

RIPPLES IN THE MURKY WATERS: HOW
HUMANITARIAN NGOS AND AMERICAN NEWS MEDIA
RELATE IN INTERNATIONAL CRISES

by

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Lisa Heyamoto

News about crises abroad first came to an American public in letters arriving on schooners from Europe after months of travel; now it comes in seconds via push notifications on smartphone screens. The pace and format of news reception have shifted with increasing rapidity, so that many of the practices and paradigms of international journalism in America are significantly different now from even a decade earlier. As traditional resources and mechanisms for reporting the news have changed or decreased, another player has entered into the international news production role: the humanitarian non-governmental organization, or NGO. The relationship between these two fields, which is often most visible in crisis situations, has become the subject of a growing body of research, as their transactions and mutual impacts highlight their common and diverging identities and goals.

This thesis uses the insights afforded by crises to critically investigate the modern relationship between American journalism and humanitarian NGOs, noting in

particular the influences of their individual relationships to government and the state of each field's organizational structure.

This work considers a number of questions, which are intended to understand the ideology and practical concerns of each field and to increase understanding of the trajectory of their relationship in a period of major change. The first step is to explore the historic ideological foundations of international journalism in the United States and also of humanitarian NGOs, examining the role played by government and the structuring of each industry. Fleshing out this history primes understanding of why the news audience expects each field to act in a certain way. Next, I focus on how the most recent decades have brought technological and economic changes that influence how NGOs and American journalists relate in their diverse informational work. I then seek a method to establish evidence of this evolution through a content analysis code, which was used here to analyze *New York Times* coverage of two international crises. I round out the discussion by pointing out areas of study related to this thesis that merit further exploration.

Acknowledgements

So many people contributed in ways big or small to this project that I am undoubtedly leaving some thanks underdeveloped in this section. I would first like to thank my primary advisor, Instructor Lisa Heyamoto, for all her patience, insight, reassurances and lightning-fast email responses. I'm also indebted to Professor Dean Mundy for his expertise and kindness as my second reader, as well as Professor Daniel Rosenberg for his encouragement and for offering the perspective I needed as my faculty rep. Thank you also to Miriam Jordan for her constant flexibility and graciousness in dealing with my various complications and missteps.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The 2014 West Africa Ebola outbreak remains one of the most prominent news stories of the last decade. The loss of over 11,000 African lives, the images of health workers garbed in head-to-toe protective gear, the constant headlines and the strained international discussions captured the world's attention and remain the subject of much interdisciplinary analysis (CDC, 2016). Humanitarian emergencies like the outbreak demand the presence of prominent aid and news organizations and consequently provide opportunities to examine how they interact. In this thesis, I examine the Ebola outbreak and other humanitarian crises and conflicts to expand understanding of an increasingly relevant aspect of modern international journalism: the apparent influence of nongovernmental organizations in how American audiences receive stories from abroad.

Disruption within American news media has invited this scrutiny, as the industry has only recently begun to find footing amid its own crisis — the major restructuring of organizations and methods that have characterized the so-called “digital age” of journalism. From 2004 through 2014, an estimated 126 daily newspapers folded and traditional revenue sources such as classified print advertising continue to dry up, often without a stable replacement (Pew, 2016). Television news, though it remains the dominant American news media form, is also seeing falling numbers (*ibid*). “Legacy” media have become unsuitable for the future, but scholars and even mainstream news audiences increasingly acknowledge that this is only the first half of the ongoing story of digital-age journalism. The high demand for text-based presentation of world news and increasing preference for video content on the Internet testify to the ongoing legacy

of older media forms even as their prominence dwindles. The transition toward news on the Internet has been far from a seamless one, however. Practical considerations about changing platforms and pace are imbued with deeper uncertainties about modern expectations, realities, structures and processes of producing the news.

I focus on a specific area of discussion within this multifaceted topic of change: American journalism's evolving relationship with the research and communications work of humanitarian non-governmental organizations. This topic in recent decades has been increasingly explored in academic discourse, largely due to the radical procedural and organizational changes in American journalism. Building upon the burgeoning discussion about interactions between American reporters and NGOs, this work examines factors that influence their relationship: the role of national and international government and the organizational structure of each field.

The pertinence of this topic is based on the overall conclusion that even as the modern news ecosystem wrestles with organizational reshuffling, the breadth and strength of humanitarian NGOs continues to grow. The number of humanitarian NGOs worldwide increased from 167 in 1980 to 436 by 2000 (McCleary & Barro, 2007). Meanwhile, governmental humanitarian work is also on the rise. In 2013, 48 percent of worldwide government contributions to international humanitarian aid went through the six major United Nations bodies dedicated to responding (OCHA, 2013). This was a 32 percent increase from 2004, showing that the global prominence of intergovernmental organizations, or IGOs, is similarly expanding.

Scholars, particularly in recent decades, are not only observing the changes occurring within the NGO and journalism relationship but are also researching the

factors driving those changes: for example, specificity in how NGOs strategize media coverage, increased globalization or journalists' increased need to seek new resources as many traditional bases of reporting have dissipated. This thesis furthers the discussion by investigating the governmental and intergovernmental influence in each discipline and the significance of their own industry-wide organizational structure.

I chose to consolidate this discussion by means of a few parameters. The first was to limit the journalistic scope to the United States, for the purpose of maintaining a more concise snapshot of norms and traditions. A national identity is a useful parameter in large part because audience expectations may center on the nation's rules and regulations as well as common historic influences. Second, the contexts in which I examine these times of transition are situations of international crisis. One reason for this is that American news media report much more news from abroad during crises than times of peace, so the amplest international coverage is available in those situations. Another justification is that crises also frequently involve both nongovernmental and intergovernmental (following the World War era) actors, allowing for more chances to grasp the nature of their relationships with American news organizations. Additionally, crises are often followed by periods of reflection or reexamination of responses, which often result in observable shifts within these fields and their relationships to each other.

I discuss the ideological foundations of journalism and NGO norms relevant to their relationship in the first chapter. This involves looking at the histories that primed their entrance into the unprecedented changes of the digital age, noting the role of government both nationally and globally as well as the results of differing structural

periods within the industries. Next, I bring the focus back onto present-day dilemmas: the organizational impacts of digital changes among communications work and journalism; how these changes play out in their relationships to each other and what difficulties arise from their conflicting roles and norms. This portion shows how fragmentation of the media market and increased reach of international governance has presented both new opportunities and increased obstacles. In Chapter Four, I seek evidence of the changes occurring in these relationships through a content analysis of a single news outlet's coverage of two international crises. This section will provide data on the prevalence of NGOs as sources in news media coverage, using IGOs as a comparison due to their heightened relevance in crises. The final chapter will point out areas where further research could more clearly inform the NGO and journalist relationship in the future.

The goal of research into this topic is to better understand what drives decisions about what news products can and should look like, considering this unique reciprocity between both humanitarian NGOs and American journalism. The more general intention is to reveal what potential lies within this relationship to continue to improve international storytelling and to understand more clearly what leads to pitfalls.

Chapter 2: Laying the Foundations

Anxiety continues to pervade many modern discussions about the direction and collective identity of the American news media. Before continuing on to the future, however, it is useful to critically examine the history of the profession that has primed current understanding of the standards and conventions for receiving news. The periods of international news highlighted here show how government and industry structure helped lay the foundations for the tenets of journalism that are relevant to their relationship with humanitarian NGOs.

