

Mapping the Enemy Image¹

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When a state enters a war or commits mass atrocities against a particular group, the mass media are believed to be essential in mobilizing the public for the upcoming violence in their name. This process can include the creation of enemy images so stripped of their human qualities that their destruction becomes justifiable and even desirable. But what happens when conflicts are ending and the political will emerges for peace and reconciliation? Does the mass media reflect the changing intensity of conflict through its depiction of the enemy and help to rehumanize groups that were previously dehumanized?

This paper addresses these questions through an analysis of the media frames used to describe the adversary through different stages of conflict from pre-violence to peace and reconciliation. It does this in three sections. The first defines enemy images and related concepts such as demonization and dehumanization and also reviews some of the relevant literature on these topics. The second describes the methodology of the study, which involves a media content analysis of five case studies involving US military engagement from World War Two to the 2003 Iraq War. The content analysis is based on categories that emerged from the literature and case study media content. The final section reviews the findings to identify how the media's framing of the adversary changes through different conflict stages and to determine if rehumanization takes place as conflicts shift into peace and reconciliation.

Section 1: Enemy Images

Enemy images are formed by the use of images, metaphors, frames, narratives, myths and ideas, in general, to delegitimize a particular group or individual for a political purpose. Enemy images are based on beliefs or hypotheses and become stereotypes when held by an entire group (Stein, 1996). In this article, focus is placed on the enemy group rather than an individual such as a political leader. In a group application of the concept, both the entire group and its members are allocated with qualities that are negative, leading to suspicion and paranoia (Merskin, 2004). Dehumanization and demonization are two devices that are commonly used to create enemy images. Dehumanization involves connecting the target group with sub-human creatures such as animals or human groups considered inferior. Demonization involves linking the group with superhumans such as demons and monsters or superhuman characteristics (Bar-Tel 1990, Goldstein & Pevehouse 2007).

The formation of enemy images is reliant on a divide between an in-group (or "we" or "us") and an out-group (or "them" or "the other"), and is often reinforced by ancient ideological dichotomies between we, who are good, and them, who are evil (Fiebig-Von Hase, 1997). Such axiomatic moral divides have a long history within many nationalist myths and have proven to be an effective tool for national consolidation. According to Harold Lasswell: "For mobilization of national hatred the enemy must be represented as a menacing, murderous aggressor, a satanic violator of the moral and conventional standards, an obstacle to the cherished aims and ideals to the nation as a whole and of each constituent part." (Cited in Merskin 2004: 162). Such divisions are strengthened when the other group looks different, uses a different language or holds a different belief system (Goldstein & Pevehouse 2007).

While enemy images can refer to groups within states, who may be subject to persecution and denied rights, they also refer to rival national groups in other states, from whom differentiation can form the basis of national identity (Boulding 1959, Norby Bonde 2005). In fact, a competitive international system in which relations involve a struggle for power can stimulate the construction of such depictions regarding other nations (Alexander et al. 2005) – especially if threats over identity and access to material resources also exist (Stein 1996). Enemy images, as such, are assumed to be an important factor in the dynamics of international relations and the behaviour of states towards other political entities (Boulding 1959, Holsti 1962).

When stereotypes of the enemy are embedded within a society, individuals associated with the out-group lose their identity and often come to represent mere categories (Halpern & Weinstein 2004: 567). The shift from an individual to a collective negative identity is part of a dehumanizing process, and prevents members of the in-group from identifying with out-group members, who are no longer viewed as individuals with characteristics like them. As such, negatively perceived actions by out-group members, even if conducted by few, are projected to the entire group, further delegitimizing all members. Stereotypes tend to be difficult to challenge because people tend to seek out evidence that supports their existing beliefs and ignore information that challenges them (Stein 1996).

