

THESIS

DECODING U.S. MEDIA THROUGH FRAMING THEORY:
EXAMINING THE COVERAGE OF HUGO CHAVEZ IN *THE NEW YORK TIMES* AND *THE*
WASHINGTON TIMES

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ABSTRACT

DECODING U.S. MEDIA THROUGH FRAMING THEORY: EXAMINING THE COVERAGE OF HUGO CHAVEZ IN *THE NEW YORK TIMES* AND *THE WASHINGTON TIMES*

The U.S. media frame news stories with certain keywords, sources, themes, tones, and concepts that influence what media consumers think about and how they think about certain issues or public figures, particularly international issues and leaders. In order to examine media framing of the late Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, this qualitative content analysis compares media coverage in the liberal *The New York Times* and the conservative *The Washington Times* during the last year of the Bush administration and the first year of the Obama administration. By utilizing framing theory and Robert Entman's definition of political framing, this study explores how article themes, tones, and sources may differ among newspapers and may differ during different U.S. presidential administrations. This study suggests that U.S. media often reflect the views of the American president and government, that a change in presidential administrations did affect how Chavez is portrayed in the U.S. newspapers, and that different newspapers framed the Venezuelan president differently.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In October 1997, my perception of the world changed. During the middle of my eighth-grade school year, I left behind my predictable schedule in Lafayette, Louisiana, when my father was transferred with his job to Maturin, Venezuela. I became shocked when I first stepped from the plane after my arrival in Venezuela - heavily polluted humid tropical air clung to the back of my throat, thousands of shacks cluttered the sides of mountains, and bicycle riders fearlessly darted through congested vehicle traffic in the littered streets. I tried to ask local vendors for some water for my parched throat, but I clumsily stumbled over mispronounced Spanish when the vendors revealed they did not speak English. Locals stared at my store-bought dress and overly stuffed suitcases. For the first time I felt like a complete outsider.

After a few months, I assimilated to my new life and started to discover the beautiful Venezuelan terrain. I explored Warao Indian villages along the Morichal Largo River by riding in dugout canoes and spent many days splashing in the waves at Isla Margarita. After studying Spanish, I became enchanted with conversing with the natives. I cherished helping to host birthday parties at Venezuelan orphanages with expatriate wives and observing the native children ceaselessly salsa dancing to the hasty beat of Caribbean music. I learned of the children's hopes of obtaining a higher education and getting jobs when they grew up. Venezuelan parents dreamed of the end of the housing shortage and their children imagined having ample food in their bellies every night. The Venezuelans had the same aspirations as my family. I connected with the natives and I no longer felt like an outsider during my three years of living abroad.

It is from my passion for the Venezuelan people and their hope for a prosperous future when Hugo Chavez first rose to power that I have chosen to do a thesis related to Venezuela.

Even though this study will refer to the politics and culture of Venezuela, this thesis is mainly an exploratory study focusing on the theme of media framing in the United States.

The concept of framing, both a macro-level and micro-level construct, assumes that the way an issue is portrayed in a news report can influence how the audience comprehends the issue. As a macro-level construct, framing reflects on the way the journalists and other communicators manipulate the presentation of information so that the information connects to the audiences' established schemas. Although most journalists do not intend to spin a story, framing help journalists quickly present convoluted information with more clarity. As a micro-level construct, framing refers to how people use information from media as they shape opinions about the information (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p.11-12).

The U.S. media have extensively covered Hugo Chavez's turbulent politics from his presidential reign in Venezuela from February 2, 1999, up until March 5, 2013, when he died from a massive heart attack and a losing battle with cancer in the pelvic region (Fox News, 2013, para. 1 & 3). Research claims that the U.S. government's position may influence the U.S. media's coverage of international leaders and their agendas. My study first examines the relationship of the United States with Venezuela during the George W. Bush administration and the Obama administration. Next, my study analyzes how coverage of Chavez differed in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* newspapers during the last year of the George W. Bush administration and the first year of the Obama administration. The purpose of my study is to determine if a change in U.S. presidential administrations and the different dispositions of newspapers play a role in media framing. More specifically, my study examines how the newspaper articles portray Chavez and his politics, thus shaping American public perception of the Venezuelan president.

Through qualitative research of comparing U.S. media coverage of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez in the liberal newspaper *The New York Times* (Okrent, 2004, July 25, Section 4, p. 2) to the more conservative newspaper *The Washington Times* (Blumenthal, 2006), I will examine the article theme, tone, and sources about Chavez during the conservative George W. Bush administration versus the liberal Obama administration. I will show that the differing themes, tones, and sources may shape American reader perception of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and his politics.

I have specifically chosen to examine coverage of Chavez in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* because both newspapers contain national and international coverage with two different aspects; the coverage in *The New York Times* has a more liberal aspect versus the more conservative coverage of *The Washington Times*. One could expect that the media coverage of Chavez is more neutral or positive in *The New York Times* compared to the media coverage of Chavez in *The Washington Times*. I also present in depth the turbulent politics between the U.S. and Venezuela during the Bush administration and the more neutral politics between the U.S. and Venezuela during the Obama administration to show that the U.S. media may reflect the perspective of the U.S. administration. Finally, I discuss Robert M. Entman's theory of political framing and illustrate how Entman's theory is reflected in both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times*.

This study is important because it suggests that *The New York Times* reflects Hugo Chavez differently than *The Washington Times*, the newspapers reflect the ideals of the U.S. presidential administration, and that political media framing in both newspapers may shape public perception of Hugo Chavez. It is my hope that readers recognize political framing in the

U.S. media and will become more educated media consumers who do not rely on one source of media coverage when forming an opinion about international leaders and their politics.

Venezuela's History

In order to fully understand Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, and his ideals, it is necessary to discuss the history of Venezuela. During the Upper Paleolithic period, food-gathering inhabitants first settled in the region now known as Venezuela. Many of the early settlers were nomadic hunters and fishermen who occupied the Lake Maracaibo basin, the llanos, and the coast. However, the more technologically advanced farming Indians resided in the Andes (Venezuela, n.d., "History," para. 1).

In 1498, during his third voyage to the New World, Christopher Columbus arrived in the region. When the European settlers saw the native Indian homes on stilts in the river, they named the region Venezuela, or "little Venice." Although the explorers would slave hunt and look for pearls on the northeastern coast, it was not until 1523 that the Spanish permanently settled in Venezuela. In the second quarter of the 16th century, the center of activity was based on the northwestern coast where the Welser banking house of Augsburg, Germany procured exploration and colonization rights. However, when the Germans failed to find precious metals, they did not settle permanently. After the Spanish reclaimed the northwestern coast of Venezuela in 1546, legends of the fabled city El Dorado, known as the "city of gold," attracted Spanish and English explorers who searched in vain for their destination (Venezuela, n.d., "The Colonial Era," para. 1).

Later in the 16th century, Spanish settlers colonized Venezuela with *encomiendas*, or semifuedal lands, with Indian laborers. In 1567, Caracas, now the capital of Venezuela, was

established and more than 20 permanent settlements dotted the Caribbean coast and the Andes region. It was not until the 17th and 18th centuries that the Roman Catholic missionaries prominently inhabited the Llanos and Maracaibo regions (Venezuela, n.d., “The Colonial Era,” para. 2).

From 1740 to the second half of the 18th century, modern Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador were categorized as the Spanish viceroyalty of the New Granada (Gascoigne, 2013, History of Venezuela, “New Granada: AD 1740-1810,” para. 1). In the second half of the 18th century, Spain loosened mercantilist trade restrictions with its colonies, thereby expediting prosperity. Educated and professional Creoles, people of European descent, but born in South America (Gascoigne, 2013, History of Latin America, “Colonial society of the eve of the change: AD 1809,” para. 4), began to emerge and resent the rule of the *Peninsulares*, Spaniards born in the Iberian Peninsula who came to South America to lead the region’s government or church (Gascoigne, 2013, History of Latin America, “Colonial society of the eve of the change: AD 1809,” para. 3). From the Creole resentment, New Granada became a region for resistance against imperial rule (Gascoigne, 2013, History of Venezuela, “New Granada: AD 1740-1810,” para. 2).

With the goal of liberating New Granada from Spanish rule, in 1810, young Venezuelan born officer Simon Bolivar joined the conspiracy in Caracas in which a junta expelled the Spanish governor and took control of Venezuela. In July 1811, the national assembly declared Venezuela’s independence, only to have the Spanish military regain control of the area a year later. On August 6, 1813, however, Bolivar led an army to liberate Venezuela, became known as the Liberator, and assumed short-lived dictatorial control for one year until the Spanish resumed control of Venezuela. From 1814 to 1821, battles ensued between Bolivar’s army and the

Spanish (Gascoigne, 2013, History of Venezuela, “Bolivar and Gran Colombia: AD 1810-1822,” para. 1,2,4,5,9,&10) until he assumed the position of president of free republic Gran Colombia (much of modern day region of Ecuador, Colombia, Panama, and Venezuela) (Simon Bolivar Biography, 2007, “profile”) from 1822, until he left Bogota, on May 1830, to resign from presidency and retire in Europe. However, Bolivar’s retirement dreams would never be fulfilled as he died of tuberculosis on the Atlantic coast of Colombia while en route to Europe (Gascoigne, 2013, History of Venezuela, “Gran Colombia: AD 1822-1830 para. 1 & 6).

In 1830, Venezuela separated from Gran Colombia and became a sovereign country. During the 19th century, political instability, dictatorships, and uprisings transpired in Venezuela. From 1908-1935 and from 1950-1958, dictators Juan Vicente Gomez and Marcos Perez Jimenez exercised authoritarian rule. From the overthrow of Jimenez in 1958, and the military’s separation from politics, Venezuela contained a steady practice of civilian elected governments (Global Edge, 2013, “Venezuela: History,” para. 2 & 3) until the political calm ceased, in 1989, when 200 people were killed during Caracas riots. The riots were against Venezuelan President Carlos Andres Perez when he initiated an economic austerity program, including increasing gasoline prices, during difficult economic turmoil (Global Edge, 2013, “Caracazo and popular dissatisfaction,” para. 1).

In February 1992, Lieutenant Colonel Chavez led an unsuccessful coup attempt, claiming the Venezuelan government no longer served the best interest of the people, but he was jailed for his rebellion. In 1992, while Chavez was in a jail, a second unsuccessful coup occurred by officers associated with Chavez. In 1993, Congress impeached Perez claiming he was corrupt. After his release from jail in 1994, Hugo Chavez Frias campaigned for reform, constitutional change and elimination of corruption, and in December 1998, Chavez won his campaign to serve

as the next president of Venezuela (Global Edge, 2013, “The caracazo and popular dissatisfaction,” para. 1 & 2). In 1999, Venezuela was renamed the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela from Chavez’s agenda of a socialist “Bolivarian Revolution” (Johnson, n.d. “Bolivarian”). From a referendum to modify the Venezuelan constitution on February 15, 2009, elected officials did not have term limits (Global Edge, 2013, “Constitutional reforms,” para 2); thus, Chavez would serve as Venezuelan president until his death on March 5, 2013.

Venezuela’s People

By presenting the population statistics and culture of the Venezuelan communities, the Venezuelan people may be better understood, especially by media consumers of *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times*.

Population Statistics

The people of Venezuela are as diverse as their geography and include the Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Arab, German, African, and indigenous groups. The estimated Venezuelan population is about 28,459,085, with a 1.44% population growth rate. Approximately 28.6% of the population is age 14 or younger, 65.6% of the population is between the ages 15 and 65, and about 5.8% of the population is 65 or over. Almost 93% of the population lives in urban areas which Caracas, as the country’s largest city, has approximately 3.051 million inhabitants. Although Spanish is the official language of Venezuela, numerous indigenous dialects are also spoken. Roman Catholics make up 96% of the region, while Protestants comprise 2% of the inhabitants, and other religions comprise the other 2% of the population. Literacy levels are also at a high of 93% with an average of 14 years of education completed. Infant mortality rate is

19.75/1,000 live births, making Venezuela rank 94 out of 224 countries analyzed for infant mortality and Venezuela's average life expectancy is 74.23 years, making Venezuela rank 113 out of 223 countries evaluated for life expectancy (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013, "People and society").

Venezuelan Culture

Venezuelan painting, fine arts, literature, music, and dance reflect Spanish influence with a blend of pre-colonial and colonial style. During colonial suppression, Venezuelan literature began to emerge. During the 1700's, literature was comprised of various forms of poetry and archives, and in the 18th century, a large number of poets and authors emerged such as Teresa de la Parra (Maps of World, 2013, "Venezuela Literature"), a Venezuelan novelist who made a huge impact on Latin women's literature and wrote about imperfect heroines among elite society (Mueller, 2012, p. 10), and Arturo Uslar Pietri, a Venezuelan novelist who often wrote about corruption in the Venezuelan government and incorporated magic realism in his literature (Arturo Uslar Pietri, n.d.,), a Latin-American strategy to include fantastical elements into realistic fiction (Wiehardt, 2012, para. 1).

The music in Venezuela surfaced after the country won its independence from Spain. The music was a conglomeration of African, Spanish and native music, with *Gaita* as one of the most traditional forms of music usually performed at festivals. *Jaropo*, the national dance, and salsa are some of the most popular dances in the country (Maps of World, 2013, "Music and Dance of Venezuela").

Although dancing and music are commemorated at many festivals throughout the year, dancing and music are especially venerated at one of the most grandiose festivals in Venezuela,

Carnival, which is observed for four days in February, 40 days before Easter Sunday each year. During Carnival, the country is beautified with decorations and lights, people toss water balloons at each other, and participants sport multiple outfits. The town of El Callao in eastern Venezuela boasts the most elaborate Carnival in the country, attracting tourists worldwide eagerly anticipating the festival where family and friends celebrate Carnival just as formally as Christmas festivals (Maps of World, 2013, “Carnival in Venezuela”).

Venezuela’s Economy

Oil is the main source for revenue for Venezuela comprising of approximately 95% of export profits, 40% of federal budget revenues, and 12% of the gross domestic product (GDP). Although a decrease in oil prices accounted for part of an economic downturn in Venezuela from 2009-2010, the increase of oil prices and the higher government spending augmented GDP growth 4.2% in 2011. However, increased use of petroleum in Venezuela due to more government spending, higher minimum wage, and enhanced domestic credit could not keep up with the supply, and in 2011 an estimated 28% inflation rate occurred (Central Intelligence Agency: The World Factbook, 2012, “Economy: Venezuela”).

Fewer private investments, reduced productivity, and a decrease in non-petroleum exports have resulted from President Chavez’s agenda of increasing government control of the economy by nationalizing agribusiness, financial, construction, oil, and steel corporations and organizations. Furthermore, in 2011, Chavez’s economic policies have exacerbated the housing crisis, inflation, the shortages of electricity, food, and other goods in Venezuela. While oil prices skyrocketed in 2011, the country’s deficit was about 5.2% of GDP and public debt had risen (Central Intelligence Agency: The World Factbook, 2012, “Economy: Venezuela”).

Venezuela's economic freedom, or the fundamental right of every human to be in charge of his or her work and property, has been measured by the Index of Economic Freedom. This annual guide, published since 1995 by *The Wall Street Journal* and Washington, D.C. think tank *The Heritage Foundation*, measures economist Adam Smith's theories of life liberty, prosperity, and freedom against standards which determine economic success of 185 countries around the world (The Heritage Foundation, "About the index," 2013).

Venezuela's 2013 economic freedom score has been calculated as 36.1, making Venezuela the 174th freest country out of 185 measured for economic freedom. Venezuela is ranked 28th out of 29 countries in the South/Central America and Caribbean regions, and its total freedom score is considered one of the 10 largest declines in the 2103 Index. Venezuela's low economic freedom score may be attributed to a decline in business freedom, labor freedom, and freedom of corruption, as well as large government spending in the 2012 presidential reelection of President Hugo Chavez after beating opponent Henrique Capriles. With Nicolas Maduro serving as Venezuela's new president after Chavez's death on March 5, 2013, it is predicted that Venezuela's foundations will continue to worsen due to structural and institutional complications. Since Venezuela's judicial system is at risk for political influence, the rule of law will be weak and government corruption will continue (The Heritage Foundation, 2013).

Venezuela's Economic and Social Development

Despite Venezuela's inflation and shortages of housing, electricity, food, and goods, Venezuela had some economic and social achievements under President Hugo Chavez. Mortality of children under the age of five decreased from 27/1,000 live births in 1995 to 18/1,000 live births in 2010 (WHO, 2010). The estimated proportion of the Venezuelan

population utilizing improved sanitary facilities increased from 45% in 1990 to 57% in 2005 (WHO/UNICEF, 2012). Venezuelan subsidized food distribution brought malnourishment down from 21% in 1998 to only 5% currently as a result of 5 million Venezuelans receiving free food (Forte, 2013, “Undeclared,” para. 6).

Social spending of the government under President Chavez minimized poverty in Venezuela. Since 2003, the amount of households living in poverty decreased from over 55% to 26%, and the amount of households in extreme poverty decreased from 25% to just 7% in Venezuela. In October 2012, President of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Alicia Barcena claimed that Venezuela lowered its inequality the most in the region over the last ten years. In fact, Venezuela had a Gini coefficient, which measures inequality from a scale of 0-1, as only .394, according to ECLAC (Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, n.d. “Social policy” para. 3 & 4). Finally, it is important to note that Venezuela had a higher education enrollment of 83%, the second-highest level of enrollment in Latin America and slightly trailing behind Cuba’s 88% higher education enrollment (Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, n.d. “Achievements in social development,” para. 7).

