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# MEXICAN NOSTALGIA, MAYA IDENTITY: THE REINVENTION OF ICONOGRAPHIC NATIONALISM IN INDIGENOUS- LANGUAGE RADIO

ANTONI CASTELLS-TALENS

*Throughout most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the education system and the mass media, including radio, contributed to promote a nationalistic discourse in the process of Mexico's state formation. In the Yucatan, three governmental radio stations broadcast today in the Maya language use an iconography that resembles the one used by official nationalism and have a closer and more direct contact with the indigenous population than any other medium in history. The stations could easily reproduce the official discourse. However, an iconographic analysis of the images projected by the stations and interviews with creators of the iconography reveal that a part of the official nationalist discourse is accepted, but another part is reinterpreted. Although the stations belong to the government, they promote a Maya, rather than a Mexican mestizo, identity. By using archaeological icons and linking them to the indigenous present, the stations de-archaeologize the Maya and imagine a common past.*

**Keywords:** nationalism, indigenous media, radio, Mexico, archaeology

The 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the emergence in Mexico of an innovative discourse about the nation, its origin, its myths, and its language. Planned between 1910 and 1920, this discourse intended to forge a new idea of homeland, to make sure that this idea was shared by the entire population, and to integrate indigenous peoples into national culture. In the 1930s, the

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state turned that discourse into a series of policies to re-construct the state: it was the birth of *revolutionary nationalism* (Florescano, 2006, pp. 395-396). During the rest of the century, the state attempted to create a uniform nation and based its policies on two pillars: (1) cultural policies such as the ones dictated by Mexico's agency of indigenous affairs, the National Indigenist Institute (INI, Instituto Nacional Indigenista) and (2) a single, mandatory education system (Gutiérrez Chong, 1999; Vaughan, 1997).

Nationalism needed to transmit the concept of the nation through as many channels as possible: school, symbols, art, ceremonies, urbanism, architecture, and international events (Vaughan, 1997; Guerra, 1994; Tenorio-Trillo, 1996). In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Mexican nationalism grew parallel to the development of the audiovisual media. Radio, the dominant mass medium in Mexico during the first half of the century, played an important role in spreading the new language of nationalism. Hayes (2000) states that by the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s, Mexico was a *radio nation*, in the sense that the medium allowed the state to connect with popular cultures and get its message across with great effectiveness. Although the government rarely intervened directly in radio broadcasts, the impact of nationalism in radio content was felt for decades (pp. xiv-xv).

Broadcasting was (and, to some extent, still is) controlled in Mexico by one family, the Azcárragas, a fact that helped the government advance its goals. By the end of the 1930s, the Azcárraga group had become not only a commercial radio empire, but a de facto cultural agency of the state which openly supported the hegemonic one-party system of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI, Partido Revolucionario Institucional) (Hayes, 2000, p. xix). Among the best-known sentences of the creator of the empire, media mogul Emilio Azcárraga, are, for instance: "I am a soldier of the PRI" or "Televisa is with Mexico, with the president of the republic and with the PRI... We are and I am a part of the system" (Frattoni & Colías, 1998, p. 219).

Radio allowed the state to reach illiterate populations with a discourse that resembled that of newspapers and film (Hayes, 2000), but because it was in Spanish, it could not reach indigenous peoples, one of the key population targets to reach cultural homogenization. In the mid-1960s, the INI studied the possibility of creating a radio network in indigenous languages to *Spanishize*<sup>1</sup>, that is, to have indigenous populations switch to Spanish and abandon their native languages, but the project did not go forward (Castells i Talens, 2005). A decade and a half later, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the federal government installed and developed a network that broadcast in indigenous languages. Today, the network includes 20 AM stations and 4 FM stations that broadcast in 31 indigenous languages (for a chronology and analysis of the network's history, see, e.g., Ramos Rodríguez, 2005; Castells-Talens, 2004; Cornejo Portugal, 2002).

This article analyzes how the nostalgic past, a common element in Mexican nationalism, was adopted and reinvented by Maya-language radio stations. The icons and myths used by the stations in the Yucatan Peninsula stemmed directly from Mexican state's revolutionary

nationalism, but the meaning and the outcome have been transformed to foster a contemporary Maya, not Mexican, identity.

## INDIGENISM AND MAYA-LANGUAGE BROADCASTING

From 1990 to 2000, the percentage of the population that speaks Maya decreased by almost 10% (Güemez Pineda, 2003). That social use of the Maya language has been receding over time is no act of nature. Throughout Mexico's history, the state has attempted to eliminate the indigenous languages as part of its drive to assimilate native peoples into dominant society. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Mexican Revolution gave birth to *indigenism*, one of the key policies and theoretical justifications of state formation. Since its early days in the 1920s, indigenist policies aimed at Spanishizing the indigenous populations through several mechanisms, including education and the use of the mass media.

In 1979, the INI, the governmental branch of indigenous affairs, began using a radio station in the mountain zone of the state of Guerrero for development purposes. One of the distinctive characteristics of the station was its use of indigenous languages in its communications, even though the official goals of the station included Spanishization of the native peoples in the region. Ramos Rodríguez (2005) showed, however, that during its first 25 years of existence, the station fostered indigenous, cultural cohesion and contributed to shape a strong, indigenous identity among its listeners.

By the late 1980s, the Mexican government had installed other stations throughout Mexico, forming a radio network that broadcast in indigenous languages. Today, the network includes 20 AM stations, 4 low-power FM stations, some experimental radio ventures, and the project to install more stations before 2010. As in many other Latin American countries, radio became the medium that indigenous languages first used to become public since the Conquest. Unlike in other countries, however, most indigenous-language radio stations that operated in Mexico were set up and are owned by the state.<sup>2</sup> This led to a problematic, if not paradoxical, situation: the stations that were to defend indigenous rights and cultures belonged to the same state that had historically attempted to eliminate these rights and cultures.

Over time, the indigenist radio stations have been the objects of praise, but also of criticism, mainly because of their unique, and often contradictory, characteristics. Because the State owns them, indigenous activists have accused them of being counterinsurgent, official tools. At the same time, because the work of the radio stations is closely tied to indigenous communities, the State has often distrusted them. The stations, therefore, must operate on a tense tightrope (Castells-Talens, 2004).

Throughout the 1990s, the INI's stations became simultaneously one of the most substantial programs of Mexico's cultural policies and one of the most desired objects for indigenous activist groups, including the guerrillas of the EZLN (Zapatista Army of

National Liberation). The tension in those stations during the mid and late 1990s rose as the state increased its pressure to control them: censorship, monitoring by intelligence agents, and occasional visits by the military and the police were not uncommon (Castells-Talens, 2004). Nonetheless, as the Zapatista debate withered away from the national political agenda, the indigenist radio's work became more serene.

Since the year 2000, indigenism has rapidly transformed itself, as the old guard has either retired or been put aside by the new bureaucrats of the National Action Party (Partido Acción Nacional, PAN). Although more research is needed, *neoindigenism*, as some scholars have named the new relationship between the state and indigenous peoples, is characterized by: huge modernization programs (including decentralization of power), integrationist cultural policies, the use of paternalism, and a vertical structure that follows guidelines from multilateral agencies (Hernández, Paz, & Sierra, 2004). As part of the modernization efforts, since 2008 half of the indigenous-language network stations can be tuned to from the Internet (Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas, 2008).

## MEMORIES, NOSTALGIA AND NATIONALISM

This article analyzes the discourse of Maya-language radio iconography, and especially, the imagining of a lost, often archaeologized, past. Although nostalgia is a term that usually applies to the person, the concept has been instrumental in analyzing collectivities, such as in the studies of nationalism, and can help compare the discourses of Mexican revolutionary nationalism with the ones in Maya-language stations.

Muro (2005) offers a chronological account of the evolution of the meaning of nostalgia, following the three definitions offered by the Oxford English Dictionary: (1) 'severe homesickness'; (2) 'regretful or wistful memory of an earlier time'; and (3) 'sentimental yearning for a period of the past' (p. 572).

Thus, nostalgia originally meant "homesickness," and was treated as a real illness, a disease identified by Swiss physician Johannes Hoffer that affected soldiers who fought far from their home countries in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Warriors showed physical manifestations such as insomnia, weakness, anxiety, palpitations of the heart, or even death (Wilson, 1999; Muro, 2005). The term evolved during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with Romanticism, to include a "regretful or wistful longing for the past." This meant that nostalgia was no longer exclusive to distance in space, but also distance in time. Muro describes nostalgia at that time as a state of mind for those who had lost something and even those who had not but wanted to go back in time. The current meaning of the word, developed throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, refers to the third dictionary definition, "sentimental yearning for a period of the past." No longer seen as a disease nor a psychological disorder, nostalgia is a catchword for looking back at an either real or imagined past (Muro, 2005, p. 573).



Nostalgia, notes Wilson (1999), needs to be distinguished from reminiscence and sentimentality. Although a part of being nostalgic involves collecting memories (reminiscing) and another part involves responding emotionally (sentimentality), nostalgia is more complex than these two terms. First, nostalgia must be differentiated from the collection of memories because it involves an active selection of the past. The nostalgic past is good or pleasant. Second, unlike sentimentality, which is a fleeting emotion, nostalgia has deeper roots (pp. 298-299).

One of the reasons why nostalgia is so instrumental for nationalism may be that it facilitates cohesion. At times of cultural distress, nostalgia provides the continuity necessary to obtain meaning and security and to keep a sense of identity (Wilson, 1999, pp. 301-302). Continuity is also a key concept for nationalists, who have exploited the ambiguity of the term with effectiveness (Smith, 2001). Continuity can be interpreted as “sameness over time”—which conveys the idea of a permanent, lasting nation—but it can also be understood as a series of gradual, small changes and an evolutionary growth (pp. 29-30).

In the study of nationalism, nostalgia has become a key concept, although not one that necessarily manifests itself explicitly. Instead, it has often been associated implicitly with the idea of “sharing memories,” an idea that helps define communities and collective identities (Smith, 2001), but that also contributes to create a utopian past to which return to (Smith, 1986). That return to the past is not to be taken literally, as in a time machine trip, but rather in a spiritual sense, by recreating the spirit or mood of a golden age in the present (Wilson, 1999; Smith, 2001).

The distant past of the nation is as glorious as its destiny. The discourse of nationalism evokes that “the golden past, hidden beneath the oppressive present, will shine forth once again” (Smith, 2001, p.30). In his study of nostalgia and Basque nationalism, Muro (2005) identifies, additionally, a *nationalist triad*, a group of three myths that structured the discourse of the radical nationalist movement: golden age, decline, and regeneration (pp. 581-585).

This discourse based on these myths is not necessarily the only one used by a nation. A nation can, in fact, use several simultaneous discourses about its past, or a discourse can be used by more than one nation (Díaz-Andreu, 2001). Hutchinson (2001) showed, for instance, how in the 19<sup>th</sup> century George Petri, a Protestant Irish archaeologist, developed through archaeology the myth of a golden Celtic past from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. This myth, first used for Protestants as the basis for an “Anglo-Irish nation” project, was soon appropriated by an emerging middle-class Ireland who rejected Protestant, British rule.

## THE ROLE OF ARCHAEOLOGY IN MEXICAN NATIONALISM

Mexican nationalism has also played a pivotal role in both constructing a series of shared myths and in molding the role of indigenous peoples in national history. The

invention of a nostalgic Mexico and the longing for the past, however, has its roots a few centuries earlier.

In central Mexico, the 17<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the early stages of the idealization of an indigenous past, which set the foundations for Mexican nationalism (Castañeda, 1996, p. 107). The same period, in contrast, was still a period of “first contact” and Conquest in some Maya areas of the Yucatan, where fear of indigenous rebellion was felt more intensely. In these high-risk regions, colonialists made every effort to disconnect myth and reality (p. 108).

Aggravating the situation, some of the Maya myths were prophecies that predicted the return of Maya autonomy, which provoked a great deal of anxiety to Yucatec Creoles (Castañeda, 1996, p.108). Indigenous myths needed to be severed from the indigenous population, and so the incorporation of the indigenous past into the nationalist discourse did not appear in Yucatan until the late 18<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Castañeda, 1996, p. 108). It is then that the concept of “lost cities” justified the need to be “discovered” (p. 109).

Western archeological explorations of the Americas often mirrored the model of Egypt (Pratt, 1992). At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Yucatan received the revealing description of “American Egypt” (Castañeda, 1996, p. 109). As in Egypt, archeologists reinvented history “through, and as” ruins and monuments (Pratt, 1992, p. 134). Additionally, the context of Western imperialism and expansionism in which these explorations were carried out allowed for a romantic interpretation of older empires (134).

In his 19th-century travels, one of the first Western explorers and travel writers in Latin America, Alexander von Humboldt, contributed to the creation of a nostalgic image of an ancient Mexico akin to the greatest European civilizations. Humboldt compared Mexican pyramids to the monuments of Ancient Egypt and the Ancient Mediterranean, dating them from “an epoch when Mexico was in a more advanced state of civilization than Denmark, Sweden, and Russia” (Pratt, 1992, p.183). His explorations provided a framework for loss and nostalgia (p. 183), which became an intrinsic element of nationalism.

In the Americas, the political use of nostalgia depended on archeological findings to create “shared memories.” During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Mexico, as many other states, increased the use of archaeology with political objectives to consolidate its past (Díaz-Andreu, 2001). Archaeology supplied scientific information about ancient cultures and civilizations that helped the state shape common myths and create collective memories. Artists such as muralist Diego Rivera reproduced archaeological findings, contributing to their durability and impact (p. 437), and by creating common myths for the dominant society, archaeology also contributed to the dehistoricization of indigenous peoples by reassigning them to a “departed age” (Pratt, 1992, p. 134):

As with the monumentalist reinvention of Egypt in the same period, the links between the societies being archeologized and their contemporary descendants remain absolutely obscure,

indeed irrecoverable. This, of course, is part of the point. The European imagination produces archeological subjects by splitting contemporary non-European peoples off from their precolonial, and even their colonial, pasts. To revive indigenous history and culture as archeology is to revive them as dead. (Pratt, 1992, p. 134).

As Thurner (1997) notes, the shared view was that in a sense the indigenous peoples were deprived from a role in history. That is, they were dehistoricized and could not, therefore, contribute to the national project (p. 12). An additional contradiction, latent in Mexican nationalism, helps explain the de-historization of indigenous peoples. Gutiérrez (1999) explains that nationalist discourse has used the figure of an old, glorious, indigenous past, while fighting a marginalized, illiterate, and uncomfortable indigenous present.

## THE STUDY OF ICONOGRAPHY

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, revolutionary nationalism appealed to the mass media to give an impulse to the national feeling. Film, radio, theater and popular music were instrumental in homogenizing the country (Florescano, 2006, p. 384). However, a significant research void needs to be filled. What role do indigenous-language stations play in the nationalist movement? Never before has a state medium been so close to indigenous cultures as these stations. In the case of indigenous-language broadcasting in the Yucatan, new questions emerge about the role of the media in identity building. What kind of identity does indigenist radio promote? To what extent do state-owned, indigenist stations follow the guidelines established by 20<sup>th</sup>-century revolutionary nationalism? How is the nationalist discourse interpreted in these stations? What are their myths? What is the role of the indigenous peoples in history?

Although programs are, without a doubt, the main tool that a radio station possesses to send a message, indigenist radio stations can hardly be considered as conventional radio stations. Their community-oriented character, their close connection to the audience, and their physical and symbolic presence among listeners turn these media into institutions that englobe a wider space than the airwaves (Ramos Rodríguez, 2005).

Identity in indigenous-language stations, a problematic concept, has been studied through empirical research. The language used in programming, the mission of the stations, the type of radio shows, the mechanisms of community participation, the mechanisms of grassroots participation, or the geographic focus of the news can serve as indicators of the identity of the stations (Castells-Talens and Kent, 2002). This article proposes to study identity through everyday forms of iconographic self-representations of the stations, that is, through the graphic symbols that radio stations choose to represent themselves on a daily basis.

The iconography of the stations constitutes their first definition, their way to assert in public what they are (and what they are not). With their logos, murals, and posters, Maya-language radio stations not only build an identity of their own, but contribute to the definition of an identity for the Maya people. Because of the great relevance of these stations for contemporary Maya society, they have the potential to act as a tool of official nationalism, as a mechanism of cultural resistance for indigenous identity, or perhaps as both.

Vargas (1995) analyzed the spatial distribution of a radio station in Chiapas to show how indigenist policy could constrain people's participation in the medium (pp. 66-69). The originality of her idea (analyzing a floor plan) shows that policy can be studied through non-written, non-obtrusive methods. Because iconography represents a key part of nationalism, iconographic self-representations of the station, such as logos, murals, and music, constitute suitable sources of data. Semiotic analysis has appeared as an alternative to traditional methods of social science research (Lee, 2000, p. 110).

In semiotic analysis, cultural representations are interpreted as texts. As Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) have attempted to show, semiotics can also treat images as narrative representations (p. 43). Following their footsteps, an interpretation of the images used by the two stations that broadcast exclusively in Maya and Spanish (Radio XEPET and Radio XENKA) can contribute greatly to understanding the representation of nationalism in indigenist radio. Radio XEPET, Radio XENKA, and Radio XEPUJ and other indigenist stations have used images in posters, brochures, stickers, logos, banners, murals, and other souvenir-type objects, such as plates or vases. The analysis will concentrate on the two most prevailing images: the stations' logos and the murals at the stations' facilities.

The logo of the stations appears in almost all—if not all—the souvenir articles distributed to listeners, visitors, and staff (T-shirts, caps, flags, stickers). Logos are also displayed in official documents of the station, posters advertising events, and, in general, almost every written communication produced in the station. The murals are the first visual display encountered when entering the stations XEPET and XENKA. In both stations, murals occupy nearly the totality of the wall faced by the visitor when entering the premises.

The iconographic analysis was complemented by in-depth interviews with two of the creators of the icons that corroborated the semiotic interpretations. Future research might attempt to explore more closely the relationship of the artists with nationalism and the visual representations of its myths.

## ARCHAEOLOGY AND RADIO

Radio XEPET in the state of Yucatan and Radio XENKA in Quintana Roo use Maya as the main language of their broadcasts.<sup>3</sup> In the state of Campeche, Radio XEPUJ combines Maya with Ch'ol, the language of migrant workers who live in the area. Logos and

murals, two of the main iconic representations in Radio XEPET and Radio XENKA,<sup>4</sup> show some commonalities in spite of the age difference between the stations and other differences, despite the mere 130 kilometers that separate them. Indigenist stations use their logos in hats, shirts, pottery, banners, posters, stickers, and other souvenir objects. The entrance to the stations is usually adorned by the painted call letters of the station, the nickname (e.g., “The Voice of the Maya” for XEPET), the frequency, the power in watts, and the logo. The logo of Radio XEPET, seen in the left picture of a souvenir vase in Figure 1, is a stylized black conch on an earth-colored background. The conch, believed to be used in pre-Columbian times by the Maya to produce sounds, has come to symbolize both a musical instrument to assert Maya roots and the most ancient medium of non-interpersonal communication in the peninsula, as confirmed by the author of the XEPET logo, a non-indigenous artist from the state of Veracruz (Lourdes González, personal communication, May 2005). The vase in Figure 1 also shows a pre-Columbian Maya, similar to the ones seen in archaeological iconography. The whole vase is reminiscent of a Maya past, as if stolen from a museum.

As in the case of XEPET, the logos of Radio XENKA and Radio XEPUJ suggest a connection to the past as well. Figure 2 shows the logos of these two stations painted on signs at the entrance of the stations. The right half of



Figure 1. Souvenir vase with logo of *Radio XEPET, The Voice of the Maya*. Photo: Antoni Castells-Talens



Figure 2. Signs at the entrance of Radio XENKA, in Felipe Carrillo Puerto, Quintana Roo, and Radio XEPUJ, in Xpujil, Campeche. Photos: Antoni Castells-Talens

XENKA's logo represents the map of the state of Quintana Roo. The shape of the eastern side of the map, which corresponds to the Caribbean coast, has been changed, however, to symbolize a Maya silhouette facing to the left with its mouth open. A scroll, resembling the shape of a comma, usually interpreted as the symbol for speech in contemporary archaeology, comes out of the mouth and stays in the center of the map. The left side of the map shows four concentric semicircles, which look like a rainbow or, most likely, like airwaves. In the exterior part of the logo, each of the four cardinal points is marked by another speech scroll. The logo of Radio XEPET shows a pre-Hispanic Maya man using a conch, again, as a communication medium.

When visitors enter either Radio XENKA or Radio XEPET, a mural covers the first wall they see. The wall—and the mural—in XEPET are relatively small. In contrast, the vast size of the mural of Radio XENKA reminds the visitor of great Mexican muralists such as Diego Rivera or Yucatec Fernando Castro Pacheco. The mural in XEPET has been present in the station since the early 1990s, and probably earlier. The one in Radio XENKA was finished in 2002. The contents vary greatly as well.

Radio XEPET's mural (Figure 3) shows a woman going to fetch water from a well in a Maya village. Three traditionally built houses and colored-leaf trees frame the scene. The woman wears an *ipil*, the Yucatec Maya dress. The landscape seems proportionally larger than the woman. The theme of a woman wearing an *ipil* is also present in different forms in the anniversary posters of 1993 and 2002, when XEPET turned 20. The well, the houses, and the walls around the yards appear bigger than the ones seen in the Yucatec villages. The scene communicates peace. No movement other than the woman, no animals, no noisy distractions, no sign of modernity breaks the harmony of a scene that could represent the 21<sup>st</sup> century as well as the 18<sup>th</sup>.

The woman walks to get water, a symbol of life, in a social and historical vacuum. She is alone in the landscape. One cannot appreciate a sense of community, other than houses without the presence of the inhabitants, nor any threat from enemies. The bucolic painting seems to represent the state of Yucatan's common answer to the stranger who asks how everything is in the state: "muy tranquilo," very calm. It's the idealized province, a province that no longer



Figure 3. Mural of Radio XEPET in Peto, Yucatan. Photo: Antoni Castells-Talens



Figure 4. Mural of Radio XENKA in Felipe Carrillo Puerto, Quintana Roo. Photos: Antoni Castells-Talens / Montage: Claudia Katz

exists in the Maya area of Yucatan. The mural has no sign of empty plastic bottles lying on the streets, electric and telephone poles, cars and buses. A feeling of nostalgia emanates from the painting: it depicts a place that is recognizable because all elements are familiar in today's Yucatan (the woman in ipil, the houses, the well), but the scene does not exist anywhere near the radio station—nor in the rest of the Yucatan, most likely.

The mural of Radio XENKA (Figure 4), on the contrary, can be described with many adjectives, none of which is “tranquilo.” As a central theme, a bare-chested, muscular Maya man stands in the center of the painting, a machete in his right hand and a gun in his left hand. He emerges from behind a holy cross. Under his armpits two soldiers die, as if the emergence of the Maya man had created an imaginary explosion that killed them.

One of the authors of the mural is Alain Martínez, a young artist born in the state of Oaxaca whose parents are Zapotec and who migrated to Quintana Roo at a young age. Martínez identifies the central character as Cecilio Chi, a Maya military man who led the Caste War, a violent indigenous insurrection in the 19<sup>th</sup> century against the Yucatec Creoles (Alain Martínez, personal communication, 2006).

Framing this image, from left to right, the rest of the painting tells a story, as is customary with the works of many Mexican muralists. On the far left three caravels sail from a fire behind a globe. The middle caravel carries a huge wooden cross with a skull in the middle. Descending from the ship, a monk is holding a baton in his right hand and a chain in his left hand. The monk steps on a sculpture of what seems to be Yum Kraal, the pre-Columbian Maya god of corn. The chain extends itself to trap the leg of a Maya man, who is standing atop a pyramid.

The man is playing a conch, too, from which a huge snake crawls forward to the right part of the mural, passing behind the central character of the painting. The pyramid looks like the main structure of the archaeological zone of Chichén Itzá, with a reminiscence of the main structure of Uxmal.

Another Maya is sitting on his knees in front of the Maya who stands on the pyramid. The sitting Maya is raising half a gourd, possibly with *belch'e*, a ceremonial liquor made out of honey. His head is down, as if he were offering the drink to the man on the pyramid, suggesting that this man could possibly be a priest or a leader. The sitting Maya is next to the cross from which the central figure of Cecilio Chi, the armed Maya, emerges.

From behind the pyramid, a huge hand with vulture-like fingernails penetrates the map of the state of Quintana Roo. The hand comes from the sleeve of a business suit. Next to it, a vulture with human-like hands with claws caresses one of the fingers of the penetrating hand. The vulture, dressed with a blue tie, is grabbing money bills with his other human-like hand. Under the bird, there is a huge egg. From the egg, seven hands emerge, attempting to grab some bills. Two of the hands are fighting for the same bill. Another hand is holding a parchment.

According to the artist, the new conquest of the Yucatan Peninsula is a consequence of greed and profit:

The claw is destroying the state. High executives, for instance, governors, *licenciados*<sup>5</sup> and all those who are selling mainly the beach zone, they are selling it to big foreign businessmen. And we represented them as this vulture, who is paying these high executives over here. And in the meantime, they are taking away our own land in the state.

*-And the hands that come out of the egg?*

- It's like the never-ending story. For instance, the foreigners' buying the land, the beach zones. The egg is like if the vulture had laid an egg and from there will come more and more. As I tell you, the never-ending story. More keep coming out. This sort of thing is never going to end (Alain Martínez, personal communication, 2006).

The parchment displays a forest, a lake, and a stele with a hieroglyph of what could look like an archaeologically Maya version of a radio. Under the stele are found the signature of the painter and the date of the painting (September 10, 2002). Above the parchment is the head of the snake, presumably Kukulcan even though the feathers are absent, that came out of the conch. The open mouth of the snake lets out another Maya man with a scroll emanating out of his mouth, as in the logo of the station. A huge radio transmitter antenna springs up from the parchment and from behind the talking head that came out of the serpent. The antenna rises into the sky until it reaches the sun, or perhaps its actual broadcast is the sun. On the lower left corner of the mural, a Maya man watches the whole mural.

The serpent is the element that marks continuity:

The Maya were adorers of the serpent, it was a god for them and we put it like it represented the Maya of nowadays, reappearing again. Once again they are arising after the war, now through radio. The radio station that is right here where we stand, Radio XENKA, speaks in two languages, in Spanish and Maya. That's why we represented it this way. [The serpent]



is as if the Maya were arising again and this is the antenna of the station. There is a character from the radio station that is talking. He is Maya as well. And with this more non-conformists are coming out. This way, one learns about the history of the ancient people who inhabited this zone and who still inhabit it (Alain Martínez, personal communication, 2006).

The posters and invitation cards that announce the celebrations of XEPET's anniversaries also make an effort to relate the archaeological past with the present, to establish continuity between the golden age and the technological present and futures. Figure 5 corresponds to the invitation to celebrate XEPET's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, in November 2007. The central image is "El Castillo" pyramid from Chichén Itzá, the main tourist and archaeological attraction in Yucatán. However, unlike most travel-agency brochures would do, the photography does not allow the viewer to travel to ancient, pre-Columbian Mexico because the picture includes a huge broadcasting antenna next to the archaeological site. What would be an anachronism in the eyes of a tourist becomes an attempt of appropriation or re-appropriation of the ruins and a mechanism to meld the Maya past with the unavoidably modern present. The Maya were in Yucatan before the Spaniards arrived (as symbolized by the pyramid), but they are still present in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (symbolized by the antenna). Although this poster differs greatly from the political mural of XENKA, an underlying metaphor unites both representations: Pre-Hispanic and contemporary elements not only coexist, but are related in a direct and conscious way. In both cases, moreover, a pyramid and an antenna are used as symbols of the Maya of the past and the Maya of the present and future, or as myths 1 (golden past) and 3 (salvation) of Muro's nationalist triad.

The photo reproduces a text in Spanish that repeats itself decade after decade in brochures, posters, and even in a sign that hangs in the INI/CDI headquarters in Mexico City: "One day will come in which a man will speak to you from far away and you will be able to listen to him calmly from wherever you are, but you will not be able to see him, because he will be too far. Fifth Maya Prophecy." Inside the same

radio station, the Maya workers of XEPET confess that the sentence is closer to an urban legend invented by someone who was ingenious than an authentic Maya prophecy. Some workers, in fact, claim that they have fruitlessly searched for the sentence in Maya sacred books such as the *Chilam Balam*. In any

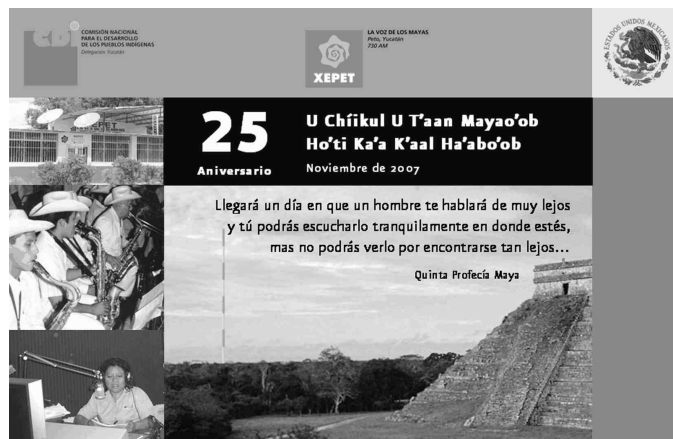


Figure 5. Invitation to the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Radio XEPET

case, the poetically-licensed sentence makes it possible to convert the antenna in the picture into a Maya tool that had been envisioned centuries ago by the forefathers.

On the left side of the invitation card, three photos accompany Chichén Itzá: the top one shows the entrance to the radio with two satellite dishes. In the middle picture, three Maya musicians play the saxophone, a foreign instrument that has become Maya in all the interpretations of the *vaquería*, a dance in Maya popular celebrations. The two musicians in the forefront are young. They are sitting next to an elder, who plays his sax in the background. The future and the past work together in a festive and traditional expression of Maya identity.

In the lower photo, with her headphones on and a modern shirt (not an ipil), a radio announcer reads before a microphone. In Radio XEPET, women have been explicitly linked with the transmission of Maya culture (Ligia Marín Perera, personal communication, May 2006). The announcer in the photo passes on culture with modern technology.

The nickname of the station and the inscription “Twenty-five years,” both written in Maya, top the main photo next to a big “25” and the word “anniversary,” written in Spanish. Three logos preside the invitation: CDI’s<sup>6</sup>, XEPET’s, and the seal of the Republic with the official name of the country in Spanish: “United States of Mexico.” Being Maya is, therefore, compatible with the symbols of the Mexican State. The invitation manifests the station’s governmental affiliation and uses the Mexican creation myth of the eagle and the snake, which originated in central Mexico (far from the Yucatan) and constitutes the central element of the Mexican flag.

The past of the Maya is also present in the representation of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Caste War and of a legendary Maya rebel hero of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Jacinto Canek, after whom XEPET’s auditorium was named. Besides a radio series on the Caste War, the station tied the celebration of its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary to the Caste War, the violent, indigenous uprising depicted in XENKA’s mural. The poster that advertised the festivities read: “1997: 150 years from the claim for Maya identity. XEPET: 15 years broadcasting Maya identity.” The poster made reference to 1982, the year of the inauguration of XEPET, and 1847, the year of the Caste War. The reference to the Caste War continued in the opening remarks of the celebration, when XEPET’s manager began his speech to a live and radio audience by saying: “There is no armed movement in Yucatan, but the demand that originated the Caste War is a demand that continues to be current.” In that same speech, the director explained that the idea of including the commemoration of the Caste War is “that the station be a space where the Maya people demonstrates that it’s a living people, that works, that struggles; that the Maya are not just archeological artifacts. The radio station works for the dignity and the freedom of the Maya people.”

## CONCLUSIONS

The iconic representations in the logos and murals often recuperate—or imagine—symbols of the pre-Columbian Maya. Whereas access to the archaeological sites seems generally reserved for tourists and researchers, the stations systematically use archaeological iconography to represent themselves, just as Mexican nationalism has done historically.

Muro's nationalist triad of a nostalgic longing for a lost indigenous past that has been interrupted violently and will be restored is well-known to Mexican nationalism, which until 1960 used indigenous iconography for that purpose in radio, music, film, painting and sculpture (Florescano, 2006, pp. 384, 409). This type of nostalgia is invoked in the mural painting of Radio XEPET, a painting that welcomes visitors to a peaceful land, where the surface is as calm as the woman who fetches water from the well. The romanticism that flows from the painting corresponds to the idealization of provincial, rural life, fitting what Florescano (2006) called *folkloric nationalism* and which was developed in Mexico half a century earlier (p. 384).

A first reading of the iconographic discourse of Maya-language radio could lead to the conclusion that indigenist radio stations are expressing a regional version of the early-20<sup>th</sup> century Mexican nationalism. Conches, pyramids, speech scrolls, archaeological vases, stylized Maya heads with feather crowns are all icons recognizable by most Mexicans as a part of their common past, so it could easily be inferred that Maya identity is basing itself on the kind of nostalgia that had driven Mexico's revolutionary nationalism. Such a conclusion would be erroneous, however.

The mural in Radio XENKA offers a diametrically-opposed representation of Maya life, with no room for nostalgia: caravels and chains, indigenous heroes, pre-Hispanic iconography, epic battles, and modern-day exploiters. The apparent peace from the well painted in Radio XEPET's facilities hide a more complex reality. When XEPET's posters made the analogy between the period 1847-1997 (150 years of the Caste War) and 1982-1997 (15 years of XEPET's history), the agitated layer beneath the calm surfaces. A war and a radio station are put at the same level. When XENKA's mural presents its central image as a rebelling Maya with a machete and a gun, it is doing the same. In both cases, the radio stations give themselves the same status as the Caste War, that is, of a fierce indigenous fight against oppression.

The mural of XENKA's discourse fits the nationalist triad discussed by Muro. An ideal, noble past of Maya who built pyramids (myth 1: golden age) has been interrupted for 500 years by 16<sup>th</sup>-century priests who descended from caravels and by businessmen-like vultures who pillage the land (myth 2: decline). From a golden age conch comes a serpent that will bring public speech in Maya which will be broadcast by radio (myth 3: regeneration). However, nostalgia is absent from the mural. The connection between the present and the

past is not exactly one of returning to the mood and spirit of the ancestors, but rather one of destiny (e.g., the announcer that comes out of Kukulcan's mouth, in the mural; the supposed Maya prophecy predicting the use of radio; the broadcasting antenna that rises from behind Chichén Itzá, in the invitation). Destiny, a key concept for nationalism (Smith, 2001), seems a natural ally of nostalgia, but in XENKA, like in the other representations of indigenist broadcasting, the Maya past shows the existence of a Maya presence, as if shouting "here we are" were the main purpose of the icons.

The discourse of Mexican nationalism shares some elements with the one in the Maya radio stations: iconographic archaeology is used to promote identity, the nationalist triad provides a narrative, and the symbols of the state are present in the stations. Radio stations do not hide their affiliation with the state. The stations' pickup trucks display the CDI's logos on the door, the broadcasts begin and end with the national anthem (played in Maya) and they employ (though with moderation) state symbols such as the eagle and the serpent.

As Hutchinson (2001) and Díaz-Andreu (2001) suggest, though, parallel discourses can emerge when similar archaeological evidence are interpreted in different fashions. At first sight the icons may look the same for Mexican and Maya discourses, but over the years, the radio stations has reinvented the purpose of the iconography, giving birth to a parallel discourse:

- The *outcome* of the discourse is different. The product of the narrative in the studied representations is not *mestizo* (i.e., mixed-blood) Mexican, as revolutionary nationalism proposed, but Maya. In these stations, the memories of an indigenous, glorious past awakened by (or imagined through) archaeology, are evoked from a Maya present, not a Mexican one.
- Mexican nationalism relied on central Mexican, Aztec symbols that are alien to the Maya. Except for the symbols of the state (which are used as representing the state, not as a part of a narrative), the discourse in radio stations uses Yucatec Maya iconography, used in Yucatan by the Creole elites.
- The territory imagined is not the Republic of Mexico, but the Yucatan Peninsula in some cases or the state of Quintana Roo in others (which is an administrative, not a cultural entity).
- The utopian future in Mexico is a homogeneous society with social justice and equity (both social and cultural), whereas the Maya stations have presented radio as liberation. Public expression in Maya is a first step toward this liberation.

Montserrat Guibernau points out that indigenous movements are characterized by a weak identification with the state and by their lack of political power (Guibernau, 1999, p. 118). In these radio stations, resources may be too scarce to create common myths of a golden age, but that is irrelevant because the discourse was already available in non-indigenous Yucatan. The state and the Yucatec Creole elites have been creating Maya myths for about 200 years, and so the symbols, artistic icons, and archaeological representations

of the past already existed. The lack of political power is illustrated in these stations by the lack of challenge to Mexican myths and by the use of a discourse that resembles the official one.

As Guibernau (1999) notes, indigenous peoples are using technology to advance their goals (p. 121). In the cases analyzed, radio is a recurrent theme of iconography, but the discourse is not about radio (as one would expect in a radio station), it is about collective identity. Radio and its components (especially antennas) serve as metaphors of the emergence of a Maya future, a future that can now be built because the past has been found. Broadcast technology is not just the means to reach these goals, but a symbol of these (invisible) goals.

Except in the mural of XEPET (which is an older icon), nostalgia is not a priority in the iconography. The search for the past is there through the overwhelming use of archaeology, but unlike in Mexican nationalism, the efforts seem more geared to connecting past and present than to forging a political project that would require nostalgia. Revolutionary nationalism had attempted to extract contemporary indigenous peoples from national history. The iconographic coupling of archaeology with antennas is doing the exact opposite. It is creating a link between the dead Maya and the live Maya. The discursive practices of the stations give the 21<sup>st</sup> century Maya a place in history. The discourse is de-archaeologizing the Maya, not by eliminating the icons related to pre-Columbian artifacts and ruins, but by appropriating them and linking them to today's Maya. Any doubts that could still exist about the alleged disappearance of the Maya vanish immediately with this iconographic discourse. Retaking Smith's (2001) concept, these Maya representations are establishing *continuity* with pre-Columbian history while embracing modern change. To paraphrase Margarita Díaz-Andreu (2001, p. 438), by establishing a parallel discourse, these radio stations have decided that the Maya have the right to their own past.

## ENDNOTES

1. *Spanishize* is a free translation of the original *castellanizar*. *Spanishize* is used over the correct term *hispanicize* because the later has wider implications about culture, whereas *Spanishize* denotes that *castellanización* programs focused on language.

2. The virtual monopoly of indigenous-language media that the Mexican State owned in the 1980s and 1990s is being challenged by the spontaneous growth of grassroots, community radio stations in indigenous zones since the year 2000. Most of these stations operate without governmental permits. Occasionally, the government closes one down and confiscates its equipment.

3. A previous version of this paper was published in 2009 by Signo y Pensamiento. The older version is in Spanish and focuses on the iconographic aspects of the findings. The introduction, the theoretical parts, and the discussion are much significantly different. However, this section is almost the same.

4. XEPET, inaugurated in 1982, is 17 years older than XENKA, which began broadcasting in 1999. XEXPUJ was inaugurated in 1996.

5. *Licenciado*, literally “person who graduated from college,” is a word commonly used in Mexico to address certain professionals (e.g., politicians, lawyers, or mid-level bureaucrats). The term implies respect, but in many cases also submission from those who have not received a university education.

6. The CDI is the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples, the governmental branch that in 2003 replaced INI as the institution in charge of the relations between the state and indigenous peoples.

