

FOREIGN NEWS AND PUBLIC OPINION:  
ATTRIBUTE AGENDA-SETTING THEORY REVISITED

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Mass Communication  
in  
Theanship School of Mass Communication

by

Asya A. Besova  
B.A., Alcorn State University, 2006  
May 2008

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to people who assisted me in my journey for my Master's Degree in the Manship School of Mass Communication. First of all, I would like to thank my committee members for their encouragement, advice and support on this project, starting with Dr. Postelnicu, my thesis chair, who was there with me every step of the way with support, advice, and faith; to Dr. DeFleur, who guided and mentored me from day one in the school; and to Dr. Song, who was providing invaluable advice on the project. I appreciate all of the hard work from each member of my committee.

Most certainly, this thesis would not have been possible without the love, encouragement and support of my family. I would like to thank my mom for listening to me, in good times and in bad times, providing me with love, nurturing me, and caring about my well-being. I would like to thank my sister, my closest friend from the day I was born. You were amazing coding and coding and never complaining. I would like to thank my dad, my "rock" when times were turbulent.

Most importantly, I would like to greatly thank Chance Cooley, my companion, my inspiration, and my love. This journey through the school would not be the same without you. You made it exciting and stimulating by challenging me in every class, by holding our long discussions, by giving me advice, by reading my papers, and by being my Junto buddy. I am giving you a credit for defending your thesis first, but I am not giving you superiority in ice-skating and ping-pong. Remember, I will always love and challenge you in our journey together.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....   | ii |
| LIST OF TABLES.....   | v  |
| ABSTRACT.....   | vi |
| CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....  | 1  |
| CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....   | 4  |
| A. International Coverage.....  | 4  |
| i. Effects of Media Coverage of International News on Public Opinion.....   | 8  |
| ii. Effects of International News Coverage on Foreign Policy.....           | 10 |
| B. Agenda-Setting Theory.....   | 13 |
| C. Attribute Agenda-Setting Theory.....                                     | 17 |
| D. International News and Geographic, Cultural, and Economic Proximity..... | 21 |
| E. Research Questions.....  | 24 |
| CHAPTER 3: METHOD.....  | 25 |
| A. Survey Data.....   | 25 |
| B. Content Analysis Data.....   | 26 |
| i. Sample.....  | 27 |
| ii. Coding Instrument.....  | 28 |
| iii. Intercoder Reliability.....  | 29 |
| C. Proximity Measures.....  | 29 |
| CHAPTER 4: RESULTS.....   | 31 |
| A. The Issue Agenda and Public Opinion.....                                 | 34 |
| B. Public Opinion and Media Coverage.....                                   | 41 |
| C. Media Frames and Public Opinion.....                                     | 42 |
| D. Comparison of Media Coverage in the U.S. and the U.K.....                | 44 |
| E. Geographic, Economic and Cultural Proximity.....                         | 46 |
| CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION.....  | 48 |
| A. The Issue Agenda and Public Opinion.....                                 | 48 |
| B. Public Opinion and Media Coverage.....                                   | 51 |
| C. Media Frames and Public Opinion.....                                     | 55 |
| D. Comparison of Media Coverage in the U.S. and the U.K.....                | 57 |
| E. Geographic, Economic and Cultural Proximity.....                         | 59 |
| F. Conclusions.....   | 60 |
| G. Limitations.....   | 61 |
| REFERENCES.....   | 64 |
| APPENDIX A: CONTENT ANALYSIS DATA.....                                      | 72 |

|                                      |    |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| APPENDIX B: CODING GUIDE.....        | 73 |
| APPENDIX C: PROXIMITY MEASURES ..... | 76 |
| VITA.....                            | 78 |

## LIST OF TABLES

|          |  |    |
|----------|--|----|
| Table 1. | Rankings of nine object nations by the public opinion valence (POV) and the media valence (MV) in the U.S. and the U.K.....                                  | 33 |
| Table 2. | Issue agendas of nine object nations in the U.S. media.....  | 35 |
| Table 3. | Issue agendas of nine object nations in the U.K. media.....  | 36 |
| Table 4. | Rankings of nine object nations by the U.S. public opinion valence (POV) and by the issue agenda promoted by the U.S. media for each object nation (IA)..... | 39 |
| Table 5. | Rankings of nine object nations by the U.K. public opinion valence (POV) and by the issue agenda promoted by the U.K. media for each object nation (IA)..... | 40 |
| Table 6. | Object nation's proximity with the U.S.....  | 76 |
| Table 7. | Object nation's proximity with the U.K.....  | 77 |

## **ABSTRACT**

This study contributes to the body of research on public opinion and media coverage of foreign news by examining the coverage of nine foreign countries in *The New York Times* and *The Times*. Media coverage and the public opinion about foreign nations were strongly correlated. Specifically, negative coverage tends to have more agenda-setting effects than neutral and positive coverage. The findings also suggest that media portray foreign countries in a unidimensional fashion, by limiting the coverage around a few policy issues. Finally, the U.S. and the U.K. media coverage of foreign nations were very similar.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, it is hard to envision our lives without persistently being bombarded by news about wars, economic changes, terrorist attacks, and catastrophes that happen inside and outside our countries. Relying on news, people make judgments and have opinions about the world. News exposure is significantly related to the liking of countries and to perceptions of their success (McNelly & Izcaray, 1986). There is an important relationship between the visibility of countries in foreign news and the public opinion about these countries (Golan & Wanta, 2003; McNelly & Izcaray, 1986; Semetko et al., 1992; Wanta & Hu, 1993; Wanta et al., 2004).

Knowledge about the world has become important and necessary in an increasingly globalized world. International news has come increasingly important. In his seminal book *Public Opinion*, Walter Lippmann articulated a process of elaboration and analysis of information about the outside world, where media play a pivotal role:

The only feeling that anyone can have about an event he does not experience is the feeling aroused by his mental image of that event. The world that we have to deal with politically is out of reach, out of sight, out of mind (Lippmann, 1922, p. 9, p. 18).  
We, therefore, rely on the media to explore the world around us and to construct our

“reality.” The public depends on the media to provide them with information about the Middle East, the war on terror, and other events that happen elsewhere in the world but affect us here at home. People who do not experience those events and foreign countries first-hand have only “the mental images” created by the media to form opinion about those countries.

Indeed, research on foreign news suggests close relationships between media coverage and public opinion. Studies conducted from an agenda-setting perspective found that the more a topic is covered by the media, the more importance is credited to it by the public (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; McNelly & Izcaray, 1986; Salwen & Matera, 1992; Semetko et al., 1992; Wanta & Hu, 1993). This assumption is known in the literature as first level agenda-setting. Later, agenda-

setting merged with framing research to suggest that the media are influential in telling us what issues to think about (issue agenda), and also how to think about those issues (attribute agenda, or second level agenda-setting). Although countries are “objects” rather than “issues,” media coverage of a country has the same agenda-setting effects on the public. Wanta, Golan, & Lee (2004) used a country as an object in their study, proving that coverage of a nation leads to more concern with a nation, just like frequent coverage of an issue leads to more importance given to that issue by the public.

While mass media play a huge role in shaping public perceptions of foreign countries, there is a variety of non-media factors that affect this relationship. For instance, foreign countries that are more similar culturally or geographically closer can be perceived more favorably compared to others that are not, regardless of media coverage. Even an individual’s personality, life experience, and media consumption patterns influence that person’s view of a foreign country. News consumers with increased interest in international news tend to rate foreign countries more favorably than people who do not usually pay attention to foreign news (McNelly & Izcaray, 1986).

This study builds on Wanta, Golan, & Lee (2004) and aspires to contribute to the research on international news coverage and public opinion. It will investigate how U.S. and U.K. media cover nine foreign countries and consider whether their coverage impacts how the publics in the U.S. and the U.K. respectively perceives those foreign countries. Throughout the study, the U.S. and the U.K. will be called *opinion nations* to designate the link between the media coverage and public opinion in these two countries being assessed. The nine foreign countries that are covered by the U.S. and U.K. media will be named *object nations*, because they are the objects for which the U.S. and the U.K. media set the attributes. The nine object

nations selected for this study are China, France, Germany, Iran, Israel, North Korea, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. The primary objective is to investigate the connections between media coverage of object nations and the public opinion rating of those nations. Using agenda-setting as the main theoretical foundation, this study analyzes whether positive, negative, or neutral media coverage of an object nation results in matching ranking of that foreign country by public opinion. The third objective is to determine if an object nation's geographical, cultural and economic proximity correlates with the valence of the media coverage, and with the public opinion. Also, this research attempts to extract connections between the topic of the media coverage and an object nation's rating by public opinion. The overarching purpose is to add to the theoretical work conceptualizing nations as objects under the umbrella of agenda-setting theory.

Additionally, this research compares international news coverage of foreign nations across countries and media systems. So far, only a few studies on this subject have been conducted on non-U.S. media. While studying news coverage patterns in one country is useful in clarifying media practices in that region, it is not enough to allow for generalization at a global scale. Thus, by studying and comparing international news in two opinion nations, the U.S. and the U.K., this research aspires to take a step forward generalizing the connection between media coverage of object nations and the public opinion.

Understanding these connections is important due to their potential impact on foreign policy. Although few researchers recognize a great impact of foreign news on foreign policy, no study denies that this impact exists. Bennett (1990) notes that a country's foreign policy is consistent with the media coverage about other nations, and Strobel (1997) shares the belief that media coverage can exercise strong influence on foreign policy.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

To provide a framework for the subject analyzed, it is imperative to look at the body of research that has been done in the field. The literature review contains two major topics: a) research on international media coverage, and b) research on issue & attribute agenda-setting theory.

### A. International Coverage

Over the past decades, the content, structure, volume, and flow of international news has become a widely analyzed topic in the field of mass communication. As the world becomes more globalized, knowledge about foreign countries becomes more important to the average citizen. Numerous researchers produced studies on different aspects of international communication (refer to Hatchen & Scotton, 2007; Schramm, 1959; Schramm & Atwood, 1981).

The most notable finding is the observation that international coverage across media is shrinking. On major TV networks, international news accounted for 35 to 39 percent of the content during 1972-1975 (Larson & Hardy, 1977), but dropped to 25 percent of the total airtime during 1977-1981 (Weaver et al., 1984). Newspapers cover foreign affairs less often than network news do, devoting less than 25 percent of the general interest news to international news (Adams, 1982). Emery (1989) studied international news across time and found that international news (operationalized as a percentage of the total news hole) dropped from 10.2 percent in 1971 to 2.6 percent in 1988. The elite newspapers *The New York Times* and *Washington Post* accounted for 3.3 percent and 5.4 percent respectively (Emery, 1989). Analyzing the U.S. mainstream newspapers during two periods in 1963-1964 and 1998-1999, Stepp (1999) reported a decline in foreign hard news from 5 percent to 3 percent. The exception was *Los Angeles Times*. With its diverse and rich immigrants market, *Los Angeles Times* devoted as much as 19

percent of the newspaper's total news hole to international news during 1997-1998 (Beaudoin & Thorson, 2001), which is not typical for U.S. newspapers.

Not only has the amount of foreign news in media been decreasing, but the quality of foreign news coverage has been inaccurate and incomplete, focusing incommensurately on topics of violence, crisis, and disaster (Goodman, 1999; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1981; Wilhoit & Weaver, 1983). For instance, Goodman (1999) found that articles about China in *The New York Times* and *Washington Post* dealt with severe crisis (24 percent), conflict (70 percent), and violence (32 percent). Few other topics were mentioned. Another study corroborated the notion while claiming that international news is shifting toward soft news and bad news (Riffe & Budianto, 2001). Soft news (religion, sport, arts, science, etc.) averaged 12.5 percent across a 31-year period, and bad news (civil conflicts, accidents, natural disasters) accounted for roughly 30 percent over the same period of time (Riffe & Budianto, 2001).

Another line of research concentrates on the proportion of coverage among the world's different regions. The U.S. media lacks balance in coverage of the world's different geographic areas (Chang, 1998; Wu, 1998; Wu, 2000). For instance, between 1972 and 1981, news pertaining to Western Europe accounted for 23.8 percent of all foreign news, Middle East accounted for 22.7 percent, compared to Latin America and Africa, which comprised 8.6 percent and 5.6 percent of all international news, respectively (Larson & Hardy, 1977). Some nations (e.g. USSR, Israel, Britain and South Vietnam) dominated this news coverage (Larson & Hardy, 1977). A more recent study analyzed the coverage of 138 elections held between January 1, 1998 and May 1, 2000 (Golan & Wanta, 2003). The results indicate that only eight elections (primarily in Europe, Asia, and Middle East) received substantial coverage and 102 elections received no coverage at all. Hatchen & Scotton (2007) proposed that the international news system is

primarily rooted in Western news media, and in particular that of the U.K. and the U.S. Foreign news is largely dominated by news pertaining to Western countries, and the public do not receive enough international news from other regions. This may lead to the perception of Western countries to be superior of other nations (Hatchen & Scotton, 2007).

The object nations chosen for this study are highly visible countries in Europe (France, Germany, Russia), Asia (China, North Korea), and Middle East (Iran, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Turkey). These nations were selected for the analysis because public opinion data was only available for these countries and because media coverage of other countries is scarce and would have produced insufficient data for analysis.

Apart from quantifying the foreign news coverage, scholars tried to uncover what motivates gatekeepers to select certain foreign news over others. Several attempts to determine the predictors of international news coverage have been made. Peterson (1981) analyzed all published and unpublished international news collected by the British newspaper *The Times* for one week in January and another week in February 1975 and found that meaningfulness (the U.S., West Europe, and former or current members of British Empire were found more meaningful for the U.K. interests), national elitism (elite nations vs. nonelite nations), and negativity (negative nature of an event) played a significant role in determining which foreign news are being included in the international agenda of *The Times*.

Another study explored the global nature of the news flow by analyzing how various systematic factors influence the volume of international news (Wu, 2000). Wu (2000) investigated news stories about “guest” countries in the media of “host” countries. His research concluded that the primary predictors of the amount of news coverage (in newspapers and TV newscasts) were trade volume and presence of international news agencies. Not surprisingly, the

U.S. was the most covered country in the world, capturing roughly 18 percent of the entire world's media space. Other countries abundantly covered were France, the U.K., Russia, Bosnia, China, Germany, Italy, Japan, and Spain (Wu, 2000). These findings show that the amount of coverage given to a certain country is linked to the country's position in the world's politics, economy, and culture (Hopkins & Wallerstein, 1996). The more politically powerful a nation is, the more media attention that country receives. Coverage imparity can also be explained in terms of imbalance of distribution of financial resources and communication technologies (Chang, 1998). As an example, the U.S., performing a central role in international communications network and serving both as a sender and as a receiver, hosts more foreign journalists in Washington, DC than any other capital does (Chang, 1998).

Only a few studies analyzed international news in other countries except the U.S. One of these studies looked at newspapers from Britain, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, and Switzerland (Servaes, 1991). It investigated six European newspapers' coverage of the U.S. intervention in Grenada in 1983. The main differences in news coverage among these politically, economically and culturally diverse newspapers were located in the editorials and opinion pages, rather than in news stories (Servaes, 1991). This was due to the fact that roughly half of the stories were produced by correspondents and journalists from the paper's staff, and another half came from news agency reports (Servaes, 1991). Some themes, such as the East-West conflict, were covered more often, the fact that can be attributed to the heavy reliance on news agencies, especially agencies in major Western cities Washington and New York (Servaes, 1991).

Rice et al. (1982) assessed how a half-year period was reported in "four most prominent nations in the Atlantic alliance" during 1980: *The New York Times*, *The Times* (London),

*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, and *Le Monde* (Rice et al., p. vii). The newspapers fell in two distinctive groups pertaining to conventions of news reporting: “Anglo-American” and “Continental” (p. xiii). While German and French newspapers (“Continental” group) lavished with unabridged and unspecified opinions and judgements, American and British newspapers (“Anglo-American” group) were very careful in distinguishing between facts and opinions, emphasizing objectiveness of reporting. These findings propose that in this research study, one ought to expect roughly similar and comparable reporting from the U.S. and the U.K. newspapers.

In sum, although the world is becoming more globalized, the coverage of foreign countries in the U.S. media has been continuously shrinking over the last decades. Foreign news accounts for a small percentage of total news both on television and in the print media. Media markets with a high number of foreign nationals (immigrants) are the only exception to the rule. The low importance given by the U.S. media to foreign news is disproportionate to the big impact media coverage is believed to have on public opinion. This link between media coverage and public opinion is discussed below.

#### **i. Effects of Media Coverage of International News on Public Opinion**

After discussing the characteristics (frequency, topic, and quality of content) of media coverage about foreign news and how mass media decide to cover foreign news, this literature review continues with the effects of foreign news coverage on the audience/public opinion.