According to Article 102 of Venezuela’s 1999 constitution, “Education is a human right and a fundamental social duty; it is democratic, free of charge and obligatory.” In order to fulfill the obligation of making education accessible to the Venezuelan people, several social missions were enacted to improve education in Venezuela during Chavez’s presidency. *Mision Robinson* was enacted to alleviate illiteracy in Venezuela and by August 2012, 1.8 million Venezuelans were taught how to read and write. *Mision Vuelvan Caras*, which benefited approximately 200,000 Venezuelans, aimed to improve the Venezuelan economy by offering programs for

technical training and education in the agriculture, tourism and construction sectors (Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, n.d. "Education," para. 1-4). Finally, *Mision Rivas* and *Mision Sucre* provide government payments to Venezuelans studying a high school or college degree (Gonzalez, 2004).

Transnational Dilemmas

While the Venezuelan government made some progress in the advancement in some areas of the economy and social development, the country faced several problems with maritime disputes, crime, and safety. Venezuela quarreled with Guyana about maritime boundaries west of the Essequibo River and argued with Colombia about maritime boundaries over Los Monjes islands near the Gulf of Venezuela. Tension surfaced between Venezuela and Colombia as Colombians trespassed on the Venezuelan borders during their illegal narcotic and military activities. In fact, in 2006, 130,000 Colombians trespassed in Venezuela when they sought refuge from Colombian turmoil in 150 Venezuelan communities on the Colombia/Venezuela border (Central Intelligence Agency: The World Factbook, 2012, "Transnational issues: Venezuela").

Venezuela also served as a source and destination country for men, women, and children sold into sexual slavery and forced labor. Women and children were sold for prostitution and transported to the urban and tourist areas of the country. Some women were even further exploited and sent to various Caribbean islands for prostitution. In 2008, the Venezuelan government showed that it was making no effort to eliminate human trafficking when the government arrested twelve people during the investigation period for trafficking crimes, but

declined to further examine the cases (Central Intelligence Agency: The World Factbook, 2012, “Trafficking in persons”).

Further safety concerns in Venezuela were from the drug activity throughout the country. Venezuela generated small amounts of opium and coca nationally, but a magnitude of cocaine, heroin, and marijuana from Colombia was smuggled into the country in order to sell narcotics to the U.S. and Europe. Money laundering incidents were frequent from the narcotics trade, particularly on the Colombian border and on Margarita Island (Central Intelligence Agency: The World Factbook, 2012, “Illicit drugs”).

Venezuelan Government under Hugo Chavez

In order to comprehend the reason for the U.S. media’s extensive coverage of Chavez and to analyze the strained relationship between the U.S. and Venezuela, it is necessary to discuss the chaotic background of Venezuela’s government and politics under President Chavez.

After Hugo Chavez won his presidential election in 1998, in February 1999, he assumed office as president of Venezuela. During his first year in office, his approval rating reached 80% when he advocated an end to corruption, increased funds for social programs, and redistributed Venezuela’s oil wealth. He took advantage of his popularity and endorsed the formation of a new constitution that would give him ultimate control of the Venezuelan government (Hugo Chavez, n.d.).

The new constitution required the new election of each government official, and in 2000, Chavez was reelected for another six-year term as president when Venezuela held a “mega election” for all government officials. Venezuela’s legislative government branch, the National Assembly, appointed all pro-Chavez justices to the Supreme Court (Hugo Chavez, n.d.).

During his presidency, Chavez assumed the role as “the leader of Latin America’s anti-free market forces.” He pursued a military buildup, used manipulation against opponents, imposed foreign exchange controls, undermined speech and property rights, nationalized private businesses and militarily provoked neighboring Colombia (The Heritage Foundation, 2012, “Background”). He befriended Cuba’s Communist president, Fidel Castro, proclaiming to enforce Cuba’s ideals upon Venezuela. He separated from Western ideals, especially the United States’ ideals, by forming strong ties with Western enemies Iraq, Iran, and Libya, and he constantly criticized the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan after the September 11, 2001 attack on the United States (Hugo Chavez, n.d.).

In 2002, Chavez’s approval rating among Venezuelans fell to 30% after he imposed his radical ideas on the Venezuelan government. A series of conflicts to oust Chavez from office ensued with many of his allies and members of the military becoming Chavez opponents. On April 11, 2002, approximately one million citizens protested Chavez’s leadership outside the presidential palace resulting in deaths and wounds from a gunfight between pro-Chavez gunman and the National Guard troops. In December 2002, Venezuela’s oil export leader Petroleos de Venezuela (PDVSA) led an opposition to try to force Chavez from office, but the opposition dissipated in February 2003, and Chavez controlled the money from PDVSA. Chavez’s approval ratings climbed once again after using the money from PDVSA to fund social programs and, in 2006, he was reelected as president of Venezuela for the third time (Hugo Chavez, n.d.).

On August 15, 2007, Chavez proposed a constitutional reform that lifted presidential term limits, reorganized government geographic boundaries, and redefined private property. Although the constitutional reforms were marginally defeated by voters, on February 15, 2009, the

constitutional amendment to end term limits for Venezuelan elected officials passed (Global Edge, 2013, “A new term and a new administration,” para. 3).

Although Hugo Chavez had won re-election on October 7, 2012, and planned on starting his new six-year term as president on January 10, 2013, he announced Chavez spokesman and supporter Venezuelan Vice President Nicolas Maduro to be his successor of his movement if his cancer worsened before he took office. Since the Venezuelan constitution states that if the president-elect dies before resuming office, the president of the National Assembly must serve as interim president for thirty days until a new president is elected (James, 2012). National Assembly Chief Diosdado Cabello served as interim president upon Chavez’s death on March 5, 2013.

On April 14, 2013, Chavez’s protégé Nicolas Maduro won Venezuela’s presidential election against opposition candidate Henrique Capriles, who claimed he did not recognize the voting results of 50.7% support for Maduro and 49.1% for him because his team claimed more than 3,000 voting “incidents” occurred. Capriles’ voting speculation raises fears of further political unrest in Venezuela, an OPEC nation containing the world’s largest oil reserves (Benson & Wallis, 2013).

Under Hugo Chavez, the government of Venezuela was a federal republic with an open adversarial court system, yet it was strictly controlled by Chavez, president since 1999, who served as both Chief of State and Head of State (GeographyIQ, “Venezuela-government,” 2012). Chavez promoted “democratic socialism,” which simultaneously tried to eliminate social ills and attack globalization and regional stability. Regional concerns included weakening democratic institutions, political polarization, a politicized military, violence over drugs on the Colombian border, internal drug turmoil, overreliance on price fluctuating oil, and negligent mining

practices that endangered the rain forest and indigenous populations (GeographyIQ, “Venezuela,” 2012).

In 2012, Chavez promoted “Bolivarian socialism,” which he called the 21st century Latin American form of socialism and which incorporated ideas from the revolution led by Simon Bolivar, a Venezuelan leader in the 19th century. According to the Venezuelan official government website, in 2006, Chavez claimed in a speech that “we have assumed the commitment to direct the Bolivarian Revolution towards socialism and to contribute to the socialist path, with a new socialism; a socialism of the 21st century which is based in solidarity, in fraternity, in love, in justice, in liberty and in equality” (Mora, 2009).

Critics had concerns about Chavez and his government. Many emphasized that he controlled most government institutions and they were afraid he was leading to an authoritarian rule. Others worried about the increased role of military in the government and appointment of retired and active-duty officials to high positions. Finally, others argued that Chavez had replaced the country’s multi-party democracy with a political system that revolved around himself, “in essence a cult of personality,” and that he was trying to push his agenda in schools, hospitals, and businesses (International Debates, 2004, p.230-231).

Despite many critics of Chavez and his politics, Chavez acquired several allies inside of Venezuela. Chavez created local allies by using funds from Venezuela’s oil wealth to expand healthcare for the poor, and since 1999, poverty slightly decreased. However, Michael Shifter, vice president of Washington’s think tank Inter-American Dialogue, said that Chavez’s politics did not cause stability in Venezuela because the “approach [was] fundamentally clientelistic, perpetuating dependence on state patronage rather than promoting broad-based development” (Hanson, 2006).

Chavez also created foreign allies by sharing Venezuela's oil wealth. As a strong critic of U.S. politics, Chavez tried to decrease U.S. influence in Latin America by forming allies with other countries that had leftist leaders who, like him, enforced state control over local industry. Chavez tremendously helped Bolivia by sending cash and advisors to support Bolivia's president, Evo Morales, when he advocated for the nationalization of the Bolivian natural gas industry and the reconstruction of the Bolivian constitution. Venezuelan oil wealth also helped Bolivia to purchase tractors for farmers, supply police vehicles, finance archaeology, invest in radio, and fund construction of Bolivian army posts (Machicao & Garcia, 2007).

Chavez formed allies with Ecuador by promising to fund Ecuador's \$4 billion oil refinery and to exchange Venezuelan diesel for Ecuadorian heavy crude. In Nicaragua, one of the poorest countries in Latin America, Venezuela provided fertilizer, tractors, medical assistance, and cheaper fuel. Furthermore, in Peru and Bolivia, Venezuela and Cuba ran eye hospitals providing free eyesight checks to patients (Machicao & Garcia, 2007).

Cuba received \$24.7 billion from Venezuela's oil wealth to construct an electrical city grid in Havana and a daily 90,000 barrel supply of crude oil. Cuba repaid Venezuela through offering products and services, such as low energy bulbs, medical and educational services, and teachers in the slums of Caracas (MercoPress, 2009a). In 2008 and 2009, poverty in Paraguay was alleviated and Paraguay's oil company, Petropar, was supported with \$114.5 million from Venezuelan oil wealth. Mud reports, report sheets filled out by the mud engineer that records testing results at the well site (Schlumberger, 2013), were detailed by the Democratic Union Table and revealed that Argentina seemed to benefit the most from Venezuela's oil wealth with an approximate \$8.4 billion used to support the presidential administrations of Argentina's

Nestor Kirchner and Cristina Fernandez, as well as purchase vessels and farm equipment (MercoPress, 2012).

Venezuela's other allies included Uruguay and Guatemala, which received funds from Venezuela's oil wealth for improved hospitals and schools; Haiti, which received garbage trucks from Venezuela; and Honduras, which received tractors for farmers. Russia received approximately \$34.5 billion from Venezuela with sales of arms and energy agreements (MercoPress, 2009a). Venezuelan oil wealth also benefited Iran. However, Jennifer McCoy, a Venezuela expert and political science professor at the University of Georgia, claimed that the Venezuelan-Iranian relationship was a "marriage of convenience" where both countries focused on anti-U.S. policy (Hanson, 2006).

The Relationship between the United States and Venezuela

The strained relationship between the United States and Venezuela was reflected in the media when newspapers presented Chavez as a menace to democracy under the George W. Bush administration. According to Golinger (2008), financial, political, and military conflicts ensued between the United States and Venezuela.

Financial conflict occurred in 2001, when the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) quadrupled its funding to anti-Chavez groups that planned a coup against Chavez. Furthermore, President George W. Bush requested that the United States Congress double the NED's budget for work in Venezuela in 2005-2008. Further financial turmoil between the United States and Venezuela transpired when the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), which opened in June 2002 just two months after a Venezuelan coup against Chavez, had extended its offices in Venezuela with the aim of supporting U.S. policy goals of establishing democracy and

peace in Venezuela through the cooperation of local Venezuelan organizations and the Venezuelan government. Development Alternatives, Inc., OTI's partner, which opened its affiliate branch in the elite El Rosal district of Caracas, operated like a CIA company that provided millions of U.S. taxpayers' dollars to anti-Chavez organizations in Venezuela (Golinger, 2008, p. 44-45).

The financial conflict also included the establishment of American Corners, a partnership between public affairs from the U.S. embassies and host institutions, which were established in the Venezuelan cities of Margarita, Barquisimeto, Maturin, and Lecherias without permission from the Foreign Ministry. The U.S. referred to the Corners as "satellite consulates," which violated international diplomacy law by hiding these "satellite consulates" in offices of lawyers and opposition municipal mayors where Venezuelans could obtain information from U.S. representatives to further the U.S. model of neoliberalism and capitalism (Golinger, 2008, p. 45-46).

A political conflict between the United States and Venezuela arose during the George W. Bush administration when the U.S. government placed many sanctions on Venezuela. Furthermore, although U.S. State Department documents provided by Ambassador William Brownfield claimed that Venezuela made a successful attempt to counter narcotics, "in September 2005, the Bush administration issued a report indicating that Venezuela had 'failed demonstrably' to prevent drug shipments to the United States" (Golinger, 2008, p. 46). Furthermore, Dan Burton, chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on International Relations, advocated Resolution 400, "which condemn[ed] Venezuela's alleged 'failure to cooperate with the war on drugs and falsely accus[ed] the Venezuelan government of actually 'creating fertile ground for criminal drug trafficking organizations,' among other things"

(Golinger, 2008, p. 47). Although a classified 2005 report sent from the U.S. embassy in Caracas and signed by the ambassador contradicts the executive branch, “it indicates that the official and public statements made by the U.S. government [were] merely aimed at manipulating public opinion on Venezuela” (Golinger, 2008, p. 47).

Other sanctions included blockades for not cooperating in human trafficking and a ban of arms for Venezuela’s lack of cooperation on the war on terrorism. Finally, the United States created an international campaign as “a united international front against Venezuela” (Golinger, 2008, p. 47).

The final angle of attack on Venezuela during the George W. Bush administration involved more than military buildup in regions surrounding Venezuela, but the use of psychological operations (psyops) that connected Chavez to terrorism and nuclear endeavors and labeled him as a “dictator.” Asymmetric warfare, or “low-intensity conflicts,” was imposed on Venezuela by the United States to include diplomatic strategies, financial support of oppositional organizations, military threats, and electoral intervention. Asymmetric warfare was evident in 2005, when the Director of National Intelligence encouraged the CIA to operate with the Defense Intelligence Agency. The CIA evolved into an appendage of a giant military complex that operated internationally to promote the U.S. agenda (Golinger, 2008, p. 48).

Despite the George W. Bush administration’s conflicts with Hugo Chavez, the Obama administration hoped to restore the U.S. relationship with Latin America by working on shared challenges such as economic growth and equality, climate restoration, and citizen security. Furthermore, the Obama administration was dedicated to strengthening that relationship through “engagement that [was] strong, meaningful, and based on mutual respect” (The White House, 2009).

Although President Obama tried to strengthen the U.S. relationship within Latin America, he was aware of the distrust between former President George W. Bush and President Chavez, and he was slowly trying to build rapport with Chavez and other Latin American leaders.

According to Jeffery Davidow, a senior advisor to President Obama in Latin American affairs: “What President Obama has said is he wants to work with Latin America and he wants to work with those countries, and there are many of them, who have suffered the same kind of oppression and dictatorship that Cuba did and Cuba does suffer now. And he would hope that they would take that historical experience of their own fight against dictatorship...” (MercoPress, 2009b).

Despite Obama’s neutral outreach to Chavez, tensions between the U.S. and Venezuela persisted. Chavez called Obama “ignorant” and claimed he had a lot to learn about Latin America. Tension developed between the two leaders when Chavez put a hold on naming a new ambassador to Washington after Obama accused him of “‘exporting terrorism’ and being an obstacle to progress in the region” (CBSNEWSworld, 2009).

Venezuelan Media

Venezuelan media have experienced a tumultuous transformation and censorship. On Saturday, August 1, 2009, more than 12 out of 34 Venezuelan radio stations were ordered off air by President Hugo Chavez. The night before Venezuelan government broadcasting watchdog Conatil announced that the radios would be shut down because they did not comply with the law. The closure of the radio stations was part of Chavez’s plan to “democratize” the airwaves. Chavez further defended the closure of the radio stations by stating, “We’ve [Chavez and the Venezuelan government] recovered a bunch of stations outside the law that now belongs to the people and not the bourgeoisie.” The Venezuelan government exuded further control on the

media when the Venezuelan attorney general proposed a legislative draft that would mandate prison for any individuals who presented false information that could harm the affairs of the Venezuelan government (Colitt & Martinez, 2009).

Critics said that the radio stations were closed because Chavez wanted his pro-government chain Community Radio, which had grown to 238 local stations since 2001, to take over public radio. Critics also said that the radio closure was to keep Venezuelan government opponents from criticizing Chavez on public radio. In 2007, Chavez exercised his power to end public dissenting views of the Venezuelan government by refusing to renew the license of RCTV, Venezuela's most popular TV network known for its criticism of Chavez's leftist policies (Kraul, 2009). Chavez considered any TV station owners that criticized the Venezuelan government as "terrorists." According to Venezuelan Minister of Public Works and Housing, Diosdado Cabello, "Freedom of expression [was] not the most sacred freedom" (CNN World, 2009).

The freedom of the press was currently based on decision 1013 of the Venezuelan Supreme Court, which claimed criteria for the media should be "timely, truthful, and impartial information." The court also mentioned that the media must not spread "false news or news that [was] manipulated by the use of half truths, disinformation that den[ied] the opportunity to know the reality of the news, and speculation or biased information to obtain a specific goal against someone or something" (International Press Institute, 2001). Therefore, journalists should not print or broadcast any material with the goal of criticizing the Venezuelan government or its leaders.

Newspaper Descriptions

This study specifically examined *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* comparing coverage of Chavez during the last year of the George W. Bush administration and the first year of the Obama administration. I chose to analyze *The New York Times* because it has a liberal reputation and focuses on national and international news. I also chose to analyze *The Washington Times* for its conservative nature, national and international coverage, and its influential nature on conservative circles evident by the example of an editorial written by American Conservative Union Chairman Al Cardenas that addresses “Fellow Conservatives” about the 40th anniversary of the 2013 Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) featuring the theme “America’s Future: The Next Generation of Conservatives — New Challenges. Timeless Principles” (Cardenas, 2013).

The New York Times

The New York Times was founded on September 18, 1851, by Henry Jarvis Raymond and George Jones. During the Civil War, the paper was published daily, although the paper originally was published every day except Sundays. In 1896, Adolph Ochs purchased *The New York Times*, and in 1897, he created the newspaper’s slogan “All the news that’s fit to print” (Pickler Memorial Library, 2012). When Ochs lowered the price of the daily newspaper to one cent in 1898, the newspaper’s circulation tripled from 26,000 to 76,000 in one year and advertising revenues increased significantly. During WWI, the newspaper printed full documents and speeches, thus creating a large newspaper index that became popular for referencing by students, historians, librarians and journalists (Pickler Memorial Library, 2012).