In a similar vein, the second section of this chapter deals with the background of these NGOs, focusing largely, but not exclusively, on their communications agendas and publicity strategies. I ground my primary analysis in the four dominant publicity types employed by humanitarian NGOs as identified by the scholar Matthew Powers: populist, donation-based, informational populism and elite advocacy.

History of American International Reporting:

Inherent in many present-day discussions on journalistic integrity, particularly in the context of working alongside NGOs, is an unspoken assumption that many practices and paradigms have always been this way. In fact, the hallmarks of journalism that dominate discourse today, terms such as “objectivity,” “editorial independence” or “fairness,” have shifted in their professional significance throughout the history of journalism. In lieu of assuming journalistic paradigms to be fixed throughout history, it then becomes valuable to examine further how those foundations evolved throughout journalism’s development. The transition periods highlighted here only include those leading up to the advance of the Internet age. The significant changes that have come

since the proliferation of the Internet and digital technologies will be discussed in Chapter Three.

Partisan and Penny Press

Print media were first employed in what would become the United States as instruments of insurgency: the men establishing the new government knew well the power of the press because they had witnessed its role in the American Revolution (Darity, Jr., 2008). In America, journalism was shaped by the tides of government from the beginning. Papers were usually aligned with a political ideology and the tone and accuracy of the news reflected such leanings. Men who could afford to own and operate a paper typically did both and much of their foreign news came from simply reprinting personal letters from overseas, or eventually, London newspaper articles (Hamilton, 2014). Everyday citizens could gather in public spaces to have the news of their choice read to them until more people became literate throughout the 19th century.

The Legacy of Yellow Journalism

From these early developments, the source of American foreign journalism had evolved into a man (for some time, this remained unequivocal) embedded in a location abroad, very typically at the scene of an armed conflict. These were the scenarios and characters sparking the most rabid interest in foreign or domestic news. Growing international trade was another source of ongoing interest, but the drama of crises such as the Spanish-American War, for example, sparked incomparably high levels of coverage (Woodward, 1930).

Spanish-American War news coverage marks an era of journalism that is now cited in many ways as a yardstick of ethics to avoid. The conflict coincided with the period that was notorious for its weak commitment to truth-telling even while newspapers experienced enormous popularity: yellow journalism. This reporting is known for its blown up headlines, frequent exaggerations and dramatic use of adjectives. William Randolph Hearst of the *New York Journal* and Joseph Pulitzer of the *New York World*, two of the biggest papers of the era, were both hailed and decried for their roles in this period. The two, in fierce competition for dominance in the newspaper industry, infamously spurred each other on to embellish stories about the Spanish role in the sinking of the U.S.S. Maine, which most historians pinpoint as the U.S. breaking point to enter the war. Striving for the impartial delivery of facts was of minimal concern, as it had been for much of journalism up to this point.

\$50,000 REWARD.—WHO DESTROYED THE MAINE?—\$50,000 REWARD.

The Journal will give \$50,000 for information furnished to it exclusively, that will convict the person or persons who sank the Maine.

EDITION FOR GREATER NEW YORK.
NEW YORK JOURNAL
AND ADVERTISER.

The Journal will give \$50,000 for information furnished to it exclusively, that will convict the person or persons who sank the Maine.

NO. 3,372. PUBLISHED DAILY EXCEPT SUNDAYS AND HOLIDAYS. NEW YORK, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1898.—16 PAGES. PRICE ONE CENT PER COPY.

DESTRUCTION OF THE WAR SHIP MAINE WAS THE WORK OF AN ENEMY

\$50,000!
\$50,000 REWARD!
For the Detection of the Perpetrator of the Maine Outrage!

The New York Journal today offers a reward of \$50,000 CASH for information FURNISHED TO IT EXCLUSIVELY, which will lead to the conviction and capture of the person, persons or persons responsible for the destruction of the Maine and the loss of 258 lives of American sailors.

The \$50,000 CASH reward for the above information is in addition to the \$50,000 CASH.

The offer is limited to the person or persons who will not be named in any report of the Government and in the name of the Government.

The offer is limited to the person or persons who will not be named in any report of the Government and in the name of the Government.

PERPETRATOR OF THIS OUTRAGE HAS ACCOMPLISHED.

W. S. HEARST.

Assistant Secretary Roosevelt Convinced the Explosion of the War Ship Was Not an Accident.

The Journal Offers \$50,000 Reward for the Conviction of the Criminals Who Sent 258 American Sailors to Their Death. Naval Officers Unanimous That the Ship Was Destroyed on Purpose.

\$50,000!
\$50,000 REWARD!
For the Detection of the Perpetrator of the Maine Outrage!

The New York Journal today offers a reward of \$50,000 CASH for information FURNISHED TO IT EXCLUSIVELY, which will lead to the conviction and capture of the person, persons or persons responsible for the destruction of the Maine and the loss of 258 lives of American sailors.

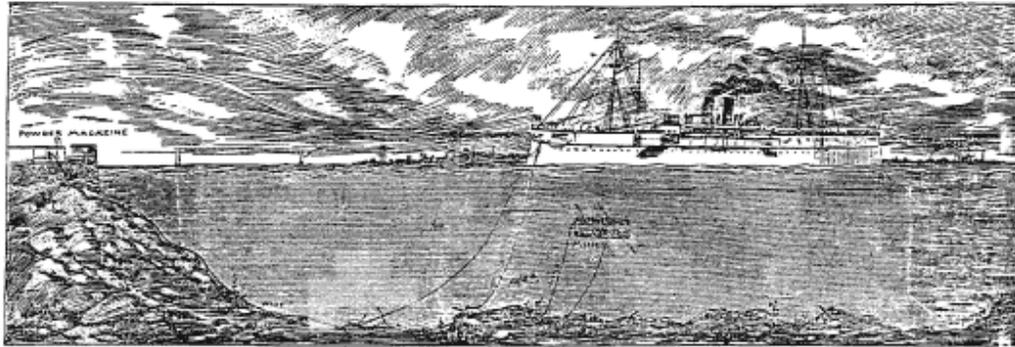
The \$50,000 CASH reward for the above information is in addition to the \$50,000 CASH.

The offer is limited to the person or persons who will not be named in any report of the Government and in the name of the Government.

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PERPETRATOR OF THIS OUTRAGE HAS ACCOMPLISHED.

W. S. HEARST.



NAVAL OFFICERS THINK THE MAINE WAS DESTROYED BY A SPANISH MINE.
Lenny Egan's sketch, the Journal's special correspondent at Havana, calls this is the very opinion of many Spaniards in the Cuban capital. The Maine was destroyed and 258 of her crew killed by means of a submarine mine or torpedoes. This is the opinion of several American naval authorities. The Spanish, it is believed, arranged to have the Maine anchored over one of the harbor mines. It was constructed the mine with a regular magazine, and it is thought the explosion was caused by sending an electric current through the mine. If this can be proved, the fatal nature of the Spaniards will be shown for the fact that they failed to spring the mine until after all the men had retired for the night. The Spaniards' error in the picture above shows the mine may have been fired.

