

The media research analysis as an approach to investigate the fabrication of an international subject in the news —

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Abstract

How does the fabrication of an international subject happen in the media? This article focuses on the theoretical framework for media research analysis in the context of the international media coverage of the Western Balkans and Albania as a case study. The theoretical and methodological approach reflects on the media research conducted both in terms of content analysis as well as theoretical and agency analysis. As Philo C. Wasburn puts it in “The social construction of international news”, in the symbolic universe built by the American media, during most of the 20th century and after 1989, the United States were considered not only the center of the greatest world events but were understood as the “natural order” for the American citizen and consumer².

Introduction

“Reality is socially constructed, and the sociology of knowledge should analyze the processes how this happens” according to Berger and Luckmann³. In social sciences there is a long discussion opened around the question of how the media

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² Philo C. Wasburn , *The social construction of international news, We're talking about them, they're talking about us*, London: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002.

³ Berger Peter L. Luckmann Thomas, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, Open Road Media, 2011.

makes sense of events. The fabrication or the social production of news is one of the dominant approaches. This perspective, supported by both American and British media scholars, requires a thorough and structural response related to the media content, but the focus should be first on the process of producing that content. Its main statement is that it is the social system that produces media content. Therefore, media news, both national and international, should be seen as products of a social system or factory that is embodied by the media organization itself in the first place, but which also extends to the social environment around it through numerous threads and connecting channels.

This means that the process of selecting and preparing news in the media is determined precisely by organizational factors such as professional staff and their specialization, the deployment of the network of resources and institutional contacts, as well as by professional ideologies or the codes of the journalist's profession. Because it is precisely the media organizations and their staffs that decide "what constitutes news", the study of content and information media texts imposes first the review of the organization or the media agency itself to understand how the media decide first what constitutes or does not constitute news.

Social construction of reality: The Theory of Berger and Luckmann

The idea of social news production borrows from the theory of social construction of reality. This theory was originally proposed by Peter Berger and Thomans Luckmann in a book written in 1966 entitled "The Social Construction of Reality". According to this theory, society itself is more a construct than an embedded reality. Its essential assertion is that "the meaning of messages is socially constructed", while the broader suggestion is that "reality is socially created and the sociology of knowledge should analyze the processes of how this happens". In fact, the theory of Social Construction constitutes a very influential trend in social sciences and the greatest shift of paradigm in humanities in the second part of the twentieth century. Other media researchers start from this theory when they constitute the constructive or fabricating role that media have. Stuart Hall is one of them. His theory of "Representations" refers to the very concept of construction on the part of every medium (especially mass media) of aspects of reality as people, places, objects, cultural identities. Reality according to this approach is always represented as such, thus mediated through codes of perception, and always implies a "construction"⁴. This means that the reality is inevitably selective. On the other hand, both structuralists and post-structuralists see "reality" and "truth" as products of specific representation systems, meaning

⁴ Hall Stuart, *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*, London: Sage, 1997.

that behind these systems lie defined historical motives and circumstances, although not static. On the other hand, in the spirit of this theory, it is impossible for the media to present the world as it is, because the media builds meaning on the world, changes it or mediates what is now there. As for the news media among scholars there is broad consensus that the “reality picture” that news builds can only be a selective construct consisting of intertwining fragments of information with observations that make sense by being presented at a specific angle of view or perspective or frame. Some of the postulates of social construction for the media suggest that the media reproduce certain meanings selectively or that the media cannot report social reality objectively since all the facts are interpretations. Although the theory also acknowledges that the meanings offered by the media can be negotiated, or rejected, while the basic postulate relies on the idea that “society is a construct more than an embedded reality”⁵.

Three levels of construction: Stuart Hall

According to Stuart Hall, the media do not report or reflect events that are “naturally” in themselves newsworthy. “News is the final product of a complex process that begins with the systematic selection of events and topics based on socially constructed categories”⁶. In other words, the news is not something that the event itself contains but is the consideration of the event as news. In my research project paper, I have widely referred to Hall’s approach related to how the media constructs reality. He identifies three levels of social media construction:

A. Construction at the organizational level

Construction at the organizational level includes staff, agency, ownership, human resources, job sharing, finances(budget) offices: management, sources. Therefore, construction at the structural and infrastructural level of the media. For example, “An aspect of the selective structure of the news can be seen in the organizational routine of newspapers in terms of types and areas of news.” Since newspapers are engaged in news production regularly, these organizational factors will influence what is selected. Specifically, newspapers are predisposed to certain types of events and topics depending on the professional staff and teams of people available, as well as depending on the structure of the media

⁵ Berger Peter L. Luckmann Thomas, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, Open Road Media, 2011.