In his seminal work *Public Opinion* (1922), Lippmann presented his view of what public opinion is:

The pictures inside the heads of [...] human beings, the pictures of themselves, of others, of their needs, purposes, and relationships, are their public opinions. Those pictures which are acted upon by groups of people, or by individuals acting in the name of groups, are Public Opinion with capital letters (p. 16).

Because of the apparent importance of international media coverage, research on the impact of foreign news on public opinion needs to be expanded. What pictures of foreign countries do media paint for us? Several attempts have been made to assess this connection.

Reilly (1979) associated exposure to foreign news with relatively favorable feelings toward other countries, regardless of their region or ideological orientation. McNelly & Izcaray (1986) linked exposure to foreign news with relatively positive images of all countries. News exposure is significantly related to liking of countries and to perceptions of them as successful (McNelly & Izcaray, 1986).

Other scholars researched the issue of visibility of a nation and its impact on public opinion. Semetko et al. (1992) hypothesized that the more visible a country is in the U.S. news media, the stronger the media attention and exposure measures will be as predictors of public opinion about a country. Comparing data from a content analysis of U.S. network news and wire service coverage about nine countries to a survey measuring public opinion about those countries, Semetko et al. (1992) corroborated the hypothesis. Also, attention to international news was a better predictor of liking of the country rather than mere exposure (Semetko et al., 1992). In other words, people with high interest in foreign news had a more favorable attitude toward foreign countries than media consumers with low interest who were merely exposed to news or consumed the news inactively. Among other findings, attention to foreign news on television was found to be the highest predictor of the liking of a country, stronger than attention to news in newspapers. Also, the visibility of a country on television news arena played a key role in the prediction of public opinion about the country (Semetko et al., 1992). In short, an individual's interest and media consumption patterns influence the public opinion about foreign countries.

A different avenue of research argues for the limited influence of international media coverage on public opinion. For instance, Salwen & Matera (1992) investigated the changes of public evaluations of foreign countries over a period of time, finding that international coverage is able to alter public opinion in terms of assessing danger, but is not capable of constructing the public agenda in terms of friends and enemies of the U.S. (Salwen & Matera, 1992).

Overall, the existing research indicates that media coverage of foreign countries exerts an impact on how these countries are being perceived by the public. The degree of the impact depends on whether a person pays attention to the news or is merely exposed to the news. Also, the visibility of the country on the international news arena is likely to be a predictor of the degree of favorable feelings toward that country.

## **ii. Effects of International News Coverage on Foreign Policy**

It was proposed earlier that media coverage of foreign countries influences not only the public, but also the matters of foreign policy. This literature review of international news coverage will conclude with a brief assessment of the relationship between foreign news and foreign policy. Overall, this relationship has been highly debated by researchers, journalists, and government officials, and the research has reached contradictory conclusions as well.

The connection between media and foreign policy has a long tradition. Hamilton et al. (2006) looked at three types of historic newspapers (yellow, conservative, and mixed newspapers) to study the media's influence on the Spanish-American War, and revealed that sensational and conservative newspapers created a conducive environment for going to war.

While assessing the frequency, direction, and source of opinions on Nicaragua's crisis in 1980s in *The New York Times*, Bennett (1990) noted that a country's foreign policy is consistent with the international coverage that it carries about other nations. Katz & Lazarsfeld (1955)

presented a viable approach to assessing the transfer mechanism from public opinion to foreign policy through the means of mass media. They proposed the “two-step flow” mechanism, which regarded opinion leaders to be a crucial component of this transfer.

Analyzing the Bosnia crisis in the 1990s, Gowing (1996) argued that media are capable of yielding emotions (especially with the aid of graphic pictures of conflict), but ultimately will make no significant difference in calculations for foreign policy. However, in cases of “policy panic,” which are very rare occasions, media can exercise a significant influence on the overall government strategy (Gowing, 1996). Strobel (1997) shared the belief that media can influence foreign policy makers, but it will play only a supplementary role. His analysis of daily press briefings at the State Department corroborated the notion of media’s ability to set agendas and interfere with foreign policy decisions (Strobel, 1997). He also reported that the 1994 incident of 68 people killed in Sarajevo was widely reported because of numerous cameras at that place, while an incident of a thousand people killed off-camera in Angola during the same day was left unreported (Strobel, 1997). As discussed earlier, the amount of coverage received by a topic in the media is essential in setting the agenda for the general public and, possibly, for policy makers.

In a qualitative and quantitative content analysis of commentary and editorial articles published in *The New York Times* and *Washington Post* about the Bosnia crisis, Auerbach & Bloch-Elkon (2005) found a strong connection between the position of the press and the crisis stage. They suggested that the elite press highlighted the threat to vital U.S. interests, and, consequently, pushed Clinton administration to a more active policy (Auerbach & Bloch-Elkon, 2005).

Cohen (1963) performed a substantial analysis on the topic of the press and foreign policy. He recognized three crucial roles of the press in the field of foreign policy: a) the role of the observer of foreign policy news, b) the role of the participant in the foreign policy process, including interactions with policymakers, and, finally, c) the role of the catalyst of foreign news (Cohen, 1963). Many scholars believe that this final role is the pivotal role in the press and its agenda-setting power over the public opinion (Cohen, 1963; Wanta, Golan, & Lee, 2004).

Gilboa (2005) reviewed available literature on a communication theory of international relations that propose a key role for global television networks, such as CNN and BBC World, in determining policies and outcomes of world events. The term *CNN effect* was coined to describe the phenomena. The term corresponds to the pressure of real-time news coverage on policymakers and leaders, forcing them into moving at a high pace, accelerating international communications, and, consequently, impacting foreign policy decision-making (Gilboa, 2005). Other scholars define the CNN effect as “a theory that compelling television images [...] cause U.S. policymakers to intervene in a situation when such as intervention might otherwise not be in the U.S. national interests” (Fiest, 2001, p. 713).

In conclusion, the way mass media cover international events and foreign countries has serious consequences on what the public thinks about the outside world, and – to a degree – on how policymakers shape foreign policy. These are good reasons for scholars to keep studying international news in order to better understand these relationships and how they take place. One theory that explains how media shape the public perceptions is called agenda-setting and is discussed below.

## **B. Agenda-Setting Theory**

Agenda-setting studies investigate the transfer of salience from the media to the public (McCombs, 2004). In more practical terms, agenda-setting has been defined as ‘the idea that the news media, by their display of news, come to determine the issues the public thinks about and talks about’ (Severin & Tankard, 1988, p. 164). The theory is very compatible with, and corresponds to other social science theories, including gatekeeping, status conferral, the spiral of silence, and cultivation theory (McCombs et al., 1997; McCombs, 2004).

Agenda-setting theory is grounded in psychological and sociological concepts. Human beings feel a need for orientation, which is conceptualized in terms of relevance and uncertainty that people experience (McCombs, 2004). The relevance of a topic refers to the fact that some issues are more pivotal to an individual or to a society in large; uncertainty refers to unsubstantial information on the topic (McCombs, 2004). Agenda-setting effects are more likely to occur when a person exercises a greater need for orientation (McCombs, 2004), such as in international issues, when a person does not experience issues firsthand and needs to rely on media for information.

Agenda-setting effects vary depending on the public’s familiarity with the issue. Issues people deal with in their everyday lives are referred to as obtrusive issues, and issues that individuals cannot experience or verify by themselves are considered unobtrusive issues (McCombs, 2004). Because international news coverage is considered a fine example of unobtrusive issues; according to the agenda-setting theory, it will have greater effects on public opinion.

It takes time for agenda-setting to propagate. Previous media effects theories, such as the hypodermic theory, argued for instant effects of media messages, but modern research suggests

that at least one month of consistent media coverage is needed to show any effects on public opinion (McCombs, 2004). Specifically, an one-month period of coverage prior to assessing public opinion exerted a strong correlation; a two-month period of coverage yielded an even stronger connection; the results for the six-month period of coverage were similar to the results of the two-month period (McCombs, 2004).

Agenda-setting theory also functions over long periods of time. The theory was tested over a 23-year time period in the analysis of the dynamics of reporting on the civil rights and the issue salience in the public mind (Winter & Eyal, 1981). Twenty-seven Gallup polls, containing a question on the importance of the civil rights issue, were compared with *The New York Times* front page news coverage, revealing a robust correlation (Winter & Eyal, 1981).

Several related conceptual aspects support the agenda-setting theory. For instance, research has shown that public opinion can attend to only several issues at a time (McCombs, 2004). The public's attention span is rather limited, and various issues constantly compete for a place in the public's mind. There are also limits on the amount of media sources that people are exposed to and the size of most media agendas (McCombs, 2004). Therefore, only several issues can occupy public's mind at a certain time.

McCombs and Shaw's 1972 study of the U.S. presidential election empirically tested the hypothesis of transfer of issue salience from media to public opinion. Two sets of data were compared: a description of the public agenda through the ordered set of issues of the greatest concern, and a description of issue agenda in nine major news sources (involving a combination of newspapers, television networks, and magazines). The researchers found a nearly perfect correlation between the media agenda and the public agenda on five issues: foreign policy, law and order, economics, public welfare, and civil rights (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

McCombs and Shaw's seminal study sprouted hundreds of other empirical investigations testing the phenomenon. One study looked at the agenda-setting effects in different-size communities - the small town of Lebanon, New Hampshire; the mid-sized city of Indianapolis, Indiana; and the large metropolitan city of Chicago –during the 1976 presidential election (Shaw & McCombs, 1977). While content analyzing national television networks and local newspapers, researchers found great impact of media on all three communities (Shaw & McCombs, 1977), allowing for geographical generalization of the theory. Agenda-setting theory was confirmed in numerous investigations in other countries, including the U.K. (Soroka, 2001 as cited in McCombs, 2004), Germany (Brosius & Kepplinger, 1990), Japan (Takeshita, 1993), Argentina (Lennon, 1998), and others, constituting for widespread applications of the theory.

Several studies tested the agenda-setting hypothesis within the framework of international news coverage. Soroka (2003) tested the hypothesis on time-series data from *The New York Times* and *The Times* during 1981-2000. He examined the relationship between foreign affairs coverage and the salience of foreign affairs for the public. Foreign news mentioning the U.S. or the U.K. respectively, was found to exert greater influence on public opinion than international news not involving these countries (Soroka, 2003). This research is merited because it includes measures and implications of real-world events (such as changes in the unemployment rate and Protocol for the Assessment of Non-violent Direct Action, the index of Reuter's news leads measuring real-world indicators of foreign policy issues) in the transfer of salience (agenda-setting) model.

Wanta et al. (2004) analyzed the Gallup polls and four network newscasts in 1998. The researchers concluded that the more coverage a country receives, the more likely it is to be considered vital to U.S. interests (Wanta et al., 2004). Interestingly, unlike domestic media

coverage, the impact of foreign news required a longer time to take effect. Three-month coverage before the poll demonstrated a slightly lower correlation than a six-month coverage. While the overall trend in Wanta et al.'s study was apparent, there were several exceptions. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Russia ranked rather high on the public agenda, but received scarce media coverage, which can largely be attributed to an apparent trend among the public to associate vital U.S. interests with oil (Wanta et al., 2004). Meanwhile, Indonesia and India received significant media coverage, but were ranked low on the importance list (Wanta et al., 2004). The researchers explained the discrepancy in terms of serious political conflicts occurring during the time frame of the research study: in India, there was violence in the election of the Prime Minister, and in Indonesia there were riots against the government of President Suharto.

In light of the agenda-setting research, an attempt was made to determine issues that increase or decrease public concern. Wanta & Hu (1993) assessed the influence of international coverage on public concern in terms of analyzing various issues. While comparing the coverage of 15 categories of international news in four media outlets with the level of public concern with international problems (as reported by Gallup polls conducted from 1975 to 1990), researchers concluded that stories dealing with international conflicts involving the U.S., coverage of terrorism involving the U.S., and stories dealing with crime/drugs demonstrated the strongest agenda-setting influence. International trade not involving the U.S. and politics not involving the U.S. correlated negatively with public attention, a finding which suggests the capabilities of media coverage to decrease concern (Wanta & Hu, 1993).

This study will continue investigating whether the topic of the coverage, or the issue agenda promoted by the media coverage, affects the public opinion of an object nation. Based on the above considerations, we propose the following research questions:

**RQ1a: What were the most frequent policy issues discussed by the media in regards to each object nation?**

**RQ1b: Is there a relationship between the issue agenda promoted by the media about an object nation and that nation's rating by the public opinion in an opinion nation?**

### **C. Attribute Agenda-Setting Theory**

Recently, scholars have started to examine the agenda-setting theory on a more detailed level, called the second level agenda-setting, or attribute agenda-setting. The theory evolved from the combination of traditional agenda-setting with framing research (McCombs, 2004; Wanta et al., 2004). The attribute agenda-setting pertains to Lippmann's notion of "the pictures in our heads," arguing that media serve as a window to the world around us and a key to cognitive maps of that world (Lippmann, 1922, pp. 1-17). The following section provides a definition for attribute agenda-setting, main studies, and the application of the concept to foreign news.

It is imperative to define attribute agenda-setting in the light of traditional agenda-setting, because both theories are very common in nature. Each issue or object on the agenda has numerous characteristics called "attributes." An attribute is defined as "a generic term encompassing the entire range of properties and traits that characterize an object" (McCombs, 2004, p. 70). Attributes vary in salience within the framework of attribute agenda similar to how issues vary in salience in traditional agenda-setting (McCombs, 2004). Although there are similarities between the concepts, the two theories differ in function. While agenda-setting primarily focuses on obtaining attention, attribute agenda-setting concentrates on a subsequent step in communication, which is comprehension (McCombs, 2004). As a result of the attribute agenda-setting, "media may not only tell us what to think about, but also how to think about it,

and consequently, what to think” (McCombs & Shaw, 1993, p. 65). Ghanem (1997) states that the media achieve this function through four dimensions: subtopics, framing mechanisms, affective and cognitive elements.

The attribute agenda-setting theory has been applicable in many areas of mass communication research. Most studies have focused on political communication while investigating the second level agenda-setting theory (Golan et al., 2007; Kioussis et al., 1999; McCombs et al., 1997; Tedesco, 2001). For instance, an experimental study, which dealt with the public’s perception of political candidates, manipulated two attributes, candidate’s qualifications and personality traits (Kioussis et al., 1999). The findings supported the theory, demonstrating that manipulation of candidate attributes correlated with the subjects’ perception of politicians (Kioussis et al., 1999).

Focusing on the 1995 regional and municipal elections in Spain, McCombs et al. (1997) found that newspapers, TV news, and political advertising (both on TV and in newspapers) greatly influenced the voters’ image of parliament candidates, although they hardly impacted the voters’ image of mayoral candidates.

Tedesco (2001) tested the theory on the 2000 presidential primaries. He used content analysis for candidate press releases and network news stories in an attempt to reveal connections between candidate and network strategy frames testing the attribute agenda-setting theory (Tedesco, 2001). Interestingly, only presidential candidate McCain distinguished himself from other candidates in terms of demonstrating a high correlation of his press releases with the media. Other candidates, such as Bradley, Bush, and Gore, had press releases that were not significantly correlated with the media (Tedesco, 2001).

In a recent study, focusing on the 2004 U.S. presidential election, Golan et al. (2007) hypothesized that the salience of attributes in political advertisements would be positively related to the salience of issues in public opinion (Golan et al., 2007). The attribute agenda-setting was supported because the salience of affective attributes in political ads impacted perceived object salience. As an example, Kerry's negative ads correlated with public opinion of issues (Golan et al., 2007).

Other researchers investigated attribute agenda-setting focusing on economic news coverage. Hester & Gibson (2003) content analyzed 48 months of print and broadcast news about the economy, and collated the data with consumer economic evaluations and real economic conditions. They found that negatively framed news coverage was one of several significant predictors of consumer expectations about the future of the economy (Hester & Gibson, 2003).

The attribute agenda-setting theory has been used in the area of international communication. The researcher was able to locate two studies examining the phenomena. While examining the factors that may prognosticate coverage of international elections on U.S. newscasts, Golan & Wanta (2003) observed a great amount of negative concentration on a presumably positive topic – elections. The researchers concluded that these negative coverage patterns could be leading viewers into connecting negative attributes to the perception of countries, as the second level of agenda-setting suggests (Golan & Wanta, 2003).

Another study (Wanta et al., 2004) tested the attribute agenda-setting theory while looking at the object valence. The researchers presented each country as an object and coded for the country's attributes: positive, negative, or neutral. As predicted by the hypothesis, the more negative coverage a nation received, the more likely respondents were to think negatively about

the nation. The finding derived from a robust correlation between media coverage and public feelings toward countries (Wanta et al., 2004). Interestingly, the influence of positive and neutral coverage of a nation on public opinion had no statistical significance. There were two exceptions from the general rule. Mexico received a significant number of negative stories, but scored the fourth warmest nation. Turkey received only one negative story, but scored as a relatively cool nation.