Enemy images often present the in-group as under threat from the enemy. Hojelid has distinguished between situationally determined and dispositional enemy images, with the former referring to the hostile action by the enemy and the latter to the expectation of such action (1991: 112, Ottosen 1995: 101). References to brutality and injustice by the out-group, no doubt, will breed anger, hatred and resentment toward them (Rodriguez 2000, Norby Bonde 2005). This is particularly true during periods of crisis and instability, when the masses are more likely to listen to political leaders that offer scapegoats and simple solutions to their problems. In such an environment, perceptions can be highly distorted so that all the actions of the other side are interpreted as a threat and intentions viewed with suspicion, even if no hostility was intended (Mandelziz 2003: 2). This can lead to aggressive behaviour by the in-group, who portray their actions as defensive, which can lead to a similar response by the out-group, making the threat from the enemy a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The creation and maintenance of enemy images are important for conflict analysis because they are used to justify and even encourage violence against internal and external groups identified as the enemy. Ottosen places enemy images with Galtung's 'cultural violence' framework, in which aspects of culture are used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence (Ottosen 1995: 98). Enemy images have always been important for the mobilization of troops before war and the maintenance of military morale during war. However, in the modern era, when public support is increasingly viewed as essential for a successful war effort (von Clausewitz 1993), the use of enemy images for building such support makes them a key component of any war effort.

It is within this context that the mass media are essential. There is much evidence to suggest that the media have an influence on the public's view of foreign affairs and policy (Brewer et al. 2003; Brewer 2006). As the public is largely informed about the outside world through the mass media, the media play a central role in shaping who

the public considers important in the world, through its agenda setting function, and who should be viewed in a positive or negative light, through its framing function (Scheufele & Tewksbury 2007, Bennett & Iyengar 2008). As such, the media play a crucial role in mobilizing the public for conflict and convincing them that the killing of certain groups is acceptable and even beneficial. As Sam Keen has argued, “We *think* others to death and then invent the battle-axe or the ballistic missiles with which to actually kill them. Propaganda precedes technology” (cited in Carruthers 2000: 24-25).

While images, narratives and myths about others predate the modern mass media, and are also disseminated through other instruments such as family and education (Boulding 1959), the media in recent decades has made the dissemination of enemy images more rapid and uniform across national groups. This can prove crucial to a war effort, as a unified message of the home side’s morality and the enemy’s immorality is a vital component of any modern war effort both to built public support for the war and sustain it during the fighting.

Of course, the media’s role cannot be understood in isolation without the politicians that invoke enemy images for political purposes. These depictions not only focus the populace on a perceived common unifying threat, but also have the additional benefit of generating support for the leader, who’s shortcomings may be overlooked when the stakes are believed to be high (Ottosen 1995: 98).

Peace, Reconciliation and Enemy Images

So far, this article has briefly outlined the concept of enemy images and its relationship to the mass media. Much of the literature is focused on this aspect of enemy images – their role during the mobilization and violent phases of conflict. While there is little written on whether enemy images change with the changing nature of conflict, there is much written on the societal processes that are essential to peace and reconciliation. This section briefly reviews this literature to ascertain which elements might manifest in the media framing of the other side as conflicts change towards peace.

According to Gayer et al, a cognitive societal unfreezing is a crucial first step before collective attitudes can change. There are three steps to this process. The first involves a re-evaluation of the beliefs acquired during conflict; the second requires openness to new ideas and information; and the third involves the acceptance of the new ideas arising from the alternative information (2009: 954). The new ideas that must be ultimately accepted for an effective reconciliation involve the rehumanization of the former enemy. In other words, the other side must be invested with human qualities that are both familiar and accepted to the group that viewed them as the enemy (Halpern and Weinstein 2004: 567).

This process involves an individualizing process, where attempts are made to show understanding and empathy toward individuals on the other side (Halpern and Weinstein 2000: 567). This can be slow and initially involve “exceptions” to the stereotype (Stein 1996), but must be categorical rather than contingent (Janoff-Bulman and Werther, 2008). It also means that the other side must be respected, so

that the devaluation and delegitimization of the antagonistic relationship can be countered. According to Ross, relations between the former sides must ultimately be changed both instrumentally and emotionally, so that each can envision the other as part of a joint future and that both threats to identity and a sense of victimization are addressed (2001: 197-200).

A key factor in reconciliation relates to the ethics of the conflict and the perceived justness of goals, which provide the rationale for starting and maintain the conflict (Bar-Tal 2000: 357). For a culture of peace to evolve, a reconsideration and change in societal beliefs relating to the justness of one's own side and the legitimacy of the other side are important. Such changes can evolve in political, social, cultural and educational processes involving societal institutions and channels of communication (Bar-Tal 2000: 357-361). It is within this context that the media and the framing of the other side are likely to change. Such transformation can begin independent of a peace process and even occur while violence is still occurring. However, full reconciliation can be much slower and continue for decades after a peace agreement is reached (Bar-Tal 2000:356).