⁶ Hall Stuart, *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*, London: Sage, 1997.

(division into sections of internal, international, political, sports, news sections). The organization of staff therefore directs the content towards several categories that constitute news. Equally influential are finances, available human resources, labor-sharing practices, offices, and infrastructure. However, at this level of construction, Hall identifies an important problem, which also constitutes a major theme of his studies, which is widely referred to. The problem of religious ideology because of the organizational structure. More specifically, his concern relates to a routine practice of referring sources of information from the media. The fact that the news is widely based on material broadcast on formal channels such as press releases, press conferences and official documents, shows according to the researchers that “news collection is normally a matter of representatives of a bureaucracy selecting information prefabricated by members of another bureaucracy” . In this way, the media legitimizes officials as the first performers of events, causing political and economic elites to play a leading role in the construction of the symbolic universe of daily news. This does not mean that there is only a consensual and unique view of media events, which constitutes an extreme level of ideology of media content. However, Hall and other scholars speak of a conformity of dominant discourses in society with ideologies or professional media practice. This is not simply related to the fact that the media is owned by capitalist owners (i.e. the ownership structure) as this means ignoring the daily “relative autonomy” of journalists and information producers from direct economic control.

What Stuart Hall and others refer to are routine news production structures, which relies on other sources, other powerful structures that provide preliminary definitions for news. This means, according to Hall, that the media does not autonomously create the news, but goes to them through official and institutional sources that make up the first definers of events, turning the media itself into their secondary definers. Some of these institutions interpret or dramatize their role and importance through public relations and press agents. Other institutions that generate a volume of activities reported at regular intervals are courts, governments, political parties, parliament, sports teams that produce news assimilated by the press. One of the reasons why this happens, according to the critics is because of the income allocation and time schedules that can be significantly reduced if “predetermined events” are covered; this are events that have been announced in advance and planned to be covered. This practice also increases the journalist’s dependence on news sources who are willing and able to determine their activities. Likewise, the division of fact from opinion as a professional requirement that Hall and other scholars see as linked to the myth of objectivity that is at the ideological core of the journalist’s work, produces professional practices that require articles based in “authoritative” and “objective” statements, which are often the “accredited”

sources. Therefore, according to Hall, media content symbolically reproduces the preexistent structure of power in the institutional order of society. So, it is precisely these high-status and powerful sources that constitute reliable sources for the media, the ones that turn into the first definers of topics and events in the media. What is more, according to Hall, the transmission of dominant ideas depends more on the non-binding mechanisms for their reproduction. This is not to say that the media professionals are willing to support certain private economic interests or state interests, but because of their institutional position and organizational practices, they are likely to serve those interests and reproduce their structural and power bases, nevertheless.

B. Construction at professional level

Professional construction has to do with journalist practices like news values, professional codes, professional sources. The question of selection within each category of those events that are assessed as of interest to readers remains crucial. The profession's code of conduct about what constitutes good news, i.e., what the journalist considers to be newsworthy, are what further define the selection of news. Media researchers Galtung and Ruge were the first to analyze international news to find the factors explaining their position at the top of the international agenda⁷. They built a list of values that lie behind the news, a kind of measuring system that determines which news will be at the entrance of a news edition on TV or on the front page of the newspaper. According to them, negativity is the first determining factor of a news story, meaning that "bad news, dealing with death, tragedy, theft, violence, natural disasters, political revolts, or simply extreme weather conditions, always rank above "good" news such as royal weddings, various ceremonies, etc.". Proximity to the scene is the second most important conductor on the list of American researchers, as it has been created the idea that audiences want to know more about events that occur near them or involving people from their country, meaning that information rangers must weigh well in advance the interest that presents an event to their specific audience. Likewise other criteria such as the time of development of the event, so how fresh it is as an event, but also the degree of spread or knowledge about it, the criterion of the following, particularity, clarity (not complexity), unpredictability, not forgetting the criterion of the people of the elite involved in it, but also the ordinary characters who give an angle of human interest, as well as the factor of exclusivity and the size of the event, are those taken into consideration when building a news story. All these journalistic angles also define the content of the media, i.e., what is reported and sometimes also the

⁷ Galtung, J. & Ruge, M. Holmboe: The Structure of Foreign News, Journal of Peace Research, vol. 2, 1965: fq 64-91.

way it is reported, putting emphasis on the criteria mentioned above. However, more about the construction work speaks the text for itself. The presentation of the text constitutes the third level of social construction or fabrication of news or media events for their audiences.