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# NOSTALGIA FOR GREATER SERBIA: MEDIA COVERAGE OF RADOVAN KARADŽIĆ'S ARREST

ZALA VOLCIC AND KARMEN ERJAVEC

*The arrest of former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić in July 2008 triggered wide-spread international interest and provided the opportunity for the Serbian public and its media to reflect upon the role of Serbia in the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s. Karadžić was a Bosnian-Serb president of the self-proclaimed Serbian republic within Bosnia and Herzegovina, and was indicted for genocide and crimes against humanity in 1995. On the basis of critical discourse analysis, we argue that Television Serbia, while covering Karadžić's arrest, constructed a nationalistic discourse by invoking nostalgia for Greater Serbia in ways that suppressed or concealed any connection between Karadžić specifically, the Serbs in general, and especially the current government with war crimes in Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the same time this discourse celebrated Serbia as a superior nation as it progressed toward inclusion in the European Union.*

**Keywords:** nostalgia, nationalism, poetry, Serbia, television, recontextualization, war criminal

*His world turned upside down  
And through his memory like a honeycomb  
A bullet,  
A slender bullet, majestic bullet.*

Radovan Karadžić, a Bosnian-Serb politician and a poet, accused of genocide and crimes against humanity for his role in ethnic cleansing during the Bosnian war in the 1990s, in a poem *A Morning Hand Grenade* (1983)

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In the Serbian context, poets have traditionally played a crucial role in invoking nationalistic sentiment, and in this respect the political ascendancy of the nationalist poet and a politician Radovan Karadžić was not as exceptional as it might have been in other national contexts. Serbian leaders have long had poetic ambitions, and poets have played an important role in the national political imaginary. Serbian folk poems, while using myths of origin and ancestry, in particular supported the struggle for the preservation of the Serbian national character in various historical periods, including the 1990s (Zarkovic, 2008).<sup>1</sup> In the Balkan region more generally, poets are recognized as playing a crucial role in imagining their nations by fostering myths, memories and nostalgia for some golden past, in which heroic events (victories/glories and sacrifices/traumas) and heroes (actual historical figures and/or mythologized characters) occupy a prominent position (Colovic, 2002). Furthermore, poets are often understood as able to emotionally inspire the members of the group to foster a sense of belonging and cohesion. Specifically, many scholars also point to the nostalgic sentiments expressed in Serbian nationalistic poetry – these offer simplistic ideals in order to avoid confronting the realities of daily life. Nostalgic sentiments can, as Boym argues, express both love of the past and hate of the Other (Boym, 2001).

During the wars of the 1990s in the former Yugoslavia, poets from all of the former Yugoslav states provided much of the raw material for the exclusionary national imagination, invoking a revered and idealized past in ways that foment nationalist conflict. Poets were intensely involved in the ideological labour that brought together selective cultural elements, historical memories, and interpretations of experiences (Colovic, 2002). The role of poets in the conflict has led Slavoj Žižek, a Slovene philosopher, to famously declare that “instead of the *military-industrial complex*, we in post-Yugoslavia had the *military-poetic complex* personified in the twin figures of Ratko Mladić and Radovan Karadžić” (Žižek, 2008: 17). This article explores the ways in which Serbian TV covered Karadžić’s arrest, arguing that it complemented the aestheticization of politics enacted by his poetry. In this regard, we might supplement Žižek’s account by noting the way in which the forms of forgetting, idealization, and nostalgia that characterized nationalist poetry were reproduced for mass audiences by the electronic media, creating a military-poetic-media-entertainment complex.

Karadžić, a former Bosnian Serb leader accused of genocide and crimes against humanity for his role in the ethnic cleansing that took place during the Bosnian war in the 1990s, was notorious for inciting Serbian troops with his speeches and poems full of nostalgic sentiments for Greater Serbia.<sup>2</sup> In his own poetry, the butchery he had led against “the Turks” – Bosnian Muslims – was openly expressed.<sup>3</sup> As Colovic (2002) points out, “exile, destruction, death, and return to a forsaken homeland” as well as “hatred” are themes that commonly feature in his works and actions. The titles of his poems are illustrative here: *Goodbye, Assassins*, *A Man Made of Ashes*, and *War Boots*. Colovic (2002: 34) calls

Karadžić's poetry "war-propaganda folklore" that transfers "conflicts from the sphere of politics, economy and history into the extrapolated sphere of myth."

In 1996, after the end of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH), Karadžić went into hiding for thirteen years. He was captured as Dragan Dabić on July 21, 2008, in Belgrade, Serbia, where he had been cultivating a long white beard, practising alternative medicine, was a regular health magazine contributor and even gave public lectures. To the Serbian radical party, he is "the greatest Serbian hero," whereas an architect of the Dayton Accords Richard Holbrooke calls him "a European Osama bin Laden."<sup>4</sup>

On July 22, 2008, a day after his arrest, the television program entitled "Television Serbia on Radovan Karadžić" was broadcast on Television Serbia (TS) and achieved the highest ratings of any television program in Serbia (*Gledanost RTS*, 2008). It also fostered active public debate. For example, the Serbian Radical party accused TS of "dangerous anti-Serbian journalism," while, on the other hand, different non-governmental organizations for human rights claimed the show represented yet another example of the "banalization of crimes" (Torov, 2008). The arrest itself deeply polarized the Serbian public: less than half of the citizens (42%) supported the arrest and extradition of Karadžić to the Hague, while 54% opposed it; roughly a third of the Serbian population defined Karadžić as a Serbian national hero, and 40% saw him as neither a national hero nor a war criminal (*Pola-pola oko izrucenja*, 2008).

The first part of this paper introduces some historical frameworks and theoretical investigations. We briefly deal with Boym's "reflective" and "restorative" definitions of nostalgia – she distinguishes between two narratives of nostalgia that frame feelings of dislocation differently, since they both try to understand how we relate to a collective home (41). In the second part, we present a study which uncovers how TS exploits and further incorporates a particular social event (in our case, Karadžić's arrest) into nationalistic and a "restorative nostalgic" discourse. The research is based on critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1992; Van Leeuwen, 1996; Wodak, 1996, 2006). We argue that TS, while covering Karadžić's arrest, constructed a nationalistic discourse that invoked nostalgia for the prospect of the creation of Greater Serbia. Any connections between Karadžić, the Serbs, and especially the current government with war crimes in BH were brushed aside. This nostalgia for Greater Serbia, we argue, exemplifies a political paradox in Serbia: at the same time that information on the historical atrocities of the former Yugoslav regimes and of Serbia's role in these atrocities was being made available to the Serbian public, nostalgia for selected cultural aspects of the Serbian past is growing as well. The conclusions offer some observations directed towards answering how to refine theories of memory, nostalgia, and media culture in ways that might help to challenge the manipulation of popular discourses by those who seek to exacerbate the forms of nationalism, racism, and historical hatred that have divided the region.

## THE POLITICAL-HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1986, the Serbian Academy of Science and Art prepared a *Memorandum* – a long list of Serbian grievances against their position within the Yugoslav federation – which articulated the need for a collective mobilization of the Serbs throughout Yugoslavia. Slobodan Milošević, a Serbian president from 1990-2000, reproduced historical and scientific data for the construction of the ideology of Greater Serbia. Its crucial vision was the idea that all ethnic Serbs need to live in the same state (MacDonald, 2002).

In BH Milošević's vision of Greater Serbia was literally carried out by Karadžić. It was in 1990 that Karadžić, at the time working at Sarajevo city hospital as a psychiatrist, helped to set up the nationalistic Serbian Democratic Party (SDS). SDS was formed in response to the rise of Croatian nationalistic parties in BH, and dedicated to achieve the goal of Greater Serbia – to ethnically cleanse different areas of the country of any non-Serbs. BH's first free, multi-party elections in November 1990 were won by three dominant nationalist parties and they all immediately engaged in endless quarrels over what course the country should follow. In 1991, when Bosnian parliament held a session on the referendum for Bosnian independence, Karadžić famously declared:

If the Republic of Bosnia votes for independence the Serb paramilitaries will make the Muslim people disappear, because the Muslims cannot defend themselves if there is war (in Williams & Scharf, 2002: 43).

Less than two years later, Radovan Karadžić declared the creation of an independent Serbian Republic of BH (later renamed *Republika Srpska*) with its capital in Pale, a suburb of Sarajevo. He pronounced himself as the head of the state. Karadžić's political party, openly supported by Milošević, mobilized and organized the Bosnian Serbs in fighting against Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks) and Croats in BH. The war in BH escalated in April 1992, when Bosnian Serbs started to besiege Sarajevo for 43 months, shelling Bosniak forces, and also terrorizing the civilian population with a relentless bombardments and sniper fire (MacDonald, 2002). Karadžić sought to eradicate any non-Serbs living in the city. Bosnian Serb forces – assisted by paramilitaries from Serbia proper – committed war crimes, including ethnic cleansing, establishing concentration camps, destroying property, and massacring numerous sectors of the civilian population (97,207 civilian deaths) (*Population losses in Bosnia and Herzegovina 92-95*, 2007).

In his many public speeches Karadžić vigorously advocated the creation of a homogeneous Greater Serbia “by violence”, while he often skilfully related to specific historical events where Serbs had been positioned as “betrayed victims”. He used nostalgic practices, such as a constant focus on Serbian “old-centuries” warrior identity, as crucial mechanisms through which the very idea of “Serbianness” was reified. Karadžić was also well known for publicly celebrating the crimes against the Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats, claiming these were committed in the name of Greater Serbia (MacDonald, 2002). For

example, on 15 October 1995 in RS parliament, Karadžić publicly stated that he does not regret the “radical mission” in Srebrenica and defined the massacre as the “defence against the Turks” (Repe, 2008: 45).<sup>5</sup>

On December 14 1995, the Dayton Peace Agreement brought an end to the Bosnian war and divided BH into two entities: the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (with 51% of the territory) in which mostly Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats live, and Republic Srpska (with 49% of the territory) populated almost exclusively by the Bosnian Serbs. Ironically, as many point out, the Agreement legalized Karadžić’s politics and his Serbian enclave, Republic Srpska (Repe, 2008). Today, this political entity is almost ethnically pure, and functions as a state within a state, having its own parallel political institutions (Verdery & Burawoy, 1999). Karadžić succeeded where other Serbian politicians had failed (i.e. Milosević) – he has, *de facto*, enlarged the territory of Serbia while creating a Serbian state in BH. In that way he has at least partially, realized the myth of Greater Serbia (Repe, 2008).

During the arrest of Karadžić, the political situation in Serbia was tense and deeply divided. For example, on July 29 2008 the demonstrations against Karadžić’s arrest were organized by all nationalistic oppositional political parties, including the Serb Radical Party. The crowd of roughly 15.000 members screamed and chanted his name, while singing “Karadžić is a hero of all heroes.” On Facebook, his advocates created various groups such as “Free Radovan Karadžić”, and “Freedom for Radovan Karadžić” to mobilize support. At the same time, death threats against the Serbian president Borislav Tadic were waged, framing him as a Serbian traitor and Serb hater.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### Some Notes on Collective Nostalgia

Nostalgia has been often understood through medical metaphors. Stewart (1993) characterizes nostalgia as a social disease, and Boym (2001) sees nostalgia as “the incurable modern condition” (xiv). The world nostalgia envisions is different from what would be created only from collection of memories.

Nostalgia can be experienced in private as well as in public spaces. According to Davis (1979: 122–123), private nostalgia is fuelled by particular, even intimate, personal memories of an individual; collective nostalgia relies on collective/public images, symbols, and signs available to many within the same historical and socio-cultural context. Collective nostalgia is available to larger communities (e.g. ethnic groups, nations) and is often used in order to forge a collective sense. As such, public nostalgia dwells in the content of the group’s history, and exploits the group’s cultural symbols. In this sense it becomes possible that different symbols help to trigger the nostalgic and nationalistic sentiment. For example, the Chetniks’ (Serbian Serb nationalist guerrillas who fought against Nazi occupiers and Tito’s

partisans during the 2nd World War) iconography, frequently displayed during public events, provoked nostalgia for Greater Serbia.

Boym conceptualizes nostalgia into “reflective” versus “restorative” one. She defines “reflective” one as a more critical one, since it calls the truth into doubt. In writing about nostalgia after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Boym argues that restorative nostalgia “attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home,” while reflective nostalgia “thrives in *algia*, the longing itself, and delays the homecoming – wistfully, ironically, desperately” (xviii). Moreover, restorative nostalgia “does not think of itself as nostalgia, but rather as truth and tradition,” while reflective nostalgia “rests on the ambivalences of human longing and belonging and does not shy away from the contradictions of modernity” (xviii). On one hand, a reflective mode of nostalgia provides both a complicated emotional state and a complex relation to history. Reflective nostalgia is based on cultural memory, but it is concerned with individual and historical time. In this way, reflective nostalgia allows for the endorsement of a specific identity narrative characterized by personal memories of the collective history. On the other hand, restorative nostalgia occupies the sphere of those concerned with reconstruction of the past in the sense of *the restoration* of origins and tradition (Boym, 2001: XV). In their extreme forms, the advocates of restorative nostalgia are engaged in the “anti-modern myth-making of history” (XV), usually to be found on the right of the political continuum. Often, they are in favour of the re-establishment of nostalgic practices that are held to be markers of their group identity (Boym, 2001: 41). At the level of everyday life the results of this view are observable in the pedantic restoration of monuments of the group’s “historical past”, changing the names of streets and public spaces to reflect “our tradition”, rewriting of history in public discourse, etc. all in order to construct and support one single narrative of national origin. Instances of this type of nostalgia are easily found in the policies and acts of nationalistic parties all over former Yugoslav states (Volcic, 2007). Or, specifically in the Serbian case, during the rallies in support of Karadžić and against his extradition to The Hague, many carried Karadžić’s and other nationalistic-historical figure’s photos, sung songs about Greater Serbia and demanded renaming of the streets in different Serbian cities after Karadžić and other Serbian nationalistic-historical figures (Repe, 2008). In that way, the re-articulation of Greater Serbia as a homeland of Serbs took place. The fantasy is to replace old symbolic names with the names of Serbs associated with the vision of Greater Serbia. Such symbolism feeds the nostalgic sense of longing for some golden times and hope for the return of the late 1980s and early 1990s, when Serbia still had a strategic power and control over most parts of former Yugoslavia. However, the important element of the nostalgic sentiment is that its objects are not available in the present. The point is that nostalgia is only experienced in the present, but only in relation to things from the past, which by the definition can never be again.

### Serbian (Nationalistic) Journalism

The media, and especially television, were among the crucial tools of the war effort in all former Yugoslav republics, and controlled by the nationalistic and populist forces, inciting ethnic hatred and denigrating the democratic opposition. In Serbia, during the 1990s, there was a dominant professional ideology of a so-called “nationalistic journalism.” There are a lot of elements characteristic of this journalistic discourse (De la Broose, 2003; Milivojevic, 1996, 2007; Milosević, 2008; Susa, 2005): “us-*versus*-them” dichotomy, “my-nation-right-or-wrong” version of reporting, substantiation of the myths of superiority of the Serbian nation in relation to the other nations of the former Yugoslavia, and forging a sense of national pride and patriotism.

Changes in media policy came after the fall of Milosević’s regime in October 2000, and ended the dominance of state television, but the policy changes still remain incomplete. The changes regulating the television were carried out chaotically, without any clear policy or legal frameworks. The new government recognized the importance of state television and slowed down the changes. TS, according to Milivojevic (2007) does not play an explicit propagandistic role any more, since it does not use militant exclusionary practices and national hysteria. However, as many scholars note (e.g. Erjavec & Volcic, 2007; Milivojevic, 2007; Susa, 2005), despite the fact that TS attempted to transform itself into a public service institution, TS does work as a state television, since it is not independent from governmental structures and it still predominately reproduces dominant political discourse. Milivojevic (2007) asks a crucial question as to how TS should confront the traumatic past of the nation, since TS itself helped to legitimate, normalize and institutionalize a particular war culture that supported the expansionist and nationalist politics of the Serbian regime.

### METHOD: PRINCIPLES OF RECONTEXTUALIZATION AND REPRESENTATION OF SOCIAL ACTORS

Fairclough (2003) and Chouliaraki & Fairclough (1999) adopt Bernstein’s (1990) definition of recontextualization as a representation of social events. In the process of recontextualization, social events are not merely repeated. Rather, they are transformed in their new setting, perhaps through the addition of new elements, or through the deletion of others. In connection, Tannock (1995: 454) suggests that we can only ascertain whether nostalgia is progressive or regressive if we examine what has been excluded from a representation of the past. In his words, we need to “center essentially on what has been edited out of the nostalgic text – on the conflicts of interest and differences of position that are occluded, on the social groups and relations that are cut out of the picture, on the hidden

values that may, intentionally or not, be in the process of being legitimated” (Tannock, 1995: 457).

The arrangement of events may change in the new context, or some elements may be substituted for others. While recontextualization often involves the suppression and filtering of some meaning potentials of a discourse (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999), it is also a process which may expand meaning potential, through additions to, and elaborations upon, the previous text. As Bernstein claims, particular social fields, and networks of social practices, have been associated with “recontextualizing principles” (Bernstein, 1990). These are specific “principles” according to which they incorporate and re-contextualize social events. These principles underlie differences between the ways in which a particular type of social event is represented in different fields, networks of social practices, and genres. Fairclough (2003: 139–140) develops the following principles: Presence (e.g. which elements of events, or events in a chain of events, are present/absent, prominent/background?), Arrangement (e.g. how are events ordered?), Abstraction (e.g. what degree of abstraction/generalization from concrete events?), and Additions (e.g. what is added in representing particular events – explanation/legitimizations (reasons, purposes), evaluation?). Critical discourse analysis also sees recontextualization in terms of a dialectical colonization/appropriation. Recontextualization is a specific kind of a dialectic that appropriates and colonizes discourses from different spaces and times (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). The concept of appropriation accentuates the fact that, even in the process of colonizing, a new discourse enters potentially transformative relationships with existing discourses in the recontextualizing context. In this respect, our study attempts to uncover how Serbian national television appropriated Karadžić’s arrest into a nationalistic discourse, while helping to create a specific type of nostalgic nationalism.

In order to identify TS’s recontextualization, we also analyze how TS represented the main social actors, i.e. who is included within the “us” realm and who is positioned as “them”. As Hodge and Kress (1993) argue, one of the central discursive strategies in ideological struggles relies on the construction of in-and-out group identities using discursive means. We adopt Hall’s “discourse of difference” (1989: 913) as the most effective method to think through binary positions.

## DATA

We analyzed all 78 news items broadcast on all TS news programs from 21 of July (the day of Karadžić’s arrest) up until 30 of July, 2008 (the day when Karadžić was sent to The Hague). Why this particular time-frame? As argued, it was during this period that the political situation in Serbia was intense, since the majority of opposition strongly challenged the president, government, and institutions responsible for the arrest. Demonstrations in support of Karadžić were organized every day. On the 30 July 2008, the situation started to

calm down, since Karadžić was sent to The Hague. Why the focus on this particular medium? We've analyzed TS's news program precisely because it is still the most watched program in Serbia, known for its pro-government orientation. Thus, the analysis of its program can help to explain official government politics (Milivojevic, 2007; Tanasic, 2008). TS broadcast two special news programs (on Tuesday, the 22 July 2008 between 20.15 and 24.00; and Wednesday, the 23 July 2008 between 20.15 and 22.00) focusing on the arrest of Radovan Karadžić, called "Radovan Karadžić – Myth and Reality", both having extremely high ratings of 60% (roughly 2.5 million viewers) in Serbia. The rest of the news programs (11.45-12.15, 17.00-17.25, 19.30-20.15) also enjoyed high ratings (*Gledanost RTS*, 2008). Within a whole analyzed news program, in terms of genres, the news reports dominated (56 items), followed by short interviews (9 items), news items (8 items) and statements (5 items). We analyzed all news items as a whole, since they present primary information to more than half of Serbian population (Tanasic, 2008; *Gledanost RTS*, 2008). Thus, we try to reveal how the most popular television news program in Serbia represented Karadžić's arrest and incorporated, re-articulated and appropriated it within representation of Serbian past and present. First, we follow a macro-structure analysis of recontextualization's principles to find out how TS represented Karadžić's arrest. Additionally, we employ a micro-analysis of the representation of the main social actors.

## TV SERBIA'S RECONTEXTUALIZATION OF KARADŽIĆ'S ARREST

### (A) Presence and absence of elements of chains of events

Which chains of events were present, or absent, in television news dealing with Karadžić arrest? The analysis has indicated that TS broadcast the following recurring themes of the Karadžić's arrest:

- The life of Radovan Karadžić as Dragan Dabić;
- Karadžić's arrest as one of the crucial obligations and defining principles for Serbia on its path towards the EU;
- The details of Karadžić's arrest, and the legal procedures of the arrest;
- Karadžić's family;
- The legal procedures in the Hague Tribunal and the descriptions of Karadžić's future life in the prison;
- Different reactions of politicians to Karadžić's arrest;
- Karadžić's biography;
- Protests against the Karadžić arrest;
- Death threats against the Serbian president, ministers, and journalists favouring Karadžić's arrest.



Overall, the expressed nostalgia infused the ways in which other themes were represented, and it served as a kind of a glue to connect the dominant topics. Specifically, nostalgia here is put to use in a variety of ways. Firstly, the analysis has showed that the most prominent theme has been Karadžić's hidden life as a fugitive.<sup>6</sup> TS has focused on his life as Dragan Dabić, his new physical appearance, clothing, speech, psychological state of mind, his alternative medicine interests, new love life, his shopping habits, his visiting of a "Crazy house" café, his writing for the alternative medicine journal "Healthy life," his Web page, public lectures on energetic therapy, and his Croatian holidays. In a way, Karadžić becomes a commercial-nationalist media product, a political commodity sold to audiences.

The next most covered theme – also in quantitative terms – was devoted to a Serbian foreign policy towards the West, the European Union (the EU) and the International Community. Serbs have had a complex and traumatic relationship with the West. The longevity of the wish to be European, Western, or, on the other hand, the desire to preserve Serbian authenticity in opposition to the West has been noted by many scholars (Popov, 2000). For the advocates of civil society, the West signifies the source of the political and economic reforms that Serbia should undergo. For others, it represents a neo-imperialist threat to the Serbian state and culture. In this model, the West means either salvation or imperial domination. But for all who use it, "the West" remains a statement of future political intentions and a statement of national identity. Ironically, despite TS's selective coverage of the arrest, it has represented the event as a point of departure for Serbia in its cooperation with the West – for which Serbia should be rewarded with some concrete support and investments from the EU. TS's coverage further focused on minor details of the arrest: the legal procedures, the political consequences for Serbia, and the reactions of Serbian elites and Karadžić's family. TS emphasized the reactions of politicians to Karadžić's arrest, especially the representatives of the EU, the USA, NATO, the UN, Republic Srpska, BH, Croatia, Monte Negro, Russia and the main Serbian political parties. Different statements from Karadžić's close collaborators and "ordinary people" alike were recorded, expressing emotional desire and nostalgia for Greater Serbia. They similarly celebrated the fact that during the BH war Karadžić partly realized Serbian dreams for Greater Serbia.

Moreover, the news reports speculated about how the trial in The Hague will take place in detail, and envisioned a life in a prison cell in Scheveningen for the once powerful and popular nationalist leader. The anticipatory portrayals of Karadžić's ignominious future is at the same time a nostalgic one, insofar as nostalgia is often triggered by images of grandeur in ruin (Boym, 2001). The pathos of the ruin, in other words, takes shape against the background of the splendour of the shadow of past glory cast by the wreckage of the present. In our case, Karadzic as once-great leader in decline. The everyday protests,

organized to support Karadžić, have played a prominent role. The news programs also covered the death threats against the Serbian president, and some pro-European ministers, and journalists. Every day, TS repeated a short biography of Karadžić's life.

However, in order to recontextualize the analysis, it's more important to explore which chains of events were *not* represented (Fairclough, 2003). TS neglected to cover Karadžić's war crimes although they are widely acknowledged among local and foreign scholars (e.g. Colovic, 2002; Popov, 2000; MacDonald, 2002; Repe, 2008). The elision of history as a war criminal can be seen as a distinctly nostalgic practice, since restorative nostalgia clearly represents an idealized version of the past. When describing the main reasons for Karadžić's arrest, TS did not cover the crime-against-humanity charges of the Hague Tribunal against Karadžić. Instead, it focused only on the legal reasons for the arrest: "a significant step towards Serbia's EU membership" (22 July 2008, TV News), "enormous pressures from the Hague Tribunal and the EU" (24 July 2008, TV News) and "a Serbian ticket to finally enter European Union" (26 July 2008, TV News).

The analyzed news items completely ignored, for example, the complex theme of Serbian responsibility for the delayed arrest of Karadžić. Many crucial questions were not addressed, such as, who actually knew about Karadžić's whereabouts, who was helping him, and why the arrest came so late? Also, why does the current government refuse to offer access to secret archives that could help to answer the above questions?

Why has TS represented Karadžić's arrest in such a thematically imbalanced way? TS adopted the same (nostalgic) nationalistic principles for the construction of nationalistic discourses as in the past, i.e. refusal of acknowledgement after the wars, a denial of responsibility and a repression of memory (Broose, 2003; Milivojevic, 2007; Milosević, 2008; Susa, 2005). Kammen's description of nostalgia as "history without guilt" (1991: 6) is particularly pertinent in this regard. It can be argued that TS neglected negative information precisely because any reference to war crimes could question the myth of Greater Serbia. Furthermore, any critical coverage of the past could remind the Serbs about their negative role during the BH war. TS presented Karadžić's arrest as a Serbian shift towards the EU – and, in that, positioned a project of "joining the EU" as a positive process, something that brings Serbia closer to the EU, and to its "modern roots."

## (B) Arrangement

How has TS "ordered" and "arranged" the main events of Karadžić's arrest? As argued above, the biography of Karadžić was reported in a linear way, following historical events, but lacking any interpretation of the events. A typical segment from TS's program is illustrative here:

1. Radovan Karadžić was born in 1945 in Petnjica village, near Nikšić. In 1960 he moved to Sarajevo, where he met his wife, Ljiljana. He finished his BA in medicine, and became a psychiatrist in a city hospital. He was intensively involved with politics from 1989...

On 12 May 1992, he became a president of Republic Srpska. He was a president until the 30 June 1996. The same year, in 1996, he left the political public life and gave the presidential power to vice-president of RS, Biljana Plavšić. In October 2004 he published his book *Miraculus of the Night*.

(22 July 2008, "Radovan Karadžić – Myth and Reality").

Similarly, the events around Karadžić's arrest followed chronological order, with no additional explanations or interpretations:

2. Radovan Karadžić was arrested on the 21 July in Belgrade. After the initial hearing, the investigative judge of Serbia's special court on war crimes Milan Dilparić decided that Karadžić would be extradited to The Hague Tribunal.

A day after the arrest, Serbia's minister for UN Tribunal relations, Rasim Ljajic and war crimes prosecutor of the Belgrade County Court, Vladimir Vukčević showed the journalists a new photograph of Radovan Karadžić. He was living in New Belgrade under the false name of Dr. Dragan Dabić, while practicing alternative medicine.

On the 22 of July, the protests to support Radovan Karadžić were organized in Belgrade by the Serbian Radical party, and other right-wing organizations.

On the 23 of July, copies of different official materials from Serbian Army meetings were found in the apartment where Radovan Karadžić was hiding.

On the 29 of July, dozens of supporters of Serbian Radical Party showed their solidarity with Radovan Karadžić, while protesting against his arrest on the Belgrade's Republic Square.

In the morning, the lawyer of the former president of the Republic of Srpska claimed that he did not file an appeal against Karadžić's transfer to the international war crimes tribunal in The Hague. He will attempt to prolong Karadžić's transfer. (30 July 2008, TV News).

First, then, the analysis shows that the coverage of the events of Karadžić's life, arrest and legal process followed a chronological order, representing these events as a sequence of connected and linear events. This form of reconstruction gives the events a specific meaning, since it differs from news-story conventions (presenting time-movement in terms of causes and effects). It also avoids explicit interpretation of any events (Bird & Dardenne, 1997), because it doesn't follow time in terms of cause and effect. Journalists use this chronological narration as a strategic ritual in reporting, since it insulates them from accusations of bias or distortion (Bird & Dardenne, 1997; Johnson-Cartee, 2005). The journalists attempt to legitimize their "objectivity" through presentation of facts, reliable sources, expert opinion, accuracy and fairness. However, while using strategic ritual in reporting, objective treatment of fact and deference to official sources, journalists function

as uncritical conduits for military and government opinion instead of fulfilling their normative role as “watchdogs”.

The second most important effect of chronological narrative, besides naturalization, is the dramatization of events, whereby journalists attempt to attract viewers and with that, high ratings. Also for Serbian media, sensational tendencies proved commercially expedient, and commercial imperatives of media organisations generate cultural content that reduce social and cultural complexities. When TS reported crucial events from either Karadžić’s political career and/or his arrest, TS has used the so-called “arrangement” principle in order to construct a belief in objective reporting: it created a linear connection between the events to offer only one interpretation of the events. In that, Karadžić has been (only) the president of Republic Srpska (and not a war criminal), and now they have arrested him. While employing this particular principle, TS contributes to the masking of the responsibility of the Serbs for the crimes committed in BH. It continues to cultivate the myth of an innocent Serbia, propagating the thesis that Serbs have always been victims of some external enemy, conspiring to annihilate them. In that way, Karadžić is positioned as someone who acted strongly to revenge past wrongs. TS attempts to erase the Serbian crimes in BH that were committed in the name of Greater Serbia, with the political, military, economic support of the majority of the Serbs (Colovic, 2002; MacDonald, 2002; Popov, 2000; Repe, 2008).

### (C) Abstraction/Personalization

What types of abstraction and generalization dominated the analyzed TS news programs? The arrest of Karadžić was generalized in two ways. First, the already limited coverage of Karadžić’s war crimes was portrayed in “a relative way”, framed in terms of moral equivalence (see example 3) and described not as intentional acts but as “accidents.”

3. A journalist: What war crimes did Radovan Karadžić commit? What is he responsible for?

Vladislav Jovanovic: We have to know that it wasn’t only Karadžić who’s been involved. Other presidents were participating, too, but they were not sent to The Hague. /.../ Accidents happened on all sides... and these have much deeper causes. (July 23 2008, “Radovan Karadžić – Myth and Reality”).

In the above response, the source implicitly acknowledged that Karadžić is guilty of crimes, but he has generalized them (“others were involved”) and relativized them (“in a war, this kind of thing happens – everyone was doing it”). This practice remains a crucial strategy for representing war crimes (for more, see Wodak, 2006). Moreover, the source used the term “accident”, which is a typical euphemism in Serbian nationalistic discourse (Lukovic, 2002): it transposes criminal acts into the unintentional realm of chance, thereby refusing to acknowledge that war crimes were also committed by Serbs. The use of the notion “an accident” is illustrative – since an accident can happen without an intentional

cause by some external “objective” force. Because the journalist did not challenge the relativization of crimes or at least, demand an additional explanation, an implicit agreement with the source of information was established.

TS claimed that Karadžić’s arrest means a shift towards the EU path for Serbia – it attempted to frame the significance of Karadžić arrest as fulfilling the EU’s requirements and thereby rendering Serbia deserving of being rewarded by the EU (see example 4).

4. Goran Svilanovic, former Yugoslav minister of foreign affairs claimed that we the Serbs have now proven to the world that we are finally on the path towards entry into the European Union. He added that Serbia has to be rewarded by the EU. The EU has to cease its attempts at blackmail. (July 23 2008, “Radovan Karadžić – Myth and Reality”).

TS has used the “reverse” principle here. Personalization can be defined as a preference for or focus upon the individual actor(s) and human interest angles in events, while downplaying institutional and political considerations that establish their social context. Many authors claim that increased media personalization results from the values embedded in television (e.g. Blumler & Kavanagh, 1999; Swanson & Mancini, 1996). In this regard, the commercial and political values of entertainment take precedence over the public service ideals of journalism. Especially because of its visual nature, television tends to focus on personalities rather than on abstract entities such as parties and groups (Peri, 2004). Furthermore, the effect of personalized news is to decontextualize news events and especially to overlook structural power relations (Johnson-Cartee, 2005). The consequence is also to naturalise war, through the breakdown of war into episodes, or series of events, each reported and described largely in isolation. This logic serves to conceptualise war as disconnected “events” rather than as an ongoing political and military process. The “human story” becomes separated from the military-political policy of war, and the past. In a sense, restorative nostalgia is implicitly used here as “truth and tradition” – TS restores its vision of the golden past as a stable construct.

In the analyzed news stories, the focus on drama, visual spectacle, human-interest stories and personalization means a focus on one person only – that is, a heavy emphasis on Karadžić to the exclusion of other social actors and the social context that helped to frame Karadžić’s life. All of this results in the construction of a narrative suggesting that Karadžić worked independently, without official Serbian state support. This meaning gets reinforced by the use of the word “only” (see example 5).

5. Only his nephew knew about Radovan Karadžić’s life as Dragan Dabić. Dragan Karadžić: We usually talked in female voices, using female pronunciation, in order to deceive possible eavesdroppers. (23 July 2008, TV news).

TS's coverage of Karadžić's political life in the Republic Srpska during the 1990s also focused strictly on Karadžić only – as if he had acted in isolation, disconnected from other social actors and isolated from the historical and political situation. The aim here is to represent Karadžić as a strong, skilled leader, a Serbian “warrior,” contributing to the idea of Greater Serbia, while at the same time establishing a sense of distance from the crimes for which he had been held responsible (see example 6).

6. Aleks Buha: ... It was only Karadžić who knew exactly what was going on in BH at the time. And he should be credited for helping to create a Serbian state in BH. (July 23 2008, “Radovan Karadžić – Myth and Reality”).

The employment of the abstraction/personalization principle served to relativize Karadžić's crimes, and to position Serbs in a positive light. Furthermore, it represented Karadžić's arrest as the ticket that will allow Serbia to enter the EU.

#### (D) Additions

What was added in the TS's representation of the events about Karadžić's arrest? And were there different explanations/legitimizations and evaluations of the arrest? TS journalists have, through their selection of interviewers, nostalgically evaluated the war in BH as a victory, in which “the Serbs have finally achieved Serbian territory in Bosnia” or as “partly fulfilled dreams of Greater Serbia.” For example:

7. Milan from Cacak claims: This was a big victory for the Serbs. Karadžić made our dreams real! Honour to him! The only problem still ahead of us... is that the Serbs in Bosnia are limited only to the territory of Republik Srpska. But at least we have that. I say this in a loud and proud way! I am proud of this. People are scared to say this, but I am not... (24 July 2008, TV News).

But on the other hand, journalists evaluated Karadžić's arrest as a crucial obligation that needs to be fulfilled, in order to receive rewards from the EU:

8. Zoran Pavlovic declared: European Union plays politics of negotiations. They have to reward us for this arrest – for example, they have to formally cancel visas for Serbian citizens, they have to accept Serbia into the EU candidature, and have to provide access to the EU financial sources, such as different funds. Serbia needs to advance towards joining the EU. (July 22 2008, “Radovan Karadžić – Myth and Reality”).

This arrest should also “help to improve the image of Serbia within the International Community” (24 July 2008, TV News). Thus, the representation of Karadžić's arrest was

used to brand Serbia on the international map – to convey a message that Serbia “is creating a spiritual link with Europe and is coming to share the common European value system. It is now a modern, civilized state, eager to join EU” (23 July 2008, TV News).

### The Representation of Social Actors

The ways in which main actors are represented serves chiefly as an affirmation of the ideology. Our analysis of social actors shows that TS used the binary oppositions: “we” versus “them.” Many scholars dealing with Serbian media propaganda show how, during the 1990s, the discourse of difference was a crucial element in nationalistic media discourse (e.g. De la Broose, 2003; Milivojevic, 1996). The “production of Serbian enemies” was taking place during the end of the 1980s, whereby a whole spectrum of various enemies within and outside the Serbian borders was produced, from the very specific to the ethereally abstract, from the individual to the collective, from both the past and the present.

We counted all actors (n= 41) who were represented in the coverage as a “we” group. Specifically, in Table I, we introduce those actors, who appeared at least 20 times in all 78 news items (since some actors were rarely mentioned). A common characteristic here is that all the “we” social actors were positively represented, and were – except Karadžić – “collectivized” (Van Leeuwen, 1996: 50). This was accomplished not only through the use of the first person plural “we” (see example 9), but also through terms like “Serbia/Serbian nation” (see example 10), and “our nation” (see example 12). The “we” group discourse strategy attempts to assure that the positive image of Serbia/Serb prevails as homogeneous and consensual.

9. We, the Serbs, have now proven that we respect the international law. Serbian enemies cannot comprehend that the Serbs are successful in fulfilling the international requirements. (23 July 2006, TV News).

10. We have successfully proven to the International Community that the Serbian nation now meets all the criteria. The processes of modernization and Europeanization will follow. (22 July 2008, TV News).

11. Our strategy is to adopt a process of Europeanization and to preserve Serbian territorial integrity, including Kosovo as a part of Serbia. Our nation will defend Kosovo and will never allow Albanians to steal from us this Serbian cradle. (29 July 2006, TV News).

12. Velimir Ilic: Despite following the international orders and despite paying our dues, the EU and the Hague Tribunal treat Serbia unfairly, and this will also happen in the case of Karadžić. Do not have your hopes up. /.../ Tribunal is destroying Serbia. (30 July 2006, TV News).

Table I. Inclusion of social actors into 'we'-group

Actor(s) of 'we'-group	Frequency
Serbia	221
(Radovan) Karadžić	202
Serbian nation	98
Serbian government	69
Serbian citizens	21

Similarly, the "them" group was coded in a particular way. As Table II shows the words "Serbian enemies" were frequently used in order to construct an unspecified and anonymous group of "them". Van Leeuwen (1996: 51) defines this act as an "indetermination." In this case, it serves the purpose of inclusion of different social actors into a group of "Serbian enemies" and, consequently, the construction of a positive "we" group. In these binary oppositions, Serbia appears as a "stronger", "better", "more victorious", "more successful", i.e. a superior nation. It's clear here how nostalgia mobilizes unity, registers disappointment with the present by framing "Others" and positing alternative worlds that can exclude.

The "them" and the "Hague Tribunal" are constructed as the big "Other" and are both positioned as the main threats to the Serbian identity. They are both framed as destroyers of the Serbs. Additionally, the Kosovo Albanians continue to be the Serbian Other: they are represented as thieves, waiting to "steal" "the cradle of Serbia" (see example 11). They continue to be framed as eternal Serbian enemies (Popov, 2000) and the representation of Kosovo as the "cradle of Serbia" continues to remain at the heart of the Serbian nationalistic imaginary (Erjavec & Volcic, 2009; Popov, 2000).

The Hague Tribunal becomes a Serbian "new" Other (see example 12) not only because of demands to arrest Karadžić and other military leaders, such as Mladić and Hadzic, but also because Milosević died there.

The International community and the EU become relatively newly and differently represented social actors. In the coverage, the international community means different international organizations, such as UN, NATO, The Hague Tribunal and the European Union. International community and the EU in particular are depicted as not understanding the Serbs and as continuously blackmailing Serbia (for example, Karadžić is not enough – now Mladić and Hadzic are wanted, too). For the EU, a metaphor "Fortress Europe" is used, pointing to the restrictive laws, policies and practices resulting in the exclusion of non-citizens.

However, this representation is not exclusively negative, since Serbia wants to, at least on the surface, fulfil these requirements and offer full cooperation with the Hague Tribunal



Table II. Inclusion of social actors into 'them'- group

Actor(s) of 'them'-group	Frequency
Serbian enemies	77
The Hague Tribunal	88
Kosovo Albanians	63
The European Union	59
International Community	20

(Torov, 2008). The construction of Serbia's superior status in relation to the International community and the EU is more implicit than it is in relation to the other actors, but is visible in TS's statements of expectation – Serbia deserves to be rewarded by the EU (see examples 13).

13. The arrest of Karadžić means the fulfilment of all EU requirements; it means a ticket to enter the EU. They demanded that from us... and we fulfilled the obligations, since they told us we cannot even start a negotiation process. /.../ we gave them Karadžić, but now they want Mladić! The pressure from the EU is even stronger now. /.../ However, Serbia needs to be rewarded for Karadžić's arrest. (23 July 2008, "Radovan Karadžić – Myth and Reality").

Interestingly, the former Serbian enemies, Bosniaks, formerly one of the crucial social actors belonging to "them" group during the 1990s wars, were largely ignored during Karadžić's arrest (see, for example, Erjavec & Volcic, 2007; MacDonald, 2002; Popov, 2000). Despite the fact that TS cites three different politicians from BH about Karadžić's arrest, Bosniaks are not represented in any other context – neither as enemies, nor as victims. Perhaps this ignorance comes from the unwillingness to connect Karadžić and the Serbs with crimes committed in Bosnia.

Specifically, we also tried to find out *how* Karadžić is referred to in the news items. Naming and labelling of a politician is not only a descriptive usage of linguistic resources, but can be indicative of the social processes and practices embedded in the communicative situation regarding, for instance, the social and political position of this leader within society. The names used by the TS to refer to Karadžić are a case in point. For the analysis we counted all the words (n= 181) referring to Karadžić. Because there was a diversity of words, they are arranged into sub-sections, grouped in terms of semantic fields and presented according to their numerical presence.

