally, the results are discussed in chapter seven.

## CHAPTER 2: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The United Nation's *Convention on the Prevention and the Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* defines genocide as:

Any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such; killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; or forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. (Hewitt, 2004).

Many horrors of the past century meet this definition: the Turkish attempt to exterminate the Armenians; the Nazi's slaughter of the Jews; the bloodshed of the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia; the mass killing of Bosnian Muslims and Croats by Serbs and the purging of Iraqi Kurds by Iraqi Arabs (Hewitt, 2004). The events that occurred in Rwanda in 1994 also meet the U.N.'s definition, as does what is happening now in Sudan. What follows is a brief outline of some key events in the genocides in these two countries. It must be noted that, like all nations, Rwanda and Sudan have complex histories, and this paper can present only a few details of those histories.

### (A) 1994 Rwanda genocide

In 1994, the small, landlocked nation of Rwanda became the site of one of the most rapid and gruesome genocides of the twentieth century when the Hutu ethnic group massacred almost a million Tutsis in just a few months (Meredith, 2005). Some argue that the violence had its origins in the policies of Rwanda's Belgian colonizers, who



tended to entrench the divisions between the Hutu and the Tutsi, Rwanda's two major ethnic groups (Kressel, 2002). Prior to colonialism, Rwandan society was organized along feudal lines, with the Tutsi herders ruling the country and the Hutu farmers forming an underclass. The Belgian colonial administration system relied on the Tutsi to enforce their rule, creating lasting educational and wealth differences between the two ethnic groups (Kressel, 2002). However when the Belgians left Rwanda, they were pressured to institute democracy and therefore transferred power to the Hutus, a move that created much tension between the two groups. The Hutu politicians who came to power took steps to transform the country into a one-party state, despite Tutsi resistance (Kressel, 2002).

By the beginning of 1994, the long-running struggle for power between Paul Kagame's Tutsi-dominated Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) and the ruling Hutu-majority *Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement* (MRND) had resulted in great international pressure on the MRND to allow multi-party politics. In response, the MRND fanned the flames of ethnic hatred, inciting the Hutu into acts of violence against the Tutsi. The genocide against the Tutsi was carefully planned by hardliners within the MRND, even while they negotiated with the RPF and others and signed the Arusha peace accord (Meredith, 2005). On April 6, 1994, President Juvenal Habyarimana was flying back from Tanzania after a meeting to discuss the peace process. As his plane attempted to land in Kigali, it was shot down, and Habyarimana was killed (Hewitt, 2004). It has been theorized that Habyarimana used the Arusha peace process to stall the RPF while the genocide was planned (Hewitt, 2004; Power, 2002). Whatever the truth, it is certain

that militants in the MRND seized upon his death as a spark to implement their genocidal campaign. When the operation started, Hutu militias went on the rampage, murdering 800,000 Tutsis in just 100 days.

Despite the massive bloodshed, the genocide received relatively little media attention (Kressel, 2002; Hewitt, 2004; Wall, 1997). Media are generally drawn to stories involving violence, conflict and crisis (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1981; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1983). However, western media have traditionally downplayed events in Africa because the continent is economically and politically marginal, and is geographically remote from the West (Crawford, 1996; Hawk, 2002; Chang, Shoemaker & Brendlinger, 1987). Although conflict and violence in Africa attracts some media attention, that attention is generally short-term and relatively scant. This was the case with the genocide in Rwanda (Kressel, 2002; Hewitt, 2004; Wall, 1997).

#### (B) 2004 Sudan genocide

The conflict in the western Sudanese province of Darfur pits black, agricultural, Muslim Sudanese against nomadic pastoral, Muslim, Arab Sudanese, although such simplification can be misleading, and the history of the province makes simple distinctions between black and Arab difficult. It is a complex situation. Nevertheless, the *Report of the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur to the United Nations Secretary-General* wrote that, while all of Darfur's seven million inhabitants are Muslims,

In the context of the present conflict in Darfur... the distinction between so-called African and Arab tribes has come to the forefront, and the tribal

identity of individuals has increased in significance. The distinction stems, to a large extent, from the cumulative effects of marginalization, competing economic interests and, more recently, from the political polarization that has engulfed the region. The 'Arab' and 'African' distinction that was always more of a passive distinction in the past has now become the reason for standing on different sides of the political divide.

It is race, then, that is the distinguishing factor of this conflict; black Muslim Darfurians are fighting Muslim Arab Darfurians for land, resources, political control and survival. Furthermore, events in Darfur are not isolated from the wider context of events in Sudan.

The Arab Islamist central government in Khartoum has been accused of supporting the Arabs in their attacks on black villages; Khartoum allegedly funds militias, known locally as *janjaweed*, that raid and destroy black villages and turns a blind eye to their actions in Darfur (BBC, 2006). The UN Report (International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur, 2005) found that mass killings had indeed taken place, that villagers were being driven from their homes, and that the *janjaweed*, at times aided by government forces, was pursuing a campaign of mass rape against black Darfurian women and girls. The UN estimated that over 400,000 people have died in the Darfur conflict, and a further two million have been driven from their homes (UN News Service, 2006).

African Union peacekeepers are operating in the region, but their mission is inadequately resourced and faces many difficulties. The situation is made even more complex by the twenty-one year civil war between north and south Sudan, which ended in a negotiated peace in January 2005 (BBC, 2006). That war made much of Sudan a

wasteland and displaced several million people, and its effects linger. Even now, the resettling of people who fled the south during the war is making the situation in Darfur more explosive, as is the continuing drought in the region.

In 2004 the U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution that declared events in Darfur to be genocide, perpetrated by Arab militias against black Darfurians (BBC, 2004). The horrors of Darfur have drawn some attention of the world media, but coverage has been sporadic at best.

Given the complexities of the two situations, it is clear that no single study can completely analyze the ways media covered them. This study will confine itself to exploring particular aspects of the coverage, in specific media outlets. As noted above, the study uses the theoretical tools provided by framing and postcolonial theory to explore this coverage.

## CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### (A) Postcolonial theory

While development economists have studied the economic effects of colonialism and political scientists have given attention to the political effects of colonialism, the cultural effects are subtler, and more difficult to study. These cultural, ideological and discursive effects are the primary subject matter of the field of postcolonial theory.

Postcolonial scholarship is concerned with deconstructing the ways in which colonial-era power structures, discourses, epistemologies, social relations and economic systems affected the colonized nations, and how these colonized nations have sought to create identities and discourses that subvert and challenge the dominant colonial-era hegemony (Chrisman & Parry, 2000). Postcolonial theory argues that the physical force and economic power of colonizing nations was at all times supported, underpinned and rationalized by the cultural products of those nations, their books, poetry, plays, scholarship, journalism, and travel writing (Moore-Gilbert, 1997). By examining these it is possible to understand how the colonial enterprise was justified and understood by the colonizers, and to theorize how this understanding and knowledge affected the colonized. While colonialism sought to universalize western cultures, to spread a single culture throughout diverse lands (French culture in French West Africa, British culture in India and so on), postcolonial theory seeks to acknowledge and understand the particular, specific cultures of diverse people. In the guise of postcolonial feminist theory, this approach emphasizes the fundamental interrelatedness of racial and ethnic identity and

gender identity. Simply put, a person is not one-dimensional; an individual may be simultaneously a Muslim, a black Fur African, a farmer and a woman. All these various facts influence her notions of herself, and the notions others have of her. Postcolonial theory is concerned with the way race, location, gender, ethnicity and a host of other factors interact to create the webs of meaning that underpin contemporary global power structures.

The program of postcolonial studies, then, is to understand the ways in which knowledge, culture and discourse combined to underpin power in colonial relationships, and also to identify modern day colonizing tendencies in culture, knowledge and discourse. This study examines the representations of people caught in a nexus of conflicting identities, physically located in certain regions, certain bodies and certain times. For the purpose of analysis, it artificially separates these, drawing apart the gender, geography, and temporal location aspects of the nexus in order to hypothesize about findings. However, it must be kept in mind that in texts, these aspects combine to create complex interpretive schemes.

The texts under study here emerge in a particular context. Colonial-era texts were written, published and read in a specific historical moment. The same can be said of texts written in the postcolonial period. The context in which these texts emerge is important. Therefore, the following section provides some notes on the history of the colonial project in Africa and its legacy. The colonial era left many traces that endured after the process of decolonization. Without understanding these lingering colonial effects, contemporary texts that represent Africa cannot be properly understood. Furthermore,

this study is particularly concerned with U.S. newspaper articles, therefore more background is needed about the U.S. and its position in the postcolonial terrain. Finally, the newspaper itself will be described from a postcolonial perspective to provide some context to the types of texts that are studied here.

(i) Africa and the colonial legacy

The age of European expansion can be said to have begun in 1415, when the Portuguese took the town of Ceuta from the Moroccans (Fage & Tordoff, 2002). This began a prolonged period of interaction between Africans and Europeans, generally characterized by the establishment of European footholds along the African coast. From these footholds grew the slave trade, which was the dominant trade between Europe and Africa for the first half of the nineteenth century (Fage & Tordoff). As European power expanded and consolidated, Africa became more prominent among the interests of the Europeans. When minerals and other natural resources were discovered in Africa, this interest grew. It culminated in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when the so-called Scramble for Africa took place (Fage & Tordoff). It was a complicated process, in which the great powers of Europe, particularly Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy, engaged in much maneuvering and intrigue in the attempt to secure a piece of Africa for themselves. By 1902, with some minor exceptions like Liberia, the whole of Africa was claimed as the property of one or another European state.

Then began the process of enforcing European rule. The first part of the colonial period, until the 1920s, was concerned with securing a proper hold on the colonies. To

this end, a number of military officers were given control of swathes of colonial territory, giving colonial rule a strongly authoritarian bent (Fage & Tordoff, 2002). Some colonies were purely colonies of exploitation, where the local population was forced to work to extract natural resources to the benefit of their colonial masters, such as Belgium (Fage & Tordoff, 2002). Other colonies were colonies of settlement, where relatively large numbers of Europeans settled in the colonies, building communities and demanding a degree of self-government, such as Rhodesia/Zimbabwe (Fage & Tordoff, 2002). In all the colonies, daily life for the local, indigenous or native people was harsh. There was widespread violence, and numerous instances of forced labor; additionally, indigenous people were disenfranchised and prevented from enjoying basic human rights. In the 1950s, resistance to colonial rule intensified and a period of decolonization began. Most North African nations attained independence in the early 1950s, and, with the independence of Ghana in 1957, the decolonization of Sub-Saharan Africa was initiated. By the end of the 1970s, colonial rule in Africa was virtually extinct, with a few exceptions like South Africa's continued colonization of South West Africa (Namibia).

According to Mamdani (1996), although colonialism has ended, the colonial legacy is enduring, and continues to color the nature of African politics, and to influence the way that Africans understand themselves and their nations. He argues that to understand the violence that has occurred in Africa since the period of decolonization, it is first necessary to understand the structure of the colonial state. The colonial states of Africa were formed in a radically different way to the states of Europe. They represented an alien power trying to gain and retain control of a large and dispersed population in a



foreign territory. To achieve this, colonial rulers introduced what is known as indirect rule, which resulted in a bifurcated state (Mamdani, 1996).

The colonial state, says Mamdani (1996), was characterized by its division of the population into two major streams: the urban and the rural. Urban populations were those that were ruled by civil law. Historically, not all the members of the urban population had equal access to the protections of civil law; white urban settlers were the real beneficiaries, while non-white urban dwellers remained an underclass. Rural populations, in contrast, were divided according to tribal affiliation and were ruled by the so-called Native Authorities. These ostensibly native local governments enforced what was presented as customary law, particularly in terms of land rights and family law. This resulted in a two-faced state: a civil state governing urban populations that were divided according to race and a so-called traditional local authority governing rural populations that were divided along tribal lines. For Mamdani (1996), while the deracialization of the civil state occurred during decolonization, the detribalization of Native Authorities has yet to occur. This is the basis for the unique crisis of the modern state in Africa: it retains some of the divisions entrenched during the colonial period. Much of the violence that takes place within African states can be traced to a colonial origin.

