How mainstream media report political dissent: A content analysis of the New York Times coverage of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X

by

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents, Clement and Marie, their parents, William and Katherine, Henry and Anna, and all my ancestors. Through their struggle and commitment, I was able to have this opportunity.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

For as long as nations have existed, there have been individuals within those societies who have led challenges to their legitimacy, whether under the banner of reform or revolution. The effect of those individuals would immediately depend upon the degree to which these political actors could communicate their grievances to the masses, whom they always hope to enlist in their efforts.

The foundation of the American republic witnessed many individuals and groups attempting to shape the new state in their own image. They would make their case to the public by distributing their own newspapers. The advantage for the Hamiltons and Jeffersons was direct communication.

While the population has dramatically grown since the founding of the United States, individuals who own printing presses have fallen in direct proportion. The message of political opposition today is most often channeled through the interpretation of a particular news agency. The power of the press to interpret and shape the political reality of the masses has yet to change; and while so many study Hamilton's Federalist Papers, so few study the New York Times.

If the study of politics is to analyze "Who gets what, when and how?" then the major news agencies which on a daily basis interpret the answer to that question for the citizenry ought not to be overlooked. According to Parenti, "Much of political debate and political struggle is a battle over who controls the labels, the terminology, and the images--who gets to call whom an extremist."[1]

Given the access social scientists have to information about political leaders and events, one can assume the accuracy of media treatment of political phenomena and possible biases that might exist could be detected. One area often explored by social scientists is how the media treat individuals, groups, or social movements who actively challenge the existing social system. This is often described as studies on "how the media treats deviants"; more often, however, these consist of case studies of how newspapers and broadcast media treat political dissent.

Perhaps part of the historical role of the press--the mechanism by which citizens could air grievances towards the state--has led social scientists to do research on how mainstream media treats political leaders and movements who seek to do just that. The purpose of this study is to discover how a major news agency--the New York Times--

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[1] Parenti, Michael. "Inventing Reality: The Politics of the Mass Media." Lecture given at Iowa State University, November 11, 1991.

interpreted two individuals--Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X--who led social movements and rhetorically questioned the legitimacy of the nation they were citizens of.

Before framing the study, however, it is necessary to explore 1) the intended role of the press in the United States; and 2) how the role of the press evolved into the 1960s, when King and Malcolm X were most active and vocal in condemning the established order.

The Press and Democracy

Certainly the importance of newspapers and other informative publications for those who study politics cannot be underestimated. The founders of the United States viewed the role of the press as paramount to government. Thomas Jefferson inscribed: "Were it left for me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate to prefer the latter."

The press was to play the critical role in informing the public on political matters. An educated populace was to be the foundation of democracy. The citizenry, who hold the fate of the country in their hands with the power to vote, are expected to be able to ingest the precise information in order to ensure rational voting and proper representation. In Don't Blame the People, a critical analysis of the news media,

Cirino declares voting polls "can only measure the extent to which techniques of media persuasion have shaped and programmed public opinion."[2]

Jefferson's Theory

Jefferson was considered to be the main proponent of the First Amendment clause, "Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of the press." In his writings, it can be observed Jefferson saw freedom of the press not only as a mechanism by which the citizenry could check the state--but also as a device for which the state could restrain its citizens. Beyond its responsibility to inform the public, Jefferson saw the press as playing a role in maintaining the security of the state. After Shay's Rebellion, when farmers who refused to obey legislation that was to confiscate their property clashed with the state militia, Jefferson interjected that public information readily distributed might help to prevent volatile exchanges between citizens and the state.

> The way to prevent these irregular interpositions of the people (Shay's Rebellion) is to give them full information of their affairs through the channel of public papers, and contrive those papers should penetrate the whole mass of the people ... Cherish, therefore, the spirit of our people and keep alive their attention. Do not be too severe upon their errors, but reclaim them by enlightening them."[3]

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[2] Cirino, Robert. Don't Blame the People. (Los Angeles: Diversity Press, 1971), 310.

[3] Mott, Frank L. Jefferson and the Press. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1943), 5-6.

In writing to a French correspondent, Jefferson indicated that the press was an important outlet for citizens to air grievances with the pen instead of the sword. "This formidable censor of the public functionaries, by arraigning them at the tribunal of public opinion, produces reform peaceably, which must otherwise be done by revolution."[4] According to Jefferson, the free press could be a civilized instrument to maintain public order and engineer consent. "The only security of all is in a free press. The force of public opinion cannot be resisted, when permitted freely to be expressed. The agitation it produces must be submitted to. It is necessary, to keep the waters pure."[5]

The Evolution of the Newspaper

The Partisan Press

Despite Jefferson's call for a free press--he once proclaimed that "liberty depends on the freedom of the press and that cannot be limited without being lost"--several times in his political career he grew disenchanted with information from the heavily partisan newspapers of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Several publications were founded early in the republic to support political causes and resolve feuds between Jefferson's anti-Federalist and Alexander Hamilton's

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[4] Mott, 7.

[5] Ibid, 62.

Federalist Party. Between 1783-1801, more than 400 newspapers were created, most for political purposes.[6]

Developments in technology from the Industrial Revolution in the mid-nineteenth century brought forth the steam-powered press and it now became possible to mass produce newspapers. In the 1850s a mass-market and low-price newspaper became known as the nation's "newspaper of record." The New York Times, founded by George E. Jones, E.B. Wesley, and Henry J. Raymond, was said to be highly objective and professional.[7]

The Business Press

Along with a changing rural to urban population in the late 19th century came a number of wealthy entrepreneurs who would finance and own chains of newspapers. In the 1870s, newspaper chains were to develop as men such as Edward Wyllis Scripps and Joseph Pulitzer began to share ownership and management of publications in more than 15 cities.[8] With a greater concentration of ownership, fewer individuals were to determine what was appropriate or inappropriate news for print. Bagdikian notes that political reformist news publications such as Harper's Scribner and Century exposed corporate abuses with investigative reporting in the 1900's

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[6] Pasqua, Thomas J., James K. Buckalew, Robert E. Rayfield, and James W. Tankard, Jr. Mass Media in the Information Age. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1990), 10.

[7] Ibid, 16.

[8] Ibid, 18.

and were consequently bought by Morgan and Rockefeller who installed their own managers.[9]

Many news agencies consolidated in the early twentieth century and the number of newspapers began to fall. While in 1900 there were more daily newspapers (2,226) than urban locations (1,737), the 1920s saw the merging of competing dailies in the largest cities. New York City had 15 dailies but by the 1930s nine remained and four would disappear eventually.[10] After World War II, the rise of mass advertising and the further urbanization of the United States population began to destroy competitive daily newspapers. Bagdikian notes that monopoly corporations moved to the suburbs and therefore "preempted the best advertising that might otherwise have supported a new local daily" in the central cities.[11]

The phenomenon of advertisements appearing all over newspapers began to change the perspectives of owners, managers, and journalists alike. According to Bagdikian, the traditional newspaper that presented breaking news and commentary began to offer articles on entertaining and light subjects to attract advertisers. "Newspapers began the process of adapting their content to the needs of advertisers and of

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[9] Bagdikian, Ben. The Media Monopoly. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990), 211.

[10] Pasqua, et al. 23.

[11] Bagdikian, 177.

adopting its ideology as their own."[12]

Media Culture and the Sixties

The advent of television in the early 1950s brought a powerful information source that would transform American culture. Evening news broadcasts provided political information with a visual effect. The citizenry would spend less time reading; representations of political actors and events in newspapers took on added significance. The flood of information meant citizens would generally be able to store mental pictures or conceptions of a leader or event. In the case of two prominent newspapers, Cirino explains: "A reader of the first two pages of the Los Angeles Times has more than 50 stories pass through his mind each morning. A thorough reader of the New York Times has to make room in his mind for 300 stories daily."[13]

In this environment, political leaders and movements of the decade were to learn that their message was going to be defined by the mediums of print and broadcast media. Gitlin clarified the obvious constraints the left-wing Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) were to operate under.

> In a society where some sixty million bought daily newspapers and twenty million watched Walter Cronkite, it becomes unimaginable for any opposition movement to define itself and its world view ... There was now a mass-market culture industry, and opposition movements

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[12] Ibid, 177.

[13] Cirino, 134.

had to reckon with it.[14]

At the time Dr. King and Malcolm X appeared in the public eye, newspapers remained the primary news source for U.S. citizens. Roper Polls revealed more than half the population in 1965 got information about what is going on in the world from the newspaper and 75 percent of the population read them daily.[15] The newspaper would act as the definitive voice of information, reaching out to communities across the United States to create an image of two political figures from different backgrounds, who would adopt separate strategies and political philosophies to challenge the basic structures of the most powerful nation on earth. The challenge to the state brought forth by these two leaders, coupled by the anti-war movement of the Sixties and the women's and nuclear freeze movements in the Seventies and Eighties, has brought more attention to the role of the media and its impact in shaping public attitudes towards political dissent.

How Media Covers Dissent

Several forces have been thought to affect coverage by the mainstream press of political leaders and movements that challenge the status quo. Among those are theories that

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[14] Gitlin, Todd. The Whole World is Watching. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 2.

[15] Ronney, Austin. Channels of Power. (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 13-14.

explain press behavior in terms of individual and organizational factors and the constraints of the capitalist system and its prevailing ideology. A content analysis of the New York Times depiction of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X is one way to observe how the mainstream press translate radical dissidence.

Individual Factors

These studies explain press coverage of political dissent as a result of the social backgrounds, attitudes, and opinions of editors, journalists, publishers, and managers.[16] The press is said to be liberal or conservative based upon the unique characteristics of individuals who make up the media. The weakness of this theory is articulated by Hertog and McLeod; namely, that the theory is proved or disproved depending upon the orientation of the group doing the study or upon what group of journalists are being observed.[17]

Furthermore, journalists tend to think of themselves as professionals who remain objective in selecting what is news and the nature of the coverage. In deciding newsworthiness, journalists look for the most dramatic events, especially

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[16] Hackett, Robert A. "Decline of a Paradigm? Bias and Objectivity in News Media Studies," Critical Studies in Mass Communication, Volume 1, (1984): 229-259.

[17] Hertog, James K., and Douglas M. McLeod. "Anarchists Wreak Havoc in Downtown Minneapolis: A Case Study of Media Coverage of Radical Protest." Paper presented at the 71st Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Portland, (July, 1988), 2.

those with economic and political impact. News stories, therefore, focus upon events more than issues.[18] Journalists also tend to adopt "news values" that include covering both sides of an issue and faithfully quoting their sources. Gans specifies several shared values of journalists, including faith in the prevailing social order and the leadership which promotes it.[19] The implication of the theory that explains press coverage of political dissent by the professional standards of journalists is that leaders and movements may have to engage in dramatic and unusual behavior, perhaps even violence, in order to be recognized by the mainstream media.

Organizational Factors

No different than any other for-profit organization, the media has a product to sell. News must be actively produced daily and this requires access to information; reporters placed on "beats" compile information from official sources. News content, therefore, most often reflects the "official outlook."[20] The editorial policy of particular media agencies is also said to significantly influence news-gatherers. Political and economic viewpoints held at the top of the

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[18] Ibid, 5.

[19] Gans, Herbert J. Deciding What's News: A Study of the CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek, and Time. (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 80.

[20] Fishman, Mark. Manufacturing the News. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980), 2.

organization will predictably be the same for reporters on the beat.[21]

System Constraints

The effect of the system of capitalism on the overall coverage of dissent is well noted.[22] The system whereby ownership of the press is concentrated in few hands and corporate advertising sustains media is said to give wealthy individuals extraordinary power to determine news content. Capitalists are said to support the existing system and radical views that might damage advertising in mainstream publications are said to be often ignored or deflected by news organizations.[23] The effect of capitalists--individuals who own the land, labor, resources, and markets in society--on the press depiction of leaders who challenge the prevailing social and economic structure is hard to estimate. Hertog and McLeod explain this is because the nature of the system's influence depends upon the particular position of the news organization within that system. Therefore, any news organization must be

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[21] Breed, Warren. "Social Control in the Newsroom: A Functional Analysis," Social Forces. Volume 33, (May, 1955): 326-355.

[22] Murdock, Graham, and Peter Golding. "Capitalism, Communication, and Class Relations," in J. Curran, M. Gurevitch, and J. Woolacott, Mass Communication and Society. (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, Inc., 1977), 123.

[23] Curran, James. "Capitalism and Control of the Press: 1800-1975," in Curran, Gurevitch, and Woollacott, Mass Communication and Society. (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, Inc., 1977), 110.

analyzed separately.

Ideological Hegemony

The following theory--"ideological hegemony"--is the most common explanation for describing the manner in which the press functions in depicting political radicalism. The theory contains elements of the individual, organizational, and systematic factors; ideology derived from the prevailing political and economic system is said to mold both the news organization and individual journalist into a defender of the status quo.

The theory of "ideological hegemony" is articulated in the writings of Italian Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci, jailed by the Fascists in Italy, theorized that the upper classes occupy a power position in society that gives them predominant influence over the doctrinal system; this gives them the ability to transmit relevant beliefs, images, and symbols for the majority to ingest through ideological institutions within society, including schools and mass media. It is argued that the powerful maintain their positions in society through the process of "ideological hegemony." By coercion and consent, powerful forces in the dominant institutions of society are able to define situations of other groups within society.

Journalists are socialized into the mainstream and accept the dominant readings of events and issues. Along with the news organizations, they generally share certain interests,

including the maintenance of the status quo. Hall argues journalists have no choice but to pick from among the meanings the system makes available to them because dominant meanings are so prevalent.[24]

Gitlin's analysis of the major news agencies' treatment of the radical Students for a Democratic Society led him to conclude that the press creates an impression the system is working by diffusing the message of political dissent. According to Gitlin, those who challenge the status quo in the United States are deterred by press coverage that prevents them from presenting "a general coherent political opposition."[25] The overall image conveyed by the press is that reform movements "focus on single grievances which the system, however reluctantly, can correct without altering fundamental social relations."[26] Consequently, the media "support the dominant system's claim to general legitimacy and its ability to fragment the opposition."[27]

In a similar study, Lentz concluded mainstream newsmagazines served to "reaffirm American society as

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[24] Hall, Stuart. "Culture, the Media, and the Ideological Effect," from Mass Communication and Society. Ed. Curran, Gurevitch, and Wollacott. (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, Inc., 1979), 100.

