

**Debating Regional Military Intervention:
An Examination of the Australian and New
Zealand Media-Government Relationship During
the 2003 Solomon Islands Crisis**

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Degree of Master of Arts in Political Science

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Acronyms

ADF	Australian Defence Force
AusAid	Australian Aid Organisation
AUNZ	Australian and New Zealand
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GRA	Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army
MEF	Malaitan Eagle Force
NZDF	New Zealand Defence Force
PIC	Pacific Island Country
PIF	Pacific Island Forum
PNG	Papua New Guinea
RAMSI	Regional Assistant Mission to the Solomon Islands
SIPF	Solomon Islands Police Force
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States of America
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Abstract

This study explores the Australian and New Zealand media-government relationship during foreign instability and regional military intervention. It offers a critique of print media coverage and political communication during the 2002-2003 Solomon Islands crisis and the subsequent Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands. By reviewing the Indexing Hypothesis and CNN Effect, this thesis considers media and government data from the year preceding the intervention. By investigating the media-government relationship in the Pacific region, this study builds on the literature that has so far primarily focused on American and European led interventions. Previous research has illustrated the advantages and limitations to specific methodological practises. This study has drawn from the current literature to form a unique methodical approach. The methods to test the Australian and New Zealand media-government relationship include content analysis, and qualitative techniques for use in four complementary tests. Findings from this study indicate that while there is some degree of the media using the political elite as a cue for newsworthy issues, the media appear to often report independently from the political elite perspectives. The political elite set the range of debate, and while the media stay within this range, they appear to sensationalise certain aspects of the debate. Government also appear to benefit from this media behaviour as it uses the media to gauge responses during the policy formation process.

Chapter 1: Introduction to Research

“Sending in Australian troops to occupy Solomon Islands would be folly in the extreme. It would be widely resented in the Pacific region. It would be very difficult to justify to Australian taxpayers. And for how many years would such an occupation have to continue? And what would be the exit strategy? The real show-stopper, however, is that it would not work - no matter how it was dressed up, whether as an Australian or a Commonwealth or a Pacific Islands Forum initiative. The fundamental problem is that foreigners do not have answers for the deep-seated problems afflicting Solomon Islands.”

– Alexander Downer, the then Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade.¹

In the six months that followed this strident statement from Alexander Downer, Australian and New Zealand foreign policy made a U-turn. In what was to be a remarkable move for regional engagement, Australia and New Zealand conducted a joint military intervention in the Solomon Islands. The goal of this thesis is to analyse what led to this policy change and what role the media played in the proceedings. More importantly, it will explore government relationships with the media in times of foreign crises, as well as reflect on the role played by media in a democratic society.

In recent years, debate surrounding the impact media have on foreign policy decision-making during international crises and military interventions has intensified. The essence of the debate centres on the degree of media independence from government influence. The ability of the media to be independent in their reporting of current affairs and in their scrutiny of state decisions is open to question. On the one hand, through agenda setting and framing, the media can sometimes directly or indirectly lead or challenged government priorities and policies. On the other, they may also be found taking their lead from the government. In other words, media framing can either lead, challenge, or follow the perspectives of the political elite.

For these reasons, the influence news media can bring to bear on a nation’s foreign policy, as either a facilitator or an impediment, is fundamental to the policy-making process itself. The relationship between news media and the political elite, when foreign policy issues are concerned, raises inevitable questions around the proper role of a democratic media, and its ability to report foreign policy and foreign interventions independently.

¹ Alexander Downer, "Neighbours Cannot Be Recolonised," *The Australian*, January 8 2003.

This thesis seeks to explore the role Australian and New Zealand print media played in their nations' foreign policy initiatives in the twelve-months preceding the 2003 Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI). The relationships between media and government can offer valuable insights into the impact media can have on government decision-making around foreign policy and foreign interventions. The media, however, is but one factor in the formation and delivery of foreign policy. A macro-level analysis of Australian and New Zealand foreign policy during the Solomon Islands crisis will clarify governmental responses and actions, while a micro-level examination of print media coverage and government actions during the year preceding RAMSI will analyse the media-government relationship.

The primary focus of this thesis is to establish the nature of media reporting on foreign intervention, and to show how this reflects or challenges media's relationship with government, but also to see impact on policy making and outcomes. It is the role, the right and the obligation of independent journalists and the democratic media in general to question and scrutinize government.² This function ensures a measure of accountability from the political elite, and helps to maintain public trust in the processes of government. This is why the media has been termed the Fourth Estate of government.³ At times, however, the nature of the media system itself can have the effect of undermining its role as the Fourth Estate of government. In many cases a more accurate description of the relationship between media and government would be of an implicitly mutually beneficial agreement. Journalists are continually constrained by the economic demands of a capitalist system. In order to guarantee that news outlets can always provide news on time and within budget, editors will allocate journalists to locations and situations where newsworthy material is consistently available. Governments also aid the media to meet these demands through the provision of close working relationships with key government insiders.⁴

Journalists rely heavily on sources of ready information. However, journalist must balance their relationship with governments in order to maintain a working relationship; as indicated by media scholar Leon Sigal "they are not free to roam or probe at will."⁵ Consequently, close relationships with the political elite are carefully fostered to ensure that legitimate information sources are always readily available as an efficient means of overcoming time and money restraints. On the other hand, the media can also act as a means by which the political elite are well supplied with information from the

² Julianne Schultz, *Democracy, Accountability and the Media* (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1-14.

³ *Ibid.*, 1-14.

⁴ Gaye Tuchman, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality* (New York: Macmillan, 1978), 387; Jonathan Mermin, "Television News and American Intervention in Somalia: The Myth of a Media-Driven Foreign Policy," *Political Science Quarterly* 112, no. 3 (1997):

⁵ Leon V. Sigal, "Sources Make the News," in *Reading the News*, ed. Robert Karl Manoff and Michael Schudson (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 16.

domestic and international arenas and such information can influence policy-makers' decisions. The political process encourages the political elite to engage in this way with journalists to advance their own ends. Political actors can provide journalists with information and discourse which supports their own interests and policies, whilst challenging any opposing arguments.

Contributing to this complexity in the exchange of information is the internal conflict that arises between different political actors or institutions seeking to advance their own agendas. The government apparatus is a place that offers briefings, releases, speeches, debates, and other newsworthy information on a relatively consistent basis, and is therefore essential to journalists and media outlets. For these reasons journalists can at times feel conflict between their obligation to continually question government and their duty to promote the business interests of their own media organisations.

Research Focus and Rationale

During a foreign crisis, the role of the independent media is debateable. The media sets its own agenda. However, many studies argue that journalists also regularly confer with government officials and politicians when considering what issues are newsworthy.⁶ When doing so, journalists often source information from the political elite, and consequently adopt their narratives. An extensive literature claims substantial political elite influence over the news media.⁷ This is referred to as the Indexing Hypothesis (Indexing).⁸

The Indexing Hypothesis argues that news media are restricted by the nature of journalistic routines and index frames and narratives to the range of opinions amongst the political elites, expressed within political forums. As a result, media content often imitates the levels of consensus and dissent of the elite.⁹ When a high level of consensus within the elite forum is evident, counter frames challenging the government in the media are less common whereas dissent within elite forums creates

⁶ Herbert J. Gans, *Deciding What's News* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979); Gaye Tuchman, "Objectivity as Strategic Ritual: An Examination of Newsmen's Notions of Objectivity," *The American Journal of Sociology* 77, no. 4 (1972): 660-679.

⁷ Lance W. Bennett, "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States," *Journal of Communication* 40, no. 2 (1990): 103-125; Lance W. Bennett and J. D. Klockner, "The Psychology of Mass-Mediated Publics," in *The Psychology of Political Communication*, ed. Ann N. Crigler (MI: University of Michigan Press, 1996); Lance W. Bennett, Regina G. Lawrence, & Scott Althaus, "None Dare Call It Torture: Indexing the Limits of Press Independence in the Abu Ghraib Scandal," *Journal of Communication* 56, no. (2006): 467-485. Robert M. Entman and Benjamin I. Page, "The News before the Storm: Limits to Media Autonomy in Covering the Iraq War Debate," in *Taken by Storm: The Media, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy in Gulf War*, ed. Lance W. Bennett and David L. Paletz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 82-101. Daniel Hallin, *The "Uncensored War": The Media and Vietnam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). Jonathan Mermin, *Debating War and Peace: Media Coverage of U.S. Intervention in the Post-Vietnam Era* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999).

⁸ Bennett, "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States."

⁹ Bennett, "None Dare Call It Torture: Indexing the Limits of Press Independence in the Abu Ghraib Scandal," 468.

opportunities for news media to offer counter frames. When counter frames or challenging perspectives towards government policy are apparent in the media, these often reflect or are indexed to, the critical perspectives of the elite.¹⁰

On the flip side, a number of academics argue that media coverage has at times been more independent and influenced policy change related to foreign intervention.¹¹ This has been termed the CNN Effect and reverses what many scholars believe to be the typical media-government relationship. The CNN Effect describes what happens when the media, in certain circumstances, becomes the driving force behind policy change for foreign intervention. As described by leading media scholars Steven Livingston and Lance Bennett, the CNN Effect “is reportedly caused by coverage that brings crisis events so quickly and dramatically to public view that officials often lament a loss of policy control to media.”¹² The amount and timing of media coverage, combined with specific framing narratives, pressures the government to respond to international crises. This sees the media as the agenda setting agent in the political communication environment. Two additional ways to consider the CNN Effect, put forward by Livingston, is as an accelerant to policy decision-making, and an impediment to policy goals.¹³

The CNN Effect is essentially in conflict with the Indexing Hypothesis; however, Piers Robinson’s *Policy-Media Interaction Model* connects these two contrasting theories into an interactive framework.¹⁴ The model clarifies those instances where either the CNN Effect or Indexing occurs. It does this by analysing media framing and policy certainty, and identifying if media coverage precedes government activity or follows it.¹⁵

Previous studies on the Indexing Hypothesis and CNN Effect were for the most part US-based, drawing on the American foreign policy experience. This study focuses on the degree to which

¹⁰ Bennett, "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States." Hallin, *The "Uncensored War": The Media and Vietnam*. Mermin, *Debating War and Peace: Media Coverage of U.S. Intervention in the Post-Vietnam Era*.

¹¹ Steven Livingston, *Clarifying the CNN Effect: An Examination of Media Effects According to Type of Military Intervention*, (Cambridge, MA: The Joan Shorenstein Centre Research on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University), 1997; Steven Livingston and W. Lance Bennett, "Gatekeeping, Indexing, and Live Events News: Is Technology Altering the Construction of News?," *Political Communication* 20, no. 4 (2003): 363-380. Steven Livingston and Todd Eachus, "Humanitarian Crises and U.S. Foreign Policy: Somalia and the CNN Effect Reconsidered," *Political Communication* 12, no. 4 (1995): 413-429. Piers Robinson, *The CNN Effect: The Myth of News, Foreign Policy and Intervention* (London: Routledge, 2002).

¹² Livingston and Bennett, "Gatekeeping, Indexing, and Live Events News: Is Technology Altering the Construction of News?," 367.

¹³ Livingston, "Clarifying the CNN Effect: An Examination of Media Effects According to Type of Military Intervention," 2.

¹⁴ Robinson, *The CNN Effect: The Myth of News, Foreign Policy and Intervention*.

¹⁵ The *Policy-Media Interaction Model* will be discussed in detail in the following chapter. Piers Robinson, "The Policy-Media Interaction Model: Measuring Media Power During Humanitarian Crisis," *Journal of Peace Research* 37, no. 5 (2000): 613-633.

these previous studies might be applicable and useful in advancing an understanding of the media-government relationship in a quite different regional setting. In the Pacific region, Australia and New Zealand are the regional powers and offer two valid cases for investigating the media-government relationships outside the US.

The Pacific region has experienced varying degrees of instability since colonisation. The early 2000s recorded a policy shift in Australia and New Zealand from a 'hands-off' approach to Pacific affairs to a greater engagement designed to address instability and the effects this had on regional security. The most remarkable event signifying the new approach was the cooperative regional intervention in the Solomon Islands in 2003, coined RAMSI. This policy shift created a unique research opportunity with which to identify the effects the media has on policy formation in the lead up to intervention.

The year period from July 25th 2002 to July 24th 2003 in the year preceding RAMSI is the timeframe chosen for this investigation. The factors that emerged during this period make a comprehensive analysis of the policy formation process possible. During this period, two fundamental adaptations to Australian and New Zealand policy in respect of the Solomon Islands occurred. Firstly, in June 2002 New Zealand assigned a team of police officers to the Solomon Islands in a non-combatant role to assist in reforming the corrupt elements of the Solomon Islands Police Force (SIPF). Secondly, in June 2003 the formation of a comprehensive military and civilian intervention was initiated. This study is concerned with a central question related to the media-government relationship in relation to the policy shift, and a number of sub-questions that help to address this central question.

Research Questions

The central question of this thesis is:

- 1: To what extent did the Australian and New Zealand print media content lead, challenge, or follow government agendas and framing before the 2003 RAMSI intervention?

Other questions that contribute to answering the central research questions are:

- 2: Did Australian and New Zealand government actions, regarding the Solomon Islands crisis, precede or follow print media coverage?
 - 2.1: Did print news media coverage of the Solomon Islands crisis in the year preceding the 2003 RAMSI reflect the range of debate in the elite forum?
- 3: How and to what degree were various sources used in the media when covering the Solomon Islands crisis and subsequent intervention?
- 4: How were criticisms of the governments response to the crisis presented in the media compared to the critical perspectives expressed within elite forums?

4.1 Did the critical perspective in the media originate from the critical perspectives expressed by the political elite?

The five questions that supplement the central question of this research address fundamental aspects of the media-government relationship. The timing in which the media and elite place the crisis on the agenda can identify if one group followed the other. If one group focuses on the crisis before the other than that group is more likely to have motivated the other to deliberate on the crisis. By analysing the range of debate employed by the media and elite, similarities and difference are identified to understand how each group defined the crisis and offered solutions, while critiquing government's action or inaction. Additionally, the use of sources in the media identifies the degree government or alternative sources and perspectives were employed, and if one source or perspective was used more so than other perspectives. Finally, by considering how challenges to government were presented in the media, and if these varied from elite forum debates can further demonstrate if there is a relationship between political debate and media coverage. Furthermore, the analysis of critical perspectives inside and outside of political forums demonstrates areas of disagreement and uncertainty around policy. The way the media report these challenges - whether they follow government, Parliament or independent critical perspectives - can provide insight to media behaviour and the media-government relationship.

By addressing these research questions, the nature of the media-government relationship in Australia and New Zealand can be analysed. Consequently, those instances when the political elite are seen to influence media content during a foreign policy crisis and intervention within the Pacific region can be better understood. On the other hand, instances when the media influence the political elite also require investigation to better understand the two-way relationship of these groups. These kinds of relationships raise questions as to the role of the media in its independent reporting of foreign policy. Therefore, significant issues, such as foreign intervention, require deliberate and comprehensive debate within public and political spheres.

Research Approach

This thesis employs quantitative and qualitative research methods with content analysis as the main method used. Content analysis of media coverage and official government documents and debate transcripts is the central methodology used in this research. The method determines the spectrum of debate utilised by media and government regarding the Solomon Islands crisis. The spectrum of debate is divided into three different framing categories: problems relating to the Solomon Islands crisis; solutions to these problems; and criticisms of government policy actions. Ascertaining the spectrum of debate used by the media and the political elite is the first step towards identifying whether Indexing or the CNN Effect occurs. The relationship between the spectrums of debate within

the media and the government directly affects the prospect of Indexing. When there are greater degrees of similarity between the spectrums of debate, there is a higher probability of media indexing their narrative to the government narrative.¹⁶ On the other hand, when there is wider variance in the spectrums of debate employed by the media and government, the probability of Indexing decreases.¹⁷ However, this alone cannot determine the Indexing Hypothesis, or the CNN Effect and therefore other approaches are necessary.

The next method uses a quantitative approach to investigate the volume and time-sequence of media coverage compared to government actions. The number of media articles and government actions is counted on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. This will provide a clear sequence of events that demonstrate who first placed the Solomon Islands crisis on the agenda. When government actions precede media coverage the possibility of the Indexing Hypothesis occurring is more likely.¹⁸ Conversely, when media coverage precedes government action the probability of a CNN Effect increases.¹⁹ Additionally, the volume of data allows for further analysis of patterns and trends regarding the degree of attention the crisis received over the year period. The quantitative approach is supplemented with a qualitative analysis of media coverage and government actions to further verify the sequence of events.

In order to provide a comprehensive investigation, the methodological approaches used by Lance Bennett²⁰ and Jonathan Mermin²¹ are applied to this research. Bennett's approach uses content analysis to investigate the different sources utilised by the media. Content analysis identifies the degree to which the news media rely on the political elite as sources of information. Counting the number of sources within media articles will provide a clear understanding of the level of influence different types of sources can have on content to identify if media are largely serving the government or vice versa.

To apply Mermin's techniques, a content analysis is employed to discern the level of critical perspectives within media content. The levels of critical perspectives are compared to the total level of coverage. The findings from the analysis will determine the level of criticism present within the media debate. To investigate the origin of the critical perspectives in the media, a content analysis and a

¹⁶ Mermin, *Debating War and Peace: Media Coverage of U.S. Intervention in the Post-Vietnam Era*; Bennett, "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States."

¹⁷ Bennett, "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States."; Robinson, *The CNN Effect: The Myth of News, Foreign Policy and Intervention*.

¹⁸ Mermin, "Television News and American Intervention in Somalia: The Myth of a Media-Driven Foreign Policy."

¹⁹ Livingston and Eachus, "Humanitarian Crises and U.S. Foreign Policy: Somalia and the CNN Effect Reconsidered."

²⁰ Bennett, "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States."

²¹ Mermin, *Debating War and Peace: Media Coverage of U.S. Intervention in the Post-Vietnam Era*.

qualitative examination of critical perspectives within government debates are compared. This can determine if media content imitates the perspectives of the political elite, or if the media independently seek or present challenges against government.

Structure of thesis

This chapter introduced the research focus and rationale for this thesis. Chapter two reviews the current literature on media and intervention by evaluating how different scholars operationalize international communication theories to analyse and assess the media-government relationship. By reviewing the Indexing Hypothesis and CNN Effect, criteria that measure the media-government relationship in Australia and New Zealand are established to form the methodological basis for this study.

Chapter three presents the case study in depth. It shows the macro-level factors that influenced Australian and New Zealand foreign policy formation during the late 1990s until RAMSI's deployment. Finally, chapter three describes the background to the Solomon Islands crisis and the initial intervention in 2003.

Chapter four outlines the methodology used to investigate the relationship between the Australian and New Zealand media and government. This involves the application of four tests to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the relationship. The first test determines who set the agenda. This is achieved by investigating the time-sequence and volume of media coverage and government activity, together with a qualitative analysis. The second test is a content analysis to establish the range of debate within each group. In conjunction with these tests, Lance Bennett and Jonathan Mermin's research designs are used as a guide to form tests three and four respectively. Chapter four also outlines the purpose and significance of the quantitative test and content analysis, establishes the units of analysis, outline a codebook, and provides the results from the reliability test. Chapter five presents the findings from the four tests outlined in chapter four. Chapter six concludes with the major findings of this study and reassesses the theoretical foundations that explain the media-government relationship in foreign crises and interventions in an Australian and New Zealand context.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The media's role in foreign policy decision-making during crises is often disputed among scholars. Two key alternative schools of thought attempt to explain connections between western media and foreign policy decision-making: the Indexing Hypothesis and the CNN Effect. The Indexing Hypothesis supports the idea that the political elite drives the news agenda by defining the perspectives expressed in the news; the same perspectives as those expressed in elite forums. In contrast, the CNN Effect argues that the media can influence political decision-making under certain circumstances. An alternative way to consider the media-government relationship, as offered in the *Policy-Media Interaction Model*,²² is through the convergence of these two conflicting theories. The *Policy-Media Interaction Model* bridges the ideas proposed in the Indexing Hypothesis and the CNN Effect to identify circumstances in which the media are able to influence policy.²³

The aim of this chapter is twofold: to review the media-state relationship conceptually, and to identify different approaches for testing media-government relations. Different variations of how, when, and why media-policy relations operate have generated active debate among scholars. In addition, re-testing earlier ideas has further shaped discrepancies in the premise itself. For example, the case of the 1992-1993 crisis in Somalia has been thoroughly scrutinized; however, different authors have drawn contrasting conclusions as to whether the media influenced policy change towards intervention, or the actions of policy-makers influenced the media response.²⁴

Researchers on media effects and humanitarian intervention have used a variety of research designs because media effects on policy are inherently difficult to measure. Frequently used methods include theoretically based case studies, such as Daniel Hallin's three spheres of objective journalism as applied to the US media coverage of the Vietnam War.²⁵ An additional method employed by Hallin was content analysis.²⁶ Content analysis is a method often employed alongside other methods, such as Livingston and Eachus study that used content analysis and a quantitative approach to measure the

²² Robinson, *The CNN Effect: The Myth of News, Foreign Policy and Intervention*.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Bernard Cohen, "A View from the Academy," in *Taken by Storm: The Media, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Gulf War*, ed. W. Lance Bennett and David L. Paletz (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1994); Livingston and Eachus, "Humanitarian Crises and U.S. Foreign Policy: Somalia and the CNN Effect Reconsidered."; Peter Jakobsen, "National Interest, Humanitarianism or CNN: What Triggers UN Peace Enforcement after the Cold War?," *Journal of Peace Research* 33 (1996): 205-215; Martin Shaw, *Civil Society and Media in Global Crises: Representing Distant Violence* (London, New York Pinter, 1996); Mermin, "Television News and American Intervention in Somalia: The Myth of a Media-Driven Foreign Policy."; Warren P. Strobel, *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy: The News Media's Influence of Peace Operations* (Washington, DC: United States Institute Of Peace Press, 1997); Piers Robinson, "Operation Restore Hope and the Illusion of a News Media Driven Intervention," *Political Studies* 49 (2001): 941-956; David N. Gibbs, "Realpolitik and Humanitarian Intervention: The Case of Somalia," *International Politics* 37 (2000): 41-55.

²⁵ Hallin, *The "Uncensored War": The Media and Vietnam*.

²⁶ Ibid.

quantity of media coverage in relation to policy change.²⁷ In conjunction with these methods, qualitative approaches have been used to establish the tone and character of opinions and voices within media coverage and government debate.²⁸ Alternatively, interview-based researches have been used to gauge the perceptions of policymakers, and other notable individuals.²⁹ Such methods have been brought together to better understand the relationship between media and government through the application of the *Policy-Media Interaction Model*.³⁰

Agenda setting and framing are intrinsically part of the wider media effects debate. Thus, one or both media theories are often incorporated in the methodological approaches used to evaluate media-government relations. By assessing the existing methods as they are applied to test media and government relations, this chapter will develop a research method to systematically and methodologically measure the dynamic of media-government relations for this thesis' case study.

Agenda Setting

Because news coverage is amongst the most widely followed type of information on public affairs, it can bring issues to the forefront of public attention. By publishing about certain issues, the media highlights the importance of those issues to the public over others. This process is described as the 'transmission of salience'.³¹ As Bernard Cohen's famous quote asserts, "the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about."³² The role of the media as the agenda setting agent is a consequence of selecting news for limited broadcast space. Communications expert Maxwell McCombs describes agenda setting as: "an inadvertent by-product of reporting the news" that can influence the thought process of the community it serves.³³ The news media are bound by the constraints of time and space due to the vast range of crises, events, and opinions worldwide. Through agenda setting, the news media can rank the value of issues by the amount of coverage each issue receives and the placement of

²⁷ Livingston and Eachus, "Humanitarian Crises and U.S. Foreign Policy: Somalia and the CNN Effect Reconsidered."

²⁸ Bennett, "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States."; Bennett, "None Dare Call It Torture: Indexing the Limits of Press Independence in the Abu Ghraib Scandal."; Scott Althaus, "When New Norms Collide, Follow the Lead: New Evidence for Press Independence," *Political Communication* 20, no. 4, October (2003): 381 - 414

²⁹ Nik Gowing, *Real-Time Television Coverage of Armed Conflicts and Diplomatic Crises: Does It Pressure or Distort Foreign Policy Decisions?*, John F. Kennedy School of Government Joan Shorenstein Barone Center, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA, 1994); Strobel, *Late-Breaking Foreign Policy: The News Media's Influence of Peace Operations*.

³⁰ Robinson, "The Policy-Media Interaction Model: Measuring Media Power During Humanitarian Crisis."

³¹ Maxwell McCombs, *Setting the Agenda: The Mass Media and Public Opinion* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2004), 4-5.

³² Bernard Cohen, *The Press and Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 120.

³³ Maxwell McCombs, "Building Consensus: The News Media's Agenda-Setting Roles," *Political Communication* 14, no. (1997): 438.

an issue within the news. In the event an issue does not make the news, the audience will seldom consider it to the same degree, if at all, with the other issues receiving attention. Current research into agenda setting shows that the rise and fall of coverage on an issue tends to dictate similar patterns of public interest.³⁴ This cause and effect relationship is significant when considering government influence over any media content which addresses foreign intervention issues.

Framing

Like agenda setting, framing is part of message construction. Framing is an essential component in agenda setting theory as it defines an issue for easy consumption. By applying unique discourse related to the changing social environment, the media play a role in shaping the way people view their community or nation. Media scholar Robert Entman describes framing as the particular aspects of a “narrative that encourage those perceiving and thinking about events to develop particular understandings of them.”³⁵ The construction of a frame is part of filtering and transmitting news to support a particular angle or agenda for attracting audience attention. This is an important part of the media effects debate, because the way an issue or event is “characterized in news reports can have an influence on how it is understood by audiences.”³⁶ Entman identifies two factors of framing that fundamentally contribute to the way an audience interprets events: selection and salience.³⁷ He differentiates between the two in this way; “[t]o frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation.”³⁸

Using sensational media frames, journalists and newspapers can create more dramatic and exciting coverage of events or issues. Sensationalism is a way the media gain an audience's attention and general definition is that it appeals to an audience's emotions through excitement, shock, fear and astonishment.³⁹ It is argued by Karen Slattery that sensationalism can be used in the media for conscious or unconscious purposes, and consequently gains attention for a purposeful cause.⁴⁰

³⁴ Shanto Iyengar and Adam Simon, "News Coverage of the Gulf War Crisis and Public Opinion," *Communication Research* 20, no. 3 (1993): 367.

³⁵ Robert M. Entman, "Framing US Coverage of International News: Contrasts in Narratives of the Kal and Iran Air Incidents," *Journal of Communication* 41, no. 1 (1991): 7.

³⁶ Dietram Scheufele and David Tewksbury, "Framing, Agenda Setting, and Priming: The Evolution of Three Media Effects Models" *Journal of Communication* 57 (2007): 11.

³⁷ Robert M. Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," *Journal of Communication* 43, no. 4 (1993): 53.

³⁸ Ibid. 53.

³⁹ David Sloan and Lisa Mullikin Parcell, *American Journalism: History, Principles, Practices* (Jefferson, North Carolina, & London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2002), 267.

⁴⁰ Karen L. Slattery, "Sensationalism Versus Moral Life: Making the Distinction," *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* 9, no. 1 (1994): 5-15.

Framing, through the organisation of ideas to construct messages, can allegedly sway an audience towards a particular policy preference. This is specifically relevant to news frames on political issues, such as a nation's response to domestic and foreign crisis. The way an issue is framed can create an environment that justifies and supports a specific policy approach.⁴¹ However, Scheafele and Tewksbury note that framing is a consequence of reducing complex stories to fit daily broadcasts so that they are easily consumed by a large audience, rather than attempting to deliberately sway an audience in a particular direction.⁴²

Elite Political Model

The Indexing Hypothesis, and to a lesser degree the Propaganda Model, are examples of international political communication theories intended to explain media-government interaction. The Propaganda Model, which Herman and Chomsky formulate in their acclaimed book *Manufacturing Consent*, claims that the powerful classes within society have considerable influence over the media.⁴³ The model suggests that the structure of commercial news production in the market system is bound by elite constraints. This occurs because of unequal economic power, which has the effect of causing the media to 'manufacture consent' in order to serve elite interests.⁴⁴ The structure of news organisations enables them to act with "power over the flow of information."⁴⁵ This is a result of news organisations often being large, wealthy companies, seeking efficiency and cost-effective reporting. The model asserts that the elite are most likely in a position to filter the media, as they are, according to Walter Lippmann, a "specialized class that can override the short-sighted perspectives of the masses."⁴⁶

The model explains how the structural conditions of media institutions censor or limit news media through a five-filter process of ownership, advertising, sourcing, flak, and ideology.⁴⁷ The relevance of the five filters can vary depending on the context of the situation in which they operate, in the same way as countries operate under individual systems. While all the filters have some relevance, sourcing and ideology are particularly relevant to Australian and New Zealand media coverage of foreign crises.

⁴¹ McCombs, *Setting the Agenda: The Mass Media and Public Opinion*, 4-5.

⁴² Scheufele and Tewksbury, "Framing, Agenda Setting, and Priming: The Evolution of Three Media Effects Models ": 12.

⁴³ Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York Pantheon Books, 1988).

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Edward S Herman, "The Propaganda Model: A Retrospective," *Propaganda, Politics, Power* 1, no. (2003): 2.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 1.

⁴⁷ Herman and Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, 2.

Sourcing is the filter often criticised as a cause of biased news reporting. Sourcing prestigious opinions in the media helps to build credibility for news stories and for particular perspectives favouring certain outcomes. Journalists rely on a steady flow of information to meet the daily demands of news production and it is their sources which help to meet these demands. For this reason, journalists often inadvertently make frequent use of public relations departments and government agencies (the political elite) for readily available material at a low cost. Public relations consultants outnumber journalists at a ratio of three to one.⁴⁸ Therefore, the use of such easily sourced material is unavoidable. As the demand to minimise costs intensifies, and the reliance on inexpensive foreign and international news declines, seeking the opinions of prestigious inexpensive sources is even more appealing to journalists. In turn, the political elite can then control the flow of information to create a platform where issues relevant to their interests can be framed and heard in a favourable way. This creates what Herman and Chomsky refer to as a symbiotic relationship between journalists and the political elite.⁴⁹ The media's use of Australian and New Zealand political sources when reporting foreign affairs is a constant. During the 1996-1999 East Timorese crises, for example, Australian and New Zealand government sources gave detailed accounts of the progress its troops were making, while at the same time rationalising and justifying the reason for such involvement.⁵⁰

The ideology filter is seen as a western reaction against ideological threat and was originally based on anti-communism.⁵¹ In the present age, anti-communism has been largely replaced by the fear of the 'other', more pressing, ideological threats such as terrorism or ideas that threaten to the free market system. An ideological threat can be shaped, reinforced and packaged by the elite in such a way as to support its own ideological agenda, whilst at the same time labelling all opposing views as constituting a threat in themselves. The dominant ideology filter increases control of media content and opinions by, and in favour of, the dominant elite. The ideological threat of terrorism became prominent following the 9/11 attacks. At this time the US and its coalition of the willing (including Australia) asserted the imperative of pre-emptive action against global threats of terror.⁵² Howard adopted this frame, placing Australia as the US deputy in the Pacific.⁵³ While sourcing and ideology are readily observable filters in the Australian and New Zealand context, the other three - ownership, advertising, and flak - are outside the scope of this research and are therefore less relevant to this research.

⁴⁸ John Nichols and Robert W. McChestney, *The Death and Life of American Journalism: The Media Revolution That Began the World Again* (Nation Books, 2010), 49.

⁴⁹ Herman and Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, 18.

⁵⁰ New Zealand Defence Force, (Ministry of Defence). *Christmas in East Timor*, (Wellington: Scoop World), 2000.

⁵¹ Herman and Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, 29-30.

⁵² BBC News, "Australia Ready to Strike Abroad," *BBC News Online*, December 1 2002.

⁵³ Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka, *"Failed State" and the War on Terror: Intervention in Solomon Islands*, (Asia Pacific Issues Elisa W. Johnston. East - West Centre, 2004).

The Indexing Hypothesis was developed from Herman and Chomsky's proposition of the media-elite relationship.⁵⁴ The Indexing Hypothesis moderates the way the relationship was previously viewed by proposing that it is structured on mutually beneficial grounds.⁵⁵ This relationship provides benefits for both parties, rather than full elite control. Robinson describes this relationship as "the ability of governments to influence the output of journalists and the tendency of journalists to both self-censor and perceive global events through the cultural and political prisms of their respective political and social elites."⁵⁶ The Indexing Hypothesis works in daily media operations whenever it reports the current debates within elite forums. Often this is not intentional news bias but rather a consequence of the 'transactional' relationship that media and government share.⁵⁷ By considering daily government activities, journalists and editors can make swift decisions as to what issues make the daily news. This can be described as an Indexing norm, where Journalists 'just know' what qualifies as newsworthy and 'just know' how each story should be covered.⁵⁸

In the decades following the Vietnam War there has been a vast array of literature from a number of authors on the subject of the Indexing Hypothesis; with some supporting it and some challenging it.⁵⁹ Much of the research is based on the analysis of media framing within news stories, and whether it correlated to elite opinion. The exact extent of the media-elite relationship varies markedly between these authors; however, they all embrace the essence of Indexing which is that the elite tend to sway the media-government relationship, but that deviations from the elite opinion can and do occur in specific circumstances.⁶⁰

Daniel Hallin's work *The "Uncensored War"*⁶¹ is an expansion of his article *The Media, the War in Vietnam, and Political Support*.⁶² Although Hallin does not refer to the media-government relationship in terms of an Indexing Hypothesis, he does build the theoretical foundations that Bennett later employs. These works propose that the political elite drives the news agenda by shaping news to

⁵⁴ Bennett, "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States."

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Robinson, *The CNN Effect: The Myth of News, Foreign Policy and Intervention*, 12.

⁵⁷ Bennett, "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States," 8-9.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 10-11.

⁵⁹ Key works include; Scott L. Althaus et al., "Revising the Indexing Hypothesis: Officials, Media, and the Libya Crisis," *Political Communication* 13 (1996): 407-421; Hallin, *The "Uncensored War": The Media and Vietnam*; Mermin, *Debating War and Peace: Media Coverage of U.S. Intervention in the Post-Vietnam Era*; John Zaller and Dennis Chiu, "Government's Little Helper: U.S Press Coverage of Foreign Policy Crisis, 1945-1999," in *Decisionmaking in a Glass House: Mass Media, Public Opinion, and American and European Foreign Policy in the 21st Century* ed. Brigitte L. Nacos, Robert Y. Shapiro, and Pierangelo Isernia (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000); Bennett, "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States."

⁶⁰ Robinson, *The CNN Effect: The Myth of News, Foreign Policy and Intervention*, 12-13.

⁶¹ Daniel Hallin, *The "Uncensored War": The Media and Vietnam* (London: University of California Press, 1989).