The violence in Rwanda, for example, can be understood as resulting not from ancient ethnic hatred, but rather from the Belgian system of indirect rule that applied different laws to different so-called tribes (Mamdani, 2001). Under the Belgians, the Tutsi were given favorable access to education, civil service jobs and land rights through their Tutsi tribal government, while the Hutu were governed by a different law, and were

less privileged (Mamdani, 2001). The Belgians, in their attempts to categorize the peoples of Rwanda, developed what was called the Hamitic hypothesis, which posited that all the achievements of African societies were not the work of indigenous Africans but of a Nilotic people who migrated from Egypt or Abyssinia. The Tutsi, according to this theory, were not indigenous people, but a race apart. When the Belgians left Rwanda, the state was handed over to Hutus, who duly deracialized access to civil law for the urban population, eliminating what white privilege existed (Mamdani, 2001). However, the long-entrenched division between Hutu and Tutsi remained. The Hutu government used the colonial rhetoric of the Tutsi's non-African origins to define Tutsi as non-Rwandans, as alien interlopers rather than fellow citizens. Gradually, Tutsi were marginalized in public life. Rather than creating a Rwanda that tried to meet the needs of its entire people, the Hutu government continued the colonial tradition of awarding resources based on ethnic affiliation. Eventually, struggles over power within Rwanda led to the 1994 genocide, in which ordinary Hutu murdered their Tutsi neighbors. Mamdani (2001) explains this phenomenon as a result of colonialism.

Before people eliminate an enemy, Mamdani (2001) explains, they need to define it. The horror of colonialism produced two types of genocidal impulses in the peoples involved. The first was the genocide of the native by the settler; the second was the native impulse to eliminate the settler. Following Franz Fanon, Mamdani (2001) argues that the second seemed more like the affirmation of the native's humanity than the brutal extinction of life. The Tutsi, with their privileges under colonialism, were constructed as an alien settler presence. During the colonial period and thereafter, "Hutu" was made into

a native identity and “Tutsi” a settler one. Therefore, argues Mamdani (2001) the Rwandan genocide needs to be understood as a natives’ genocide. It was genocide by those who saw themselves as sons and daughters of the soil, and their mission as one of clearing that soil of a threatening alien presence. It was not an ethnic, but a “racial” cleansing. For the Hutu who killed, the Tutsi was a colonial settler, not a neighbor.

One of Mamdani’s (2001) main points is that the violence in Rwanda should be understood in *political*, not ethnic terms. The twin identities of Tutsi and Hutu were not primarily ethnic; rather, they were primarily historical and political. Mamdani (2001) criticizes western media’s coverage of Rwanda for neglecting to acknowledge the political and historical nature of the genocide. Instead, they tended to explain the conflict in ancient ethnic terms. Just as the texts written during the colonial period failed to identify and describe the violence, inequities and contradictions of the colonial state, so contemporary writing fails to acknowledge the legacy of western colonialism and the unique problems of the African state (Mamdani, 2001). Instead of texts that emphasize the political realities of the postcolonial state in Africa, western media produce texts that obscure the role of western powers in contemporary African crises and exoticize African events as apolitical and resulting from nebulous ancient prejudices.

This tendency to cover Africa in terms of ancient hatreds rather than modern political realities is the result of contemporary circumstances, including the role of the U.S. in what has become known as the neocolonial era. The following section will discuss the position of the U.S. in the postcolonial world.

## (ii) Neocolonialism and the United States

The position of the United States within the field of postcolonial studies is a complex one. The colonial history of the United States, in the pure sense of directly governing remote lands, is limited to its 50-year rule of the Philippines. However, as a global superpower, the U.S. is intimately involved in what has been termed neocolonialism. Neocolonialism, a term coined by Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah, refers to the idea that, after gaining their independence, former colonies remained subject to control by external powers through such means as international monetary bodies, multinational corporations and other educational and cultural institutions; and that this control continues today (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 1998; Thieme, 2003).

Essentially, it is argued that powerful countries, particularly the world's only current superpower, the U.S.A., continue to exert control over weaker countries, and especially former colonies. Leveraging its economic might, diplomatic clout, geopolitical influence and at times, its military power, the U.S. continues to shape the fates of less important and weaker nations. The concept of neocolonialism, as it is used today in the field of postcolonial studies, serves to remind practitioners of the fact that the current era is not free of colonial enterprises, nor are current cultural practices free of the colonizing tendency. While direct colonialism as it was known in earlier times is scarce, a more insidious form of colonialism has replaced it. This relationship is often conceptualized in terms of a center and its periphery (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 1998; Thieme, 2003). Essentially, this model constructs a powerful center, historically the Mother Country, and a marginal periphery, the daughter colonies. Today, the center would be the powerful,

wealthy nations of the world, particularly Europe and North America, and the periphery would be the developing nations, poor countries and former colonies. The center is dominant, its values and ideologies direct world events, and the periphery is relegated to a subservient role in the cultural, economic, diplomatic and military arenas. As the world's superpower, the U.S. is located right at the center of this model, while Rwanda and Sudan are positioned far in the periphery. This will be discussed in more depth later, for now, it is sufficient to say that there exists a neocolonial relationship between the countries at the center, in this case the U.S., and those at the periphery, in this case Rwanda and Sudan. The contribution of postcolonial theory is providing a critical paradigm with which to analyze the ways in which the cultural products of the U.S., including newspaper articles, support uphold and propagate neocolonial power structures. The following section briefly discusses the position of newspaper articles within the U.S.

### (iii) Postcolonial theory and the text

The program of postcolonial studies was largely initiated by textual criticism (Moore-Gilbert, 1997). Major postcolonial theorists and critics, including Gayatri Spivak and Edward Said who both had a background in literature, began to identify the ways in which the texts of the powerful created and perpetuated an interpretive framework that justified and supported the oppression of the powerful (Gandhi, 1998; Said, 1978). Their work took inspiration from Foucault, who was one of the first to draw a link between knowledge and power (Gandhi, 1998). Theorizing that one of the major ways that colonial powers maintained and reproduced control over the colony populations was

through their monopoly on knowledge, postcolonial critics sought to highlight how this power was reflected in texts, and how the colonized fought back against this process. According to such theorists, colonial power was maintained by various means; not simply political, military and economic measures, but also by subtler, cultural tools. The creation and dissemination of information and knowledge were a key part of the power apparatus.

Texts are central to this conceptualization of power and colonialism. In postcolonial theory, texts are not considered inert objects. They are imagined as active sites of meaning that are socially constructed and contested. Consider the newspaper article. It is a socially constructed text. It is the result of the combined efforts of a number of people, and reflects the interests of a range of players. It is imbued with a range of values and beliefs, some so deeply embedded that they do not even appear to be culturally determined (Beaudoin & Thorson, 2001). By treating the article as a text, it is possible to extract meaning and investigate the ways that postcolonial narratives are told.

Postcolonial theory is concerned with, among other things, ways of knowing, or epistemologies. Journalism is a modern way of knowing, a source of information and interpretive tools that enable people to negotiate through the modern political, economic and cultural milieu. The news media are an important institution in the modern political systems of liberal democracies like the U.S. They perform a range of functions: informing the public on important issues; alerting elites to public sentiment; acting as watchdogs and so on (Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956). In the U.S., a special status has been granted to the press by the First Amendment to the Constitution, which states “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the

free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.” (Cornell Law School, 1789/2006).

The U.S. government may not pass laws that abridge the freedom of the press. This press privilege is based on a particular worldview, in which liberal values like freedom, equality, inalienable human rights and inviolable private property are central. U.S. media are financed by the capitalist system; large corporations that answer to shareholders and have the profit motive as their primary driving force own most media outlets in the country (Hesmondhalgh, 2002). U.S. media are committed to democracy; their very existence as organs of free speech is based on the democratic system, and to capitalism, the economic system that underpins them. In short, the news media in the U.S. are based on certain ideological positions and inherently colored by certain values, including capitalism, liberal democracy and free speech. Other values, like racism and xenophobia are also part of the culture in which these media operate, and leave their imprint. The historical perspectives of American culture, for example historical literature on Africa, Europe or the Middle East, influence the content of contemporary representation in media. As Mamadani (2001) points out, contemporary western coverage of Africa tends to take a particular view of the continent, seeing it primarily in tribal terms, rather than in political terms. The result is the obscuring of the legacy of colonialism, and a failure to understand the real roots of violence in contemporary African states.

In short, U.S. media are culturally and ideologically embedded in the history, values and norms of the U.S. and the legacy of historical representations of the world, and their production of news articles can be described as the creation of cultural products.

Media are one of many institutions of U.S. culture, affecting and in turn affected by all the others, and producing culturally inscribed texts that perform multiple functions. This point about ways of looking at texts was eloquently made by Spivak (1985); she argued that the literature of the nineteenth century should be read as unavoidably imprinted with the streams of thought and cultural practices relating to the imperialism of the era. She calls attention to the role of literature in the production of cultural representations; it should not be possible to read the texts without considering this role. This paper calls attention to the role that the media play in the production of cultural representations. Media texts are cultural products, like novels, and should be read with an awareness of their role in the perpetuation of certain norms, values and stereotypes.

These cultural products, these texts, are encoded with the values, ideas, prejudices, conceptions and discourses of the culture that produces them. They serve, both explicitly and implicitly, to promulgate and affirm the culture that produced them. Noting this, researchers in fields ranging from sociology to women's studies have argued that close analysis of texts can reveal much about the culture that produced them (McKee, 2003). How texts represent other cultures gives insight into the culture that the texts originated in.

Newspaper articles, TV news broadcasts and newsmagazine articles are texts. They are meaning-bearing entities that serve particular functions, and present meaning in



certain ways. They are culturally embedded products, produced within the context of a specific political and economic system.

Newspaper articles create their meanings through various linguistic and stylistic devices, ones that are common across newspapers. Framing is a communication theory that describes this process of meaning creation in media texts.

### (B) Media framing

Framing is a theoretical tradition within mass communication studies that is concerned with how media cover various issues, what they emphasize and omit, what kind of language they use, and what effect these choices have on audiences.

Early work on framing came from disciplines like sociology and psychology. For example, Snow, Rochford, Worden and Benford (1986) describe framing in terms of how social movements used frames to further their causes. Here frames are schemata that organize information and provide structures for interpretation, and are used to make sense of the world and to influence people. By promoting particular frames – for example, framing gun control as an encroachment on personal freedom – social movements unite people and prompt them to take action. This conceptualization imagines the frame as a way of organizing and interpreting information, and infusing it with meaning.

Similarly, Gamson et al. (1992) define the frame as “a central organizing principle that holds together and gives coherence and meaning to a diverse array of symbols.”

This definition likens frames to scaffolding upon which symbols such as words are arranged; frames give these symbols structure and meaning.

This has clear applications in a postcolonial analysis of a text. Using the concept of a frame as tool, a text can be analyzed by describing the frame and interpreting it through a postcolonial lens.

These concepts are, however, both complex and multilayered. Framing and frames are multi-level concepts. They can be categorized and divided in various ways. One of the primary divisions made within framing research is a division between audience and text frames. There is also a distinction made between frames, which reside in audiences or in texts, and framing, which is the process of constructing these frames.

#### (i) Frames

The notion of audience frames locates frames within the minds of individuals; they are “mentally stored clusters of ideas that guide individuals’ processing of information” (Entman, 1993, 53). A range of factors, including media, interpersonal relationships and prior beliefs and knowledge influence these internal frames, and individuals use them to make sense of the world. This psychological strain of framing theory, focusing on internal cognitive processes and their interaction with media, can be seen in the work of researchers like Iyengar (1990), Brewer, Graf & Willnat (2003) and Shen (2004). This is what Zhang (2001) calls the psychological conception of frames. From a postcolonial theoretical perspective, these psychological frames can be imagined

as the stored stereotypes and conceptions that people have about themselves and others that enable them to assess and interpret new information and make decisions.