[25] Gitlin, 11.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

constituted"[28] in their analysis of Newsweek, Time, and U.S. News and World Report's coverage of Dr. King and Malcolm X. According to Lentz, the newsmagazines conveyed the correctness and justice of the American system by deradicalizing the messages of both leaders, in particular after their deaths. "The latter radicalism of King was diluted ... Malcolm X was reincorporated as a figure from a useable past, the history of a nation struggling to put its ideals into practice. The radicals of the 1960s became converts to Americanism."[34]

Organization of Thesis

The body of this thesis consists of five chapters related to the coverage by mainstream media of political dissent within the context of a major news agency, the "newspaper of record" in the United States, the New York Times, and their coverage of two political leaders, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X. Chapter 2 presents biographical sketches of both leaders and chapter 3 offers the focus for press analysis, the research plan based upon Harold Lasswell's three political functions of media - surveillance, correlation, and transmission - and the theory being tested, ideological hegemony. Chapter 4 looks at the surveillance of the two

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[28] Lentz, Richard. "Mass Media and Deviance: Exploring the Boundaries." Paper presented at the 69th Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Norman, (August, 1986), 1.

[34] Ibid, 21.

leaders by the news agency and interprets whether each leader was posed as a positive or negative threat to the established order. Chapter 5 presents how both leaders were depicted in editorial and journalist interpretation fitting into the world scene while alive and after their assassinations. Chapter 6 asks whether the theory of ideological hegemony is suitable to explain analysis found in the previous two chapters; chapter 7 offers recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER 2. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

Before dissecting the coverage of Dr. King and Malcolm X in the New York Times in relation to how the media covers political dissent, it is first necessary to have an understanding of the social backgrounds and political careers of these two prominent figures.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X are considered to be the two most significant African American leaders of the post-World War II era. The two leaders rose to prominence in the 1960s and both were victims of assassination at the age of 39. Both leaders were born to fathers who were ministers; the similarities of backgrounds, however, end there. King was raised by a middle-class family in the segregated South and sent to the finest educational institutions black people were allowed to enter. Malcolm Little lived in the poorest sections of northern cities without parental supervision after his father was murdered and began his education by copying the dictionary in a prison cell.

The separate backgrounds and life experiences of King and Malcolm X shaped their different religious, ideological, political, and organizational methods. Despite differences that existed between the two individuals, Baldwin notes the

two leaders had much in common. "Both ministers were drawn together in a dialectic of social activism by the nourishment they shared in Black folk tradition, by their common devotion to the liberation of the oppressed, by the ideas and convictions they shared, by the personal admiration and respect they had for each other, and by the impelling moral, spiritual, and intellectual power they received from one another."[35]

King and Malcolm X were of the same generation; each was born in the 1920s and entered adulthood as citizens of a country that burst from the flames of World War II as the preeminent military and economic power. Each leader challenged the historical paradox of this super-power--a country, on the one hand, subscribed to the ideals of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" and on the other hand, devoted to the open discrimination and segregation of peoples on the basis of race.

As King and Malcolm X evolved in their political careers, both individuals vociferously attacked the government they lived under for its war-making initiatives against other nations. The 1960s would see the United States attempt to extend its influence over the land, labor, resources, and markets of Southeast Asia.

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[35] Baldwin, Lewis. "Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr." The Western Journal of Black Studies. Volume 13, no. 2, (1989): 103.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Born on January 15, 1929, in Atlanta, Georgia, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. has a national holiday accredited to his name. King grew up in the heavily segregated South, where blacks were relegated to separate and unequal public education, hospitals, and public accommodations. The poor living conditions were combined with the constant threat of white violence against blacks who did not follow Jim Crow laws. King's father was a Baptist preacher who had seen whites beat blacks and even observed a lynching; King's father vowed to hate white people until the day he died.[36] King's mother, Alberta, was described as the perfect preacher's wife.[37]

King developed as a young adult and enrolled in Morehouse College at the age of 15. He preached his first sermon two years later and in 1947 was ordained and made assistant pastor at Ebenezer Baptist Church. King worked during his summer breaks from school as a manual laborer but quit at Railway Express Company when the foreman called him a nigger.[38]

In 1948 at the age of 19, King graduated from Morehouse with a degree in sociology and elected to study for his B.A. in divinity school at Crozer Seminary in Chester,

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[36] Oates, Stephen B. Let the Trumpet Sound. (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), 5.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Oates, p. 21.

Pennsylvania. He traveled to Boston University and received his doctorate from the Graduate School of Theology at Boston University. While in school at Boston, he met Coretta Scott and was married in 1953.

King and the Southern Rights Movement

King was offered and accepted the pastorate at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. After Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat at the front of a bus to a white passenger, King became head of the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) and led the bus boycott. King's house was bombed and his first arrest and trial for civil disobedience began to grant the leader national attention. On February 17, 1957, Time published a feature article on King and the movement.

On invitation from Prime Minister Kwame Nkumrah, King visited Accra, Ghana, and returned to Montgomery by way of Nigeria, Rome, Paris, Geneva, and London. King was said to be deeply affected by the poverty in Africa which he blamed on European colonizers.[39] In 1958 King and 115 black leaders met in Montgomery and formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), which would operate through the Southern church as an agency to coordinate civil rights activity.[40]

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[39] Oates, 117.

[40] Ibid, 123.

King authored Stride Toward Freedom about the Montgomery boycott in 1958 and while autographing copies of the book in Harlem, the leader was stabbed by a demented woman with a letter opener. One of King's ribs and part of his breastbone had to be removed to get the blade free. After recovering, King traveled to India, the land where Mahatma Ghandi preached. Once again, King was distraught by the immense poverty in this foreign nation. He also observed wealthy estates and exclaimed, "The bourgeoisie - white, black, or brown - behave about the same the world over."[41]

After returning to Atlanta, King was summoned to Albany, Georgia, where blacks were attempting to desegregate public facilities. City officials refused to give into the demands set forth by King and others who went to jail and Albany remained as segregated as ever. Despite the defeat, King said blacks in Albany gained self-respect.[42]

After the debacle in Albany, King became convinced that the Federal Bureau of Investigation was on the side of segregationists, noting that agents were always with local police officials. Bureau Director J. Edgar Hoover had, in fact, begun a sophisticated wiretapping and electronic surveillance of King and the SCLC claiming that the civil

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[41] Ibid, 143.

[42] Ibid, 205.

rights movement was influenced by Communists.[43]

The SCLC and its leader selected Birmingham, Alabama, as the next city to target for desegregation. Nonviolent marches and sit-ins sent thousands of blacks, including children under the age of 10, into the jails of the city. King authored the famous "Letter from the Birmingham Jail" in 1963 on toilet paper in a prison cell. In that same year, King was named Time's "Man of the Year" and the SCLC was considered the most important black organization according to Newsweek's poll.[44]

As Bull Connor and his marshals turned fire hoses on black demonstrators in Birmingham, the nation and the world watched. King and the black masses consequently earned their first piece of national legislation; the 1964 Civil Rights Act opened public accommodations, prohibited racial discrimination in large business and labor unions, and established the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

King received international recognition in 1964 as the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. The civil rights leader accepted the award as "profound recognition that nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time."[45]

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[43] Ibid, 201.

[44] Ibid, 291.

[45] Ibid, 321.

King and the SCLC next set out to secure voting rights for blacks. A vigorous voting rights campaign in Selma, Alabama, gave rise to "bloody Sunday," as police officers obeyed Sheriff Jim Clark's orders to attack unarmed civil rights marchers on the Edmund Pettus Bridge. The brutality shook the nation more than any other event in the civil rights struggle; television broadcasts were interrupted and headlines were printed in newspapers and newsmagazines. In response to the events in Selma, Congress passed the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Having secured two major pieces of legislation for the South, King turned his attention toward Northern ghettoes.

The North, Vietnam, and the Poor People's Campaign

The second phase of Dr. King's political career (1965-1968) was marked by an attempt to expand his tactics of nonviolence to a broader scale. In the process, the leader developed a radical analysis of the problems facing blacks and challenged political and economic institutions of the government. In January, 1966 King and the SCLC created an organization in Chicago, Illinois, to force the city to alleviate substandard living conditions for blacks. As King led a march to challenge segregated housing patterns within the city, the leader was hit with a brick as thousands of whites surrounded the demonstrators. King declared that in all the years he had marched, he had never faced "mobs as hostile

and as hate-filled as I've seen in Chicago."[46]

Mayor Richard Daley reluctantly agreed to a partial list of SCLC's demands, which articulated the goals of fairer job-hiring practices and more integrated and low-income housing. Lacking the resources and commitment for alleviating desperation in the slums, however, Daley's government was never willing to accommodate King and SCLC's vision of Chicago. The operation was viewed as the "Northern Albany."

In 1967, King authored Where do We Go From Here? and argued that to end ghetto poverty, it might be necessary to organize demonstrations "on a scale so vast that they would dwarf some of the biggest demonstrations we have seen in the history of the movement."[47] Along with King's attempt to eliminate poverty was an outspoken opposition to the growing involvement of the United States military in Vietnam: "I speak as a child of God and brother to the suffering poor of Vietnam ... I speak for the poor of America who are paying the double price of smashed hopes at home and death and corruption in Vietnam,"[48] King declared.

As a consequence of King's verbal assaults against the Vietnam War, the formally cordial relationship between King and President Johnson ended. The FBI furthered the

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[46] Ibid, 413.

[47] Ibid, 391.

[48] Ibid, 419.

counterintelligence campaign against the outspoken leader; King toured the country in 1967 speaking against the war as FBI agents followed him through Chicago, Louisville, and Atlanta.[49] At an SCLC staff retreat in November, 1967, King called for a radical restructuring of the United States and one month later revealed his plans to organize a mass civil disobedience campaign in the nation's capital to force the government to end poverty. King explained a change in direction for the movement: "For years I labored with the idea of reforming the existing institutions of the South, a little change here, a little change there. Now I feel quite differently. I think you've got to have a reconstruction of the entire society, a revolution of values."[50]

The Poor People's Campaign led by the SCLC began to recruit poor people of all races from cities across the nation. King spoke of causing "major massive dislocations" of government buildings and installations to dramatize the plight of the poor and "to cripple the operations of an oppressive society."[51] King's logic was that if it was necessary to stay in Washington, D.C. for sixth months to get action, the Poor People's Campaign would because here the politicians had no place to run. In January 1968 as King and the SCLC began to

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[49] Ibid, 432.

[50] Ibid, 442.

[51] Ibid, 448.

travel to recruit volunteers for the Poor People's march, the FBI targeted King in its COINTELPRO activities against "black nationalist hate groups."[52]

In March, 1968, King was invited to Memphis, Tennessee, to support sanitation workers who were on strike. On March 28, King led a march of more than 6,000 that erupted into sporadic violence as the Governor of Tennessee sent in 3,500 National Guardsmen to patrol the city. Vowing to lead a nonviolent march, King and his staff returned to Memphis on April 3. On Thursday, April 4, at 6 p.m., King was assassinated on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel. In response, riots flared up in 110 cities, 39 people were killed, and 75,000 federal troops and National Guardsmen patrolled the streets of the nation.

Malcolm X

Born Malcolm Little in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1925, Malcolm X was considered "the other leader besides King" in the 1960s. Malcolm X once again became the subject of national attention in 1992 with the introduction of a movie about his life and the reprinting of his autobiography.

Malcolm Little was born to an East Indian woman and a black American preacher, who extolled the Marcus Garvey "back to Africa" movement. Vigilantes harassed the Littles out of Omaha and burned their home in Lansing, Michigan. When Malcolm

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[52] Ibid.

was six years old, his father was allegedly attacked by a mob, who beat him and forced him to die under the wheels of a streetcar.[53] "I can remember a vague commotion, the house filled up with people, crying, saying bitterly that the white Black Legion had gotten him,"[54] Malcolm wrote.

Shortly thereafter, Malcolm's mother was committed to Kalamazoo State Hospital in 1937 and the children became wards of the state. The last time Malcolm saw his mother in a state institution was at the age of twenty-seven and she didn't recognize him at all. "I can't describe how I felt," Malcolm wrote. "It was as if I was trying to walk up the side of a hill of feathers."[55] In seventh grade Malcolm was elected class president in his school in Mason, Michigan. In eighth grade, his school adviser told Malcolm his desire to be a lawyer was "no realistic goal for a nigger."[56] In the summer of 1940, Malcolm visited his half-sister, Ella, who lived in Boston. Malcolm remained in Boston and later traveled to Harlem, where he drifted into the life of a street hustler. Malcolm's street life of pimping, burglary, and soliciting drugs forced him into several confrontations with the police.

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[53] Franklin, Robert Michael. Liberating Visions. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1990), 77.

[54] Haley, Alex. The Autobiography of Malcolm X. (New York: Random House, 1965), 10.

[55] Ibid, 22.

[56] Ibid, 36.

At the age of 20 in February, 1946, Malcolm Little received a 10-year sentence at Charleston State Prison in Massachusetts. Half-sister Ella got him transferred to Norfolk Prison Colony, a rehabilitation center with a large library. In 1948 at Concord Prison, Malcolm's brother Reginald introduced him to the teachings of Elijah Muhammed, the spiritual leader of the Nation of Islam. Elijah Muhammed's doctrine advocating the total separation of blacks from the white race caught Malcolm's attention.

Malcolm began to read in prison and to copy the dictionary from A to Z, likening the book to a "miniature encyclopedia" and learning about language and the history that spawned it. "Reading had forever changed the course of my life,"[57] Malcolm wrote.

Malcolm and the Nation of Islam

In 1952, Malcolm was released from prison on parole and joined the Nation of Islam. Within one year, Malcolm X was Detroit Temple Number One's assistant minister. The primary task for the minister was to recruit young people into the organization and Malcolm X began preaching and recruiting in Boston, Philadelphia, and in New York's Harlem.

The success by the young minister got him appointed to the position of national representative to Elijah Muhammed and minister of Harlem Temple Number Seven. In 1958, Malcolm

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[57] Ibid, 179.

married Betty X, or Betty Shabazz. Malcolm and the "Black Muslims"--the name ascribed to the Nation of Islam--became known to the larger public in 1959 when newsman Mike Wallace produced "The Hate That Hate Produced" on WNTA-TV in New York City and author C. Eric Lincoln released his book, The Black Muslims in America.[58]

Malcolm X became known as a speaker on many college and university campuses. The minister praised Allah and his messenger-- Elijah Muhammed--and articulated the message of the Black Muslims: "Mr. Elijah Muhammad is our Divine Leader and Teacher here in America. He believes in and obeys God 100 per cent ... God's purpose today is the complete separation of the so-called Negroes from their slave master."[59] The charisma and oratory skills of Malcolm X earned the young minister much attention from the local and national press. Inside the religious organization, some grew envious of the reputation Malcolm had received.