While the rest of the U.S. daily newspapers had a .2% decline in readership from September 30, 2011, to September 30, 2012, and an increase of .6% of circulation on Sundays, *The New York Times* circulation was an exception, according to the Audit Bureau of Circulations. *The New York Times* had a 40% increase in print and digital circulation Monday through Friday and a 28% increase in print and digital circulation on Sunday. The daily total circulation for *The New York Times* recorded on September 30, 2012 was 717,513 print circulation, 896,352 digital circulation, and a total circulation of 1,613,865 (Moos, 2012).

Critics and employees of *The New York Times* have described the paper as having a liberal character. For example, Henry Jarvis Raymond composed an editorial article titled “A Word about Ourselves” stating the following:

Upon all topics, -- Political, Social, Moral, and Religious, -- we intend that the paper shall speak for itself; and we only ask that it may be judged accordingly. We shall be Conservative, in all cases where we think Conservatism essential to the public good; and we shall be Radical in everything which may seem to us to require radical treatment, and radical reform. We do not believe that everything in society is either exactly right, or exactly wrong; what is good we desire to preserve and improve; what is evil, to exterminate, or reform (Meyer, 2001).

Although *The New York Times* is intended to be a paper that would be conservative if it served the public welfare, the paper could also “speak for itself” and produce radical, liberal material for public knowledge.

The New York Times is categorized also as a liberal newspaper by Daniel Okrent, who served as *The New York Times* public editor. He mentioned in the opinion section that *The New York Times* is indeed liberal. He pointed out that the newspaper covers many social issues such as “gay rights, gun control, abortion and environmental regulation, among others. And if you think *The Times* plays it down the middle on any of them, you’ve been reading the paper with your eyes closed” (Okrent, 2004, July 25, Section 4, p. 2).

Liberal undertones may also be found throughout the paper. Okrent recommends that readers start with the editorial page, “so thoroughly saturated in liberal ideology that when it occasionally strays from that point of view the shocked yelps from the left overwhelm even the ceaseless rumble of disapproval from the right” (Okrent, 2004, July 25, Section 4, p. 2).

A final example of *The New York Times* having a liberal reputation is from Bill Keller, who resigned as executive editor of the paper in June 2011 and rejoined the paper as senior writer and op-ed columnist. Recalling Okrent’s column mentioning that *The New York Times* is liberal, Keller admitted in an interview at the LBJ Library that the paper is indeed “socially liberal.” He said that “we are liberal in the sense that we are open-minded, tolerant, [and] urban. Our wedding page includes-and did even before New York had a gay marriage law-... gay unions. So we’re liberal in that sense. Socially liberal.” Further suggestion that the newspaper is liberal is when renowned *The New York Times* Executive Editor A. M. Rosenthal “felt the need to steer *The Times* to the right to compensate for the leftward political leanings of some staff” (Shapiro, 2011).

The Washington Times

The Washington Times was founded in 1982 by the controversial Reverend Sun Myung Moon, head of the Unification Church. Critics of the paper have accused Moon for imposing his conservative views on the paper. In fact, several editors and a publisher resigned from the paper claiming that the Unification Church was interfering with the editorial content and independent management of the paper (The Huffington Post, 2010). *The Washington Times* has a daily circulation of 93,763 and is ranked 89th out of the top 130 circulated U.S. newspapers (Mondotimes, 2012).

An example of *The Washington Times* being labeled as a conservative is when journalist and author Max Blumenthal mentions the newspaper's:

[E]ditorial stance has consistently leaned to the hard right, as its favorite targets have ranged from liberal comsymps to President Bill Clinton to, most recently, 'illegal aliens' and their allies in the 'open borders lobby.' Throughout, *The Times* has served as a major key on the conservative movement's Mighty Wurlitzer (Blumenthal, 2006).

The newspaper's alleged liberal "targets," suggests that the newspaper articles may show partiality to conservative viewpoints.

The Washington Times conservative nature has also been categorized by Southern Poverty Law Center Intelligence Project Executive Director Mark Potok when he suggested that the newspaper helped support the ideas of the 2006 Republican political campaigns. He further mentioned:

The *Times* is a terrible little newspaper that unfortunately has vastly disproportionate influence on the right wing of the Republican Party. The vast majority of people who read it don't realize that this paper is in bed with bigots and white supremacists. The *Times* is a key part of the radical right's apparatus in the United States (Blumenthal, 2006).

A final example of *The Washington Times* being classified for its conservative nature is the recent announcement that the newspaper will launch One America News cable news in July 2013, which will reach an expected estimate of 10-15 million U.S. TV sets and will be the second conservative news channel besides Fox News. One America News, which will feature hard news and conservative talk shows, is supported by millions of dollars of investment by One America News President Charles Herring who claimed:

If you take a typical channel on any of the leading video providers, and you try to determine which ones are providing credible news, you get about eight or nine news channels that skew to the left – for example, MSNBC skews left, and some argue that CNN skews left... There is only one that skews right and that's Fox.

[One American News will] open another front and give independent, libertarians, and all kinds of different voices under the conservative umbrella an opportunity to express themselves (Veryconservativenews.com, 2013).

With the establishment of One American New, the conservative broadcast news will have more of a variety of viewpoints, besides the viewpoints of Fox News, and will perhaps lead to less biased conservative broadcast news.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The U.S. media strive to report factual news to their consumers. However, even though the media strives for impartiality, media framing occurs through the theme of the news stories, the tone of the article and the type of article sources, thus shaping how the audience thinks about the article's information, perhaps affecting consumer perception of foreign policies and international leaders such as President Hugo Chavez. Frames help journalists organize complex stories into concise summaries for easier audience comprehension. The effects of this media framing can have a greater impact on consumers than editorial columns (Evans, 2010, p. 210).

Researchers have investigated the link between international media framing, public opinion and U.S. foreign policy. After the Cold War, international media coverage have changed and left a void in the analysis of international conflicts, thus leading journalists to redefine the framework of the portrayal of international news. These new frames suggest that "foreign leaders who are odds with U.S. foreign policy...have been demonized by media that portray them as evil incarnate" (Evans, 2010, p. 211). Thus, Hugo Chavez may be framed as problematic due to his anti-West ideologies.

Framing Theory

Kuypers (2002) explained how the public is shaped by media news presentation by stating that "[the media use] frames [which] are composed of certain keywords, metaphors, concepts and symbols; they work by highlighting some features of reality over others. In short, they make some facts rather than others more salient or relevant to the person exposed to the frame." The media will project a certain issue, event, or person and can influence what the

audience thinks and how the audience thinks about a certain incident or individual. For example, Kuypers (2002) claimed that the press creates frames against those who do not believe in their political agenda, whether intentionally or not. The press may introduce oppositional views from critics of the political actors in order to support the framing of the media (Kuypers, 2002 p. 198).

An example of media framing occurred on October 16, 1995, when Minister Louis Farrakhan spoke to a large group of Americans in front of the nation's capitol, specifically African Americans, to stress atonement and forgiveness among the black and white populations and to rise above the history of the enslavement of the blacks from the past. Farrakhan reacted against the criticism of some black leaders and the press to explain that the racial division may be demolished through the acceptance of responsibility for enslavement, government intervention, and penitence (Kuypers, 2002, p. 89-90). When *The New York Times* reporter R. W. Apple covered Farrakhan's speech, Apple stressed that reporters know the way they expose events is how the audience will perceive the events. If racial polarization is emphasized in the coverage of the march, racial tensions between whites and blacks may ensue. On the other hand, if the focus of appeals for the reconstruction of the black family core values and the desire for black role models is demanded, the march could produce neutral effects. It is also worthy to note that it is the consistent framing of the message over time that accounts for framing strength (Kuypers, 2002, p. 199).

When the audience is exposed to the newspaper, every aspect of the newspaper has been carefully preplanned as to what stories to print, how much to print, and the emphasis of the story. Although there is mostly neutrality in article themes and tones, conventions are evident. For example, consider the two headlines "Britain pledges aid to Berlin against French aggression; France openly backs Poles" and "Mrs. Stillman's Open Love." The headlines attract the reader

according to his or her taste, but the editor determines which will hold the reader's attention. "It is a problem of provoking feeling in the reader, of inducing him to feel a sense of personal identification with the stories he is reading...he must find a similar foothold in the story, and this is supplied to him by the use of stereotypes" (Lippmann, 2000, p. 39).

Framing may also occur in the use of sources for the story. According to Johnston-Cartee (2005) source standardization occurs when journalists repeatedly use the same sources.

Journalist's often seek "experts," elites, and bureaucrats. News shapers are also used as sources by many journalists. Johnston-Cartee emphasizes researcher Solely's argument that news shapers should not be confused with newsmakers and that news shapers may be described as an organization's leading political scientist or "expert" who provides background for viewers.

Solely claims that David Gergen is an example of a news shaper since he attended and taught at a private Ivy League university, served as a "think tank" for the Republican and Democratic administrations, and completed journalistic endeavors through his work as editor for *Public Opinion* and *U.S. News & World Report* magazines (Johnston-Cartee, 2005, p. 219-221).

Media framing has also influenced political attitudes. Leighly (2004) mentions:

[W]hen free speech frames are used to define the news story, tolerance increases; when public order values are used, tolerance decreases. As in the study of race related policy attitudes, news media frames increase the importance accorded [to] one value over another, and individuals' broader orientations (such as government support for minorities or political tolerance) shift in response (Leighly, 2004, p.190).

An example of a shift in individual orientation is when the public supports the Ku Klux Klan in its right to free speech. Media frames also determine how the public views policy problems and potential solutions and whether they should support certain policies (Leighly, 2004, p.190). Although the public may not support the views of the Ku Klux Klan, the framing

of media may convince the public that the bigger issue is that all parties deserve freedom of speech, even hate groups such as the Ku Klux Klan. Thus, when considering the framing of *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times*, the public will form certain views about Chavez and his policies by the way the media defines the news story.

Finally, an example of framing in the U.S. newspapers is found in the coverage in *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* of President Nixon's visit to China in 1972, and Chinese President Hu Jintao's visit to the U.S. in 2006. Questions arose from how the head of state visits were depicted and how the image of China changed in American newspapers. Both of the newspapers reflected anti-communist beliefs in the 1970s and China's threat as a superpower in the late 1990s, thus evoking negative feelings of head of state visits (Xie, 2008, p. 27).

U.S. Media Framing of Foreign Affairs

Graber (2002) mentions that in 1978, the United States and 145 other nations signed a United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Declaration that the media would promise to eradicate cultural ignorance by fairly representing all cultures. However, the U.S. and other foreign presses did not maintain the goals of UNESCO and mainly focused on wealthy and more powerful countries. Furthermore, the media:

Assesses foreign countries largely in terms of U.S. interests, with little attempt to explain their culture and concerns from their own perspective. It does not sensitize Americans to 'the needs and desires of others' nor foster 'respect of the rights and dignity of all nations.' Rather, it reinforces Americans' preexisting assumptions and stereotypes (Graber, 2002, p. 369-370).

Media framing is evident from the U.S. media's sparse inclusion of foreign viewpoints, thus American readers may have skewed perceptions of foreign countries and their leaders.

Foreign affairs stories in newspapers may be oversimplified and stereotypes may occur because facts are not placed in a realistic context. For example, analysis of forty-six years of the Soviet Union from 1945-1991 disclosed that the majority of the coverage focused on military aspects of the Cold War, but economic and scientific issues were rarely covered. Foreign news reported that the American press is based mostly on American sources which emphasize pro-American ideals. For example, in 1983, a Soviet fighter pilot shot down Korean Airline Flight 007, and in 1988, U.S. navy ship *Vincennes* shot down Iran Air Flight 655. The Soviets justified their actions by claiming the Korean plane as hostile. However, the American press presented the Soviet action as morally despicable and the American justification for the shooting of the Iran flight as failure in technology (Graber, 2002, p. 360-362).

There have also been several examples of media bias, which contributed to media framing, among U.S. newspapers when featuring foreign affairs. For example, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* were analyzed from 2001-2002 to present the Pakistan-India conflict. The U.S. bylines focused on peace journalism and favored Pakistan while Indian bylines concentrated on war journalism supporting India. Indicators supporting war journalism include: “here and now; differences oriented, partisan-oriented, and use of demonizing language.” Indicators supporting peace journalism are “solution-oriented, causes and consequences, multi-party orientation, and non-partisan oriented” (Siraj, 2008, p. 2).

Another example of U.S. newspaper foreign affairs bias contributing to media framing is the misconception of immigrants causing crime. Mainstream newspapers and Asian-American newspapers presented the murder trial of a Hmong refugee differently. Mainstream media publicized state interest, demonstrated sensational reporting, reflected on racism, and focused on

character flaws rather than on factors that led to the crime. As a result, biases against minorities may have been reinforced (Wieskamp, 2007. p. 11).

U.S. newspaper bias contributing to media framing reflecting foreign affairs may be found in the comparison of *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Houston Chronicle*, and the *Los Angeles Times* coverage of Israeli and Palestinian conflicts. Pro-Israeli partiality emanated from the papers as frequent suicide bombings characterized Palestinian activities and conflict aggravation symbolized Israeli suffering (Kuang-Kuo & Zeldes, 2006, p.4).

Media bias contributing to media framing may be impacted by the occupant of the White House. For example, the American relationship with Iraq was tumultuous, in 1990, during the start of the Gulf War. *USA Today* reflected capitalistic disapproval for Iraq through the article “Saddam Hussein; ‘Ruthless’ reach for power; Dictator has a long history of violence.” Throughout the article, Hussein is depicted as a brute, being described as the “butcher of Baghdad,” a “ruthless leader,” and “the Adolf Hitler of the Middle East” (Neuman, 1990, p. 1A).

Furthermore, the newspaper article highlights Hussein as a murderer as he promised to “scorch half of Israel’ with poison gas,” killed his colleague, and murdered numerous Kurds in villages. Finally, the newspaper uses strong language to create the illusion that Hussein is a threat to the whole world as he makes a “mockery of world diplomacy” and threatens “to hold the world hostage.” The article also concludes with a powerful quote from Nasir al-Sabah, U.S. Ambassador from Kuwait, encouraging the world to collaborate to seize the control from the powerful Hussein (Neuman, 1990, p. 1A).

On the other hand, under the Clinton administration in 1998, *The Washington Post* did not present Hussein as such a powerful threat that the whole world should defeat, but rather the U.S. should defeat. In the article “No More Halfway Measures,” Hussein is described as a tyrant

that may be defeated through a combination of military force and political programs for Iraq.

Although the article mentioned that Hussein has “murderous hands” and might horde weapons of mass destruction, the article also concluded that although it will be difficult to stop Hussein’s regime, reconfiguration of U.S. CIA and military strategy could defeat the dictator (Perle, 1998, p.C01).

Moreover, the article does not depict Hussein as a large world threat, but rather mentions that he diverged from capitalistic ideals. This article motivates the West to consider Hussein as a lesser priority than during the H.W. George Bush administration by claiming the United States “cannot fight all the world's wars in all the ways they may be fought. But we can help those who share our goals and are willing to fight where they can contribute most” (Perle, 1998, p. C01).

Perhaps the newspaper presented Hussein less severely because the Iraq/U.S. relations improved or perhaps the media supported Clinton’s objective of supporting capitalistic ideals, but respected other countries’ decision to withdraw from the Iraqi war.

U.S. Media Reflect Government Policy and Elite Corporations

The U.S. media are supposed to operate as a watchdog and as the Fourth Estate of government in which the media act independently to ensure other institutions serve the public. However, there has always been apprehension that the media may be challenged by elites or that the media may embellish government ideals (Baron & Davis, 2009, p. 109). James Curran, professor of communications at Goldsmith’s College at the University of London, addresses redefining traditional media as a watchdog when he wrote:

While the watchdog role of the media is important, it is perhaps quixotic to argue that it should be paramount...Most modern media are now given over mainly to entertainment. Coverage of public affairs accounts for only a small part of even news media content, and only a proportion of this takes the form of critical

scrutiny of government...a large number of media enterprises are now tied to core sectors of finance and industrial capital (as cited in Baron & Davis, 2009, p. 109).

How could the media criticize the corporations who own them, or the government they represent, which have the power to affect their profits?

More evidence that the U.S. media are dependent upon government policy, and thus create framing leading to stereotypes, is examined by Dickson when she states that during the conflict between the Reagan administration and the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, the American press favored the use of government officials instead of many other sources to disseminate messages to the public.

For example, when Dickson evaluated *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* coverage of the U.S. –Nicaragua conflict in 1981-1990, she found that newspapers favored using the President of the United States, the U.S. State Department, and individuals from Congress as sources instead of using Nicaraguan officials. Furthermore, she noted that the Contras, or opposition to the Nicaraguan government, were rarely utilized as sources (Dickson, 1992, p. 565-566). The hypothesis for the overuse of U.S. government officials as sources is that perhaps the newspaper has limited members and resources to conduct thorough research, and the media support the U.S. political ideology. The suggestion of the media's overreliance on U.S. government officials as sources "reveal a press that frequently failed to reflect a divergence of viewpoints, to question on the merit of U.S. policy goals and fulfill its self-declared mission as [a] governmental watchdog" (Dickson, 1992, p. 570-571).