A second set of conceptualizations locates frames in texts. Broadly speaking, this is what Zhang (2001) calls the sociological conceptualization. Zhang (2001, 3) writes “Some researchers conceive of framing as more of a sociological process of news production, focusing on the interpretative and rhetorical processes of news media discourse.” Snow et al. (1986), cited above, illustrate an early sociological conception of framing. For Snow et al. (1986) frames are the result of social processes; events acquire a certain interpretation that enables groups of people to share the meaning of those events. Entman (1993) locates frames within texts; he writes, “the text contains frames” (Entman, 1993, 52). Frames provide sense and give coherence to symbolic information in texts, not just in peoples’ heads.

This is precisely the way that postcolonial theory conceptualizes texts, as socially constructed sites of meaning, conveying particular culturally resonant themes and ideas that reflect particular worldviews. A frame, in this conception, is the subject matter of postcolonial criticism, the organized contents of the text.

These frames within texts are formed out of a variety of influences from sources, news processes, journalistic norms and so on; they are sociological in nature, just as news production itself can be imagined as a sociological process.

Scheufele (1999) describes the division between mental frames and textual frames as being a distinction between media frames and individual frames, and argues that it is a fundamental distinction that must be made when operationalizing frames. For Zhang

(2001), the difference between the two is largely related to the level of analysis. He argues that at the microlevel, the level of the individual, frames should be conceptualized as a psychological phenomenon whereby people make sense of the world. At the macrosocial level, the level of media texts, frames should be conceptualized in more sociological terms.

Clearly, by studying frames in news texts, specifically the framing of two instances of genocide in U.S. newspapers, this study is concerned with text or media frames.

#### (ii) The process of framing

Scheufele (2000) provides a model of the process of framing. There are three steps in this process: frame building, frame setting, and individual-level effects of framing (Scheufele, 2000). Frame building refers to the process of creating media frames. Specifically it is concerned with the various influences on journalists, such as their values, and with the role-players, such as lobby groups and politicians who participate in the frame building process. Frame setting is the actual encoding and explicating of frames, the point at which the textual frame takes final shape. This media frame then has effects on the audience exposed to it, the individual-level framing effects. At this level the role of audience frames becomes a research issue.

From a postcolonial theoretical perspective, the process of framing is one that is marked by power inequalities, values and cultural beliefs. This contested and dynamic process results in the texts that will be the subject matter of this study. However, this

study will not examine the framing process, but will simply attempt to study frames as they appear frozen in texts.

### (iii) Operationalizing framing concepts

Having thus conceptually defined frames and framing, it is necessary to operationalize the concepts involved. The key issue here is to concretely describe what the study will be examining.

Entman (1991) suggests that frames, at the level of news texts, consist of particular keywords, metaphors, concepts, symbols and visual imagery. Although Entman doesn't work within a postcolonial paradigm, the elements he describes as composing frames are the very subject matter of postcolonial criticism, the elements that work within the text to create particular interpretations and culturally resonant themes. This study will attempt to identify these elements, metaphors, symbols and so on, and use them to describe the frames present in the selected texts.

Entman (1993: 53) writes "To frame is to select some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendations for the item described." Here Entman is defining some of the aspects of the text that combine to create a particular frame in a news article.

These aspects are, first, problem definition, which identifies the problem, conflict or controversy under consideration; second, causal interpretation, which suggests the causes underlying the problem; third, moral evaluation, which suggests to the reader how

the event should be morally categorized; and finally, treatment recommendation, which concerns the course of action suggested, either implicitly or explicitly, to remedy the problem. By identifying how these factors unfold in a particular news report, together with the elements noted earlier, it is possible to provide a rich description of that text's frame. These tools will be used by this study to describe the frames used in representing the Rwandan and Sudanese genocides in media texts.

The following section of the paper will describe some of the expectations the study has about the likely contents of the media texts that will be examined. This will be followed by a discussion of the specific methods that will be employed.

## CHAPTER 4: INFLUENCES ON THE FRAMES: LOCATION, GENDER, AND TIME

With the set of theoretical tools provided by framing and postcolonial theory, it is now possible to begin outlining what it is anticipated will be found in this study. As noted above, no single study can hope to analyze all aspects of newspapers' coverage of genocide in Rwanda and Sudan. This study confines itself to examining certain aspects of the coverage, as will be detailed below. The aspects selected for in-depth examination are based in the similarities and differences between the two instances of genocide considered here.

### (A) Comparing Rwanda and Sudan

Both Rwanda and Sudan are geographically located in Africa. This means they are located on a continent that is often ignored in the mainstream U.S. media; and, when covered, is portrayed as a place of darkness, primitivism and tribalism (Crawford, 1996; Hawk, 2002). It is a continent that has suffered greatly under colonialism, and has struggled to free itself of the colonial legacy (Mamdani, 1996). Furthermore, it is a continent that is frequently represented in apolitical terms, with an emphasis on supposed ancient tribal hatred rather than modern political issues (Mamdani, 2001).

In addition, Rwanda and Sudan are politically and economically peripheral countries. The GDP of Sudan (at purchasing power parity) is \$85.89 billion, just 0.7% of the GDP of the USA (\$12.31 trillion), while the GDP of Rwanda, at \$12.54 billion, is just

0.1% (CIA World Factbook, 2005). Although Sudan, with oil reserves and a history of supporting terrorism, is a politically slightly more important nation than Rwanda, both are peripheral.

A key difference, however, is that the Rwandan genocide took place in 1994, just one year after U.S. troops stationed in Somalia were ignominiously withdrawn, causing a reevaluation of U.S. policy on intervention (Meredith, 2005). The current Sudanese crisis, while having its roots in much older conflicts, is generally agreed to have started in 2003, two years after the attacks on New York that brought down the World Trade Center towers and the same year that the U.S. invaded Iraq. These two events have had a significant impact on U.S. media; they have demanded a lot of media attention and resources, and they have had a significant impact on U.S. foreign policy, absorbing a lot of military resources, money, time and political capital.

Clearly, while both countries are geographically located on the same continent, the genocides took place in very different temporal locations. This study aims to uncover the differences, if any, in the framing of the genocides that the changed global environment influenced.

Furthermore, there is an important gender consideration when comparing these two genocides. While a significant portion of the coverage of Sudan is expected to focus on female victims, and particularly on sexual violence, the coverage of Rwanda is expected to seldom mention rape. This study will explore the different positions assigned to female and male victims by the media, and the way in which gender norms and issues play out in the texts. Further, it will theorize on the reasons for these differences.



Thus there are three factors to consider here, namely politico-economic and geographic location, temporal location and gender.

(B) Location: Africa at the periphery in the world system

It is a well-established fact that U.S. media coverage of international news is fragmentary, and that coverage of developing countries in particular is incomplete and prone to emphasize violence, conflict and crisis (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1981; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1983). According to Chang, Shoemaker & Brendlinger (1987), the presence of conflict is one of the key characteristics that make an event newsworthy in the eyes of U.S. media. Given this emphasis on conflict, genocides are a natural candidate for foreign news coverage. However, Chang, Shoemaker & Brendlinger (1987) show that the perceived significance of a country influences how much coverage it will receive. Countries with strong economic, political and cultural links to the U.S. are more likely to be covered by U.S. media (Chang, Shoemaker & Brendlinger, 1987).

As discussed earlier, one of ways of conceptualizing the neocolonial world is in terms of a powerful center made of dominant western countries, above all the U.S.A., and a periphery of poorer, weaker developing nations (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 1998; Thieme, 2003). The model can be imagined as analogous to the Solar System, with a powerful core, and various peripheral nations, some closer and some further to the powerful center. There are various factors that influence a country's location on the periphery, including its geographic location, its political history and position and its

economic status. The closer a country is, economically, politically, culturally and geographically, to powerful countries, the closer it is to the powerful center.

Many academics have argued that US news coverage of foreign affairs is influenced by the proximity – physical, cultural or economic – of the foreign nation in question (Charles, Shore & Todd, 1979; Swain, 2003; Beaudoin & Thorson, 2001). Essentially, it is argued that the amount of coverage and the proportion of sympathetic coverage are related to the proximity of the foreign nation being covered to the U.S. In other words, a country like the United Kingdom, which is culturally, politically and economically very close to the U.S. receives more and favorable coverage, compared to a country like Madagascar, which is economically, culturally and geographically remote from the U.S. Former colonies in Africa, like Rwanda and Sudan, are relatively unimportant on the geopolitical stage; they are poor and are culturally peripheral. In the postcolonial world their importance declined as European powers abandoned the continent, and today Africa is scantily covered in the western press.

Given that Sudan and Rwanda are both in Africa, are both economically unimportant and politically marginal, it is hypothesized that they will receive limited coverage. However, after the Rwanda genocide, the media engaged in much self-criticism (Kuperman, 2000; Dowden, 2004; Melvern, 2006). These critiques focused on how U.S. media covered Africa and African events, and found the media sorely lacking. Particularly, journalists were exhorted to cover Africa more fairly and prominently. It is thus anticipated that, since press failures in Rwanda were widely discussed within the profession, the Sudanese genocide will be covered more prominently than the Rwandan

genocide. By prominence, this study means the number of articles; it is expected that the genocide in Sudan will be covered more often than the genocide in Rwanda

Peripheral location affects more than just the amount of coverage an event or issue receives, it also influences the natures of the coverage. As Robison (2004) pointed out in her examination of the British media's coverage of Bosnia during the genocide, Bosnia was often framed as "the heart of Europe" and Bosnians as "just like us". The victims' location in Europe made them sympathetic; their proximity to the centers of global power influenced how they were framed.

Coverage of Africa, conversely, has historically been negative and prejudiced (Myers, Klak and Koehl, 1996). With its unenviable reputation as the Dark Continent, as imagined by Conrad (1902/1999), Africa has been plagued with a bad reputation in the U.S. press. In their comparison of the coverage of Rwanda's genocide with Bosnia's, Myers *et al.* (1996) note that the African instance was more often described in terms of savagery and tribalism. Crawford (1996) and Hawk (2002) likewise found that coverage of Africa was often highly negative, and tended to show Africa as a place of darkness, primitivism and underdevelopment. It is therefore expected in this study that the coverage will be negative, focusing on themes and metaphors of primitivism, darkness and underdevelopment.

Furthermore, as suggested by Mamdani (2001), it is anticipated that coverage of the genocides will de-emphasize the political nature of the violence, instead framing it in terms of ancient hatreds or primitive tribalism.

(C) Temporal location: the worst of times

As noted, events in Rwanda took place in a very different context to events in Sudan. In the 1990s, the Cold War was over, and America was beginning to test its ability to deploy its military on humanitarian missions (Meredith, 2005). However, events in Somalia dramatically changed America's stance on humanitarian intervention. Following the 1993 incident known as "Black Hawk Down", in which American troops were attacked and killed by lightly armed Somali civilians, then-President Bill Clinton reassessed America's intervention policies, and implemented new guidelines. The new guidelines laid out strict terms under which American intervention would be considered. Thus, when events in Rwanda began to unfold, the U.S. was unwilling to commit troops or resources (Meredith, 2005). It can therefore be anticipated that the coverage of events in Rwanda will de-emphasize the possibility of military intervention, with explicit reference to events in Somalia.

Between 1994 and the start of the Sudanese genocide in late 2003, many significant global events occurred. Among the most important were the terror attacks of September 11, 2001, in which two hijacked airplanes were flown into the World Trade Center twin towers in New York City and the subsequent War on Terror, fought primarily in Afghanistan and Iraq. The events of September 11 and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have had profound effect on U.S. foreign policy, and U.S. media.