In 1963, Malcolm was censored by Elijah Muhammed for his "chickens coming home to roost" reaction to John F. Kennedy's assassination. Months after his censorship, Malcolm left the Nation of Islam. He explained his discontent with the movement's non-involvement in the civil rights struggle and

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[58] Roosenraad, Jon A. "Coverage in Six New York Daily Newspapers of Malcolm X and his Black Nationalist Movement: A Study." M.A. thesis, (Michigan State University, 1968), 9.

[59] Ibid, 11.

that the "hierarchy itself wasn't practicing what it preached."[60] Later, Malcolm X would reveal disenchantment with the personal lifestyle of spiritual leader Elijah Muhammed.

Muslim Mosque, Mecca, and the OAAU

On March 12, 1964, Malcolm X held a formal press conference and announced two major points of diversion his new organization, the Muslim Mosque, would take from the Nation of Islam: 1) A willingness to work with other black organizations and religions; and 2) A redefinition of black nationalism, including non-separatists.[61]

Upon studying orthodox Islam, Malcolm X made his hajj to Mecca in April 1964. In the company of white Muslims, Malcolm informed the nation he had changed his previous belief that all whites were evil and now understood "we are all brothers." Malcolm X, now known as El-Hajj Malik El Shabazz, began to travel throughout Africa and the Middle East. The leader took the cause of his people to newly independent African nations such as Ghana and Algeria and met with heads of state and newspaper editors.

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[60] Breitman, George, ed. Malcolm X: By Any Means Necessary. (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1970), 158.

[61] Breitman, George, ed. Malcolm X Speaks: Selected Speeches and Statements. (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1965), 18-19.

After traveling to Africa, Malcolm announced the formation of the Organization of African American Unity (OAAU) (named after the Organization of African Unity). Malcolm reported an alliance he was forming between African Americans and Africans and the intention to take the case of the mistreatment of blacks by the United States government to the United Nations. Although Malcolm X talked about the possibility of joining Dr. King, the closest Malcolm X came to the Civil Rights Movement was a speech in Selma on February 4, 1965; Malcolm had invaded Dr. King's territory upon invitation by the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). On February 21, 1965, Malcolm X was assassinated at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem as he was preparing to deliver a speech on the stage. Malcolm's wife, Betty, and four daughters were present.

In order to present a research plan to study how the New York Times interpreted the lives of King and Malcolm X, this study will briefly take into account scholarly translation of the subject.

CHAPTER 3. MARTIN AND MALCOLM: THE FOCUS FOR PRESS ANALYSIS

Studies related to Dr. King and Malcolm X often focus upon the philosophical and ideological differences of the two leaders. King and Malcolm have been described as "adversaries in a great Manichean contest, the forces of light against the forces of darkness, with the future course of black protest at stake."[62] Lucaites and Condit describe King and Malcolm X as representatives of different strands of vision for black America, with King symbolizing social and political reform and Malcolm standing for nationalism and revolution.[63]

In an extensive study of the two leaders, Cone labeled King as an "integrationist" and Malcolm X as a "nationalist." The two figures were said to represent two primary strands of African American political ideology and resistance to slavery and segregation. According to Cone, King believed that if blacks could be integrated into the larger society and afforded the same rights as whites, an equitable and just society might be created. Malcolm X, on the other hand, rejected the idea of integration with the majority and the

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[62] Goldman, Peter. The Death and Life of Malcolm X. (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 74.

[63] Lucaites, John Louis and Celeste Michelle Condit. "Reconstructing Equality Culturetypal and Counter-Cultural Rhetorics in the Martyred Black Visions." Communication Monographs. Volume 57, (March 1990): 1.

notion blacks could ever achieve justice in the United States.[64] Cone notes, however, that neither King nor Malcolm X was a "pure integrationist" or a "pure nationalist" and both represented aspects of each political philosophy.[65]
A further difference between the two leaders derived from their separate religious orientations. King emphasized "the concept of God's love" and a Christian theology that embraced everybody; Malcolm stressed "justice and self-love" and described Islam as the "black man's religion."[66]

Most scholarly critique that stresses differences between the two leaders concentrates upon the time period when King was down South fighting for civil rights and Malcolm X in Harlem Temple Number Seven. Baldwin, however, notes that the relationship between King and Malcolm X passed through two important stages.

The first stage covered the period from 1957-1964, when Malcolm was a Muslim Minister in the Nation of Islam and King was the president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. "During that first stage the religious, philosophical, and political differences between Malcolm and

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[64] Cone, James H. Martin and Malcolm in America: A Dream or a Nightmare? (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991), 41.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid, 164.

King became very clear."[67] The public relationship between the two leaders during the first stage was very negative. Malcolm described King in public interviews as "a traitor" and a "twentieth century Uncle Tom." King called Malcolm "crazy" and "demagogic."[68]

Stage Two: Closer Together

The second stage of the relationship between Dr. King and Malcolm X began after the two leaders met briefly face-to-face on March 26, 1964 in Washington, D.C. during Senate debate on the Civil Rights Bill. According to Baldwin and other scholars, the second stage saw the two leaders come together more on a personal and ideological level. Cone concludes that despite the different fabrics of African American political ideology that each leader represented--"integration" for Martin and "nationalism" for Malcolm--the two "began to eventually embrace aspects of each other's viewpoints, without denying the solidarity of their own central claims."[69] Literary genius James Baldwin, a personal friend of both leaders, argues "by the time each met his death, there was practically

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[67] Baldwin, Lewis. To Make the Wounded Whole: The Cultural Legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 27.

[68] Ibid, 33-34.

[69] Cone, p. 254.

no difference between them."[70] Lewis Baldwin notes primarily "the two found themselves on common ground on international issues, such as world poverty, South African apartheid, and American imperialism."[71] Both leaders had traveled to the Third World and each man eventually linked the struggle of African Americans to the struggle of peoples living in poverty all over the world.

These particular themes were articulated by each leader in public forums before the national press corps and within documents of the SCLC and the OAAU. The major undertakings in the final years of their lives--for Martin the Poor People's Campaign and for Malcolm the United Nations crusade-- were based upon these ideological premises. King vowed the Poor People's Program would demonstrate the exploitation of the poor in capitalist countries. To reconstruct U.S. society, King said, might require the nationalization of vital industries as well as a guaranteed income for impoverished Americans and an end to the slums.[72] King articulated an even broader movement after the Poor People's Campaign. "It is clear to me that the next stage of the movement is to become international ... Poor countries are poor primarily because we

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[70] Baldwin, James. "Malcolm and Martin." Esquire. (April, 1972), 94.

[71] Baldwin, 43.

[72] Oates, 445.

have exploited them through political or economic colonialism ... Pressure can be brought to bear on the capital and government power structures concerned."[73]

In the same token, Malcolm X emphasized that his trips to Africa and the Middle East were made to build political coalitions and to gain support for his plan to take the case of black oppression in the United States before the United Nations. "We thought that the first thing to do was to unite our people, not only internally, but with our brothers and sisters abroad."[74] In short, the final years of both King and Malcolm X saw each leader take a very vocal, direct and active stance against the United States government. The presentation of their programs and articulation of their philosophies would be open to the interpretation of a major news agency that not only feeds U.S. citizens, but much of the world.

Research Methodology

To study how mainstream media treat radical political dissent, the objective will be to paint the overall image of each leader created by the New York Times. Particular emphasis, however, will be directed to how the news agency

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[73] Washington, James Melvin. A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr. (San Francisco: Harper, 1988), 652.

[74] Breitman, George. Malcolm X Speaks. (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1965), 165.

interpreted similar positions each leader would take in favor of a new economic and political order--a direct confrontation with corporate power and the military-industrial complex--the last years both King and Malcolm lived.

The most common method to interpret and analyze material from press publications is content analysis. This research technique is based on measuring the content of written, spoken, or published communication by objective analysis; content analysis allows the investigator to deal with larger questions of the process of media behavior.[75]

Research Plan

The New York Times analysis of King and Malcolm X can be explored by conducting a content analysis following Harold Lasswell's often-cited three functions of the press in modern society.

Lasswell's Press Functions

Lasswell described the three major functions of press communication as follows:

1) Surveillance - The lookout role of the media, watching the society for positive or negative threats to the established order.

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[75] Berger, Arthur Asa. Media Research Techniques. (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, Inc., 1991), 25.

2) Correlation - The interpretation and linking function, which helps the audience comprehend different things in society, and how they fit into the big picture.

3) Transmission - The socialization function, which defines the society, its norms, and its values to the audience.

In short, Lasswell notes the press socializes the public (transmission) by deciding what is newsworthy (surveillance) and its relevance (correlation). We can, therefore, set up the following framework in order to analyze what the New York Times considered was most newsworthy (surveillance) and relevant (correlation) about each leader. This will give us the overall image of each leader (transmission).

1) Surveillance - Was the leader viewed newsworthy as a positive or a negative threat? Did the leader's status change over time or remain roughly the same?

a) What labels were used to describe each leader?

b) What were the major themes emanating from the Times surveillance of major political challenges each leader posed to the established order, namely for King the antiwar movement and Poor People's Campaign and for Malcolm X the attempt to take the U.S. before the U.N. and stated intent to join the civil rights movement? What from the content of speeches was considered newsworthy and what was ignored?

2) Correlation - How did each leader fit into the larger society? What was their relationship to one another?

a) What was the position of the news agency in its editorials devoted to each leader, expressing the opinion of the editor or the publisher? Under what circumstances did each individual end up on the prestigious editorial page and how did the news agency socialize the public to view each leader throughout the course of their life?

b) How did the New York Times present the relationship between Martin and Malcolm and their organizations?

c) What labels, editorial content, and themes were applied after each leader was assassinated? What was the legacy left by each man according to the newspaper?

3) Transmission - Based upon the coverage fulfilling the surveillance and correlation functions cited by Lasswell, what was the overall picture painted of each leader by the news agency? Does the theory of "ideological hegemony" explain what was put forth by the New York Times in its coverage and analysis?

Research Hypothesis

The most common theory to explain how mainstream press covers political radicalism - ideological hegemony - would suggest the following depiction of King and Malcolm X by the New York Times:

Surveillance and Correlation - A wealthy news agency like the New York Times would presumably project both King and Malcolm X as negative threats to the established order. King would be conveyed as more of a negative threat in the latter years of his life--the second stage of his relationship with Malcolm--considering the leader's outspoken opposition to the Vietnam War and the Poor People's Campaign.

Coverage of Malcolm X would remain consistently negative, from the Nation of Islam to the Organization of African American Unity (OAAU) based upon his consistent rhetoric against the political and economic system. For Lasswell's first two functions of media, surveillance and correlation, we can assume if the theory of "ideological hegemony" is correct, the most radical rhetoric of the leaders would be either: 1) diffused and the potential threat to the predominant American institutions that each leader posed would be played down or 2) sensationalized to make the leader appear less credible in their ideological posture.

Transmission - The theory of "ideological hegemony" would predict that the Times will absorb and neutralize the most radical rhetoric to create the impression the political and economic power structure the two leaders attack is legitimate. If this hypothesis is correct, the public would be further socialized to trust the prevailing political, economic, and social order.

CHAPTER 4. SURVEILLANCE

Lasswell describes the first function of media communication as the surveillance of the environment for positive or negative threats to the established order. The New York Times surveillance of King and Malcolm indicates the degree of importance attributed to each leader. This is taken into account by dissecting 1) labels assigned to each leader; and 2) major themes encompassing the capsulation of their confrontations with fixed authority.

Dr. King first appeared in the New York Times on January 22, 1956 in a story on the boycott of public transportation by blacks in Birmingham, Alabama. Malcolm X first appeared in the Times on November 23, 1961, in a story about a city college making room for his speaking engagement. The number of times each leader appeared in the New York Times until the year of their assassinations is found in Table 1.

Dr. King was most newsworthy, appearing in 856 publications compared to Malcolm's 112. The bulk of the New York Times coverage of Dr. King was descriptive reference of day-to-day events taking place in the Civil Rights Movement. The majority of King's coverage occurred after Malcolm X left the Nation of Islam in March of 1964.

Table 1: The number of New York Times publications that Dr. King and Malcolm X appeared, per year, from 1956-1968

	Dr. King		Malcolm X	
1956	30		x	
1957	24		x	
1958	18		x	
1959	14		x	
1960	54		x	
1961	72		2	
1962	53		6	
1963	82		23	
1964	100		58	
1965	124		23	(until Feb. 25)
1966	118			
1967	120			
1968	47	(until April 15)		

Labels

Lasswell notes newspapers function to survey the environment for positive or negative threats to the status quo. "Labels" refer to words and phrases the news agency used to describe Dr. King and Malcolm X during their political careers and signify whether the Times perceived the leaders as good or bad for society.

Malcolm X

In assessing the Times coverage of Malcolm X, it is apparent he was perceived as a negative threat to the prevailing order. This is evident from the labels assigned to

Malcolm. The Times labeled Malcolm as "a leader of the Black Muslims,"[76] the "New York and Washington leader of the Black Muslim Negro separatist movement,"[77] "a white-baiting orator,"[78] and a "racist."[79] After he left the Nation of Islam, Malcolm was coined "the insurgent Black Muslim leader,"[80] "the dissident Black Muslim,"[81] a "demagogue," (false ruler)[82] an "embittered racist,"[83] a "Muslim Black Nationalist leader,"[84] "a former Eastern representative of Elijah Muhammad's Black Muslims,"[85] and the "controversial head of the Muslim Black

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[76] "Malcolm X Scores U.S. and Kennedy." New York Times, 2 December 1963, 21.

[77] Handlee, M.S. "Malcolm X Scores Kennedy on Racial Policy," New York Times, 17 May 1963, 10.

[78] Benjamin, Philip. "Malcolm X Lived in Two Worlds, Black and White, Both Bitter," New York Times, 22 February 1965, 10.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Griffin, Junius. "Malcolm X Plans Muslim Crusade," New York Times, 3 April 1964, 22.

[81] "Malcolm Says Muhammad Fails Cause of Negro." New York Times, 30 June 1964, 20.

[82] "To Arms with Malcolm X." New York Times, 14 March 1964, 22.

[83] Ibid.

[84] "1,000 in Harlem Cheer Malcolm X." New York Times, 23 March 1964, 18.

[85] "Organizations and Leaders Campaigning for Negro Goals in the United States." New York Times, 10 August 1964, 16.

Nationalist movement."[86]

Dr. King

In contrast to Malcolm X, Dr. King was considered by the news agency to be a positive force in the nation and in the world during the Civil Rights Movement. The labels of King remained positive until the last year of his life, when the civil rights leader took a militant antiwar stance and involved the SCLC with other left-wing political organizations.