Hidden Mine or a Sunken Torpedo Believed to Have Been the Weapon Used Against the American Man-of-War—Officers and Men Tell Thrilling Stories of Being Blown Into the Air Amid a Mass of Shattered Steel and Exploding Shells—Survivors Brought to Key West Scout the Idea of Accident—Spanish Officials Protest Too Much—Our Cabinet Orders a Searching Inquiry—Journal Sends Divers to Havana to Report Upon the Condition of the Wreck.

Figure 2.1: Yellow Journalism

The front page of the New York Journal immediately after the sinking of the battleship Maine. Hearst famously printed, "How do you like the Journal's war?" twice on the front page in the months after war was declared.

Hearst and other publishers of the time, including E.W. Scripps, also pioneered the consolidation and mass purchasing of newspapers to form the largest chains ever created up till then. Their business models sparked a trend of merging that still figures

heavily in the legacy media market today. As Ford and Emery describe in their book on the highlights of American press history (1954): “The growth of newspaper chains and the entrance of the newspaper into the field of corporate finance brought consolidations and mergers, which struck down the less solvent papers and tended to centralize control of the American press in fewer hands,” (p. 263). This helped stratify newspapers into new hierarchies of influence and reach. It also helped standardize certain organizational behaviors that could be linked to economic success.

Rules of the Game: Professional Norms

An appetite for international news has been reliably present throughout the nation’s history. A traceable difference, however, lies in the ideological values of the field today as compares historically. “News values” refers to the criteria by which journalists determine what stories to cover. Meanwhile, ethics and standards determine not only which stories journalists tell at times, but also how those stories are told. While no single formula for these exists, ethics that guided “legitimate” journalism that generally avoided bias while professing truth grew more popular.

These standards were not determined in a short amount of time, but rather, evolved over the course of a century and a half. News standards developed hand in hand with the process of professionalizing journalism. It was just after the end of the Civil War that the first journalism societies and associations began forming, and through the latter half of the 19th century, the earliest American codes of ethics and standards were being drafted (Darity, Jr., 2008). Columbia University and other higher education institutions opened journalism schools (*ibid*). The language of journalistic work

changed to reflect more of a calling than a casual choice of employment. An academic sphere of journalism developed an increasingly important role in shaping the work.

The norms that developed during this time persist in media discourse today. Some of them, such as accuracy or relevance, are less controversial than others, such as objectivity, fairness or balance. One of the key developments in the 20th century, however, was a strong sense of journalistic independence and the concept of “objectivity.” As they emerged from the era of yellow journalism, journalists wanted to establish greater credibility by removing bias and opinion. International events of this century helped to bring these principles to the forefront of American journalism.

Building Periods of the Objectivity Foundation

During the World War era, governments began restricting access to conflicts or peace conferences. These included closing diplomatic meetings to mitigate overall coverage and implementing press pools to have the leverage to weed out unfavorable reporting. The trust between American journalists and government suffered the most irreversible damage during the latter part of the 20th century, however. These events helped to develop journalism to be highly autonomous from government and increasingly entrepreneurial. This intense period of division between American government and journalism has had lasting effects.

Later, the Vietnam War, often referred to as uniquely characterized by uncertainty and ambiguity, was also initially confusing for journalism: “Just as the battle lines in this guerrilla war were not clearly laid out, as they had been in the world wars and Korea, the rules governing correspondents were less formal ... In addition,

television, a brand-new medium with untested power, debuted as a major source of news for millions of Americans” (Hamilton, 2014; p. 382).

The format of news had been changing between the 19th and 20th centuries. Similarly to how the news media are adjusting to new technologies today, the journalists of the late 1800s adapted to the speed necessitated by the telegram (Hochfelder, 2012). Every news format — television, radio and newspaper — took different approaches to make their information digestible for the intended audience, which, as discussed in the next section, influenced the sources and voices included. For example, the television footage that entered American homes during the Vietnam War permanently changed the nature of visual reporting during American-involved conflicts.

The level of trust between reporters and their standard government or military sources broke down during the war as the reports from correspondents stationed in Vietnam often revealed casualties that were left out of press briefings or stark differences from the official word given to the Washington reporters. One Associated Press bureau chief included on his list of do's and don'ts for his reporters: “Don't believe any official statement.”

Despite initial opposition to their skeptical coverage, those journalists laid important theoretical groundwork for the decades since Vietnam. The period caused significant friction between governmental sources and journalists that helped give rise to increasingly entrepreneurial journalism within crises and conflicts. As one author writes, “We became inured to our leaders lying in the war” (Marlantes, 2017). This meant that journalists began to more frequently seek information in crisis situations

from a more diverse array of experts and sources. NGOs would prove to be increasingly equipped to meet those needs.

History of Humanitarian Non-governmental Organizations

The origin of the humanitarian NGO lies in the space between the public's humanitarian need or will and the government's capacity or inclination to effectively deliver on those needs. Beyond simply administering aid or supplies, NGOs can serve as public bodies of authority or "governance" working outside of the structure of formal government (Armstrong, et al., 2011). While governments possess *de jure* authority — that is, the law of the land, with the appropriate enforcement mechanisms — other civil actors can amass significant amounts of *de facto* power of governance through advocacy or well-branded public awareness campaigns, for example. In rare examples, NGOs are commissioned officially by governments as the acting arm of authority or aid in a certain area, as is the case between the United States government and the American Red Cross.

Further, as authors highlight, the value systems of civil society organizations are often similar to governments: they are defined by — and to a certain extent, limited to — regional, national and international boundaries; they are measured for their effectiveness and judged by their legitimacy; and they are expected to varying degrees to be accountable to publics. Close relationships with governments, however, can be liabilities for the NGOs that claim independence and autonomy as key tenets (Armstrong, et al., 2012). Ties such as these can also result in a lack of credibility with journalists, which hinders the overall publicity goals of organizations.

The standards of autonomy have become more complicated by the increasing presence and authority of the intergovernmental organizations that nations have formed from the 20th century onward: these are the policy-making and enforcement bodies that assume governance of the global space, such as the United Nations or the European Union. As a result, the historical account of NGO communications work is also intertwined with the influence of intergovernmental organizations and the consolidated organization of international governance.

Powers' Four Periods of Publicity

I prime my analysis of NGO history largely on the work of a leading scholar in this discipline. Matthew Powers defined four eras within humanitarian NGO development, each characterized by a shift in the publicity goals of the organizations. These publicity goals, as will become clear, are interrelated with the missions of NGOs and critically shape their relationships to specific news media. Powers' designations of differing publicity types provide a useful framework within which to better understand the role of these organizations in media discourse.

NGOs: From Societies to Systems

The earliest examples of organized nongovernmental political efforts tend to be religious orders and societies. The anti-slavery societies of Europe are a frequently cited example of the modern conception of humanitarian work, although humane societies and other relief organizations also flourished in China and elsewhere in the world well before then.

The societies' power lay in harnessing the opinions of the masses, which was attempted largely by use of pamphlets, fliers and petitions. The anti-slavery campaigns broke ground in employing multiple forms of media to communicate messages to a public. Organizers learned to communicate in ways that would make sense to their intended audiences, including circulating communicative images and drawings, as the majority of the population couldn't read (The Abolition Project, 2009). Meanwhile, in their relationship to journalism at the time, these civil society organizations had to fight the influence of the partisan newspapers. The papers were largely owned and read by members of the elite class, which held out against abolishing slavery. As discussed in the previous section, objectivity with regard to controversial issues was not an established journalistic ideal at the time.

