

The CNN Effect and State Violence Against Muslim Ethnic Minorities

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The emergence of new technology and mass social media has become a dominant tool for the propaganda machine which cycles baseless fringe opinions through unfettered and relentless iterations providing a false legitimacy to an alternative set of baseless facts that ultimately drives official policies. Specifically, the media is important as it molds public perception and brings global attention to international crises. International crises, such as ethnic cleansings or genocides, are widespread throughout the globe. Throughout history, genocides have been possible by the production of false narratives against specific religious or ethnic minorities. These narratives were promoted and reiterated by national leaders within a nation through the dissemination of information to control public opinion on these circumstances. In this perspective, the media and transmission of information effectuate the oppression of marginalized populations.

Alternatively, the relationship between the media, public perception, and actions from leaders can affect humanitarian crises positively by focusing global public opinion and building consensus on major social injustices and human rights violations and ultimately implementing new policies. The positive and negative changes on account of the relationship between the media, public perception, and leaders impact the social, cultural, economic, and political environment for the international communities' aid and abetting in these human rights violations. Thus, it is evident how the narrative dispersed by the media and leaders impacts the lives and culture of ethnic minorities.

This thesis project consists of three executive parts. The first part describes a model called the CNN effect. This section focuses on the cyclical relationship of the three fundamental participants of this model: mass media, public opinion, and international leaders. This relationship is crucial in the context of human rights as it creates favorable and unfavorable conditions for human rights against ethnic minority populations. The second part is a case study. This case study looks at the nation of Myanmar, specifically the Rohingya Muslim population. This section argues that mass media usage by the Myanmar government was responsible for the Rohingya genocide through its circulation of false information against this population. I argue that this is a direct example of the unfavorable conditions of the CNN effect. The third part is a case study. This section focuses on the Uyghur Muslim population of the Xinjiang province of the People's Republic of China. I argue that the production of the Islamophobic narrative by the Chinese government as circulated via the media and extreme censorship by the government has led to the genocide of this population. This thesis demonstrates the results of the CNN effect as it generates and publicizes human rights violations. With a specific emphasis, on the genocide and ethnic cleansing of Muslim populations. The relationship between the media, public perception and governmental actions is increasingly important due to technological advances that influence society, culturally, economically, and politically.

PART 1: CONTEXT

The Cyclical Relationship Between the Media, Public Opinion, and Global Leaders

The mass media is highly influential in the development of public opinion and communication on critical global and national foreign events. It is a tool to which every citizen in developed, powerful nations have access to. Conversely, the global community of low-income and middle-income nations are limited in their access to mass media and information. The citizens of a vast majority of these underdeveloped nations lack autonomy and are politically and socially oppressed by their governments. This leads to an increase in human rights violations within these communities. Therefore, international actors are important to assist these nations and ensure public awareness of these problems throughout the global community. Specifically, the mass media is a critical actor in the transmission of information. The mass media's representations of human rights issues are indicative of the establishment of foreign policy by global leaders as it impacts low-income and middle-income nations.

An examination of the relationships between the mass media, political governments, and public opinion will examine how the media is a key tool that can influence foreign policy decisions on the topic of human rights and development. The critical analysis on the history of human rights and foreign policy, the emergence of media representations on human rights, identification of central actors, and models of communication will validate how and why the media can influence foreign policy. This topic is important due to increased use of technology and mass media throughout the global community. There is a strong correlation between the use of mass media by global governments to inflict human rights violations against ethnic minorities. The expansion of technology within international political, economic, and cultural affairs have begat the use of mass media for human rights violations. Specifically, the malicious use of mass media as it generates a public opinion against minority populations has been historically prominent in cases of genocide. Hence, the relationship between mass media, public opinion, governments, and leadership is important to the outcome of human rights violations. Each of these factors can be simultaneously used in the production of human rights violations and in the formation of international public awareness on human rights violations. It is consequential to comprehend the direct relationship between each of these factors as they configure the social, economic, political, and cultural environment for international communities.

Models of Communication and the Media

Within the studies of international political economy and communication, there exists an abundance of models that exhibit the relationship between foreign policy and the mass media. Nonetheless, the most pervasive models as referenced throughout scholarly journals are those of the model of modernization, the communication development model, the CNN effect, and the policy-media interaction model. Each of these models distinctly examines the relationships between mass media representations of human rights and development as they lead to foreign policy and foreign intervention.

The modernization model as proposed by various economic and political scholars describes the progression of global societies from traditional to modern (Shah 2003). The most notable of these models is Walt Whitman Rostow's *Stages of Economic Growth* which analyzes the role of economic progression as it modernizes a society. This applies to the realm of media and communication because the increased exposure to new-found knowledge and practices is vital to economic, political, and cultural progression. Therefore, western civilization is a significant provider of such knowledge whether via globalization, colonialism, or foreign intervention. Daniel Lerner in his model of modernization notes the importance of mass media as a central actor in the launch of global modernization (Shah 2003, 165). In correspondence to modernization, the assimilation model identifies that assimilation of knowledge leads to social control which leads to social change. Both these models in combination note the role of the accumulation of knowledge from the west as pivotal to sociocultural changes in traditional society. The media and propaganda are the central distributors of this knowledge for sociocultural change. Thus, the combination of media and modernization leads to a fundamental model of modernization known as mediatization (Hjarvard 2008, 106). This model notes the role of technology and information as it drives a nation from an agrarian or traditional society to a modern democracy. Similar to the stages of economic growth as proposed by Rostow which emphasizes the role of technology and production as it drives a nation to modernize, this model in combination with the media is used to promote social and cultural change. Therefore, it is notable the correlation that the media has in the development of culture and society through the modernization model.

The communication development model is another important framework for the analysis of the relationship between media and foreign policy. The communication development model notes how the promotion of the topics of development and human rights such as those on agriculture, education, and health are fundamental to prompt discussions amidst international leaders (Linden 1999, 412). This model notes the importance of political representation and public participation through the free press as critical to provoking foreign governments to take action against human rights violations. It recognizes that when or if a government does not recognize these violations, they are at stake to lose their notoriety and power amidst their citizens. Hence, in this model the media is a fundamental actor that shapes public perceptions on international affairs. Another actor within this model is the United Nations. The United Nations notes the importance of public representation as critical to the implementation of societal development. This is in alignment with the participatory paradigm that notes that government alone cannot provoke development, there must be actions from global citizens both nationally and locally (Sparks 2007). Analogous to the communication development model is the model of development communication (Pamment 2015, 189). Development communication is the idea that increased communication between foreign actors can lead to social, cultural, economic, and political change. The model notes the media as an important actor of development through their circulation of information. Contrary to the communication development model, it notes the Eurocentric perspective of knowledge as contrived by the media. It recognizes that even though the media is a critical actor in development there exists decolonization or colonization of information which places the west as the commander of political relations.

The most pervasive model throughout this discussion is the theory of the CNN effect. This model directly relates the fundamental actors of the media, the leaders, and the public opinion as

they result in foreign policy decision making (Balbanova 2010; Baum and Potter 2008; Forysthe 1995; Peksen, Peterson, and Drury 2014; Robinson 2002) The CNN model proposes that increased media coverage of international events or humanitarian issues such as natural disasters, human rights violations, civil war, political oppression, genocide, and many other issues formulates public opinion and pressure politicians to intervene. Within the model of the CNN effect, multiple frameworks are analyzed to show how the media can influence public opinion and foreign policy. These by the media are those of empathy framing, distance framing, and supportive framing (Balbanova 2010, 73; Robinson 2002, 28-29). These tactics dictate whether or not political intervention by leaders is taken. Empathy framing is when the media purposely exposes instances of human affliction and is critical of the government's responses as a means to prompt policy change. Distance framing is used to create an emotional distance between the viewers or public and the afflicted foreign community. Distance framing and supportive framing are both used by the media to assist the governments in their ability to gain the public's support for the foreign policy they have implemented (Robinson 2002, 28-29). This model is critical in the implementation of foreign policy. Yet, it is up for debate as to when or why the CNN effect takes place. The idea is that the CNN effect only takes place when politicians do not have a definitive grasp on a political or economic issue at hand. Likewise, based on what the issue at hand is and what nations are involved the CNN effect may be a weak or strong link in policy decision making (Robinson 2002, 37-38). Additionally, the CNN effect is ambiguous as it can both enlighten public perception on human rights or it can be the primary tool used in human rights violations. The approaches used in regards to the CNN effect and the media significantly challenge public opinion, interpretation of information, and actions by global leaders.

The CNN effect and the policy-interaction model are in correspondence with one another. Both note that the media is a critical actor in foreign policy decisions as it challenges and influences governments to reach a consensus on critical international events and issues. In truth, the CNN effect is a glorified name for the policy-interaction model. Yet, the analysis of this model is important for the comprehension of how the media, the government, and the public work to create important policy changes in support of global communities. Each of these models is consequential in social, cultural, economic, and political development within low-income and middle-income nations as they prompt governmental actors to augment or create a foreign policy on human rights. Each relies heavily on the participation of the global actors of the media, national and international leadership, and public opinion by the general population. Thus, they are important frameworks to understand how human rights foreign policy comes into existence.