In a 1956 profile on King, the New York Times described the leader as "soft spoken," "mature," "learned," "well read," and an "upper-middle class Negro Baptist."[87] In 1957, he was categorized more formally a "young Negro Baptist minister" and as "the Reverend."[88] After King was stabbed in Harlem, he was described as "a soft spoken scholar of Hegel and Kant,"[89] the "Negro anti-segregation leader,"[90] the "29-year old

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[86] Handler, M.S. "Malcolm X Flees Firebomb Attack." New York Times, 15 February 1965, 1.

[87] "Battle Against Tradition." New York Times, 21 March 1956, 18.

[88] Rowland Jr., Stanley. "2,500 Here Hail Boycott Leader." New York Times, 26 March 1956, 19.

[89] "Dr. King, Negro Leader, Stabbed by Woman in a Store in Harlem." New York Times, 21 September 1958, 1.

[90] "Dr. King Stricken with Pneumonia," New York Times, 23 September 1958, 68.

clergyman,"[91] and the "Negro integration leader."[92] In 1958, he was labeled for his academic achievements, "a Doctor of Philosophy and a Doctor of Divinity," and religious status, the "pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church."[93]

In 1960, King was described as "the leader of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference,"[94] and "the leader of the non-violent Negro resistance movement in the South."[95] King's involvement with the Freedom Riders in 1961 prompted the news description "militant but nonviolent."[96] In a 1962 news profile, he is compared to Booker T. Washington and described as having "no arrogance about him, nor any intellectual posturing" as "an active servant in the cause of integration." Furthermore, he is noted as a "fund raiser and a politician."[97]

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[91] "King Hails Supreme Court Opinion." New York Times, 1 October 1958, 1.

[92] "Dr. King Leaves Harlem Hospital." New York Times, 4 October 1958, 1.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Sitton, Claude. "Dr. King is Seized in Tax Indictment." New York Times, 16 April 1960, 14.

[95] "Dr. King Sees Gain by Negro Sit-Ins." New York Times, 18 April 1960, 18.

[96] Sitton, Claude. "Bi-Racial Riders To Go On." New York Times, 14 May 1961, 1.

[97] "Man in the News." New York Times, 16 July 1962, 47.

King was labeled "the Atlanta minister"[98] as he led the Civil Rights Movement in Albany and Birmingham, Alabama during 1962 and 1963 (thereby accentuating his outsider status). The New York Times claimed King to be "the leading spokesman for non-violent protest by Negroes."[99] In relation to other black leaders, King is described as "moderate" and "responsible."[100]

King received his most prestigious acclaim from the Times after winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. King was glowingly termed "a young visionary," "a man with a dream," "an imposing civil rights leader," and "the greatest living leader of the Negro movement in the United States."[101]

When King and the movement shifted to Northern cities amidst the cries of "Black Power" from Stokely Carmichael and others, he was categorized much the same as in the South: a civil rights and religious leader, an integrationist, a practitioner of non-violence and "the most popular of Negro

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[98] Sitton, Claude. "Peace Talks Gain at Birmingham in a Day of Truce." New York Times, 9 May 1963, 1.

[99] Ibid.

[100] Sitton, Claude. "The City's Mood: A Compromise Brings Peace but the Dangers of Extremism Remain." New York Times, 12 May 1963, 13 (4).

[101] "Man with a Dream." New York Times, 15 October 1964, 14.

leaders."[102] He was also given the title "Nobel Peace Prize winner."[103]

During the last year of his life, labels given by the Times depended upon the politics King was engaged. When King spoke against the Vietnam War, he was classified as a "critic."[104]. As Dr. King prepared for the Poor People's Campaign, the Times designated him as a political leader between other black leaders who were either "moderates" or "militants."[105] When King made public appeals to black communities to stop rioting, however, he was once again classified as "responsible" and "moderate."[106]

The only overtly negative label the Times applied to Dr. King came when he participated as keynote speaker during a political convention of left-wing organizations in 1967. King and the SCLC took a strong position against the Vietnam War during the convention. All the participants of the convention were labeled as "radicals." By highlighting a picture of King

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[102] Smith, Eliot Fremont. "Books of the Times." New York Times, 12 July 1967, 41.

[103] Reed, Roy. "Dr. King to Seek New Voting Law." New York Times, 6 February 1965, 1.

[104] Roberts, Gene. "The Race Story: Two Negro Leaders," New York Times, 16 April 1967, 3 (4).

[105] Caldwell, Earl. "In the Black Establishment." New York Times, 20 August 1967, 3 (4).

[106] "The Voice of Negro Leadership." New York Times, 27 July 1967, 34.

addressing the convention with a caption reading, "the radicals,"[107] the Times was portraying King as a negative threat to the established order.

In conclusion, the labels assigned during his political career presented Malcolm X as a menace to the social order. The titles given to Malcolm grew more negative during the final year of his life, after his split from the Nation of Islam. The labels attributed to Dr. King, in contrast, were positive, and King was depicted as a leader who could contribute to the establishment; the "radical" designation, however, warrants further analysis of how the news agency portrayed his antiwar posture.

Major Themes

To look at the major "themes" of the Times analysis of Dr. King and Malcolm X is to find topics the news agency selected to be of sufficient potential interest to the public to warrant press coverage and to inspect the positive or negative tone of the coverage. The positive or negative tone of the themes - whether uplifting or detrimental to each leader - illustrate whether the leader was presented as a positive or negative threat to the established order.

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[107] Weaver Jr., Warren. "Politics and Race: Trouble on the New Left." New York Times, 1 September 1967, 4 (4).

In this chapter, themes from public addresses and the central activities each leader engaged challenging the prevailing political and economic structure--for Malcolm X the bid to take the U.S. before the United Nations and the intent to join the civil rights movement and for King the antiwar position and Poor People's Campaign--will be assessed.

Malcolm X

For Malcolm X, his position on violence was the most critical focus of the Times surveillance of public speeches and press conferences. The Times deemed Malcolm X as most newsworthy when the leader made reference to not accepting Dr. King's views on non-violence, urging black people to arm themselves in self-defense. After Malcolm X left the Nation of Islam, he held 17 or 18 public rallies in Harlem.[108] Four of the rallies to appear in the paper advertised his stand on violence. The other rallies went unrecorded.

Two rallies in 1964 illustrate the Times scrutinization of Malcolm's stand on violence.

- A speech Malcolm X gave in support of the Mississippi Freedom Party's challenge to the seating of the state's all-white representatives in Congress, was recorded by the paper as 12 consecutive paragraphs on what Malcolm said about

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[108] Breitman, George. Malcolm X on African-American History. (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1967), 1.

violence.[109] The text of the speech reveals less than one-half of the content was devoted to references towards violence.[110]

• On March 22, Malcolm addressed a crowd of more than 1,000 people to outline his program of blacks controlling their own communities. The paper devoted nine of ten paragraphs to Malcolm's assertion that 1964 would be the year "of the ballot or the bullet."[111]

Along with the theme of violence, the Times acknowledged the leader's organizing abroad to take the U.S. before the United Nations as a threat to the government. The Times quoted officials stating this could present the U.S. Government with "a touchy problem."[112] The news analysis, however, delegitimized his attempt and described the political action as merely a "tactic"[113] and used quotation marks around the term "racism" whenever making reference to Malcolm's charges against the U.S.[114]

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[109] Lubasch, Arnold H. "Malcolm Favors a Mau Mau in U.S." New York Times, 21 December 1964, 20.

[110] Breitman, George. Malcolm X Speaks. (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1965), 105-114.

[111] "1,000 in Harlem Cheer Malcolm X," New York Times, 23 March 1964, 18.

[112] Handler, M.S. "Malcolm X Seeks U.N. Negro Debate," New York Times, 13 August 1964, 28.

[113] "1,000 in Harlem Cheer Malcolm X," New York Times.

[114] Handler, M.S. "Malcolm X Cites Role in U.N. Fight," New York Times, 2 January 1965, 15.

The Times regarded the stated intent of Malcolm X to join the larger civil rights movement and merge black organizations as sufficient for analysis but dramatized the possible impact as negative. The newspaper accentuated its theme of violence by expounding on observers who "see Malcolm's entry into the broader field of civil rights as a prelude to a bloody summer."[115] The news agency downplayed Malcolm's public appearance and speech in Selma, Alabama on February 4, 1965, which marked the only time the leader joined the civil rights movement led by Dr. King. Malcolm's visit to Selma "delayed the protest march for hours" and not one word of the text from the speech Malcolm delivered to the civil rights protesters was quoted.[116]

Other rhetorical challenges made by Malcolm X against the prevailing political and economic structure in public addresses--verbal assaults against capitalism, favorable statements made in favor of socialism, and bitter condemnations of the Vietnam War and U.S. involvement in the Congo and other countries in Africa--were not regarded as newsworthy by the New York Times.

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[115] Powledge, Fred. "Negroes Ponder Malcolm's Move," New York Times, 15 March 1964, 26.

[116] "Speed Negro Vote, Alabama is Told," New York Times, 5 February 1965, 10.

Dr. King

A cursory glance at the two phases of King's political career--the fight against segregation in the South and the antiwar stance and organizing the Poor People's Campaign from the North--reveal that themes attached to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. varied and depended upon the political activities he was engaged. During the fight against segregation down South, the Times cast King's speeches and public presentations with positive and favorable themes; the leader was conveyed as an uplifting social reformist who invoked the nation to make real the promises set forth in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. When King was protesting against the Vietnam War and making alliances with left-wing organizations, however, the news agency saw fit to question his judgement and motivation and to marginalize assertions he would make.

On notable historical occasions, the newspaper saw fit to print entire or significant excerpts of King's speeches, such as the "I Have a Dream" oration, the acceptance speech in Oslo, Norway given after winning the Nobel Peace Prize, and the declaration in front of the capitol at Birmingham after the march from Selma. None of King's declarations against the Vietnam War--including the speech in front of the United Nations in New York City before a crowd of hundreds of thousands and the famous Riverside Church address--were printed in separate excerpts.

A look at the Times coverage of King's most notable public pronouncements during the fight for legislation--the March on Washington, the Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, and the speech after the historic Selma to Montgomery march--reveals consistent positive themes.

- The "I Have a Dream" oration in Washington, D.C. invoked reporter James Reston to compare King to American reformers such as Roger Williams, Sam Adams, Thoreau, William Lloyd Garrison, and Eugene V. Debs. Reston observed King's dream was "a promise out of our ancient articles of faith: phrases from the Constitution, lines from the great anthem of the nation, (and) guarantees from the Bill of Rights."[117]

- King was said to be accepting the Nobel Peace Prize as a humble trustee of those fighting for civil rights. James Feron invoked likeable imagery, noting King spoke "for 10 minutes in a slow, deep voice that filled the marble hall at Oslo University."[118]

- Reporter Roy Reed stated King "spoke with passion, and the thousands sitting in the street beneath him responded with repeated outbursts of approval" during the speech the leader gave on March 26, 1965 after 25,000 marched from Selma to

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[117] Reston, James. "I Have a Dream," New York Times, 29 August 1963, 1.

[118] Feron, James. "Dr. King Accepts Nobel Peace Prize as Trustee," New York Times, 11 Dec. 1964, 1, 32.

Birmingham, Alabama's capitol.[119]

The themes encapsulating the New York Times analysis of King's antiwar activities and organizing the Poor People's Campaign were decidingly of a more negative tone than the coverage of the leader's political engagements down South. While King had previously been cast as a nonviolent, stern and popular social redeemer, the leader's antiwar position and attempts to organize the poor aroused new themes from the news agency. In opposing the Vietnam War, King was misguided, dishonest, and ineffective; in organizing the poor on Washington, King was sparking the possibility of violence and unrest that could threaten civil society. In both endeavors, King was not supported by the public.

King and Vietnam

Overall, King's antiwar position was portrayed as a scheme to advance civil rights. According to the Times, King should not have been active against the Vietnam War because the cause of civil rights has been adversely affected. The one lengthy news analysis devoted specifically to King's antiwar position represents the overall negative survey by the news agency. The piece by Gene Roberts entitled "King's Opposition to U.S. Role in Vietnam Said to Hurt Position as Rights Leader" focused upon a persistent theme found in the majority

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[119] Reed, Roy. "Dr. King Cheered," New York Times, 26 March 1965, 1, 22.

of Times surveillance of the leaders involvement with the antiwar movement: "Will King's antiwar stance cripple civil rights?" By framing the discussion of King's opposition to the war around this one central question, the news agency dismissed the leader's legitimacy as an antiwar leader--despite his international recognition as the winner of the Nobel Peace Prize--because his mission was ostensibly to advance civil rights.

According to Roberts, Dr. King "convinced himself" to take a stand against the war "as the civil rights movement became increasingly fragmented and directionless,"[120] i.e., as an act of mild desperation to revamp the civil rights movement. King is said to have plotted an antiwar position as a strategy to get the civil rights struggle going again (not to stop the war). Roberts declared King had pledged to "associates" after one speech in 1965 not to speak against the war but "after several weeks of meditation and book writings in Jamaica earlier this year, he decided upon an all-out attack."[121] King was also deemed as dishonest in "aligning himself with the black power wing of the civil rights movement, which had long preached against the war ... doing

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[120] Roberts, Gene. "Dr. King and the War," New York Times, 14 April 1967, 21.

[121] Ibid.

what he once said he would not do."[122]

Furthermore, Roberts concluded, King was alienating "moderate" civil rights organizations and U.S. citizens. Therefore, "an already weak civil rights movement is growing weaker and an already disinterested public is growing increasingly disinterested."[123] The result of King's antiwar position is civil rights advocates "hoping against hope" for a new program "but it does not appear to be coming from Dr. King."[124]

The New York Times further portrayed King as an illegitimate antiwar leader by dramatizing civil rights leaders and organizations who were not publicly speaking against the war. In sharp contrast, the news agency excluded the opinions of leaders and organizations (outside of the SCLC) in favor of King's activities. The following are the most pertinent examples:

• When the NAACP passed a resolution not to become involved in the antiwar movement, the Times placed the following headline on page one: "NAACP Decries Stand of Dr. King on Vietnam"; ironically, the news agency noted that the NAACP statement "did not mention Dr. King by name" and no

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[122] Ibid.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Ibid.

quotes appeared from NAACP officials saying anything about Dr. King.