C. Construction at text-level

Textual construction concerns contextualization through narrative, text, discourse, and reference frameworks used. At this level, the construction can be traced back in the text chain from the designation, classification, identification, links to other events, making sense of events and extracting or suggesting meaning to the public. Indeed, the first two aspects considered (bureaucratic organization of media work that divides into specific categories and typologies, as well as the value of news that determines the selection of specific events within these categories) are only one part of the process. The third aspect, the moment of the construction of history itself, is equally important, albeit less obvious. It concerns the presentation of the event to the imagined audience or public in a language that is understandable to that public. This presentation requires an order and does not follow from chaotic and random criteria, not in the same way they occur in the real world. Furthermore, these events must be named, defined, and referred to in terms of other events known to the audience. This identification and contextualization process is among the most important to give meaning to media events. According to the cultural studies approach to the media, an event only makes sense when placed in a known or identified social and cultural framework. Without a social and social contextual map, journalists cannot give meaning for their audiences to unexpected, unusual, and unplanned events that make up the mass of events worth publishing. Such events present the unpredictability, variability, and conflicting nature of the world, but they must be made meaningful to be newsworthy. These processes of identification, classification and social contextualization of news closes the process of the making of social news. More about this process says the discourse analysis and framing.

News framing process: Robert Entman

The selection process called “framing” is inevitable in terms of making the news. This concept is used in studying the effects of a discourse, but also as an instrument applied by the media in news making. The angle of the presentation of an event is called “frame”. Entman proposes that frames or angles used by

the media can be identified in news narratives through key words, metaphors, concepts, symbols, and visual images⁸. He emphasizes the fact that this process works through repetition, selection and exclusion of some topics and ideas versus others. Through these processes, some aspects of perceived reality are selected by media that are themselves defining, intrepid, evaluating them in moral views and developing or recommending. So, the process of framing the news has to do with exactly what is “highlighted”, what is “selected” and what is “excluded” in journalistic terms. Similarly, the frame can be seen as the connecting knot or line of explanation of events. The deductive approach used to extract news reference frameworks therefore focuses on the search for key words, stable and repeated phrases, stereotype images, as well as formulations based on the same sources of information. Media researchers have generally studied Framing Theory either within the news effects tradition, or in the context of the news-making process. As far as the effects are concerned, it has been studied the influence that news frames have on audiences, while in terms of the news-making process, the studies focus more on the way news content is created and modified, considering factors that influence news fabrication in a certain way. Likewise, the news framing process itself is influenced by other factors and elements such as “social norms and values, pressures and organizational constraints, the pressure of interest groups, journalistic routines, as well as the ideological and political orientations of journalists”. On the other hand, foreign policy, and national interest also orient news content.

Researchers mention various stages of framing processes like “frame building” and “frame setting” as well as the effects of framing in terms of the individual and social level of the consequences that the framework has. Factors that structurally influence news framing are internal factors in the field of journalism, which determine how journalists and news organizations frame issues, as well as external factors, i.e., beyond the journalistic field. The process of building the news frame takes place in interaction between journalists and elites. Journalistic text is the product of these frames or scenarios, meaning that frames are part of journalistic, but also political, institutional, and social imperatives.

Some of the criteria researchers suggest for identifying frames are:

First, they must be identifiable conceptual and linguistic characteristics.

Second, they must face journalistic practice.

Third, it should be possible for a certain frame to be clearly distinguished from another frame.

Finally, the frame must have representative validity, so be known to others as such.

⁸ Entman Robert M, *Projections of Power: Framing News, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy*, The University of Chicago Press: 2004.

Some of the mechanisms by which news frames can be identified and measured are: 1. titles; 2. subtitles; 3. photos; 4. resources; 5. quotes; etc.

Some authors group the “framings” into two divisions by naming “framings of specific issues” related only to specific topics and “general framings” which extend widely to topics from the most diverse. What is more, some framings transcend not only themes, but also different time and historical periods, as well as different cultural contexts. Some of the densest frames that are identified in the news by scholars in news texts are those of “conflict”, “destabilization”, “crisis”, “human interest”, “morality”, “economic consequences”, but also “international terrorism”, “war on terror”, “world crisis”, “national interest”, etc.