The History of International Development and Human Rights Policy

Human rights in international relations have been an important topic amongst world leaders and international organizations. Its development has been ongoing since its beginnings in the 18th century and has experienced a progressive change in the last century. To understand the development of the notion of human rights from the 18th century to the 21st century it is essential to identify what precisely constitutes a human right. By itself, a right is a principle. A human right then is a principle or claim that an individual is inherently entitled to as a global citizen. The social, cultural, political, and economic environment determines what a right is, who is entitled to that right, and dictates if that right is upheld. Hence, human rights are the broad classification in which particular categories of rights exist. Moral rights, legal rights,

subsistence rights, basic liberties, positive rights, negative rights, group rights, and individual rights are distinct among the classification of human rights. Throughout history, these rights have been developed and reshaped to conform to the present global environment.

In the history of western civilization, the movement to define and codify basic human rights made its first appearance in the late 18th century. After the American and French Bourgeois revolutions, the importance of freedom rights was acknowledged within society (Linden 1999, 412). Later, in the early 19th century, the socialist revolutions in Europe resulted in additional development to human rights, social and economic rights. Additionally, the historical tribulations of World War II resulted in the development of solidarity and collective rights. Accordingly, each of these events signifies a period of immense political, social, economic and cultural change along with immense distress on specific populations within the international community. Yet, out of these difficult periods of social unrest, immense political changes were underway. From the American and French revolutions, critical political documents in western civilization were drafted to declare a basis for laws for basic human rights. The French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, the United States Declaration of Independence, and the Bill of Rights were created as a result of these events. Likewise, the hardships of World War II and the subsequent creation of the United Nations in 1945 was foundational to the development of present-day human rights. From these historical accounts, an important trend is evident. The role of international wars, civil wars, ethnic conflict, social upheaval, and political upheaval have been crucial to the creation and reevaluation of human rights. To develop, society had to make a mistake and learn from the repercussions.

Human rights are a critical factor to societal and economic development. It is evident the role western civilization has in the construction of human rights based on the monumental events of the 18th and 20th centuries. Hence, the reconstruction of human rights frameworks has been largely dependent on the power of international leaders' responses to global injustices. Therefore, it can be implied the critical positionality and power that leaders of western civilization have in the construction of human rights and development in low-income and middle-income nations. Thus, the implementation of human rights in society is critical to economic and political progression and modernization in emergent nations. The United States as the dominant hegemon of the international community has had an essential role in the implementation of international human rights policy and development. The context of this idea of development is rooted in colonialism: The West can exert its power to politically, economically, and socially improve underdeveloped nations (Pamment 2015, 192). Within the United States, the presidential administrations of Harry S. Truman, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and Bill Clinton have been fundamental participants in these developments (Carleton and Stohl 1987; Forysthe 1995; Hartman 2001; Peksen, Peterson and Drury 2014; Qian and Yanagizawa 2017). Each administration had a distinct approach to champion human rights. These approaches differed due to the economic and political environment that each administration faced. The Truman administration governed after the end of World War II in 1945 and confronted the discussion of human rights due to the atrocities that had taken place previously (Forysthe 1995, 117). Decades later, the Carter administration of 1977 to 1981 governed amidst the Cold War and post-Vietnam War era, and was confronted with the discussion on human rights. Due to the prevalence of Communism amidst the Cold War, the Carter administration sought to replace Cold War politics with human rights politics (Forysthe

1995). Likewise, the Reagan administration of 1981 to 1989 approached human rights policy with an emphasis on civil and political rights as a means to oppose Cold War communism (Hartmann 2001). The Bush Sr. administration governed from the end of the Cold War and during the Persian Gulf War. Hence, Bush Sr. focused on the importance of human rights and foreign policy in the nations of Israel, El Salvador, and the Middle East (Forysthe 1995, 124-125). Lastly, the Clinton administration was interested in human rights and foreign policy together. The 1993 United Nations convention on human rights in Vienna, Switzerland occurred with the Clinton administration in office and thus impacted his decision to engage with this topic (Forysthe 1995, 127). Western civilization, specifically the United States administrations were vital participants in the implementation of human rights policy and international developments. The political and economic decisions made by each administration impact the justification of human rights within the international community.

The Expansion of Media Awareness on Human Rights

The combination of malicious usage of the media as propaganda to damage the identity of ethnic minority groups has led to human rights violations within low- and middle-income nations. Leaders actively sought to control the narrative in order to inflict inequality amongst a marginalized population. This is an example of the malicious use of mass media to generate the spread of misinformation. This spread of misinformation by governments or global leaders via mass media, social media, radio, news, or propaganda begets a public opinion against such populations. Hence, the narrative distributed by the government via the media eventually is embraced by the general population. The CNN effect can have both favorable and unfavorable consequences. The unfavorable consequences are indicated through the use of media to justify human rights violations. The favorable consequences occur when media coverage on human rights violations and genocide against ethnic minorities leads to the attention, activism, and sanctions by the international community. Evidence of the exploitation of mass media for human rights violations occurred historically during the Holocaust and Rwandan genocide. Both of this mass systemic removal of ethnic minority groups were not possible without the dispersion of information via radio and propaganda to promote a narrative that oppressed these populations. The use of the media and information by governments fueled the genocidal narratives against many ethnic minority populations.

National governments and international organizations need to have a comprehensive grasp on the development of emergent nations and the role that political and economic decisions have on human rights. As for the general population, attention to such information is shared utilizing communication through mass media. In Western civilization, mass media platforms are abundant. Due to recent technological developments in the past century, these platforms have amplified to a larger audience. The increase in communication on vital international political and economic discussions assists in the revision of society and culture in underdeveloped nations (Shah 2003).

Communication and mass media are rooted in 18th, 19th, and 20th-century propaganda. Propaganda is a communication tool used to influence public opinion on critical political discussions. Though propaganda is often biased information used to support a particular political point of view, it has been used widely throughout history, specifically at times of international

political, economic, and social unrest. For instance, in the 19th-century propaganda was used in Europe as an instrument to instigate societal development (Pamment 2015, 192). Since propaganda functions as a transfer of knowledge from one individual to another, 19th century Europeans used it for colonialism. It was also vital in its distribution of knowledge because it allowed for elites to have control of the message. Their goal was to educate and convince underdeveloped nations of accepting the advanced European civilization as a way to increase their participation in the political economy by the establishment of trade and industrialization in these nations (Pamment 2015, 192). A century later, propaganda was still widely used, especially amidst World War II¹. It was vital to the spread of information, modernization, and the expansion of knowledge to underdeveloped nations on the continents of Asia, Africa, and South America (Shah 2003, 171). Lastly, amid the Cold War, propaganda was used in opposition to communism. The presidential administrations of this era used propaganda and the media to establish western superiority and to influence public opinion on human rights violations in communist nations (Qian and Yanagizawa-Drott 2017, 468).

In the late 20th century and early 21st century, the primary means of communication in the mass media are through western news publications, radio channels, and broadcast networks². After the end of the Cold War, the 1980s to early 2000s experienced a period of rapid growth in communication and mass media, especially on the issue of human rights. News coverage on these humanitarian issues such as human rights, global development, civil war, genocide, and political oppression was a key to prompt politicians to establish sanctions and policies (Peksen, Peterson and Drury 2014, 855). Hence, data acquired on the prominence of human rights in articles about political actions validate the role of public opinion in the establishment of foreign policy (Peksen, Peterson and Drury 2014, 858). This coincides with the idea that increased human rights coverage in the media, likewise leads to increased activism by non-governmental organizations (Ramos, Ron and Thoms 2007, 861). Unfortunately, media coverage on human rights is dependent on critical economic and political factors, especially because it often involves western interventions, specifically from the United States. The factors that indicate whether or not an underdeveloped nation receives media attention is based on the size of their population, non-governmental organizations involved in assistance, level of poverty, the nation's political agenda, if they operate as a democracy, if they are an ally of the United States, and if there are current military interventions (Cole 2010, 308). Hence, the relationship of a nation and the international community is critical to the enforcement and public acknowledgment of human rights. With this in mind, based on the social, cultural, and economic environment of a nation the media then decides their interpretation and exhibition of that particular humanitarian event (Rai and Tanwar 2015, 138).