Section 2: Methodology

The literature review suggests that a number of variables are important in determining if enemy images change as a conflict moves through different stages. With these under consideration, a review of the media content from this study's five cases was conducted to determine how the people on the other side were framed before, during and after the violent phase of conflict. To find media articles, the New York Times was selected due to its traditional role as an agenda setter for American foreign affairs news and its accessibility over an extended time period. The conflicts and the adversary groups assessed were: World War Two and Japanese, The Vietnam War and North Vietnamese, Iraqis and the 1991 Gulf War, Serbians and the 1999 Kosovo Intervention and Iraqis again and the 2003 Iraq War. These conflicts span seven decades and offer a broad range of conflict types, from total war during World War Two to limited wars during Vietnam, the Gulf War and the 2003 Iraq War to a humanitarian military intervention in the war over Kosovo. They also offer diversity in terms of geopolitics, covering periods that can be classified as World War, Cold War, post-Cold War and Global War on Terror. It is hoped that these differences will allow findings to emerge from the study that can be generalized to a greater degree.

For each group, 150 references to the designated group in articles about either the war itself or relations with the group were gathered. These references, which became the Units of Analysis (UOA), were divided in three segments (50 UOA each) that represented the different phases: mobilization (pre-violence), violence and reconciliation (post-violence).² In total, 750 UOA were coded. For each UOA, three categories were identified, based on the literature review and assessment of the media content. The coding categories, options within them and hypotheses relating the central questions of the article in relation to each are outlined below.

Category 1: Character descriptions

The characteristic ascribed to the adversary is likely the most significant element of the enemy image. At the one extreme, there is dehumanization and demonization – the strongest type of enemy image characterization. However, this is also the area where the enemy image can be challenged and rehumanized through the use of positive characteristics and framing that focuses on the similarities between them and us. For this category, six coding options were identified:

1. Non-human characteristics (dehumanizing and demonizing): inhuman traits such as animals, and superhuman traits such as demons, monsters and machines.
2. Negative human characteristics: such as aggressive and irrational. Also includes labelling using loaded words such as “communist” or “terrorist”.
3. Differences contrasted: comparison of “us” and “them”.
4. Differences highlighted but neutral (not necessarily positive or negative)
5. Similarities highlighted: ideas such as being in the same boat, sharing same concerns, upholding similar values.
6. Positive characteristics: positive adjectives to describe the other side, such as “friends”.

As conflict shifts from violence to peace and reconciliation, a rehumanization process would likely require media framing of the other side to offer more positive frames and less negative ones, and highlight similarities more and differences less.

Category 2: Our Future Actions

The next important aspect of this analysis relates to how “we” should respond to the other side in our future actions. At the one extreme is a call for violence as a possible solution to deal with the perceived threat posed by the enemy. However, a number of other options were also present in the media content, such as using non-violent means, providing help, joining them, stepping back/withdrawing, sympathizing, and being cautious. As shifts in the conflict stage occur, the expectation is that framing will also move from advocating violence during early stages to softer solutions such as helping and being sympathetic, which suggest a rehumanization process. Overall, seven options are included in this category, as outlined below:

1. Violence is necessary
2. Stop through non-violent means: e.g. stop through appeal to international tribunals or the people themselves (e.g. through an uprising)
3. We must help: provide aid and assistance; help with their poverty and/or repression.
4. We must join them (in situations where cooperation with the people is needed). E.g. fight beside them, work with them, cooperate with them as equals.
5. We must step back/withdraw: stop intervening, allow the people to chose their own path, give their sovereignty.
6. We should sympathize with them: understand and listen to them, use tact, learn/respect their culture and customs.
7. We must be cautious: consider our options and the consequences of using violence, e.g. think of civilian casualties.