Immediately following the events of 2001, journalists criticized themselves for neglecting foreign affairs coverage in the 1990s and noted that the terror attacks had increased Americans' appetites for foreign news (Ginsberg, 2002; Parks, 2002). There

were high hopes that foreign affairs coverage would improve in the new decade, and it is therefore anticipated that the coverage of Sudan will be more thorough and prominent.

However, the effects of 9/11 and the War on Terror on U.S. foreign policy must also be considered. Kurth (2006) argues that the war in Iraq has undermined America's ability to respond to humanitarian crises; he also notes that the U.S. has never shown much interest in directly intervening in African conflicts. Given this historical reluctance to be involved in African disasters, and the limits the Iraq war has placed on U.S. military capacity, it is unlikely that the U.S. will intervene directly in Sudan. Just as failure in Somalia discouraged American intervention in humanitarian crises in the 1990s, it is likely that the resource-heavy War on Terror will discourage American intervention in crises today. It is a well-established fact that the government has a profound influence on the nature, content and focus of foreign news coverage in the U.S. press (Entman, 2003; Callaghan & Schnell, 2001; Merskin, 2004).

Therefore it is expected that the solution aspect of the framing of both the Sudanese and Rwandan genocides will de-emphasize military intervention, in keeping with American foreign policy.

#### (D) Gender: suffering women and vulnerable children

Feminist scholars have long argued that gender is much more than simple biological sex; it includes a host of qualities, values and stereotypes (Chancer & Watkins, 2006). Women are imagined as caring, gentle, submissive, and quiet, men as aggressive,

loud, dominant and unemotional (Chancer & Watkins, 2006). These stereotyped gender concepts are visible throughout U.S. cultural products and U.S. society.

As outlined by Tanesini (1999), there are a variety of stereotypical ways that women are represented and imagined in texts. Women are frequently pictured as weak, submissive, victimized, fearful and so on (Spivak, 1985; Swain, 2003). Representations of women, particularly non-white women, are also frequently sexualized (Carby, 1985).

In the case of genocide, there has been a focus on what has been termed 'genocidal rape' (Russell-Brown, 2003), and thus a focus on the female victims of the campaign and on sexual violence.

Genocidal rape is a relatively recent addition to the lexicon of international law. As seen in the introduction, it is not included in the UN's definition of genocide. However, legal scholars and activists have successfully argued that rape can be considered 'causing serious bodily or mental harm' to a victim (Russell-Brown, 2003), and constitutes a distinct crime against humanity, that is, usually, humanity embodied in women. Genocidal rape is thus rape committed against someone as both a woman and as a member of the target group in a genocidal campaign. Rape in the context of genocidal campaigns has been redefined as a unique category of crime, not simply an extension of torture, but as a distinct type of abuse (Bergoffen, 2006).

Genocidal rape caught the imagination of the media with the reports of Bosnian rape camps, where women were detained and repeatedly raped as part of an explicit campaign to use rape as a tool of genocide (Koo, 2002; Nikolic-Ristanovic, 2002). Much of the media coverage of events in Bosnia focused on the rape camps, and the victimhood

of Bosnian Muslim women. So widespread was the coverage of Bosnian rape camp victims that Nikolic-Ristanovic (2002) talks about the media's creation, through its coverage, of a Rape Victim Identity for Bosnian Muslim women.

A similar phenomenon can be perceived in the coverage of unfolding events in Sudan. A report released by Médecins Sans Frontières (2005), for example, emphasizes sexual violence against women above the many other horrors – starvation, murder and beatings – facing the people of western Sudan. The *New York Times* features articles like “Sudan's Department of Gang Rape” (Kristof, November 22, 2005), “A Policy Of Rape” (Kristof, June 5, 2005) and “Amnesty Says Sudan Militias Use Rape As Weapon” (Lacey, July 19, 2004). The *Washington Post* publishes stories entitled “For Darfur Women, Survival Means Leaving Camp, Risking Rape” (Timberg, 2006) and “‘We Want to Make a Light Baby’; Arab Militiamen in Sudan Said to Use Rape as Weapon of Ethnic Cleansing” (Wax, 2004). This emphasis on the sexual victimization of Sudanese women is not unproblematic.

Nikolic-Ristanovic (2002) criticizes the emphasis on rape, noting that women (and men) suffer in many ways during warfare, and the focus on rape obscures this. Indeed, in many instances, adult civilian men are murdered at a much higher rate than any other group, and often make up the most significant portion of the dead in genocidal campaigns (Carpenter, 2002). Why, then, is there such a focus on female genocide victims, and particularly on their sexual violation? Why is genocidal rape so extensively covered?

One suggestion of why women are particularly prominent as victims of genocidal violence in the news comes from Carpenter (2005), who suggests that framing women as victims in need of protection is a strategic move on the part of international lobby groups. She argues that traditional gender norms of women as 'vulnerable' and as 'the weaker sex' make it easier for audiences to accept women as innocent victims, rather than men (Carpenter, 2005). In an effort to generate support for relief operations and perhaps military interventions, international organizations and elites emphasize the effect of violence on 'innocent women and children' because they believe that those they seek to influence will find such victims more sympathetic than draft-age males. Carpenter (2005) asserts that this tendency is undesirable for two reasons. First, it promotes the identification of womanhood with victimhood and furthers traditional gender stereotyping that portrays women as lacking agency; second, it obscures the suffering of male victims.

In this study, it is hypothesized that women's sexual victimization will be emphasized (Nikolic-Ristanovic, 2002; Koo, 2002) and women will be framed as weak, dependent and helpless. Additionally, following Carpenter (2005), it is expected that female victims will be more prominent than male victims, they will be featured more often, in more detail and more sympathetically than their male counterparts.

However, it is important to note that, as mentioned earlier, the focus on genocidal rape came as a result of the widespread publicity the rape camps of Bosnia received. In the case of Rwanda, rape was not often reported in the press. This is particularly surprising when one considers that it was at the Rwandan genocide trials, on September



2, 1999, that the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda handed down the first ever conviction for sexual violence in a civil war, and held for the first time that rape can be an act of genocide. It is expected that, as the Rape Victim Identity had not yet been created, the mass rape of Rwandan women was overlooked by the media.

#### (E) Summary of expectations

The expectations of this study fall under three broad headings: the effect of the location on the periphery of the countries being studied on the amount and type of coverage they receive; the effect of the different temporal locations of the two genocides on the coverage; and the impact of gender on the coverage.

To summarize, the expectations are as follows:

1. The impact of location on the periphery on the amount and type of coverage:
  - a. The countries will receive limited coverage in Midwestern newspapers;
  - b. Sudan will receive more coverage and attention than Rwanda; and
  - c. The coverage will be framed largely in terms of savagery, primitivism, darkness and tribalism.
2. The effect of the different temporal locations of the two genocides on the coverage:
  - a. In both cases there will be a de-emphasis on direct military intervention, in the case of Rwanda with reference to Somalia, and in the case of Sudan because of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.
3. The impact of gender on the coverage

- a. Women will be more prominent than men as victims of the genocide, they will be mentioned more frequently and described more sympathetically;
- b. Women will be framed as dependent, weak and passive; and
- c. The sexual victimization of women will be emphasized in the coverage of Sudan.

These expectations will be explored and analyzed using the twin tools of content analysis and textual analysis, as described in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY

There are two major approaches to analyzing the written word, the quantitative approach exemplified by content analysis and the qualitative approach exemplified by textual analysis. Both approaches have their advantages and disadvantages, and both can be used to draw interesting and insightful conclusions from texts. Content analysis provides a researcher with replicable and valid data about a group of texts, while textual analysis provides more nuanced and detailed data about the way the text operates.

As discussed, this study takes a postcolonial theoretical approach to the analysis of the media coverage of genocide in Rwanda and Sudan. Postcolonial theory, with its emphasis on particularity, difference and nuance demands analytical tools that provide both depth and precision.

Therefore, this study uses a two-pronged methodology, combining content analysis and textual analysis in order to give the most comprehensive account possible of the texts examined. By combining these two methods, the advantages of both are harnessed.

### (A) Content Analysis

The first part of the study uses content analysis to describe the prominence of the two genocides in particular newspapers and to test the hypotheses about their relative prominence outlined above.

Content analysis is a research method aimed at drawing replicable and valid

conclusions about a population of texts. Kerlinger defined content analysis as “a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables” (as cited in Wimmer and Dominick, 2006). It involves the precise counting of elements of a selection of texts. In order to test the hypotheses presented above, the number, source and type of articles must be determined.

Krippendorff (2004) wrote “content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use.” The tools of content analysis are quantitative, and enable the researcher to make certain statements about the text with a high degree of confidence.

This study intends to consider non-elite publications from the Midwest to gain a better understanding of how these horrific and distant events are represented to Americans who do not live in the major urban centers on the coasts. Although many studies of newspaper content focus on elite publications like the *New York Times*, that have been shown to have an agenda-setting function for the rest of the media (Golan, 2006), this paper has instead chosen to select smaller regional newspapers. The rationale for this is that, while the *New York Times* may indeed set the agenda for other newspapers, most newspaper readers in the U.S. do not read it. Instead people tend to read their local newspaper. Even though the *New York Times* may influence that paper, it is not identical to the *New York Times*. There is value in studying the content that readers in the Midwest are directly exposed to, whether or not that content is influenced by the elite publications.

The papers selected for this study are the Wisconsin *State Journal/Capital Times*, the *St Louis Post-Dispatch* and the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*.

The *Post-Dispatch* has traditionally been viewed as a liberal publication. According to its website, the newspaper embraces progressive values, and allows its editorial pages to reflect these (“Editorial page policy”, 1907/2007). The *Plain Dealer* is conservative, while the *State Journal* is slightly liberal.

These newspapers were selected as three of the largest newspapers in the Midwest of the U.S. All three of these publications are among the top 100 newspapers in the U.S. by circulation. The *St Louis Post-Dispatch* has a circulation of 423,291, the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* has a circulation of 450,875 and the Wisconsin *State Journal* has a circulation of 148,489 (Audit Bureau of Circulation, 2007).

As discussed, the purpose of this paper is to try to understand the ways in which the genocides in Rwanda and Sudan have been presented to Midwestern Americans.

The Midwest is a politically important region in the U.S., and Wisconsin, Missouri and Ohio were all considered important swing states in the 2004 presidential elections (CBS, 2004; CBC, 2004), and in the 2006 midterm elections Ohio was considered an important swing state (Cornwell, 2006). The three papers selected are among the largest newspapers in these states, and the way they presented the Sudanese and Rwandan genocides is therefore of interest.

It may be argued that, because these are relatively smaller papers, compared to papers like the *New York Times*, that they may not have the resources to cover stories like these and rely on wire copy. However, even if that is so, that doesn’t undermine the value

of this study. The reader of these newspapers, the voters of the Midwest, are presented with these wire stories and the particular frames they contain. That is what they see. Therefore, it is interesting to study the frames presented, even if they are simply wire copy frames.

To isolate the articles that were examined, keyword searches for “Rwanda” and “Sudan” were run at two distinct time periods. The Rwanda search was run from April 1, 1994 to July 31, 1994, the period in which the genocide was at its height. The Sudan search was run from September 1, 2004 to December 31, 2004, which is the period just after the U.S. House of Representatives declared that events in Darfur constituted genocide, and includes September 9, the day on which then Secretary of State Colin Powell declared events in Sudan to be genocide.