⁶² Daniel Hallin, "The Media, the War in Vietnam, and Political Support: A Critique of the Thesis of an Oppositional Media," *The Journal of Politics* 46, no. 1 (1984): 2-24.

match the opinions expressed within political forum debates, such as the United States Congress.⁶³ Hallin's study on US media coverage of the Vietnam War challenges conventional wisdom that "American news media shifted towards an oppositional role" and thus influenced political authority.⁶⁴ Hallin asserts that, "the thesis of an oppositional media begins to fall apart...[as] the media continued...to rely heavily on official information to avoid passing explicit judgement on official policy and statement."⁶⁵ This shows that media content was not as much of an influencing factor as previously theorised. Media coverage of the time was based on 'facts' sourced by journalists from Congressional debates, from which it is clear that both consensus and conflict were already present within political forums.⁶⁶

In order to identify US journalistic newsgathering routines and practises when covering the Vietnam War, Hallin conducted a quantitative content analysis of news coverage over a seven-year period.⁶⁷ The codebook for the content analysis of news stories is extensive and considers 49 different variables.⁶⁸ From August 1965 until January 1973 a random sample of news stories totalling 779 television broadcasts from *ABC*, *CBS*, and *NBC*, and print coverage from the *New York Times* were examined.⁶⁹ The period was divided into three phases of media coverage, pre-Tet Offensive, Tet Offensive, and post-Tet Offensive, to signify the rise and fall of reportage in relation to specific political and military actions.⁷⁰

From this study Hallin formulates *A Model of Objective Journalism*⁷¹ to explain the dynamics of journalism and the changes in critical media coverage. The model explains how and why media coverage imitates the levels of consensus and dissensus of the political elite. As described by Hallin the model emphasises "the response of an objective media to the degree of consensus or dissensus that prevails particularly among political elites."⁷² The model is designed to explain what issues the media cover, how they are covered and what is not covered. This is achieved by creating three spheres of objective journalism to demonstrate the varying levels of consensus or dissent within elite forums, and the effect this has on media reporting. The configuration of the model is displayed in Figure 1.⁷³

⁶³ ———, *The "Uncensored War": The Media and Vietnam*.

⁶⁴ ———, "The Media, the War in Vietnam, and Political Support: A Critique of the Thesis of an Oppositional Media," 5.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁶⁶ ———, *The "Uncensored War": The Media and Vietnam*, 25.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 110-111.

⁶⁸ ———, *The "Uncensored War": The Media and Vietnam*, 255-273.

⁶⁹ ———, *The "Uncensored War": The Media and Vietnam*, 110-111.

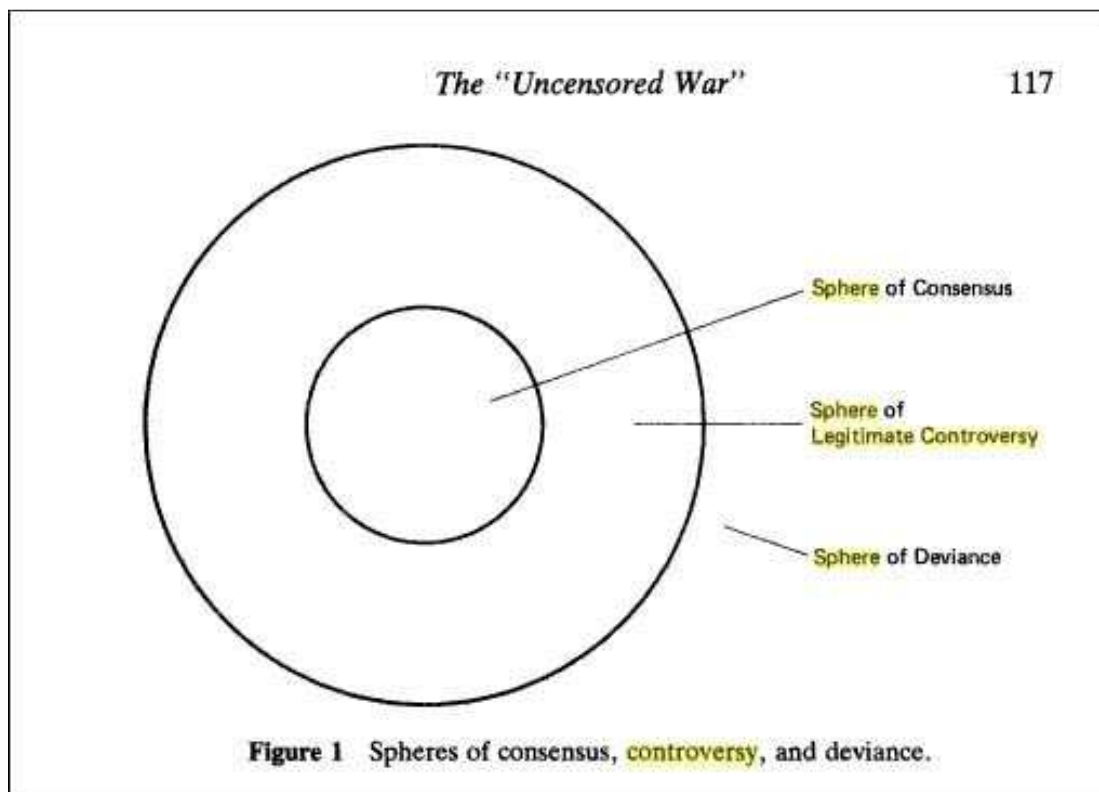
⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 110-111.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 116-117.

⁷² ———, "The Media, the War in Vietnam, and Political Support: A Critique of the Thesis of an Oppositional Media," 7.

⁷³ ———, *The "Uncensored War": The Media and Vietnam*, 117.

Figure 1: Three Spheres of Objective Journalism



The model is divided into three spheres: the sphere of consensus, the sphere of legitimate controversy, and the sphere of deviance.⁷⁴ The sphere of consensus is the region described by Hallin's empathetically as "motherhood and apple pie" where journalists and society regard issues with collective agreement and media coverage reflects it.⁷⁵ Because the majority of the populations within the mainstream are thought to agree on an issue or subject, Hallin claims "journalists do not feel compelled to present opposing views, and indeed often feel it their responsibility to act as advocates or ceremonial protectors of consensus values."⁷⁶

Outside the sphere of consensus sits the sphere of legitimate controversy where journalists reflect the political contests and debates within the American two-party system.⁷⁷ In this sphere "objective journalism reigns supreme: here neutrality and balance are the prime journalistic virtues."⁷⁸ On the exterior of the sphere of legitimate controversy lies the sphere of deviance. This includes views that journalists and the majority of society perceive as unworthy of attention.⁷⁹ Consequently, the

⁷⁴ ———, "The Media, the War in Vietnam, and Political Support: A Critique of the Thesis of an Oppositional Media," 21.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 21.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 21.

⁷⁷ ———, *The "Uncensored War": The Media and Vietnam*, 116.

⁷⁸ ———, "The Media, the War in Vietnam, and Political Support: A Critique of the Thesis of an Oppositional Media," 21.

⁷⁹ ———, *The "Uncensored War": The Media and Vietnam*, 112.

media is the filter that sidelines the views of those who challenge the consensus opinion. Hallin describes how the three spheres function:

“internal graduations and the boundaries between them are fuzzy. Within the sphere of legitimate controversy, for instance, the practise of objective journalism varies considerably. Near the border of the sphere of consensus journalists practice the kind of objective journalism that involves a straight recitation of official statements; farther out in the sphere of controversy they become more willing to balance official statements with reactions from the opposition or with independent investigations of controversial issues.”⁸⁰

The media shift their coverage between the three spheres of objective journalism depending on the degree of consensus or dissent the political elite is expressing within its forums at the time.

Findings from Hallin’s research indicate that during the Vietnam War the institutional aspect of the US media did not change as the media remained committed to functioning within the “professional ideology of objective journalism” and upheld previous newsgathering procedures.⁸¹ The media remained predominantly impartial when reporting the War and “most coverage fit the traditional ‘who, what, when, where’ model of objective journalism”⁸² This finding is supported by the low level of coverage (8%) containing explicit comments from journalists.⁸³

Applying the three spheres of objective journalism to the study of the Vietnam War explains the changes in media reporting. As opposition towards the war increased, the media moved the critical debate from the “fringes of society” into the mainstream, the sphere of legitimate controversy.⁸⁴ Opinions considered controversial in the earlier stages of the war became increasingly legitimate, and media coverage adjusted to reflect the shifting opinions. This was evident in 1968 when a Presidential candidate expressed opposition to the War during the New Hampshire primary. After this event, media coverage of opposition was “not only respectable but an obligatory subject for news coverage.”⁸⁵ Critical or supportive media coverage of official policies “depends on the degree of consensus those policies enjoy, particularly within the political establishment.”⁸⁶ Therefore, Hallin’s findings suggest that media coverage of the war reflected the opinions voiced within elite forum debates.⁸⁷ As the war progressed and elite opinion became divided, so too did media coverage of the conflict.⁸⁸

⁸⁰ ———, “The Media, the War in Vietnam, and Political Support: A Critique of the Thesis of an Oppositional Media,” 21-22.

⁸¹ Ibid., 11.

⁸² Ibid., 12.

⁸³ Ibid., 12.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 22.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 22.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 22.

⁸⁷ ———, *The “Uncensored War”: The Media and Vietnam*.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Expanding on Hallin's ideas of the media-government relationship Lance Bennett coined the Indexing Hypothesis in the article *Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States*.⁸⁹ This article claimed that the "news is 'indexed' implicitly to the range and dynamic of government debate."⁹⁰ The media and political elite have a long-standing relationship that aids each party to reach its objectives and circumvent time and resource constraints. Bennett suggests that "indexing can be observed best in patterns of journalistic content and formal rationalization that points to the existence of an underlying normative order."⁹¹

Theoretical findings were based on empirical research of the *New York Times* coverage of the 1980s Nicaragua crisis.⁹² During President Ronald Reagan's time in office the White House began a campaign for "congressional authorization and funding" of the Nicaraguan Contra's, a group opposing the leftist Sandinista government of Nicaragua.⁹³ Congress exposed a scandal in which the US was found to be selling weapons to Iran through Israel and then diverting the funds to the Contras. Subsequently the White House tried to legitimise these activities by requesting official congressional approval and funding.⁹⁴ As a consequence, a great divide was created between the House of Representatives, Congress, and the White House. Using televised media coverage the White House launched a pressure campaign against Congress with a "barrage of intimidating political rhetoric, unleashed against vulnerable House members up for re-election, charging the legislators who opposed administration contra police were soft on communism."⁹⁵ This resulted in an effective "opposition bloc" and the eventual authorization of military aid to the Contras.⁹⁶

Bennett operationalized the Indexing hypothesis by measuring the types of sourced opinions, the frequencies of these sourced opinions, and the direction of the opinions on stories concerned with the Nicaragua crisis from January 1 1983 to October 15 1986.⁹⁷ The sample of media coverage included 2,148 news abstracts and editorials, with 1,177 voiced opinions.⁹⁸ The opinions were divided into non-opinionated and descriptive. The descriptive opinions were further categorized into groups: editorial and op-ed, administration source, congressional source, judicial source, or popular (non-governmental) source, foreign opinions of US allies, and interest groups and polls.⁹⁹ The voiced

⁸⁹ Bennett, "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States," 103.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 103.

⁹¹ Ibid., 111.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid., 112.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 112.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 113.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 114.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 114.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 115.

opinions were coded to distinguish the direction of the opinion: support, opposition, or a divided opinion of policy.¹⁰⁰

Voiced opinions in the media were analysed to identify correlations between media content and government actions, statements or debates. To verify this, Bennett explores the patterns of voices applied by the media, and how this relates to the actions of governmental institutions over 17 key intervals.¹⁰¹ Bennett specifically considers the level of oppositional voices within political institutions to see how this correlates with oppositional voices within the media. When opposition decreased within political institutions, the media would then imitate this and decrease its use of oppositional voices. Bennett compared congressional opinion to the official administration opinion to measure media indexing in the *Times*. As the opinions between congress and the administration were divided on how to address the crisis, key votes within congress were measured against media indexing. Bennett identified patterns within news stories and editorial opinions that consistently demonstrate the media Indexing coverage to government opinions. The opinions presented in the *Times* were primarily from government sources, with 15% coming from non-government sources.¹⁰² A key finding from the editorials suggests:

“when the ratio of voices in Congress opposing administration policy went up, so did the ratio of opposing *New York Times* op-ed opinion. When the ratio of congressional opposition went down, so did the ratio of *Times* opposition-to-support on its op-ed page... the editorial voices in the *Times* op-ed pages rise and fall as if ‘indexed’ to the tides of congressional opposition.”¹⁰³

The sequence of political action with media coverage demonstrates that the elite influence media content when reporting responses to foreign crises. Once the White House won the pressure campaign and an oppositional Congress was silenced, the *Times* editorial reflects this change and reported virtually no opposition towards the official policy.¹⁰⁴

Another writer who supports the key findings of the Indexing Hypothesis is Jonathan Mermin in the 1997 article *Television, News and American Intervention in Somalia*.¹⁰⁵ Mermin uses the Somalia crisis to evaluate the media-government relationship and suggests that the media indexed its coverage to elite opinions.¹⁰⁶ To verify this, Mermin analyses sources and framing of televised media coverage from January to November 1992. In addition, he investigates the volume of media coverage compared to key policy activities over the same period to determine who set the media agenda. This

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 114-115.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 114-117.

¹⁰² Ibid., 116-117.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 119.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 121.

¹⁰⁵ Mermin, "Television News and American Intervention in Somalia: The Myth of a Media-Driven Foreign Policy."

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

was designed to identify whether or not the media pushed the crisis onto the political agenda. Mermin concludes that the political elite initially addressed the crisis, indicating media Indexing.¹⁰⁷ He goes on to further clarify the Indexing Hypothesis by differentiating between two versions of Indexing: marginalization and correlation. The correlation version theorises that in a situation when there is bipartisan support towards a policy, critical perspectives in the media reflects this.¹⁰⁸ Any critical perspectives would be ‘outweighed’ or ‘overshadowed’ in news coverage by the official opinion.¹⁰⁹ Such correlation is evident in Bennett’s 1990 study where the *Times* indexed its critical coverage of the Nicaraguan crisis to the opinions expressed within Congressional debates.¹¹⁰ Alternatively, the marginalization version suggests that the critical perspectives not first articulated by the political elite are either “ignored or relegated to the margins of the news.”¹¹¹ Here the views from the political elite expressed in forum debates dominate the media’s agenda; and the media offer limited, if any, acknowledgement of views outside official opinion. This marginalisation version of the Indexing Hypothesis is similar to Hallin’s sphere of deviance, where opinions that do not conform to the governing elite are sidelined in both the elite debates and in the media.

An expansion to Mermin’s 1997 work is found in his book *Debating War and Peace*.¹¹² Here Mermin contributes to the theoretical and empirical framework through the analysis of eight US military interventions. The analysis evaluates the source and volume of critical perspectives in the media in relation to Washington consensus or conflict. This research identifies the different versions of Indexing present within these case studies. A comparison is made between the level of critical paragraphs in the news and the total number of paragraphs during the first two weeks of the interventions.¹¹³ These findings are supplemented with a qualitative analysis to identify when the critical perspectives arose, and how this compares to the debate in Washington. Mermin asserts “critical perspectives do not just increase from a reasonable baseline in the news when there is debate in Washington, but instead are ignored or marginalized in the news if not first expressed in Washington.”¹¹⁴ Mermin goes on to argue that “if politicians are in consensus, the indexing rule reproduces and reinforces their consensus; the press does not offer critical analysis of government policies unless actors inside government have done so first.”¹¹⁵ This analysis demonstrates that when there is consensus on policy within the political elite, critical perspectives become marginalised in the news.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ _____, *Debating War and Peace: Media Coverage of U.S. Intervention in the Post-Vietnam Era*, 6.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 6.

¹¹⁰ Zaller and Chiu, "Government's Little Helper: U.S Press Coverage of Foreign Policy Crisis, 1945-1999," 391.

¹¹¹ Mermin, *Debating War and Peace: Media Coverage of U.S. Intervention in the Post-Vietnam Era*, 6.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid., 42-45.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 5.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 7.

Additional Indexing research offered in Zaller and Chiu's work *Government's Little Helper* analyses media reportage of 42 different foreign policy crises between 1945 and 1999 and finds inconsistent results of Indexing.¹¹⁶ This inconsistency compelled the authors to reconsider the fundamental, but uncertain, question of 'who leads whom', media or government. Zaller and Chiu propose the possibility of a 'third factor'. The 'third factor' argues that journalists and the elite are prone to respond similarly as a result of shared cultural conditioning. Thus, the culture within which the political elite and journalists both operate results in similarly timed responses.¹¹⁷ The social context provides an agenda; and policy-makers and the media address these same issues within a similar time. For these reasons, the importance of public opinion to policy-makers, along with the possibility that media slant stories towards public opinion, cannot be overlooked.

Zaller and Chiu's analysis of Bennett's work concludes the presence of a 'third factor'. They claim:

"[t]he empirical results are equally consistent with the thesis of press dependence on Congress, with a thesis of congressional dependence on the press, and with a thesis that some 'third factor' causes both press slant and congressional opinion, thereby inducing a spurious correlation between them."¹¹⁸

Bennett's work can be considered innovative, as it was one of the first to systematically test the media and foreign policy relationship. However, as shown by Zaller and Chiu, it is not without its limitations. The most notable claim against Bennett's work is that he neglected to measure congressional debate outside what was evident within the limited sample of media coverage.¹¹⁹ Fundamentally, Bennett's failure to accurately measure the level of consensus and dissent of official government policy within political institutions challenges his overall finding that the media index coverage to the elite opinion. This failure reinforces the possibility of the 'third factor'.

The final author this dissertation reviews, contributing to the Indexing literature is Scott Althaus. Althaus uses a quantitative content analysis to investigate press-state independence by applying the Indexing norm to the case study of the 1990-1991 Persian Gulf Crisis. Althaus investigates critical discourse of news stories to identify instances when journalists instigate oppositional voices.¹²⁰ The analysis of full text media coverage of all evening news broadcasts on *ABC*, *CBS*, and *NBC* relevant to the crisis provides a more comprehensive approach to the analysis of critical news content.¹²¹ The use of full text media is significant as previous studies often base

¹¹⁶ Althaus, "When New Norms Collide, Follow the Lead: New Evidence for Press Independence."

¹¹⁷ Babak Bahador, *The CNN Effect in Action: How the News Media Pushed the West Towards War in Kosovo* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 43.

¹¹⁸ Zaller and Chiu, "Government's Little Helper: U.S Press Coverage of Foreign Policy Crisis, 1945-1999," 392.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 63.

¹²⁰ Althaus, "When New Norms Collide, Follow the Lead: New Evidence for Press Independence."

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

investigations on headlines or selected section samples, limiting the complete spectrum of opposition views.¹²² The coding scheme divides media content into three kinds of textual elements related to policy discourse – Means, Ends, and Context discourse. Means discourse identifies themes that advocate for or against a policy or particular government action.¹²³ Ends discourse identifies themes that justify or intend a particular policy outcome.¹²⁴ Context discourse locates themes relating to the larger political context or problem which policy is intended to solve.¹²⁵ The three kinds of discourse are given an ‘invoke/pro’, ‘criticize/con’, or ‘neutral’ value. Therefore, there can be multiple discourses and values accorded to any complete story rather than one only classification. The sources that express ‘pro’ and ‘con’ discourse are divided into Congress, foreign leaders, administration, US citizens, experts, Iraqi leaders, Iraqi citizens, foreign citizens, or journalists.¹²⁶

Althaus concludes his work on the 1990-1991 Gulf War by claiming “[j]ournalists frequently presented competing perspectives and were often the instigators rather than merely gatekeepers of critical viewpoints.”¹²⁷ This challenges mainstream Indexing findings as, by addressing the three main limitations to previous research, Althaus found more evidence of independent reporting of critical perspectives. Overall, though, coverage was supportive of government actions.¹²⁸

Current Indexing literature by Hallin, Althaus, Bennett, Mermin, and other researchers reveals an additional limitation: most research narrowly focuses on American media-policy relations, with few case studies outside of the US.¹²⁹ Research on the Indexing Hypothesis and other media effect theories over-relies on case studies involving US media outlets, with little consideration of the possibility that other western news media outlets can influence national foreign policy.

Considering the limits of current Indexing literature, key methods have become apparent. These methods contribute to the formation of a research approach in order to answer the central research question of this research: to what extent did the Australian and New Zealand print media content follow or challenge government agendas and framing prior to RAMSI in 2003? This research uses a comprehensive design to include the use of all full text media coverage and government actions

¹²² Bennett, "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States."; Timothy Cook, "Domesticating a Crisis: Washington Newsbeat and the Network News after the Iraq Invasion of Kuwait," in *Taken by Storm: The Media, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy* ed. Lance W Bennett and David L. Paletz (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1994).

¹²³ Althaus, "When New Norms Collide, Follow the Lead: New Evidence for Press Independence," 388.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 388-389.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 389.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 402.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ Althaus et al., "Revising the Indexing Hypothesis: Officials, Media, and the Libya Crisis."; Bennett, "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States."; Mermin, "Television News and American Intervention in Somalia: The Myth of a Media-Driven Foreign Policy."

and communications, rather than selective random sampling. This is designed to address the limitations of previous studies where there is inconsistency in the overall analysis of the media. Previously, some studies have used random samples over an extensive period,¹³⁰ some apply proxy data that risks the possibility of misinterpreting the overall tone or other significant information,¹³¹ while others investigate a comprehensive and complete data set over the entire period of the investigation.¹³² The analysis of full-text media coverage is vital to drawing accurate similarities and differences between media and government.

Another fundamental method of this research includes three distinct sets of content analyses to comprehensively investigate how the media and political elite addressed the Solomon Islands crisis. To conduct the content analysis this study considers all frames within media content and political debates in order to avoid limiting the research to one overall tone or frame of media and political content, and missing the overall picture. This has been noted as a limitation to previous works.¹³³ The three content analyses of this research investigate the range of media and political debates, the use of sources in the media, and the critical debates taking place.

Firstly, the range of debate applied by the media and government will be investigated to draw connections between the two. Consideration will be given to the entire range of debate on the crisis including the problems of the crisis, possible solutions, and the wider context in which the crisis is taking place.¹³⁴ Some studies investigate only limited parts of the media-government debates, such as the critical debate.¹³⁵ While these aspects are important, the entire political debate provides a greater scope for analysis of the media-government relationship.

Secondly, consideration to the use of sources in the media will investigate both local and foreign sources and these will be compared to contributions within political forums. It is important to consider the range of sources in the media, rather than focusing solely on the local perspectives in order to comprehend the perspectives that are relied on more heavily and those perspectives that are

¹³⁰ Bennett, "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States."

¹³¹ Cook, "Domesticating a Crisis: Washington Newsbeat and the Network News after the Iraq Invasion of Kuwait."

¹³² Althaus, "When New Norms Collide, Follow the Lead: New Evidence for Press Independence."; Entman and Page, "The News before the Storm: Limits to Media Autonomy in Covering the Iraq War Debate."; Livingston and Eachus, "Humanitarian Crises and U.S. Foreign Policy: Somalia and the CNN Effect Reconsidered."

¹³³ Althaus, "When New Norms Collide, Follow the Lead: New Evidence for Press Independence." Hallin, "The Media, the War in Vietnam, and Political Support: A Critique of the Thesis of an Oppositional Media."; Bennett, "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States."

¹³⁴ Althaus, "When New Norms Collide, Follow the Lead: New Evidence for Press Independence," 388.

¹³⁵ Mermin, *Debating War and Peace: Media Coverage of U.S. Intervention in the Post-Vietnam Era*.

marginalised.¹³⁶ Failing to do so, as evident is a number of studies, limits the overall picture of the media-government relationship, as government ally's can contribute to framing news content.¹³⁷

Finally, the analysis of critical perspectives expressed in political forums and media content provides grounds to differentiate between debates occurring within each circles. The definition of 'critical coverage' in the media is ambiguous and varies between authors.¹³⁸ However, given this research focuses on foreign policy and intervention, any critical perspective relating to Solomon Islands policy and intervention should be included in this investigation. All of these methods will be discussed in greater detail at the end of this chapter, and outlined in depth in chapter four.

The CNN Effect

The CNN Effect emerged from round the clock coverage of the 1991 Gulf War. The newly established Cable News Network International (CNNI) produced 24hour coverage of the unfolding events when other news broadcasters lost the communication networks in the initial combat.¹³⁹ The US intentionally destabilised media networks during the early stages of the intervention to prevent local Iraqis from reporting and to gain control of media output.¹⁴⁰ These events revealed that the globalised nature of the media, as an instantaneous distributor of the news and current events, under the right conditions might influence policy. Considered negatively from the policy maker's perspective, the CNN Effect broadly contends that instantaneous media coverage brings crisis events rapidly into the public's attitude resulting in a loss of control of policy.¹⁴¹ Former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger describes the changing nature of foreign policy decision-making in the current media environment:

“[t]he public hears of an event now in real time, before the State Department has had time to think about it. Consequently, we find ourselves reacting before we've had time to think. This is now the way we determine foreign policy – it's driven more by daily events reported on TV than it used to be.”¹⁴²

The CNN Effect however, is not exclusively related to CNN or even 24-hour coverage but rather an overwhelming level of transnational media coverage in relation to an event. There are a variety of workable definitions of the CNN Effect. For example, Livingston defines it as “the impact of new

¹³⁶ Althaus, "When New Norms Collide, Follow the Lead: New Evidence for Press Independence," 388.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 338.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 386.

¹³⁹ Cited in Bahador, *The CNN Effect in Action: How the News Media Pushed the West Towards War in Kosovo*, 3-4.

¹⁴⁰ Cited in *ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Livingston, "Clarifying the CNN Effect: An Examination of Media Effects According to Type of Military Intervention," 1.

¹⁴² Eytan Gilboa, "The CNN Effect: The Search for a Communication Theory of International Relations," *Political Communication* 22, no. (2005): 27-44.

global real-time media on diplomacy and foreign policy.”¹⁴³ While Joseph Nye describes it as, the “impact of the increased free flow of broadcast information and shortened news cycles on public opinion in free societies.”¹⁴⁴ As there is not one single workable definition applied by academics and authors alike, this could help to explain why the debate over the CNN Effect is still widely contested. If a range of authors apply a range of definitions when testing a CNN Effect, potentially inconsistent results may be inevitable.

CNN Effect research by Steven Livingston and Todd Eachus takes a more systematic and comprehensive approach than previous works.¹⁴⁵ These authors assess connections between media coverage and the US foreign policy decision-making process during the 1991-1992 humanitarian crisis in Somalia and seek to investigate who influences the media agenda to establish if a CNN Effect occurred. The authors’ in effect, attempt to determine who is the first to address the crisis. Those advocating a CNN Effect argue that the media pushes issues onto the policy-makers’ agenda, and this puts pressure on them to respond. A comprehensive understanding of the time-sequence of media coverage and political actions, as Livingston and Eachus illustrate, can highlight when and how crises are brought to the attention of both the media and policy-makers.

Livingston and Eachus produce a quantitative research approach in their 1995 article *Humanitarian Crises and U.S. Foreign Policy*.¹⁴⁶ This research utilises two methods to determine who was the first to address the 1991-1992 Somalia crisis. Firstly, a content analysis of the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* coverage establishes the article and word frequency, source, and dateline.¹⁴⁷ Secondly, interviews with the US, United Nations (UN), non-government officials, and journalists qualitatively establish the “temporal ordering of official decision in relation to changes in media content.”¹⁴⁸ In order to determine a CNN Effect from these two research methods, Livingston and Eachus present a principle rule to measure the events:

“If key decisions follow surges in media content of brief but highly dramatic single news episodes...then the CNN Effect is real: Shifts in policy come in response to media content, and policy-makers, in some measure, have lost control of policy-making to the news media.”¹⁴⁹

¹⁴³ Bahador, *The CNN Effect in Action: How the News Media Pushed the West Towards War in Kosovo*, 4.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Livingston and Eachus, "Humanitarian Crises and U.S. Foreign Policy: Somalia and the CNN Effect Reconsidered."; Mermin, "Television News and American Intervention in Somalia: The Myth of a Media-Driven Foreign Policy."; Livingston, "Clarifying the CNN Effect: An Examination of Media Effects According to Type of Military Intervention."

¹⁴⁶ Livingston and Eachus, "Humanitarian Crises and U.S. Foreign Policy: Somalia and the CNN Effect Reconsidered."

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 416.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 416.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 416.

Here the key indicator of a CNN Effect is the loss of control to the media over the policy-making process. Comprehending who places the crisis on the agenda is achieved through the analysis of the time-sequence of the official government policy with the level of media coverage. This begins to reveal if the media ‘gain control’, in some sense, of the policy-making process. Combining this with a qualitative description strengthens the overall findings by providing a detailed account of how events unfold and how news content accounts for this, compared to the actions of policy-makers.

Findings from Livingston and Eachus’ research revealed that a small group of middle ranking government officials began to push the Somalia crisis onto US policy-makers’ agenda.¹⁵⁰ While the crisis was not essentially different from other contemporary African crises, USAID official Andrew Natis created a platform to differentiate Somalia as the worst humanitarian crisis of the time.¹⁵¹ The US government proceeded to relieve humanitarian suffering with disaster relief funds and this, the authors argue, is the point (after the relief efforts began) at which media coverage began to increase. These findings show no CNN Effect, as it was government officials, not the media, who were pushing the crisis onto the government agenda.¹⁵² On the other hand, it could be argued that the group seeking to influence the political agenda were using the media to gain greater awareness of the crisis. The use of the media to bring attention to the Somalia crisis indicates the media did have an effect, although a more limited one.

In his 1997 article, *Clarifying the CNN Effect*, Livingston distinguishes between three different types of CNN Effect that affect all participants in the news media sphere: an *accelerant* to policy decision-making; an *impediment* to the achievement of desired policy goals; and the policy *agenda setting agent*.¹⁵³ The *accelerant effect* reduces the reaction time for decision-makers by placing pressure on policy-makers to rapidly respond to potential security risks or threats.¹⁵⁴ Governments need to appear well organised to the media and public, so as to maintain confidence during such risks and threats. However, when decisions are made in haste, they may not be formed with rational evaluation or long-term strategies.¹⁵⁵ The *impediment effect* generally occurs in two forms. The first is as “an emotional inhibitor” to nullify the realities of war.¹⁵⁶ Emotive images or negative framing can undermine public or political support for an operation thus challenging the overall policy. Using this technique, the media raise concerns about military operations and challenge aspects or possible

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 424.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 424.

¹⁵² Ibid., 427.

¹⁵³ Livingston, "Clarifying the CNN Effect: An Examination of Media Effects According to Type of Military Intervention," 2.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 2.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 2-4.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 4-5.

outcomes of policies. The second scenario is “a threat to operational security” where foreign adversaries use information gained by the media to their advantage.¹⁵⁷

The *agenda setting effect* is possibly the most important and influential of the effects. As Livingston and Eachus’ earlier work demonstrates, the timing of political action compared to media coverage is fundamental to the impact the media and government potentially has.¹⁵⁸ The *agenda setting effect* suggests that the media place issues on their agenda and, in turn, foreign policy agendas imitate them.¹⁵⁹ This could be demonstrated by the priority or level of coverage a crisis receives. For example, a crisis may have been on the media agenda for some time but as the issue intensifies (from the media’s perspective), the amount of coverage increases. As a result, increased attention also becomes evident within government. An issue or crisis that would have been addressed by ‘middle-ranking’ officials is then transmitted to ‘high-level’ decision-makers.¹⁶⁰

Livingston employs two primary methods to investigate the *agenda setting effect*. The first, making use of data from previous research on the Somalia crisis, uses the level of news coverage from a range of televised broadcasts between July and December 1992¹⁶¹ to chart key events. Here the time-sequence and volume of media coverage, in comparison to significant political actions, identifies, to a degree, the agenda setting agent. The second method investigates the 13 most serious humanitarian crises from January 1995 to mid-May 1996. This investigation considers whether the seriousness of a crisis, in terms of the number of people at risk, has any relation to the level of media coverage a crisis receives. Findings reveal disproportionate levels of US coverage to the worst humanitarian crises; emphasising that media coverage of humanitarian crises differs and from human suffering.¹⁶² Thus, there was no uniform rule to what type of crisis could receive media coverage and at what level. Additionally, a number of humanitarian operations have occurred without any media attention at all. The level of media coverage is often associated with the presence of US or Western troops.¹⁶³ Virgil Hawkins contributes to this idea in *The Other Side of the CNN Factor: the media and conflict*.¹⁶⁴ This article argues that concentrated attention of one crisis comes at the expense of limited attention of other crises, and limited media attention contributes to limited policy debate.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 2.

¹⁵⁸ Livingston and Eachus, "Humanitarian Crises and U.S. Foreign Policy: Somalia and the CNN Effect Reconsidered."

¹⁵⁹ Livingston, "Clarifying the CNN Effect: An Examination of Media Effects According to Type of Military Intervention," 6.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 6.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 8.

¹⁶² Ibid., 9.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 9.

¹⁶⁴ Virgil Hawkins, "The Other Side of the CNN Factor: The Media and Conflict," *Journalism Studies* 3, no. 2 (2002): 225-240.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

Critics of the CNN Effect suggest that there is an over-emphasis on the impact media have on foreign crises. This is due to a number of factors including the type of crisis, the presence of US or Western militaries, the location of the crisis, and related geopolitical interests. The case of the 1991 Gulf War and subsequent Northern Iraq crisis reinforces the idea that geostrategic incentives and the presence of Western troops influence the degree of media scrutiny.¹⁶⁶ At the time of the crisis, Turkey was facing its own guerrilla war with Kurds in Turkey's east, and the influx of Kurdish refugees from Iraq was an immense threat to the Turkish government. Turkey, as a loyal ally of the US, requested that the US implement a policy to return the Kurdish refugees to Iraq and reintegrate them back into the North.¹⁶⁷ It was these factors, and not the saturated sympathetic media coverage, that appear to have had the greater influence, and pushed the US into action.

The clear distinction between Livingston's three CNN Effects is constructive for identifying the many factors influencing the media-government relationship during foreign crises. The formation of a matrix to understand the complex nature of foreign policy formation, particularly geostrategic incentives, military involvement, type of intervention, and how the media acts, sets the foundations for future studies.

An alternative approach to measure the media-government relationship is offered in Martin Shaw's book *Civil Societies and Media in Global Crises*.¹⁶⁸ Shaw analyses British media reporting of the Northern Iraq crisis and government response. Unlike Livingston and Eachus' research, which considers who set the agenda, Shaw investigates the media's representation of the crisis and how the media became gradually critical of Western inaction. The case study analyses official government statements within the media, together with a survey and interviews with the British public, in order to establish if public opinion varies depending on where the media source their information. Public opinion plays an important role in the political sphere, as it can influence the actions and decisions of the political elite. This research identifies the "relationships between different aspects of attitudes to the war, and between these attitudes and a range of social variables, rather than to engage in precise, predictive opinion polling."¹⁶⁹ Shaw argues that Western leaders refused to intervene in the crisis until pressure from critical media coverage changed British, and subsequently US, policy towards intervention.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁶ Livingston, "Clarifying the CNN Effect: An Examination of Media Effects According to Type of Military Intervention," 9-10.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 10.

¹⁶⁸ Shaw, *Civil Society and Media in Global Crises: Representing Distant Violence*.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 184.

¹⁷⁰ Robinson, *The CNN Effect: The Myth of News, Foreign Policy and Intervention*, 20.