Category 3: Justifications for our actions

The final category relates to the previous and deals with the justifications used for actions taken by us, particularly relating to the justifications offered for engaging in the war. There are a number of different justifications that were used, from simple claims about doing the right thing and ends justifying means, to suggestions that our actions may have been unjustified or incorrect. As conflict stages change towards peace, reconciliation, and rehumanization of the other side, the hypothesis is that more framing questioning the correctness of our actions will emerge. The seven options in this category are:

1. Actions justified (unspecified): did the right thing, no regrets.
2. The ends justifies the means: actions regrettable, but necessary for result [result or ends must be identified].
3. No other options: this is the best of the options available; we've tried everything else (e.g. sanctions and diplomacy have failed)
4. They have hurt us/others in the past: references to historical evil/atrocities/wrong-doings.
5. Pre-emptive strike: if we don't do this, they will do that [must identify threat].
6. We are superior: includes the need for re-establishing the 'natural order' of things.
7. Actions unjustified: expressing regret, guilt; made the wrong decision, we've ignored someone/something important.

To test for coding reliability, 20% of the sample (150 UOA) was coded by a second coder, and inter-coder reliability tests using percentage agreement and Krippendorff's alpha (α) were carried out for each category. The results of the reliability testing are presented in Table 1:

Table 1: Inter-coder Reliability Results

<i>Categories</i>	<i>Percent Agreement</i>	<i>Krippendorff's Alpha (α)</i>
Category 1	87.78	0.77
Category 2	86.67	0.73
Category 3	92.22	0.78

Before examining the findings by category, it is important to point out that not all the categories were referred to in each UOA. It is important to note that each UOA is only identified as such when the people on the other side are specifically mentioned. The percentage of use per category, therefore, is important because it provides insight into how the other side is framed and what elements are emphasized over others. For example, category 1, which is the most direct potential form of dehumanization and rehumanization, is only used in about 20% of cases where the other side's people are mentioned. This means that in most cases, no specific characterization of the other side's people is offered when the other side is mentioned. It also means that more subtle forms of enemy image formation (or challenges to them), such as actions that should

be taken against them are used. Table 2 outlines the percentage of references to each of the three categories in this study.

Table 2: Percentage of References by Category

Category	Before	Fighting	Recon.	All
Category 1 (character)	20%	19%	25%	21%
Category 2 (our actions)	36%	47%	50%	45%
Category 3 (justifications)	18%	33%	27%	26%

The following section reviews the results of the media content analysis, with an emphasis on assessing if enemy images change with the changing intensity of conflict and whether a rehumanization process during reconciliation is reflected in the media coverage of the other side.

Section 3: Findings

The first category assessed related to the character of the other side. Character references were used most often during World War Two and least during the 2003 Iraq War. There is a general trend of less use of this category over time, perhaps reflecting a desire not to portray the people of the other side in a negative way.

At the one end of the options range are references to non-human characteristics, such as those associated with dehumanization and demonization. Interestingly, there was almost no framing of the other side's people in this way, even in the case of Japan during World War Two, when such framing was assumed to exist. The next category – negative human characteristics – however, was much more prevalent. In this category, a predictable pattern involving an increase during the fighting phase and a decline in the reconciliation phase occurred. Over the five conflicts combined, negative human characteristics increased from 12% of all references in the before period to 28% in the fighting phase to 11% in the reconciliation phase. On the flipside, positive characteristics of the other side grew from 32% to 47% to 60% of total references per period over the three stages of conflict. Surprisingly, however, positive human characteristics of the other side's people outnumbered negative ones in each of the three stages.

The comparison of differences appeared most frequently in the mobilization phase of the conflict, in which the differences contrasted constituted 18% of all references. Similarly, neutral differences highlighted (at 16%) and similarities highlighted (at 22%) were most common in the phase before fighting began. Differences contrasted and highlighted (but neutral) decreased significantly in the fighting and reconciliation phase of conflict, while similarities highlighted remained relatively consistent through the three phases of the conflict. Interestingly, there was no notable increase in the similarities highlighted, as would be expected, as the fighting ended and peace and reconciliation started. Table 3 outlines all the findings from this study on the character framing of the other side.