• The first story that described King and the SCLC's official position against the war included information that three months earlier, NAACP leader Roy Wilkins was critical of black organizations opposed to the Vietnam War; organizations that were already strongly anti-war, such as the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SCLC), were not included in the story, except mention that the SCLC's "militant stand" had crippled them financially.[125]

• The opinion of Dr. Ralph J. Bunche, the United Nations Under Secretary for Political Affairs, critical of Dr. King for "merging in his recent speeches the civil rights movement and the crusade against Vietnam," was placed on page one.[126] Dr. King's response--"we do not believe in any merger or fusion" of the civil rights and peace movements--was portrayed by the Times as dishonest by Lawrence E. Davies, who quoted from old antiwar speeches King had made "before today's statement in Los Angeles." Ironically, none of the quotations

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[125] Reed, Roy. "Dr. King's Group Scores Ky Junta," New York Times, 14 April 1966, 1.

[126] Sibley, John. "Bunche Disputes Dr. King on Peace," New York Times, 13 April 1967, 1.

illustrated that King was joining the two movements.[127]

• The opinion of "former director of the United States Information Agency" Carl T. Rowan castigating King's antiwar position was also featured, taken from an article that appeared in the Reader's Digest.[128] Rowan referred to a Louis Harris poll often cited by the Times showing King out of favor with the U.S. public (4 out of 10 Americans "unfavorably disposed towards civil rights groups opposing the Vietnam War").[129]

The Poor People's Campaign

In coverage of Dr. King and the Poor People's Campaign, the New York Times portrayed a leader embarked on a potentially disastrous mission. The common theme describing King's public statements and preparation for the Poor People's Campaign was the threat of violence taking place in Washington. After violence broke out during the march in Memphis, coverage became more negative towards King's attempt to organize the poor.

In the same way the New York Times depicted black leaders and organizations in regards to King's antiwar status, the

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[127] Davies, Lawrence E. "Dr. King's Response," New York Times, 13 April 1967, 32.

[128] Kihss, Peter. "Rowan Terms Dr. King's Stand on War a Peril to Rights Gains," New York Times, 28 August 1967, 10.

[129] Ibid.

news agency 1) dramatized leaders and organizations who did not endorse the call for massive disobedience in Washington and 2) marginalized black voices aligned with King. A cursory glance at Times coverage of the subject revealed the following:

• Earl Caldwell wrote an opinion piece on the topic of how "moderates" in the black movement were wary of King's activities and believed blacks should use normal democratic channels to make demands. Caldwell quoted an insulting statement towards King: "Dr. King is crazy to believe that he can control crowds with the temper being what it is now." The source of the quotation, however, cannot be found since the quotation was attributed "some are saying privately."[130]

• While stating King's rationale for the campaign, Walter Rugaber noted "no one expects even to approach" the 10 million dollars King was asking for to provide jobs and incomes to slum dwellers. Despite King's call for a nonviolent march, "this tactic has had an uncertain effect in some past instances" (King had never led a march that erupted into violence at that point in his political career). Furthermore, "the country seems hardly sympathetic to such a campaign."[131]

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[130] Caldwell, Earl. "In the Black Establishment," New York Times, 20 August 1967, 3 (4).

[131] Rugaber, Walter. "Strong Challenge by King," New York Times, 11 February 1968, 4 (4).

• After the violence that killed one black man in Memphis --a march Dr. King participated in but never organized--the Times' Rugaber attributed the event as a "powerful embarrassment" to Dr. King. The violence in Memphis "set the nation on edge" and despite King's call for nonviolence in Washington, "many were not so sure."[132]

Aside from coverage of King, Vietnam, and the Poor People's Campaign, the leader's criticisms of capitalism did not appear in the Times or his advocacy of democratic socialism. Brief attention was given to King's relating segregation to colonialism when the leader met with Premier Ahmed Ben Bella of Algeria on October 13, 1962. The headline, however, entitled "Ben Bella Links Two Injustices" used parentheses around `Injustices,' delegitimizing the linkage.

Conclusion

In short, the result of the New York Times surveillance--Lasswell's first function of media--was to present Malcolm X, in labels and themes, as a negative threat to the established order, and Dr. King as both positive and negative. King was portrayed as a positive asset during the struggle for civil rights down South but negatively as an antiwar leader and organizer of the poor. After analyzing the Times selection of

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[132] Rugaber, Walter. "A Hot Spring Begins in Memphis," New York Times, 31 March 1968, 2 (4).

newsworthiness, a look at the relevance of each individual within society and their historical legacies is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5. CORRELATION

The correlation function cited by Lasswell pertains to the Times interpretation of how Malcolm X and Dr. King fit into the larger society. According to Lasswell, the media function to help the citizenry comprehend events that take place and their particular significance within the realm of the larger society. During their political careers, it can be observed how the Times placed the two leaders in the world by analyzing 1) the opinion of the editor or publisher and the circumstances each political figure appeared on the editorial page before assassination; and 2) the interpretation of the relationship the two leaders had with one another. The second half of the chapter will further describe Lasswell's correlation function by focusing on how the news agency interpreted the assassinations of both leaders.

Malcolm X

Malcolm X was featured on the Times editorial page only one time before his assassination. The image presented was the same as found in the surveillance of Malcolm X (chapter four, a negative threat, an advocate of violence); Malcolm is additionally presented as a power-hungry fraud. The editorial,

appearing on March 14, 1964, was directed towards the following remarks the newspaper reported Malcolm X made at his first press conference since his break from the Nation of Islam:

> It is criminal to teach a man not to defend himself when he is the constant victim of brutal attacks. It is legal and lawful to own a shotgun or a rifle. We believe in obeying the law.
>
> In areas where our people are the constant victims of brutality and the Government seems unable or unwilling to protect them we should form rifle clubs to be used to defend our property in times of emergency, such as happened last year in Birmingham, Plaquemine, La.; Cambridge, Va.; and Danville, Va. When our people are being bitten by dogs, they are within their rights to kill those dogs.
>
> We should be peaceful, law-abiding. But the time has come for the American Negro to fight back in self-defense whenever and wherever he is being unjustly and unlawfully attacked."[133]

The following day the headline of the editorial read, "To Arms with Malcolm X."[134]

> Malcolm X, the embittered racist recently ousted from the Black Muslim movement, has struck back in anger" (Malcolm apparently didn't leave the movement on his own but was kicked out - he is mad).
>
> He has called upon negroes to form rifle clubs, ostensibly to defend lives and property in times of emergency: It is legal and lawful to

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[133] Handler, M.S. "Malcolm X Sees Rise in Violence," New York Times, 13 March 1965, 20.

[134] "To Arms With Malcolm X, New York Times, 14 March 1964, 22.

> own a shotgun or a rifle, he says, adding with a straight face: we believe in obeying the law"
> (Malcolm is crooked)
>
> His is a call to break the law: to take the law into one groups own hands that would hold fire-arms; to erect a private militia. His is a call to arms against duly constituted forces."
> (Malcolm supports law-breakers)
>
> When he mocked the assassination of President Kennedy, he exposed himself to negroes and whites as the irresponsible demagogue he is"
> (Malcolm is an insignificant, false ruler)
>
> The negro civil rights movement has accomplished more in the past few years by non-violence--by what its leaders call active passive resistance--than by appeals to armed mobs. Malcolm X will not deceive negroes in New York or elsewhere."[135]
> (The unpopular leader will not trick the negro people into a frenzy).
>
> (underlining and parentheses are mine)

Dr. King

In contrast to Malcolm X, who appeared just one time, Dr. King's name appeared on the editorial page 12 times before his assassination. Eight editorials mentioned King briefly or in passing; on four occasions, however, editorials were applied directly to King. Three of the four editorials presented King as a legitimate leader for all people--black and white--to respect and admire. The last editorial to appear before King's assassination, however, presented the leader as misguided and

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[135] Ibid.

dangerous to all elements in society.

The three editorials where the Times linked King's political activities as part of the overall democratic will of the nation were as follows:

• On July 23, 1962, the New York Times praised King for not disobeying a federal court injunction stopping black demonstrations in Albany, Ga. The editorial states King has won "wide admiration" for his fight to obtain black constitutional rights but could lose respect by defying the federal courts: "Whatever the shortcomings of local justice in the Deep South, certainly no one knows better than Dr. King the Federal judiciary is a pillar of the constitutional safeguards his followers have so often been denied."[136]

• On October 15, 1964, the Times exalted the "Evangel of Nonviolence" for winning the Nobel Peace Prize. According to the newspaper, King winning "exalts the prize as much as it does this brave crusader for human understanding and brotherhood." In order to correct the problems blacks face, leaders such as Dr. King working with the white community "represent the best insurance that progress will be both peaceful and prompt."[137]

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[136] "The Courts and Dr. King," New York Times, July 23, 1962, p. 20.

[137] "Evangel of Nonviolence," New York Times, 15 October 1964, 38.

• On July 27, 1967, the Times heralded King--"The Voice of Negro Leadership"[138]--along with three other leaders for issuing a statement to the black community to stop rioting. King was said to be involved in "a timely act of responsible citizenship that deserves the respect and active support of Negroes and whites."[139]

In contrast to the portrayal of King as credible and responsible to the masses, the editorial that appeared one day after the riot in Memphis (March 30, 1968) questioned the leader's legitimacy. Entitled "Mini-Riot in Memphis" the news agency hinted a "major-riot in Washington" because King could not control the Poor People's Campaign. The riot in Memphis, "exposes the danger in drawing large numbers of protesters into the streets for emotional demonstrations in this time of civic unrest ... None of the precautions he (King) and his aides are taking to keep the capital demonstration peaceful can provide any dependable insurance against another eruption of the kind that rocked Memphis."[140]

In the opinion of the news agency, the riot in Memphis made white resentment against the black strikers stronger and

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[138] "The Voice of Negro Leadership," New York Times, 27 July 1967, 34.

[139] Ibid.

[140] "Mini-Riot in Memphis," New York Times, 30 March 1968, 32.

"Dr. King must by now realize that his descent on Washington is likely to prove even more counterproductive." The Times stated King should recall the example of India's Mahatma Gandhi, who suspended protests in India after violence broke out during demonstrations, stating he made a "Himalayan miscalculation." In the same manner, the editorial concluded "Dr. King will be making a Himalayan miscalculation if he fails to appreciate the consequences for the civil rights movement and the nation of an April explosion in Washington."[141]

The Relationship Between Martin and Malcolm

A further illustration of the status the two leaders held in society is the manner in which the Times interpreted the relationship between the two leaders. Upon inspection of the few New York Times articles where both leaders appeared, the prevailing image was that Dr. King and Malcolm X were bitter antagonists. King and the SCLC were projected as a better choice for white society than Malcolm and the Black Muslims or the Organization of African American Unity.

In all ten articles where Dr. King and either Malcolm X or the Black Muslims appeared, the Times highlighted ideological differences. On four occasions Dr. King and Malcolm X appeared in the same story and were quoted; all four

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[141] Ibid.

articles extensively quoted criticisms King and Malcolm X made against one another. In contrast, the newspaper never printed positive statements made by either leader in reference to the other or mentioned aspects the leaders or their respective organizations had in common.

• Under a dramatic picture of children arrested and in detention at Birmingham on May 11, 1963, the headline appeared: "Malcolm X Terms Dr. King's Tactics Futile."[142] Five paragraphs were devoted to a dispute with King as the Times · M.S. Handler stated Malcolm "criticized the campaign of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as an exercise in futility and an erroneous approach to the problems of race relations."[143]

• As King addressed a church congregation in London on the theme of "The Three Dimensions of a Complete Life," he made reference to disliking the doctrine of black supremacy. Despite the fact King made no personal reference to Malcolm X during the three-hour speech, the Times framed the address as "a rebuttal to Malcolm X."[144] James Feron noted King's "plea for moderation in the rights struggle appeared directed at the activities of Malcolm X, leader of the militant Black

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[142] Handler, M.S. "Malcolm X Terms Dr. King's Tactics Futile," New York Times, 11 May 1963, 9.

[143] Ibid.

[144] Feron, James. "Dr. King Preaches Negro Restraint," New York Times, 7 December 1964, 1.

Nationalist movement, who is also in London."[145]

• When Dr. King came to Harlem, the Times printed criticisms the leader made of the Black Muslims (although he once again did not refer to them by name) and stressed that eggs thrown at him were by their supporters.[146]

• When Malcolm X took the big step of leaving the Nation of Islam, the Times published a story about the reactions from leaders of the civil rights movement.[147] Alongside that article appeared a separate piece entitled, "Dr. King Urges Nonviolence in Rights Movement." In this article, three-quarters of the content was devoted to King's commitment to nonviolence, with reporter Gene Currivan stressing "his advocacy for nonviolence was a stand opposite that taken by Malcolm X, who believes that violence is the only language the white man understands."[148]

Aside from the newspaper dramatizing personal criticisms made by each leader of one another, King and the SCLC were seen as fitting into respectable society while Malcolm X and the Black Muslims were portrayed as opportunists wanting to

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[145] Ibid.

[146] "Dr. King is Target of Eggs in Harlem," New York Times, 1 July 1963, 1.

[147] Powledge, Fred. "Negroes Ponder Malcolm's Move," New York Times, 15 March 1964, 28.

[148] Currivan, Gene. "Dr. King Urges Nonviolence in Rights Movement," New York Times, 15 March 1964, 28.

fuel violence. During the events in Birmingham, the presence of Black Muslims "ready to capitalize now or later on a failure by Dr. King is perhaps symbolic of the choice now confronting whites throughout the nation: compromise with present Negro leaders or prepare to deal with the extremist of black supremacy."[149] In a Times editorial, blacks who committed violence in Birmingham "played straight into the hands of the Black Muslim lunatic fringe."[150] After the Supreme Court intervened on behalf of the blacks in Birmingham, an editorial stated "the advocates of nonviolence and orderly methods in Negro ranks now have powerful new ammunition to use against the Black Muslims and other advocates of total warfare with the white community."[151]

In a profile of "Organizations and Leaders Campaigning for Negro Goals in the United States,"[152] the SCLC was said to "win the backing of whole Negro communities" with King as a Negro statesman who believes in the nonviolence of Gandhi and

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[149] Sitton, Claude. "The City's Mood: A Compromise Brings Peace But the Dangers of Extremism Remain," New York Times, 12 May 1963, 13 (4).

[150] "Bombings in Birmingham," New York Times, 13 May 1963, 28.

[151] "The Meaning of Freedom," New York Times, 21 May 1963, 36.

[152] "Organizations and Leaders Campaigning for Negro Goals in the United States," New York Times, 10 August 1964, 16.

subscribes to Hegel's philosophy of synthesis.[153] In contrast, the organization Malcolm formed--the OAAU--"seeks to recruit Negro intellectuals and professionals who cannot accept Islam but favor separation of the races" (the three statements about the OAAU suggested the inclusive nature of the OAAU and all three assertions were, ironically, false).