There are several inconsistencies with the affective attribute agenda in the research of Wanta et al. (2004). As predicted by the attribute agenda-setting theory, negative media coverage correlated with negative public opinion about the country; however, the study did not demonstrate correlation between positive coverage and positive public opinion. These findings may be attributed to the analysis that the researchers performed. They analyzed the number of negative attributes for each country rather than the percentage of negative attributes from the total number of attributes for a particular nation. The same critique can be applied to their treatment of neutral and positive attributes. Also, the research did not control for potential influence on the media coverage from other significant sources, such as government-issued statements, president's agenda, and others.

In light of the previous discussion on attribute agenda-setting, this study proposes the following hypothesis and research question:

**H1: The valence of public opinion in an opinion nation about an object nation is correlated with the valence of the object nation's media coverage.**

**RQ2: Is there a correlation between negative, positive, and neutral media coverage an object nation receives and the public opinion about this object nation?**

Although this study attempts to reveal connections between media coverage, as a primary variable, and public opinion, there might be other variables that may play a significant role in the model, such as an object nation's proximity with an opinion nation. In further analysis, we will review this aspect.

#### **D. International News and Geographic, Cultural, and Economic Proximity**

Although mass media have a pivotal role in shaping the public's opinions about a topic or a country, they are not the only factor affecting opinion formation. Other elements, such as a person's education, cultural background, etc. influence how people form opinions about the world around them. When it comes to opinion about foreign countries, even variables such as country's geographical location are believed to influence public perception of that country.

Some research investigates possible relationships between a country's proximity and international news coverage (Hester, 1971; Larson & Hardy, 1977; Golan & Wanta, 2003). Scholars have been trying to establish a relationship between geographical, cultural, and economic proximity between the countries and the international coverage. It has been proposed that countries with close physical, cultural, and economic ties are more likely to be more newsworthy than distant countries. This hypothesis has been tested by several studies with controversial findings, explained below.

Cultural proximity, or cultural affinity, was found to be among the highest predictors for a country's newsworthiness. Golan & Wanta (2003) proposed to measure cultural proximity through the number of immigrants from a particular country. Hester (1971) established cultural affinity to be the determinant of international media coverage. Analyzing stories from the AP wire, the U.S. trunk wire and the Wisconsin State Wire, he found that there were significantly

more stories from the developed nations (with higher number of immigrants) than from the developing nations.

However, another study did not support this notion. Golan & Wanta (2003) did, in fact, establish significance between cultural ties and newsworthiness, but it was inversely related, denoting that the fewer immigrants from a particular country in the U.S., the more likely these countries of origin were to receive coverage. These controversial results can be attributed to the nature of the stories analyzed (only election stories were used in the analysis).

Golan & Wanta (2003) suggested that economic proximity should be measured through the ranking of a nation on the list of economic partners. Economic proximity is a debatable factor among researchers and may or may not influence foreign news coverage. Ahern (1984) analyzed various economic and political factors that might account for differences in international coverage. The study revealed that a country's GNP, trade and political relations with the U.S. influenced the amount of coverage in the U.S. media, accounting for almost 60 percent of variance (Ahern, 1984). Rosengren & Rickardsson (1974) confirmed the impact of economic proximity on foreign coverage as well, revealing that trade is a crucial variable in determining nation's newsworthiness.

However, several studies did not find a strong connection between economic proximity and foreign news coverage. Atwood (1985) claimed a weak relationship between economic proximity and foreign news coverage, stating that "news does not necessarily follow trade" (as cited in Golan & Wanta, 2003, p. 2). After a close examination of the factors that could predict coverage of international elections on newscasts, Golan & Wanta (2003) revealed that nations with low trade with the U.S. were more likely to receive election coverage than other nations.

There is also no consensus among researchers on the impact of geographic proximity on foreign news coverage. On one hand, several researchers (Chang et al., 1987; Larson & Hardy, 1977) did not find any support for the hypothesis that geographic distance from the U.S. might be a factor in how much coverage a country receives. For instance, Canada, being a close neighbor to the U.S., was not in the top 20 of countries receiving the most network television coverage in the U.S. (Larson & Hardy, 1977). While analyzing *The New York Times* and Toronto's *Globe and Mail* articles on the genocide in Sudan, Kim et al. (2007) found that the U.S. media exerted substantial influence on their Canadian counterpart, although Canadian media were independent in expressing their opinion.

On the other hand, McLean & Pinna (1958) found a definite evidence for the impact of geographic proximity on international media coverage, concluding that the farther the physical distance to the nation, the less interest in news coverage the viewer would express. Wu (1998) assessed 13 newspapers and also found evidence for impact of geographic proximity. For instance, in *Seattle Times*, 60.4 percent of coverage was allocated to Canada and only 39.6 percent to Mexico; inversely, *San Francisco Chronicle* devoted 35.4 percent to Canada and 64.4 percent to Mexico (Wu, 1998).

Research on a nation's proximity and its attributes is scarce. The main investigation of this subject was done by Golan & Wanta (2003), who analyzed the foreign coverage of nations' elections in regards to cultural, economic and geographical proximity to the U.S., and concluded that media outlets tend to focus more on negative attributes of international coverage. The researchers found that news media do not link positive attributes to countries, but rather concentrate on countries that pose immediate danger to U.S. interests or are largely unknown by the majority of the U.S. people (Golan & Wanta, 2003). The researchers went further to claim

that if the U.S. audience is only exposed to elections from countries that pose threats to the U.S. or have fewer ties with the U.S., the audience may link these negative attributes to nations in general (Golan & Wanta, 2003).

### **E. Research Questions**

In sum, this study will ask the following research questions and test the following hypotheses:

**RQ1a: What were the most frequent policy issues (issue agenda) discussed by the media in regards to each object nation?**

**RQ1b: Is there a relationship between the issue agenda promoted by the media about an object nation and that nation's rating by the public opinion in an opinion nation?**

**H1: The valence of public opinion in an opinion nation about an object nation is correlated with the valence of the object nation's media coverage.**

**RQ2: Is there a correlation between the amount of negative, positive, and neutral media coverage an object nation receives and the public opinion about this object nation?**

Also, as mentioned in the literature review, this study compares the media coverage of the object nations in the U.S. to media coverage of the object nations in the U.K.

**H2: Coverage of object nations by the two opinion nations' media will be similar in valence (negative, positive, neutral).**

## CHAPTER 3: METHOD

To test the hypotheses posed and to answer the research questions presented, this study uses public opinion survey data, content analysis data, as well as cultural, geographic, and economic proximity measures.

### A. Survey Data

To assess public opinion feelings about different object nations, the TransAtlantic Trends Survey 2004 (retrieved from The Roper Center for Public Opinion January 21, 2007), executed by Taylor Nelson Sofres is used.<sup>1</sup> In this study, CATI telephone-based interviews with a random sample were conducted between June 6, 2004 and June 26, 2004 among adult residents of 11 countries, including the U.K. and the U.S. An average of 1,000 respondents participated in each country. Completion rates for the U.K. and the U.S. were .22 and .09 respectively.

The survey asked participants to rate their feelings toward nine object nations using a “feeling thermometer” measure. The nine object nations were: Russia, Israel, North Korea, Turkey, China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, France, and Germany. The “feeling thermometer” went from 100, meaning a very warm, favorable feeling, to zero, meaning a very cold, unfavorable feeling. Participants were asked to use any number from 0 to 100. If they had no opinion or have never heard of that nation, they were asked to indicate so.

The U.S. sample was composed of 45 percent males and 55 percent females. Approximately 83 percent were white, 6.2 percent black, and 3.9 percent belonged to other race. The respondents’ age varied from 18 to 99,  $M = 49.5$ ,  $SD = 18.3$ . About 33 percent of respondents graduated from college, 31.6 percent had a high school diploma, 24 percent had a

---

<sup>1</sup> The project was sponsored by the German Marshall Fund of the United States and the Compagnia di San Paolo (Italy) with additional support from the Luso-American Foundation (Portugal), Fundación BBVA (Spain), and the Institute for Public Affairs (Slovakia).

professional degree beyond college, and 10.4 percent completed some high school. As for political orientation, 30 percent of respondents were moderate/middle of the road, 17 percent were slightly liberal, and 19 percent were slightly conservative. About 10 percent belonged to the liberal/extremely liberal group, and 17 percent were extremely conservative or conservative. Seven percent were undecided.

As for the U.K. respondents, 45 percent were males and 55 percent were females. The age varied from 18 to 92,  $M = 50.8$ ,  $SD = 17.2$ . About 38 percent graduated from high school, 24.1 percent had a college degree, 18.3 percent completed some high school, 10.5 percent had a professional degree beyond college, and 8.3 percent completed some elementary school or less. Taking into account political orientation, 35 percent were in the center, 18 percent were center left, and 19 percent were center right. About 5 percent accounted for left or extreme left, and 11 percent belonged to the right or extreme right group. Fourteen percent were undecided.

### **B. Content Analysis Data**

Content analysis is used to analyze media coverage in the opinion nations, the U.S. and the U.K. Content analysis is a research method that provides researchers with an efficient way to investigate media content (Wimmer & Dominick, 1987). Berelson (1952) defined content analysis as “a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (Berelson, 1952, p. 55). Budd et al. (1967) described the method as being preoccupied with the larger questions of the processes of effects and communication rather than with the message itself. Some of the benefits of content analysis approach include: a) “unobtrusive appraisal of communications,” b) assessment of “the effects of environmental variables and source characteristics on message content,” and c) an “empirical starting point for generating new research evidence about the nature and effect of specific

communications” (Kolbe & Albanese, 1996, p. 244). Content analysis is also the research method traditionally employed in agenda-setting studies.

### **i. Sample**

Communication scholars agree that a few newspapers and periodicals occupy an important position in the media landscape (Weiss, 1974). This is the case of *The New York Times* in the U.S. and of *The Times* in the U.K., the two publications selected for this study because of their elite status as media organizations. Numerous studies recognize the prominence of *The New York Times* among the U.S. dailies in terms of foreign policy reporting (Denhan, 1997; Merrill, 1995). It is also one of the main elite press sources for America’s foreign policy decision-makers (Denhan, 1997; Malek, 1996; Merrill, 1995). Its “Foreign Desk” news and “Editorial Desk” opinion pieces are credited with enormous impact in the foreign policy-making community (Page, 1996, p. 17).

The British newspaper *The Times* fills a similar role in the U.K. *The Times* publishes an ample amount of foreign news and “should be credited for the excellence of its foreign reports and the many special articles written by distinguished contributors” (Pierre, 1982, p. 63). Pierre (1982) granted that *The Times* is a “working tool for Britain’s elite.”

Following the research that demonstrated the superiority of the constructed week sampling techniques of media content (Lacy et al., 2001; Riffe et al., 1993; Stempel, 1952), two constructed weeks between June 26, 2003, and June 26, 2004 (the day before the survey was administered) were collected for analysis (See Appendix A).

The Lexis-Nexis news database and *The Times* website were searched for articles containing names of the nine object nations (Russia, Israel, North Korea, Turkey, China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, France, and Germany). All articles published on the selected dates were saved for

analysis, resulting in a sample of 497 articles ( $N = 497$ ). *The New York Times* published 297 articles on these object nations ( $n = 297$ ), and *The Times* published 200 ( $n = 200$ ). A news story was included if it mentioned at least one object nation. The unit of analysis was the object nation.

## ii. Coding Instrument

Coders recorded the date of the article, the type of the article and the object nation mentioned in the news. In the U.S. media, the object nation that received most frequent coverage was China (20 percent of all U.S. articles), followed by Germany (18 percent of all U.S. articles), Russia (15 percent of all U.S. articles), France (14 percent of all U.S. articles), Israel (10 percent of all U.S. articles), Iran (8 percent of all U.S. articles), Saudi Arabia (6 percent of all U.S. articles), North Korea (5 percent of all U.S. articles), and Turkey (3 percent of all U.S. articles).

In the U.K. media, the object nation that received most frequent coverage was France (27 percent of all U.K. articles) and Germany (23 percent of all U.K. articles), followed by China (14 percent of all U.K. articles), Russia (13 percent of all U.K. articles), Israel (7 percent of all U.K. articles), Iran (6 percent of all U.K. articles), Saudi Arabia (4 percent of all U.K. articles), North Korea and Turkey (each 3 percent of all U.K. articles).

Coding for valence mirrored instrument categories used by Wanta et al. (2004), indicating predominantly positive, neutral, or negative coverage. The media coverage of an object nation was coded as having negative valence if the story reported or implied that object nation's activities threaten the interests of the U.S. or the U.K., respectively. The media coverage of an object nation was coded as having positive valence if the story reported or implied that object nation's activities and values are consistent with the U.S. or the U.K. interests. Stories that demonstrated a balance of both positive and negative information were coded as neutral.

Coders also recorded the issues discussed in the news articles. The list of issues, partially adopted from the Wanta & Hu's study (1993) as well as from the public opinion survey, included: economic issues, energy issues, elections and political system, environmental issues, natural calamities/accidents/disasters, human rights, military issues and defense, nuclear issues, conflict, Iraq war, terrorism, crime, immigration issues, religion issues, science/technology issues, global epidemics, foreign policy and diplomacy, international trade, and other. For the complete coding sheet, refer to Appendix B.

### **iii. Intercoder Reliability**

Two independent coders were trained to use the instrument before proceeding to the process of coding. To ensure the accuracy and objectivity of the coding results, the researcher carried out the intercoder reliability test.

Two coders coded a random selection of 10 percent of the sample. The overall intercoder reliability for the 23 variables on the code sheet was .94 with the Holsti's formula. Intercoder reliability scores varied from .84 to 1.00 on individual categories with the Holsti's formula. Coders were unaware of the purpose of this research.

## **C. Proximity Measures**

The present study draws on Golan & Wanta's (2003) measurements of cultural, economic, and geographic proximity. Golan and Wanta (2003) proposed that cultural proximity can be measured through the number of immigrants from a foreign nation, and economic proximity through the trade volume between two countries. Based on these measurements and a newly developed measurement of geographic proximity, we determined the proximity between the opinion nations and the object nations included in the analysis.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. has the most number of immigrants from China, Korea, and Germany, and the least number of immigrants from Turkey and Saudi Arabia (U.S. Census Bureau Population Division, 2000). According to the U.K. National Statistics, the U.K. has the largest number of immigrants from China, Germany, and France, and the smallest number of immigrants from Iran and Israel (National Statistics, 2001-2005). Individual scores are reported in Table 6 and Table 7 (See Appendix C).

Economic proximity measurements, or economic ties, were measured as the ranking of an object nation on the U.S. list of trading partners and as the ranking on the Top 80 U.K. trading partners. According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, China, Germany, and Saudi Arabia were at the very top of the list, and Turkey and Korea were not considered important trading partners at all (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2006). As for the U.K. National Statistics, strategic trading partners included Germany and France, Iran was at the bottom of the list, and North Korea was not even included in the list of 80 partners (National Statistics, 2003). Individual scores are reported in Table 6 and Table 7 (See Appendix C).

As for the geographic proximity, a three-type distinction was constructed, with type I assigned to a bordering object nation, type II assigned to an object nation on the same continent, and type III corresponding with an object nation not on the same continent. For the U.S., all object nations belonged to type III, and, therefore, this measure was excluded from analysis. For the U.K., France was a type I country, Germany was a type II country, and all other object nations belonged to type III.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This study compares public opinion feelings toward nine foreign countries (object nations) to media coverage of those object nations in order to study the first and second level agenda setting functions in the context of foreign news. The two opinion nations are the U.S. and the U.K. The nine object nations are China, France, Germany, Iran, Israel, North Korea, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. To answer the research questions and the hypotheses proposed by this study, we constructed the following statistical measures:

1) Public opinion valence (POV) measures how each object nation was perceived by the public opinion in each opinion nation (warm/positive to cold/negative). The public opinion survey measured the public's feelings toward the nine object nations on a feeling thermometer scale from (0) to (100). According to this scale, values between 0 and 50 showed negative feelings, values around 50 showed neutral feelings, and values between 50 and 100 showed positive feelings. Based on this measure, a ranking of the nine object nations by the public opinion in the two opinion nations was constructed, from the warmest most liked nation to the coldest, most disliked nation. POV serves as the dependent variable in our analysis.

In the U.S., POV shows that the public regarded Germany as the warmest nation ( $M = .61$ ,  $SD = .23$ ), followed by Israel ( $M = .60$ ,  $SD = .26$ ), Russia ( $M = .57$ ,  $SD = .21$ ), Turkey ( $M = .53$ ,  $SD = .22$ ), France ( $M = .51$ ,  $SD = .28$ ), China ( $M = .49$ ,  $SD = .24$ ), Saudi Arabia ( $M = .43$ ,  $SD = .24$ ), Iran ( $M = .34$ ,  $SD = .25$ ), and North Korea ( $M = .31$ ,  $SD = .26$ ).