The resulting articles, numbering 213, were counted, and broken down into various categories to determine the relative prominence accorded to the genocides. These categories arose out of the literature surveyed, and were designed to help answer the main questions and explore the main expectations identified in chapter four. The stories were categorized by author, either wire (when the story was written by wire services or based on wire copy), reporter (when a story was written by a reporter from the newspaper it appeared in) or outsider (when a story was not written by the papers’ own reporters or by wire services, for example, articles by academics, letters to the editor, articles written by activists and so on). They were further categorized by story type, either full-length (a story more than 200 words long in the main section of the newspaper), NIB (a story that is less than 200 words long, or is located in the briefs column of the newspaper) or letter

(a letter to the editor). Furthermore, stories were coded to reflect whether or not they included the words “blood”, “tribal”, “rape” and “humanitarian”. A second coder recoded all the data, with a resulting agreement rate of 96%.

### (B) Textual analysis

Textual analysis can be described and understood in many ways (McKee, 2003). Essentially, textual analysis begins by treating a particular cultural artifact (for example, a book, a piece of graffiti, a magazine advertisement) as a text, that is, as something to which people attribute meaning, as a piece of communication that conveys certain meanings to certain people using certain strategies (McKee, 2003). Textual analysis involves examining texts in detail to determine what the likely interpretation of those texts will be. It must be emphasized that practitioners of textual analysis make no claims as to the generalizability or repeatability of their work. Rather, textual analysis seeks to draw out the potential meanings a text may hold for its readers, based on the researcher’s immersion in the text and related texts (McKee, 2003).

Textual analysis has frequently been used in media studies as an alternative to methods like content analysis; content analysis is a more quantitative method that assigns parts of a text to pre-established categories and then counts the elements that fall into each category. While content analysis can be useful, it does not give researchers and scholars a sense of how the text works to convey its meaning. Textual analysis seeks to fill this gap (McKee, 2003).

Many studies examining how media texts represent various categories of people

and events have used textual analysis. Merskin (2004) used textual analysis to identify how U.S. President George W. Bush constructed Arabs as enemies following the events of September 11, 2001. Vincent (2004) explored how newspapers constructed gender during Wimbledon in 2000 using a combination of textual and content analysis and Pirinen (1997) used what she called “close textual analysis” (291) to explore how female athletes are represented in Finnish women’s magazines. Parameswaran (2004) uses textual analysis to note how Indian newspapers represented protests at the Miss World pageant and linked them to themes like globalization. She describes how the search for nuance, depth and detail through textual analysis of media products can add depth and intelligibility to media studies. Roushanzamir (2004) uses textual analysis to explore how US media represent Iran and Berkowitz (2005) uses textual analysis to explore how female Palestinian suicide bombers are represented in terms of mythical archetypes. All of these studies share a concern with understanding the deeper, richer meanings of texts, beyond those qualities that can easily be counted.

As this study addresses the representation of genocide in Rwanda and Sudan from a perspective sensitive to issues of multidimensionality, a method that involves close reading of the text and attention to nuance and subtlety is demanded. For this reason, it uses textual analysis.

However, as noted above, textual analysis doesn’t claim to be replicable or generalizable. This is because the analysis of the text is reliant on the researcher’s own interpretations. This subjectivity invokes questions about the researcher’s claim to understand the texts, and to be qualified to analyze them. This is a serious consideration,



one that can be partially addressed by standpoint theory.

Essentially, standpoint theory addresses the question of epistemology, or the questions of knowing: how we know, what we know and what it means to know. Standpoint epistemology “argues that all knowledge is constructed in a specific matrix of physical location, history, culture, and interests, and that these matrices change in configuration from one location to another” (Sprague, 2005, p. 41).

Standpoint theory rejects the positivist idea that knowledge can be value-free, and can come from some imagined position outside the social world, from an external and objective viewpoint. Rather, it argues, the bodily, cultural and social location of the knower influences the nature of the knowledge created and held. “When people look at things from different perspectives, what they see is likely to be different” (Tanesini, 1999, p. 138). Thus, any textual analysis of media texts will inevitably be colored by the researcher’s position.

The argument of standpoint theory is that all knowledge is limited by the position, or standpoint, of the observer. This applies as much to experimental data as to textual analysis. If this premise is accepted, then the reliance on a particular researcher’s interpretation of a text is less problematic. It is accepted that all knowledge is relative and positional in nature, including this study, this is an inherent limitation of human knowledge, and while not unproblematic, is nevertheless inevitable and therefore acceptable.

In order to conduct the proposed textual analysis, the following procedure was adopted. Initially, the stories drawn from the database were read several times. This

practice is referred to in the literature as immersion in the text (Roushanzamir, 2004; Pirinen, 1997). Its purpose is to help the researcher get a sense of how the texts work, how their language is structured and what differences and similarities exist between and among them.

Notes were taken on frequently recurring themes and tones, and these notes were synthesized into a rich description of how the texts represent genocide in Rwanda and Sudan.

## CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS

A total of 213 articles were examined for the purposes of this study. Of these, 155, or 72.8% were about Rwanda and 58, or 27.2% were about Sudan. The *St Louis Post-Dispatch* printed the greatest number of articles (130) about the two genocides, followed by the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (63) and then the *Wisconsin State Journal* (20; see table one). The majority of the coverage of Rwanda took the form of full-length stories in the main news section of the papers (83.9%), with only a handful of news-in-brief (NIB) articles (15.5%; see table two). An article is considered to be a NIB if it is less than 200 words long, or is located in the briefs column of the newspaper. Such stories formed almost half (46.6%) of the coverage of Sudan.

In both cases, the majority of coverage was sourced from wire reports, although this tendency was slightly more pronounced in the case of Rwanda (49%) than Sudan (44.8%; see table three). Articles written by outsiders includes all articles not written by the papers' own reporters or by wire services, for example, articles by academics (Wharton, 1994; Le Vine, 1994), letters to the editor (Buckley, 2004; Galczynski, 2004), articles written by activists (Rosenblum, 1994) and so on. Such articles were more common in the coverage of Rwanda (18.7%) than in the coverage of Sudan (12.2%).

### (A) Location: intimate Rwanda, remote Sudan

As discussed above, it was anticipated that the stories would not be accorded great prominence in the newspapers selected because of the countries' location on the

periphery, their marginal status on the world stage. The findings support this. As shown in table four, no newspaper devoted significant daily attention to either genocide.

However, contrary to expectations, the genocide in Rwanda received significantly more attention in these newspapers than did the genocide in Sudan. Although Rwanda is smaller and less important on the world stage in political and economic terms than Sudan, it received far more coverage in all the papers included in the study. Not only were there a greater number of stories about Rwanda, but also a greater proportion of those articles were full-length stories (83.9% versus just 46.6% in the case of Sudan), emphasizing the fact that greater importance was afforded to events in that country. Despite the self-criticism the media engaged in over the inadequacy of their coverage of Rwanda (Kuperman, 2000; Dowden, 2004; Melvern, 2006), the amount and depth of coverage actually decreased, so that the coverage of Sudan is sparser than that of Rwanda.

There are several possible explanations for this unexpected finding. As noted earlier, the continuing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have monopolized a lot of media attention and resources. It is possible that the limited space American newspapers reserve for foreign news is largely filled by news of the wars, leaving little room for other international news. News about Africa, never perceived as very important, is likely to be cut in such circumstances. This may be behind the relative neglect of news about the genocide in Sudan.

Another possible explanation has its roots in the long-term trend of declining newspaper readership and circulation. Since the 1990s, newspaper circulations have been declining (Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2007). Declining circulation has meant

declining revenue, and newspaper have, especially in recent years, been forced to cut costs (Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2007). One of the easiest targets in cost-cutting exercises in newsrooms is the foreign bureau (Carroll, 2007). Foreign bureaus are expensive to maintain, and foreign news coverage can generally be easily sourced from wire copy (Carroll, 2007). Furthermore, newspapers are reluctant to cut staff at the local news beat, where they generally have a competitive advantage. These factors have led to a significant decrease in the number of reporters employed by U.S. newspapers at foreign bureaus. There has been a ten percent decline in the number of foreign bureaus sponsored by mid-size newspapers since 2000, and as much as a 30% decline in the number of foreign correspondents at mid-size newspapers (Carroll, 2007). Foreign correspondents are now largely concentrated in Baghdad, leaving events in the rest of the world to be covered by fewer American reporters. This may account for the low amount of coverage of the genocide in Sudan.

A final possible explanation lies in the differences between the two sets of events. While the genocide in Rwanda was rapid, taking just a few months to begin and end, the genocide in Darfur has been slow, beginning in 2003 and continuing to this day. It is possible that the media were able to intensely cover events in Rwanda because of the short-term nature of the genocide, while the longer-term genocide in Sudan has failed to sustain attention of the media.

It was further anticipated that, in keeping with the media's tendency to emphasize violence and extreme events, much of the coverage would be focused on the violence occurring in the two countries. It was expected that, because both countries are physically

located in Africa, the framing of the genocide would include themes of barbarism, tribalism, darkness and savagery. Furthermore, as described by Mamdani (1996), it was anticipated that the coverage would be cast in tribal, rather than political terms. These expectations were met, but not entirely; there were significant differences between the coverage of Sudan and Rwanda in terms of their tone, their major themes and the frames used. The genocide in Rwanda was represented in more personalized and intimate terms than that in Sudan, but also in significantly more graphic and violent terms (see table five).

The articles about Rwanda display a strong, vivid focus on the violence being perpetrated. Words and phrases that appear very commonly include “blood-letting”, “blood-soaked”, “anarchy”, “horror” and “ethnic slaughter”. Grim details are often provided. One article reads: “bodies were floating down the Akagera River, which marks the border, at the rate of one every 50 yards” (“Rwanda rebels close border, 1994). Another states: “corpses pile up in Rwanda” (“Real leaders wouldn’t let it happen”, 1994). Corpses, mutilation and brutality are often mentioned; events are framed as anarchy, as senseless violence.

Descriptions of the violence are graphic. One article reads: “For three weeks, he was presumed dead, one of the 100,000 now estimated to have been hacked, shot and ripped to death in the orgy of ethnic murder that has swept across Rwanda since the president of the tiny African nation was killed in a plane crash.” (“A massacre beyond imagination”, 1994). Another article reads:

A month of horror flows out of Rwanda in the gruesome stories of refugees cast across northern Burundi. Patients were pulled from hospital

operating tables and shot to death. Children were ripped apart by shrapnel from grenades thrown into church sanctuaries. Innocent Tutsis were bludgeoned and dismembered by club, mace, spear and machete. (“Cold calculation seems to motivate Rwanda butchery”, 1994).

This is in keeping with news media’s fascination with violence and extreme circumstances; the reports almost glory in the brutality of the events they describe.

The articles also often focus on the actions of military forces in Rwanda, in particular the RPF (“Refugees shelled, trampled”, 1994; “Rwanda’s capital steeped in blood”, 1994; “Bloodshed continues in Rwanda”, 1994). This again demonstrates the perpetual media focus on violence, military action, bloodshed and tragedy.

Entman (1993) included imagery as a component of media frames. The images that appeared in the coverage of Rwanda are, as expected, strongly suggestive of backwardness, tribalism, savagery and darkness. One headline in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* reads “Heart of anarchy”, another reads “Bloody, bloody Rwanda”; the *St Louis Post-Dispatch* features headlines like “Rwanda’s capital steeped in blood” and “Foreigners flee corpse-littered Rwandan capital”. The genocide is repeatedly characterized as “tribal”; it is described as an “ancient tribal conflict”, a “tribal bloodbath”, as “tribal bloodletting”, “tribal slaughter” and “tribal warfare”. This emphasis on tribalism gives the impression of Rwanda as backwards, mired in history and unable to move forward. This is typical of coverage of African countries (Myers, Klak and Koehl, 1996; Crawford, 1996; Hawk, 2002) and is in keeping with Mamdani’s (1996) criticism of western perspectives on African events. The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* headline “Heart of anarchy” is a direct reference to Conrad’s (1902/1999) *Heart of Darkness*, the book that is considered to be a founding text of the Western perspective on

Africa. Conrad's Africa is a dark, savage and terrifying place; the *Cleveland Plain Dealer's* headline borrows that imagery for its article on events in Rwanda.