Shaw analyses print news coverage to explore the range of ideology and representation of the war in major British newspapers. The newspapers included *The Sun*, *Star*, *Sport*, *The Daily Mirror*, *Daily Express*, *Daily Mail*, *Today*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Guardian*, and *The Independent*.¹⁷¹ The newspapers are divided into different ideological camps and include those displaying: expressions of patriotism (*The Sun*, *Star*, and *Sport*); slightly fewer expressions of patriotism (*Daily Mirror*); restrained nationalist ideology (*Daily Express* and *Daily Mail*); conservative ideology with varied information and opinions (*The Telegraph* and *The Times*); and liberal ideology with wide variations of coverage (*The Guardian* and *The Independent*).¹⁷²

To investigate the range of British public opinions and attitudes towards the crisis, Shaw analyses diaries from individual respondents and survey responses from two different phases of the 1991 Gulf War.¹⁷³ Participants' attitudes towards the crisis are compared with the ideology of the newspaper they source information from. Findings suggest that public perceptions of war are not directly formed by the ideological perspective of the newspaper a person reads, but rather the newspaper indirectly reinforces the consumer's ideology and this therefore contributes to shaping perceptions and attitudes to war.¹⁷⁴

Shaw also considers media framing and how the media represented the victims of violence. Framing shapes people's opinions and attitudes towards the war, and findings suggest that news coverage sympathetically framed the refugee movement of two million Kurdish people. Similarly, media scholar Susan Curruthers suggests that the media applied sympathetic frames as the Kurds "were more easily filmable, and, as homeless refugees in a snowy wasteland, were susceptible to being cast as pitiable victims rather than fanatical Muslims."¹⁷⁵ However, the humanitarian crisis occurring with the Shi'ite rebellion in southern Iraq received less media attention, even though there were many similarities to the Kurdish rebellion. The representation of the Shi'ite rebellion in the media did not provoke any sympathetic framing to inspire foreign intervention.¹⁷⁶ The use of media framing in a sympathetic and emotionally moving form is useful when understanding how the media can at times influence foreign policy decision-making leading to intervention.

A major limitation to Shaw's media based research is the narrow scope of information gathered, and the exclusion of government sources.¹⁷⁷ By only considering the media's portrayal of

¹⁷¹ Shaw, *Civil Society and Media in Global Crises: Representing Distant Violence*, 67-118.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 133.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 144-145.

¹⁷⁵ Susan Curruthers, *The Media at War: Communication and Conflict in the Twentieth Century* (Palgrave Macmillan 2000), 211.

¹⁷⁶ Shaw, *Civil Society and Media in Global Crises: Representing Distant Violence*, 100-118.

¹⁷⁷ Robinson, *The CNN Effect: The Myth of News, Foreign Policy and Intervention*, 20.

British foreign policy and how an audience responds to it, the significance of the policy itself is marginalised. As a result, it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to understand whether the media accurately present the policy, or whether an audience's response to the policy relates to the media. The inclusion of alternative government sources to comprehensively understand policy, are vital in establishing the range of factors that potentially influence foreign policy decision-making.

Additionally, the internal and external political affairs of a state fundamentally contribute to the formation of foreign policy, such as the politics and policy issues during national elections. Shaw's research fails to recognise the significance of the internal nature of British political culture, which fundamentally shapes its foreign policy and other related decisions. It has been argued that domestic political issues played a role in British Prime Minister John Major's decision to intervene, and that it was a means for him to avoid opposition criticism during the early stages of his first term as Prime Minister.¹⁷⁸ Additionally, Shaw also overlooked the geopolitical incentives for British involvement in the Kurdish refugee crisis as discussed earlier. It is possible that Britain felt compelled to intervene to prevent the spread of refugees into Turkey because of a prevailing sentiment that Western involvement was responsible for the crisis. The lack of similar attention to the Shi'ite rebellion, it could be argued, arose from limited media access to southern Iraq. Furthermore, when the media did cover the crisis, the use of distancing terminology, portraying the crisis as an internal conflict, did not connect the Shi'ite rebellion to US and Western interests or responsibilities.¹⁷⁹ To provide greater analysis of media effects on policy decisions towards intervention, the need for a more inclusive data-gathering method, one that draws on additional sources, is necessary.

Another media scholar, Nik Gowing, utilises interview-based methods in the article *Real-time Television Coverage of Armed Conflicts and Diplomatic Crises*.¹⁸⁰ This research investigates a number of armed conflicts during 1990-1995, although Bosnia encompasses much of the investigation.¹⁸¹ By interviewing over one hundred key government officials and politicians in a number of countries, Gowing attempts to "unravel the precise impact of real-time television on their work."¹⁸² The interview process operates without any consistent method. Some interviews occur under informal off the record conversations, while others receive extensive transcription and are quoted directly within the analysis. The analysis of the interviews is considered in relation to specific actions and events.

¹⁷⁸ Curruthers, *The Media at War: Communication and Conflict in the Twentieth Century*, 211.

¹⁷⁹ Bahador, *The CNN Effect in Action: How the News Media Pushed the West Towards War in Kosovo*, 25.

¹⁸⁰ Gowing, "Real-Time Television Coverage of Armed Conflicts and Diplomatic Crises: Does It Pressure or Distort Foreign Policy Decisions?."

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid., 1-2.

From this Gowing concludes that “[r]eal time TV coverage of armed conflicts ... helps those people know a little more but not enough to persuade governments to show greater will.”¹⁸³

Gowing’s research, however, presents ‘analytical confusion’ arising from the shortfalls of a systematic method designed to measure media impact on policy.¹⁸⁴ The lack of precision in Gowing’s work often results in overstated findings, and makes it difficult to verify any direct relationship between media and policy. Another issue arising from Gowing’s interview-based research is the failure to clarify the fundamental questions and definitions that are regularly applied throughout the investigation. For instance, what determines policy certainty and uncertainty? Furthermore, interview-based research often involves specialists, such as political players, who are instinctively biased due to the self-interested nature of the political arena. Interview-based research is inconsistent when determining media-government relations, as memory is not a reliable source of information.¹⁸⁵ Memory can change depending on the context it is remembered in, and pieces of information are often forgotten.¹⁸⁶ Lacking any specific logical structure, this method of research inevitably creates discrepancies in the discussion.

Regardless of the countless studies on the impact of the CNN Effect on humanitarian interventions, findings remain inconsistent and often contradictory, as shown in the works of Livingston and Eachus, Livingston, Shaw, and Gowing. The literature from these authors claims that the media can have some effect on foreign policy but when, why, and to what degree remains disputed.¹⁸⁷ Nevertheless, these works are important when considering to what extent the Australian and New Zealand print media content led or challenged government agendas and framing prior to RAMSI in 2003. The inconsistency of interview based research shows that it is an inadequate means for demonstrating the media-government relationship. Framing, however, has been shown to be a reliable and necessary avenue of research into if and how media actually do influence foreign policy decision-making. The literature identifies agenda setting as a fundamental method for verifying whether or not the media initially covered a crisis and, as a consequence, created the ensuing political interest. However, both agenda setting and framing require qualitative analysis to identify the presence of alternative geopolitical influences. The significance of these methods to this research are discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 61.

¹⁸⁴ Piers Robinson, "The CNN Effect: Can the News Media Drive Foreign Policy?," *Review of International Studies* 25, no. (1999): 304.

¹⁸⁵ Robinson, *The CNN Effect: The Myth of News, Foreign Policy and Intervention*, 18.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Livingston, "Clarifying the CNN Effect: An Examination of Media Effects According to Type of Military Intervention," 1.

Robinson's Policy-Media Interaction Model

Piers Robinson's *Policy-Media Interaction Model* draws from the existing theoretical literature to bridge the ideas proposed in the Indexing Hypothesis and CNN Effect, and establishes a framework for understanding media-government relations.¹⁸⁸ Robinson's model is a comprehensive approach that systematically accounts for any cases where the media has influenced foreign policy. The model is aligned with the Indexing Hypothesis. However, it is also designed to give insight into situations where media coverage varies from elite viewpoints and challenges official opinions; in this way it identifies the presence of a CNN Effect. By applying the ideas from Bennett and Hallin - that media challenge official government policy at times of 'elite dissensus' or 'legitimate controversy' - Robinson develops the model to contribute to the wider media effects debate.¹⁸⁹

In relation to the CNN Effect, Robinson differentiates between a *strong* and *weak* effect, an expansion of Livingston's three types of CNN Effects.¹⁹⁰ A *strong* CNN Effect is to a degree comparable to the *agenda setting effect*.¹⁹¹ However, a *strong* effect argues that the media not only place the crisis on the agenda but can also influence government whilst debating appropriate response options.¹⁹² Both of these approaches can 'pressure' or influence policy-makers into action. The *weak* effect is understood to have less influence over policy-makers, as "media reports might incline policy-makers to act rather than create a political imperative to act."¹⁹³ Therefore, a *weak* effect could occur when policy-makers are 'personally affected' by an issue in the media.¹⁹⁴ The *weak* effect is therefore equivalent to the *accelerant and impediment effects* presented by Livingston.¹⁹⁵

Robinson establishes three key factors necessary to identify when the media influence government policy formation: times of policy uncertainty; elite dissensus; and the use of *empathy* and *critical* framing.¹⁹⁶ When these three factors occur it allows the media to oppose government policy and influence a new approach. Conversely, when there is policy certainty, elite consensus, and *distance* and *support* framing, a CNN Effect is unlikely, and the media will tend to index coverage to the opinions of the political elite. Robinson identifies these factors by examining press statements, interview data from decision-makers in a range of government departments, and additional secondary sources.¹⁹⁷

¹⁸⁸ Robinson, "The Policy-Media Interaction Model: Measuring Media Power During Humanitarian Crisis."

¹⁸⁹ Piers Robinson, "Theorizing the Influence of Media on World Politics: Models of Media Influence on Foreign Policy," *European Journal of Communication* 16, no. 4 (2001): 531.

¹⁹⁰ ———, *The CNN Effect: The Myth of News, Foreign Policy and Intervention*, 38.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 38.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 39-40.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 25-32.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 27.

Policy certainty is based on the policy of the executive, which in the US includes the White House, Department of Defense, and State Department. The executive is usually responsible for making foreign policy, and the different executive departments are what Robinson calls subsystems.¹⁹⁸ Policy uncertainty, therefore, happens when: situations occur and there is no policy; if the subsystems are ambiguous and unclear; or if there is disagreement between the subsystems,¹⁹⁹ e.g., if the State Department and Department of Defense had a different policy or approach on the same issue. Robinson makes this determination by looking at press statements and releases on the issue from these different executive departments to see if the policy is consistent amongst them.

Elite dissensus relates to disagreement within the legislature, which in the US is Congress. The level of agreement or disagreement on an issue between the major parties in Congress is the basis for measuring the level of media criticism.²⁰⁰ If there is disagreement then the media is more critical of foreign policy. If there is unity, the media is less critical.²⁰¹ Therefore, subsystem disagreement relates to the executive and is what Robinson coins 'policy uncertainty'. Consensus and dissensus, on the other hand, relates to how it is discussed in the legislature.

The process of media framing is described by Robinson: "this concept [media framing] enables us to understand how news media texts do not simply replicate reality, but can actually be constructed so as to produce a particular understanding or perception of a problem."²⁰² This allows one side of the debate to have an advantage in the media. The media are a source of information for the general populace and the media can often be powerful or damaging to the elite depending on the frame. The type of frame applied to media coverage is essential in determining the opportunity for the media to influence policy. Robinson identifies four framing categories that are applied to debates relating to a crisis: *empathy* and *distance* frames, and *support* and *critical* frames.

Sympathetic framing, as a requirement of the CNN Effect, refers to how the government policy of non-intervention is presented, and therefore encompasses *empathy* and *critical* framing.²⁰³ *Empathy* frames empathise with a group of people involved in a crisis, and identifies them as victims using key terms such as, 'women', 'children' or 'elderly'.²⁰⁴ *Critical* frames suggest a policy is inadequate or failing. On the other hand, *distance* framing uses terms such as 'fighters',

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 26-27.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 26.

²⁰⁰ ———, "Theorizing the Influence of Media on World Politics: Models of Media Influence on Foreign Policy," 531.

²⁰¹ ———, *The CNN Effect: The Myth of News, Foreign Policy and Intervention*, 30.

²⁰² ———, "Theorizing the Influence of Media on World Politics: Models of Media Influence on Foreign Policy," 532.

²⁰³ Ibid., 616.

²⁰⁴ ———, *The CNN Effect: The Myth of News, Foreign Policy and Intervention*, 137-139.

‘soldiers’ and ‘men’ to empathise the emotional distance between the crisis and the reader.²⁰⁵ *Support* frames, meanwhile, refer to terms that are supportive and encourage a policy approach. However, it is difficult to set out terms or phrases that identify *critical* or *support* frames since they invariably depend on the context of the crisis. For example, if a nation already has troops present in a crisis zone, then the context and debate would differ if the troops were not yet present.²⁰⁶

Robinson’s model relies heavily on policy uncertainty, which is difficult to successfully measure. When policy change occurs the variables that lead to the change are not incorporated in the model. Therefore, the model fails “to systematically account for policy change (or the “effect” on the CNN Effect) within the model.”²⁰⁷ Furthermore, the case studies which Robinson investigate analyse relatively short periods, potentially missing the bigger picture or significant information.

The *Policy-Media Interaction Model* connects the theoretical ideas of the Indexing Hypothesis and the CNN Effect, both of which will be considered during this investigation of the Australian and New Zealand media coverage of, and government debate on the 2003 Solomon Islands crisis. Robinson’s research demonstrates the difficulties of determining policy certainty and uncertainty. However, the model reiterates the importance of government policy, and media and government framing. These factors are fundamental to the methodological approaches utilised in this research.

The Formation of a Research Method

By reviewing the current literature on the media government relationship a number of primary, but not conditional, requirements are necessary for the Indexing Hypothesis or CNN Effect to take place. These principles are offered in Table 1 on the following page.

Given that these principles are necessary for the theories to operate, this research has designed a number of areas to investigate the media-government relationship in Australia and New Zealand. Furthermore, the research techniques applied by the various authors all have limiting factors and highlight the fact that one single approach is inadequate to measure the media-government relationship during foreign crises. For this reason it is necessary to combine a number of methodological approaches to coherently demonstrate the theoretical explanation and to address the primary research question: to what extent did the Australian and New Zealand media lead, challenge, or alternatively follow government agendas and framing prior to RAMSI in 2003.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Bahador, *The CNN Effect in Action: How the News Media Pushed the West Towards War in Kosovo*, 29.

Table 1: The Primary Principles of the Indexing Hypothesis and CNN Effect

	Indexing Hypothesis	CNN Effect
Agenda setting	Political Elite are the agenda setting agent Media coverage follows political activity	Media are the agenda setting agent Media coverage leads political activity
Framing – Range of Debate	Media and Political Elite offer a similar range of debate	Media use sympathetic (empathy) framing
Critical Framing	Critical frames are similar between media and Political Elite	The media challenges Government
Media sourcing	Primarily Government sources Sources are primarily supportive towards Government	Varied sources Sources offer a range of opinions - critical, mixed or neutral

It has been demonstrated within the literature that a number of content analyses are suitable for the investigation of the Indexing Hypothesis and the CNN Effect. There are three content analyses applicable for the study of the Australian and New Zealand media-government relationship. These are: evaluating the range of debate in the media and government through a framing analysis; investigating the media's use of sources; and identifying critical perspectives towards government within the media and elite forums. In addition to these content analyses, an investigation of the sequence in which media coverage and government activities occurred clarifies who initially placed the crisis on the agenda.

Investigating the Range of Debate

In the works of Bennett, Mermin, Althaus, and Livingston and Eachus, content analysis is used to identify the spectrums of debate on foreign crises. The range of debate can also identify if certain issues or policy options have been sensationalised in the media. One of the most notable

studies came from Althaus who considers not only the critical or supportive frames (what he calls *means discourse*), but also additional themes that arise in the media when reporting foreign policy (*ends* and *context discourse*). This is particularly necessary when establishing the entire range of debate on foreign crises. This can include justifications for foreign involvement or intervention by outlining the problems within the crises area; and the possible foreign response to such problems. The entire range of debate also permits the identification of possible sympathetic and distancing frames; what Robinson defines as *empathy*, *distant*, *support*, or *critical* frames. Sympathetic or distancing framing can move an audience and policy-makers into action or inaction and is relevant when determining the presence of a CNN Effect or Indexing Hypothesis.

The Media's Use of Sources

The investigation of sources in the news is found in Althaus, Bennett, and Mermin's research. One aspect of these investigations establishes which sourced opinions support and which challenge the perspectives and policies of the political elite. Bennett conducts a content analysis of 'voiced opinions' within news stories by analysing the frequency, direction, and source of the 'voices' to verify journalistic routines. Additionally, Althaus uses content analysis to demonstrate the significance of all sources in the media, rather than uniquely focusing on American sources. Mermin focuses on the source of critical opinions in the news to determine where these originate, and if they correlate to critical perspectives within the elite forum. These findings verify the importance of a content analysis to identify the use of sources in the media when evaluating the media-government relationship.

Critical Perspectives Towards Government

The level of dissent within the elite forum has proven difficult to measure accurately. However, it is imperative to attempt to assess this to weigh the impact media can have over executives involved in foreign policy decision-making. Hallin, Bennett, Mermin, Althaus, and Robinson acknowledge that the degree of consensus or dissent within the elite forum can determine the critical and supportive frames those policies will receive in the media. Thus, one area of content analysis on which Althaus and Mermin focus is the number of critical frames presented in the media that challenge government policy, or certain aspects to it. Mermin's study proves the most significant in this regard. Mermin argues that when Indexing is evident the number of critical perspectives determines whether the marginalisation or correlation version is taking place. This is important as it can give greater insight into the media, particularly in its role as the fourth estate of democratic society. To accurately comprehend the media-government relationship, a similar content analysis needs to be conducted, investigating framing in news articles, and establishing whether or not they originate from elite forum proceedings.

Timing of Political Elite Actions and Media Coverage

A quantitative time-line review of media coverage and government actions verifies who placed the crisis on the agenda. A fundamental aspect of a CNN Effect is the political elite losing control of the policy-making process to the media. This is what Livingston refers to as the *agenda setting effect* and Robinson calls the *strong effect*. The investigation into the agenda-setter is an approach employed by Mermin, and Livingston and Eachus. While this test alone is insufficient to distinguish the relationship between these groups, it does provide the basis for understanding media-government relations. It therefore becomes necessary to establish if media coverage precedes government actions, or vice versa, to determine who first placed the foreign crisis on the agenda. In addition to this, the volume of coverage and action from the media and political elite signifies which group was more heavily engaged with the crisis during particular periods. Providing a time-sequence and volume analysis of media reporting and government actions further clarifies whether the media or government first covered the crisis. As previously stated, to understand who first placed the crisis on the agenda, a qualitative analysis must supplement such a sequential analysis.

Chapter 3: Australia, New Zealand, and the Solomon Islands

Chapter one introduced the focus and rationale of this research. Chapter two set out the theoretical explanation, as well as the framework designed to test the Indexing Hypothesis and CNN Effect. These theories are relevant, as they attempt to explain the role the media play in foreign policy decision-making. More specifically for this study, these theories guide analysis and allow us to compare Australian and New Zealand media relations with other regions.

Foreign policy decision-making is a complex process that involves the assessment and analysis of the regional and international environment in relation to national interests.²⁰⁸ The underlying domestic and regional political environments are crucial to the investigation of the media during foreign crises. For this reason, it is essential to reflect on the political factors that influenced the Australia and New Zealand governments to intervene in the Solomon Islands at the time they did. This chapter will first discuss broadly the relevant regional and international political factors. This will be followed by a detailed account of Australian and New Zealand foreign policy, as well as a review to the Solomon crisis and initial intervention.

Australian and New Zealand policy towards the Solomon Islands shifted from non-intervention in 2002 and early-2003, to intervention in mid-2003. While the incentives for intervention differed slightly between the two, both countries responded collectively when addressing the issue of Solomon Islands instability. Pursuing a regional multilateral approach was necessary, as it was clear that a unilateral approach was unfeasible and unlikely to bring successful results.

The Regional and International Setting

The Pacific region faces a wide range of challenges regarding development and security. These issues are primarily the result of poor governance and endemic economic problems.²⁰⁹ While Australia and New Zealand do not face the same challenges as their Pacific islands neighbours, the close proximity to PIC's and their potential to pose security threats to the wider region has drawn the attention of policy makers in Canberra and Wellington over a number of decades.²¹⁰ Entrenching the region's economic problems is the increasing dependence on foreign aid.²¹¹ This issue has been exacerbated by the over-exploitation of natural resources, which has created a bleak future for

²⁰⁸ Robert Patman, "Foreign Policy," in *New Zealand Government and Politics*, ed. Raymond Miller (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 19.

²⁰⁹ Stephen Hoadley, *Pacific Island Security Management by New Zealand and Australia: Towards a New Paradigm* (Working Paper 20/05, Centre for Strategic Studies: New Zealand. Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, Wellington 2005). 5.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Satish Chand, "Labour Mobility for Sustainable Livelihoods in Pacific Island States," in *Pacific Futures*, ed. Michael Powles (Canberra: Pandanus Books, 2006), 127.

countries that rely on foreign investment for economic stability.²¹² A mixture of political, cultural, and developmental problems in recent times has caused instability and internal conflicts in Fiji, Tonga, and the Solomon Islands.

Within the Asia Pacific region, Australia and New Zealand have learnt lessons from peace missions in the Papua New Guinea (PNG) province of Bougainville, and subsequently East Timor. During engagements in Bougainville, Australia and New Zealand were present in a primarily peacekeeping capacity.²¹³ With the independence of East Timor in 1999, Australia and New Zealand increased their level of engagement by contributing large military, police, and logistical support forces in a nation-building capacity.²¹⁴ However, long-lasting peace was not achieved in East Timor as tensions remained high and fighting between different factions recommenced in 2005.²¹⁵ This example highlights the challenges facing peace missions with nation-building objectives in deeply troubled areas, as it requires long-term focus and support to adequately address entrenched discontent.

The Pacific Island Forum (PIF) is the political organization formed for greater regional cooperation between the 16 member states, including Australia and New Zealand. The forum is the body for regional discussion, decision-making, and the expression of collective views.²¹⁶ As a method for effective regional conflict prevention and resolution, the PIF adopted the *Biketawa Declaration* in 2000.²¹⁷ The *Declaration* focuses on the rising number of internal conflicts in the region, and asserts that these should be addressed through the collective action of states, while respecting the principle of non-intervention.²¹⁸ However, the process that leads to regional assistance is often slow as consensus is difficult to achieve. The PIF incorporates a range of nation-states, each with its own agenda. This can sometimes lead to conflict within the forum, similar to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). As a result, reaching consensus can be time consuming or in some cases impossible.

Beyond the region, the increasing number of international threats to peace and security resulted in a new pattern of security initiatives. In 2001, the 9/11 terrorist attacks highlighted vulnerabilities in the international security system and resulted in the implementation of mandatory

²¹² Hoadley, "Pacific Island Security Management by New Zealand and Australia: Towards a New Paradigm ", 4-5.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 10-13.

²¹⁵ Douglas Abdiel, "No News Is Good News: The Longevity of Australian Humanitarian Interventions," *Armed Forces and Society* 37, no. 4 (2011): 576.

²¹⁶ Pacific Islands Forum, "Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat: Mission, Goals & Roles," (2010) <http://forumsec.org/pages.cfm/about-us/mission-goals-roles/>. Accessed April 14 2010

²¹⁷ Pacific Island Forum, "Biketawa Declaration," Pacific Island Forum, (2000) <http://www.forumsec.org/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/BIKETAWA%20Declaration.pdf>. Accessed April 14 2010

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

security measures by the UNSC.²¹⁹ Part of the newly established global security initiative and the Bush administration's 'war on terror' discourse was centred on weak states, due to Afghanistan's role as a state considered weak for being a safe haven for Al Qaeda. Mandatory anti-terrorism security measures after 9/11²²⁰ put more pressure on the scarce resources of the PICs, already struggling with "fish and rice."²²¹

The demand for a stronger international security system derives from the key issues recognised by foreign powers relating to failing states. These include weak border security, underdevelopment, and corruption; all of which create desirable environments for international criminal activity such as money laundering, drug trafficking, and terrorism.²²² These issues are considered key impediments to stability and development throughout the Pacific region; attitudes which were reinforced when significant threats occurred, such as 9/11 and the Bali Bombing.²²³

For Australia and New Zealand, the October 2002 Bali Bombings were further proof that the somewhat geographically isolated nations of the region were not immune to international security threats. This was the largest terrorist attack that Indonesia and the Asia-Pacific region had experienced, killing 202 foreign nationals, including 88 Australian and 3 New Zealand citizens.²²⁴ The attacks heightened the need to address lax security systems within the region. It was these regional and international security issues that prompted Australia and New Zealand to take a lead in Pacific affairs by providing assistance to strengthen security and address instability.²²⁵

Australia and New Zealand: Different Agendas Operating Collectively

At the time of the Solomon Islands crisis, Australia and New Zealand held relatively different foreign policy agendas. New Zealand, under the direction of Prime Minister Helen Clark and Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Phil Goff, took a multilateral approach towards international relations with a focus on supporting the legitimacy of the UN. On the other hand, Australia, under Prime Minister

²¹⁹ United Nations Security Council, (United Nations). *United Nations Security Council Resolution 15450: Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, 2004

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ 'Fish and rice issues' is the term to describe "the provision of basic health and education services, the prevention of civil unrest and the management of environment and resource needs" In *Tanya Ogilvie-White, "Facilitating Implementation of Resolution 1540 in South-East Asia and the South Pacific," in Implementing Resolution 1540: The Role of Regional Organizations*, ed. Lawrence Scheinman (Geneva, Switzerland: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 2008), 85.

²²² Hoadley, "Pacific Island Security Management by New Zealand and Australia: Towards a New Paradigm ", 6.

²²³ George Bush, "A Central Front in the War on Terror: President's Speech to the Nation," The White House, (2003) <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/09/20030909.html>. Accessed April 16 2010; Joan Fitzpatrick, "Rendition and Transfer in the War against Terrorism: Guantanamo and Beyond," *Loy. L.A. Int'l & Comp. L. Rev.* 25, no. (2003): 459-460.

²²⁴ New Zealand Herald, "New Zealander Killed in Jakarta Blast," *New Zealand Herald*, July 17 2009.

²²⁵ Hoadley, "Pacific Island Security Management by New Zealand and Australia: Towards a New Paradigm ", 5-6.

John Howard and Foreign Affairs Minister Alexander Downer,²²⁶ directed its foreign policy on idealist principles and on strengthening bilateral relations with the US.

Despite initial assumptions by Australia and New Zealand, Pacific leaders did not maintain an adequate level of security and development.²²⁷ This indicates why Australian and New Zealand policies “moved from optimism and generosity to doubt adjustment, and reassessment and finally to activism and occasional intervention.”²²⁸ It is this policy change that established the grounds to analyse the relevance of Australian and New Zealand foreign policy approaches towards the Pacific region and the wider international setting. Particularly in relation to whether the media led or challenged government agendas and framing, or whether they followed the already established ideas of the political elite.

Australian Foreign Policy during the Howard Years

Howard gained coalition power in 1996, establishing a foreign policy focused on a state-centric view of security through military advancements, strengthening power alliances, and scepticism towards the ability of international institutions to adequately manage security issues.²²⁹ During Howard’s time in power his policy evolved to respond to a new regional and global security agenda centred on reducing the threat of intrastate conflict and terrorism. Key events in this period included East Timor in 1999, the 9/11 attacks in the US, the Bali Bombing of 2002, and the war in Iraq.²³⁰

During Howard’s first term, a close alliance with the US was identified as the cornerstone of Australia’s economic and foreign policy.²³¹ As declared by Howard in his address to the Lowy Institute for International Policy: “from the moment of our election in 1996, as a deliberate act of policy, my government intensified Australia’s post-Cold war relationship with the United States.”²³² The alliance was one of shared interests and values. The Australian, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty (ANZUS) became a channel to strengthen relations with the US post 9/11. As the events and effects of 9/11 unfolded, and the Bush administration declared it’s ‘war on terror’, Australia followed by contributing troops to the distant wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and justifying

²²⁶ Daniel Flitton, "Perspectives on Australian Foreign Policy 2002," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 57, no. 1 (2003): 37-54.

²²⁷ Hoadley, "Pacific Island Security Management by New Zealand and Australia: Towards a New Paradigm ", 6-7.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.

²²⁹ David McCraw, "The Howard Government's Foreign Policy: Really Realist?," *Australian Journal of Political Science* Volume 43, no. No. 3 (2008): 467-468.

²³⁰ Hoadley, "Pacific Island Security Management by New Zealand and Australia: Towards a New Paradigm ", 5-6.

²³¹ McCraw, "The Howard Government's Foreign Policy: Really Realist?." 471-472.

²³² John Howard, *Australia in the World*, Address to the Lowy Institute for International Policy, Sydney, 2005). 12.

their involvement within the same discourse.²³³ The Australian commitment was made despite initial public opposition to its involvement in the non-UN authorised invasion of Iraq in 2003.²³⁴

The formation of the US-Australian Free Trade Agreement was US compensation to Australia for its on-going loyalty and commitment to the ‘war on terror.’²³⁵ This verified the bilateral approach to international affairs that these administrations embraced. Australia’s support for the ‘war on terror’, as well as its increasing focus on, and engagement in, Pacific affairs, also indicated an attempt to protect and control its back yard from Chinese political and military expansion in the Pacific.²³⁶

Australia’s regional security consciousness is driven by the country’s long-standing public concern over illegal immigration. This concern was a significant reason behind the government’s increased focus on advancing regional engagement and it was also seen as a potent polling advantage during the 2001 federal election.

Howard’s actions were at times contradictory to the intentions expressed by his government. In Howard’s early years his attendance at annual PIF meetings was infrequent, reflecting his marginal interest in Pacific affairs. This was at odds with his growing acceptance of the region’s strategic significance to Australia. Australia slowly came to recognise the implications of the events taking place in the region due to the instability in Indonesia and East Timor. This eventually shaped the Australian foreign policy vision of 1999, referred to as the ‘Howard Doctrine’, that saw Australia embrace the role of regional leader.²³⁷ The US labelled Australia the ‘deputy’ in the region, a term that was reapplied to Australia’s role in the Solomons.²³⁸ This view of Australia was strengthened following 9/11, when Australia further altered its foreign policy to align itself with the US.

Regardless of US influence on Australian foreign policy, responsibility for the Pacific was largely left up to Australia. The Australian 2003 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade’s White Paper, entitled *Advancing the National Interest*, demonstrated the beginning of a change in policy towards the Pacific. The 2003 White Paper emphasised the security threat of global terrorism.²³⁹ The Paper also drew on American hegemony and the ANZUS treaty more so than any Australian White

²³³ Kabutaulaka, ""Failed State" and the War on Terror: Intervention in Solomon Islands," 4.

²³⁴ Flitton, "Perspectives on Australian Foreign Policy 2002," 45.

²³⁵ William H. Cooper, *The U.S.-Australia Free Trade Agreement: Provisions and Implications*, (CRS Report for Congress, Congressional Research Service: The Library of Congress, 2005).

²³⁶ Kabutaulaka, ""Failed State" and the War on Terror: Intervention in Solomon Islands," 4.

²³⁷ Richard Leaver, "The Meanings, Origins and Implications of 'the Howard Doctrine'," *The Pacific Review* 14, no. 1 (2001): 15-34.

²³⁸ Kabutaulaka, ""Failed State" and the War on Terror: Intervention in Solomon Islands," 4.

²³⁹ Australia, *Advancing the National Interest*. (Canberra: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Hansard, 2003),

Paper in the treaty's 25-year history.²⁴⁰ What is most significant about the 2003 White Paper however, is that it highlighted a new focus on the Asia Pacific region.²⁴¹ More importantly Elsin Wainwright's Australian Strategic Policy Institute report, *Our Failing Neighbour*, applied the 'failed state' reasoning for Australian intervention. In this report Solomon Islands instability was linked to the global 'war on terror'.²⁴² *Our Failing Neighbour* offered Australia the grounds to prioritize the Solomon Islands crisis as part of the global 'war on terror'. This also illustrates the political factors shaping Australian foreign policy throughout 2003.

New Zealand Foreign Policy during the Clark Years

Despite the historically close relationship between New Zealand and Australia during the late 1990's and early 2000, their foreign policy approaches were significantly different due to ideological differences between the governments. From 1999, New Zealand foreign policy was formed under Clark's Labour government. Foreign Policy analysts identified New Zealand foreign policy as operating under the principle of being a 'model international citizen'; focusing on the promotion of human rights, democracy, and the commitment to international institutions.²⁴³ This differed significantly from Australia's commitment to its bilateral relationship with the US. This approach led to the restructuring of the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) and a shift away from the security perspectives of Australia and the US.²⁴⁴ By focusing on peacekeeping and regionalism, New Zealand limited the expansion of its armed forces.²⁴⁵ Furthermore, the Labour government endorsed a strong connection to PICs, reinforced by its large Polynesian population and a commitment to assisting close neighbours and friends. New Zealand's commitment and strong connections with the Pacific stemmed from constitutional relationships, trade, and migration.²⁴⁶

Human rights have played a fundamental role in shaping New Zealand foreign policy; an agenda avidly embraced and endorsed by Clark. Within the region, New Zealand was one of the initiating forces behind the *Biketawa Declaration* which promoted democracy, human rights, and peace throughout the Pacific. The Labour government recognised the significance of democracy and human rights as interdependent and mutually reinforcing fields, essential to sustainable

²⁴⁰ Derek Woolner, "The 2003 Defence Statement: The Failure to Marry Politics and Policy," *Australian Review of Public Affairs*, (April 28 2003) <http://www.australianreview.net/digest/2003/04/woolner.html>. Accessed

²⁴¹ Australia, "Advancing the National Interest," xvii.

²⁴² Elsin Wainwright, *Our Failing Neighbour: Australia and the Future of Solomon Islands*, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Canberra, 2003). 13.

²⁴³ Phil Goff, *New Zealand's Foreign and Security Policy Challenges*. (Wellington: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Beehive, May 10 2000), beehive.govt.nz/feature/new-zealand039s-foreign-and-security-policy-challenges

²⁴⁴ David McCraw, "New Zealand Foreign Policy under the Clark Government," *Pacific Affairs* 78, no. 2 (2005): 227.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 227.