In TS's coverage, the emphasis is on the semantic field of Karadžić's life as Dragan Dabić. The use of words, such as "alternative doctor", "bioenergetic", "poet", "musician", "friendly neighbour", and even "a lover" (see example 14), shows that TS attempted to

Table III. Lexicalization of Radovan Karadžić in the news items

Semantical field	Word	Frequency
Karadžić's life as Dragan Dabić	Alternative doctor/ doctor of alternative medicine	32
	Bio-therapist/energy-therapist	20
	Poet and a musician	19
	(dr.) (Dragan) Dabić	10
	Friendly neighbor	9
	Bohemian	8
	Lawyer	5
		22
The Hague Tribunal	Most sought after fugitive	19
	Victim of The Hague Court/Tribunal	3
Nation/country		16
	Most Serbian Serb	7
	Strongest Serbian hero	6
	Hero of the heroes	3
Family relationships		16
	Brother	5
	Uncle	4
	Father	4
	Husband	3
Politics		15
	Successful/capable politician	8
	Leader of Bosnian Serbs	4
	Former president	3
Violent conflict		5
	War criminal	3
	Murderer	2
	European Osama bin laden	1

explicitly position Karadžić as a nice, warm, friendly, emotional, loving, and intelligent man, who possesses some spiritual powers and cannot really be “a war criminal.”

14. Karadžić has been extremely intelligent and creative human. People perceived him as a bio-energetic, a therapist, a friendly neighbour, a poet and a musician. /.../ the editor of the newspaper *Healthy Life*, for which Karadžić contributed essays, claimed that he was bohemian. /.../ His colleagues say that he had a lover, a brunette called Mila. (23 July 2008, “Radovan Karadžić – Myth and Reality”).

On the other side, there are only three names referring negatively to Karadžić (“war criminal”, “murderer”, and “European Osama bin Laden”), published five times altogether. Because of journalistic attempts to present the coverage as “objective”, the news stories also had to include negative opinions from Western media and politicians (see example 15).

15. Richard Holbrooke declared: This is a historical day. A European Bin laden has finally been arrested. (22 July 2008, TV News).

TS covered predominately positive evaluations of Karadžić (for example, “the greatest Serbian hero”), as stated by Serbian nationalistic politicians:

16. Secretary General of Serbian Radical Party Aleksandar Vucic claimed: The Government arrested the greatest Serbian hero. (22 July 2008, TV News).

TS also positioned Karadžić within family relations, in order to portray him as a good husband, father, brother and uncle (see example 17).

17. Radovan was an exceptional uncle – says his nephew Dragan. (28 July 2008, TV News).

The analysis also reveals that TS covered Karadžić as a great politician. A statement from an “ordinary man” connotes that Karadžić is a good politician because he has gained territory for the Serbs. In the following report, similar implicit nostalgia for Greater Serbia can be detected:

18. Radovan Karadžić was an extremely capable politician, who really conquered more territory that historically belonged to the Serbs. Not like some other Serbian politicians. (22 July 2008, TV News).

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this article, we attempted to explore how Karadžić's arrest was represented in TS's news programs. Particular nostalgic sentiments were used, co-opted and appropriated by TS, in order to achieve political goal of channelling specific interpretations about the past and present. In that sense Svetlana Boym's insight that nostalgia is the “romance with one's own fantasy” (2001:xiii) is a very accurate description of the relationship between the nostalgic sentiment as employed by TS. We argue that TS used restorative nostalgia in ways that served both commercial and state interests, consolidating its place in an emerging synergy between government and market that we described, drawing on Žižek, as forming a military-poetic-media-entertainment complex. In TS's discourse, nostalgia for Greater Serbia was

present amidst the evidence of crimes committed in its name. Moreover, Karadžić was portrayed as a leader who has at least partly realized Serbia's expansionist goals and made it possible for Serbs in BH to live together.

TS reproduced a specific type of nationalistic discourse – one which uses strategies of suppression of sensitive themes, including coverage of or reference to war crimes. Overall, TS glossed over contradictory elements that could compromise the ideal vision of Great Serbia. Nostalgic nationalism, as expressed in TS coverage of Karadžić's arrest requires some kind of a disappointment in order to re-create the idealized nostalgic construction of the past community it hopes to achieve in the future. This type of nostalgia functions as the search for continuity (Tannock, 1995). The renewed possibility of the future depends upon a strong narrative of return. TS's narrative articulates unity in terms of loss, by invoking nostalgia for a romanticized notion of Serbian unity in the past – a wholeness of community experience that has been eradicated by unjust external forces. Karadžić was predominately represented in a positive light: on the one hand, as a hero and a strong politician, and on the other, as a bio-energetic, a poet and a family man with a new identity. Any connections between Karadžić, the Serbs, and especially the current government with war crimes in BH were brushed aside. Thus, TS incorporated Karadžić's arrest into the predominant nationalistic discourse. It recontextualized pre-existing discourses to reproduce nationalism for a new, "pro-European" politics. TS covered the "historical arrest" of Radovan Karadžić without serious attempt to confront the traumatic past and reconcile with it. In that, nostalgia employed by TS exploited popular culture with its entailed "banalities" of everyday life.

## NOTES

1. Serbian epics has always been a symbol of a national imagination. Nationalist discourse wants to establish that a nation has always existed and in doing so often articulates and reinterpretes already existing discourses and other available cultural material, to convey a particular sense of belonging.

2. Greater Serbia generally and in this paper specifically refers to the specific idea within Serbian nationalism – whose goal it is to unite all Serbs and Serbian lands in one state.

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3. Serbian nationalists name the Muslims in former Yugoslavia »the Turks« (Erjavec & Volcic, 2007). In this example, Bosniaks are called »the Turks«.

4. Karadžić faces eleven charges of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. He is charged with responsibility for the Serbian slaughter of almost 8.000 Muslims at Srebrenica in July 1995, the long siege of Sarajevo, and the 'ethnic cleansing' of north-western Bosnia in the autumn of 1992, when tens of thousands of non-Serbs were killed and hundreds of thousands driven from their homes.

5. Perhaps Karadžić's most infamous crime during the wars was the Srebrenica massacre committed in front of the Dutch United Nations troops. Approximately 8,000 people, mostly men, were slaughtered despite the "safe area" designation.

6. Also in quantity terms, the largest number of news programs (more than half) has been devoted to the secret life of Radovan Karadžić as Dragan Dabic.

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# UIT DIE BLOU: NOSTALGIA FOR THE “OLD” SOUTH AFRICA ON YOUTUBE

MARTHA EVANS

*Using theories of nostalgia, this paper examines a variety of texts produced and consumed on YouTube by white South Africans, particularly expatriates. Since many of the users grew up under apartheid, and now live on other continents, their interaction is infused with a kind of “double nostalgia” – for a vanished past as well as a distant homeland. At the same time, the Internet provides them with a communication technology that is particularly suited to reminiscence. Remembering takes on a variety of forms; most simplistically, nostalgia is evoked by videos that feature the cultural products and brands of the past and/or homeland, particularly televised images from the past. Other individuals engage in more complex and overtly politicised forms of remembering by actively constructing idealised versions of the apartheid past and setting them against the perceived shortcomings of the present. The makers of these videos are particularly drawn to images of urban ruin, which in turn provoke profoundly nostalgic reactions from expatriate viewers. The paper argues that in the case of a number of white South Africans, the articulation of nostalgia on the Internet has served as a useful means of collective identity formation, but that this often stands in the way of accepting the new political order.*

**Keywords:** White South African, expatriate, nostalgia, YouTube, Internet

*It takes one awful second, I often think, and an entire epoch passes away.*

– W. G. Sebald

Between 2002 and 2005, David Goldblatt’s major retrospective exhibition “Fifty-One Years” was held around the world. The exhibition included a range of black-and-white photographs, spanning almost all of South Africa’s apartheid era and beyond. Some of the

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images of South African life are globally recognisable; depictions of black hardship under apartheid rule had been publicised by the anti-apartheid movement abroad for many decades. Thus, images of whites-only benches and separate modes of transport had already, through extensive media exposure, been catalogued as official, almost iconic renderings of apartheid history. Other, more domestic images of white lifestyles under apartheid appeared to be less well known to foreign audiences and were overlooked in most reviews of the exhibition. Yet, to many of the white South African viewers these photographs would have been disconcertingly familiar, taking them back to the intimate spaces of their past: empty maids' rooms with beds on bricks,<sup>1</sup> ballerina girls dancing on front stoeps, sleepy Sunday picnics and clipped green lawns and lawnmowers. The effect of viewing these at the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford in 2003, among strangers, was hauntingly and unnervingly nostalgic.

For the generations of white South Africans who grew up under apartheid, the past is a murky place. While recollections of growing up may evoke – as childhood memories do – feelings of safety, being close to nature, freedom and sanctuary, the oppressive political era of the time complicates any form of attachment to the past. Just as the overexposed whiteness of some of the individuals in Goldblatt's photographs emphasises their peculiar mix of vulnerability and supremacism, images of white South African childhoods reinforce their beneficiary status at every turn. Generally, mainstream media equates nostalgia for this bygone era with apartheid apologism. Its prevalence among white South Africans is dismissed as regressive and racist, whereas its occurrence among black South Africans is noted as a worrying indication of the deficiencies of the present.<sup>2</sup> Nostalgia within the context of Afrikaner nationalism is subject to intense criticism; for example, the 2008 opera production, *Ons vir Jou*, was treated as a source of both disdain and amusement in most mainstream newspapers, with prominent Afrikaner commentators such as Koos Kombuis accusing producer Deon Opperman of "living in the past" (cited in Basson, 2008; no page number). For this reason, those who publicly express wistfulness about the era do so with great caution or with complex, often ironic, provisos, aware that critics will ask of them: can one be nostalgic when the epoch that passes away was awful?

Composite forms of remembering have been permitted, even celebrated, during the post-apartheid era, and memoirs and autobiographical writings have flourished (see Nuttall, 1998). For the most part, however, these autobiographical writings have focused on the lives of the elite, merging public and private memory and frequently expressing a combative relationship with the past – a kind of anti-nostalgia. More wistful and personal recollections of everyday life under apartheid have not been widely articulated in the public sphere. Some of these find their way, instead, into cyberspace, and the Internet is increasingly being used as a means of remembering and memorialising, particularly for groups that perceive themselves as marginalised.

This paper examines some of these "unofficial" forms of remembrance. Although the post-apartheid heritage industry has competently reconstructed officially recognised



versions of South Africa's history, and is working to recover "counter-memories" of the political majority (Baines, 2007: 182), it is equally important to examine the counter-memories of groups who now form part of the political minority, particularly if we are to avoid closed readings of the past. John Nauright suggests that in the South African case "analyzing the collective use of nostalgia can assist us in developing a conceptual framework to understand what otherwise can appear on the surface to be racist or sexist responses to challenges to an established social order" (1996: 71).

The paper looks specifically at nostalgic texts produced and consumed on YouTube<sup>3</sup> by white South Africans, mainly expatriates, for whom pining for the homeland is often conflated with longing for a particular period of its history. In some cases, nostalgia is awakened by video snapshots of seemingly apolitical cultural products, including South African music, sport (particularly rugby), brands, apartheid era television shows, advertisements and newsreaders, film clips, and photographs of land- and cityscapes.

Before looking at a selection of videos, it is necessary briefly to examine nostalgia, its associations and uses and how this particular form of longing and remembering relates to the Internet and to white South African expatriates specifically.

## NOSTALGIA: A BRIEF HISTORY

Although we might associate nostalgia with modernity, it comes from an earlier time. The term nostalgia (from the Greek terms *nostos*, "return home", and *algos*, "pain" or "longing") was coined by Johannes Hofer in 1688 in order to describe an intense form of homesickness experienced by Swiss mercenaries. The longing to return home was so persistent that it was believed to have resulted in a number of physical symptoms (Broome, 2007: 13), including insomnia, breathlessness, anorexia, heart palpitations (Wilson, 2007: 21) and even death. For the next 100 years or so, nostalgia continued to be associated with homesickness, particularly with various illnesses (including scurvy) experienced by sailors on long voyages. Its status as a medical condition led to its perpetuation, as well as the "epidemic of 'feigned nostalgia'", especially among soldiers who were serving abroad (Boym, 2002: 3–4).

The perception of nostalgia as a pathology persisted until the late nineteenth century when it was de-medicalised and perceived not so much as an illness with physical symptoms but more as an emotion or sentiment. According to medical doctors at the time, the evolution of nostalgia from diagnosable disease to mere emotion came about largely because of advances in communication and transport networks. These alleviated the sentiment by allowing would-be sufferers to stay in touch with their homelands (Wilson, 2005: 22). At this point, the current understanding of nostalgia materialised and it began to be associated not only with longing for the homeland, but also with yearning for a particular time, for a vanished and elusive past. Yet, some of the characteristics of the initial diagnosis remain:

nostalgia can still be said to operate by means of an “associationist magic”, whereby aspects of everyday life provoke longing (Boym, 2002: 5). In this respect, auditory cues are still particularly powerful.<sup>4</sup> Nostalgia is still readily associated with melancholy and pensiveness and it still enforces the “conception of patriotism and national spirit” (ibid.) and enables the “construction of distinct national identities” (Fritzsche, 2001: 1 589).

Nostalgia’s association with longing for a lost past was augmented in the fast-changing nineteenth century, when an interest in maintaining the status quo dominated a number of literary and aesthetic representations (Broome, 2007: 15), most notably in the pastoral desire for a vanished “Golden Age”. At this point, nostalgia also began to be associated with conservative forces. Since then, its use has often been questioned, with nostalgic texts being dismissed as overly sentimental, idealised, self-indulgent, out of touch, distorted, misrepresentative and conservative. “Nostalgia,” according to Peter Fritzsche, “appears to most observers as sweet but dumb” (2001, 1 592); the sentiment has indeed “gotten a bad rap” (Wilson, 2004: 7).

In its defence, however, various critics have argued that nostalgia can be employed as a useful means of identity creation and continuity (see, for instance, Davis, 1979; Wilson, 2005), particularly for immigrant communities (see Ritivoi, 2002). Kathleen Stewart argues that nostalgia “rises to importance as a cultural practice as culture becomes more and more diffuse” creating “a frame for meaning, a means of dramatizing aspects of an increasingly fluid and unnamed social life” (1998: 227).

## WHITE SOUTH AFRICANS, NOSTALGIA AND THE INTERNET

While apartheid nostalgia has not yet developed to the extent that, say, Rhodesian nostalgia<sup>5</sup> has, it does appear to be on the rise. James L. Gibson points out that “because apartheid treated different groups differently, nostalgia about the old system is more commonplace than expected” (2006: 66). Unsurprisingly, Afrobarometer surveys measuring public opinion within the country found that levels of nostalgia for the apartheid regime were highest among white South Africans (Quinn, 2002). Dissatisfaction with the present is frequently posited as a reason for apartheid nostalgia, particularly in the context of personal security, and growing levels of black South Africans have also expressed nostalgia for the supposedly crime-free past (see Kynoch, 2003; Gordon, 2004: 356).

Various critics have suggested that nostalgia manifests in times of societal change (Broome, 2007: 158), especially after revolution<sup>6</sup> or war.<sup>7</sup> White expatriate South Africans have been exposed to two variations of social transformation. The first involves the enormous changes that attended the birth of the post-apartheid nation, and the second is the experience of geographical displacement.

While the extent and rate of change in post-apartheid South Africa is a much-debated topic,<sup>8</sup> in the context of the media, there have been some highly visible changes. Not only

do black South Africans feature more prominently – as both subjects and as commentators – than ever before (Berger, 2002), but globalisation has also opened up borders, exposing white South Africans to the cultural products of other nations on a greater scale. In addition to this, and perhaps most importantly, the political power shift and policies such as affirmative action and black economic empowerment have altered the beneficiary status of citizens (even if this has not been accompanied by dramatic changes in lifestyle), and the national myths of the country are being reconstructed. Another significant change, albeit hotly contested, is the increase in crime, particularly violent crime. A United Nations survey involving 60 (mainly developed) countries for the period 1998 to 2000 ranked South Africa first for rape per capita and second for assault and murder, and white expatriates cite crime as one of their main reasons for emigrating (Louw & Mersham, 2002: 315).

Emigration itself has been identified as a major source of cultural trauma in the twentieth century (Sztompka 2004, p. 162–163), and many expatriates find themselves in a foreign milieu from where they watch fragmented images of their fast-changing homeland. In this respect, they match Mary McCarthy's description of exiles: "great readers of newspapers", "hungry for scraps of rumor and information which they can piece together" (cited in Robinson, 1996: 50).<sup>9</sup> Their state recalls Milan Kundera's description of nostalgia in his novel *Ignorance* (2002). Kundera looks at different European etymologies of the word nostalgia to tease out new ways of understanding the effects of geographical displacement:

In Spanish *anoranza* comes from the verb *anorar* (to feel nostalgia) which comes from the Catalan *enyorar*, itself derived from the Latin word *ignorare* (to be unaware of, not know, not experience; to lack or miss). In that etymological light nostalgia seems something like the pain of ignorance, of not knowing. You are far away and I don't know what has become of you. My country is far away and I don't know what is happening there (2002: 5–6).

The Internet is now the chief means of alleviating the "pain of ignorance". If the medical doctors of the nineteenth century were right, and developments in communication technology led to the disappearance of the sentiment, it would follow that the Internet, with its sophisticated and varied forms of contact (from email and Skype to online access to news about the mother country) should further contribute to the disappearance of nostalgia (or ignorance). Yet, communication technology can also fuel reminiscence. As Janelle L. Wilson points out, "nostalgia requires a supply of memories" (2005: 23), and the Internet is increasingly being used to furnish such memories, as well as operating as a vehicle for nostalgic expression. The World Wide Web is changing the way in which the past is constructed, giving users access – within the limits of the digital divide – to previously hard-to-acquire archives. James E. Katz and Ronald E. Rice describe the Internet as "our largest memory lost-and-found centre" (2002: 315), while Svetlana Boym points out that "cyberspace makes the bric-a-brac of nostalgia available in digital form" (2002: 347). In addition, certain platforms allow users a hand in the business of memory-making, memory

retrieval and memorialising. YouTube, for instance, encourages users to “Broadcast Yourself”, an invitation which gives them the freedom not only to sift through and post present records for future reclamation, but also to create historical records out of their own personal data. What is more, the proliferation of memorial web pages (see Cerulo & Ruane, 1997; Geiser, 1998), perhaps the ultimate expression of the search for that which is lost, is increasingly allowing for interactive expressions of grief which transcend the barriers imposed by death (Katz & Rice, 2002: 316).

The technology of YouTube is especially suited to reminiscence, for nostalgia, like memory, “operates by means of mnemonic devices” (ibid: 346) and association. A panel of “related videos” accompanies the viewing of YouTube clips, so that while watching “80s Adverts from South Africa”, for instance, one is invited to view “South African VW TV Ad 1980s” or “*Laat Nag Ou TV ads in Suid Afrika*” (Late-night old TV ads in South Africa), along with a string of videos tailored to feed the nostalgic’s desire to lose him- or herself in further representations from the past.

White South African expatriates have a high prevalence on community forums where they both consume news about the homeland and seek out the company of fellow citizens and expatriates as a means of “curing” homesickness. In many respects, white expatriates can be said to be experiencing a kind of “double nostalgia”. Not only are they experiencing the seventeenth-century version of the sentiment (a kind of homesickness, a yearning for the mother- or fatherland and, in Kundera’s terms, the pain of not knowing what is happening there), but the socio-political and cultural practices of their past are also perceived to be vanishing, and their object of desire grows more and more irrecoverable. Numerous theorists argue that nostalgia is an expression of longing for something “notoriously elusive” (Boym, xiv), for “something lost” (Broome, 2007: 14). “The impossibility of nostalgia,” says Dylan Trigg, “predicates itself on the desire for the absent” (2006: 55). The lack of continuity conjured by the terms “old” and “new” South Africa situates the history of many expatriates within this paradigm.

John Nauright argues that it is white insecurity about their future in South Africa that promotes nostalgia, “reinforcing a longing for elements of that past in the present and immediate future” (1996: 71). Insecurity about South Africa’s future also features as a major reason for emigration, so the high levels of nostalgia exhibited by expatriates are to be expected.

Sporting ceremonies have also been widely associated with nostalgia (see Jarvie & Maguire, 1994: 215–17) and perhaps the most ubiquitous and banal example of a nostalgia-inducing symbol, particularly among expatriate whites, is the Springbok. “For white South Africans, nothing has symbolized the success of their collective past more than the Springbok emblem worn by white national sporting teams and closely identified with the national rugby team” (Nauright, 1996: 72). T-shirts, hats, key rings, scarves and other items bearing the Springbok are sold by outlets in popular host countries such as the United

Kingdom and Australia, and in some ways the Springbok has become more visible than the new South African flag. For expatriates, the green and gold jersey has become a significant means of marking their national identity, and many profess to wearing it abroad more than they would at home.<sup>10</sup> Although the symbol remains hotly contested, Nelson Mandela's donning of the Springbok jersey at the 1995 World Cup ameliorated some of its racial divisiveness, and its presence is permitted in the post-apartheid public sphere.

The old South African flag, however, is considered anathema, and the inclusion of sections of "*Die Stem van Suid Afrika*" ("The Voice of South Africa" – the old national anthem) in the new hybrid anthem is still a subject of intense debate. Yet, while attachment to these and other Afrikaner nationalist symbols went through a period of repression during Mandela's presidency, there appears to be increasing tolerance for their re-emergence. YouTube screens several stirring versions of "*Die Stem*", often accompanied by visuals of the *oranje, blanje, blou*. Old South African flags, and T-shirts bearing the flag, are readily available on the Internet;<sup>11</sup> although some sites (such as <http://www.flagkit.co.za>) stipulate that the flags are to be used "for educational purposes only". Some of the more commonplace artefacts from the apartheid past (old notes, coins and stamps, many bearing Verwoerd's image, ashtrays and lapels emblazoned with old police force logos, Eeufees memorabilia and old passbooks) are fetching increasingly high prices on online auctions (see <http://www.bidorbuy.co.za>). Although the apartheid nostalgia industry is by no means comparable to the Chinese trade in products of the Cultural Revolution, it is foreseeable that it will one day match the Rhodesiana industry.

Yet the Internet's role as an auction hub for memorabilia is only a small part of its connection to nostalgia. More importantly, it acts as a centre where individual users can exchange memories and reminisce over the events of the past. Gary Baines (2008) refers, for instance, to the ways in which former "Border War" soldiers seek out the "camaraderie of Cyberspace":

Such veterans have established a network of sites to exchange memories ... They constitute 'cyber-communities' in which hyperlinks, multiple postings, and cross-citations facilitate communication between individuals who shared similar experiences (no page no.).

While there are a variety of texts on YouTube that evoke nostalgia (particularly images of landscapes and portrayals of the South African Border War), this paper focuses on two types that interact interestingly with media. The first is made up of simple clips of South African television from the 80s, put together with minimal editorial interference; and the second consists of carefully constructed montages of current photographs of urban ruin set against postcard-style photographs of cityscapes, supposedly of the apartheid past. While the first set of videos sheds light on the effects of apartheid era television, the second set employs skilful filmic techniques to construct a particular version of the past.

This paper refers to two useful models on approaching and interpreting nostalgic texts. The first is Fred Davis's (1979) sociological analysis of the nostalgic's relationship with the past and looks at nostalgia as a sentiment or structure of feeling. Davis argues that there are three orders of nostalgia: "simple nostalgia", which involves a kind of unselfconscious indulgence in the phenomenon; "reflexive nostalgia", which interrogates the historical accuracy of that which is recalled; and "interpreted nostalgia", which treats the nostalgic experience critically. The first set of videos is interesting because of the responses they evoke, though they do not constitute nostalgic texts as such.

The second set of videos employs nostalgia as a rhetorical practice. Here, Stuart Tannock's "Nostalgia Critique" (1995) is useful. Tannock argues that nostalgic narratives are not innately regressive and we can determine whether nostalgia is a useful way of approaching the past only if we look at it as a rhetorical practice (Doane & Hodges, 1987: 3) rather than a sentiment. Tannock's concern is with the way in which the past is constructed, arguing that three key ideas inform the rhetoric of nostalgia:

first, that of the prelapsarian world (the Golden Age, the childhood Home, the Country); second, that of the lapse (a cut, a Catastrophe, a separation or sundering, the Fall); and third, that of the present, postlapsarian world (a world felt in some way to be lacking, deficient, or oppressive) (1995: 456).

This approach is particularly useful as a means of analysing this second set of YouTube texts, which actively engage in setting the past against the present.

## THE SUN ALWAYS SHINES ON TV

Because of the relatively late arrival of television in South Africa<sup>12</sup> and the limited viewing choices on offer up until the early 1990s, televised images act as powerful mnemonic devices. Elihu Katz has pointed out how single-channel broadcasting in Israel meant that the viewing of the 9 p.m. news "became a sort of civic ritual during which the society communed with itself" and "the shared experience of viewing often made for conversation" (1996: 29). This changed with the introduction of additional channels, when viewing figures for combined channels dropped. While Katz is writing specifically about the consumption of news programmes, in South Africa similar ritualistic habits defined the viewing patterns of entertainment series. The relatively short period between 1976 and 1994<sup>13</sup> thus represents a time in which television played a powerful role in identity formation for white South Africans.<sup>14</sup> For this reason, perhaps, YouTube is littered with emotive responses to old television adverts, snippets of popular series and recordings of news broadcasts, while the multicoloured SABC logo has become an almost iconic rendering of white South African nostalgia.<sup>15</sup> The serial, almost ritualistic,<sup>16</sup> nature in which

shows were screened means that they have imprinted themselves in the collective memory of viewers. In addition, television's "intrusion" into the domestic realm and its association with family no doubt nourish seemingly personal recollections – memories that at the same time reinforce a sense of group belonging because other households shared the same experience. "Nostalgia," Fred Davis points out, "despite its private, sometimes intensely felt personal character is a deeply social emotion as well" (1979: vii). Televised snippets from this period are thus an especially effective means of provoking the sentiment.

Here, nostalgia's association with both national identity and with the banal is noteworthy. Just as national identity is flagged in the media through routine habits of language and everyday symbols (see Billig, 1995), so nostalgia is prompted by the retrieval of such forgotten jingles, addresses and symbols. Salvaged televised snippets thus evoke a sense of nostalgia that is intricately connected with national consciousness.

The South African case is assisted by the comparatively limited viewing options that were on offer: a handful of 80s shows are remembered by most viewers. The YouTube videos have only to string together the opening sequences of a select number of shows to provoke intense nostalgia; the most popularly recalled include *Magnum PI*, *The A Team*, *Dallas*, *MacGyver* and *Knight Rider*. South African-produced series such as *Vyfster*, *Agter Elke Man* and *Ballade vir an Enkeling* are popular among Afrikaans-speakers, and also for English-speaking expatriates, many of whom testify to a renewed affection for the language upon leaving their homelands.<sup>17</sup>

Adverts, which work hard at being memorable, also provoke nostalgic commentary. The punchlines, slogans and jingles of products such as Cremora ("It's not inside, it's on ...top!"), Toyota, ("Everything keeps going right ... Toyota.") Morkels ("Morkels: Your two-year guarantee store."), and Joshua Door ("You've got an uncle in the furniture business. Joshua Door."), along with characters such as the NikNaks Man, the Oros Man, Volkswagen's David Kramer and Joko's Jeremy Taylor, generate nostalgic expressions along the following lines: "... so cool to see all these old ads, Brings back great memories from the good old days, thank you/*Baie Dankie*" (User Bethulie13<sup>18</sup>).

Another frequently viewed advert, for Volkswagen, employs nostalgia itself as a marketing device. The advert, made in the early 1990s, uses South African singer André de Villiers's nostalgic song "I remember the days of my life" and shows snippets from the life of a typical white South African couple, in which the VW Beetle, itself an icon of nostalgia,<sup>19</sup> features prominently. The couple meet at university in the 1960s, marry and start a family in the 1970s and continue into the 1980s when they give their old Beetle to their son for his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. For expatriate viewers, the experience of watching this wistful early 1990s advert, nearly twenty years later in a country far from home is seeped in almost every form of nostalgia imaginable. Comments such as: "Great memory of being a teenager in South Africa" (User wineberrylaura<sup>20</sup>) and "wow, this was like a step in the past ..." (User starsgorki<sup>21</sup>) sum up the general response.

In some videos, brand identities are also conjured as a means of fostering reminiscence. Two videos, “*Ons Mis Suid Afrika*” and “*Mis Suid Afrika*” (“We miss South Africa” and “Miss South Africa”), begin with a selection of South African airport images and go on to feature an array of remembered products and brands such as Castle Lager, Ouma rusks, Mrs Balls Chutney, NuMetro, the Spar, the post office logo, the VW Beetle, Rooibos, *Huisgenoot* magazine, *Beeld* newspaper, and the Springboks, together with pictures of the old and new South African flags, Table Mountain, old ten-rand notes, South African coins, biltong, potjiekos and koeksusters. The videos, both set to a stirring Afrikaans song titled “Sally Williams Nougat” by Jak de Priester, attracted numerous hits and emotive responses:

*Ek sit in Duitsland Dit is my lewe wat hieroor gesing word. Ek het baie bereik in 2 jaar, maar niks kan my wortels uitroei nie, nou so hartseer. Dankie* (“I am sitting in Germany That’s my life that’s being sung about there. I have achieved a lot in 2 years, but you never outgrow your roots, now so heartsore. Thanks”)<sup>22</sup>

*sonder vriende en familie in vreemde land is amper soos tronkstraf jy kannie wag om uit te kom en terug te gaan nie ..groete uit kiwi land* (being without friends and family in a strange land is a bit like being in prison you can’t wait to get out and go back ..greetings from kiwi land).<sup>23</sup>

The video responses, together with the high number of expatriate outlets peddling typical South African products and brands, suggest that brand identity, collective identity and nostalgia are closely linked. Brands, like currency, form part of the everyday bric-a-brac of a lost time and place, and like snippets of song and jingles, brands are “cues to memory”. Clearly, however, “a brand does not only signal a product’s value – it can have a particular resonance which makes the product personally meaningful and intrinsically relevant for the consumer” (Brioschi, 2006: 198). Mazoe Orange Juice, for instance, holds a special place in the hearts of many former Zimbabweans/Rhodesians. Popular poems with titles like “You know you’re Rhodesian if ...” and “Remember the Rhodesian childhood” (see [www.rhodesian.com](http://www.rhodesian.com) and [www.zimdays.com](http://www.zimdays.com)) feature Mazoe prominently.

Denis Hirson’s (2004) *I Remember King Kong (The Boxer)*, a literary version of this popular form of reverie, reflects on the white South African childhood, albeit in a more critical fashion. The prose intersperses memories of brands, such as Marmite, Lucky Strike candy cigarettes and Atlas bread, with more personal recollections, and the book’s cover utilises Chappies bubblegum wrapping.

The profound responses evoked by these videos stems from three factors. The first is their auditory nature; as mentioned earlier, auditory cues remain one of the most powerful means of fuelling nostalgia. While reading the slogan “everything keeps going right ... Toyota” is likely to provoke a smile, hearing the sung version induces an almost physical



response from users. One response to an old rendition of *Die Stem* elicited “*ek f huil sommer*” (“I am just crying”).

The second factor contributing to the users’ intense reaction to these videos is the reassuring truth that somebody else remembers these easily forgotten details of history ... that another person, distant and unknown, shares the memory. The fact that this person is a complete stranger somehow intensifies this response, which is particularly strong for expatriates experiencing geographical displacement. In response to the video posting “*Ons mis Suid Afrika*”, one user claimed, “it’s so sad to be away from what I grew up with, but it’s a little comforting to know that i’m not yearning by myself” (User SouthAfricanNan<sup>24</sup>). Somewhat ironically, since cyberspace is so frequently viewed as a frontier, as a new world in which race and gender can be transcended, it is sought by individuals whose identity is still bounded by borders (as well as race and gender). “Cyberspace is often conceived of as a ‘place’ where the users electronically reconstitute the relationships that existed before migration” (Karim, 2003: 14) and new media technologies are increasingly operating as a crucial factor in the development of Diasporic identity (Tsagarousianou, 2004).

The third dynamic contributing to the outpouring of nostalgia is the apparently apolitical nature of the videos, both in terms of content and form. The television shows and adverts of the 1980s were required to abide by the state-controlled SABC’s programming policies. Initially, black South Africans did not feature on television at all, and the government enforced a ban on “disruptive” political figures, resulting in the invisibility of the struggle against apartheid (Ives, 2007: 161). Even when the so-called black channels were introduced in 1982, television tended to feature black citizens in traditional dress, engaging in accepted labour practices, thereby reinforcing a traditional/civilised binary organised along racial lines (Ives, 2007: 161). When black characters intruded on “white” Afrikaans and English channels, they usually appeared as domestic servants (ibid.), except in the case of American shows featuring African Americans, such *The Cosby Show*, which Ron Krabill (2003) argues played an important role in readying white South Africans for reform. These televised snippets thus allow users to remember, fondly, an earlier, seemingly simpler time, without niggling references to the political status quo. As mentioned earlier, white nostalgia for pre-1994 South Africa is complicated by the pariah status of the political regime under which they grew up. While the videos discussed later provoke intense debate among South African viewers, for the most part, these televised snapshots afford them a space of refuge where they can indulge in nostalgic emotion without criticism or reference to their status as beneficiaries of a racist political system. Discussion seldom becomes heated on the threads, with commentators, most of them South African, typically thanking the author of the video, remarking on its nostalgic effects, or reminding fellow users of additional memories. Janelle L. Wilson’s understanding of nostalgia as a place “where identity has safe harbor” (2005: 20) is relevant here, and it queries nostalgia’s association with sadness and melancholy. The

extensive expressions of gratitude suggest that these particular manifestations of nostalgia are in fact highly pleasurable.

In some cases, however, particularly when nostalgia is invoked as a means of commenting on the present, the trance-like pleasure of the threads is disrupted. Even a manifestly dull video, “*Laat nag ou TV ads in Suid Africa*”, showing late-night text television adverts (referred to as “teletext”) accompanied by contemporary pop music managed to invoke comparisons with the present:

“yeah who would of thought in 1988 that it would be nostalgia in 2008? i was born in 1985, but those days in south africa looks much better than now. anybody have a time machine?” (User Corry777<sup>25</sup>).

“one fact must be made. apartheid kept things under control and the economy strong and the dead bodies out of the morg” (User *Ekweetbeste*,<sup>26</sup> “Iknowbest”).

Very often, comments such as these are simply accepted. Users of YouTube are able to “rate” comments (giving it a thumbs-up or a thumbs-down), so that debates are subjected to popular viewer opinion. The original poster of the video is also able to delete comments that he or she finds offensive. The latter comment received a relatively high rating of +8, indicating the users’ shared sense of the merits of apartheid. Few of the apartheid nostalgia comments are challenged by white South African users, and because the digital divide within South Africa still manifests along racial lines (Wasserman, 2003), relatively few black South African users connect with interfaces such as YouTube. In addition, because of the parochial particularity of the content of the videos, not many foreign viewers are able to share in the debate.

When they do, however, an interesting dynamic is introduced. In one case, the nostalgic outpourings are disrupted by critical commentary from an Australian visitor, who points out that in a selection of South African advertisements made in 1988 only one black family is represented. The statement quickly received three thumbs-down ratings, illustrating commentators’ impatience with disruptions to the nostalgic experience. Other remarks were subsequently deleted (after receiving poor ratings), but we can assess from the South African retorts that these also sought to rupture the nostalgic experience in some way: “Yeah, and it definitely changed for the better, didn’t it? Fucking idiot!”<sup>27</sup> one user remarked in response to a deleted comment that appears to have questioned the idealised memories of days gone by.

These and other responses suggest that some white South Africans expatriates using YouTube find it difficult to employ Fred Davis’s second reflective and third critical modes of nostalgia, even when prompted to interrogate their recollections by others. Alternative, less comforting representations of the past also attract far fewer viewers. “State of emergency, 1980s”, for example, has attracted only half (around 10 000) the number of

viewers as “South African Adverts from the 80s”, while videos on the topic of South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission struggle to secure more than 3 000 viewers.

These responses also support the claim that marginalised groups, or groups that perceive themselves as marginalised, are especially attracted to the World Wide Web (see, for instance, Morley, 2000; Morley & Robins, 1995; Karim, 2003; Aksoy & Robins, 2003; King, 2003; Tsagarousianou, 2006), largely because it provides them with counter-hegemonic publishing opportunities. While YouTube has some policy restrictions – on hate speech,<sup>28</sup> gratuitous violence and sexually explicit material – the site still has relatively few checks and balances. There are none of the restraints attached to professional journalism, such as balance, impartiality and checking of sources, and users are free to create material that would most likely be denounced as extremist in mainstream media. Nostalgia for apartheid has frequently been criticised as retrograde under the new regime (and by world opinion generally), and the Internet provides a means for users to express their longing in a relatively anonymous fashion.

More than this, the Internet allows users to seek out, create and inhabit like-minded communities, where extremist viewpoints are not only tolerated but in some cases applauded, while those that challenge them are denounced. This is especially true of the conversation around South Africa’s contentious past on YouTube.

## NOSTALGIA, AFROPESSIMISM AND THE CITY

The second set of YouTube videos appears to have been created specifically as a means of criticising the post-apartheid government. The videos use images of current urban ruin and decay to suggest that the once grand cities of the apartheid era have been allowed to decline. One, “The Life and Death of Johannesburg”,<sup>29</sup> shows long-shot stills of a pristine-looking city, with the opener “it looks pretty from a distance”, followed by images of inner-city squalor. Another, “Epilogue to Hillbrow RIP”,<sup>30</sup> was posted to show how “since the ANC government came to power”, the “vibrant communities” of Hillbrow, Yeoville and Berea have been replaced by “despair and squalor”. Some videos suggest that the images of urban decline have been posted as a means of curing the homesickness afflicting expatriates. “Remedy for homesick South Africans” and “Homesick South Africans”, present slide shows of images “old” South Africa (e.g. the former South African flag, white sporting heroes and logos of local brands like Marmite) set against images of “new” South African mayhem (e.g. a black baby drinking out of a beer bottle, overweight black policemen, and petrol-station signs reading “no fuel”).

Here, Stuart Tannock’s model for analysing nostalgic texts is particularly useful. Tannock argues that it is necessary to focus “on what has been edited out of the nostalgic text” (1995: 457) in order to assess whether it entails a regressive “retreat” or a useful “retrieval” (ibid.: 458). Nostalgia “evokes a positively evaluated past world in response to

a deficient present world” (ibid.: 454) by placing a “cut” between the “pre- and post-lapsarian worlds”. In the videos, the year of South Africa’s transition to democracy, 1994, clearly separates the apartheid and post-apartheid eras, and the not-so-subtle suggestion is that under apartheid the country was well run, aesthetically pleasing, clean and safe, whereas the post-apartheid administration has allowed it to fall to wrack and ruin. While this may be true of certain urban areas, what is interesting about these videos is that there are surprisingly few photographs of the actual past (the depictions of the “pre-lapsarian world”, in Tannock’s terms). Instead, the video creators rely on the symbolism of brands and national emblems to conjure history. In the case of the city narratives, images from the supposed past appear to have been plucked from the tourist brochures and websites of the present. These images are also curiously uninhabited, presenting illuminating cityscapes with landmarks such as the Hillbrow Tower, whereas the second set of documentary-style images records daily street life. Their grainy quality, together with images of bustling commuters and litter, evoke a sense of crowded mayhem and decline. Many of these post-lapsarian images have been taken from a single source – a blog, “Death of Johannesburg”, seeped in Afropessimist and racist discourse (Evans, forthcoming).

Yet, South African users, particularly expatriates, find the videos extremely moving, and a mix of poignant and angry responses flood the comment sections. As Dylan Trigg points out, “the ruins of contemporary society, latent in the urban landscape, are privileged spaces, which simultaneously invoke reactions of repulsion and sublimity” (2005: xxvi). Unsurprisingly, in addition to comments around African states’ inability to govern, the videos elicit mournful responses from expatriates:

My apartment building was located on Pretoria Street, Hillbrow. Close to Fontana’s. So sad to see how awful it all looks. It once was the bubb to be when you were young ...<sup>31</sup>

I lived in Hillbrow, in the eighties ... I wonder what is left now from the pubs in Bellevue, the ‘Rumours’ for instance. Any idea? Can you make more videos about Hillbrow?<sup>32</sup>

Although supposedly heartbreaking, the apparent hunger for additional images of urban ruin suggests that the videos also serve the purpose of alleviating homesickness in some way, perhaps by confirming the decision to emigrate.