Images of darkness, blood, terror and violence characterize the coverage of Rwanda, creating a media frame that can be described as Blood-soaked Rwanda. In this frame, the violence is senseless, the result of primitive tribalism, and Rwanda is a dark, gruesome place.

However, it should be noted there is still space for alternative versions of the Rwanda story. Rosenblum (1994), for example, gives a different perspective on the Rwanda genocide, saying that the conflict should not be described as rooted in ancient tribal hatreds, but rather as a modern power struggle. He lambastes the media, writing "Reporting from Africa is now reduced to simplistic caricature, and Rwanda is no exception." This piece, written by a non-journalist, is an example of an article that managed to escape the traditional labels used when writing about Africa. Even though the framing of Rwanda did tend to emphasize bloodshed and tribalism, alternative narratives were given at least some space.

The stories about Sudan display a very different tone, and are concerned with different themes. The coverage of genocide in Sudan tends to be more concerned with broad policy rather than human suffering, violence and events on the ground. As can be seen in table five, the coverage of Sudan included much less use of loaded words like "blood" and "tribal". Rather, articles tended to have a neutral tone and to focus on macro-level events.



For example, the *St Louis Post-Dispatch* includes a number of stories about the U.N. Security Council meetings held in Nairobi, Kenya (Sawyer, 2004a; Sawyer, 2004b), focusing on multinational politicking rather than on the events in Darfur. Most of the NIBs in the *St Louis Post-Dispatch* likewise focus on broad events. For example, a typical NIB (“Annan says attacks continue in Sudan”, 2004) focuses on a statement made by then-U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan; another (“U.S. softens wording of Sudan resolution”, 2004) describes maneuvers in the U.N. Security Council; and another (“Annan seeks new way to deal with Darfur”, 2004) discusses the political alternatives under consideration by Annan. Here the genocide is framed as an international political issue, rather than a tribal bloodbath. This is in marked contrast to the framing of Rwanda, and the emphasis on the political aspects of the genocide is a departure from the tradition Mamdani (2001) describes. From Mamdani’s (1996) perspective, such an emphasis on the political would be an improvement, however, the extent to which that is true is discussed in chapter seven.

The *Wisconsin State Journal* barely mentions Sudan, and includes no articles that specifically discuss events in the Darfur region, even though the period under study includes the day then-Secretary of State Colin Powell declared events in Sudan to be genocide, as well as the Nairobi conference, which was held for the first time in Africa with the hope of persuading the Security Council to take action on Darfur. In the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* there are also few mentions of Sudan. However, the one in-depth article on the events in the country focuses on the actions of the U.N. and its policy,

rather than on the events themselves (“U.N. must be strong in Sudan”, 2004), in a similar way to the stories in the *Post-Dispatch*.

This difference in tone and emphasis is marked. Where Rwanda is characterized, with great immediacy, as blood-soaked and tribal, Sudan is more remote, events are not chronicled in detail and brutal acts of violence are seldom mentioned, instead, the focus is on U.N. actions and broad policy debates. When violence is mentioned, it is in restrained terms. For example, one NIB reads: “The Sudanese government is under intense international pressure to restore calm in western Sudan where an 18-month insurgency has killed more than 30,000 people and driven more than 1 million from their homes.” (“Ex-U.S. ambassador to U.N. visits camp”, 2004); another reads: “The United Nations has suspended its humanitarian operations in Sudan's troubled South Darfur area following a shooting that killed two aid workers, the organization said Monday.” (U.N. suspends aid operations after attack”, 2004). The violence in the region, when it is present, is described in muted terms, without words like “blood-soaked” and “orgy” that characterized the coverage of Rwanda. This represents a significant change in the way that Africa is framed; instead of images of depravity the news is discussed in neutral tones, with an emphasis on politics and government actions. It is possible that this change is the result of criticism leveled at the media for its gory, shallow and naïve reporting on Rwanda.

There were other differences in the tone of the articles. Although the newspapers examined all relied heavily on wire copy in their coverage of Rwanda, the stories were generally more focused on the victims of the genocide, and on the details of events as

they unfolded. In “Cold calculation seems to motivate Rwanda butchery” (1994), a victim is named and mourned; “The mob ran Venerande Bakashema down like helpless prey. Eight and a half months pregnant, she had no chance. Then they slaughtered her. Francois Sekayuku, 32, a Tutsi farmer, numbly told the story of his wife's death.” A similar naming and sympathy were found in “Girls buried alive rescued in Rwanda” (1994); “When their parents were slaughtered, Eugenia and Iraminani were buried alive next to them in a mass grave for two days. Only the little girls' heads and hands were sticking up from the ground. They survived, lucky to live, but alone in the world.” Victims are identified, given names and stories. No similar stories of named victims appear in the coverage of Sudan.

The coverage of Rwanda also pays much greater attention to the specificity of the country, to its history and the experience of living there. The first article published in the *Wisconsin State Journal* during the period (Seppa, 1994), for example, is a long piece by a journalist who lived in Rwanda for many years. In it, he fondly reminisces about his time in the country, telling how he proposed to his girlfriend in Kigali, how the streets of the city were safe to walk at night, how the beauty of the countryside touched him. The story gives the reader an image of Rwanda as it was before the genocide; it makes the people of that country seem more human. A similar piece in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, written by a former public affairs officer at the U.S. Embassy, describes pre-genocide Rwanda in idyllic terms.

In the early 1980s every cultivable acre of the "Land of a Thousand Hills" was lush and green with beans, rice, banana trees and other produce. Some of the world's finest tea and coffee grew on mountain slopes. Lions and other wildlife roamed the Akagera National Park, and the world's few

remaining highland gorillas - Dian Fossey's "Gorillas in the Mist" - found sanctuary in a protected zone in the shadow of active volcanoes on the border with Zaire. (Lite, 1994).

Sudan is never discussed in such intimate and loving terms.

Several newspaper articles about the Rwanda genocide also include the accounts of people who had fled the country, and who were eyewitnesses to the brutality there (Fenning, 1994; "Exiles, orphans among ranks of Rwandan rebels", 1994; Ganey, 1994; Hagan, 1994; Olson, 1994). In these pieces, certain victims were allowed to speak for themselves, to tell the story of the Rwanda genocide in their own terms. The accounts are generally sympathetic, and bring to the fore the human cost of events in Rwanda, eliciting empathy and compassion.

No similar articles were found in the coverage of Sudan. There was just one article in the *St Louis Post-Dispatch* that identified a Sudanese man by name, and that article did not describe his experiences in Sudan, but rather dealt with his attempts to claim refugee status in the U.S. (Shinkle, 2004). While the experiences of genocide victims in Rwanda were given relative prominence in the coverage, the victims in Sudan are seldom mentioned, and never in great detail. This results in a much more stark and unsympathetic framing of the genocide as a remote piece of political intrigue rather than as a tragedy befalling fellow human beings.

Overall then, the following conclusions were drawn. The coverage of Rwanda was more in-depth, personalized, prominent and concerned with the victims themselves than that of Sudan. It was also significantly more violence-oriented, gruesome and filled with negative imagery of Africa. Coverage of Sudan was sparse, focused on U.N.

decisions and statements, government actions and broad policy. It described violence in muted, restrained terms and refrained from the kind of negative African imagery that was prevalent in the Rwanda coverage.

(B) Time matters: humanitarian intervening in Rwanda vs. non-involvement in Sudan

The major expectation here was that military intervention would be de-emphasized in both cases, with reference to Somalia in the case of Rwanda and with reference to the War on Terror in the case of Sudan. To a degree this proved to be the case. However, there were interesting differences in the way the coverage between the two periods framed the possible solutions to the genocide.

In the case of Rwanda, several newspaper articles called for the U.S. to directly intervene in Rwanda to provide humanitarian relief, or for the U.S. to use its clout to force the U.N. to intervene militarily, while in the case of Sudan, the editorials generally limited themselves to calling for greater political action by the U.N. While the coverage of the genocide in Rwanda attempted to generate support for direct American humanitarian intervention and for U.S. action in the U.N., the coverage of the Sudanese genocide focused almost entirely on the actions of international bodies such as the U.N.

There was much criticism of U.S. policy and many references to Somalia in the coverage of Rwanda (“Dangers in delaying troop plan for Rwanda”, 1994; Rosenblum, 1994; “U.S. should learn from Rwanda”, 1994; “Rwanda: no more time to wait”, 1994; Krauthammer, 1994; Cohen, 1994; “Answering Rwanda’s cries”, 1994; “A most dismal distinction”, 1994). For example, Rosenblum (1994) writes:

The Clinton administration is doing even less than its predecessors to support the forces for democratic change in Africa. Activist ambassadors in Zaire, Kenya, and Cameroon gave vigor to the later years of the Bush administration. Under Clinton this has all but disappeared. From Ethiopia to Zaire, militant intransigence is being met with interminable policy reviews and acquiescence.

In a similar vein, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*'s editorial board writes, "Clinton must not only be saying what the United Nations shouldn't do, though those are easy arguments to make in Somalia's wake, where the United Nations veered from its proper place of neutrality to pursue a Somali warlord. Clinton should be vigorously promoting what the world body can and ought to do; the humanitarian operation in Somalia provides powerful lessons of that, as well." (Rwanda: no more time to wait, 1994). Despite the criticism, however, the coverage generally stops short of suggesting that the U.S. should intervene militarily, as expected. Instead, humanitarian effort is suggested (Page & Page, 1994).

There were several articles published that praised the Clinton administration for its cautious approach in light of events in Somalia ("Step lightly over Rwanda", 1994; Powaski, 1994). In "Step lightly over Rwanda" the editorial writers of the *Wisconsin State Journal* write:

It may be uneasy comfort to know that the Clinton administration is learning foreign policy on the job. But it is comforting nonetheless to see how the administration has approached its policy on Rwanda by applying what it learned in Somalia and Bosnia. Evidence of the administration's upward progress on the learning curve was provided by the U.S. role in the U.N. vote last week to support an African peacekeeping mission in civil war-torn Rwanda. Thanks to the United States, the United Nations resisted calls from humanitarian groups to expand immediately the U.N. peacekeeping force in Rwanda before fully considering the mission's purpose and limits.

Military action is not encouraged; rather, most of the coverage agrees that the U.S. should hesitate to involve its own soldiers in events in Rwanda. Humanitarian aid is suggested to bring relief to those displaced by the genocide. The title of the article by Powaski (1994) sums up the attitude of the media "Peace first, then U.S. will keep it"; once the fighting has ceased, the U.S. can offer humanitarian aid and help rebuild the country.

Importantly, not all coverage encouraged even humanitarian missions in Rwanda. For example, Kaplan (1994) takes an extremely grim view of the future of Sub-Saharan Africa. The article is worth quoting at length:

What, if anything, can the United States and other Western countries do to prevent much of sub-Saharan Africa from collapsing into total anarchy? Some analysts say it may already be too late to keep the continent from crumbling. At best, they add, even if Western governments were to coordinate their efforts to make profligate African governments adopt stringent political and economic reforms - and there's little sign of that happening - a real improvement wouldn't be likely in less than 15 years. "The plain fact is that much of black Africa is in an advanced state of political and economic disintegration," warns Jean-Jacques Magin, an adviser on African affairs to the French government. Large-scale humanitarian efforts like that currently being mounted for the Rwandans or recently carried out in Somalia are tantamount to "giving aspirin to someone stricken by a fatal disease," Magin says. He fears that "the outside world will gradually grow weary of organizing huge and expensive rescue operations every six months or so to save the population of yet another African state engulfed by mass slaughter and the breakdown of all semblance of order." But he adds: "Probably that is what the outside world will be called on to do."

This article paints a bleak portrait of the African continent and seems to suggest that even humanitarian missions are a waste of time.

