

**Journalism and the New World Order. Vol. 1: Gulf War, National News Discourses and Globalization.** Edited by Stig A. Nohrstedt & Rune Ottosen. Sweden: Grafikerna Livréna I Kungälv, 2001. 282 pp. ISBN 9189471067.

*Journalism and the New World Order: Gulf War, National News Discourses and Globalization* is a timely project, appearing shortly after the beginning of the twenty-first century and prior to the events of September 11. Writing after the Gulf War, Jean Baudrillard (1991) declared that it never happened, but a decade later, Stig A. Nohrstedt & Rune Ottosen assert that the Gulf War never ended. In between these two claims resides the truth that was crushed by the chilling tremors of the September 11 suicide attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. These terrifying attacks have indeed shattered the myth of the former and have unravelled the unsettling certainty of the latter. The current Iraq War, however, is a thunderous attestation indeed to Nohrstedt & Ottosen's prophetic testimony that "the Gulf War never ended" (p. 241).

One of the primary questions this volume explores is whether war journalism can resist the one-dimensional and propagandist nature of reporting in Western democracies—and whether there is any real chance for independent and critical war journalism. Echoing other scholars' warnings against prematurely harvesting the success story of the Gulf War (such as Frank, 1992; Hafez, 2000; Karim, 2000), Nohrstedt & Ottosen caution against a forthcoming spiral of violence as a consequence of the widening gap between North and South, Occident and Orient.

In this volume, Nohrstedt & Ottosen initiate "a comparative and empirically based international project" (p. 7) that consists of 10 chapters. The first chapter, "Studying the Media Gulf War," written by the book's editors, foregrounds the theoretical basis of the book by considering the Gulf War as a global event representing a focal point in the history of global journalism. Research in international communication is mainly concerned in this volume with the global media structure, transnational flow of news, ideology, dominance, and propaganda. In spite of numerous studies that dealt with the media coverage of the Gulf War, only a few of these have analyzed the transnational Gulf War narratives in conjunction with the processes of recontextualization that occurred during the transfer of these dominant discourses from their transnational to cross-national settings, thus allowing national or local media systems to construct multiple Gulf War realities.

Through in-depth case studies the various authors develop a conceptual model for understanding the issues and tactics that generally characterize the theoretical premises of ideology and dominance, and they acknowledge the power and hegemonic nature of the transnational media system that consists of U.S.-based and -owned giant conglomerates. For the Western media, the coverage of the Gulf War redefined the relationship between the media and the military forces since the Falklands War, as well as the invasions of Grenada and Panama. But its full impact was not fully revealed until well after the end of the Gulf War, in studies that showed how the U.S. military managed and controlled the interpretations of the war.

The book's 10 chapters contribute to research on the theory of transnational news flow, domestication of transnational news, and foreign reporting, presenting an integrated theoretical framework to analyze the interplay of transnational news coverage, politics, and society. By employing a multi-level analysis of the Gulf War narrative, the authors attempt to uncover the processes of transcultural communication in terms of transnational news coverage and public agendas, transnational media content's interaction with domestic environments, interaction between "domestic" and "foreign" media issues, and media effects on international conflicts.

In chapter 2, "The Media Gulf War and Its Aftermath," Heikki Luostarinen and Rune Ottosen address the ethical, technological, and operational challenges related to media

management during the Gulf War. They evaluate the media performance during the Gulf War by tapping into the principles of the media-military relationship and the U.S. coordination of media policy of the entire Western coalition in addition to the war itself. The authors discuss issues such as access and censorship.

The literature about the persuasive nature of the U.S. military information policy in the Gulf War is abundant. The controlled news flow during the Gulf War made many journalists commit themselves to never play into the hands of the military information apparatus again. However, as it turned out 11 years later, the U.S. military was much better organized and resolved to controlling the news flow during wartime than reporters' hectic schedules and the commercial, political, and institutional pressures on critical journalism. This was echoed in W. Lance Bennett's (2003) criticism of the current "U.S. press ethnocentric" coverage of the recent Iraq War, in which the same restraints, moral considerations, and arguments resulted from the U.S. media being embedded with the military.