The previously discussed claims on mass media, communication, and political intervention are from a Eurocentric perspective. It is important to acknowledge that nations that endure human rights violations and receive humanitarian aid do not have the same economic and political

¹ Propaganda used during WWII, specifically during the Holocaust is a pivotal example of the dissemination of false information to oppress an ethnic minority. See additional information at <https://www.ushmm.org/collections/bibliography/nazi-propaganda-1>

² The prominent mass media establishments in the west are *Newsweek*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Economist*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Chicago Tribune*, and *The Los Angeles Times* (Cole 2010; Peksen, Peterson and Drury 2014; Qian and Yanagizawa-Drott 2017)

infrastructure as western civilization. This affects the infrastructure of communication as low-income or middle-income nations lack the technology and systems to effectively influence the masses through media. While the west mobilizes its citizens via the media to promote social change, underdeveloped nations must rely on different approaches. This technological divide further dissociates wealthy nations from impoverished ones (Cole 2010). Also, when underdeveloped nations do have the means of communication it may be only available to urban populations (Tomiak 2018, 460). Within these nations, local radio channels are synonymous with mass media in the west. The topics of discussion on the local radio channels have prompted citizens to stand up for cultural, political, and economic change on issues of civil conflict and injustices. On the contrary, radio channels in low-income nations can also be a tool of oppression to spread false narratives as was the case with the Rwandan genocide³. Local radio channels can both aid or obstruct human rights in ethnic conflict⁴. This approach, known as the participatory paradigm, uses communication to encourage local populations to stand up and actively participate in their own political, economic, and social lives (Sparks 2007). Lastly, there is a linkage between human rights and mass media due to the United States Bill of Rights first amendment that states the importance of the liberty of free speech and press (Cole 2010). Though this is taken from the context of western civilization it is important for comprehension on why the civil liberty of communication coincides with human rights and policy change. Correspondingly, the United Nations recognizes the right to a free and independent press and the power of knowledge as vital to the implementation of human rights as published in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the General Assembly (Linden 1999, 413)⁵. Due to the justification of human rights and free speech from respectable international agencies like the United Nations, the relationship between policy, communication, and human rights is apparent.

The Central Actors: The Media, the Leaders, and Public Opinion

To implement foreign policy, to uphold human rights standards, to communicate information, and to validate these measures can only occur via active participation from specific actors within the global community. These actors exist at the local, national, and international levels and are acted upon by mass media outlets, global leaders, and the general population. These three distinct actors are the implementers of social, cultural, political, and economic change on the discussion of human rights. Their relationship consists of dynamic and equal involvement to influence foreign policy decision making (Baum and Potter 2008). These relationships assemble a distinct market in which information is a commodity that is sold, bought, and traded between each actor (Baum and Potter 2008, 42). Knowledge equals power, the more knowledge each actor can accumulate the better their chance to implement change (Hjarvard 2008).

³ The Rwandan genocide, a period of extreme ethnic conflict between the Hutu and Tutsis, resulted in the execution of a mass number of the Tutsis minority group. The spread of information and propaganda to oppress this population was vital to the genocide as accomplished by the local station, Radio Rwanda. See <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-26875506> for additional information.

⁴ For additional information see book, “We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda,” by Philip Gourevitch (1 September 1999)

⁵ See <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights> website for more information on the articles of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

The media is the central actor and liaison between its counterparts, the global leaders, and the general population. Hence, the quality and quantity of information dispersed by media outlets have a consequential impact on the reactions of the other actors. The other actors can integrate the media into the development of their society and culture (Hjarvard 2008). For example, propaganda transmitted by the government is their interpretation of media coverage. Many groups exist within the context of mass media, mainstream news, local channels, journalists, and radio channels, each of which has ample effects on the production of public opinion. Many scholars have analyzed the media and established several hypotheses on how the media can sway public opinion. First, the media can influence politicians to act when a human rights violation has occurred, which brings immediate attention to the issue locally and globally (Peksen, Peterson, and Drury 2014, 856). Secondly, additional factors impact the role of the media in foreign policy. The framework of these hypotheses is based on specific increases or decreases in poverty, western aid, modernization, population size, and non-governmental support as an indication of increased media coverage (Ramos, Ron, and Thoms 2007, 388-390). On the contrary, a nation with a lower gross domestic product and is less developed may not gain media attention on human rights violations. These hypotheses indicate the importance of the role that media has in the decisions on whether or not a particular global issue is a public knowledge. Thus, what the media covers dictates if culture, social, political, or economic progression occurs in a given nation.

The media is also a means to transmit knowledge between nations and populations, yet the actor that possesses the most power to prompt action are the leaders of society. The leaders of society are a large category that consists of a subset of actors. These actors range from large multinational organizations such as the United Nations, individual nation-states, western civilization, to local politicians, social elites, the military, and the United States administration. These actors collectively possess the tools and means to take action and implement policy standards on issues of human rights. They can decide the direction of public diplomacy and processes used to fulfill such action (Pamment 2015). Western civilizations such as the United States and Europe hold the most power in these decisions. As a consequence of colonialism, the West has control over the economies, culture, and politics of many underdeveloped nations. Therefore, the reaction from politicians to information dispersed in the media is fundamental to invoke political change. Based on these factors, politicians can decide which nations are likely to receive foreign aid and policy interventions to assist in development or humanitarianism (Carleton and Stohl 1987). Thus, foreign aid and foreign policy can sustain their power by militaristic actions by western nations on foreign ground. These actions, whether helpful or harmful in the process of development for low-income or middle-income nations are fundamental in the production of the values of their society and culture. Likewise, such actions of foreign intervention by elites, leaders, and politicians are crucial to the development of human rights due to the tendency of these actors to invoke colonialism or democratization on underdeveloped nations (Hartmann 2001). These processes as a solution to humanitarian interventions are further supported by the relationship between the societal leaders, the media, and public opinion. Hence, the political leader acts as the consummate in the delivery of information for the media and general population, as they command the role the information economy can have in foreign policy decision making.

The active participation of the general population is indicative of the decisions of governmental leadership and is relied upon by the mass media. The media shape's public opinion, but for them to exist they must obtain the public's interests and support. The general public applies to any individual who is not a member of a governmental leadership or participant in a mass media corporation. The general public which fuels public opinion consists of a subcategory of actors, third-world communities, local populations, political activists, western communities, and non-governmental organizations. Public opinion is important because their response to foreign policy and humanitarian issues determines the course of action taken by politicians and elites. The public, through their right to freedom of speech, can influence and assist in the development of foreign policy based on the information provided to them by the media (Baum and Potter 2008, 44). Though it is crucial to discern that public opinion may be paradoxical for low-income or middle-income nations whose citizens have been deprived of their human right to freedom of speech and press. Therefore, the role of western civilization, human rights activists, and non-governmental organizations are important actors in the foundation of public opinion. An emergent actor among this discussion is the European based organization, *Amnesty International* (Calabrese 2017; Carleton and Stohl 1987; Qian and Yanagizawa-Drott 2017; Ramos, Ron and Thoms 2007;). Data provided by various scholars indicates the correlation between the increased circulation of human rights-based violations communicated by this organization, acquired by the media, and lastly distributed to the public as influential to policy decisions by government leaders. The increased attention to human rights violations to the public eye established by public opinion, pressures politicians to take action against human rights violations. Therefore, the public's perspective on critical international issues serves as a platform to induce dire political change.

The dynamic and cyclical relationship between these actors, the media, the leaders, and the public opinion is significant to the development of social, economic, political, and cultural change within low-income and middle-income nations. To comprehend this relationship as it applies to the relationship of the media and foreign policy, various models and theories of communication and modernization must be applied.

Conclusion

The mass media is especially important in the present-day politics, economics, and culture of society as it is influential on public opinion and decisions instated by political leaders. The critical examination of the history of human rights and foreign policy, history of the media, essential actors to this discussion, and models of communications indicates the importance of the relationship between the mass media and foreign policy decisions. Nonetheless, throughout the literature on the relationship between the media and foreign policy, there are critical areas of neglect. An abundance of research on this topic has been conducted by scholars from western civilization, thus a Eurocentric view is always conveyed. With this in mind, these theories and accounts do not take into consideration the perspective of the low-income and middle-income nations. For instance, how insufficient education systems within low-income or middle-income nations might lead to low literacy within a community. Likewise, how this may affect citizens' ability to comprehend information that is vital to their right to free press and ability to form opinions that may influence policy. These rights and infrastructures that allow western citizens to participate in politics and the media are often taken for granted. Therefore, future research on

this perspective would be supportive of the argument for the relationship that the mass media can have with foreign policy decisions both locally and globally.

This topic on the relationship that the media has on foreign policy decisions on human rights in low-income and middle-income nations is important to the study of the international political economy because of the ability the media has in the development of culture, politics, and economics. As society propels into the future, the prevalence of media, technology, and communication will become increasingly important within international politics, economics, and society. It is essential to the future of global development to learn the history of the relationship between the mass media and foreign policy to guarantee the well-being of individuals throughout the global community.

PART II: CASE STUDY

The Production of National Instability: The Rohingya Crisis, The Media, and Human Rights

In every region, some populations face inequalities and injustices due to economic, political, cultural, and social forces. Such inequalities and injustices deprive people of their inalienable human rights justified to them under the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The leaders and governments within the state utilize these forces to retain power through the rejection of segments of their population. International leaders and governments utilize the economic, social, political, and cultural forces to command their power over their citizens. Western civilization was once a model for human rights and set the expectations for human rights across the globe. The specific case of the nation of Myanmar is an example of a low-income nation afflicted with human rights violations and injustices due to iniquitous government and military leadership. The case of Myanmar is valuable to explore the dynamic relationship between human rights violations, governmental dictatorship, and military control as produced by the exile of media⁶, media control, and broadcast of false information. These factors dynamically suppress the economic, political, cultural, and civil rights of Myanmar citizens. From this case study, one can learn how excessive military control leads to human rights violations. Additionally, this case infers how the media can be used violently to manipulate and perpetuate stereotypes, incite ethnic genocide, suppress freedom of expression, and freedom of opinion for all citizens both majority and minority.