In short, the correlation function cited by Lasswell that links the two leaders to the larger society portrayed Malcolm X as fitting in with neither mainstream society or with other black organizations and Dr. King as an asset to blacks and whites except when he began to organize the Poor People's Campaign. In relation to one another, the two leaders were portrayed as in serious conflict, even after Malcolm left the Nation of Islam. The one editorial devoted to the philosophy of Malcolm X conveyed the idea the leader was out to deceive the public and had a thirst for violence. In contrast, King was seen as being an integral part of a movement that would better society early in his political career with positive editorials based on his refusing to disobey a Federal injunction, winning the Nobel Peace Prize, and writing a letter urging blacks not to riot. King's involvement with the Poor People's Campaign, however, sparked an editorial that featured the same themes found in the surveillance of King,

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[153] Ibid.

namely that King posed a dangerous threat to civil society and the nation by organizing the poor to embark on Washington. The next step is to look at the correlation function after each leader was assassinated.

Assassination and Aftermath

Having interpreted the space each leader was said to occupy within the larger society while living, a content analysis of the New York Times coverage of the assassinations of Malcolm X and Dr. King indicates their respective places in history. The newspaper's editorials and news analysis after the sudden deaths of both leaders link the legacies of the two men with the world. In this section, the focus for analysis will be 1) labels assigned by the news agency to each leader; 2) content from the editorial page and 3) themes from news analysis.

Malcolm X

Labels

As noted in chapter 4, the labels applied to Malcolm X were consistently negative during his political career. After his assassination, the labels grew more detrimental. One day after his assassination Malcolm was described as a "cultist,"[154]

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[154] "World Pays Little Attention to Malcolm Slaying," New York Times, 28 February 1965, 74.

and a "black supremacist."[155] One week following in a story about the arrest of a Black Muslim in connection with the assassination, Malcolm was classified as a "Muslim extremist."[156]

Editorial No. 2

The second newspaper editorial was an assessment of Malcolm's life and appeared the day after his assassination. Malcolm is once again portrayed as insignificant to the larger society; he is cast as a deranged misfit, a man thirsty for violence.

> He was a case history, as well as an extraordinary and twisted man, turning many gifts to evil purpose. (Malcolm was mentally unbalanced, insidious, and evil too, worthy of psychological study)
>
> His ruthless and fanatical belief in violence not only set him apart from the responsible leaders of the civil rights movement and the overwhelming majority of negroes. It also marked him for notoriety, and for a violent end. (Malcolm was insignificant to black leaders and the masses and his stand on violence is what killed him)
>
> It stood to reason that he could not remain Number 2 to Elijah Muhammed's Number 1 among the Black Muslims. So he broke away (Power-hungry Malcolm obviously had to be No. 1.)
>
> The world he saw through those horn-rimmed glasses was distorted and dark. But he made it darker still with his exaltation of

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[155] Ibid.

[156] Bigart, Homer. "Black Muslim Guard Held in Murder of Malcolm X," New York Times, 27 February 1965, 1.

> fanaticism. Yesterday someone came out of that darkness that he spawned and killed him."[157] (Malcolm was unbalanced in the way he saw the world; he was responsible for his own death). (underlining and parentheses are mine)

Major Themes

The topics selected by the New York Times after Malcolm's assassination make it evident he was interpreted as insignificant to the larger society. According to the Times, Malcolm was a crooked, power-hungry misfit whose death was of little consequence. This is most evident by the Times coverage of Malcolm's funeral. A portion of the February 28 headline read "Murdered Leader of Cult Eulogized as Believer in Brotherhood of Man."[158] Clearly, Malcolm had been mis-eulogized. Martin Arnold of the Times began the front-page story of the proceedings with this summation of the fallen leader.

> Malcolm X, a black nationalist who had told negroes they must meet violence with violence, went to his grave yesterday eulogized as a man who believed in the brotherhood of man.[159] (underlining is mine)

Indeed, the essence of Malcolm's life was his outspoken position on arming oneself for protection. (This also re-illustrates the over-surveillance of Malcolm's violence

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[157] "Malcolm X." New York Times, 22 February 1965, 24.

[158] Martin, Arnold. "Harlem is Quiet as Crowds Watch Malcolm X Rites," New York Times, 28 February 1965, 1.

[159] Ibid.

position).

"Little World Attention"

The "World Pays Little Attention to Malcolm Slaying" appeared on February 28.[160] Two days earlier, however, the newspaper recorded "Malcolm Called Martyr Abroad."[161] The latter headline was deceptive; the story was devoted to a speech made by a "U.S. information agent" who states that Malcolm's ideas had been misunderstood abroad and that was why he was being hailed as a hero.[162] The February 28th report refuted the "martyr" implication as a summary of Times correspondents said Malcolm suddenly was not being hailed in Africa and Asia. The Times did report Malcolm had some world friends; "Chinese Communist Propagandists" were to exploit the murder for a hate campaign.[163]

"Little Local Attention"

The newspaper presented Malcolm's assassination as having little effect in New York City. Malcolm's organization, the (OOAU), was allegedly "fading" in Harlem, with only "40 full-

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[160] "World Pays Little Attention to Malcolm Slaying," New York Times, 28 February 1965, 74.

[161] Kenworthy, E.W. "Malcolm X Called a Martyr Abroad," New York Times, 26 February 1965, 15.

[162] Ibid.

[163] Ibid.

fledged members and 200 hangers on."[164] In distinct contrast, the Times recorded a police estimate that more than 22,000 people had viewed Malcolm's body on display at the local funeral home.[165]

The newspaper also portrayed that persons in Harlem who reacted to Malcolm's death with heart-felt tears were headline material. "Some Weep Over Slaying" appeared on a headline caption the day after the assassination.[166] The Times further make it appear that it's impossible for local people to have respect for Malcolm:

> The Uptown Chamber of Commerce rejected last night a Harlem organization's demand that stores close ... in 'respect' for Malcolm X."
>
> (the word "respect" appears in quotes)

Suspicious Malcolm

The New York Times most blatant description of Malcolm X as a fraud came when the newspaper implied the black leader may have only 'pretended' to leave the Nation of Islam. In a story appearing after Malcolm's death, Peter Kihss conveyed many of Malcolm's depraved qualities:

> Reliable investigators elsewhere, who cannot be named, held the Black Muslim movement

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[164] Kihss, Peter. "Hunt for Killers in Malcolm Case on Right Track," New York Times, 25 February 1965, 1.

[165] "Black Muslim Guard Held," 1.

[166] "Harlem is Quiet," 1.

had been imprisoned within itself by a 'racial-segregationist' and 'hate white' philosophy that had to have ignorant persons to begin with (Malcolm was unaware).

Malcolm was credited with an ability of almost exciting to riot and then pulling the string away quickly to avoid confrontation with the police (Malcolm was like a sly fox).

There were differing views on Malcolm's departure from the Black Muslims - either as a clash over power or his recognition that the movement needed broader appeal (The departure was a sham; Malcolm had never left the Nation of Islam).

One report was that some Middle East leaders had given financial aid to Malcolm and made possible his trip last year to Cairo, Mecca, and African capitals. This was held to have been in hope of converting him to Orthodox Mohammedanism, and Malcolm in fact declared he had come to know good white people abroad. But these patrons were reported to have backed away when Malcolm, on his return here once again began denouncing whites."[167] (Malcolm took the money and faked the Middle East people into believing he subscribed to their religion; he then turned his back on them when he was a safe distance away. Indeed, Malcolm was lying back in the U.S. when he said he had a transformation in Cairo and rejected the Nation of Islam's term, "white devil," to embrace the brotherhood of all men. Malcolm was also apparently unaware that his trips to African capitals were arranged from outside in order to convert him to another religion; his intent to meet with African heads of state order to get support for taking the U.S. before the U.N. was irrelevant).

(underlining and parentheses are mine)

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[167] "Hunt for Killers," 1.

Power-hungry

The New York Times also erroneously painted Malcolm as plotting behind the scenes to take over Elijah Muhammed's position as the religious leader of the Nation of Islam. A headline, "Malcolm Fought for Top Power in Muslim Movement and Lost" appeared the day after Malcolm's assassination.[168] Reporter Will Lissner reported Malcolm left the Nation of Islam after waging a struggle for supreme power that failed."[169] Neither in any of the literature this writer has reviewed on Malcolm X, nor in any Times accounts during his life, is there any indication Malcolm attempted to take over the Nation of Islam. Lissner also depicted Malcolm's lust for personal glory by stating "he had risen to be the second most powerful figure in the Black Muslim movement--and he had made the country aware of it."[170] This so stated despite Malcolm's incessant rejection of a ranking in the movement during his lifetime.

Questionable Death

Every time the Times mentioned the apparent lynching of Malcolm's father, the paper revealed suspicion Earl Little had been killed by a white mob; the implication was Malcolm

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[168] Lissner, Will. "Malcolm Fought for Top Power in Muslim Movement, and Lost," New York Times, 22 February 1965, 11.

[169] Ibid.

[170] Ibid.

falsely interpreted the manner of his father's death. One day after Malcolm's assassination, the Times reported that "Malcolm had always believed his father had been murdered,"[171] (as if Malcolm was the only one to believe such). In a Times book review of Alex Haley's autobiography, reporter Eliot Fremont Smith describes Earl Little only as dying "mysteriously."[172]

Dr. King

Labels

After his death, the labels accorded to Dr. King were strikingly positive; the few negative labels given to the leader during his lifetime were nonexistent. One day after his assassination, the "39-year old Nobel Peace Prize-winning civil rights leader"[173] was described as "a man with access to the White House and the Vatican," "a veritable hero in the African states," "a symbol of integration," and "the most famous spokesman for Negro rights since Booker T. Washington."[174] One week after his death as the cities went up

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[171] "Malcolm X Lived in Two Worlds, Black and White, Both Bitter," New York Times, 22 February 1965, 10.

[172] Smith, Eliot Fremont. "Books of the Times," New York Times, 5 November 1965, 22.

[173] Caldwell, Earl. "Martin Luther King is Slain in Memphis; a White is Suspected; Johnson Urges Calm," New York Times, 5 April 1968, 1.

[174] Schumach, Murray. "Career a Symbol of Integration," New York Times, 5 April 1968, 25.

in flames, day after day, King was recounted based upon his belief in non-violent political action: he was "the champion of nonviolence,"[175] "a nonviolent man,"[176] "the apostle of nonviolence,"[177] and "an advocate of racial progress through nonviolence."[178]

Editorials

After the assassination, for six consecutive days, a string of editorials appeared in the New York Times, offering perspectives from the editor and publisher on what the loss of King meant to the nation in light of the political violence that ensued across the nation. Overall, King's death in the editorials is interpreted as catastrophic for black and white citizens alike, based upon the leader's adherence to nonviolence and belief in the American dream. In light of the assassination, citizens and legal institutions within the United States are challenged by the news agency to make (their interpretation of) King's dream a reality.

In reference to Dr. King, the editorial page read as follows from April 5, 1968 to April 10, 1968:

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[175] Hofmann, Paul. "National Political, Labor, and Religious Leaders Mourn Dr. King," New York Times, 6 April 1968, 27.

[176] Mitgang, Herbert. "The Race Crisis," New York Times, 7 April 1968, 1 (4).

[177] Franklin, Ben A. "A Mood of Tension and Violence," New York Times, 7 April 1968, 2 (4).

[178] Bigart, Homer. "Dr. Martin Luther King Buried in Atlanta: A Vast Cortege Follows Mule-Drawn Bier," New York Times, 10 April 1968, 1.

April 5 - The day after the assassination, King was characterized as a significant leader for blacks and whites alike whose death is a "national disaster." King's essence was his belief in nonviolence, "the cause for which he died"; citizens therefore need to respond with "maximum self control" in the face of the tragedy.[179]

April 6 - King was conveyed as a leader whose goal was to uplift black Americans, but "only when "America" comes home to make the promise of the Declaration of Independence the truth for every Negro citizen will the world know that Martin Luther King did not did in vain." In order to make real "the great vision" King had, of a nation "where all men are brothers" and of a world "where armed violence would be as rare and seem as strange as human cannibalism," what is needed is "an enormous public and private investment of money, ideas, and energy to insure equality of schooling, of job opportunities, and of housing." To begin with, the newspaper challenges the House of Representatives to pass open-housing legislation, which would constitute "no finer gesture to Dr. King's memory."[180]

The second editorial, entitled "The Racists," dealt with rioting in the cities and presented King as a leader who

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[179] "The Need of All Humanity," New York Times, 5 April 1968, 46.

[180] "America, Come Home," New York Times, 6 April 1968, 38.

operated within a respectable American tradition. People who set whites and blacks against one another are ignoring King's mission in life, which was to bring the American dream to everybody, according to the newspaper. The paper also compared the murderer of Dr. King with Stokely Carmichael, who is accused of promoting violence.[181]

April 7 - Three days after his death, King is portrayed as a dreamer who lived to create a better life for people at home and abroad. According to the newspaper, King "felt obliged" to speak against the Vietnam War "when the United States was honored by his Nobel Peace Prize." King's stance on the war was legitimate because the leader saw "impediments to race and economic progress at home while a war was raging abroad."[182]

April 8 - The editorial four days after the assassination argued that rioting disgraced King's memory because of its violent nature. According to the newspaper, the majority of blacks support working through normal channels to articulate grievances and Congress needs to act in order to maintain this faith: "In the wake of Dr. King's martyrdom and its painful immediate consequences, the imperative task is to make these

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[181] "The Racists," New York Times, 6 April 1968, 38.

[182] "He Had a Dream," New York Times, 7 April 1968, 12 (4).

hopes reality."[183]

April 9 - On the day King was buried, the New York Times printed "A Drum Major for Justice," recognizing King's sermon delivered months earlier at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta where he stated what he would like to have be said for a eulogy on his behalf.

April 10 - The day after King's funeral, the newspaper projected the leader as one of the most notable in U.S. history. The editorial argued that the funeral united the nation, fulfilled the wise leader's patriotic vision, and compelled government officials to act. According to the newspaper, King had "given his life for the American dream" and "seldom in its history had this country had a leader of such transcendent spirit combined with iron will, of such integrity of purpose combined with magnetic appeal, of such devotion to a great cause combined with the courage to pursue it." What was now needed was "a long term commitment by the American people" and for "every dollar released through a scaling down of the Vietnam War" to be reallocated "to the monumental tasks of social regeneration in urban and rural slums."[184]

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[183] "After the Lost Weekend," New York Times, 8 April 1968, 46.