## CONCLUSION

The babble of memories posted by expatriate South Africans on YouTube testifies to their difficulty in coming to terms with the fast-changing present and suggests that, for some, the past offers refuge from the difficulties of the present, particularly for South Africans who are experiencing the trauma of geographical displacement. Yet, just as nostalgia can “both facilitate and hamper” the immigrant’s transition to the new host

environment (Ritivoi, 2002: 4), so it can enable and obstruct the acceptance of integration and transformation in post-apartheid South Africa. This is not to suggest that all users are incapable of engaging in more searching forms of nostalgia or of using nostalgia as a means of critical reclamation, or that nostalgia cannot be used to criticise the present. Undoubtedly, scores of South African expatriates employ more complex and critical forms of nostalgia, and do not necessarily yearn for a return of apartheid. Denis Hirson's (2004) *I Remember King Kong (The Boxer)*, for instance, shares many of the kinds of memories discussed here, including references to adverts, slogans, brands and personalities, and harks back to what appears to have been a simpler time. But the book also gathers more personal recollections, mostly pleasant but sometimes disrupted by political references, such as memories of intercepted letters, bugged telephones and police raids. Statements such as "I remember Steve Biko's smile" (2004: 119) and "I remember my father raging at our neighbour's young son for calling a black man a boy" (ibid.: 32) situate the more wistful memories of childhood within a specific ideological context. Perhaps the success of the book is that, even within the child's limited world view, it is clear that something about this otherwise idyllic world is amiss, and the memories constantly suggest the existence of a greater and more oppressive system beyond the child's understanding. Svetlana Boym's comment that one can also be "nostalgic not for the past the way it was, but for the past the way it could have been" (2002) seems fitting in this context.

Yet, there are few such examples of this kind of nostalgia on YouTube. Instead, a glorified and strangely mediated version of the past has been used as a means of commenting on the present, using a distinct "past vs. present" structure, with 1994 as the dividing line. This is particularly true of narratives that involve the contested space of the city. Yet what these videos lack is any actual footage from the past; they rely instead on the banal symbols and brands associated with white South African identity. Similarly, the sentiments evoked by apartheid era television seldom see beyond the apolitical sanctuary created by the adverts and televised images of the time. Both sets of videos take refuge in the absence of reference to the political status quo, and users appear hostile to the disruption of the nostalgic experience.

A current Radio Good Hope television advertisement neatly sums up the problem with this kind of nostalgia. The advert, for a radio station that plays pop classics from the 1980s, shows two South African men (one white and one coloured) walking on the beach. Upon hearing some 1980s music, they fall into nostalgic reverie and one comments: "I wish we could go back to those days." The scene is disrupted and the viewer is magically transported back to apartheid South Africa. A "no dogs" sign transforms into a "whites only" sign, and a policeman in old South African Police gear manifests and approaches the coloured man to enforce his removal. "Not everything was better in those days," the slogan declares.

## ENDNOTES

1. Many white South Africans would attribute this to belief in the *tokoloshe*, a mischievous and lascivious sprite-like creature that features in southern African black folklore. Superstitious African men and women supposedly raised their beds on account of the *tokoloshe*, either to allow it to pass freely beneath or to stop it from climbing up. Yet the popular link between the practice of raising beds and fear of the *tokoloshe* remains unproven. Some have suggested that it is just as likely that the beds in the maids' rooms, which were usually small in size, were raised in order to make more storage space (see the article on the *tokoloshe* on <http://www.vanhunks.com>, authored by David Trotter).

2. John Nauright (1996) suggests, for instance, that rugby offers white South Africans with an opportunity to retreat into nostalgic representations as a means of resisting cultural assimilation, whereas Gary Kynoch (2003) explores incidences of apartheid nostalgia in Soweto, attributing them to dissatisfaction with the present, particularly in the context of personal security.

3. YouTube is a video-sharing website that uses Adobe Flash Technology to screen video content uploaded by users. The format of the content ranges from slide shows, recorded television material, film clips, music videos, video blogging and original shorts. It is rated as the third most visited Internet site after Google and Yahoo! by Alexa internet Inc., an organisation that measures web traffic.

4. In the past, Swiss mercenaries were advised to avoid the sound of cowbells and alpine memories (Trigg, 2006: 53), while the sound of the bagpipes was considered so powerful in provoking nostalgia among Scottish Highlanders that their military superiors prohibited them from being played (Boym, 2002: 4). Today, music still features as a primary mnemonic device.

5. White, former residents of Zimbabwe are frequently referred to as "When Wes", because of a supposed tendency to prefix sentences with "When we were in Rhodesia ...". Rhodesiana is also readily available on the Internet (see: "Memories of Rhodesia", <http://www.memoriesofrhodesia.com>, which sells Rhodesian memorabilia, including old medals, prints of landscapes and old magazines) and Internet communities are created around their identity as former residents of the country (see: <http://www.zimdays.com>, which invites former Zimbabwean residents to "remember the days ...").

6. See, for instance, Svetlana Boym's (2001) account of post-communist nostalgia and Peter Fritzsche's (2001) exploration of nostalgia in the wake of the French revolution.

7. See, for instance, Robert Hemmings's (2008) examination of the link between nostalgia and post-war trauma in literature.

8. For example, some critics have argued that South Africans have not integrated and that, apart from marginal Indian and black middle-class flight to traditionally "white" suburbs (Morris, 1998), they continue to live in separate areas (Ballad, 2004). Others point out that the economic wealth of the country still remains in the hands of white South Africans (Van der Westhuizen, 2007).

9. Of course, in other senses, the white South African expatriate, privileged because of his or her very ability to act on the choice to emigrate, also subscribes to McCarthy's definition of the émigré as a "rather hedonistic escaper ... a bird forced by chill weather at home to migrate but always poised to fly back" (1971: 705–8).

10. For example, on another forum, an expatriate claimed: "Talking from the perspective of a South African living in New Zealand for 4 years now, I don't even watch rugby but I have the advantage that before the match I wear my 'Springbok rugby' shirt into town ..." (see: <http://photocamel.com/forum/10056-post26.html>).

11. See: <http://www.zazzle.com>.

12. Television only arrived in South Africa in 1976, since the National Party was concerned about the potential effect that the medium would have on racial politics (Ives, 2007: 160).

13. Although M-NET, South Africa's first privately owned subscription channel, was introduced in 1986, the market only began to segment significantly in the early 1990s, with the SABC's transformation and the introduction of DSTv.

14. While black identity formation was no doubt also affected by televised images during this period, television penetration rates for this group would most likely have been significantly lower than for white South Africans. No figures are available, but it is probably safe to assume that most white South Africans had access to television during this period.

15. The logo is particularly liked by popular culture, and is frequently reprinted on T-shirts.

16. Programming was consumed according to the days of the week. In response to a question posted on Media24 Open Questions, “does anyone miss good ’ol friday night series- the mcgyver’s and airwolfs, star treks and such”, some users testified to never missing an episode while others reminded fellow users that “Monday was Air Wolf” (See: <http://answerit.24.com/Question/Question.aspx?QuestionID=37900> – accessed 24 May 2009).

17. For instance, in response to an Afrikaans song posted on YouTube, an English-speaking expatriate commented: “Beautiful song, maybe if I was still in RSA, I would’ve thought, ‘ag, it’s a dutch-man song, but things changed and I yearn and hurt everytime I hear it” (User SouthAfricaNan, age 37, residing in Portugal).

18. Bethulie13, an ardent Springbok fan, is 35 and now resides in the United Kingdom.

19. Janelle L. Wilson’s (2005) findings on the VW Beetle as a popular memory trigger for the Baby Boom generation in America partly explain its popularity in advertising.

20. Age 32, now residing in the United States.

21. Age unknown, now residing in the United States.

22. User gptalliance, age 31 residing in Germany.

23. User koellie30, age 32, now lives in New Zealand.

24. Age 37, residing in Portugal.

25. Age 23, still resides in South Africa.

26. Age 27, now living in Australia.

27. User SlightlyWetFart, age 19, now residing in the United Kingdom.

28. Even here, the restriction against hate speech is likely to fly under the radar, since many of the videos are accompanied by Afrikaans soundtracks. While these don’t use hate speech, Koos Kombuis’s “*Fokko!*” (“Fuck all”) song is unlikely to have been permitted in English.

29. “Life and Death of Johannesburg” was posted by User GoonerfromJohannesburg (a South African living in London) on 1 April 2008.

30. “Epilogue to Hillbrow – RIP” was posted by AngrySouthAfrican2, who now lives in New Zealand, on 22 April, 2008.

31. User geldenhuys1968, age 41, now residing in Canada.

32. User Creatinismisstupid, no age given, now living in Antwerp.

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# CONSTRUCTING A HOME AWAY FROM HOME: INTERNET, NOSTALGIA AND IDENTITY POLITICS AMONG ZIMBABWEAN COMMUNITIES IN THE DIASPORA

LAST MOYO

*The Internet is increasingly becoming one of the main cultural public spaces where diasporic communities across the world celebrate their cultural identities. Its potential as a diasporic medium is implied particularly in its attributes of hyper-interactivity and openness which are usually harnessed by people in the diaspora to reconstruct the mythic home in time and space. This article focuses on Inkundla website which is a popular cultural space among Zimbabweans of Ndebele ethnicity living in the diaspora. I argue that Inkundla has developed to become a cyber ethnoscape where Ndebele social myths based on nostalgia and the quest for cultural and political survival find expression. I conclude that although the Inkundla participants perceive their values and culture as sacred, pure, and immutable ontological practices, in reality Ndebele culture is constantly changing, renegotiated, and reinvented online. At the same time, the homeland of Zimbabwe is simultaneously celebrated and repudiated so as to create and sustain ways of “imagining” the mythic Mthwakazi nation within what is constructed as a repressive and alienating Zimbabwe.*

**Keywords:** Zimbabwe, diaspora, Internet, hybridisation, cultural identity, identity politics.

The protracted political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe has led to a growing number of people living in the diaspora. When the crisis began in 2000, a significant number of people left the country to settle in countries such as Britain, the USA and Canada, Australia,

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New Zealand and South Africa. In 2004, the Zimbabwean government estimated that approximately 3.4 million Zimbabweans had left the country, with nearly two million legally and illegally settling in Britain while the rest settled elsewhere (BBC News, 8 November 2005). Although it is difficult to establish the exact number of Zimbabwe's emigrants due to some undocumented cases of illegal settlement in host countries, there is a growing belief that the diaspora population is actually higher and that they are slowly developing into closely knit communities in their respective host countries (Mano & Willems, 2008; Block, 2005). When I lived in Britain between 2003 and 2008, for example, I observed that Zimbabweans had developed their own social circles for entertainment and business. In big cities such as London, Birmingham, Leeds, Derby, and Edinburgh, there were Zimbabwean night clubs, churches, butcheries, stalls, restaurants, and football teams which served as social spaces for Zimbabweans to conduct business, interact, socialise, and also negotiate their identities. In her research for the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Block (2005) confirms that about 81% of Zimbabweans in the UK said they socialised with their compatriots in churches, clubs, and other social spaces. In addition to these physical spaces, Zimbabweans have also developed cyber public spaces and spheres where they not only discuss various socio-political and economic issues about their homeland, but also grapple with cultural re-invention and cultural preservation within the context of the diaspora. A quick list of examples includes *New Zimbabwe.com*, *SW Radio Africa*, *Zimdaily*, *Zim Guardian*, *Afro sounds FM*, *Inkundla*, and the *Zimbabwean*. There are many other Zimbabwean virtual spaces emerging in other diasporas such as the US, Canada and South Africa (Mano & Willems, 2008).

This article focuses on one such virtual space called *Inkundla*, which is a popular cultural space among Zimbabweans of Ndebele ethnicity living in the diaspora. The *Inkundla* website lists the following as its aims and objectives:

- To develop fellowship among Mthwakazian men and women at home and in the diaspora.
- To offer a networking medium for Mthwakazians to serve their community.
- To cultivate the highest ideals in culture, family life, business, professional and traditions of Mthwakazi.
- To foster responsible citizenship and loyalty to the Mthwakazi nation (Inkundla, 30 September 2008).

The website also runs Shaya FM, an online radio station which it describes as “a community radio station which focuses on Mthwakazi [i.e. Matabeleland regions of Zimbabwe] and Southern Africa” (Inkundla, 30 September 2008). The Internet radio plays music mainly from Matabeleland and South Africa as part of its programming because of a common language heritage with the Zulu, Venda and Suthu ethnic groups that live in South Africa. *Inkundla* also streams videos about Matabeleland's musicians, football clubs

and even common historical experiences in its online television called *Mabonakude*, a Ndebele vernacular for TV.

In the article, I examine the cultural narratives and discourses in *Inkundla*'s discussion forum. Central to the analysis is the question of how this cyber ethnoscape provides a platform for cultural celebration and memory, identity creation, sustenance and preservation for Ndebele people in the diaspora. As one critic observes, diasporas are, by definition, "re-imagined communities, constructed around multiple narratives and discourses [and] their survival depends to a large extent on their ability to provide a space for conflicting claims of belonging and their willingness to reconcile those differences" (Echchaibi, 2002, p. 40). Similarly, Mandaville (2001, p. 178) posits that we "need to understand diasporic media as spaces of communication in which the identity, meaning and boundaries of diasporic community are continually constructed, debated, and re-imagined."

Apart from radio, film and to a lesser extent television, the Internet is increasingly becoming one of the main media which diasporic communities use in celebrating their culture and identity (Tynes, 2007; Karim, 2003, 1998; Poole, 2002; Georgiou, 2001). Tynes (2007), for example, examined how Sierra Leoneans in the diaspora used the Internet for the construction and sustenance of their national identities while Poole (2002) focused on a similar theme in relation to Muslim communities. Both writers argued that the Internet was pivotal in allowing these diasporic communities to take charge of formulating and reformulating their own identities and culture within a transnational and diasporic context.

Theoretically, the potential of the Internet in the construction of identities for diasporic communities is largely implied in its form as an open, hyper-interactive, convergent and digital medium. Openness refers to the fact that anyone who has access and has some degree of technological literacy can participate in the production and dissemination of cultural symbols and narratives through the discussion forum. Unlike the traditional mass media such as television and radio that face a lot of censorship, the Internet can be said to be relatively autonomous although websites can still be subjected to control and gatekeeping by owners and the state surveillance. Interactivity, a hallmark of new media like the Internet, refers to the idea of "a more powerful sense of user engagement with media texts, a more independent relation to sources of knowledge, individualised media use, and greater user choice" (Lister et al, 2003, p. 20). Steur (1992, p. 84) also defines it as "the extent to which users can participate in modifying the form and content of a mediated environment in real time." Interactivity also refers to the Internet's ability to link those fragmented and disparate diasporic communities regardless of the constraints of time and space. Hence, within the context of diasporic communication, the Internet's interactive capacities and its association with more engaging and individual consumption pattern, possibly suggests open, honest and unrestricted narratives between discussants about their newly acquired lifestyles and identity in the diaspora. As we shall see later in this article, the dividing line between the private family life and public discourse in *Inkundla* tended to be a bit blurred because the

discussants enjoyed privacy and anonymity in grappling with culture and social expectations in the diaspora.

As a digital medium, the Internet also has the capacity to receive and disseminate high data inputs relatively faster and more cheaply compared to other media — a point that augurs well for diaporic communities that normally cannot afford capital intensive offline media such as television and newspapers (Echchaibi, 2002; Fazal & Tsagarousianou, 2002).

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The social construction theory informs and underpins arguments that are made in this article. Briefly, this theory posits that identities are a social construct rather than fixed and immutable realities that exist independently from social structures and processes (Burr; 2003; Danziger, 1997; Potter; 1996; Berger & Luckmann, 1966). As Burr (2003) argues, social constructionism denies the claim of the existence of an objective reality and posits that social reality is continuously invented and re-invented by human beings. “When people talk to each other, the world gets constructed” (Burr, 2003, p. 8). According to social constructionism, human communication, defined by Fiske (1993, p. 13) as “that which constitutes the individual as a member of his culture or society”, is central in the tailoring of social identities. In other words, communication is seen as a symbolic process by which culture and identity are produced, sustained and maintained (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2002; Carey, 1989). As a theory, social constructionism therefore acknowledges the role of the media, old and new, in the ideological articulation and structuration of individual, local and national identities. Media institutions reproduce social norms and socialize the individual to accept his or her society’s values and beliefs as natural. As Wilson (2000, p. 28) argues, “identity is developed from outside in, [it] is a gift from the society to the individual.” As such, social constructionism perceives all culture as socially and historically contingent and argues that no culture is sacred, real or natural because “we are born into a world with the conceptual frameworks and categories that are already in existence” (Burr, 2003, p. 12).

My focus on *Inkundla* is based on the assumption that the Internet as a new and alternative communication technology lies at the core of the construction and renegotiation of Ndebele culture and identity through the everyday virtual interactions of people in the diaspora. However, it is imperative to point out that the social construction of identities is not a smooth flow, but a complex process that involves ideology and hegemony. As Castells (2004) argues, identities are not always readily bequeathed by their subjects, but involve an intricate process of negotiation and renegotiation. Identities “become identities only when and if social actors internalize them, and construct their meaning around this internalization” (Castells, 2004, p. 7).

The study of *Inkundla* therefore provides me with the opportunity to make a theoretical critique of social constructionism as it obtains in the new medium of the Internet which, as

stated earlier, is generally perceived as an open, lateral, democratic, flexible and interactive public sphere (Lister et al, 2003; Slevin, 2000). The article discusses the extent to which the Internet can be an instrument of ideological articulation and cultural socialization for people in the diaspora. It also demonstrates how this process takes place through everyday social intercourse in virtual communities.

The term identity politics is used in the article to emphasize the point that the Ndebele identity in the diaspora appeared to be developing within a context of hyper cultural politicization, especially regarding ethnic relations in the homeland. Although the Ndebele identity was couched in the idiom of resistance to Westernization, it seemed to be largely based on the need to resist the dominant cultures in Zimbabwe. It was about not conforming or to be seen not to be conforming to the homogenizing effect of the dominant cultures at home and in the diaspora. In that sense, identity politics could be summed up as identity with an attitude of “US” and “THEM”, even though the lived experience of the social agents could be totally different.

## METHODOLOGY

Narrative theory is used to deal with the questions of cultural representation in the *Inkundla* forum (Barthes, 1972; Levi-Strauss, 1977; Fulton, 2005). My critique is largely influenced by the Barthesian post structuralist approach which looks at stories as constituting “narrativised ideology” seeking to construct and naturalize social values and beliefs (Fulton, 2005, Huisman, 2005; Lacey, 2000; Fiske, 1999; Barthes, 1972). However, it is not my intention to give an exhaustive description of the theory in this section as the method is applied in the textual analysis of the discussions in the forum. Narrative theory is used to critically analyze those online texts that were considered to be repositories of mythic constructions and representations of Ndebele culture. As Barker (2005, p. 220) observes, the big ideological issues about “subjectivity and identity always take a narrative or story-like form [in real life].” As such, narrative texts, be they in the form of myths, epics or legends, represent the materialized ideology through which the bonds of cultural order and social cohesion in societies are achieved. Using narrative theory therefore enabled me to focus on the capacity of the texts in not only naturalizing cultural values and beliefs, but also in the ideological positioning of those who consumed the texts in the discussion forum. In short, narrative analysis showed how the seemingly fragmented online conversations in the *Inkundla* forum actually amounted to a coherent identity narrative which sought to interpellate the Ndebeles in the diaspora as the loyal agents of a mythologized cultural regime.

## HISTORY, SOCIAL MEMORY AND NDEBELES IN DIASPORA: INKUNDLA FORUM

History and collective memory underpin representations of the Ndebele people in the diasporic media space of *Inkundla* discussion forum. According to Castells (2004, p. 7), “the construction of identities uses building materials from history, from geography, from biology... from collective memory and from personal fantasies, from power apparatuses and religious revelations.” Smith (2003, p. 138) refers to these identity construction tools as “the deep cultural resources that constitute the sacred foundations of national identity” through which “the popular living past can be rediscovered and reinterpreted” (Smith, 1999, p. 10).

Myth and historical accounts posit that the Ndebele, often constructed as a nation of fearless and all conquering warriors by some writers, migrated from Zululand around the 19<sup>th</sup> century during the reign of terror by Tshaka (Ndlovu, 2000; Beach, 1986; Cobbing, 1974). Mzilikazi, a Nguni chief serving under Tshaka, escaped with his Khumalo people and settled in the western parts of what is present day Zimbabwe. It is said that Mzilikazi then formed a very powerful Kingdom of ethnically diverse people who were organised into a caste system. Ndebeles believe that their Kingdom ruled far and wide, conquering many tribes, including the Shona people from whom they allegedly took women and cattle as the spoils of war. The Ndebele kingdom, also popularly known as the Mthwakazi nation among the Ndebele, collapsed during the colonial invasion by Cecil John Rhodes in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In post-colonial Zimbabwe, the Ndebele people continued to live in the Western parts of Zimbabwe (Matabeleland) as subjects of a government that is dominated by the majority Shona ethnic group, a tribe that they had condescendingly clustered with other lesser ethnic groups in the lowest of the castes during their reign. Immediately after independence from colonial rule, about 20 000 of the Ndebeles were killed by the new black government in what is normally referred to as the *Gukurahundi* atrocities (Zimrights, 1999; CCJP, 1999).

The psyche of the participants of *Inkundla* in the diaspora reflects a yearning for the recovery of both their lost past glory and the reconstruction of their monarchy based on the above myths and history which are used as the brick and mortar of their social identities and culture. To begin with, the participants in the *Inkundla* forum frequently identify themselves as belonging to the Mthwakazi nation and not to Zimbabwe. They address, advise and admonish each other first and foremost, as people of a common Mthwakazi heritage rather than as Zimbabweans. Below is an interesting example of the appropriation of the Mthwakazi myth by one of the discussants:

Mthwakazi we invite you to join our community in free, fun-filled family day of music, song, poetry and dance to celebrate the presence of the Ndebele nation in the UK. It is a celebration of who we are, recognition of the past in order to live through the present and also prepare

for the future...Woza Mthwakazi, asiwutsheleni umhlaba ukuthi isizwe sikhona njalo siyaphila [*English translation from isiNdebele*: Come Mthwakazi, let's show the world that the nation is there and is still alive] (Inkundla, 31 August 2008).

It is important to note that the reinvention of what it means to be a Ndebele in the diaspora is constructed not just as an ethnic identity, but a national identity that reflects not only nostalgia, but also a sense of defiance against the existing cultural order, especially in the homeland. The revival of the Mthwakazi nationhood myth is not accidental, but a part of the ethnic group's cultural mythology to construct the homeland as a special territory that is natural, sacred and set apart for them. The sense of defiance and resurgence against the cultural status quo of the homeland is seen in the determination that "the world must know that the nation is there and is still alive." This clause echoes those collective ethnic cleansing memories of the Ndebele during *Gukurahundi* which, since independence, have permeated all discourse regardless of time and space (Moyo, 2008). Castells (2005, p. 8) argues that these identities, even though still a product of discursive practices, constitute resistance identities where "trenches of resistance and survival [are built] on the basis of principles different from, or opposed to, those permeating the [dominant] institutions of society." The construction of the Ndebele identity in *Inkundla* apparently seemed to be based largely on the rejection of the perceived domination by the Shona culture in the homeland. This was mostly prefigured in the deployment of the binary oppositions of US (Ndebele) and THEM (Shona) in most of the narratives posted in the forum. In the forum, Ndebeles and Shonas are never and should never be the same as both ethnic groups are represented as having irreconcilable histories and cultures. As one posting stated, "the relationship between Shonas and the Ndebeles is that which has been tried and tested again and again but with the same results. Just irreconcilable!" (Inkundla, 27 April 2008). Such myths and binary oppositions characterised the social and political life world of Ndebeles in the diaspora.

## MARRIAGE, OLD TABOOS AND NEW MYTHS

Although inter tribal marriages between the Shona and the Ndebele are common both in the diaspora and in Zimbabwe, Ndebele myths have always constructed these marriages as a taboo because of the perceived cultural differences between the two ethnic groups. In *Inkundla*, many of the postings discussing marriage and *lobola* (bride price), for example, often described Shona culture as a putrefying nidus to what was represented as the Ndebeles' cultural purity and superiority. Whereas Ndebeles were said to charge a symbolic nominal fee simply as a custom of bonding the bride and bridegroom's families, Shonas allegedly charged a lot of money including even in British pounds. Participants were often advised not to marry into the Shona ethnic group at home and in the diaspora because the Shona were represented as greedy since they had allegedly commercialised the bride price



custom. One posting stated that “the value of this custom has ceased due to its commercialisation by those bent on getting rich like *abetshabi*” [the culturally inferior] (Inkundla, 22 April 2008) while another retorted “Yebo banengi asebe commercialisa isiko leli. Iningi lakhona ngebetshabi amaTshona kodwa labe Sintwini sebengathi bayangena labo. Kodwa nxa uhlangane labeSintwini uqobo lwabo, hayi kuhle sibili kunganeno. Asithatheni abakwethu please.” *English translation from isiNdebele*: Yes many people are commercialising this custom, including Ndebeles in some cases, but mainly it’s the Shona. But if you can really come across real, cultured Ndebeles, they are fair. We all must marry from our ethnic group’ (Inkundla, 22 April 2008).

The Shona people were consistently condescendingly referred to as “*abetshabi*”, a pejorative term connoting cultural inferiority and lack of originality as the defining attributes of Shona culture. Shona identity and culture were constantly represented in antithetical terms as inferior, banal and unrefined compared to Ndebele “cultural superiority.” Marrying a Shona woman in the diaspora was constructed as symbolising breaking long standing taboos or crossing cultural boundaries of the Mthwakazi nation. As Lacey (2000, p. 67) argues in narratives “one element in a binary opposition is always privileged over the other. This means that binary oppositions are also hierarchies, with one half dominating the other.” Creeber (2006) also observes that such polarities often lead to stereotyping and the creation of myths that distort difference of the opponents so as to create a sense of uniformity, social order and cultural rapport among the sanitised collective. This stereotyping could also be seen in one of the postings which drew the cultural mapping of regions where the Ndebeles could marry. In the map, all the Mashonaland regions were listed as forbidden places because of their alleged exorbitant charges (Inkundla, 19 June 2006).

Through binaries, myths about deviance and compliance in marriage were constructed where those who defied the boundaries were castigated as “*amahlongandlebe*” (i.e. wild and uncultured) while the compliant were called “*amadoda sibili*” (real man). This amounted to a construction of social in-groups and out-groups built around new diasporic myths. As Smith (1986, p. 140) observes, “mythic narratives always present normative roles which serve as models for appropriate behaviour so as to achieve group integration.” *Inkundla* created a sense of stability through polarities which were based on an imagined and mythic cultural and political space for Ndebeles in the diaspora and the homeland from which participants could criticise current and historical injustices back in Zimbabwe. The mythic Mthwakazi virtual nation thus cannot be said to be solely about the past, but also about the present challenges facing its subjects. The social and political myths built on nostalgia, reflect a quest for cultural stability and continuity. They are a way of putting the self and community together in order to achieve a sense of cultural order or stability.

## MTHWAKAZI POLITICS AND NATIONAL BELONGING

The Mthwakazi nation in the forum was not only constructed as a cultural space, but also a political space where participants exercised their citizenship obligations in relation to what was constructed as an oppressive state in the homeland. Two interesting cases where respondents criticised the recently signed unity pact between the three main parties reflect how identity politics in the forum is underpinned and informed by historical and distributive justice in Zimbabwe:

Case 1: This darkest hour is the ploy by Shonas to ostracise Mthwakazi. When important power sharing deals are being discussed by the Shonas, Mthwakazi has no contribution or say whatsoever. Gukurahundi saw to that. We bemoan the death of our aspiring leaders at the hands of the butchers (Inkundla, 11 September 2008).

Case 2: Mthwakazi I greet you. From now on, those with Mthwakazi blood flowing in their veins, let there be no person from Matebeleland who is voted into parliament and let there be no votes conducted in Matebeleland until our voice is heard, until the Gukurahundi issue is properly addressed. Let's unite and make Mthwakazi ungovernable by the Tshonas (Inkundla, 22 September 2008).

The direct references to Gukurahundi, a time of the mass killing of Ndebeles by the post-independence government, shows that the Ndebele identity in *Inkundla* is also tightly interwoven with discourses of human rights and democracy as myths of collective suffering and a common destiny. As such, the production and reproduction of the counter hegemonic narratives is part of the broader discourse of the cultural politics of resistance through cultural defiance and mockery of the dominant ideology back in the homeland. It is a diasporic identity that does not necessarily celebrate the homeland, but repudiates some of its aspects by using the victims' collective suffering and historical experience to create and sustain ways of "imagining" a nation within a nation. The construction of Matabeleland as the Mthwakazi nation that can claim spatial recognition is not merely nostalgic, but helps to consolidate the notion of Ndebele resistance even in the diaspora. As Hall (1995, p. 181) argues, the notion of place or spatial location always "creates a strongly bounded idea of culture and identity. It helps stabilise cultural patterns and fix cultural identities." The narratives of nationhood in the forum indeed sought to "emphasise the ... continuity of the nation as being in the nature of things...by stressing a foundational myth of collective origin" (Barker, 2005, p. 253). The phrase "those with Mthwakazi blood flowing in their veins" in the second quotation reflects how, in addition to place, the "rhetoric of blood and soil" (Tamir, 1999, p. 69), is pivotal in the construction and normalisation of counter hegemonic identities. As Barthes (1972, p. 155) argued many years ago, myth in all narratives has the effect of "giving an historical intention a natural justification" because it

acts as “a form of metalanguage...or connotative discourse that is deeply imbued with ideological flavour” (Fulton, 2005, p. 6). Myths therefore served the function of hiding the relationship between nature and history through the everyday discourse of the “nation as natural and primordial divisions...rooted in kinship and ethnicity” (Smith, 1999, p. 6). Although myth always served to naturalise Ndebele identity, there were always problems of instability and contradictions in the notions of a universal Mthwakazi identity and culture.

It was observed that there was never a stable consensus in the negotiation and affirmation of who exactly the Mthwakazi or Ndebele nation is in the diaspora and in Zimbabwe. Two interesting postings directly reflected this instability. The first case tried to resolve the identity and place of the Moyo people in Mthwakazi while the second case is of a Hlubi person rejecting a Ndebele identity:

Case 1: Moyo is of Shona origins. A heart is *mwoyo* in Shona. These people are undisputedly of Shona extraction. Their totem is *Vuma Balanda* (in Ndebele) or *Bvuma veranda* in Shona... They only became part of the nation by assimilation. They were absorbed from the Shona and henceforth became *amaHole* [lower caste] in the Mthwakazi nation (Inkundla, 20 June 2007).

Case 2: I support the emergence of the Hlubi nation in Matebeleland and there is a sound reason for doing so. Why? On one hand, it creates the balance of power among nations. On the other, the name Matebele, while “accepted” [quotes in the original], seems to need re-branding. That brand can be Hlubi or something else... It certainly matters what the people are called and I’m not going to standby if they wanted self-determination. This forum is about democracy. Hlubikazi nation is right to express disgust at those who are anti Hlubi. Let the Hlubi launch their nation while Matebeleland concentrates on Shona bashing that will yield nothing (Inkundla, 21 June 2008).

The analysis of both identity narratives confirms the claim that “identity is not a fixed universal but a description in language” (Barker, 2005, p. 100). There are always competing representations embodied in the myths of identity narratives. While I argued earlier that the Ndebele identity in the *Inkundla* forum seemed to be built partly on the dichotomies of US (Ndebele) and THEM (Shona), it was also clear that there was a centre-periphery divide tailored into the contours of Mthwakazi as an imagined collectivity. Whereas some discussants constructed the Ndebele identity in terms of the rhetoric of blood and soil, the instability of such classifications was exposed through the claim that there are those who are more Ndebele than others, and those who, in spite of being constructed as Ndebele, completely reject the Ndebele identity and reconstruct their own imagined “Hlubi nation” both at home and in diaspora. These instabilities and contradictions stem from the fact that while the Ndebele people in the diaspora share certain common pre-colonial and post colonial experiences, there is some intolerance by discussants to the diversity and plurality of cultural identities within the Mthwakazi construction. The attempt to create a

homogenous identity by marginalising and decentering other ethnic groups created contestations from other participants who argued that “OMoyo abakoMthwakazi asiwo maShona. Okhokho babo bangabe babengamaShona kodwa bona by religion, culture and language ngamaNdebele” [*English translation from isiNdebele*: “The Moyo people of Mthwakazi are not Shona. Their forefathers may have been, but these Moyos are Ndebele by religion, culture and language” (Inkundla, 20 June 2008). This demonstrates the fluid and dynamic nature of identity as a product of discourse, and clearly, one can argue that “what is represented as marginal is not marginal at all, but is a constitutive effect of the representation itself” (Brah, 1996, p. 226). The clash of what Robertson (2002, p. 29) calls the “hegemonic universal” against the “subaltern universal” is nothing but a product of the discourse of cultural politics itself.

In reality, meanings of the Ndebele identity in the diaspora keep mutating as social actors compete to impose meaning on history and social experience in line with their interests and survival politics. This demonstrates that the Ndebele sense of roots and identity are not natural, but merely culturally- encoded properties of convenience. In spite of the forum participants’ perception of their culture and identity as secure ontological categories, they are merely epistemological constructs created by their own discursive practices so as to survive in time and space.

## NEGOTIATING CULTURAL HYBRIDIZATION IN THE DIASPORA

The affirmation of what is actually a re-imagined Mthwakazi identity in the *Inkundla* forum creates the impression of concrete, stable or fixed cultural identities. Discussants appeared to be pre-occupied with situating the Ndebele within the imagined cultural landscapes of their homeland that were appropriated largely from pre-colonial and post colonial myths and history. However, as I argue in this section, just as there are tensions and trade offs between the ethnic and the national, there seems to be a similar relationship between diasporic identities and the hosting hegemonic culture. Assimilation and rejection take place simultaneously resulting in the construction of new identities that are at once African and Western. Hybridisation, defined by Robertson (2002) and Piertz (2002) as essentially about the mixing of cultures and the blurring of cultural distinctions between cultural universes, is used here to critically appreciate these dynamics of diaspora cultures.

Most of the forum discussions on issues such as marriage, funerals, gender and sexual identities, and raising children in the diaspora demonstrated the complexities inherent in the time-space dialectics faced by the diaspora communities. The Ndebele in the diaspora appeared to be constantly in search for the self, introspectively and retrospectively, due to numerous socio-political and economic exigencies occasioned by the new world of the host country. One of the main questions that constantly came up was that of inter-racial marriages. One of the discussants asked if it was correct for a Ndebele to marry White

people in the diaspora? Responses to this posting ranged from disapproval to approval and outright confusion as to what has to be done. Another participant by the pseudo name *Mahlabayithwale* objected to the idea of marrying White people whatever the circumstances:

Mthwakazi, I know it's one's right to marry whoever they love, but I get worried when we discuss these subjects because it creates the impression that when it comes to love matters, we have no standards. To me marrying a white... defeats our cause as a Mthwakazi nation. If the *tshabis* (means other races or ethnic groups often regarded as inferior) are not good as we say in our political discussion forums, why then don't we find something bad with establishing life time relationships with them? These relations affect us and our generations & are tantamount to nothing but swallowing up of the Ndebele nation (Inkundla, 29 March 2006).

Whereas this participant completely rejected the idea of hybridisation, other people regarded him as unrealistic and anachronistic. One of them stated that, "Mina ngitshadile ende sizihlalele lekhiwa lami" [*English translation from isiNdebele*: "As for me I'm married a White and we are happy"] (Ibid, 29 March 2006). Other postings raised issues such as gender identities in the diaspora in terms of the changing social expectations in relation to such marriages. For example, there were anxieties about what type of a wife and a mother would a White woman be in the Ndebele cultural set up? "How will she dress? Will she visit the African village to meet the in-laws? Will she respect the parents, cook for the husband and eat Ndebele food?" Another participant stated "Mina ngizwela abantwana bakhona abazakhula bengazi ukuthi bame ngaphi kwakhona (Black or White). Kubangcono may be ikhiwa lakhona uma likhulele eZimbabwe lisazi amasikho akho." [*English translation from isiNdebele*: "I feel pity for the children who will suffer an identity crisis because they won't know whether they are Black or White. If your White lady grew up in Zimbabwe it may be better since she may know our customs"] (Ibid, 29 March 2006). Others argued that this was not a big problem because there were concrete examples from other Africans in the diaspora to show that cross-racial marriages were functional. One participant summed it up by saying, "I think we need to get a grip of ourselves and move on with life" (Inkundla, 23 June 2007).

These examples demonstrate that, as Hall (1994) and Bhabha (1994) argue, the diaspora constantly generates new identities that push the ethnic and racial boundaries in immigrant populations thus leading to some cultural fusion. What we are witnessing here is the continuous negotiation and renegotiation of the Ndebele culture beyond the previously imagined confines of race. The discussants are beginning to assume multiple subject positions where the grand narratives of nationhood must co-exist with the small multiple narratives that celebrate the hybridity, syncretism and creolisation of what initially appeared as fixated and sacred primordial cultural identities. The conventional myths of nationhood, ethnicity, gender, race, religion and class have suddenly become very restrictive because of

the new spatial realities that culminate in the mixing and overlapping of identities. Thus hybridisation means that Ndebeles in the diaspora must begin to appreciate the ambiguous and complex nature of identities as reflected in two cases below where participants responded to a posting inquiring about the place of sexual identities such as homosexuality among the Ndebele overseas:

Case 1: I think it's not right but everyone has the right to choose. If there is a stage at which an individual life becomes truly adult [mature], it is when one grasps the irony in its unfolding and accepts responsibility for a life lived in such a paradox. One must live in the middle of a contradiction, because if all contradiction were eliminated, at once life would collapse. There are simple no answers to some of the great pressing questions. You just live them out to make your life worth it (Inkundla, 18 September 2008)

Case 2: Christians who are mad about homosexuality should have a reality check!! They claim the church doesn't allow it, but what about fornicators, adulterers, rapists, liars, thieves, perverts, paedophiles who make 99% of the congregation? Being gay is a sexual lifestyle just like fornication, masturbation, incest, adultery and society shouldn't judge it (Inkundla, 18 September 2008).

The first respondent demonstrates the complexity of sexual identity in the Ndebele diaspora communities by locating it within the human rights discourse. For that reason, unlike the claims of other participants who constructed sexual identities merely on the basis of religious myths, this respondent showed that identity is fluid, multi-dimensional, complex and contradictory with "in-between spaces that provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood- singular or communal- that initiate new signs of identity" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 3). It is always an open-ended process of construction and reconstruction. Hence, in the diaspora, Mthwakazi cannot merely be understood on the basis of the simple binaries of Ndebele versus Shona, Black versus White, African versus European, or Straight versus Gay, but a melange of identities based on, among others, subjectivity, rights, interests, choices of individuals, and their lived experiences in a given place and time. As the second respondent argues, being "gay is a sexual lifestyle just like fornication, masturbation, incest, adultery" (Inkundla, 18 September 2008). The openness and frankness of cultural negotiation at times seemed to intrude what would traditionally be regarded as private space for families as discussants wanted even to know how people perceived questions of sex and intimacy between couples in the diaspora (Inkundla, 26 September 2008). One participant responded by stating that, "I do not think that this forum is the rightful place to discuss sexual issues you put across. There is a possibility that you could be creative in bed or want to be creative....but hey...grow up, keep that to yourself. There are values of UBUNTU [personhood as opposed to bestiality] that we have to maintain to protect our integrity" (Ibid, 26 September 2008). While some participants emphasized on the values of *ubuntu* which restrict sex and intimacy to the realm of the private sphere, other participants denied this

arguing that “with all due respect I don’t think we will advance into the 21st century if people like you continue to pull us into the dark ages. What I merely stated were facts/reality... We have to discuss these issues becoz they are happening right in front of our noses” (Ibid, 26 September 2008). The differences in participants’ opinions demonstrated that hybridisation is not necessarily a smooth process, but a contradictory, bumpy, rough, negotiation and metamorphosis of cultural values. As Shih-Hung Lo (2002, p. 69) contends, it can be better conceptualised as the “opening up of spaces for accommodation as well as resistances between different senses of belonging...than merely as a harmonious state of cultural mixing.”