The case study of Myanmar is unique compared to other instances of human rights violations due to the dynamic relationship between the media, the government, the military, and its citizens. Through research on this topic, it is apparent how both social media and newspaper media can be used to incite violence and illuminate injustices throughout the globe by the dynamic relationship of information, knowledge, power, and public perception. This case study also provides an outlook on both the negative and positive repercussions of the CNN effect model for the marginalized Rohingya population of the Rakhine state of Myanmar. Thus, the improper use of media by the Myanmar government and military to generate violence leads to the cultural eradication of a population, political instability, social inequalities, and a deficiency of economic progression and trade within the nation. There is a direct correlation between the media and government in the deprivation of human rights for the citizens of Myanmar.

In Myanmar the use of mass media, both through news sources and social media, have been partly responsible for the deprivation of human rights for the Rohingya Muslim population. Through the lens of the CNN effect, it is apparent the misuse of the social media site, Facebook, as it is used to oppress the Rohingya Muslims. It was effective in spreading a false narrative and influencing widespread public opinion against this population. The control of news media sites throughout Myanmar and Southeast Asia through their framing further oppressed this population through the dissemination of false information, Western-based news organizations attempted to

⁶ Exile media is the process of governmental action to ban mass media outlets and journalists from specific international spaces.

frame the human rights violations through a call to action from the United Nations and United States. This exemplifies the favorable and unfavorable consequences of the CNN effect as it inflicts human rights violations and resolves them.

The History of Military Control: Democracy, Insurgency, and the Rohingya Genocide in Myanmar

The nation of Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, is an independent nation in Southeast Asia. Formerly, a British colony from 1886 until independence in 1948, there were minimal issues regarding the human rights of minorities. After British independence, Myanmar existed in peace for fourteen years before military control ensued in 1962. However, since then Myanmar has undergone immense social, political, and cultural upheaval (Whitten-Woodring et. al. 2020). At this time, the population of Myanmar became suppressed and silenced by the military, otherwise known as Tatmadaw (Hakim 2020). The Tatmadaw is the armed forces of Myanmar and under their rule has the influx of human rights violations, suppression of autonomy, incitement of hate, and violence come to exist. The Tatmadaw control all of the political and economic power in Myanmar and have seized such power through coup d'état. Historically, in Myanmar, a coup d'état occurred in 1962 and most recently in 2021 (Schairer-Vertannes 2001)⁷. Through these actions, the military gained immense power over its civilians and suppressed many of their fundamental rights from freedom of speech to freedom of the press to freedom of expression and freedom of religion. In these periods of hardships and political oppression, citizens have raised opposition against the Tatmadaw in their fight for democracy and free will. A prominent leader in this fight is a politician, activist, and Nobel Peace Prize recipient Aung San Suu Kyi. Aung San Suu Kyi is the head of the National League for Democracy in Myanmar and has been a hailed advocate in the fight against military control, but has contradicted the events of the Rohingya genocide⁸. Despite a lengthy house arrest, Suu Kyi continued to advocate for the population of Myanmar in the fight for democracy. She is the prominent actor that brought international attention to the events in Myanmar (Steinberg 2007).

Unfortunately, the military alone is not the only actor in the incitement of violence against Myanmar civilians. In the Rakhine State, the Rohingya Muslim population, a minority group accounting for 4.3% of the Myanmar population, has been forcefully erased from the Myanmar landscape (Lee 2019). A prominent actor alongside the military is the ultranationalist Buddhist extremist group, Ma Ba Tha (Lee 2016). The Ma Ba Tha is also known as the Patriotic Association of Myanmar has been involved in the suppression of rights and freedoms against the Muslim population. The Ma Ba Tha was instrumental in crafting legislative acts in 2015, such as

⁷ In the course of the past months, since February 2021, Myanmar has suffered from a military coup d'état which has led to political, economic, and civil unrest. Most notably, violence and deaths against civilian protesters. See publications, *The New York Times*, *CNN*, and *UN News* for breaking news on events in Myanmar.

⁸ It has been argued that Aung San Suu Kyi has been complacent in her activism against the Rohingya genocide. It is evident in her statement made at the United Nations International Court of Justice. See "Aung San Suu Kyi Defends Myanmar Against Rohingya Genocide Accusations," *The New York Times*, 1 February 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/> (accessed 30 April 2021)

the Protection of Race and Religion, Religious Conversion Bill, Women's Special Marriage Bill, and Monogamy Bill all restrict the Rohingya Muslims fundamental rights as declared by the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (Lee 2016). Though Myanmar was a signatory in the agreement to provide human rights for stateless people under the United Nations Charter they did not follow through on this act (Vu and Lynn 2020). These acts as instated by the Ma Ba Tha and supported by the Tatmadaw were the fuel to the erasure, displacement, immigration, and genocide of the Rohingya Muslim population. These acts serve as an extension to the Myanmar Citizenship Laws of 1982 that declared the social, economic, cultural, and political foundations of what constitutes a Myanmar citizen (Van Schaak 2019).

Using these definitions for citizenship as dictated by the Ma Ba Tha and Tatmadaw, the Rohingya do not meet the stringent requirements of citizenship. This leads to justify the displacement of over 700,000 Rohingyas into the neighboring nations of Southeast Asia (Vu and Lynn 2020). This displacement otherwise referred to as "Myanmification" creates a landscape that is unsuitable for the Rohingya (MacLean 2019). These actions impact the Rohingya's economic livelihood to provide for themselves and force them into internment camps or ghettos run by the military. Yet, the actions of the Ma Ba Tha and Tatmadaw are not alone in the incitement of oppression against the Rohingya population.

The Mediasphere: The Power of Facebook in the Rohingya Genocide

The central tool utilized by both the Ma Ba Tha and Tatmadaw is social media which is used to implement their goal of displacing and excluding the Rohingya population through manipulation of knowledge and power. Stefan Bächtold in his analysis on discourses presented by philosopher Michel Foucault notes the importance of power and knowledge in the construction of truth and social practices (Bächtold 2015). He argues that the organization and construction of power and knowledge within a society directly impact social hierarchy, state governance, and spatial construction. In the case of Myanmar, this implies that social media is an extension of power used directly to incite violence. The violent attacks against the Rohingya were produced on account of the military's ability to control the media and manipulate the information dispersed to the public to incite violence. Thus, extreme hate polarized the Rohingya community (Whitten-Woodring et. al. 2020). This perspective of knowledge and power by the media is influential in the genocide of a population is counterintuitive to the CNN effect model which notes the importance of the media, leaders, and public opinion in provoking positive change in society. To understand the implications social media has on the marginalization of the Rohingya population and negative implications on the entirety of Myanmar society it is critical to note the elements and actors that are mishandling this tool of power. The narrative produced against the Rohingya Muslims by the government has been detrimental to this population's identity and culture. Likewise, the right to freedom of expression and belief for the entire Myanmar population was deprived of these populations via mass internet blackouts instated by the government⁹. Hence, the elements of importance throughout this discussion are the social media account Facebook, the role of government censorship, and media propaganda combined with the administrative decisions of both international and local actors in their ability to handle these platforms.

⁹ The Myanmar government has actively cut internet and media services at night to silence and control political uprisings, which is a direct infringement on this population's right to freedom of expression and opinion. See, "Myanmar junta orders internet blackout as more pro-democracy protestors are detained," *CNN*, 3 April 2021, <https://www.cnn.com>, (accessed 6 May 2021)

Facebook is a social media tool rooted in Western civilization. It is accessible to anyone with an internet connection which provides international citizens with the ability to practice their right to freedom of opinion and expression as indicated by Article 19 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. When the media and internet are controlled by the state and government, citizens are unable to practice that right (Brooten 2013). Hence, exile journalism and media are practiced within a state. How the Ma Ba Tha and Tatmadaw handled Facebook incited the genocide against the Rohingya population. Facebook was the primary tool in the incitement of violence against the Rohingyas (Lee 2019). The Ma Ba Tha and Tatmadaw used Facebook to circulate false information and convictions against the religion and identity of the Rohingya (Hakim 2020). They utilized this conventional tool of knowledge to dehumanize a group of people on account of their dislike of their religion and race. The Ma Ba Tha was largely responsible for this circulation of information as they produced the prejudiced posts circulated on Facebook (Atkinson 2020). The argument then questions whether the Ma Ba Tha and Facebook together should be held responsible for the marginalization and genocide of the Rohingya nation. The Ma Ba Tha and Tatmadaw for their production and circulation of the information or the elite management of Facebook in the United States? Facebook only reinforced pre-existing stereotypes on the Rohingya population (Kyaw 2015). The ineffective management of the platform was what allowed the Ma Ba Tha and Tatmadaw to possess control over the narrative¹⁰. Thus, they attempted to control public opinion to incite violence.

