

**Barbaric mistakes:
Western print media's portrayal of "ethnic" conflicts**

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by
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Abstract

Recent literature has criticised the broad label of “ethnic conflict” applied to a spate of post-Cold War violence and the international community’s response to such conflicts (see for example Tang, 2011; Franks, 2010; Ray, 2008; Terzis, 2008; Allen and Seaton, 1999; Jacquin-Serdal, 1998). Sharp criticism has also arisen concerning the way in which international media reports on these so-called “ethnic” wars (Walzer, 2004; Carruthers, 2004 and 2011; Livingston, 2007; Anderson and Trembath, 2011). Many scholars have argued that the actors involved in ethnic conflicts are often simplified in mainstream media clichés and interventionist narratives (Orford, 2003; Thompson, 2007; Bantimaroudis and Kampanellou, 2009).

This study addressed the question: “*Does Western media framing of different actors in ethnic conflict influence the likelihood of intervention being advocated in the media?*” In order to answer this question, this study used a content analysis of USA, UK and Australian print media, and explored the media framing of conflicts in Rwanda, Kosovo, and East Timor. The study examined newspaper articles prior to intervention and, using Piers Robinson’s media framing model (2000), measured the quantity of “empathetic” and “distancing” coverage in relation to suggestions for intervention.

The results of this study show that simplified representations of these complex conflicts often lead to a dangerous polarisation in Western media. Ethnic conflicts are discussed either within a “barbaric” frame, where readers are presented with well-defined heroes, victims and villains and are encouraged to support intervention; or with a “native” narrative, where the situation is reported as a distant problem between “squabbling tribes”, and the media consumer is encouraged to support non-intervention.

Keywords: Intervention, humanitarian intervention, interventionist narratives, ethnic conflict, media, media framing, war reporting, empathy framing, distance framing, barbaric, primordial, war, genocide, Rwanda, Kosovo, East Timor, Timor Leste, hero, victim, villain.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Tables.....	v
List of Figures	vi
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Thesis	2
1.3 Literature Review	2
1.4 Research Questions and Hypotheses	3
1.5 Methodology	4
Chapter 2 Literature Review	5
2.1 Political Paradigm	5
2.2 Media Matters	11
2.3 Heroes, Victims and Villains: Interventionist Narratives	13
2.4 It's Just the Natives	15
2.5 Empathy vs. Distance Framing	17
2.6 Coding Categories	19
Chapter 3 Methodology	21
3.1 Choosing Case Studies	21
3.2 Conflict Timelines	21
3.3 Selecting Newspapers	23
3.4 Analysis and Coding	24
3.5 Limitations	31
Chapter 4 Findings	33
4.1 Rwanda	33
4.2 Kosovo	42
4.3 East Timor	48
Chapter 5 Rwanda, Kosovo and East Timor: Comparing the Three Conflicts	54
5.1 Centre-stage: How Media Focus Differs in Each Conflict	54
5.2 Not Just Quantity but Quality: Are Actors Portrayed Differently in Each Conflict?	56
5.3 Dissention Amongst the Ranks: Do the Newspapers Differ?	61
Chapter 6 Conclusions	64
6.1 The "Ethnic" Conflict Framework	64
6.2 Exceptions for Barbarians	65
6.3 The Exception to the Exception: Natives	65
6.4 Who's Who: The West Needs Identifiable Players	66
6.5 Heroes and Victims	67
6.6 Villains Wanted: Identifying the "Bad Guy"	69
6.7 Location, Location, Location	70
6.8 Summary of Conclusions	72
References.....	73

List of Tables

Table 1: Actor Categories	26
Table 2: Coding for Empathy and Distance Framing.....	31
Table 3: Inter-coder Test Results.....	32
Table 4: Actors Identified in References, Rwanda.....	36
Table 5: Character of Actors in Rwandan Conflict	37
Table 6: Role of Actors in Rwandan Conflict	38
Table 7: Actions Proposed for Internal and External Parties, Rwanda	39
Table 8: Actions Proposed for External Parties, Rwanda, by Newspaper.....	40
Table 9: Actors Identified in References, Kosovo	43
Table 10: Character of Actors in Kosovo Conflict	44
Table 11: Role of Actors in Kosovo Conflict.....	45
Table 12: Actions Proposed for External Parties, Kosovo.....	46
Table 13: Actions Proposed for External Parties, Kosovo, by Newspaper	46
Table 14: Actors Identified in References, East Timor.....	49
Table 15: Character of Actors in East Timor Conflict	50
Table 16: Role of Actors in East Timor Conflict*	50
Table 17: Actions Proposed for Internal Parties, East Timor.....	51
Table 18: Actions Proposed for External Parties, East Timor, by Newspaper	52
Table 19: Actors Identified in References	54
Table 20: Character References of Actors*	56
Table 21: Actors' Role in Conflict	58
Table 22: Actions Suggested for External Parties, *N/A section removed.....	59
Table 23: Roles' Impact on Suggestions for External Parties, *N/A removed	60
Table 24: Suggestions for Internal Parties, Divided by Newspaper	61
Table 25: Suggestions for External Parties, Divided by Newspaper	62

List of Figures

Figure 1: Estimated Pace of Genocide in Rwanda	34
Figure 2: Calls for Intervention into Rwanda	41
Figure 3: Calls for Intervention into Kosovo	47
Figure 4: Calls for Intervention into East Timor	52

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

Since the end of the Cold War, international politics has shifted its focus from inter-state war to intra-state conflict. Violence appears to no longer pit state against state, but governments against insurgents, and ethnic group against ethnic group. When civil war erupted in the 1990s in Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia, East Timor and the Solomon Islands – to name a few – the conflicts were understood in the international arena as “ethnic” conflicts: violence arising from deep-rooted, ethnic animosity between rival groups. This “ethnic hatred” framework quickly became the prevalent explanation for conflicts around the world during this time (Jordanova, 2001: 829; see also Crawford and Lipschutz, eds, 1998; Allen and Seaton, 1999).

Coupled with this shift was the rise of “humanitarian intervention”, the use of military force in other states to provide aid and protect human rights. The emerging norm of humanitarian intervention into ethnic conflicts, and its supposed contradiction to the protection of sovereign states, has been much debated in international politics and academia. Some politicians and scholars support intervention as upholding human rights, pointing to the Responsibility to Protect doctrine (see for example Dowden, 2004: 283), while others criticise intervention, referring to the United Nations charter’s protection of state borders (see for example Kuperman, 2008; Dinnen, 2008). Regardless of the academic debate, humanitarian intervention has occurred in many conflicts, with a range of perceived successes and failures. The 1992-93 US-led intervention into the conflict in Somalia is widely referred to as a “debacle” and raised concern for interveners ability to keep missions on-task – the popular political phrase “crossing the Mogadishu line” sprung from the US involvement in Somalia and refers to the consequences of becoming too involved in intervention (Clarke and Herbst, 1996: 70; see also Clark, 1993). Humanitarian intervention into East Timor and the Solomon Islands were, on the other hand, understood as more successful and, in the case of East Timor, even criticised for being overdue (Kuperman, 1999; Cotton, 2001; Ponzio, 2005). Reactions to interventions into Bosnia and Kosovo remain divided (Kempf, 1999; McGwire, 2000), while the international community’s failure to intervene in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda has been widely criticised (Kuperman, 2000b; Dowden, 2004). With such mixed reviews, it is little wonder that humanitarian intervention has provided rich fodder for academic studies, particularly in political and media studies.

Media's role in intervention also remains a cause of much debate. Some scholars argue that media greatly influences domestic and foreign policies, while others suggest that media acts as a mouth-piece for political elites, and many propose that the relationship is more complex (for media and government relationships see Hallin, 1986; Bennett, 1990; Livingston and Eachus, 1995; Livingston, 2005). Media studies concerning humanitarian intervention, specifically, have focused mainly on the use of "framing" (see Entman, 1993 and 2004; Robinson, 2000; Carruthers, 2011 and 2000; Hawkins, 2011). Framing refers to a constant process of selection and exclusion in representation of the nature of the conflict, the conflict's actors and the conflict's relevant moral issues (Entman, 2004: 5). This study is based within these debates, and further expands the field of analysis of media framing of intervention.

1.2 Thesis

This study focused on the Western media frames used to represent recent ethnic conflicts in the lead up to humanitarian intervention. It critiqued the way in which three specific conflicts were portrayed in international media; the 1994 Rwandan Genocide, the US-led intervention in Kosovo and the Australian-led intervention in East Timor. This study explored the framing used to discuss the violence in all three examples of "ethnic" conflict, and the impact such framing had on suggestions made for or against international intervention in Western media.

1.3 Literature Review

In order to contextualise this study, a literature review was conducted to explore existing theories on Western media portrayals of intervention in ethnic conflict. Within media representations of ethnic violence and subsequent intervention into the conflict, several theories have emerged concerning the role of "heroes", "victims" and "villains" (see Wolfsfeld, 1997; Iordanova, 2001; Orford, 2003; Thompson, 2007). Western media has been accused of relying on these stereotypes and clichés in the representation of ethnic conflict (Allen and Seaton, 1999; Orford, 2003; Barkawi, 2004). This study examined the extent to which media frames of heroes, victims and villains were utilised in portrayals of the conflict in Rwanda, Kosovo and East Timor. It also explored the narratives used in Western media when clearly defined characters were *not* present in media coverage of a conflict. Scholars have argued that a lack of clear binary opposition in ethnic conflicts has led to reduced interest by policy makers, the media and the public (see Jacquin-Serdal, 1998; Fein, 2000; Shaw, 2011; Thompson, 2007). This study explored the hypothesis that some conflicts are

ignored or misunderstood because of the inability for Western media to identify traditional hero/victim/villain narratives.

Literature has highlighted a distinction between ethnic conflicts which are identified as “barbaric” situations, and those which are deemed “native” problems. It has been proposed that “barbaric” ethnic conflicts are framed as a violation of human rights, with clear victims and villains, and are portrayed as worthy of intervention (Fernández-Armesto, 2001; Jordanova, 2001; Orford, 2003). “Native” conflicts, on the other hand are often represented as confusing battles between primitive people, and are distanced from the Western reader as conflicts better left alone (Thompson, 2007; Fowler and Sarkin, 2010).

1.4 Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study sought to answer the question: *“Does Western media framing of different actors in ethnic conflict influence the likelihood of intervention being advocated in the media?”*

This question, given the theories explained in the literature review, evolved into the following hypotheses:

- 1) When ethnic conflicts are framed as “barbaric” situations (involving heroes, victims and villains), intervention is promoted in the media.**
- 2) When ethnic conflicts are framed as “native” situations (stemming from ancient hatreds), at least one of the three players – heroes, victims or villains – is missing, and intervention is not promoted.**

In testing these hypotheses, insights were also attained by addressing the following sub questions:

- 1) What media frames are used to represent “barbaric” conflicts, and how do they compare to the frames used for “native” conflicts?*
- 2) What kind of media frames lead to the promotion of international intervention into ethnic conflicts, and what kind correlate with support for non-intervention?*
- 3) Do the media frames used to represent ethnic conflicts differ, depending on the geographic location of the conflict, or the geographic location of the news in which they appear?*
- 4) Why are some ethnic conflicts depicted as barbaric (and warranting intervention) and some as native (and not worthy of intervention)?*

The next section discusses the methodology used to answer these questions.

1.5 Methodology

A content analysis was conducted of Western media coverage prior to the genocide in Rwanda, the intervention into Kosovo and the intervention into East Timor. Using Piers Robinson's empathy and distance framing model (2000) as a basis, a comparison of these three very different conflicts identified patterns in the type of coverage the conflicts received. More importantly, the empathy/distance model enabled a direct comparison of the kind of coverage *individual parties* involved in the conflict received. To Robinson's model, this study added the variables of different "characters" or "actors" in the conflict (such as "heroes", "victims" and "villains") for analysis. For example: were the East Timorese portrayed as victims in a similar way to the Kosovo Albanians, or to the Rwandan Tutsi people? Were the Indonesian military, Serbian authorities or Hutu militia identified as villains? Did the West and its role as a potential hero come into play? Finally, the content analysis allowed an assessment of the relationship between the framing of the actors involved in the conflict and suggestions made for international intervention.

While most media studies of this nature have so far focused on US newspapers, this study compared coverage in leading US, UK and Australian newspapers. *The Times* in London, the *New York Times* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* were all reviewed, sampling 50 articles from each paper during the prelude of each conflict. Media studies to date have also largely focused on reporting *during* conflict, ignoring the framing of conflicts prior to international intervention. This study explored media coverage before potential foreign intervention, examining the framing of the conflict and the way in which the option of intervention is presented.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This study investigates how conflicts are understood in the lead up to intervention, and what frameworks are used to portray them to the wider international community. Political and academic literature in the fields of humanitarian intervention, just war theory, media and conflict, and media framing is extensive and this study draws on elements from each. The following literature review provides a brief overview of the political context of intervention; critiques existing “ethnic conflict” literature; examines previous research into media’s role in conflict; and explores media’s specific role in representing different actors in “ethnic” conflicts.

2.1 Political Paradigm

Sovereignty So Far

Modern international relations have, since the signing of the *Treaty of Westphalia* in 1648, been based on the concept of the sovereign nation (Zartman, 2010: 3). Contemporary international law has established support for the protection of sovereign rights, with the *UN Charter* stating that members should refrain from threatening the “territorial integrity” or “political independence” of another state (article 2.4). However, since the end of the Cold War, inter-state wars have given way to intra-state conflicts, with increasing political focus on military action in “humanitarian intervention” (Mednicoff, 2006: 373; Fein, 2000: 49; Kuperman, 2004: 314). Humanitarian intervention is defined in this study as “the use of military force in other states to halt human rights abuses or otherwise promote human rights” (Heinze, 2006: 20). The *UN Charter*, despite protecting nation-states, has been interpreted by some international lawyers and theorists as making an exception to state sovereignty in the case of widespread human rights violation (Wheeler, 2000: 2). This interpretation is largely based on the *Responsibility to Protect* document, released in 2001 by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, which outlines the duty of other nations to intervene in states where mass atrocities are occurring (Thakur and Weiss, 2009: 22; Fowler and Sarkin, 2010: 1). This exception to the general rule of non-intervention is a subset of one of the largest contemporary political debates: whether or not there exists a case for *justified war* (Slaughter-Burley et al, 1994: 18; Goodman, 2006: 107).

The argument between upholding a state's sovereign right and the need to intervene to protect individual human rights has emerged from a much wider paradigm which focuses on "just war" theory. Early theorists, such as the Christian scholars Thomas Aquinas and Augustine, debated the possibility of virtuous war (Miller, 2002: 174), as did the influential Dominican friar Francisco de Vitoria in the sixteenth century (1991: 303) and Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius in the seventeenth-century (Goodman, 2006: 107; Holzgrefe and O'Keohane, 2003: 26). The debate raised by these scholars, and numerous others, has led to the creation of the *Charter of the United Nations*, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, and the *Responsibility to Protect* document (Kuperman 2008: 49). However, as long as state sovereignty remains the foundation of international relations, intervention of any kind will be examined under scrutiny (Slaughter-Burley et al, 1994: 28), and the concept of humanitarian intervention has been heavily criticised in theory and practice (Kuperman, 2008: 49; Rieff 2002: 112; Williams and Bellamy, 2006; Bilder, 1969: 173; Weiss, 2001: 20).

Exceptions for "Barbarians"

An important classic political theorist whose ideas are often not considered in the humanitarian intervention debate is John Stuart Mill. One early line of thinking in which humanitarian intervention was proposed as a legitimate exception to non-intervention was in Mill's 1859 work *A Few Words on Non-Intervention*. Mill argued against sovereign states intervening in each other's affairs but believed in an exception to that rule in the case of "barbarians" (1984a: 119). Mill believed that nations deemed "barbarous" would only benefit from being "conquered and held in subjection by foreigners" (1984a: 119) and divided the world into civilised and uncivilised nations (2006: 257). Mill defined "barbarians" as having limited capabilities, a lack of homogenous national sentiment and an inability to reciprocate in international agreements (2006: 259). He rejected his usual doctrine of non-intervention in the case of dealing with barbarians, and claimed that intervening in the case of barbaric nations is likely to be for their own benefit (Mill, 2006: 259). Mill argued that "barbarous nations" had no rights as a nation, except the right to strive towards becoming a "civilised" nation with legitimate status (Mill, 2006: 259). The writings of Mill and other classic political theorists may seem extreme in a contemporary context; however the distinction between "civilised" and "barbaric" nations has resonated throughout international relations since Mill's original writings.

Some contemporary scholars have argued that Mill identified problems which are intrinsic and timeless in international relations (Prager, 2005: 621). Indeed, Mill's justifications for intervention can be identified in recent political rhetoric. Western leaders' prolific use of the

words “uncivilised” and “barbaric” in defence of recent military interventions is well-documented (Kuusisto, 1999; Fernández-Armesto, 2001: 1; Jordanova, 2001: 828). US Generals and the former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton pointed to “barbaric” acts in Iraq to justify a US presence (World News Today, 2010), former British prime minister Tony Blair spoke of action in Kosovo as “saving civilisation” (Kuusisto, 1999; Fernández-Armesto, 2001: 1; Jordanova, 2001: 828), and representatives in East Timor justified an Australian intervention into the “barbaric” situation there (*Lateline*, 1999). While Mill was referring to whole cultures as barbaric, the more recent examples have focused on a specific government or leader and their actions as barbaric. However, it is important to note that while the context and application has changed, the rhetoric has remained the same – as has the cultural supremacy and perceived right to overpower “barbarians”. Law professor Anne Orford suggested in her work that international law portrays the need to intervene in other states as a way to “protect and look after the people of ‘failed states’” (2003: 11). She argued that this attitude, and the forms of dependence set up in post-conflict ‘peace-building’ situations, seem to “rehearse colonial fantasies about the need for benevolent tutelage of uncivilised people who were as yet unable to govern themselves” (2003: 11). The advocacy of “civilised” cultures intervening in “barbaric” ones is not exclusive to the colonial era; the assumption of supremacy continues to exist in intervention rhetoric today.

While intervention against “barbarism” may have roots in the desire to help others, its application often leaves much to be desired (Weiss, 2001: 20; Kuperman, 2008: 49). Even when humanitarian intervention is accepted in theory, it is thwarted by unenforceable international law and inconsistencies in its implementation (Holzgrefe and O’Keohane 2003: 15). It is also heavily dependent on domestic politics – something that appears to be largely overlooked in theories focusing on international law. Some academics and politicians have argued that intervention could have saved hundreds of thousands of lives in situations such as Rwanda (Dowden, 2004: 283), and did save lives in Bosnia. However, others have suggested that humanitarian intervention may in fact be counter-productive – leaving situations worse than they would be without intervention (Kuperman, 2008: 75). A dependency on international forces in post-conflict stages has been heavily condemned, and the emerging norm of humanitarian intervention has been criticised for triggering and emboldening rebellion from non-state actors (Kuperman, 2008: 75). Others have further argued that economic, political and trade interventions *prior* to military humanitarian intervention are overlooked in the wake of humanitarian crises (Crawford and Lipschutz, eds, 1998; Orford, 2003). This study investigates *how* conflicts are represented and understood in this time period – the lead up to a potential military intervention.