The Mthwakazi culture in the diaspora has become what Pieterse (2002) calls a “cultural melange” or “a melting pot” where its social agents are questioning the myths of purity and sacredness of Ndebele culture. Hybridisation is about this new “fuzziness and melange...cut and mix, criss-cross and cross-over” (Pieterse, 2002, p. 55) which is now confronting the myths of purity and superiority. Consequently, for the Ndebele in the diaspora identity becomes a negotiated question even in the most sacred of the customs such as burial and *ukuthethela* [ancestral appeasement] due to the social exigencies of the diaspora. For example, one of the debates focused on whether it was possible to keep or maintain Ndebele funeral rituals in the diaspora. Discussants wondered whether funerals in the diaspora still needed to be huge gatherings such as in the homeland. Do people still need to shake hands, tie a red cloth by the gate, and throw broken utensils on the tomb of the deceased? Most respondents argued that the diaspora had rendered all these customs impracticable due to completely new environments and circumstances. One of the discussants argued, “If you lose your loved ones overseas just do what can be done or what matters. Let’s face it, death is death and customs don’t make it any better” (Inkundla, 23 April 2006). Others advocated for the use of flowers and other practicable Ndebele customs to show love for the deceased.

These new cultural values show that, as Fazal & Tsagarousianaou (2002, p. 100) opine, diasporic cultures are ultimately based on the “harmonisation of the old and the new without losing the past or [completely] assimilating the new.” As Pieterse (2002, p. 56) argues, in such cases identity becomes “a mix of the exotic and the familiar” based on a double identity of “a mix of home culture and language (matching the culture of origin) and an outdoor culture and language (matching the culture of the host country).” The exotic gets embraced as a question of necessity and growing familiarity with the new such as online dating which discussants acknowledged as normal and acceptable because others had even “celebrated 3 weddings from the Internet and they are all living a normal life like any other couples in Mthwakazi” (Inkundla, 24 July 2004).

The hybridity extended even to the question of language as a carrier of culture, where, despite the strict unwritten code of using the Ndebele language in the forum, some participants used English while others mixed “Nde-English”, a mix of Ndebele and English. In essence, while some participants constructed the Ndebele identity as an amorphous, fixed

thing, in reality it was changing to the extent that even though the social agents “were celebrating the presence of Mthwakazi in the diaspora”, in reality, there was now an intricate mix between local Ndebele and external global cultures through a process that Robertson (2002) refers to as “glocalisation.” This irony is also epitomised by *Inkundla*, the name of the discussion forum which traditionally referred to the public sphere that used to be an exclusive domain for the Ndebele patriarchy to discuss national issues. However, the diasporic virtual *Inkundla* is open to women to participate in the issues affecting the imagined Ndebele community at home and in the diaspora.

## NOSTALGIA AND THE MYTHIC HOME: NAMES, IMAGE AND OTHER NARRATIVES

Wilson (2000, p. 78), argues that nostalgia is not just about the memory of the golden times, but more about “ideologizing and mythologizing the past.” People in the diaspora always construct the ancestral homeland as an object of veneration and emotional and spiritual attachment. In most cases, the nostalgia is often seen in the transference of deep cultural meanings to the nation culminating in what Smith (2003) calls the “territorialisation of memory” which he describes as the “historicisation of nature and naturalisation of history” (Ibid, p. 135). He argues that historicisation of nature is about the diasporic mythic processes which construct the land, rivers, valleys, and mountains as part of the history of the homeland. These myths result in “poetic landscapes” which become an inextricable part of diasporic narratives of the homeland. The historicisation of nature leads to the naturalisation of history where the history of nation becomes an extension of the national terrain and its natural resources.

The *Inkundla* participants’ nostalgia for the homeland manifested itself through their recollections of the special places of their “nation.” In that way, identity in the diaspora became a product of the merging of the national landscape and the Mthwakazi people so that it became impossible to think of one outside the other. Below are a few cases:

Case 1: Mina ngikhumbula indawo yakithi okuthiwa yiGwelutshena. Indawo isemaguswini enkayi, inhle kakhulu klapho okuphuma amajaha amahle. Njalo kulapho okuculwa khona umculo wesicathamiya. *Translation to English:* I still remember my region which was called *Gwelutshena*. This place, located in the lovely forests and valleys of Nkayi, is where handsome youngman come from. This region is also good in traditional choral music (Inkundla, 11 December 2006).

Case 2: Ubone ke kithi kulendawo okuthiwa ko NTUNJA ngoba phela kulelitshe likaNTUNJAMBILA. LISAKHUMBULA NJE OWAFUNDA Ematopo mission angalikhumbula lelidwala elile cave enkulu sibili sasicatshela izulu. *Translation to English:* For me, I remember a place called NTUNJA because there is this big lovely rock called



NTUNJAMBILA. Can you remember it? Those who learnt at Matopo mission would remember it. It is a big rock that has a big cave in it where we used to hide from the rains (Ibid, December 2006).

On the surface of it, these cultural narratives appear to be about memories of places of the Mthwakazi people. However, they are actually myths that seek to bridge the divide between culture and nature by framing natural places within a cultural discourse that celebrates and romanticises Ndebele identity. The place called *Gwelutshela* in the first narrative is a highly mythical place in Ndebele culture. There are even traditional songs that portray this place as a romantic place symbolising the celebration of the myths of love, romance, and family among the Ndebele. The territorialisation of memory through the poetic landscapes thus helps to consolidate Ndebele identity in the diaspora.

The second story is a recollection of one of the central myths in Ndebele culture based on an enigmatic and mysterious shrine in the region of Matabeleland. The shrine of *Ntunjambila* even features in some of the Ndebele folklore as a place of protection against harm by enemies. Matopo, the site of its location, is of great spiritual significance to the Ndebele because this is where other shrines such as Njelele, Dzilo, and Bembe are located. Myth has it that the voice of God was once heard in the overhang and that the priests and priestesses of these shrines could induce rains, germinate sorghum in their hands, and induce bumper harvests (Ranger, 1999, 167). As Smith (2003, p. 145) observes, the diasporic communities bond with the homeland by recollecting or constructing myths that sanctify locales as places of material and spiritual sustenance resulting in the “the growth of a collective attachment to...the land as historically belonging to ‘us’ as ‘we’ do to it.” As such, the nostalgic narratives by the forum participants construct Matabeleland as a natural part of the Ndebele culture, identity and destiny.

Apart from the mythic landscapes, the Ndebele people in the diaspora have also developed many other symbols as ways of imagining their homeland. Names, which are repositories of identity and historical myths about a people, were at the centre of the nostalgic reconstruction of the Ndebele society in the diaspora. Below, I explain the impact of some of the names used in the forum:

## PSEUDO-NAMES USED BY PARTICIPANTS IN THE INKUNDLA FORUM

These pseudo-names that are used in the *Inkundla* forum are hardly used even by the Ndebele people back in Zimbabwe. Their usage in the forum is just one of the ways of reconnecting with the mythic past by the people in the diaspora. In Ndebele, names usually have a symbolic meaning and the strict adherence to mythic names shows how tradition is deeply embedded on the consciousness of the Ndebele even in the diaspora. While the use and recollection of traditional names amounts to myths that romanticise life in Mthwakazi,

### Pseudo-names used by participants in the *Inkundla* forum

Name	Mythic connection
<i>Zwangendaba</i>	Brings memories of the origins of the Ndebele. Like Mzilikazi, Zwangendaba was one of the chiefs who escaped Tshaka's reign of terror. His name features a lot in most Ndebele epic poetry and elegies.
<i>Mahlabayithwale</i>	Brings memories of hunters in the Ndebele traditional set up. This name would have been given to a very good hunter whose bravery, hunting skills and duty to feed his family stood unprecedented.
<i>Nomandebele</i>	It means mother of the Ndebele nation. This obviously has mythic connections to the past, but it might also refer to the virtual and diasporic nation.
<i>Ndunankulu</i>	It means a big, respectable and powerful chief. The traditional Ndebele society was always governed by chiefs and kings. Traditional chiefs still exist in Matebeleland as a recognisable part of the modern state.
<i>Ngqwele</i>	Brings memories of the meaning of masculinity in the Ndebele society. A man must be seen as powerful among other men not only in terms of the physical stature, but ideas as well. The <i>ngqwele</i> would always emerge from the boys at a tender age as they herd cattle and play warrior games such as <i>ukuqwaqwezana</i> (stick fighting game).
<i>Ntandokazi</i>	A <i>Ntandokazi</i> in the traditional set up, used to be the most loved wife in a polygamous marriage. In the traditional Ndebele society, it was a norm for men to have several wives.

I do not think that this necessarily means that people want to go back to the rural village life styles. Instead, these mythological names are epistemes of the shared communal ethnic identities that are being constructed to bind the otherwise disparate people in some form of collectivity in time and space. As Fulton (2005, p. 7) aptly explains, "the mythical function of all narratives [including those symbolised by names of people and places] is to return us to a stable subjectivity, to remind us of who we are."

The appropriation of tradition could also be seen in the use of traditional images associated with the Ndebele identity. For example, participants used pictures of people in

skin kilts (*imisisi*), traditional drum players (*ingungu*), and a charging black bull (symbol of PF-Zapu, a political party that was very dominant in Matabeleland). All these pictures conjured memories of the mythic Mthwakazi or Ndebele nation as nostalgic constructions of the home sick people who are neither fully accepted into the mainstream cultures of their host countries nor are able to go back to the home which they are longing for due to social dislocation there.

## CONCLUSION

The narratives of the *Inkundla* forum demonstrated the centrality of the Internet- virtual community in the negotiation and re-articulation of identities for the Ndebele communities in the diaspora. The *Inkundla* virtual community appears to provide a social space and network through which the myths and ideologies that furnish the Ndebele identity find expression. However, as was demonstrated using the example of Zimbabweans living in Britain, the critical negotiation of identities is not only limited to the virtual space, but also takes place through other forms of human interaction such as cultural festivals and other media forms shared by people in real space. As Fiddler argues, (1994, p. 25), “the new media do not typically replace existing media, but instead modify and [complement] them.”

The narratives in *Inkundla* also demonstrated that the Ndebele culture in the diaspora was gradually changing, although its cultural agents furnished it using the old foundational myths which were represented as almost sacred and natural. Although these changes seemed to be inevitable because of the dynamics of time and space, the hybridisation of cultures appeared to be a highly complicated process where the loss and retention of old values, and assimilation and rejection of new values took place simultaneously. Hybridity, however, did not mean a complete disappearance of the perceived foundational myths which continued to be the heart and soul of people’s identities in the diaspora. On the contrary, it meant the construction and celebration of multiple identities as symbolised by the gradual fragmentation of the totalising metanarratives of nationhood and the growth of small, particularistic, narratives that acknowledge individuality and social difference within a deterritorialized, transnational, diasporic nation. The post modern set up of the virtual networks and communities associated with the diaspora means that identity is increasingly becoming more fluid since digital opportunities for making and remaking the self and community are widening.

Although the Internet provided a relatively autonomous place for identity construction, I observed that cultural conversations among discussants were subject to opinion leaders’ views which became a way through which mythology found articulation and thus became a property of the diaspora community. The opinion leaders in the discussion forum wielded power which determined which myths or ideologies received an enduring status of unquestionable Ndebele knowledge and customs. As, Barker (2001, p. 12) observes myths

and discourse do not proliferate “in an endless deferral but [are] regulated by power which governs not only what can be said under determinate social and cultural conditions, but who can speak, when and where.” All spoke on the forum, but it was the opinion leaders who were “heard” mostly. Therefore, while the virtual interactions of the Ndebele took place through a medium that presupposes democratic interaction, it must be noted that the negotiation of identities was itself a highly ideological and mythologized process that was influenced by the popularity and linguistic dexterity of the opinion leader.

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# IN PINOCHET'S SHADOW: SOCIAL MEMORY AND NATIONAL NARRATIVES IN CHILE

CLAUDIA BUCCIFERRO

*This paper focuses on the relevance of the memories associated with Augusto Pinochet's military regime for understanding Chilean society today. Using the Sociology of Memory as a framework, I argue that the experience of the dictatorship constitutes a collective trauma because it changed the country's social fabric and shattered people's assumptions about everyday life. During seventeen years of repression, it also neutralized the public sphere and validated authoritarian modes of behavior that prevailed long after the return of democracy. Most of the memorializing done to date rightly involves the victims of direct repression – people who were tortured, exiled, or “detained and disappeared” – and their families. However, I propose that the regime's impact on society at large should also be addressed, including the “trauma of perpetrators,” because the dictatorship's crimes were enabled by social practices that have not been scrutinized. President Michelle Bachelet's election and Pinochet's death, occurred in 2006, motivated national media to review the country's history and revisit the memories; many public discourses show an attempt to incorporate the experience into a coherent narrative of identity, which is a necessary step in the collective path to healing.*

**Keywords:** memory, narratives, media, identity, Chile

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*It is better to remain quiet and to forget. That is the only thing we must do. We must forget. And that won't happen if we continue opening up lawsuits, sending people to jail. FORGET: That's the word. And for that to happen, both sides must forget and continue with their work.* —Augusto Pinochet, on September 13, 1995 (Quoted in Derechos Chile, 2002b)

His name was Sebastián Acevedo, and he was a coal miner from a town located near Concepción, in Southern Chile. His son and daughter had been taken by the military and were nowhere to be found. He suspected that they were being held and tortured at one of the many secret camps that the dictatorship had established, but no matter how many doors he knocked on or how many people he contacted, nobody would tell him a thing. So one day he stood in front of the Cathedral in downtown Concepción and started demanding in a loud voice that his children be released. He poured kerosene over himself, drew a wide circle with chalk on the pavement and stood in the middle, with a match in his hand. Soon a police squad came and surrounded him. He announced that when the first policeman dared to enter the circle, he would light the match. The police hesitated, and he kept on saying out loud that the military had his children, that he wanted them to be released. Somebody entered the circle, and Sebastián Acevedo lit the match. He immediately caught fire, and ran all the way across the plaza to the opposite corner of the street, where the government buildings were located. There, he died. His children were released soon after.

This story was told to me by a friend who had a friend who saw it, because that is how stories circulated in those days, but it has been legitimized over time (Reding, 1988). In the years that followed, an anonymous hand would often paint a red cross on the pavement in front of Concepción's Cathedral, to mark the spot where Sebastián Acevedo immolated himself. The paint would quickly be made to disappear, but some other morning the cross would be found there again and people would notice and murmur.

The memory of the dictatorship in Chilean consciousness is like that cross: constantly pointed out, constantly repressed, caught between the efforts to forget, to move on, and the efforts to make sense of the past, to make peace. In spite of the official efforts to obliterate them, both Sebastián's story and the memory of the dictatorship have prevailed. One has become a legend, the other has become a required point of reference when considering recent Chilean history. But what do we do, as a country, with memories like this? How do we deal with them? How do we get over the pain and horror? What type of discourses do we create in order to make sense of such haunting experiences?

This study focuses on understanding the Chilean dictatorship as a collective trauma, reviewing the social memories associated with it and considering their significance for the construction of national narratives of identity. Because I was born and raised in Chile during the dictatorship years, I have used my own memories as a reference in order to consider how theoretical analyses resonate with "real life." I have paid attention to the collective process



of healing and the ways in which Chilean society has dealt with this issue during the past years.

## THE UNIDAD POPULAR AND THE MILITARY JUNTA

Chile was under military dictatorship for 17 years, from 1973 until 1990. The coup d'état that overthrew the government of President Salvador Allende on September 11, 1973 was supported within the country by the right and center-right political parties, the traditional social elite of land and business owners, and the right-wing media. Internationally, as it is now known, it was supported by the United States' government, with direct participation of the CIA (Miller Klubock, 2003b). However, it is important to note that this was not a case of "regime change" initiated solely from outside the country, as has been the case in other places of the world.

Chilean society was deeply divided at the time the coup took place, and it is my opinion that the genesis of the movement that led to the coup is related to social, economic, and political factors that had been gaining weight during the years of Allende's rule. It could even be said that the coup was foreseeable, considering the way in which social and political unrest had been resolved in the past: despite its "democratic tradition," Chilean history has had its share of authoritarian rulers during the last 200 years, beginning with the country's founding father, Bernardo O'Higgins. This is important for the way Allende's death is represented in memory: while the U.S. involvement in the coup is certainly relevant, people can't blame it all on the United States. It makes the memories of the crimes committed by the military *Junta* and by Augusto Pinochet all the more difficult to deal with, for we can't say that a foreign power, an Other, erupted in the life of otherwise peaceful Chileans and initiated such violence.

Allende, a socialist physician, had been elected in 1970 with the support of a center-left political coalition called *Unidad Popular*, and had promised to implement a "Chilean way to socialism" that emphasized social reforms. Although many of his measures were a continuation of the policies initiated by previous governments – such as the nationalization of the copper industry – his administration was seen as a threat by the traditional social and economic elite, which soon initiated a movement to boycott it. This was backed by the United States' government, it is now known, but was mainly organized by Chileans (Kornbluh, 29/10/2000). Meanwhile, the Christian-Democratic party that had originally supported Congress' ratification of Allende as President, switched allegiances and joined forces with the right, leaving the government with a minority vote in the legislature. This created a struggle between the executive and the legislative powers, and while this power lock remained, the social unrest increased. Large business owners organized a resistance to the anti-capitalist measures of the government, which had created a quota system for the distribution of food. They withdrew essential goods from the market in order to create

scarcity. People in the countryside seized privately owned lands, and strikes and marches organized by all kinds of groups took over the scenario in the industrial sector and in the streets. The generalized disorder and lack of access to goods and services that characterized those years are one of the most prevalent memories passed down to the new generation (De la Parra, 1998).

The explanations for everything that happened during Salvador Allende's government are many, and they depend on the political stances held by the observer (as evidenced in the discussion pages found in Wikipedia, 12/02/2006, where contrasting viewpoints are expressed). The military coup took place on Tuesday, September 11<sup>th</sup>, when the Presidential Palace was bombarded by Chilean Air Force planes and the President issued a last radio address before dying in his office. Many of his close supporters were killed or detained, but his family was allowed to go into exile. Allende's death was publicly announced as a suicide, although the truth of this has also been debated. State of Siege was declared, and a curfew was strictly enforced by military officers mounting guard in the streets.

The same day, the persecution of previous supporters of the *Unidad Popular* began, and during the next years, thousands of people were taken to torture camps set up in over 12 different locations throughout the country (Padilla Ballesteros, 2006). According to the investigations carried out by *The Rettig Commission and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, created by the "transitional" government of Patricio Aylwin in the early 1990s, there were 1,102 cases of documented "disappearances," and 2,095 cases of "extrajudicial executions and death under torture," which totals 3,197 officially recognized cases of "people killed by the state" – by the police, intelligence agencies, or the armed forces (Remember-Chile, 11/29/2001). Another investigating committee, the *Comisión Valech*, released a report in 2004 "officially listing close to 30,000 Chileans who had been unjustly imprisoned and tortured" (Nagy-Zekmi & Leiva, 2005b, p. 6). In addition to this, thousands of people were forced into exile and prevented from re-entering the country, which is also a human rights violation (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 03/08/1982). By 1984, the number of Chilean exiles living abroad was officially estimated at no less than 20,000 people (Council on Hemispheric Affairs, 1984), although other accounts considered it to be about one million, which at the time would have represented ten percent of the country's population (García Márquez, 1982).

The memories that have been passed down to me by family members regarding Allende's government speak of something that began with a high degree of "social effervescence," a sense of expectation and movement, but that quickly turned into chaos, loudness, and scarcity. This coincides with modern media representations of the time (De la Parra, 1998). There were marches and strikes everywhere, private land was being appropriated by groups of settlers, people had to stand in line for hours to get groceries, etc. The "people's government" was misunderstood as a general disregard for authority, and thus ranks were not respected and insubordination was everywhere. Anecdotally, my mother,

who is a nurse-midwife and worked at a public hospital, says that a doctor giving instructions to assistants often encountered responses such as “well, I’ll do it if I want to, because this is the people’s government, so you can’t give me orders anymore.” Instances like this were pivotal, I think, in gaining support for the military intervention among people who generally held democratic beliefs, but who thought things were getting out of control.

This contrasts sharply with the childhood memories that I have from the time of the dictatorship, which pertain to silence, order, and fear. Some things were said only in whispers or not at all; compliance with the establishment and obedience to authority were thoroughly enforced. Any fear or discontent that people could feel was soon drowned with the noise of foreign music or covered up with the purchase of some technological innovation, as other authors have pointed out as well (Moulian, 2002). As I was growing up, my awareness of the political and social situation of the country grew, and I remember the stories about those who were detained and disappeared, the tortured, the exiled, the confined – the stories about the corpses floating down the Mapocho river in Santiago, and the truckloads of people being taken in the dead of night to the National Stadium, which had been turned into a torture camp.

I remember how the families were divided between the supporters and the resistant to the regime – almost all Chilean families were split, including my own. Siblings and cousins would just stop talking to each other, would lose contact over time. Politically positioning oneself on the right or the left, as a supporter or detractor of the regime, was deeply related to one’s sense of identity, because it reflected the ethical principles that one upheld. However, dissent was often manifested only in private because the grip of fear was overpowering, and a simple slip could get a person detained (Constable & Valenzuela, 1991; De la Parra, 1998). At the same time, I remember how things were at most homes, where the father ruled the household as if it were his own feud, with an authority that was forcibly enforced. This was so even in cases where the man was a staunch opponent to the regime, where he or others close to him had been victimized by it. How could that be? Were they identifying with the perpetrators? Or perhaps the thousands of perpetrators were just an extreme manifestation of a violent and authoritarian trend that was widespread in Chilean society to begin with? In order to address questions such as these, it is useful to consider them in light of theories of collective memory and trauma.

## THE DICTATORSHIP AS COLLECTIVE TRAUMA

Alexander (2004) says that recent efforts have been made to address the traumatic brutalities of the dictatorships that ruled most Latin American countries in the 1970s; however, many of them “are purely empirical investigations of the extent of repression and/or normative arguments that assign responsibilities and demand reparations” (p. 7). While the trauma endured by the survivors of torture and by the families of the disappeared

is an uncontested issue, little has been said about the trauma sustained by society as a whole. It is this particular aspect that occupies my attention: How have “normal people” been affected by the events associated with the military regime? How have the memories been transferred to the new generations? How do Chileans deal with the memory of the perpetrators? What are the implications of these memories for current Chilean society? What are the narratives that are created around them?

Alexander cites a study conducted by Jelin and Kaufman, saying that it contrasts “the victims’ insistence on recognizing the reality of traumatizing events and experiences with the denials of the perpetrators and their conservative supporters, denials that insist on looking to the future and forgetting the past” (p. 7). The efforts at remembering made by non-governmental organizations are often aimed at demanding justice, and usually encounter denial on the part of the perpetrators, who insist on society’s need to move on. The problem is that, as Alexander says, “events are not inherently traumatic. Trauma is a socially mediated attribution” (p. 8). Many survivors and exiles have been fighting for this attribution of trauma, because it conveys the idea that there is a pending recovering process for Chilean society as a whole. This is why the *Asociación de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos* (Association of Families of the Detained and Disappeared) states that “no healthy, solid, stable democracy can build itself upon a foundation of forgetting the most serious crimes against the right to life, integrity and freedom committed in Chilean history and within a policy of state terrorism that unleashed maximum political violence against society” (quoted in Remember-Chile, 11/29/2001b).

Ron Eyerman (2004) states that social trauma is linked both to the formation of collective identity and collective memory, adding that

cultural trauma refers to a dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a tear in the social fabric, affecting a group of people that has achieved some degree of cohesion. In this sense, the trauma need not necessarily be felt by everyone in a community or experienced directly by any or all. While some event may be necessary to establish as the significant cause, its meaning as traumatic must be established and accepted, and this requires time to occur, as well as mediation and representation, (p. 61).

The Chilean dictatorship certainly qualifies as cultural trauma under this definition, for it affected the social fabric of the country on every level possible, and shattered people’s assumptions about who they were and how things were supposed to be done. The “democratic tradition” was broken, and people who believed that the coup would be followed by a restoration of order and new presidential elections were soon to be disappointed; instead, the military *Junta* headed by Pinochet entrenched itself in power, closed Congress, and outlawed most political parties (Constable & Valenzuela, 1991). Soon, relatives, friends, and neighbors were divided between supporters and non-supporters, and regarded each other as a potential threat. Leftists in hiding were “given away” by “normal”

people, and undercover police officers infiltrated all types of organizations – universities, schools, community groups, etc. – in search of political dissidents. A law against people gathering without an authorization from the police was issued, neutralizing any possibility for significant social organization. Thousands of people were fired from their jobs, or demoted, or harassed so much that they felt forced to resign; hundreds of others were relegated to small rural towns, where they lived under close police supervision.

Smelser (2004) says that a cultural trauma is a threat to people's personal identities, but to be defined as such it must arouse negative affects; thus, "if a potentially traumatizing event cannot be endowed with negative affect (e.g., a national tragedy, a national shame, a national catastrophe), then it cannot qualify as being traumatic" (p. 41). So, is the dictatorship in Chile regarded with negative affect? Certainly not by all, given that it has many supporters; perhaps that is why it is still such a conflictive issue. Could it be that the dictatorship was not traumatic for those who supported it, and thus its conceptualization as a cultural trauma is then contested?

Because the memories of it will be passed on to the new generations through processes of representation – including those in which media are involved – it is important for the narratives associated with the experience of the dictatorship to be reviewed. Eyerman (2004) says that the trauma's meaning "must be established and accepted, and this requires time to occur, as well as mediation and representation" (p. 61). It makes sense, then, that after a long period of latency in which the traumatic memories were not addressed, people are finally discussing them and creating representations that are passed on through movies, articles, and documentaries. In the last few years, issues such as Allende's government, the coup d'état, the economic reforms implemented during the dictatorship, the historical referendum that ended Pinochet's regime, and the multifaceted transition to democracy have been revisited and analyzed by the media in a collective effort to make sense of Chile's recent history.

## THE DICTATORSHIP, THE MEMORIES, AND THE MEDIA

Soon after the military *Junta* seized power, the restrictions imposed on media by previous governments regarding the broadcasting of foreign material were lifted, while the censorship of information began (Aliski, 1981). Newspapers, magazines, and radio stations that had been associated with leftist political movements were forced to close and their offices were often raided by the military. Any ties that had previously existed between print media and different political factions were severed, and the subsidies given to television channels not owned by the State were discontinued. This pushed mass media in general towards commercialism and non-partisanship, so they soon curtailed the transmission of locally produced material and replaced it with shows coming mostly from the United States (Tironi & Sunkel, 2000). The prosecution of political dissidents – which resulted in many artists being detained and disappeared, tortured, or sent into exile – further shrank the

production of local music and shows, and promoted a high degree of self-censorship among the people who continued to work in the entertainment industry (Aliski, 1981). Consequently, the dictatorship and its abuses became a taboo topic even as it framed people's everyday lives. The experiences became something of which one should not speak, the memories were repressed, and denial or oblivion was encouraged.

The changes imposed by Pinochet's dictatorship on the media system were typical of authoritarian regimes, which are "concerned with demobilizing and (when necessary) repressing their subject populations with a view to imposing social and political order while maintaining themselves in office" (Mughan and Gunther, 2000). The changes helped to redirect people's attention towards topics considered non-threatening to the regime, such as fashion and technology, and accompanied the State implementation of neoliberal economic policies that opened the Chilean market to a massive influx of foreign products. So, people could not only watch the "American way of life" being played on television series, they could also emulate it through the purchase of all kinds of imported commodities that soon became symbols of social status and economic wellbeing. At the same time, the legal working time was lengthened to almost nine hours per day, the paid vacation time was reduced to only two weeks, job security was significantly undermined, and the pension system was privatized, so many people had no time or energy left to ponder their surroundings, let alone engage in political activities. As Adorno would conceptualize it, the dynamics of the new economic system expanded into all areas of life, and people were, willingly or not, drawn into the new state of affairs, so they ended up consenting to it (Gunster, 2004).

The importance of the mass media in the representation of the memories associated with the dictatorship lies in that, as Eyerman (2004) says quoting Arthur Neal, "a national trauma must be understood, explained, and made coherent through public reflection and discourse" (p. 61). For the experience to acquire meaning, it must be mediated

through newspapers, radio, or television, for example, which involve a spatial as well as temporal distance between the event and its experience. Mass-mediated experience always involves selective construction and representation, since what is visualized is the result of the actions and decisions of professionals as to what is significant and how it should be presented. (p. 62)

However, the selection of the material included in a media discourse is not a matter that depends on journalists and artists alone, because it is influenced by political and economic factors such as market forces, pressure from advertisers, media owner's agendas, and the public's expectations. This is why the narratives presented through the media should not be read as free-floating texts, but be considered in relation to the larger context in which they are articulated. The depoliticization of large fractions of the population was the result of efforts consciously enacted by the regime, and this carried over into the type of media texts

that were produced at the time and came to be favored afterwards (Silva, 2004). Structural aspects were significant: for example, television was regulated according to a public service ideal, and only two television stations existed during the dictatorship years – one owned by the State, and one owned and managed by the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile. The first transmitted the official discourse of the regime, and the second presented material that, while at times slightly oppositional, was never confrontational. There was no cable or satellite television, and of course no Internet, so people didn't really have access to alternative discourses.

Mattelart and Mattelart (1992) say that in times of crisis, media turn into “sites of negotiation, mediation and reconciliation” (p. 165). In Chile, it was during the 1980s, when the struggle for democratization took momentum, that the social and political factions opposed to the regime were able to use the media to promote their viewpoints. According to Tironi and Sunkel (2000), the changes in the media system introduced by the dictatorship resulted in trends that, over time, helped turn them into instruments for democratization. The media helped to revive political engagement and to articulate critical discourses that had no other means of public expression, thus contributing to mobilize social forces against the regime. Television, for example, played an important role in the political campaigns of the 1988 plebiscite: a segment during the evening prime time was assigned to the transmission of material produced by the contending parties, and the opposition usually presented a much more persuasive discourse (Méndez et al., 1989, cited by Tironi & Sunkel, 2000). More recently, media have become sites of negotiation for representing the memories and articulating the narratives that could shape a new understanding of the events.

Media are among the many factors relevant for the creation, validation, and transmission of collective memory, because they allow for traumas to be dramatized (Stiglmeier, 1994; Alexander, 2004). This is something that is just beginning to happen in Chile; in previous decades, media discourses that directly addressed these issues found little diffusion within the country. An example is the documentary *Chile, La Memoria Obstinate* (The Obstinate Memory), directed by Patricio Guzmán in 1997, which focuses on the memories of the military government. Guzmán, who is a Chilean exile, went back to interview people who appeared in a previously censored film of his called *La Batalla de Chile* (The Battle of Chile), which was made soon after the coup d'état. Miller Klubock (2003b) says that the film focuses on “how, in a context in which both the military and the democratic opposition seem to have colluded in producing amnesia as a condition for democratization, does memory remain obstinate? Or, does it?” (p. 273). He adds that it provides a

portrait of the problem of memory for a generation born after 1973 and living in a political context defined by a consensus between the military, its allies in the right-wing parties, and the concertación about the need to subordinate the demands for truth and justice to the imperatives of consolidating a new institutional order and maintaining the free market economic model inherited from the dictatorship (p. 274).

This context has now changed: the tacit agreement between political actors about not stirring up the memories was broken during Michelle Bachelet's campaign because her personal history as tortured and exiled was part of her presentation as a candidate. The tacit agreement between the political factions and the military regarding not damaging the image of officials in active duty was also broken by the legal prosecution of high-ranking military personnel involved in human rights violations. Even the economic model, which at one time received very few attacks, has been widely criticized by social movements such as those initiated by students, doctors, and teachers in 2006 (Julio, 07/17/2006).

Nonetheless, reporting an event as traumatic continues to be a delicate affair, especially when it involves assigning responsibility and designating certain groups as perpetrators and others as victimized. As Alexander says, "politicians and other elites may attack the media, its owners, and often the journalists whose reporting established the trauma facts" (p. 18), but in Chile, media ownership is greatly concentrated in the hands of those who supported the military regime, so they have little interest in creating a representation of it as trauma. It is one of those societies in which "carrier groups have not emerged with the resources, authority, or interpretive competence to powerfully disseminate these trauma claims," so the narratives have not been largely dealt with (p. 27). For example, one of the most prominent newspapers is *El Mercurio*, which has traditionally been linked to the rightist parties and landowning elites. Besides the homonymous newspaper, however, *El Mercurio* constitutes an economic conglomerate (dominated by the Edwards family) that owns several newspapers oriented towards different segments of the population and that are published in different parts of the country (Kornbluh, 2003). Its main competitor is COPESA, *Consortio Periodístico de Chile, S. A.*, which publishes *La Tercera* and controls a host of other papers, as well as some radio stations.

The policies of the military regime, which resulted in a neutralization of the public sphere and in the disappearance of critical discourses from the media, had important implications for social consciousness and organization, because, as Miller Klubock (2003) states, the news and entertainment that people received "were generated by the dictatorship or imported from abroad and received through official and approved newspapers and television" (p. 257). By controlling the official discourses that circulated in society and creating conditions under which no alternative narratives could emerge and be spread, the *Junta* aimed at controlling the way in which people made sense of the events and the light in which they remembered them. As Connerton (1989) indicates, those who control the dominant discourses in a society can also control, at least to some extent, the memory of that society.



## DEMOCRATIZATION AND THE PATH TO HEALING

Chile's transition to democracy is unique because it was negotiated between the different political factions and Gen. Pinochet, who by 1981 had acquired the title of President of the Republic. The Constitution that he issued in 1980 established the basis for the 1988 referendum, in which a majority of the people voted against the regime's continuation. Elections were conducted the following year, and Patricio Aylwin won with the backing of a center-left coalition (*Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia*) that continues to lead the country as this article goes into press. Aylwin's presidency made efforts to address the human rights violations that occurred during the dictatorship: the creation of the *Rettig Commission* and the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, mandated to investigate cases of death at the hands of state organizations, served to officially recognize the issue, even though their work considered only a fraction of the cases of abuse (Dandavati, 2005).

Eduardo Frei's presidential term (1994-2000) saw the legal prosecution of Gen. Manuel Contreras and Pedro Espinoza, former Chief and Chief of Operations, respectively, of the DINA (*Dirección Nacional de Inteligencia*) an intelligence agency created in 1973 and largely responsible for the detention and disappearance of people. The Amnesty Law issued during the military regime prevented the inquiry into operations carried out in Chile from 1973 to 1978, but these two men faced trial for the assassination of Orlando Letelier, which occurred in Washington, DC – Letelier, Allende's Foreign Minister, and his American secretary were killed by a car bomb in 1976 (Derechos Chile, 2002). Despite the investigation's relevance, Contreras and Espinoza were sentenced to only 7 and 6 years in prison and there was no larger inquiry into DINA's activities – which was seen as a symbolic move to actually prevent further legal inquiry (Amnesty International, 03/06/1996).

In 1998, Pinochet was detained while traveling in England. Charges against him had been filed in Spain, where Judge Garzón requested his extradition, but Chilean diplomacy initiated conversations to have him sent home instead. It took months before a resolution was voiced, while people rallied in Chile, Madrid, and London, for and against the legal prosecution of the former dictator (Derechos/Human Rights, 1998). Finally, the British court determined that he was in frail health and released him on humanitarian grounds; a military plane flew him to Chile and upon landing, he stood up from his wheelchair, smiling, to salute the cheering crowd. Hundreds of charges were presented against him in Chile, but he was also released after being declared unfit to stand trial. In 2004, it was discovered that he had six secret accounts holding at least eight million dollars deposited in banks throughout the world, and so another prosecution began, this time focused on possible tax evasion and money laundering charges (Tricot, 08/09/2004). Even though he was put under house arrest

for a period of time, he was never sent to jail, and attempts to prosecute his family after his death also failed.

Nonetheless, all these efforts to assign responsibility for the human rights violations that occurred during the dictatorship never dealt with the issue of collective responsibility, an important aspect to consider in terms of memory. This was hardly ever addressed, as if only the excesses of a few had determined the scope of the abuses. The crux of the matter is well explained by Ariel Dorfman (06/03/2000):

the Jefe Máximo did not act alone. Countless people participated in and permitted his abuses. There are, of course, the hundreds of military men and functionaries who carried out the general's orders, who pulled the trigger or plunged the electrode into another person's eye or tightened the vice upon the genitals of a defenseless man or woman. Not to speak of those who bought the materials with which such horrors were perpetrated, who rented out the cellars and cleaned them, who paid the agents' wages and typed the reports and served the coffee and biscuits during the warriors' rest breaks. And who include, less visibly, thousands who denied the crimes while knowing them to be true, or justified them as unavoidable to save the country from barbaric Marxist hordes. But I'm not just referring to them. I'm thinking of others: those who closed their eyes so as not to see, who decided to ignore the screams, who murmured publicly that the mothers of the disappeared were mad and how much longer would they keep causing trouble. Those who used the dictatorship to become rich, to buy the patrimony of the state, to dismiss the defenseless worker. And still others: those who later, when democracy came, preferred to forget, preferred the amnesia of uncontrolled consumerism while pain stalked the side alley, while grief rose from every corner and conscience of the country. I'm referring to those whose silence allowed Pinochet to exist and prosper. (p. 1)

Although the end of Pinochet's regime meant the stop of political repression and the return of hundreds of exiles, the country seemed to continue along the path set down during his rule. Silva (2004) says that the new Chilean democracy has been characterized by "the growing depoliticization of civil society and the absence of major national political debates," as well as a tendency to turn political discussions into attractive media shows (p. 64). This has important implications for memory, for as Moulian points out, "the most premeditated manifestation of forgetting is de-politicization" (cited by Fitzsimmons, 2000, p. 82).

My perception is that the military regime successfully established "hegemony" (Gramsci, 1992), so its influence has been much more pervasive than what would be expected of political repression alone. The measures implemented during those 17 years effectively changed the way Chilean people managed themselves in everyday life, the relationships they built, the principles they upheld, the personal narratives they constructed (De la Parra, 1998). In my view, the trauma of the dictatorship goes beyond the crimes committed by the state and the suffering of the people who were directly affected; it relates

to the manner in which it changed how Chileans live their lives and understand themselves and their world.

While authoritarianism existed before 1973 – as in all patriarchal societies – it was enforced and strengthened during the dictatorship, and its presence was felt in all spheres of life. The social-democratic principles of compassionate leadership were completely dismissed, so those who held any type of power exercised it without consideration and those who didn't have any obeyed without dispute. Fear became ingrained in society, and was used by all who could. It is this concept that bridges the dynamics that prevailed within the public and the private spheres, and thus makes sense of what happened in most homes: the men, even if they opposed the dictatorship, ruled their homes as if they were dictators themselves. Abuse of power became naturalized, so it is no surprise that attempts to conceptualize the dictatorship as trauma encounter resistance.

Chile's path of healing resembles that of other nations who have suffered collective trauma (Giesen, 2004). First, there was a general pact of silence, a desire to move on and to forget, which took legal form in the Amnesty Law. Then, there was the narrative of the *Junta* as leading an oppressive regime that decent people had to endure because they feared for their lives, and so they remained "silent witnesses" even though they didn't agree. All the violent actions committed by the military are still regarded by many as "justified in order to save the country," thus there is no remorse or recognition of guilt attached to them. Also, the general tendency among Chileans has been to focus on the economic achievements, acquiring a taste for American goods and going to great lengths to show that they are integrated into world trends, considering the dictatorship a distant past. However, the painful memories of the trauma suffered continue to re-surface, and the issue is not closed. Collective healing requires, just as individual healing does, to review the memories and to incorporate them in a coherent narrative that is accepted as part of the history of the self (Van Der Kolk & Van Der Hart, 1995).

## MEDIA AND MEMORY IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

Articles published in major newspapers such as *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera* repeatedly point out that Chile has changed during the last couple of years, in contrast to the stillness that characterized the transition to democracy. Widespread access to information technology and international media has resulted in globalization becoming part of people's everyday lives, reversing Chile's historical isolation. The economic reforms and the ensuing accelerated modernization have resulted in annual growth rates among the highest in the world (Ford, 2006), also affecting the social dynamics of a country that, until recently, was very traditional. Although Chile looks good in macroeconomic terms, the current prosperity was achieved at a significant social cost, absorbed mainly by the lower middle-class and the poor sections of society. So, the changes are not all good: The widening gap between the

rich and the poor, as well as the rampant expansion of consumerism and commodification, are evident everywhere. Rates of street crime and burglary have increased considerably, so street safety has become a main governmental concern. The organization of the family has been affected by women's wide scale integration into the workplace. Finally, stress-related disorders such as anxiety, depression, and bulimia are said to be increasing (Hershberg & Rosen, 2006).