Theoretical analysis: International Reporting; Foreign countries in the media

In the field of media studies there is no shortage of research about international coverage or reporting of Western media, especially of American ones. Part of these studies are more interested in the flow of information within transnational or global communication. Another part of the literature related to the above content deals with issues of religious imperialism or cultural dominance and globalism with the argument that it is Western corporations that have control of the flow of information. Few of these studies rely on systematic historical investigation of international reporting. This body of studies has not been directly valuable to this research and only tangentially touches on the topics of interest within the foreign reporting of international media in general and American and British media. On the other hand, a considerable number of studies address issues of foreign country image in Western countries, where Western spectrum media constitute an important research locus. Another group of studies deal with the image analysis of other countries in the US or UK, focusing further on the effects of how foreign states are perceived by the international public.

I have mostly referred to studies that focus on foreign correspondence and international reporting, especially when dealing with international magazines such as *Time* and *The Economist*, but also American and British press in general, although these studies do not address the international reporting of specific countries such as Albania. Another group of studies focusing on the organizational aspects of the international media, especially for *Time* magazine, has been helpful, like the work of the renowned sociologist Herbert Gans that has monitored journalistic environment in the context of a research project installed in some of the American mainstream media such as CBS, *Time*, and *Newsweek*⁹. For

⁹ Gans Herbert, *Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, 'Newsweek' and 'Time'*. London: Constable, 1980.

the Economist, the work of Alexander Zevin (2019) has been important to map out a larger view on the newsmagazine as well as to understand some of its core principles and operations, a journal that he confirms has made history as well as reporting it¹⁰.

The literature concerning international reporting of western media, does not specifically look at subjects such as Albania, although it is important to look at how the international media reports those countries in the context of the trends in international media coverage of the Western media spectrum in general. This study relies particularly on the News Framing Theory. Elements such as topics and angles or frames of reported events have also been studied. In fact, the process called “framing” is inevitable in terms of making the news. This concept has been widely used to study the effects of a discourse, but also serves as an instrument applied by the media in news making. Entman proposes that frames or angles used by the media can be identified in news narratives through keywords, metaphors, concepts, symbols, and visual images¹¹.

Finally, within the framework of international media reporting and lectures, we briefly refer to literature about the discussion of Orientalism in general and that of Balkanism for the very connection they have with our object of study. In this regard, Todorova’s approach to the discussion on the Balkans sheds some light on the discourse about Albania, although it does not specifically consider the media when talking about the construction of this discourse. Likewise, the reference to Edward Said’s well-known work, *Orientalism*, has been inevitable, to understand the historical roots of Western discourses for the rest of the world.

International images in the media

Representations or discourses about Albania in western media are circulated and re-appropriated by the national media in Albania but have rarely turned into an object of analysis and scientific research, with very few exceptions focused on issues of image and effect, rarely in those of the production and construction of these content leading to the creation of specific images. I am referring to a handful of publications by Albanian authors, mainly focused on the study of the images about Albanians especially those created by the media of neighboring countries such as Greece and Italy, but also of other countries where Albanian immigrants are present, such as the British media¹².

¹⁰ Zavin, Alexander Zavin, *Liberalism at Large: The World According to the Economist*, Verso, 2019.

¹¹ Entman Robert M, *Projections of Power: Framing News, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy*, The University of Chicago Press: 2004.

¹² i.e., Isa Blumi, “The commodification of otherness: how to think about Albanians?,” *East European Politics and societies* (1998); Nicola Mai, Russell King, “Out of Albania, From Crisis Migration to Social Inclusion in Italy”, Berghahn Books: 2008; Alpijon, Gezim, “Western Media and the European

Albania in general historical, geo-political discourses

Maria Todorova's book "Imaging the Balkans" unravels the historical roots of the discourses over the Balkans and serves as a reference point on "ways of speaking" for the Balkan region, whose entity is also Albania that constitutes our direct object of study¹³. Todorova focuses on the discourses of historians as far as the Balkans are concerned as a geographical and cultural entity. It itself relies on abundant literature that deals with the problem and the presentation of "the other" and "different" as a genre at the crossroads of disciplines, from anthropology, to literature, philosophy, sociology, and history in general, while discussion of Orientalism also constitutes a subgenre of this preoccupation with "the other". It was Edward Said who coined the term Orientalism with his book bearing the same title and which constitutes a criticism of the orientalism discourse, and which constitutes according to him "a Western style to dominate, restructure, and gain authority over the Orient". He has studied Orientalism not only in terms of language, societies and peoples, but also as a system of thinking that builds an approach to a heterogeneous, dynamic and complex human reality mainly from an essentialist perspective which observes the Orient from afar, i.e. from above. However, Todorova's book claims to be more than a subspecies of Orientalism, therefore more than an Orientalist variation about the Balkans. According to her, the Balkan category deserves special attention and close analysis. Unlike the Orient as the analysis category of Said, the Balkans have historical and geographical concrete, so it does not have the not so concrete nature of the Orient. Said, on the other hand, was convinced that Orient and Occident do not correspond to any stable reality that exists as a natural fact. However, what scholars care about beyond the debates on epistemological approaches and the ontological status of their theories is the existence of an East/West dichotomy and the size of space that this divide engulfs.