The U.K. public also regarded Germany as the warmest nation ( $M = .58$ ,  $SD = .25$ ), followed by France ( $M = .57$ ,  $SD = .26$ ), Russia ( $M = .54$ ,  $SD = .21$ ), China ( $M = .52$ ,  $SD = .22$ ), Turkey ( $M = .50$ ,  $SD = .22$ ), Saudi Arabia ( $M = .49$ ,  $SD = .23$ ), Israel ( $M = .45$ ,  $SD = .24$ ), Iran ( $M = .42$ ,  $SD = .23$ ), and North Korea ( $M = .39$ ,  $SD = .24$ ).

2) Media valence (MV) measures how each object nation was covered by the media in each opinion nation (warm/positive to cold/negative). The media coverage of each object nation was measured as negative (0), neutral (1), and positive (2). Based on this scale, a ranking of the nine object nations was created, from the most positively covered to the most negatively covered. MV is used as an independent variable in this analysis, needed to test whether attribute agenda-setting power of mass media applies to perceptions of object nations.

The U.S. media covered Germany ( $M = .99$ ,  $SD = .60$ ) and China ( $M = .99$ ,  $SD = .54$ ) very positively, followed by Israel ( $M = .98$ ,  $SD = .57$ ), France ( $M = .95$ ,  $SD = .64$ ), Russia ( $M = .85$ ,  $SD = .66$ ), Turkey ( $M = .64$ ,  $SD = .67$ ) and Saudi Arabia ( $M = .64$ ,  $SD = .49$ ), Iran ( $M = .36$ ,  $SD = .49$ ), and North Korea ( $M = .25$ ,  $SD = .44$ ).

The U.K. media covered France ( $M = 1.09$ ,  $SD = .45$ ) most positively, followed by China ( $M = 1.03$ ,  $SD = .57$ ), Saudi Arabia ( $M = .90$ ,  $SD = .32$ ), Germany ( $M = .88$ ,  $SD = .53$ ), Russia ( $M = .75$ ,  $SD = .57$ ), Israel ( $M = .67$ ,  $SD = .69$ ), Turkey ( $M = .63$ ,  $SD = .52$ ), Iran ( $M = .38$ ,  $SD = .50$ ), and North Korea ( $M = .29$ ,  $SD = .49$ ).

3) Issue agenda (IA) measures the issue agenda promoted by the opinion nation media about each object nation. Each article in the sample was coded for policy issues such as economy, foreign policy, military issues, conflict, etc., and an issue agenda emerged in relationship to each object nation. For each opinion nation media, the U.S. and the U.K., we selected the most frequently mentioned policy issues, and we analyzed which opinion nations were the most covered along these issues. For instance, 28 percent of all the articles on international trade mention China, and 22 percent of all articles on the trade mention France, followed by Germany (17 percent of all articles on trade), Russia (15 percent of all articles on trade), Saudi Arabia (7 percent of all articles on trade), Israel (5 percent of all articles on trade),

Table 1. Rankings of nine object nations by POV and MV in the U.S. and the U.K.

|              | U.S. POV <sup>1</sup> | U.S. MV <sup>2</sup> | U.S. Media Frames            |                             |                              | U.K. POV <sup>6</sup> | U.K. MV <sup>7</sup> | U.K. Media Frames            |                             |                               |
|--------------|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
|              | <i>M</i> (Ranking)    | <i>M</i> (Ranking)   | Negative <sup>3</sup><br>(%) | Neutral <sup>4</sup><br>(%) | Positive <sup>5</sup><br>(%) | <i>M</i> (Ranking)    | <i>M</i> (Ranking)   | Negative <sup>8</sup><br>(%) | Neutral <sup>9</sup><br>(%) | Positive <sup>10</sup><br>(%) |
| Germany      | 0.61 (1)              | 0.99 (1.5)           | 18%                          | 65%                         | 17%                          | 0.58 (1)              | 0.88 (4)             | 20%                          | 71%                         | 9%                            |
| Israel       | 0.60 (2)              | 0.98 (3)             | 17                           | 68                          | 15                           | 0.45 (7)              | 0.67 (6)             | 44                           | 44                          | 12                            |
| Russia       | 0.57 (3)              | 0.85 (5)             | 30                           | 55                          | 15                           | 0.54 (3)              | 0.75 (5)             | 31                           | 63                          | 6                             |
| Turkey       | 0.53 (4)              | 0.64 (6.5)           | 45                           | 45                          | 10                           | 0.50 (5)              | 0.63 (7)             | 37                           | 63                          | 0                             |
| France       | 0.51 (5)              | 0.95 (4)             | 23                           | 59                          | 18                           | 0.57 (2)              | 1.09 (1)             | 6                            | 79                          | 15                            |
| China        | 0.49 (6)              | 0.99 (1.5)           | 15                           | 71                          | 14                           | 0.52 (4)              | 1.03 (2)             | 14                           | 69                          | 17                            |
| Saudi Arabia | 0.43 (7)              | 0.64 (6.5)           | 36                           | 64                          | 0                            | 0.49 (6)              | 0.90 (3)             | 10                           | 90                          | 0                             |
| Iran         | 0.34 (8)              | 0.36 (8)             | 64                           | 36                          | 0                            | 0.42 (8)              | 0.38 (8)             | 63                           | 37                          | 0                             |
| North Korea  | 0.31 (9)              | 0.25 (9)             | 75                           | 25                          | 0                            | 0.39 (9)              | 0.29 (9)             | 71                           | 29                          | 0                             |

\*Pearson's correlation between 1 and 2:  $\rho = .723, p < .05$ .

\*Pearson's correlation between 1 and 3:  $\rho = -.851, p < .01$ .

\*Pearson's correlation between 1 and 4:  $\rho = .533, n.s.$

\*Pearson's correlation between 1 and 5:  $\rho = .872, p < .01$ .

\*Pearson's correlation between 1 and 5:  $\rho = .872, p < .01$ .

\*Pearson's correlation between 2 and 7:  $\rho = .689, p < .05$ .

\*Pearson's correlation between 6 and 7:  $\rho = .733, p < .05$ .

\*Pearson's correlation between 6 and 8:  $\rho = -.842, p < .01$ .

\*Pearson's correlation between 6 and 9:  $\rho = .779, p < .05$ .

\*Pearson's correlation between 6 and 10:  $\rho = .559, n.s.$

Iran (3 percent of all articles on trade), North Korea (2 percent of all articles on trade), and Turkey (1 percent of all articles on trade). Specifically, this measure allows us to see which object nations appear most often in economic stories, military themed stories, conflict stories, etc. IA is the second independent variable in this analysis, and is used to test whether the first-level agenda-setting power of the media applies to foreign countries.

### **A. The Issue Agenda and Public Opinion**

Research question 1a asked what were the most frequent policy issues discussed by the media in regards to each object nation. The U.S. data show that coverage was dominated by discussion of economic issues (45 percent of all U.S. articles) and foreign policy issues (36 percent of all U.S. articles), followed by international trade (22 percent of all U.S. articles), military issues (18 percent of all U.S. articles), terrorism (17 percent of all U.S. articles), elections and Iraq war (each accounting for 16 percent of all U.S. articles), and conflict (14 percent of all U.S. articles)<sup>2</sup>.

However, this general IA was not equally distributed across all nine object nations. Certain nations dominated the coverage associated with certain issues. Table 2 shows the complete list of object nations and the issues predominantly promoted by the U.S. media for each of these nations. The numbers indicate that the media coverage of each object nation is specialized in terms of IA. Each object nation receives most of the coverage in connection with 2-3 policy issues and only marginal coverage on other issues. To illustrate, about half of all articles in the U.S. media about Russia focus on economic and foreign policy issues. More than

---

<sup>2</sup> Although some of these policy issues may seem redundant (such as economic issues vs. international trade issues, or military vs. Iraq war vs. conflict), the coding scheme prevented real overlap between these variables. Coding definitions for each issue are provided in the Appendix B. For instance, military issues included articles about budget/spending on military, defense issues, treaties, etc. Articles about the status of the army in Iraq were coded as Iraq war. However, most articles in the sample covered more than one issue at the same time. To illustrate, an article that discussed recent army events in Iraq was classified under Iraq war and also under military. If an article included discussion of the ethnic tension in Iraq, then it was also coded as conflict.

Table 2. Issue agendas of nine object nations in the U.S. media.

|                                       | <b>Russia</b>  | <b>Israel</b>  | <b>North Korea</b> | <b>Turkey</b>  | <b>China</b>   | <b>Iran</b>    | <b>Saudi Arabia</b> | <b>France</b>  | <b>Germany</b> |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|
|                                       | %<br>(Ranking) | %<br>(Ranking) | %<br>(Ranking)     | %<br>(Ranking) | %<br>(Ranking) | %<br>(Ranking) | %<br>(Ranking)      | %<br>(Ranking) | %<br>(Ranking) |
| <b>Economic issues</b>                | 43% (1)        | 22% (7)        | 30% (3)            | 18% (8.5)      | 70% (1)        | 27% (7)        | 50% (2)             | 39% (1)        | 52% (1)        |
| <b>Energy issues</b>                  | 25 (3)         | 10 (12)        | 25 (4)             | 27 (4)         | 9 (6)          | 33 (4)         | 41 (3.5)            | 11 (11.5)      | 11 (8)         |
| <b>Elections and political issues</b> | 20 (5)         | 29 (6)         | 5 (12.5)           | 27 (4)         | 8 (7)          | 21 (9)         | 23 (6)              | 14 (7)         | 11 (8)         |
| <b>Environmental issues</b>           | 8 (12.5)       | -              | -                  | -              | 1 (17.5)       | 6 (14.5)       | 5 (15)              | 2 (17)         | 1 (17.5)       |
| <b>Calamities and disasters</b>       | 3 (18)         | -              | -                  | -              | 1 (17.5)       | -              | 5 (15)              | -              | 1 (17.5)       |
| <b>Human rights issues</b>            | 5 (15.5)       | 10 (12)        | 5 (12.5)           | 18 (8.5)       | 11 (5)         | 6 (14.5)       | 18 (8)              | 5 (13)         | 8 (13.5)       |
| <b>Military issues and defense</b>    | 8 (12.5)       | 56 (1)         | 5 (12.5)           | 18 (8.5)       | 6 (9.5)        | 27 (7)         | 18 (8)              | 16 (6)         | 17 (6)         |
| <b>Nuclear issues</b>                 | 15 (7)         | 12 (10)        | 70 (1.5)           | 9 (12.5)       | 6 (9.5)        | 55 (1)         | -                   | 11 (11.5)      | 6 (15)         |
| <b>Conflict</b>                       | 12 (10.5)      | 44 (3)         | 5 (12.5)           | 9 (12.5)       | 6 (9.5)        | 18 (10)        | 14 (10.5)           | 13 (9)         | 10 (11)        |
| <b>Iraq war</b>                       | 17 (6)         | 15 (9)         | 5 (12.5)           | 27 (4)         | 3 (14)         | 30 (5)         | 18 (8)              | 20 (4)         | 21 (4.5)       |
| <b>Terrorism issues</b>               | 13 (8.5)       | 39 (4)         | 10 (7)             | 27 (4)         | 1 (17.5)       | 36 (3)         | 41 (3.5)            | 13 (9)         | 11 (8)         |
| <b>Crime issues</b>                   | 13 (8.5)       | 17 (8)         | 15 (5)             | -              | 3 (14)         | 12 (12)        | 9 (12.5)            | 4 (15)         | 10 (11)        |
| <b>Immigration issues</b>             | 5 (15.5)       | 5 (14.5)       | 5 (12.5)           | 18 (8.5)       | 3 (14)         | -              | -                   | 4 (15)         | 4 (16)         |
| <b>Religious issues</b>               | 5 (15.5)       | 32 (5)         | 5 (12.5)           | 27 (4)         | 6 (9.5)        | 27 (7)         | 14 (10.5)           | 13 (9)         | 10 (11)        |
| <b>Science and technology issues</b>  | 12 (10.5)      | 5 (14.5)       | 10 (7)             | 9 (12.5)       | 18 (3)         | 15 (11)        | 9 (12.5)            | 18 (5)         | 25 (3)         |
| <b>Global epidemics issues</b>        | 2 (19)         | -              | 5 (12.5)           | -              | 1 (17.5)       | -              | -                   | -              | -              |
| <b>Foreign policy and diplomacy</b>   | 37 (2)         | 54 (2)         | 70 (1.5)           | 45 (1)         | 16 (4)         | 48 (2)         | 55 (1)              | 36 (2)         | 27 (2)         |
| <b>International trade issues</b>     | 22(4)          | 10 (12)        | 10 (7)             | 9 (12.5)       | 30 (2)         | 9 (13)         | 27 (5)              | 34 (3)         | 21 (4.5)       |

Table 3. Issue agendas of nine object nations in the U.K. media.

|                                       | <b>Russia</b>  | <b>Israel</b>  | <b>North Korea</b> | <b>Turkey</b>  | <b>China</b>   | <b>Iran</b>    | <b>Saudi Arabia</b> | <b>France</b>  | <b>Germany</b> |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|
|                                       | %<br>(Ranking) | %<br>(Ranking) | %<br>(Ranking)     | %<br>(Ranking) | %<br>(Ranking) | %<br>(Ranking) | %<br>(Ranking)      | %<br>(Ranking) | %<br>(Ranking) |
| <b>Economic issues</b>                | 50% (1.5)      | 33% (7)        | 29% (7.5)          | 50% (2.5)      | 74% (1)        | 56% (3.5)      | 50% (2.5)           | 70% (1)        | 59% (1)        |
| <b>Energy issues</b>                  | 9 (13)         | 11 (12.5)      | -                  | -              | 23 (5.5)       | 31 (9)         | 50 (2.5)            | 12 (9)         | 5 (14.5)       |
| <b>Elections and political issues</b> | 38 (3.5)       | 22 (9)         | 29 (7.5)           | 38 (4.5)       | 23 (5.5)       | 13 (12.5)      | 10 (12.5)           | 36 (3.5)       | 29 (4)         |
| <b>Environmental issues</b>           | 3 (16.5)       | -              | 14 (10.5)          | -              | 6 (12.5)       | -              | -                   | -              | 2 (17.5)       |
| <b>Calamities and disasters</b>       | 3 (16.5)       | -              | -                  | -              | -              | -              | -                   | -              | 2 (17.5)       |
| <b>Human rights issues</b>            | 25 (8.5)       | 17 (10.5)      | -                  | 25 (7)         | 9 (10)         | 19 (11)        | 20 (10.5)           | 9 (11.5)       | 12 (11)        |
| <b>Military issues and defense</b>    | 50 (1.5)       | 50 (3.5)       | 71 (2.5)           | 13 (10.5)      | 6 (12.5)       | 56 (3.5)       | 30 (7.5)            | 30 (5)         | 34 (2.5)       |
| <b>Nuclear issues</b>                 | 6 (15)         | -              | 71 (2.5)           | -              | 11 (9)         | 44 (6.5)       | -                   | 3 (13)         | 8 (12)         |
| <b>Conflict</b>                       | 31 (5.5)       | 67 (1)         | 14 (10.5)          | 25 (7)         | 17 (7)         | 63 (1.5)       | 30 (7.5)            | 9 (11.5)       | 15 (9.5)       |
| <b>Iraq war</b>                       | 31 (5.5)       | 28 (8)         | 57 (4)             | 13 (10.5)      | -              | 50 (5)         | 40 (5)              | 27 (6)         | 20 (7)         |
| <b>Terrorism issues</b>               | 28 (7)         | 50 (3.5)       | 43 (5.5)           | 38 (4.5)       | -              | 44 (6.5)       | 30 (7.5)            | 16 (7)         | 17 (8)         |
| <b>Crime issues</b>                   | 25 (8.5)       | 39 (5.5)       | 43 (5.5)           | 50 (2.5)       | 14 (8)         | 38 (8)         | -                   | 10 (10)        | 15 (9.5)       |
| <b>Immigration issues</b>             | -              | -              | -                  | -              | -              | -              | -                   | 4 (14.5)       | 5 (14.5)       |
| <b>Religious issues</b>               | 16 (10.5)      | 39 (5.5)       | -                  | 25 (7)         | 6 (12.5)       | 25 (10)        | 50 (2.5)            | 6 (13)         | 2 (17.5)       |
| <b>Science and technology issues</b>  | 16 (10.5)      | 17 (10.5)      | 14 (10.5)          | -              | 40 (3)         | 13 (12.5)      | 20 (10.5)           | 15 (8)         | 24 (6)         |
| <b>Global epidemics issues</b>        | -              | 6 (14.5)       | -                  | 13 (10.5)      | -              | -              | -                   | 1 (17)         | 2 (17.5)       |
| <b>Foreign policy and diplomacy</b>   | 38 (3.5)       | 56 (2)         | 86 (1)             | 63 (1)         | 37 (4)         | 63 (1.5)       | 50 (2.5)            | 49 (2)         | 34 (2.5)       |
| <b>International trade issues</b>     | 9 (13)         | 11 (12.5)      | 14 (10.5)          | -              | 49 (2)         | 6 (14.5)       | 30 (7.5)            | 36 (3.5)       | 27 (5)         |

half the coverage of Israel discussed military issues and also foreign diplomacy. About 70 percent of all coverage received by North Korea is connected to nuclear issues, and the examples continue. Germany, the warmest of object nations, was covered in connection with economic issues, foreign policy and diplomacy issues.