The “Ethnic” Conflict Framework

The “ethnic hatred” framework that became the prevalent explanation for conflicts in the 1990s has been labelled a misleading one (Bowen, 1996: 3; Crawford and Lipschutz, eds, 1998; Allen and Seaton, 1999; Iordanova, 2001: 829). Academics have disputed what “ethnic conflict” is and whether conflicts labelled “ethnic” are truly ethnic in nature. Part of the criticism of political studies that focus on ethnic conflict lies in the shifting definitions of the term “ethnicity”. Hale argues in his work, *Explaining Ethnicity*, that although scholars often regard “ethnicity” as an important phenomenon in politics, “nothing close to a consensus has emerged about not only what its effects are but also what it is” (2004: 258). The concept of “ethnicity” is ambiguous and difficult to define (Allen, 1999: 28; Grosfoguel, 2004: 1; Hale, 2004: 459). In this context, the broad label of “ethnic” conflict becomes problematic in political literature.

Anthony Smith, one of the leading academics in the study of nationalism, criticised the conventional view of ethnic groups as “homogeneous, stable and enduring communities” (2009: 41). Shortcomings in previous studies conducted on ethnic conflicts stem from the assumption that ethnic groups are monolithic, when in reality ethnic groups have internal divisions, and are not permanent concepts (Kuperman 2004: 348; see also Anderson, 1991). Ethnicity, from an anthropological point of view, is a “fluid” entity, a concept that is “negotiated”, rather than stagnant and permanent (Allen, 1999: 28). Political economist David Keen surmised that because “ethnic” conflicts are often framed as having “historic causes”, a region’s violent history “seduces us into accepting ethnic divisions as fixed and inevitable” (1999: 90).

Many academics have also criticised the assumption that “ethnic” wars stem from ancient hatreds and deep-rooted, irreconcilable differences (see Crawford and Lipschutz, eds, 1998; Allen and Seaton eds, 1999; Orford: 2003; Ray, 2008; Terzis, 2008; Tang, 2011). Long-term observers have suggested that the misguided understanding of ethnicity has led to inaccurate interpretations of conflicts, such as those in former Yugoslavia (Glenny, 1992; Bowen, 1996: 3; Allen and Seaton, 1999). Ethnic tensions were portrayed as the cause of the violence when the crisis was “equally a product of modern capitalist international relations” (Orford, 2003: 12). Behind the “ethnic war” claims were political and economic battles between world powers. Professor Tim Allen warned of the dangers of using ethnicity as a straightforward explanation of war and suggested that ethnic explanations of conflicts target social groups as “inherently pre-disposed to violence”, and that this contrasts “their primal barbarity” with “our humanitarianism” (Allen and Seaton, 1999: 31).

Despite growing academic concerns for the broad application of the “ethnic conflict” label, recent outbreaks of violence have been attributed to ancient ethnic rivalries, rather than considering the wider context in which conflict exists. Rhetoric employed by Western powers to justify recent interventions has often included the terms “barbaric” or “failed”. For example, humanitarian intervention in the Solomon Islands in 2003 was portrayed in the news as a necessary response to a “state failure” (Wainwright, 2003: 145). Ten years prior to intervention into East Timor, Roman Catholic Bishop Carlos Belo accused the Indonesian government of human rights abuses and described the system as “barbaric” (New York Times, 22 January 1989). Ann Wigglesworth of Caritas described the suffering in East Timor later as “so barbaric”, “so inhuman” and claimed it was “difficult to understand how human beings can act like that” (Lateline, 1999). Similarly, the United States Commission on Security and Co-operation in Europe declared that a particular massacre in Kosovo prior to intervention was “barbaric” and that the violence was the responsibility of Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic (Helsinki Commission News, 1999).

The Exception to the Exception

The descriptions of failed states and barbaric situations, while arguably correct, classify the nations involved as “exceptions” to the non-intervention political theory. However, if ethnic violence involving barbarism is, as previous literature suggests, usually framed as a situation warranting international intervention, then what happened in Rwanda? In 1994, Belgian Peacekeepers were withdrawn from Kigali, Rwanda, during the onset of genocide, contrary to expectations that developed nations would intervene in such situations (Clark, 2005: 115). The conflict in Rwanda was portrayed in Western media as “confusing” and not worthy of international intervention, despite the genocide occurring there (Thompson, 2007: 160; Fowler and Sarkin, 2010: 14, 15). It was not until the worst of the genocide was over that the international community considered intervention (Kuperman, 2000b: 98; Fowler and Sarkin, 2010: 2). Why such an event went unrecognised, or was ignored, for so long is a question that has plagued political theorists, but one explanation lies in a justification identifiable in Mill’s work: *the exception to the exception*.

After discussing the legitimate intervention into “barbaric” situations, Mill went on to express an opportunity to *refuse* to intervene in so-called “native” conflicts – an attitude that also appears prevalent in contemporary political discourse. Mill argued, in his 1859 essay, against intervention when the contest is “only with native rulers, and with such native strength as those rulers can enlist in their defence” (2006: 262). He believed that in such a case there was little assurance that intervention, even if successful, would be for the good of the people

(2006: 262), and adopted a 'let-them-fight-it-out-amongst-themselves' approach to "native" battles. Mill suggested that a nation devoid of freedom and democracy must look to its own people to overthrow despotic leaders, rather than international intervention. This Darwinian approach to understanding foreign conflicts has permeated international relations since Mill's time.

In 1989 political scientist Francis Fukuyama released an essay labelled *The end of History?*, a work that reflected Mill's attitude towards leaving "native" conflicts alone. Fukuyama argued that a liberal democratic state was the ultimate goal to which a "civilised" nation could aspire (1989). This, in turn, implied that states embroiled in ethnic wars were "uncivilised" and had not reached their full potential, or legitimately exercised their full rights, as a nation state. Fukuyama highlighted political views of the time in his description of civil and tribal wars as "ancient conflicts" and believed that "clearly, the vast bulk of the Third World remains very much mired in history, and will be a terrain of conflict for many years to come" (1989). Fukuyama's dismissal of conflicts in the third world as seemingly necessary battles on the road to evolution, while controversial in the academic world, offers an insight into a popular opinion held regarding intervention. While Fukuyama has since reassessed his views, particularly after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the USA, his theory on non-intervention is evident in the international reaction to several other conflicts.

The suggestion that the West should not intervene in complex conflicts in far-away countries can be recognised in much of the international political rhetoric concerning refusals to intervene (Keen, 1999: 82). Attributing the cause of a conflict to "ethnicity" has become a way of "laying not just entire blame, but responsibility for the entire circumstances at the door of the natives" (Fardon, 1999: 76). Primordial explanations of wars identified as "native" ethnic conflicts attribute conflict to "ancient hatreds" and ingrained ethnic differences (Crawford and Lipschutz, 1998: 200; Livingston and Euachas, 2000). This understanding suggests that "little can be done" and that others are encouraged to feel that the best solution is to "stand aside" (Fardon, 1999: 76). Former British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd stated that in particular cases it is "perfectly defensible" for the international community to "stay out of the way until those concerned have come to their senses" (as quoted in Keen, 1999: 82). Clearly, Mill's interpretation of how to deal with "native" conflicts foreshadowed future thinking, and examples of calls to resist intervention in so-called "ethnic" battles continue in contemporary political arguments.

2.2 Media Matters

Media's Role in Conflict

The media industry has been the focus of many studies for its role in conflict (see Livingston, 1997 and 2011; Carruthers, 2000; Hawkins, 2002; Wolfsfeld, 2004; Fowler and Sarkin, 2010). Political philosopher Michael Walzer argued that “it may be possible to kill people on a very large scale more efficiently than ever before, but it is much harder to kill them in secret” (2002: 29). With modern communication technologies allowing rapid media response to catastrophes, theorists are constantly investigating the influence this can have on a nation's foreign policy. This impact, labelled the “CNN effect”, was extensively explored in the 1990s by leading scholars Steven Livingston and Piers Robinson, with Livingston defining the CNN effect broadly as the “idea that media attention to distant crises can trigger policy responses” (2007: 188; for a full description see Livingston, 1997 and Livingston and Eachus, 1995). This study does not wade into the CNN effect, however, it could be used as the first part of a CNN effect study, as it examines the media framing of conflicts.

Amongst the criticism of media behaviour, and media studies, lays Peter Jakobsen's argument that academic focus on conflict media “misses the point” (2000). Following Livingston's definitions of the CNN effect, Jakobsen argued that global media fails to take an interest in conflicts in their pre-violence phase, ignoring “simmering” problems and focusing only on sensational events. Much of the academic criticism of war reporting stems from this ‘in-and-out’ nature of coverage, which is also labelled “parachute journalism” (Hultman, 1992; also see Allen and Seaton, 1999; Thompson, 2007: 161). US media in particular, is critiqued for reporting international affairs in a “fleeting, ephemeral and all too typically frivolous” manner (Livingston, 2007: 189). Allen and Seaton argue that reporting has become, with new technologies in the media, less insightful and more sensationalist (1999; also see Iordanova, 2001: 830). Academic studies too, have been criticised for their focus on the violent stages of conflict, rather than the pre- and post-violent stages (Gilboa, 2010: 93), which is one of the reasons this study focuses on the stages *prior* to intervention.

Media Framing of Humanitarian Intervention and “Ethnic” Conflict

Frames enable journalists to “package” large amounts of information into more readily accessible stories for domestic audiences (Gitlin, 1980: 7). Journalists rely on cognitive recognition from their readers/viewers, regularly using culturally familiar “frames” in order to quickly convey an understanding of the conflict (Wolfsfeld 1997: 33). “Framing” can be further defined as “selecting some aspects of a perceived reality [to] make them more salient

in a communicating text” (Entman, 1993: 52). In the context of international conflict reporting, this means getting a clear, succinct story across to audiences who may not be educated in the complexities of the situation. Journalists react to specific events in the field and “look for the best narrative fit” (Wolfsfeld; 1997: 35). This reliance on frames, and the selection process involved, has seen media’s role in conflict critiqued as both influential and one with important consequences.

The way in which media frames conflict has an impact on the way the public perceive the need for intervention. Scholars have argued that media images of suffering, and the “frames” presented in news stories, are able to mobilise public sentiment (Orford, 2003; Robinson, 1999; Wolfsfeld, 1997:56 - 73). Media representations of past and present wars can “strengthen or corrode the public willingness to support foreign adventures” (Barkawi, 2004: 115), and therefore framing can potentially influence a government’s decision to intervene in another nation. The measure of this influence is, however, as previously mentioned, much debated (see Hallin, 1986; Bennett, 1990; Livingston, 1997 and 2007; Fowler and Sarkin, 2010: 9).

Sharp criticism has arisen concerning the way in which international media views “ethnic” conflicts specifically (Rosel, 1997: 145; Said, 2001: 146; Kuperman, 2004: 314), and scholars have suggested that conflicts involving ethnic groups are over-simplified in mainstream media frames (Hayden, 1996: 783; Allen and Seaton, 1999; Bantimaroudis and Kampanellou, 2009: 171, 186). Part of the problem lies in media’s general coverage of war itself. Communications analyst Gadi Wolfsfeld argued that one of the questions news people, while perhaps not consciously asking themselves, seek to answer in their attempts to understand and frame conflict is “Who are the good guys?” (1997: 49). He argued that the nature of conflict journalism encourages reporters to find “fault” with one side of the war, usually through identifying “victims” (1997: 53). Wolfsfeld’s identification of the hero/victim narrative in conflict media compliments Orford’s work concerning humanitarian intervention and contributes to the growing literature discussing the way in which media frames ethnic wars.

2.3 Heroes, Victims and Villains: Interventionist Narratives

“...we do prefer to keep our crises simple, stories with a definable beginning and a predictable end. We like our villains to be foreign and our heroes home-grown.” (Ted Koppel, *Nightline*, 1994)

The Hero

Orford provided an insightful perspective on intervention as part of a “familiar heroic narrative” in her work *Reading Humanitarian Intervention* (2003: 158). She argued that a hero/victim narrative is often portrayed in Western media in order to justify intervention, and that this narrative often masks real power relations in the conflict (2003: 158, 159, 171). Orford’s work is part of a limited, but growing, field of feminist, Marxist and post-colonialist critiques in international relations which deal with the issue of identity (see also Morrison, 1992; Kaplan, 1997). Orford argued that legal texts dealing with intervention allow and promote a powerful construction of a “hero” role for the international community (2003: 159). She concluded that this “heroic” narrative has stemmed from an imperialist era, when the hero/victim paradigm “governed encounters between Europe, later the ‘West’ or the ‘international community’, and those colonised or enslaved by Europeans” (2003: 161). Even in an era of decolonisation, the role of the hero is primed for the “civilised, white West” to intervene in other, “darker” and more “barbaric” nations (Morrison, 1992: 44). Serious concerns have been raised for the “imperial” and “patriarchal” attitude of humanitarian intervention discourse, and the media in which it is legitimised (Orford, 2003: 37).

Scholars have identified this “heroic” narrative in media framing of intervention, specifically within coverage of the international community’s involvement in the Kosovo and East Timor conflicts (Orford, 2003: 35; Wolfsfeld, 1997; Iordanova, 2001: 828; Kuusisto, 1999). Orford argued that media reports widely promoted the image of NATO as a “protector” of Kosovar Albanians from Serbian ethnic cleansing (169). The intervention into Kosovo was, indeed, described by Tony Blair as an act in defence of “civilisation” (Fernández-Armesto, 2001: 1). Similarly, prior to intervention into East Timor, Australian Prime Minister John Howard described the situation as “deplorable” and said that “innocent people” had “insufficient protection” (Lateline, 1999). Such justifications offer a narrative in which the international community “rescues those passive victims who suffer at the hands of bullies and tyrants” (Orford, 2003: 35). This construction of the international community as a “white knight” coming to rescue victims of humanitarian crises not only requires the role of the “hero”, but also the characters defined as “helpless victims” (Orford, 2003).

The Victim

Orford claimed that the humanitarian intervention narrative often produces images of people who live in states targeted for intervention as “starving, powerless, suffering, abused or helpless victims” in need of rescue (2003: 174). Since World War II, images of the ‘third world’ have solidified an impression of poverty and helplessness in the wake of global development (Escobar, 1995). Legal scholar Patricia Williams has identified descriptions of people of states in Africa, Asia, South America and Eastern Europe as “childlike”, “primitive”, “barbaric” or “unable to govern themselves” (1995: 204-5), and she has highlighted a divide between the “civilised” hero and “barbaric” victims. Professor Sinclair Dinnen argued that intervention missions are usually “derived from ‘western’ blue-prints about how states are supposed to work”, implying a superiority of the West over other, lesser states (2008: 339). This notion of West superiority in intervention literature and law is not new, Mill and his contemporaries assumed such a role, and the colonial era relied on this attitude – one which Orford labelled a “hierarchy of race” (2003: 174).

The role of the “victim” in media framing of ethnic conflict, and the empathy it produces in readers, was extensively explored by Robinson (2000, 2002). Robinson’s description of victims was used in the methodology of this study and his method of identifying such frames is further discussed in the next section of this review, which explores empathy and distance framing.

The Villain

If the victim and hero are well-established roles in humanitarian intervention discourse, who is playing the part of the villain? Walzer argued that intervention rhetoric is “extremely dependent on the victim/victimizer, good guys/bad guys model” and claimed that forceful intervention may not be politically possible without it (2004: 71). Walzer criticised the UN’s initial “weakness” in Bosnia as a failure to successfully identify the “bad guys” involved, therefore failing to justify a more forceful intervention earlier in the conflict (2004: 71, also see Iordanova, 2001: 828). However, the role of the “bad guy” lacks sufficient academic investigation. Image theorists have conducted thorough research into the way a nation’s media frames an “enemy” to its public (see Ottosen 1995; Alexander et al: 2005; Merskin 2004; Steuter and Wills, 2010; Bahador, 2012), but less research has been conducted concerning images of an aggressor in humanitarian crises. While previous literature has covered the need for heroes and victims in an interventionist narrative, this study extends the theory to reveal the importance of an identifiable “villain” prior to humanitarian intervention.

2.4 It's Just the Natives

A Dangerous Story

So, what happens when the ethnic conflict in question does not neatly fall into the hero/victim/villain framework? When violence does not present two clearly-defined sides, the default framing is that of an “eruption of mindless violence”, often stemming from “ancient tribal hatreds” (Keen: 1999, 81). This framing is different to the “barbaric” frames mentioned earlier, in that there is no “tyrant that needs removing” or “victim group that requires rescue” (Walzer, 2004: 70). Instead, there appears a framing of “native conflict”, a primitive battle too difficult for the Western world to understand, let alone intervene in.

This framing of native battles better left to “sort it out themselves” is evidence of Mill’s attitude appearing in contemporary politics. Mill’s suggestion that “native” conflicts should be left well alone reoccurs in justifications for non-intervention in situations such as Rwanda and early Bosnia – cases that are put in the ‘too hard basket’ for Western nations to understand and intervene in, due to their “ancient” and “deep-rooted” hatreds. Fowler and Sarkin showed in their work that the “ancient enmity” frame discouraged the international community from taking any sort of action in Rwanda (2010: 15). Political analysts Fowler and Sarkin suggested that this frame implies – as Mill initially proposed – that the hatred between two groups is “rooted so deeply that no intervention from the West could ever improve relations between the groups” (2010: 15). Sociologist Stanley Cohen noted that if media present a country's violence as “just another episode in a centuries-long Darwinian struggle for power, a twist in the endless cycle of retaliation which is beyond any imaginable solution, then bystander ‘passivity’ is hardly surprising” (2001: 177).

Africa: Left in the Dark

“Having been carved up and colonized by European powers and turned into pawns, knights and rooks on a cold war chessboard by the superpowers, Africa now faces a devastating new problem: indifference.” (Stephen Holmes, *New York Times*, 1993)

Many scholars and journalists have criticised the lack of media focus on African news in general, and African conflicts in particular (Livingston, 2007; Anderson and Trembath, 2011; Allen and Seaton, 1999; Kuperman, 2000a; Hawkins, 2008 and 2011). A 2008 content analysis of media articles from the *New York Times* showed that the volume of news coverage Africa received had increased since 1996 but also showed that “crisis” news

remained the predominant type of coverage (Osunde and Tlou, 1996; Danker-Dake, 2008). A large portion of the cause of this neglect lies in news values. The sensationalist nature of conflict media complies with the dominant values used to select “newsworthy” stories in the mainstream editorial process: immediacy, drama, simplicity and ethnocentricity (Kolstø, 2009:27). Editors and journalists are trained to focus on conflicts and events which impact on their readership, with African conflicts often understood as removed from the reality of the West.