According to Todorova, the East is more often identified with the industrial backlog, the lack of social and institutional development that is typical for the developed capitalist West, as well as for irrational and superstitious cultures untouched by the Western Enlightenment¹⁴. Similarly, according to her, the Balkans have a concrete historical existence and more concretely two are the historical legacies of the Peninsula of Southeast Europe: one is the millennium of The Byzantine with its own deep political, institutional, legal, religious, and cultural impact, and the

"Other": Images of Albania in the British Press in the New Millennium", *Albanian Journal of Politics I* (1): 4-25, © Albanian Political Science Association, 2005.

¹³ Todorova, Maria, *Imagining the Balkans*, Oxford University Press: 1997.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

other is the Ottoman half-millennium that gave the name of the peninsula, as well as gave it the longest period of unity it has known. Exactly the Ottoman elements are according to her, even those that have served to further fuel current stereotypes for the Balkans. Similarly, popular according to her is the impression that the Balkans began to lose its identity when it began to Europeanize. Precisely such a description according to Todorova underlines the difference between the Balkans and Europe. While the image of the Orient has served as “escape from civilization” and the notion of the Orient as a kind of utopia or symbol of freedom or wealth, as romantic or extravagant excesses; For Todorova the Balkans has an unimaginative concreteness, and almost complete lack of wealth, which promoted direct access to it and usually negative, but rarely nuanced, with very few exceptions. Likewise, the transitional status of the Balkans is the one that characterizes the descriptions about it. While the West and East present themselves as incompatible entities, as complete anti worlds, the Balkans have always evoked the image of a bridge or intersection. The bridge metaphor serves to say “semi-developed”, “half colonial”, “half civilized”, “half oriental”. Referring to British diplomats who considered the semi-Orientals abominable, Durham wrote in 1925 that “A Consul found it a smart solution not to learn the local language, as its recognition would cause it to be kept for a long period in some “intolerable hole...”¹⁵. It is precisely the ambiguity that lies in such definitions, the one that also gives the traits or elements of an anomaly to the Balkan region. Despite the meaningful nuances between anomalous terms (deviation) and ambiguity (with two interpretations), Todorova suggests that ambiguity is treated as anomaly. This is precisely why persons and phenomena in transition states, as well as marginalized ones, are considered dangerous, as they pose danger in themselves and pose danger to others. So, in the Balkan region Todorova notices an intermediate situation.

Finally, what attracts the attention of scholars about the Balkans and the media, is that for the Balkans it is reported only in times of terror and unrest, while the rest of the time are ignored. A frozen vision of the Balkans as the product of coincidence, underestimation, and sensationalist journalism is more than a stereotype according to Todorova. This image for the Balkans according to the parameters created since World War I has been reproduced almost without changes over the following decades and operates as a discourse. This is a version of American supremacy, therefore forged according to the model of the old European aristocratic paradigm. This version manifests evolutionary belief in the superiority of the civilization over the law to barbarism, archaic predispositions, backlogs, fights, unpredictable behaviors, and disapproval, which constitute “tribalism”. The very use of the term “tribal” links the Balkans to an inferior category of civilization, originally used against Africans. The main characteristics of a tribal

¹⁵ In : Todorova, Maria, *Imagining the Balkans*, Oxford University Press: 1997.

society are “primitiveness, lack of complexity and weakness, because when faced with the demand for modernization and sophisticated system of legal and political representation, this society falls into the collapse of tyranny.

Trends in international media coverage

First trend: Falling international coverage

One of the trends that is most talked about related to international reporting is the significant decline in coverage that world events receive on written media pages. According to one study, under the conditions of a strong competition for reader attention, even the American press is focusing on stories or news of practical value more than on complicated global events or distant countries. Likewise, in a widely cited article entitled “Goodbye World”, Peter Arnett, CNN’s international veteran correspondent, he states that “foreign news is gradually disappearing from press pages and national news is dominating every page of it”¹⁶. The trend he sees in the American press is the departure from practices and experience of international reporting towards practical locality, the one who can sell the covers. As for the decline in international coverage, Wasburn expresses himself, referring to a lecture he gave at Harvard in the 1990s CBC moderator Dan Rather telling students: “Don’t be lying; The trend in American journalism is the departure from foreign coverage that is very expensive. It takes a lot of room and time after you’re dealing with complicated situations that require a lot of explanation. And there’s always someone around whispering that people don’t care about this information at all... If you have to write something about the international chronicle, make it short.”

