Centre for Counter Hegemonic Studies
Research Paper

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September 2017

Research Paper 3/17
Centre for Counter Hegemonic Studies
http://counter-hegemonic-studies.net/

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Take up the White Man's burden, in patience to abide
To veil the threat of terror, and check the show of pride.

Modern imperialism has rendered the equal application of state sovereignty in international law a mere mirage. The concept of the 'white man's burden' - the perceived responsibility of the white man to 'save' the weak brown man - has been used for centuries to justify imperialism and impede sovereign nations' autonomy. 'The white man's burden' outweighs the equal application of international law, including the application of state sovereignty. Similarly, the Western corporate and state media's narrative on Syria ignores a people's right to state sovereignty and focuses on selective humanitarian elements.

The United States and its allies have impeded Syria's sovereignty and justified that by propagating a narrative through the western corporate and state media which dilutes the legal concept of sovereignty. An effective media focus on the 'white man's burden', under the guise of humanitarian international law, ignores a fuller view of rights, presenting an inaccurate narrative of the legalities of the crisis to influence the reader's viewpoint on the crisis.

Primary observations of the Western media representation of the Syrian conflict suggests its neglect of Syria's right to state sovereignty, presenting an incomplete depiction of international law. So the following questions explore the media's shaping of the Syrian narrative. To what extent has the western corporate and state media presentation of the conflict neglected Syria's legal right to State Sovereignty? What are the key issues of international law that bear on the Syrian crisis? How does 'the white man's burden' shape the media narrative? Using content analysis, what patterns emerge from the corporate and state media's narrative? How does the Propaganda Model affect the reading of these articles? How has the Western alternative media and the non-Western media (in English) presented this conflict?

It is paramount to understand the legality of foreign intervention and ascertain the key legal issues. An analysis of media articles will focus on three aspects of each article: content, structure and word choice, revealing patterns in the narrative presented. The articles will be further analysed through Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model (1988), to enable an identification and understanding of the effects of corporate media bias has and how these 'filters' may affect the reading of articles. Kipling's poem 'The White Man's Burden' offers an insight into the cultural justifications for imperialism and, in particular, colonizing the Philippines in 1889. This idea, it is argued, echoes contemporary justifications for military intervention in Syria.

Modernising Imperialism

Whilst the United Kingdom decolonised most of its empire by the mid-twentieth century, the United States took over its role as a colonising superpower. However, while the UK ended its practice of direct and paternalistic colonialism, the US modernized it through a range of interventions in sovereign nations.

Edward Said defines 'imperialism' as 'a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory; 'colonialism' which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is "the

implanting of settlements on distant territory" (Said, 1994:8). Said quotes Michael Doyle, "Empire is a relationship… in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another political society… imperialism is simply the process or policy of establishing or maintaining an empire" (Said, 1994:8). This imperial ambition can be seen in Washington's insistence on deposing the democratically elected Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and arming and financing opposition forces [see Appendix 1: 1].

The United States' attempt to control the Middle East is demonstrated in its attempt to redraw the map of the region in what the US has termed, 'Map for a New Middle East'. Condoleezza Rice's leaked map illustrates that Washington assumes an entitlement to change the region's geographic borders according to its own interests, and to thus extend its own control over the region (Global Research, 2006). This entitlement stems from perceived superiority. Osterhammel states that "colonizers are convinced of their own superiority and their ordained mandate to rule" (Osterhammel, 2005:16).

In 1899, Kipling wrote a poem entitled The White Man's Burden justifying the colonisation of the Philippines on humanitarian grounds. Referencing the poem, Kody (2017) states, "The implication, of course, was that the Empire existed not for the benefit — economic or strategic or otherwise — of Britain itself, but in order that primitive peoples, incapable of self-government, could, with British guidance, eventually become civilized". The white man was justifying his interference in the affairs of the weak brown man for the weaker's own good. A similar reasoning is used today in situations such as Syria.

Kissinger and Barker justify US military intervention in Libya, arguing analogously to the Kipling line. 'A limited military intervention solely on humanitarian grounds could be justified … Gaddafi's forces had already caused heavy casualties among civilians and were on the verge of capturing Benghazi, with possibly dire consequences for its inhabitants' (Kissinger and Baker 2011). Their logic is not limited to Libya, as they also explore the reasons for military intervention in Syria and other nations, highlighting the North American viewpoint that the US has an obligation to intervene in the affairs of sovereign nations for humanitarian reasons. Western corporate and state media propagate this narrative (see Appendix 1).