Table 3: Character Category Findings

Conflict	Characteristic	Before	Fighting	Recon.	All
WWII					
(Japan)	Negative characteristics	5%	38%	8%	14%
	Differences contrasted	5%	15%	13%	11%
	Differences highlighted (neutral)	20%	8%	4%	11%
	Similarities highlighted	25%	15%	13%	18%
	Positive Characteristics	45%	23%	63%	47%
	% Referenced	40%	26%	48%	38%
Vietnam					
War	Negative human characteristics	0%	13%	5%	7%
	Differences contrasted	11%	0%	5%	4%
	Differences highlighted (neutral)	0%	6%	0%	2%
	Similarities highlighted	22%	19%	40%	29%
	Positive Characteristics	67%	63%	50%	58%
	% Referenced	18%	32%	40%	30%
Gulf War					
War	Negative human characteristics	50%	50%	43%	47%
	Similarities highlighted	25%	0%	0%	6%
	Positive Characteristics	25%	50%	57%	47%
	% Referenced	8%	12%	14%	11%
Kosovo					
War	Negative human characteristics	19%	33%	17%	23%
	Differences contrasted	44%	0%	0%	23%
	Differences highlighted (neutral)	25%	0%	0%	13%
	Similarities highlighted	13%	33%	0%	16%
	Positive Characteristics	0%	33%	83%	26%
	% Referenced	32%	18%	12%	21%
Iraq War					
War	Non-human characteristics	0%	0%	17%	10%
	Similarities highlighted	100%	0%	17%	20%
	Positive Characteristics	0%	100%	67%	70%
	% Referenced	2%	6%	12%	7%
Combined					
War	Non-human characteristics	0%	0%	2%	1%
	Negative human characteristics	12%	28%	11%	16%
	Differences contrasted	18%	4%	6%	9%
	Differences highlighted (neutral)	16%	4%	2%	7%
	Similarities highlighted	22%	17%	19%	19%
	Positive Characteristics	32%	47%	60%	48%
	% Referenced	20%	19%	25%	21%

The next category identified a range of actions our side should take regarding the adversary's people over the three different stages of conflict. The most aggressive of the options available related to the need to use violence against the adversary. Overall, calls for violence would be expected to increase with the onset of fighting and taper with peace and reconciliation. This was indeed the pattern recorded, overall, with the combined conflict references to the necessity for violence growing from 5% in the before stage to 18% in the fighting stage to only 1% in the

reconciliation stage. In fact, in every since conflict, references to the necessity of violence declined as the war itself changed from the fighting to peace stage.

Two other notable categories that indicate a shift to rehumanizing the other side are those that referenced helping and sympathizing with the other side’s people. Helping and sympathizing suggest empathy with the other side – a key component of rehumanization – that would not be likely if they were still perceived as enemies. In both of these categories, the overall trends do suggest that the media engaged in a rehumanization process with the end of violence. References to helping the other side through relief, aid and assistance increased from 23% in the fighting stage to 40% afterwards, while references to sympathizing with them increased from 10% to 26% over the same periods.

Table 4 outlines the findings from the five case studies regarding the actions we should take regarding the people on the other side in percentage terms.

Table 4: Our Actions Category Findings

Conflict	Our Actions	Before	Fighting	Recon.	All
WWII (Japan)	Violence is necessary	0%	29%	0%	10%
	Stop through non-violent means	9%	12%	0%	6%
	Help them (relief/aid/assist)	0%	6%	13%	8%
	Join them, fight together	9%	6%	8%	8%
	Step back, withdraw	9%	6%	13%	10%
	Sympathize with them	73%	24%	63%	52%
	Be cautious	0%	18%	4%	8%
	% Referenced	22%	34%	48%	35%
Vietnam War	Violence is necessary	0%	13%	4%	6%
	Stop through non-violent means	0%	4%	7%	4%
	Help them (relief/aid/assist)	30%	4%	43%	27%
	Join them, fight together	25%	9%	7%	13%
	Step back, withdraw	25%	43%	7%	24%
	Sympathize with them	5%	9%	32%	17%
	Be cautious	15%	17%	0%	10%
	% Referenced	40%	46%	56%	47%
Gulf War	Violence is necessary	0%	40%	0%	10%
	Stop through non-violent means	20%	13%	3%	10%
	Help them (relief/aid/assist)	0%	7%	38%	20%
	Join them, fight together	0%	0%	10%	5%
	Step back, withdraw	53%	7%	21%	25%
	Sympathize with them	20%	13%	17%	17%
	Be cautious	7%	20%	10%	12%
	% Referenced	30%	30%	58%	39%