Anderson and Trembath compiled a thorough history of Australian conflict reporting and argued that coverage of Africa is “predisposed to cultural assumptions that life there is held more cheaply than in the West” (2011: 283). They observed that mass atrocities are usually associated with the non-Western world and they acknowledge the higher news value placed on Western individuals (2011: 283). The idea that news values favour localised and ethnocentric stories is not a revelation, and the concept has been extensively analysed (see for example Beaudoin and Thorson, 2001; Gans, 2004; Anderson and Trembath, 2011; Chang *et al*, 2012). This study acknowledges the well-documented lack of African news that has dogged past media sources and goes on to explore the *quality* of reporting concerning Africa.

The Tale of Two Tribes

In no place else is the framing of ethnic conflicts as “native” squabbles more obvious than in coverage of Africa. Mainstream media, in particular, has been condemned for its erroneous reporting of African wars (see Morrison, 1992; Styan, 1999; Hawkins, 2008; Danker-Dake, 2008; Fowler and Sarkin, 2010). Sociologist Martin Shaw argued that in cases such the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, the media found the politics at the time even more difficult to deal with than Kurdistan or Bosnia, and could “only describe the conflict in ethnic terms” (1996: 172). Media coverage of a complex situation reduced it to “simple ethnic categories” (Shaw, 1996: 173) and reduced the situation to fighting between two “tribes” (Philo, 1998: 50). A reporter ‘on the ground’ during the Rwandan genocide, Mark Doyle, admitted that there is a “general tendency to portray Africa as chaotic, the Dark Continent” (Thompson, 2007: 154), and noted that part of Western media’s dilemma with identifying the genocide before it was too late was because the organised attacks “didn’t really fit the media image of chaotic Africa” (Thompson, 2007: 154).

Many reports on the Rwandan conflict discussed the “wild” or “mad” nature of the people involved (Philo, 1998: 50; Carruthers, 2004: 164) and the terms “tribe”, “ethnicity” and often references to Joseph Conrad’s fiction novel *Heart of Darkness* were frequently elided together

(Allen, 1999: 31). For example, when conflict in Rwanda was peaking in 1994, Washington Post columnist Richard Cohen titled one of his articles “Tribalism: the Human Heart of Darkness”, arguing that such violence could not occur in the United States (April 21, 1994, as in Fowler and Sarkin, 2010: 187). The “them” and “us” approach to African conflict has seen media representations distance Western readers (Fowler and Sarkin, 2010: 187; Anderson and Trembath, 2011: 263, 282; Shaw, 2012: 86), and this study seeks to directly compare the framing of “ethnic” conflict in Africa to “ethnic” conflict in other parts of the world.

2.5 Empathy vs. Distance Framing

“The bottom line is that wars are things which happen to non-Western people, not to us.”
Martin Shaw (1996: 8)

Previous studies of media framing have identified two different framing models, those which *empathise* and those which *distance* (Robinson, 2000; see also Preston, 1996; Shaw, 1996 and 2012). Robinson used the empathy/distance model to measure media power during humanitarian crises in particular, and investigated whether it influences government decisions to intervene (2000). He argued that media coverage of war may be framed to empathise with suffering people, therefore encouraging support for intervention; or alternatively, coverage may allow an emotional distance, separating the reader from those in conflict and therefore promoting of *non-intervention* (2000: 616).

Robinson’s work involving the framing of victims (2000) relied somewhat on the work of Shaw (1996). Shaw argued that the media has significant influence on the likelihood of international intervention (1996: 156). He conducted a study of television and print media representations and international responses to the 1991 Gulf War (1996), and investigated why some conflicts (such as the Kurdish revolt against Saddam Hussein’s regime) received extensive media coverage – and intervention – while others (such as the Shia people’s revolt against Hussein) did not. He questioned why brutal conflicts in Angola, Cambodia, and (at the time) Afghanistan received so little diplomatic and media attention when other, lesser conflicts were widely publicised (1996: 4, 159). As well as strategic interests, Shaw concluded that certain conflicts warrant media pressure for intervention because of their “histories of linkage” with the West (1996: 8 - 10). Western media focuses predominantly on conflicts where there is perceived cultural similarities with those in involved.

Empathy Framing

Empathy frames traditionally highlight the human-rights angle of a conflict, and therefore promotes the policy of intervention (Shaw, 2012: 83). This sort of framing is most commonly achieved through the representation of a “victim” (Robinson, 2000). Media analyst Alison Preston described this kind of framing as a “narrative template of proximity” and claimed that the “ordinary individual” is highlighted in order to create feelings of empathy in the media consumer (1996: 112). Policy-makers often invoke empathy framing to justify intervention into humanitarian crises (Robinson, 2002: 29). For example, imagery of starving children was used by George Bush Senior to justify US intervention into Somalia (Robinson, 2002: 29). Through empathy framing, Western readers are encouraged to identify with the heroic character in interventionist narratives, reading stories concerning victims as a call for help or protection (Orford, 2003: 166).

Empathy framing is further achieved through the “infantilisation” of so-called barbaric nations and people. Media’s portrayal of people of Africa, Asia, South America, and Eastern Europe as “childlike, primitive, barbaric or unable to govern themselves” (Orford, 2003: 172) suggests an infant-like state, in need of protection and guidance from “civilised” nations. In readings of such interventionist literature, the attributes of the Western, modern, developed world are “valued over, and defined against, the supposed attributes of the backward, non-Western world” (Barkawi, 2004: 118). This assumption reflects an imperial, colonial attitude permeating contemporary intervention rhetoric.

Distance Framing

Distance framing, on the other hand, is either directly or indirectly supportive of non-intervention (Shaw, 2012: 83). This kind of framing portrays parties involved in both sides of a conflict as “different” from the reader, and without the hope of “salvation” from an outside intervener. Distance framing may refer to conflicts as “ancient hatreds”, or containing “deep-rooted problems” that imply an irreconcilable situation – for example, portraying suffering people as members of “warring ‘tribes’” (Robinson, 2000: 616).

Shaw identified the phenomenon as a “*process* of distancing” that occurs in media coverage of foreign conflicts (1996: 8). In his study of the Gulf War, he discovered that the Kurdish people, in their revolt against Saddam Hussein’s regime, were represented as victims and were deemed worthy of intervention by the international community (1996). However, the Shia people, in their revolt in the south of Iraq, were not represented as “innocent” victims, despite the brutal suppression of their rebellion, and were therefore not advocated as a case

for intervention (1996). The way both sides of the Shia conflict were portrayed as guilty of crimes, signifies a distancing in Western media when there is no clearly identifiable “victim”.

Identifying Empathy and Distance Frames

Robinson outlined a set of “descriptors” for coding media frames in his study of US intervention in Bosnia and Operation Allied Force in Kosovo (2000). When analysing media frames Robinson identified a list of terms corresponding with empathy framing, and a list corresponding with distance framing (2000: 616). Examples of empathy descriptors used in relation to the Kosovar Albanian people, and intervention into the conflict, included: “thousands of refugees”, “desperate people”, “rape, torture and executions”, “Old and young . . . suffering from exposure”, “helpless men, women and children”, and “homes reduced to rubble” (Robinson, 2000: 628). These were classified as terms which would evoke pity and concern in the Western media consumer. Descriptors for distance framing included terms such as: “minimize risks rather than maximize results”, “sending mixed messages”, “Kosovo policy jinx”, “shameful miscalculation”, “grievous political mistake”, “we are unprepared”, and “failed to weaken ... Milosevic” (Robinson, 2000: 628). These (often critical) descriptors were understood as discouraging intervention into the situation and therefore distancing the conflict.

2.6 Coding Categories

To Robinson’s empathy and distance framing model, this study adds the analysis of different “characters” or “actors” in the conflict, in order to identify any hero, victim or villain frames used in media coverage. This study largely draws on the coding categories of “actors” used in enemy image literature (see Bahador, 2012; Steuter and Wills, 2010; Merskin, 2004; Ottosen 1995). Much of this literature has focused on the “demonising” of enemy leaders, “dehumanising” of an enemy people, and Bahador’s study, in particular, focused on the “rehumanising” of an enemy people after war (2012). Two of the coding categories Bahador used in his study, which proved particularly relevant to this study, were: “Character Descriptions” (terms which describe the individual actors in a conflict) and “Our Future Actions” (how “we” should respond to the conflict) (2012: 200). Within his “character description” category, Bahador identified six frames, which are listed below, ranging from dehumanisation and demonization to re-humanisation and empathy framing. These frames provided a useful template for analysis and were used in the methodology of this study. Part of the coding analysis of this study was also modelled on Bahador’s options for “Our Future Actions”, which are also listed below.

Character description options, as outlined by Bahador (2012: 200, 201):

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: negative adjectives such as aggressive and irrational. Also includes labelling using loaded words such as communist or terrorist.
3. Differences contrasted: direct comparison of “us” and “them”.
4. Differences highlighted but neutral, not necessarily positive or negative.
5. Similarities highlighted: includes ideas such as being in the same boat, sharing same concerns, and upholding similar values.
6. Positive characteristics: positive adjectives to describe the other side, such as friendly.

Our Future Actions options, as outlined by Bahador (2012: 201):

1. Stop them through force, violence is necessary
2. Stop through non-violent means: for example, appeal to international tribunals or the people themselves
3. Help them: provide aid and assistance; help with their poverty and/or repression.
4. Join them (in situations where cooperation with the people is possible). For example, fight beside them, work with them, and cooperate with them as equals.
5. Step back/withdraw: stop intervening, allow the people to choose their own path, and give their sovereignty.
6. Sympathize with them: understand and listen to them, use tact, and learn/respect their culture and customs.
7. Be cautious: consider our options and the consequences of using violence, for example, think of civilian casualties.

The role of Robinson’s framing model (2000, 2002) and Bahador’s coding categories (2012) in this study is explained in the next section, which discusses the methodology chosen for this thesis.

Chapter 3

Methodology

As culture is constructed through language and textual representations, the ideal way to study a culture is through textual analysis (Plymire, 2005). Many media studies tend to contain either discourse or content analysis methodologies, as well as ethnographies and surveys, with most using a qualitative assessment (Groshek, 2008; Fein, 2000; Ottosen, 1995). Content analysis was therefore employed in this particular study.

3.1 Choosing Case Studies

The “ethnic” conflict case studies chosen for this particular investigation are, chronologically: the lead up to the 1994 Rwandan genocide; the Kosovo conflict of 1998/9 (leading up to NATO’s intervention); and the East Timor violence leading to intervention in 1999. Two of these three conflicts were the subjects of military intervention; the UN sanctioned air strikes on Serbian forces in 1999 in an attempt to halt atrocities in Kosovo (McGwire, 2000: 1) and the deployment troops to East Timor in an Australian-led intervention on 20 September 1999 (Australian Defence Department, 2000). The Rwandan genocide stands out as an exception, leaving the international community wondering why earlier intervention did not occur in such a dire situation (Kuperman, 2000b: 95). These case studies were also chosen for their diversity – this cross-section covers interventions by the US (through NATO), the UN and Australia, as well as focusing on conflicts in Africa, the Pacific and Eastern Europe. Patterns that emerged in media representation of these conflicts have therefore been tested on conflicts from differing geographical and cultural regions. The recent intervention in East Timor was specifically chosen because the region has received limited academic attention compared to the conflicts in Kosovo and Rwanda.

3.2 Conflict Timelines

In order to investigate the media’s representation of the above “ethnic” conflicts prior to intervention, it was necessary to research media coverage from the time of the domestic conflict’s beginning up to the time of any interventions. Defining the “start date” of a conflict is difficult, as is determining when “intervention” occurred. For example, do economic sanctions signify international intervention in a country or does diplomatic pressure from the international community register as intervention? For the purposes of this study,

“intervention” was recognised as the day foreign troops were deployed to, or a foreign military force attacked, the country in question. Indirect interventions, such as economic sanctions or diplomatic facilitation were still analysed in the lead-up to physical foreign intervention, to capture the influence of international influence prior to foreign troops moving in. This study utilised the Uppsala University Peace and Conflict database to determine the “start date” for conflicts, which defines a conflict as active if there is “at least 25 battle-related deaths per calendar year” (2011).

By these definitions, the dates for this study were decided as:

Rwanda

On October 3, 1990, the conflict reached over 25 battle-related deaths. While Rwanda did not receive military intervention, by August 1994, most of the genocide had occurred (Kuperman, 2000b: 100), so this date was selected as the end of the period studied.

Dates: 3 October, 1990 to 1 August, 1994

Kosovo

On March 6, 1998, the conflict reached over 25 battle-related deaths and on March 24, 1999 NATO began bombing Belgrade (McGwire, 2000: 1; UCDP).

Dates: 6 March, 1998 to 24 March, 1999

East Timor

On December 7, 1975, the conflict reached over 25 battle-related deaths. Troops were deployed in an Australian-led intervention on 20 September 1999 (Australian Defence Department, 2000). Due to the extensive length of this conflict, only the escalated violence/media coverage in the year prior to intervention was studied.

Dates: 20 Sept, 1998 to 20 Sept, 1999

3.3 Selecting Newspapers

Most print media studies rely on US newspapers, such as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, understandably, given the USA's disproportionate involvement in international military interventions (Groshek 2008; Balabanova: 2010). This study not only examined articles from major US newspapers but also from major Australian and British newspapers, in order to gain a wider understanding of how ethnic conflicts are portrayed the West. That is not to say that these three nations are the only ones capable or accurately representing "the West". However these three stood out as powerful media drivers and were the main intervention states in the case studies chosen. This study also focused solely on English language media, due to language and resource restrictions, but it is important to note that the conclusions may be applicable in a broader context if further investigated. The impression of the "other" being akin to "barbarian" is, according to Alexander et al, not unique to the West (2005: 27).

One newspaper from each country was selected, and where possible, with the widest circulation and highest readership. In the UK, *The Sun* had the largest circulation, *The Daily Mail* claimed the second largest, and *The Times* was the longest running daily paper. *The Sun* and *The Daily Mail*, however, are tabloid papers and since this study required three comparable papers, *The Times* was chosen. In the US, *The Wall Street Journal* had the highest circulation, followed by *USA Today* and *The New York Times*. However the *Wall Street Journal* is known as a financial publication and *USA Today* targets a very specific readership, so *The New York Times* was chosen for the USA component of this study. In Australia the *Sydney Morning Herald* was the oldest continuously published newspaper, *The Australian* was the biggest-selling national newspaper and *The Age* in Melbourne ranked third in circulation. Due to accessibility, the *Sydney Morning Herald* emerged as the best choice for this study. In an age of media concentration, the three papers chosen came from different news groups in an attempt to gain a cross-section of any bias: *The Times* is owned by News Corporation, *The Sydney Morning Herald* by Fairfax Media and *The New York Times* by The New York Times Company. The newspapers were accessed online, largely from the Dow Jones Factiva database, which contained much of the sample from the study's timeline, but also supplemented by BBC Monitoring, Nexis.com, and online public libraries.

Within each newspaper's archive, 50 articles reporting on the conflicts were selected within the time frame previously indicated. This was done by dividing the total number of articles that addressed the conflict by 50, resulting in "x" number of articles, and then selecting every "x"th article. This resulted in 150 articles for each conflict, and a total of 450 articles.

The following rules were then established for determining and distinguishing units of analysis (UOA):

- A UOA was defined as any one sentence in the article that mentions the country in conflict
- Within each article, up to three UOAs were analysed, in order to identify the range of frames used, but not over-represent any particular story.
- UOAs were read/understood in the context of the whole paragraph/story.
- Headlines did not count as UOAs as they often did not address most of the categories on the coding sheet.
- UOAs which discuss more than one actor (differently) were split into two UOAs (e.g. “The Hutus and Tutsi tribes are fighting each other” was recorded as one UOA, while “The Hutu military is attacking Tutsi civilians” was analysed as two UOAs – once with the Hutu military as the main actor, and a second time with the Tutsi civilians as the main actor). This rule will be clarified once the coding scheme is described in the next section.

Total Numbers

This selection process resulted in a total of 369 sentences from the 150 articles on the Rwandan conflict, 388 sentences for Kosovo and 356 for East Timor, with a total of 1,113 sentences analysed. However, as some of these sentences were further divided into separate units when multiple differing actors were mentioned, a total of 1,746 UOAs were identified and analysed, an average of 1.5 actors mentioned per sentence.

3.4 Analysis and Coding

Using Robinson’s classifications of media framing, this study categorised units of analysis within newspaper articles into those that *empathise* and those that *distance* the “ethnic” conflict reported (2000: 616). This study identified descriptors which either: empathise with the victims of “barbaric” situations (and therefore encourage the reader to support intervention); or distance the ethnic groups in the case studies chosen (reflecting a presumed “exception” to humanitarian intervention concerning “native” conflicts). This study aimed to reveal the extent to which conflicts framed with an empathising angle were portrayed as a nation or a people in need of assistance (unable to help themselves, with barbaric

governments/situations), while those with a distancing frame were represented as native conflicts, too difficult to wade into. The coding categories were determined as: Actor, Character Description, Role in Conflict, Actions Proposed for Internal Parties, and Actions Proposed for External Parties. These categories and the options within them are further discussed below.

Category 1: Actor

An “actor” is one of the participants involved in the conflict. Each UOA analysed was required to have at least one actor. If more than one actor was mentioned using different frames, then the sentence was split into two UOAs for greater precision.

The categories for the “actor” of a unit of analysis were as follows:

1. *Side A’s military force or political leaders (Rwandan Government; Milosevic or Serbian forces, Indonesian government or army)*
2. *Side A people (not military force or leaders, Hutu; Serbians; Indonesian people)*
3. *Side B’s military force or political leaders (RPF/Tutsi; KLA/Albanian separatists; East Timorese/pro-independence forces)*
4. *Side B people (not military force or leaders, Tutsi; ethnic Albanians, East Timorese)*
5. *Both Side A and B people, or country in conflict in general (unidentified, Rwandans; Yugoslavians; both Indonesian and East Timorese).*
6. *Unidentified rebels or militia, operating in country in conflict.*
7. *International community (governments, military powers, UN, NATO, neighbouring countries, or citizens outside of country in conflict)*

*Note: There is no N/A for this category, as any sentence that did not discuss at least one of the parties above was by default, not a valid UOA.

Table 1 outlines the categories of actors specific to each conflict studied.