The idea provides a dangerous precedent in relation to haphazard interventions in the affairs of sovereign states and blatantly disregards international law, including bypassing international bodies. Leaders of affected countries have regularly questioned the consequences of constant American intervention. Regarding the Syrian crisis, Putin argues that, 'we are defending the norms and principles of international law… when issues related to the use of force are dealt with outside the framework of the UN and Security Council, then there's risk that such unlawful decisions might be applied against anybody and on any pretext' (RT 2013).

Those who encourage interventionism cite previous illegal military interventions in sovereign states to conclude that if they were carried out without consequences, this permits further illegal interventions on sovereign states (BBC Online 2013). The disregard for international law has been viewed as disrespectful towards sovereign nations and part of a pursuit for world domination. Putin branded the USA a nation which "wants to control everything … the USA is seeking to dominate the world and interfere with the internal matters of other countries" (Daily Mail, 2012). In a similarly irate attack, responding to America's consistent attempts to intervene in Egypt on issues such as its removal of government and subsequent legislative amendments to non-government organisations, Egyptian writer Tahsin asked,
> "Is the American Congress the supervisor of governments around the world? On what basis are U.S. congressmen interfering in the internal affairs of independent countries? This is

totally unacceptable to Egypt and to all independent countries around the world. Does the U.S. government permit any other country in the world to interfere in its internal affairs?" (Al Arabiya, 2013).

Moreover, America's interference has usually ended in dire consequences for the country that they have tried to 'save'. The Washington Post explored ten contemporary examples of United States military interventions, from Grenada and Panama to Iraq, including the removal of governments, which resulted in power vacuums and subsequent disasters. Yet, as in the previous cases, United States' military intervention is still perceived as a legal norm.

Relevant issues in international law
Your new-caught sullen peoples, half devil and half child
Although the Western media has attempted to legitimise the attacks on Syria by quoting international law experts and certain United Nations' members, the UN has never authorised military intervention in Syria. Moreover, the United States Congress has also not authorized US military intervention into Syria, making it arguable illegal under domestic American law (Washington Post 2017). Thus the military intervention (whether direct attacks or the arming of anti-government groups) has not been legally sanctioned, either domestically nor internationally. As President al Assad states, the countries attacking Syria, without Syrian Government permission are therefore "invaders" (Appendix 1, Article 50). Yet the Western corporate and state media rarely present this rather straight forward legal fact, depicting only a need to intervene and 'save' the Syrians (see Appendix 1).

Although many of the articles in Appendix 1 quote United Nations members, the UN has actually defended Syria's sovereignty. Chapter 2 of the United Nations' Charter acknowledges the 'principle of sovereign equality of all its members'. Article 2 (1) states, "The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members"; Article 4 adds,
> "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations."

These provisions guarantee that states are protected from military attacks from other members. The only exceptions are the right of states to defend themselves from attack, or a UN Security Council decision to intervene in defence of 'collective security'; that's is, the violation of the rights of another member state. The arguments from western states of a 'responsibility to protect' have not changed international law, in this respect (Anderson 2016: Ch. 10). It is therefore clear that, under the Charter of the United Nations, the United States' military attacks on Syria have been illegal.

The western corporate and state media narrative of a 'responsibility to intervene' in Syria, on humanitarian grounds, is refuted by law Professor Ben Saul who says, "military intervention without Security Council authorisation is illegal … there is also no right of humanitarian intervention. There is also no right of self-defence in the current circumstances because Syria has not attacked the US or any other country" (Saul 2013), Yet, as will be shown in analysis, the western media generally did not explore the illegality of the attacks on Syria but rather sought to justify them. Instead, there was an emphasis on selective and alleged breaches of humanitarian law.

Do alleged human rights violations give an automatic right for the international community to depose governments, as the United States and its media claim? Western governments have received criticism for their own human rights violations. The United States has had numerous violations regarding Guantanamo Bay including criticism from the United Nations. In 2013,

the United Nations found Australia guilty of almost 150 human rights violations regarding refugees alone, not taking into account treatment of Indigenous Australians (SMH 2013; ABC 2017). Then there is the matter of successive illegal prior attacks on sovereign states, such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya; none of these had a basis in international law. Yet there were few consequences. The hypocrisy of most western corporate and state media is evident, in calling for the deposing of the Syrian President, when they are almost silent on their own governments' violations. They certainly do not call for the deposing of western governments.