²⁴⁶ David. B MacDonald, "Regionalism: New Zealand, Asia, the Pacific, and Australia," in *Sovereignty under Siege? Globalisation and New Zealand*, ed. Robert Patman and Chris Rudd (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2005).

development.²⁴⁷ The promotion of human rights by New Zealand, combined with its multicultural identity, allowed New Zealand policy to incorporate sensitivity towards minority groups, particularly in the Pacific.²⁴⁸ Due to New Zealand's receptiveness to cultural diversity, it was welcomed as a player in regional affairs, often more so than Australia.²⁴⁹

New Zealand has an enduring commitment to multilateral institutions, particularly the PIF and the UN. This was particularly evident during the 1999 Labour government, which supported and encouraged the use of multilateral cooperation to bring peace and stability. A good example of New Zealand's commitment to international institutions is reflected in its response to UN initiated assistance to East Timor. During the late 1990s New Zealand held minor strategic interests in East Timor. However, New Zealand avoidance of the East Timor independence issue changed direction under the Clark government. This was substantiated when New Zealand acted on its moral consideration towards human rights and acknowledged that it had overlooked Indonesian occupation for over two decades.²⁵⁰ With the government's increased commitment to peacekeeping operations, East Timor was the perfect opportunity to demonstrate a willingness to contribute to international peace and development operations.²⁵¹

The emergence of wider global security issues afforded New Zealand further opportunities to demonstrate its commitment to international institutions. One of the most notable demonstrations of the government's commitment to the UN was in the case of the Iraq war where it was at pains to act in the absence of UN authorisation.²⁵² Strongly supportive of UN authority, New Zealand's policy differed from key allies Australia, the US, and UK. Its position often attracted criticism and claims that New Zealand was not 'pulling its weight' in defence and in the 'war on terror'.²⁵³

²⁴⁷ New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Human Rights, 2010," <http://www.mfat.govt.nz/Foreign-Relations/1-Global-Issues/Human-Rights/0-overview.php>. Accessed June 2nd, 2010

²⁴⁸ Richard Devetak and Jacqui True, "Diplomatic Divergence in the Antipodes: Globalisation, Foreign Policy and State Identity in Australia and New Zealand," *Australia Journal of Political Science* 41, no. 2 (2006): 248.

²⁴⁹ G. Fry, *Whose Oceania? Contending Visions of Community in Pacific Region-Building*, (Working Paper no.2004/3, Department of International Relations, RSPAS, Australian National University, 2004). Cited in Devetak and True, *"Diplomatic Divergence in the Antipodes: Globalisation, Foreign Policy and State Identity in Australia and New Zealand."* 248-249.

²⁵⁰ Matt Robson, *A Wider View of Disarmament and Arms Control*, Disarmament and Arms Control. (Wellington: Beehive), February 14 2001.

²⁵¹ McCraw, "New Zealand Foreign Policy under the Clark Government," 224.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 225.

²⁵³ Robert Patman, *Globalisation, Sovereignty and the Transformation of New Zealand Foreign Policy*, (Working Paper 21/05, Centre for Strategic Studies: New Zealand. Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, Wellington, 2005). 12.

Clark restructured the NZDF in 2001,²⁵⁴ to better meet the demands for international UN peacekeeping missions.²⁵⁵ This was highlighted in 2003 when, “New Zealand ranked first in financial and personnel support for UN peacekeeping operations (relative to size of its population and GDP), with over 800 military personnel serving in 13 UN-authorized peace support or humanitarian missions.”²⁵⁶ Regardless of US and Australian criticism, Clark was not concerned with strengthening relationships with these countries when its own strategic outlook was starkly different.²⁵⁷

Given New Zealand’s commitment to international and regional institutions that urged other nations to support the Solomon Islands, particularly the UN and PIF, its engagement with the Solomon Islands was noted from 1999 in a number of capacities. However, rather than focusing on the global ‘war on terror’ and other international security threats, New Zealand turned its attention to the internal instabilities in the Pacific. In a speech entitled *The Pacific – Where to From Here?* Goff clearly noted that New Zealand was only one sovereign nation in the Pacific and that “[w]e cannot assume our viewpoint will always be that of other countries in the region.”²⁵⁸ This highlights a contrast between Australian policy makers, who embraced the role of regional leader.

The most notable contribution New Zealand made to the Solomon Islands preceding RAMSI was 10 advisory police officers to reform SIPF in early July 2002. While Australia maintained its position of non-intervention at this time, it did provide funds for the reform programme. It is evident from this that New Zealand’s stance towards the Solomon Islands was different from Australia. While Australia asserted superiority in its role as regional leader in the global ‘war on terror’, New Zealand’s more low-key approach involved working closely to assist its Pacific neighbors.

Crisis in Paradise - Background to the Solomon Island Crisis

The crisis that led to RAMSI began in 1998, although ethnic tensions dated back to World War Two. The Solomon Islands gained independence in 1978, but struggled to develop a stable social, political, and economic environment. Primarily, ethnic tensions between two military forces, the Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army (GRA) and the Malaitan Eagle Force (MEF), intensified in late 1998.²⁵⁹ However, ethnic tension is an oversimplification of an extremely complex situation.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 12.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 12.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 12.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 12.

²⁵⁸ Phil Goff, (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade). *The Pacific - Where to from Here?*, (Wellington: Beehive), July 19 2002

²⁵⁹ Greg Watson, "Conflict Overview: Solomon Islands " in *Securing a Peaceful Pacific*, ed. John Henderson and Greg Watson (Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2005), 403.

At the heart of the on-going tensions in the Solomon Islands were the consequences of a poorly functioning government, deeply corrupted and divided by the traditional Wantok system.²⁶⁰ Land ownership issues, the exploitation of natural resources, the breakdown of social stability, and a rise in crime further complicated the situation. The economy struggled to keep up with flourishing global markets, and was impacted by rising poverty conditions as well as the spill-over effects from the Bougainville conflict.²⁶¹ Furthermore, because the Solomon Islands stretch across 992 atolls, with six main islands and over 80 spoken languages and dialects, an effective central government and national sentiment were inherently difficult objectives to achieve.²⁶² All of these issues were a reminder that independence had not delivered what many expected.

Adding to Solomon Islands pressures was a vastly growing population, increasing at a rate of 3.3% annually.²⁶³ At the same time “growth in real GDP dropped from positive 10% in 1995 to negative 10% in 2001.”²⁶⁴ Weakening this economic situation further was a ‘marked demographic youth bulge’ reaching dangerous heights of around 50% of the population under the age of 20 years.²⁶⁵ With few employment opportunities, rising poverty, crime, lawlessness, and little confidence in the government’s ability to control the situation, instability reached critical levels throughout 1999 and 2000.

When the crisis began to escalate in 1999, the Solomon Islands government requested Australian assistance. This request was denied. A number of attempts were made to form a peace agreement between the GRA and MEF during 1999 and 2000.²⁶⁶ However, for a variety of reasons, these agreements failed to maintain peace and did not address all the issues that were fragmenting the country and its people.²⁶⁷ On June 5th 2000 the MEF led a coup, seizing Parliament until an interim government was installed in late June.²⁶⁸ The coup was an attempt to gain retribution for the damages caused by Guadalcanal militias who raped, killed, and pillaged throughout 1999.²⁶⁹ However, this action further destabilised the economy and heightened ethnic hostility. The rising concerns from

²⁶⁰ Francis Fukuyama, "State Building in Solomon Islands," *Pacific Economic Bulletin*, (2008) http://www.sais-jhu.edu/bin/y/f/PEB23_3_.pdf. Accessed August 22 2011, 5.

²⁶¹ Watson, "Conflict Overview: Solomon Islands ", 402-403.

²⁶² United Nations, "Permanent Mission of Solomon Islands to the United Nations: Country Facts," (2011) <http://www.un.int/wcm/content/site/solomonislands/cache/offonce/pid/3606>. Accessed

²⁶³ Elsinia Wainwright, "Responding to State Failure - the Case of Australia and Solomon Islands," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 57, no. 3 (2003): 487.

²⁶⁴ Solomon Islands Coastal Fisheries Consultancy Services, *Solomon Islands National Assessment World Summit on Sustainable Development: Synopsis of Issues, Activities, Needs, and Constraints: Sustainable Development 1992-2002 Solomon Islands*, Johannesburg, June 2002). 5.

²⁶⁵ Wainwright, "Our Failing Neighbour: Australia and the Future of Solomon Islands," 19.

²⁶⁶ Homiara Peace Accord June 1999, Panatina Agreement August 1999, and the Townsville Peace Agreement October 2000. Watson, "Conflict Overview: Solomon Islands ".

²⁶⁷ The reasons for the failure of the three peace Agreements are discussed fully in *ibid.*, 404.

²⁶⁸ Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka, "Australia Foreign Policy and the RAMSI Intervention in Solomon Islands " *The Contemporary Pacific* 17, no. 2 (2005): 286.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 284-286.

international observers over the sovereign coherence of the Solomon Islands led Australia to reopen peace talks which had stalled. In October 2000 there was a more comprehensive and legitimate attempt by Australia to stabilise the Islands in the form of the *Townsville Peace Agreement*. As a result, an International Peace Monitoring Team was formed and began immediately to ease tensions.²⁷⁰ However, peace talks again broke down due to the continuing spill-over effects from the Bougainville conflict, the failure to adequately collect arms, and the continuing, widespread and 'endemic' corruption. Inevitably the Islands experienced increasing instability and eventual violent conflict.²⁷¹

The total number deaths from the outbreaks of violence were relatively small compared to that of other international conflicts. However, the total estimate of displaced people in 1999 reached 35,309 out of a population of just over 400,000.²⁷² The effects of displaced people saw an extremely large number move into squatter shelters in the capital, consequently creating more problems from rapid urbanisation. International commentators began to label the country a failed state, and this discourse created a changing political context to the conflict.²⁷³ Solomon Islands Prime Minister Allan Kemakeza made a second request for assistance to the Australian government in April 2003. Australia and New Zealand began to change their respective positions of non-interference in Solomon Islands affairs and by June 24th 2003 the first stages of RAMSI were deployed. A timeline of key Australian, New Zealand, and Solomon Islands government actions is displayed in Table 2 on the following page.

The Initial Intervention

Generally, Australia's and New Zealand's foreign policies were shaped by the two countries' differing relationships and internal priorities. Australia was reluctant to respond to the first request for assistance as the instability of Solomon Islands' affairs seemed beyond the capabilities of the small assistance force Australia was capable of supplying. The initial unwillingness to assist in January 2003 was due also to more fundamental concerns. Both Australia and New Zealand were apprehensive about becoming entrenched in a costly, long-term development project, and the likelihood of having to endure criticism for what could well turn into yet another example of neo-colonial mistakes.

After the second request for assistance, and the rising level of regional security threats, Australia, with the support of New Zealand, committed to these requests. The formation of a regional taskforce was coined RAMSI or *Operation Helpem Fren*, Melanesian for 'helping a friend'.²⁷⁴ On July 24th 2003, the Australian-led RAMSI taskforce landed in the secured Honiara airport, coinciding with

²⁷⁰ Watson, "Conflict Overview: Solomon Islands ", 405.

²⁷¹ Derek McDougall, "Australia, New Zealand and Regional Intervention," in *Securing a Peaceful Pacific* ed. John Henderson and Greg Watson (Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2005), 216-217.

²⁷² Watson, "Conflict Overview: Solomon Islands ", 403.

²⁷³ Kabutaulaka, "'Failed State' and the War on Terror: Intervention in Solomon Islands," 7.

²⁷⁴ Hoadley, "Pacific Island Security Management by New Zealand and Australia: Towards a New Paradigm ", 10.

the arrival of the Australian naval vessel HMAS *Manoora*. The assistance mission was unanimously mandated through the Solomon Islands National Government and endorsed by the PIF, UN Secretary-General, and Commonwealth Secretary-General, with contributions from 15 PICs.²⁷⁵

Table 2: Key Australian and New Zealand Government Actions on the Solomon Islands

April 22 2003	Solomon Islands Prime Minister Sir Allan Kemakeza informally requests Australian assistance to address Solomon Islands instability.
June 5 2003	Solomon Islands Prime Minister Sir Allan Kemakeza visits Australia for discussions with Australian Prime Minister John Howard and other senior ministers.
June 10 - 13 2003	A team of Australian and New Zealand officials visit Honiara to investigate options for assistance.
June 25 2003	Australia and New Zealand announce the likelihood of intervention in the Solomon Islands on the condition of PIF approval.
June 30 2003	PIF unanimously endorse the collective action of PICs in assisting the Solomon Islands.
July 4 2003	Official invitation made by the Solomon Islands Parliament to Australia, New Zealand, and other PICs.
July 15 2003	New Zealand officially agrees to contribute to the comprehensive assistance package to the Solomon Islands.
July 17 2003	Solomon Islands National Parliament granted unanimous support for foreign intervention and comprehensive assistance package.
July 22 2003	Australia officially agrees to contribute to the comprehensive assistance package to the Solomon Islands.
July 24 2003	Australia, New Zealand, and the other PICs participating in RAMSI sign the <i>Facilitation of International Assistance Act 2003</i> , in Canberra. ²⁷⁶
July 24 2003	Intervention forces arrive in the Solomon Islands.

The operation was implemented in two distinct phases. The first phase was a military operation to restore law and order. Once law and order was established, the second phase was implemented. The second phase consisted of an active policing role to strengthen the rule of law, and the restructuring of governmental institutions for economic recovery.

²⁷⁵ These countries include Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

²⁷⁶ *Facilitation of International Assistance Act*, (2003). New Zealand

The initial taskforce consisted of 2,225 personnel, including 1,800 military in the Combined Task Force from Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, PNG, and Tonga.²⁷⁷ The same five nations, along with Samoa, Vanuatu, Kiribati, the Cook Islands, and Nauru, contributed 230 police.²⁷⁸ The size of forces and assistance on the ground on arrival was necessary to emphasize the seriousness of the intent to stabilise the islands.

The pre-emptive narrative used by Howard and Bush post 9/11 caused critics of the intervention and drew similar parallels between Australian intentions in the Solomon Islands and the US invasion of Iraq.²⁷⁹ Criticisms were also directed towards the possible benefits the Australian government had in gaining greater control over the delivery of aid.²⁸⁰ This criticism however, could be disputed as Pacific leaders had requested greater regional assistance for some time, unlike the Iraq intervention that lacked regional support or an invitation for the local government.²⁸¹

The parallels between the Solomon Islands intervention and Iraq were often viewed as too close for comfort for New Zealand, making the government question its involvement in RAMSI. New Zealand did not want its outlook on Pacific affairs to be viewed as part of Australia's reserved position towards the 'arc of instability'. This created a cautious response from the Labour Government as it wished to avoid connecting New Zealand with these perceptions of Pacific affairs. Australian assistance, too, was hedged with caution; it was wary of attracting any accusations of neo-colonial posturing.²⁸² Nevertheless, it was clear that in order to achieve long-term success a significant force was needed to stabilise the Solomon Islands, re-establish law and order, and strengthen government institutions through the distribution of aid and the placement of defence personnel.²⁸³

While Australia and New Zealand were fully committed to assisting the Solomon Islands both countries had reservations as to how this foreign intervention might affect political issues at home. As mentioned previously, Australia understood all too well the domestic political issues surrounding illegal immigration and used this platform to gain public support for intervention. On the other hand, New Zealand faced an actively discontented opposition government. The opposition highlighted concerns that further pressures on police and defence forces would increase the burden of already stretched resources. Having sent a small police force to the Solomon Islands in 2002, the proposal to make additional contributions raised objections. However, when it was acknowledged that this kind of

²⁷⁷ Russell. Glenn, *Counterinsurgency in a Test Tube: Analyzing the Success of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI)*, National Defence Research Institute, Santa Monica, Arlington, Pittsburgh, 2007). 20.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 20.

²⁷⁹ Kabutaulaka, "Australia Foreign Policy and the RAMSI Intervention in Solomon Islands ": 289.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 290.

²⁸¹ Ibid., 290.

²⁸² Wainwright, "Our Failing Neighbour: Australia and the Future of Solomon Islands," 9.

²⁸³ Ibid., 38-47.

civil unrest, failing government structure and bitter discontent could potentially spread throughout the region, the New Zealand and Australian governments felt obliged to act, regardless of their differing foreign policies and domestic issues.

The experiences of East Timor reminded Australia and New Zealand that peace-keeping and nation-building require extensive commitment to achieve long-term success. Regardless of the lessons learned from East Timor, and the additional deep-rooted problems of the Pacific, many within Australia and New Zealand felt a responsibility to assist the Solomon Islands when that state was on the brink of collapse. Although RAMSI was formed by the collective actions of 15 PICs, Australia and New Zealand recognised that they had the principle role to play.

From this review of the current literature on the formation of Australian and New Zealand foreign policy regarding the Solomon Islands, it is clear there has been little attention paid to the role of the media. This thesis seeks to address this shortfall, to explain the Solomon Islands intervention, and the role of the media in the foreign policy formation.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to set out the methodological approaches designed to answer the primary research questions, which will be reiterated later in the chapter. The previous chapters described the media-government relationship and the Australian and New Zealand foreign policy environment. The current literature on the media-government relationship during crises demonstrates the complexity of this relationship, as there are a variety of possible variables and explanations of how interactions between the two may occur. For these reasons, the necessity of using a range of methods to test the relationship is thoroughly discussed and outlined in this chapter.

Before the methods for analysis are set out, it is essential to define *elite forum*, *government*, and *action*. Elite forum is defined as the combination of the executive and legislative branches of the political system. The executive is defined as government and legislative refers to Parliament. In Australia the elite forum includes the governing party, or coalition parties, as the executive, and The Senate and House of Representatives as the legislative. In New Zealand, the executive branch includes the majority party or majority coalition parties, while the legislative is the House of Representatives. The term *action* or *activities* is used to describe political communication. This includes, but is not exclusive to, press releases, speeches, Parliamentary proceedings, joint standing committee transcripts, attendance at national and international meetings, and diplomatic interactions.

There are three contrasting hypotheses as to how the Australian and New Zealand media-government relationship operates during the formation of foreign policy supporting military intervention in the Solomon Islands. The first hypothesis suggests that in the year preceding the 2003 RAMSI intervention, the Australian and New Zealand local media followed political elite activity and perspectives. This is termed the Indexing Hypothesis and argues that the news media 'index' their coverage to the perspectives of the political elite that have been articulated within political institutions and forums, and published through political communication and activity.²⁸⁴ To test this, a content analysis evaluates the range of debate to verify if the frames used in media coverage and elite forum activity are comparable. To demonstrate media indexing coverage to political elite perspectives, the timing of media coverage would follow political activity. Most significantly, the narratives between the media and political elite would be similar, with limited coverage of alternative perspectives. Thus, when the media use government sources excessively, the interaction between the two demonstrates a closer, more cooperative relationship.

²⁸⁴ Bennett, "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States."

The second hypothesis proposes that in the year preceding the 2003 RAMSI intervention, Australian and New Zealand media led government agendas, and this resulted in the policy receiving attention. This is referred to as a CNN Effect and specifically relates to Livingston's *Agenda setting Effect*.²⁸⁵ The *Agenda setting Effect* assesses who was first to cover the issue and focuses on the factors considered important to a policy receiving attention, while not necessarily focusing on policy change itself. For a CNN Effect to occur, the media cover a crisis ahead of elites. The media perform as the agenda setting agent and this propels the political elite into action, particularly on foreign policy makers. A quantitative time-sequence analysis of the volume of media coverage and political elite communication over the year before the intervention can identify who led whom.

The third hypothesis suggests that Australian and New Zealand journalists present frames and perspectives different from those offered by the political elite. There may be some similarity in the agenda and timing of the agenda; however, the way the agenda is defined and presented may vary between the media and elite. When the media report crises independently from the perspectives of the political elite it demonstrates greater media independence. When applying the principles of Robinson's *Policy Media Interaction Model*, journalists have the most influence over policy formation when they offer different perspectives using empathy and critical frames, at times of elite dissensus and policy uncertainty.²⁸⁶

Part of understanding which hypothesis best explains the media-government relationship is through the analysis of critical media content. Critical media framing sees the media challenge or delegitimize government policy. The media disputes the government's overall approach in dealing with the crisis and suggests alternative remedies. Critical framing can operate in two ways. It can either be critical of a government's failure to act in times of crises, or it can challenge a government's intention to intervene in another nation's affairs. In each of these cases, the media are challenging the government's policy position and urging them to move towards an alternative approach. When the media challenge the government's response, they are pushing the government to alter its policy relating to the crisis. This deals with framing and relates to Livingston's *impediment effect*, where the media challenges to policy occur after an intervention, or Bahador's *challenging effect*, where media challenges to policy occur before an intervention.²⁸⁷

The methods to test these hypotheses and describe the Australian and New Zealand media-government relationship are based on Robinson's *Media-Policy Interaction Model*. The model

²⁸⁵ Livingston, "Clarifying the CNN Effect: An Examination of Media Effects According to Type of Military Intervention," 2.

²⁸⁶ Robinson, *The CNN Effect: The Myth of News, Foreign Policy and Intervention*.

²⁸⁷ Bahador, *The CNN Effect in Action: How the News Media Pushed the West Towards War in Kosovo*, 11.

encompasses both the CNN Effect and Indexing Hypothesis. For the purpose of this research, the model has been altered to include supplementary methods applied by alternative authors, such as a more advanced content analysis of framing and media sourcing.²⁸⁸ Adapting the model ensures a more comprehensive investigation of framing, as well as an analysis of the sequence within which media articles and government actions occur to provide more data for a detailed analysis. The adaptations to Robinson's approach ensure that the seven research questions listed below are comprehensively addressed. These seven research questions will be addressed by investigating four key areas: the sequence between media coverage and political elite actions; the range of debate used by each group; the use of sources in the media; and criticisms expressed by the political elite and reported by the media. By addressing these areas, inferences can be made to explain the media-government relationship in Australia and New Zealand. The rest of this chapter describes the samples used, the selection process for the tests used to address the central questions, and the reliability test used.

Research Questions

The central question of this thesis is:

- 1: To what extent did the Australian and New Zealand print media content lead, challenge, or follow government agendas and framing before the 2003 RAMSI intervention?

Other questions that contribute to answering the central research questions are:

- 2: Did Australian and New Zealand government actions, regarding the Solomon Islands crisis, precede or follow print media coverage?
 - 2.1: Did print news media coverage of the Solomon Islands crisis in the year preceding the 2003 RAMSI reflect the range of debate in the elite forum?
- 3: How and to what degree were various sources used in the media when covering the Solomon Islands crisis and subsequent intervention?
- 4: How were criticisms of the governments response to the crisis presented in the media compared to the critical perspectives expressed within elite forums?
 - 4.1 Did the critical perspective in the media originate from the critical perspectives expressed by the political elite?

Sample and Criteria for Collecting Data

The central focus of this research addresses Australian and New Zealand print newspaper coverage and elite forum activity regarding the Solomon Islands crisis. Print newspaper coverage of

²⁸⁸ Bennett, "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States."; Hallin, *The "Uncensored War": The Media and Vietnam*; Althaus, "When New Norms Collide, Follow the Lead: New Evidence for Press Independence."; Mermin, *Debating War and Peace: Media Coverage of U.S. Intervention in the Post-Vietnam Era*; Livingston, "Clarifying the CNN Effect: An Examination of Media Effects According to Type of Military Intervention."

the Solomon Islands crisis was most suitable for this study as it provided greater volume and detail for analysis. Televised coverage of the crisis was limited and failed to provide sufficient data for a comprehensive analysis. Print media offers greater depth and detail in the analysis of underlying messages and media processes to clarify the media-government relationship.

The top three national newspapers of each country are investigated in this study. These newspapers tend to have a large circulation, demonstrate a range of reportage on the Solomon Islands crisis, and provide an adequate level of coverage. The Australian newspapers used were the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *Herald Sun*, and *Daily Telegraph*. These papers had a combined circulation average totalling 1,183,515 during 2002 to 2003.²⁸⁹ The New Zealand newspapers used were the *New Zealand Herald*, *Dominion Post*, and *The Press*. The New Zealand newspapers had a combined circulation average totalling 415,323 during the same period.²⁹⁰ It is important to note in 2002 the *Dominion Post* was made up of two separate papers: *Dominion* and *The Evening Post*. It became the *Dominion Post* in 2003, and any reference to the *Dominion Post* includes the transition of both these newspapers into one.

The Dow Jones Factiva database was the search engine used for the collection of media data. Factiva provided a comprehensive record of full text media articles from the six papers investigated and was available online. In order to find articles, the term *Solomon Islands* was entered into the search engine, with the search period July 25th 2002 to July 24th 2003. Many irrelevant articles were part of this search and were manually filtered out. To filter irrelevant material, the news articles that did not address the Solomon Islands crisis were removed. If an article discussed a social issue that made no direct reference to the crisis, but discussed issues of law and order, the article was included in the data set.²⁹¹ In total, the Australian media data set included 74 articles, and the New Zealand media data set included 76.²⁹²

Elite forum activity relating to the Solomon Islands crisis consisted of official government actions and publications. The activity comes in a variety of forms, such as Parliamentary transcripts of debates and questions and answer sessions, speeches, press releases, joint standing committees, and official statements. Such material ranges from extensive pieces to broad or vague references to the crisis. Political elite publications and activity are a key source of information on policy positions and

²⁸⁹ Australian Press Council, "Audience: Circulation," (2010). http://www.presscouncil.org.au/snpma/snpma2007/ch02_3_snpma2007.html. Accessed August 2nd, 2010

²⁹⁰ Personal Communication with *The Audit Bureau of Circulation* (ABC). 2nd August, 2010.

²⁹¹ A comprehensive list of terms used to identify relevant articles is outlined in Appendix 3.

²⁹² A number of items retrieved from Factiva were replicates from the same paper, and in these instances only one article was included in the data set. Often the same or very similar articles were presented on the same date in different newspapers. When this occurred, all of the articles were included in the data set, as the readership may have varied between papers. Due to the limited number of news articles in this investigation, there was no differentiation between the types of news articles.

changes, as well as the decision-making process. Publications from the political elite are direct sources of information for the media and are essential to understanding the dynamics between the media and government.

The Australian and New Zealand government archives websites, Hansard and the Beehive respectively, were used to collect the elite forum data set.²⁹³ The method for collection and the criteria for inclusion and exclusion are similar to the process for gathering the media data. The search term *Solomon Islands* was used in the aforementioned archives during the period July 25th 2002 to July 24th 2003.

The methods to collect elite forum activity are selected with the same criteria as the media articles gathered through the Factiva search engine using the search term Solomon Islands. The items were manually filtered through to ensure the Solomon Islands references are in a political context or make a reference to the crisis. Identifying references to the crisis was straightforward; any reference to social, political, or economic instability indicated the relevance of the material.²⁹⁴ In total, the Australian elite forum data set included 54 items and the New Zealand data set had 24. For one of the four tests, the elite forum is divided into government (executive) and Parliament. The Australian data set for this test includes 43 government items and 15 Parliament items. The New Zealand data set for this test includes 21 government items and five Parliament items. The elite forum is separated into government and Parliament due to nature of the investigation. In tests one, three and four however, the groups are left as the elite forum due the limited number of items in the data set. Had the groups been separated in tests one, three, and four, the analysis would yield debatable findings from overreliance on data that does not provide sufficient evidence of the media-government relationship.²⁹⁵

Research Methods and Related Tests

Chapter two identified the following tests to assess the media-government relationship using methods successfully applied within the media-government literature follows.²⁹⁶ The basis of these

²⁹³ New Zealand Parliament, <http://www.Parliament.nz/en-NZ/PB/Debates/Debates/>, (Accessed March 20th 2010).

Parliament of Australia, http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Hansard/Search?q=&expand=true&drvH=0&drt=2&pnu=43&nuH=43&pi=0&pv=&chi=2&coi=0, (Accessed March 20th 2010).

²⁹⁴ If the article was relevant, this was confirmed during coding for the content analysis. If there was no information to code, then this indicated that the material was irrelevant and was removed from the data set.

²⁹⁵ While the Solomon Islands crisis was significant to Australian and New Zealand foreign policy, it did not produce an immense volume or array of government publications or activity. There were a small number of extensive Parliamentary debates from each country, although this was relatively small overall. Had the data from government and Parliament been considered separately, the small volume of information would have resulted in vague inferences that would be difficult to prove without adequate proof. Consequently, the findings would be limited and would bring doubt to the overall research.

²⁹⁶ Bennett, "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States."; Hallin, *The "Uncensored War": The Media and Vietnam*; Mermin, *Debating War and Peace: Media Coverage of U.S. Intervention in the Post-*

methods utilises both content analysis and quantitative techniques. To conduct the content analyses for this research the media and government data sets were manually coded. Manual coding was necessary to ensure the codes were applied within the context intended. After which, the data was entered in to the SPSS computer software program for quantitative analysis. Coding is completed within the context of the most recent crisis, July 25th 2002 - July 24th 2003. Previous crises or government assistance from outside of the year period of analysis is not coded.

Test One: The Quantitative Test

Test one is designed to address the question: did Australian and New Zealand government actions, regarding the Solomon Islands crisis, precede or follow print media coverage? Reviewing the dates the Australian and New Zealand media covered the Solomon Islands crisis in comparison to the dates government addressed the crisis can identify trends and patterns in the volume and sequence. The quantitative test aims to identify a time-sequence pattern of dialogue around the situation in the Solomon Islands to determine who initially placed the crisis on the agenda. To supplement the quantitative examination, an analysis of the content focuses on the language and issues raised over the year period. The qualitative analysis considers if the issues raised and discussed by the media and political elite were similar, or if one group presents different issues from the other.

The procedure to conduct the time-sequence test and analyses the data is as follows:

- Every media article and government activity is charted over the year period. The timeframe for analysis is July 25 2002 – July 24 2003.
- The data is analysed in days, weeks, and months to clarify trends and patterns.
- The weeks were analysed Monday to Sunday with the first week commencing Monday July 22nd 2002, and the last week commencing Monday July 21st 2003.
- The months commenced from the first day until the last day of the month.
- The analysis is broken into two key phases of activity: the first ranging a 10-month period from July 2002 – May 2003, the second ranging two months: June – July 2003.

A quantitative time-sequence review cannot categorically prove which hypothesis describes the Australian and New Zealand media-government relationship on its own. Consequently, the alternative tests include three content analyses and an analysis of the data to further validate the nature of the media-government relationship in Australia and New Zealand.

Vietnam Era; Livingston, "Clarifying the CNN Effect: An Examination of Media Effects According to Type of Military Intervention."; Livingston and Eachus, "Humanitarian Crises and U.S. Foreign Policy: Somalia and the CNN Effect Reconsidered."; Althaus, "When New Norms Collide, Follow the Lead: New Evidence for Press Independence."

Test Two: Framing test

Test two is designed to address the question: did print news media coverage of the Solomon Islands crisis in the year preceding the 2003 RAMSI reflect the range of debate in the elite forum? Using a content analysis, the framing test determines how the Solomon Islands crisis was framed in the year that led up to the RAMSI intervention. The framing test measures the range of debate utilised by the media, government, and Parliament. Analysing the media's range of debate against government and Parliament's explains any connection between the three groups. The range of debate is divided into three framing categories to include: the problems of the Solomon Islands crisis; the solutions proposed to address these problems; and criticisms towards government response.

The elite forum is separated into government and Parliament in this test, as the range of debate can differ between the two. Identifying the differences and similarities between the way government and Parliament frame a crisis to identify if there is any dissent within the political elite. Dissent is significant to understating the media-government relationship as media coverage often reflects the debate within political forums; in this case Parliament.

As there can be a range of frames or codes within a text, the procedure for analysis must be methodological and systematic. The codebook used for test two's content analysis is displayed in Table 3 on the following page and definitions of the codes are offered in Appendix 3. The procedure to operate the content analysis is as follows:

- In order to operate this content analysis, the data sets for media, government, and Parliament are coded manually.
- The categories for coding include the date, medium, problem frames, solution frames, and critical frames.²⁹⁷
- To identify codes, the data sets are manually filtered through sentence by sentence, to ensure the frames are coded within context.
- When coding the solutions category, only a direct reference to a proposed solution is coded. Therefore, the Scoping Mission to the Solomon Islands, which took place between June 10th – 13th 2003 when a team of Australian and New Zealand police, military and civilian officials visited Honiara to investigate the options for assistance, are not a category for coding. This is because no decisions or proposals were made during this mission, as the overall intention of the mission was to come to a decision as to what the final intervention force would involve.
- If more than one consecutive sentence requires the same code, then the total consecutive sentences are given one code, not one code for each sentence.

²⁹⁷ The categories are presented in Appendix 4 and defined in Appendix 3.

- The coded data is entered into the computer software program SPSS.
- A new SPSS 'sheet' is used for each media, government, and Parliament data sets.
The coded data is entered in chronological order.

Table 3: Codebook Test Two

Medium			
Date	News Agency	Government	Parliament
25.06.02	1 = Herald Sun	1 = Prime Minister	1 = Government
24.06.03	2 Daily Telegraph	2 = Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade / Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	2 = Coalition Government
	3 = Sunday Morning Herald	3 = Other	3 = Opposition Parties
	4 = New Zealand Herald		4 = Other
	5 = Dominion Post		
	6 = The Press		
Range of Debate			
Problem Frames	Solution Frames	Critical Frames	
1 = Economic	1 = Aid	1 = Impact on Police & Defence	
2 = Security Threat AUNZ	2 = Non-Intervention	2 = Should Have Acted Sooner	
3 = Security Threat Region	3 = Non-Armed Police	3 = Aid is Ineffective	
4 = Failed State	4 = Intervention Unspecified	4 = Lack of Public Debate	
5 = Humanitarian	5 = Macro Reform	5 = Inflamm Situation	
6 = Lawlessness	6 = Armed Police & Defence	6 = Alienate PIC	
7 = Ethnic Violence	7 = Assistance Package	7 = Re-Colonise & Control	
8 = Terrorism	8 = Other	8 = Questionable Purpose of Deployment	
		9 = Bugged Down in Operation	

SPSS measures two areas of framing. The frequency each frame was used and the time when frame categories were used. The first area of analysis considers the frequency each group used each frame within the range of debate. The range of debate is made up of three frame categories being the

problems of the Solomon Islands crisis, solutions to these problems, and criticisms towards government's action or inaction relating to the crisis. The three categories are compared to identify similarities and differences in frequencies between media, government, and Parliament.

The second area of analysis revolves around the time-sequence of media, government, and Parliamentary for each frame. This time-sequence analysis determines which group initially uses each frame. Analysing the sequence that frames are used will be measured in relation to key government actions. The purpose of this is to determine if key government activities influence the way the media frame their range of debate, or if media framing influenced government or Parliamentary activity.

There are three possibilities of what the findings from this test demonstrate. Firstly, an Indexing Hypothesis would be evident when government or Parliament uses similar frames and narratives before the media. When the media appear to follow Parliamentary debates, rather than the government perspective alone, it builds an even stronger case supporting the Indexing Hypothesis. Secondly, the findings may demonstrate the media setting the range of debate before government or Parliament, or offer a different range of debate altogether. When the media set the agenda and debate, it begins to build a case supporting the possibility of a CNN Effect. The third explanation to what the findings may demonstrate is that the media and government offer a similar range of debate, but sensationalise different aspects of the debate. This would indicate that the media are reporting somewhat independently from the elite.

Test Three: The Media's Use of Sources

Test three is designed to address the question: how and to what degree were various sources used in the media when covering the Solomon Islands crisis and subsequent intervention? Using Bennett's investigation in *"Towards a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States"* as a guide, test three evaluates the media's use of sources.²⁹⁸ Similarly, a content analysis will be used to investigate the use of sources in the media compared to key government activity to enlighten our understanding of the media-government relationship.