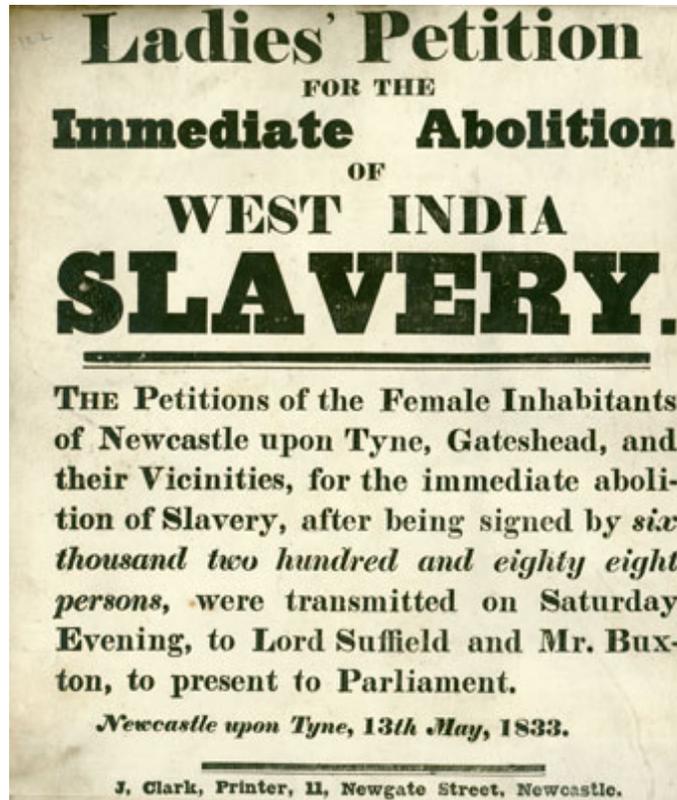


Figure 2.2 Anti-slavery Petition

Petitions like this one, circulated in northeast England in 1833, were a nearly ubiquitous medium employed by anti-slavery societies to sway public opinion and spread the abolitionist message.

This type of publicity remained fairly dominant throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, appealing ideologically mostly to the principles of shared humanity and increasing equity of resources.

These societies developed not only in their diversity—including labor and trade unions and associations, women’s organizations, etc—but also broadened in their scope. Up until about the end of the 19th century, international non-governmental societies were mostly influential in their respective home nations. Growing capabilities

in communication technologies also had ripple effects in expanding these societies' capacities.

Aid Organizations and Consolidation of Intergovernmental Political Will

Powers looks next to the early 20th century to mark the rise of donation-based publicity, citing organizations such as Oxfam and Save the Children as examples. These NGOs cast wide nets for donations among the general public, usually to fund relief and other aid work. This included keeping a generic and easily-digestible communication level that would draw in a large base. Even though through their work, these NGOs naturally amassed a large amount of information about the crisis zones in which they worked, most were concerned with making their work and their brand, not the information they gathered, public.

Displacement from the two world wars put massive strains on federal governments to care for populations, so they sought additional help from NGOs. A few prominent organizations in the United States and the United Kingdom rallied around specific single issues, usually providing relief aid to lands affected by the war or ongoing blockades by Western nations. In addition, worldwide decolonization often left young and less-than-stable governments behind, which also opened situations that called for aid (Davies, 2014). It was an age of increasingly cooperative relationships between governments and aid-administering NGOs.

But Powers points out that this age of strengthening partnership between these NGOs and governments was also characterized by an overarching dedication to compliance with political agendas and national interests. Donation-based British organization Oxfam experienced this struggle to prioritize while administering aid

during the British blockade of Greece toward the end of WWII. Despite the evidence Oxfam discovered of the British role in creating the conditions it was there to mitigate, the organization could not afford the social capital it would cost to appear unpatriotic by publicizing what it was learning (Black, 1992). This association with governmental ideology hearkens back to the early days of American journalism, when the duty to inform was also bound up in political bents. Yet at this time, political autonomy was becoming an increasingly valuable asset to any organization committed to informing or aiding.

NGOs, for all their notable usefulness to the recuperating Western national governments, were not the only alternative to which the global community of nations was turning. During these reconstructive periods, the strongest intergovernmental organizations that had ever been created were tried on the global stage and quickly grew in power and prominence. The League of Nations was the first, assembled towards the conclusion of World War One. It was a U.S.-led initiative to establish global cooperative governance. Although the League's legacy today is often relegated to its status as a failed organization, it did break important ground in the relationships between NGOs and gradually strengthening IGOs. One situation that saw the development of this relationship was the refugee crisis following Russia's civil war and revolution. The League's High Commissioner, who was allocated only small funds to deal with the people's needs, delegated the on-the-ground work to smaller-scale organizations, including NGOs (Reinalda, 2009 p. 207). As mentioned above, NGOs involved in aid were often not very politically minded, so to align

themselves with the general will of the League, or its later and stronger follow-up, the United Nations, was a fairly common paradigm.

The Standardization of Rebellion

The third phase of NGO publicity defined by Powers, informational populism, would change these acquiescent conventions upon emerging in the '50s and '60s. The organizations established around this time include Amnesty International and Médecins Sans Frontières (usually known in America as Doctors Without Borders). Priorities expanded among these types of humanitarian organizations to increase expertise and to establish a more specialized and professional brand. These NGOs focused not only on delivering on-the-ground aid or advocating lawmakers, but also raising general awareness about issues by releasing research-based reports on them. In the case of MSF — an organization founded by a team of French doctors and journalists — the principle of *témoignage*, or “bearing witness” to rights violations or health crises, was a founding principle in its Charter.

These organizations also dealt more explicitly with the uncertainty about national loyalties and obligations that plagued NGOs of Oxfam’s caliber. MSF, for example, took an ideological pride in its Charter tenet of “complete independence from all political, economic and religious powers” (Fox, 2014). The humanitarian NGO was evolving to see its work as increasingly separate from governmental agendas, recognizing the potential conflicts of interest that would arise from close relationships and anything less than an independent ideology.

The borders of governmental authority were becoming less clear on an international scale. The flagging effort of the League was mostly dismantled by

the Second World War; it was out of those peace negotiations that the United Nations was subsequently born, which far surpassed it in political will and strength. It expanded the international peacekeeping vision to function as a sort of preventive care for the health of the world — staving off conflict through economic and social harmony. This vision was borne out in the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

The UN tried to accomplish its agenda of international harmony in part by building upon the work of the League in coordinating with NGOs. From its inception, the ECOSOC charter included Article 71, which allowed NGOs to apply for consultative status with the ECOSOC, enabling them to partner with the massive IGO system. The mutually beneficial relationship was intended so that the NGOs would lend their expertise in policy or planning discussions, and in turn, they would receive chances to participate in conferences and gain access to networking opportunities with other organizations. In 1945, 41 organizations were granted consultative status (“Introduction,” 2016).

Similarly to their relationships to journalism, tension also characterized the relationships between these powerful IGOs and newer humanitarian NGOs, rooted in their converging and diverging organizational priorities. The goals of IGOs such as the United Nations were centered largely on themes that were familiar to the humanitarian NGOs: peace, reparations after war, smooth decolonization processes and social and economic harmony (Reinalda, 2009). Amid these similarities, however, the representatives making up and running

IGOs were inextricably linked to the interests of the national governments that sent them.