How does 'the white man's burden' shape the media narrative?

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw the rise of New Imperialism, a renewed effort by Europe, the United States and Japan colonizing new territories and exploiting the resources of conquered lands under the guise of missionary work. Whilst gaining criticism for its literary merits, the poem The White Man's Burden was well cited for its strong propagandist merit. Theodore Roosevelt, soon to become US President, described it as, 'rather poor poetry, but good sense from the expansionist point of view' (History Matters 2017). Kipling wrote the poem in 1899 to urge the United States to colonise the Philippines for the benefit of the Filipinos. It is the 'white man's burden' in life to save the weak brown man who is forever in need of white saviours. The racialized notion of the 'White Man's burden' became 'a euphemism for imperialism', and many anti-imperialists couched their opposition in reaction to the phrase." (Hopkins 2013: Ch. 5) Although written in 1889, many of its main points are can still be still applicable to the media's narrative about the Syrian conflict today. Imperialism is justified as necessary for the benefit of the weak brown man who is need of white saviours.

The poem explores modernist arguments for imperialism, the most important of them being, to benefit the colonised. The very first lines of the poem set the vital need for imperialism, 'Take up the White Man's burden—/Send forth the best ye breed—/Go send your sons to exile/ To serve your captives' need'. Kipling urges the colonisation process to be undertaken by the best available "sons", in essence to "exile" them as a service to the colonized. Kipling continues in his description of the colonized as 'Your new-caught, sullen peoples,/ Half devil and half child' attributing both descriptions of evil and childishness to those captors. Thus, the need for the white man to colonise is two-fold: to curb evil and to provide the paternalistic role to the infantilised captors. The need to curb evil and serve a paternalistic role are echoed in the next lines, 'Take up the White Man's burden/ In patience to abide/ To veil the threat of terror/ And check the show of pride'. The simultaneous role of the white man in colonizing the "other" is to alleviate the threat of terror and checking their pride. The former is a moral duty whilst the latter may be seen as a paternalistic role.

These ideas are echoed in the current narrative on Syria. Whilst the Syrian people themselves are infantilised in the sense that they are incapable of deposing their own tyrant without the help of the white saviours, Assad and his army are presented as evil. The West's main narrative is that Syria is incapable of deposing the tyrant on their own and as such, the United States is 'morally obligated' to step in and intervene. This could be by arming, financing and training groups the United States has termed "moderate rebels" or by actively seeking to depose Assad. Another prevalent narrative is that Syria is incapable of fighting ISIS (i.e. of defending itself) and so the United States of America is needed to fight ISIS on the world's behalf.

Kipling then, as the United States now, accepts that there will be opponents of imperialism. Kipling warns the United States to prepare itself for, 'The blame of those ye better/The hate of those ye guard' but not to let this affect them, as they know that it is for their own benefit. It is interesting to note Kipling's feeling of superiority in describing the captors as "those ye better", reflecting the true feelings of superiority of the colonisers. Kipling continues in the last

lines, 'Comes now, to search your manhood/ Through all the thankless years,/ Cold-edged with dear-bought wisdom,/ The judgment of your peers!' reiterating the thanklessness of the job. Yet this burden is aligned with 'manhood', a necessary action of men who protect others. Whilst the burden of being powerful is heavy and worse, thankless, the United States must continue in its struggle for the sake of the weak devil-child. As seen in the content analysis, similar ideas have served as the foundation of western media articles on the Syrian crisis.

Content analysis: patterns from the corporate media narrative

> *Take up the White Man's burden, send forth the best ye breed-*
> *Go bind your sons to exile, to serve your captives' need*

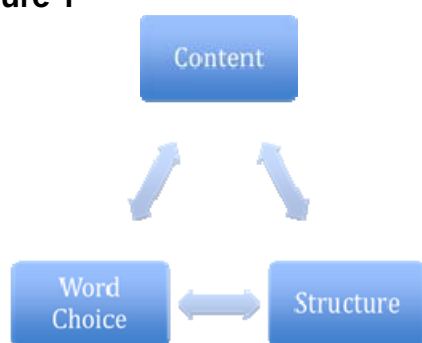The link between the state and the mass media is well explained by Herman and Chomsky.