A study examining international news at Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News between 1985 and 1995 also showed that there was a decrease from 20 to 14%. Only after 2001 was there an increase in space dedicated to international events in the American media, but again related to security issues and the fight against terrorism, whose vanguard were now the United States itself.

However, the space dedicated to international news has not been always the same for the American media. Thus, during the Cold War period only, a third of news could be classified as international. During the 1980s and 1990s the number of international news increased, reflecting the events of these years. While 1992-1995 marked a decline again when international coverage accounted for only 29% of the news chronicle. In this period the news returned to the domestic agenda in a similar or lower position of international coverage even compared to the Cold

¹⁶ Arnett Peter, Goodbye Wold, American Journalism Review, Nentor 1998. www.ajr.org.

War period. As for the period after the events of September 9, 2001, the data speaks of increased international reporting, but focused on the role of other countries in America's own "war on terrorism".

In a changing picture, nowadays, environmental conditions remain delineating for the press. The challenge of the moment is product differentiation. Newspapers and written media must compete not only with each other and news agencies, but also with television and the internet. Low-cost satellite phones, as well as internet technology, create new imperatives in terms of pace and frequency of reporting. Technology has also created new foreign news typology such as blog nature information, etc. "Each new conflict brings increases in the number of correspondents; peace brings decline. Current debates about the disappearance of foreign news often do not take this fact into consideration." Although several foreign offices have been closed and the overall international coverage space is being reduced, external news remains among the most abundant segments of news coverage, albeit in constant contraction. A 2005 report, as far as the Ecclesiastical Project in Journalism was concerned, it found that among the newspapers studied, coverage of external events during 2003 and 2004 was in almost the same quotas as internal event coverage, while in 1977 and 1987 the space dedicated to external news was three times higher to a third higher than that dedicated to internal news. Meanwhile, in 1997 the international event coverage space was one and a half times higher than that of national news, according to data presented in the study for 2006.

Second trend: geographical proximity, bilateral relations determine coverage

In an analysis exploring the dynamic nature of the international news stream on time, three researchers track the visibility of foreign states in the American media. They have monitored two major American media outlets such as the NYT (1950-2006) and NBC Nightly News (1968-2006)¹⁷. They valued five contextual factors that influence the visibility of foreign countries in news including: geographical proximity, bilateral trading relations, displacement of American troops, GDP per capita income and population. In general, American media cover countries in which the United States has more meaningful diplomatic contacts. Another study identifies factors that determine international events that are covered and those not covered by us news media. The variation studied by the authors of the article precisely concerns the media coverage of international events. Seven variables have been selected: the potential for social

¹⁷ Timothy M. Jones, Peter Van Aelst, Rens Vliegenthart, Foreign Nation Visibility in U.S. News Coverage A Longitudinal Analysis (1950-2006), Communication Research June 2013 vol. 40 no. 3 417-436

change, normative deviation, relevance for the United States, geographical distance, linguistic proximity, freedom of the press and economic system. In the analysis to distinguish between the news covered and those not covered, the authors also identify some of the most powerful discriminators. The results of their study show that discriminatory function, i.e., in favoring of events reported and in favor of others that do not roil and play: normative deviation of an event, relevance to the United States, the potential for social change and geographical distance.

Third trend: The viable discourses of American superiority

Foreign correspondence in American journalism was formally organized in the late 1830s and since then the goal of American journalists sent to cover foreign developments has been the historical contextualization and framework of these events, thus giving them meaning to the American public. The dominant discourses in American correspondences, according to scholars, was that of American superiority, especially in political terms, that was regularly constructed through the proposal that the United States had a sacred mission to fulfill to the rest of the world, which could be achieved through “savior” and “charitable” intervention or through enlightenment (towards Europe).

The usual practices of how international news was provided in the early 1900s according to Joci Cole and John Maxwell Hamilton, authors of a 1900-1921 foreign correspondence study, was through foreign strings and recycled stories that correspondents found in local newspapers¹⁸. Not even the NYT had still original coverage of foreign news. The ethnocentric understanding of foreign cultures by the early American press is typical of the early phase of American foreign correspondence in the world, although over the years the texts of American journalists sent to report from foreign countries began to be more ambivalent and, in some cases, reflected efforts to present alternative images of the countries from which they reported. While still information was provided mainly by “news digests”, the appearance of foreign correspondents signaled a new stage when journalists sent abroad broadcasted a first hand’s experienced world different from ready-to-use materials. Readers of the American press must have been interested in foreign news starting from this period and in the period between the World Wars, as the researchers’ data says that editors began racing with foreign news, which in the New Herald Tribune accounted for more than 60% of the total news since 1859. Interest in news on the part of all produced the world’s first news cooperative, The Associated Press, which means that everyone could now provide the same foreign news.