[184] "The Vision of Dr. King and the Needed Commitment," New York Times, 10 April 1968, 46.

Major Themes

The subjects addressed after King's assassination in relation to his life were greatly influenced by violent uprisings that occurred across the nation. Perhaps as a result of the turmoil and strong world reaction, New York Times' reporters did not engage in extensive interpretation and analysis of King's political career as they had done with Malcolm X. The coverage after King's death consisted of 1) national and international reaction to the assassination, from U.S. and foreign officials, black leaders, and the world press; and 2) descriptions and reaction to the rioting and looting taking place across the nation. News articles that interpreted the relevance of King's legacy and what the future may bring, however, reveal that several of the same themes that appeared in editorials were also found in news analysis. These included the themes of Dr. King as the symbol of black nonviolence and integration and as standing in the middle of the radical fringe who opposed his leadership. Four Times reporters offered these perspectives within news articles published the week after King was murdered.

• On April 5, Murray Schumach placed King as a momentous "Leader of Millions in Nonviolent Drive for Racial Justice" whose career was "a symbol of integration." Schumach focused upon King's perspective on nonviolence and devoted the first sixteen paragraphs to the philosophy that placed King "between

white and Negro extremists." According to Schumach, "Negro extremists," or those who cried for "black power" had contempt for Dr. King: "They dismissed his passion for nonviolence as another form of servility to white people. They called him an "uncle Tom" and charged that he was hindering the Negro's struggle for equality."[185] White extremists, "not bothering to make distinctions between degrees of Negro militancy,"[186] were also against Dr. King.

• Herbert Mitgang's analytical piece on April 7 once again expounded on the topic of nonviolence ("A Non-Violent Man is Martyred" was the headline). Mitgang asked if nonviolence had died with the death of Dr. King, "the root question in early spring," and noted that "while he lived King was a powerful force for sanity in race relations." King was, however, an ineffective antiwar leader whose "sporadic speeches against the war appeared to have little effect in moving Negroes one way or another." King's "drive against bias" achieved victories, the "high point" the 1963 March on Washington, but many "unfulfilled promises" including the battle for economic rights. His death, Mitgang asserts, may leader to greater change because "the flags are flying at half

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[185] Schumach, Murray. "Martin Luther King Jr.: Leader of Millions in Nonviolent Drive for Racial Justice," New York Times, 5 April 1968, 25.

[186] Ibid.

staff for a Negro" and "a President has made a major change in his plans and will go before a joint session of Congress, because of a Negro."[187]

Ben A. Franklin also offered an analytical piece the same day as Mitgang, but in contrast, framed King as objective in correlating war and domestic spending. While he too focused on the theme of nonviolence, Franklin noted as long as the war takes precedence, Johnson would not be able to make real "King's noble dream for America." If Johnson is unwilling to initiate serious maneuvers to accommodate some of Dr. King's "revolutionary demands," Franklin cautioned, King's prophecy of a "Fascist reaction of repression of the Negro revolution by force of arms seems only a pistol shot away."[188]

Conclusion

Overall, the labels, editorials, and themes ascribed to after his assassination depicted Malcolm X as existing without any power base or following in Harlem, in the nation, or in the world. The evil intentions of the leader are what led to his downfall and Malcolm X is cast by the New York Times as going down in history as an outcast, a false leader. In

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[187] Mitgang, Herbert. "The Race Crisis: A Non-Violent Man is Martyred," New York Times, 7 April 1968, 1 (4).

[188] Franklin, Ben A. "Race Crisis: A Mood of Tension and Violence," New York Times, 7 April 1968, 2 (4).

contrast, the labels, editorials, and themes reserved after his assassination cast Dr. King as an important national leader relevant to all segments of society who sacrificed his life to bring racial equality. The legacy of King could best be honored by a national commitment to make the leader's dream reality, but King's place in history would be secure to anybody reading the newspaper. After describing how each leader fit in society before and after their assassinations, the last of Lasswell's media functions - transmission - will go further in depth to analyze the depictions set forth in chapters 4 and 5.

CHAPTER 6. TRANSMISSION

Lasswell states that one of the socio-political functions provided by newspapers and the media is to socialize the public. The press is said to be an institution that helps to familiarize each generation with accepted doctrine, defining the society, its norms, and its values to the audience. Therefore, if the media does function to socialize the public, then how does the media decide what doctrine is acceptable for socialization? Based upon the content analysis undertaken in chapters four and five, analyzing Lasswell's first two functions of media--surveillance and correlation--it is possible to interpret whether the theory of ideological hegemony might best explain the New York Times "transmission" of Dr. King and Malcolm X.

Testing the Hypotheses

Invoking the theory of hegemony, the first two functions of media according to Lasswell-- surveillance and correlation--were expected to present Malcolm X as a negative threat to the established order and society, in particular during the last year of his life as he increased his animosity towards the U.S. Government. Dr. King was to be represented as

negative demanding national legislation to protect blacks down South and especially during the last year of his life attacking the Vietnam War and organizing the poor. It was predicted that for both functions of media, the rhetoric and activities of both leaders would be either sensationalized or diffused. Reviewing the previous two chapters, the hypotheses are confirmed in relation to Malcolm X. In contrast, the hypothesis was false during King's leadership down South but true in the more radical stages of his political career.

Malcolm X

Surveillance and Correlation

The surveillance of the news agency--labels assigned to Malcolm X and major themes--projected the leader as an evil menace, a religious fanatic bent on spreading violence. Malcolm's attempt to take the U.S. Government before the U.N. was framed as frivolous and his stated intent to join the Civil Rights Movement was projected as another way the leader could spread violence.

In terms of labels, Malcolm was maligned as a racist and a demagogue and his status as a Muslim Minister was disrespected as he was described as a cult leader while head of the Organization of African American Unity. This represents a gross distortion by the New York Times because the OOAU was self-described by Malcolm X as a political and non-religious

entity open to blacks of all faiths and this is made clear in the platform of the organization.[189]

The topics the New York Times selected for news sensationalized Malcolm's position on violence. News coverage of major speeches focused almost exclusively on the subject. Malcolm's verbal assaults against capitalism, attacks against U.S. foreign policy in Vietnam, the Congo, and other nations were not regarded as newsworthy.

In the two times Malcolm X appeared on the editorial page, the image conveyed was even more negative than the coverage of individual reporters. Malcolm was described as crazy and a danger to society with a craving for violence. The only editorial during his life distorted his call for forming rifle clubs in self-defense as a deceptive appeal for armed and unruly mobs. The editorial after the assassination of Malcolm X described the leader as twisted, ruthless, and holding a fanatical belief in violence. Furthermore, Malcolm was power-hungry and his view of the world was distorted. Malcolm was, in the end, shot down because of his many insane perspectives.

The major themes selected by reporters after the assassination perverted the political career and historical

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[189] Clark Steve, ed. Malcolm X: The Final Speeches. (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1992), 257.

legacy of Malcolm X. The New York Times seriously contradicted their own coverage of the impact the assassination had locally and internationally. Kihss reported that Malcolm X was ignorant to have joined the Nation of Islam in the first place and his leaving may have been a masquerade to broaden its appeal; Lissner acknowledged Malcolm left the Nation of Islam, because he was power hungry.

In short, the hypotheses testing ideological hegemony related to Lasswell's first two functions of media were true in regards to Malcolm X as the leader was never able to present his ideological perspective to the public through the New York Times. The rhetoric of Malcolm X was sensationalized on the violence theme and diffused with the non-reporting of the leader's most serious criticisms of the system. The leader was represented as a negative threat to the system and a crazed misfit to society, just as the theory of hegemony would predict.

Dr. King

Surveillance and Correlation

The years Dr. King led the movement in the South elicited a positive portrayal from New York Times reporters and on editorial pages. The labels and themes attached to King depicted the leader as an articulate voice the South and the nation could not ignore. The March on Washington and

acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize by Dr. King were enthusiastically greeted by the news agency. In contrast to Malcolm X, the changes in law and society King asked for were presented by the New York Times in a coherent fashion. King was quoted extensively from major speeches and some were printed in entirety; as King invoked the need for reform and devotion to the system, the news agency reported with precision.

The last year of his life, however, saw King involved in demonstrations harshly condemning the U.S. Government, specifically against the Vietnam War. The Times, in contrast to the movement down South, marginalized King and misrepresented activities in which he was engaged. King was classified as against the war, true enough, and some of his strongest arguments against the war were printed. He was not, however, framed in opposition to the political and economic system that produced the war, which King had strongly become. King was not acknowledged as a legitimate antiwar leader--he was using this as a tactic to get civil rights legislation--and his assertion the United States was on the wrong side of the world revolution was unacknowledged in analyses of King's position. King himself grew disenchanted with the media ignoring and marginalizing opposition to the war as he preached the following to an Atlanta congregation on January 16, 1966: I'm tired of the press and others trying to

brainwash people and let us feel that there are no issues to be discussed. Our hands are dirty in the war."[190]

Moreover, the New York Times presented King as appearing in relative isolation against the war without public support; the antiwar position was ostensibly a political ploy to advance civil rights. As the news agency printed countless articles about leaders who questioned King's position on Vietnam, they both ignored and trivialized alliances King and the SCLC made with left-wing black (SNCC and CORE) and white organizations together against the war. King's position on the war was seen as divisive and stories reporting leaders or political organizations lauding King for his stand were nonexistent. King was also said to be making a tactical mistake in attempting to link blacks with progressive whites. According to the Times, King was looking for a miracle.[191] The active participation of King in a major political convention of leftists was characterized as radical.

The content from speeches King made at antiwar rallies was overshadowed by the Times over-dramatization of the appearance and activities of the demonstrators in the crowd, before and after the marches and speeches. Gitlin emphasized

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[190] Fairclough, Adam. "Martin Luther King Jr. and the War in Vietnam." Phylon. Volume 45, (March 1984): 19-39.

[191] Weaver, Jr., Warren. "Politics and Race: Trouble on the New Left," New York Times, 1 September 1967, 4 (4).

the same condescending tone towards members of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) during antiwar rallies reported by the New York Times.[192]

In the last year of his life, King was portrayed as a dreamer, unrealistic as a civil rights leader for protesting the war and linking U.S. foreign and domestic policy in his Poor People's Campaign. When King made pronouncements linking the economic issues of the Vietnam War and the War on Poverty, the New York Times fragmented the issues and questioned King's logic. The newspaper sensationalized the Poor People's Campaign with an editorial stressing the threat of bloodshed in the nation's capital. The majority of the coverage of the Poor People's Campaign focused upon logistics and preparation; the grievances of poor and working people that might compel them to march towards Washington behind Dr. King did not appear in print.

After King's assassination, a string of editorials depicted the leader as a man who would forever be respected for his belief in the dreams of the nation and love of nonviolence. The radical side of King was generally ignored. According to the news agency, King only wanted to make real the good inherent in the United States. The leader was erroneously depicted as being in mortal combat with leaders of

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[192] Gitlin, 27.

SNCC such as Stokely Carmichael; outrageously, his relationship to leaders of the Black Power movement was compared to his relationship with extreme whites.

In conclusion, King's rhetoric and activities were well interpreted down South. The coverage of King and the movement in the early years even encouraged black newspapers to give an award to the New York Times.[193] Although the hypothesis did not hold true in regards to King's activities down South, King was at that time calling for national legislation and reform within the system and not for change within the power structure.

In clear divergence, the two most time-consuming missions King undertook in the last year of his life--ending the war and organizing the poor--and his rhetoric against the system were marginalized and diffused. The most obvious example is the tame portrayal of the leader after his assassination on the editorial page; the citizen would not know King had become disenchanted with the system and had begun to organize the masses based on a new realization.

In short, the hypotheses tested in this study and the results of the content analysis make it appear as if the New York Times was acting as an agent of hegemony, in that the

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[193] "Negro Paper Honors Nine for Civil Rights Contribution," New York Times, 9 January 1963, 87.

most radical rhetoric and activities of the two leaders was neutralized from a pro-establishment perspective. This is too simplistic an observation, however, based only upon the testing of the hypotheses; what is needed is a look at media tendencies described by social scientists invoking the theory of hegemony and further application to this study.

Media Polarization/The Relationship Between Black Leaders

Gitlin, who invokes the theory of hegemony, notes political dissent is often polarized, in that media reporting creates an artificial impression two sides are diametrically opposed. In the case of leaders involved in movements confronting established institutions, the effect can be to present leaders who may have disagreements on some issues but who are pursuing similar goals as being mortal enemies. In this study, the New York Times falsely portrayed King as being disengaged with black leaders who had ideological differences, in particular on the issue of violence. The New York Times presented King and Malcolm as adversaries, stressing their ideological differences and overlooking perspectives held in common. After King's assassination, the Times reported Carmichael and SNCC and other black power advocates had rejected King. In contradiction, the Times reported several demonstrations where King and Carmichael appeared together, criticized King for aligning himself with SNCC against the

war, and noted SNCC and CORE agreed to participate with the SCLC in the nonviolent Poor People's Campaign.

Reincorporation

Another hegemonic media routine identified by Lentz is the process of deradicalizing leaders by reincorporating their images and legacies into the mainstream U.S. society, serving to reaffirm the system as it is presently constituted. In examining editorials long after their deaths, it is apparent Dr. King and Malcolm X were "reincorporated" by the New York Times to appear as respectable agents of reform. In the case of Dr. King, the process of reincorporation went into affect after the assassination, as the leader was cast as the true believer in the American dream. Malcolm, on the other hand, was interpreted in a more negative light after his assassination. The modern-day portrayal of the two leaders by the New York Times, however, illustrates the theory of reincorporation; in the few editorials available, both leaders have been deradicalized and their messages diffused. One editorial, however, appearing in 1993, reflects the radical side of Dr. King. The "reincorporation" of the two leaders appeared in the following manner:

· A January 6, 1993 editorial on Malcolm X entitled, "When X = Literacy" stressed the leader's appreciation for literacy. The editorial posed the question,"What would Malcolm

X be doing if he were alive today?" The debate, according to the news agency, centers on "black conservatives" and "black liberals;" the conservative Republicans consider Malcolm "the founder of their movement" and the liberal Democrats "say Malcolm's nationalism would have kept him forever apart from those conservatives who doubt the need for civil rights laws." This debate, the Times note, ignores the reality that if Malcolm were alive and "perhaps" involved in politics, "he would be among the fiercest literacy advocates."[194]
A sane reader of Malcolm's political philosophy might interject that during his political career, the leader wanted nothing to do with Republican conservatives, Democratic liberals, or civil rights legislation. The editorial, however absurd, conveys Malcolm X as a reformer for literacy, perhaps a la Barbara Bush, and offers the ruling class perception--conservatives and liberals--of the legacy of Malcolm.