> "[The media] serve and propagandize, on behalf of, the powerful societal interests that control and finance them … The representatives of these interests have important agendas and principles that they want to advance, and they are well positioned to shape and constrain media policy" (Herman and Chomsky 1988: xi)

According to this Propaganda Model, the first filter in reading media is size, ownership and profit orientation of the news outlets. Whilst this paper will not go into detail about commercial ownership, it is important to note that many of the articles analysed here include the ABC, Al Jazeera, the BBC and Russia Today, all state-owned media which will naturally reflect their respective country's policies. In this way, the mass media becomes complicit in western neo-colonialism.

In an indicative study, this paper analysed media reports on Syria between 2010 and March 2017. The premise was to search different terms through Google, as the findings would represent issues the average reader might access. Search terms included: Syria, Syrian crisis and Syrian war. Online articles were specifically chosen as, in the findings of the Digital News Report (2015), there is a surge in people accessing online news articles. Moreover, online articles would more likely continue shaping the narrative, as they remained readily accessible. The Digital News Report (2015) confirmed these choices and highlighted important considerations to bear in mind during analysis. The report found that Australians receive most of their news online. When asked to name their single main source for news, 44% said the Internet, with television second at 35%. Interestingly, in an ABC news article that summarized the findings, about 2/3 of the way down, it stated that audience tracking data suggests only 10% of people will scroll that far down in a story of that length. This is an important point when analysing the structure of the articles about Syria. For the sake of analysis, articles that were longer than three or so paragraphs were included. The search was over a period of approximately 3 months.

As analysis continued, the numbers read increased to 40 articles from the western corporate and state media, 5 from Al Jazeera, 5 from non-Western news outlets in English and 5 from the western alternative media. Primary analysis of Al Jazeera articles demonstrated that they were unique in their presentation of the narrative, whether in comparison to Western media or other non-Western media in English. After the analysis was concluded, a pattern emerged amongst the Western corporate and state media articles. To test whether this pattern still existed, a further ten articles were analysed (see Appendix 1). Thus, the number of articles analysed increased to 50 Western corporate and state media, 5 Al Jazeera, 5 non-Western media in English and 5 alternative Western media.

The main elements of analysis for each article were content, structure and word choice. The three interjected at times and, although at the outset these features appeared to be separate, they worked together to present a deliberately chosen narrative on Syria.

Figure 1

Although the articles appeared to report on a diverse range of content, the structure and word choices produced consistent results in the narrative presented. The three aspects of the articles shape the reader's viewpoint of the Syrian crisis as follows.

Findings

Western corporate and state media articles presented a clear dichotomy of good (the United States) vs evil (Assad). Six of the articles surveyed focused solely on the idea that the West has a burden to overthrow Assad and save the Syrians, apart from the numerous articles that alluded to this role. 18 out of the 50 mass media articles directly blamed the crisis on Assad's refusal to step down, thus placing an onus on the West to depose him. This is a very high number when the content of the articles is taken into account. The diverse content of the articles range from the Syrian crisis and the humanitarian aspects to Turkey's intervention in Syria. 16 articles out of the 50 Western corporate and state media articles focused on the humanitarian elements of the crisis, not including articles that merely alluded to this. Yet every aspect of the Syrian crisis, regardless of the main content, was directly or indirectly linked to Assad. Media constantly blaming the crisis on Assad twists the narrative from a question of state sovereignty to a war caused by a tyrant trying to remain in power, completely reversing the legal and political elements of the crisis.

During the election campaign between Trump and Clinton in 2016, the western corporate and state media presented a biased view on who had the better foreign policy regarding Syria. Two articles that emerged in the random search juxtapose the media treatment of Trump and Clinton's platforms on intervening in Syria (Appendix 1: Articles 18 and 33). It is interesting to note that, although written by different media outlets, both articles presented a near identical narrative of events on Syria. Both suggest that it was the white man's burden to intervene and, implicitly, save the weak brown man in Syria who was in need of American intervention and of United States funding and training for armed 'opposition' forces. Anything less would allow Syria to fall into chaos, allow the tyrant to continue slaughtering innocent Syrians and allow ISIS to take control of the country.