Table 1: Actor Categories

Actor	Kosovo	East Timor	Rwanda
Side A military	Milosevic or Serbian forces	Indonesian govt. or army	Rwandan Government
Side A people	Serbians	Indonesians	Hutu
Side B military	KLA/Albanian separatists	East Timorese/pro-independence forces	RPF/Tutsi
Side B people	Kosovo Albanians	East Timorese	Tutsi forces
Both Side A and B people	Yugoslavs	Rwandans	Both East Timorese and Indonesians
Unidentified rebels or militia	General reference to rebels/militia	General reference to rebels/militia	General reference to rebels/militia
International Community	Countries other than Serbia/Kosovo	Countries other than Indonesia/East Timor	Countries other than Rwanda

Category 2: Character description

The character framing of those in conflict can have a powerful effect on the reader. In this category, Robinson’s theories on distancing and empathy frames (2000) and Bahador’s (2012: 195-212) methodologies were used, with one end of the scale measuring distance frames, such as “non-human” and “negative” characteristics being attributed to those in conflict, and the other extreme encouraging readers to empathise with actors through “similarities or positive” characteristics being highlighted.

The coding options for this category were as follows:

1. *Non-human characteristics*; Lacking humanity – or emphasis of inhuman traits – dehumanization by likening to other species. For example “Demons”, “monsters”, “animals”, “machines”, “clawing at each other”, references to “jungle” animals etc. Includes mention of vaccine tests carried out on them, rather than on animals and prioritising animals over humans in the conflict.
2. *Negative human characteristics or infantilisation* – e.g. “Savage”, “evil”, “aggressive”, “irrational”, “primitive”, shadowy characteristics – “dark and skulking”, “untrustworthy” etc. Also includes Colonial stereotypes: “Barbaric”, “primitive”, “uncivilised”, “archaic”, “dark

ages”, “undeveloped”, “pre-modern”, “savage”, “tribal”, “corrupt”, “unstable”, “fractured”, “ethnic tension”, engaged in “bush wars” or “ethnic” divides. Also includes differences that are highlighted/contrasted, e.g. “us” compared to “them” and “othering”, “foreign”, “third world”, “unsustainable”, “over-populated”, references to “jungle”, “villages”, “AIDS-ridden”, “cholera epidemics” and “refugees”. *Infantilisation*: “irresponsible”, “unruly”, “child-like”, “squabbles”, suggestions that we are responsible for them in some way, or must protect them is an action – not a character trait. Unable to grasp concept of democracy, in need of foreign rule.

3. *Similarities highlighted or positive characteristics* – “friends”, “in the same boat”, sharing same concerns, upholding similar values. Call for human rights to be upheld. Includes celebrating together. Positive adjectives (eg. “brave”, “passionate”, “loyal”. “powerful allies”).

4. *N/A* – there are no “character” attributes described.

Category 3: Role in conflict

One of the most significant indicators of empathy and distance framing in media coverage of conflicts was the role attributed to the actor discussed. At one extreme, actors were portrayed as “aggressors”, increasing the violence within the conflict and attacking others. One the other end of the scale were “victims”, innocent civilians suffering because of the conflict.

This study identified six options for the roles described in news articles, which are outlined below:

1. *Aggressors* (increasing conflict) - Oppressing others through violent acts. Attacking or planning to attack. Must be a specific reference to violent action being taken/planned. Includes smuggling/stock-piling weapons.

2. *Preventing/delaying peace* – Oppressing others through non-violent acts, refusing to surrender/negotiate/compromise, increasing/maintaining tension in some way, failing to meet peace agreements. Threatening to “react”, “respond” or “defend”, with or without violence, includes fighting back after attacked. Supportive of authority/military force/rebel groups on their side of the conflict. Includes informed passive observers – informed but refusing/neglecting to act (must be obvious). Includes sarcastic articles using quote marks to suggest/imply the opposite, e.g. “The people marched in a “peace” protest.” Ignoring innocents or victims (e.g. “The USA has ignored suffering in Rwanda”).

3. *Forced to act or mislead*. Forced to support war efforts/Forced to make sacrifices to support war. Forced to support the fighting force, e.g. Supplying resources. Includes non-informed – ignorant or lacking information, misled by Government/propaganda/opposition.

4. *Promoting peace* – negotiating and meeting, celebrating together, participating together, showing understanding of the opposition as equals. Includes international threats portrayed as necessary to stop or punish wrongdoings and past or present humanitarian help (e.g. Foreigners living and working as missionaries/teachers/doctors). Includes people shown as unsupportive of war efforts or war-seeking government/leadership/authority – rebellion, lack of confidence, and (if focusing on people) instances of the government killing/silencing dissent. Sending peace-keeping forces. Upholding cease-fire agreements. Voting rather than fighting for rights.

5. *Victims* (or disadvantaged due to the circumstances) – e.g. “Victims”, “denied human rights”, “displaced”, “refugee”, “hungry”, “deprived”, “suffering”, “persecuted”, “attacked”, “subjected”, “suppressed”, “repressed”, “violated”, “innocent”, “civilian”, “scared”, “without food/water/basic shelter”, “praying”, “huddling”, “trudging”, “raped”, “murdered”, “wailing/crying/mourning”, “tragic”, “desperate”, “sick”, “diseased”, “denied voting rights”. Includes forced to support the conflict or misled by authorities. Includes requests for outside intervention, “let down by international community”, “ignored by international community”.

6. *N/A* – there are no descriptions of role in conflict.

Category 4: Actions proposed for internal parties

This category coded any suggestions for solutions or resolutions that could, or should, be achieved by parties directly involved in the conflict. This again measured distance and empathy framing. Proposals for warring groups to “sort it out themselves” distanced readers, while suggestions of “working with interveners” promoted an empathy frame.

There were three options identified for the category, as outlined here:

1. *Sort it out themselves* - The people/ leaders/military involved should either co-operate (negotiate, find peace etc), surrender, or continue fighting (unite against their opposition, remaining independent, resisting opposition, includes leaders asking for internal support etc.) – **without** mention of outside intervention. Includes suggestions of the conflict being an “internal affair”.

2. *The people or people's leaders should resolve the conflict (peacefully or through victory) with outside intervention* – This includes non-military: diplomatic facilitation or humanitarian aid as well as outside military assistance.

3. *N/A* – there are no suggestions for action

Category 5: Actions proposed for external parties

The final category of the coding analysis recorded suggestions for outside actors to intervene, or not to intervene, in the conflict. The distancing element in this section applied to calls for the international community to refrain from intervening, or withdraw troops already operating in the country in conflict, as well as suggestions that the situation is unsolvable by outside parties. The empathy framing at the other end of the scale referred to strong suggestions of intervention, often explained as a call for halting human rights violations and “helping” or “saving” victims in the conflict.

The options for this category are shown below:

1. *Outside parties (including media's own country) must not intervene*, e.g. this is not our fight, we cannot help. For example: reference to unsolvable rivals: “Ancient” or “ethnic” hatreds, “deep-rooted” problems. Includes we, or others, must step back/withdraw/reform – stop intervening, allow the people to choose their own path, give sovereignty, change our laws/actions. Includes foreign aid/nationals leaving the country (e.g. Red Cross evacuating).

2. *Outside parties must be cautious* – think of civilian casualties, international repercussions of intervening, consider options, consequences, limited resources. Includes warnings/threats. Includes reference to more important issues, or perspective needed (including more concern for animals in the region than people, such as Rwandan Gorillas). Reference to “failed” intervention/war/peace treaty collapsing: Vietnam, Beirut, Lebanon, Sudan (Fein 2000: 50), Somalia in 1992/93.

3. *Don't use violence but stop or ease conflict through other means*. E.g. appeal to International tribunals or courts. Or appeal to the people themselves. Moving people/relocating people, protecting with sanctions, diplomatic pressure. Make benefits of peace tangible, includes “set an example”, “lead by example”, or sending diplomats. Fund other (neighbouring) countries' interventions. *We must help (aid and assistance) on humanitarian level* e.g. physically help with poverty, repression, relief assistance.

4. *Outside parties must help them with military action/intervention*, protect with military force/peace-keeping force. Code for: “lead”, “help”, “assist”, “aid”, “save”, “protect”. Also includes criticism of inaction: See Robinson’s critical descriptors (2000: 620). Includes references to discussions held to consider sending help/troops. Includes references to successful interventions/wars and universal moral obligation (to punish and redress crimes against humanity) (Fein 2000: 50): Hitler, Nazi Germany, Holocaust, WW1, WW11, atrocities, genocide, illegal, Gulf War (1990/91). Includes references to international peace/balance being threatened, neighbouring countries being drawn into war, and reference to conflicts escalating if left alone eg “could turn into a Cyprus or Northern Ireland on our northern border”.

5. *N/A* – No action suggested for external parties.

Example

An example of this study’s coding can be seen here:

In the New York Times, on the 16th of March, 1998 an article headlined *Forensic Team Requests Visas To Visit Kosovo* began with:

*“A group of international forensic experts have applied for Serbian visas so they can examine the bodies of ethnic Albanians killed by Serbian police officers in **Kosovo** Province.”*

This sentence was separated into three UOAs because of the three different actors discussed: the international community, the Albanian people, and the Serbian police force.

As per the coding sheet provided, the international community was coded as having no specific character reference; a “promoting peace” role (in what appears to be attempts to seek international truth/justice); with no suggestion of internal resolution but with the suggestion of stopping or easing the conflict through international aid or facilitation. The Albanian people were coded as having a negative characteristic (“ethnic” suggests a racially determined group – differing from homogenous democratic societies); as having a victims’ role in the conflict; with no suggestion of internal solution to the conflict; but with the suggestion of external aid/facilitation. The Serbian police were coded as having no specific character adjectives; as having an attacking/aggressors’ role in the conflict; and the suggestion of external facilitation to ease/investigate the truth in the conflict.

The coding's relation to empathy/distance framing can perhaps be better understood in the following table. Table 2 shows the various categories classified as either empathy or distance frames.

Table 2: Coding for Empathy and Distance Framing

Category coded	Empathy framing	Distance framing
Character	Similarities highlighted or positive characteristics	Non-human characteristics Negative human characteristics
Role in Conflict	Forced to act/mislead Promoting peace Victims	Aggressors Preventing/delaying peace
Actions proposed for internal parties	Resolve conflict with outside intervention	Sort it out themselves
Actions proposed for external parties	Stop conflict through means other than military Outside parties must intervene (military)	Outside parties must not intervene Outside parties must be cautious

3.5 Limitations

The content analysis method of study does, however, have limitations, and this section outlines the approach taken to minimise these. Some researchers have suggested that the downfall of studies which rely on textual analysis readings is the possibility of “textual determinism”. This is the concern that the researcher alone determines how the material is interpreted, without the input of the audience or possibility of multiple interpretations (Ang, 1991). To reduce the possibility of textual determinism, within the reasonable parameters of this study, an inter-coder reliability test was conducted. Table 3 shows the results of the inter-coder testing, which involved a second coder testing a 10 per cent sample (15 news stories) of each conflict and inter-coder reliability tests being applied, using percentage agreement, Scott's Pi (1955), Cohen's Kappa (1960) and Krippendorff's alpha (nominal) (2004) for each

variable. From the 45 articles in the sample, which incorporated 164 units of analysis, a satisfactory level of reliability was achieved.

Table 3: Inter-coder Test Results

Category	Percent Agreement	Scott's Pi	Cohen's Kappa	Krippendorff's Alpha (nominal)	Agree	Disagree
Actor	93.9%	0.921	0.921	0.921	154	10
Character	85.4%	0.732	0.732	0.733	140	24
Role	89.6%	0.87	0.87	0.87	147	17
Internal proposals	93.9%	0.747	0.747	0.748	154	10
External proposals	92.1%	0.806	0.806	0.806	151	13

Chapter 4

Findings

This chapter examines the findings for each individual conflict; it begins by providing some relevant background information on the media's role in the conflict, and then presents the findings within each conflict separately. In the next chapter a comparison of the three conflicts is made, to highlight the differences in the international media's portrayal of each war. The results of this study support some of the theories surrounding Western media's portrayal of "ethnic" conflicts, and challenge others, and the implications of the findings are discussed in the final chapter.

4.1 Rwanda

Rwanda in Context

The violence in Rwanda in 1994 saw up to 800,000 people killed, and was deemed – in retrospect – as one of the world's most horrific genocides (Bilder, 1999: 8; Fein, 2000). With the Tutsi death toll of this genocide standing at seventy-seven per cent of the population (507,000 out of an estimated 657,000) this genocide emerges as one of the few in which the majority of the targeted group were annihilated (Fein, 2000: 57; Des Forges, 1999:15-16; Fowler and Sarkin, 2010: 2). The perpetrators, now understood to be extremist Hutus, represented a faction of the ruling ethnic group – Rwanda was led by a Hutu-dominated government at the time. Rwanda had been in civil conflict for several years before the genocide, with the Rwandan Patriotic Front – a Tutsi-dominated group of Rwandan refugees based in Uganda – posing a serious threat to the Hutu government. Extremist Hutu, and the military forces they controlled, were presumably threatened by the imposition of a new political system and the attacks mounted by the RPF (Fein, 2000: 55; Kuperman, 2000b).

The speed of the genocide, only understood in hindsight, was remarkable. Within the first two weeks of the genocide, loosely defined as beginning April 7, 1994, almost 40 per cent of Rwanda's Tutsi had been killed – making it the fastest genocide rate ever recorded (Kuperman, 2000b: 98; Fowler and Sarkin, 2010: 2; Shaw 1996: 170). Figure 1 shows the estimated pace of the genocide.

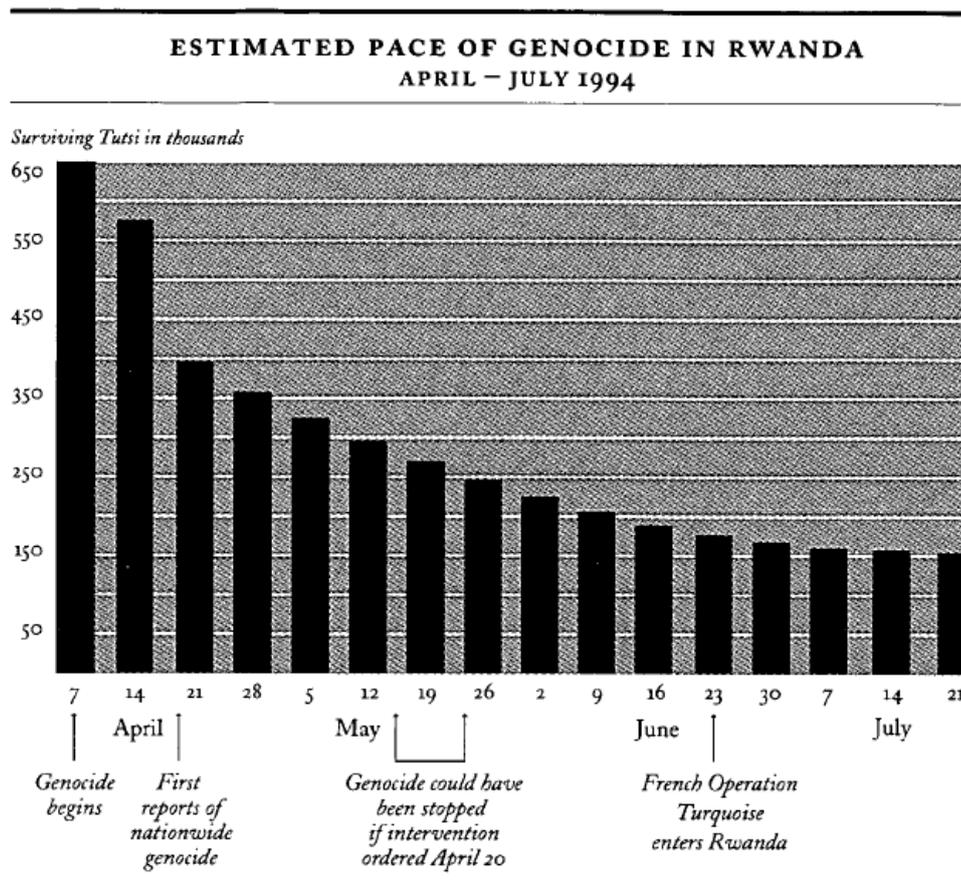


Figure 1: Estimated Pace of Genocide in Rwanda

(Kuperman, 2000b: 98)

The international community, the UN and leading states, have since been heavily criticised for not intervening earlier in the conflict, despite reports of some warnings from insider accounts (Fein, 2000: 57; Dowden, 2004: 283; Robertson, 1999: 55; Fowler and Sarkin, 2010: 3,6,8). Then-US President, Bill Clinton, has admitted this failure to assist Rwanda, and has expressed regret for the USA’s part in withdrawing UN troops early in the genocide (Dowden, 2004: 283). UN-General Secretary Kofi Annan stated that the genocide in Rwanda will define, for our generation, the “consequences of inaction in the face of mass murder” (1999). While debates continue over whether or not international intervention could have halted the majority of Tutsi killings, given the speed of the genocide (Kuperman, 2000b; Fowler and Sarkin, 2010), this study examined how the press represented the conflict at the time.

Like the international community, the world’s press have been accused of failing Rwanda with inaccurate and ill-informed coverage of the conflict (Thompson, 2007: 160; Kuperman, 2000a; Fowler and Sarkin, 2010: 14, 15). Understood in context, it is reasonable (however unacceptable it may be) to see how the press physically “missed the story” in Rwanda. Access to the country at the beginning of the genocide was difficult and dangerous, and the biggest

story coming out of Africa at the time was the coming South African election, ending the apartheid rule (Dowden, 2004: 284; Thompson, 2007: 158; Fowler and Sarkin, 2010: 13). Most of the international press had gathered in South Africa to cover Nelson Mandela's rise, including press usually based in Nairobi, who could have conceivably covered the outbreak of genocide in Rwanda (Dowden, 2004: 285). On the global stage also, Rwanda's conflict did not take precedence at the time – most of the world was focusing on the war in Bosnia (Livingston, 2007: 192, 193; Thompson, 2007: 162).

Regardless of the debate concerning geographical stationing of media at the time, the primary criticism of media eventually covering Rwanda was the way in which the conflict was described. Rwanda stands out as a clear example of Western media resorting to an “ancient ethnic hatred” framework (Shaw, 2012: 140; Carruthers, 2004: 164). The language used to portray the civil war was heavily loaded with primordial tribal references (Dowden, 2004: 288; Thompson, 2007: 150) and the conflict is now understood to have been grossly oversimplified in international media (Fardon, 1999: 64; Dowden, 2004; Thompson, 2007). Early reports of “ethnic tension”, “tribal divisions” (Krauss, *The New York Times*, October 1990), and “months of violent tribal conflict” (Lewis, *The New York Times*, 07 April 1994), represented the situation in Rwanda as yet another primitive African conflict. In 1993, *The Times* released an article headlined “Tribalism side-tracks Africa's Hopeful March towards Democracy” (Kiley) and on April 8, 1994, discussed a “wave of tribal killings”. US television coverage, in particular, focused on the theme of “mutual ethnic slaughter” (Adelman, 1996: 46). Even on April 16, 1994, after most of the Tutsi population had been killed, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported the massacres as “the region's latest wave of ethnic violence” (Tompsett). It wasn't until much later that the world press began to realise that the perceived “tribal chaos” was, in fact, a well-organised and politically-motivated genocide (Dowden, 2004: 290; Thompson, 2007: 145, 162). Rwanda was more than just an ethnic battle between Hutus and Tutsis. With international actors, such as French and Belgian forces, and organised external groups, such as the Ugandan-based Rwandan Patriotic Front, it is difficult to understand why media institutions decided to simplify the conflict to a “tribal” battle. The theory that the Rwandan conflict was represented as a “native” battle formed part of the hypothesis of this thesis, and is tested by the findings in the following section.