· A string of editorials appeared in the New York Times beginning in 1985 surrounding the birthday and national holiday celebration for Dr. King. Two editorials on the national holiday project King as a leader who saw the breakdown of the black family as a primary source for the problems of African-Americans.

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[194] "When X = Literacy," New York Times, Jan. 6, 1993, p. 20.

On January 15, 1985, the news agency argued King could best be honored if black churches, civil rights groups, and social organizations would tackle unemployment and the crisis of the black family, problems that "exceed the reach of government and law." These problems, some black leaders admit according to the Times, reflect "a breakdown in cultural values" and the need for King's leadership is "as great as ever." King is misrepresented here as the leader with solutions that lie outside of the government realm.[195] One year later (Jan. 15, 1986), King was (mis)represented as a relevant leader for modern times because "he had begun to talk about dangers to the stability of the black family." According to the Times, King recognized, like other black scholars, that the crisis of black families is central to other problems.[196] King, no doubt, understood during his lifetime the black family had problems; the leader, however, saw these problems as symptoms of larger structural and institutional problems. In terms of unemployment, his solution was for the government to provide a guaranteed right to a job. At the time this editorial appeared, the conservative regime in power preached its "the black family is the root of black people's problems"

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[195] "Honoring Dr. King," New York Times, 15 January 1985, 18.

[196] "How to Honor Dr. King - and When," New York Times, 15 January 1986, 22.

doctrine and the New York Times reflected a ruling class identity in associating this doctrine with Dr. King.

• An editorial in 1989 argued in favor of "what King was pressing at his death," the "Poor People's Campaign of 1989," consisting of a number of reform demands of the NAACP, including "enterprise zones" and "prenatal care"; missing from the list, however, were the guaranteed right to employment and a social income, focal demands of King.

In contrast to previous editorials that presented King as a moderate reformer, an editorial on January 18, 1993--in the wake of Spike Lee's movie Malcolm X--introduced the radical side of King. The Times argued historical revisionism has taken place in projecting King as "the moderate alternative" contrasted with "more militant strategies of black empowerment." King should be remembered as "a nonviolent revolutionary and a tireless fighter for peace and racial justice." Ironically, during both his life and after his assassination, the New York Times interpreted King as detached from leaders who advocated "more militant strategies of black empowerment." Looking back, the Times now argues King was more militant. The one editorial, however paradoxical, represents the most accurate portrayal of King.

After evaluating the other hegemonic media routines found in this analysis, the theory of hegemony will be restated and reinterpreted to explain the results of this study.

Ideological Hegemony Revisited

The theory of ideological hegemony states that the ruling class within society is able to exert power by maintaining a predominant influence over the ideological doctrine, advocated and taught through the institutions of civil society, such as the mass media. Hegemony requires the active consent of major groups in society so as to create a common perception of the world; Gramsci notes hegemony represents a higher stage within the development of a class that takes state power and argues this was why revolution was so difficult in Italy and not in Tsarist Russia.

The purpose of this study was not to test whether there was a conspiracy to define the two black leaders in a disapproving manner, but rather to look at hegemonic media routines identified in other analyses of political dissent and to test whether the same tendencies appeared in the Times coverage of Dr. King and Malcolm X. It was not as important that the Times editorial board liked either of the two leaders as that the two leaders were able to present a coherent political opposition to the public, in particular on issues confronting the power structure.

Overwhelmingly, as noted before, the rhetoric and activities of Malcolm X were sensationalized; the image of the leader was so distorted that communication of his ideology and political programs of the Muslim Mosque and OAAU could not be

projected. Predictably, Malcolm X was reincorporated into the mainstream in an editorial 28 years after his death. What is said to constitute hegemonic media routine--the ability to absorb and neutralize political dissent--applied towards the New York Times description of Malcolm X.

A similar hegemonic routine applied to the New York Times coverage of Dr. King, though the leader was able to concisely present his political ideology in the South. Unlike Malcolm X, who was always bitterly lambasted, King was hailed by the New York Times. Despite the positive portrayal in the first stage of his political career, however, the New York Times overall exhibited hegemonic media routine in its depiction of Dr. King.

King the Reformist v. King the Radical

In the South, King was not attacking the national government, but extolling Washington as the ally against the legal segregation of individual Southern states. Previous studies of media coverage of political dissent note the mainstream press may not resist change entirely and may invoke and demand the need for reform. Gitlin notes reformist movements--a suitable name for Dr. King's crusade in the South --are less vulnerable "to structural deformation in the publicity process."[197] Both reformists and radicals, however,

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[197] Gitlin, 286.

are said to be covered by mainstream media as appearing antagonistic towards other opposition movements.[198] In this study, the New York Times framed King and the SCLC against every black leader and organization at one time or another during his political career--King against Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam, King against "Black Power" leaders and SNCC and CORE, King against Roy Wilkins, the NAACP, and the Urban League (during the war), and King against Representative Adam Clayton Powell of Harlem.[199] Even as King called for reform down South, newspaper frames routinely stressed differences between black leaders.

Furthermore, the Times absorbed and neutralized the two most radical endeavors of King's young political career--a leadership role speaking against the Vietnam War and the organization of the disenfranchised opposing Washington. The distortion of King's antiwar stance and pro-establishment perspective on the Poor People's Campaign reflected a news agency projecting the status quo. Radical demands articulated by King--those that directly confronted policy makers and the military industrial complex (composed of transnational corporations, the Pentagon, and the Congress) such as the

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[198] Ibid.

[199] Orris, John. "Powell, Denying Rift, Welcomes Dr. King to Harlem," New York Times, 15 November 1965, 1.

guaranteed right to a job, cutting military spending, and nationalizing vital industries--were vilified or ignored by the New York Times.

Conclusion

In short, the ideological disagreements, per say, between the Times and the radical perspectives of the two leaders apparent on the editorial page were not as pertinent in indicating hegemony as the distortion and diffusion of oratory and endeavors disputing the established order. Criticisms leveled against the political and economic power structure were not issues for news analysis; the consequence of the non-reporting was that militant perspectives were kept from the public domain. Radicalism was either distorted, or ignored altogether; combative ideologies of King and Malcolm X --criticisms against capitalism, for example--never appeared in print. The New York Times overall acted as an agent of social stability in its interpretation of the radical rhetoric and endeavors of the two leaders.

As noted before, ideological hegemony contains elements of three theories--journalistic, organizational, and system--to explain the content of news. The journalists at the New York Times, for example, are professionals who work for a large corporate organization (Time-Life) that exists to make profits in a capitalist system. Gans describes journalists are vulnerable to pressure from groups who can hurt them, their

organizations and firms.[200] The tug-of-war that exists between sources, journalists, and audiences are said to be "resolved by power" and news becomes, according to Philip Schlesinger, "the exercise of power over the interpretation of reality."[201]

In this manner, dominant classes within society are said to be able to transmit a perspective of the world supportive of the established political order, through the penetration of ideology via the doctrinal system of media. Other theories to explain press coverage of media dissent are inadequate for explaining the Times coverage of the Dr. King and Malcolm X for the following reasons:

• Journalistic theories stress the autonomy of professionals who report the news, yet the tone of the reporting on each leader was nearly identical regardless of the individual writing the story, with rare exception. Individual reporters, in contrast to the expectation of acting independent of editorial pressure, conveyed the same interpretations as editors.

• Organizational theories emphasize the autonomy of separate news agencies, but hegemonic media tendencies found

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[200] Gans, Herbert. Deciding What's News. (New York: Pantheon, 1982), 80.

[201] Schlesinger, Philip. "The Sociology of Knowledge," paper presented at the 1972 meeting of the British Sociological Association, (March 24, 1972), 4.

in previous analyses of media coverage of political dissent reappeared in this study, demonstrating the uniformity of news content regardless of agency.

• System theory is best incorporated into the theory of hegemony, which takes into account a specific condition that results from the capitalist economic system, namely the predominant influence enjoyed by individuals with access to media. To thoroughly test this theory is beyond the realms of this analysis, however, as it would require content analysis of news coverage of political dissent in all capitalist nations, not just the U.S..

After deciding that the theory of ideological hegemony best defined the results of this study, the last step is to interpret the relevance of this study with further recommendation of projects to test theoretical concepts related to media and politics.

CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION

The results of this study illustrate the theory of ideological hegemony in the media depiction of leaders who confronted corporate power and the national security state. The perspective the New York Times came from, in particular when the major institutions of the U.S. Government were being attacked, was pro-establishment. During the last year of both leader's lives, as each became more outspoken against what they considered to be structural impediments to the progress of black and poor people, the news agency became defensive against opposition to U.S. foreign policy and ambivalent towards civil rights legislation. We now explore the possible bounds of this theory to explain media behavior and recommendations for further study.

Hegemony and the Press

The theory of hegemony is not only invoked in studies testing mainstream media coverage of political opposition. Others studies of media and politics offer models that encompass elements of the theory. Chomsky, for example, offers the "propaganda model," tested in reference to mainstream

media interpretation of U.S. foreign policy.[202] Studies using the model conclude "what enters the mainstream (media) will support the needs of established power."[203] According to Chomsky, the media are corporations that exist to sell a product - consumers of newspapers and television - to businesses (advertisers). "Those who occupy managerial positions in media belong to the same privileged elites, and might be expected to share the perceptions, aspirations, and attitudes of their associates, reflecting their own class interests."[204] Chomsky explains that the issue is not the integrity and honesty of reporters, but rather "the choice of topics, the highlighting of issues, the range of opinion permitted expression, the unquestioned premises that guide reporting and the general framework imposed for the presentation of a certain view of the world."[205] Hertsgaard offered a detailed study on the press and the Reagan presidency, and concluded "the press during the Reagan years abdicated its public responsibility"[206] to serve the

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[202] Chomsky, Noam. Necessary Illusions: Thought Control in Democratic Societies. (Boston: South End Press, 1989), 153.

[203] Ibid.

[204] Ibid.

[205] Ibid, 12.

[206] Hertsgaard, Mark. On Bended Knee: The Press and the Reagan Presidency. (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1989), 9.

interests of power.

According to Parenti, the primary function of media is the permeation of ruling class ideology throughout society. "It's irreducible responsibility is to continually recreate a view of reality supportive of existing social and economic class power."[207] The most important effect of the news media, according to Parenti, is the ability to organize the political world for us - choosing what to emphasize and what to ignore and suppress: "The media may not always be able to tell us what to think, but they are strikingly successful in telling us what to think about."[208]

The press in the U.S. is also said to be hegemonic because U.S. citizens assume they have a free and neutral press, unlike nations where newspapers are state-owned and citizens can presume they receive the party line. In his studies of the construction of popular opinion to further state power, Ginsberg contends "the ability of the upper and upper-middle classes to dominate the marketplace of ideas has generally allowed these strata to shape the entire society's perception of political reality and the range of realistic

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[207] Parenti, Michael. Inventing Reality: The Politics of the Mass Media. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), 10.

[208] Ibid, 23.

political and social possibilities."[209] According to Ginsberg, "While Westerners usually equate the marketplace with freedom of opinion, the hidden hand of the market can be almost as potent an instrument of control as the iron fist of the state."[210] Parenti argues "power is always more secure when cooptive, covert, and manipulative than when nakedly brutish."[211] British Labor leader Tony Benn, speaking on behalf of Western press distortion of the Gulf War, asserted that media play a role in modern society comparable to the role played by churches in Medieval times.[212] "They control the thinking of people so it doesn't get far out of line to what the government wishes."[213] With the concentration of media ownership, the possibility of receiving diverse ideological perspectives in major media has nearly evaporated. A journalist from the former Soviet Union once told a U.S. journalist "the only difference between our propaganda and your propaganda is you believe yours."

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[209] Ginsberg, Benjamin. The Captive Public. (New York: Basic Books, 1986), 86.

[210] Ibid.

[211] Ibid, 24.

[212] Benn, Tony. Lecture delivered at Iowa State University, (November 18, 1992).

[213] Ibid.

Recommendations for Further Research

To control information is political power; to study major media is to analyze institutions that expend authority in society. Further research related to the findings from this study and on the subject of the press and politics could be forthcoming.

The breakdown of the labels given to Malcolm X illustrate a particular attention given to the leader's religious affiliation. The New York Times made consistent reference to Malcolm X being a Muslim, and rarely referred to King as being a Christian, especially in regards to negative labeling. Was the portrayal of Malcolm X by the Times a result, at least partly, of a bias against non-Christians found in mainstream media? Does a double standard exist in the mainstream--as appeared in this study--against non-Christian leaders and peoples engaged in political struggle?

The opposition of the press towards antiwar demonstrations--found in this study and Gitlin--sparks the question to what degree the press allows dissident perspectives when the military is undertaking missions abroad. The scant research on this topic has characterized the media acting on behalf of the Pentagon by through the restriction of news debate to elite circles.[214]

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[214] Chomsky, p. 36.

Furthermore, because the two leaders were reincorporated into U.S. society as reformist leaders, studies might determine if this represents a persistent pattern. How, for example, was Eugene Debs portrayed while living compared to twenty or fifty years after his death? Or W.E.B. DuBois, or Marcus Garvey? The repercussions are that the media forms consent by deradicalizing leaders and social movements, thereby eliminating debate that challenges established institutions.

Additional research might also be undertaken to further test the mainstream press portrayal of Dr. King and Malcolm X. The New York Times is considered a nationally respected publication written primarily for an educated Eastern audience. How did local newspapers with smaller circulations and different audiences portray the two leaders? Was there a difference between newspapers found in different geographical regions?

Lastly, studies of media often focus upon the concentration of media ownership. A socio-historical study of newspapers in selected cities before World War II might test the extent to which citizens had access to diverse ideological perspectives when the press was owned by more than a few corporations. Were dissident perspectives available? Do citizens in modern-day European cities get more diverse information from their newspapers based on wider selection?

Major studies of the press conclude citizens are socialized to accept the virtues of private ownership of the means of production, the good of the U.S. military abroad, and the advancement of the system towards liberty and justice for all. Lasswell notes the media must perform this socio-political function of socialization in any society if the republic is to survive. Lasswell, considered a democratic theorist, may have slighted the vital relationship between information accessibility and democracy. If only ultrawealthy enterprises own and distribute mass information, suppress competing ideologies, and impress definitions of political reality to make their translation presupposed, the process of ideological hegemony is taking place.

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