The humanitarian NGOs entering the new phases of development that emphasized expertise and credibility were poised to capitalize on the connections to these IGOs, even with the additional autonomy struggles. The NGOs' media goals also adjusted to establish a presence in more elite circles of power and influence, in large part by attracting the coverage of "elite" media, also referred to as the "prestige press". Amnesty International, whose media work includes reporting on human rights infractions against dissidents or identity groups, worked to market itself as reliable to respected American news media. It accomplished this mostly through sit-down meetings with newspaper editorial boards and a public commitment to maintaining organizational impartiality towards any government or political will (Powers, 2014).

Amnesty's principles and processes helped usher in the next phase of humanitarian NGOs identified by Powers: elite advocacy organizations. These followed the same trajectory of accumulating expertise through impartial reporting and establishing credibility through various forms of publication. International Crisis Group is one example of this type of organization. These NGOs are often funded by philanthropic sources, which lessens their dependence on large donor bases and thereby changes their publicity strategies. Nevertheless, their publicity goals are not diminished overall as a result of the changed funding sources — the aim of the elite NGOs is established expertise and a voice that is considered in powerful policy-making circles, which requires the public support of influential figures and significant money.

The strategies of the elite NGOs center a great deal on attracting and maintaining credibility with the “prestige” press, an ambiguous term that usually describes well-established news media that have access to or whose content is popular among national and international policymakers and leaders. These NGOs at times also had internal ties to the elite circles: Human Rights Watch, for example, was founded by a former U.S. ambassador to the U.N., who brought with him a strong understanding of international governance. Human Rights Watch and the International Crisis Group both plan their media strategies around providing facts that the community of national and international governance will be expected to respond to. These reports naturally attract the attention of newspapers, magazines and broadcast programs that cater in part to these audiences. Some media will report information about crises that is more suitable for a general audience with a limited understanding of specialized factors that are involved.

The next section details an overarching account of changes in the most recent years that have had significant impacts on the procedural interactions of intergovernmental bodies, NGOs and journalism. These include the social, economic and technological factors of the news media and NGO relationship that have seen acute shakeup in the most recent few decades.

Chapter 3: Shifting Times

2016 was a year of unexpected turns for certain pockets of the media market. In general, the trends of the previous two decades maintained their course: newspaper readership fell another 7 percent from the previous year and TV audiences declined (Mitchell, et al., 2016). On the other hand, a few publications, including the *New York Times*, reported increases in digital subscribers (Ember, 2017). The disparity demonstrates an inescapable truth about American journalism: that it is evolving through complex uncertainty. That uncertainty is beginning to take shape, but the identity-building of digital-age journalism is ongoing. The relationships between diverse news media companies and the humanitarian NGOs and IGOs that are also learning to capitalize on digital changes has become an even more relevant topic during this period. These relationships continue to be shaped by the actions of governments and internal structural changes.

The Early Years: Growing Pains

The 2000s and beyond have been characterized by anxiety about whether the decline of traditional media also rang the death knell of journalism. This is the technological earthquake in which journalists and NGO or IGO professionals alike have had to find their footing: from 1995 to 2015, the Pew Research Center found that the percentage of Americans using the Internet regularly jumped from 14 to 95 percent (Fox & Rainie, 2014). U.S. adults using a computer — whether at work, the library or at home — in 1990, equaled 42 percent; by 2014, 81 percent were using a desktop computer or laptop (*ibid*). Unlike the television, which is a poor medium for text, or a

newspaper, which has limited visual capabilities, Internet-enabled technologies provide gateways to all of these types of content — a vast, digital home for assorted news to reach an audience. The manifold nature of these technologies has impacted both humanitarian work and journalism.

The initial stages of this transition were ugly for news companies operating in traditional formats. In the face of some tenaciously denialist segments of media scholars or professionals, print circulation of newspapers declined at steep rates, including a 7.1 percent fall in weekday circulation from October 2008 to the end of March 2009 (McChesney & Nichols, 2010). In 2015 alone, print and digital circulation combined fell again by 7 percent (Mitchell, et al., 2016). Moreover, the backbone of most American newspaper revenue, print advertising, fell in the first quarter of 2009 by 29.7 percent (McChesney & Nichols, 2010). Newspapers, TV and radio newsrooms all bled jobs — an estimated 20,000 between 1994 and 2014, or 39 percent of the workforce — as organizations struggled to find ways to monetize the content it had supported before (Pew, 2015). Both the demand for the product and its major revenue sources were drying up.

TV news also continues to lose audiences. For now, it remains the most popular news medium among Americans, but each year, local news consistently loses viewership across all time slots (Mitchell, et al., 2017). Furthermore, the population of TV news viewers is aging, and younger news audiences are flocking primarily to online news, which signifies more instability for TV news formats in the future (*ibid*). Meanwhile, in the growing realm of computer and smartphone screens, developers are

constantly refining social media platforms to be more video-friendly for their audiences, to the benefit of online news viewers.

The financial pain these legacy organizations have experienced in the interim often quickly translated to their international reporting operations. Between 2003 and 2011, the American Journalism Review reported that the number of foreign correspondents employed by U.S. newspapers shrank from 307 to 234, with 20 papers shuttering the entirety of their operations abroad (Kumar, 2011). These were practical moves, as international journalism is unsurprisingly a costly venture for newsrooms. News coverage increasingly tended to gravitate towards crises and breaking news rather than deeply embedded expert journalists. Hamilton writes,

“While newspapers are still willing to lose money covering major conflicts or wars, especially those involving the United States, they are less enthusiastic about paying for roving correspondents who may (or may not) find a distant human rights story no one knows about in a place where the interests of the United States are not clear” (Hamilton, 2014; 106).

One of the frequent alternatives to embedded correspondents is what is informally dubbed “parachute journalism.” This is when an American stateside reporter is deployed to a breaking news situation or crisis to cover it in the short term, typically staying only so long as the event remains current and leaving again quickly.

International coverage produced by parachuting in has been critiqued frequently for its shortcomings in providing the deep regional or cultural understanding that was credited to the now-dwindling foreign bureau. The result is an increased skepticism about the state of international reporting produced by American news media.

Institutional Reorganization and Credibility

Among news organizations, cuts have also resulted in restructuring of the kinds of international news reaching an audience. Papers that have closed down their foreign operations have had to turn to other alternatives to get foreign news into their papers. The large chain McClatchy, for example, closed its remaining three foreign bureaus in 2015, citing “financial realities” and the company’s “changing mission” (Calderone, 2015). To bolster its international reporting, the company turned increasingly to its syndication services with the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and Associated Press. This is a common trend among newspaper chains, and it results in wire services and syndications gaining power via increased distribution in the decline of newspapers.

But legacy news organizations’ changes still only comprise half of the story. A generation of digitally native organizations has changed news from the presentation to structure of news staff. News organizations such as Politico, BuzzFeed News and the Huffington Post have experienced increasing success in reaching online audiences, capitalizing on social media trends and digital-friendly storytelling formats. They have proven themselves adept at reporting internationally as well as nationally, winning awards for intrepid coverage. Digitally-native have drawn increasing numbers of journalists from legacy companies as they have become more established in the news world. Initially, however, these organizations were often dismissed by news audiences and media critics due to the institutional instability of journalism that has resulted from the digital era.