Although the general narrative was that the United States and its allies were intervening in Syria out of the need to fight ISIS, two articles compare the Syrian army to ISIS. Overall, however, ISIS is presented as the villain which the United States must defeat.

Table 1

New York Times 23 July, 2014 *Life in a Jihadist Capital: Order with a Dark Side* https://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/24/world/middleeast/islamic-state-controls-raqqa-syria.html	ISIS controlled areas are not as bad as they first appear
The Sun 20 Aug 2016 *Syria carnage- Russia has killed more civilians than ISIS as Putin's jets blitz war-ravaged Syria* https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/1644344/russia-has-killed-more-civilians-than-isis-as-putins-jets-blitz-war-ravaged-syria/	Russia has killed more civilians than ISIS

Regardless of the subject matter, word choices were presented as a binary, with a clear distinction being made between western corporate and state media articles and Al Jazeera, on one side of the binary, and the non-Western media and Alternative Western media articles on the other.

Table 2

Western corporate and state media/Al Jazeera on Syrian opposition	Western Alternative and Non-Western media on Syrian opposition
Rebels (positive)	Terrorist (negative)
Western corporate and state media/Al Jazeera on Syrian government	**Western Alternative and Non-Western media on Syrian government**
Capture (negative)	Liberate (positive)
Forces/Troops (negative)	Army (neutral/positive)
Warplanes (negative)	Airforce (neutral/positive)
Regime (negative)	Government (neutral/positive)

The above words were chosen in some instances as early as the headline. By choosing words with negative connotations, the Western corporate and state media taints the Syrian government before the reader has begun to read the content, regardless of structure.

One person's 'Pro-Assad' forces is another's 'Syrian soldiers'

Perhaps the most important finding is that the Western media monopolies delegitimise the Syrian Arab Army by their refusal to reference the country's army as an army. The articles range in the degree of their attack of the Syrian Army, from allegations of atrocities to articles presenting the Army as an arm of the 'regime', rather than the country's defence forces. Most western articles presented the Syrian Army negatively. This is most evident in media references to the army which advance the western governments' narrative that the army are simply "Assad's" militia.

The great majority of the western media monopolies' articles that mentioned the Syrian Army refer to it as 'Pro Assad' or 'Pro-regime forces'. This includes articles on 'accidental' strikes by the United States (in which Australia was involved), which killed Syrian army soldiers at Deir Ezzor. By these word choices, the articles seek to delegitimise Syria's Army by presenting them as Assad militia rather than the country's legitimate defence forces.

Within these same articles, only 4 out of the 50 articles use the word 'Army' to describe the Syrian Army, while one used the word 'military'. See the examples highlighted in the table.

Table 3

Article	Implication
BBC 8 Oct 2015 *Syria's crisis: Russia's strategy and end game?*	A quote by analyst Michael Kofman who refers to them as the Syrian Army
BBC 22 Oct 2015 *Syria crisis: US attacks Moscow welcome for Assad*	Alleged negative action- using the term army exacerbates the perceived atrocity
BBC 17 Feb 2016 *Syrian crisis: Aid arrives in besieged towns*	Alleged negative action- using the term army exacerbates the perceived atrocity
ABC Aus 29 Oct 2016 Syria crisis: Government forces launch counter-offensive against rebels in Aleppo	A Quote that all kinds of weapons were used- - using the term army exacerbates the perceived atrocity
The Guardian 31 Oct 2016 Syrian Rebels' Aleppo Offensive could amount to war crimes, UN envoy warns	The closest to acknowledging the Syrian army was the use of "Syrian military" who spoke to The Guardian, thus giving their sources credibility

These examples show that journalists made a conscious choice to refer to the Syrian Army as an 'army' only when it served their specific purpose.