¹⁸ Hamilton, John Maxwell, *Journalism’s Roving Eye: A History of American Newsgathering Abroad*. Louisiana State University Press: 2009. pp 15.

On the other hand, news of the “news digest” method had been almost entirely dependent on European newspapers. However, this model of news presentation became delineating for the first forms of foreign news correspondence in terms of selection criteria and priority given to events, but also to the way information material was composed. Similarly, the focus in terms of covered territory was the same as that covered by the news digest, the first country occupied Europe, Mexico and Central America, as well as a very high attention on conflicts and sensational events from foreign and distant countries. In fact, sensation and violence were also the ways of presenting local and internal news in so-called “penny papers”.

The news constructions of the time, of the form of “news digest”, thus drew a dangerous and strange world. There was no large difference between countries for the way it was presented, as the main dichotomy at this time according to scholars was between the United States and the rest of the non-American world that presented violent, strange, and threatening. This form of information had become quite homogeneous, telegraphically written, focused on details, but lacked the context or background of the development of events spoken of. Accuracy and evidence, analyzing foreign cultures did not yet constitute a professional rate of journalism in the 19th century. It should also be said that the currents at this time were influenced by the way the world presented themselves in the annals of foreign diplomacy, as well as by the editorial sections that had now been consolidated in the press. Thus, the contents and editorials reflected the ideology and belief that the U.S. had a unique position and role, appointed by Fate, to be “leaders of civilization”.

Likewise, the discourse in Washington was channeled by the same principles of the sacred mission. Studies of this period therefore speak of a presentation of the world in relation to the United States through a discourse of the American mission, which ignored the complexities of foreign cultures thus underestimating their value. The researchers therefore confirm that the discourse of American superiority in articles for foreign countries also contains the discourses of being American in self-defining terms. There are even those who conclude that foreign news is national news. Cases where the discourses of ethnocentrism were challenged are rare in the beginnings of foreign news media in the American press, however, are not lacking. A widespread practice in the American press of the “news digest” model was to mock or mock foreign cultures through analysis and descriptions, especially as far as foreign leaders were concerned.

The researchers speak of the phenomenon of negative stereotype of foreign leaders, as well as the argument behind it as a manifestation or reinforcement of the sense of American political specialty. Similarly, such appearances meant that a certain people or nationality is incapable of self-government and exploitation of its natural resources, in support of the imperialist rule. This does not mean

that there was lack of correspondents who challenged prejudice and highlighted the stereotypes with which they approached foreign cultures. There were those who sympathized with foreign countries, their cultures, their people, and their struggles, as well as those who mocked the U.S. approach, especially the NYT and the New York Tribune. Likewise, in the context of international news the theme of the need for national leadership is even stronger. “Leaders to maintain the support of followers focus attention on foreign threats that shift attention from unresolved internal problems.”

Likewise, as far as the following discourses are concerned today in international reports of the American media. “In the symbolic universe built by American media not only is the United States the center of the greatest world events, but the altruism of our democracy and our capitalist economy, although they no longer constitute the only alternative to “communist totalitarianism” as it was since the end of World War II until 1989, They are still understood today as the “natural order” for the American citizen and consumer. On the other hand, the lecture for the other is often analyzed by researchers to build oneself. So, the other’s constructions are essentially self-constructed. In such a spirit, Dell’Orto states that historically the US has defined itself as contrary to Europe. Thus, Europe is perceived as “the other foreign, threatening enemy and potential learner”¹⁹. American superiority appears openly in chronicles of Europe since the nineteenth century according to it. The Disc of American Superiority is illustrated especially with Italy and Greece. Such discourses speak of foreign cultures as beautiful but enslaved and unable to self-govern, so they need American intervention. The beautiful and the ruined is the dichotomy that prevails in descriptions of Egypt, Turkey, to St. Domingo.