Overall, in the coverage of Rwanda, the U.S. was not encouraged to intervene militarily, but was encouraged to directly provide humanitarian relief and to push the U.N. to take action. In the Blood-soaked Rwanda frame, the solution suggested is

humanitarian aid, political alternatives are seldom discussed and military intervention is not encouraged.

Articles about Sudan encourage political action, but almost exclusively through the U.N. or occasionally through the African Union (AU), direct U.S. intervention is never suggested (“Civilians are still at risk”, 2004; “The crisis deepens”, 2004; “U.N. must be strong in Sudan”, 2004). As can be seen in table five, even direct humanitarian intervention is de-emphasized in the coverage of Sudan.

A great deal of coverage in the *St Louis Post-Dispatch* concerns John C. Danforth. In 2004 Danforth was the U.S. ambassador to the U.N. He was committed to solving the problems of Sudan, and took the initiative in many peace processes in the region. Danforth received a lot of coverage in the *St Louis Post-Dispatch* because he is a St Louis native. Most of this coverage details Danforth’s work at the U.N. and tells of how he plans to bring peace to Sudan. At no point does Danforth suggest direct U.S. intervention; rather, he tries to persuade the members of the Security Council to pass resolutions applying sanctions to Sudan, and to promote peace negotiations within Sudan. Thus, it is in keeping with the rest of the coverage, and in line with the expectations discussed above. The U.S. is not encouraged to directly intervene in the Sudanese genocide; rather, tools like U.N. sanctions are suggested. As noted above, the media frame the genocide in Sudan in primarily political terms. The solution, under this frame, is political action, particularly by the U.N.



As anticipated, military intervention was de-emphasized in all the coverage. However, in the case of Rwanda, the U.S. was encouraged to intervene with humanitarian missions, while in the case of Sudan, no direct U.S. intervention was suggested.

A possible explanation for the fact that no direct intervention was suggested in the case of Sudan lies with the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the reduced capacity of the U.S. military to become involved in new areas. As Kurth (2006) writes:

Even during the 1990s, when American willingness to undertake humanitarian intervention was at its peak, the United States evinced very little interest in intervening in Africa... Because of its [the U.S.A.'s] lack of either deep historical connections or contemporary vital interests in Africa, it is not likely to have the political will to [intervene in the future]. Washington's reluctance to undertake humanitarian interventions in Africa... in the near future is deepened by two other U.S. realities, one relating to the U.S. military and the other to the consequences of the Iraq War... the Iraq War has had very damaging consequences for humanitarian intervention. The war has developed in a way that will make it almost impossible for the United States to undertake such an intervention over the next several years, and it has greatly impaired both the political will and the military capability necessary for such interventions.

American politicians and military leaders, aware of the constraints the war in Iraq has put on military capacity, will be extremely reluctant to pursue foreign policies that require direct intervention, either military or humanitarian, by the U.S. As foreign policy and foreign affairs officials de-emphasize intervention, a similar de-emphasis can be expected in media coverage (as noted earlier, media tend to follow the lead of government in foreign policy).

In the case of Rwanda, there were no significant constraints on the U.S. military as the country was not involved in any wars. Instead the constraints were largely political, the events of Somalia hobbled the political will to intervene in Africa and President

Clinton's stringent new intervention policies dampened enthusiasm for action. This combination of factors may be why humanitarian intervention was suggested.

(C) Gendered framing: woman-as-victim

As expected, women are indeed prominent in the description of victims of the genocides, particularly in the coverage of Rwanda; as noted earlier, victims in Sudan are seldom mentioned and never named. Women are identified as victims in 30% of the stories about genocide in Rwanda (see table six). Rape, however, was very seldom mentioned in either the coverage of genocide in Rwanda or the coverage of genocide in Sudan (see table five). This is contrary to expectations. It was expected that rape would be prominent in the coverage of Sudan, this has not proved to be the case.

A possible reason for this is the almost non-existent coverage given to Sudan by the *Plain Dealer* and the *State Journal*, and the relatively little coverage in the *Post-Dispatch*. Although rape was mentioned seldom overall, it was more prominent in the coverage of Sudan than that of Rwanda, indicating that it is likely that if more coverage of Sudan were present rape would be relatively prominent in it.

When reading the texts from a qualitative perspective, certain patterns became apparent. Women were less likely to be quoted than men, more likely to be spoken for rather than to speak. Women tended to be portrayed as passive objects instead of active subjects granted their own voices. They were largely silent victims. While men were often quoted as authorities on events, women were not. As will be demonstrated below,

then, the expectation that women would be shown primarily as passive victims was met. Women were stereotyped as silent and passive, and their victimhood was emphasized.

The coverage of Rwanda often identified “women” as specific victims of the violence in the country. For example, one article reads: “BBC reporter Lindsey Hilsum reported from Kigali, “I have seen hundreds of bodies *including those of four women* hacked to death with machetes near a Red Cross storage point.”” (“Foreigners flee corpse-littered Rwandan capital”, 1994, emphasis added). Another states: ““From the roof of the French school, while evacuees were being loaded on trucks, you could look across a valley and see people, *especially women*, being hauled out of houses and being beaten to death on the road,” Mark Huband, a reporter for The London Guardian, said by telephone from Kigali.” (“Tribal bloodletting spreads beyond Rwanda’s capital”, 1994, emphasis added). These articles make it a point to highlight the female victims of the carnage, an interesting and suggestive strategy. It seems to indicate that the reporters are aware of the advantages of emphasizing female victims in terms of generating horror and sympathy among readers.

Many of the named victims whose deaths are described are women (“Cold calculation seems to motivate Rwanda butchery”, 1994; “Girls buried alive rescued in Rwanda”, 1994). A notable story about female victims is that by Colyer (1994). The article, written by a medical doctor working in Rwanda, details the fates of two named victims, both female.

Yesterday, 4-year-old Jacqueline died. Several days ago, the Interhamwe - roving bands of killers - hacked off her lower jaw with a panga - a type of machete. By the time she made it to the hospital she weighed only 18 pounds and was in septic shock. Even in the best American hospital, she

probably wouldn't have made it. Today was a good turning point for 16-year-old Veronica. A month ago she had an open skull fracture and her hand amputated in a panga attack. She was left for dead in a pile of 500 bodies in a church for two weeks. She arrived in a catatonic state and with horrible infection. Today she smiled and told me her name. Her wounds are healing. (Colyer, 1994).

Such a story is an example of the ways in which women and girls are made prominent among the victims of the carnage, and how they are presented as pitiful and deserving of sympathy.

As mentioned, women, particularly Rwandan women, seldom speak for themselves. Volland (1994) tells the story of two Rwandan sisters who came to the U.S. as political refugees after having been plucked from a Kenyan refugee camp. They are the only Rwandan-born women given a chance to tell their stories, and are portrayed as afraid, ignorant and helpless. The only other quote by a woman comes from "U.N. declares Rwanda safe" (1994), "Another refugee, Eustasie Wanzunuwe, 30, insisted - even as she lay with an intravenous drip in her arm - that the cease-fire in Rwanda was only a ruse. "They stopped fighting so we will go back," she said weakly. "Then they will kill us. That is the strategy." Again, this quote emphasizes the speaker's weakness, fear and victimhood.

Virtually all the quotes from Rwandans are from men, when women are quoted in the news articles, they are usually Americans. Hagan (1994) interviews American Kathy Krasovec who was working in Rwanda when the genocide began, and Olson (1994) interviews American-born Rita Rukashaza who married a Rwandan man and lived with him in Rwanda. Both women demonstrate greater agency and authority than the Rwandan women interviewed, probably because they are Americans.

Rwandan men, when they speak, generally speak from positions of power, as officials or soldiers rather than as victims. In "Exiles, orphans among ranks of Rwanda rebels" (1994) the story of a young soldier is told:

Francois Rwagansana once took well-off Westerners on safaris throughout Africa. But he came home for the ultimate adventure: guerrilla warfare. Rwagansana, 33, plies his new trade at a rebel base in Rugende, five miles north of the divided capital. He has learned how to survive sickness, carry weeks of food on his back - and break the bones of rigid dead enemies to make use of their clothing. And he has learned how to kill.

Further quotes in the same article come from another man in a position of power, "These young men hardly know their country, hardly know the difference between a Hutu and a Tutsi," said Tito Rutaremara, 49, a political leader in the Rwandan Patriotic Front. "Yet there they are, in the bush, fighting the war." These two men are authoritative and ready to fight. In "Rwandan refugees in a mess" (1994) another Rwandan man is named. "Inside and alone, Sigisbert Bucyayunigura, 40, a former cameraman with Rwanda TV and now a newly designated U.N. medical assistant, was seeing patients. Many, he said, were suffering from bronchitis and pneumonia, diarrhea, malaria and abdominal problems. A few had machete and bullet wounds." All these men are active, able to fight or to help their fellow sufferers, while women tend to be passive victims.

There is, as expected, little mention of rape in the coverage of Rwanda. The sole article that mentions rape reads:

Rwandan soldiers raped and hacked civilians to death. "It is like the mayhem has gathered pace. There are massacres all over the place. The army's delight is to murder civilians, while civilians turn on each other in ethnic revenge," said one witness, trapped in the capital. He said in one incident soldiers tied the hands of civilians behind their backs and then

slew them with machetes, or just "emptied round after round as if on target practice." "Sometimes people pleaded for their lives for 20 to 30 minutes, then the soldiers just shot them dead," he said. "Women are in trouble, they are raped first, then killed." ("Refugees await food in Rwanda", 1994).

This is an early mention of the mass rapes that occurred in Rwanda, but is, as noted, the only such mention.

It was anticipated that the coverage of events in Sudan would have a greater focus on sexual violence; this indeed proved to be the case, although there was still minimal focus on rape (see table five). When rape was mentioned in the coverage, it was in broad, sweeping terms; individual victims were not named or interviewed. For example, one NIB reads: "In addition to hunger and instability, there have been numerous reports of displaced *women and girls raped repeatedly* by members of the militias, according to U.N. officials in Darfur." ("Civilians are still at risk", 2004, emphasis added). Another reads: "The conflict in Darfur has been spinning out of control for 20 months as government-backed fighters, known as the Janjaweed, engage in wave after wave of terror against Africans, *burning villages, killing and maiming men, raping women* and causing at least 1.4 million people to flee farms and villages. The death toll is said to exceed 70,000, and tens of thousands more are dying of malnutrition and disease." ("The crisis deepens", 2004, emphasis added). Women's sexual violation is acknowledged and emphasized, but the women themselves are absent. They are not permitted to speak or to be named, or even described. Their function in the text is simply to elicit sympathy as innocent victims.

Overall, the expectations regarding gender were met. Women were silent, seldom permitted to speak for themselves. Their victimhood was emphasized, they were frequently the silent, pitiful named victims of the violence in Rwanda. The coverage of Sudan neglected the victims; they were never named, never interviewed, and seldom mentioned at all. The violence in Sudan was discussed in only the most general terms. Although rape was mentioned slightly more frequently in the coverage of Sudan, there was very little focus on sexual violence overall.

## CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

The framing of genocide in Africa changed significantly between the 1994 Rwandan genocide and the 2003 Sudanese genocide. Specifically, while the Rwandan genocide was framed as bloody, violent, primitive and savage, the genocide in Sudan was framed in primarily benign, political terms. This is significant. While past research into coverage of Africa suggested that the dominant themes would be darkness, savagery and primitivism (Myers, Klak and Koehl, 1996; Crawford, 1996; Hawk, 2002), the findings suggest that this no longer necessarily applies. Furthermore, while work by the African political theorist Mamdani (1996; 2001) suggests that westerners view Africa in apolitical, tribal terms, the coverage of Sudan suggests that that is changing.