The upper-level management of Facebook's inability to comprehend and control their platform meant that states, terrorists, and extremist groups could circulate false and discriminatory information on the site¹¹. Hence, the Tatmadaw in an attempt to control the narrative of information implemented media censorship otherwise known as state-controlled media (Brooten 2013). The Tatmadaw practiced this through restrictions on internet accessibility through nightly internet blackouts. These blackouts, in the case of the military coup and citizens' insurgence, meant that citizens could no longer communicate with one another in an attempt to plan their next assembly (Bui 2016). In the case of the Rohingya, government censorship meant the restriction of speech and assembly as it generated power for the government to abuse minorities through their production and circulation of information (Bui 2016). Censorship also meant that the only available platforms of information accessible to the citizens of Myanmar were those the government granted them access to. Any Western or other international media platforms were inaccessible to the general population as it suppressed their ability to practice their freedom of expression and opinion (Lee 2019). The Tatmadaw could reproduce and disperse information through Facebook that would meet the demands of their political and economic agenda. As for the Rohingya population, the public reactions either for or against this information jeopardize their security. This facilitates the standards of what constitutes genocide under ideas set forth by scholars Hakim (2020) and Van Shaack (2019). Both argue that genocide and human rights violations are produced by state power and public participation through acts of violence against a protected group with the intent of violence and destruction (Van Shaack 2019). In this case, Facebook or social media is a direct line to public participation in genocide (Hakim 2020). The

¹⁰ See statement from Facebook (2018) on their removal of Myanmar Military Official from the site: <https://about.fb.com/news/2018/08/removing-myanmar-officials/>

¹¹ See "A Genocide Incited on Facebook, With Posts From Myanmar's Military," *The New York Times*, 15 October 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/> (accessed 30 April 2021)

Rohingya were oppressed by forces produced by Facebook and acted upon by the military, Myanmar leaders, Buddhist monks, and Rakhine civilians. All of whom can be legally charged for incitement of genocide (Van Shaack 2019). These acts of violence are amplified by Facebook, specifically CEO Mark Zuckerberg's inability to denounce the role his site has had in the social, political, and cultural atmosphere of Myanmar.

Propaganda against the Rohingya population has been emulated by the Tatmadaw and Ma Ba Tha through their use of Facebook. Hakim (2020) notes the role of media or government propaganda as it begets genocide. Hakim draws upon the historical lessons of propaganda in the Holocaust as analogous to media propaganda in the Rohingya genocide. Propaganda whether direct, public, or intentional used as incitement against a specific population is an act of crime. Therefore, though Mark Zuckerberg and the management of Facebook did not directly incite genocide, they were complicit in the act as leaders of their platform (Hakim 2020). Hence, the role of anti-Rohingya rhetoric and propaganda dispersed via Facebook prompted the genocide, mass migration, and insurmountable human rights violations against the Rohingyas. Facebook gained this attention and notoriety from the suppression and exile of other media outlets (Whitten-Woodring et. al. 2020). Thus, this further generated power for the Ma Ba Tha and Tatmadaw to incite violence and control the narrative and environment of Myanmar.

Based on this information, it is important to comprehend the construction of power, knowledge, and narratives in the construction of genocide and human rights violations. The role of government censorship and suppression of information to heighten attention to false rhetoric on Facebook incited the mass violence and displacement of the Rohingya population. It constructed a social, political, and cultural space that marginalized a community, excluded them from citizenship, and deprived them of their fundamental human rights. The elements of Facebook, government censorship, and media propaganda in correlation produced an environment for marginalization. Thus, it impacted not only the Rohingya population but their economic and cultural livelihood along with political instability. All of these problems were created due to mass governmental control further perpetuated by the power of social media.

Local Press and International News: Coverage of the Rohingya Genocide

The role of local and international news is important to the coverage of political, social, and economic events within a nation. Many factors impact the production of this information, how it's covered, whether it's reliable, and who can access it. In Myanmar, the implication of exile journalism and media through governmental control has a direct outcome on the information accessible to the general public. Exile media is information produced by publications and journalists that is censored and controlled by the government (Brooten 2013). In Myanmar, the Tatmadaw has exiled and restricted citizen access to many international western news publications to suppress the insurrection. The government and military control what information citizens have access to through the censorship of international news. Hence, the most conventional form of news in Myanmar is the government-run and owned publication, *The Global New Light of Myanmar*¹² (Atkinson 2020; Lee 2019). With this in mind, there are two important factors to consider in the discussion of news in Myanmar. The first factor to consider is how the local news and media in Myanmar shape the political, cultural, economic, and social

¹² See the <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/> for direct coverage of events in Myanmar.

environment. Second, it is important to consider the reaction and frames by international and local news on the events in Myanmar. Both the arrangement of society based on news and the reaction of the news based on society are important in the production of information, especially in the context of Myanmar's human rights and the Rohingya genocide.

The locally owned and operated *Global New Light of Myanmar* publication greatly impacts the public perception of information in circulation on the military coups and ethnic cleansing in Myanmar. While *The Global New Light of Myanmar* is run by the military and state and controls much of the information in Myanmar, it is not the only national news publication. The privately-owned *Myanmar Times* features a different approach than the state-run publication (Atkinson 2020). It is important to note that how the information distributed by these outlets is perceived, is dependent on who the receiver of the information is. This binds to the production of the Rohingya genocide and human rights violations because rural communities lacked access to these media outlets. Hence, they relied on Facebook to provide them with information rather than newspapers (Whitten-Woodring et. al. 2020). Likewise, the perception of information or likelihood to believe false information is dependent on education level. An individual within a rural population who does not have access to quality education is more likely to perceive information from credible news or Facebook differently than an individual with an education (Whitten-Woodring et. al. 2020). This distinction between the social perception of news is pivotal in the creation of false accusations and opinions that led to the demise of the Rohingyas. This perception and dissemination of information are highlighted by scholar Christopher Atkinson's (2020) review of the newspapers *The Global New Light of Myanmar* and *The Myanmar Times*. *The Global New Light of Myanmar* focuses on information that will benefit the state, government, and military so that they may retain power over the people. Likewise, this publication distorts information to hide the atrocities and violent acts committed by the Tatmadaw and Ma Ba Tha against the people of Myanmar. They also further perpetuate discriminatory rhetoric provided by Facebook to marginalize the Rohingyas. Alternatively, *The Myanmar Times*¹³ provides universal information on the events in Myanmar in English with the intent for the entire global community to be knowledgeable on the situation. Lastly, the language used by each of these publications is important to the storytelling of human rights and genocide in Myanmar. Whether or not the events are framed as an act of terrorism against human rights has a direct effect on international awareness of the situation. With this in mind, the CNN effect model is in progress in which the frames of current events by news publication in Myanmar directly affect whether international actors such as the United Nations and the United States take action.

The frames and contexts of monumental international events as depicted by the news and media directly affect public opinion. This is important due to the cyclical nature of the CNN effect in which public opinion impacts the decisions of policymakers and elites in their response to a specific event. In the case of Myanmar, the frames and approaches of the insurgency and Rohingya crisis by both local newspapers and international newspapers affect the political responses of the international community. Hong Tien Vu and Nyan Lynn (2020) examine this relationship between coverage of events in Myanmar, the frames utilized, and how that may generate an international response. Through their analysis of both local, regional, and international newspapers as they employ various frameworks for the production of knowledge,

¹³ See the <https://www.mmmtimes.com/> for direct coverage on events in Myanmar.

Vu and Lynn validate their argument. The newspapers in the examination are *The New York Times* of the United States, *The Irrawaddy* of Myanmar¹⁴, and *The New Nation* of Bangladesh¹⁵ (Vu and Lynn 2020). *The New York Times*, a liberal Western-based media outlet focuses on peace, revitalization, social actions, and reactions from the United Nations in their coverage of the Rohingya crisis. *The Irrawaddy*, an exiled media platform in Myanmar, frames the crisis using semantics to indicate violence to address the problem through a call to action against the government and military. *The New Nation* focuses on the Rohingya crisis as it affects regional affairs, along with ways humanitarian relief could be beneficial for the displaced population. In each of these publications, there is an emphasis on the semantics of the publications and their coverages as they contextualize the crisis through various frameworks of violence, crisis, press freedom, humanitarian relief, international pressure, and investigation (Vu and Lynn 2020, 1294-1295). Thus, the interpretations of events via international and local press coverage directly reflect society and initiates a call to action to international leaders and organizations.

The coverage and perceptions of the events in Myanmar, specifically the Rohingya genocide, by local, regional, and international press impact the responses of local and international leaders. This dynamic relationship between each of these actors affects the social, cultural, political, and economic spheres of the Myanmar population. Newspaper publications, alongside social media, are critical to the development or lack of development of human rights, humanitarian aid, and international intervention for the citizens of Myanmar. The linkage between information via news to citizens impacts their right to freedom of opinion and expression, thus, the importance of coverage impacts society and culture in Myanmar.

International Intervention: Sanctions and Policy by Political Actors

Social media, news coverage, and citizens' responses generate international attention to the crises occurring in Myanmar. International attention encourages Western and regional actors to take political, economic, and social action against the Myanmar military and government. The United States, the United Nations, European Union, Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN), local non-governmental organizations, and international non-governmental organizations have been fundamental actors in the creation of policy and sanctions to protect the citizens of Myanmar against their government (Bui 2016; Rainer and Goel 2020; Steinberg 2007). The actions of these international actors have regional and local influence over the economic, political, and social stability of the citizens of Myanmar. Hence, an analysis of the actors that hold the utmost power in their interventions against the Tatmadaw and the Ma Ba Tha will be highly beneficial in the protection of human rights for the citizens of Myanmar.