The media's use of sources is significant to this investigation as the media frequently use reputable sources to substantiate news content. For this reason, the use of political sources in the media fit this purpose well. Different sources such as a Prime Minister, member of the opposition government, or academics can provide different perspectives and narratives to a news story. What is most significant is when journalists continuously use the same source is this strengthens the relationship between the journalist and that source. To correspond with the Australian and New

²⁹⁸ Bennett, "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States."

Zealand political systems, the source categories in this investigation vary from Bennett’s categorisation to include Government, Opposition Government, Independent, and Foreign sources.²⁹⁹ The codebook used for test three’s content analysis is displayed in Table 4 on the following page and definitions of the codes are offered in Appendix 3.

Table 4: Codebook Test Three – The use of sources in the media

Date	News Agency	Sources	Direction
25.06.2002 -	1 = Herald Sun	1 = Government	1 = Support
24.06.2003	2 = Daily Telegraph	2 = Opposition	2 = Opposition
	3 = Sunday Morning Herald	3 = Independent	3 = Mixed
	4 = New Zealand Herald	4 = Foreign Government. Australia or New Zealand	4 = Neutral
	5 = Dominion Post	5 = Foreign Government Solomon Islands	
	6 = The Press		

The first area for analysis considers the type of source used by the media and the frequency in which sources are used. The frequency of sourced opinions in the news is important to show if the media rely on a particular type of source more so than other sources. Bennett’s examination found that when Indexing occurred the *Times* reporting on the Nicaragua crisis used only 15% of sources outside of the political elite. However, placing a numerical value on media sourcing is generally indicative, and thus needs to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. In order to provide a thorough examination, analyses of political elite sources are measured against key government activities to identify patterns in journalist behaviour.

The second area of analysis considers if sourced opinions were supportive, opposing, mixed, or neutral towards government policy.³⁰⁰ While the use of sources is important to validate the news story, determining the direction of a source is just as significant. The direction can add weight to the frames that the media are presenting. However, over-relying on particular sources can also skew or misrepresent particular perspectives. For example, when one source presents negative opinions to government on a regular basis with few alternative critical sources, this can make it appear that such criticisms is greater than it actually may be. Particular attention to critical or oppositional perspectives from within political institutions will be measured against media sourcing.

²⁹⁹ The source categories are presented in Appendix 5 and defined in Appendix 3.

³⁰⁰ The categories for coding are defined in the Appendix 3.

A large number of media sourcing from the government (possibly more so than any other type of source) potentially signifies an Indexing Hypothesis. While predominant sourcing from government would be likely because government may tend to provide up-to-date information for the public on a regular basis, the media should also source from the opposition in government to reflect the entire political debate. When consensus within the political elite declines and dissent becomes apparent, then it is expected that the media source more heavily from government to reflect this shift in the elite debate. However, when there is a very low level of government dissent (political agreement on issues or policy) and the media are using a range of sources with a range of opinions, then this tells us something quite striking about journalistic behaviour. It suggests that the media are sourcing a range of opinions in its content, even when the range of political debate is smaller and in agreement. For this to occur, the media are moving beyond Indexing content to the perspectives of the political elite and are independently sourcing and reporting on the crisis.

On the other hand, findings may demonstrate a large degree of non-government sources critical of government. This could occur before policy decisions had been finalised, as the sources would be trying to place the crisis on the political elite agenda to push for policy attention. Government sources used by the media may offer mixed or neutral perspectives in dealing with the crisis. However, critical perspectives from non-government sources may also be evident after a policy decision to demonstrate the sources discontent. When the media are not offering sources that present a range of the debate similar to that on the elite forum and instead offer a range of sources, this suggests that the media are independently sourcing various opinions that challenge government. When this occurs, and sources in the media challenge government policy and action, the media could be operating within the principles of the CNN Effect. It is possible that the media and government are concentrating on what the public are concerned about. If this were the case, then the media would offer a range of sources, both from the political elite and the non-government sources that are generally supporting government.

Test Four: Critical Perspectives toward Government

Test four is designed to address the questions: how were criticisms of the governments response to the crisis presented in the media compared to the critical perspectives expressed within elite forums, and: did the critical perspective in the media originate from the critical perspectives expressed by the political elite? Test four utilises Mermin's *Debating War and Peace* as a guide to measure the significance of critical perspectives presented by the media and the political elite.³⁰¹ In doing so, test four operates a content analysis by which critical paragraphs towards government in the

³⁰¹ Mermin, *Debating War and Peace: Media Coverage of U.S. Intervention in the Post-Vietnam Era*.

Australian and New Zealand media are compared to the critical paragraphs presented by the political elite.

Test four develops on test two, by comprehensively analysing the origin of all critical perspectives. The purpose of this investigation is to identify whether critical perspectives originate from members of government or Parliament, or if they originate from someone different altogether. For the media to index their coverage to the perspectives of the political elite, the level of critical perspectives in each group, the media and government, would be similar between the two. If the media appear to index their range of critical debate to what was expressed by the political elite, then there will be a high degree of correlation between the two debates. Alternatively, indexing could show the media following elite debate while marginalising alternative perspective. If either of these possibilities occurs, then Mermin's guide distinguishes between the marginalisation and correlation versions of the Indexing Hypothesis.³⁰²

The codebook used for test four's content analysis is displayed Table 5 on the following page and definitions of the codes are offered in Appendix 3. The procedure to operate the content analysis is as follows:

- In order to identify the volume of critical perspective paragraphs in the media, the critical frames towards government are identified, categorised, and tallied.
- Categories for coding are date, medium, source, and direction.³⁰³ The categories for direction include critical, supportive, mixed, and neutral frames.
- The critical frames are statements that challenge the way the government addresses the Solomon Islands. Therefore, the statements do not necessarily oppose intervention outright but rather criticise aspects of the government's response.
- The coded data is entered into SPSS in chronological order.
- The data is then analysed to determine the volume of critical frames in each data set, and the timing each critical frame is used in each data set.

The total numbers of paragraphs are counted in the media and government data sets and compared to the total number of critical paragraphs. Due to the way Factiva structured its articles, paragraphs are defined as a cluster of sentences ranging 1-5. Often one sentence appears by itself, and to ensure consistency, this is classed as a paragraph. The volume of critical, supportive, neutral, and total paragraphs are analysed in percentage and ratio values.

³⁰² Ibid., 5-6.

³⁰³ The categories are presented in Appendix 6 and defined in Appendix 3.

Table 5: Codebook Test Four – Measuring Critical Perspectives

Date	Medium	Source	Critical Frames
25.06.02	1 = Newspaper	1 = Herald Sun	1 = Impact on Police & Defence
24.06.03	2 = Government	2 = Daily Telegraph	2 = Should Have Acted Sooner
	3 = Parliament	3 = Sunday Morning Herald	3 = Aid is Ineffective
		4 = New Zealand Herald	4 = Lack of Public Debate
		5 = Dominion Post	5 = Inflammate Situation
		6 = The Press	6 = Alienate PIC
		7 = Government	7 = Re-Colonise & Control
		8 = Coalition Government	8 = Questionable Purpose of Deployment
		9 = Opposition Government	9 = Boggled Down in Operation
		10 = Foreign Government	
		11 = Other	

Analysing critical perspectives from Parliament will begin to identify instances of dissent within the elite forum. There are a number of possible outcomes to this analysis. Firstly, the media could correlate their coverage to the critical perspective debate of the political elite. This would show parallels in the way the media and elite debates develop, along with similarities in the timing of these debates. If the media index their coverage in this way, there would be a high level of media sourcing critical government opinions. Mermin defines this as the correlation version of the Indexing Hypothesis. This is not the only form Indexing as Mermin proposes the marginalization version. The media can present critical perspectives under the guide of the political elite debate, while marginalising alternative critical perspectives. The media would either present critical perspectives at extremely low levels and within overwhelming supportive frames, or ignore these perspectives altogether. As this research investigates the debates in Australia and well as New Zealand, this gives insight to the range of debate emerging in each country and therefore helps to determine if one country's media ignores part of the debate or not. On the other hand, the media could use critical perspectives not articulated by the political elite. This would suggest the media diverge from political elite debate and act more independently than Indexing would suggest. The larger the level of critical perspectives, without obvious dissent within the political elite, indicates greater degrees of media independence. Media independence is also evident in the origin of the source; if the perspective did not follow political elite activity or there were delays, a low level of critical perspective would still be possible if the critical perspective in the media were from sources outside of the political elite.

Testing Reliability

Checking the reliability of coding procedures is essential to the validity of the results. Content analysis should be replicable to ensure the method is reliable. To ensure reliability, in this instance a second coder coded 10% of the data. This was done for every 11th article, and coding was done on the first three units of analysis of each item. The results were tested using Scott's Pi, Cohen's Kappa and Krippendorff's Alpha formulas. The level of agreement between the two coders on Scott's Pi was 94% for unit one, 92% for unit two, and 85% for unit three. Cohen's Kappa test proved 94% for unit one, 92% for unit two, and 85% for unit three. Krippendorff's Alpha test presented 94% for unit one, 92% for unit two, and 85% for unit three. This demonstrates a sufficient level of reliability for the replication of the coding for the content analysis.

Chapter 5: Findings

Introduction

Four tests have been used to analyse the Australian and New Zealand media-government relationship during the Solomon Islands crisis. The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the data from those tests. The chapter is divided into four sections. Each discusses a separate test. The first, the time-sequence test, explores the sequence and volume of media coverage relative to government actions in the year preceding the Solomon Islands intervention. Test two, the framing test, explores the range of debate within both media and government to identify the relationship between the two. The range of debate is investigated in three parts: problems presented by the Solomon Islands crisis; solutions to those problems; challenges to government action and policy. Test three investigates the sources used by the Australian and New Zealand media to establish the degree to which they used government sources as opposed to alternative ones. The media's use of sources can support or oppose frames, and help to determine the sequence in which frames and sources occur in the media. For this reason, the investigation of sources is appropriate to supplement the findings from the first two tests. The fourth and final test, the critical perspectives test, investigates the media's use of critical perspectives towards government policy in relation to government actions. This test is designed to establish whether the media present critical perspectives towards government independent of those expressed within the elite forum. However, this test differs from test two in that it considers where the perspectives originated (within government or outside it) and the degree to which critical perspectives in the media relate, if at all, to the degree of attention that policy receives. Identifying the origin of critical perspectives can further clarify whether the media follow government opinions, or whether they incorporate critical perspectives of government and relegate alternative perspectives "to the margins of the news."³⁰⁴

Test One: The Time-Sequence Test – Who leads Whom?

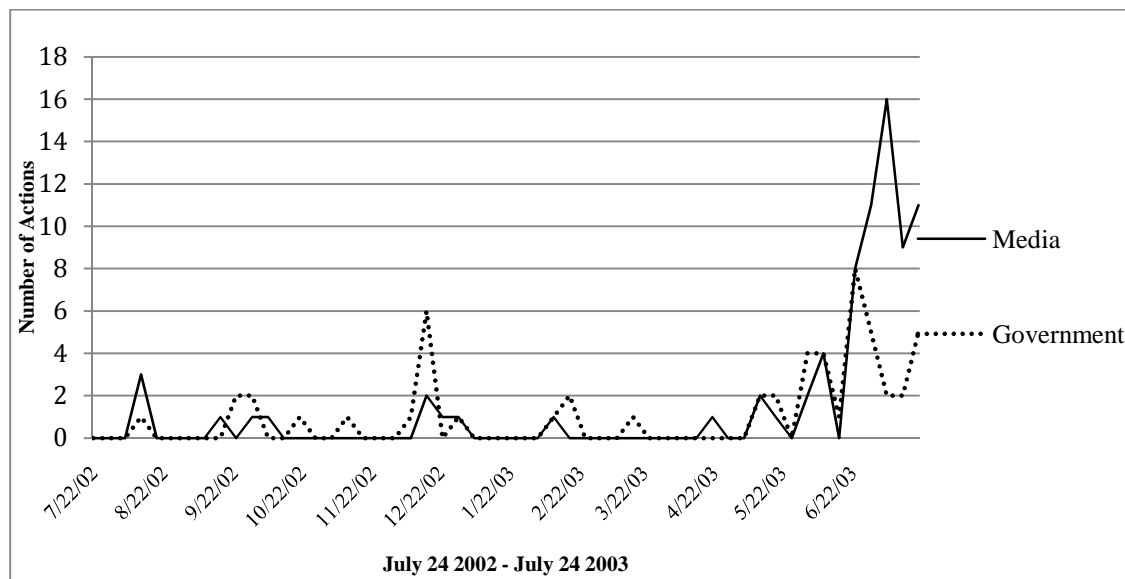
Test one determines the volume and time-sequence the media and government address the Solomon Islands crisis during the twelve-months preceding RAMSI. Comparing media coverage with government reactions to the crisis will show which group led the other in placing the crisis on its agenda. This examination is discussed in two phases. The first phase encompasses a ten-month period, from July 2002 until the end of May 2003, when attention on the crisis was at lower levels. The second phase includes the two-month period of June and July 2003, directly before RAMSI, when attention on the crisis increased markedly. The build up of media and government attention in the two-months preceding the intervention, is the central focus of this section.

³⁰⁴ Mermin, *Debating War and Peace: Media Coverage of U.S. Intervention in the Post-Vietnam Era*.

Australian Time-sequence of government Activity and Media Coverage

During the 12 months preceding RAMSI, the volume of Australian media coverage and government activity remained at relatively low levels until early June 2003, two months before the intervention. Figure 2 displays the levels of media coverage and government activity over the 12-month period from July 2002 until July 2003.

Figure 2: Australian Media and Government Activity Over 12 Month Period



From July 2002 until the end of May 2003, there were relatively lower levels of Australian media coverage and government activity relating to the crisis. The media published 19% of its articles during this period. Government activity on the other hand was at 42% during the same period, double the level of media coverage. During this ten-month period, media coverage and government activity occurred somewhat sporadically; although, there were a number of instances where government activity appeared to lead media coverage.

From September 2002 until April 2003, there were numerous instances where media coverage followed government activity. On September 25th 2002, Minister of Defence Robert Hill conducted a speech, *Asia-Pacific Security After September 11*, highlighting calls for regional countries to intervene in the Solomon Islands.³⁰⁵ Hill maintained Australian commitment to reform the SIPF, yet concluded that the “responsibility for ending the spiral of violence must rest with the people of the Solomon

³⁰⁵ Robert Hill, (Department of Defence). *Asia Pacific Security after September 11 - Continuity and Change*, Speech to the First Anniversary Dinner of the C.E.W Bean Foundation. (Canberra: Hansard), September 25 2002

Islands and their leaders.”³⁰⁶ The following week, on October 2nd 2002, the *Herald Sun* ran an article quoting Hill’s speech, summarizing the problems of the Solomon Islands within the same narrative.³⁰⁷

Another example of media coverage following government activity occurred on October 2nd 2002³⁰⁸ when the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer, stated that officials from Australia and New Zealand were to visit the Solomon Islands.³⁰⁹ Again, media coverage followed government activity.³¹⁰ In December a similar instance occurred after Downer conducted a press release declaring: “Australia would not intervene directly [in the Solomon Islands] but would make every effort to help the leaders and people find lasting solutions.”³¹¹ Articles from the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Daily Telegraph* on December 24th reiterated Downer’s statement. However, these articles did not report Australia’s non-intervention position.³¹² Prior to these government statements, no media coverage had occurred since October 2002.

During April 2003, when the Solomon Islands government requested Australian assistance to restore stability, there was discretion around the Australian and Solomon Islands discussions. This discretion meant there was no government activity during this time and the media published only one article.³¹³ However, one media article in April quoted Downer claiming Australia is “not about to get involved militarily in the Solomon Islands. We will continue through the Australian aid program to help bolster law and order.”³¹⁴ This was a confirmation of his statement from December 2002. Following this media article, the Solomon Islands remained relatively unaddressed by both the government and media until mid-May 2003.

Two-Month Period of Increased Government Activity and Media Coverage

By the beginning of June 2003, a substantial increase in media coverage and government activity was evident. This two-month period of substantial increase, directly before the RAMSI intervention, is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Australian Media and Government Activity Two Months Preceding RAMSI

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ Ian McPhedran, "Peace Push for Islands," *Herald Sun*, October 2 2002.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Alexander Downer, (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade). *High Level Mission to Solomon Islands and Vanuatu*, (Canberra: Hansard), October 1 2002

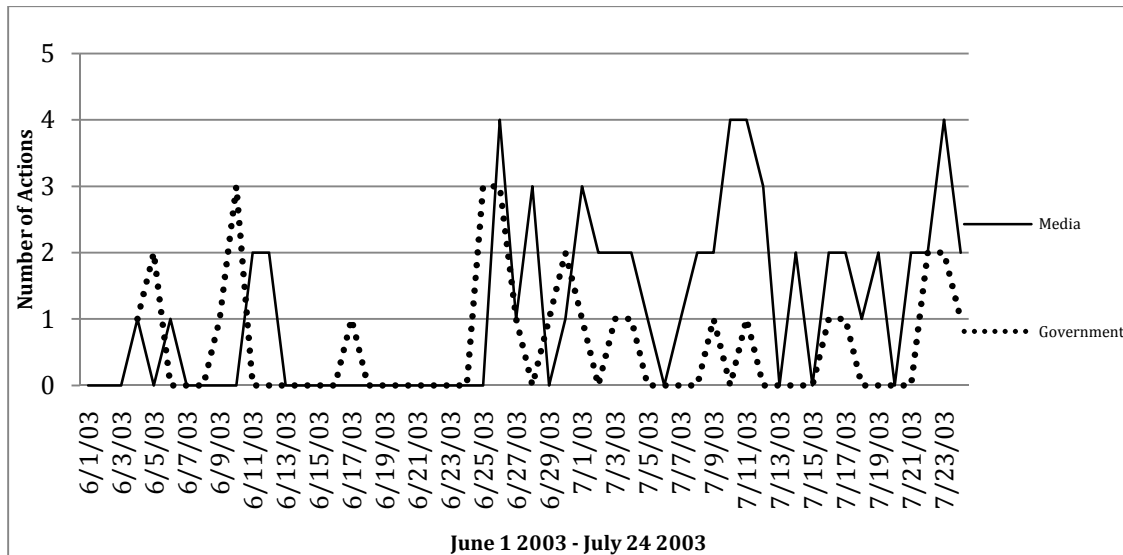
³¹⁰ McPhedran, "Peace Push for Islands."

³¹¹ Alexander Downer, (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade). *Visit to Solomon Islands*, (Canberra: Hansard), December 19 2002

³¹² Craig Skehan, "Solomons PM Survives Vote," *Sydney Morning Herald*, December 19 2002; *Daily Telegraph*, "PM Extortion Condemned," *Daily Telegraph*, December 23 2002.

³¹³ Craig Skehan, "Solomons Rebels Abandon Warlord after Slaughter," *Sydney Morning Herald*, April 24 2003.

³¹⁴ Ibid.



During the two-month period, government conducted 58% of its actions and the media published 81% of its total coverage, signifying concentrated attention on the crisis and the impending intervention. During 2002 and early 2003 the crisis was already on both groups' agendas, at relatively lower levels.

In June 2003, the first notable occurrence of increased government activity came during a visit by the Solomon Islands Prime Minister to Canberra. On June 4th the Australian government confirmed the proposed visit for the following day. On the day of the visit the Australian and Solomon Islands Prime Ministers declared greater cooperation in addressing the Solomon Islands crisis.³¹⁵ The media published articles on both the 4th and 6th of June³¹⁶ outlining the possibility of increased Australian assistance to the SIPF. This was the first time the media published Australian contributions of police assistance; however, the government had raised the option as early as September 25th 2002.³¹⁷ From these events it appears government actions occurred before media coverage.

Following consultation with the Solomon Islands, Australia and New Zealand formed a Scoping Mission to visit Honiara from the 10th–13th of June 2003. On the day of the Mission's departure Downer gave a speech at the launch of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute Report. For the first time the possibility of "direct engagement, including security assistance... such engagement

³¹⁵ Australia, *Question without Notice - Solomon Islands*. (Canberra: House of Representatives, Hansard, 2003), 15990. ; John Howard, *Joint Press Conference with Solomon Islands Prime Minister, the Hon. Sir Allan Kemakeza MP*, (Canberra: Hansard), June 5 2003

³¹⁶ Tom Allard, "Growing Concern over Lawless Solomons," *Sydney Morning Herald*, June 4 2003; Ian McPhedran, "Solomon Crisis Threatens Region," *Herald Sun*, June 6 2003.

³¹⁷ Hill, "Asia Pacific Security after September 11 - Continuity and Change."

[involving] cooperative intervention” was offered.³¹⁸ The next day the media reported this proposal.³¹⁹ During and following the Scoping Mission, between June 13th-25th 2003, there was no media coverage. This was the only interval during the two-month period in which the media did not cover the Solomon Islands. The government discussed the issue once.³²⁰

The largest increase in government activity occurred on June 25th 2003. It came after the Solomon Islands National Government passed legislation providing Australia, New Zealand, and other PICs with the formal instruments for armed intervention and institutional reform.³²¹ From June 25th-29th there were eight government actions, a considerably high number for a five-day period. The first action came on June 26th when Downer publicly outlined the particulars for a comprehensive assistance package for the first time.³²² Following these actions, relatively high levels of media coverage began on June 26th, continuing until July 3rd 2003.

A further example of government activity appearing to lead media coverage is found in the sequence of specific narratives used by each group. In four media articles on June 26th 2003, Prime Minister John Howard is quoted as saying “it is not in Australia’s interest to have a number of failed states in the Pacific.”³²³ Four subsequent media articles on June 27th and 28th offered similar justifications for Australia’s involvement in the Solomon Islands, demonstrating similarities between media coverage and government discourse.³²⁴ The ‘failed state’ narrative was also used by a number of Australian officials in early June 2002 and subsequently used by the media.³²⁵

Heightened government activity again occurred after the PIF meeting of June 30th 2003. The increase was due to the crisis and proposed intervention being top of the meeting’s agenda. Most importantly, the PIF granted approval for regional intervention, citing the 2000 *Biketawa Declaration*,

³¹⁸ Alexander Downer, *Our Failing Neighbor: Australia and the Future of Solomon Islands*, Speech at the Launch of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute Report. (Canberra: Hansard), June 10 2003

³¹⁹ Tom Allard, "Australia May Lead International Force to Fix Solomons," *Sydney Morning Herald*, June 11 2003.

³²⁰ Australia, *Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2003-2004*. (Canberra: House of Representatives, Hansard, 2003), 16691.

³²¹ McDougall, "Australia, New Zealand and Regional Intervention," 218.

³²² Alexander Downer, (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade). *Security in an Unstable World*, Speech at the National Press Club. (Canberra: Hansard), June 26 2003

³²³ "Aussie Soldiers to Protect Solomons," *The Daily Telegraph*, June 26 2003; Ian McPhedran, "Our Troops Stand By," *Herald Sun*, June 26 2003; Tom Allard, "PM Ready to Send Troops to Solomons," *Sydney Morning Herald*, June 26 2003.

³²⁴ Tom Allard, "UN Slated as Solomons Action Nears," *Sydney Morning Herald*, June 27 2003; Michael Duffy, "Sucked Deep into Pacific Quagmire," *Daily Telegraph*, June 28 2003; Tom Allard and Craig Skehan, "Danger Islands," *Sydney Morning Herald*, June 28 2003; Tom Allard and Craig Skehan, "Solomons PM Sets Rules - Ignore Old Crimes," *Sydney Morning Herald*, June 28 2003.

³²⁵ Alexander Downer, (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade). *Doorstop - Parliament House*, (Canberra: Hansard), June 10 2003; Alexander Downer, (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade). *Talks on Solomon Islands*, (Canberra: Hansard), June 25 2003; Australia, "Question without Notice - Solomon Islands."; ———, "Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2003-2004."

and supporting the newly established regional approach to Pacific crises.³²⁶ Following the PIF meeting, Downer and his New Zealand and Solomon Islands counterparts offered a statement confirming a regional military intervention.³²⁷

On the day of the PIF meeting *The Daily Telegraph* released one article and, while there was no reference to the scheduled meeting, it affirmed Australian support for armed intervention.³²⁸ Following the PIF meeting, and the subsequent government statement, media coverage spiked. Three media articles on June 1st 2003, and two additional articles, each published on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th of June 2003, all noted the PIF decision to support foreign intervention.³²⁹ In total, this was the largest number of media articles published over a four-day period for the entire twelve months.³³⁰

The next increase in media coverage occurred during July 10th-12th 2003,³³¹ corresponding with the passing of Solomon Islands' official legislation allowing intervention. The day before the surge in media coverage, the Australian government discussed the necessity of Solomon Islands Parliamentary approval for RAMSI to proceed.³³² For this reason, the actions of the political elite appeared to lead media coverage during the passing of the legislation.

It is necessary to reiterate the purpose of the time-sequence test: did Australian government actions, regarding the Solomon Islands crisis, precede or follow print media coverage? From the time-sequence analysis of both media coverage and government activity over the year period, it appears media coverage overwhelmingly followed government activity. The government set the media agenda

³²⁶ Alexander Downer, Phil Goff, and Laurie Chan, (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade). *Joint Press Conference Following Pacific Island Forum Foreign Ministers Meeting, Sydney*, (Sydney: Hansard), June 30 2003

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Daily Telegraph, "Support Sought on Solomons," *Daily Telegraph*, June 30 2003.

³²⁹ Ian McPhedran, "Forum Backs Peace Force," *Herald Sun*, July 1 2003; Tom Allard, "Pacific States All as One on Military Role in Solomons," *Sydney Morning Herald*, July 1 2003; Daily Telegraph, "Solomons to Get Help," *Daily Telegraph*, July 1 2003.

³³⁰ Michael Harvey, "PM Prepares for Age of Terrorism " *Herald Sun*, July 2 2003; Tom Allard and Craig Skehan, "Special Forces on Call for Solomons," *Sydney Morning Herald*, July 2 2003; Daily Telegraph, "Troops Await Invitation," *Daily Telegraph*, July 4 2003; Ian McPhedran, "France May Join Mission to Solomons," *Daily Telegraph*, July 3 2003; Craig Skehan, "Petitioners Fear Troops Lack Power," *Sydney Morning Herald*, July 4 2003; Sydney Morning Herald, "Leaders - the Real Pacific Problem," *Sydney Morning Herald*, May 19 2003.

³³¹ Tom Allard and Craig Skehan, "Ex-Solomons PM Fears Colonisation," *Sydney Morning Herald*, July 10 2003; Daily Telegraph, "Solomons 'on Attack'," *Daily Telegraph*, July 10 2003; Jon Ralph, "Marchers - Leave Solomons Alone," *Herald Sun*, July 10 2003; Deborah Snow, "This Side of Paradise: 10 Years on, a Surgeon Heads Home," *Sydney Morning Herald*, July 10 2003; Daily Telegraph, "Date Named for Islands Taskforce," *Daily Telegraph*, July 11 2003; Daily Telegraph, "Go-Ahead for Taskforce," *Daily Telegraph*, July 11 2003; Daily Telegraph, "Green Light for Soldiers," *Daily Telegraph*, July 11 2003; Herald Sun, "Aussie Troops Poised," *Herald Sun*, July 11 2003; Jim Baynes, "Islands Force Gets Ok," *Herald Sun*, July 12 2003; Daily Telegraph, "Downer Hails Solomons Vote," *Daily Telegraph*, July 12 2003; Nick Gavin, "Saving a Nation," *Sydney Morning Herald*, July 12 2003.

³³² Alexander Downer, (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade). *Doorstop Re. Proliferation Security Initiative Meeting*, (Brisbane: Hansard), July 9 2003

by commencing dialogue on the Solomon Islands crisis throughout late 2002 and early 2003, which the media subsequently reported.

There are two key findings that further validate this sequence of events. Firstly, there is a similarity in the narrative employed by both government and media content. The analysis of quotes used in the media, from members of the government, reveal that the media often sourced government officials and applied those perspectives and narratives in numerous articles. This will be explored in depth in test three. The second key finding reveals that when government took action, media coverage subsequently increased in volume. However, there are also instances when the media reported independently of Australian government actions, although these are less common. An example of independent media reporting occurred when Australian National University Professor Emeritus Helen Hughes claimed that Australian aid was ineffective and contributed to many of the Solomon Islands' problems.³³³

Nevertheless, the Australian time-sequence and volume investigation of media coverage and government activity presents greater evidence to support that the media followed government actions rather than the media independently setting the agenda. For these reasons, the analysis shows that a CNN Effect is unlikely in this case, as the government raised the Solomon Islands issue and the media largely reacted to policy attention.

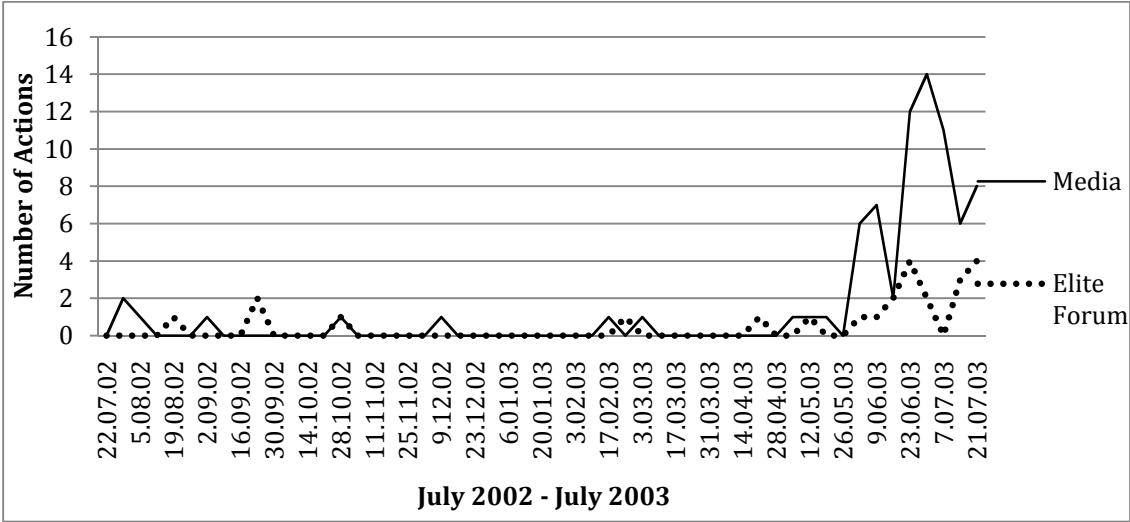
There also appears to be no instance of increased media coverage prompting policy makers to respond. However, the possibility of either an Indexing Hypothesis or a 'third factor' influencing Australian media reporting of the crisis is inconclusive. While there is evidence to suggest the media followed government activity - which would appear to support the Indexing Hypothesis - this alone does not verify it. For this reason, deliberation on the range of debate used by the media, government, and Parliament, follows in test two of this chapter.

Time-sequence of New Zealand Government Activity and Media Coverage

New Zealand media coverage and government activity in the year preceding RAMSI is shown in Figure 4. The New Zealand analysis is divided into two distinct phases. The first phase focuses on the 10-month period of June 2002-May 2003, and the second phase concentrates on the two-month period of June and July 2003. The sequence of events will be discussed to ensure a comprehensive understanding of how the events unfolded, and whether or not media coverage followed government activity, or pushed the elite into action.

³³³ Sydney Morning Herald, "Leaders - the Real Pacific Problem."

Figure 4: New Zealand Media and Government Activity Over 12 Month Period



While the period for this investigation began on July 25th 2002, relevant government activity occurred before this date. On July 19th 2002, Foreign Affairs Minister Phil Goff gave a speech called *The Pacific – Where To From Here?*³³⁴ The speech outlined the long-term plan to address Solomon Islands instability and revealed a change in the way New Zealand would assist.³³⁵ Instead of solely focusing on financial aid contributions, Goff signalled that New Zealand would prefer to move towards involvement in the institutional reform of the SIPF.³³⁶ On two occasions in July 2002, once the timeframe for this investigation commenced, the media reported this policy shift.³³⁷ The government did not raise the subject again until September 2002 when it reaffirmed its position.³³⁸ While Figure 4 does not demonstrate the events before the 25th July 2002, it appears the media followed government actions as the policy was in its early stages of formation. However, this point needs further investigation to accurately determine, as the information is limited at best.

During the ten-month period of July 2002 until May 2003, low levels of government activity and media coverage occurred. On October 29th 2002, New Zealand released a statement confirming the departure of 10 police officers to the Solomon Islands in order to conduct a three-year program to reform corrupt elements of the SIPF.³³⁹ The following day *The New Zealand Herald* reported the

³³⁴ Goff, "The Pacific - Where to from Here?."

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ Christchurch Press, "Solomons Duties for Kiwi Police," *Christchurch Press*, July 30 2002; Dominion Post, "Police Aid for the Solomons," *Dominion Post*, July 31 2002.

³³⁸ Phil Goff, (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade). *Address to the NZ-PNG Business Council*, (Wellington: Beehive), September 27 2002

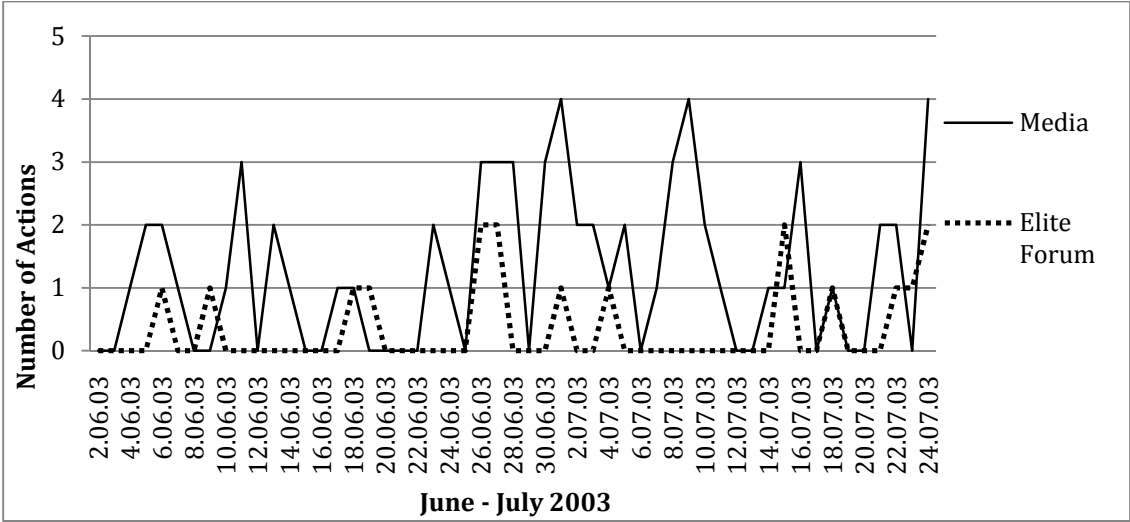
³³⁹ Phil Goff, (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade). *NZ Police to Help Rebuild Solomons Policing Capacity*, (Wellington: Beehive), October 29 2002

deployment of police officers, citing Goff from the day before.³⁴⁰ This is an early example of government action appearing to lead media coverage. From October 2002 until May 2003 limited media coverage of government activity occurred. When there was no specific event or government activity, media coverage was limited.