The U.S. media also failed to serve as a "governmental watchdog," in May 2003, when Iranian leaders tried to be transparent and negotiate with the U.S. government over issues, such as support for Hezbollah and Iran's nuclear energy program. This negotiation was dubbed as the

“Grand Bargain,” yet was hardly represented in the U.S. media. News had spread about the U.S. Intelligence mistaken conclusion that although Iran still possessed uranium, Iran was building weapons with the uranium. Iran harbored no plans to build nuclear weapons. Also, after years of the media presenting President George W. Bush’s accusations of Iran’s plot to construct nuclear weapons, the opinion from the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) diverged from the U.S. media’s opinion over Iran’s involvement with nuclear weapons. In 2007, the “Grand Bargain” was covered by the U.S. media when *The New York Times* Columnist Nicholas Kristof began to report the U.S. government was recalcitrant about Iran’s bargaining offer. The media did not immediately cover the fact that Iran had sent documents to the U.S. government containing a compromise to be transparent with the United States. Kristof explained the lack of media coverage of the “Grand Bargain” and his urgency to provide the truth:

In general, what journalists are best at covering is what a president or a prime minister would say, [not] complicated processes that don’t happen in one day, that can’t easily be condensed into a bumper sticker...But it was something we really needed to pursue, especially when it looked like we might bomb Iran because of the view they were utterly recalcitrant, incapable of a diplomatic solution. These documents were an important piece of counter evidence (Umansky, 2008, p. 29).

The U.S. media’s overreliance on the U.S. presidential administration for dissemination of information about Iran helped shape public perceptions about Iran and its leaders.

Although *The New York Times* partially covered credible facts during the preliminary stages of the invasion of Iraq, in 2003, many of the facts were skewed. For example, some of the facts were ostentatiously displayed on the front page with sensational headlines. Articles from David Johnston, James Risen, and others from *The New York Times* that questioned the stories and facts of Iraq were often buried in less prominent sections throughout the newspaper (Okrent, 2004, May 30, Section 4, p. 2).

Likewise, the article "Illicit arms kept till eve of war, an Iraqi scientist is said to assert," written by former reporter Judith Miller, flamboyantly covered the front page of *The New York Times* followed by a series of inconsistent articles with Miller surrounded by military personal hunting for weapons of mass destruction. On the other hand, this inaccurate media portrayal may not solely be blamed on Miller because "the failure was not individual, but institutional." Even though Miller concluded that the discovery of radioactive material in Iraq was not likely to be linked to weapons of mass destruction, editors exhibited the headline "U.S. experts find radioactive material in Iraq." *The New York Times* continuously produced "flawed journalism" after the Iraqi invasion "when writers might have broken free from the cloaked government sources who had insinuated themselves and their agendas into the prewar coverage" (Okrent, 2004, May 30, Section 4. p. 2).

The U.S. media's reliance on the president of the United States and other government officials is also apparent on Moeller's (2004) study of how the American and the British media released facts of weapons of mass destruction. Moeller examined articles from May 2003, when the hunt of weapons of mass destruction intensified, in October 2002, when Congress directed the military to remove weapons from Iraq and when rumors of North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons first circulated, and in May 1998, when nuclear tests caused a strained relationship between India and Pakistan. She examined the articles from four U.S. newspapers (*The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*) and two London papers (*The Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian*). She also examined newsweeklies *Newsweek*, *U.S. News & World Report*, and *The Economist* along with National Public Radio's "Morning Edition" and "All Things Considered." She found that journalists classified "important" news as what the president revealed.

For example, on October 7, 2002, *The New York Times* opened with George W. Bush's warning that Saddam Hussein could assault the United States and its allies with nuclear weapons and the American duty is to prevent Hussein from engaging in the war on terror. The media could have avoided distributing problematic messages by acting as a watchdog and verifying the President's assertions or by using other sources outside the U.S. administration. Sources deviating from the president's opinion were not examined nor presented by the U.S. media (Moeller, 2004, p. 16).

Perhaps the media are overly dependent upon the U.S. president as a source of information because the media consider the U.S. president as the official spokesperson for the United States whose view represents the complete truth of foreign affairs. Perhaps the media have limited resources and time to incorporate a large amount of sources in the articles. Perhaps the media even feel that the consumers will focus more intently on the news if the sources are influential government officials, namely the president of the United States. Whichever the reason for the media's dependency of using the U.S. president as a main source, an overreliance on any source may shape reader discernment by offering limited viewpoints about foreign issues and foreign leaders.

Chapter 3: Research Questions and Method

As my introduction and literature review indicate, the U.S. media have comprehensively covered Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and his policies. Previous studies have also shown that the media may also reflect the opinions of the government and elite organization leaders. The strained relationship between U.S. President George W. Bush and Chavez may have influenced a negative depiction of Chavez in U.S. media; likewise, expected neutral coverage of Chavez in the U.S. media may be reflected in the less challenging relationship between U.S. President Obama and Chavez.

Concentrating on the theme of media framing, my study compares U.S. media coverage of Chavez in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* during the last year of the George W. Bush administration and the first year of the Obama administration. I chose to only cover the last year of the George W. Bush administration and the first year of the Obama administration to keep the newspaper articles at a realistic number of units for analysis. Furthermore, I chose to examine *The New York Times* due to its more liberal nature with national and international coverage; likewise, I chose to inspect *The Washington Times* due to its more conservative reputation with national and international coverage.

Although I expect both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* to thoroughly cover Chavez's politics and his relationship to the United States, I expect more coverage of Chavez during the George W. Bush administration due to the chaotic relationship between George W. Bush and Chavez. I also expect that *The New York Times* would frame Chavez more positively or neutrally than *The Washington Times*. I anticipate that both newspapers would contain more negative article tones about Hugo Chavez during the Bush administration than the

Obama administration. Finally, I anticipate that there are more diverse sources in *The New York Times*.

From my expectations, I formed the following research questions:

1. Will *The New York Times* frame Chavez in a more neutral or positive manner than *The Washington Times*?
2. Will both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* contain more negative article tones to frame Chavez during the George W. Bush administration versus the Obama administration?
3. Will *The New York Times* use more diverse article sources than *The Washington Times*?

Empirical Design

In order to examine possible U.S. media framing of Hugo Chavez in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times*, I adopted a systematic approach for analyzing data. This exploratory qualitative study analyzed news covering Chavez from both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* during the last year of the George W. Bush administration and the first year of the Obama administration. Articles that are from or about editorials, book reviews, magazines, and sports were not analyzed due to the casual use of sources and opinions in the articles. Articles, such as news service stories, that were replicated in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* also were not considered.

In order to determine framing of Chavez in both newspapers, this study utilized the method of qualitative content analysis to methodically categorize article themes, tones, and sources. This proposed study used Robert M. Entman's definition of political framing.

According to Entman (1993), the text presents frames, “which are manifested by the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments” (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Keywords and sentences were specifically examined to determine the themes and tones of the newspaper articles which may indicate framing. Areas explored in the articles about Venezuela included politics, social problems, international relations, economy, military, recreation, protests, critics, and policy.

This study analyzed *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* articles by the constant comparative technique, which is first defined by Glaser and Strauss, in 1967, and further refined, in 1985, by Lincoln and Guba. This approach is broadly defined by the following steps:

1. Comparative assignment of incidents to categories
2. Elaboration and refinement of categories
3. Searching for relationships and themes among categories
4. Simplifying and integrating data into a coherent theoretical structure

(Wimmer & Dominick, 2006, p. 117).

During my assignment of units of analysis, some units did not fit perfectly into any one assigned category, but for the purpose of this thesis each unit of analysis was assigned only one category. For example, if the article tone was analyzed as starting positively, but ending negatively, the article tone was only labeled negative. The whole article tone was classified by the overall ending tone of the article. If comments were made by the U.S. presidential

administration, the administration source was categorized as a U.S. government official. A complete list of unique source categorization rules may be found in Appendix C.

Sampling and Coding

After entering “Hugo Chavez” as the search terms in the LexisNexis database for *The New York Times* from the time period on and between January 20, 2008, and January 20, 2010, a total sample of 412 articles from *The New York Times* was found. I focused my study on hard news only so articles from or about editorials, book reviews, magazines, obituaries, and sports were eliminated, thus reducing my sample size for *The New York Times* to 326 articles. To make my sample size more manageable from *The New York Times*, I decided to code every second article from the 326 article sample size, thereby reducing my sample size once more to 163 articles for coding. More specifically, in *The New York Times*, 93 articles during the George W. Bush administration and 70 articles during the Obama administration were coded. The articles in *The New York Times* sample size were from the following sections: Arts/Cultural, Metropolitan, Foreign, Business/Financial, Arts and Leisure, and National. However, if a Metropolitan section article only spoke about sports, I did not code the article.

Likewise, after entering “Hugo Chavez” as the search term in the LexisNexis database for *The Washington Times* from the time period on and between January 20, 2008, and January 20, 2010, a total sample of 357 articles from *The Washington Times* was found. I wanted to focus solely on non-opinionated news and therefore eliminated articles in the following sections: Letters, Inside Blogotics, Editorials, Commentary, Books, OPED, Nation, Marketplace, Solutions and Embassy Row, especially if Embassy Row focused on the foreign diplomat meeting schedule with the U.S. president. I also eliminated an article in this sample that was

repeated and thereby reduced my sample size to 290 articles that were coded in *The Washington Times*. To make my sample size even more manageable from *The Washington Times*, I decided to code every second article from the 290 article sample size, thus reducing my sample size to 145 articles that were coded from the following sections: World, Page One, Arts Etc, National Security, The First 100 Days, Newsmakers, Culture, and Politics. More precisely, I examined 76 articles during the George W. Bush administration and 69 articles during the Obama administration.

The following table is a summary of my sample size:

Table 3.1 Article sample size from *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times*

Newspaper	Dates	President in office	Number of Articles
<i>The New York Times</i>	1/20/08 – 1/15/09	George W. Bush	93
<i>The Washington Times</i>	1/23/08 – 1/16/09	George W. Bush	76
<i>The New York Times</i>	1/21/09 – 1/19/10	Obama	70
<i>The Washington Times</i>	1/27/09 – 1/21/10	Obama	69
Total			308

The articles served as the units of analysis when categorizing keywords and sentences in a codebook to determine prevailing themes and positive, neutral or negative article tones. I also examined sources for the direct and indirect quotes in the articles. Sources were quantified and specific; for example, I did not count indirect quotes that come from “other foreign leaders” or “officials.” However, I chose to categorize sources from “the Obama Administration,” “The Bush Administration,” and “American Embassy” due to their constant use as sources in the

newspaper articles. Sources were assessed as Venezuela president, U.S. president, U.S./Latin American/foreign expert/news shaper, U.S. pro-Chavez government official, pro-Chavez government official, U.S. anti-Chavez government official, anti-Chavez government official, U.S. neutral government official, neutral government official, U.S. pro-Chavez organization, pro-Chavez organization, U.S. anti-Chavez organization, anti-Chavez organization, U.S. neutral organization, neutral organization, U.S. pro-Chavez business official, pro-Chavez business official, U.S. anti-Chavez business official, anti-Chavez business official, U.S. neutral business official, neutral business official, U.S. pro-Chavez citizen, pro-Chavez citizen, U.S. anti-Chavez citizen, anti-Chavez citizen, U.S. neutral citizen, and neutral citizen. A complete explanation of the definition of each source category may be found in Appendix B.

Codebook

For the purpose of coding my articles, I used the following definitions from Merriam-Webster online for “positive”:

- “Contributing toward or characterized by increase or progression”
- “Having a good effect: Favorable”
- “Marked by optimism” (“Positive,” n.d.)

In order to determine if the article tone was positive, the article must have contained adjectives or adverbs that commend Chavez’s character or actions or the article must have shown that Chavez was willing to cooperate with U.S. ideals.

I also used the following definitions from Merriam-Webster online for “neutral”:

- “Not engaged on either side; *specifically*: not aligned with a political or ideological grouping”
- “Of or relating to a neutral state or power”
- “Not decided or pronounced as to characteristics: Indifferent” (“Neutral,” n.d.)

In order to determine if the article tone was neutral, the article must not have possessed any adjectives or adverbs that diminished or praised Chavez’s character nor shown that he was in conflict or in cooperation with U.S. ideals.

I finally used the following definition from Merriam-Webster online for “negative”:

“Marked by features of hostility, withdrawal, or pessimism that hinder or oppose constructive treatment or development” (“Negative,” n.d.).

For the purpose of this study, an article tone was considered negative if there were hostile or critical adjectives or adverbs that described Chavez’s character, if the article focused on Hugo Chavez’s actions that hinted that he was an aspiring dictator (such as lifting his term limits as president), if Chavez was making an alliance with a nation considered to be hostile to the U.S. (such as Iran or Russia), or if the article opposed “development” of a solution or compromise between the politics and ideologies of Chavez and the U.S. government.

In order to clarify my systematic coding approach of *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* articles, I met face to face with two intercoder reliability participants to see if they could replicate my coding results. I had one Colorado State University former Public Communications and Technology graduate student and one current PhD student in Public

Communications and Technology at Colorado State University code every 12th article from *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* sample sizes to compare their findings with my results. I distributed 12 codebook sheets for each participant to fully analyze their article sample sizes. The first participant analyzed a sample size of articles from *The New York Times* and the second participant analyzed a sample size of articles from *The Washington Times*. I also emailed each participant the assigned articles to analyze. On the codebook sheet, the participants circled the appropriate category for each section of analysis. I also used the same codebook, found in Appendix A, to analyze my full 308 article sample size.

The participants had a total of 12 articles to code from each newspaper spanning both the last year of the Bush administration and the first year of the Obama administration. Although *The New York Times* intercoder could have technically coded 13 articles with the total sample size of 163 articles, I wanted to keep the articles for both intercoders even at 12 articles since *The Washington Times* sample size was only 145 articles. I only distributed the codebook found in Appendix A and did not distribute the definitions of the sources found in Appendix B nor the unique source guidelines found in Appendix C. I verbally described the criteria for coding to the participants and did not want to overwhelm them with handouts that could confuse them with coding.

Both participants were to examine their articles and determine the overall theme of the article. Possible themes of the articles included arts, economics, security, military, or politics. Next, the participants were to label the article tone describing Chavez as positive, neutral, or negative. If the article showed Chavez had a favorable character and was willing to compromise with U.S. relations, then the article was considered positive. If the article did not present Chavez in conflict with the U.S., then the article was labeled as neutral. If the article showed Chavez as

controversial toward capitalistic ideology, then the article tone was labeled as negative. Finally, the intercoders were to determine the category for the sources of the direct and indirect quotes in the article.

An example of a model result from the participants testing intercoder reliability may be found in *The New York Times*' January 19, 2010, Arts/Cultural section article "President Chavez, the Nongameboy" written by Dave Itzkoff and located in section C2 of the newspaper. The title of the article gives a clue that by calling Chavez the "nongameboy," perhaps the article will be critical toward Chavez. The article focuses on Chavez's distaste of the PlayStation's games, which he thinks promotes violence and selfishness. He states that capitalist countries (such as the U.S.) promote these games to endorse capitalist ideals. From the subject of games in the article, this article may be coded under the theme of arts. The tone of the article may be described as negative since Chavez is clashing with capitalistic ideals. Furthermore, the sources of this article are Agence France-Presse, a French global news agency, which may be categorized as a neutral organization, and Hugo Chavez, which may be categorized as Venezuela president (Itzkoff, 2010, January 19, p. C2).

Another example of an ideal result from the participants testing intracoder reliability may be found in *The Washington Times*' January 23, 2008, article "Venezuela and drugs" written by James Morrison and found in the World section on page A14 of the newspaper. The article speaks about Venezuela being used as a neutral area for drugs to be smuggled from Colombia for the international drug trade, and President Hugo Chavez refused to cooperate with Colombian President Alvaro Uribe to fight against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), which the U.S. considers a terrorist group. Since the article mentions Hugo Chavez's growing recognition of FARC as a legitimate organization, the article may be coded as having the theme

of security. The article mentions Chavez as an “anti-American president” that supports FARC so therefore the tone of the article toward Chavez may be classified as negative. Two sources are used for quotes; one source is an anonymous top U.S. official and the other source is Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Thomas Shannon who may both be categorized as U.S. neutral government officials (Morrison, 2008, January 23, p. A14).

Intercoder Reliability Results

In order to obtain my intercoder reliability results, I utilized Holsti’s formula where:

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{2(M)}{N1+N2} \quad (\text{Wimmer \& Dominick, 2006, p. 167})$$

In the Holsti’s formula calculation, M is the number of coding decisions where both I and the intercoder agree, and N1 and N2 are the total number of coding decisions by me and the intercoder. According to researcher and Cleveland State University professor Kimberly A. Neuendorf (2002), coefficients for published content analyses of .90 or greater are almost always suitable, coefficients of .80 or higher are satisfactory, and coefficients of .70 or higher are appropriate for exploratory studies (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006, p. 169). Since my thesis is an exploratory study, my goal was to have a coefficient of .70 or higher for my intercoder reliability results.

Thus, using Holsti’s formula, the following were my intercoder results from *The New York Times*:

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{2(54)}{71+ 71} = .76$$

After applying Holsti's formula for my intercoder results from *The Washington Times*, I obtained following results:

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{2(67)}{87+87} = .77$$

After comparing my answers to the first intercoder's results, our answers correlated 54 out of 71 total answers; thus, we have a reliability score of about 76%, which is acceptable for my exploratory study. Although there were some limitations to the intercoder reliability results, I am also satisfied with the 77% reliability results from the second intercoder with our answers correlating at 67 out of 87 total answers.

Chapter 4: Qualitative Content Analysis Results

The coding of 308 articles and their sections, themes, tones, and sources in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* using the constant comparative technique was a painstaking and delicate process. The results will be best represented in pie and bar graphs.

Newspaper Sections

Out of 163 articles examined in *The New York Times* during the last year of the George W. Bush administration and the first year of the Obama administration, 124 articles or about 76% of the articles came from the Foreign section, four or about 2% of the articles came from the Arts/Culture section, five or about 3% of the articles came from the National section, 13 or about 8% came from the Business/Financial section, one or about 1% came from the Arts and Leisure Section, and 16 or about 10% of the articles came from the Metropolitan section. The pie chart below represents percentages of articles in *The New York Times* sections.