The United States holds substantial political and economic power to tackle global inequalities that face underdeveloped nations. The United States can impose Western sanctions against the Tatmadaw and the Ma Ba Tha to ensure social stability and security for the citizens of Myanmar (Pederson 2013)¹⁶. The United States has been an active participant against the Myanmar

¹⁴ See the <https://www.irrawaddy.com/> for direct coverage on events in Myanmar.

¹⁵ See the <https://thedailynation.com/> for direct coverage on events in Myanmar.

¹⁶ The United States Biden Administration and Trump Administration has been productive in their imposition of sanctions against the Myanmar military through their label of the events against the Rohingya in Myanmar as genocide and the banishment of Myanmar military officials

military through their imposition of Western sanctions. Yet, in their attempt to destabilize the military through the insurance of economic and political development, political peace, and improved human rights records, the Tatmadaw exerted increased control (Pederson 2013). The West in an attempt to provide aid became a pawn for the military. Hence, the West had to suppress international aid, trade, and security to Myanmar (Rainer and Goel 2020). This led the Myanmar military to establish a relationship with China and Russia. (Steinberg 2007). With this in mind, there are many interconnected relationships between the international community in attempts to impose sanctions and policy changes against the nation of Myanmar. The United States in alliance with the nations of Japan, Thailand, Australia, and the European Union imposed sanctions against Myanmar in 1988, 1997, and 2003 (Steinberg 2007). Unfortunately, due to a conflict of opinions on how to handle the situation in Myanmar, minimal change was imposed. The United States focused on the delegitimization of the military, pressure against elites to relinquish power, and reformation of policy. Yet, no social, economic, political, or cultural change came from such action. Hence, it can be implied that a political actor closer to the situation may have more jurisdiction in the administration of policy change and sanctions.

The Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) is closely associated with the political, economic, and social environment of Myanmar. The ASEAN is composed of ten member states and focuses on the progression of economic, political, and social stability for the Southeast Asian region (Bui 2016). Myanmar joined this association in 1997, which prompted ASEAN to take notice of human rights violations. Hence, the integration of policy and changes can have the utmost effect on actions taken by the Tatmadaw. Hean Bui (2016) analyzes the organization of the ASEAN as it can affect the social environment of the events in Myanmar. Bui concludes that due to the cultural, political, and economic diversity of nations within the Southeast Asian region, the organization of the system of ASEAN is ineffective to uphold human rights standards. This leads to political and economic instability in the region. Nations will either not seek to trade with Myanmar or they will continue to engage in trade and production with Myanmar with the knowledge that any human right violation will go unnoticed. Additionally, regional instability can come from neighbors of Myanmar, such as Thailand and Bangladesh taking the grunt of mass immigration and humanitarian aid due to the Rohingya crisis. As previously noted, Thailand was allied with the United States in the implementation of actions against Myanmar, and as one of the democratic nations in the region of ASEAN, is an important factor in political and economic action against the Tatmadaw (Bui 2016; Steinberg 2007). Unfortunately, Thailand has turned a blind eye to situations that regard sex trafficking and drug smuggling by Myanmar refugees in the shelter in their nation (Schairer-Vertannes 2001). This account is more human rights violations in progress that ASEAN has been unable to handle. With an insufficient system set by ASEAN that focuses on retention of economic and political stability over adequate human rights, positive political, social, and cultural change for the Myanmar citizens and Rohingya is unattainable.

from entering the United States. See “Top Myanmar Generals Are Barred From Entering U.S. Over Rohingya Killings,” *The New York Times*, 17 July 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/> (accessed 30 April 2021) and “Biden Imposes Sanctions on Generals Who Engineered Myanmar Coup” *The New York Times*, 12 February 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com> (accessed 30 April 2021).

Lastly, the participation from the United Nations and local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can have substantial effects on the combat of human rights violations in Myanmar. The United Nations by its establishment of the Declaration of Human Rights has immense power to declare what constitutes human rights violations. Unfortunately, as states establish their own human rights treaties and forms of governance, they decide whether to listen to advice from the United Nations. Myanmar did agree to sign the United Nations Convention on Statelessness but failed to implement any measures (Vu and Lynn 2020). NGOs hold the power to assist the United Nations to ensure that their declarations are implemented throughout the global community. In Myanmar, NGOs can come through the forms of humanitarian aid, media coverage, or political assistance. Myanmar attempted to ban the participation of NGOs in the Rakhine state as they provided economic and humanitarian assistance for the Rohingya population (Van Shaack 2019). Their fear of Western intervention as it may deconstruct their control over the Myanmar population further deprived human rights of its citizens.

The Western-based NGOs of *Freedom House*¹⁷ and *Amnesty International*¹⁸ have been active participants in the production of knowledge and opposition against military action in Myanmar (Brooten 2013; Lee 2016). Their attempts to deconstruct the Tatmadaw and reproduce information on these events to the international community is pivotal in the engagement of other foreign actors, such as the United States, ASEAN, and United Nations as they support the civilians of Myanmar through this economic, political, social, and cultural crisis.

Conclusion

In the nation of Myanmar, it is apparent the improper use of power and knowledge to incite violence, deprive human rights, and displace a marginalized population. The political and social history in Myanmar on account of military control over democracy led to the incitement of violence within the nation. Both the Tatmadaw and Ma Ba Tha perpetuated the violence through their use of social media to spread anti-Rohingya Muslim hate rhetoric. An analysis of the history of violence and military control from the end of British rule to political independence to military dictatorship is evidence of the political and economic instability within Myanmar. Thus, this instability has social and cultural repercussions for the livelihood and accessibility of the fundamental human rights for the citizens of Myanmar. From this case study it is apparent the dynamic favorable and unfavorable consequences of the CNN effect for the Rohingya Muslim population of Myanmar. It is important the role that social media has as it restricts human rights and leads to the genocide of a minority population. Additionally, the coverage of this humanitarian crisis by national and international news organizations greatly impacts sanctions and policies in support of this oppressed population. These interventions influence the political, economic, social, and cultural environment within Myanmar. Through restrictions to the identity of the Rohingya Muslim via genocide, they lose their right to their freedom of religion, expression, and opinion. Hence, the cultural and social environment for the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar is altered. The role of international intervention through policy change

¹⁷ A variety of research and non-governmental organization action to aid and protect human rights in Myanmar can be found at <https://freedomhouse.org/country/myanmar/freedom-world/2021>.

¹⁸ A variety of research and non-governmental organization action to aid and protect human rights in Myanmar can be found at <https://www.amnestyusa.org/countries/myanmar/>.

and sanctions is important as it influences the political, economic, social, and cultural environment in a nation. It is important to understand the factors in the CNN effect as they begets human rights violations in Myanmar to ensure that these events are not replicated in another region at another time by a government or military.

PART III: CASE STUDY

The Production of the Uyghur Narrative: China's Battle against "Terrorism" in Xinjiang

The threat of terrorism, in the wake of the September 11 attacks, has produced the widespread narrative of Islamophobia throughout the globe. This narrative targets populations of the Islamic faith and jeopardizes their cultural and political freedoms. Many nations have aligned with one another in a commonly shared fear of terrorism and which they have used to their advantage with serious consequences on their society. The People's Republic of China, along with the entire global community, has taken the utmost extreme measures in their battle against internal terrorism within their nation. China's internal, contrived terrorism threat is the Uyghur Muslim population of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region. China, in promoting fear of this population, has asserted its economic and political power to control this region for both its resources and to halt alleged terrorism within the region. Their assertion of power and control has been detrimental to the Uyghur Muslims as it deprived them of their inalienable economic, political, social, and cultural rights. The Chinese society alone could not pull off such drastic measures. The Chinese government's access to the advanced technology of widespread surveillance allowed them to virtually and physically control and confine the Uyghur Muslims. China's immense surveillance system through media control and censorship would establish a widespread public opinion that would support their Islamophobic and terroristic narrative against the Uyghur Muslims of Xinjiang. This case of Uyghur Muslims illustrates how control over the media can produce a violent narrative that deprives a population of their inalienable rights to freedom of religion and expression through the subjugation of them as terrorists. This is a direct example of the unfavorable consequences and slightly modified repercussions of CNN effect as the media depictions of the Uyghur Muslims are used to justify the policies that suppress this population of their rights.

The Uyghur Muslim population of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region of China is a noteworthy case study as it demonstrates the harmful relationship between the government's control over the media and public opinion as it produces a false narrative that deprives a population of its human rights. In this particular case study, it is evident the role that resources, economic, and political power have in human rights violations as the Chinese government seeks to expand its control over the Xinjiang region to advance themselves as the global hegemon. Thus, China's political and economic agenda disenfranchises its citizens, specifically the Uyghur Muslims', cultural and social rights. The CNN effect model is applicable in this case as the Chinese government manipulates public opinion through media censorship to meet their political and economic demands. It is evident the fundamental role that China's control over the media has in their perpetuation of the global narrative of terrorism against the Uyghur Muslim population of Xinjiang.