In political terms, the election of Michelle Bachelet in January of 2006 also reveals a change. Not only is she the first woman President in the history of the country, but she is also a separated mother-of-three, an agnostic, a former exile, and a pediatrician who has a Master's degree in military science. Her father died in a detention camp, and she and her mother were held at a torture center before being allowed to go into exile. Since her taking of office, the repressed memories of the dictatorship seem to have acquired relevancy and legitimacy; people are talking about them in the media and re-assessing the country's current situation in an attempt to make sense of it all – and this is very much needed in order to deal with the trauma endured (Hite, 2006).

This is, from my point of view, something new. When I left Chile in 2001, the memories of the dictatorship were still very much repressed, and every time the topic was brought up, people were again divided between supporting and opposing the regime. Even though public acknowledgment of the crimes of the dictatorship had occurred (with the publishing of the *Rettig Commission's* Report) and most people agreed that human rights violations had taken place, the interpretations of it were never thoroughly discussed. Self-censorship was still being exercised by the media and the intellectuals, and the "politics of consensus" also complicated the voicing of more radical points of view. The measures taken to discourage civil engagement and public debate – punishing dissenters; censoring the press; neutralizing political parties; closing the schools of sociology, journalism, and history; infiltrating spies in college classrooms and community organizations; and promoting people's dedication to work and to consumerist leisure activities – had been incredibly successful, and resulted in behavioral styles that prevailed long after the dictatorship ended. In this sense, Chilean filmmaker Patricio Guzmán says that the dictatorship established a culture of fear that still exists, even though it has taken different forms: now people are afraid "of the future, of losing their jobs, of retiring, of the immigrants, of the police, of street crime, of the past, of each other" (Kinoki, 10/13/2006).

However, ritual forms of commemoration have always taken place, and continue to occur, including the student protests that are expected every September 11, along with the marches and public appearances organized by civic organizations. But recent years have seen the emergence of other forms of commemoration: several memorials have been built, and former detention camps (or what is left of them, since many buildings were demolished long ago) have been preserved and opened to the public. Some companies, such as *Chile Information Project* (2006) even offer guided tours of Villa Grimaldi and other places

associated with the memory of the dictatorship's crimes. This project also has an extensive webpage containing information about the country's recent history, and states that "if there is a call to forget, then it must be because many still remember.... The past must be understood if we are to understand where we are today, who we are and how best to deal with the future" (Derechos Chile, 2002b). Paradoxically, though, the company and its website are owned by an American and employ mostly Americans.

The film industry has also begun to directly address the topic of the dictatorship. In 2004, a major movie situated in 1973 was released: *Machuca* tells the story of three children from different social backgrounds who become friends during the months leading to the military uprising. It was the first film made in Chile that directly dealt with the coup d'état, while at the same time reflecting on issues such as class and personal politics. Its director, Andrés Wood, points out that "none of us had addressed the topic of 1973," and doing it was necessary because "there was a debt with filmmakers of a younger generation, with those who are younger than 40 years old" (Kinoki, (09/01/2004). Previous movies either subtly addressed the topic or – as the documentaries directed by Patricio Guzmán – were made by Chileans in exile, and were rarely (if ever) broadcast within the country. In this sense, Guzmán says that in Chile "no radio, newspaper, or major mass media talks about Allende. There is collective guilt, a collective trauma that will last for a long time." He sees his work as helping to preserve the memory and to open up spaces for discussion, because "the past doesn't go by, but lives with us" (Kinoki, 11/17/2006b).

The contested nature of the memories of the Chilean dictatorship has also led to conflictive historical interpretations of those years. During the 1980s, public school textbooks included information about Pinochet as "President of the Republic" and glorified the military intervention. In 1999, Pinochet wrote a public *Carta a los Chilenos* (Letter to the Chilean People) in which he reiterated the dominant narrative of the regime's supporters. The letter's accuracy was quickly refuted by a group of critical Chilean historians, who went on to publish *Manifiesto* (Manifesto) and *Historia Contemporánea de Chile* (Contemporary History of Chile), explaining the other side of the argument. In 2000, some academic institutions and nongovernmental organizations held, for the first time, an interdisciplinary conference on "Memory for a New Century," which evidences efforts to come to terms with the recent past.

Chilean media refrained for years from delving into the topic of the dictatorship and its abuses, but most political factions have agreed on the fact that human rights violations took place, although some justify them on strategic terms, as a necessary sacrifice to save the country. Recently, print media outlets initiated different projects related to memory. For example, the newspaper *El Mercurio* created web pages containing famous writers' and politicians' individual narratives of the day of the coup d'état, and blogs for people to post their reactions to various political topics (an example can be found at *El Mercurio*,

10/12/2006). Other newspapers and magazines have done the same, thus allowing for the public presentation of the memories and their discussion.

## CONCLUSION

Connerton (1989) points out that both individual and collective identity are intrinsically related to memory – to the way in which people represent the past and make sense of their experiences in order to understand the present, and the way in which the past is remembered and actualized by rituals and embodied commemorative practices. He states that “we may say that our experiences of the present largely depend upon our knowledge of the past, and that our images of the past commonly serve to legitimate a present social order” (p. 3). This is why it’s important to understand the manner in which Chilean people remember, interpret, and incorporate the experience of the dictatorship into their lives; likewise, given the role that media play in the construction and preservation of collective memory, it is important to review the discourses that are created around it.

In Halbwachs’s view (1992), our memories are always tied to the memories of our social group, and thus all remembering is collective. We can’t escape being affected by the shared experiences undergone by our social group. In this sense, the trauma suffered by Chilean society during the years of the dictatorship goes beyond the individual suffering of those who were prosecuted and abused; it extends to those who survived in hiding, their families, the silent witnesses, and the perpetrators, too. It is because of this that inquiry into the memories is relevant: if all memory is social memory, as Halbwachs suggests, then those memories need to be brought out of the private realm and included in a public conversation in order to find a shared path to healing.

Thus, there is the issue of the inescapability of trauma in Chile. Those of us who were born and raised during the dictatorship years are also marked by them, whether we want it or not; the social practices that were internalized during those years became part of the fabric of Chilean society, and the history to which they refer is an integral part of our identity. Because the memories have been passed to us, we can’t pretend that they are part of a distant and inaccessible past. This brings into the foreground the question posed by Ariel Dorfman (02/03/2006) about Pinochet being tried by the Chilean judicial system: he said “Pinochet is a mirror” and the real issue is “are we willing to judge the country that produced Pinochet?” In other words, are Chileans ready to begin revisiting our history now, processing the collective trauma? Or will we keep repressing the memories, saying that we don’t want to look back? Can we construct a narrative of our nation that incorporates the experience of the dictatorship in a way that allows us to make peace? Are recent media discourses beginning to construct this narrative? On Saturday, Nov. 25, 2006, Pinochet turned 91 and issued a statement taking political, though not legal, responsibility for everything that happened during his regime, saying once more that it was all necessary to

save the country from chaos and communism (The New York Times, 11/27/2006). He died a few days later, and when the news was made public, thousands of Chileans poured into the streets, some of them engaging in celebration, others in mourning. The different factions clashed and fought among themselves – it all showed that the social memory of the dictatorship is still in the making, and that the trauma still hurts.

In 2004, the Commander in Chief of the Army, Gen. Cheyre, “acknowledged institutional responsibility” for the abuses (Nagy-Zekmi & Leiva, 2005, p. 6); he also stated that the military shouldn’t be involved in politics and that a coup will never happen again. However, Gen. Cheyre, now retired, stepped forth in outrage when a high ranking official was recently asked to resign after a court investigation linked him to the killing of 14 political prisoners in what is known as the *Caravana de la Muerte* (Death’s Caravan). The implicated official, Gen. Santelices, argued that in 1973 he was a twenty-year-old “just following orders” (Aguila, 02/05/2008). Cheyre argued that this ousting breached a tacit agreement between the armed forces and the governing coalition about protecting the careers of officials linked to human rights violations. He added that the “intellectual authors” of the military regime, not the people who were instrumental in making it happen, should be held accountable, and that included the entire political and judicial establishment of the time (La Tercera, 02/12/2008). The statements generated general discomfort in Chilean society, even as several more people were tried and found guilty in subsequent months.

Eyerman (2004) says that “the articulating discourse surrounding cultural trauma is a process of mediation involving alternative strategies and alternative voices. It is a process that aims to reconstitute or reconfigure a collective identity, as in repairing a tear in the social fabric” (p. 63). These alternative voices and strategies are needed in Chile; for them to emerge, it is necessary for society as a whole to engage in a conversation that is likely to be, at least to some extent, carried out through the media. Miller Klubock (2003b) states that, during the dictatorship, “memory and mourning, like most of social life, were driven indoors and out of public sight” (p. 277). For them to be collectively addressed, they must move into the public sphere, which is global in nature not only because it includes the voices of the people who still live in exile and the relevant works produced by authors worldwide, but also because it ultimately interests a global audience, given the United States’ documented participation in the events. Hundreds of pages of declassified CIA documents attest to the scope of U.S. involvement in the organization of the coup d’état and the operations carried out by the military regime, a case that is not unique within the Latin American milieu (Kornbluh, 29/10/2000; Nagy-Zekmi & Leiva, 2005).

Several years ago, I was a guest at a dinner party in New York City, and I sat at a table with two people who worked for a major television network in the United States. When they learned that I was Chilean, they said “Oh, yes, we know Chile. Allende, the coup d’état, Pinochet’s dictatorship, the human rights violations...” They had visited the country in 1990, when Amnesty International sponsored a concert featuring musicians such as Sting

and Peter Gabriel in a symbolic act of celebrating the end of the military regime and the opening of Chilean borders to artists of all political creeds. They mentioned what they had seen in Chile back then, which was basically people going about their daily business and media producing entertainment and news. Yet, they were still outraged by the fact that everything seemed so normal. "How could it be?" they asked me, "didn't they care? While people around the globe had learned about the atrocities committed by Pinochet, how could Chileans go on having normal lives? How could national media not be all about the tortured and the exiled and the detained and disappeared?" I knew some of the answers to their questions at the time, and they didn't like them, but the topic was not suitable for casual dinner conversation anyways. I grew increasingly uncomfortable and they grew increasingly outraged. Now those answers are contained within these pages and, hopefully, they can be used to promote more understanding.

In this paper, I have analyzed why Pinochet's dictatorship qualifies as a collective trauma, considering the shared memories that are associated with it, as well as their bearing for Chilean society, the construction of national narratives, and the role that media plays in their public articulation. The discussion has been underlined by the idea that the process of remembering is social and that, in order to move past a collective trauma, it is necessary to acknowledge the memories and incorporate the experience into a narrative that then serves as the platform for understanding who we are and where we are today. A wider conversation about this is just beginning to take place in the public sphere, and I argue that it should go beyond the issue of Pinochet's personal culpability and the direct victimization of political opponents; it should address Chilean society's shared responsibility and the way in which the experience of the dictatorship affected its very core.

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# REELING NOSTALGIA: 'AREMOTE' AND THE ENDURING SAKARA MUSIC IN NIGERIA

ABIODUN SALAWU

*The paper focuses on 'Aremote', a late evening musical programme of the Ibadan station of Radio Nigeria, within the larger context of efforts to re-enliven the richness of sakara music as an accoutrement of socials in decades past within the south-western part of the country, and a classical piece of philosophical reflection. A major figure in the sakara musical artistry was the late Yusuf Olatunji whose works are regarded as canonical among the nation's indigenous traditional music. Taking it within the context of a milieu in which the nation's airwaves are already taken over by the American pop music and the largely jejune, western-influenced indigenous popular music, this paper explores the rationale for the 'Aremote' programme, as well as its audience and impact. Beyond these, the outcomes of this are expected to inform us about the capacity of broadcast media to shape our tastes and values. The study is also capable of providing insights into the prospects of a creative and functional management of the contest between traditionalism and modernism, as well as between globalisation and localisation.*

Keywords: nostalgia, traditional music, radio, Yusuf Olatunji, globalisation

Music occupies a major portion in broadcast programming. Especially for radio, music is very principal in programming. Barnard (2000:124) observes that music has formed the core of radio programming almost since the medium's inception, largely for reasons of tradition and cost. Olatunji (1971), for instance, records that 47 percent of Nigerian radio airtime was devoted to music.

Music is both an entertainment medium and a cultural element. In the same vein, broadcast media are, expectedly, media of entertainment and cultural continuity. It is for this

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reason that music and broadcast media are inseparable. Music is more associated with radio because radio, traditionally, broadcasts for longer hours than television, and as a result, requires music to fill its airtime for music's easy availability and relative cheapness.

No doubt, the entertainment value of music played on broadcast media is very important, yet the cultural significance of the music is more important. As a result of cultural fluidity, various cultural elements, including music, of different peoples of the world have intermingled. Again, as a result of 'cultural triangulation' (Uche, 1996:49-58), Nigeria, for instance, has largely accepted music from Britain and North America, almost to the point of subverting its own indigenous music. Yet again, as a result of changing climate and ethos, the modern Nigerian music is almost driving the traditional indigenous music into extinction. All these realities are reflected in the music content of broadcast media in Nigeria.

For the purpose of sustaining the heritage, the few stations and programmes that still pay attention to these traditional music forms are worth some attention. Thus, this paper seeks to study 'Ojo n re'bi ana', one of such few programmes of Radio Nigeria, Ibadan that we have chosen to put together under the generic name 'Aremote'. A major musical genre of focus in this programme is sakara, eminently identified with the late Yusuf Olatunji whose works are regarded as canonical among the nation's indigenous traditional music. This paper, essentially, explores the rationale for the 'Aremote' programme, as well as the nature of its audience, and its impact.

## METHODOLOGY

This study aims at ascertaining the profile of 'Ojo n re'bi ana' audience; the audience's assessment of the programme, and the impact the programme has made. This is done against the background of the feeling of nostalgia the music played on the programme evokes.

Data were obtained through phone-in system and letters to the presenter. The programme has a tradition of opening up its telephone line(s) to listeners during the last edition of every month. The aim of the phone-in strategy is to have the evaluation of the programme by the audience. The listeners are also asked to offer suggestions for the improvement on the programme.

For the purpose of this study, this researcher was in the studio of 'Ojo n re bi ana' on the 24<sup>th</sup> of November, 2004; 29<sup>th</sup> of December, 2004; and on the 26<sup>th</sup> of January, 2005. The researcher listened attentively to the telephone conversations, while also taking in some other information within the environment. All the observations were on the spot jotted down.

The researcher also burrowed into the file containing letters written to the programme producer/presenter by the listeners. A number of those letters were studied for the purpose

of obtaining relevant information. In addition, some informal interviews were held with the presenter. These interviews proved useful as relevant information were equally obtained.

## Nostalgia

Nostalgia means a longing for the past, often in an idealised form. Described as a medical condition, Nostalgia was regarded as a form of melancholy in the early modern period, and came to be an important topic in Romanticism. Boym (2001) calls it ‘hypochondria of the heart’, that is the ability to mourn the passing of times. She, in a similar vein, associates the phenomenon with the need to vividly recreate experiences of one’s own past. Because it is an idealisation of the past, Nostalgia, Boym (2001) says, can demean the present and hold it hostage. Nostalgia can also lend a sentimental alloy to nationalism. That is Nostalgia brings about a sentimental attachment to national or group culture and values, and, in a way, causes aversion for cultures and values that are alien.

Nostalgia has temporal and space dimensions. The temporal dimension has to do with yearning for a period in the past, while the space dimension is a “longing for a home that no longer exists – or never existed” (Legg, 2001: 100). Nostalgia can also be restorative or reflective. Restorative nostalgia replaces and reconstructs in manners that defy traditional borders (Miyoshi, 1993: 726 – 751) to integrate while at the same time separating others from their roots and thereby disempowering them with reference to their own cultures. In this sense, restorative nostalgia seeks to conquer space. On the other hand, reflective nostalgia seeks to shatter space, to create places without roots, and ensure the triumph of a prospective vision often based on unrealised potential rather than a celebration of the past (Legg, 2001: 101).

Nostalgia comes under the temporal direction classification of memory functions. Specifically, it can be regarded as retrospective memory, and more specifically, as episodic memory. Episodic memory concerns information specific to a particular context, such as a time or place (Anderson, 1976). Philosophers variously refer to episodic memories as recollective memory, personal memory or direct memory (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/memory/>). Theories of organicist memory hold that “the body was conceived ... as itself a storage and retrieval device in which the past was ‘remembered’ ...” (Bennet, 2003 in Radstone and Hodgkin, 2003).

Nostalgia can also be seen in the light of Reminiscence. Reminiscence, a synonym for Nostalgia, also refers to recollections of memories from the past. Reminiscence is also said to be a therapy for people with Alzheimer’s disease (a brain disorder). It is beneficial to the patients’ inner self and their interpersonal skills. Reminiscence is about giving the person with Alzheimer’s disease a sense of value, importance, belonging, power and peace (<http://alzheimers.about.com/treatmentoptions/a/reminiscence.htm>). There are three categories of Reminiscence. They are the Simple, the Evaluative, and the Offensive-

Defensive. Nostalgia belongs to the category of Simple Reminiscence. Here, the idea is to reflect on the past in an informative and enjoyable way.

Generally, Reminiscence is used to cope in times of stress, such as mourning. It can also help reduce injury to our self image and it can create a feeling of intimacy and give special meaning to contact time with others. Mediums used for Reminiscence Therapy and Activities are:

- Visually: photographs, slides, painting, pictures, looking at objects of autobiographical meaning.
- Music: Using familiar tunes from the radio, CDs, or making music using various instruments.
- Smell or taste: Using small kits, different foods.
- Tactile: touching objects, feeling textures, painting and pottery.

### Music in Nigeria

In a paper presented at a Conference on Nigerian music, Tunji Vidal offers the following description of the Nigerian musical landscape:

The Nigerian music scene today is characterised by a pastiche of styles, fashions and practices: by an array of music types and musical instruments; by the co-existence of multiple musical traditions and expressions, each with its corresponding community of tastes (Vidal, 1993:1).

Indeed, Nigeria presents a picture of a pot-pourri of musical forms, instruments and sound characteristics. Each variant of music is associated with specific ethnic, religious, social, economic or musical group. Vidal broadly classifies the various musical expressions into seven categories. They are:

- Traditional music in its many ethnic variants such as the Igbo, Yoruba, Idoma, Efik, Hausa, Edo, Ijaw, Nupe, Ibibio etc;
- Islamic music, which consists of Quranic chants and the recitation of the Islamic liturgy before, during and after divine worship;
- Islamised music such as waka, were, apala, sakara etc;
- Western classical music and Nigerian contemporary art music;
- Western and Africanised church music;
- Neotraditional and theatre music;
- Urban popular music such as highlife, juju, African pop, Afro beat, fuji etc.

This last variant of music is the most widespread in Nigeria. Vidal (1993:2) remarks that it is the social music of the urban people with its new sets of cultural values, aesthetic tastes

and preferences; the westernized music of urban youths the music of the new breeds, the product of a changing Nigerian society.

As already noted, *Sakara* belongs to the class of Islamised musical genre. As such the next segment of this paper shall dwell on this genre.

### The Islamised Music

*Sakara*, *Apala*, *Waka* and *Were* are the products of islamisation. These musical forms that constitute a musical culture emerged within the Islamic communities in both the southern and northern parts of Nigeria. Vidal (1993:8) notes that the influence and cultural contribution of the Islamic religion to the development of music in Nigeria can be seen in the use of Islamic styles of cantillation, evident in some urban folk popular music in both the northern and southern areas that contain a large number of muslim communities. He adds that Islamic festivals also provide the opportunity for the performance of non-liturgical, Islamic socio-religious and traditional music.

In another classification of the four centuries of musical traditions of Lagos in the South-West of Nigeria, Vidal (1977) subsumed the islamised Yoruba musical forms under the Modern Period, which started 1914. *Waka* developed as a musical form used in the semi-religious context of welcoming pilgrims returning from Mecca. *Were*, which is the most traditional of all islamised Yoruba musical forms, was created as a signal indicating the time for the eating of *sari*, the early morning meal during the Ramadan fasting period. The *sakara* and *apala* musical forms are, purely, for entertainment purposes, hence they are the most commercialized of the forms.

Mustapha (1975) corroborates this when he says that *sakara* and *apala* are two of the most popular forms of social music and are used for entertainment during occasion like funeral, house warming, child naming and marriage ceremonies, and other social engagements.

The icons of apala music included late Haruna Isola, late Ligali Mukaiba and late Ayinla Omowura. *Apala* is imbued with a gentle but compelling rhythm. Benson Idonije, writing in *The Guardian* (Nigeria) of Wednesday, December 8, 2004, asserts that Haruna Isola remains the most influential and established artist whose name is synonymous with *apala* music. He, further, comments on Isola's artistry:

As a singer, he had the ability to create thought-provoking lyrics about issues, places, real life situation and even the philosophy of life where he was comfortably at home with the use of parables and anecdote ... Knowing that *apala* music, like every other typical African music form is characterised by repetitive rhythm and percussion, he was able to introduce the element of variety to his style through the creation, on the spur of the moment, of myriad of choruses which derived inspiration from situational social events as they unfolded



themselves. They added extra artistic substance and colour to social commentaries that were rehearsed and premeditated (p. 67).

Idonije also added:

Besides (sic) rhythm, which forms the bedrock of *apala* music, Isola realized the essence of a well-blended group vocal harmony treatment. And so, he always had in the band, percussion when they could double proficiently on vocals to provide the necessary call and response pattern of the music (p. 67).

Ayinla Omowura's music is also said to be melodic, and at the same time loaded with instructive messages targeted at the masses. For this reason, his music enjoyed popularity among the folks and the artisans. His music was the toast of commercial drivers, meat sellers, motor mechanics etc.

Of recent, there has been resuscitation of public identification with *apala* music with the release of 'Soyoyo' album by a son of Haruna Isola named Musiliu. With the introduction of modern instruments, increase in tempo and current social slang, the music has been electrifying in social gatherings around Lagos and the Southwest. The success of this album is attested to by its constant featuring on broadcast airwaves, and the public acclaim which it enjoys.

### The Sakara Music

*Sakara* is a gentle, yet rhythmic musical form rich in language and the abundance of the wisdom of the folk culture. Mustapha (1975) identifies three types of *sakara* music styles. He tagged them the *Eso*, the Full *sakara* and the *Agbala*. The *Eso* (race) is popularly liked by youngsters. It commands good and quick movement of action during dancing and it is always the taste of many people. 'Full sakara' is the standard form and it is neither slow nor high. The song, which usually accompanies it, is known as 'orin faaji' (leisure song), hence 'full sakara' dance can be appropriately called 'ijo faaji' (leisure dance). Many people, especially women, prefer this style. *Agbala* is the choice of elderly people because of its relative slowness. Elders are seen dancing, dragging legs in slow succession of movements. *Sakara* musicians alternate among these various forms of the genre for specific effects.

Mustapha (1975) also identifies the instruments of *sakara* to include *molo* (a type of violin); *goje*; *iya-ilu* (the talking-drum), *omele nla* (big omele) and *omele kerere* (small omele), otherwise known as *omele ako* (he-omele) and *omele abo* (she-omele) respectively; and *igba* (calabash).

*Molo* and *goje* (called *goke* in Hausa language) are borrowed from the Hausa of the northern Nigeria. Both are used by the bandleader and are capable of being rendered to produce meaningful sounds. *Molo* produces low sounds, which cannot be heard far off while

*goje* produces sounds of high resonance. Mustapha (1975:519) further remarks that *goje*, *molo* and *iya-ilu* serve some common purposes. They are used as language surrogates because Yoruba is a tonal language. They are also used to produce the signature tune, to mark the end of a song and the beginning of another, and as instrumental gap-filler. The *omeles* are subsidiary drums to *iya-ilu*.

The *igba* is a hard and tough calabash handled by one of the singers. He wears many rings on his fingers (both right and left) and strikes the calabash with the rings to produce meaningful and melodious sounds at intervals as the music is produced.

The contents of *sakara* music span hagiography, didacticism, philosophy, and social commentaries. But, by far, hagiography occupies the widest space in the music as praises of party makers, invited guests and other important dignitaries are sung during social engagements and in the composition of musical records.

A major maelstrom of *sakara* music was the late Yusuf Olatunji whose works are regarded as canonical among the nation's indigenous traditional music. He bestrides the scene of *sakara* music like a colossus, even in death.

### Yusuf Olatunji (1909-1978)

Yusuf Olatunji, popularly known as *Baba l'Egba* (for he was of the Egba clan of Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria) was born around 1909 at Gbegbinlawo (now Baba l'Egba) village in the North local council area of Abeokuta.

Yusuf started his musical career at a very tender age; and it was, probably, for this reason that he did not have a considerable measure of western education. He attended St. Peter (Primary) School, Ake, Abeokuta; but left when he was in Standard Two. As a boy, he organised a musical band which used to play inside train, en-route Ijoko-Ota, Lagos and Abeokuta.

Before Yusuf actually started his *sakara* career, there had been other artistes like Saki, Sura Dan Busari and Abibu Oluwa. In Abeokuta, he joined the *sakara* group of Saki, but later left to start his own *sakara* group, known then as Joseph Olatunji and his *sakara* group. It is instructive at this juncture to note that Olatunji was born a Christian. His name was originally Joseph. It was later in his musical career that one of his patrons enjoined him to convert to Islam. Hence, he changed his name to Yusuf. His group, like other groups used to play for social clubs during their ceremonies, and during other social engagements.

In 1948, Yusuf waxed three gramophone records in the then Gold Coast, now Ghana. In 1949, he went back to Ghana in the company of Olayiwola Ejire, another *sakara* artiste. Both of them waxed five records each. In all, before his death, Yusuf had 37 records to his credit - 10 small records and 27 LPS.

*The Guardian* (Nigeria) of Saturday, June 24, 2000 has the following report about Yusuf Olatunji:

Yusuf Olatunji belongs to the core of artistes, especially musicians who have elevated the Yoruba language and contributed to popular music particularly, *sakara*. His major contribution centred on the socialization process among age groups... Some of the major societies and age groups of his time would be extremely pleased to have a stamp of Yusuf Olatunji, which would establish them firmly in the public domain. (*The Guardian*, June 24, 2000, p. 28).

## The Broadcast Music

Music in broadcasting comes in various forms. Hilliard (2000:33-34) categorises music in broadcasting as:

Content: Recorded (on record, tape, cartridge, and compact disc) music played by disc Jockeys, dominates radio programming.

Bed: Bedding is the generic term used to describe music used under or as backup of an announcer's sound tracks.

Theme: This is music used as a programme theme or to peg a specific event or particular personality. The action or performer is identifiable as soon as the theme music is heard. A theme can be used for the opening, for the closing, and for commercial break transition in a show.

Bridge: The musical bridge is the most commonly used device to create transitions. Music lasting only a few notes or a few bars can be used to indicate the breaks between segments of the programme. The music bridge also can be used to distinguish the commercial inserts from the rest of the programmes. In a dramatic sequence (in a commercial, for example), the music bridge frequently indicates a change of place or a passage of time. The bridge usually is only a few seconds long. When it is very short, only a second or two, it is called a *stab*.

Sound effect: Some effects cannot be presented effectively except through music. For instance, brass and percussion instruments can convey or heighten the feeling of a storm better than sound effects alone.

Background or mood: Music can heighten the content and mood of a sequence. Such music is subtle, not obvious or evident.

This writer, equally, classifies the use of music in broadcast thus:

- Filler-interlude: This is when music is played to fill the airtime between the end of a programme and the beginning of another. Music interlude is most noticeable when a

particular programme is unavoidably absent at the time it is supposed to come on air. To fill the air space at this time, various musical records or video clips are played for the entertainment of listeners or viewers.

- Interlude within a programme: Music is played for the purpose of enlivening a programme. This type usually comes up during discussion programmes. To break the boredom of talk, music is sometimes played in between as an interlude.
- Chitchat programme: This is the use of music during chitchat programmes. The presenter interjects his chat with music.
- Request programme music: This is the use of music, ostensibly, for the enjoyment of people who are being greeted through the request cards sent to presenters of such programmes. People buy specially designed cards (by the broadcast station) and use such to request that certain music be played for their loved ones (sometimes, for an event like birthday, marriage etc) whose names are listed in the cards.
- Special music programmes: These are specially designed programmes meant for the play of music. Such could be music of an age, music of a genre, music of a culture or a place.

Barnard (2000) also says that traditionally, music has been used by radio stations as an aid to relaxation, as a means of establishing a link with the audience (record request shows) and to provide a background to working activities.

As we consider what broadcast media do to music, we also need to look at what music does to the media. Barnard (2000:133), for instance, notes that radio's demand for and use of music has a profound effect on the repertoire and promotional strategies of record companies. He explains:

Prior exposure on radio can influence a company to sign an artist; and how a songwriter, record producer or band approaches the process of creating a single or album may be influenced not only by what is currently selling but what is likely to be chosen for airplay. If a record is not heard on radio, its chances of selling are limited (Barnard, 2000: 133).

Barnard also talks about the use that listeners make of music radio, in the process distinguishing between different types of music radio listeners. According to him, *daytime listeners* use radio in a secondary way, as background, while *evening listeners* (emphases, mine) make a deliberate choice to *listen* (emphasis supplied) (Barnard, 2000: 134-135).

There are a myriad of music programmes on radio and television. Apart from just play of music, such programmes also feature news about musical, and sometimes, general entertainment world, as well as analyses of music played, artistry of a particular musical artiste and events surrounding the lives and careers of particular artistes. Because of the visual advantage of television, music programmes on the medium, sometimes, include tourism and dancing. Examples of broadcast music programmes - past and present - in Nigeria include 'Sunday Rendezvous', 'Bala Miller Show', 'Video Vibes', 'Highlife

Music', 'World of Music', 'Highlife My Life', 'Goje Africa', 'Prime Time', 'African Fusion', 'Aremote', 'Ojo n re bi and', 'L'aye ojo hun' etc.

Onabajo (2001:67) contends that many radio stations programming is made up of 90% music. Presumably, Onabajo is referring to Nigeria. The question is how much of this percentage is given to indigenous music? Uche (1986) seemed to have answered this question when he observed that a Radio Nigeria station must have been responsible for the nation's youth's preference for foreign music. Whereas many government radio stations, especially those on Medium Wave seem to have improved on their programming local contents, those on Frequency Modulation (FM), especially the privately owned ones are still very much guilty of this (Salawu, 2004).

Quite to the contrary, the draft national cultural policy of Nigeria (which sadly enough has not been given life to) recommends that:

the media should be used for the dissemination of cultural and artistic products for the purposes of preserving Nigeria's cultural heritage. (Federal Dept. of Culture, 1982).

Similarly, the broadcasting cultural objectives as contained in the National Broadcasting Code are:

- To seek, identify, and preserve Nigerian culture and promote the study of Nigerian history and language.
  - To select, critically, relevant foreign culture for the purpose of enriching Nigerian culture.
  - To develop and promote the appreciation of indigenous aesthetic values.
- (Cited in Onabajo, 2001:44).

Even on stations that have been 'generous' with the use of indigenous music, it is the base type of indigenous music that is largely jejune and of un-edifying content.

### The 'Aremote' Programmes

In this study, 'Aremote' refers to such programmes like 'Aremote', 'Ojo n re'bi ana' and 'L'aye ojo hun', all on the Ibadan station of Radio Nigeria. This study is, however, focused on 'Ojo n re bi ana' (meaning, the day is setting). It comes up on Wednesdays between 9p.m and 10p.m. Its anchorman goes by the sobriquet, *Dokita Oloogun oorun* (Doctor of Sedation). This sobriquet has been adopted by the presenter because of the gentle and slow nature of the music, especially, that of Yusuf Olatunji, played on the programme. The music has the capacity of rocking the listeners to sleep at that late hour, after a hard day's job. This is where 'Ojo n re' bi ana' links back to 'Aremote', which simply means lullaby.

Importantly, both 'Aremote' and 'Ojo n re bi ana' usually climax with the music of Yusuf. The two programmes usually start with other music like *fuji* and *apala*. Sometimes, they bring in slow pace *juju*. When the programmes enter their second halves or about 20 minutes to the end, the presenters usually switch over to the music of Yusuf, which serves as the epitome of the programmes. The 'Aremote' programme comes on air between 9 p.m. and 10 p.m. on Mondays. Both 'Aremote' and 'Ojo n re'bi ana' feature on the AM station of Radio Nigeria, while 'L'aye ojo hun' features on the FM station (Premier) of the Radio.

'L'aye ojo hun' (In the olden days) comes on air between 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. on Mondays. The title of this programme is intrinsically suggestive of nostalgia. It is anchored by the same presenter of 'Ojo nre'bi ana'. In its own case, a particular old artiste is brought on the programme on a particular edition for interview. The music of the interviewee is interspersed with the interview. But, on occasions, because of the obvious love the presenter has for the music of late Yusuf, the programme, sometimes, ends with the *sakara* music.

'K'a sun're' (May we sleep well) is another programme that we can subsume under the broad umbrella of 'Aremote'. It has, however, been laid to rest. 'Ojo nre'bi ana', the focus of this paper actually started in the year 1983. It was, then, aired between 10 p.m. and 12 midnight. The timing, however, changed in 1992 to 9 p.m. to 10 p.m. as we, currently, have.

## DATA PRESENTATION

During the programme edition of November 24, 2004, a total of fifteen calls were received. The calls came in repeatedly, disrupting the flow of music. Calls were even jamming with one another on the two mobile phones held by the presenter. The calls came from far and near. One of the callers disclosed that people keep vigil for the late-evening programme. All the callers had pleasant words for the programme.

Certain things stand this programme out from similar ones. One of such is that life musical recordings of the artistes featured are played. This provides a lot of excitement for the listeners. For instance, during the November 24, 2004 edition of the programme, a life performance record of Yusuf Olatunji was played. This impressed a listener who called in to say that such records are rare. This definitely evokes the feeling of nostalgia. Yusuf died some thirty years ago.

The presenter's rich knowledge of Yusuf's music is not in doubt. On the programme, he offers scintillating analyses of the music, gives information about historical backgrounds of the records, provides explanations of the lyrics and the drum messages, and reels out details about life and style of Yusuf. All these help in winning listenership for the programme and the music.

The December 29, 2004 edition of the programme was sponsored by Lisabi Club '98. The club does this every year, either to mark the end or the beginning of a year. During this programme edition, letters written to the producer/presenter were mentioned. A total of

sixteen letters were mentioned. The writer of one of the letters wanted to know when the programme Fans Club would be launched. Another writer inquired how to become a member of the proposed fans club. To the question asked about when the club would be launched, the presenter answered that the club would be inaugurated in the year 2005.

One other writer, a female, wondered if the presenter thought that the programme should just be for men. Another female writer disclosed that she was first attracted to the programme by the music of Ayinla Omowura. She is, now, appreciating the music of Yusuf through the programme.

A few calls were also received during this edition. A caller adjudged the programme to be okay, and could not really find any weak point in it. Another caller appreciated the life play record of Yusuf being played on the programme. Yet, another caller called for robust featuring of the music of Haruna Isola on the programme.

The following are the contents of some of the letters written to the producer/presenter:

#### Letter 1

To the Doctor of Sedation,

This programme makes us, young people, to know about the music of the past.

Both the young and the old listen to the programme. (Dated January, 19,2005).

#### Letter 2

I chose to be listening to this programme for some important reasons. One, I was, before, not getting the lyrics of *apala* (and *sakara*), but the presenter has made me to understand the wisdom contained in these songs. Two, the programme does not make us to forget our (Yoruba) culture and tradition. Three, there has been no time when I listen to this programme till the end, its sedative must have rocked me to sleep.

There are some pieces of advice for the presenter. Since this programme has become a favourite of all the listeners to Radio Nigeria, a Listeners' Club for the programme should be inaugurated. I also want to suggest that there should be a question and answer session where questions about the musicians being featured (the year the album was released and the artiste) will be asked. In addition, I want you to be playing music of such artistes like Ebenezer Obey, I.K. Dairo, Hubert Ogunde etc. (Dated August 20, 2004)

#### Letter 3

I listen to this programme to demonstrate my love for Yusuf's music. I am excited about a piece of information heard during one of the editions of the programme that one of Yusuf's son wants to resurrect the music of his father like a son of Haruna Isola is, currently, doing. I want to know more about this.

Concerning the proposed inauguration of the Yusuf Fans Club, let us expedite action on this. (Dated November 2, 2004).

#### Letter 4

Your programme reminds me of the music of Yusuf, even those albums of his that were released before I was born. His music is full of wisdom. Please, do not let the programme die. (Dated January 12, 2005).

#### Letter 5

I suggest that life play record of Yusuf be played 10 to 15 minutes to the end of the programme. (Dated January 10, 2005)

#### Letter 6

There is wisdom in the music. The music is didactic. In an album of Yusuf played last week, he said we should not be desperate for money. (Dated December 3, 2004).

#### Letter 7

The music is sedative. It reminds me of our culture. (Dated October 10, 2004).

#### Letter 8

The programme makes me restful. It is a source of relaxation for me after a hard day's job.

I want to suggest that the programme duration be extended by 30 minutes. The young, the old, men and women benefit from the programme. I appreciate the programme more because of the old music aired on it. The old music comes fresh (Dated December 3, 2004).

## DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

No doubt, the programme, 'Ojo n re bi ana' has brought the music of Yusuf and other traditional music back again into the consciousness of its listeners. It has succeeded in reminding the people of their past. And, from the calls and letters received, it is evident that people are appreciative of this. Writing about a similar programme on Metro FM (another Radio Nigeria station in Lagos), Benson Idonije in *The Guardian* (Nigeria) of November 12, 2004, wrote that "the success of 'Highlife my Life', an on-going documentary on our musical past is thriving on its identification with the people - whose expectations are being met" (p.31).

'Ojo n re bi ana' is not just about playing the music. It also provides background information about the music and the musicians. In this case, it would be right to say that the programme is entertaining, informative and educative.



The popularity of the programme is evident by the heavy traffic of calls and volume of letters received about it. From the data, it is also observed that listeners to the programme and music of Yusuf cut across various segments of the society - the young, the old, men and women. In one of the interviews with the programme producer/presenter, the researcher gathered that on requests, the presenter had made recording of all the 37 albums of Yusuf for some bank employees, including the young and the female. Other young people, in preparation for their sojourning abroad, had made similar requests. This, obviously, must have been done to take care of nostalgia. One other inference from all this information is that not only people without or with little western education listen to the music; the educated, equally, listen.

Similarly, some young former honourable members of the Oyo State House of Assembly used to sponsor the programme in the past. This point raises the issue of sponsorship, which the programme is currently lacking. In fact, this point was a major cry of the presenter during the January 26, 2005 edition of the programme. It is believed that with more efforts, regular sponsorship can be obtained for the programme. A sister programme, 'Aremote', is currently enjoying the sponsorship of an indigenous publishing company. An inference from this is that due to the parlous state of the economy, most media programmes have been finding it difficult getting sponsorship. However, in the case of programme like 'Ojo n re'bi ana', it has been extremely difficult. And, this underlines the fact that the appreciation for music of the past particularly *sakara* and *apala*, is still inadequate.

All the same, 'Ojo n re bi ana' still lives up to the sobriquet of its presenter, 'Doctor of Sedation'. The presenter disclosed that it was because of the nature of the programme that its fans tagged it 'Aremote' (lullaby). This was very well before the actual programme with the name 'Aremote' started in 2004.

## CONCLUSION

This paper appreciates the fact that life is dynamic, and as such things of the past always give way to things of the present. This is why the appreciation for the music of Yusuf and such other music has not been totally adequate. Yet, we appreciate the programmes like 'Ojo n re bi ana' in their efforts to enliven the past because in the past is wisdom.

Significantly, creativity is an enduring phenomenon. In other words, these creative works that have been recorded cannot die, even though the artistes may have, long, died. Works featured on the programme are classical and canonical. It is in this sense that 'Ojo n re bi ana' becomes relevant. Such programmes should be supported by the government if only for the purpose of nostalgia and the wisdom that the music aired on them offers. The present can only be understood with the appreciation of the past.