Out of 145 articles examined in *The Washington Times* during the last year of the George W. Bush administration and the first year of the Obama administration, 81 or about 55% of the articles came from the World section, 49 or about 33% of the articles came from Page One, one or about 1% came from the Arts Etc. section, four or about 3% of the articles came from the National Security Section, two or about 1% came from The first 100 Days section, one or about 1% came from the Newsmakers section, four or about 3% came from the Culture section, and four or about 3% of the articles came from the Politics section. Although article placement is not a focus of this study, Page One was analyzed in *The Washington Times*. The section is called

Page One because the articles did not have titles in LexisNexis. The pie chart below represents the percentage of articles in *The Washington Times* sections.

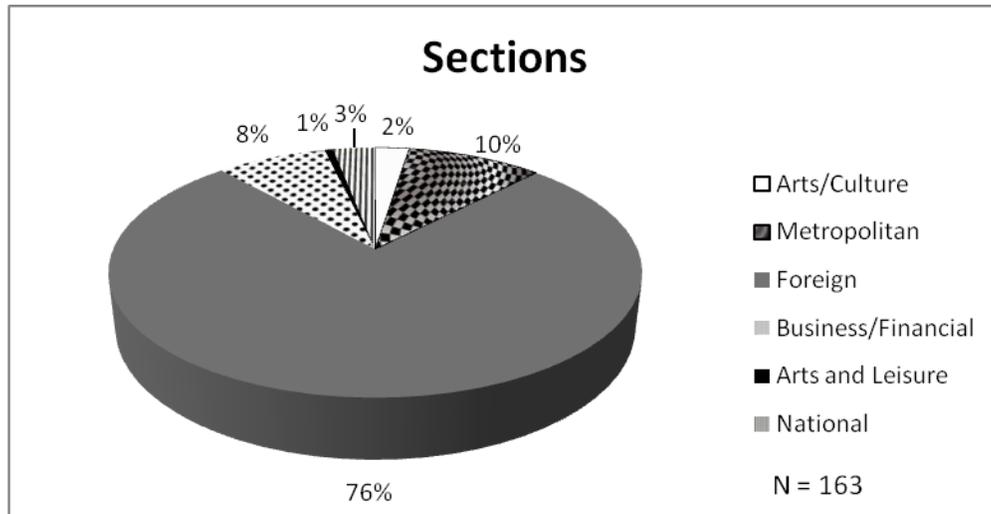


Figure 4.1 Where articles in *The New York Times* were published

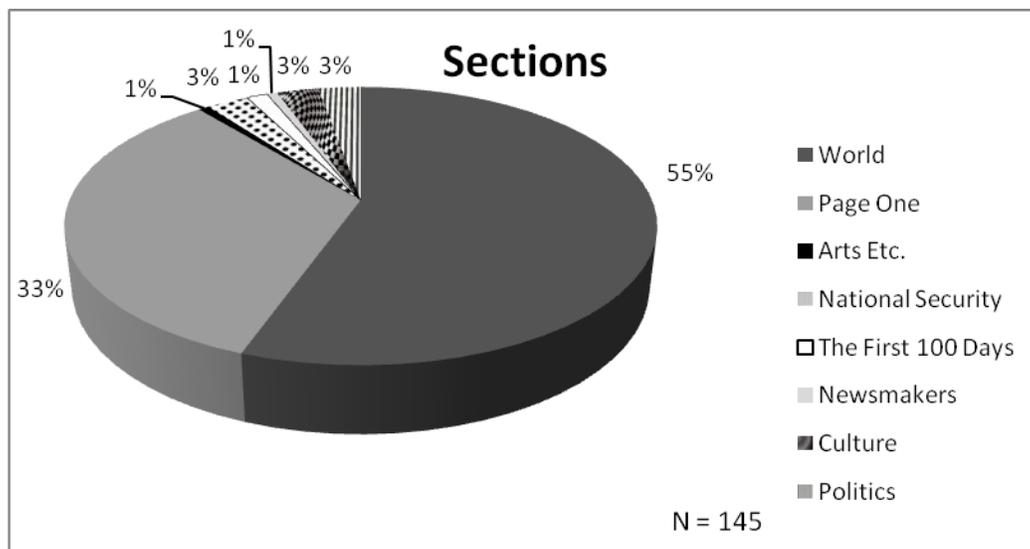


Figure 4.2 Where articles of *The Washington Times* were published

Article Themes

When examining all 308 articles in my sample size, I classified articles in the following themes: arts, economics, security, military, and politics. The articles were categorized with an arts theme if the subject focused on games, music, or art. For example, in several articles that were classified as possessing an art theme, Chavez criticized games from PlayStation as promoting capitalistic ideology, Chavez made an appearance at the Venice Film Festival featuring a documentary of the Venezuela's social change under the Chavez administration and its affects with other South American countries, and Chavez recorded an album full of songs released by his United Socialist Party. Articles that were classified with the theme of economics discussed Venezuela's currency, oil prices in Venezuela, Chavez's nationalization of companies in Venezuela, and Chavez's relationship with foreign oil companies and investors.

Articles that were categorized with the theme of security focused on kidnapers in Venezuela, the Venezuelan government obtaining weapons from Russia, drug trade in Venezuela, death threats of opposition leaders, lack of human rights, and Venezuela providing a safe haven to rebels of Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Military themed articles discussed Chavez's accusations of the U.S. military planning to over throw him, Chavez uniting military forces with his allies, the Venezuelan military breaking up protests from opposition leaders, and Chavez tightening his control over his own military to ensure all of his officers maintain loyalty to his Bolivarian regime. Finally, articles that were classified with the politics theme discussed Chavez's meeting with foreign leaders, the promotion of new Venezuelan Ambassadors to the United States, and Venezuelan relationships with democratic and leftist countries.

The bar graphs below represent the number of article theme categories in 308 articles in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* during the last year of the George W. Bush administration and the first year of the Obama administration.

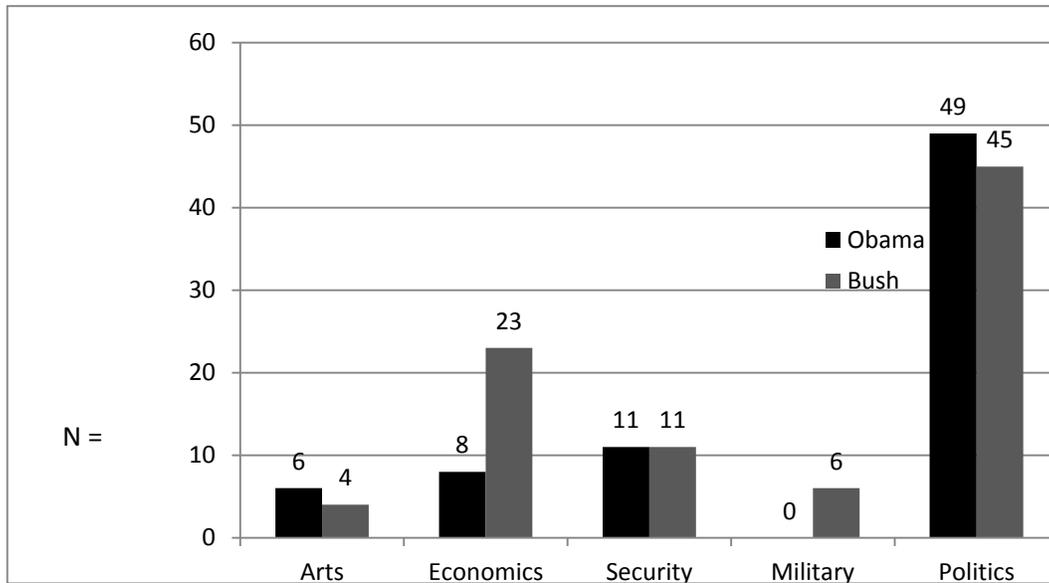


Figure 4.3 Article themes in *The New York Times* during the last year of the George W. Bush administration and the first year of the Obama administration

This bar graph shows that the 163-article sample in *The New York Times* during both the George W. Bush administration and the Obama administration have about the same amount of arts, politics, and security themes. Six articles, or 3.68%, contain the art theme during the Obama administration and four articles, or 2.45%, have the art theme during the George W. Bush administration. Eight articles, or 4.90%, possess the economics theme during the Obama administration and 23 articles, or 14.11%, have the economics theme during the George W. Bush administration. There are 11 articles, or 6.74%, during both administrations that have the security

theme, zero articles during the Obama administration have the military theme, and six articles, or 3.68%, during the George W. Bush administration contain the military theme. Forty-nine articles, or 30.06%, during the Obama administration have the theme of politics while 45 articles, or 27.60%, possess the theme of politics during the George W. Bush administration.

Upon analyzing the trends in article themes of *The New York Times* during the last year of the Bush administration, it is apparent that more of the articles have the unique themes of military and economics than the articles in *The New York Times* during the last year of the Obama administration. An example of an article in *The New York Times* during the last year of the Bush administration with a military theme is “Troops mass at Colombian border in crisis over killing of rebel,” which discusses Venezuela and Ecuador placing their troops on the Colombian border after Colombia’s military forces killed the senior leader of FARQ, the Colombian rebel group with ties to Hugo Chavez (Romero, 2008, March 3, p. 9).

An example of another article in *The New York Times* during the last year of the Bush administration with an economy theme is the article “Chavez threatens to end exports to U.S. in Exxon feud,” which mentions that Chavez threatened to end oil exports to the U.S. after Exxon froze as much as \$12 billion in Venezuela’s assets in retaliation to Chavez trying to nationalize his country’s oil industry (Romero, 2008, Feb. 11, p. 13)

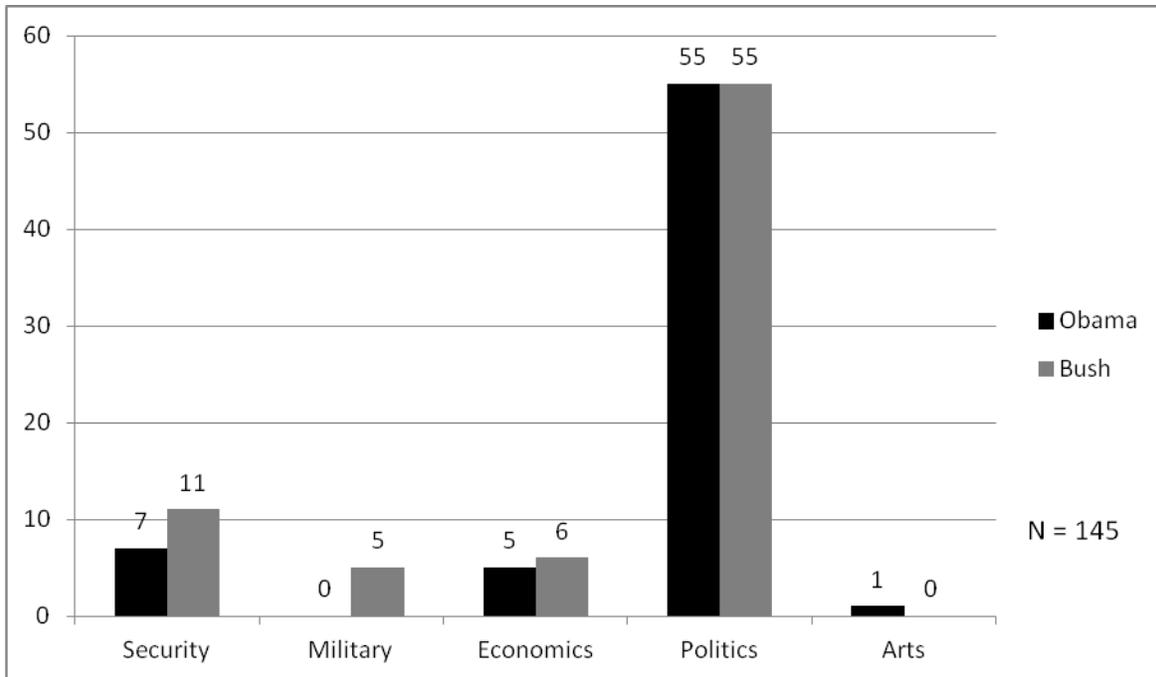


Figure 4.4 Article themes in *The Washington Times* during the last year of the George W. Bush administration and the first year of the Obama administration

The bar graph above shows that the 145-article sample size in *The Washington Times* during both the George W. Bush administration and the Obama administration have about the same amount of arts and economics themes while having the same amount of politics themes. Seven articles, or 4.83%, contain the security theme during the Obama administration and 11 articles, or 7.59%, have the security theme during the George W. Bush administration. Zero articles possess the military theme during the Obama administration and five articles, or 3.44%, have the military theme in the during the George W. Bush administration. Five articles, or 3.44%, during the Obama administration have the economics theme and six articles, or 4.1%, during the George W. Bush administration have the economics theme. One article, or .07%, has

the arts theme during the Obama administration and zero articles have the art theme during the Bush administration. There are both 55 articles, or 37.93%, with the theme politics during the Obama and Bush administrations.

Upon analyzing the trends in article themes of *The Washington Times* during the last year of the Bush administration, it is apparent that the majority of the articles have military and security themes. An example of an article in *The Washington Times* possessing the military theme is in the article “Venezuela and drugs,” which mentions that the Bush administration is furious that Chavez will not cooperate with Colombian President Alvaro Uribe against countering rebel group FARC, which is considered a terrorist group by the U.S. government (Morrison, 2008, Jan. 23, p. A14).

An example of another article in *The Washington Times* during the last year of the Bush administration possessing the security theme is in the article “Ecuador cuts Colombia ties; arms buildup inflames standoff,” which implies that Chavez supports FARC and bought weapons from Russia, which is considered a “rogue” country against U.S. ideology (Sands, 2008, March 4, p. A01).

Article Tones

The graphs below represent the number of the 308 articles in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* during the last year of the George W. Bush administration and the first year of the Obama administration in their respective tone categories. As noted earlier in this study, an article is categorized as follows:

- Positive if the article uses adverbs or adjectives that commend Chavez’s character or shows that Chavez is willing to work with the U.S. ideologies
- Neutral if the article does not diminish nor praise Chavez’s character nor shows that the he was in conflict or in cooperation with U.S. ideals.
- Negative if the article uses adverbs and adjectives to diminish Chavez’s character or shows that Chavez is not willing to work with the U.S. ideologies

From the pie graphs below, a total of 163 articles were represented in *The New York Times* during the last year of the George W. Bush administration and the first year of the Obama administration. Ninety-three articles were examined under the Bush administration - one or about 1% of the articles was positive, 36 or about 39% of the articles were neutral, and 56 or about 60% of the articles were negative. Seventy articles were examined under the Obama administration - five or about 7% of the articles were positive, 26 or about 37% of the articles were neutral, and 39 or about 56% of the articles were negative

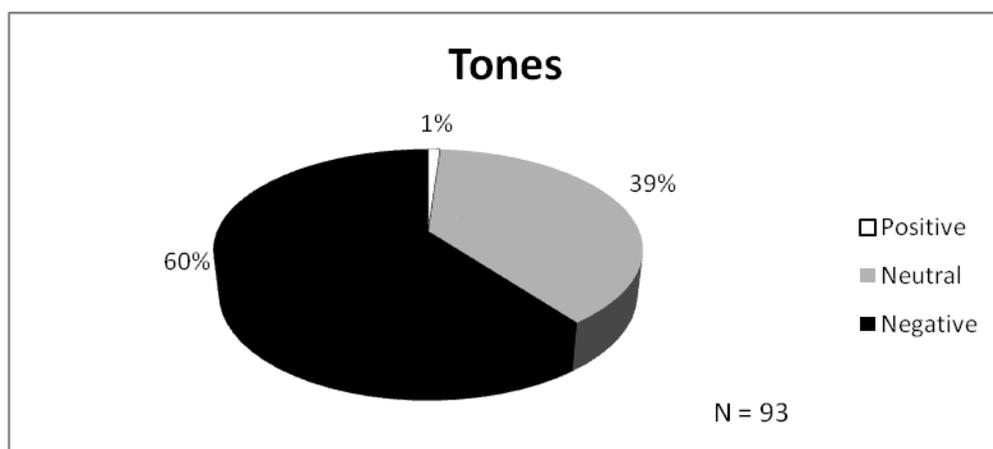


Figure 4.5 Article tones in *The New York Times* during the last year of the George W. Bush administration

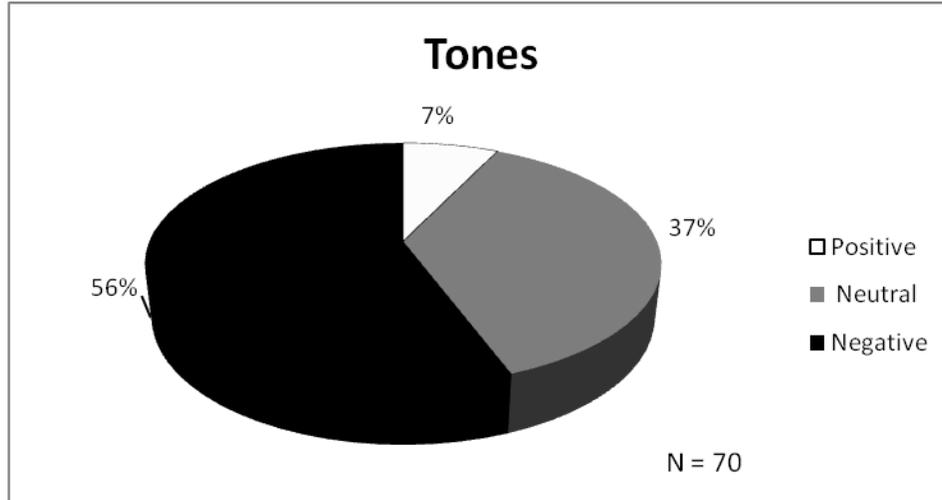


Figure 4.6 Article tones in *The New York Times* during the first year of the Obama administration

An example of an article with a negative tone in *The New York Times* during the last year of the Bush administration is the article “Files tying Venezuela to rebels not altered, report says,” that mentions Colombian officials did not alter computer files, which revealed Chavez financially supported FARC. The files were obtained from computers from Ecuador when Colombian military forces seized them in the March 2008 raid of Ecuador’s FARC rebels (Romero, Gonzalez, & Diaz, 2008, May 16, p.14). This article is considered negative because it portrays Chavez as a supporter of FARC, which is considered a terrorist group by the U.S. government.