The pattern that emerged after the initial conclusion of the analysis was that from the 28th of November 2016 (subsequent to Trump winning the US elections), there were four examples of either neutral or positive references to the Syrian Army. Neutral and positive references to the military were not present before this.
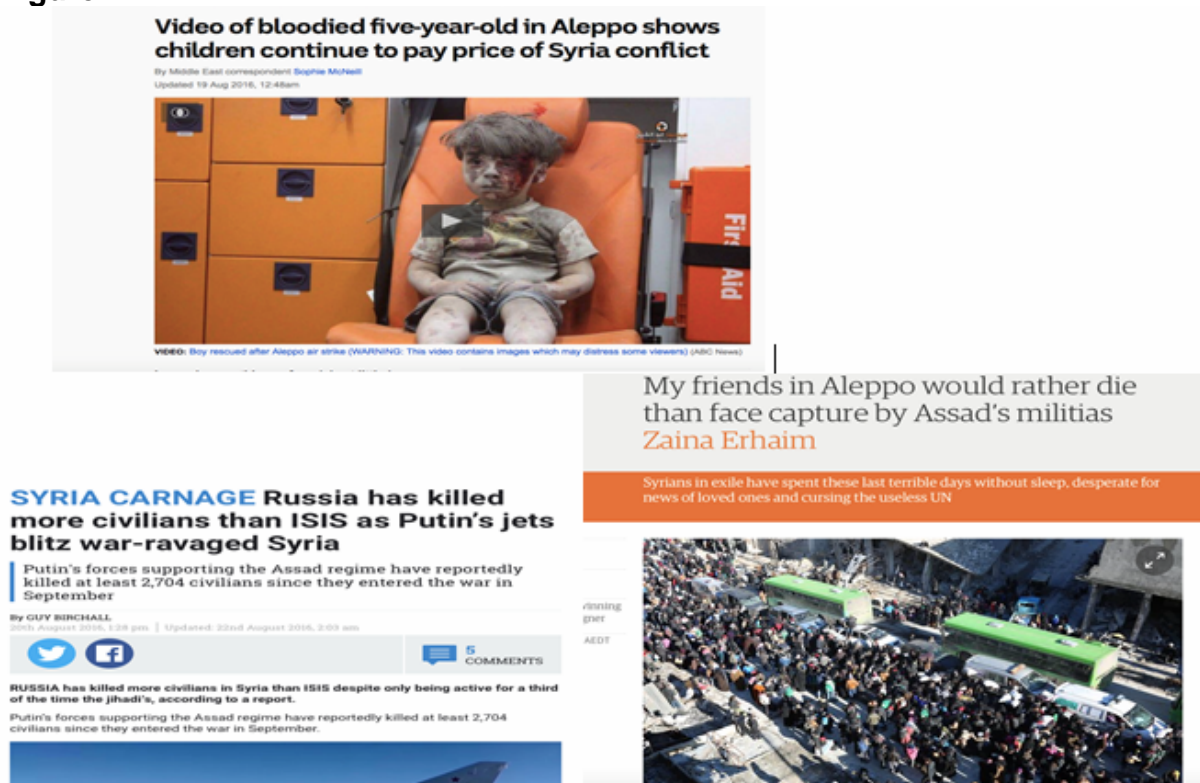
Table 4

Article	Reference
BBC 28 Nov 2016 *Syria conflict: Rebels lose third of east Aleppo territory*	First reference to Syrian Army that is not necessarily negative
ABC 7 Dec 2016 *Syrian war: Government captures 75% of eastern Aleppo, poised for biggest victory*	Positive reference (although tainted by headline with the words "government captures")
ABC Aus 3 March 2017 *Syrian Army retakes Ancient Palmyra from Islamic State militants*	Although it uses different titles for the Army, what's very interesting is that it refers to the Syrian and Russian airforce for the first time, rather than warplanes.
SMH 12 March 2017 *President Bashar Al Assad calls US forces in Syria invaders*	Not only does it refer to the Syrian Army, the main premise of this article is quoting Assad that any intervention in Syria without Syria's permission constitutes an invasion.

Donald Trump was elected President of the United States in November 2016. As a presidential candidate, Trump ran on a platform of non-intervention on Syria (Appendix 1: Article 33). This may help explain the media shift in references to the Syrian Army post-November 2016, as they moved to reflect the US government's semi-official stance on the Syrian crisis. However, this changed with the US missile strikes on Syria in April 2017, when Washington's policy towards Syria reverted to interventionist.

By contrast, all 5 of the non-Western media articles refer to the Syrian Army, with Al-Masdar being the most specific and differentiating between the army and its elite Tiger Forces. This deliberate choice in semantics is also reflected in reference to 'rebels'. All of the Western media monopolies' articles referred to armed anti-government groups as 'rebels', while non-Western sources tended to equate the so-called rebels with 'terrorist' groups.