This however does not mean we should be too idealistic about the past. Certain things in the past should not be encouraged. For instance in the music of the past, we find traces

of unhealthy rivalry amongst musicians of that period. In the music of Yusuf Olatunji, there are instances where abusive references are made to rival musicians. Such music also carries the notion that the battles are not just verbal, they are also spiritual, as there are innuendoes to the fact that certain physical harms are done against each other through the occult means. Yusuf Olatunji, for instance in one of his LPs, discloses that he suffered a sore on one of his legs, alleging that this was caused by a certain rival musician who thought the leg would finally be amputated. Olatunji sang this song to celebrate his victory and deride his rival for failing to make him a cripple. The story again was that the sore came back on the leg soon after the said LP was released. This tradition of the music of warfare was inherited by the immediate next generation of musicians as we found in Sunny Ade versus Ebenezer Obey and Sikiru Ayinde Barrister versus Kollington Ayinla. And, even of recent some younger *fuji* musicians have also engaged in this kind of musical diatribes. The fact however is that there is as yet no suspicion of any use of occultic means in this kind of battles since the days of Yusuf Olatunji and his contemporaries. In fact, the assertion now is that musicians engage themselves in musical diatribes as a marketing strategy. This is because the fans of each of the musicians in the duel would always want to buy their musician's new LP to listen to the latest diatribe against the rival musician.

Again, while Nostalgia should not be taken as a phenomenon of extreme idealisation of the past against the present (that is, time), it should also not be taken as extreme idealisation of *ours* against *theirs*. Certain good aspects of music of other lands can be emulated. The game of exclusiveness in the name of nostalgia may not be all wholesome, especially in this age of globalisation where fluidity in the passage of cultures is at utmost ease.

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# ONE WAR, THREE PICTURES: A CROSS-COUNTRY ANALYSIS OF THE 2003 IRAQ WAR

JIN YANG

*This study compared newspaper coverage of the 2003 Iraq War across three countries: the U.S., China and India. The study found that the three presses were all ethnocentric in covering the war and delivered three different pictures to readers. While the U.S. presses focused on war affairs and marginalized Middle Eastern sources, China's presses emphasized diplomatic efforts to end the war and gave more news space to Middle Eastern sources. Moreover, antiwar attitude was more obvious in China's presses and economic impact was a major concern for Chinese presses. Indian presses took a more critical attitude toward the war than the Indian government. With the antiwar topic as the dominant topic, Indian sources as the primary source, antiwar attitude more obvious, Indian presses were more concerned about the political impact of the war.*

**Keywords:** Iraq War, framing, presses, ethnocentrism

The beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century witnessed several important international events. Among them, the most notable is the U.S. initiated Iraq War. With dynamic political and economic forces running on the world stage, the Iraq war generated a tremendous amount of media coverage and engaged an intensive interest from world audiences. This study zooms in on the Iraq war which has created the most controversial U.S. foreign policy in history and explores how the preemptive military action was covered and reported by different countries' presses. In particular, the focal analysis will be on how the three presses of China, India and the United States presented the war to readers.

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The social construction of reality considers news content to be a form of knowledge produced by mass media's effort and influenced by journalists' social locations (Hallin, 1994) and other social, political and economic relationships (Chang, Wang & Chen, 1998). Through organization and distribution of facts and information, news organizations contribute to audiences' knowledge and understanding of social functions and world affairs (McQuail 1972). News media serve as a window to the world that is beyond the audience's experience and reach (Lippman, 1922). The key component that connects news organizations and audiences in the process of social construction of reality is media discourse. However, media discourse is not an objective or an unbiased transcript of reality, but rather it is loaded with selected frames or salient aspects of a perceived reality (Entman, 1993). Hence, the world audience learns of the issues and events as are defined by the mass media, and the audience's perception of the issues and events is heavily influenced by the media's perspective.

Entman (1991) pointed out that comparative case studies help locate the inevitable biases, framing or other news judgments journalists make in constructing the reality for readers. Frames are likely to come into sharp focus when similar news stories are compared through contrasting media contexts (Schaefer, 2003). However, systematic comparative research has long lagged behind case studies and area studies (Chang, Wang and Chen, 1998). Scant attention has been paid to the media coverage of non-English speaking countries or developing countries that do not share the U.S. perspective (Paletz, 1994). Though the war always attracts media attention, few studies have compared the way in which wars are portrayed in the presses of different countries (Kaid et al, 1993). This study is an attempt to fill the void by comparing how the three largest presses in the world covered the 2003 Iraq War.

## LITERATURE REVIEW MEDIA FRAMES

The concept of framing is meaningful not only because it offers an alternative way to the old "objectivity and bias" paradigm to examine media discourses but also because it helps explain mass communication effects and provides valuable suggestions for communication practitioners (Tankard, 2001). In an effort to systematize the fragmented approaches to framing in political communication and integrate them into a comprehensive model, Scheufele (1999) distinguished two kinds of frames based on location: media frames and individual frames. While media frames and individual frames are both integral parts of the process that bridges the objective reality and the readers' knowledge of the world, media frames are embedded in media discourse whereas individual frames are processed as internal structures of the mind of the audience.

Though media framing is one of the mostly frequently used constructs, the definitions of media framing unfortunately have been less definitive and conclusive. Media frames have been mostly examined based on three distinct “framing” metaphors (Tankard, 2001), which well summarize the media framing approaches taken by researchers to media frames. The first metaphor of a picture frame suggests that a frame isolates certain parts of a picture and excludes other parts in order to draw attention to the framed parts. Likewise, a media frame highlights certain aspects of a story and excludes other aspects by “selection, emphasis and exclusion” (Gitlin, 1980, p. 7; Tankard, 2001). That is why media topics, use of sources and word choices are often the targets of media frame studies. The second metaphor still using a picture frame says that a picture frame can suggest a tone or mood for viewing a picture. Similarly, the news media can set an interpretive background or tone for an event or issue (Tankard, 2001). That is why tones, attitude and themes are often chosen to be the operational mechanisms in media frame studies. The last metaphor of a house frame proposes that a house frame serves as the organizing structure to build a house. In news, “a frame is a central organizing idea for making sense of relevant events and suggesting what is at issue” (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989, p. 3). Media frame researchers often investigate themes to identify the central organizing idea. These three metaphors are helpful not only in conceptually understanding the concept of media frames but also constructive in operationally defining media frames in framing research.

## ETHNOCENTRISM IN WAR NEWS

Several factors have been singled out for their influences on media frames. Organization structures (Tuchman, 1978), organization pressures and constraints (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996) and relationships among the political, cultural and economic contexts (Ball-Rokeach & Cantor, 1986) have been diagnosed having an impact on the way news stories are framed. Besides these structural factors, another group of factors that were found to exert an impact on news frames are related to the “software” part of news organizations, such as values (Gans, 1979; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996), national interest (Yang, 2003), ideology and orientations (Edelman, 1993; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Among others, ethnocentrism is recognized as the most influential factor that permeates war news reporting and practice.

Ethnocentrism was coined by Sumner in his *Folkways* to refer to a point of view “in which one’s own group is the center of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with references to it” (Sumner, 1906, p.12). Ethnocentrism, perceived as fostering ingroup survival and cooperation but outgroup bias and misconception, is generally considered a negative human trait in social science area (Neuliep, Hintz & McCroskey, 2005). An ethnocentric attitude or outlook, quite in parallel with “egocentrism”, applies the values derived from one’s own cultural background to other cultural contexts (Levine & Campbell,

1972). In the investigation of conflicts and wars, social scientists frequently ask whether ethnocentric attitudes and ideologies are the cause of war and discrimination or the mobilizing tools to support warlike and discriminatory policies (Levine & Campbell, 1972).

The long-held journalistic principle of impartiality and fair play contradicts ethnocentrism in news reporting practice because journalists are supposed to fully report the facts in an objective manner but not to take a side. However, in reporting war news, ethnocentrism seems to come into full play. A comparative study on the U.S. embassy bombings and the September 11 attack in African and U.S. newspapers found that “journalists of both regions were ethnocentric in putting their own concerns and structural frames first and not challenging what they already thought about the other” (Schaefer, 2003, p. 110). Aday, Livingston and Hebert (2005) found that war correspondents of the Vietnam War typically practiced patriotic journalism at the beginning of the war.

Nossek (2004) concluded that depending on how a foreign news item is defined, the practice of journalism would be very different. When a foreign news item is defined as “ours”, journalists’ professional practices become subordinate to national loyalty (Nossek, 2004). Gans (1979) pointed out succinctly that “the clearest expression of ethnocentrism, in all countries, appears in war news” (p.42).

The ethnocentric dispositions in war news challenged the principle of objectivity, and news professionals suggest alternative approaches to reporting be considered. For example, Bell (1996) proposed the idea of journalism of attachment that says journalists should have some attachment focusing on the human and emotional costs of war rather than simply transmitting what is happening based on government and military sources. Hume (1997) concurred that “reporters cannot remain detached or neutral in the face of modern evils like genocide in Bosnia or Rwanda, but must side with the victims and demand that something-must-be-done” (p. 4). But Richardson (n.d.) summarized three points of criticism that rebut the journalism of attachment. First, attached journalism simplifies the war into the dichotomy of good and evil and encourages unacceptable self-righteousness and judgment. Second, it weakens journalists’ full responsibility to report all the facts. Third, it encourages the Western military intervention in the name of justice.

However, as long as journalists are affiliated with a country, it is very hard, if not impossible, for them to remain aloof and distant because “with their sense of national identification sharpened, journalists tend to support their government in any capacity during times of international conflict and act as cheerleaders for their nation’s officials” (from Berry (1990) as cited in Lepre and Luther, 2007, p. 364). Therefore war journalism is and will be characterized by identification with one side or, in particular, with the home side of the war (Knightley, 2000).

This study chose to compare the coverage of the Iraq War by major presses in the United States, China, and India for two reasons. First, these are the three largest countries in the world in terms of population: China having 1,311 million people, India 1,122 million,

and U.S. 299 million (Population Reference Bureau, 2006). Moreover, all the three countries have established a well-developed press system and have a larger newspaper circulation than other countries. In fact, they are among the seven countries with the largest newspapers in the world: Japan, Germany, China, United Kingdom, South Korea, U.S.A and India (World Association of Newspapers, 2005). Second, China and India are emerging as important countries in the economics and politics of Asia. According to a Gallup Poll, both nations are rapidly modernizing and have experienced tremendous economic growth in the past decades (Naurath, 2007). With the economic powers both nations are securing, their influence in the world will definitely become more significant. Hence, comparing their reports of the Iraq War to each other as well as to those of the United States will show an interesting contrast.

This study asks to what extent the three presses framed the Iraqi war differently. Based on the three operational framing metaphors suggested by Tankard (2001), this study attempts to find out to what extent the three presses differed from each other in selecting topics, in using sources, in presenting sources' attitude and in depending on high-frequency words. Most important of all, the study revisits the issue of ethnocentrism and asks whether the coverage was ethnocentric.

RQ1. To what extent did the three presses differ from each other in selecting topics?

RQ2. To what extent did the three presses differ from each other in selecting sources?

RQ3. To what extent did the three presses differ from each other in selecting sources' attitude?

RQ4. To what extent did the three presses differ from each other in selecting high-frequency words?

RQ5. Were the three presses ethnocentric in their coverage of the Iraq War?

## METHODOLOGY

This study used content analysis to identify the overall frames in the news and editorial content of two U.S. daily newspapers, two Chinese daily newspapers and two Indian newspapers. The U.S. newspapers are *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. The Chinese newspapers were the English language versions of *The People's Daily* and the *China Daily*. The Indian newspapers were *The Times of India* and *The Hindu*.

### Sample Description

*The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* were chosen because of their prominence and influence, especially regarding their coverage of international political news (Kim, 2000). *The New York Times* is generally considered the "paper of record" for international news coverage (Gitlin, 1980) and its circulation was more than one million in 2005 (World Association of Newspapers, 2005). *The Washington Post* is a morning daily that has a



circulation of more than seven hundred thousand copies (World Association of Newspapers, 2005) and is considered one of the famed first tier of prestigious newspapers in the U.S (Kenny, 2002).

The *China Daily* is the semi-official English-language newspaper with orientation to non-Chinese readers (Tai, 2000). Considered as a trailblazer among Chinese newspapers, the *China Daily* is a showcase for the nation's newspapers (Chang, 1989). The paper's circulation is estimated to be 300,000 and it is part of a group of international English-language newspapers that reach an international audience (Stevenson, 1994). *The People's Daily* is an official, serious, and quality newspaper in China that boasts the world's largest readership (Chang, 1989). Its circulation is about 2.5 million copies (World Association of Newspaper, 2005). It has editions in English, Japanese, French, Spanish, Russian and Arabic (People's Daily, 2008).

*The Times of India* has the widest circulation among all English-language broadsheets in the world (The Times of India, 2008). According to the Registrar of Newspapers in India, *The Times of India* had a combined circulation of over 2.5 million ranking first among multi-edition dailies (Press in India, 2006). *The Times of India* was also certified by the Audit Bureau of Circulations as the world's largest selling English broadsheet newspaper (The Times of India, 2008). *The Hindu* is the most respected newspaper and its news coverage is more extensive than any other Indian paper (Mani, 1952). The circulation of the *Hindu* was more than 1 million copies in 2006 (Press in India, 2006) and rose to 2.3 million in 2008 (The Hindu, 2008).

The selection of the six papers to represent corresponding national press systems is based on influence, circulation and reputation. As is known, when issues under investigation relate to international affairs especially a war, i.e., when national interest is involved, national papers of reputation and large circulations are considered better representations in reflecting the general national attitude toward the event. Hence, in terms of reputation, population base and influence, the two newspapers selected from each individual country were fairly representative of its corresponding national press systems, therefore comparable in the analysis of how the Iraq War was covered.

### Sampling Method

To address RQ1 to RQ4, the researcher used a quantitative content analysis. The sampling period ran from March 19, 2003, the official date when the U.S. launched the Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq, to May 1, 2003 when the Bush Administration officially declared the end to major combat operations. The stories from *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Hindu* and the *China Daily* were identified using the LexisNexis database. Stories from *The People's Daily* and from *The Times of India* were identified using the search engine on their own web sites because these two papers are not available

in LexisNexis. To locate stories from *The New York Times* from LexisNexis, a combination of key words “Iraq” “War” “Iraqi” was used. It generated a total of 555 stories forming the population of Iraq War stories from *The New York Times*. Using the systematic sampling technique, every 11<sup>th</sup> story in the population was selected for the sample, yielding a sample of 50 news stories from *The New York Times*. In the same manner, 50 news stories were selected from 483 Washington Post stories and 50 news stories from 199 Hindu stories. For the *China Daily*, the key word search only generated 40 news stories. A closer examination of the 40 stories revealed that not all the stories were relevant to the coverage of the Iraq war and only 19 stories were kept for the analysis. Because the China Daily directly publishes many of Xinhua News Agency’s stories that cover world events, the researcher randomly sampled 31 stories out of a population of 391 stories from the Xinhua News Agency via LexisNexis. *The People’s Daily* web site generated a total of 403 stories in regards to the Iraq War and 50 stories were randomly selected by choosing every 8<sup>th</sup> story. *The Times of India*’s search engine yielded a total of 81 stories which were randomly selected by choosing every other story until 50 stories were obtained.

### Data Collection

To answer RQ1 in regards to aspects of the war, the researcher borrowed a measurement from Lee’s (2004) comparative study of the coverage of the Iraq War in *The New York Times* and the Arab newspapers. Lee (2004) analyzed the categories of news stories suggested by Tankard’s list of framing method (2001) and then grouped the categories into four identified aspects of war or topics: war efforts, war effects, antiwar voice and war victims. To be specific, the topic of war effort consisted of 7 sub-categories: process of the combat, weapons of mass destruction, stories about soldiers and their family, analysis of military operation, diplomatic efforts for war, post-war Iraq construction and other. The second topic, war effects, was composed of 4 sub-categories: economic effect, environmental effect, security and other. The third topic, antiwar voice, had six sub-categories: antiwar demonstrations or responses, critique of U.S. strategic interest (control of oil resource), critique of U.S.-Israel relation, critique of U.S.-led construction of post-war Iraq, critique of U.S. foreign policy and other. The last topic was war victims and listed six sub-categories: coalition forces, Iraqi soldiers or Arab civilians, coalition prisoner of war (POW), Iraqi POW, refugees and other.

RQ2 focuses on the use of source. To code sources that the three presses mostly depend on, 18 categories were created by the researcher: U.S. official, U.S. civilian, U.S. soldiers, Iraqi official, Iraqi civilian, Iraq soldiers, Non-Iraqi Middle East Officials, Non-Iraqi Middle East Civilians, Non-Iraqi Middle East Terrorists, Chinese officials, Chinese Civilians, Indian Officials, Indian Civilians, British Officials, British Civilians, UN Officials, other Officials (excluding U.S., British, Iraqi, Chinese, Indian, UN and Non-Iraqi Middle East officials) and

others. The coders would read every story and identify every source used in the story and then make a decision on who will be the dominant source in the story.

To answer RQ3 concerning the source's attitude towards the war, three coding categories were used: favorable toward the war, neutral and unfavorable toward the war. The coder would code the attitude revealed from the dominant source in the story by examining the quotes used or the undertone carried by the dominant source in the story. All the above coding was conducted using the story as the unit of analysis.

To address RQ4 on the use of high-frequency words, CATPAC software was used. CATPAC can be used to quickly identify high-frequency words though its primary function is to identify main concepts along with the interrelationship among those main concepts. This study was interested in what words were most frequently used in three presses in order to supplement the frame identification. The process does not require a priori categories to code media discourse, and thus increases the objectivity and validity of the research (Tian & Stewart, 2003). Developed by Joseph Woelfel and Terra Research and Computing, CATPAC has been optimal for reading texts and is considered as an efficient concept recognition tool (Doerfel, 1994). The 100 articles from each country were all cleared of extra information such as loading time, keywords, headline and etc. Only the body copy of the articles was kept for analysis. Three files were created respectively for three countries. Every file was run with an exclude file (i.e., a file with a list of words such as a, an, and, more, than, etc. to be excluded from analysis) to have meaningful words listed and sorted.

RQ5 on whether the presses were ethnocentric were to be answered based on the findings from RQ1, RQ2, RQ3 and RQ4.

### Intercoder Reliability

One graduate student and the researcher coded all the stories. To test the intercoder reliability, 20 percent of the full sample, i.e., 60 stories (10 from *The New York Times*, 10 from *Washington Post*, 10 from *The People's Daily*, 10 from *China's Daily*, 10 from *The Times of India* and 10 from *The Hindu*) were randomly selected independently from the full sample. Scott's pi was used to check the intercoder reliability because it is one of the most frequently used reliability tests (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 1998). Based on the suggestion made by Lombard, Snyder-Duch & Bracken (2005), PRAM, Program for Reliability Assessment with Multiple Coders, was used in assessing the reliability indices and calculating Scott's pi. The reliability coefficients (Scott's pi) for type of story, aspect of the story, dominant source and opinion of dominant source were 1.00, .70, .85 and .76 respectively.

Table 1 Comparison of Profiles of Sampled Stories from U.S., Chinese, Indian Presses

	Word Count words (percent)	Average Word words per story	Types of News Reports (percent)	
			News	Editorial and others
U.S. Press	90031 (50)	900	67 (29)	33 (48)
China Press	38099 (21)	381	91 (40)	9 (13)
India Press	50616 (28)	506	73 (32)	27 (39)
Total	178746 (100)		231 (100)	69 (100)

## FINDINGS

The study compared six nationally or internationally circulated newspapers from three countries (*The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* from the U.S., *The People's Daily* and the *China Daily* from China and *The Times of India* and *The Hindu* from India) in the coverage of the Iraq War starting from March 19, 2003 and ending on May 1, 2003. Fifty stories and 178,746 words were analyzed. The U.S. newspapers had 90,031 words (50%), Chinese newspapers had 38,099 words (21%) and Indian newspapers had 50,616 words (28%). The average words per story were 900 words for the U.S. newspapers, 381 words for the Chinese newspapers and 506 words for the Indian newspapers. For types of stories, there were 67 news reports (29%) from the U.S. newspapers, 91 (40%) from the Chinese newspapers and 73 (32%) from the Indian newspapers. Regarding editorials, there were 33 reports (48%) from the U.S., 9 (13%) from China and 27 (39%) from India.

RQ1 asked to what extent the three presses differed from each other in selecting topics. Table 2a shows that the three presses had very different topical choices (Chi-square = 69.76, d.f.=8,  $p < .001$ ). The U.S. allocated dominant news space to war efforts (54%), followed by stories of war victim (20%), war effects (9.0%) and others (9.0%). The least covered topic was antiwar voices (8.0%). The number one topic in China's newspapers was the same as the U.S. newspapers: war efforts (48%), but its second most prominent topic was antiwar voices (35%) followed by war effects (10%) and others (4.0%). However, further examination of war effort stories revealed that China had more stories on the process of combat and diplomatic effort for the war while U.S. had more stories on the process of combat and analysis of military action. The least covered topic in China's papers was war victims (3.0%). India's number one topic was antiwar voice (40%), followed by war efforts

Table 2a Comparison of Topics across Three Countries

	<b>U.S. (N=100) %</b>	<b>China (N=100) %</b>	<b>India (N=100) %</b>
<b>War Efforts</b>	<b>54.0</b>	<b>48.0</b>	<b>29.0</b>
Process of combat	29.6	33.3	17.2
Weapons of mass destruction	7.4	4.2	0
Analysis of military operation	29.6	2.1	10.3
Diplomatic efforts for war	11.1	29.2	37.9
Post-war Iraq construction	22.2	20.8	31.0
Others	0	10.4	3.4
<b>War Effects</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>25.0</b>
Economic effect	55.6	80.0	48.0
Environmental effect	11.1	0	4.0
Security	0	20.0	20.0
Political effect	33.3	0	28.0
<b>Antiwar Voices</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>35.0</b>	<b>40.0</b>
Antiwar Demonstration and responses	87.5	82.9	55.0
Critique of U.S. strategic interest	0	2.9	12.5
Critique of U.S.-led post-war construction	0	0	2.5
Critique of U.S. foreign policy	12.5	2.9	27.5
Other	0	0	2.5
<b>War Victims</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>
Coalition forces soldiers	20.0	0	0
Iraqi soldiers or Arab Civilians	40.0	0	100
Coalition POW	10.0	66.7	0
Iraqi POW	10.0	0	0
Refugees	5.0	0	0
Other	15.0	33.3	0
<b>Others</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>5.0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Note. Chi-square = 69.76, d.f.=8, p<.001

Table 2b Comparison of Topics Between Two Presses

Focus	U.S. (N=100) %	China (N=100) %	Z-score
War Efforts	54.0	48.0	
War Effects	9.0	10.0	
Antiwar Voices	8.0	35.0	-4.8***
War Victims	20.0	3.0	3.7***
Others	9.0	4.0	
Total	100.0	100.0	
	U.S. (N=100) %	India (N=100) %	Z-score
War Efforts	54.0	29.0	3.8***
War Effects	9.0	25.0	-3.0**
Antiwar Voices	8.0	40.0	-5.3***
War Victims	20.0	1.0	4.8***
Others	9.0	5.0	
Total	100.0	100.0	
	China (N=100) %	India (N=100) %	Z-score
War Efforts	48.0	29.0	
War Effects	10.0	25.0	-2.8**
Antiwar Voices	35.0	40.0	
War Victims	3.0	1.0	
Others	4.0	5.0	
Total	100.0	100.0	

Note. \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

(29%) and then by war effects (25%) and others (5.0%). The least covered topic in India's papers was the same as China's papers: war victims (1.0%). Though China and India both had more stories on antiwar voices, their focus diverted from each other with China highly concentrated on antiwar demonstration and responses and India splitting between the topics of demonstrations and critique of U.S. foreign policy and U.S. strategic interest.

Table 3a Comparison of Dominant Sources Used in Three Presses

	U.S. (N=100) %	China (N=100) %	India (N=100) %
U.S. Officials	31.5	17.6	8.8
U.S. Civilians	34.8	2.2	7.4
U.S. Soldiers	18.5	1.1	0
Iraqi Officials	2.2	5.5	0
Iraqi Civilians	3.3	1.1	0
Non-Iraqi Middle East Officials	0	12.1	1.5
Non-Iraqi Middle East Civilians	2.2	2.2	1.5
Chinese Officials	0	13.2	0
Chinese Civilians	0	11.0	0
Indian Officials	0	1.1	29.4
Indian Civilians	0	0	30.9
British Officials	0	5.5	2.9
British Civilians	1.1	2.2	0
UN Officials	1.1	1.1	0
Officials	4.3	14.3	11.8
Others	1.1	9.9	5.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Note. Chi-square=258.31, d.f.=30,  $p<.001$

To pinpoint the differences among countries, two-proportion z-tests were run on the percentages in the same topics. Table 2b indicates that the U.S. and China differed significantly in antiwar voices ( $z$ -score=-4.8,  $p<.001$ ) and war victims ( $z$ -score=3.7,  $p<.001$ ) suggesting the U.S. had significantly fewer antiwar stories and significantly more war victims stories than China. The U.S. and India differed significantly in war efforts ( $z$ -score=3.8,  $p<.001$ ), war effects ( $z$ -score=-3.0,  $p<.001$ ), antiwar voices ( $z$ -score=-5.3,  $p<.001$ ) and war victims ( $z$ -score=4.8,  $p<.001$ ) suggesting the U.S. focused significantly more on war efforts and war victims than India while India focused significantly more on antiwar voices and war effects. China and India differed only in war effects ( $z$ -score=-2.8,  $p<.01$ ) with India focusing more on war effects than China.

RQ2 asks to what extent the three presses differed from each other in selecting sources. Table 3a shows that the three countries differed significantly from each other in using sources (Chi-square=258.31, d.f.=30,  $p<.001$ ). In the U.S. papers, the most dominant source

Table 3b Comparison of Dominant Sources of Four Geographic Areas used in Three Presses

	U.S. (N=100) %	China (N=100) %	India (N=100) %
U.S.	84.8	20.9	<b>16.2</b>
Middle East	7.6	20.9	<b>2.9</b>
China	0	24.2	<b>0</b>
India	0	1.1	<b>60.3</b>
Others	7.6	33.0	<b>20.6</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Note. Chi-square=230.88, d.f.=8,  $p<.001$

was U.S. civilians (34.8%), followed by U.S. officials (31.5%) and U.S. soldiers (18.5%) and the Iraqi as a source took only about 5.5% with Iraqi officials taking 2.2%. In the case of China, the number one cited source was U.S. officials (17.6%), followed by other officials (14.3%) and then Chinese officials (13.2%), Iraqi sources taking about 6.6%. Chinese civilians in China papers got a reasonable share of 13.2%. India followed a different path in using sources. India papers gave its top one space to Indian civilians (30.9%), then to Indian officials (29.4%), then to other officials (11.8%).

To clearly see the relationship between countries and sources, the 18 categories of sources were reduced to five categories by collapsing sources from the same geographic area into the same source. Ignoring the differentiation between officials and civilians resulted in the following sources: U.S., Middle East, China, India, and others. A Chi-square test (See Table 3b) on the combined categories of the sources showed the three countries still differed from each other significantly (Chi-square =230.88, d.f.=8,  $p<.001$ ). For the U.S., the U.S. sources dominated (84.8%), for India, Indian sources dominated (60.3%) with the exception of China. China's most dominant source was "others" (33.0%), and the second most dominant source was from China (24.2%). In regards to the sources of Middle East, China represented them better (20.9%) than the U.S. (7.6%) and India (2.9%).

To pinpoint the differences of sources used in the papers, two-proportion z-tests were run to compare two presses' use of sources (See Table 3c). The U.S. and China differed in the use of U.S. sources ( $z\text{-score}=9.0$ ,  $p<.001$ ), Middle East sources ( $z\text{-score}=-2.6$ ,  $p<.01$ ), Chinese sources ( $z\text{-score}=-5.2$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and others ( $z\text{-score}=-4.3$ ,  $p<.002$ ), which suggests that in comparison to China, U.S. focused only on U.S. sources and significantly excluded other possible sources especially Middle East sources. The U.S. and India differed in the use of U.S. sources ( $z\text{-score}=9.7$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and Indian sources ( $z\text{-score}=-9.2$ ,  $p<.001$ ), which indicates that both the U.S. and India allocated more news space to their own countries' sources and excluded other possible sources. China and India differed in three sources:



Table 3c Comparison of Dominant Sources of Four Geographic Areas Used in Two Presses

	U.S. (N=100) %	China (N=100) %	Z-score
U.S.	84.8	20.9	9.0***
Middle East	7.6	20.9	-2.6**
China	0	24.2	-5.2***
India	0	1.1	
Others	7.6	33.0	-4.3***
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
	U.S. (N=100) %	India (N=100) %	
U.S.	84.8	16.2	9.7***
Middle East	7.6	2.9	
China	0	0	
India	0	60.3	-9.2***
Others	7.6	20.6	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
	China (N=100) %	India (N=100) %	
U.S.	20.9	16.2	
Middle East	20.9	2.9	3.9***
China	24.2	0	5.3***
India	1.1	60.3	-9.1***
Others	33.0	20.6	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Note. \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

Middle East (z-score=3.9, p<.001), Chinese sources (z-score=5.3, p<.001) and Indian sources (z-score=-9.1, p<.001). While it is not surprising that Chinese sources and Indian sources were where the difference were, a significant higher representation of Middle East sources cited in China presses is surprising.

RQ3 explores to what extent the three presses differed from each other in selecting sources' attitudes. Table 4a indicates the pattern of attitudes toward the war significantly differs among three countries (Chi-square=19.73, d.f.=4, p<.001). All three countries were "neutral" in their prevalent attitude (U.S. had 75%, China had 53.8% and India had 48.5%), however, in terms of antiwar attitude, China took 38.5%, closely followed by India (36.8%)

Table 4a Comparison of Attitude to War of the Dominant Sources in Three Presses

	<b>U.S. (N=100) %</b>	<b>China (N=100) %</b>	<b>India (N=100) %</b>
Pro-war	12.0	7.7	<b>14.7</b>
Neutral	75.0	53.8	<b>48.5</b>
<b>Anti-war</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>38.5</b>	<b>36.8</b>

Note. Chi-square = 19.73, d.f.=4,  $p < .001$

and then by U.S. (13%). In terms of pro-war attitude, India had a higher percent (14.7%) than U.S. (12%) and China (7.7%).

To further identify the differences, two-proportion z-tests were run on the paired countries for each category of the attitude. Table 4b showed that the U.S. and China differed in neutral attitude ( $z\text{-score}=2.2$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and anti-war attitude ( $z\text{-score}=-4.2$ ,  $p < .001$ ) suggesting the U.S. running significantly higher percentage of neutral and lower percentage of anti-war attitude than China. The U.S. and India also differed in neutral attitude ( $z\text{-score}=3.8$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and antiwar attitude ( $z\text{-score}=-3.9$ ,  $p < .001$ ) with U.S. significantly higher in neutral attitude and significantly lower in anti-war attitude than India. However China and India did not have any differences in the use of attitudes.

Table 4b Comparison of Attitude to War of the Dominant Sources Between Two Presses

	<b>U.S. (N=100) %</b>	<b>China (N=100) %</b>	<b>Z-score</b>
Pro-war	<b>12.0</b>	<b>7.7</b>	
Neutral	<b>75.0</b>	<b>53.8</b>	<b>2.2**</b>
Anti-war	<b>13.0</b>	<b>38.5</b>	<b>-4.2***</b>
	<b>U.S. (N=100) %</b>	<b>India (N=100) %</b>	
Pro-war	<b>12.0</b>	<b>14.7</b>	
Neutral	<b>75.0</b>	<b>48.5</b>	<b>3.8***</b>
Anti-war	<b>13.0</b>	<b>36.8</b>	<b>-3.9***</b>
	<b>China (N=100) %</b>	<b>India (N=100) %</b>	
Pro-war	<b>7.7</b>	<b>14.7</b>	
Neutral	<b>53.8</b>	<b>48.5</b>	
Anti-war	<b>38.5</b>	<b>36.8</b>	

Note. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Table 5 Comparison of High-Frequency Words in Three Presses

U.S.			China			India		
Total Words: 5747			Total Words: 1699			Total Words: 3482		
Total Unique Words: 25			Total Unique Words: 25			Total Unique Words: 25		
Total Episodes: 5741			Total Episodes: 1693			Total Episodes: 3476		
Total Lines: 8082			Total Lines: 1737			Total Lines: 4478		
Word	#	Percent	Word	#	Percent	Word	#	Percent
Iraqi	567	9.9	Iraqi	318	18.7	War	559	16.1
UnitedStates	559	9.9	UnitedStates	249	14.7	Iraq	456	13.1
Iraq	530	9.2	war	247	14.5	UnitedStates	447	12.8
War	469	8.2	China	99	5.8	India	171	4.9
American	359	6.2	United Nations	86	5.1	Oil	143	4.1
Military	304	5.3	International	69	4.1	Against	136	3.9
Forces	302	5.3	Foreign	59	3.5	World	135	3.9
Baghdad	300	5.2	Against	55	3.2	Iraqi	119	3.4
Officials	241	4.2	Military	52	3.1	Military	113	3.2
Saddam Hussein	201	3.5	People	45	2.6	American	112	3.2
Troops	189	3.3	Countries	42	2.5	Government	108	3.1
Soldiers	176	3.1	World	34	2.0	Indian	88	2.5
City	150	2.6	Role	31	1.8	Pakistan	83	2.4
People	138	2.4	Issue	30	1.8	Political	79	2.3
UnitedNations	137	2.4	Humanitarian	29	1.7	Baghdad	78	2.2
President Bush	130	2.3	Percent	28	1.6	President Bush	77	2.2
Against	125	2.2	Relations	28	1.6	Minister	74	2.1
British	119	2.1	Baghdad	27	1.6	Country	73	2.1
Iraqis	118	2.1	China's	27	1.6	Forces	73	2.1
Saddam Hussein's	113	2.0	Action	26	1.5	International	70	2.0
Weapons	112	1.9	End	26	1.5	Resolution	61	1.8
Army	108	1.9	Meeting	24	1.4	Regime	6	1.7
Country	104	1.8	Economic	23	1.4	Saddam Hussein	58	1.7
Attack	98	1.7	Possible	23	1.4	UnitedNations	55	1.6
Oil	98	1.7	British	22	1.3	Led	54	1.6

Note. Clustering method is Ward's. Threshold=0.0, Restoring force=0.1, Cycles=1, Function=sigmoid, Clamping is checked as Yes. This is the default setting of CATPAC.

RQ4 asks to what extent the three presses differed from each other in selecting high-frequency words. CATPAC output in Table 5 revealed some interesting patterns. The top five high-frequency words for each of the three countries were strikingly similar: they all included "Iraq" or "Iraqi," "war" and "United States," suggesting that all the three countries focused on the war itself. Interestingly, for the U.S., the fifth was "American," and for

China, the fourth was “China” and the fifth was “UN.” However, for India, the fourth was “India” and the fifth was “oil.” When covering the war, all presses used these national identification labels very frequently. The next set of high-frequency words in the U.S. presses were “military,” “forces,” “Baghdad,” “officials,” “Saddam Hussein,” and “troops,” which suggests that the U.S. presses’ focuses were on the combat and military action. In China’s presses, “United Nations,” “international,” “foreign,” “against,” “military,” “people” and “countries” rated as fifth through eleventh in most frequently occurring words. These words were closely associated with antiwar demonstration and antiwar voices. India also had similar words such as “against,” “world,” and “military” suggesting the same theme of antiwar, but its anti-war angle differed from that of China. While China adopted the international principle as a rationale to inquire into the legitimacy of the war, India challenged the war from a strategic interest: oil resources. That is why the word of “oil” ranked fourth in India’s presses. U.S. presses had a number of stories that centered on war victims which may explain why words such as “soldiers,” “city,” “people,” “troops” were identified as high-frequency words. These words, however, were totally absent from Chinese and Indian presses. For them, the legitimacy of the war was not the only concerns. China was also concerned about the war’s economic impact, which is why “percent,” “meeting,” and “economic” registered in China’s high-frequency list. India, however, was more concerned about the war’s political implication and impact, which is why “Pakistan,” “political,” and “minister” registered high in its high-frequency list. The word “end” uniquely appeared in China’s presses since a lot of its stories called for an end to the war, and the words “resolution” and “regime” uniquely appeared in India’s presses because many of its stories called for the Indian government to take an official stand on the U.S.-led Iraq War.

RQ5 asks whether the three presses were ethnocentric in covering the Iraq War. Based on the findings from RQ1 on topic selection, RQ2 on source selection, RQ3 on attitude of sources and RQ4 on high-frequency words, we conclude that the three presses were all ethnocentric.

## Discussion and Conclusion: Summary of Media Frames in Three Presses

*Topics.* Four aspects of framing have been examined in this study: topics, sources, attitudes and high-frequency words. The study found that the U.S., China and India selected topics in different patterns. The topic of war efforts was the most dominant in both U.S. and China’s presses, but not in India’s. However, the U.S. and China presented the same topic differently with the U.S. centering on combat and military action and China on diplomatic effort for the war. The topic of war effect was highlighted in India’s presses but not in the presses of the U.S. or China. China and India seemed to be alike in focusing on the topic of antiwar voices, thereby making a significant contrast with the U.S. For example, both China

and India devoted significantly more space to covering antiwar voices. However, China and India had a different focal emphasis with China's being on demonstration and India's on demonstration as well as critiquing of U.S. foreign policy and strategic interest. U.S. committed significantly more coverage to covering the topic of war victims than did China or India.

*Sources.* In investigating sources, this study found that the U.S. relied more on U.S. sources, China more on Chinese sources and India more on Indian sources, which is not very surprising. What is striking is the use of Middle Eastern sources. China presented Middle Eastern sources more frequently than either the U.S. or India. Considering the fact that Iraq is a Middle East country and was the U.S.'s rival in this war, it is surprising that the U.S. did not have a reasonable presentation of Middle Eastern voices.

*Attitudes.* The ordinal spectrum of the attitude toward the war was very similar among all three countries, each having a dominantly neutral attitude, followed by the antiwar attitude and then by the pro-war attitude. However, allocating news space to a particular attitude differed across borders. In regards to the neutral attitude, the U.S. had a significantly higher representation than China and India. For the antiwar attitude, the U.S. had a significantly lower representation than China and India. China and India had no significant differences in the attitude representation pattern.

*High-frequency Words.* In terms of high-frequency words, the U.S., China and India shared the same top four words, all of which were related to the war itself. But the U.S. depended more on war-victim-related and military-action-related words. China and India shared many words of anti-war voices, but with China took an economic angle and India a political angle. Another obvious pattern revealed from the high-frequency words relates to nation-identification words. U.S. presses had "American" as one of the high-frequency words, China presses had "China" and India presses had "India."

### **Ethnocentrism in Three Presses**

When the war began, President Bush affirmatively stressed that "we will stay on task until we've achieved our objective, which is to rid Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, and free the Iraqi people so they can live in a society that is hopeful and democratic and at peace in its neighborhood" (Office of Press Secretary, 2003). The Bush administration strongly believed that the Iraq War was a war fought for freedom and democracy, and the terrorism threat had to be preemptively eradicated. The U.S. government's decision to launch the preemptive military action without the United Nation's approval was backed by the widespread public support in the U.S. (Moore, 2003). And the public perception of President

Bush handling his job increased to 71% in the middle of war (Carlson, 2003). Hence during the Iraq War, the public support was strong, and the majority viewed President Bush positively. By making war efforts the most salient topic and antiwar sentiments the least salient topic, by highlighting U.S. sources and marginalizing Middle Eastern voices, the U.S. presses marched together with both its readers and its government to the war.

The position taken by the Chinese government was a result of its relationships with both the U.S. and Iraq. On the one hand, China never had a close relationship with Iraq and geopolitically it had no real stake in Iraq other than the recent economic ties with the country (He, 2004). On the other hand, the United States was never a close friend to China and the Sino-U.S. relationship has experienced ups and downs through decades (He, 2004). When France and Germany voiced their opposition to the U.S.-led Iraq War, China and Russia joined the opposition force by arguing that any military action must be initiated by the United Nations. China has been considered a country that opposed the war (Lee, 2004). The media frames identified in Chinese presses indicated that Chinese readers were well-informed on the war efforts especially the diplomatic efforts for ending the war, were well-exposed to antiwar stories, were presented with a wider range of sources (especially of the Middle Eastern sources) and might lean toward being anti-war. Such a picture of war obtained from the Chinese presses did not conflict with the Chinese government's stand. Both China's press and the Chinese government shared the belief that the U.S. initiated preemptive war against a sovereign country was a violation of international law and principle.

The Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee responded to the Indian opposition party's charge on the Indian government's ambivalent position to the Iraq War asserting that New Delhi neither wanted Baghdad to lose its freedom and nor wanted to see world order collapse on account of it (The Hindu, 2003). However, there are some critics who claimed that the Indian government had sided with the United States. Koshy (2003) noted that the Indian government neither supported the United States nor openly criticized the United States for its aggression against Iraq, but rather it had taken what it called the "middle path." Koshy (2003) also observed that on the eve of the war, the U.S. Ambassador to India Robert Blackwell claimed in a statement that the U.S. and Indian positions were the same.

Media frames revealed from the study suggest that Indian readers were more exposed to antiwar stories than war effort stories. War effect stories, especially those concerning political effects, may have left a stronger impression in Indian readers' minds. Indian readers were presented with more Indian sources and more likely to adopt an antiwar attitude. While such media frames didn't totally agree with the subtle stand taken by the Indian government, they didn't contradict with the stand of Indian government either, because the Indian government repeatedly announced that New Delhi neither wanted Baghdad to lose its freedom nor expected to see the world order collapse on account of it (The Hindu, 2003). Though Indian presses held a more critical attitude toward the war than the Indian

government toward the war, the presses still centered on Indian interests more than others. The presses allocated more space to Indian sources and the nation label terms “India” “Indian” appeared more than other nation labels in the presses. Its concern over the political impact of the war suggests though the war was fought in Iraq, Indians were more worried about what it meant for its decades-long conflicting relationship with its rival Pakistan over Kashmir.

Tuchman (1978) has pointed out that mass media actively set the frames of references for the audience. By selecting certain aspects of the Iraq War and ignoring others, presenting certain sources and certain opinions and highlighting certain keywords, the presses screened the reality and constructed the social meanings of the conflict for their readers. It is evident that the three presses portrayed three different pictures of the same war for the readers, indicating that each was being ethnocentric.

In the field of mass media research, researchers often ask if news coverage can meet journalistic standards of ‘balance,’ ‘truth,’ and ‘objectivity’ in cases of extreme political conflict (Norris, Kern & Just, 2003). The answer to that question is unequivocally no as seen from the evidence documented in this study. The U.S. presses failed to balance the use of sources, especially those of Iraq or Middle East, a vital rival of the war. Chinese and Indian presses gave a prominent attention to antiwar voices but failed to balance the topic choice and to present war victims stories to readers. In China and India, stories on the war were almost devoid of human suffering and loss. The war, in the eyes of Chinese and Indian presses, was less about victims, soldiers, hunger and loss of life, and more about politics, economics and power. Every country relied more on its own sources and marginalized others. Moreover, the most frequently appearing words of “American,” “China,” and “India,” i.e., the national identification labels, suggest that all presses were more interested in the perspectives of their own country. Each national press tended to side with their nation most of the time. It seems that the war was more relevant when it related to “us,” and through “us” the war became visible. The identification of the ethnocentrism in all three presses reveals that in the times of war it is hard for presses not to prioritize their own countries’ concerns and perspectives.

### Media and Government

However, there is some anecdotal evidence that suggests journalists in all three presses may not totally fail the journalistic principle and standards. Take story topic, for example. While war effort stories dominated U.S. presses, China’s presses also featured mostly war effort stories than other topics. Though the Chinese government repeatedly condemned the U.S.-led war for not having the approval from the UN Security Council, China’s presses gave more attention to war efforts, which might suggest that these presses are gradually adopting some western styles of objective reporting (Luther & Zhou, 2005). The Indian

government was not as aggressive as the Chinese government in criticizing U.S.-led war, however, in Indian presses, antiwar stories dominated. More evidence was revealed from each national press having a “neutral” attitude, which suggests that the three presses made an effort to be objective. An anti-war attitude was also present in the U.S. presses even though the U.S. government was pro-war. There is no denying that each country used more of its own sources. However, it is important to note that the presses of each country did not necessarily adopt the stance of its government. It seems too simplistic to declare that the media and the government have “a symbiotic relationship” with each other (Chang & Lee, 1993, p. 4; Epstein, 1979, p.3). Brown (2003) argued “the relationship between government, military and the media are increasingly intertwined as a result of long-term processes of political and technological changes” (p. 43). He noted that in times of conflict, the media do not simply cover events but actively pursue their own role, and the way the media reported events can become an important part of the events. This suggests that the “ability of national governments to define events for the citizen” has been reduced and the “interpenetration of war, politics, and the media” has increased (Brown, 2003, p. 56). An intertwined view of the war as defined by both the government and the media might be what to expect for future war media discourse. However, ethnocentrism will prevail in the coverage, especially in international events; presses are forever the presses of “us.”

### Contribution

This study made two contributions to the international comparative media analysis. First, it examined the performance of three distinct media systems in war coverage. The findings confirmed that media presses were mostly ethnocentric in times of war and presented distinct pictures of the same war from their own perspectives. This finding was in line with earlier studies of war news that in times of war journalists’ professional practices became secondary to national loyalty and remote from the journalists’ professional values (Nossek, 2003). While it might be argued that it was the differences in media systems or the differences in relationships among the social, economic and political forces that shaped the way the war was presented, it is very hard to claim that ethnocentrism is not the most influential factor in the international media framing analysis. Second, this study combined the manual coding and computer-assisted analysis together in collecting and analyzing data. While manual coding has the advantage of identifying tones and implied meanings of words, computer-assisted analysis improves the accuracy and reliability of the study.



## Limitation

This study solely relied on the quantitative research method to compare the coverage and therefore it can only provide one set of preliminary data on the issue. A well-rounded analysis shall include a very ‘human’ or qualitative part of research such as interviewing journalists engaged in covering the war or taking on a discourse analysis of news stories sampled. While computers can enhance the reliability of the study, the validity still needs better approaches to address. Future research using content analysis shall continue to explore the possibilities of increasing the validity of a study, an issue frequently challenged by researchers, professionals and news organizations.

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# THE CONDITIONALITY OF SOURCE USE: COMPARING SOURCE USE IN U.S. AND SWEDISH TELEVISION NEWS

DANIELA V. DIMITROVA AND JESPER STRÖMBÄCK

*While there is scholarly consensus regarding the importance of news sources, there are rather few comparative studies on how the media use sources. In addition, most of these focus mostly on the coverage of specific events, and are primarily based on print media. To go beyond these limitations and test the conditionality of source use, this study compares the use of sources in routine news coverage in television news in the United States and Sweden. The results show several differences in source use in Swedish and U.S. television news, but also a more complicated pattern of source use than anticipated. Most importantly, the results point towards the conditionality of source use depending on the type of news story and topic covered. The study warns against tendencies to generalize too far from single country-studies on source use or from comparative studies that are based on the media coverage of specific events or a single medium only.*

**Keywords:** news sources, cross-national journalism studies, television news

News journalists around the world operate under different media systems and face different political, cultural and economic conditions in their daily work. Nevertheless, they have a lot in common in terms of the journalistic routines and newsgathering practices they follow to get the news. An important component of news reporting routines is the reliance on sources. Journalists around the world, regardless of type of medium, have to rely on news sources in order to get their stories and keep the public informed about the news of the day.

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Sources exhibit significant impact on the construction and meaning of news (Bennett, 1990; Comrie, 1999; Entman, 2004). Among the many functions of news sources, one can distinguish at least four different functions (Manning, 2001). First and foremost, sources provide journalists with access to information about an issue or event. Next, the use of sources in news reporting gives credibility to the news account. Another function that sources play is to provide diverse viewpoints about the same issue or event. Finally, the reliance on sources helps reduce newsroom uncertainty under deadline pressure and provides structure and reflexivity to the news account.

The importance of news sources has been well documented by journalism and mass communication scholars (Beckett, 1995; Bennett, 1990; Bennett et al., 2007; Berkowitz, 1987, 2009; Comrie, 1999; Gans, 1980; Lasorsa & Reese, 1990; Reich, 2009; Tuchman, 1978). However, source use has too rarely been studied in different types of news stories, story topics or in a cross-cultural comparative context, although there are exceptions (Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2009; Kim & Weaver, 2003; Yoon & Gwangho, 2002). Against this background, the purpose of this study is to examine the conditionality of source use by comparing news coverage in two different countries with distinctly different political and media systems—Sweden and the United States (Hallin & Mancini, 2004).

We focus on these two countries for two main reasons: First, in keeping with the most different systems design (Przeworski & Teune, 1970), we wanted to select countries that differ in their general characteristics and yet belong to the group of advanced democratic societies. The United States is a large country with a federal system and decentralized decision-making structure. Sweden, on the other hand, is a small European country with a parliamentary multiparty system. Both countries have highly developed and free media systems. However, the U.S. media system is very commercialized and heterogeneous while the Swedish media system is more homogenous and has a strong public service tradition. The second reason why we selected Sweden and the United States is that we wanted to compare countries that belong to two different models of media and politics, according to Hallin and Mancini's (2004) well-established classification. The United States is a typical representative of the so-called Liberal model while Sweden is a paragon of the Democratic Corporatist model. Choosing two countries that exemplify two different models allows us to position journalism within the broader context of the national political and media systems in each country, isolating the nation as the context of study (Livingstone, 2003).

Most previous research has focused on the use of news sources at the local and national level, but examining source use in different countries allows us to see similarities in news reporting at the international level. Studying the use of sources comparatively offers another advantage: it provides the opportunity to understand differences in media coverage "in full perspective" and gain deeper insights into journalism practice in general and news content in particular. As recently argued by Berkowitz (2009, p. 108), to better understand the journalist-source relationship, there is a need for comparative research where the "most

productive position [...] identifies contextual and structural similarities and contrasts between two cases, and then adjusts the findings from one to better inform the other.”

Such comparative research on source use is also needed to test the assumption that the medium dictates the type of messages being produced, as McLuhan famously noted (1964). Despite the unique characteristics of television as a medium it is possible that the type of sources used in television news would be conditioned by a number of different factors. First, the topic a news story may impact the type of sources being selected. Second, the type of story—for instance foreign versus national news—may influence what sources are included. Finally, different sources may be used in routine news as compared to the coverage of specific issues or events. In order to explore the conditionality of source use, the present study extends prior research by comparing routine news coverage on Swedish and U.S. television, which, although rarely analyzed in comparative journalism studies, remains the most popular channel for receiving news.

## THE NEED FOR AND IMPACT OF NEWS SOURCES

News journalism cannot exist without sources. Sources serve multiple functions in daily news production (Berkowitz, 2009; Cook, 2005; Lawrence, 2000; Manning, 2001; Reich, 2009). First, news sources provide journalists with access to information that they would otherwise be unable to get. Especially in cases of remote news events the sources give first-hand accounts of what took place (Lawrence, 2000). Additionally, by including sources in the news reporting, journalists increase the credibility of the news story (Manning, 2001). Thus, news sources also provide verification of where, when, how and why the event took place and who were the parties involved. Another important function of news sources is their ability to provide diverse viewpoints about the same issue or event (Comrie, 1999). This function is critical in contemporary democratic societies as it enables an informed public discussion and debate. It also helps to shield journalists from accusations of bias (Tuchman, 1978). Finally, scholars have pointed out that regular ties with expert sources (i.e., beats) help reduce newsroom uncertainty under deadline pressures (Manning, 2001). In the daily news cycle, having access to reliable sources allows journalists to file timely reports and explore issues in depth. In addition, sources satisfy the need for reflexivity and interpretation in contemporary journalism (Albaek, Christiansen, & Togeby, 2003).

The use of news sources can also be highly consequential, as news sources undoubtedly have a significant impact on news coverage (Bennett, 1990; Berkowitz, 2009; Comrie, 1999; Lawrence, 2000). For example, whose voices are heard in the news reporting is likely to frame the news in certain ways (Entman, 2004). As Kim and Weaver (2003: 125) note, “[n]ews reports are based on a selective articulation of certain voices about a given topic”. Studies have also shown that different actors tend to frame the same issue differently. For instance, Roth, Dunsby and Bero (2003) found that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration

framed proposed federal tobacco regulation in scientific terms while public commentators emphasized political and ideological frames. Differential framing impacts not only what the public learns about a certain issue but also their attitudes and interpretations of the issue (de Vreese, 2003).

Clearly, the ability to speak up in the news gives more power to certain types of sources to frame issues or events, while powerful sources simultaneously are more likely to be called upon by journalists. Although it is disputed whether journalists or their sources “lead the tango” (Gans, 1980; Reich, 2009; Strömbäck & Nord, 2006), there is no doubt that official sources that are considered more credible and authoritative tend to be more common and have stronger impact on news framing than sources that lack a powerbase and the legitimacy that official sources are credited with (Berkowitz, 2009; Manning, 2001). The preponderance of elite or official sources in media coverage has been explained most often by the indexing hypothesis (Bennett, 1990) or by the official sources dominance model (Lawrence, 2000; Shehata, 2007). Bennett (1990) argued that the news media tend to present or “index” the views of the political elite, whereas Lawrence (2000) proposed an official sources dominance model in her analysis of media coverage of crime in the United States. She found that elected officials not only dominated but also significantly impacted crime news coverage. There is general agreement that members of the political elite typically have easier access to the media, with higher government officials such as the nation’s president having even more influence (Bennett, 1990; Entman, 2004; Manning, 2001; Sigal, 1973).

Even though official sources are commonly used by the news media around the world (Comrie, 1999; Kim & Weaver, 2003; Lawrence, 2000; Yoon & Gwangho, 2002), prior research suggests a somewhat stronger reliance on official sources in the U.S. media compared with other countries (Bennett et al., 2007; Hallin, 1986; McCarthy et al., 1996). This holds true for routine news coverage (Berkowitz, 1987) as well as media coverage of conflict events such as wars (Hallin, 1986) and economic crises (Lasorsa & Reese, 1990) where journalists tend to favor high prestige sources. In an early study of the newsmaking process, Sigal (1973) reported that government officials accounted for more than three-quarters of the sources used in the leading U.S. media. More recently, in a comparative content analysis of the elite press in Sweden and the United States, Dimitrova and Strömbäck (2009) reported higher frequency of use of official sources in the American coverage of the Iraq War than in the Swedish coverage of the same event. Consequentially, we expect a higher reliance on official sources also in routine news coverage in U.S. television news compared with Swedish television news. Thus, we advance the following hypothesis:

- H1. Domestic official sources will be used more frequently in U.S. television news coverage than in Swedish television news coverage.



Examining news coverage can allow us to find out not only whose voices are heard but also whose voices are not heard (Berkowitz, 2009). This is critically important from a social responsibility perspective (Comrie, 1999). If the media constantly favor voicing the opinions of certain groups it can lead to marginalizing other groups and their voices. One possible consequence of such omission is limiting public understanding and debate on the important issues of the day, thus undermining the participatory and deliberative qualities of democracy.

The U.S. media has often been accused of being too ethnocentric and lacking international focus, especially in typical daily newscasts. Statistics reported by the Project of Excellence in Journalism (2005, 2008) have documented a downward trend in foreign news on television. Indeed, research shows that U.S. network news devote considerably less time to foreign news than their European counterparts in countries such as Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Norway and Denmark (Rössler, 2004, p. 282). Studies of Swedish television news have demonstrated that about 40% of news coverage focuses on foreign news (Djerf-Pierre & Weibull, 2001; Jönsson & Strömbäck, 2007). In sum, Swedish media seem to exhibit higher international diversity and include more foreign news in their daily reporting. Several different factors may be contributing to such differences, not the least of which is that Sweden is a small country and a member of the European Union. Thus, we advance the following hypothesis:

H2. International sources will be used more frequently in Swedish television news coverage than in U.S. television news coverage.

There are many factors that may influence the selection and use of news sources. Among them are the different journalism models and perceptions of the notion of objectivity. For U.S. journalists, objectivity often means “expressing fairly the position of each side in a political dispute”, thus giving a balanced view of stakeholders. Swedish journalists, in contrast, tend to understand objectivity as “going beyond the statements of the contending sides to the hard facts of a political dispute” (Patterson, 1998, p. 22). This difference in journalist’s understanding of journalistic objectivity may lead not only to a higher frequency of official sources in U.S. compared to Swedish news coverage, but also to a higher frequency of other stakeholders or opinion holders such as ordinary citizens and academic experts. Indeed, prior research comparing the use of sources in news reporting between Swedish and U.S. newspapers found significant differences in the use of ordinary citizens and academic experts as sources (Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2009). This research shows that both types of sources were used more frequently in U.S. news reporting. Even though these studies focused only on print media, we expect the same differences to hold true for television as well.

H3: Ordinary citizens will be used as sources more frequently in U.S. television news coverage than in Swedish television news coverage.

H4: Academic experts will be used as sources more frequently in U.S. television news coverage than in Swedish television news coverage.

Another trend with respect to media's reporting of politics and political processes is towards increasing mediatization of politics (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999; Strömbäck, 2008) and media interventionism (Esser, 2008). Briefly, media interventionism refers to the degree to which journalists report on politics and other issues in their own words, scenarios, assessments and interpretations (Esser, 2008; Blumler & Gurevitch, 1995; Semetko et al., 1991), instead of granting political and other social actors the opportunity to communicate to the people through the media. Related to this are phenomena such as shrinking soundbites (Hallin, 1992; Esser, 2008), a journalistic style that is interpretive rather than descriptive (Patterson, 1993), and an increasing use of media analysts, journalists or media spokespersons as sources. As research suggests that media interventionism is more pronounced in U.S. news coverage – at least during election campaigns – than in other countries (Esser, 2008; Esser & D'Angelo, 2006), we expect that U.S. television news will be more reliant on media analysts or media spokespersons as sources than Swedish television news. Thus, our last hypothesis is:

H5: Media analysts will be used as sources more frequently in U.S. television news coverage than in Swedish television news coverage.

Most previous studies that have examined the use of sources in news coverage have looked at the coverage of domestic politics or specific events only, which is not representative of the full universe of ordinary news journalism. Sourcing in other types of news stories has rarely been studied. Therefore, we pose a research question to explore whether source use is conditioned by whether the news stories are mainly about politics or other topics. In addition to topic, it might be the case that source patterns vary depending on whether the news is domestic, foreign, or hybrid news (i.e., a combination of foreign and domestic news focus). To explore such possible differences, we add a second research question:

Research Question 1: Are there any differences in source use between television news stories that mainly focus on politics versus other topics?

Research Question 2: Are there any differences in source use between domestic, foreign, or hybrid television news stories?

## METHODOLOGY AND DATA

To test the hypotheses and answer the research questions above, a quantitative content analysis of the leading television news networks in Sweden and the United States was used. The top three television networks in the United States and the top two public service channels and the leading commercial television channel in Sweden were selected for analysis. In the United States, the study included *CBS Evening News*, *NBC Nightly News* and *ABC World News*. In Sweden, the study included *Rapport* and *Aktuellt*, both public service news shows, and *TV4 Nyheter*, the top commercial news show. The sample included two weeks of routine news coverage on the selected channels in the fall of 2007—from October 19 to November 1, 2007. Weekend broadcasts were excluded. Taken together, the study includes 682 news stories, distributed as follows: *Rapport* (166), *Aktuellt* (107), *TV4 Nyheter* (101), *CBS Evening News* (105), *NBC Nightly News* (108), and *ABC World News* (95).

The unit of analysis was the individual television news story. To ensure consistency, a news story was defined as a clearly separate news segment that focuses on one main event, topic or issue. Thus, the theme of the news segment should remain the same for each news story. The segment may be introduced by a news anchor or aired on its own as video with voice over package. All news stories except those in special segments about weather and sports were analyzed. Advertisements were also excluded.

Use of domestic official sources, ordinary citizens, academic experts, international sources and media analysts was of particular interest in this study. For someone to be counted as a source, a statement, fact or quote must be attributed to him or her within the news story. Each source variable was coded on a presence/absence basis. The operational definitions are provided below.

Domestic official sources were defined as domestic politicians and government officials in the United States and Sweden, respectively. Domestic government officials are people hired by federal/national, regional or local governments, responsible for implementation of different policies. Coders also looked for the use of ordinary citizens as sources within a news story. People depicted as ordinary citizens are those who get to speak not due to their position within a certain hierarchy but as everyday people. “Man on the street” interviews are a good example of including ordinary citizens as a news source. Academic experts were defined as sources that are given academic titles or credentials, such as “professor”, “political scientist”, and the like, without a partisan label. The international sources category included three types of sources: foreign politicians, foreign government officials and spokespersons for transnational organizations. An example of the last source might be a spokesperson for the European Union or the United Nations, or any other transnational organization. Finally, we coded for the use of media analysts and media spokespersons as

sources. This source category includes all members of the media that are used within the news story besides the journalist covering the story.

All news stories were coded according to the dominant location. Coders were instructed to check 1 if the news story overwhelmingly focused on domestic affairs, 2 if the news story overwhelmingly focused on foreign affairs, and 3 if the news story focused on both domestic and foreign issues (i.e., hybrid news). Finally, all stories were coded according to the main topic of the news stories. In all, 31 pre-defined topics were used for this coding, including the residual category “other topics”. One of the topics was “politics/elections”, including both domestic and foreign stories on politics or elections that did not focus on any particular issue or issue-related topic from the list.

To check for intercoder reliability, six percent of the U.S. news stories were randomly selected to include news stories from all news programs. Two coders – one of whom also coded the Swedish news stories – coded these stories independently. The intercoder reliability (Holsti’s formula) across all categories was .90 and across the categories used in this study .95.

## RESULTS

Based on the first hypothesis, we expected official sources to be used more frequently in U.S. television news than in Swedish television news. In this study, two different kinds of official sources were included, more specifically domestic politicians and domestic government officials. To investigate H1, these were combined into one category.

The results show that while domestic official sources were slightly more common in U.S. than in Swedish television news (see Table 1), the difference was not statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = .606$ ,  $p = .436$ ,  $df = 1$ ). Controlling for whether the news stories are domestic, foreign or hybrid (i.e., a combination of foreign and domestic affairs) shows, however, that domestic official sources were significantly more common ( $\chi^2 = 2.332$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $df = 1$ ) in U.S. than in Swedish television news when the news were about foreign affairs. In foreign news, domestic official sources were included in 26% of the U.S. and only 1% of the Swedish news stories. Interestingly, and contrary to the hypothesis, domestic government officials were significantly more common ( $\chi^2 = 4.008$ ,  $p = .045$ ,  $df = 1$ ) in Swedish than in U.S. domestic news stories. There was no difference with respect to hybrid news stories.

Controlling for whether the topic of the news stories was about politics and elections shows, however, that domestic official sources were significantly more common ( $\chi^2 = 4.777$ ,  $p = .029$ ,  $df = 1$ ) in U.S. news stories on politics than in Swedish news stories. Domestic official sources were included in 88% of the U.S. and 57% of the Swedish news stories that focused on politics or elections.

**Table 1. Source Use in U.S. and Swedish Television News (%)**

	United States (n=308)	Sweden (n=374)
Domestic official sources	34	31
International sources**	6	12
Ordinary citizens	30	25
Academic experts***	20	10
Media analysts/Spokespersons	8	9

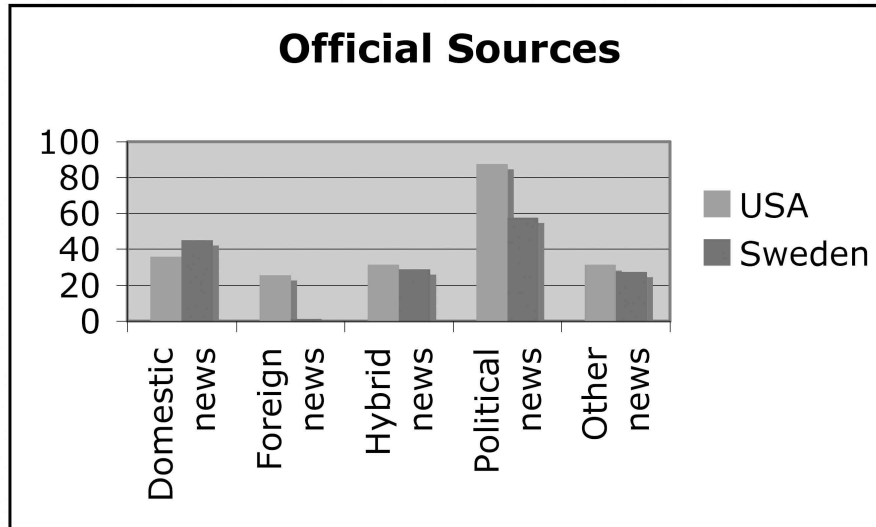
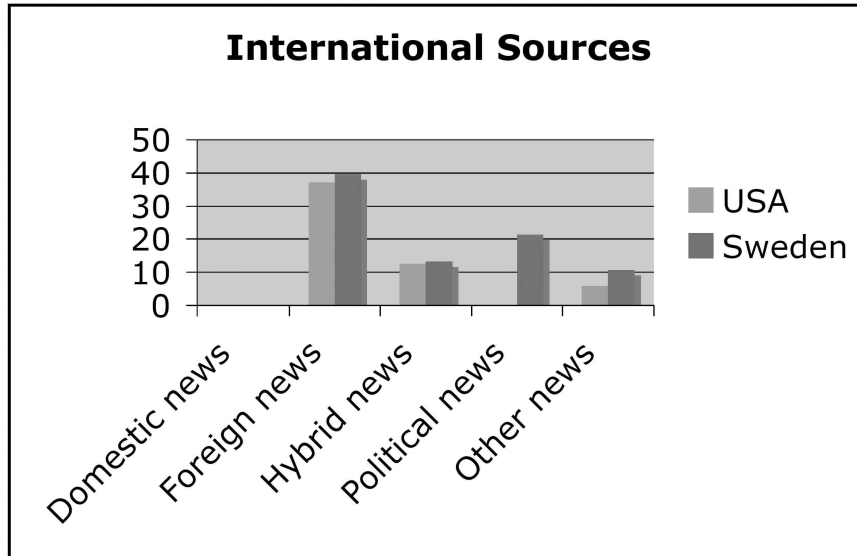
\*p<0,05 \*\*p<0,01 \*\*\*p<0,001. Table indicates the percentage of news stories in which different types of sources were present.

Taken together, the results demonstrate that domestic official sources were more common in U.S. than in Swedish news stories when they were about foreign affairs or about politics and elections – supporting H1 – but less common when the news were about domestic issues in general – contrary to H1. Overall, disregarding the location and the topic of news stories, domestic official sources were not more common in U.S. than in Swedish television news.

These results suggest the conditionality of source use, and the importance of investigating the use of sources in routine news coverage and not only in the coverage of special events such as wars, crises or elections. Both the topic and the location of news stories matter for the broadcast news' use of official sources, as illustrated by Figure 1 below. While perhaps not surprising, these results nevertheless warn against making broad generalizations based on studies that focus on foreign news or politics and elections only.

The second hypothesis predicted that international sources would be used more frequently in Swedish than in U.S. television news. In this case, three kinds of international sources were included, namely foreign politicians, foreign government officials and spokespersons for transnational organizations such as the United Nations. To investigate H2, these were combined into one category.

The results show that international sources indeed were significantly more common ( $\chi^2 = 8.668$ ,  $p = .003$ ,  $df = 1$ ) in Swedish than in U.S. television news. More specifically, international sources were included in 12% of the Swedish and 6% of the U.S. news stories. On this level of analysis, the hypothesis is thus supported. Controlling for the location of the news stories shows, however, that the more frequent appearance of international sources is purely a function of the fact that Swedish television news carries more foreign news stories

**Figure 1. Domestic official sources in TV news coverage (%)****Figure 2. International sources in TV news coverage (%)**

than U.S. television news. Within the categories of foreign and hybrid news, international sources are used about as often in both countries' television news. More specifically, in

foreign news, international sources are used in 40% of the Swedish and 37% of the U.S. news stories, and in hybrid news, in 13% of the news stories in both countries. Whether the news are about politics and election does make a difference, however, as international sources were included in 21% of the Swedish news stories on politics and elections and in none of the U.S. news stories on this topic. The main reason for this is that Swedish television news covers elections abroad – not least, within the European Union and in the U.S. – more often than U.S. television news does.

The third hypothesis predicted that ordinary citizens would be used more frequently as sources in U.S. television news than in Swedish television news. The results show that 30% of the U.S. news stories include at least one ordinary citizen as a source while 25% of the Swedish news stories do. This difference is not significant ( $\chi^2 = 2.712$ ,  $p = .100$ ,  $df. = 1$ ), at least not on the aggregate level. Breaking down the results according to the location of the news story leads to some interesting observations though: With respect to domestic news, ordinary citizens appear as sources in 36% of the U.S. and 24% of the Swedish news stories. This difference is in the direction predicted by the hypothesis and is statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 7.395$ ,  $p = .007$ ,  $df. = 1$ ). With respect to foreign news, the pattern is reversed: In this case, ordinary citizens are featured as sources in 28% of the Swedish and 11% of the U.S. news stories, contrary to the hypothesis. This difference is also significant ( $\chi^2 = 3.835$ ,  $p = .050$ ,  $df. = 1$ ). With respect to hybrid news, there is no statistically significant difference. As for the importance of topic, no statistical differences were found depending on whether the news stories were about politics/elections or other topics. Thus, the results suggest that the use of ordinary citizens is conditioned by the location of the news stories but not by whether the stories are about politics/elections.

The most pronounced difference so far is related to H4, predicting that academic experts will be used more frequently as sources in U.S. television news than in Swedish television news. As shown in Table 1, academic experts appear as sources in 20% of the U.S. television news stories, compared with 10% of the Swedish television news stories. This difference is highly significant ( $\chi^2 = 13.416$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $df. = 1$ ), lending support to the fourth hypothesis. This difference does only appear, however, when the news is about domestic affairs. With respect to hybrid news and foreign news the pattern is in the direction of the hypothesis, but without reaching statistical significance. Something similar can be said about the impact of topic: In both cases the differences between U.S. and Swedish television news in their reliance on academic experts as sources are in the direction of the hypothesis, but the difference is statistically significant only when the news is about topics other than politics ( $\chi^2 = 14.450$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $df. = 1$ ).

The last hypothesis predicted that media analysts or media spokespersons would be used as sources more frequently in U.S. than in Swedish television news. As shown in Table 1, this hypothesis is not supported. The location of the news story makes no difference, although the results suggest that Swedish television news is particularly likely to use media analysts or spokespersons as sources when the news is about foreign affairs, whereas U.S.

Figure 3. Ordinary citizens as sources in TV news coverage (%)

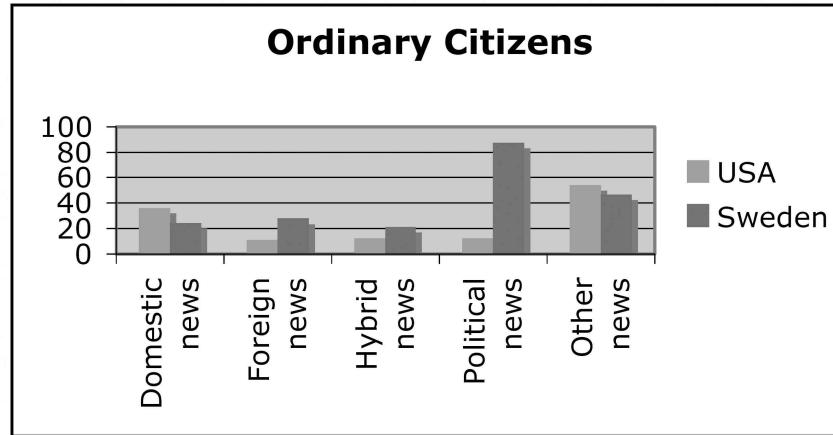
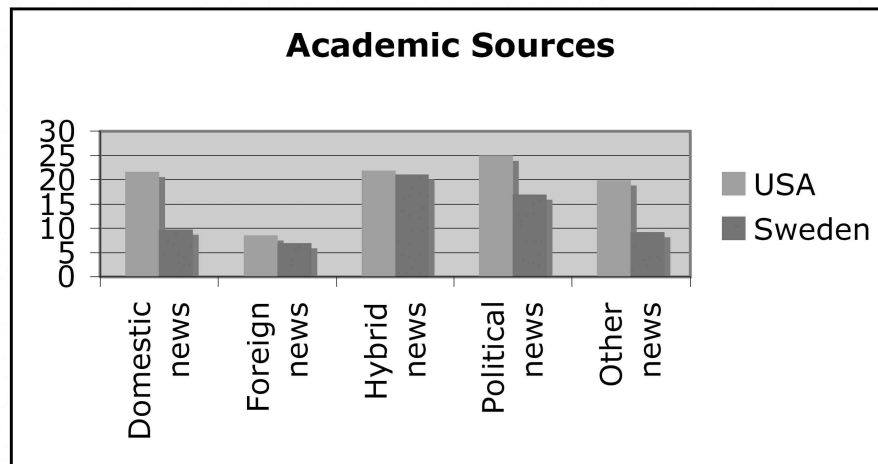
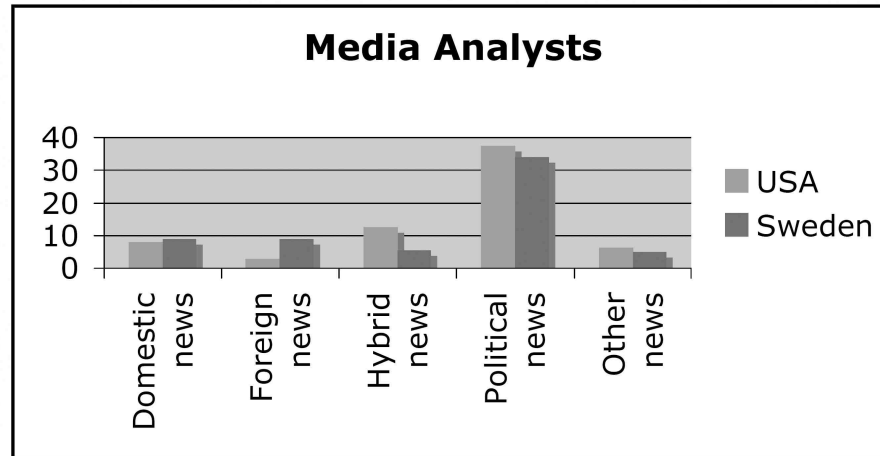


Figure 4. Academic sources in TV news coverage (%)



television news appears to be more likely to use media analysts as sources in hybrid news. In the latter case the N is so small, however, that the small difference with respect to hybrid news does not merit any particular attention. As for topic, no pattern can be discerned depending on whether the news is about politics or other topics.



**Figure 5. Media analysts as sources in TV news coverage (%)**

## POST-HOC ANALYSIS

It might be the case, however, that the results are affected by the inclusion of all news stories, and would show a different pattern if the study included only longer news stories. To test this proposition, we first excluded all stories shorter than 54 seconds, which is half of the mean length of all news stories. This does not affect the results. Although the frequencies for each source category change, on the aggregate level the same differences are significant or insignificant as when all news stories are included. When excluding all stories shorter than the mean length (108 seconds) of all news stories, the more frequent use of ordinary citizens in U.S. as compared to Swedish television news becomes statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 5.051$ ,  $p = .025$ ,  $df = 1$ ). Aside from that, the same differences are significant or insignificant as when all news stories are included. Thus, the length of the news story does not seem to significantly affect cross-national differences and similarities in source use.

## DISCUSSION

While there is scholarly consensus regarding the importance of news sources, there are still rather few comparative studies on how the media in different countries use sources. This is particularly true with respect to television news and beyond the coverage of specific events such as wars, crises and elections. To go beyond these limitations, the purpose of this

study was to compare the use of sources in *routine news coverage* in *television news* in the United States and Sweden to better understand journalism practice in each country.

The study found some, but in most cases qualified, support for several of the proposed hypotheses. Most importantly, the results suggest that the use of news sources in television news is conditioned by both the location and the topic of news stories. To summarize the results: While H1 predicted that domestic official sources would be more common in U.S. than Swedish television news, the results show that this hypothesis was supported when the news stories were about foreign affairs (consistent with previous research on U.S. and Swedish press coverage of the Iraq War – see Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2009) but not about domestic issues. In domestic news stories, official sources were in fact more common as sources in Swedish than in U.S. television news, contrary to our expectations. But when the news was about politics and elections, domestic official sources were however significantly more common in U.S. than in Swedish television news, which concurs with prior research on election coverage in both countries (Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2009). Thus, the use of domestic official sources was conditioned by both the location and the topic of the news stories. Implicitly, this finding suggests that U.S. officials have more impact on the framing of foreign news as well as news about politics and elections.

We predicted that international sources would be more common in Swedish than in U.S. television news, and on the aggregate level this hypothesis was supported. Further analyses showed, however, that this was mainly because Swedish television news carried more stories on foreign affairs than U.S. television news. Controlling for the location of the news stories, there were no significant differences between Swedish and U.S. television news. However, Swedish television news used more international sources in the coverage of politics and elections than did U.S. television news. Thus, the use of international sources was conditioned by both the location and the topic of news stories.

Additionally, we expected that ordinary citizens would be more common in U.S. than in Swedish television news. The results show that this hypothesis was not supported on the aggregate level, but supported with respect to domestic news. With respect to foreign news, the pattern was however reversed. Whether the news story was about politics did not make a difference. Thus, the use of ordinary citizens as sources was conditioned by the location but not the topic of the news story.

We also predicted that academic experts would be used as sources more often in U.S. than in Swedish television news, and this hypothesis was supported on the aggregate level and when the news was about domestic affairs. It was not supported when the stories were about foreign or hybrid news, although the pattern was in the direction of the hypothesis. As for the impact of topic, the difference between U.S. and Swedish television news in their use of academic experts as sources was significant only when the news was about topics other than politics. Overall, the results suggest that the use of academic experts is less conditioned by the location or topic of news stories than the use of domestic officials,

international actors and ordinary citizens as sources. This may be related to differences in the media system between the two countries noted earlier.

Finally, the last hypothesis predicted that media analysts would be more common as sources in U.S. than in Swedish television news. This hypothesis was not supported, regardless of the location or the topic of news stories.

Overall then, the results suggest that at least the use of domestic officials, international actors, ordinary citizens and academic experts as sources is conditioned by the location and the topic of news stories. This points a more complex pattern of source use than anticipated and underscores the importance of investigating source use across not only countries, but also across locations and topics of news stories. Considering that some of the above fail to confirm differences found in research comparing source use in Swedish and U.S. newspaper coverage of wars and elections (see Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2009), the results also underscore the importance of investigating source use across different media and different news events.

## CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Overall, the findings of this study suggest a more complex pattern of source use in national TV news coverage than anticipated. Not only are there differences in the use of news sources across countries, but also across topics and across the location of the news stories. Comparing these results with those from earlier studies on source use in Swedish and U.S. media, the results also suggest that there might be significant differences in source use between a) routine news coverage and the coverage of special events such as wars and elections, b) domestic news and foreign news reporting, c) political versus other types of news and d) television and newspaper coverage.

As such, this study warns against tendencies to generalize too far from studies on source use that are based on the media coverage in single countries, of specific events, or on one type of medium only. Hence, it also suggests a need to re-evaluate theories regarding the journalistic use of sources that have not been tested across countries, media, events, locations and topics. Although some research might show that official sources, to take just one example, are more common in one country's newspaper coverage of foreign affairs or wars and crises, as compared with newspapers in another country, this does not necessarily lend itself to the conclusion that the media in the former case in general have a stronger tendency to use official sources than the media in other countries. In other words, while the journalistic need for sources is a constant, the journalistic use of sources is a variable that might be both country-, medium-, issue- and context-sensitive.

Hence, future comparative research on media source use should take special precautions to include several media and the coverage of different types of news on different topics and news events. This brings us to this study's limitations. While we believe that this study has

helped to advance and qualify our knowledge of the media's source use in different countries and with respect to routine news coverage, we do acknowledge that this study is restricted to television news only. We also acknowledge that two weeks routine news coverage is a limited time period. Further research on the use of news sources should thus not only include several media and the coverage of different types of news on different topics and news events; it should also include longer time periods, preferably spread across time in order to increase generalizability and to capture changes across time both within and across countries.

These limitations notwithstanding, this study, beyond the specific results, shows that more research is warranted before firm conclusions can be drawn with respect to media's use of sources across different countries. Considering the significance of news sources and their impact on media framing and audience perceptions, it should be an important task for journalism scholars to go beyond single countries, news outlets, issues and contexts when studying and drawing conclusions about media's source use.

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