The issue agenda promoted by the U.K. media about the nine object nations (IA) focused on economic issues (60 percent of all U.K. articles), followed by foreign policy and diplomacy (45 percent of all U.K. articles), military issues (34 percent of all U.K. articles), elections (29 percent of all U.K. articles), international trade (26 percent of all U.K. articles), Iraq war (25 percent of all U.K. articles), conflict (24 percent of all U.K. articles), and terrorism (22 percent of all U.K. articles). Similar to the U.S., this general IA was not promoted equally for all object nations. France and Germany dominated the coverage of all issues, finding that is attributed to the high frequency of articles about France and Germany (half of the articles in the U.K. media mentioned France or Germany).

Table 3 shows the complete list of object nations and the issues predominantly promoted by the U.K. media for each of these nations. The data again illustrate that the media coverage of each object nation is specialized in terms of IA. Specifically, each object nation receives the majority of its coverage in connection with a couple of policy issues and only marginal coverage about other issues. For instance, almost half of all articles in the U.K. media about Russia focus on economic and military issues. Coverage of Israel is on conflict, military issues and foreign diplomacy in more than half of all articles about Israel. More than 70 percent of all coverage received by North Korea was in the connection with nuclear issues. Also, more than 70 percent of all articles about China report economic issues.

Research question 1b asked whether there is a relationship between the issue agenda (IA) promoted by the media about an object nation and that nation's rating by the public opinion in an opinion nation (POV). Several Pearson's correlations were administered between these two measures in each opinion nation.

Table 4 and Table 5 show IA for the nine object nations. For instance, most of the economic coverage was related to China (31 percent of all U.S. articles about the economy), Germany and Russia (21 and 15 percent of all U.S. articles about the economy, respectively). While these three object nations dominated the economic theme, the other six object nations rarely appeared in foreign news about the economy, and received a mere 23 percent of all economy-themed articles combined.

Similar imbalances emerged in articles about conflict. Israel was the object nation discussed predominantly in conflict news (33 percent of all U.S. articles about conflict), followed by Russia, France, and Germany (each accounting for 13 percent of all U.S. articles about conflict). The coverage related to terrorism also had Israel on the first place (24 percent of all U.S. articles about terrorism), Iran in the second place (18 percent of all U.S. articles about terrorism), and Saudi Arabia in the third place (14 percent of all U.S. articles about terrorism). In contrast, other object nations such as China, North Korea and Turkey barely received any coverage in relationship with this issue.

In the U.S., Pearson's correlations between POV of the nine object nations and the IA promoted by the media for each object nation showed partial significance. Object nations that received a lot of conflict coverage were ranked high by the public opinion ( $\rho = .672, p < .05$ ). Object nations that received a lot of election coverage also ranked high with the public opinion ( $\rho = .689, p < .05$ ). The correlations between POV and other issues were not significant.

Table 4. Rankings of nine object nations by the U.S. public opinion valence (POV) and by the issue agenda promoted by the U.S. media for each object nation (IA).

|                               | U.S. POV <sup>1</sup> | Issue Agenda (IA)            |                              |                       |                       |                               |                             |                                |                        |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
|                               |                       | Economic issues <sup>2</sup> | Military issues <sup>3</sup> | Conflict <sup>4</sup> | Iraq war <sup>5</sup> | Terrorism issues <sup>6</sup> | Foreign policy <sup>7</sup> | Int. trade issues <sup>8</sup> | Elections <sup>9</sup> |
| <i>N</i> = 393                | (Ranking)             | %<br>(Ranking)               | %<br>(Ranking)               | %<br>(Ranking)        | %<br>(Ranking)        | %<br>(Ranking)                | %<br>(Ranking)              | %<br>(Ranking)                 | %<br>(Ranking)         |
| Germany ( <i>n</i> = 71)      | 1                     | 21%(2)                       | 17%(2)                       | 13%(3)                | 24%(1)                | 12%(4.5)                      | 13%(4)                      | 17%(3)                         | 13%(3.5)               |
| Israel ( <i>n</i> = 41)       | 2                     | 5(6.5)                       | 33(1)                        | 33(1)                 | 10(5)                 | 24(1)                         | 15(1.5)                     | 5(6)                           | 19(1.5)                |
| Russia ( <i>n</i> = 60)       | 3                     | 15(3)                        | 7(5.5)                       | 13(3)                 | 16(3.5)               | 12(4.5)                       | 15(1.5)                     | 15(4)                          | 19(1.5)                |
| Turkey ( <i>n</i> = 11)       | 4                     | 1(9)                         | 3(8)                         | 2(8.5)                | 5(7)                  | 5(7)                          | 4(9)                        | 1(9)                           | 5(8)                   |
| France ( <i>n</i> = 56)       | 5                     | 12(4)                        | 13(3.5)                      | 13(3)                 | 18(2)                 | 11(6)                         | 14(3)                       | 22(2)                          | 13(3.5)                |
| China ( <i>n</i> = 79)        | 6                     | 31(1)                        | 7(5.5)                       | 9(6)                  | 3(8)                  | 2(9)                          | 9(7)                        | 28(1)                          | 10(6)                  |
| Saudi Arabia ( <i>n</i> = 22) | 7                     | 6(5)                         | 6(7)                         | 6(7)                  | 6(6)                  | 14(3)                         | 8(8)                        | 7(5)                           | 8(7)                   |
| Iran ( <i>n</i> = 33)         | 8                     | 5(6.5)                       | 13(3.5)                      | 11(5)                 | 16(3.5)               | 18(2)                         | 11(5)                       | 3(7)                           | 11(5)                  |
| North Korea ( <i>n</i> = 20)  | 9                     | 3(8)                         | 1(9)                         | 2(8.5)                | 2(9)                  | 3(8)                          | 10(6)                       | 2(8)                           | 2(9)                   |

\*Pearson's correlation between 1 and 4:  $p = .672, p < .05$ .

\*Pearson's correlation between 1 and 9:  $p = .689, p < .05$ .

\* Pearson's correlations between the following pairs 2-8, 3-4, 3-5, 3-7, 3-9, 4-5, 4-7, 4-9, 5-9, 7-9 were also significant,  $p < .05$ .

Table 5. Rankings of nine object nations by the U.K. public opinion valence (POV) and by the issue agenda promoted by the U.K. media for each object nation (IA).

| N = 252               | U.K. POV <sup>1</sup><br>(Ranking) | Issue Agenda (IA)            |                              |                       |                       |                               |                             |                                |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
|                       |                                    | Economic issues <sup>2</sup> | Military issues <sup>3</sup> | Conflict <sup>4</sup> | Iraq war <sup>5</sup> | Terrorism issues <sup>6</sup> | Foreign policy <sup>7</sup> | Int. trade issues <sup>8</sup> | Elections <sup>9</sup> |
|                       |                                    | %<br>(Ranking)               | %<br>(Ranking)               | %<br>(Ranking)        | %<br>(Ranking)        | %<br>(Ranking)                | %<br>(Ranking)              | %<br>(Ranking)                 | %<br>(Ranking)         |
| Germany (n = 59)      | 1                                  | 23%(1)                       | 23%(2)                       | 26%(2)                | 25%(2)                | 25%(2)                        | 28%(1)                      | 23%(1.5)                       | 23%(2)                 |
| Israel (n = 18)       | 7                                  | 12(4)                        | 5(5)                         | 3(7.5)                | 7(5)                  | 5(5.5)                        | 6(5)                        | 9(5)                           | 8(5.5)                 |
| Russia (n = 32)       | 3                                  | 16(3)                        | 10(4)                        | 11(4)                 | 12(4)                 | 12(4)                         | 14(4)                       | 16(3)                          | 11(4)                  |
| Turkey (n = 8)        | 5                                  | 4(9)                         | 4(7)                         | 3(7.5)                | 4(6.5)                | 3(8)                          | 2(8)                        | 4(7.5)                         | 3(8.5)                 |
| France (n = 67)       | 2                                  | 19(2)                        | 28(1)                        | 31(1)                 | 26(1)                 | 28(1)                         | 24(2)                       | 23(1.5)                        | 24(1)                  |
| China (n = 35)        | 4                                  | 9(5)                         | 20(3)                        | 15(3)                 | 18(3)                 | 17(3)                         | 16(3)                       | 10(4)                          | 15(3)                  |
| Saudi Arabia (n = 10) | 6                                  | 5(7.5)                       | 4(7)                         | 4(5)                  | 3(8)                  | 4(7)                          | 4(6.5)                      | 4(7.5)                         | 5(7)                   |
| Iran (n = 16)         | 8                                  | 7(6)                         | 4(7)                         | 3(7.5)                | 4(6.5)                | 5(5.5)                        | 4(6.5)                      | 8(6)                           | 8(5.5)                 |
| North Korea (n = 7)   | 9                                  | 5(7.5)                       | 1(9)                         | 3(7.5)                | 2(9)                  | 2(9)                          | 1(9)                        | 3(9)                           | 3(8.5)                 |

\*Pearson's correlation between 1 and 2:  $\rho = .711, p < .05$ .

\*Pearson's correlation between 1 and 3:  $\rho = .881, p < .01$ .

\*Pearson's correlation between 1 and 4:  $\rho = .879, p < .01$ .

\*Pearson's correlation between 1 and 5:  $\rho = .862, p < .01$ .

\*Pearson's correlation between 1 and 6:  $\rho = .812, p < .01$ .

\*Pearson's correlation between 1 and 7:  $\rho = .854, p < .01$ .

\*Pearson's correlation between 1 and 8:  $\rho = .857, p < .01$ .

\*Pearson's correlation between 1 and 9:  $\rho = .782, p < .05$ .

\* Pearson's correlations between all issue agendas were also significant,  $p < .05$ .

Comparing individual issue agendas (IA), certain significant patterns emerged. The countries most frequently mentioned in the economic coverage (China, Germany and Russia) were also the most frequently mentioned in regards to international trade. Military issues and conflict topics were also highly correlated, as the same object nations (Israel, Germany, France and Iran) were most frequently covered from this angle. Therefore, there is a lot of overlap in the issue agenda promoted by the U.S. media coverage about these nine object nations.

This analysis was repeated for the U.K. Pearson's correlations were administered between the ranking of the object nations by the U.K. public opinion (POV) and the issue agenda promoted by the U.K. media for each object nation (IA). This test showed significance. The U.K. POV is highly correlated with all the issues, because Germany and France (two warmest nations) received the most coverage on all the issues.

## **B. Public Opinion and Media Coverage**

The first hypothesis posited that the valence of public opinion in an opinion nation about an object nation (POV) is correlated with the valence of the object nation's media coverage (MV). This hypothesis was supported.

Pearson's correlation between the U.S. MV and the U.S. POV was significant ( $\rho = .723$ ,  $p < .05$ ), showing a positive relationship between the media coverage and the public's perception of the nine object nations.

Specifically, the following similarities between the MV and the POV were uncovered. Iran and North Korea received negative coverage in the U.S. media ( $M_{Iran} = .36$ ,  $SD = .49$  and  $M_{North Korea} = .25$ ,  $SD = .44$ ) and equally negative public opinion rating ( $M_{Iran} = .34$ ,  $SD = .25$  and  $M_{North Korea} = .31$ ,  $SD = .26$ ). On the other hand, Israel and Germany were covered rather favorably by the U.S. media ( $M_{Israel} = .98$ ,  $SD = .57$  and  $M_{Germany} = .99$ ,  $SD = .60$ ) and were

perceived as warm countries by the U.S. public ( $M_{Israel} = .60$ ,  $SD = .26$  and  $M_{Germany} = .61$ ,  $SD = .23$ ).

The same analysis was repeated with the U.K. media and the U.K. public opinion data. Pearson's correlation between the U.K. MV and the U.K. POV was significant ( $\rho = .733$ ,  $p < .05$ ), indicating the same positive relationship between the media coverage and public opinion about nine object nations.

To illustrate, North Korea and Iran received predominantly negative coverage in the U.K. media ( $M_{Iran} = .38$ ,  $SD = .50$  and  $M_{North Korea} = .29$ ,  $SD = .49$ ) and were perceived as rather cold nations by the U.K. public ( $M_{Iran} = .42$ ,  $SD = .23$  and  $M_{North Korea} = .39$ ,  $SD = .24$ ). France and China were both portrayed as positive countries in the U.K. media ( $M_{France} = 1.09$ ,  $SD = .45$  and  $M_{China} = 1.03$ ,  $SD = .57$ ) and were perceived as warm nations by the U.K. public ( $M_{France} = 0.57$ ,  $SD = .26$  and  $M_{China} = 0.52$ ,  $SD = .22$ ).

### **C. Media Frames and Public Opinion**

The second research question asked whether there is a correlation between the percentage of negative, positive, and neutral media frames about an object nation and the public opinion about this object nation (POV). To answer this research question, we ran Pearson's correlations between the public rating of each object nation (POV) and the percentage of negative, neutral, and positive media frames of that object nation. The data analysis yielded somewhat different results for the two opinion nations analyzed, the U.S. and the U.K.

In the U.S., negative media frames were related to the POV about the nine object nations ( $\rho = -.85$ ,  $p < .01$ ), meaning that the more negative media frames an object nation received, the more likely it is to be perceived as a cold nation by the U.S. public. For instance, the object nations that received the highest number of negative media frames were North Korea (75 percent

of all media frames on North Korea) and Iran (64 percent of all media frames on Iran). These object nations were also regarded as the coldest nations by the U.S. public. On the other hand, positive media frames were also correlated with the U.S. POV, showing that the more frequently positive media frames an object nation received, the more likely it is to be regarded as a warm nation by the U.S. public ( $\rho = .87, p < .01$ ). To illustrate, Germany received the second highest number of positive media frames (17 percent of all media frames on Germany) and was ranked number one by the U.S. public opinion. Also, North Korea and Iran did not receive any positive media frames and ranked the lowest by the U.S. public opinion. Neutral media frames about object nations did not correlate with the U.S. public opinion. Such is the case with Israel, which received 68 percent of neutral media frames, but still was perceived as a warm nation. For a complete list of the U.S. media frames, refer to Table 1.

In the U.K., negative media frames were also linked to the POV ( $\rho = -.84, p < .01$ ). For instance, North Korea and Iran received the highest number of negative media frames (71 percent of all North Korea media frames and 63 percent of all Iran media frames) and were perceived as very cold nations. Interestingly, the U.K. POV correlated with the U.K. neutral media frames ( $\rho = .70, p < .05$ ). To illustrate, Germany received a large number of neutral media frames (71 percent of all media frames on Germany) and was regarded as the warmest nation, and France also received a large number of neutral media frames (79 percent of all media frames on France) and was perceived as the second warmest nation. Contrary to the findings in the U.S., the U.K. POV did not have any relationships with the U.K. positive media frames. Four out of the nine object nations (North Korea, Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia) did not receive any positive media frames. Table 1 contains the complete list of media frames in the U.K. media.

#### **D. Comparison of Media Coverage in the U.S. and the U.K.**

The second hypothesis posited that the coverage of the nine object nations by the opinion nations' media (MV) will be similar in valence (negative, positive, neutral) in both the U.S. and the U.K. This hypothesis was confirmed. Pearson's correlation between the U.S. MV and the U.K. MV was significant ( $\rho = .689, p < .05$ ), showing similarities in how the nine object nations were covered by the media in the U.S. and the U.K. Interestingly, the POV in two opinion nations were also correlated ( $\rho = .667, p < .05$ ).

To illustrate, there was predominant negative coverage of North Korea in both the U.S. media ( $M = .25, SD = .44$ ) and the U.K. media ( $M = .29, SD = .49$ ). Iran also received negative coverage both in the U.S. media ( $M = .36, SD = .49$ ) and the U.K. media ( $M = .38, SD = .50$ ). The U.S. media reported rather positively on China ( $M = .99, SD = .54$ ), France ( $M = .95, SD = .64$ ), Germany ( $M = .99, SD = .60$ ), and Russia ( $M = .85, SD = .66$ ), similarly to how the U.K. media reported on these countries: China ( $M = 1.03, SD = .57$ ), France ( $M = 1.09, SD = .45$ ), Germany ( $M = .88, SD = .53$ ), and Russia ( $M = .75, SD = .57$ ).