From the pie chart below, a total of 76 articles are represented in *The Washington Times* during the last year of the George W. Bush administration; one or about 2% of the articles are positive, 21 or about 41% of the articles are neutral, and 54 or about 57% of the articles are negative.

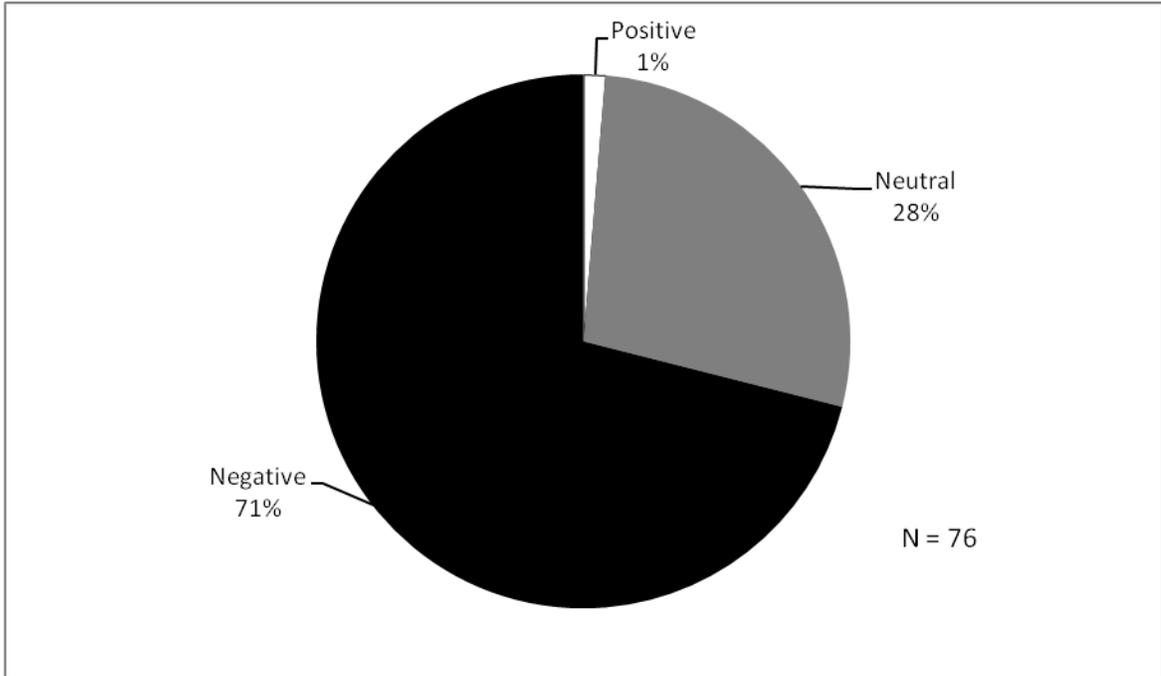


Figure 4.7 Article tones in *The Washington Times* during the last year of the George W. Bush administration

From the pie chart below, a total of 69 articles were represented in *The Washington Times* during the first year of the Obama administration and had a more or less equal tone distribution; 11 or about 22% of the articles were positive, 17 or about 34% of the articles were neutral, and 41 or about 44% of the articles were negative.

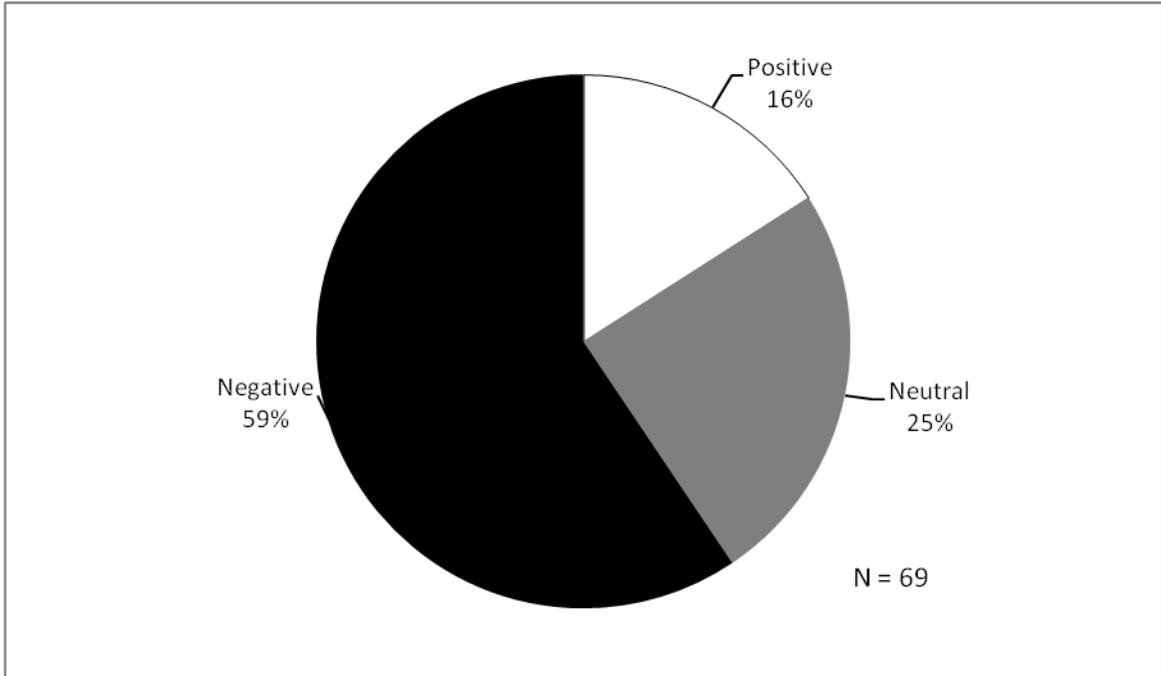


Figure 4.8 Article tones in *The Washington Times* during the first year of the Obama administration

An example of an article with a positive tone from *The Washington Times* during the first year of the Obama administration is the article “Obama calls meeting with Chavez good steps; Sales of gift book soar,” that mentions Obama’s positive meeting with Hugo Chavez and his acceptance of Eduardo Galeano book “The open veins of Latin America,” which is critical of U.S. ideology. On the other hand, this article utilizes a slightly cautious tone about Obama’s meeting with Chavez by mentioning Nevada Republican Senator John Ensign’s opinion of Obama being irresponsible by being shown in the media as joking with Hugo Chavez who had not cooperated with the former Bush administration (Dinan, 2009, April 20, p. A01). This article

is considered positive because it shows that Chavez might be willing to improve his relations with the U.S. by cooperating with the Obama administration.

From the pie chart below, a total of 169 articles were represented in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* during the last year of the George W. Bush administration; two or about 1% of the articles were positive, 57 or about 34% of the articles are neutral, and 110 or about 65% of the articles were negative.

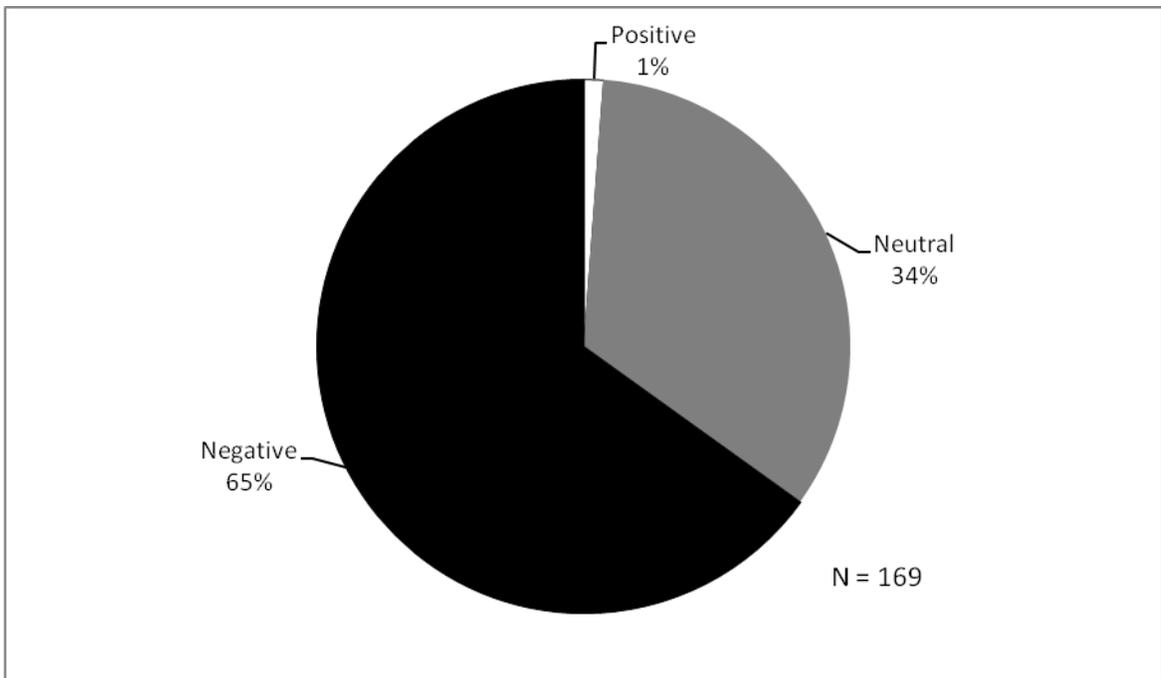


Figure 4.9 Article tones in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* during the last year of the George W. Bush administration

From the pie chart below, a total of 139 articles were represented in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* during the first year of the Obama administration; 16 or about 8% of

the articles were positive, 43 or about 31% of the articles were neutral, and 80 or about 61% of the articles were negative.

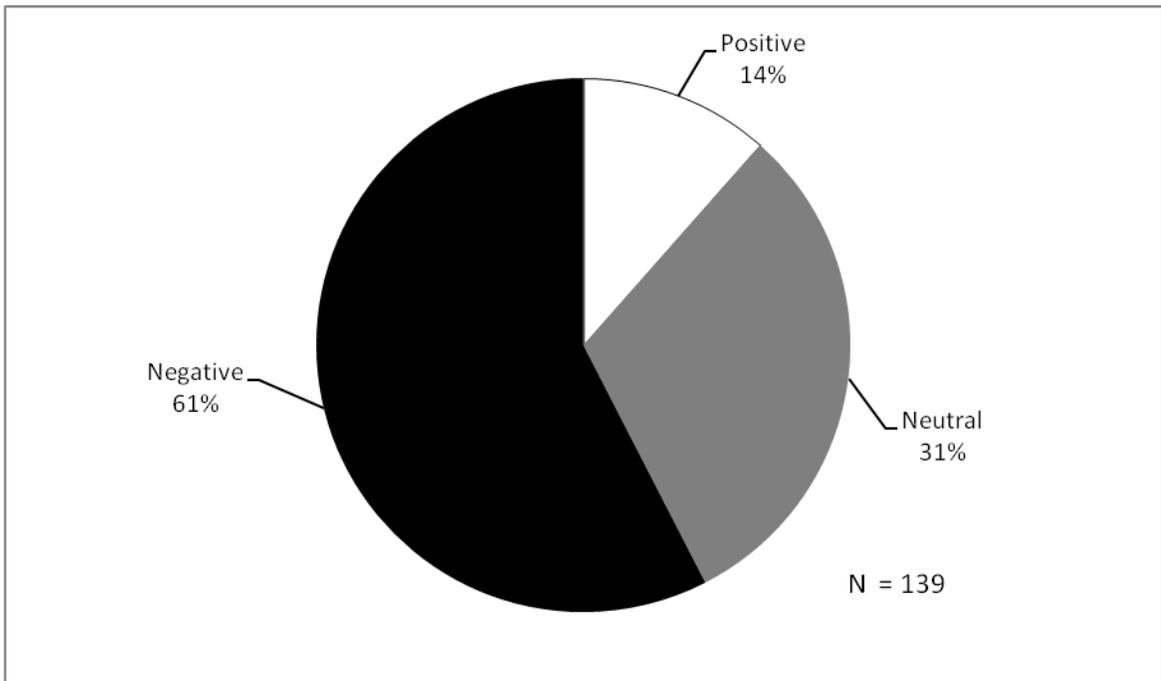


Figure 4.10 Article tones in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* during the first year of the Obama administration

Article Source Results

The following table below shows the categorized sources of 163 articles in *The New York Times* during the last year of the George W. Bush administration and the first year of the Obama administration:

Table 4.11 Sources in *The New York Times*

Source Type	# of sources during George W. Bush	# of sources during Obama
Venezuela president	27 (8.1%)	23 (10.7%)
U.S. president	4 (1.2%)	6 (2.8%)
Expert/news shaper	63 (18.8%)	30 (2.8%)
U.S. pro-Chavez government official	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Pro-Chavez government official	23 (6.9%)	19 (8.8%)
U.S. anti-Chavez government official	8 (2.4%)	7 (3.3%)
Anti-Chavez government official	26 (7.8%)	8 (3.7%)
U.S. neutral government official	20 (5.3%)	12 (5.6%)
Neutral government official	24 (6.0%)	23 (10.7%)
U.S. pro-Chavez organization	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Pro-Chavez organization	4 (1.2%)	0 (0%)
U.S. anti-Chavez organization	5 (1.5%)	0 (0%)
Anti-Chavez organization	4 (1.2%)	3 (1.4%)
U.S. neutral organization	5 (1.5%)	1 (.05%)
Neutral organization	17 (5.1%)	4 (1.9%)
U.S. pro-Chavez business official	1 (.03%)	0 (0%)
Pro-Chavez business official	3 (.09%)	3 (1.4%)
U.S. anti-Chavez business official	1 (.03%)	0 (0%)
Anti-Chavez business official	11 (3.3%)	3 (1.4%)
U.S. neutral business official	7 (2.0%)	2 (.09%)
Neutral business official	13 (3.9%)	11 (5.1%)
U.S. pro-Chavez citizen	0 (0%)	1 (.05%)
Pro-Chavez citizen	2 (.06%)	7 (3.3%)
U.S. anti-Chavez citizen	5 (1.5%)	0 (0%)

Anti-Chavez citizen	15 (4.5%)	12 (5.6%)
U.S. neutral citizen	5 (1.5%)	5 (2.3%)
Neutral citizen	42 (12.5%)	35 (16.3%)
	Total: 335	Total: 215

The following table below shows the categorized sources of 145 articles in *The Washington Times* during the last year of the George W. Bush administration and the first year of the Obama administration:

Table 4.12 Sources in *The Washington Times*

Source Type	# of sources during George W. Bush	# of sources during Obama
Venezuela president	19 (5.7%)	16 (5.3%)
U.S. president	3 (.09%)	11 (3.7%)
Expert/news shaper	49 (14.7%)	42 (14%)
U.S. pro-Chavez government official	0 (0%)	1 (.03%)
Pro-Chavez government official	44 (13.2%)	26 (8.7%)
U.S. anti-Chavez government official	27 (8.1%)	13 (4.3%)
Anti-Chavez government official	24 (7.2%)	10 (3.3%)
U.S. neutral government official	31 (9.3%)	64 (21.3%)
Neutral government official	40 (12%)	36 (12%)
U.S. pro-Chavez organization	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Pro-Chavez organization	5 (1.5%)	1 (.03%)
U.S. anti-Chavez organization	0 (0%)	1 (.03%)
Anti-Chavez organization	0 (0%)	2 (.07%)
U.S. neutral organization	11 (3.3%)	13 (4.3%)

Neutral organization	16 (4.8%)	11 (3.7%)
U.S. pro-Chavez business official	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Pro-Chavez business official	1 (.03%)	0 (0%)
U.S. anti-Chavez business official	2 (.06%)	0 (0%)
Anti-Chavez business official	4 (1.2%)	4 (1.3%)
U.S. neutral business official	16 (5.8%)	17 (5.7%)
Neutral business official	13 (3.8%)	8 (2.7%)
U.S. pro-Chavez citizen	0 (0%)	1 (.03%)
Pro-Chavez citizen	7 (2.1%)	1 (.03%)
U.S. anti-Chavez citizen	4 (1.2%)	1 (.03%)
Anti-Chavez citizen	4 (1.2%)	4 (1.3%)
U.S. neutral citizen	8 (2.4%)	5 (1.7%)
Neutral citizen	6 (1.8%)	12 (4%)
	Total: 334	Total: 300

The following table below shows the categorized sources of 308 articles in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* during the last year of the George W. Bush administration and the first year of the Obama administration:

Table 4.13 Sources in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times*

Source Type	# of sources in <i>The New York Times</i>	# of sources in <i>The Washington Times</i>
Venezuela president	50 (9%)	35 (6%)
U.S. president	10 (2%)	14 (2%)
Expert/news shaper	93 (17%)	91 (14%)
U.S. pro-Chavez government official	0 (0%)	1 (.1%)

Pro-Chavez government official	42 (8%)	70 (11%)
U.S. anti-Chavez government official	15 (3%)	40 (6%)
Anti-Chavez government official	34 (6%)	34 (5%)
U.S. neutral government official	32 (6%)	95 (15%)
Neutral government official	47 (9%)	76 (12%)
U.S. pro-Chavez organization	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Pro-Chavez organization	4 (1%)	6 (1%)
U.S. anti-Chavez organization	5 (1%)	1 (.1%)
Anti-Chavez organization	7 (1%)	2 (.3%)
U.S. neutral organization	6 (1%)	24 (4%)
Neutral organization	21 (4%)	27 (4%)
U.S. pro-Chavez business official	1 (.2%)	0 (0%)
Pro-Chavez business official	6 (1%)	1 (.1%)
U.S. anti-Chavez business official	1 (.2%)	2 (.3%)
Anti-Chavez business official	14 (3%)	8 (1%)
U.S. neutral business official	9 (2%)	33 (5%)
Neutral business official	24 (4%)	21 (3%)
U.S. pro-Chavez citizen	1 (.2%)	1 (.1%)
Pro-Chavez citizen	9 (2%)	8 (1%)
U.S. anti-Chavez citizen	5 (1%)	5 (.7%)
Anti-Chavez citizen	27 (5%)	8 (1%)
U.S. neutral citizen	10 (2%)	13 (2%)
Neutral citizen	77 (14%)	18 (3%)
	Total: 550	Total: 634

Although it is not appropriate to create a comparison chart of each number of sources from *The New York Times* to each number of sources in *The Washington Times*, I created a comparison chart of the source types which differed the most in the two newspapers.