Another criticism of the international community's dismissal of the Rwandan conflict is the suggestion that the “ethnicities” involved were not as distinct, or as solidified as the international community assumed at the time. It has been widely acknowledged that many African tribal identities were either created, or at least solidified, by European colonisers

(Allen and Seaton, 1999: 29; Bowen, 1996; Kuperman, 1996: 221, Caplan and Torpey eds, 2001: 345). Belgian colonial rulers have been attributed with assigning “ethnicities” to the Hutu and Tutsi people in their issuing of identity cards, despite the two “tribes” being more intertwined than believed. In this particular case the Tutsi minority was favoured by the Belgian and French colonisers, as wealthier landowners, and although many Hutu and Tutsi had intermarried to such an extent that they were unable to be physically distinguished, the two factions were divided (Bowen, 1996; Kuperman, 1996: 221, Caplan and Torpey eds, 2001: 345). In this way, many poor Tutsis were identified as Hutu, and many wealthy Hutu were labelled Tutsi (Bowen, 1996). The simplistic media framing of two warring “tribes” in Rwanda in 1994 ignored the possibility of Western colonial policies having contributed to the country’s “ethnic” divide (Fowler and Sarkin, 2010: 11).

Rwandan Results

Actors

In this study, analysis of the “actors” proved very revealing in regards to the way in which Western media approached the case studies. Table 4 summarises the amount of coverage each of the identified actors received in the Rwandan conflict.

Table 4: Actors Identified in References, Rwanda

Actor	Rwanda
Side A military or leaders (Hutu gov./forces)	14.8%
Side A people (Hutu)	2.5%
Side B military or leaders (RPF)	13.8%
Side B people (Tutsi)	2.8%
Both sides or country in general	34.3%
Unidentified rebels or militia	2.1%
International community	29.7%
Total	100%

These results show that the leading actor discussed in international media concerning the Rwandan conflict was “both sides or the country in general”. This means that within the units of analysis in this study, the actor most frequently discussed was Rwanda as a whole nation, (or reference to both Hutu and Tutsis). The role of the international community was also a main focus of media articles, while the Rwandan government and Rwandan Patriotic Front (as side A and B) drew almost equal, but lesser coverage. A noticeable absence is that of the Hutu

and Tutsi *people*, rather than military force. The people of Rwanda were often identified as a whole – without distinctions being made between ethnic groups. This indicates that, overall, the Rwandan conflict was discussed in a general sense, without in-depth media discussions of the various factions involved in the war.

Character

Table 5 examines how the character of each of the identified actors was described (if at all).

Table 5: Character of Actors in Rwandan Conflict

Actor	Non-human characteristic	Negative human/differences contrasted	Similarities highlighted/ positive	N/A	Total
Side A leaders (Rwandan Gov)	0.0%	33.3%	1.3%	65.4%	100%
Side A people (Hutu)	0.0%	30.8%	0.0%	69.2%	100%
Side B leaders (RPF)	0.0%	24.7%	2.7%	72.6%	100%
Side B people (Tutsi)	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	80.0%	100%
Both sides/country in general	1.1%	55.8%	3.9%	39.2%	100%
Unidentified rebels or militia	0.0%	45.5%	0.0%	54.5%	100%
International community	0.0%	1.3%	5.1%	93.6%	100%

The three newspapers most often described Rwanda, or Rwandans as a whole group, as having “negative human characteristics”. Fifty-five per cent of the references made to Rwanda/Rwandans were negative, with only 3.9 per cent highlighting similarities or portraying positive characteristics. These “negative” human characteristics frequently described the refugee living conditions, which, while not blamed on the actor, still functioned as a distancing tool from the reader – Rwandans were living in third-world conditions, they were the “other”, different from “us”. For example, on April 9, 1994, the New York Times published an article headlined “The Nightmare in Central Africa”, discussing the “widely held view in the West” that “democratic roots simply will not sprout in some African countries”, which consisted of “tribes and cultures whose only common heritage, unless held in check by a brutal dictatorship, is warfare against one another”. Another frequent reference was to “ethnic” ties – “ethnic killings”, “ethnic bloodshed”, “ethnic problems” etc. “Tribal” was another description that occurred frequently, with references to “tribal bloodletting”, “tribal violence” and “tribalism, so vividly on parade”. Other one-off descriptions included “Africa’s current horror story”, “a bush war” and references to the country’s general problems with population, the AIDS virus and gender inequality.

The 1.1 per cent of descriptions of Rwanda in general that fell into the “non-human characteristic” frame consisted of four references to “wild” or “jungle-like” situations, as well as suggestions that AIDS drug testing should be carried out on humans in Rwanda, rather than on animals. Several references were also made regarding how human bodies were destroying the once-beautiful countryside and that the fate of the gorilla species in Rwanda was in jeopardy because of the war. These descriptions were understood, in this study, as placing the status of Rwandan people below that of animals.

Characteristics of unidentified rebels or militia, if discussed at all, were always negative and usually involved reports of unidentified groups committing massacres or atrocities against innocent victims. Side A, the Rwandan government and army were shown in a slightly less favourable light than Side B, the Rwandan Patriotic Front, although both were – when discussed – portrayed as predominantly negative. Both Hutu and Tutsi people, when identified separately were also portrayed as having negative characteristics – when any character traits were mentioned – with 10 per cent more negative characteristics attributed to the Hutu people than the Tutsi people overall. In this study’s findings, neither group were ever referred to as having similarities to the reader or positive characteristics.

As well as the characteristics of actors, an analysis of their represented role in the conflict was also conducted, and the findings are summarised in Table 6.

Table 6: Role of Actors in Rwandan Conflict

Rwanda	Aggressors	Preventing peace	Forced to act/ misled	Promoting peace	Victims	N/A
Side A leaders (Rwandan Gov.)	28.8%	11.1%	0.0%	18.0%	12.0%	3.7%
Side A people (Hutu)	4.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.9%	0.0%
Side B leaders (RPF)	36.7%	4.8%	0.0%	26.0%	0.0%	4.5%
Side B people (Tutsi)	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	9.2%	0.0%
Both sides or country in general	20.1%	3.2%	0.0%	6.0%	69.0%	37.3%
Unidentified rebels or militia	7.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
International community	0.7%	81.0%	0.0%	50.0%	4.9%	54.5%
Total	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%

Of the two “sides” in conflict, it is interesting to note that the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front was portrayed as the more aggressive side. This included stories of attacks, killings or plans to attack. The RPF was represented as the aggressors of the situation almost

10 per cent more than the Hutu-dominated Rwandan army. However the RPF, and Tutsi leaders were also portrayed more often as seeking peace than their Side A counterparts.

The international community dominated the section coded for “preventing peace”. This appeared in the form of criticism for past interventions or occupations meddling in Rwanda, present withdrawal of peace keepers, or so far ignoring the plight of the Rwandan people. The international community also appeared as the most active party in pursuing peace, through establishing diplomatic negotiations.

Despite initial media confusion over which tribes were being targeted, and who made up the refugee population expelled during the conflict, the Tutsi people were eventually portrayed more often as victims than the Hutu population were. The Hutu civilian population did receive some coverage as victims, but also almost equally as they were discussed as aggressors. The highest reference to victims however, came in references to the country, or population, as a whole. Sixty-nine per cent of references to “victims” did not distinguish between Hutu, Tutsi or other groups involved in the conflict – Rwanda as a nation and its people in general were described as victims.

Table 7 summarises the “proposed actions” for both internal parties in the conflict, and the wider global community.

Table 7: Actions Proposed for Internal and External Parties, Rwanda

Actions proposed (internal and external parties)	Rwanda
Internal parties should sort it out themselves	10.6%
Internal parties should seek peace/victory with intervention	6.3%
N/A for Internal parties	83.1%
	100%
Outsiders must NOT intervene	11.4%
Outsiders must be cautious	8.5%
Non-violently stop conflict (diplomats etc)	16.3%
Stop conflict through intervention/military action	13.1%
N/A for External parties	50.8%
	100%

The actions proposed for both internal and external parties involved in the conflict have similar implications, so will be discussed together. In the case of the Rwandan conflict, very little discussion took place in media coverage concerning what internal parties should *do* about the situation. More emphasis was placed on the international community’s response to

the conflict, although this too was only discussed in half of the references. When solutions and responses were covered, the majority of the suggestions for internal parties were to “sort it out themselves”, while external parties were most frequently called on to stop the violence by sending diplomats to facilitate negotiations, or by sending humanitarian aid. The little difference between references for and against intervention by the international community (11.4 per cent opposed, 8.5 per cent wary of intervention, and 13 per cent in favour of full military intervention) shows that the intervention debate, in the media at least, was fairly even. However, more often than not, the debate did not arise, and resolutions were not discussed.

The suggested actions can be further analysed according to the three separate newspapers chosen for this study, to examine how the possibility of intervention into Rwanda was portrayed in the USA, Australia and the UK (Table 8).

Table 8: Actions Proposed for External Parties, Rwanda, by Newspaper

Rwanda	Outsiders must NOT intervene	Outsiders must be cautious	Non-violently stop conflict (diplomats etc)	Stop conflict: military intervention	N/A	Total
New York Times	8.8%	4.7%	9.8%	11.2%	65.6%	100%
The Times	19.2%	9.6%	18.6%	13.8%	38.9%	100%
Sydney Morning Herald	6.2%	13.0%	23.3%	15.1%	42.5%	100%

During the lead-up to intervention in Rwanda, none of the newspapers studied appeared to be framing the story as a case worthy of military intervention. The Sydney Morning Herald focused on suggestions for diplomatic or humanitarian intervention more than the other papers, with 23.3 per cent of its coverage suggesting the approach. The Times was more focused on calls to refrain from intervening (with 19.2 per cent of its coverage suggesting so), while the New York Times did not even debate the possibility in over half of the references to Rwanda.

Calls for Intervention over Time

Suggestions made for international intervention within media coverage of Rwanda were also considered temporally – with **Error! Reference source not found.** demonstrating the changes from October 1993 to September 1994.

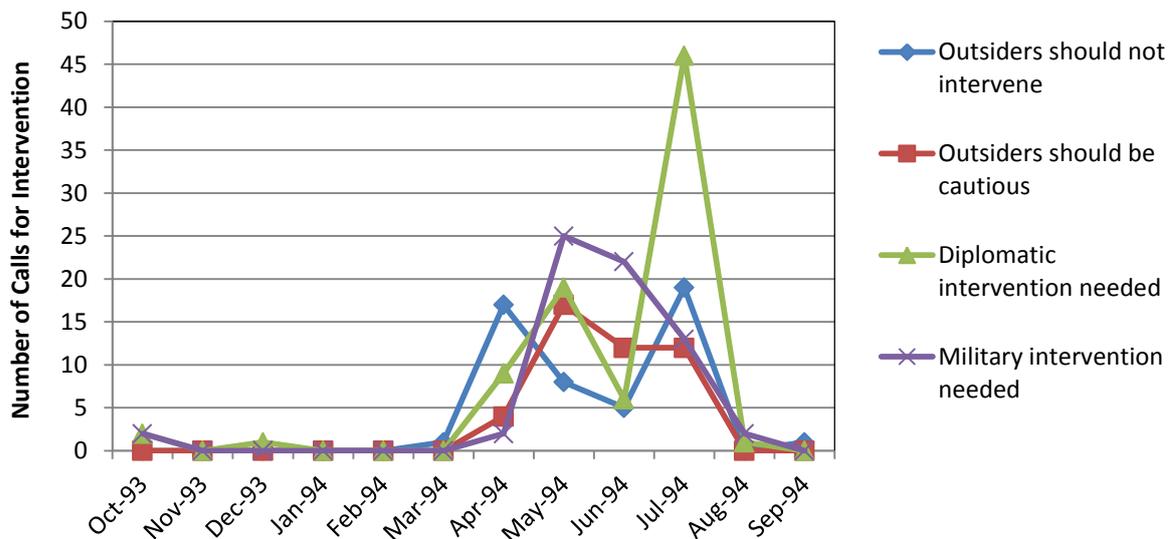


Figure 2: Calls for Intervention into Rwanda

While calls for intervention were monitored in the year prior to October 1993, there was such limited mention of intervention that they were omitted from the graph.

In the lead-up to the outbreak of the worst violence in Rwanda, most media reports contained little debate for international intervention into the situation. The discussion of intervention increased between March and April, 1994, as the reports of violence began to flow into media channels, but the strongest suggestion was still that of on non-intervention. News stories did not portray the conflict in Rwanda as one worthy of intervention, with warnings of the recently failed intervention into Somalia ringing in the international community's ears. However, when the first reports of a nation-wide genocide broke in April 1994 (Kuperman, 2000b: 98), calls for military intervention into the situation sharply increased and peaked. These suggestions were also closely followed by calls for diplomatic interventions (or suggestions of humanitarian aid supplies) and warnings that the global community should be cautious when considering intervention. Non-intervention advocates quietened during the next two months but rose again when the situation continued into June. By July, more calls for non-intervention were being reported than suggestions of full military intervention. It appears the global media compromised these competing views with overwhelming reports calling for diplomatic intervention, and proposals for humanitarian aid to be delivered to refugees. This suggestion dominated intervention debates until August/September, when discussions of intervention faded from media focus.

Rwanda in Summary

The findings of this study revealed some interesting angles from which the conflict in Rwanda was reported. Print media from the US, UK and Australia consistently reported the conflict as a complicated battle between “ethnic groups”, with heavy use of “native” and “tribal” language. Media also avoided identifying a specific perpetrator and victim in the situation, regularly grouping warring factions together as equal aggressors. While “victims” in general were portrayed, and empathy for them evoked, these victims were vaguely identified as “Rwandans” – without reference to specific sides of the conflict. This in turn prompted little reference to the need for intervention from outside parties – a prospect that was not debated heavily in the media. In light of what is now recognised as genocide of the Tutsi people, it is interesting to note that the Tutsi military and leaders received more coverage as “aggressors” than their Hutu counterparts in the early stages for the conflict.

4.2 Kosovo

Kosovo in Context

In 1991, 90 per cent of the population of Kosovo identified themselves as Albanian, with only 10 per cent identifying as Serbian (McGwire, 2000: 78-80). While Albania had traditionally resisted inclusion into Yugoslavia, it held a desire to unite with Kosovo – a move that was contested by Serbia, which controlled Kosovo at the time. Kosovo became a particularly controversial region when Serbian national sentiment peaked, as the region held emotional attachment to Serbians throughout Yugoslavia (Cotter, 2009: 594; Hayden, 1996: 783). Slobodan Milosevic rose to power in Serbia with promises to support the Serbian minority in Kosovo (Cotter, 2009: 594; Kempf, 1999: 2) and followed through by revoking Kosovo’s autonomy. In September 1990, Kosovo Albanians responded by declaring independence. Ibrahim Rugova, leader of the Democratic League of Kosovo (DLK) was elected president in a secret referendum (McGwire, 2000: 78-80). Rugova offered passive resistance to Belgrade rule, but after many years of not achieving the goal of independence through non-violence (while other regions of Yugoslavia achieved independence through war), the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) emerged as an alternative solution (McGwire, 2000: 78-80). In late February Serbian forces launched an initial counter-offensive and a major counter-offensive in the summer of 1998, driving back the KLA and burning Kosovo villages, and consequently engaging the first significant international media attention (McGwire, 2000: 78-80; Bahador, 2007). International pressure ensued, primarily from the US, to negotiate agreements between Milosevic and the KLA.

When NATO decided to intervene in the Kosovo conflict in March 1999, it was politically portrayed as a way to avert a humanitarian disaster and ethnic cleansing by reducing the capability of Serbian forces to repress the Kosovar Albanians (Kuusisto, 1999; McGwire, 2000: 76; Goodman, 2006: 108). Action in Kosovo was justified with a heroic narrative, described in mainstream media as a just war, punishing an evil dictator and saving innocent people (Iordanova, 2001: 826; Kuusisto, 1999). This justification has, like that of the Rwandan conflict, been criticised for the over-simplification of a very complex conflict, stemming back to the failed state of Yugoslavia (Clemens, 1992: 694; Iordanova, 2001: 826; Sremac, 1999; Kuusisto, 1999). The term “multi-ethnic civil war”, used to describe the situation, missed the full complexity of the violence in Kosovo (McGwire, 2000: 77; Allen and Seaton, 1999; Kuusisto, 1999).

Constant reference to this “ethnic” divide and the black-and-white players that emerged in international media when covering Kosovo was a key focus of this study. The following sections examine the way in which the conflict was represented to “the West”.

Kosovo Results

Actor

In this conflict, “side A” refers to the Serbian ethnic group, while “side B” refers to the Kosovo Albanian ethnic group. The Serbian government was identified as “side A” leaders, while the KLA and Ibrahim Rugova were both coded as “side B” leaders/military. Table 9 summarises how often each of the relevant actors was identified in the UOAs.

Table 9: Actors Identified in References, Kosovo

Actor	Kosovo
Side A military or leaders (Serbian gov./forces)	32.3%
Side A people (Serbians)	1.8%
Side B military/leaders (Rugova, KLA)	18.0%
Side B people (Kosovo Albanians)	13.8%
Both sides or country in general	7.7%
Unidentified rebels or militia	0.0%
International community	26.4%
Total	100%

Within coverage leading up to the NATO intervention in Kosovo, the prime focus of international media was Side A: Slobodan Milosevic and the Serbian forces. A third of the references covering the conflict focused on Milosevic and the Serbian police, and another quarter examined the international community’s role in the situation. The region in general, or both sides of the conflict together, were rarely mentioned, with very distinct sides being identified in the conflict. The media never referred to unidentified rebels, each attack or battle had specific, recognisable forces. Side B people, Kosovo Albanians, featured more heavily than their Side A counterparts, but not as frequently as Side A leaders and military – in this conflict, Milosevic was centre stage. Table 10 examines *how* these actors were described.