The Xinjiang Province: Control of Resources and the Uyghur Muslims

The Xinjiang Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China, also known as China's "new frontier" (Çaksu 2020), is a landscape of diversity and capital. This province is important to the Chinese political economy due to its geographical location and an immense supply of

natural resources (Rogers 2018). Thus, control of this landscape is vital to the Chinese government's accumulation of power for their rise as the global hegemony. A glimpse into the history of this province, as known since 1955 as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), presents a past of nationalistic control, marginalization, and violence against a native population of Central Asia (Li and Niemann 2016). To comprehend present-day events against this native population one must look at the origin of this tension as it began in the Qing Dynasty (Çaksu 2020).

The Qing Dynasty, which reigned from the 17th century to the 20th century, under the rule of the Chinese emperor and government, sought western expansion into Central Asia through the accumulation of the Xinjiang Region (Çaksu 2020). The Xinjiang Region was important to China due to its geographical location. This region borders eight Central Asian nations, Afghanistan, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Russia, and Tajikistan (Clothey et. al. 2016). Thus, the land served as a key trade route into the Central Asian Region, which would provide China with immense economic growth. The economic growth would be fueled through the regional trade of resources produced in Xinjiang: gas and oil (Rogers 2018). Hence, the Silk Road, which ran directly through Xinjiang and into the European landscape, was an exceptional economic strategy for control over the global market (Clarke 2010; Rogers 2018; Tukmadiyeva 2013). Later, the collapse of the Soviet Union allowed China to extend its control over trade and politics in Central Asia, which was important for development and stabilization within this region (Tukmadiyeva 2013). China had developed a new link to assert its political and economic power over the entire international community, but at a cost that disproportionately affected the Uyghur Muslim diaspora of Xinjiang.

The Uyghur Muslim population also referred to as the Turkic Muslims or Uyghur Karakhanids, are a native population of the Xinjiang landscape (Li and Niemann 2016). China's westward expansion into this region meant an influx of Han Chinese. In 1953, the Uyghur Muslims made up 75% of the population in XUAR and the Han Chinese 6% of the population. The latest statistical analysis as noted by Çaksu (2020) identifies that in 2000, the Uyghur Muslims made up 45.21% of the population and the Han Chinese 40.47%. This statistic is dated and maybe be more extreme due to the events of the past two decades. Hence, an important segment of the XUAR history is the oppression and harmful relationship between the Uyghur Muslims and Han Chinese. This tension is built upon by the People's Republic of China (PRC) emphasis on nationalism and the unity of China as a single-ethnic state (Irgengioro 2020). This tension is perpetuated by the Han Chinese, who are the majority ethnicity throughout the PRC. Their desire for a like-minded society that aligns with their beliefs in Confucianism leads to the push for a homogenous culture throughout China that disenfranchises the Uyghur Muslims as "others" and "backward" from the dominant bloodline of the Han Chinese. Hence, the tension between the majority and minority populations leads to an influx of human rights violations against the Uyghur Muslims (Culpepper 2012). The Han Chinese dominates the PRC government and have actively engaged in the process of "sinicization" against the Uyghur Muslims (Irgengioro 2020). This process controls and suppresses the Uyghurs' autonomy over their religion, culture, and identity (Kanant 2014; Rogers 2018). The Chinese government preserves its control over this region through the implementation of policies and narratives that undermine the Uyghur identity and produce negative stereotypes about this population (Jin, Pei, and Ma 2017). The Han Chinese, as the majority population, produce the dominant public opinion on the Uyghur

population. Hence, their belief in the narrative produced by the PRC further maintains the PRC's control over the religion, identity, culture, and resources provided by the XUAR. Unfortunately, events that have plagued the international community have further tainted the narrative of the Uyghur Muslims and their relationship with the Han Chinese. These events facilitated the increased exclusion of Uyghurs from Chinese society as it deprived them of their human rights.

The Threat of Terrorism and the Internment of Uyghur Muslims

The Uyghur Muslims due to their identity, religion, and culture have already been a target for the Chinese governments' spread of nationalism and increased control over the XUAR. After the events of September 11, the narrative as produced by the PRC is tainted to indicate the Uyghurs as indistinguishable from the terrorists who committed the atrocities of that date. Hence, the official government narrative of Islamophobia, terrorism, extremism, and separatism have assisted the Han Chinese in their control over the Uyghur Muslims. Due to these events and those that ensued, the Uyghur Muslims have been interested in the practice of separatism from the Chinese state to preserve their own identity and agency (Clarke 2010; Debata 2010; Roger 2018). The Chinese government views the separatist movement as a direct threat to their control over the Uyghur narrative and their population. To maintain control, China, in 1996 released a political slogan to specifically target the Uyghur Muslims (Kanant 2014). They accused them of active engagement in three types of evil: separatism, terrorism, and extremism (Harris and Isa 2019; Kanant 2014; Tukamadiyeva 2013). This narrative was foundational to the production of human rights violations against the Uyghur population which led to their internment into "re-education" camps (Çaksu 2020; Luqui and Yang 2018)¹⁹. These three evils are important as they formulate the basis of Islamophobia throughout the Chinese state, serving as the cornerstone to the deprivation of Uyghur Muslims' rights to their freedoms to expression, religion, and assemblage as provided to them by the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

The threat of terrorism is seminal to the narrative against the Uyghur Muslims. The events of September 11, 2001, shook fear into the lives of many individuals throughout the international community. In China, these events prompted the PRC to attempt to present themselves as victims of terrorism (Çaksu 2020). The perpetrators to blame for this so-called terrorism, were the Uyghur Muslims²⁰. China invented an ideology that they too were victims of the "War on Terror" that was persistent throughout the globe, specifically throughout Western society (Kanant 2014). China already had tightened its policies against the Uyghurs in the 1990s through their "Strike Hard Campaigns", an anti-Muslim campaign that sought to discourage Uyghur Muslims from the practice of their culture and identity (Clarke 2010). Hence, the events

¹⁹ See "Surviving The Crackdown in Xinjiang," *The New Yorker*, 5 April 2021, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2021/04/12/surviving-the-crackdown-in-xinjiang>, (accessed 4 May 2021)

²⁰ Riots of 1990's and 2009 between the Han Chinese and Uyghur Muslims, specifically an Islamic Separatist group, are incidents of terrorism by the Uyghur Muslims. The terrorist events that prompted widespread protests was the Urumqui bus bombing of 1992 and the rape of Han Chinese women by Uyghur Men of 2009. Though these incidents are minimal, the Chinese government has utilized them as a foundation for their Islamophobic narrative (Culpepper 2012; Li and Niemann 2016).

of September 11 led the government to pursue further restrictive policies against the Muslim population as they promoted the support of the international community in the fight against global terrorism. New legislation was enacted to provide tighter security throughout the Chinese regions to suppress the likelihood of future terror attacks (Clarke 2010). However, China's implementation of such policies lacked a clear definition of who met the conditions of being deemed a terrorist. The global community was aware that the events of September 11 were accomplished by Al Qaeda, an Afghanistan-based Islamic extremist group. Hence, the Uyghur Muslims being of Islamic faith were caught in a false narrative that deemed them terrorists, extremists, and separatists (Clarke 2010; Kanant 2014). Widespread hard campaigns throughout the XUAR meant that any Islamic religious activity, education, or infrastructure was deemed a potential terrorist threat and a threat to international security. Thus, intense Islamophobia spread and became more pervasive throughout both the XUAR and the Central Asian region.

The socially constructed mindset of Islamophobia is a dangerous categorization that deems any individual that identifies as Muslim or Islamic faith as a potential terror threat. This stereotype produces false misconceptions and contributes to the spread of hate and injustice towards an already marginalized population in the XUAR of China (Luqiu and Yang 2018). Thus, it even led to the criminalization of Muslim religion, culture, and identity. The PRC and Central Asia were quick to criminalize Muslim practices as terror threats. This led to widespread anti-Muslim rhetoric and narratives across the Asian region. The PRC, on the lookout for potential terror threats, over the course of years thereafter September 11, wrongfully imprisoned and murdered an immense population of Uyghur Muslims which is a form of state-run genocide (Clarke 2010, 20). As indicated, the PRC in order to control terrorism, separatism, and extremism, deemed all religious activities illegal. To communicate or practice any form of Muslim faith or separatism meant internment or even death at the hands of the Han Chinese. Hence, the already existent disagreement between the Han Chinese and Uyghur Muslims was heightened. The Chinese government already disapproved of the Uyghur Muslims; hence, they exploited the "War on Terror" to meet their agenda to control a population that had for years been in pursuit of separation from the Chinese state. The Chinese government leveraged the global concern of the "War on Terror" through their fear of extremism, terrorism, and separatism to produce an Islamophobic narrative that would assist in their eradication of the Uyghur Muslim population of Xinjiang.