The main discrepancy in comparing the coverage of object nations by the two opinion nations was recorded in the reporting on Saudi Arabia and Israel. The U.S. media were more likely to cover Israel in the positive light ( $M = .98, SD = .57$ ) than the U.K. media ( $M = .67, SD = .69$ ). Saudi Arabia received more positive coverage in the U.K. media ( $M = .90, SD = .32$ ) than in the U.S. media ( $M = .64, SD = .49$ ).

When analyzing negative, neutral, and positive media frames separately in the coverage of the nine object nations by the two opinion nations, North Korea, Iran and Saudi Arabia did not receive any positive media frames in either the U.S. or the U.K. media. North Korea received 75 percent negative media frames in the U.S. and 71 percent negative media frames in the U.K.

media. Similarly, Iran accounted for 64 percent of negative media frames in the U.S. media and 63 percent of negative media frames in the U.K. media. Neutral media frames for China constituted 71 percent of the total number of frames on China in the U.S. media and 71 percent of the frames in the U.K. media. Neutral media frames were also predominant in the coverage of France and Germany by the U.K. media. France and Germany received the highest number of positive media frames in the U.S. media (18 percent and 17 percent, respectively) and China and France accounted for the highest number of positive media frames in the U.K. media (17 percent and 15 percent, respectively). Interestingly, the U.K. media contained significantly less positive media frames than the U.S. media for each object nation except for China.

Apart from comparing the valence of coverage by the U.S. and the U.K. media, we also compared the issue agenda (IA) promoted by these two opinion nations in the coverage of the nine object nations. Two analyses were performed: we correlated the overall issue agendas for opinion nations (using the rankings of the most frequently mentioned issues in the U.S. media and the U.K. media) and we analyzed relationships between opinion nations' media coverage in regards to individual issues (using the rankings by the issue agenda promoted by the U.S. media and the U.K. media for each object nation from Table 4 and 5).

There was a significant relationship between the overall issue agendas in the opinion nations ( $\rho = .886, p < .01$ ). The issues that ranked high in the U.S. media (i.e., economic issues and foreign policy issues) were also predominant in the U.K. media. As for the opinion nations' reporting on individual issues, the U.S. media and the U.K. media were similar in reporting economic issues ( $\rho = .714, p < .05$ ) and international trade ( $\rho = .798, p < .01$ ).

### **E. Geographic, Economic and Cultural Proximity**

To analyze the relationships between the public opinion about an object (POV) and economic and cultural proximity of the object nation to the opinion nation, several Pearson's correlations were administered.

Based on the proximity measures in Table 6 in Appendix C, the economic proximity ranking of the nine object nations to the U.S. was constructed with (1) corresponding to the object nation that is the highest ranking U.S. trading partner and (9) corresponding to the U.S. lowest trading partner. The U.S. trading partners (in descending order) are China, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Russia, France, Israel, Iran, Korea, and Turkey.

In the same fashion, the cultural proximity ranking of the nine object nations to the U.S. was constructed with (1) corresponding to the object nation with the highest number of immigrants to the U.S. and (9) corresponding to the object nation with the lowest number of immigrants. The object nation with the highest number of immigrants in the U.S. is China, followed by Korea, Germany, Russia, Iran, France, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey.

Pearson's correlations showed no relationship between the public opinion valence (POV) and cultural and economic proximity of the nine object nations to the two opinion nations. To illustrate, Israel was ranked as the second warmest nation by the U.S. public opinion, but was not a strategic trading partner, ranking the sixth on the economic proximity measure. China had the largest number of immigrants to the U.S., but it was ranked mediocre by the U.S. public opinion.

The analysis was repeated in the U.K. Based on the proximity measures in Table 7 in Appendix C, the economic proximity ranking of the nine object nations to the U.K. was constructed. The U.K. trading partners (in descending order) are Germany, France, China, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Russia, Israel, Iran, and North Korea. Similarly to the U.S., the cultural

proximity ranking of the nine object nations to the U.K. was constructed. The object nation with the highest number of immigrants in the U.K. is China, followed by Germany, France, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Israel, Iran, and North Korea.

There was a relationship between the economic proximity of the nine object nations to the U.K. and the public opinion in the U.K. (POV) ( $\rho = .883, p < .01$ ), showing that the warmest object nations were more likely to be the highest ranking U.K. trading partners. For instance, Germany, the warmest object nation, ranked as the first trading partner with the U.K. Also, France, the second warmest nation, ranked as the second highest trading partner. Pearson's correlation also showed a significance between the cultural proximity of the nine object nations to the U.K. and the public opinion in the U.K. (POV) ( $\rho = .817, p < .01$ ). Again, Germany and France were perceived as very warm nations and also had the second and third highest number of immigrants to the U.K.

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION**

This study attempts to contribute to the body of research on public opinion and media coverage of foreign news. The primary objective was to investigate the connections between media coverage of an object nation and the public opinion feeling toward that nation. The second objective of this research was to extract connections between the issue agenda of the media coverage regarding an object nation and an object nation's rating by public opinion. Thirdly, this study compared the coverage of the nine object nations by two opinion nations. Finally, the study tested whether an object nation's geographical, cultural and economic proximity with the opinion nation correlates with the public opinion about that object nation.

### **A. The Issue Agenda and Public Opinion**

The first research question asked whether there is a relationship between the issue agenda (IA) promoted by the media about an object nation and that nation's rating by the public opinion (POV) in an opinion nation. In the U.S., the analysis showed puzzling connections. Object nations that received a lot of conflict coverage were ranked high by the public opinion, a finding that does not support previous literature. Generally, scholars have found that stories with the highest levels of conflict resulted in public concern with international problems (e.g. Auh, 1977; MacKuen & Coombs, 1981; Wanta & Hu, 1993). In our study, the object nations with the most conflict coverage are Israel, Russia, Germany, and France, and they all received high ratings by the public opinion. The results can be explained through the special connections of these object nations with the U.S.

Israel received the utmost conflict coverage because of the ongoing tensions and military outbreaks with Palestinians. At the same time, Israel was regarded as a very warm nation and received neutral media coverage in 68 percent of the times and only minimal negative (17

percent) and positive (15 percent) media coverage. Thus, although this object nation was mentioned predominantly in conflict stories, the majority of the media frames were neutral, and Israel was not portrayed as an initiator of conflict. For example, in a story about Israel's cabinet agreeing to release 300 Palestinian prisoners responding to the major Palestinian demand in peace negotiations, Israel is being portrayed neutrally in a conflict-theme story (Israeli-Palestinian conflict) (*The New York Times*, July 7, 2003). Another example is a story about the debate in Israel over whether to withdraw soldiers and settlers from Gaza (*The New York Times*, May 14, 2004). In this story, Israel is portrayed neutrally, but the major topic in the story is, again, Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Also, the majority of articles about conflict in Israel discuss conflict with other countries, not with the U.S. Thus, from this example, one can conclude that the valence of the media coverage (the attribute agenda) is more powerful in influencing the public than the issue agenda promoted by the same media.

The findings about Israel being perceived as a very warm nation are also attributed to the long term U.S. - Israel relations. The U.S. foreign policy of sympathy and buttress for the development of a Jewish homeland in 1947 originated these relations, which further developed into mutually beneficial partnership that connects militarily powerful Israel with the U.S., aspiring to balance competing interests in the Middle East.

Other object nations mentioned in connection with conflict frames but still perceived as rather warm by the U.S. public opinion are Russia, Germany, and France. These object nations received frequent conflict coverage in the U.S. media. These object nations play key roles in the world politics and were often mentioned in stories about conflict in other countries. To illustrate, Germany and France were mentioned in a story about a rebel group in Chad holding one of North Africa's most powerful terrorists and attempting to turn him over to the United States and

its allies, i.e. Germany and France (*The New York Times*, May 14, 2004). Even though the previous literature on the topic suggests that conflict coverage of a country results in the negative perception of this country, the present findings argue that it is imperative to look at the countries that are involved in the conflict. That is, the conflict between an object nation and an opinion nation might result in negative portrayal of this object nation in the opinion nations media, whereas the coverage of the conflict between an object nations and some other nation might not directly translate into negative perceptions of this object nation in the opinion nation.

In the U.S., countries that received a lot of election coverage (France, Germany, Russia, and Israel) also ranked high with the public opinion (POV), a finding which is contrary to the previous literature on the topic that suggests that the broadcast media report more on the elections in countries that pose potential threats and are relatively unknown to the U.S. (Golan & Wanta, 2003). This discrepancy in findings may be attributed to the fact that Golan & Wanta (2003) analyzed broadcast media, and this research reviewed print media. Another possible explanation is the fact that these four warmest nations in this study were also the most frequently mentioned nations and they held elections during the time frame of the study (Russian presidential election on March 14, 2004; French senatorial election on September 26, 2004; European Parliament election in Germany on June 13, 2004; and Israeli legislative election on January 28, 2003). Also, during the time frame of the study, Germany, Russia, and France might have been perceived as closely related to the U.S. interests, since the Iraq war was in its initial stage and these countries had not taken firm stance on the issue yet, which could have been either a pro-American or anti-American interest. We tend to conclude that the positive association between the election coverage and POV is not causal but due to chance. In other words, if an

object nation's election is being discussed in the media frequently, it will not necessarily lead to a favorable POV.

In the U.K., the public rating of the nine object nations (POV) and the issue agenda of the U.K. media (IA) correlated significantly. In all eight issues used for analysis, object nations that received a lot of media coverage on all eight issues were ranked high by the U.K. This finding is attributed to the fact that France and Germany, being the closest neighbors and the strategic partners in the European Union with the U.K., have also received the most overall coverage of all issues. Specifically, Germany and France ranked first or second on all issues analyzed.

Thus, the findings suggest that there might be partial correlations between the issue agenda (IA) promoted by the media about object nations and the public opinion about these object nations (POV). However, these relationships are multifaceted and issue-specific. Because the statistical tests were not significant in the U.S., but significant in the U.K., no clear conclusions can be drawn about the relationship between the IA and the POV. This connection needs to be investigated more thoroughly by future research. Our analysis, at best, indicates that a possible relationship, if it exists, is not a direct one. In other words, the IA alone is not significantly correlated with the public opinion ranking (POV). If the issue agenda affects public opinion ranking on of an object nation, factors such as the valence of the coverage, the diplomatic relationships between the opinion nation and the object nation, even the frequency of the coverage, mediate that relationship.

### **B. Public Opinion and Media Coverage**

The first hypothesis posited that the valence of public opinion in an opinion nation about an object nation (POV) is correlated with the valence of the object nation's media coverage (MV). This hypothesis was supported. The results showed a clear relationship between media

coverage of object nations (MV) and how individuals perceive those nations, finding that is consistent with the previous literature on the attribute agenda-setting (e.g. Golan & Wanta, 2003; Wanta, Golan, & Lee, 2004).

In the U.S., the nations that received the utmost positive coverage (Germany, Israel, and Russia) were regarded as warm nations, whereas highly negative U.S. media coverage of Iran and North Korea corresponded with the U.S. public's negative perception of these nations. There are several explanations for the very negative media coverage and very cold feelings toward Iran and North Korea. Relations between North Korea and the U.S., which developed primarily during the Korean War, are highly tense with the U.S. public being suspicious toward the North Korea's nuclear program and perceiving North Korea as an imminent attack to the U.S., which is supported by the findings that the U.S. media coverage of North Korea is highly negative and that articles on North Korea mentioned heavily nuclear issues and used strong language, such as: "the administration places [priority] on its effort to stop the spread of the world's deadliest weapons to terrorist groups and anti-American, unpredictable states like North Korea" (*The New York Times*, May 14, 2004, p. 4). Findings about North Korea are consistent with the previous research. Wanta, Golan, & Lee, (2004) found North Korea to be very negatively portrayed in the U.S. broadcast media and be regarded as one of the three coldest nations.

As for Iran, there is a clear public opposition to Iranian attempts to produce nuclear weapons, which was documented in the U.S. media. The finding is supported by the Pew Global Attitudes Project, which found citizens around the world (including the U.S. public) expressing substantial concern about the threat posed by a nuclear-armed Iran (Global Unease With Major World Powers, 2007). Such is the case in one of the articles that report on President Bush referring to Iran as a "more compelling threat" than Iraq (*The New York Times*, May 30, 2004, p.

12). In previous research on covering Iran in the U.S. broadcast media, Wanta, Golan, & Lee, (2004) found a substantial amount of negative coverage. This indicates that mass media has been consistent in the coverage of Iran over the last few years promoting the same issue agenda (centered around nuclear topics) and attribute agenda (negative valence). This strongly impacted the public opinion in rating Iran as one of the coldest countries.

Although the overall relationship between the media coverage of object nations (MV) and public opinion about these object nations (POV) is apparent, there were some discrepancies in regards to China. The U.S. covered China positively, but the U.S. public did not consider China as a warm nation. The Pew Global Attitudes Project finds a similar pattern and attributes it to the concern of the U.S. public with the China's growing military resources and with the possible impact of China's economic power on the U.S. (Global Unease With Major World Powers, 2007). Most of the media coverage of China, however, was neutral in nature, because the U.S. media exerted neutral reporting on economic and international trade issues about China.

In the U.K., object nations that were regarded as the warmest (Germany, France, and Russia), received very warm media coverage as well. Most articles about Germany and France by the U.K. media covered economic issues and foreign policy. Topics with negative connotations, such as conflict and crime, represented a very small number of articles. As the closest to the U.K. neighbor and as a strategic partner, France is sharing cultural ties and traditions of cordial and cooperative relationships, which is reflected in both, the U.K. public opinion and the U.K. media. As an example, in one story, France is mentioned as a collaborator on obesity research project, led by British scientists (*The Times*, May 22, 2004). Relations between Germany and the U.K. are often being referred to as the Franco-German Partnership, established after 1945. As the most enthusiastic proponents of the further integration of the

European Unions, these two nations are often referred to as the "twin engines" or "core countries," which confirms the findings of very warm feelings toward Germany and very positive media coverage. To illustrate, one of the articles report on the collaboration of Germany and the U.K. in the construction of the pipeline from Russia, under the Baltic Sea, through Germany and eventually to Britain (*The Times*, June 26, 2003).

On the other hand, object nations that received highly negative rankings from the U.K. public (Iran and North Korea) scored the lowest on the valence of the U.K. media coverage (MV), a finding consistent with the U.S. media coverage of these object nations. One example of very tense relationships between Iran and the U.K. is the quote from *The Times*, "Iran has responded angrily to remarks by Tony Blair who indirectly referred to it as a 'rogue, repressive' state cowed by Iraq's experience into co-operating with the UN nuclear watchdog" (*The Times*, November 3, 2003).

One of the most visible discrepancies between the U.K. media coverage (MV) and the U.K. public opinion (POV) was in the evaluation of Saudi Arabia. In the U.K., Saudi Arabia was regarded as a rather negative nation, but received the third most positive coverage. The discrepancy might be attributed to the fact that the U.K. media reported on Saudi Arabia as an important player in the world oil market and as a major oil-producer. Also, the U.K. media heavily mentioned Saudi Arabia as a collaborator with the U.K. on energy issues. For instance, one article mentions Saudi Arabia in the story about a significant drop in oil prices in the U.K. (*The Times*, October 21, 2003).

Overall, the findings suggest for strong relationships between the valence of public opinion in an opinion nation about an object nation (POV) and the valence of the object nation's media coverage (MV), as suggested by the previous literature on the topic (e.g. Golan & Wanta,

2003; Wanta, Golan, & Lee, 2004) and the attribute agenda-setting theory. The theory suggests that media exerts a lot of power in setting the agenda related to unobtrusive issues (McCombs, 2004). Since international issues are not first hand issues but rather unobtrusive issues, we observe a strong relationship between the POV and the MV, as predicted by the agenda-setting theory.

McCombs (2004) argues that attribute agenda-setting theory incorporates such communication concepts as status conferral, stereotyping, image building, and gatekeeping. This analysis showed that, indeed, the U.S. and the U.K. media promote certain stereotypes. For instance, North Korea and Iran are predominantly being reported on the issue of nuclear proliferation and are treated as a threat to the world, which is largely reflected in the predominant public opposition to Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons (Global Unease With Major World Powers, 2007). Also, the majority of articles about China are associated with economic developments and international trade, which portrays China as an important economic partner to both the U.S. and the U.K., but does not necessarily promote favorable feeling about China in the public opinion, since both the U.S. and the U.K. public regard China as a mediocre nation. This finding is consistent with the results of the in-depth global attitude report showing the flagging views of China as an emerging superpower (Global Unease With Major World Powers, 2007). Media coverage of foreign countries is, therefore, limited. Both the public and media tend to focus on a few issues about a foreign nation at one time, which is consistent with the propositions of the agenda-setting theory (McCombs, 2004).