Table 10: Character of Actors in Kosovo Conflict

Kosovo	Non-human characteristic	Negative human/differences contrasted	Similarities highlighted/ positive	N/A	Total
Side A leaders (Milosevic)	0.0%	21.1%	0.0%	78.9%	100%
Side A people (Serbians)	0.0%	30.8%	7.7%	61.5%	100%
Side B leaders (Rugova, KLA)	0.0%	32.3%	1.6%	66.1%	100%
Side B people (Kos. Albanians)	0.0%	62.9%	13.4%	23.7%	100%
Both sides/Yugoslavia	0.0%	33.3%	3.7%	63.0%	100%
Unidentified rebels or militia	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%
International community	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	98.9%	100%

Within the media coverage of the Kosovo conflict Milosevic and the Serbian police were portrayed as the “villains” of the situation. Of the 45 times their character was described, all of them contained negative attributes. The descriptions used included terms such as “brutal”, “defiant”, “ruthless”, “murderous”, “stubborn”, “false” and “lying”. The Serbian people also received “negative” coverage, although not as completely as Serbian forces, with descriptions of “old enmities”, but the character of the Serbian people was only discussed five times, so the results are based on very little framing. Far more prominent was the character description of Side B people, the Kosovo Albanians. They received 74 character references, with what appears to be an overwhelmingly negative representation. However, this “negative” includes 15 references to “villages” and “villagers”, as a distancing reference – readers would not relate to living in villages, and these terms were classified as “othering”. Constant reference to Kosovo Albanians as an “ethnic” group (43 of the 74 character descriptions) was also coded a negative, as the term distanced the conflict as an ethnic battle, rather than political or economic. Over 13 per cent of the character references for Kosovo Albanians highlighted similarities with the reader, with six mentions of “civilians” (rather than “villagers”), and

several references to family values. This description of the Kosovo Albanians as divided by ethnic ties, and living in villages may act as a distancing element in the media, but should also be taken into consideration with the role they were described to have played in the conflict. The actor's roles are summarised in Table 11.

Table 11: Role of Actors in Kosovo Conflict

Kosovo	Aggressors	Preventing peace	Forced to act/ misled	Promoting peace	Victims
Side A leaders (Milosevic)	74.7%	44.2%	11.1%	8.8%	3.3%
Side A people (Serbians)	3.4%	0.9%	11.1%	0.0%	4.1%
Side B leaders (Rugova, KLA)	15.1%	32.1%	0.0%	10.7%	9.8%
Side B people (Kos. Albanians)	2.1%	2.8%	11.1%	0.6%	66.4%
Both sides or country in general	4.8%	7.4%	0.0%	2.5%	14.8%
Unidentified rebels or militia	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
International community	0.0%	12.6%	66.7%	77.4%	1.6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Of all the actors discussed in the media during the lead-up to intervention in Kosovo, Milosevic and his forces were again a main focus. Portrayed as the overwhelming aggressive force in the war, Side A's military and leaders were again identified as the "villain" of the situation, with the most "aggressor" and "preventing peace" references of all the parties involved. Side B, which included the KLA, were represented as preventing peace and sometimes acting as the aggressors, but not nearly as frequently as the Serbian side. As well as a clearly identifiable "bad guy" in the conflict, a well-defined "victim" emerged as the Side B people, the Kosovo Albanians. While some reference was made to the region in general, or both side's people, being victims, 66.4 per cent of references to victims were attributed to the Kosovo Albanians. So, with a clear villain and victim established, was there any mention of a hero? Table 12 summarises the suggestions for internal and external parties in the conflict.

Table 12: Actions Proposed for External Parties, Kosovo

Actions proposed (internal and external parties)	Kosovo
Internal parties should sort it out themselves	4.0%
Internal parties should seek peace/victory with intervention	34.0%
N/A for Internal parties	62.0%
	100%
Outsiders must NOT intervene	3.4%
Outsiders must be cautious	6.8%
Non-violently stop conflict (diplomats etc)	33.8%
Stop conflict through intervention/military action	18.9%
N/A for External parties	37.2%
	100%

Over half of the references made concerning the Kosovo conflict called for some kind of intervention, diplomatic or military, with very few calls to refrain from intervening or for remaining cautious about intervening. In representations of the Kosovo conflict, it appears that the potential for a “hero” was well established. Suggestions for internal parties were not common, but when they were made, they were in favour of some kind of outside intervention – mainly in the form of diplomats facilitating negotiations. Proposed actions for external parties also heavily favoured facilitating negotiations, which fits the context of the conflict – much of the onset of intervention comprised of international pressure being applied to Belgrade and attempts to bring Milosevic and the KLA to some agreement.

The suggested actions can be further analysed according to the three newspapers chosen for this study, to identify any differences between the USA, Australia and UK news sources (Table 13).

Table 13: Actions Proposed for External Parties, Kosovo, by Newspaper

Kosovo	Outsiders must NOT intervene	Outsiders must be cautious	Non-violently stop conflict (diplomats)	Stop conflict through intervention	N/A	Total
New York Times	1.6%	3.3%	34.4%	26.2%	34.4%	100%
The Times	8.1%	13.1%	28.1%	12.7%	38.0%	100%
Sydney Morning Herald	0.8%	4.6%	38.3%	17.1%	39.2%	100%

All three newspapers appeared to report the Kosovo conflict as a war worthy of intervention, with more support in each paper for non-military intervention in the lead-up to NATO’s

decision to bomb Serbian forces. The New York Times stories promoted the use of force more than its Australian and UK counterparts, with 26.2 per cent of its coverage reporting calls for military intervention as opposed to The Time’s 12.7 per cent and the Sydney Morning Herald’s 17.1 per cent. The Times also reported more calls for caution and restraint than the other two newspapers.

Calls for Intervention over Time

While Kosovo was framed overall as a case worthy of intervention, the intervention debate was played out in the media over a period of time. Figure 3 charts calls for intervention in the year prior to NATO’s attacks on Serbian forces.

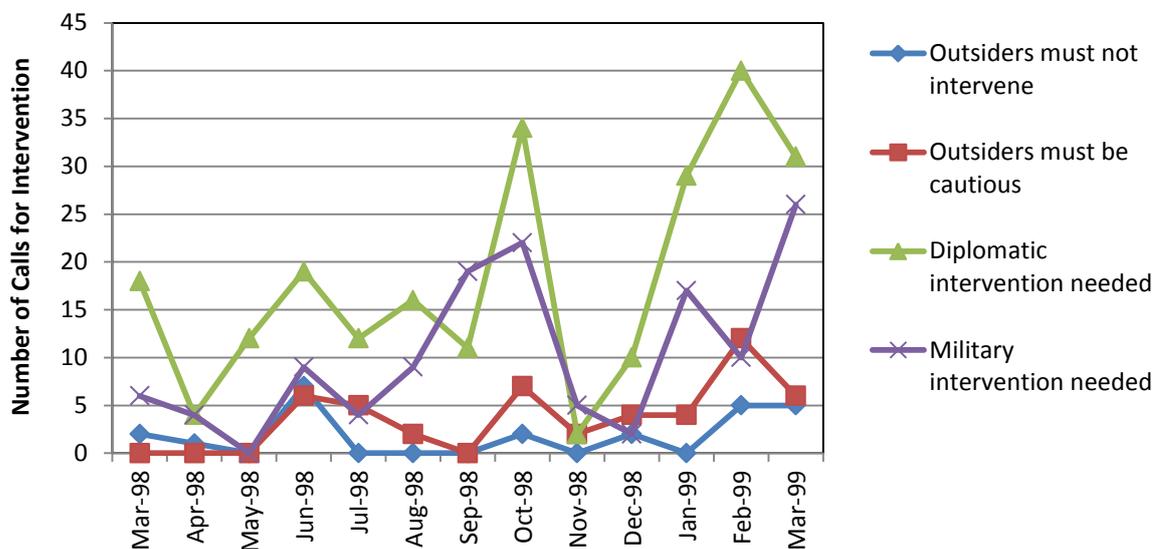


Figure 3: Calls for Intervention into Kosovo

While the intervention debate played out in Western media varied greatly in the year leading up to military intervention in Kosovo, one call remained prominent throughout the year – that of diplomatic intervention. Only in September, and November 1998, did calls for full military intervention rank the highest in news reports, with the rest of the coverage suggesting diplomatic negotiations and solutions. Even as plans for military intervention were solidified in March 1999, calls for diplomatic intervention were still the most dominant in media coverage, although warnings against intervention dropped away during that time. Compared to the suggestion for diplomatic solutions, little resistance to intervention was proposed in news reports, with few calls for non-intervention made in the lead up to March 1999.

Kosovo in Summary

The conflict in Kosovo, prior to intervention, was reported as distinctly having two “sides”. On one side, Milosevic and the Serbian forces were portrayed as villains and aggressors, while the Kosovo Albanian population were reported as innocent victims. Kosovo Albanians also received a substantial amount of coverage through empathy frames – with their similarities to the readers often highlighted. Another distinct “side” of the conflict was that of the “side B” leaders and military – which was portrayed largely as preventing peace, rather than as being aggressive. The media coverage portrayed the assumption that the various groups comprising the Balkans have always fought each other, despite this attitude already being academically criticised – Yugoslavia was not always dominated by ethnic divisions, and was, until the 1990s, operating as a mixed society in a relative stable situation (Hayden, 1996: 786; Crawford and Lipschutz, 1998: 197). In media coverage of Kosovo there was a strong emphasis on diplomatic intervention, with a noticeable number of calls for international sanctions and facilitation. Calls for military intervention also featured heavily, but were less frequent than calls for diplomatic intervention. Kosovo was, therefore, portrayed as a situation worthy of intervention from the global community.

4.3 East Timor

East Timor in Context

The conflict that preceded an Australian-led intervention in East Timor in 1999 had been ongoing for over 20 years. When Portugal withdrew from its former colony in the mid-1970s, East Timor’s independence was short-lived, with Indonesian troops moving in swiftly to occupy the territory – an annexation that was never recognised by the United Nations (Cotton, 2001: 132). Since then, pro-independence fighters had risen and fallen in East Timor, with varying amounts of international attention to the situation. In 1996 two Timorese independence leaders won Nobel Peace Prizes for their struggle, and the release of information regarding the killing of Western journalists during Indonesian attacks attracted the world media. In 1997, Indonesian President B.J. Habibie agreed to allow East Timor to hold a referendum to decide its fate, much to the chagrin of others in the Indonesian parliament and ruling class (Kuperman, 1999: 10). Militia violence followed, with a post-ballot outbreak of massacres (Orford, 2003: 1) and in September 1999 the UN Security Council authorised multinational force to be sent to East Timor to address concerns for the “systematic, widespread and flagrant violations” of international humanitarian and human rights law that were occurring (Cotton, 2001: 127, 130).

Some human-rights groups and political analysts have blamed “25 years of Western coddling of Indonesia” for the massacres that occurred in the later part of the conflict (Kuperman, 1999: 10, also see Herman and Chomsky, 2002). Others have argued that it was too much of the wrong sort of international pressure on Jakarta, without consideration for repercussions on the ground, which escalated the violence (Kuperman, 1999: 10). Regardless of the exacerbating factors, the conflict, and the intervention which followed, was closely watched by international media, especially in Australia (Orford, 2003: 1). This study examined the way in which East Timor was discussed, and the extent to which this conflict was represented as an “ethnic” conflict.

East Timor Results

Table 14 summarises the amount of coverage each of the identified actors received in the East Timor conflict.

Table 14: Actors Identified in References, East Timor

Actor	East Timor
Side A military/leaders (Indonesian gov/forces)	31.2%
Side A people (Indonesians)	0.8%
Side B military/leaders (East Timorese forces/leaders)	6.6%
Side B people (East Timorese)	19.5%
Both sides or country in general	8.6%
Unidentified rebels or militia	6.6%
International community	26.7%
Total	100%

Prior to intervention in East Timor, media coverage focused on Side A military and leaders (the Indonesian government and army) more than any other actor. Almost one third of the references made concerning the conflict, 31.2 per cent, concentrated on the Indonesian military and leaders. Another quarter, 26.7 per cent, focused on the international community’s response to the conflict. Side B people (the East Timorese) received a high 19.5 per cent of coverage, while Side B military and leaders received very little comparative coverage. Table 15 examines *how* these actors were described.

Table 15: Character of Actors in East Timor Conflict

East Timor	Non-human characteristic	Negative human/differences contrasted	Similarities highlighted/ positive	N/A	Total
Side A leaders (Indones. Gov.)	0.0%	31.3%	0.6%	68.1%	100%
Side A people (Indonesians)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100%
Side B leaders (East Timor)	0.0%	5.9%	23.5%	70.6%	100%
Side B people (East Timorese)	0.0%	11.0%	14.0%	75.0%	100%
Both sides/country in general	0.0%	15.9%	11.4%	72.7%	100%
Unidentified rebels or militia	2.9%	29.4%	0.0%	67.6%	100%
International community	0.0%	5.1%	0.7%	94.2%	100%

While the Indonesian authorities were a focus of the media, the coverage describing their characteristics was largely negative, with 31.3 per cent of the references to the government including negative attributes, such as “mad”, “abusive”, “brutal”, and several references to lying or deceiving others. In this conflict, the Side B people (the East Timorese) received more favourable coverage than negative, with 14 per cent of references highlighting a positive attribute. These attributes included several mentions of “bravery”, “friendship”, and supportive of “democracy”. The “negative” characteristics attributed to the East Timorese people were usually references to primitive living conditions, such as “villages” and “refugee” status – distancing the actor from the reader. These characteristics should be taken into consideration in conjunction with the roles each of the actors, which can be examined in Table 16.

Table 16: Role of Actors in East Timor Conflict*

East Timor	Aggressors	Preventing peace	Promoting peace	Victims	N/A
Side A leaders (Indones. Gov.)	60.7%	60.8%	21.8%	0.0%	9.1%
Side A people (Indonesians)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%	2.3%
Side B leaders (East Timor)	2.8%	6.2%	11.3%	5.0%	6.8%
Side B people (East Timorese)	0.9%	1.0%	6.3%	66.1%	18.2%
Both sides or country in general	3.7%	3.1%	1.4%	14.0%	40.9%
Unidentified rebels or militia	31.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
International community	0.0%	28.9%	59.2%	12.4%	22.7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

*Note: The “forced to act” role was removed from this table as it contained only 2 UOAs.

The Indonesian government and army were firmly identified as the primary aggressor of the conflict. With 60.7 per cent of references to aggressors, and 60.8 per cent of references to preventing peace attributed to the Indonesian leaders and military, they were clearly identified in the media as the “bad guys”. The East Timorese people were clearly defined as the victims in the situation, with 66.1 per cent of references to victims applying to them. The region of East Timor in general was also identified as a victim of the situation, as was the international community, largely due to a series of attacks on UN personnel. Side B leaders were represented as promoting peace more than any other role, as was the international community. The international community also received some coverage coded as “preventing peace” because of claims that other nations had previously ignored the conflict and were delaying intervention into atrocities that were occurring. Suggestions for intervention that were identified in the UOAs are summarised in Table 17, which highlights the proposed actions for internal and external parties.

Table 17: Actions Proposed for Internal Parties, East Timor

Actions proposed (internal and external parties)	East Timor
Internal parties should sort it out themselves	5.3%
Internal parties should seek peace/victory with intervention	18.9%
N/A for Internal parties	75.8%
	100%
Outsiders must NOT intervene	2.9%
Outsiders must be cautious	8.0%
Non-violently stop conflict (diplomats etc)	18.5%
Stop conflict through intervention/military action	26.1%
N/A for External parties	44.4%
	100%

The most common suggestion made for internal parties in East Timor was to accept intervention. Although, 75.8 per cent of references to East Timor did not discuss any solutions for internal parties – the focus was largely on how the outside world would respond. Here, more than half of the references to East Timor discussed intervention – with 26.1 per cent in favour of military intervention. This out-ranked calls for diplomatic solutions (at 18.5 per cent). With 44.6 per cent of references calling for some kind of intervention, military or otherwise, this conflict was clearly framed as one worthy of international intervention. The suggested actions can be further analysed according to the three newspapers, to identify any differences between the USA, Australia and UK news sources (Table 18).

Table 18: Actions Proposed for External Parties, East Timor, by Newspaper

East Timor	Outsiders must NOT intervene	Outsiders must be cautious	Non-violently stop conflict (diplomats)	Stop conflict through intervention	N/A	Total
New York Times	3.6%	5.1%	15.8%	24.5%	51.0%	100%
The Times	2.8%	4.9%	11.1%	32.6%	48.6%	100%
Sydney Morning Herald	2.3%	13.9%	27.7%	22.5%	33.5%	100%

These findings show that, of the three newspapers, the Sydney Morning Herald reported the most calls for caution regarding intervention into East Timor – which is understandable given Australia’s strong economic ties with, and geographical proximity to, Indonesia. The Sydney Morning Herald also discussed diplomatic solutions more than its UK and USA counterparts. The Times and the New York Times represented East Timor as more of a case for military intervention, with The Times reporting pro-intervention calls in a third of its total references made to the conflict.

Calls for Intervention over Time

While the situation in East Timor was represented as a case worthy of intervention, it was framed very differently in the month prior to intervention than it had been in the year before foreign troops landed on Timor soil. Figure 4 charts the changes in calls for international intervention in the lead-up to September 1999.

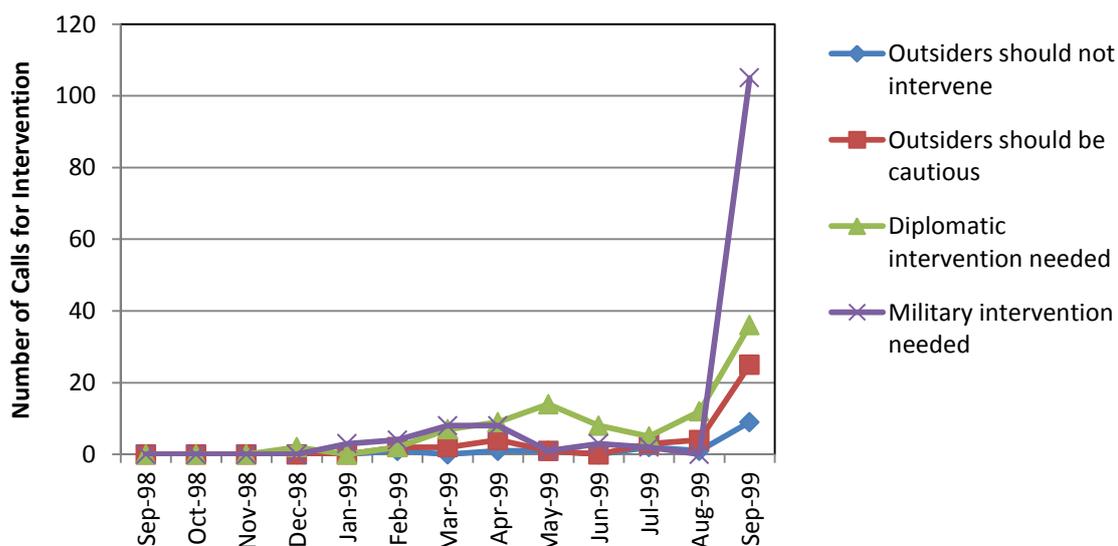


Figure 4: Calls for Intervention into East Timor

The debate over intervention into East Timor did not feature heavily in news reports of the situation until the beginning of 1999, when calls for military and diplomatic intervention dominated. From April to August 1999, diplomatic intervention was favoured in media coverage of East Timor. However, between August 1999 and the intervention the next month, the intervention debate heated up on all sides. During this period calls for military intervention sky-rocketed, and were more than twice as common as suggestions for diplomatic solutions. The opposition leader in Australia at the time, Kim Beazley, declared this steep increase of public support for intervention – demonstrated through numerous protests against Indonesia – as “the most inspiring event he had witnessed” (Orford, 2003: 1).