Gunnar Garbo presents in chapter 3 a perceptive account of U.S.-UN relations during the Gulf War within the context of the international system. In a sense, the Gulf War coverage was the testament that destroyed the utopia of the "new world information order" and disintegrated the counter-hegemonic efforts of the regional non-aligned movements of Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Laurien Alexandre conducts a content analysis of the Voice of America (VOA) editorials to serve as a basis for the ensuing analysis of the Iraqi *Baghdad Observer*. In contrast to Alexandre's chapter, however, Hanne M. Mathisen provides a very different and polarized version of the Gulf War from that of the VOA study. Both authors underscore the fact that media in wartime are easily manipulated, drawn into conflict, and can often end up as instruments for propaganda. The analyses in chapters 4 and 5 reaffirm previous research findings regarding war-propaganda narratives. For instance, the analysis of the VOA editorials as well as the *Baghdad Observer* reveals the manipulation of news by governments to advance their own dominant narrative. Both the VOA and the *Baghdad Observer* used a range of referential levels in their rich narratives, descriptions, and argumentation to support the views of their respective governments. Therefore, despite the appearance of diverse news items and topics, the context and reasons for war, along with their mythical references and metaphors, worked in concert to affirm the ideological position of their respective countries.

The objective of chapters 6 and 7 is to grasp the ways in which the European media constructed the narratives of the Gulf War. Focusing on politically independent media, the European media analyses inform research about the globalization role of the U.S. media. They do this by showing how the national media systems depict the same events, and the ways in which these events are appropriated into images and interpretations relevant to their unique cultural, linguistic, and ideological predisposition. Wilhelm Kempf, Michael Reimann, & Heikki Luostarinen conduct qualitative content analysis to detect the degree of propaganda in propagating a new U.S.-led international order. Chapter 6 supports the notion that the first Gulf War global media narrative did not necessarily generate a unified interpretation or an identical mental script with similar effects while being transmitted from the transnational to the national level. Wilhelm Kempf's contribution in chapter 7 consists of a multinational content analysis of various U.S., German, Norwegian, Swedish, and Finish media constructions of the Gulf War.

In chapter 8, "US Dominance in Gulf War News? Propaganda Relations between News Discourses in US and European Media," Stig A. Nohrstedt offers a global historical context for the patterns of news coverage in different countries. The focus here is on transnational flow of war news, the relation between news and foreign policy, global media technology, global journalism practices and professional ideologies, and of course global war propaganda. Oddgeir Tveitinen, in chapter 9, examines the political communication theory

in which the media play a primary role in mediating or even intensifying a conflict and confirms, "There was beyond any doubt a concerted media campaign to bring about retaliation against Iraq" (p. 239).

In their conclusion, Nohrstedt & Ottosen argue that the propaganda factor of the Gulf War further intensified the friction between the centre-periphery and the North-South international system of nation-states. The increased state involvement in the Gulf War translated into increased engagement in propagandist efforts to win public support both on the national and transnational levels. There is no argument in this regard that the U.S. was instrumental in delivering the most efficient, focused, and superior propaganda of all. But as the case studies in this volume reveal, other parties also used their media to attain their objectives and to disorient and win domestic and international opinion over their cause.

Be that as it may, most media coverage of the Middle East fell short of responding to the diversity of cultures and the intricacies of its media and societies. Certainly, quantifying per capita incomes, the number of TV and radio sets, and the circulation figures of newspapers has resulted in crude categorization. Moreover, the simplistic clichés of favourable/unfavourable studies and deterministic generalizations have all missed the whole point of communication as a way to comprehend and accept the history of the existing and very different "other."

More than a decade later, nothing has changed in this surrealist picture. The dominance of the U.S. flow of information continues unabated—consider how far the media was allowed to go this time in the coverage of the Iraq War. William A. Dorman offers a clear picture of this through his critique of American journalism's recent coverage of the Iraq War when he points out the total surrender of the American media to patriotic jingoism as they were being embedded with the U.S. military. And how remarkably fast they forgot the lessons they had learned from the "plethora of academic studies and the media's breast beating" that followed the Gulf War" (Dorman, 2003).

Yet lessons remain to be learned from the current nature of the transnational news flow, the U.S. war on terrorism, and the recent Iraq War, and this book is especially interesting for international communication research. It is far more compelling today in relation to questions about the dominant global media narratives, the impact of media technology on content and quality of transnational news flow, and the integrity and independence of media during wartime.

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