Two-Month Period of Increased Government Activity and Media Coverage

A substantial increase in government activity and media coverage occurred at the beginning of June 2003 and remained at relatively high levels until RAMSI departed on June 24th 2003. During this period, New Zealand government activity totalled 70%, and the media released 85% of its articles, representing three major spikes in discussions. The two-month period is displayed in Figure 5.

Figure 5: New Zealand Media and Government Activity Two Months Preceding RAMSI



A fundamental question that needs answering is: why did the volume of media coverage and government activity increase at the beginning of June 2003? It appears that, like Australia, New Zealand indicated its willingness to assist in the Solomon Islands through armed intervention. The first government activity to have sparked media’s interest was the June 4th and 5th meeting in Canberra with the Solomon Islands government. While no New Zealand representative was at the meeting, it was reported Goff and Downer were in direct consultation.³⁴¹ This led to Goff confirming New Zealand’s participation in the Solomon Islands Scoping Mission, on June 6th 2003.³⁴² Media coverage subsequently increased with one article on June 4th 2003, and two more articles on June 5th and 6th.³⁴³ This illustrates how and when media coverage appeared to follow government action in both timing of coverage and content.

³⁴⁰ New Zealand Herald, "NZ Police to Help in Solomons," *New Zealand Herald*, October 30 2002.
³⁴¹ Claire Trevett, "Solomon Action Waits on Canberra " *New Zealand Herald*, June 5 2003.
³⁴² Phil Goff, (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade). *NZ, Australia to Make Scoping Mission to Solomons*, (Wellington: Beehive), June 6 2003
³⁴³ Ibid; Greg Ansley, "NZ Considers Solomons' Plea for Help," *New Zealand Herald*, June 7 2003.

Media coverage from the days before June 7th indicates there were additional factors influencing it. Fundamentally, the major influences were the actions of the Australian media and government. For example, the *New Zealand Herald* published an article titled *Australia said yesterday that no decision had been made on whether to send troops or police*.³⁴⁴ In this article Howard stated: "I would expect that next week a group of officials from Australia would go to the Solomon Islands to have further discussions about not only the security situation but also economic issues."³⁴⁵ This article was one of a number that extensively discussed Australian actions at that time.

On June 9th, the day before the Scoping Mission's departure, Prime Minister Helen Clark discussed New Zealand involvement in the mission but gave no indication of military intervention.³⁴⁶ The media reported the government's actions by extensively quoting Clark and Goff from their statements on the 6th and 9th of June. The media also sourced Goff from an unofficial statement, which indicated New Zealand was considering sending armed troops to the Solomon Islands.³⁴⁷ The Scoping Mission took place during June 10th–13th and the government did not release a statement until the following week. The limited flow of government activity during this time saw the media follow with limited attention. There were only two media articles during the week beginning June 16th, a massive decrease from the seven articles in the previous week.

In the week beginning June 23rd 2003 media coverage increased substantially, coinciding with the first major spike in government activity. On June 26th a government statement confirmed that New Zealand was strengthening defence relations with Australia. This was expressed in the scheduled six-monthly New Zealand-Australia talks, which also placed the Solomon Islands crisis high on the agenda.³⁴⁸ However, an additional factor, besides New Zealand government activity, that could possibly have influenced media coverage was Downer's June 26th statement proposing military intervention in the Solomon Islands in conjunction with New Zealand.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁴ New Zealand Herald, "Australia Said Yesterday That No Decision Had Been Made on Whether to Send Troops or Police" *New Zealand Herald*, June 6 2003.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ Helen Clark, (Prime Minister). *Address to Return Services' Association Annual National Council Meeting*, (Wellington: Beehive), June 9 2003

³⁴⁷ Ian Llewellyn, "Goff, Downer Consider Troops for Solomons," *New Zealand Herald*, June 10 2003.

³⁴⁸ Phil Goff, (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade). *Goff to Adelaide for Regular NZ-Australia Talk*, (Wellington: Beehive), June 26 2003

³⁴⁹ Downer, "Security in an Unstable World."

The day following Downer's announcement, and before the planned Australian meeting, Goff conducted a speech on New Zealand foreign policy and the Solomon Islands crisis.³⁵⁰ On the same day Goff also proposed that the Solomon Islands be placed on the PIF meeting agenda for the following week.³⁵¹ In this statement Goff declared: "outside assistance will be considered under the auspices of the Forum's Biketawa Declaration" although it was not specified what this would involve.³⁵² While the government avoided committing to an intervention in the Solomon Islands, media coverage reported that New Zealand involvement was to be expected; New Zealand was strengthening defence relations with Australia at the same time as priming external actors such as the PIF, various PICs, the media, and the public into accepting the need for armed intervention. The media implicitly acknowledged these intentions and continued to report government actions after they had taken place.

The PIF meeting took place on June 30th. Following the meeting, Goff took part in a joint press conference with Downer and Solomon Islands Foreign Minister, Laurie Chan. During this conference Goff validated New Zealand's intention to join Australia in a "police-led deployment...for the restoration of the rule of law...by trained police officers – but with a contingency that there will be military protection."³⁵³ At this point, the details of the comprehensive assistance package involving military and civilian officials were not publicly discussed. The day after the PIF meeting the New Zealand Parliament held an extensive debate on the crisis to discuss its involvement in the proposed intervention. While this debate demonstrated unanimous support for assisting the Solomon Islands, it was the first time that the Opposition government was seen to challenge aspects of the policy.

Throughout June and July 2003 the media consistently reported - quoting Goff - that New Zealand's involvement in the armed intervention was conditional on the approval of the PIF. By basing its Solomon Islands coverage almost exclusively on government activity and quotes from Goff, it appears that the media followed government actions rather than initiating its own. This is particularly evident when one notes that, although government actions subsided throughout the week of July 7th, the continuing high level of media coverage invariably repeated the same coverage and government activity from the previous week. Within media articles during the week beginning July 7th, a large number of government sources were used. For instance, Goff and the Defence Minister

³⁵⁰ Phil Goff, (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade). *The Ethics of Foreign Policy*, (Wellington: Beehive), June 27 2003

³⁵¹ Phil Goff, (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade). *Pacific Forum Foreign Ministers to Discuss Solomons*, (Wellington: Beehive), June 27 2003

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Downer, Goff, and Chan, "Joint Press Conference Following Pacific Island Forum Foreign Ministers Meeting, Sydney."

Mark Burton are repeatedly cited saying New Zealand intended to contribute to the intervention while the size of its force had not yet been decided.³⁵⁴

Government activity intensified in the week beginning July 15th 2003, when New Zealand passed legislation for its involvement in the regional intervention. Two government actions were conducted on that day and in one of these items Goff stated: "Ministers with Power to Act...approved a New Zealand contribution to meet the Solomon Islands' request for outside assistance to restore the rule of law and help it get back on its feet."³⁵⁵ While the media did not specifically cite these activities, coverage confirmed New Zealand's involvement in the intervention and the detailed mandate.

The last spike in government activity came in the week beginning July 21st 2003, the week the intervention commenced. This was anticipated as New Zealand, along with the other participatory countries, signed the *Facilitation of International Assistance Act 2003* in Canberra.³⁵⁶ Additionally, Clark and other senior ministers expressed best wishes to the departing troops.³⁵⁷ The deployment of military personnel to a foreign crisis zone typically provides more fruitful opportunities for heightened sensationalism and clarifies why media coverage was sustained at high levels during this week.

The purpose of this test is to determine whether New Zealand government activity regarding the Solomon Islands crisis preceded media coverage, or media coverage preceded government activity. During the year preceding RAMSI the New Zealand media closely followed government activity. However, this was more apparent during the two-month period of increased activity directly before the intervention. The time-sequence of media coverage and government activity reveals more occurrences of government activity preceding media coverage, than media coverage leading government reaction. The volume of media coverage also increased sequentially to government activity. There were also occasions when the New Zealand media responded to the activities of the Solomon Islands and Australian governments. During such times, the New Zealand government did not appear to be much affected by local media coverage as dialogue with Australia and the Solomon Islands had already begun. Intervention was on the New Zealand government agenda already, and the media merely reported what it presumed to be the likely outcome of this discussion. From these processes it appears that the government placed the Solomon Islands on the agenda and addressed the crisis independent of the media.

³⁵⁴ Tracy Watkins, "Solomons Concern Minister," *Christchurch Press*, July 9 2003; Tracy Watkins, "Unease over NZ Role in Force for Solomons," *Christchurch Press*, July 8 2003.

³⁵⁵ Phil Goff, (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade). *NZ Assistance to Solomon Islands Government*, (Wellington: Beehive), July 15 2003

³⁵⁶ *Facilitation of International Assistance Act*.

³⁵⁷ Helen Tunnah, "Nzer to Keep a Hand on Mission," *New Zealand Herald*, July 24 2003; Dominion Post, "Soldier's Farewell," *Dominion Post*, July 24 2003.

One of the most striking findings during the two-month period of increased activity is that a spike in media coverage often mirrored a spike in government activity. While on the surface this pattern alone does not indicate that the government influenced media coverage or media Indexing, it does draw attention to media content, which in turn clarifies the sequence in which issues and events were covered. Furthermore, the media sourced the opinions of government, predominantly Clark and Goff, in 59% of all sources used during the year period.³⁵⁸ In many cases quotes are drawn directly from prior government activity and the media reported directly on these. This demonstrates that the media relied heavily on government actions and information for its coverage, and appeared to follow the opinions of the political elite in many instances.

The time-sequence and volume of media coverage clearly indicates that it was the New Zealand government that pushed the Solomon Islands onto the agenda after expressing a willingness to bring stability to that country. It was only then that the media saw the issue as newsworthy. The media only increased its attention at the beginning of June 2003, once the Solomon Islands had approached Australia for help, and the New Zealand government had confirmed that it was open to dialogue. It is this overall finding that begins to exclude the possibility of a CNN Effect having occurred in the New Zealand case. The media do not appear to have instigated policy attention; it was the policy makers who addressed the crisis first. However, the fact that policy makers placed the crisis on the agenda does not verify Indexing. The range of debate, particularly the range of Parliamentary debate, needs to show similarities for Indexing to occur. A 'third factor' remains a possibility due to the similarities in coverage and government actions. There is also the possibility that while government highlighted the Solomon Islands crisis, the media were still able to report independently; this will be investigated in greater detail in the remaining three tests.

Test Two: The Spectrum of the Debate

To determine if the media framed the Solomon Islands crisis within a similar narrative to government, the narrative is divided into three sections for investigation: problems of the crisis; proposed solutions to these problems; and criticisms towards government response. Identifying how the media, government, and Parliament discussed these three areas clarifies the question of whether the three groups utilised similar frames or whether one group discussed the crisis using a different narrative. This structure is aimed at facilitating analysis and discussion concerning whether or not media coverage of the crisis reflected the range of debate in the elite forum and so building on an understanding of the extent to which Australian and New Zealand media led, challenged, or followed

³⁵⁸ The media's use of sourcing is discussed in detail later in this chapter.

government perspectives. To analyse the problems, solutions, and criticisms, the Australian case is considered first, followed by the New Zealand case, and will conclude with a summary of events in each country.

Crisis in Paradise – Defining the Solomon Islands Problems

In the year leading up to the RAMSI intervention, the Australian and New Zealand media, government, and Parliament defined the problems of the Solomon Islands crisis within eight primary frames. These eight frames determined the spectrum of the debate and will be analysed by the frequency and the overall percentage value.³⁵⁹

Australia’s use of Problem Frames

The spectrum of the Solomon Islands problems debate in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *Herald Sun*, and *Daily Telegraph*, appears to reflect a similar debate used by the Australian government and Parliament. The frequencies and percentages of each frame used by the media, government, and Parliament are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Australia Problems Frames

Type of Problem	Media		Government		Parliament	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Economic	36	13%	23	17%	11	18%
Security Threat (AUNZ)	15	6%	10	7%	3	5%
Security Threat Region	7	3%	9	6%	3	5%
Failed State	27	10%	8	6%	4	7%
Humanitarian	9	3%	4	3%	2	3%
Lawlessness	129	48%	79	57%	30	50%
Ethnic Violence	24	9%	2	1%	4	7%
Terrorism	21	8%	4	3%	3	5%
Total	268	100%	139	100%	60	100%

The most frequently used problem frame is *Lawlessness*, with the media’s frequency at 48% (129 of 268), the government’s at 57%, and Parliament’s at 50%. A distant second and third to this was the *Economic* and *Failed State* frames. The *Economic* frame reveals a relatively low disparity of 4-5% between the media and government, and the media and Parliament. A higher level of consistency between the three groups is evident in the *Failed State* frame. All three groups consistently apply these three frames, and more often than other problem frames. This shows that while there are other ways to describe the Solomon Islands problems, all three groups offered a similar narrative.

³⁵⁹ The eight problem frames are described in Appendix 3.

The *Security Threat to the Region* frame revealed a 2% difference between media and Parliament, and a 3% difference between media and government. The *Humanitarian* and *Security Threat AUNZ* frames were used at lower levels, although both frames reveal some consistency between all three groups. The low use of this frame suggests there was little sympathetic framing around the crisis. As sympathetic framing is needed for a CNN Effect this is a significant finding since the media do not appear to have used emotive messages to motivate an audience or to influence policy makers to respond.

Overall, there appears to be a greater level of consistency in the range of debate used by media and Parliament, than by media and government. The greater consistency is demonstrated by the average percentage difference between the two groups. The media and government revealed a 4.25% difference, whereas media and Parliament showed a 2.25% difference. The lower percentage difference the greater the consistency. More specifically, the similarity between the media and Parliament is evident in the *Security Threat AUNZ*, *Security Threat Region*, *Humanitarian*, *Lawlessness*, and *Ethnic Violence* frames with between a 0-2% difference between the media and Parliament, whereas media and government present two frames with a 0-2% difference.

The consistency between media and Parliament support the Indexing Hypothesis, since the range of debate in media coverage falls within the range of the entire political debate rather than government debate alone. It is natural for the government to present the terms of its involvement in foreign crises by defining the issues and how it proposes to address them. Parliamentary debates on the other hand, focus on the practical feasibility of the government's cause, and consequently produce more comprehensive and critical debates. This begins to explain why the tone and character of media coverage often depicts similarities, to a degree, in the perspectives within Parliament; more so than those in government. The consistency between media and Parliament builds a case supporting occurrences of the Indexing Hypothesis because the range of debate reflects debates within the political forum. Furthermore, the media do not appear to be challenging the government's interpretation of the crisis. Had the media suggested there was a dire humanitarian situation, whilst at the same time urging government to intervene more rapidly, this would indicate a CNN Effect. This does not appear to have occurred.

New Zealand's use of Problem Frames

The examination of problem frames utilised by *The New Zealand Herald*, *The Press*, and *Dominion Post* present some similarities in the range of debate used by the New Zealand government and Parliament. On the following page Table 7 displays the overall frequencies and percentages of problem frames used by the media, government, and Parliament.

The most frequently used problem frame in the New Zealand media, government, and Parliament is *Lawlessness* with the media’s use at 58%, Parliament’s at 53%, and government’s at 45%. This frame presents the largest disparity between media and the other two groups. However, there is a reasonable level of consistency between the media, government, and Parliament as *Lawlessness* is the most frequently used frame overall. The *Economic* frame is the second highest-ranking frame used by the three groups, followed by the *Failed State* frame. Ranking the three most frequently used frames demonstrates consistency in the way the media, government, and Parliament framed problems relating to the Solomon Islands crisis.

Table 7: New Zealand Problem Frames

Type of Problem	Media		Government		Parliament	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Economic	27	12%	10	25%	11	17%
Security Threat (AUNZ)	3	1%	1	3%	2	3%
Security Threat Region	9	4%	2	5%	1	2%
Failed State	18	8%	5	13%	9	14%
Humanitarian	11	5%	2	5%	2	3%
Lawlessness	131	58%	18	45%	35	53%
Ethnic Violence	16	7%	0	0%	3	5%
Terrorism	10	4%	2	5%	3	5%
Total	225	100%	40	100%	66	100%

The media and Parliament offered the *Ethnic Violence* frame with a 2% difference, while the media and government present a larger 7% difference. The remaining four frames, *Security Threat AUNZ*, *Security Threat Region*, *Humanitarian*, and *Terrorism*, appeared at lower frequencies to the aforementioned frames. However, these four frames generally demonstrate a high level of consistency between each group. These findings reveal that while there are minor differences in the frequency levels of each group, there are no major variances to indicate that the range of debate employed by the media, government, and Parliament was vastly different. Additionally, the low frequency of the *Humanitarian* frame in the media builds a case against a CNN Effect, as the media do not appear to use emotive frames to describe the situation.

From an analysis of the overall average percentage difference between the media and the other two groups, it appears there is a greater level of consistency between media and Parliament, than between media and government. The media and government reveal a difference of 5.25%, whereas the media and Parliament reveal a lower 3.125% difference. This lower percentage demonstrates that, on average, the consistency between media and Parliament was greater than between media and government.

The New Zealand case, similar to the Australian case, shows that when media coverage appears to reflect a similar range of debate to Parliament it begins to support claims of an Indexing Hypothesis as it represents the entire political debate, not just that of the governing elites. This is because the media are more inclined to use Parliament as a cue to the range of perspectives relating to a crisis because Parliament provides a more comprehensive debate outside the parameters of government. However, the solution response and critical perspectives categories are where the debate takes shape by considering how each government should respond. Greater insights are therefore offered.

Responding to a Struggling Solomon Islands

Proposed solutions to assist the Solomon Islands provide the second area with which to investigate the range of debate used in Australia and New Zealand. Foreign policy evolves to meet the demands of the changing international environment, while taking into account the domestic political landscape. This section will investigate the range of options considered by the media, government, and Parliament on how to respond to the Solomon Islands crisis. The Australian case presents eight solution frames in the year before RAMSI, whereas New Zealand offered seven.³⁶⁰

Australia's proposed solutions to the Solomon Islands Crisis

During 2003, Australia dramatically altered its hands-off approach towards the Pacific region with its newly found interest in the Solomon Islands. From as early as 1999 financial aid contributions were the most direct form of assistance offered by Canberra to mitigate the on-going instability.³⁶¹ However, in the year before RAMSI Australian foreign policy-makers began to shift towards a more active role in assisting the Solomon Islands. Table 8 on the following page presents the frequencies and percentages of the eight proposed solutions in the Australian media, government, and Parliament during this year period.

The Australian Parliament most frequently used the *Aid* frame (46%), although this frame occurred at substantially lower levels in the media and government. Alternatively, the media and government presented the *Armed Police-Defence* frame most frequently, with 69% in the media and 42% in government. Parliament used this frame at a much lower level.

It appears the media were more persistent in discussing the *Armed Police-Defence* aspects of Australia's response. Parliament, on the other hand, and to some degree government, focused on the *Non-Armed Police* and *Macro Reform* aspects of the response. An example of how the political elite

³⁶⁰ The seven solution frames are described in Appendix 3.

³⁶¹ With the exception of the Townsville peace agreement as there was never enough support within the GRA and MEF to maintain a peace.

discussed the non-armed options was at a Joint Standing Committee hearing when AusAID Assistant Director General, Margaret Thomas declared:

“In a country like the Solomon Islands we need to be pretty upfront that we need to provide assistance to help them take those steps [progress in law and order and economic management], and that is something that we have been willing to do, provided the momentum continues to be positive. It is much more of a closer partnership where we have to get very engaged with helping the government start to identify and set out some of those priorities and provide technical assistance to enable them to do so.”³⁶²

Thomas was not the only individual to express support for non-armed efforts in the Solomon Islands. The Shadow Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kevin Rudd, and other members of Parliament, made similar statements as early as October 2002. However, the media seldom published these and instead applied the *Armed Intervention* frame more frequently. Government was the first to present *Armed Police-Defence* as a possible response option on June 10th in a statement by Downer, and the following day the *Sunday Morning Herald* reported this.³⁶³ From then on media reportage appeared to incorporate more dramatic solutions than government. This might be because, from the media perspective, an armed military intervention is more sensational than non-armed police in an advisory role. Government and Parliament appeared to take a calmer and more comprehensive approach by discussing a range of solutions, such as *Macro Reform, Non-Armed Police, Aid, Armed Police-Defence, and Assistance Package*.

Table 8: Australia Solution Frames

Type of Solution	Media		Government		Parliament	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Aid	6	4%	16	15%	16	46%
Non-Intervention	2	1%	1	1%	0	0%
Non-Armed Police	4	3%	6	6%	5	14%
Intervention	5	3%	16	15%	1	3%
Macro Reform	6	4%	17	16%	9	25%
Armed Police-Defence	102	69%	45	42%	4	11%
Assistance Package	17	11%	4	4%	1	3%
Other	6	4%	1	1%	0	0%
Total	148	100%	106	100%	35	100%

As part of government discussion on the Solomon Islands crisis, the Opposition specified three areas that required deliberation if there was to be bilateral support for armed intervention. While two of these areas were addressed when the Solomon Islands government welcomed foreign troops,

³⁶² Australia, *Human Rights and Good Governance Education in the Asia Pacific Region*. (Canberra: Defence and Trade Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Hansard, 2003), FADT 37.

³⁶³ Allard, "Australia May Lead International Force to Fix Solomons."; Downer, "Our Failing Neighbor: Australia and the Future of Solomon Islands."

and consensus among the PIF for foreign intervention was declared, the final issue of an exit strategy for the regional intervention was not discussed. The government and media ignored the issue of forming a well-defined exit strategy, which seems to indicate that not everything conducted by Parliament was worthy of media coverage.³⁶⁴

The above analysis displays both consistencies in the use of solution frames, and a number of notable discrepancies. In most instances, all three groups have used each solution frame (with the exception of Parliament not using the *Non-Intervention* and *Other* frames) although each group uses each frame at varying levels. The differences between media and Parliament were the most notable, particularly as Parliament discussed *Aid* in much higher frequencies than any other category. Conversely, the media and government used the *Armed Police-Defence* frame at the highest frequency. However, the government also focused on the other aspects of the response such as *Aid* and *Macro Reform*, while the media only briefly addressed these. The analysis shows that Parliamentary debate was not used as a cue for the media coverage for possible response options. The government considered a range of response options when addressing the Solomon Islands crisis, whereas the media considered these at lower frequencies and generally focused its coverage on the *Armed Police-Defence* aspects of the response.

The media's use of the *Armed Police-Defence* frame shows that when a sensational response option such as military intervention is one of a number of options being discussed, the media are more inclined to report the most dramatic option. By defining the government's response as predominantly *Armed Police-Defence* the media can break down multifaceted stories for 'easy reading' purposes. As the *Armed Police-Defence* frame was also used at a higher level by government, the media may only have reported comparable response options to government debate.

Discrepancies between media, government, and Parliament are plausible when an issue is being debated. Nevertheless, the discrepancies between how the media defined solutions to the crisis compared to the other groups are too great to determine the possibility of an Indexing Hypothesis or a 'third factor'. If the media are not leading or following the perspective of the political elite, then what do their actions suggest? The findings from this case demonstrate that the media appeared to be reasonably independent in reporting solution options. While there are indications that the media followed government debate in some instances, overall they were not consistent in following either government or Parliamentary debates, and used the *Armed Police-Defence* frame at much higher levels than any other frame. This indicates that the media published a more sensational response option, rather than the full debate that was offered by government and Parliament. Nevertheless, the

³⁶⁴ Kevin Rudd, (Shadow Minister for Foreign Minister and Trade). *Sydney Meeting of South Pacific Foreign Ministers an Important Step Forward on Solomons Intervention*, (Canberra: Hansard), June 30 2003

media did not apply sympathetic framing as a way to sensationalise the Solomon Islands crisis. The media sensationalises news stories to engage an audience's attention. News stories are often reduced to short and easily consumable material, and journalists repeatedly using phrases such as 'armed military intervention' to present an appealing story. This is especially important when stories begin to 'fall-down or off' the agenda, and are overtaken by emerging issues. Keeping the audience engaged over long periods requires sensational topics and frames. While the Solomon Islands crisis was not on the agenda for an excessively long period of time compared to other crises, it was on the agenda during other international crises such as the Iraq War. Therefore, the media had more incentive to sensationalise the possible intervention, to ensure audiences continued to read the ongoing events. By sensationalising issues the media present one policy option (armed intervention) more so than other options, such as financial aid contributions. Such media behaviour is one requirement for a CNN Effect; the media were urging Australian policy makers using repeated framing, to respond to the crisis with an armed military intervention.

New Zealand's proposed solutions to the Solomon Islands Crisis

In the year preceding RAMSI, New Zealand assisted the Solomon Islands with on-going financial aid contributions and a small non-armed police force to reform the SIPF. By providing this assistance, New Zealand confirmed the long-standing relationship between the two nations and its commitment to develop PICs. However, New Zealand's approach in addressing the Solomon Islands instability changed over the 12 month preceding RAMSI. The New Zealand media, government, and Parliament applied seven proposed solution frames to the Solomon Islands crisis during this time.³⁶⁵ The seven categories are analysed for frequency and percentage levels to clarify the range of debate used by each group, displayed in Table 9 on the following page.

The government consistently applied six of the seven frames within similar frequencies. Conversely, the media and Parliament applied the *Armed Intervention* frame at the greatest frequency of 58% and 73% respectively. While a disparity of 15% between the media and Parliament appears somewhat wide, when you consider that both groups apply this frame at the highest frequency some consistency can be demonstrated. The difference between the media's and Parliament's extended use of the *Armed Intervention* frame, and the government's use of a similar number of frames, demonstrates the varying focus of solution options used by the three groups.

³⁶⁵ The seven solution frames are described in Appendix 3.

Table 9: New Zealand Solution Frames

Type of Solution	Media		Government		Parliament	
	Frequenc y	%	Frequenc y	%	Frequenc y	%
Aid	7	4%	4	15%	2	5%
Non-Armed Police Intervention	8	4%	5	19%	0	0%
Macro Reform	31	17%	5	19%	1	2%
Armed Intervention	6	3%	3	11%	1	2%
Assistance Package	107	58%	4	15%	30	73%
Other	22	12%	5	19%	7	17%
	2	1%	1	4%	0	0%
Total	183	100%	27	100%	41	100%

It appears the government evenly discussed a range of response options in the year preceding the intervention as it utilised six of the seven solution frames evenly. This was different from the way Parliament and the media discussed the solution options. On June 25th 2003, the government indicated the possibility of military intervention in the Solomon Islands. As Parliament only raised the Solomon Islands crisis for debate on one occasion before the government’s announcement, the timing of that announcement could begin to explain why the Parliament used the *Armed Intervention* and *Assistance Package* frames at the highest levels. Parliament only discussed the Solomon Islands once before the government’s announcement and did not place the crisis on the agenda again until July 1st 2003. Furthermore, there appeared to be very low levels of opposition towards an intervention.³⁶⁶ If there had been significant opposition to the intervention, then alternative options would have been utilised within Parliament. This was not the case.

The July 1st 2003 Parliamentary debate was the most comprehensive discussion on the crisis and possible response options. While there was little opposition to the intervention overall, the debate demonstrated the different narratives used by the coalition government and the Opposition when discussing intervention. In this debate government members moderated their language around the military aspect of the intervention force by referring to the intervention as a police-led deployment, rather than an armed military intervention.³⁶⁷ However, police-led deployment and military intervention denoted the same thing. Bill English, a member of the Opposition highlighted the inconsistency when he stated:

“we should stop calling it a police-led deployment. We are sending 200 of our armed defence personnel – soldiers... There also happen to be 40 police going as well. The

³⁶⁶ The low degree of dissent is discussed in detail in the critical perspective section of test two. Although the low level of solutions other than *intervention* frames begins to demonstrate that dissent was low.

³⁶⁷ New Zealand, *Question for Oral Answer - Questions to Minister: Solomon Islands - Police*. (Wellington: Hansard Parliamentary Debate, 2003), 3.

Government seems very anxious to couch this whole deployment as simply a matter of law and order – dealing with criminals and getting a law and order system going”³⁶⁸

The media infrequently used the term police-led deployment and opted for language such as soldiers or troops, the broad use of intervention, and armed or military intervention. The media in this instance appeared to employ the language used by the Opposition rather than the moderate language used by government. Yet, in all of the aforementioned frames the meaning is much the same and is framed as either *Intervention* or *Armed Intervention*.

The most striking resemblance between media and Parliament are in the *Aid, Macro Reform, Assistance Package, and Other* frames with 1-2% difference. Despite the consistencies, there are a number of discrepancies, such as Parliament using the *Intervention* frame at only a 2% frequency compared to media’s 17% and government’s 19%. As Parliament did not discuss the crisis until July 1st 2003, it is possible the media used a similar range of debate to that of government. The media’s behaviour indicates that the media operated independently in the way it framed solutions.

The analysis demonstrates that the media reported somewhat independently of the political elite during the year preceding RAMSI. There are a large number of discrepancies in the way the media, government, and Parliament framed solutions to the Solomon Islands crisis. There does not appear to be a general pattern or rule that describes how the media framed the response options. The media used various solution narratives, although it framed the most likely response as *Intervention* or *Armed Intervention*. These two frames were also more sensational compared to the *Aid* or *Macro Reform* frames. Comparing the media’s range of debate to that of the government and Parliament reveals that in many cases the media reported independently from the perspectives of the elite. Although when government activity occurred the media reported this activity, which made it appear the media reported the perspectives of the political elite more often than was the case. On another note, it does seem likely that the media were pushing government for a particular response. The media used the *Intervention* and *Armed Police and Defence* frames most frequently. It appears the media reported the more newsworthy and sensational topic of intervention at a much higher frequency. Media coverage indicated a possible intervention after government indicated that a military response would be the most likely form of action. However, as the media continually reported the armed intervention policy option more so than other options, it was indirectly pushing government to respond in this way. Nevertheless, the overall impact of the media reporting *Intervention* as a solution to the Solomon Islands crisis is inconclusive. It appears the media did not push the government to act, but its reporting behaviour may have boosted public support for intervention and, in turn, possibly reduced the critical debate surrounding it. Even so, the public opinion and support aspect is not measured in this research, and therefore leaves an area for future examination.

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 5.

Critical Perspectives towards Government Actions

The manner a crisis is presented by the media can alter an audience's interpretation and understanding of events "thereby helping or hindering an administration's efforts to mo[u]ld public opinion."³⁶⁹ The media's use of critical perspective towards government can support one policy approach while delegitimizing another. The Australian case used five critical perspectives towards government in the year leading up to RAMSI, whereas the New Zealand case used seven critical perspective frames.³⁷⁰

Before completing the analysis, one further area that needs clarification is the inclusion of the *Should Have Acted Sooner* and *Aid is Ineffective* frames. The aforementioned frames criticize the Australian and New Zealand policy of financial aid contributions and non-intervention. These two categories support intervention rather than challenge it, as they delegitimize the 'hands-off' approach and supportively frame an intervention. The way these frames challenged government's hands-off approach to the Pacific created the platform to move towards a more involved role in the region. This could explain why the Australian government offered only one critical statement, being the *Aid is Ineffective* frame, during the entire year leading up to RAMSI. However, the purpose of this section is to establish and analyse the range of debate between the media, government, and Parliament and therefore these categories fulfil this purpose.

Critical Perspectives towards the Australian Government

The range of debate on the Solomon Islands crisis used by the Australian media, government, and Parliament presents a number of critical perspectives towards the Australian policy in the year before RAMSI. While the Australian government and Parliament were united over military intervention in the Solomon Islands, it is natural that critical perspectives towards government should have arisen due to the social and economic costs of intervention and competing interests within government. The five critical perspectives from the Australian case study are displayed in Table 10 on the following page.

The only critical frame that media, government, and Parliament each used was the *Aid is Ineffective* frame. This frame was first used by Kevin Rudd, Shadow Minister of Foreign Affairs, in September 2002 when he stated: "I regrettably conclude to the House that the use of \$30 million of

³⁶⁹ Lance W. Bennett, Regina G. Lawrence, and Steven Livingston, *When the Press Fails: Political Power and the News Media from Iraq to Katrina* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

³⁷⁰ The critical perspective frames are described in Appendix 3.

Australian funds on the Solomon Islands police force has been a demonstrated failure.”³⁷¹ The media did not present this frame until May 19th 2003, even though the Opposition had presented it on five occasions before this date. The government did not present the *Aid is Ineffective* frame until June 10th 2003, after the Solomon Islands had commenced discussions for increased Australian assistance.³⁷² The government’s delayed criticism - that aid is an ineffective solution to the crisis - demonstrates that even though Parliament had expressed criticisms, these were largely ignored until the prospect of intervention was likely.

Table 10: Critical Perspective towards Australian Government

Criticism	Media		Government		Parliament	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Should Have Acted Sooner	0	0%	3	25%	1	33%
Aid is ineffective	4	31%	9	75%	2	67%
Lack of public debate	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%
Inflame situation	2	15%	0	0%	0	0%
Re-Colonize & Control	6	46%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	13	100%	12	100%	3	100%

The media did not apply the *Should have Acted Sooner* frame, although government used it at 25% and Parliament at 33% frequency. These two frames are the only critical perspectives offered by government and Parliament. The Opposition proclaimed this failure in Parliament on June 10th 2003, while the government acknowledged this on June 26th, three days before the PIF meeting.

The media utilised three critical frames that neither government nor Parliament discussed. The media’s use of the *Re-colonize and Control*, *Lack of Public Debate*, and *Inflame Situation* frames demonstrates independent media reporting, as the media moved beyond the debates of the political elite. These frames were sourced from individuals or groups independent of government, with the exception of one case.

Critical frames from outside the political forum came from well-respected public figures, such as Archbishop Adrian Smith of Honiara. On July 7th 2003, after the PIF had approved regional intervention, Smith emphasised that internal resentment from Solomon Islands could come with foreign involvement: “Intervening in the Solomons without respect to social justice could make things worse ... If it goes wrong, it could go very wrong. Feeling like ‘We’re being pushed aside’ or

³⁷¹ Australia, *Ministerial Statements: Australia's Development Cooperation Program*. (Canberra: House of Representatives, Hansard, 2002), 7097. <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;adv=yes;orderBy=customrank;page=0;query=Solomon%20Islands%20Kevin%20Rudd%202002%20Content%3A%22Solomon%20%22%20Date%3A01%2F09%2F2002%20%3E%3E%2030%2F09%2F2002;rec=0;resCount=Default>

³⁷² Downer, "Our Failing Neighbor: Australia and the Future of Solomon Islands."

'Foreigners are taking out jobs' can express themselves in ugly ways."³⁷³ This issue was not something the political elite had publicly deliberated on; however, public support within the Solomon Islands was fundamental to the success of foreign intervention.

Regardless of the low levels of criticism towards government, in more cases than not the critical frames were presented within supportive frames. An example of this counterbalance is Professor Emeritus Helen Hughes who declared in the *Daily Telegraph*:

There needs to be a lot more public debate about why Australia is sending police and soldiers to the Solomons to risk their lives... Are our troops to be peacekeepers of peace makers? How long will they stay? Unless we have an understanding of what needs to be done so our forces can one day be withdrawn they should not be sent.³⁷⁴

However, Hughes followed this statement with "Australian troops have to go in."³⁷⁵ This shows that there were divisions within the popular agreement outside government. Political forum debate failed to demonstrate such reservations to the intervention and, as the media reported perspectives from outside the political elite, it demonstrates that the media were moving beyond using the political elite as a cue for frames and perspectives.