East Timor in Summary

The conflict in East Timor was covered in Western media as a battle between two distinct sides. The Indonesian government and military forces were described as an abusive regime which could not be trusted to keep promises of peace, while the East Timorese people were portrayed as clear victims in the situation. The international community was under scrutiny for most of the conflict, while little focus was placed on East Timorese leaders/military. The international community’s role in East Timor featured in media coverage almost as much as the Indonesian government and the situation was represented as a clear case not just for intervention, but specifically for military intervention. A major push in the media for military intervention was noted in the month prior to intervention, when calls for foreign troops to intervene significantly increased.

Chapter 5

Rwanda, Kosovo and East Timor: Comparing the Three Conflicts

Media framing of each conflict to the Western world revealed some interesting findings, however, the *differences* between representations of the three wars further revealed enlightening contrasts. This section compares the findings from all three conflicts, to further explore the differences and similarities in the way the conflicts were portrayed.

5.1 Centre-stage: How Media Focus Differs in Each Conflict

The difference between the Rwandan conflict and the interventions into Kosovo and East Timor can be understood within the context in which they were presented to the outside world. The focus of international media was different in the three wars, with Rwanda standing out as the exception. Table 19 highlights the actors on whom Western media focused within each conflict.

Table 19: Actors Identified in References

Actor	Rwanda	Kosovo	East Timor
Side A military or leaders	14.8%	32.3%	31.2%
Side A people	2.5%	1.8%	0.8%
Side B military or leaders	13.8%	18.0%	6.6%
Side B people	2.8%	13.8%	19.5%
Both sides or country in general	34.3%	7.7%	8.6%
Unidentified rebels or militia	2.1%	0.0%	6.6%
International community	29.7%	26.4%	26.7%
Total	100%	100%	100%

The leaders of “Side A” (authority or military) in both Kosovo and East Timor were the dominant focus of Western media. Stories on the Kosovo conflict highlighted Slobodan Milošević and the Serbian forces active in the region, while the Indonesian government and army were the main actors in articles referring to the East Timor conflict. This focus on Side A in Kosovo and East Timor is important when compared to the Rwandan conflict. In the African country’s conflict, it was the country of Rwanda in general, or both Side A (Hutu-

dominated government) and Side B (Rwandan Patriotic Front) which was referred to in the international media.

Both the Kosovo and East Timor conflicts were represented as clearly divided cases, with easily identifiable ethnic divides. Rarely was the region described as a whole, or both sides of the conflict discussed together – both leaders and people were separated, and audiences were expected to understand these differences. “Ethnic Albanians”, “Serbian police”, “Indonesian army”, and “East Timorese” all provided well-defined players for the international media to focus on. Serbian people living in Kosovo, or Indonesians living in East Timor were largely ignored in the West’s need to simplify stories. Rwanda however, was more complicated for Western media. The dismissal of Rwanda as “yet another African squabble” (Dowden, 2004) was evident in media’s reluctance to identify sides. For the larger part of the conflict, participants were described generally as “Rwandans” – despite the establishment of two ethnic groups and the Rwandan Patriotic Front opposing a recognised Hutu-led Rwandan government. While this has been argued to be the fault of limited access to information on the ground (Dowden, 2004), Kosovo was also restricted, as were parts of East Timor. When media did eventually delve into the Rwandan conflict, the war was described in terms of equally primitive “tribes”, with both Hutu and Tutsi tribes mentioned in the same reference.

If, as some theorists suggest, a delay in international intervention is a result of failing to identify a clear perpetrator who needs to be punished (Walzer, 2004: 71) – then this study’s findings support such arguments. The relative focus on Side B’s people in Kosovo and East Timor (Kosovo and East Timorese civilians), compared to Side A’s people, supports this theory – if a “bad guy” was established, a victim was also required for the narrative. Rwanda was again, a far less clear-cut case, with very little mention of the Tutsi population that suffered what is now understood to be one of the world’s more horrific genocides.

In all three conflicts, and especially in the Rwandan conflict, the role of the international community featured heavily. This can be attributed to constant reflections from governments, experts and NGOs on whether or not the international community had a role to play in the conflict. This indicates that, regardless of the conflict, Western media remains fixated on the role of the international community, rather than those in conflict (Wolfsfeld, 2004).

However, as was the case in Rwanda and to some extent Kosovo and East Timor, the amount of coverage allocated to a conflict or actor, did not necessarily mean swift intervention. Part of the explanation for this is the tone of coverage, and the way in which actors were

described. This study compared the adjectives used to describe actors in each conflict, and these results are discussed in the next section.

5.2 Not Just Quantity but Quality: Are Actors Portrayed Differently in Each Conflict?

While a purely objective media would dictate that adjectives are prohibited in fair and accurate reporting of a conflict, this is not always the case. Many appear in editorials and letters to the editor, but a surprising amount of subjective descriptions arise in “hard news” articles as well. Table 20 highlights the extent to which actors were described as having negative or positive attributes.

Table 20: Character References of Actors*

Actor	Negative human characteristic/differences contrasted			Positive characteristic/similarities highlighted		
	Rwanda	Kosovo	East Timor	Rwanda	Kosovo	East Timor
Side A military or leaders	16.4%	27.6%	57.5%	5.6%	0.0%	3.4%
Side A people	2.5%	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%	5.6%	0.0%
Side B military or leaders	11.3%	23.6%	2.3%	11.1%	11.1%	27.6%
Side B people	1.9%	35.1%	12.6%	0.0%	72.2%	48.3%
Both sides/country in general	63.5%	10.3%	8.0%	38.9%	11.1%	17.2%
Unidentified rebels or militia	3.1%	0.0%	11.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
International community	1.3%	1.1%	8.0%	44.4%	0.0%	3.4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

*The “character” coding section of this study also measured non-human characteristics (such as references to animal behaviour), but as only three references appeared that section has been omitted in the table above.

The leaders of Side A in both Kosovo and East Timor (Serbian military/Milošević and the Indonesian government) were frequently represented as possessing negative characteristics. Example of the adjectives used include (in order of frequency): “brutal”, “lying”, “thug-like” and “vicious”. In Kosovo, Side B’s leaders/military were described in a similarly negative fashion, but this was overshadowed by the focus on the Side B people (Kosovo Albanians). The side B people were portrayed in a negative frame – largely because of constant reference to “ethnic” Kosovo Albanians, which, as discussed previously, was coded within a distancing/inferior frame from the reader. The coverage of Rwanda, in contrast, saw very little

difference in roles between the Hutu military/leaders and the Tutsi military/leaders. In that particular conflict, it was the country's people in general which were discussed as having negative characteristics – both sides of the conflict were reported as “as bad as” the other.

The East Timor findings showed the clearest distinction between warring factions. The Indonesian government was portrayed negatively, while the pro-independence East Timorese leaders were described in a significantly more positive frame than the side B categories of Kosovo or Rwanda. References to East Timorese leaders receiving Nobel Peace Prizes and positive support meant that side B in this conflict was often described as “media darlings”. When it came to positive characteristics of people, again Rwanda was understood as a whole, with no references to either Hutu or Tutsi people falling under a positive frame, only empathy for “Rwandans” as a nation. The coverage of Kosovo, however, saw powerful empathy framing for the Kosovo Albanians, and East Timor saw dominant coverage of the East Timorese in a positive frame.

This study also examined the representation of the role each actor played in the conflict, with noticeable differences arising between actors. Table 21 summarises the roles identified for these actors, separated by conflict for comparison between the three wars.

Table 21: Actors' Role in Conflict

Actor		Rwanda	Kosovo	East Timor
Side A military or leaders	Aggressors	54.8%	48.9%	41.7%
	Preventing, delaying peace	9.6%	42.6%	37.8%
	Forced to act or misled	0.0%	0.4%	0.6%
	Promoting peace	12.3%	6.3%	19.9%
	Victims	23.3%	1.8%	0.0%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
Side B military or leaders	Aggressors	76.1%	18.3%	9.7%
	Preventing, delaying peace	4.5%	57.5%	19.4%
	Forced to act or misled	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Promoting peace	19.4%	14.2%	51.6%
	Victims	0.0%	10.0%	19.4%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
Side A people	Aggressors	46%	38%	1.1%
	Preventing, delaying peace	0.0%	15%	1.1%
	Forced to act or misled	0.0%	8%	1.1%
	Promoting peace	0%	0%	75%
	Victims	54%	38%	25%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
Side B people	Aggressors	13.3%	3.3%	1.1%
	Preventing, delaying peace	0.0%	6.5%	1.1%
	Forced to act or misled	0.0%	1.1%	1.1%
	Promoting peace	0.0%	1.1%	9.8%
	Victims	86.7%	88.0%	87.0%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
Both sides or country in general	Aggressors	21.4%	15.6%	15.4%
	Preventing, delaying peace	1.5%	35.6%	11.5%
	Forced to act or misled	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Promoting peace	2.3%	8.9%	7.7%
	Victims	74.8%	40.0%	65.4%
	Total	100%	100%	100%

The roles of victim and villain were again far more distinct in media coverage of Kosovo and East Timor than that of Rwanda. Side A leaders and military were portrayed in a negative light, with “aggressive” and “preventing peace” roles, in all three conflicts. However, in the coverage of Rwanda the Tutsi forces (such as the Rwandan Patriotic Front) were reported as being even more aggressive than Hutu militia. In Kosovo and East Timor the Side B military and leaders, while sometimes reported to be preventing peace, were not reported to be as aggressive as Side A’s military and leaders. The conflict in Rwanda was represented as an almost equal battle from both sides.

In all three conflicts the Side B people (Kosovo Albanians, East Timorese and Tutsis) were portrayed largely as clear victims of the situation. However, in Rwanda the Tutsi people were also covered more frequently as aggressors. Of coverage of the Tutsi people, 13.3 per cent referred to them as aggressors, while Kosovo Albanians received only 3.3 per cent and the East Timorese received only 1.1 per cent. This indicates that while obvious victims were established in coverage of Kosovo and East Timor, Rwandan victims were more difficult to identify, with the victims’ “innocence” in the conflict sometimes questioned.

In examining the amount of times the two sides in conflict were framed together in the same way, the contrast between the conflicts becomes even more obvious. Rwandans *in general* received a large amount of coverage as victims, with an outpouring of sympathy in Western media for the victims of atrocities in the country, but the atrocities were rarely attributed to one side or another. The East Timorese in general were also framed as victims but this still identified the East Timorese as separate to the Indonesian population – they were a clearly defined group of victims. This understanding of the Rwandan conflict as a general battle, without clear and separable victims (as East Timor and Kosovo had) may go some way to explaining the international community’s reluctance to intervene, as the portrayal of Rwanda reflects concepts of a “native battle” too engrained for Western nations to wade into.

Table 22 examines suggestions made for external actors during the lead-up to intervention.

Table 22: Actions Suggested for External Parties, *N/A section removed

Conflict	Outsiders must NOT intervene	Outsiders must be cautious	Non-violently stop conflict	Stop conflict through intervention	Total
Rwanda	23.1%	17.3%	33.1%	26.5%	100%
Kosovo	5.4%	10.8%	53.7%	30.0%	100%
East Timor	5.3%	14.4%	33.3%	47.0%	100%

Rwanda received the greatest proportion of calls for specific non-intervention, despite empathy framing for the general “victims” involved. Even when mention of intervention was made, it was with suggestions of diplomatic facilitation or humanitarian aid, rather than military peace-keeping forces. Perhaps even more tellingly, and which is not indicated in the table above, is that less than half of the references to Rwanda (49.2 per cent), contained suggestion of the international community having a role to play (see Table 7). This is lower than the coverage of Kosovo and East Timor, where 62 per cent and 55 per cent of references, respectively, debated the possibility of intervention.

In Kosovo and East Timor, calls for intervention were more frequent, although surprisingly different. While a villain-victim representation was evident in the coverage of Kosovo, this did not appear to lead to calls for an all-out military intervention. Rather, these portrayals more frequently lead to calls for international intervention in the form of diplomatic facilitation. East Timor however was covered with a strong suggestion of military intervention, despite heavy diplomatic pressure being applied to the Indonesian government at the time. These differences can be understood in context, with frequent references to peace treaties being made in the lead-up to the Kosovo intervention, and less in East Timor.

Further investigation into the kinds of *roles* mentioned in all three conflicts show that portrayal of “aggressors”, rather than “victims” prompts stronger suggestions for international intervention. This is shown in Table 23.

Table 23: Roles’ Impact on Suggestions for External Parties, *N/A removed

Role mentioned	Outsiders must NOT intervene	Outsiders must be cautious	Non-violently stop conflict	Stop conflict through intervention	Total
Aggressors	14.8%	7.8%	29.7%	47.7%	100%
Preventing peace	10.8%	12.0%	38.2%	39.0%	100%
Forced to act or misled	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	100%
Promoting peace	1.8%	11.0%	52.3%	34.9%	100%
Victims	6.1%	4.3%	52.4%	37.2%	100%
N/A	21.6%	32.7%	32.7%	12.9%	100%

When “aggressors” and “victims” are mentioned in media coverage of the three conflicts, calls for international intervention are significantly increased – supporting the concept of a villain-hero-victim narrative requirement for support of intervention. Mention of victims prompts frequent calls for non-violent assistance (humanitarian aid, diplomatic facilitation),

while mention of “aggressors” encourages a stronger reaction (military intervention). This would suggest that while identification of a “victim” prompts pity, it is the identification of a “villain” (and therefore possibility of a “hero”), which prompts calls for full military intervention.

5.3 Dissent Amongst the Ranks: Do the Newspapers Differ?

As well as examining the representation of conflicts, this study found subtle differences between the US, UK and Australian newspapers studied. Table 24 shows the suggestions for the internal actors of the country in conflict, divided by newspaper.

Table 24: Suggestions for Internal Parties, Divided by Newspaper

Rwanda	Sort it out themselves	Seek peace/victory with intervention	N/A	Total
New York Times	8.4%	7.4%	84.2%	100%
The Times	13.8%	8.4%	77.8%	100%
Sydney Morning Herald	10.3%	2.1%	87.7%	100%
Kosovo	Sort it out themselves	Seek peace/victory with intervention	N/A	Total
New York Times	2.9%	33.6%	63.5%	100%
The Times	8.6%	28.5%	62.9%	100%
Sydney Morning Herald	0.8%	39.6%	59.6%	100%
East Timor	Sort it out themselves	Seek peace/victory with intervention	N/A	Total
New York Times	5.6%	19.5%	74.9%	100%
The Times	2.1%	17.4%	80.6%	100%
Sydney Morning Herald	7.5%	19.7%	72.8%	100%

During the build-up of the Rwandan conflict, all three newspapers included more suggestions for non-intervention than intervention. All three reported more references to the internal parties “sorting it out themselves”, rather than looking for international intervention, with the Sydney Morning Herald presenting the strongest case for non-intervention. 10.3 per cent of references to Rwanda in the Sydney Morning Herald suggested internal solutions, while only 2.1 per cent suggested external intervention. The N/A section in these findings are also

relevant, as they highlight that very little discussion concerning the internal parties abilities to resolve the conflict were discussed in Western media. In each newspaper, between 77 and 88 per cent of articles discussing Rwanda did not suggest internal solutions. This figure is noticeably lower in both the Kosovo and East Timor conflicts. Also, in contrast to the Rwandan conflict, suggestions for internal parties in both Kosovo and East Timor – when discussed – leaned heavily towards some form of intervention, especially in the lead-up to the Kosovo intervention. Table 25 further reflects these attitudes in suggestions for external parties.

Table 25: Suggestions for External Parties, Divided by Newspaper

Rwanda	Outsiders must NOT intervene	Outsiders must be cautious	Non-violently stop conflict (diplomats etc.)	Stop conflict through intervention	N/A	Total
New York Times	8.8%	4.7%	9.8%	11.2%	65.6%	100%
The Times	19.2%	9.6%	18.6%	13.8%	38.9%	100%
Syd. Morn. Herald	6.2%	13.0%	23.3%	15.1%	42.5%	100%

Kosovo	Outsiders must NOT intervene	Outsiders must be cautious	Non-violently stop conflict (diplomats etc.)	Stop conflict through intervention	N/A	Total
New York Times	1.6%	3.3%	34.4%	26.2%	34.4%	100%
The Times	8.1%	13.1%	28.1%	12.7%	38.0%	100%
Syd. Morn. Herald	0.8%	4.6%	38.3%	17.1%	39.2%	100%

East Timor	Outsiders must NOT intervene	Outsiders must be cautious	Non-violently stop conflict (diplomats etc.)	Stop conflict through intervention	N/A	Total
New York Times	3.6%	5.1%	15.8%	24.5%	51.0%	100%
The Times	2.8%	4.9%	11.1%	32.6%	48.6%	100%
Syd. Morn. Herald	2.3%	13.9%	27.7%	22.5%	33.5%	100%

In suggestions for actions to be taken by the international community, here the Times was more reluctant to report support for intervention in Rwanda, and the New York Times did not even debate the possibility in more than half of the references to Rwanda (65.6 per cent). In Kosovo, the US and Australian papers provided more suggestions of some form of intervention than The Times, with The Times suggesting more caution than the other papers, although all three again framed the conflict as a case worthy of intervention overall. In East Timor, the US paper was less suggestive, again only discussing the international community's

role for half of the references, while The Times' stories were more pro-intervention. The Sydney Morning Herald suggested non-military intervention more than its counterparts, explainable again because of Australia's tenuous relationship with Indonesia.

The obvious difference between the media's response to Rwanda and the other two conflicts goes to the heart of this study – why were calls of intervention fewer in the coverage of Rwanda than that of Kosovo and East Timor? The explanation, this study shows, is in the framing of the conflicts. The following chapter further explains this, and the implications of this study's findings.