Figure 2

The importance of the structure of the articles can be seen in the use of emotive headlines. Emotive language in headlines, as seen in Figure 2, prepares the reader to be anti-Assad and anti-Syrian sovereignty. The use of rhetorical questions in the headlines must be noted as 5 out of the 50 mainstream media articles and 1 alternative media article had question marks in their headlines. In these instances, the headlines attempt to speak to the reader, again highlighting an emotional appeal rather than an impartial reporting of facts.

The structure was similar in all articles that alleged crimes 'by Assad'. Three quarters of the way through the article, they would say that these were only 'alleged', sometimes quoting a source from the other side defending Assad. As the Digital Media survey showed, 90% of readers would have stopped reading by that point.

Herman and Chomsky explore the effect of media ownership in advancing western/American interests such as IMF and World Bank (Herman and Chomsky 1988: xiv). This was demonstrated by the sources that the Western mainstream media cited for credibility. Herman and Chomsky say that media "provide 'experts' to confirm the official slant on the news … the same underlying power sources… also play a key role in fixing basic principles and the dominant ideologies" (Herman and Chomsky 1988: xi). Western media monopolies frequently cite the United Nations (selectively), the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (openly aligned with anti-Government armed groups) and other western or anti-Syrian experts.

Case study on structure: the Raqqa water supply
An article on the Raqqa water supply (Appendix 1: Article 42) presents an interesting case study for how journalists may use structure to escape the restrictions of content. Although the content was positive (the article was on the return of Raqqa's water supply) there is no evidence in the article that it was the Syrian Army which had restored the supply. By deliberately choosing the passive voice to not allow a positive act to be attributed to Syria's army, the media has used the structure to write in a manner that does not acknowledge the work of the Syrian Army. Whilst the content and word choice were ostensibly positive, the journalist's manipulation of the passive voice was deliberate in disregarding the efforts of the Syrian Army, not undermining the negative narrative on the Syrian Army.

Al Jazeera's articles, although non-Western, deserve their own analysis, as they were distinct from other articles. The Qatar-based news outlet was the most blatant in its anti-Syrian government and anti-Syrian sovereignty stance. It even had one article titled, 'Aleppo and the myth of Syrian sovereignty' (Appendix 1: Article 54). Al Jazeera was the most subjective, frequently writing articles in the first person. It frequently used emotive language and was very photo heavy with emotive photographs. Al Jazeera's resort to emotion was evident from its content choice, structure and word choice.

One of the most interesting things about the Al Jazeera articles is that, on many occasions, it presents not just a different viewpoint on the events, but sometimes an alternate reality. For example, whilst most other media articles were speaking of the 'rebels' losing ground, Al Jazeera wrote an article denying this (Appendix 1: Article 51). Whilst most western articles assert that the Syrian crisis started because of Assad quelling political dissent, Al Jazeera claims that the crisis started by a young boy writing graffiti (Appendix 1: Article 55).

Word choice proved important in Al Jazeera's narrative. Most of the western media and Al Jazeera's articles referred to 'rebels', while many of the non-Western sources referred to them as 'terrorist' groups or 'armed opposition' groups. This important word choice tends to legitimises the armed opposition to the Syrian Government. By placing them on the binary as 'rebels', Al Jazeera has legitimised the armed opposition and differentiated them from terrorists. Simultaneously, these sources delegitimise the Syrian Army and government. Article 52 in Appendix 1 ('Government troops loyal to President Bashar al-Assad') and Article 52, ('Assad forces') try to reduce the army to being Assad's private militia. Al Jazeera also refers to 'government-held' areas of Syria (Article 51, Appendix 1). Would it be normal to refer to 'government-held areas of Qatar'? By dividing 'rebel' controlled areas and government-held areas, Al Jazeera normalizes the partition of Syria.

How did the non-Western media (in English) present the crisis?
Although non-Western media is often pro-Syrian sovereignty/anti U.S. intervention, it seems to attempt a greater degree of impartiality. The non-Western media articles chosen were all from news outlets from countries allied with Syria (e.g. Russia/Russia Today) or in an analogous

situation (Iran/Press TV). This pre-sets the narrative they would present on the Syrian crisis. These non-Western media articles were mostly written in the third person and did not use emotive language. All these articles refer to the 'Syrian Army' as an army rather than the personal forces of the President. Mostly they do not refer to the armed opposition as 'rebels' but rather as 'terrorists'. There was rarely a distinction between armed opposition groups and terrorists. Whilst ostensibly an example of impartiality, this also demonstrates a pro-Syrian sovereignty stance.