### **C. Media Frames and Public Opinion**

The second research question asked whether there is a correlation between the percentage

of negative, positive, and neutral media frames about an object nation and the public opinion about this object nation.

In the U.S., more negative media frames were more likely to lead to the negative perception of an object nation, a finding that is consistent with the previous literature (e.g. Wanta, Golan, & Lee, 2004). Similarly, positive media frames were more likely to promote favorable feelings toward the nine object nations. In their study, Wanta, Golan, & Lee (2004) did not find similar relationship. They attributed the discrepancy to the fact that several warm nations (Italy, Mexico, Brazil, and Germany) received no positive media coverage and, also, no negative media coverage (with the exception of only marginal negative coverage on Mexico) (Wanta, Golan, & Lee, 2004). The findings conveyed to the individuals the impression that, while these nations are not predominantly positive, there is no apparent threat to the U.S. (Wanta, Golan, & Lee, 2004). Neutral media frames in the U.S. media, as supported by previous literature (e.g. Wanta, Golan, & Lee, 2004), did not correlate with the public opinion, which is attributed to the fact that neutral coverage should not inflict positive or negative reaction from the public.

In the U.K., as predicted, negative media frames were more likely to lead to the negative perception of an object nation. On the other hand, findings about positive and neutral media frames were more puzzling. Neutral media frames promoted favorable feelings about the nine object nations, which can be largely attributed to the fact that Germany and France, the two warmest object nations, received over the half of all coverage which was predominantly neutral in nature. Positive media frames had no relationship with the U.K. public opinion, the finding that is attributed to the fact that North Korea, Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia received no positive media coverage.

In sum, the percentage of negative frames was correlated with the POV rating in both opinion nations. The percentage of positive frames was also significantly correlated, but only in one of the opinion nations (the U.S.). Finally, the percentage of neutral media frames was correlated with POV only in the U.K. These findings corroborate the notion that negative coverage has the strongest agenda-setting effect on public opinion. Positive and neutral stories, however, are not clear agenda-setters. These stories may inform the public on how to perceive other countries, but if there are other stronger variables, such as diplomatic relationships, economic variables, or geographic proximity, positive and neutral coverage may be unsuccessful in determining the views of the public. For instance, while Israel received mainly neutral media coverage in the U.S. media, it was perceived as a very warm nation due to the well-established diplomatic relationships between the two countries.

#### **D. Comparison of Media Coverage in the U.S. and the U.K.**

The second hypothesis posited that the coverage of the nine object nations by the opinion nations' media will be similar in the valence (negative, positive, neutral). This hypothesis was confirmed, showing similarities in the coverage of object nations. Similarities were discovered about the issues agenda (both the U.S. and the U.K. associates the same policy issues with the nine object nations) and the MV (object nations receiving negative coverage in the U.S. tend to receive negative coverage in the U.K.).

There were also similarities in the coverage of issues by the two opinion nations. Both in the U.S. and the U.K., China received the most of the coverage of economic issues and international trade issues (more than two thirds of articles about China mentioned economy and one half mentioned international trade) because of its obvious leadership role in the global economy. Interestingly, more than a half of China articles about economy and international trade

mentioned collaboration of China with the U.S., the U.K. or other countries. Articles about Russia, Saudi Arabia, North Korea, Iran and Turkey mentioned energy issues more often than other countries. Saudi Arabia and Iran are the members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Russia is an important player in the world's oil market, and Turkey attempts to become an energy conduit to the West by completing a major oil pipeline from Baku in Azerbaijan to the port of Ceyhan in Turkey.

Not surprisingly, North Korea and Iran reported heavily on nuclear issues in both opinion nations' media (more than two thirds of articles on North Korea report nuclear issues and almost a half of articles on Iran mention the topic). Without the permission of the International Atomic Energy Agency, North Korea initialized the program for the enrichment of uranium with an attempt to produce nuclear weapons, the fact that was highly reported in the news and that escalated into one of the most critical issues in international relations. Iran was heavily mentioned in the context on nuclear issue because of the ongoing negotiations between Iran and the "EU-3," consisting of France, Germany and the U.K. on the topic of suspending the enrichment and reprocessing activities in the facilities in Natanz and Arak, Iran.

Other researchers found similar connections between the U.S. and the U.K. media as well. For instance, Hallin & Mancini (2004) grouped the U.S. media and the U.K. media in one media system and named it the North Atlantic or Liberal Model. This model is characterized by the neutral commercial press, information-oriented journalism, and strong professionalization (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Rice et al. (1982) recognize the Anglo-American model, with American and British newspapers separating opinion from facts and promoting objective reporting.

Despite the similarities of the U.S. media and the U.K. media, there were several discrepancies in the coverage of Israel and Saudi Arabia. Israel has proved to be a strategic partner to the U.S. but not the U.K., which is reflected in the media. Similarly, Saudi Arabia is a more strategic partner to the U.K. than to the U.S., which explains more positive media coverage of Saudi Arabia in the U.K. media.

### **E. Geographic, Economic and Cultural Proximity**

The research analyzed the relationship between the public opinion about an object nation in the opinion nation and economic and cultural proximity of the object nation to the opinion nation and reached uncertain results. In the U.S., there was no correlation between the economic proximity of an object nation to the U.S. and the U.S. public opinion about that nation. Previous research had inconsistent results on the topic as well. For instance, Ahern (1984) analyzed economic and political factors that could influence news coverage in the U.S. newspapers, and found that trade is one of the leading variables correlated to the amount of coverage about a nation. On the other hand, Golan & Wanta (2003) concluded that that close trading partners of the U.S. were less likely to receive media coverage. We tend to conclude that economic proximity can not be used as a predictor of a) the amount of coverage received by an object nation, b) the public opinion valence, and c) the media valence.

In the U.S., cultural proximity was not correlated either with the public opinion on the nine object nations. In the previous research on the topic, cultural proximity has been strongly associated with the amount of news coverage a country receives. For example, Burrowes (1974) concluded that stories about nations with high immigrant populations in the U.S. are more likely to be covered by the U.S. media. On the other hand, a study on elections coverage found that

nations with many ancestral ties to the U.S. were less likely to receive elections coverage in the U.S. media (Golan & Wanta, 2003).

In the U.K., however, the results showed some significant relationships. The warmest object nations were more likely to be the highest ranking U.K. trading partners, finding that confirmed the relationships between the economic proximity of an object nation to the U.K. and the U.K. public opinion about that nation. Similarly, object nations with the largest number of immigrant to the U.K. were found to be more likely perceived as the warm nations, a corroboration of the connections between the cultural proximity of an object nation to the U.K. and the U.K. public opinion about that nation. France and Germany, the two warmest nations, had a very high number of immigrants in the U.K. and were vital trading partners with the U.S., which might also be explained due to the fact that these nations are the two closest U.K. neighbors.

Thus, the findings of this study could not argue for a clear relationship between the public opinion about an object nation in the opinion nation and economic and cultural proximity of the object nation.

## **F. Conclusions**

Media can be very influential in telling us how to think about issues or objects. It is especially true in foreign news, because most people do not have first hand experience with foreign countries, and media very much provide us with how we should perceive other countries. This was confirmed by this study, which suggest that there is a strong connection between media coverage of foreign countries and public opinion.

There is a great need to explore these relationships because media tend to cover foreign nations in a very unidimensional fashion. For instance, the U.S. media covered China mostly in

the economic light, and reported on Iran and North Korea in the light of nuclear issues. In the U.K. media, researchers found connections between the frequency of coverage of a nation and the number of policies that media mention in regards to this nation.

Overall, research showed that the U.S. media and the U.K. media covered foreign nations in a similar way, a finding that might have interesting implications. It suggests that English-speaking individuals will be exposed to similar information even if they use foreign media source from other English-speaking country. The diversity of sources does not necessarily translate into diversity of content in the mainstream media. While the media are the host of many voices, a reader in search of alternative points of view needs to attend other sources apart from the elite newspapers like the *New York Times* and the *Times*.

Finally, the results of this research corroborated the notion that people tend to attend to negative information more often than to neutral or positive information. This study found a strong correlation between negative media frames and public opinion and only marginal connections between neutral and positive media frames and public opinion.

### **G. Limitations**

There are several limitations to this study. This research project limits itself to the analysis of print media. Other media sources, such as television, radio, or the Internet, might provide fruitful area for research on how mass media might exert an impact on public opinion. It is important to recognize that a more visual medium might have a larger impact on public opinion as suggested by some scholars. Also, this research did not take into account the fact that individuals might visit media outlets from different countries over the Internet, and, therefore, might be influenced by them.

Another strong consideration of this study is the survey data used for the analysis. There were only nine object nations used in the study, because the survey provided the feeling thermometer responses for these nine countries. A bigger pool of nations might demonstrate more clear results and might bring up other explanations for the findings. The nine object nations used in the study have been frequently covered over the years as they are strategic economic or political partners of both, the U.S. and the U.K. It would be interesting to repeat this study with countries that have not had a lot of background in the media. Also, the public opinion survey did not provide data about the respondents' media use patterns or their preferred sources of information. Another consideration is the low response rates for the survey in both opinion nations.

In addition, there might be other intervening variables that may exert an impact on how public perceives other nations. This study did not account for these variables. For instance, the analysis did not include any potential influence from governmental sources, such as presidential agenda or agenda of the foreign ministers. Also, the model did not account for individual diplomatic relationships that object nations might have with opinion nations. All of these variables need to be included in further analysis to draw conclusions on who exerts impact on public opinion and to what degree.

Another limitation is connected to the methodology. Content analyses are often constrained in their potential (Kolbe & Albanese, 1996) and they do not allow one to draw causal conclusions about the phenomena. Further research is needed to test the agenda-setting effects on individuals in the experimental setting.

In conclusion, despite the limitations of this research, there are significant overall implications for this project. First of all, it provides solid data in support of the attribute agenda

setting research. This research found a strong connection between the media coverage valence and the public opinion valence. Also, it is a significant project and a stepping stone for future studies in the area since it is one of the kind to test the attribute agenda-setting function of print media within the foreign news coverage. It is also important to note that the findings of this research project suggest strong corroboration for the attribute agenda setting and only partial confirmation of the first level agenda setting theory.

## REFERENCES

- Adams, W. C. (1982). Covering the world in ten minutes. In W. C. Adams, *Television coverage of international affairs*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Ahern, T. J. (1984). Determinants of foreign coverage in U.S. newspapers. In R. L. Stevenson, & D. L. Shaw, *Foreign news and the new world information order* (pp. 217-236). Ames: Iowa State University Press.
- Auerbach, Y., & Bloch-Elkon, Y. (2005). Media framing and foreign policy: The elite press vis-a-vis US policy in Bosnia, 1992-95. *Journal of Peace Research* , 42 (1), 83-99.
- Auh, T. S. (1977). Issue conflict and mass media agenda-setting. Indiana University: unpublished dissertation.
- Beaudoin, C. E., & Thorson, E. (2001). LA Times offered as model for foreign news coverage. *Newspaper Research Journal* , 22 (1), 80-93.
- Bennett, W. L. (1990). Toward a theory of press-state relations in the United States. *Journal of Communication* , 40 (2), 103-125.
- Berelson, B. (1952). *Content analysis in communications research*. Glencoe: The Free Press.
- Best, S. J., Chmielewski, B., & Krueger, B. S. (2005). Selective exposure to online foreign news during the conflict with Iraq. *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* , 10 (4), 52-70.
- Brosius, H. B., & Kepplinger, H. M. (1990). The agenda setting function of television news: static and dynamic views. *Communication Research* , 17, 183-211.
- Budd, R. W., Thorp, R. K., & Donohew, L. (1967). *Content analysis of communications*. New York: Macmillan.
- Burrowes, R. (1974). Mirror, mirror on the wall: A source comparison study of inter-nation event data. In J. N. Rosenau, *Comparing Foreign Policies: Theories, Findings, and Methods* (pp. 383-405). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Chang, T. (1998). All countries not created equal to be news: World system and international communication. *Communication Research* , 25, 528-566.
- Chang, T. K., Shoemaker, P., & Brendlinger, N. (1987). Determinants of international news coverage in the U.S. media. *Communication Research* , 14, 396-414.

- Christie, T. B. (2006). Framing rationale for the Iraq war. *The International Communication Gazette* , 68 (5-6), 519-532.
- Cohen, B. (1963). *The press and foreign policy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Craft, S., & Wanta, W. (2004). U.S. public concerns in the aftermath of 9-11: A test of second level agenda-setting. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* , 16 (4), 456-463.
- De Vreese, C. H., Peter, J., & Semetko, H. A. (2001). Framing politics at the launch of the euro: A cross-national comparative study of frames in the news. *Political Communication* , 18, 107-122.
- Denhan, B. E. (1997). Anonymous attribution during two periods of military conflict: Using logistic regression to study veiled sources in American newspapers. *Journalism & Mass Communications Quarterly* , 74 (3), 565-578.
- Emery, M. (1989). An endangered species: The international news hole. *Freedom Forum Media Studies Journal* , 3, 151-164.
- Erikson, R. S., Luttbeg, N. R., & Tedin, K. L. (1991). *American public opinion* (4th Edition ed.). New York: Macmillan.
- Fiest, S. (2001). Facing down the global village: The media impact. In R. Kugler, & E. Frost, *The global century* (pp. 709-725). Washington, DC: National Defense University Press.
- Friedman, T. L. (2005). *The world is flat: A brief history of the twenty-first century*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Funkhouser, G. R. (1973). The issues of the sixties: An exploratory study in the dynamics of public opinion. *Public Opinion Quarterly* , 37, 62-75.
- Gatlung, J., & Ruge, M. H. (1965). The structure of foreign news. *Journal of Peace Research* , 2, 64-91.
- Ghanem, S. (1997). Filling in the tapestry: The second level agenda-setting. In M. McCombs, D. L. Shaw, & D. Weaver, *Communication and democracy: Exploring the intellectual frontiers in agenda-setting theory* (pp. 3-14). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Association.
- Gilboa, E. (2005). The CNN effect: The search for a communication theory of international relations. *Political Communication* , 27-44.
- (2007). *Global Unease With Major World Powers*. Washington, D.C.: The Pew Research Center.

- Golan, G. J., Kioussis, S. K., & McDaniel, M. L. (2007). Second-level agenda setting and political advertising. *Journalism Studies* , 8 (3), 432-442.
- Golan, G., & Wanta, W. (2003). International elections on US network news. *Gazette: The International Journal of Communication Studies* , 65 (1), 25-39.
- Goodman, R. S. (1999). Prestige press coverage of US-China policy during the Cold War's collapse and post-Cold War years. *Gazette* , 61, 391-410.
- Gowing, N. (1996). Real-time TV coverage from war. In J. Gow, R. Paterson, & A. Preston, *Bosnia by Television*. London: British Film Institute.
- Gunther, A. C. (1998). The persuasive press inference: Effects of mass media on perceived public opinion. *Communication Research* , 25 (5), 486-504.
- Gurevitch, M., & Blumler, J. G. (1990). Comparative research: The extending frontier. In D. L. Swanson, & D. Nimmo, *New directions in political communication: A resource book* (pp. 305-325). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Hallin, D., & Mancini, P. (2004). *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hamilton, J. M., Coleman, R., Grable, B., & Cole, J. (2006). An enabling environment: A reconsideration of the press and the Spanish-American war. *Journalism Studies* , 7 (1), 78-93.
- Hatchen, W. A., & Scotton, J. F. (2007). *The world news prism: Global information in a Satellite Age*. Blackwell Publishing.
- Hester, A. (1971). An analysis of news from developed and developing nations. *Gazette* , 7, 30-40.
- Hester, J. B., & Gibson, R. (2003). The economy and second-level agenda setting: A time series analysis of economic news and public opinion about the economy. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* , 80 (1), 73-90.
- Hopkins, T. K., & Wallerstein, I. (1996). *The age of transition: Trajectory of the world-system, 1945-2025*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Zed Books.
- Katz, E., & Lazarsfeld, P. F. (1955). *Personal influence: The part played by people in the flow of mass communications*. Free Press.