Credibility Crises in the Internet Age

Both online-native news media and legacy media websites continue to deal with the difficulty of distinguishing their content from less formal or rigorous Internet media publications. Alternative digitally native publications such as blogs have figured heavily in Internet publishing, yet most are not rooted in the ideological foundations of the professionalization of journalism, such as accuracy or objectivity. These informal Internet publications are significant players within the online space: by 2008, one blog-tracking website estimated over 900 million posts were being published daily by 133 million total blogs worldwide (Zúñiga, et al., 2009). In part because of their informality, blogs also proved themselves to be viable platforms for breaking news on the Internet, which has helped associate them with journalism, sparking terms such as “citizen journalism” (*ibid.*).

Because blogs are so strongly and historically associated with Internet publishing, they have blurred the lines of credibility since the medium’s earliest days. It remains difficult for audiences to distinguish credible and objective information when both the journalistic and the agenda-imbued circulate by way of the same technologies. These issues were not created by the move to digital technologies, but the accessibility of Internet publishing has sparked the increased dialogue and scholarship on these topics.

Trust is an important factor in determining where the growing online audience will go for information. Among news media, this has consistently been a value of diminishing return: the Edelman Trust Barometer, a now-deceased yearly report on the level of trust across news media, detailed the steady decline of trust in news media in

the 2000s (Edelman, 2017). Although this falling trust is related to factors extending beyond the user experience of news media content on Internet technologies, such as corporate consolidation, the result is that maintaining a reputation of reliability becomes an increasingly important source of capital for news outlets that were also dealing with the economic instability marking the era.

NGOs and the Digital Age

Meanwhile, the level of public trust among Americans in NGOs' reliability continued to increase. NGOs trust-building communications work has not only courted the news media but also the general public. This decline in American news media foreign infrastructure has intersected with the growing media capabilities afforded NGOs, which were also impacted by the changes in audience behavior. Research on American NGOs showed that many have fundamentally reconsidered their publicity strategies as they have increasingly adopted new media technologies (Seo, et al., 2009). Many debate whether they can rely less on news media to spread their messages, reach donors or political elites in the age of social media and targeted, personalized messaging. NGOs have focused on building unique websites to house their increasing amounts of original media content and hosting social media profiles to more directly reach audiences and donors (Seo, et al., 2009).

Beyond the increased technological capabilities, however, NGOs have also grown more powerful in their overall international influence. The historical account in Chapter Two included the inception of the United Nations' Economic and Social Council, specifically the consultative status that it extended to NGOs from the beginning. This partnership continues today, and even human rights NGOs including

Amnesty, Human Rights Watch or MSF have all applied for and been granted consultative status with the ECOSOC. Partnerships of this caliber between NGOs and IGOs speak to the influential mutuality of the relationship. Today, over 4,000 NGOs hold consultative status with the ECOSOC, showing that cooperative connections between IGOs and NGOs are an increasingly relevant aspect of both of their identities (U.N. Department of Economic and Social Affairs). This also means that during crises, when both kinds of organizations are poised to coordinate with journalists in their coverage, their relationships may also be more intertwined than appears to the public.

The Changing Times

As awareness about the decline of traditional formats such as newspapering and evening news has spread further into public consciousness, new modes of storytelling that were once considered experimental are making their way into the mainstream. Likewise, the topic of the NGO role in news production and how the field interacts with journalism is itself becoming more widely acknowledged as a pertinent consideration. It is then helpful to refer to recent examples of American news media interactions with NGOs and discourse on the subject from media critics and scholars in order to encounter insight into how the relationship might function, .

Sharing a Media Spotlight

Although much of this chapter so far has focused on journalism's academic sphere for acknowledgment of the developments in the NGO/journalism, or IGO/journalism relationship, academia is not where the practical elements of journalism are honed and refined for the purposes of serving audiences. Neither is it the field that

primarily contributes to public perceptions about the work of each. These spring from decisions made in newsrooms and offices of media companies, among professionals who are working with the risk of losing audiences by miscalculation when interacting with NGOs. These are the companies dealing with the financial realities of a changing industry and unfamiliar news audience expectations.

Journalists — who are expected to be free from conflicts of interest and to possess an objective lens — nonetheless form professional relationships in the field that are strengthened by their mutual benefits. Historically, some forms of coordination between journalists and NGO professionals have been normalized for a century or more. Transportation and access to restricted areas are the most common example. What news producers and writers decide is the extent to which they will partner with these researchers or communications professionals to produce a story. Those partnerships can vary widely in their depth, and how publicly transparent news media are about them do as well.

The most commonplace transaction throughout several decades, as the public relations departments of NGOs grew, is information from press releases. Press releases are typically tailored to attract the attention of journalists by way of appealing to news values. Within journalistic scholarship and discourse, the tone when discussing the prevalence of news stories springing from press releases is often one of anxiety. This was particularly true in the earlier 2000s when the fate of journalism organizations was still very much unknown, journalist jobs were being slashed and public relations positions continued to escalate. From 1960 to 2011, the ratio of public relations

professionals to journalists jumped from less than 1 to 1 all the way to 4 to 1 (McChesney & Nichols, 2010).

However, humanitarian NGOs struggle to balance priorities in their own public relations work, particularly those organizations that invest in and have built an image on deep-diving research, such as HRW or Amnesty (Powers, 2014). In-depth reporting on a crisis is at times hindered or interrupted by news values such as timeliness or prominence, which require frequent updates on aspects that American audiences are more likely to care about. The struggle between NGO researchers and PR professionals mirrors that of journalists deciding between prioritizing feature-length pieces with context and detail or breaking news updates. Both fields, squeezed by the pressures of the 24/7 news cycle, also end up reinforcing it by the production of press releases and their use by news media for story ideas. The dynamic is exacerbated by the loss of journalistic staff embedded abroad. While large legacy newsrooms such as the *Washington Post* or *New York Times* have the resources and staff to both manage blogs for quick updates and run feature-length pieces on their main sites, press releases serve the needs of less-powerful news organizations

Another method exemplifying the changing of standards and procedures that are accompanying the digital age is the NGO tactic of “poaching” journalistic talent, whether on a short-term or career-length basis (Bogert, 2012). Independent journalists — freelancers, stringers and often photojournalists — are often courted by NGOs to produce the kind of high-quality content that either attracts the news media or, if the organization is structured as such, enables it to bypass news organizations altogether.

This has bolstered the autonomy of NGOs as news producers by partnering more visibly with news media or publicizing content through their own channels.

The cooperative relationships between journalists and an NGO research or communications team can be extensive and quite overt. Most of the examples of full-on collaborations between journalists and NGOs have occurred in the TV news realm. An oft-cited example is the relationship formed between the International Crisis Group and the ABC program *Nightline*. With their first collaboration occurring in 2005 to produce a story about refugees in Uganda, the two organizations coordinated for several years and stories thereafter, splitting the costs of production (Abbott, 2009). The partnerships were never kept secret: each time, the *Nightline* anchor told the audience exactly how the story was produced. It seemed to be an effective alternative to deal with the financial realities outlined earlier in this chapter. A spokeswoman for the ICG writing about collaborations asserted that partnerships of this kind are “happening now in print and broadcast newsrooms across the country, though many are reluctant to discuss them too openly” (Abbott, 2009). Such collaborations have not universally been viewed favorably or as a viable answer to legacy organizations’ financial woes.