Word choice was important. Press TV uses the term 'Syrian Government' which legitimises Assad as leading an actual government. This was in contrast to the western media monopolies which constantly referred to Assad's government as a 'regime'. Al-Masdar used the word 'liberated' territories, opposite to the western media's often used word of 'captured'. This is also in contrast to Kissinger and Barker's use of the word 'captured', to refer to the Syrian Army's recapture of a Syrian city.

Content choice centred on attributing positive acts to the Syrian Army. Russia Today legitimised the Syrian Army by presenting them in a positive light, such as saving civilians from landmines and other planted devices. Unlike the Raqqa case study, these articles more often used an active voice, at times attributing positive acts to the Syrian Army. This was in direct contrast to the general narrative of western corporate and state media, which focused on negative actions of the Syrian Army and government.

How did Western alternative media present the crisis?

Come now, to search your manhood, through all the thankless years,
Cold-edged with dear-bought wisdom, the judgment of your peers

Perhaps the most striking finding in content analysis was that western Alternative media was the most highly critical of the United States and the most defensive of Syrian sovereignty. For example, the Global Research (Canada) article was extremely anti-US, using emotive language (Appendix 1: Article 61). Out of all the 65 articles, only two articles - both from the alternative media - referred to Assad winning the last election, thus legitimising the Syrian Government and delegitimising the US attacks on Syria (Appendix 1: Article 63 and 64). This juxtaposes the western media narrative, that the crisis was due to a tyrant desperately fighting to keep his rule, with that of a country's struggle for sovereignty.

Alternative western media seemed the most empathetic towards Syrian sovereignty. The only two articles that mentioned Assad winning the 2014 presidential elections were in alternative media articles. This counter-narrative, to that of a tyrant fighting to maintain power, presents a narrative of a democratically elected president fighting for his country's right to sovereignty. Similarly, the 'capture' of Syrian cities did not present a danger to citizens, but was rather a legitimate re-acquisition of Syrian cities that had fallen because of US illegal proxy wars and continuous intervention in sovereign states.

None of the western Alternative media articles allude to a white man's burden of intervention. Instead, they presented scathing attacks against illegal interventions in sovereign states, laying blame for ISIS in Syria and Iraq at the feet of US interventions in the Middle East.

This indicative or qualitative survey was not representative survey, with a sampling error. Different search words render different results. For example, the search term "legality of Australia's intervention on Syria" rendered the RT and SMH articles. Non-western media and western Alternative media samples would need more examples, and from a wider variety of

different sources, for the results to be more representative conclusive. Nevertheless, the study well illustrates some striking contrasts in media coverage during armed conflict.

Conclusion

This survey of media coverage of the Syrian crisis is a case study into the power of media to shape war-time narratives. For years, mass media channels have presented narratives of events in Syria that further their governments' narratives. This was most evident in the distorted presentation of the legality of armed attacks on Syria, contrary to the well accepted and legal concept of state sovereignty.

The United States and allies present an implicit 'white man's burden' argument (otherwise known as 'the responsibility to protect') in saving 'other' peoples. This line is propagated strongly by the corporate and state media within those western states. Such a view is founded in a sense of entitlement, as demonstrated by continuous intervention. This sense of entitlement stems from the western viewpoint that the east is weaker and that the west is inherently superior. These ideas provide dangerous precedents to intervene in sovereign states haphazardly, and in blatant disregard for the norms of international law. Western governments argue that selective, alleged human rights violations provide justifications for attacks on other nations; yet such claims cannot apply to the United States and its allies. International law bodies and courts have become irrelevant, with the US and its allies usurping the role of investigators and judges, ordering military punishments as they see fit.

The western media articles applaud this travesty, with a fabricated dichotomy of good versus evil. They presented a narrative in the classical use of the word. Perhaps the most important finding is that the western mass media delegitimise the Syrian Army by their refusal to reference it as an army. Simultaneously, the most pro-Syrian sovereignty media outlets appear to be the alternative Western media outlets, suggesting that many western citizens do not share this homogeneic view. Western alternative media suggests that there is a silenced voice of protest that aims at recognising the sovereignty of other nations.

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