Kosovo War	Violence is necessary	0%	11%	0%	6%
	Stop through non-violent means	0%	7%	0%	4%
	Help them (relief/aid/assist)	20%	11%	90%	28%
	Join them, fight together	0%	4%	0%	2%
	Step back, withdraw	0%	14%	0%	8%
	Sympathize with them	47%	11%	10%	21%
	Be cautious	33%	43%	0%	32%
	% Referenced	30%	56%	20%	35%
Iraq War	Violence is necessary	17%	12%	0%	9%
	Stop through non-violent means	0%	0%	3%	1%
	Help them (relief/aid/assist)	43%	62%	46%	51%
	Join them, fight together	17%	12%	6%	11%
	Step back, withdraw	10%	3%	34%	16%
	Sympathize with them	0%	3%	9%	4%
	Be cautious	13%	9%	3%	8%
	% Referenced	60%	68%	70%	66%
Combined	Violence is necessary	5%	18%	1%	8%
	Stop through non-violent means	4%	6%	3%	4%
	Help them (relief/aid/assist)	24%	23%	40%	30%
	Join them, fight together	12%	7%	7%	8%
	Step back, withdraw	19%	15%	18%	17%
	Sympathize with them	21%	10%	26%	19%
	Be cautious	14%	21%	4%	13%
	% Referenced	36%	47%	50%	45%

The final category related to the justifications of our actions. A shift towards rehumanization and genuine reconciliation, as mentioned in the literature review, would likely see a move away from solely seeing the conflict's justness through the perspective of our side and increasingly question the justness of our actions. As such, one might expect to see a decline in the percentage of references to the claim that our actions were justified and more references to our actions being unjustified. Furthermore, one might also expect to see references to a potential threat by the other side to us ("They will hurt us in the future") decline with a diminishing enemy image.

Based on the findings, however, the expected trends only played out to a limited degree. Overall, for example, references to our actions being justified (unspecified) reduced only 3% from 24% to 21% after the fighting. When combined with two other similar justifications with minor differences in emphasis – "ends justified means" and "there are no other options" – the decline went from 37% during the fighting stage to 30% afterwards. This was a notable change but not insignificant. Looking at the flipside regarding the unjustness of our actions, there is again a shift in the expected direction, but only gradually from 39% during the fighting to 42% in the period following it. Finally, on the issue of a future threat from the other side, manifested in the idea that "they will hurt us in the future", change was in the opposite direction to what was expected, increasing from 22% during the fighting to 27% in the post-fighting period. This was perhaps one of the most unexpected findings of the study and at odds with other signs of rehumanization.

Table 5 outlines the justifications for our actions in the media framing related to the other side's people during the five conflicts studied.

Table 5: Our Action Justifications Category Findings

Conflict	Justifications	Before	Fighting	Recon.	All
WWII (Japan)	Actions justified	0%	35%	15%	21%
	Ends justify means	13%	12%	8%	11%
	There are no other options	13%	0%	0%	3%
	They will hurt us in future	63%	18%	46%	37%
	We are superior	0%	6%	0%	3%
	Actions unjustified	13%	29%	31%	26%
	% Referenced	16%	34%	26%	25%
Vietnam War	Actions justified	33%	0%	7%	11%
	Ends justify means	0%	0%	7%	2%
	There are no other options	0%	12%	0%	5%
	They will hurt us in future	42%	29%	27%	32%
	Actions unjustified	25%	59%	60%	50%
	% Referenced	24%	34%	30%	29%
Gulf War	Actions justified	0%	18%	18%	13%
	Ends justify means	0%	0%	9%	3%
	There are no other options	0%	12%	0%	5%
	They will hurt us in future	45%	35%	27%	36%
	Actions unjustified	55%	35%	45%	44%
	% Referenced	22%	34%	22%	26%
Kosovo War	Actions justified	N/A	7%	0%	6%
	Ends justify means	N/A	29%	75%	39%
	Actions unjustified	N/A	64%	25%	56%
	% Referenced	0%	28%	8%	12%
Iraq War	Actions justified	21%	59%	38%	40%
	Ends justify means	0%	0%	4%	2%
	There are no other options	21%	6%	0%	7%
	They will hurt us in future	43%	24%	21%	27%
	Actions unjustified	14%	12%	38%	24%
	% Referenced	28%	34%	48%	37%
Combined	Actions justified	16%	24%	21%	21%
	Ends justify means	2%	7%	10%	7%
	There are no other options	9%	6%	0%	5%
	They will hurt us in future	47%	22%	27%	29%
	We are superior	0%	1%	0%	1%
	Actions unjustified	27%	39%	42%	37%
	% Referenced	18%	33%	27%	26%