Chapter 6

Conclusions

This study identified several trends in Western print media in the portrayal of “ethnic” conflicts, prior to potential intervention. The findings reveal that the answer to this thesis’ main question, *“Does Western media framing of different actors in ethnic conflict influence the likelihood of intervention being advocated in the media?”*, is, put simply: yes. This study indicated that media framing of the different actors in ethnic conflict has a strong influence on the possibility of intervention being promoted through media sources. In order to address this question further, this chapter discusses whether or not the findings of this study support the hypotheses:

- 1) When ethnic conflicts are framed as “barbaric” situations (involving heroes, victims and villains), intervention is promoted in the media.**
- 2) When ethnic conflicts are framed as “native” situations (stemming from ancient hatreds), at least one of the three players – heroes, victims or villains – is missing, and intervention is not promoted.**

6.1 The “Ethnic” Conflict Framework

The situations in Kosovo, East Timor and Rwanda were, as much of the literature suggests, understood as “ethnic” conflicts – produced by “ancient hatreds” and part of a “deep-rooted” problem. This study found that very little focus was placed on external, political or economic contributions to the conflict, with the media’s portrayal of the violence in all three cases as an “ethnic” problem. Frequent references to the “ethnic hatred” in Kosovo, the “tribal massacres” in Rwanda and the “barbaric” atrocities in East Timor were noted. The concerns of political theorists regarding the simplification of conflicts were expressed in the literature review (see Kuperman, 2004; Orford: 2003; Allen and Seaton eds, 1999; Crawford and Lipschutz, eds, 1998) and this study found that these particular conflicts were indeed reduced to “ethnic” wars in mainstream media. Furthermore, media coverage of the wars in Kosovo, East Timor and Rwanda reduced the violence into two different *kinds* of ethnic conflict: “Barbaric” or “Native”. The following summaries explain how these two categories were identified and address the first sub question of this thesis: *What media frames are used to represent “barbaric” conflicts, and how do they compare to the frames used for “native” conflicts?*

6.2 Exceptions for Barbarians

The concept of a “barbaric” nation in need of intervention was evident in Western media’s portrayal of both Kosovo and East Timor conflicts. In both cases, this study found that the representation of Kosovar Albanians and East Timorese people followed the colonial stereotype of “helpless” victims, requiring rescue from outside forces. Frequent references to “villages” and “villagers” in both situations, as well as “refugees” showed a powerful portrayal of a primitive people in need of Western intervention to guide them towards a democratic state of freedom. Orford argued that the public’s desire for intervention into East Timor was made more urgent by the repeated representation of the Timorese as “defenceless, powerless, ‘hysterical’ and unprotected, and by the focus on threats to babies, women and children” (2003: 10). Justifications for intervening in the case of the “barbaric” have been, as discussed in the literature review, traced back as far as classic writing on intervention (see Mill for example) and became prominent in a colonial era. This study indicated that the West’s perceived superiority is still clearly evident in media portrayals of more recent ethnic conflicts. This thesis found that ethnic conflict is still identified in Western media as either a barbaric situation, where the West is encouraged to intervene as a “white knight”, or a native problem of uncivilised cultures and not worth intervening in.

6.3 The Exception to the Exception: Natives

Media representation of Rwanda fell into the second category of ethnic conflict: a war between “natives”. This study showed that the situation in Rwanda was portrayed as a relatively equal battle between ethnic groups, with heavy reference to “tribal” stereotypes – type-casting Rwanda as yet another inexplicable “native” battle. While references to “tribes” or “tribal” characteristics appeared regularly in reference to the Rwandan conflict, it was never used to describe the violence in East Timor or Kosovo; those ethnic conflicts were portrayed as “barbaric” situations instead. While Kosovo and East Timor received what Robinson would deem empathy framing concerning the people involved, Rwandan people were distanced from the Western reader. A dominant 64 per cent of the negative characteristics mentioned in reference to the Rwandan conflict were attributed evenly to both sides of the conflict. This study further found that the Tutsi people were never described solely as portraying positive characteristics, while Kosovar Albanians and East Timorese people were often attributed positive characteristics. The representation of Rwanda as a whole containing negative characteristics, and the lack of positive characteristics attributed to the

Tutsi population – victims of genocide – reflects a misguided attitude towards “native” conflicts, a case of tribal battles deemed ‘better left alone’.

6.4 Who’s Who: The West Needs Identifiable Players

This study’s findings clearly highlighted Western media’s reliance on identifiable characters in order to report support for intervention. Considering the second sub question of this study, *What kind of media frames lead to the promotion of international intervention into ethnic conflicts, and what kind correlate with support for non-intervention?*, this study showed that identifiable roles of “heroes”, “victims” and “villains” are required for media frames to promote intervention. Within media framing of the East Timor and Kosovo conflicts a prominent hero/victim/villain discourse was found, while portrayals of the Rwanda lacked clear identification of such groups. In coverage of Kosovo, Slobodan Milosevic and Serbian forces emerged as a clear “villain”, while the Indonesian government and forces were the obvious “bad guys” in East Timor. The Kosovar Albanians and the East Timorese were represented in each case as largely innocent victims, with suggestions for the international community to act as a “hero”. In both Kosovo and East Timor, good and bad “sides” were clearly labelled, with a presumed reader understanding of the opposing sides operating within the conflict. Both these cases went on to be represented as worthy of intervention.

Rwanda, however, was portrayed differently. Suggestions in the media for international intervention into Rwanda were minimal and, in fact, most of the international peace-keeping or humanitarian efforts in Rwanda were heavily criticised as preventing or delaying peace, rather than assisting. In media representations of the Rwandan conflict, this study found that 23.1 per cent of references specifically called for non-intervention, compared to the 5.4 and 5.3 per cent Kosovo and East Timor received; indicating a clear difference in the way Rwanda was portrayed to the international community. With half of the Rwandan units of analysis having no reference to international intervention at all, it is obvious that the conflict was explained as a case for non-intervention.

Rwanda was represented as a confusing situation, with indistinguishable actors, and little effort was made in the media to identify perpetrators and victims. This study found that there was very little mention of the Tutsi population, who suffered what is now understood to be one of the world’s more horrific genocides. Hutus and Tutsis were grouped together as “Rwandans”, refugees lacked ethnic identification, and attacks were attributed to “rebels” and unidentified perpetrators. Political analysts have recognised that the conflict in Rwanda failed to present a distinct polarisation of ethnicities between the Hutus and the Tutsis (Jacquin-

Serdal, 1998: 131, 139; Livingston and Eachus, 1999; Ignatieff, 1998; Turton, 1997) and the findings of this thesis support this claim. Rwanda was a confusing war for Western media consumers, with both Hutu and Tutsi “sides” of the conflict consistently lumped together in news coverage of their roles. The West’s inability, or reluctance, to understand the complexities of the Rwandan conflict has been attributed to the global community failing to recognise the genocide (Walzer, 2004: 71; Fein, 2000), and the media has been heavily criticised for its role in the situation. This study found that a lack of identifiable “characters” hindered the media’s ability to accurately report the events, which likely contributed to the international community’s reluctance to intervene in the conflict in Rwanda. The impact of heroes, victims and villains on calls for intervention in media coverage is further explored in the next two sections.

6.5 Heroes and Victims

A powerful construct identified in this study was that of a colonial discourse of heroes and victims. The belief that “barbaric” nations require intervention from more “civilised” cultures echoes colonial attitudes towards native populations, and despite contemporary politics operating in a post-colonised era, this attitude prevails in media coverage of “ethnic” conflicts. As discussed in the literature review, many theorists have identified the hero/victim stereotypes displayed in intervention literature (see Orford, 2003; Barkawi, 2004; Allen and Seaton, 1999; Morrison, 1992; Kaplan, 1997), and this study found that Western media coverage of Rwanda, Kosovo and East Timor drew heavily on this imagery.

Robinson argued that empathy for the “victim” is produced through media articles prior to potential intervention, resulting in direct or indirect support of such an intervention (2000). This study found that in media coverage of Kosovo and East Timor the majority of positive characteristics (part of empathy framing) were attributed to “Side B people” (Kosovar Albanians and East Timorese). Similarities between these people and the audience were regularly highlighted and readers were encouraged to feel empathy towards the actor, supporting Robinson’s theory.

However, this study further expands on Robinson’s theory in the case of Rwanda. According to Robinson’s definitions, empathetic framing was technically achieved through the representation of general “victims” in Rwanda – but this study showed that these victims were ethnically and politically unidentified. It is important to note that the Rwandan people in general were still portrayed as victims, but victims from afar – to be assisted with donations or aid, rather than direct military intervention. For example, several mentions were made of

helping neighbouring African nations conduct interventions (see, for example, Lewis, New York Times, 01 May 1994) and a large focus was placed on delivering food or aid to “Rwandan” refugees (see, for example, Lorch, New York Times 02 May 1994). Of the Rwandan UOAs referring to the international community, 40.4 per cent warned against intervention or suggested caution, while 33.1 per cent called for intervention through diplomacy, and only 26.5 per cent called for military intervention. These findings enhance Robinson’s theory of empathy framing by providing evidence that if a group receiving empathy framing is not clearly identified, then military intervention is still not likely to be promoted.

Furthermore, while some empathy framing was identified for Rwandans in general, similarities between the “victims” and the reader were very rarely promoted. In fact, despite empathy framing of victims, more than half of the references to Rwandans in general also contained negative characteristics. Rwandans were framed as “victims”, but they were portrayed as their own victims, and not worthy of intervention. This study also found zero similarities between the Tutsi population and the reader represented in Western media at the time. While Robinson categorised framing as *either* empathy or distance, Rwanda appears to have received both – empathy in the general description of “victims”, but distancing in the description of actor’s characteristics. This can be understood as a shallow form of “pity” in media framing of “native” ethnic conflicts, victims are pitied in general but individual actors are distanced from the reader, and little is done to promote intervention.

This study also found that in the case of Kosovar Albanians and the East Timorese victims, the West was framed as the “hero”. The role of the international community as a hero, righteous in their intervention to assist in a barbaric situation, was evident in coverage of both conflicts – where the international community’s participation was represented as that of “promoting peace”. In the intervention into East Timor, the Australian-led forces were framed as the heroes, with media reports at the time suggesting that through military intervention, Australia could be “potential saviours of the East Timorese, agents of democracy and human rights able to overpower those bent on killing and destruction” (Orford, 2003: 10). This study found that a significant increase in support for intervention was portrayed in the media a month prior to troops landing in East Timor, as well as an increase in calls for intervention in Kosovo shortly before NATO attacked Serbian forces. In Kosovo the international community was represented as promoters of peace (with 77 per cent of their representation falling under this category) and in East Timor the international community was again hailed as defenders of democracy (with 59 per cent of representation falling under “promoting

peace”). The international community was regularly portrayed as promoters of peace in the Rwandan situation as well (50 per cent of representations), however the lack of intervention in this conflict can be explained by the lack of establishment of other “characters” – the hero was there, but not the identifiable victim or villain.

These findings corroborate theorists’ suggestion that there is a necessity for a hero and victim narrative to be established in Western media in order for international military intervention to be supported (Walzer, 2004: 71; Fein, 2000; Barkawi, 2004: 115). Both heroes and victims were established in media reports of Kosovo and East Timor, which were represented as cases worthy of intervention, while Rwanda (a case that did not receive military intervention) lacked a clear, identifiable, one-sided victim. However, this study showed that even more significant in its impact on support for intervention is not the hero and victim, *but the villain*.

6.6 Villains Wanted: Identifying the “Bad Guy”

One area in which this study’s findings add to the literature is in measuring the impact of Western media labelling a “villain” within ethnic conflicts. The findings showed that the identification of a villain is more significant than the establishment of a hero and victim in media representations of cases worthy of intervention. The theoretical argument that public support of intervention requires a “good guys/bad guys model” (Walzer, 2004: 71) and victim/victimiser rhetoric, was evident in media coverage of the three conflicts included in this study. Both of the situations in Kosovo and East Timor were portrayed as worthy of intervention, and coverage of these conflicts focused heavily on a clearly identifiable villain: the “Side As” – Slobodan Milosevic and his Serbian forces in Kosovo and the Indonesian government in East Timor. Side A’s leaders and military were clearly portrayed as possessing negative characteristics, above and beyond their role in conflict, establishing a villain for audiences to unify against. The Serbian forces, as Side A military, were represented overwhelmingly as perpetrators, with 74 per cent of references made to roles in the conflict labelling them as the aggressors, while Indonesian forces were portrayed as aggressors in 60 per cent of references to roles in the conflict.

In Rwanda the situation was far more blended. It was the Tutsi forces who received a higher percentage of “aggressor” references, with 36.7 per cent, and the Hutu forces receiving 28.8 per cent. The international community’s failure to recognise the atrocities occurring in Rwanda can be understood using Fein’s theory: that for genocide to be recognised, it requires “an innocent victim and guilty perpetrator” (2000: 50). This study supports Fein and other theorists’ suggestion that delays in international intervention are a result of failing to identify

a clear perpetrator who needs to be punished (Walzer, 2004: 71; Fein, 2000; Barkawi, 2004: 115).

The effect of representation of a villain on support for *different kinds* of intervention is also worth noting, with this study showing an interesting relationship between the two. This thesis found that mention of “victims” prompted more calls for *diplomatic* intervention, while references to “aggressors” produced a significantly higher proportion of calls for *military* intervention. Increased suggestions for full military intervention were made in cases with a stronger identification of a perpetrator – a clearer identification of a villain corresponded with a greater number of calls for the international community to step in. Of articles which discussed “victims”, 52.4 per cent suggested diplomatic intervention, and a weaker 37.2 per cent contained calls for military intervention. Within articles mentioning “aggressors”, 47.7 per cent contained calls for military retaliation, and a lesser 29.7 per cent suggested diplomatic intervention. This study therefore shows that while an identification of a victim is, as theorists have suggested, important for mobilising public support for intervention (see Barkawi, 2004; Orford, 2003; Robinson, 2000), it is the recognition of a clear “villain” which prompts the strongest suggestions for full military intervention.

6.7 Location, Location, Location

This study posed the final sub question: *Do the media frames used to represent conflicts differ, depending on the geographic location of the conflict, or the geographic location of the news in which they appear?* This study found that the answer, to the first part of the question, is yes.

Much of previous intervention literature has focused on the lack of intervention into African conflicts (Kuperman, 2000b; Dowden, 2004). This reluctance to intervene in battles in Africa has been attributed to several factors. A failed intervention into Somalia in the early 1990s left a bad taste in the international community’s collective mouth, and is understood to have contributed to hesitation over intervention into later African conflicts (Livingston, 2007: 189; Kuperman, 2000b; Clarke and Herbst, 1996). However, African nations suffer from a much broader non-intervention bias that does not apply to other parts of the world. The argument by Mill and others that “native” battles are better left alone appears to apply to the global media’s understanding of African conflicts.

The non-intervention approach taken by the international community to conflicts in Africa relies on the promotion of the view that these battles stem from “irrational, age-old hatreds”

(Jacquin-Serdal, 1998: 128), and are unable to be assisted by outside intervention. Several theorists have challenged this assumption over the past decade, and the non-intervention justifications it produces in policy have been criticised (see Tang, 2011; Ray, 2008; Terzis, 2008; Kuperman, 2004; Jacquin-Serdal, 1998; Brown et al, 1997; Ignatieff, 1998; Turton, 1997). This thesis contributes to that growing field, as these findings reveal that Rwanda was indeed represented as a war resulting from ‘ancient hatreds’, perhaps explaining (although in no way excusing) the non-intervention policy taken by the international community.

Africa again stands out as an exception to the rule regarding theories of intervention and refugees. While some theorists (see Dowty and Loescher, 1996) suggest that increased international intervention into ethnic conflicts can be justified as attempts to stem refugee flows (and therefore maintaining regional peace and security), it would appear that this excuse is only used in select conflicts. Reports of the Rwandan conflict referred to a massive refugee exodus regularly and yet did not prompt increased calls for intervention. When refugees from Kosovo were widely reported on, however, the situation was different, with this study recording increased calls for intervention under the excuse of stopping the region from becoming embroiled in international conflict. Eastern Europe, and its neighbouring allies to the West, was deemed worthy of intervention under the refugee clause, while Africa was not.

The impact of the geographical location of the conflict on Western media also goes some way in answering the final sub question of this thesis: *Why are some ethnic conflicts depicted as barbaric (and warranting intervention) and some as native (and not worthy of intervention)?* The findings of this study suggests that African conflicts are more likely to be depicted as “native” battles better left alone, while ethnic conflict in other parts of the world are portrayed as “barbaric” situations with the potential for intervention. The results of this study highlight a need for broader investigation into “why” African conflicts are viewed differently.

When it comes to the geographical location of the newspapers involved, this study found little difference in the representation of ethnic violence and intervention. During the worst of the Rwandan conflict, the UK, USA and Australian newspapers all covered more suggestions for non-intervention than intervention. All three carried the voices of advocates for the internal parties to “sort it out themselves”, rather than calling for international intervention. The only area in which a difference between the newspapers was perceptible was in The Sydney Morning Herald’s preference for a diplomatic solution in East Timor, over a military intervention, which could possibly be explained by Australia’s trade relationship with Indonesia or Australia’s responsibility to lead and contribute heavily to an intervention. The

otherwise uniform approach to the case studies suggests that media in the UK, USA and Australia portray ethnic conflict in a similar fashion.

6.8 Summary of Conclusions

This study found that ethnic conflict is portrayed in one of two ways in Western media: either as a “barbaric” situation in which the West must intervene; or as a “native” battle better left alone. This study also showed that suggestions of intervention in Western media are significantly linked with the identification of “characters” participating in the conflict. Both the conflict in Kosovo and the violence in East Timor were found to be portrayed as “barbaric” situations, with an obvious hero/victim/villain narrative, and in need of intervention. The conflict in Rwanda, however, was represented as a “native” conflict and was not represented as worthy of intervention. Unlike the good guys/bad guys framework found in media coverage of Kosovo and East Timor, Rwanda was portrayed as a morally neutral battle between ethnic groups, with heavy reference to “tribal” stereotypes.

The international community’s reluctance to intervene in Rwanda may be partly attributed to the failure to identify specific victims, and an obvious villain. While Kosovo and East Timor received proximate and empathy framing concerning the specific “victims” involved, the Rwandan people were only *generally* framed as “victims”. This study found that a lack of identifiable “characters” in media coverage of Rwanda corresponded with a lack of support for international intervention into the violence occurring. This thesis also found that not only do mainstream media narratives rely on a hero/victim framework in order to support intervention, as proposed by recent political literature (Orford, 2003; Fein, 2000; Barkawi, 2004), but that the identification of a “bad guy” is the key to prompting the most media support for full military intervention. The West, it would appear, requires a clear “victim” and an obvious “bad guy” before stepping into the role of the “hero” in the story of intervention.

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