A practical argument against conspicuous partnerships between news media and humanitarian NGOs is the watchdog role of journalists that is only increasing regarding NGOs. Chapter Two outlined the governmental watchdog role as it was anchored in the psyche of American journalism during the conflicts of the 20th century. In more recent decades, the growing power of humanitarian NGOs — major organizations such as Amnesty, HRW or MSF all operate with budgets that surpass small nations — has demanded more intense scrutiny from journalists (Walker & Pepper, 2007). Though

NGOs rank high in trustworthiness among Americans, as with any other institution, the memory of scandals will taint that reputation. Major news outlets reported when MSF was temporarily suspended from working in Myanmar after becoming embroiled in controversy surrounding its treatment of a disenfranchised minority group (Hume, 2014). Digitally-native news site ProPublica investigated in 2015 the Red Cross's misuse of the half-billion dollars it raised for relief in Haiti (Elliott, 2015).

As Americans' charitable giving continues to increase, the role of news media in holding these massive organizations accountable is also becoming more important. Humanitarian aid and need have both grown over the last 10 years; 2014 set records with the \$24.5 billion given that year and 2015 surpassed even that (OCHA, 2015; 2016). NGOs continue to penetrate increasingly diverse areas of social and political life, and journalists and news organizations have the critical role of remaining independent enough to tackle the watchdog role. Open collaborations with NGOs may cost news organizations the public image of editorial independence to properly hold those same NGOs accountable.

At times, however, the nature of the partnership in the story is not as clearly laid out by journalists. ABC's *World News Tonight*, for example, produced stories in 2011 and 2012 on famines in West and East Africa that involved traveling in U.N. vehicles, using images from the International Rescue Commission and covering Doctors Without Borders facilities (ABC, 2012). In none of those stories was the nature of the reporting process addressed. The same was true in 2017 when Scott Pelley reported for CBS News' *60 Minutes* on the famine in South Sudan. The producers wound the narrative around the work of the World Food Program (CBS, 2017) — while no partnership was

declared, every location was set up by the WFP and nearly every source was from the organization. These examples call to mind questions of how transparent news media will need to be about their relationships with NGOs going forward and how close audiences will tolerate those relationships being.

Chapter 4: Seeking Evidence

A next logical step to better understand how these discussions and questions manifest practically is to examine news coverage itself, to see the impacts. This is the aim of Chapter Four, which details the processes and results of my investigation into how the NGO and journalism relationship plays out in news coverage. Because of their relevance to crises and the larger discussion, I also noted the presence of IGOs in the same stories for added context. The evidence was gathered by using a code for a content analysis that would distill helpful information within news coverage indicating the trajectory of NGO and IGO participation in international crisis coverage produced by the American news media. I then tested the code in an analysis across two different time periods, with the goal of capturing a potential progression.

The Structure:

I examined content published by the *New York Times* about the atrocities in Darfur of the early 2000s and the 2014 West Africa Ebola outbreak. Briefly, I will justify my choices of parameters for this investigation.

Choices of media outlet(s)

The *New York Times* is a media organization that has adapted through most of the periods of change detailed in this thesis. As an established and respected legacy and digital journalism company, it has experienced the procedural shifts brought on by technological changes and by identity-shaping periods such as the wake of the Vietnam War. It is almost ubiquitously included in the “prestige press” designation, strengthening its legitimacy as primarily journalistic. Its financial and organizational

strength as a company also lend to its status as a standard-setter among American news media. This influential standing means that we can, within reason, infer that the *Times*' content choices will be noticed and at times mimicked by other newsrooms, contributing to more general perceptions among the American news audience about the organization and procedures of news media in the digital age.

Choices of crises

Crises were selected again because of their heightened amount of coverage, as well as their importance to news media for establishing trust and proving their journalistic value to audiences. Additionally, in light of the disinvestment in foreign reporting infrastructure discussed in Chapter Three, crises are often the most likely scenarios in which the humanitarian work of NGOs and IGOs — and their communications — will intersect with American journalism.

The crises chosen for this investigation as the case studies in which to examine the presence and influence of NGOs and IGOs are the Darfur crisis and the 2014 West Africa Ebola outbreak. These were chosen primarily for their similarity of condition and their respective time periods. I examined coverage from 23 March to 31 August of 2004 for Darfur coverage and the same dates in 2014 for coverage of the Ebola outbreak. My reason for choosing these years and date ranges is that they fall before and after the most destructive years both economically and structurally for American legacy news media in general, specifically 2008 and 2009. These years proved impactful for journalism organizations at every level.

To draw a more equitable comparison, I strove to keep as many constants between the crises selected as possible. The crises occurred in nearby regions, which

would tend to involve some of the same foreign infrastructures on the part of the news organization and likely many of the same humanitarian NGOs and IGO bodies.

Increased consistency between the natures of the crises meant that the investigation would more closely focus on the journalistic differences stemming from changes over time instead of being obfuscated by other circumstances.

The Investigation:

I organized my analysis to answer the following questions:

- Within each crisis, did the frequency of IGO sources and mentions surpass those of NGOs, or vice versa? How do these IGO and NGO frequencies differ between the crises and what might those differences communicate?
- Is there a noticeable difference in pluralism of sources (meaning the number of sources in an article) found between IGOs and NGOs in coverage?

The Hypothesis:

- Based on the influences of budgets and immediate relevance to American audiences, I hypothesized that IGOs would be cited in more articles as sources or mentions at a higher frequency than would NGOs, among both Darfur and Ebola coverage.
- However, I hypothesized that the Ebola coverage would show NGOs being mentioned and sourced in articles at a closer frequency to the IGO-positive articles, resulting in a smaller discrepancy between the two types of organizations than what was seen during Darfur. I predicted this because of the

increasing establishment of NGOs as players in the media realm as well as the decreasing trend of embedded foreign journalistic operations.

- I predicted that pluralism, defined here as the average number of sources among articles that included at least one source, would be higher for NGOs than IGOs, between both crises. And between Darfur and Ebola, I predicted that there would be a higher variance of NGO sources in Darfur coverage. These predictions were rooted in the acknowledgment that a greater diversity of NGOs tend to occupy a crisis zone and they are usually associated with on-the-ground narratives, which the *Times* frequently strives to provide.

The Method:

In order to identify the unique prevalence of both NGOs and IGOs in coverage, I examined articles individually for mentions and sources. I constructed a code to determine what constituted a source or mention and what sorts of content to include and exclude in the analysis. For example, I examined editorials but excluded letters to the editor in the analysis. The full code is available in Appendix A.

I used the academic database Lexis Nexis to view all *Times* articles that mentioned either Darfur or Ebola during the set time periods. All relevant articles and their information were tracked in spreadsheets, noting the number of IGO or NGO sources. The master lists of articles about each crisis were organized into the following headings:

Headline	Date	Dateline	Report Type	# of I/NGO sources	Notes
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Table 4.1: Content Analysis Categories

Between March 23 and August 31 of 2004, the *Times* published 115 articles, columns, news summaries and wire reports about Darfur that were eligible for this analysis. Between those same dates in 2014, it published 108 pieces of relevant content involving Ebola.