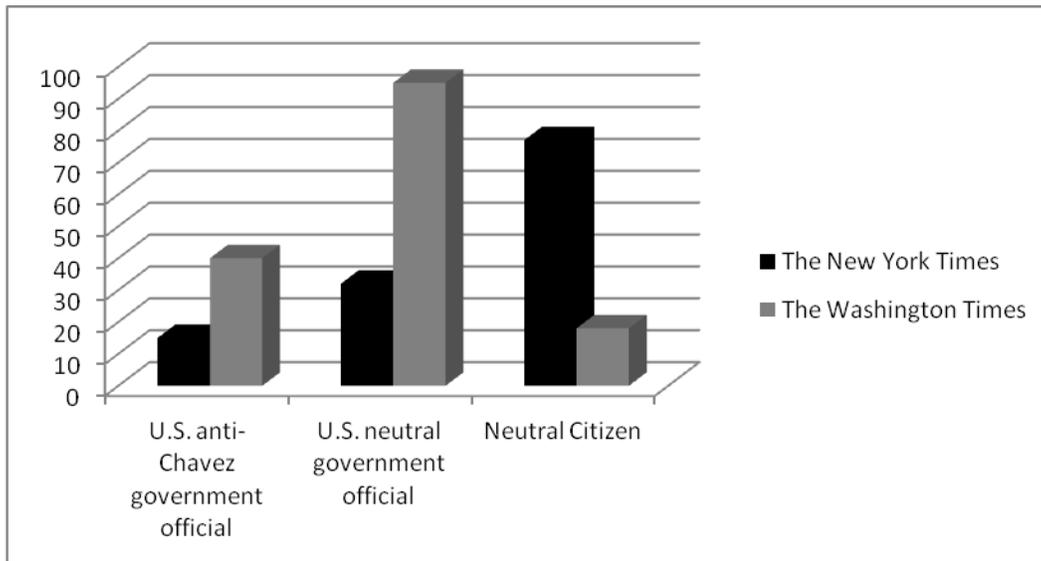


Figure 4.14 Source number comparison in *The New York Times* versus *The Washington Times*

As the chart shows above, the sources between *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* that differed the most are in the following categories: U.S. anti-Chavez government official, U.S. neutral government official and neutral citizen. Overall, *The New York Times* displayed the most diversity with sources in the 163 article sample size versus the 145 article sample size of *The Washington Times*. Approximately 15 or 3% of the articles in *The New York Times* featured U.S. anti-Chavez government official sources versus 40 or 11% U.S. anti-Chavez government official sources in *The Washington Times*. Approximately 32 or 6% of the articles in

The New York Times featured U.S. neutral government official sources versus 95 or 15% in *The Washington Times*. Finally, 77 or 14% of the articles in *The New York Times* featured neutral citizen sources versus 18 or 3% neutral citizen sources in *The Washington Times*. Although *The Washington Times* articles has more U.S. neutral government officials as sources, *The New York Times* used more neutral citizen sources which may be considered more diverse because their opinions are not representing the opinions of government officials.

An example of *The New York Times* using more diverse article sources than *The Washington Times* may be found in the article “In Venezuela, plantations of cocoa stir bitterness,” which mentions that many citizens in Venezuela depend on cultivating cocoa plantations for stable income because Venezuelan cocoa creates a chocolate that is in high demand in the United States and Europe. This article uses sources such as neutral Venezuelan citizen Clemencia Bacalo, who claims to continue to rely on working on cocoa farms, and U.S. neutral citizen and California chocolate maker, Gary Guittard, who claims that Venezuela is in a league of their own when it comes to the high quality of cocoa production (Romero, 2009, July 29, p.A04).

An example of *The Washington Times* using less diverse sources than *The New York Times* is found in the article, “Colombia faces border tension with Venezuela,” which discusses that Colombia was building an army of 15,000 men after Chavez threatened to attack Colombia after Colombia permitted U.S. troops to continue to utilize their military bases. The article relies on sources from anonymous U.S. government officials that claim Chavez was using calculated measures to instigate a feud with Colombia when Venezuelan troops blew up two pedestrian bridges linking Venezuela and Colombia after accusing Colombia of sending spies over the Venezuelan border. Another unnamed U.S. government official source claimed that Venezuelan

troops were not strong enough to attack Colombia (Arostegui, 2009, Dec. 10, p.B1). It is also important to note that this article did use quotes from Colombian Defense Minister Gabriel Silva and Hugo Chavez, but their quotes only supported the views of U.S. government officials.

Research Questions Answered

After examining 308 articles for coverage of Hugo Chavez in both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* during the last year of the Bush administration and the first year of the Obama administration, I obtained the following results from my research questions:

1. Will *The New York Times* frame Chavez in a more neutral or positive manner than *The Washington Times*?

The coding results showed that *The New York Times* framed Chavez slightly more positively or neutrally than *The Washington Times*. A total of 70 articles were represented in *The New York Times* during the first year of the Obama administration; five or about 7% of the articles were positive, 26 or about 37% of the articles were neutral, and 39 or about 56% of the articles were negative. A total of 69 articles were represented in *The Washington Times* during the first year of the Obama administration and had a more or less equal tone distribution; 11 or about 22% of the articles were positive, 17 or about 34% of the articles were neutral, and 41 or about 44% of the articles were negative.

A total of 69 articles were represented in *The Washington Times* during the first year of the Obama administration and had a more or less equal tone distribution; 11 or about 22% of the articles were positive, 17 or about 34% of the articles were neutral, and 41 or about 44% of the articles were negative. A total of 76 articles are represented in *The Washington Times* during the

last year of the George W. Bush administration; one or about 2% of the articles are positive, 21 or about 41% of the articles are neutral, and 54 or about 57% of the articles are negative.

I expected *The New York Times* to cover Hugo Chavez in a more positive or neutral tone than *The Washington Times* due to its more liberal disposition. However, I expected there to be a larger difference in article tones between the two newspapers, where *The New York Times* presented Chavez much more neutrally or positively than *The Washington Times*. These results indicate that newspaper disposition does have an effect on the way media is framed about foreign leaders and their ideologies, just not to the degree that I had anticipated.

2. Will both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* contain more negative article tones to frame Chavez during the George W. Bush administration versus the Obama administration?

As I expected, both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* contained more negative article tones to frame Chavez during the last year of the Bush administration versus the first year of the Obama administration. From the pie chart below, a total of 139 articles are represented in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* during the first year of the Obama administration; 16 or about 8% of the articles are positive, 43 or about 31% of the articles are neutral, and 80 or about 61% of the articles are negative. From the pie chart below, a total of 169 articles were represented in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* during the last year of the George W. Bush administration; two or about 1% of the articles were positive, 57 or about 34% of the articles are neutral, and 110 or about 65% of the articles were negative.

My anticipation of more articles being written about Chavez during the Bush administration in both newspapers was also correct; *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* contained 169 articles for my study during the last year of the Bush administration versus

139 articles during the first year of the Obama administration. Perhaps more articles were written about Chavez and had a more negative tone during the Bush administration due to the volatile relationship between Bush and Chavez, especially over disputes of Chavez nationalizing oil and not cooperating with Western foreign investors as well as Chavez's involvement with the rebel group FARC.

3. Will *The New York Times* use more diverse article sources than *The Washington Times*?

As I expected, *The New York Times* displayed the most diversity with sources in the 163 article sample size versus the 145 article sample size of *The Washington Times*. Approximately 15 or 3% of the articles in *The New York Times* featured U.S. anti-Chavez government official sources versus 40 or 11% U.S. anti-Chavez government official sources in *The Washington Times*. Approximately 32 or 6% of the articles in *The New York Times* featured U.S. neutral government official sources versus 95 or 15% in *The Washington Times*. Finally, 77 or 14% of the articles in *The New York Times* featured neutral U.S./foreign citizen sources versus 18 or 3% neutral citizen sources in *The Washington Times*. Although *The Washington Times* articles has more U.S. neutral government officials as sources, *The New York Times* used more neutral citizen sources that may be considered diverse because their opinions are not representing the opinions of government officials.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

After examining 308 articles covering Chavez in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* during the last year of the Bush administration and the first year of the Obama administration, I would like to add my perceptions and opinions to discuss patterns in my article coding results. It is my hope that these perceptions will aid in further research of how the U.S. media frames foreign leaders, especially during a change in U.S. presidential administrations.

Discussion of Findings

It is not surprising that 76% of the articles in *The New York Times* are from the Foreign section, and about 55% of the articles are in the World section, and 33% of the articles are on Page One of *The Washington Times*. There is little news coverage of Hugo Chavez in other sections such as the Business/Financial and Arts/Culture sections of *The New York Times* and the National Security and Culture sections in *The Washington Times*. As mentioned earlier in the study, the U.S. media cover foreign news according to the U.S. interests with little representation of foreign perspectives and culture (Graber, 2002, p. 369-370). This results in U.S. media consumers forming biases and stereotypes against foreign leaders, such as Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez.

Although article placement was not the focus of my study, it is interesting that 33% of *The Washington Times* contained articles on Page One, which may indicate a bias of placing such a large importance of Hugo Chavez and his ideology on the first page of the newspaper. On the other hand, the articles about Chavez were spread throughout *The New York Times*, such as 10% of the articles were in the Metropolitan section, 8% articles were in the Business/Financial

section, and 76% of the articles were in the Foreign. This may indicate that *The New York Times* was less biased by not focusing on displaying articles of Hugo Chavez toward the front of the newspaper and deemphasizing the threat and influence of Chavez on U.S. ideologies.

Two trends in the themes of the articles in *The New York Times* sample size stood out. The articles during the Bush administration had more themes of military and economics compared the articles during the Obama administration. Perhaps this shows more bias during the Bush administration because it indicated that Chavez was a potential economic and military threat due to his intimidation over Venezuela's shipment of oil to the U.S. and his cooperation with U.S. enemies.

The two trends that stand out in *The Washington Times* is that during the Bush administration, more articles focused on the themes of military and security than articles during the Obama administration. Perhaps this indicates bias because during the Bush administration the U.S. media emphasized Chavez as a military and security threat as he became allies with countries that were considered enemies of the United States.

It is curious that in both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times*, the articles possessed a heavier theme of economics during the Bush administration versus the Obama administration. This may be attributed to Bush and Chavez's rivalry over Venezuela's exports to the United States and Chavez's use of oil wealth to aid countries, such as Iran and Cuba, which were deemed "rogue nations" by the United States due to their anti-capitalist ideals. It is also not a shock that in both newspapers, the articles had a greater military theme during the Bush administration versus the Obama administration. This can be attributed to Chavez's constant accusations of the U.S. military plotting to overthrow him and uniting Venezuela military forces with other nations that are antagonistic against Western ideals. With the constant article theme of

economics and military, perhaps U.S. media consumers would form the stereotype that Chavez is an antagonist to the United States and could go out of his way to deny trade with the United States or threaten the U.S. militarily.

I also found it unsurprising that both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* did not present many articles with the arts theme. This may be due to the lack of news from Chavez that may be categorized in this theme, or perhaps news featuring the art and culture in Venezuela was not an immediate interest of the U.S. government, and thus the media did not cover many articles with this theme. I also expected that both newspapers would present articles heavily focused on the theme of politics. During the Bush administration, political disagreement constantly arose between President Bush and President Chavez over oil and military endeavors. Furthermore, during the Obama administration, politically themed coverage focused on Obama trying to renew relations with Chavez after the Bush administration, yet still being cautious of the political ideologies of the Venezuelan leader.

What I did find unusual, however, was that there were an equal amount of articles in *The New York Times* during the Bush and Obama administrations which focused on the theme of security. I would have expected that there would be a larger percentage of security themed articles in *The New York Times* during the Bush administration due to the constant coverage of Chavez's possible support of FARC, the Colombian rebel group deemed as terrorists by the United States, and Chavez's acquirement of weapons from Russia. This equal representation of security themed articles could mean that both newspapers featured articles that covered the most pressing issues of the U.S. government. Perhaps there could have been more security themed articles in *The New York Times* during the Bush administration versus the Obama administration if there had been a larger sample size. As expected, there was a large portion of articles with the

theme of security in *The Washington Times* during the Bush administration versus the Obama administration.

After observing the article tones in *The New York Times* during the first year of the Obama administration, I am surprised that the majority of the articles do not possess a neutral tone. This may be due to Obama's newly established relationship with Chavez after the Bush administrations tumultuous relationship with Chavez. The articles may still present Chavez in a negative light because the U.S. government is still cautious of Chavez's anti-capitalistic ideologies.

I anticipated that there would be a larger percentage of articles that possess a negative tone in *The New York Times* during the Bush administration due to Bush's troubled relationship with Chavez. Likewise, I am not shocked there were few articles that portrayed Chavez in a positive light. I am a little surprised that 39% of the articles had a neutral tone; I would have expected that there would have been a greater percentage of articles with a negative tone toward Chavez in *The New York Times* during the Bush administration. Perhaps this can be attributed to the more liberal, and perhaps more neutral, disposition of *The New York Times*.

It is important to note that in there was more positive coverage of Chavez during the Obama administration versus the Bush administration. This indicated that *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* articles may have shown bias against Chavez due to Bush's disagreement with Venezuela's economic and military relationship with the United States and its allies.

I am not surprised with the results of the percentages of article tones in *The Washington Times* during the first year of the Obama administration. I expected that during the Obama administration, the coverage of Chavez would have more positive and neutral articles due to

Obama's quest to mend relations with Chavez after the Bush administration. However, the majority of the articles during the first year of the Obama administration could be negative because although Obama was trying to mend relations with Chavez, the U.S. government was still cautious of his anti-American ideologies.

The results of the article tone percentages in *The Washington Times* during the last year of the Bush administration were as I anticipated. I would not have expected the articles during the Bush administration to possess a positive tone due to Bush's chaotic and problematic relationship with Chavez. I am a little surprised that 41% of the articles had a neutral tone and there were not a larger percentage of articles with negative tones. However, like I expected, there was more negative coverage than positive or neutral coverage in *The Washington Times* during the last year of the Bush administration.

The results of coverage of Hugo Chavez in *The New York Times* during the first year of the Obama administration are not unanticipated. Although the majority of the articles possessed a negative tone, quite a large percentage had a positive or neutral tone. This may be due to the Obama administration's hope of improving relations with Hugo Chavez.

The results of the article tone percentages in both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* during the last year of the Bush administration are what one could expect. It is important to note that during the last year of the Bush administration there was more negative coverage of Chavez and hardly any positive coverage of Chavez. This perhaps indicates bias in both newspapers during the Bush administration because Chavez and Bush could not agree on economic trading policies nor military endeavors between Venezuela, the United States and U.S. allies. This may also indicate that perhaps the media will frame international leaders according to the U.S. president's relationship and view of the international leader. Since Bush has a more

volatile relationship with Chavez than Obama, the media in both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* portrayed Chavez more negatively during the last year of the Bush administration versus the first year of the Obama administration.

Reflections on Political Framing Theory

As mentioned earlier, this study focused on Robert M. Entman's political framing theory, where, according to Entman (1993), the text presents frames, "which are manifested by the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments" (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* portrayed Hugo Chavez in a negative manner when Chavez was conflicting with U.S. ideologies and not willing to cooperate with the United States and their allies. Certain keywords used in both newspapers to describe Chavez as a "demagogue" or "anti-American" coupled with the words "fear" and "concern" throughout the articles suggested that people of the United States and their allies should be weary of Chavez's ideologies and government; Chavez was framed as a tyrant who was uncooperative with the West.

Stereotyped images of Chavez were also evident in both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times*, thus politically framing Chavez as a despot. For example, during the Obama administration, Chavez was frequently mentioned as giving Obama a book about his ideologies and being obstinate toward Obama even after considering cooperating with the U.S. and Obama promised to improve relations with Chavez. The frequent portrayal of Chavez possibly supporting FARC, obtaining weapons from Russia, and refusing to cooperate with Western foreign investors about Venezuelan oil further politically framed Chavez as an autocrat.

An example of Chavez being stereotyped as an adversary to the United States was in the article “Obama to meet with Myanmar rulers; visit marks major change in U.S. policy” from *The Washington Times*. This article states that in April 2009, at a Summit of the Americas meeting, Chavez posed in front of photographers while he handed President Obama a copy of the book “The Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of the Continent,” by Eduardo Galeona, who claimed that the U.S. and Europe interfere with the politics and economies of Latin America. The article characterized Chavez as a “publicity hound” and indicated that Obama’s acceptance of the book did not mean that the U.S. and Venezuela were forming a relationship (Mosk & Roughneen, 2009, pp. A1). Thus the article created framing that stereotyped Chavez as an irrational leader who could be causing tension with President Obama by giving the U.S. president anti-American literature.