Conclusion

This paper aimed to empirically assess if the mass media reflects the changing intensity of conflict in its framing of the other side through the use of enemy images. It was especially interested in examining if a rehumanization process occurred in which former enemy groups were framing in more humanizing ways as conflicts transitioned from fighting into peace and reconciliation. Through a media content analysis of three categories over five conflicts, certain trends were indeed identifiable on these issues.

The first interesting finding was that there was little extreme dehumanization and demonization recorded during the mobilization and fighting stages of the conflicts. This was an unexpected finding, as the assumption was that such references, especially relating to the Japanese during World War II, were common. In fact, while negative human characteristics were widely used, there were also a high percentage of positive characteristics ascribed to the Japanese. Several factors may explain this trend. The first is that this study only looked at the New York Times, which is an elite paper that attempts to engage in a higher standard of journalism. If the study included the tabloid press, which tends to be more sensational and ethnocentric in its coverage and frames foreign affairs in more populist terms, the findings could have been different. Second, it is important to note that this study only looked at how the people of the other side were framed. Had the study included the leaders or fighting forces, which tend to be framed more negatively, the framing could have been far more negative. However, these limitations also do not negate the main concerns of the study, which is to identify framing changes over the different stages. As such, these should be identifiable even if the starting point is of a less extreme nature. Indeed, as mentioned, the study did find notable changes in the way the other side was framed with negative characteristics declining and positive ones increasing when the conflicts shifted to peace and reconciliation.

Next, more evidence of shifting media framing was present when “our actions” were scrutinized, with calls for the necessity of violence dropping significantly and calls for help and sympathy increasing as conflicts shifted from fighting. This was an area where rehumanization via media framing was at its strongest, showing significant changes in percentage terms.

Finally, the last category relating to the justifications of our actions showed mixed results, with not all key issues demonstrating a rehumanization process with the deintensification of conflict. While framing regarding the justness and unjustness of our actions did shift in the expected directions overall, it did so only marginally. This issue, like a few others, also showed variations of framing amongst the different conflicts. For example, during the Vietnam War, there was far more framing suggesting that our actions were unjustified than justified, even during the fighting phase, and this pattern remained consistent when fighting ended. This was quite different from the 2003 Iraq War, for example, in which the justification of actions far outweighed the unjustness during the fighting, with the trend only changing in the expected direction once the major combat had ended.

If there was one important intervening variable in the study, it was the domestic politics of the conflicts, which appeared to impact the way in which the enemy was

framed. In conflicts that had a higher percentage of public and political elite support and unity, the enemy group tended to be framed more negatively. While this was not the specific focus of this study, future research could examine if Bennett's indexing hypothesis could be extended to the severity of enemy image portrayal in the media (Bennett, 1990). In other words, do enemy images become more extreme and the other side less humanized if the political elites are more united in favour of the war? Initial findings suggest that this may be the case.

Future research could also extend this study in a number of ways, looking at how enemies are framed in different print media (beyond the NYT) as well as broadcast media, such as television news, which tends to be more condense and sensational in coverage. In addition, framing of the other side in other countries outside the United States could add greatly to any attempts to generalize on this subject more broadly. However, even with these limitations, the initial findings in this study show that on most key variables assessed, the framing of the enemy does indeed change with the intensity of conflict, shifting toward rehumanization with the onset of peace and reconciliation.

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Notes

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² Each UOA had to be at least one sentence long where the people were specifically mentioned or identified (e.g. Japanese people, people of Japan etc.). Any reference to just the broader term, which could refer to other elements (e.g. Japanese army, Japanese products etc.) was excluded. If there was more than one reference to the people in a sentence, it was still counted as one UOA. Only up to three UOA per article were used, and these were the first three in sequence if more existed. While the focus was on the specific reference to the people, other parts of the article sometimes needed to be read for understanding the context.