After each batch of articles was sorted through and every relevant article or segment notated, the master lists were then split further into IGO or NGO-“positive” lists of articles. Using the data separated out in those, I applied basic calculations to determine the percentages of articles that incorporated NGO and IGO sources and then compared the variations in the findings across the two crises. I also performed some basic statistical analysis to determine how pluralistic the NGO and IGO-positive coverage was in each period.

The Results:

Several of my hypotheses were proved correct, while others were not. The data demonstrated that editorial choices followed along similar lines to what my contextually-based hypotheses predicted about what individual crisis coverage would show and what their differences suggested about the trajectory of these interdisciplinary relationships.

Frequency of IGO versus NGO sources

The frequency of IGO sourcing was higher than NGO sourcing between both crises, which was in line with my prediction. In Darfur coverage, at least one IGO appeared in 37 percent more articles than NGOs, and in Ebola, the difference was 8 percent. The data is recorded below in Table 4.2. It is important to note that articles that cited IGOs and NGOs would often overlap by containing both, as is apparent in the reflected percentages.

	Darfur Articles	Ebola Articles
IGO-positive article frequency	.67	.55
NGO-positive article frequency	.30	.47

Table 4.2: Source frequency table

Although the IGO frequency remained higher than NGO frequency in Ebola coverage, the disparity between them did shrink by 29 percent in the later crisis, which confirmed the second hypothesis. These changes among coverage may possibly reflect the impacts of industry developments and the changes in the prominence of NGOs in international storytelling that have been discussed up to this point.

Pluralism among NGO and IGO sourcing

The other hypothesis related to the pluralism of sources among the articles that did include IGOs or NGOs in the narratives. I had predicted that pluralism would be higher within NGO sourcing than with IGOs. This turned out to be true only among Ebola coverage. The data I collected in the master list was used to find the average

number of sources among the NGO and IGO-positive lists. I then compared between crises and organization type. The results are reproduced in Table 4.3.

	Darfur Articles	Ebola Articles
Average # of IGO sources	1.97	1.65
Average # of NGO sources	1.61	2

Table 4.3: Source pluralism table

The pluralism among NGO sources was lower than among IGO sources in the Darfur coverage, despite my predictions, but surpassed them in Ebola coverage. This did not lend evidential support to the external factors of prestige or unilateral credibility that my hypothesis was rooted in. Further, the mean number of NGOs did not decrease between Darfur but instead increased. This could signify the presence of multiple factors: it may stem from the nature of the crises and the responses they entailed, whether there was a more diverse array of nongovernmental sources available during Ebola or the individual choices of reporters and editors.

Conclusion:

The analysis suggested that overall, NGOs may be increasingly important to the *New York Times*' international crisis coverage, which would be significant for American news media in general. It remains unclear whether NGOs are gaining legitimacy among legacy news organizations in terms of how much influence an individual organization will have in news content through partnerships or other digital-era changes, the gap between these organizations and intergovernmental organizations' media exposure

continues to shrink. Furthermore, the comparable levels of IGO presence in this crisis coverage indicate that these bodies should be the focus of comparable scrutiny in their relationships to news media. The method may be improved by including more news outlets or by comparing more similar crises, but these conclusions indicate the usefulness of the code in distilling relative presences of NGOs in news coverage and to discern developments over time in the level of input and influence.

Chapter 5: Conclusion & Exploring Further

Both humanitarian NGO work and American journalism are richly diverse fields of work that are in continual phases of development. Although they have experienced transitional phases before, the depth of reorganization that has occurred in recent decades, either adjacent to or as a result of the digital age, is unprecedented. The current developmental stage of humanitarian NGOs — embracing a storytelling role that emphasizing informational credibility and bolstered by access to media-making tools — is critically intersecting with the dismantling and reimagining of tactics occurring across American news media. As questions about news consumers’ choices and expectations continue to circulate, it is important to understand all the factors shaping those paradigms, including the influence of government and the ever-increasing scope of intergovernmental organizations.

Reviewing the history of the two fields shows that government and IGOs have played influential roles in their collective identities from their earliest roots. The norms and value systems of American journalism evolved with the shifts in national and international relations. These things in turn shaped how the dominant legacy media companies considered their professional relationships with non-state actors, such as humanitarian NGOs. Meanwhile, those organizations saw increased opportunity to enable citizen influence in national and international policy by accruing expertise and strengthened credibility among news media by adopting impartial reporting techniques to inform their advocacy work.

They are the more modern decades of these relationships that encompass topics that remain underexplored in research. One important pursuit could be to further

investigate the processes of how intergovernmental bodies relate to news media and their effects. The discussion begun here could be better informed by comparing research-based findings on IGO media practices to similar findings on NGOs. It would be valuable to further understand how IGO communications departments have responded to the expanded in-house media capacities enabled by the digital era and how those allowances have affected their relationships to news media. Slightly more information is available for NGOs in recent decades. The advances of Internet technologies and their effects on news media organizations provide increased opportunities for discussion on the implications of their relationships to IGOs or NGOs, exploring new procedural frontiers for the information coming to news consumers.

News about situations abroad contributes heavily to Americans' perceptions of the world around them, which in turn shape their responses within and beyond the realm of the nation-state. It is important to grasp not only the paradigms of institutional storytelling frameworks that have become obsolete but also how news storytelling — and storytellers — can evolve. Equally important to distill is what level of understanding among the public would be necessary to normalize the partnerships, collaborative work or other tactics that may increasingly appear within the work of American news media. This can be done by observing the public's reactions not only in comment sections or social media but also in the directions they send their dollars among the news media. In the tension of economic pressures and technological advancements that favor speed and convenience. Journalists will continue to decide what sorts of relationships will benefit their storytelling the most.

Appendix A

This content analysis examines New York Times coverage of two crises — the Darfur genocide and the West African Ebola crisis — to identify the information role that humanitarian NGOs and IGOs played in its news reporting. A time parameter has been set from March 23 to September 28 of 2004 and the same span for 2014.

Master List Checklist

Every article will be examined and categorized in the following way:

1. Headline:

2. Date/Time:

3. Dateline:

Three possible categories: On The Ground (OTG); Remote (R); or None (N)

4. Report Type:

Original Reporting or Wire or Opinion

5. # of Humanitarian IGO/NGO sources:

The criteria here are that the IGO or humanitarian NGO be cited as a provider of some important detail. This can include a specific attribution, or, in some cases, being a critical part of the narrative. If the opinion piece is written by someone from an IGO or NGO, that will qualify as a single source. An individual from an organization and the organization as a whole are to be considered two separate sources, and any individual from that IGO or NGO as another source thereafter. Photos provided by the

organization or where a member(s) of the organization is a photo subject are also included.

6. Notes:

This is for any other relevant information.

Analysis and Follow-Up:

Using Excel, I will tally up the total percentage of articles that mentioned either IGO or NGO sources in both Ebola and Darfur coverage, and do the same for Darfur. I will then separate the two organization types into respective spreadsheets. Next, I will compare the percentages of NGO and IGO-positive articles produced during each era.

Goals:

The goal is to quantify in some sense the trajectory of the NGO and American news media relationship by seeing how it plays out in the content on two different crises.

Tracking comparative IGO presence also gives important context to the NGO discussion, as these organizations also play an often unacknowledged role in the NGO field.

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