Another example of Chavez being stereotyped as an enemy of the United States was in the article “Warming relationships in a warm locale” from *The New York Times*. This article likewise focused on Chavez handing Obama Eduardo Galeona’s book “The Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of the Continent,” an “anti-capitalist tractate,” which was an unsurprising selection due to his past volatile relationship with President Bush, who he called “the devil.” The article also mentioned that President Obama is unlikely to read or understand the book because it was in Spanish. This article further stereotyped Chavez as thoughtless and instigating trouble by handing the newly elected U.S. President Obama anti-capitalist literature (Stolberg, 2009, April 19, Column 0, p. 8A).

Chavez was further stereotyped as an adversary to the United States in *The New York Times* article “Chavez threatens to end oil exports to U.S. in Exxon feud.” The article mentioned that in early February 2008, Chavez planned to halt Venezuelan oil exports to the U.S. and

featured Chavez saying “political opponents were plotting to reconvert Venezuela into a North American colony,” therefore stereotyping Chavez as uncooperative brute of the U.S. (Romero, 2008, February 11, Column 0, p. A13).

A final example of Chavez being stereotyped as an antagonist was in *The Washington Times* article “U.S. examines laptops seized in Ecuador raid; Venezuela action eyed.” This article mentioned that possible evidence surfaced on computers seized by Colombian commandos in a raid on Ecuador that hinted that Chavez could be supplying money to Colombia’s Revolutionary Armed Forces Group (FARC), which the U.S. government considered a terrorist group. The article further stereotypes Chavez as a tyrant to the United States by claiming he was “not cooperating fully with American anti-terrorism efforts” (Behn & Gentile, 2008, March 13, p. A1).

Occasionally, articles in both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* would mention Chavez in passing and focus on topics such as the rise of Raul Castro as Cuba’s next president, Democratic and Republican arguments for the impending U.S. presidential election of 2008, international recognition of Spanish chefs, U.S. international relations, other foreign politics, the drug war throughout Latin America, and other Latin American leaders’ ideologies. However, the majority of the articles focusing on Chavez’s volatile relationship with the United States and their allies created the political frame of Chavez as an enemy to the West.

The “sources of information” throughout the newspapers also created the political framing of Chavez as an opponent of the United States and other capitalist countries. The largest number of sources in both newspapers was Venezuelan government officials, U.S. government officials, and Latin American experts. The overreliance of officials and news shapers as sources

focuses the audience's attention on politics rather than outside civilian, organization, and business views of Chavez's government.

The overreliance of the U.S. president as a source frames Chavez according to the president's agenda. The White House spends much time holding the attention of media by providing journalists with briefings, backgrounds, press releases, interviews, and press conferences featuring elite government officials, including the president. Evidence suggests that the president influences the media to some extent, although the exact measurement of influence is unknown.

According to researcher Kingdon, who has studied Washington's agenda, "The media report what is going on in the government, by and large," and researcher Light, who has examined the U.S. president's agenda from the Kennedy to the Reagan administrations, mentions "for the White House staffs, the media is not a source of new ideas; it is at best a bridge to the political environment" (as cited in Edwards & Wood, 1999). Since Presidents George W. Bush and Obama briefed the press about Chavez's policies and ideologies, the press acted as a "bridge" to clearly disseminate the president's message to the public. Therefore, the president's agenda is reported by the media and affects what subjects the media consumers contemplate, such as President George W. Bush's hostility toward Hugo Chavez and President Obama's hope for restoring relations between the United States and Venezuela.

Perhaps the U.S. media are overly dependent on U.S. government officials as sources of information because the government and elite organizations support the media. For example, newspapers are trying to stay afloat in a digital age when media consumers are obtaining their news for free on the Internet. The media relies on the U.S. Federal Communications Commission which hold meetings with policy experts and consumer groups to see if it could

relax rules on how many people newspapers, televisions, and radio stations can reach that continuously allows for free speech and healthy competitions among media outlets (MacMillan & Poirier, 2009). Perhaps Venezuelan government officials are used as many article sources over Venezuelan business officials and citizens because the Venezuelan people are afraid to criticize the Venezuelan government. It may also be argued that the media use the same type of sources because they have limited resources and time to produce articles. Whatever reason the media over rely on sources, any source dependency may shape the readers opinion about Chavez and his government by presenting limited viewpoints Chavez's policies and ideologies.

Related Research

My findings support other studies which claim the U.S. media coverage of foreign countries and their politics changes according to the U.S. government interests. According to Saleem (n.d.), the U.S. media positively framed foreign countries that share U.S. political, economic, and military interests. Other conclusions to Saleem's study were that the U.S. media reflected the opinion of the elites, the U.S. media relied on U.S. government sources to shape the media, the U.S. media focused only on foreign issues that reflected the opinion of the government leaders, the U.S. government revealed selective information to the media that led to positive or negative framing of foreign countries, the U.S. media sometimes amplified the power of enemy or rogue states, and the U.S. media justified U.S. military actions and augmented U.S. military successes and enemy atrocities (Saleem, n.d.) My thesis also supports Saleem's study which argues that U.S. government stance and elite opinions can influence the framing of foreign countries in the U.S. media.

My conclusions support another study claiming that news media aligns with government actions. According to Jeongsub and Seo (2009), the U.S. media framed North Korea differently as the relationship between the United States and North Korea altered; North Korea became more visible in the U.S. media after President George W. Bush considered it a rogue country or an “axis of evil” (Jeongsub & Seo, 2009). Venezuela also became more visible in the U.S. media as the relationship between Venezuela and the United States shifted; the U.S. media reflected the U.S. government leaders’ opinions toward Chavez and his ideologies. During the last year of President George W. Bush’s administration, Chavez was magnified as a large enemy of the United States due to Bush’s strained relationship with Chavez; the U.S. media likewise marginalized Chavez as a threat to the United States when President Obama worked to improve the relationship between the United States and Venezuela.

Future Studies and Limitations

This qualitative content analysis did have some limitations. My research article sample is fairly small. In order to further test my research questions, a larger study such as a comparison of Hugo Chavez coverage in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Times* during the last three years of the George W. Bush administration and the first three years of the Obama administration, would be necessary.

Other limitations included when my intercoders and I differed in coding results. For example, the intercoders and I did not agree on some article themes that covered economics, politics, military, or security. I feel that coding these themes could be a fine line. For example, articles discussing Chavez’s affect on the international oil industry may not necessarily be considered having an economics theme, but could be classified with a politics theme. Likewise,

articles discussing Hugo Chavez's interaction with Colombia's rebel group FARC may not necessarily be considered having the theme of security, but rather possessing the theme of politics. Perhaps to have solved this issue, I could have more thoroughly defined my expectations of articles to include articles which discussed industries always have the theme of economics, articles which discussed drugs or Hugo Chavez's interactions with rebels always have the theme of security, articles that discussed naval or army plans always have the theme of military, and articles that discussed ideologies or voting scandals always have the theme of politics.

Another small problem with coding agreement between me and my intercoders included deciding on article tones. Some of the article tones were tricky to categorize because the tone could have started out positive and ended neutral or negative. I am not too sure why we disagreed on some article tones because I was very explicit on my expectations of article tone that any article that praised Hugo Chavez and his government or showed that he was willing to cooperate with the U.S. was considered positive, any article that neither praised nor criticized Hugo Chavez or his government was considered neutral, and any article that criticized Hugo Chavez and his government and showed that he was uncooperative with the U.S. was considered negative.

Finally, one intercoder and I disagreed on what constituted a news shaper. I only considered analysts or professors news shapers, but this intercoder considered former U.S. presidents as news shapers instead of U.S. government officials. Perhaps I could have more thoroughly explained that any professor/scholar/theorist, leader of a government organization, or leader of a regional organization was categorized as a news shaper.

It also would be interesting to examine coverage of Hugo Chavez in the liberal leaning *Los Angeles Times* compared to the more conservative *New York Post*. Although my research indicates that the U.S. media frames foreign countries to reflect the opinions of the elite government officials, it would be interesting to see how newly elected Venezuela President Nicolas Maduro is framed, especially with Obama trying to improve relations between the U.S. and Venezuela.

If I could do this study again, I would more thoroughly explain my expectations for each aspect of the article to be coded and explicate further the meanings of the article tone, theme, and source categories. I would have also given the intercoders the definitions of the sources category and the unique source coding guidelines found in Appendices B and C. However, for the purpose of this exploratory content analysis study, I am satisfied with my intercoder reliability results and feel my codebook was thorough for the intercoders to examine a portion of my sample size.

Impact of Hugo Chavez's Death

President Hugo Chavez unlimited-term reign as Venezuela's president ended when he died in Caracas on March 5, 2013, from a heart attack and cancer. Venezuela held presidential elections for Hugo Chavez's handpicked successor Nicolas Maduro against Henrique Capriles on Sunday, April 14, 2013, with Maduro narrowly winning the election and Capriles claiming the votes were manipulated. I expect that the United States will have a strained relationship with the new Venezuelan president who adopted Chavez's ideologies and said in a victory speech outside of his presidential palace that "Chavez continues to be invincible, that he continues to win battles" (Bajak & Olson, 2013). I also expect the United States media to portray Maduro

negatively in both liberal and conservative news papers if Obama has a negative relationship with the new Venezuelan leader.

Another reason why I expect the U.S. to have a strained relationship with Maduro and that the U.S. media will politically frame him as a tyrant like Chavez is because Maduro has mentioned some sort of foul play with Hugo Chavez's cancer claiming "I think it will be 50 years before they declassify a document (that) I think (will show) the hand of the enemy is involved." Although Maduro did not technically specify "the enemy," he hinted that there was possible U.S. involvement with the foul play of Chavez's cancer (Hugo Chavez's Last Words..., 2013).

Concluding Thoughts

Despite research limitations, this study indicates that the U.S. media shapes foreign leader images according to U.S. government official opinions; Chavez was portrayed more negatively in the U.S. media during the last year of the George W. Bush administration than during the first year of the Obama administration. This study also showed that *The New York Times* framed Chavez more positively and neutrally compared to *The Washington Times*. However, *The New York Times* framed Chavez only slightly more positively and neutrally than in *The Washington Times*, thus leading me to conclude that *The New York Times* disposition may not have as big an effect on framing as I originally expected. Perhaps the newspaper focuses on framing the stories to align with the current U.S. presidential administration. Finally, this study showed that *The New York Times* articles contained more diverse sources than the articles in *The Washington Times*, not over relying on government officials and news shapers as sources, but also incorporating opinions from Venezuela, U.S. and other foreign citizens.

This study was important because it showed that although the media is supposed to be impartial, article themes, tones, and sources may shape consumer perception about foreign leaders and their political ideologies. The media framing, although unintentional, suggests the topics the audience thinks about and the article tones allude to how the audience thinks about foreign individuals, such as Hugo Chavez.

The purpose of my study was to determine if a change in U.S. presidential administrations and the different dispositions of newspapers play a role in media framing. The study found that the change in U.S. presidential administrations may indeed affect the portrayal of Hugo Chavez, with the media during the Bush administration stereotyping Chavez more negatively than during the Obama administration. Also, the disposition of the newspaper may affect how Chavez was stereotyped: Chavez was stereotyped less negatively in the liberal *The New York Times* compared to the conservative *The Washington Times*. I believe this study emphasized that framing does occur in the media, regardless of the dispositions of the media medium, and that by recognizing the effect of framing on public perception, audiences will be more responsible media consumers by not forming opinions about foreign leaders, such as Hugo Chavez, based on one type of media.

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Appendix A

Codebook

Record	Key/Explanation
Newspaper	<i>The New York Times</i> <i>The Washington Times</i>
Article Section	1. Arts/Cultural 2. Foreign 3. Metropolitan 4. World 5. Page One 6. Culture 7. Politics 8. National Security 9. Business/Financial 10. Arts and Leisure 12. Arts Etc 11. Newsmakers 12. The First 100 Days
Article Theme	1. Arts 2. Economics 3. Security 4. Military 5. Politics
Article Tone Note: The article tone is negative if there are words that criticize Chavez or if Chavez's government policies are in conflict with U.S. ideologies. The article is positive if Chavez appears to want to cooperate with the U.S. government and leaders.	1. Positive 2. Neutral 3. Negative
Article Source Number of Sources _____	1. Venezuela president 2. U.S. president 3. U.S. /Latin American/foreign expert/news shaper 4. U.S. pro-Chavez government official 5. Pro-Chavez government official 6. U.S. anti-Chavez government official 7. Anti-Chavez government official 8. U.S. neutral government 9. Neutral government official 10. U.S. pro-Chavez organization 11. Pro-Chavez organization 12. U.S. anti-Chavez organization 13. Anti-Chavez organization 14. U.S. neutral organization 15. Neutral organization 16. U.S. pro-Chavez business official 17. Pro-Chavez business official 18. U.S. anti-Chavez business official 19. Anti-Chavez business official 20. U.S. neutral business official 21. Neutral business official 22. U.S. pro-Chavez citizen 23. Pro-Chavez citizen 24. U.S. anti-Chavez citizen 25. Anti-Chavez citizen 26. U.S. neutral citizen 27. Neutral citizen

Appendix B

Source Category Definitions

1. President Hugo Chavez was always included in the Venezuela president category
2. President Bush or President Obama was always included in the U.S. president category depending on which president was in the White House when the article was published.
3. A U.S./Latin American/foreign expert/news shaper included any source who was an analyst or professor and who was an expert on U.S. or Latin America politics or who was an expert on matters pertaining to the U.S. and Latin America.
4. A U.S. pro-Chavez government official included any American government source which supported Hugo Chavez's ideologies or government.
5. A pro-Chavez government official included any non-American government source which supported Hugo Chavez's ideologies or government.
6. A U.S. anti-Chavez government official included any American government source which did not support Hugo Chavez's ideologies or government.
7. An anti-Chavez government official included a non-American government source which did not support Hugo Chavez's ideologies or government.
8. A U.S. neutral government official included an American government official that neither praised nor criticized Hugo Chavez's ideologies or government. This source reported facts without bias.

9. A neutral government official included a non-American government official that neither praised nor criticized Hugo Chavez's ideologies or government. This source reported facts without bias.
10. A U.S. pro-Chavez organization was any American club, institution, or group which supported Hugo Chavez's ideologies or government.
11. A pro-organization included any non-American club, institution, or group which supported Hugo Chavez's ideologies or government.
12. A U.S. anti-Chavez organization was any American club, institution, or group which criticized Hugo Chavez's ideologies or government.
13. An anti-Chavez organization was any non-American club, institution, or group which criticized Hugo Chavez's ideologies or government.
14. A U.S. neutral organization included any American club, institution, or group which neither praised nor criticized Hugo Chavez's ideologies or government.
15. A neutral organization included any non-American club, institution, or group which neither praised nor criticized Higo Chavez's ideologies or government.
16. A U.S. pro-Chavez business official included any American business spokesperson who praised Hugo Chavez's ideologies or government.
17. A pro-Chavez business official included any non-American business spokesperson who praised Hugo Chavez's ideologies or government.
18. A U.S. anti-Chavez business official included any American business spokesperson who criticized Hugo Chavez's ideologies or government.
19. An anti-Chavez business official included any non-American business spokesperson who criticized Hugo Chavez's ideologies or government.

20. A U.S. neutral business official included any American business spokesperson which neither praised nor criticized Hugo Chavez's ideologies or government.
21. A neutral business official included any non-American business spokesperson which neither praised nor criticized Hugo Chavez's ideologies or government.
22. A U.S. pro-Chavez citizen included any American average citizen who praised Hugo Chavez's ideologies or government.
23. A pro-Chavez citizen included any non-American average citizen who praised Hugo Chavez's ideologies or government.
24. A U.S. anti-Chavez citizen included any American average citizen who was critical of Hugo Chavez's ideologies or government.
25. An anti-Chavez citizen included any non-American average citizen who was critical of Hugo Chavez's ideologies or government.
26. A U.S. neutral citizen included any American average citizen who neither praised nor criticized Hugo Chavez's ideologies or government.
27. A neutral citizen included any non-American average citizen who neither praised nor criticized Hugo Chavez's ideologies or government.

Appendix C

Unique Article Source Categorization Guidelines

1. Since some articles in both newspapers switched topics about other foreign countries around the world and did not refer to Chavez; the sources in the separate topics were not analyzed.
2. Some sources declined to comment, yet I still counted these sources to show that the newspaper journalist was trying to be diverse with article sources.
3. Archbishops, leaders of faith, leaders of protests, and leaders of organizations were categorized as business officials.
4. Attorneys, police, and judges were counted as business officials.
5. Publishers, journalists, and editors were counted as business officials.
6. Some sources affiliated with the government remained anonymous but were categorized as government officials.
7. Former government officials were considered as government officials.
8. Some articles contained no sources; these neutral toned articles were usually short paragraphs or an overview for weekly meetings in Washington. Although I did not count articles that reviewed schedules in Washington, D.C., if there was a tone toward Chavez, I analyzed the article.
9. Officials or workers of an anti-Chavez government were considered anti-Chavez officials or anti-Chavez citizens.
10. The Obama administration and the Bush administration were categorized as U.S. government officials.
11. Commanders in armies and police officers were considered citizens.

12. A campaign manager and a campaign spokesman were considered as business officials.
13. All candidates running for office and White House spokesmen were considered government officials.
14. The head of councils were counted as government officials.
15. Newspapers, government websites, and magazines were categorized as organizations.
16. The U.S. State Department and American Embassies were counted as organizations.
17. Some of the same sources were counted as pro-Chavez, anti.-Chavez, or neutral after their initial category due to Chavez's changing relationship with the sources. For example, U.S. government officials were eager to make peace with Chavez when Obama was first elected, but those relationships were eventually strained.
18. I did not count sources from historical prominent figures such as revolutionary Simon Bolivar or intellectual 20th century leader Arturo Uslar Pietri.
19. Prisoners that were arrested on charges by the Venezuelan government were counted as anti-Chavez citizens.