- Kim, J. H., Su, T. Y., & Hong, J. (2007). The influence of geopolitics and foreign policy on the U.S. and Canadian media: An analysis of newspaper coverage of Sudan's Darfur conflict. *Press/Politics* , 12 (3), 87-95.
- Kiouis, S., Bantimaroudis, P., & Ban, H. (1999). Candidate image attributes: Experiments on the substantive dimension of second level agenda setting. *Communication Research* , 26 (4), 414-428.
- Kolbe, R. H., & Albanese, P. J. (1996). Man to man: A content analysis of sole-male images. *Journal of Advertising* , 1-20.
- Kolbe, R. H., & Albanese, P. J. (1996). Man to man: A content analysis of sole-male images in male-audience magazines. *Journal of Advertising* , 25, 1-20.
- Korzenny, F., del Toro, W., & Gaudino, J. (1987). International news media exposure, knowledge and attitudes. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* , 31, 73-87.
- Lacy, S., Riffe, D., Staci, S., Hugh, M., & Chang, K. (2001). Sample size for newspaper content analysis in multi-year studies. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* , 78 (4), 836-845.
- Larson, J. F., & Hardy, A. (1977). International affairs coverage on network television news: A study of news flow. *Gazette* , 23, 215-241.
- Lennon, F. R. (1998). *The 1997 Argentina election: The national dailies and the electoral campaign*. Freedom Forum and Austral University.
- Lippmann, W. (1922). *Public Opinion*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications.
- MacKuen, M. B., & Coombs, S. L. (1981). *More than news: Media power in public affairs*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Malek, A. (1996). New York Times editorial position and US foreign policy: The case of Iran revisited. In A. Malek, *News media and foreign relations: A multifaceted perspective* (pp. 224-245). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1972). The agenda-setting function of the mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly* , 36, 176-185.
- McCombs, M. (2004). *Setting the agenda: The mass media and public opinion*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Inc.
- McCombs, M., & Shaw, D. L. (1993). The evolution of agenda setting research: Twenty-five years in the marketplace of ideas. *Journal of Communication* , 43, 58-67.

- McCombs, M., Llamas, J. P., Lopez-Escobar, E., & Rey, F. (1997). Candidate images in Spanish elections: Second level agenda-setting effects. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* , 74, 703-717.
- McLean, M. S., & Pinna, L. (1958). Distance and new interest: Scarperia, Italy. *Journalism Quarterly* , 63, 36-48.
- McNair, B. (2003). *News and Journalism in the UK*. Routledge.
- McNelly, J. T., & Izcaray, F. (1986). International news exposure and images of nations. *Journalism Quarterly* , 63 (3), 546-553.
- Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. (1994). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster.
- Merrill, J. C. (1995). *Global Journalism*. New York: Longman.
- Miller, J. (2004, May 14). Libya Halts Military Trade With North Korea, Syria and Iran. *The New York Times* , p. 4.
- Mortished, C. (2003, October 21). Oil prices fall as Opec warns of output rise. *The Times* .
- Myre, G. (2004, May 14). 12 Palestinians Killed in Gaza In Strikes by Israeli Forces. *The New York Times* , p. 6.
- Myre, G. (2003, July 7). Israeli Cabinet Votes to Free Some Palestinian Prisoners. *The New York Times* , p. 1.
- National Statistics. (2001-2005). *International Passenger Survey*. Retrieved September 10, 2007, from <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=507>
- National Statistics. (2003). *UK Trade in Services*. Retrieved July 5, 2007, from [http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme\\_economy/UK\\_Trade\\_In\\_Services\\_2003.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_economy/UK_Trade_In_Services_2003.pdf)
- Page, B. (1996). *Who deliberates? Mass media in modern democracy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Peterson, S. (1981). International news selection by the elite press: A case study. *Public Opinion Quarterly* , 45, 143-163.
- Pierre, H. (1982). The Times (London): News as literature. In M. Rice, *Reporting U.S.-European Relations*. Pergamon Press.

- Reilly, J. (1979). *American public opinion and U.S. foreign policy*. Chicago: Chicago Council on Foreign Relations.
- Rice, M., Carr, J., Pierre, H., Reifenberg, J., & Salinger, P. (1982). *Reporting U.S.-European relations: Four nations, four newspapers*. Pergamon Press.
- Riffe, D., & Budianto, A. (2001). The shrinking world of network news. *International Communication Bulletin* , 36, 12-35.
- Riffe, D., Aust, C. F., & Ucy, S. R. (1993). The effectiveness of random, consecutive day and constructed week sampling in newspaper content analysis. *Journalism Quarterly* , 70 (1), 133-139.
- Rosengren, K. E., & Rickardsson, G. (1974). Middle East news in Sweden. *Gazette* , 20, 99-116.
- Salwen, M. B., & Matera, F. R. (1992). Public salience of foreign nations. *Journalism Quarterly* , 69 (3), 623-632.
- Sanger, D., & Wilgoren, J. (2004, May 30). Kerry Says Focus on Iraq Endangers U.S. *The New York Times* , p. 12.
- Schramm, W. (1959). *One day in the world's press*. Stanford, Ca: Stanford University Press.
- Schramm, W., & Atwood, L. E. (1981). *Circulation of news in the third world: A study of Asia*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press.
- Semetko, H. A., Brzinski, J. B., Weaver, D., & Willnat, L. (1992). TV news and U.S. public opinion and foreign countries: The impact of exposure and attention. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* , 4 (1), 18-36.
- Servaes, J. (1991). European press coverage of the Grenada crisis. *Journal of Communication* , 41 (4), 28-41.
- Severin, W., & Tankard, J. (1988). *Communication theories: Origins, methods, uses*. New York: Longman.
- Shaw, D., & McCombs, M. (1977). *The emergence of American political issues*. West: St.Paul, MN.
- Shepherd, R., & Mortished, C. (2003, June 26). Gazprom seeks UK backers for gas pipeline. *The Times* .
- Smith, C. (2004, May 14). Chad Rebel Group Says It Holds Qaeda-Linked Terrorist. *The New York Times* , p. 3.

- Soroka, S. N. (2003). Media, public opinion, and foreign policy. *Press/Politics* , 8 (1), 27-48.
- Stempel, G. H. (1952). Sample size for classifying subject matter in dailies. *Journalism Quarterly* , 29, 333-334.
- Stepp, C. S. (1999). Then and now. *American Journalism Review* , 60.
- Strobel, W. P. (1997). *Late-breaking foreign policy*. Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.
- Takeshita, T. (1993). Agenda-setting effects of the press in a Japanese local election. *Studies of Broadcasting* , 29, 193-216.
- Tedesco, J. C. (2001). Issue and strategy agenda-setting in the 2000 presidential primaries. *American Behavioral Scientist* , 44 (12), 2048-2067.
- Theodoulou, M. (2003, November 3). Iran upset by Blair's 'rogue' remark. *The Times* .
- Turk, J. V. (1986). Public relations' influence on the news. *Newspaper Research Journal* , 7, 15-27.
- U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. (2006). *Foreign Trade Division*. Retrieved July 3, 2007, from [http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/Press-Release/2006pr/final\\_revisions/06final.pdf](http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/Press-Release/2006pr/final_revisions/06final.pdf)
- U.S. Census Bureau Population Division. (2000). *Immigration Statistics*. Retrieved July 3, 2007, from <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/foreign/datatbls.html>
- Wanta, W., & Hu, Y. (1993). The agenda-setting effects of international news coverage: An examination of differing news frames. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* , 5, 250-264.
- Wanta, W., Golan, G., & Lee, C. (2004). Agenda setting and international news: Media influence on public perceptions of foreign nations. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* , 81 (2), 364-377.
- Weaver, D., & Wilhoit, G. C. (1981). Foreign news coverage in two U.S. wire services. *Journal of Mass Communication* , 31 (2), 55-63.
- Weiss, C. H. (1974). What America's leaders read. *Public Opinion Quarterly* , 38 (1), 1-22.
- Wilhoit, G. C., & Weaver, D. (1983). Foreign news coverage in two U.S. wire services: An update. *Journal of Communication* , 33 (2), 132-48.

- Willets, D. (2004, May 22). High house prices are a powerful contraceptive. *The Times* .
- Wimmer, R. D., & Dominick, J. R. (1987). *Mass media research: An introduction* (5th Edition ed.). CA: Wadsworth, Inc.
- Winter, J., & Eyal, C. (1981). Agenda setting for the civil rights issue. *Public Opinion Quarterly* , 45, 376-383.
- Wu, H. D. (1998). Investigating the determinants of international news flow: A meta-analysis. *The International Journal for Communication Studies* , 60, 493-512.
- Wu, H. D. (2000). Systemic determinants of international news coverage: A comparison of 38 countries. *Journal of Communication* , 50 (2), 110-130.
- Yioutas, J., & Segvic, I. (2003). Revisiting the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal: The convergence of agenda setting and framing. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* , 80 (3), 567-582.
- Zipf, G. (1946). Some determinants of circulation of information. *American Journal of Psychology* , 401-421.

## APPENDIX A: CONTENT ANALYSIS DATA

|                          | Day of the<br>Week | Date              | <i>The New York Times</i><br>(n = 297) | <i>The Times (n = 200)</i> |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Day 1                    | Monday             | July 7, 2003      | 13                                     | 11                         |
| Day 2                    | Tuesday            | March 2, 2004     | 31                                     | 22                         |
| Day 3                    | Wednesday          | December 12, 2003 | 42                                     | 24                         |
| Day 4                    | Thursday           | June 26, 2003     | 22                                     | 14                         |
| Day 5                    | Friday             | May 14, 2004      | 34                                     | 19                         |
| Day 6                    | Saturday           | January 3, 2004   | 11                                     | 23                         |
| Day 7                    | Sunday             | May 30, 2004      | 17                                     | 0                          |
| Day 8                    | Monday             | November 3, 2003  | 18                                     | 14                         |
| Day 9                    | Tuesday            | October 21, 2003  | 24                                     | 14                         |
| Day 10                   | Wednesday          | May 26, 2004      | 18                                     | 13                         |
| Day 11                   | Thursday           | March 11, 2004    | 18                                     | 15                         |
| Day 12                   | Friday             | March 19, 2004    | 15                                     | 16                         |
| Day 13                   | Saturday           | May 22, 2004      | 19                                     | 15                         |
| Day 14                   | Sunday             | February 15, 2004 | 15                                     | 0                          |
| Total for all newspapers |                    |                   | <b>(N = 497)</b>                       |                            |

## APPENDIX B: CODING GUIDE

1. [CODER]        1 – Skye  
                     2 – Liza
  
2. [CASE] Case number
  
3. [PAPER] Newspaper  
                     1 – *The New York Times*  
                     2 – *The Times*  
                     3 – *Daily Telegraph*
  
4. [DATE] Record the date of an article (MM/DD/YY)
  
5. [TYPE] Record the type of the article (select only one).  
                     1 – News  
                     2 – Editorial  
                     3 - Wire report  
                     4 – Other
  
6. [NATION] Record the object nation coded (select only one).  
                     1 – Russia  
                     2 – Israel  
                     3 – North Korea  
                     4 – Turkey  
                     5 – China  
                     6 – Iran  
                     7 – Saudi Arabia  
                     8 – France  
                     9 – Germany
  
7. [ATT] Was the object nation portrayed as negative, neutral, or positive? (select only one)  
                     0 – negative  
                     1 – neutral  
                     2 – positive
  
8. [ISSUE] Are any of the following issues mentioned in the story? (select all that apply)

1 – Yes

0 – No

- a) Economic issues  
Ex.: inflation, recession, prices, unemployment, privatization, governmental budget/spending, taxes, wages, etc. (Do NOT include international trade)
- b) Energy issues  
Ex.: oil prices, alternative sources, natural gas, coal, etc.
- c) Elections and political system  
Ex.: races; fight for power between political parties, government changes, corruption, etc.
- d) Environmental issues  
Ex.: clean air, conservation, clean water, environmental protection, etc.
- e) Natural calamities/accidents/disasters  
Ex.: earthquakes, storms, fires, etc.
- f) Human rights  
Ex.: freedom of speech
- g) Military issues and defense  
Ex.: budget/spending on military, treaties, veterans, etc.
- h) Nuclear issues  
Ex.: weapons, development, etc.
- i) Conflict  
Ex.: military or diplomatic conflict with another country. Do NOT include Iraq
- j) Iraq war
- k) Terrorism  
Ex.: threats, attacks, preparedness, anti-terrorism efforts, etc.
- l) Crime
- m) Immigration issues
- n) Religion issues  
Ex.: Islamic fundamentalism, etc.
- o) Science/technology issues
- p) Global epidemics  
Ex.: AIDS, flu, etc.

- q) Foreign policy & diplomacy  
Ex.: participation to international treaties, summits, meetings, etc.
  - r) International trade
  - s) Other (explain what the topic is).
9. [THEME] Is the story predominantly: (select only one)
- 1 - About domestic affairs in the object nation.
  - 2 - International affairs of the object nation (not involving the U.S./U.K.).
  - 3 - Conflict between the object nation and the U.S./U.K.
  - 4 - Conflict between the object nation and another nation.
  - 5 - Collaboration between the object nation and the U.S./U.K.
  - 6 - Collaboration between the object nation and other nation.
10. [NOTES] Please, write down any additional information that you found interesting/compelling (adjectives, frames, etc.).

## APPENDIX C: PROXIMITY MEASURES

Table 6. Object nation's proximity with the U.S.

|              | <b>Cultural*</b><br>(Ranking) | <b>Economic**</b><br>(Ranking) | <b>Geographic***</b><br>(Ranking) |
|--------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| China        | 1,192,435 (1)                 | 1 (1)                          | Type III                          |
| Korea        | 864,125 (2)                   | 115 (8)                        | Type III                          |
| Germany      | 706,705 (3)                   | 5 (2)                          | Type III                          |
| Russia       | 340,175 (4)                   | 13 (4)                         | Type III                          |
| Iran         | 283,225 (5)                   | 88 (7)                         | Type III                          |
| France       | 151,155 (6)                   | 17 (5)                         | Type III                          |
| Israel       | 109,720 (7)                   | 23 (6)                         | Type III                          |
| Saudi Arabia | 21,085 (8)                    | 8 (3)                          | Type III                          |
| Turkey       | 1,390 (9)                     | 208 (9)                        | Type III                          |

\* Cultural proximity was measured through the number of immigrant from a particular object nation. U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Immigration Statistics, 2000. Retrieved July 3, 2007 from <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/foreign/datatbls.html>

\*\* Economic proximity was measured through the object nation's ranking on the U.S. list of trading partners. U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Foreign Trade Division, 2006. Retrieved July 3, 2007 from [http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/Press-Release/2006pr/final\\_revisions/06final.pdf](http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/Press-Release/2006pr/final_revisions/06final.pdf)

\*\*\* Geographic proximity was measured through the typology of proximity, corresponding Type I for a boarding object nation, Type II for an object nation on the same continent, and Type III for an object nation on the different continent (based on the *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary's* seven-continent distinction).

Table 7. Object nation's proximity with the U.K.

|              | <b>Cultural*</b><br>(Ranking) | <b>Economic**</b><br>(Ranking) | <b>Geographic***</b><br>(Ranking) |
|--------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| China        | 117,000 (1)                   | 19 (3)                         | Type III                          |
| Germany      | 108,000 (2)                   | 2 (1)                          | Type II                           |
| France       | 94,000 (3)                    | 3 (2)                          | Type I                            |
| Turkey       | 15,000 (4)                    | 22 (5)                         | Type III                          |
| Saudi Arabia | 13,000 (5)                    | 20 (4)                         | Type III                          |
| Russia       | 9,000 (6)                     | 28 (6)                         | Type III                          |
| Israel       | 7,000 (7)                     | 29 (7)                         | Type III                          |
| Iran         | 6,000 (8)                     | 41 (8)                         | Type III                          |
| Korea        | n/a (9)                       | not on the list (9)            | Type III                          |

\* Cultural proximity was measured through the number of immigrant from a particular object nation. National Statistic, International Passenger Survey, 2001-2005. Retrieved September 10, 2007 from <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=507>

\*\* Economic proximity was measured through the object nation's ranking on the Top eighty UK trading partners list. National Statistics, UK Trade in Services, 2003. Retrieved July 5, 2007 from [http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme\\_economy/UK\\_Trade\\_In\\_Services\\_2003.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_economy/UK_Trade_In_Services_2003.pdf)

\*\*\* Geographic proximity was measured through the typology of proximity, corresponding Type I for a boarding object nation, Type II for an object nation on the same continent, and Type III for an object nation on the different continent (based on the *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary's* seven-continent distinction).

## VITA

Asya A. Besova was born in Kirovograd, Ukraine, in July 1985. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication from Alcorn State University in May 2006 with Summa Cum Laude. Throughout her years as an undergraduate student, she was a member of the ASU International/Multicultural Student Organization and ASU *Campus Chronicle* newspaper. She received the Award for Making Significant Contribution to *Campus Chronicle* and Department of Communication.

She continued her education at theanship School of Mass Communication in Louisiana State University. Currently, she is a member of the LSU Mass Communication Association of Graduate Students and the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC). During the summer of 2007, she interned at the LSU Department of Residential Life.

Her research interest in foreign communication, along with her international background led her to examine the relations between public opinion about foreign nations and media coverage of these nations. After graduation, she plans to pursue a career in public relations or media research.