The framing and coverage differed in many respects between the two instances studied. Not only was Rwanda covered more thoroughly and prominently, but also the victims of the Rwanda genocide were given a voice in the coverage. Although the articles about Rwanda tended to be filled with images of violence, primitivism and savagery, they also encouraged humanitarian aid, sought to create sympathy for the victims of the genocide and allowed the reader glimpses of pre-genocide Rwanda. In contrast, the coverage of Sudan was sparse, shallow and reliant on pseudo-events such as speeches by U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Although this coverage refrained from using the grim images of earlier coverage, it also failed to include the voices of the victims of the genocide, and served to discourage U.S. involvement in events. While women were



portrayed as weak, passive, silent victims in the coverage of Rwanda, they were almost completely invisible in the coverage of Sudan, unnamed, silent and absent.

The use of tribal imagery, and images of darkness and savagery in the coverage of Rwanda was pronounced. This was very much in keeping with criticisms leveled against Western media's coverage of Africa (Myers, Klak and Koehl, 1996; Crawford, 1996; Hawk, 2002; Mamdani, 1996; Mamdani, 2001). Such images were almost entirely absent in the coverage of Sudan, which is a definite improvement, but came at the cost of depth and breadth of coverage. Contrary to expectations, then, in many ways the quality of coverage declined. There were fewer, less detailed, less intimate and less sympathetic articles about the genocide in Sudan than there were about the genocide in Rwanda. Despite the criticism leveled at the media following events in Rwanda, even less attention is being paid to events in Sudan. While the elimination of the images of savagery, tribalism and darkness is a positive development, the scant coverage of Sudan is a point of concern for those interested in western media's coverage of Africa.

#### (A) A critique of postcolonial theory

From a post-colonial perspective, the findings of this study are noteworthy. In 1994 at the time of the genocide in Rwanda, the coverage was very much what a postcolonial theorist would expect. Africa has historically been viewed as dark, ominous, violent and savage by the west. The news coverage, with its emphasis on the horrors of the genocide and the bloodiness of the violence, fits well within the tradition of the western perspective of Africa. The coverage tended to simplify the situation in Rwanda

by characterizing it as a “tribal bloodletting”, rather than exploring in depth the roots of the genocide. This too is in keeping with the vision of Africa as apolitical, trapped in its history and unable to emerge into the modern world.

As a general rule, the people interviewed in the stories tended to be U.N. officials, government officials in western countries, aid workers and western journalists. There were a limited number of quotes from Rwandans, and most of those quotes were from Rwandan men. When quotes were included from Rwandans, they tended to be about the violence, about the terrifying experiences of survivors. In short, the voices of Rwandan people tended to be the voices of victims, rather than the voices of actors. This is also in keeping with the traditional western view of Africans as primitive and childlike.

However, despite the largely gloomy, violent and graphic coverage, there were instances in which an alternative narrative emerged. As noted earlier, there were several articles in which the writer had been to Rwanda prior to the genocide and remembered that country fondly (Lite, 1994). Such stories painted an idyllic picture of Rwanda as a country of peace and prosperity, unusual themes in coverage of Africa. There were also, more importantly, articles that directly criticized the nature of the coverage of the genocide (Le Vine, 1994; Rosenblum, 1994). In these articles, the authors provided an alternative to the Blood-soaked Rwanda frame that was so often used to characterize events in that country. Instead, these articles sought to complexify the narrative of Rwanda by introducing political elements to the story. For example, Rosenblum (1994) writes: “Reporting from Africa is now reduced to simplistic caricature, and Rwanda is no exception. Tribal conflicts - in particular "ancient" ones - have replaced in-depth

reporting and political analysis. But labeling African struggles as tribal disputes obscures the responsibility of African dictators who will use any means to maintain power, and excuses the Western states who support these regimes.”

The fact that space is available to these alternative narratives is encouraging. It points to a potential region of conflicted interpretation that can be used to improve coverage. Indeed, after the genocide much of the news industry’s own criticism of the coverage (Kuperman, 2000; Dowden, 2004; Melvern, 2006) highlighted similar issues to those discussed by Rosenblum (1994) and Le Vine (1994).

Women appeared in the coverage of Rwanda as expected, largely as passive, sympathetic victims. However, the special dangers faced by women, particularly sexual violence, were seldom discussed. So while the general suffering of women was highlighted, their particular vulnerabilities as women were not addressed. This points to the tendency of the media to use stereotypes and clichés – in this case the suffering woman – without paying attention to the realities experienced by the people they are stereotyping. Women are not permitted to tell their own stories; western reporters, who rely on stereotypes and existing frames, tell their stories *for* them. The particular experiences of Rwandan women are not explored.

The coverage of Sudan represents a significant change from the way that Rwanda was covered. Gone are the images of violence and bloodshed; rather, the articles use a dispassionate tone and refrain from describing the violence in detail. This represents an improvement, a retreat from the traditional blood-soaked imagery used to report on Africa. However, with this positive change came a more negative development. While

the coverage of Rwanda consisted of by-the-minute, on-the-ground reports of events, the coverage of Sudan is remote. The daily lives of the Sudanese people caught up in the genocidal events are not reported on as those of Rwandans were. The coverage is less personal, less intimate. Where the victims of genocide in Rwanda were often named, and small-scale events were described in detail, in the coverage of Sudan there are no named victims. The coverage takes a bird's eye view of the genocide, dispassionately observing events from a distance. While the coverage of Rwanda was often written from Kigali, by reporters who were clearly present, observing events, the coverage of Sudan is written from outside that country, often from the U.N. Commission on Human Rights in Geneva. As discussed above, this is likely partially the result of cost-cutting at newspapers which has resulted in shrinking foreign bureaus and fewer foreign correspondents. In addition, the war in Iraq has monopolized media attention and resources.

The coverage of Sudan lacks the immediacy and personal nature of the coverage of Rwanda. Instead of using the dark, bloody images of Africa that the Rwandan coverage relied on, the Sudanese coverage uses a more remote frame. Where the Rwandan coverage fitted into the traditional, ghoulish frame of Africa, the Sudanese coverage framed events in a different way. The genocide is framed as an international, political issue, to be resolved by international mediation and international bodies like the U.N. While the Rwandan coverage tended to be very local, focused on events in Rwanda, the Sudanese coverage tended to be very global, focused on events at the international level.

Although it is encouraging to note the move away from traditionally bleak framing of Africa, the remote, political frame used to cover Sudan is not necessarily an improvement. While the Blood-soaked Rwanda frame makes Rwanda seem primitive, trapped in history, dark and wild, the remote political frame makes Sudan seem as if it is unable to govern itself. There is a somewhat paternalistic atmosphere in the coverage. Furthermore, by eliminating the personal stories about victims of the genocide, the coverage of Sudan elicits much less sympathy. It is harder to empathize with the nameless, faceless victims of the Sudanese genocide than it is to empathize with the intimately described victims in Rwanda. Thus, what is gained in terms of non-stereotyped imagery of Africa is lost in terms of narrative quality. By covering the genocide in Sudan superficially and remotely, the media send the message that events in Sudan are not worthy of sustained attention.

#### (B) Limitations and suggestions for future research

As discussed earlier, this study is limited in scope, considering just three newspapers for certain discrete periods of time. The analysis focused on three elements of the news coverage of the genocides in Rwanda and Sudan, namely location on the periphery, temporal location and gender. Furthermore, this study relies heavily on textual analysis, which is, as noted, a subjective method.

Future researchers could consider a wider range of newspapers over longer time periods in order to present a more rounded picture of the coverage of Sudan and Rwanda.

In addition, the elements of coverage considered could be expanded to provide more detail and insight.

Future research could expand the selection of newspapers to those outside of the region considered. It would, for example, be interesting to compare the tone of coverage in the three midwestern papers considered here to coverage in papers from other regions of the U.S.A., or to coverage in other countries. In particular, it may be interesting to select newspapers in Anglophone African countries such as South Africa or Nigeria for comparison.

Genocide is a uniquely horrifying event, and one which the international community and international law have pledged themselves to preventing and eradicating. Despite these pledges, genocides continue today. Darfur is still embroiled in a genocide, despite years of political wrangling and economic sanctions. If genocide is to be prevented and halted, it is important that events be properly understood. The media have a role to play in this. Genocide victims are often powerless and unheard. Media have an obligation to the victims of genocide to provide a voice for them on the international stage. This study has explored some of the ways that media coverage framed genocide in Rwanda and Sudan, with the hope of providing some insights into the frames used, a useful analytical framework for future research in the area. Armed with these tools, media scholars will perhaps be better able to critique coverage of genocides and improve its quality, to the benefit of all.

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## TABLES

**Table one: Number of articles by newspaper**

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	Rwanda	Sudan
St Louis Post-Dispatch	82	48
Cleveland Plain Dealer	59	4
Wisconsin State Journal	14	6
TOTAL	155	58

**Table two: Types of articles**

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	Rwanda			Sudan		
	Story	NIB	Letter	Story	NIB	Letter
St Louis Post-Dispatch	79	2	1	21	26	1
Cleveland Plain Dealer	38	21	-	3	1	-
Wisconsin State Journal	13	1	-	3	-	3
TOTAL	130	24	1	27	27	4
% of total articles	83.9%	15.5%	0.6%	46.6%	46.6%	6.9%

**Table three: Article authors**

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	Rwanda			Sudan		
	Reporter	Wire	Outsider	Reporter	Wire	Outsider
St Louis Post-Dispatch	21	50	11	20	25	3
Cleveland Plain Dealer	18	26	15	2	1	1
Wisconsin State Journal	11	-	3	3	-	3
TOTAL	50	76	29	25	26	7
% of total articles	32.3%	49%	18.7%	43.1%	44.8%	12.2%

**Table four: Average number of articles per day during the period examined\***

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	Rwanda	Sudan
St Louis Post-Dispatch	0.7	0.4
Cleveland Plain Dealer	0.5	0.03
Wisconsin State Journal	0.1	0.05
TOTAL	1.3	0.5

\* This table was calculated by dividing the total number of stories published by each paper about each genocide by the number of days in the period studied to give an average number of stories per day. The total was calculated by dividing the total number of stories in all three papers by the number of days in the period.

**Table five: Number and percentage of articles containing various words**

**Articles containing the word blood\***

	Rwanda	Sudan
St Louis Post-Dispatch	29 (35%)	5 (10%)
Cleveland Plain Dealer	17 (29%)	1 (25%)
Wisconsin State Journal	5 (36%)	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>51 (33%)</b>	<b>6 (10%)</b>

**Articles containing the word tribal\*\***

	Rwanda	Sudan
St Louis Post-Dispatch	18 (22%)	2 (0.04%)
Cleveland Plain Dealer	10 (17%)	1 (25%)
Wisconsin State Journal	3 (21%)	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31 (20%)</b>	<b>3 (0.05%)</b>

**Articles containing the word “rape” \*\*\***

	Rwanda	Sudan
St Louis Post-Dispatch	1 (0.01%)	3 (0.06%)
Cleveland Plain Dealer	0 (0%)	1 (25%)
Wisconsin State Journal	0 (0%)	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1 (-)</b>	<b>4 (0.07%)</b>

**Articles containing the word “humanitarian”**

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	Rwanda	Sudan
St Louis Post-Dispatch	27 (33%)	3 (0.06%)
Cleveland Plain Dealer	18 (31%)	1 (25%)
Wisconsin State Journal	2 (14%)	0 (0%)
TOTAL	47 (30%)	4 (0.07%)

\* Includes all forms of the word, such as bloody, blood-soaked, bloodshed, blood-letting and so on.

\*\* Includes all forms of the word, such as tribalism, intertribal and so on.

\*\*\* Includes all forms of the word, such as raped, raping and so on.

**Table six: Number and percentage of articles mentioning a woman, women in general and children as victims**

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	Rwanda	Sudan
St Louis Post-Dispatch	29 (35%)	11 (23%)
Cleveland Plain Dealer	20 (34%)	0
Wisconsin State Journal	3 (21%)	2 (33%)
TOTAL	52 (34%)	13 (22%)