Fourth trend: ethnocentrism, capitalism, individualism as the hit parade of Americanism

As part of the analysis and interpretation of media content, it is important that the values that the media puts at the heart of its reporting are recognized. Some of the main topics or codes that go through American media reporting have been identified by Herbert Gans. Ethnocentrism, individualism, moderation, are some of them. According to Herbert Gans, who was the first to ask this question in 1979, the enduring values that permeate news in the American media industry “can be grouped into eight entities: ethnocentrism, altruistic democracy, responsible capitalism, small-town pastoralism, individualism, moderation, social order and national leadership”²⁰. At the top of the list is precisely ethnocentrism that

¹⁹ Dell’Orto, Giovanna, *Giving Meaning to the World: The First US Foreign Correspondents, 1838-1859*, Greenwood Press: Westport, 2002. p. 121.

²⁰ Gans Herbert, *Deciding What’s News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, ‘Newsweek’ and ‘Time’*. London: Constable, 1980.

speaks of American orientation as ubiquity (i.e., with the widest spread) in terms of the chronicle of international reports of the American media. Ethnocentrism manifests itself in both the content of international reports and in the country or space left to them in relation to internal reporting. As CNN's renowned American journalist Christiane Amanpour is quoted as saying, "If there are no American soldiers at an event, there is no American media."

Likewise, the value of individualism is one of the most expressed in American media reporting. The focus on individual actors rather than social structures or processes, as well as more than on groups or policy issues, is also characteristic of the American media. According to Gans (1979) about 90% of the news is about people and what they do and what they say. The news focuses mainly on individual public officials, business leaders, well-known personalities, and scientists, as well as on the actions and stories of ordinary people. Likewise, news is personalized in the sense that "they prefer angles of human interest in dealing with events by underestimating the institutional and political considerations that make up their social context".

Gans sees the expression of individualism even in the treatment that the American media does to communism and socialism. He argues that "communism and socialism are seen with fear as they weaken the individual, while capitalism is valued less for what is in itself than for the freedom it offers to at least some individuals". The theme of individualism is also related to that of responsible capitalism, as its extension. One of the other topics that permeates the American media is that of moderation. Gans suggests that news is critical of individuals, groups or ideas seen as extreme: atheist or religious fanatics, members of countercultures, ideologues or those who see only their self-interest, etc.²¹. The latest topic in terms of American commercial media is national leadership and the U.S. president as the defender and guarantor of political and social order, even as the nation's moral leader.

Conclusions

The theoretical, agency and content analyses within the framework of the representations of the subject of Albania by two foreign newsmagazines speak of:

1. Constant approach and treatment under the sign of the demarcation of Albanian abnormality.
2. Constant institutional and professional approaches with the subject of Albania.

²¹ Ibid...

3. Constant fabrication of the subject of Albania based on organizational, professional, and textual discourses characteristic in the Western media landscape, respectively the international newsmagazines.

The Theoretical analysis based on research about our study object speaks of:

1. Construction and fabrication of international and international news content on the international Anglo-American media spectrum.
2. Construction occurs at the organizational, professional, and textual levels.
3. Thematic framing or selection of reporting angles are part of this process.
4. The discourse that dominates international media reporting is still that of American or British superiority.
5. On the horizon of the Western international media, new trends such as the decline in international coverage are observed, shifting the focus towards news of a practical and entertaining nature, falling number of foreign couriers, focusing on the values of Americanism such as individualism etc.
6. Some of the determining or crucial factors in covering or not covering a foreign country are indicators such as geographical proximity and diplomatic relations and especially American or British interests there.

The conclusions arising from agency's analysis, as to the defining factors of this viable report and constant approach are:

- Factors of the magazine's property, managerial and organizational structure have had a significant role and weight in covering or not covering the subject of Albania, in the kind of coverage given to it and in the way it is treated and discourse for it.
- The journalistic model or profile, as well as aspects of newsmagazines professional performance, shed light on how events and subjects are presented.
- The editorial line, their political positions, their international line of reporting, the philosophy of national incarnation and values, are factors that have also influenced the magazines' approach towards the subject of Albania.
- The magazines' audience and their information sources have also influenced the frequency of Albania's coverage, as well as have had a demarcating role in the way this subject is presented to respond to the reader's identity.

The conclusions arising from quantitative and qualitative data based on content analysis on Albania speak of:

- Constant coverage and nature of the similar coverage generally from year to year and from one historical period to another.

- Albania's space in terms of configuration of sections, areas of coverage and frequency of subject mentions do not undergo relevant changes from period to period.
- Textual content quite similar and often the same or identical from one historical period to another. The prevailing discourse of each period is that of Albanian abnormality intertwined with that of American or British superiority.
- The themes and reference frames within discursive formations are also close and often the same, but so are the angles of view.

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