On two occasions the media sourced a Solomon Islands minister who opposed foreign intervention, demonstrating that the media did indeed source perspectives from outside of government.³⁷⁶ However, these received only a small level of attention in the media. Nevertheless, Mr Sogavare, the former Solomon Islands Prime Minister, expressed strong sentiments when he stated "[i]t'll be nothing short of re-colonising this country... This honourable house is deliberately used as a puppet for overseas agendas."³⁷⁷ What is interesting about Sogavare's critical perspective is that it was not shared among many others. Nevertheless, the media were reporting beyond the debate within the political elite. Media behaviour shows that when there was consensus within the Australian political elite supporting foreign intervention, the media reported perspectives critical of government. This finding challenges previous arguments that media content reflected the level of criticism within the political elite, and provides an instance where the media can be shown to have independently reported alternative perspectives outside those in the political elite.

There is little consistency in the range of critical perspectives offered by the media, government, and Parliament, other than those that ultimately supported intervention by criticising previous responses. There was only one critical perspective that was offered by all three groups. The

³⁷³ Adrian Smith, "Islanders Need Help to Move to Peace," *Sydney Morning Herald*, July 7 2003.

³⁷⁴ Duffy, "Sucked Deep into Pacific Quagmire."

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ Allard and Skehan, "Ex-Solomons PM Fears Colonisation."

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

media went beyond the range of debate employed by government and Parliament by presenting three alternative perspectives. These do occur at low levels overall, but they do make up a large portion of all the critical perspectives.

Critical Perspectives towards New Zealand Government Policy Action

Critical perspectives towards the way government addressed the Solomon Islands crisis in the New Zealand media and Parliament demonstrates some consistency between the two, whereas government did not offer any critiques to current policy. The frequencies of critical frames are displayed in Table 11.³⁷⁸ Out of a total seven critical perspective categories that arose within the media and Parliament, the media published five and Parliament seven.

Table 11: Critical Perspectives towards New Zealand Government

Criticism	Media		Parliament		Government	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Impact on Police & Defence	3	20%	10	50%	0	0%
Should Have Acted Sooner	0	0%	2	10%	0	0%
Aid is ineffective	0	0%	1	5%	0	0%
Alienate PICs	6	40%	4	20%	0	0%
Re-Colonize & Control	2	13%	1	5%	0	0%
Questionable Purpose	2	13%	1	5%	0	0%
Bogged Down in Operation	2	13%	1	5%	0	0%
Total	15	100%	20	100%	20	100%

Three critical frames used by the media and Parliament show a greater degree of consistency. The *Re-Colonise & Control*, *Questionable Purpose of Deployment*, and *Bogged Down in Operation* frames each frequented Parliament at 5% (1 of 20), and 13% (2 of 15) in the media. These three frames indicate a similarity in the range of debate of critical perspectives used by the media and Parliament. There is also some consistency between media and Parliament in the way they used the negative *Impact on Police & Defence* and *Alienate PICs* frames. Regardless of the consistencies, variations between how and when the media and Parliament used critical frames are irrefutable.

The three frames used by the media and Parliament show some similarity in the range of debate used by each. Parliament used the negative *Impact on Police & Defence* frame most frequently at 50%, while this frame was the media’s second most frequently used frame at 20%. On the other hand, the media published the *Alienate PICs* frame most frequently at 40%, and Parliament used it at 20%, its second most frequently used frame. Thus, the frames *Impact on Police & Defence* and *Alienate PICs* were most commonly employed. However, the frequency of the employment varied

³⁷⁸ The critical perspective frames are described in Appendix 3.

between the media and Parliament. The timing of media and Parliamentary use of these frames shows that Parliament used them well before the media. Parliament used 19 of its total 20 critical frames on July 1st 2003, when the House extensively debated the crisis and proposed solutions, whereas the media used 14 of the total 15 critical frames over July 9th – July 16th 2003. As Parliament utilised critical perspective over a week before the media this suggests that the cultural context did not influence simultaneous attention. As it was not cultural influences, such as public expectations for these critical perspectives to be discussed, the findings begin to eliminate the possibility of a ‘third factor’.

The July 1st Parliamentary debate focused on the negative impact an intervention would have on the already strained police and defence force.³⁷⁹ However, when the media began reporting critical perspectives on July 9th 2003, its critical focus was on the possibility of an intervention *Alienating PICs*.³⁸⁰ It was not until July 16th that the media published the *Negative Impact on Police and Defence* frames.³⁸¹ The media did not report the *Negative Impact on Police and Defence* frame until 16 days after Parliament had focused on it. This shows that when the media finally began reporting critiques of government, the focus differed from Parliamentary debate.

A consideration of the extensive July 1st 2003 Parliamentary debate in detail shows coalition government member Keith Locke bringing a number of criticisms to light. Locke raised the issue of whether New Zealand should contribute 2,000 military personnel to RAMSI and went on to say: “I think we have to be concerned that we could have too much overkill, in terms of military intervention.”³⁸² Continuing from this, Locke cautioned that New Zealand “could draw hostility from the local population, which could make the situation worse.”³⁸³ Lastly, Locke stated “I have heard reports from Australia that it will put various Australians in the different ministries for the long term. I think we have to be a bit wary about being seen to dominate the Solomons.”³⁸⁴ Despite Locke’s concerns he was not quoted in the media. The only opposition minister quoted was Dr Wayne Mapp; although Mapp’s statement in the media occurred before the July 1st Parliamentary debate and was not critical of government.³⁸⁵ This demonstrates the media did not present alternative perspectives outside of government until after the intervention was informally confirmed by New Zealand and approved by the PIF. An examination of the use of these frames shows that there were other instances where the media reported critical frames a long time after the political elite expressed them.

³⁷⁹ New Zealand, "Question for Oral Answer - Questions to Minister: Solomon Islands - Police."

³⁸⁰ Helen Tunnah, "Honiara to Vote on Army Help," *New Zealand Herald*, July 9 2003; Watkins, "Solomons Concern Minister."; Tracy Watkins, "Goff Admits to Solomons Risk," *Dominion Post*, July 9 2003.

³⁸¹ Helen Tunnah, "Armed Police Backup in Solomons Force," *New Zealand Herald*, July 16 2003.

³⁸² New Zealand, "Question for Oral Answer - Questions to Minister: Solomon Islands - Police," 19.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, 20.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

³⁸⁵ Kevin Taylor, "Big Force for Solomons," *New Zealand Herald*, June 30 2003.

The frequencies of critical frames applied by the media and government demonstrates that the media were focused on *Alienating PICs*, whereas Parliament was more concerned with what negative *Impact on Police & Defence* the intervention would have. Furthermore, the media did not present critical frames that justified government taking an increasingly forceful role in the Solomons. As the media avoided using the *Should Have Acted Sooner* and *Aid is Ineffective* frames, it shows that the media diverged from solely reporting on the perspectives of the political elite. Because media reports were on occasion independent of the perspectives of the political elite, the possibility of the media having indexed its coverage to the elite diminishes. These findings reject an Indexing Hypothesis. On the other hand, the media does not appear to report frames that challenge how government was addressing the crisis, outside of those already used by government. This diminishes the possibility that critical media coverage ‘pushed’ government into the Solomons more quickly than it would have desired, and removes any likelihood of a CNN Effect. Critical perspectives occurred in the media only after the political elite had used them first.

Concluding the Australian and New Zealand Range of Debate

To summarise the range of debate, it is important to revisit the main purpose of section two: to determine if print news media coverage of the Solomon Islands crisis in the year preceding RAMSI reflected the range of debate in the elite forum. Problem frames in each of the Australian and New Zealand cases illustrate a high degree of similarity in the range of problem frames used by the media, government, and Parliament. When reporting problems regarding the Solomon Islands crisis, both the Australian and New Zealand experience demonstrate, to a degree, media indexing to the perspectives of the political elite. However, when considering the entire range of the debate to include the solution and criticism frames, the possibility of an Indexing Hypothesis diminishes.

Solution and criticism frames used in the Australian and New Zealand cases offer wider variance between the media, government, and Parliament than do the problems frames; however, some similarities in the frequencies of solution frame are still apparent. In the Australian case higher levels of consistency in the solution frames occurred between media and government. However, the critical frames used by the Australian media demonstrate a large degree of independent media reporting. The media did not appear to follow the political elite by avoiding critical perspectives. This action shows that when critical debate within political forums is limited or non-existent, the media offer alternative perspectives outside of political debate to provide a comprehensive and balanced picture of events.

The New Zealand use of solution and critical frames demonstrates some consistency between media and Parliament. However, the consistency does not entirely indicate that the media indexed its content to the perspectives of the political elite. In many instances, the media used frames long after

the political elite has used them, and the focus of particular solution and criticism frames differs over the year period. While some of the frequencies may demonstrate resemblances, the different timing of frames used shows that neither the media nor government entirely index its coverage to the other. Such a finding also eradicates the possibility of a 'third factor', where the cultural context influences the behaviour of the media and government.

In both the Australian and New Zealand studies greater media independence is evident than Indexing hypothesised. Even so, in both cases the media appear to have indexed their coverage to the perspectives of the political elite when describing the problem of the crisis. The debate takes shape when options are raised as to how a nation should respond, and when those options themselves are critiqued. This is where differences in the spectrum of debate is most importantly investigated. The reportage and coverage of the solutions and critical frames used by the media, government, and Parliament to address the Solomon Islands crisis, offer an interesting insight to journalistic behaviour in Australia and New Zealand. In the Australian case, the media selected solutions and government critiques that they considered important and worthy of acknowledgement. Thus, the media did not filter challenges to consensus opinion, and published critical opinions regardless of the exclusion of these opinions in political debate. The findings in both cases, question the use of dissent from, and consensus with, political institutions as an indicator of Indexing. In the Australian case consensus for intervention was apparent due to the one critical statement offered in Parliament, which ultimately supported the intervention. The New Zealand case on the other hand showed only minor levels of dissent around particular aspects of the intervention, such as the level of ground force. Regardless of these low levels of dissent, the Australian case showed a number of frames critical of government actions outside what was offered within the political elite forum. New Zealand presented similar frames, to a degree; however, there was greater focus on the possibility of New Zealand alienating PICs. Test four will consider further media critiques of government, focusing on the origin of the critiques in relation to sources.

Test Three: The Media's use of Sources

The media use sources to legitimise the substance of a story, present alternative perspectives, and indicate where information is acquired. The media's use of sources can influence the content of news articles and how an audience interprets issues. Test three considers the range of sources used in the Australian and New Zealand news media, together with the frequency and direction of the sources, in order to comprehend the nature of journalistic routines and practises in the year preceding RAMSI. Analysing the media's use of sources can highlight whether some are relied on more than others. The level of government sourcing compared to alternative sources can identify the way the media-government relationship operates. Consideration will also be given to the use of sources during times

of key government activity to help determine if certain ‘times’ call for certain opinions. For example, when government activity occurs does the media decrease the level of non-government sources and increase Government sources? Conversely, when government activity declines, does the media instigate alternative sources? The direction of the source – e.g. is it supportive, challenging, mixed, or neutral towards government policy - is vitally important to the way media frame news stories.³⁸⁶

Sources in the Australian media

The Australian media used five types of sourced opinions in the year preceding RAMSI. These include sources from the *Australian Government*, *Opposition*, *Independent*, the *New Zealand Government*, and the *Solomon Islands Government*. The frequencies and percentage values of the media’s application of these five sources are displayed in Table 12.

Table 12: Australian Media Sourced Opinions Frequency

Source	Frequency	Percentage
Government	69	59%
Opposition Government	8	6.8%
Independent	20	17.1%
New Zealand Government	2	1.7%
Solomon Islands Government	18	15.4%
Total	117	100%

Australian Government sources were the most frequently used in the media, totalling 59% of all sources. A distant second to this was *Independent* sources at 17.1% followed by *Solomon Islands Government* sources at 15.4%. This shows that while *Government* sources were used at the highest frequency, alternative sources were also utilised. Below Table 13 illustrates the direction and frequency of the use of sources in the Australian media.

Table 13: Australian Media Sourced Opinions and Direction

Sourced Opinion	Direction				Total
	Support	Mixed	Opposition	Neutral	
Government	65%	0%	0%	35%	100%
Opposition Government	62%	25%	13%	0%	100%
Independent	25%	10%	20%	45%	100%
NZ Government	50%	0%	0%	50%	100%
Solomon Islands Government	61%	0%	11%	28%	100%

In the year preceding RAMSI the media relied heavily on *Government* sources. This is demonstrated in the frequency with which these sources were used. From July 2002 until late April

³⁸⁶ The codebook for test three’s content analysis is offered Appendix 3.

2003 the frequency of *Government* sourcing was lower than after April 2003. A large degree of *Government* sourcing appears to demonstrate a closer media - government relationship. This behaviour is not unusual as the government share information and perspectives for publicity, and the media utilise this readily available information. Yet, when there is an exceptionally high level of *Government* sourcing, as demonstrated in the Australian media, it is somewhat troubling. When the media is saturated with official *Government* sources, this encourages less demand for alternative voices. It also primes the audience to understand the crisis from the government's perspective. Such instances of saturated *Government* sourcing have the effect of reinforcing government policy and building support for it.

Test one and two argue that while there was some evidence of media indexing to political elite perspectives there are more instances of media independence. So, how does media independence occur when there is heavy *Government* sourcing? The media do apply *Government* sources at a high frequency, totalling 59% for the year. Of this 59%, one third was neutral and therefore do not support or challenge government policy. The media can select a more prominent way to frame a story, independent from government perspectives, while still using neutral government sources to provide information. For example, a *Herald Sun* article begins with “[a] team of officials will make an urgent dash to the Solomon Islands next week to pave the way for a possible Australian-led police operation”,³⁸⁷ while Downer is quoted as cautioning: “without action the Solomons could cease to exist as a functioning state.”³⁸⁸ In this way the media is seen to use *Government* sources for information, while framing the story in a ‘newsworthy’ way.

When the media source from the *Opposition* it shows them using a range of political elite sources to reflect the entire political debate. The media used *Opposition* sources at a low 6.8% of all opinions. The only period the media used *Opposition* sources was between June 12th and July 1st 2003, with the exception of July 23rd 2003 when Simon Crean offered his support for the intervention.³⁸⁹ During this 19-day period key government activity occurred. This included: the Scoping Mission conducted to make an assessment of the Solomon Islands; the Australian government indicating its willingness to intervene in the Solomon Islands if it could gain regional approval; and the New Zealand government indicating its willingness to work with Australia. Significant government activity created an opportunity for alternative perspectives in the media, and the media utilised *Opposition* sources during this time. The timing of key government actions by both Australia and New Zealand appears to have influenced the use of sources in the media. However, *Opposition* sources do not appear to have increased, or even to have appeared in the media after debates within the House. Such

³⁸⁷ McPhedran, "Solomon Crisis Threatens Region."

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

³⁸⁹ Ian McPhedran, "Aussie Spy Plans Set for Solomons Operation to Cost \$300m.," *Herald Sun*, July 23 2003.

media behaviour shows that it was not necessarily political debate that influenced the type of sources used, rather it was government activity that was more sensational than the members debating in the House. For this reason, the media do not appear to have indexed their coverage to the perspective of the political elite and this reduces the possibility of an Indexing Hypothesis. So, what does appear to be occurring? By considering the media's use of *Independent* sources we can provide a better understanding of this question.

The Australian media used *New Zealand Government* sources on two occasions, with one source opposing intervention and one supporting it. This was a very low level overall. *New Zealand Government* sources were not used in the media until New Zealand committed to the intervention on June 25th 2003. This shows that the timing of policy decisions – even if they were foreign decisions – appear to influence the level of sourcing.

The *Solomon Islands Government* was sourced on 18 occasions in the year period. During this time there were two sourced opinions that opposed the intervention and while that is not a large number, two whole stories were centred on this policy challenge. The sources that opposed the intervention came from a Solomon Islands Parliamentary member, Manasseh Sogavare.³⁹⁰ Sogavare was the only person unequivocally to oppose foreign intervention in the Solomon Islands. This highlights an interesting point about the use of sources in the media. The media provides an individual with a platform to express an opinion that may not be the opinion of others or of a dominant group. This demonstrates the ambiguity of sourcing individual opinions, as one opinion can appear more 'valuable' or to hold more 'weight' than it is actually worth. The media is viewed as a source of information for the public and therefore the public or audience may interpret one person's opinion as a dominant opinion, when it is not.

The use of *Independent* sources would suggest that the media appear to seek alternative perspectives outside of government. As *Independent* sources were the second most frequently used source, this begins to demonstrate media independence. Once the decision to intervene in the Solomon Islands was reported in the media, confirmed by government, and granted approval by the PIF, *Independent* sources notably decreased in the media whereas government sources increased. Such a finding appears to demonstrate that before the decision to intervene had been finalised the Australian media reported more independently by offering sources outside of the political elite. *Independent* sources were more challenging against intervention, indicating a reverse CNN Effect. What is more interesting is that *Independent* sources were the most critical of government policy. One possibility for this type of media behaviour is that there was little criticism within political forums on the way

³⁹⁰ Daily Telegraph, "Solomons 'on Attack'."

government was addressing the crisis, apart from frames that critiqued previous methods and therefore supported intervention. The media sought alternative perspectives that both offered a range of opinions and neutral information. It is evident that the media relied heavily on *Australian Government* sources in its coverage of the Solomon Islands during 2002 and 2003. The media and government demonstrated a closer relationship than the media and any other type of source. Nevertheless, media independence is evident during times of prevalent government activity.

When the media report autonomously, using a range of *Independent* sources, media impartiality is demonstrated. Given the level of *Government* sources in the media, there is a possibility of a CNN Effect, even if this possibility is mild. Nevertheless, in this instance, the media did not appear to be attempting to influence policy by using sources. Had journalists felt compelled to bring attention to the crisis and the government’s were handling of it, higher volumes of sources opposing government policy would have been apparent. Out of the total 117 sourced opinions, only 7 opposed government action or intervention; a very low number overall. Furthermore, the previous test shows a very low level of criticism within the political forum. For these reasons the possibility of a CNN effect having occurred decreases, since opposition or challenges to government policy did not appear to occur before government altered its policy. Test one demonstrates that it was the political elite that placed the Solomon Islands on the agenda. The media were not pushing the agenda by using *Independent* sources, but rather providing various opinions from outside the political forum. This shows that while the media relied, to a degree, on *Government* sources, it also made use of sources that reflected the debates both inside and outside the political elite.

Sources in the New Zealand media

The New Zealand media used five types of sourced opinions in the year preceding RAMSI. The types of sources were *Government*, *Opposition*, *Independent*, the *Australian Government*, and the *Solomon Islands Government*.³⁹¹ The frequencies and percentage value that the media applied across these five sources are displayed in Table 14.

Table 14: New Zealand Media Sourced Opinions Frequency

Source	Frequency	Percentage
Government	48	39%
Opposition Government	4	3.3%
Independent	18	14.6%
Australian Govt.	31	25.2%
Solomon Islands Govt.	22	17.9%
Total	123	100%

³⁹¹ The New Zealand source categories are summarized in Appendix 3.

The media used *Government* sources most frequently at 39%. While the majority of sources came from *Government*, this group does not entirely saturate the media as an additional 61% for sourced opinions come from the remaining four groups. *Government* sources are important in the media as they inform the public of significant issues, such as foreign crises and interventions. On the other hand, alternative opinions are just as important to legitimise policy. Table 15 on the following page illustrates the frequency and direction of sources in the New Zealand media.

The New Zealand media used *Australian* sources between July 2002 and May 2003. They were most heavily used during June 2003 and began to decline during July 2003. The use of *Australian* sources in the New Zealand media demonstrates that the media utilised information on the crisis from Australia when New Zealand decision-makers were in the policy formation process and little government activity was occurring. It was logical for the media to source Australia, as decisions were made in Australia before New Zealand, and Australia publicly encouraged New Zealand to join its efforts. The Solomon Islands directly approached and held discussions with Australia, and Australia indicated that it would assist the Solomons earlier than New Zealand.³⁹² Furthermore, *Australian* sources were generally supportive of direct assistance in the Solomon Islands and first pressured, then reinforced, New Zealand’s commitment for intervention. The media’s use of *Australian* sources demonstrates independence from the New Zealand elite perspective; however, these sources supported direct assistance from New Zealand.

Table 15: New Zealand Media Sourced Opinions and Direction

Sourced Opinions	Direction				Total
	Support	Mixed	Opposition	Neutral	
Government	59%	4%	0%	19%	100%
Opposition Government	25%	0%	75%	0%	100%
Independent	33%	11%	0%	56%	100%
Australian Government	77%	3%	0%	20%	100%
Solomon Islands Government	59%	0%	4%	37%	100%

New Zealand and *Australian Government* sources in the media occurred at relatively consistent levels in the two months leading up to the intervention, as this was the period both governments indicated that intervention was probable. It was also the juncture when the media’s use of *Independent* sources began to decline. *Independent* sources were the only source that remained consistent from July 2002 until May 2003. Yet, they occurred at a lower level than most of the other sources and higher than *Opposition Government* sources. The low frequency of *Independent* sources is

³⁹² On June 4th 2003, the New Zealand Herald reported that the Australian Cabinet’s National Security Council (NSC) was considering direct assistance ranging up to “full scale military intervention”. Mary-Louise O’Callaghan, "Howard Holds Urgent Talks with Solomons PM," *New Zealand Herald*, June 4 2003.

interesting, as it has been argued that *Independent* or 'expert' sources, such as academics, think tanks, and NGO's, are often thought to exhibit less bias than sources from government, and legitimise news stories and perspectives.³⁹³ Yet, the high use of foreign sources, particularly *Australian* sources, reduces the demand for the media to use sources outside of the New Zealand elite.

Opposition sources occurred at a staggeringly low level. Of the four sourced opinions in the media, one supported government policy and three opposed it. This is a high level of opposition from one group. The *Opposition* were sourced once, on June 30th 2003, the day of the PIF meeting, and again on July 16th 2003. *Opposition* sources were used at a surprisingly low level after the important July 1st Parliamentary debate. The *Opposition* represents a large portion of New Zealand society and its role is to challenge government on important issues. By ignoring the opinions of the *Opposition*, the media is failing to fulfil its democratic duty to represent the range of views within society. This is an example of how the media can control information in the news and as a result can include, or in this case exclude, particular opinions.³⁹⁴ When the media use very low levels of *Opposition* sources, this offers two possibilities to the media's behaviour. On the one hand, it could indicate that the media utilise its relationship with the government (executive) more so than the entire political debate. Alternatively, it could indicate that the media did not reflect the political forum, as it was limited. Therefore, the media used alternative sources from outside the New Zealand political elite to gather information and perspectives. Looking at the media's use of sources during times of key government activity begins to clarify what best explains the media-government relationship.

Following a number of government actions the media sourced a range of perspectives. The day after Australia and New Zealand announced military intervention it appears likely that the media used *Government*, *Independent*, and *Australian Government* sources. Another key government action that appeared to increase sourcing from the *Opposition* was the government's official announcement it would contribute to the regional intervention on July 15th 2003.³⁹⁵ The following day the media used *Government*, *Opposition*, and *Independent* sources. After key government actions such as the Parliamentary debate on July 1st 2003 that confirmed some dissent within the political elite, the media failed to source alternative perspectives other than those of government. When dissent within the political elite became apparent in the July 1st 2003 Parliamentary debate, the media failed to report this and instead increased *Government* sourcing. It appears that the media overlooked the perspectives of the *Opposition* during this time, and focused on the escalating law and order situation within the

³⁹³ John Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992). In Althaus et al., "Revising the Indexing Hypothesis: Officials, Media, and the Libya Crisis," 29. 29.

³⁹⁴ Pamela J Shoemaker and Tim P Vos, "Media Gatekeeping," in *An Intergrated Approach to Communication Theory and Research*, ed. Don W. Stacks and Michael Brian Salwen (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2009), 75-76.

³⁹⁵ Goff, "NZ Assistance to Solomon Islands Government."

Solomons, frequently sourcing from the *Solomon Islands Government*. The emerging dissent within the political elite compared to the use of sources in the media, shows that the media did not regularly index its coverage to the debates within political forums, and was more inclined to mirror government perspectives. When no, or low, levels of government activity occurred the media were more inclined to offer alternative perspectives.

The elite forum debate was limited, with four of the five Parliamentary debates, after the decision to intervene had been established. The media used *Opposition* sources in low frequencies. However, the direction of the sources reflected the Parliamentary debate by highlighting critiques to the intervention. *New Zealand* and *Australian Government* sources were most relied on in the New Zealand media. The limited political elite debate could also contribute to the explanation of the media frequently using *Australian* and *Solomon Islands* sources, which were not always supportive and, in many cases, were used for informative purposes by presenting neutral facts.

The use of foreign government sources (Australian and Solomon Islands) could also demonstrate media independence from the perspectives of the political elite. The media were moving beyond the executive debate by sourcing information from alternative sources. The findings hitherto are not sufficiently substantial to indicate the presence of an Indexing Hypothesis and indicate a close media-government relationship, with instances of media independence. This does not indicate the presence of a CNN Effect however; if this were the case there would be higher levels of sources challenging government in order to gain policy attention.

The media's use of sources compared to test two's findings gives greater understanding of the New Zealand media's behaviour when reporting foreign intervention. The media predominantly framed the solutions to the crisis as *Intervention* or *Armed Intervention*, while government conducted a balanced debate over the range of solutions. Parliament also used the *Intervention* frame most frequently, although the political elite debate occurred after government indicated intervention was probable. So it must be asked, why did the media frame the solutions in a closer narrative to Parliament than to government, while sourcing more from government than Parliament? It appears that while the government did not use the *Intervention* frame most frequently, it did discuss this as an option to the crisis, and the media used these instances for direct quotes. Government actions produced more information that was readily available, and this information occurred in a greater volume than alternative sources. Thus, the media had a ready flow of information to source from. Test two also posits that the New Zealand media appeared to report the most dramatic response option, and could therefore select quotes that better framed *Intervention* as being the most appropriate response option. The media's use of sensational frames could also begin to explain the high frequency of *Australian Government* sources. Australia indicated it would assist the Solomon Islands in a comprehensive

military intervention in mid June 2003, and the media used *Australian Government* sources most frequently throughout June. The media went to where current information originated, rather than relying solely on the perspectives of the New Zealand political elite, whilst independently selecting the narrative in which to frame possible solutions.

Comparing Australian and New Zealand Media Sourcing

Australia and New Zealand predominantly used five categories of sources, yet the levels of each varied considerably. The percentage of the Australian and New Zealand media’s use of sources is compared below in Table 16. While *Government* sources were the most heavily used in corresponding media, the *Australian Government* was sourced more frequently than the New Zealand government. The New Zealand media used *Australian Government* sources at a much higher level than the Australian media used the *New Zealand Government* sources. As Australian policy decision-making took place before New Zealand, it appears to have impacted on the use of foreign sources.

Table 16: Comparing Australian and New Zealand Media’s Sourced Opinions

Source	AUS %	NZ %
Government	59%	39%
Opposition Government	6.8%	3.3%
Independent	17.1%	14.6%
Corresponding Government	NZ = 1.7%	AUS = 25.2%
Solomon Islands Govt.	15.4%	17.9%
Total	100%	100%

Returning to the research question for this section: how and to what degree were various sources used in the media when covering the Solomon Islands crisis and subsequent intervention? Test three reveals some interesting findings. The Australian case indicates the media utilised its relationship with *Government* when sourcing opinions and information on the crisis. This is demonstrated by the high level at which *Government* was sourced in the media, compared to the low level non-government opinions were sourced. Consequently, the degree of opposition towards government’s direct involvement was marginalised and, in turn, allowed those government perspectives and opinions that supported direct involvement to take centre stage.

The New Zealand media similarly sourced *Government* more often than any other source, although the *Australian Government* was sourced at a higher level than that at which the Australian media sourced the *New Zealand Government*. As both governments were sourced with generally supportive opinions and no opposition to direct involvement, they mutually reinforced the perspective of the political elite within New Zealand. The use of *Opposition* sources supports this. The *Opposition*

in each country was sourced at the lowest frequency levels by both countries' media, although the New Zealand media used it at an extremely low level of 3.3% compared to 6.8% in the Australian media.

The media of both countries relied heavily on *Government* sources, more so than any other source. This was more evident in the Australian media than the New Zealand media. On the other hand, the New Zealand media sourced a greater level of *Australian Government* sources than the Australian media sourced the *New Zealand Government*. Key government actions often prompt the media to source government opinions and perspectives. Australia is the largest nation in the Pacific in terms of size and wealth, and power-relations in the Pacific regions, and this has appeared to play out in the media. Australia declared its commitment of intervening in the Solomon Islands before New Zealand, and the New Zealand media reported the significance of this decision, knowing this could affect decision-makers. Thus, Australian sources were utilised in the New Zealand media. These main findings demonstrate that at times the media-government relationship operates closely, by using government sources to present current information. Nevertheless, there are instances of media independence, where the media do not have to use *Governments* sources, and gather information and perspective from those outside the political arena.

Test Four: Critical Perspectives in the Media – Correlation or Marginalization?

Democracy demands that journalists offer independent, objective, and balanced opinions.³⁹⁶ However, when it comes to reporting issues that have had little or no debate within political forums due to bipartisan support, maintaining the appearance of balanced journalism becomes difficult. In such circumstances the media are more likely to report the 'execution and outcome' of a policy, rather than 'wisdom and justification'.³⁹⁷ In these instances, and using the US as an example, Mermin argues that "[w]hen there is no policy debate in Washington, reporters offer critical analysis *inside the terms of Washington consensus*, finding a critical angle in the possibility that existing policy, on its own terms, might not work."³⁹⁸ Media criticism is centred on the "ability of the government to achieve the goals it has set."³⁹⁹ This shows why investigating critical perspectives in the media are imperative to the evaluation of the media-government relationship. This phenomenon is evident in both Australian and New Zealand reportage of the Solomon Islands crisis and intervention in 2003.

The Australian and New Zealand Parliaments did not thoroughly debate the Solomon Islands crisis until after each government had indicated its willingness to provide direct assistance. When

³⁹⁶ Hallin, *The "Uncensored War": The Media and Vietnam*, 68.

³⁹⁷ Mermin, *Debating War and Peace: Media Coverage of U.S. Intervention in the Post-Vietnam Era*, 9.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

³⁹⁹ Jonathan Mermin, "Conflict in the Sphere of Concensus? Critical Reporting on the Panama Invasion and the Gulf War," *Political Communication* 13, no. (1996): 181-194.

debates finally did take place, each Parliament declared bipartisan support; however, there were low levels of criticism in the New Zealand government regarding the size of the taskforce (execution). The near unanimous support within each Parliament highlights the importance of origin and frequency of critical perspective published in the media, compared to that of the political elite. This section operates around Mermin’s guiding principle to test an Indexing Hypothesis, as discussed in Chapter 2 and 4: “critical perspectives do not just increase from a reasonable baseline in the news when there is debate in Washington, but instead are ignored or marginalized in the news if not first expressed in Washington.”⁴⁰⁰ To identify if the media independently report critical perspectives, or if they index these to the opinions of the political elite, critical perspectives in the news are analysed to identify the origin of these perspectives.

It is routine for the issues raised by government to make news. This explains why the media tend to use government sources. Critical perspectives that first arise in the media when there is consensus within the elite, makes for interesting analysis. This section considers the relevance of origin and frequency of critical perspectives, compared to those in the elite forum. A descriptive analysis of tone and character of media reporting also requires consideration in order to best clarify critical perspectives. Table 17 on the following page presents the number and percentage of critical, supportive, neutral, and mixed paragraphs that occurred in the Australian and New Zealand media during the year period leading up to RAMSI in July 2003.

Table 17: Critical Paragraphs within the Media

Paragraph Direction	Australia		New Zealand	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Critical	13	1.6%	15	1.5%
Supportive	139	17.5%	104	10.3%
Neutral	623	78%	864	86%
Mixed	23	2.9%	23	2.2%
Total	798	100%	1001	100%

The number of paragraphs in all media articles that referred to the crisis equates to the total paragraphs. Within the total paragraphs the number of critical, supportive, neutral, and mixed paragraphs are identified.⁴⁰¹ For a paragraph to be considered critical it must oppose government policy. Thus, a statement that has mixed (supportive and critical) opinions is not considered critical in this case.

The Significance of Critical Perspective in the Australian Media

⁴⁰⁰ Mermin, *Debating War and Peace: Media Coverage of U.S. Intervention in the Post-Vietnam Era*, 5.

⁴⁰¹ The direction categories – Support, Critical, Mixed, and Neutral - are also outlined in Appendix 3.

In the year leading up to RAMSI the Australian media published five different critical perspectives paragraph categories. The critical perspectives are published in 13 paragraphs, out of a total of 798.⁴⁰² Therefore, critical paragraphs in Australian newspapers represented 1.6% of all paragraphs, a relatively low level. Previous studies on other interventions reveal that during times of Washington conflict, when there is a divide within the house over government policy, higher levels of critical perspectives, between 7 - 16.9%, occur.⁴⁰³ During times of Washington consensus (bipartisan support) lower levels of critical perspectives, between 1.6 - 3.2%, are revealed.⁴⁰⁴ This demonstrates that the low level of critical perspectives in Australian media is routine.

The first critical perspective towards Australian policy was directed at the former aid policy, rather than the armed intervention policy. Nonetheless, the critical perspective that implied *Aid is Ineffective* in addressing the Solomon Islands issues was raised in Parliament as early as September 2002 and again on May 12th 2003. The media engaged the same critical perspective on May 19th 2003, after Parliament first expressed it. The similarities between the media, government, and Parliament depart here.

As test two demonstrates, problem frames (justification) for direct Australian assistance in the Solomon Islands were offered within a similar debate by the media, government, and Parliament. Law and order in the Solomon Islands began deteriorating in 2002 and early 2003, threatening the Australian national interest. The legal critique of Australian intervention was limited as the PIF granted approval citing the Biketawa Declaration, and the Solomon Islands National Government legally invited regional assistance. Nevertheless, there were three critical perspectives offered by the Australian media, but not articulated by the Australian political elite. These included the *Lack of public debate*, *Inflame situation*, and *Re-colonise and control* frames. The media's use of these three frames reveals that the media reported perspectives outside of government, and most significantly outside of Parliamentary debate.

The first and most predominantly used critique by the media that was not articulated by the political elite was the claim, on June 12th 2003, that armed intervention was a move to *Re-colonise and Control* the Solomon Islands. This critical perspective suggested Australian policy embraced 'neo-colonial goals' rather than indicating dissent within the political elite.⁴⁰⁵ However, the media claimed that, while the intervention could be perceived in this light, the request for assistance was initiated by the Solomon Islands rather than by Australia or New Zealand. Therefore, it was the 'lesser of two

⁴⁰² Due to the way Factiva structured its articles a paragraph is defined as one to five sentences clustered together which is the same structure as the New Zealand newspaper articles.

⁴⁰³ Mermin, *Debating War and Peace: Media Coverage of U.S. Intervention in the Post-Vietnam Era*, 101.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 101.

⁴⁰⁵ Sydney Morning Herald, "Solomons Solution of Last Resort," *Sydney Morning Herald*, June 12 2003.

evils'.⁴⁰⁶ The media positioned critical frames within supportive frames as justification for intervention within legal boundaries and regional obligations. Thus, the media published frames generally supporting Australian government action. The ratio of critical to supportive frames was 1:11 and the ratio of critical to neutral frames was 1:49. This shows that the media used a relatively low level of critical perspectives towards government policy while covering the Solomon Islands crisis. The media were generally reporting neutral perspectives, followed by supportive, however, they moved beyond the debate of the political elite by presenting alternative critical perspectives and reporting independently.

An additional example of the media using a critical perspective from outside elite debate is found in an opinion piece in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on July 7th 2003.⁴⁰⁷ In this article, Honiara's Catholic Archbishop Adrian Smith, argued that intervention in the Solomon Islands could *Inflame the Situation* and possibly turn the crisis into a downward spiral of turmoil.⁴⁰⁸ However, as the article progressed, Smith stated that the urgent nature of affairs in the Solomons required foreign intervention, although extreme caution was needed. This is the only instance where the *Inflame the Situation* perspective was expressed. This was an opinion piece and shows that media reportage of a critical perspective within a supportive frame was not the result of indexing to the political elite, but part of the general debate on the crisis.

Following Smith's July 7th opinion piece, the media published four stories, three of which contained significant critical content. Of the 13 critical statements voiced in the Australian media over the year period, five occurred on July 10th 2003. The five paragraphs all claimed armed intervention was a move to *Re-colonise and Control* the Solomons, the highest number of critical perspectives on any one-day. These five critical perspective paragraphs came from an Australian left wing socialist group. The group were publicly pressuring Australia to withdraw intervention commitments by claiming that such a move was in the business interests of Australia, rather than from a security or moral standing.⁴⁰⁹ This article could be seen as an example of the media seeking balanced opinions towards government policy, when little debate within the political elite is conducted. However, in this case it appears this critical perspective was indeed worthy of media attention as the article followed a march on the Department of Foreign Affairs in protest of government policy.

The critical perspectives in the media depart from the perspectives expressed in the elite forum debates; however, the tone of these critical perspectives is often framed alongside more dominant counter frames, which lessen the significance of the critique. The media appear to present

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁷ Smith, "Islanders Need Help to Move to Peace."

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁹ Ralph, "Marchers - Leave Solomons Alone."

critical frames outside those expressed by the political elite, and so demonstrate a degree of media independence from the political elite debate. Consensus within the political forum over armed intervention in the Solomon Islands indicates why these three frames occur at such low levels in the media. Had the media mirrored its coverage to the political elite then media content would have imitated the critical perspectives of the political elite; and therefore would have placed greater attention on the *Should have acted sooner* and *Aid is ineffective* frames. This does not appear to have occurred.

Overall, the possibility of the media indexing its critical perspectives to the political elite is limited and indicates greater media independence. However, it appears the media's goal was not to undermine or contest government policy, but rather present debates around the intervention, regardless how limited some of them may have been. This is commensurate with the evidence from test two that supports media independence when critiquing government policy, and that appears to reduce the chance of media indexing to the perspectives of the political elite. Had the media been indexing its coverage, the media would have offered few critical perspectives in line with the political elite. While test two argues that the media offer more sensational responses to a crisis, such as *Armed Intervention* frames, the critique for such a response is not limited to the political elite. While the media-government relationship does reveal some overlap, overall the Australian media do at times look beyond the political elite for alternative perspectives.

The Significance of Critical Perspectives in the New Zealand Media

New Zealand Parliamentary members claimed to be unanimously united over intervention, as expressed by opposition government member Dr Wayne Mapp: "it is a rare occasion when the entire House – certainly, it must be a first time in my experience – supports a deployment. Not a single party has said that this deployment should not take place."⁴¹⁰ However, members of the Opposition were the first to express critical perspectives towards the execution and outcome of government policy, with similar critical media coverage following this. The New Zealand media published 15 critical paragraphs towards government in the year leading up to RAMSI, representing 1.5% of all paragraphs. As discussed in the Australian case, this level of critical perspectives is reasonable when there is bipartisan support for intervention.⁴¹¹ An analysis of tone and character identifies the differences between media content and the critical perspectives in Parliament.

Critical paragraphs in the media were used throughout July 2003, following an extensive Parliamentary debate on July 1st 2003. The debate was one of two where the government conducted critical perspectives. These included seven different critical perspective categories totalling 15 critical

⁴¹⁰ New Zealand, "Question for Oral Answer - Questions to Minister: Solomon Islands - Police."

⁴¹¹ Mermin, *Debating War and Peace: Media Coverage of U.S. Intervention in the Post-Vietnam Era*, 101.

paragraphs. While critical perspective in the media appeared to follow Parliamentary debate, the origin of these appeared to come from a range of sources, including a number from sources independent of the political elite.

The media focused its critical attention on whether the policy was likely to work (execution and outcome) rather than justifying why the previous policy did not work, which was defined in the *Should have acted sooner* and *Aid is Ineffective* frames. The media first offered critical perspectives following the July 1st Parliamentary debate and the perspectives varied over four days and eight media articles. In eight of the 15 critical paragraphs published in the media, they were followed with more neutral opinions that altered the salience of the media article. This is not surprising as the ratio of critical to neutral paragraphs is 1:58. An example of how critical perspectives were published alongside more neutral statements comes from the first critical perspectives that occurred on July 9th 2003. The article opened with, "Foreign Affairs Minister Phil Goff has acknowledged a risk of New Zealand and Australian forces alienating the Solomon Islands if their job restoring order drags on too long."⁴¹² This was followed with a quote from Goff: "That's why we're not macho about it, we're not gung-ho about it, we're not rushing in."⁴¹³ The media published the impending intervention using similar critical perspectives expressed within the political forum. This differed from the far more measured and reserved way in which the government were describing the situation and its approach. Here the media appear to be reporting different sides of the debate within the norm of objective journalism.

The level of critical perspectives in the media is relatively low compared to the total number of supportive paragraphs addressing the Solomon Islands crisis, with a ratio of 1:7. The critical perspectives that did arise in the media were not only similar to the critical perspectives made by the political elite, but were also primarily published within content which supported the intervention.

In the 7 media articles offering critical perspectives, the perspectives originated from a variety of sources, including *Government*, *Opposition*, *Foreign Governments*, and *Independent* sources.⁴¹⁴ Goff expressed a number of concerns as late as July 9th, although he was not the sole critic. A PNG minister, as well as one Solomon Islands minister and an independent defence expert, also critiqued the impending intervention.⁴¹⁵ The critiques used in the media were similar to the political elite debate. However, the media independently sought perspectives that challenged government policy from non-government sources. Australian Strategic Policy Institute member, Aldo Borgu, argued "[e]veryone is

⁴¹² Watkins, "Solomons Concern Minister."

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ The source categories are the same as those in Test Three of this chapter.

⁴¹⁵ Tunnah, "Honiara to Vote on Army Help."; Watkins, "Solomons Concern Minister."; ———, "Goff Admits to Solomons Risk."

concerned about getting bogged down in the operation, because once the troops are there it's going to be a lot more difficult to withdraw them."⁴¹⁶ In the July 1st debate the political elite expressed this same perspective. However, the main focus of the elite debate was on the impact the intervention would have on the domestic police force. Additionally, the media reported PNG's warning to Australia that "any heavy-handed approach would alienate Pacific neighbours, jeopardising support for any intervention."⁴¹⁷ While the political elite debate covered a range of issues, the media were not confined to only the elite perspective, and possibly published alternative sources as a way to demonstrate the legitimacy of the elite debate.

Test two demonstrates inconsistencies between the media and Parliament in the way they critiqued government policy. While there were similarities in the range of frames applied by the media, government, and Parliament, there was a delay of up to two weeks between Parliamentary debates and these issues being published in media coverage. The government were more measured in offering detailed information to the media, whereas the media published a range of perspectives on the intervention. This supports the findings from test two, which argues that, while there were some similarities in the way government was critiqued the media were more independent in finding perspectives outside of government.

The media do not appear to have published challenges to government prior to Parliament debating the crisis. From a theoretical standpoint the findings begin to reduce the occurrence of a CNN Effect, as the media do not push for policy attention or place the crisis on the agenda. It is the political elite that appears to do both these things, in addition to offering critiques to government action and inaction prior to media coverage. While many of the perspectives appear to be initially expressed within political forums, the media do not appear to have directly indexed critical perspectives to those of the political elite. There was delayed timing in the media's use of these perspectives. Government actions did not directly initiate critical media coverage; it took public debates to press for a more comprehensive media story. This is evident in the media's use of critical perspectives independent from the political forum, which demonstrates the debates taking place in the public sphere. Such media coverage demonstrates greater media independence in its critical reporting of governments handling of the Solomon Island's crisis. While the media do use government sources, these do not appear to concentrate the media coverage, nor do they appear identical in media coverage.

⁴¹⁶ New Zealand Herald, "Caution on Solomons," *New Zealand Herald*, July 16 2003.

⁴¹⁷ Tunnah, "Honiara to Vote on Army Help."

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This research set out to analyse the extent to which the Australian and New Zealand print media led, challenged, or followed government agendas and framing in the year prior to the 2003 RAMSI intervention. To demonstrate the media-government relationship, the Indexing Hypothesis, CNN Effect, and related theories and their operationalization were investigated. For an Indexing Hypothesis to occur, the media index coverage to the perspectives of the political elite. This results from the interaction and information sharing procedures between the media and political elite. Indexing could be described as a ‘mirror effect’ between media and government frames. To demonstrate an Indexing Hypothesis, there must be a high degree of similarity in the range of debate utilised by both media and government, as well as a high level of political elite sourcing by the media. On the other hand, a CNN Effect would show the media itself placing the crisis on the political agenda, ‘pushing for’ or urging policy attention; media coverage in such circumstances would precede political activity. A CNN Effect requires the media to either influence the political agenda or challenge the perspectives of the political elite with emotive framing, compelling audiences and political actors to act.

Addressing limitations within the current media-government literature

This research has attempted to address the limitations of previous research, by including the use of foreign sources, finding a way to compare critical debates, and comprehensively analysing the entire range of debate. The investigation of sources in previous media-government literature focused on particular aspects of sources in the media such as the frequency and direction of sources,⁴¹⁸ the significance of foreign sources,⁴¹⁹ and the significance of critical sources.⁴²⁰ This research has combined each of these areas for a more comprehensive approach to examining sourcing in the Australian and New Zealand media.

Within current media-government literature the significance of elite dissensus and policy uncertainty of a potential CNN Effect is noted.⁴²¹ The ambiguity of these factors however, makes them difficult to identify, and problematic to measure or demonstrate. While this research does not attempt to measure elite dissensus, it does draw similarities in the range of critical debate used by media and the political elite to establish the media-government relationship. In doing so, a link is drawn between the level and type of criticism towards government in the media and political forums.

⁴¹⁸ Bennett, "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States."

⁴¹⁹ Althaus, "When New Norms Collide, Follow the Lead: New Evidence for Press Independence."

⁴²⁰ Mermin, *Debating War and Peace: Media Coverage of U.S. Intervention in the Post-Vietnam Era*.

⁴²¹ Robinson, *The CNN Effect: The Myth of News, Foreign Policy and Intervention*, 25-32.

While this study employs and amalgamates elements from different approaches for a more systematic method, it has its own limitations. Investigating the media beyond print to include televised or online publications, and considering the stages after the deployment of troops, could have allowed for a more diverse and deeper investigation. While comparing the Australian and New Zealand media-government relationship has been useful to understand reporting in the South Pacific, more than one case study of a Pacific crises could assist testing the validity of the research, such as Australian and New Zealand involvement in the Bougainville or the UN-led deployment to East Timor. Additionally, the investigation of various types of crises in the Pacific, such as PNGs fight for autonomy, could develop a better understanding of media-government relations related to foreign policy issues. On a methodological level, this research has not systematically addressed the on-going issue of measuring consensus or dissent of the political elite or policy certainty. While this was not an issue this thesis attempted to address, it remains a fruitful area for future research.

The media-government relationship in Australia and New Zealand

What do the findings from the four tests tell us about this study's research questions regarding the media-government relationship in Australia and New Zealand? The time-sequence of Australian and New Zealand media coverage and government actions reveals a clear pattern in which political elite activity precedes print media coverage. Both the Australian and New Zealand print news media appeared to follow the issues focused on by their respective governments in the year before RAMSI, as illustrated by the timing of media coverage. Media coverage followed the presentation of government communiqués employing similar narratives and media volume tended to follow increased government activity on the issue.

The findings from the four tests used in this research identify similar instances and circumstances of Australian and New Zealand media indexing content to the opinions of the political elite (with some exceptions), when addressing the 2002/2003 Solomon Islands crisis. The news media have been shown to index stories 'implicitly' to the spectrum of debate, first articulated within the political forums.⁴²² To demonstrate Indexing, the political elite must be seen to lead the media in addressing the crisis. By doing so, they set the range of debate that the media subsequently follow. Before the political elite placed the crisis on the agenda in mid-2003, the media infrequently paid the crisis low levels of attention only after government acknowledged rising problems.

While the media followed government activity in terms of timing, the narrative on many occasions appeared to be independent of the political elite. This independence was greater than the Indexing Hypothesis in previous studies in the US indicate. It shows that the media used government

⁴²² Bennett, "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States."

as an indicator of newsworthy topics, yet often independently used frames that are more sensational than those used by government and Parliament. Media independence was also evident in their use of critical perspectives, again selecting voices with more dramatic positions.

The Australian Debate

The Australian media, government, and Parliament appeared to justify Australian involvement in the Solomon Islands within similar frames. Conversely, the three groups appear to behave differently in the way the solutions are discussed, and in the range of critiques offered. The government tended to be far more cautious in presenting ideas to the media and public by taking the time to gauge possible options, whereas the media present more sensational response options. The media were quick to adopt military intervention as a possible response, following government's indication that this option would be placed on the agenda; although the media used this frame at much higher frequency than government. Following this, the media presented frames that supported an intervention at a greater ratio than government or Parliament.

Most striking however, were the numbers of critiques towards the government in the Australian media that were not articulated within elite forums, signalling media independence in the way the crisis was published. Media independence was also evident in the source of the critical perspectives. There were two frames - being the *Should Have Acted Sooner* and *Aid is Ineffective* frames - that the media, government, and Parliament all used; however, the media reported alternative critical perspectives outside the political elite debate. The media appear to have used the government as a cue for newsworthy issues, yet the media move beyond the political debate, signifying media independence in a number of instances.

In comparison to US research, Bennett's study of Times reporting of the Nicaragua crisis showed only 15% of sources outside of the political elite,⁴²³ whereas the Australian media in this study offered 34% of sources outside of the political elite. Furthermore, much government sourcing presented neutral tones regarding the crisis, offering relevant information rather than an overtly political one. This media behaviour shows that, while the media still sourced the government, they also sought alternative perspectives for a vigorous debate on the issue.

While the political elite were in the policy formation process and before any decision had been finalised, the media published more sources independent of the government. The media appear to have acted independently and utilised a range of sources to ensure a range of perspectives on the crisis. Once commitment to the intervention was declared, the media began increasing the use of government

⁴²³ Ibid.

sources, and utilised a closer media-government relationship. The media typically sought credible sources, and the government was one of the most reliable, up-to-date sources of information on political activity. By putting faith in the government and using them as a source of information, the media build a symbiotic relationship. If the media had continued to present alternative perspectives from outside government after policy had been finalised and that challenged the official position, this would suggest that they were challenging the government. By challenging the government, the media may have undermined their relationship, which would make the government possibly less inclined to share information in the future. This does not appear to have occurred.

The media do not appear to have pushed for a different policy or policy change, which excludes the likelihood of a CNN Effect. While the media demonstrated much independent framing, using sources outside of the elite, the possibility of a CNN Effect in Australia becomes less likely when assessing the findings with existing theories on a CNN Effect. One typology of the CNN Effect requires the media to place a new issue or crisis on the agenda and push for greater policy attention (termed the agenda setting effect). However, the media appear to have reported on the Solomon Islands crisis because it was already on the political agenda. Government action initiated media coverage. Additionally, Robinson's strong effect argues that not only do the media have to place the crisis on the agenda but also that they can influence government policy during debates on possible response options.⁴²⁴ The systematic analysis of media content and narratives compared to government's reveals that the media stayed within the debate set by the political elite, although, the media did use more sensational frames such as *Armed Intervention*. They did this by using such frames at a much higher frequency than government even though government used them first. This occurred in both the way the government could respond to the crisis, as well as critiquing possible response options. Nevertheless, a strong effect does not appear to have occurred, as the media were not pushing for a particular response and remained within the range of debate set by government. Media independence appears to occur as the media dramatizes frames by presenting them more frequently and in more sensational ways than government. Most importantly however, is the fact that the media do not use sympathetic or emotionally moving frames; which is a prerequisite of a CNN Effect based on previous research.⁴²⁵ The media could have victimised the Solomon Islands people in an attempt to gain public attention and 'push' for intervention. However, this was not the case as the government were the agents who placed the crisis on the agenda and set the event in motion for intervention.

The New Zealand Debate

⁴²⁴ Robinson, "The CNN Effect: Can the News Media Drive Foreign Policy?," 38.

⁴²⁵ Robinson, *The CNN Effect: The Myth of News, Foreign Policy and Intervention*, 137-139; Shaw, *Civil Society and Media in Global Crises: Representing Distant Violence*, 110-118.

The possibility of a CNN Effect in New Zealand is also eliminated, as government activity preceded media coverage. Following key government activities, media coverage notably increased in volume. This indicates that New Zealand government actions influenced the timing of media coverage. The political elite brought the crisis to the attention of the media, and the media used these actions as a cue for newsworthy topics. Furthermore, like Australia the media avoided using *Humanitarian* frames outside a few cases. The media framed the crisis as a humanitarian issue at similar levels to government and Parliament - around 5% of all the problem frames. This indicates that the media were not pushing for a response, as seen in other CNN Effect research.

In terms of the entire range of debate, there are both similarities and differences in the way media content and government activities are framed. On the one hand, the New Zealand media appeared to index its coverage to the political elite when defining the problems of the Solomon Islands crisis. There was some degree of similarity between the media and Parliament in the way the entire debate was framed. Both the media and Parliament appear to have used the Intervention and Armed Intervention frames frequently, although Parliamentary debate took shape after the government indicated it would contribute to the intervention. On the other hand, there are more instances where the media's solution and critical perspectives vary from both the government and Parliament. The differences in media, government, and Parliament debates indicate that the media did not index its coverage to the political elite. Rather the media appear to have used the debate as a cue and only then, like Australia, applied more sensational frames at greater frequencies.

The New Zealand media appear to have used government frames but these references were often not reported in the media until over two weeks after government had used them, indicating a lack of urgency or priority regarding the story. When coverage occurred the media selected more sensational solution options and used these at higher frequencies than the government's more moderated approach. Both the range of debate and critical perspectives assessed demonstrate that while the media and government stayed within a similar range of debate on the crisis, the media sourced these primarily from outside the political elite. In these instances, Independent sources critiqued government policy, rather than the media reflecting dissent from within the elite forum.

The New Zealand Government was sourced most frequently in the media, although this was not an overwhelming large number (39%) compared to the Australian media's use of government sources (59%). The New Zealand media used government sources to gather information on the crisis and to gauge government's intentions with respect to the crisis. However, when key government activity occurred, such as the official statement confirming New Zealand contribution to RAMSI, the media followed this using a range of sources from within and outside the political elite. Furthermore, the use of Australian sources was staggeringly high, which further indicates a degree of media

independence as the media sought alternative views beyond those of the national political elite. The timing of Australian government actions appears to have either directly or indirectly affected New Zealand media reportage. This was particularly evident during June and July 2003. The reoccurrence of Australian government activity the media sourcing reveals that while the media did appear to follow the New Zealand government's agenda, the actions of the Australian government also shaped media agenda. Often, Australian government decisions were made before New Zealand, influencing New Zealand media coverage, although this does not appear to have pressured the New Zealand government to react.

The use of critical perspectives in the New Zealand media vaguely related to the critical perspectives of the political elite, yet the media also used independent sources when presenting critical perspectives. Similarly, the Australian media independently sought critical perspectives towards government, as the political debate was limited in terms of critiquing policy options. Australian government decisions' relating to the Solomon Islands preceded New Zealand debates and decisions, and seemed to clearly influence New Zealand media content. The New Zealand media relied heavily on Australian sources, more so than the Australian media on New Zealand government sources, which referred to New Zealand infrequently. The findings relating to foreign sources in the media have proven to be fundamental when establishing the media-government relationship in Australian and New Zealand.

Contributions to the Broader Theoretical Debate

In terms of the broader theoretical debate, this research extends Indexing Hypothesis and CNN Effect research by highlighting the interaction of power and media outside the United States in the Pacific Region. In an increasingly globalised world, it is surprising how little the media-government literature has considered this relationship empirically on other settings.

According to Althaus, examining foreign sources within media content is necessary to understand political debates.⁴²⁶ The way in which New Zealand media sought information from Australian sources reveals a new dimension to the media-government relationship and reporting behaviour. When a middle power like New Zealand seeks sources from a more dominant power, such as Australia it is showing appreciation for its regional/international power relations in a way that would not appear within a superpower (USA) domestic media structure. The New Zealand media-government relationship appears to be more limited when a larger power is present. The media appear to consider the wider power relations and legitimate players on foreign policy issues. This shows that the media's presentation of power relations also works in reverse; a more dominant power is less

⁴²⁶ Althaus, "When New Norms Collide, Follow the Lead: New Evidence for Press Independence."

likely to consider smaller powers in its media coverage or government activity. As Australia is a larger power, the local media show less interest in New Zealand government activity or media coverage than the other way around. This reveals that when governments are making foreign policy decisions that relate to other nations, the power position of that nation relative to the others, influences the media-government relationship.

The fact that the New Zealand media and possibly the government, sought information from Australia presents something quite interesting about reporting behaviour in the South Pacific region that may have wider international implications. As the media go to the most powerful source rather necessarily the local source, this has the effect of diminishing the local media-government relationship. As New Zealand follows Australia in terms of power relations in the Pacific and the international arena, it is possible that the local media-government relationship will almost always contract when foreign policy issues are on the media and government agendas especially when that issue involves a greater regional or international power. Chapter three demonstrates that in terms of foreign policy, New Zealand does not always follow Australia. This indicates that when New Zealand is engaged in regional foreign policy issues in which Australia is also involved, the media will rely on Australian perspectives. As a result, the New Zealand media reinforce the power relationship. However, it is likely that the New Zealand media will act cautiously when presenting Australian perspectives, as they may not want to jeopardise the New Zealand government as a reliable source. Foreign policy issues outside of the region may also see New Zealand influenced by other strong middle or super powers, if the findings of this study are indicative.

It appears that the Australian media are less concerned about presenting a smaller power perspective, such as New Zealand. If power relations play out in a natural order, (where a more powerful nation influences the less powerful nation's media coverage and government actions) then we would expect that when a more powerful nation is involved with Australia in addressing a foreign crisis, that nation's perspective is likely to be reflected in the Australian media. For example, had the US been involved in assisting in the Solomon Islands, given its super-power status, its perspectives would likely show up more frequently in the Australian media. Until such circumstances arise however, the Australian media are likely to rely on local political and alternative perspectives to shape the local debate on foreign policy. Thus, as a regional leader, Australia is likely to dominate regional foreign policy debates.

In theory, the media's role is to act as the Fourth Estate to question government officials and provide a comprehensive debate on issues for the public. In this sense, the media's ability to report alternative perspectives and the actions of neighbouring governments is critical to fulfilling its

democratic duty. The less attention the media pay to neighbouring countries, the more limited foreign policy debate will be.

Another general finding that provides greater insight on the media-government relationship and the broader theoretical debate is the way the media stayed within the range of debate set by the political elite, but used frames at different frequencies than government or Parliament. Bennett argues “news is ‘indexed’ implicitly to the range and dynamic of government debate.”⁴²⁷ With this in mind, the media in Australia and New Zealand generally stayed within the spectrum of debate set by the political elite during the Solomon Islands crisis, while sensationalising certain frames. The media’s capacity to sensationalise issues also demonstrated media independence from the political elite to some degree.

The Australian and New Zealand media’s frequent use of sensational frames that presented intervention as a ‘fitting’ response option appears to have supported their respective governments’ decision to intervene; particularly as the New Zealand government was somewhat hesitant to go down this path. It does not appear that the media were urging the government to intervene, but rather, by using sensational frames, creating support for the government decision. In terms of both Australian and New Zealand media-government relations, it appears that the governments were utilising the media’s role to report information from themselves and test reactions to their proposals for military and civilian intervention. Once the media covered the proposed intervention, with little opposition within political elite or media, government proceeded to fine-tune policy. This behaviour was more prominent in the New Zealand case.

⁴²⁷ Bennett, "Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States," 103.

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Appendix 3: Codebook and Definition of Codes

CODES		DESCRIPTION
Date		
25.06.2002 - 24.06.2003		All data sets are catalogued by the publication date.
Medium		The data sets are categorised by the news agency or political institution that published the item. Due to the way Factiva database structured its articles, the news agency was identified on the first line after the title. The government data sets are initially divided into the government or Parliament, and then coded with the department, ministry, or political party.
<i>Newspaper</i>		
1	Herald Sun	
2	Daily Telegraph	
3	Sydney Morning Herald	
4	New Zealand Herald	
5	Dominion Post	
6	The Press	
<i>Government</i>		
1	Prime Minister	
2	Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade	
3	Other Ministers	
<i>Parliament</i>		
1	Government	
2	Coalition Government	
3	Opposition Parties	
4	Other, e.g. Select Committee Experts	
Problem Frame		The problem frames describe the issues relating to and resulting from the Solomon Island crisis. These have been expressed in the data sets and are divided into eight main categories.
1	Economic	The economic frame applies words or phrases that describe economic concerns at the time of the crisis. These include the terms, failing, declining, struggling, and bankrupt economy or government; it also describes the economic hardships of the people, such as unemployment.
2	Security Threat Australia and New Zealand	The security threat AUNZ frame portrays the crisis as a security risk to Australia or New Zealand and makes a direct reference to either or both of these countries. This includes references to the arc of Instability, as a threat specifically to Australian and New Zealand.

3	Security Threat Region	The regional security threat frame describes the Solomon Islands crisis as a security risk to the Pacific region but does not including a direct reference to Australia and New Zealand as this is categorized as <i>Security Threat AUNZ</i> . This frame includes reference to the Solomon Islands as part of the arc of instability, as the instability threatens regional security, not just Australia or New Zealand.
4	Failed State	The failed state frame includes direct references to the Solomon Islands as a failed state, on the brink of becoming a failed state, or as a collapsing state.
5	Humanitarian	The humanitarian frame incorporates humanitarian issues relating or resulting from the crisis. For example, references to refugees, loss of livelihood or human suffering. It includes frames that present victimises the Solomon Islands people and uses sympathetic framing.
6	Lawlessness	The lawlessness frame includes words or phrases that describe the Solomon Islands to be in a in a state of lawlessness. These included direct reference to the term law and order, armed attack, corruption, drugs, extortion, gangs, militants, hostages, kidnappings, killing, murder, assassination, money laundering, rape, warlord, rebel leader, or weapons.
7	Ethnic Violence	The ethnic violence frame refers to the internal conflict between the Solomon Islands two ethnic groups: the Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army and the Malaitan Eagle Force.
8	Terrorism	The terrorism frame includes references to the possibility of terrorist cells operating in, or exploiting the internal instability and lawlessness in the Solomon Islands. In many cases the threat of terrorism is related to terrorist cells using the Solomon Islands as a ‘safe-haven’ for its activities.
Solution Frame		The solution frames are the proposed response options to the Solomon Islands crisis. These have been offered in the data sets and are divided into eight main themes.
1	Aid	The aid frame encompasses references to the contribution of financial or material assistance to the Solomon Islands government from a foreign government or agency.
2	Non-intervention	The non-intervention frame specifically states that Australia and New Zealand will not intervene in the Solomon Islands.
3	Non-Armed Police	The non-armed police frame indicates that only police in a non-armed capacity should intervene in the Solomon Islands’. The role of a non-armed police force is to reform and develop the practises of the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force.

4	Intervention Unspecified or Undecided	The intervention unspecified or undecided frame encompasses any reference to Australian and/or New Zealand intervention in the Solomon Islands as a proposed solution to the problems. However, the type of intervention is unspecified, or only discusses it broadly at that stage. This category could include reference to military, police or civilian intervention, although which approach is still undecided by policy-makers. After the intervention category has been specified within a media article or government action, any unspecified reference to 'intervention' is part of the previous specified intervention type within the same publication. For example, after police, military, or civilian options are referred to within an article the intention is no longer unspecified; any reference to an intervention after this is in direct reference to that type of intervention and categorised to that frame.
5	Macro Reform	The macro reform frame incorporates references to the institutional reform of Solomon Islands; including the government, economy, judiciary, and police institutions.
6	Armed Police & Defence	The armed police and defence frame refers to a police or defence force carrying weapons from Australia, New Zealand, or other PICs. This can include the terms peacekeepers, peacekeeping, military forces, and armed police.
7	Assistance Package	The assistance package frame is the category that includes the three elements armed military and police, and macro reform and civilian personal frames together. However, this frame does not include the Scoping Mission.
8	Other	The other category describes infrequent solutions proposed to the Solomon Islands crisis. This could include assistance from powers outside of the Pacific region, for example, the UN, the European Union, Indonesia, or France.
Critical Perspectives towards Government Frame		Critical perspective towards the Australian and New Zealand governments' are identified in this section. These incorporate statements that have been stated in the media and government, expressing critical perspectives towards government action or inaction. Overall there are nine categories of critical perspectives.
1	Impact on Police & Defence	The impact on police and defence frame claims an overseas deployment of police and/or a defence force impacts negatively on the forces at home and abroad due to strained resources.
2	Should Have Acted Sooner	This frame asserts the response from foreign nations, to the situation in the Solomon Islands, should have occurred before June 2003. Reference to this frame often reminds the reader that foreign nations could have acted sooner as the first requested for foreign assistance by the Solomon Islands was sought in early 2000.
3	Aid Is Ineffective	This frame encompasses the idea that aid from foreign nations is ineffective in improving the economic and development situation of the Solomon Islands.

4	Lack of Public Debate	This frame criticises the lack of public debate around the proposed responses from the Australian and New Zealand government's. Also associated with this frame is reference to the speed of the decision to intervene, which was arguably hastily and without adequate consultation.
5	Inflame Situation	This frame proposes that intervening in the Solomon Islands, through civilian, police, or military forces could exacerbate unstable conditions.
6	Alienate PICs	The alienate PIC frame claims foreign intervention or a heavy-handed approach could alienate the Solomon Islands or its Pacific Islands neighbours.
7	Recolonise and Control	This frame suggests that foreign intervention is a move to re-colonise and control the Solomon Islands for the benefit of the nation intervening.
8	Questionable Purpose of Deployment	The questionable purpose of deployment frame indicates Australia or New Zealand has greater interests in combating terrorism and other global security concerns rather than resolving the Solomon Islands problems. Therefore, the intention and purpose of the intervention is misplaced, possibly resulting in unsuitable strategies or outcomes.
9	Foreign Troops will be 'Bogged Down' in Operation	This frame encompasses phrases that suggest the Solomon Islands could become dependent on the troops in the long term to maintain law and order.
Sources		
1	Government	Government includes the political parties that make up the government in power or coalition government.
2	Opposition Government	The Opposition government includes the political parties and members that are not part of the government or coalition government.
3	Independent	An independent source includes individuals or groups that are independent from the political arena, political parties, or a foreign government. These can include but is not limited to, academics, NGO's, independent think tanks, religious leaders, or local people.
4	Foreign Government Australia or New Zealand	Includes sources from the government or opposition government from the foreign nation also part of the consultation on the Solomon Islands. For example, if the Australian media applies a source form the New Zealand government, this source would be categorised as from the foreign government.
5	Foreign Government Solomon Islands	Includes sources from the Solomon Islands government.
Direction		
1	Support	Support Frames are supportive or promotes government actions or policy relating to the Solomon Islands.
2	Opposition	Opposition frames oppose or challenges government actions or policy towards the Solomon Islands.

3	Mixed	Mixed frames contain words that are both supportive and highlight limitations to a governments actions or policy relating to the Solomon Islands.
4	Neutral	Neutral frames discuss a governments actions or policy towards the Solomon Islands but does not support or challenge this. These frames state facts and information rather than opinions.

List of Acronyms for Categories of Appendix 4, 5, & 6

Full Term	Acronym
Australia and New Zealand	AUNZ
Australia	AUS
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	DFAT
Dominion Post	DP
Daily Telegraph	DT
Government	Govt.
Herald Sun	HS
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade	MFAT
New Zealand	NZ
New Zealand Herald	NZH
Pacific Islands Country	PIC
Sunday Morning Herald	SMH
The Press	TP

Appendix 4: Codebook Test Two – The Range of Debate

Medium			
Date	News Agency	Government	Parliament
25.06.02	1 = HS	1 = Prime Minister	1 = Govt.
24.06.03	2 DT	2 = MFAT / DFAT	2 = Coalition Govt.
	3 = SMH	3 = Other	3 = Opposition Parties
	4 = NZH		4 = Other
	5 = DP		
	6 = TP		

Range of Debate		
Problem Frames	Solution Frames	Critical Frames
1 = Economic	1 = Aid	1 = Impact on Police & Defence
2 = Security Threat AUNZ	2 = Non-Intervention	2 = Should Have Acted Sooner
3 = Security Threat Region	3 = Non-Armed Police	3 = Aid is Ineffective
4 = Failed State	4 = Intervention Unspecified	4 = Lack of Public Debate
5 = Humanitarian	5 = Macro Reform	5 = Inflamm Situation
6 = Lawlessness	6 = Armed Police & Defence	6 = Alienate PIC
7 = Ethnic Violence	7 = Assistance Package	7 = Re-Colonise & Control
8 = Terrorism	8 = Other	8 = Questionable Purpose of Deployment
		9 = Bugged Down in Operation

Appendix 5: Codebook Test Three – The use of sources in the media

Date	News Agency	Sources	Direction
25.06.2002 -	1 = HS	1 = Govt.	1 = Support
24.06.2003	2 = DT	2 = Opposition	2 = Opposition
	3 = SMH	3 = Independent	3 = Mixed
	4 = NZH	4 = Foreign Govt. AUS. or NZ.	4 = Neutral
	5 = DP	5 = Foreign Govt. SI	
	6 = TP		

Appendix 6: Codebook Test Four – Measuring Critical Perspectives

Date	Medium	Source	Critical Frames
25.06.02	1 = Newspaper	1 = HS	1 = Impact on Police & Defence
24.06.03	2 = Govt.	2 = DT	2 = Should Have Acted Sooner
	3 = Parliament	3 = SMH	3 = Aid is Ineffective
		4 = NZH	4 = Lack of Public Debate
		5 = DP	5 = Inflammation Situation
		6 = TP	6 = Alienate PIC
		7 = Govt.	7 = Re-Colonise & Control
		8 = Coalition Govt.	8 = Questionable Purpose of Deployment
		9 = Opposition Govt.	9 = Bugged Down in Operation
		10 = Foreign Govt.	
		11 = Other	

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