The Chinese government in their severe constraints against the Uyghur Muslims' basic liberties and freedoms established internment camps to control this population. The Uyghur Muslims were sent to these camps for a variety of reasons, some seemingly arbitrary and many of which were centered on the practice of their religion and culture. Likewise, if the Uyghur Muslims did not speak in the dialect or language of the Han Chinese, they were at risk of banishment into the internment camps. This cyclical nature of oppression against the Uyghur Muslims by the Han Chinese is what produced their desire for separatism from the Chinese state (Irgengioro 2018). Hence, to gain control of the entire situation, China imprisoned the Uyghur Muslims, with specific targets towards the youth of this minority population. China glorified their internment camps through the designation of them as "re-education" camps or vocational schools that taught the culture and traditions of the Han Chinese (Çaksu 2020; Luqui and Yang 2018). In reality, these are heavily controlled spaces where Uyghur Muslims are brainwashed, raped, tortured, and forced into labor. The Uyghur Muslim female and child populations are specific targets for these

internment camps. The narrative of females and children as easy targets for violence and control due to their innocence is reproduced in these internment camps. Uyghur Muslim women are forced to abort their progeny that will be of Muslim ethnicity. In turn, they are forced into marriage and sex with Han Chinese to reproduce the dominant blood lineage (Irgengioro 2018). Meanwhile, children taken when young, have little knowledge of their Muslim culture and identity. Thus, Han Chinese teachers can reproduce the narrative of Uyghur Muslims as "barbaric" and "backwards" in the education of these children. They teach the children to practice Han Chinese cultures and traditions and emphasize the Uyghur Muslim culture and language as useless and a hindrance to the modernization of the PRC. These internment camps are problematic as they are a direct infringement on the human rights of the Uyghur Muslims.

In context with one another, the narrative of terrorism, separatism, extremism, and Islamophobia throughout the PRC has brought about the marginalization of the Uyghur Muslim community. The events of September 11 bolstered the Chinese government's intent to suppress and silence the traditions and cultures of the Uyghur Muslims. Through the personal victimization of the Chinese state as threatened by national terrorism and the criminalization of the Uyghur Muslims as terrorists, the PRC could meet their agenda to eradicate this population from the Chinese landscape. The Chinese government was further able to control the narrative of Islamophobia and detain the Uyghur Muslim population through their access to surveillance technology. This technology was essential to the control of the Uyghur population. This outlook and policies alone did partial justice to the internment of the Uyghur Muslims. The Chinese government's access to technology assisted them in their control of the Uyghur narrative.

Surveillance, Social Media, and State Media: Control of the Uyghur Narrative

The availability and dependency in technology throughout China have been consequential to the control of the Uyghur Narrative. Technology in its forms of surveillance, social media, and news media has produced the virtual internment of the Uyghur Muslims through immense securitization and invasion into the daily lives of this population (Çaksu 2020). These security measures, as referred to by many scholars as a modern-day Orwellian society, signifies that the Chinese state is constantly vigilant to the actions of its citizens (Cabestan 2020; Çaksu 2020). China has maintained control through the establishment of a society in which each citizen, specifically the Uyghur Muslims, must be hyperconscious of their everyday moves. Thus, the PRC's control of their population is due to the establishment of a social credit system that constantly surveys both the physical and virtual society in China (Cabestan 2020). The role of immense surveillance, censorship of social media, and narratives produced by state media is critical to the suppression of the Uyghur Muslim identity. In combination, these factors are emblematic of the CNN effect, as the leaders of the PRC can control the public opinion of their society to meet their own political and economic agendas.

The highly advanced surveillance system of the PRC has been essential for the control of the Chinese population with adverse effects for the Uyghur Muslims. This security system, otherwise known as China's social credit system, is an active actor in the internment of Uyghur Muslims through its detection of behavior deemed to be acts of terror across the XUAR (Cabestan 2020). The social credit system used in China was adopted from the Western credit system. For the purpose of the PRC, it is used to monitor citizens' economic, political, and social

behavior through surveillance throughout every city and community in China. The social credit system ranks the citizens' behaviors through punishment or rewards based on one's credit score. This allows the PRC to maintain social stability and control citizens through the use of fear. Scholars Cabestan (2020) and Çaksu (2020) note that the social credit system creates the perfect "Panopticon" for Chinese society. The "Panopticon" is a concept that metaphorically represents the social climate created in China through the increase in surveillance and censorship. The idea is that every citizen must practice self-censorship as they never know when they are being watched. This is also representative of surveillance capitalism which is when personal information is commodified to analyze for behavior (Çaksu 2020, 188; Culpepper 2012). Since the Chinese government heavily monitors surveillance cameras and the media for separatists or terrorists, Chinese citizens, specifically the Uyghur Muslims, must censor themselves for their physical safety. The Chinese government has also increased control in the Xinjiang region not only through extreme surveillance but also through travel restrictions into the XUAR (Kanant 2014). They have furthermore banned journalists into the region to remain in secrecy the human rights violations they commit against the Uyghur Muslims. Through this action, the PRC can control not only its citizens, but the narratives that could be transmitted globally through social media, state media, and international media.

As a result of censorship throughout the PRC, Chinese citizens have a limited range of access to social media sites. The dominant social media sites in China are WeChat and Weibo (Cabestan 2020; Harris and Isa 2019). However, these mass media sites are intensely monitored and censored by the Chinese government. They fall under the veil of the "Great Firewall of China", a legislative movement by the PRC to block and control the circulation of information throughout China (Cabestan 2020; Clothey et. al. 2016). The "Great Firewall of China" was created in the 1990s to limit internet usage, suppress political mobilization, and online activism. An abundance of Western-based mass media sites, inclusive of both social media and international news sources, are blocked in China: Facebook, Google, Instagram, Snapchat, Youtube, Whatsapp, *The Economist*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* (Cabestan 2020, 7). Thus, Chinese citizens are limited in their accessibility to information. To remain discrete in their communication practices, citizens, specifically the Uyghur Muslims, must communicate through linguistically hidden transcripts. Uyghur Muslims must present themselves accordingly whether they are in the "frontstage" or "backstage" of society (Clothey et. al. 2016, 862). The Uyghur Muslims' behavior and speech must change in the public frontstage; hence they must suppress their Muslim cultural identity to protect themselves from the threat of the internment camps. The backstage is in the privacy of the homes of the Uyghur Muslims. Unfortunately, the Uyghur Muslims must still censor themselves as the Chinese government installed QR codes on their homes to track and monitor this minority population (Çaksu 2020).

These increased surveillance measures against the Uyghur Muslims produce false narratives and stereotypes about this minority population that is reverberated across the Chinese landscape. Scholars Jia Jin, Guanxiong Pei, and Qingguo Ma (2017) analyzed the relationship between social media usage and negative stereotypes on the Uyghur Muslims at Zhejiang University in Beijing. Though their study was limited in its sample size in comparison to the population of China, it was evident that negative media information about the Uyghur Muslims resulted in negative stereotypes and bias. Jin, Pei, and Ma conducted their study with a small group of Han Chinese students who claimed to have no biases against the Uyghur Muslim population. Yet,

their study was evidence of the CNN effect which proposes that the narrative produced by the media, which is controlled by the Chinese government, contributes to the development of public opinion. The dynamic relationship of each of these factors reproduces the Islamophobic narrative of the Uyghur Muslims as terrorists and an illness to be eradicated from the Chinese social system (Çaksu 2020; Culpepper 2012). Thus, the Chinese government in response enacts political actions such as the “strike hard campaign”.

Due to the extreme censorship of mass media in China, there is little international media coverage on the Uyghur Muslim narrative. The Chinese state media is the primary producer of the narrative and frames it to increase their control over society (Culpepper 2012). The dominant Chinese state media sites, controlled by the government itself, are as follows: *People’s Daily*, *China Daily*, and *Xinhua News Agency* (Luqui and Yang 2018; Krumbein 2015). These publications construct and distribute the Islamophobic narrative that oppresses the Uyghur Muslims. Hence, news sites are crucial to the reaffirmation of stereotypes against this religious and racial minority through the frames it uses. The frameworks used have international political repercussions on policy changes either for or against this marginalized population. Frédéric Krumbein (2015) analyzes the media coverage and frameworks of these human rights violations against the Uyghur Muslims via the publications of *China Daily* of China, *The New York Times* (*NYT*) of the United States of America, and *South China Morning Post* of Hong Kong. Through this study, Krumbein notes the importance of the political, economic, social, and cultural environment of each of these states as reflective of their stance on the human rights violations against the Uyghur Muslims. *China Daily*, due to its control by the PRC, frames its narrative against the Uyghur Muslims. While the *NYT* emphasizes the Uyghur Muslims struggle for democracy and deprivation of their human rights. Hong Kong, a special administrative region under the rule of the PRC, in their news source *South China Morning Post*, reflects the Western opinion produced by the *NYT*. Though this publication has press freedom it must suppress its usage of the terminology "human rights" to not undermine the Chinese government. This study is evidence of the direct relationship between media coverage on human rights as it produces public opinion. The China government's control of the state media allows them to further extend their grasp over the Uyghur Muslim narrative.

Each of these technologies, surveillance, social media, and state media, are crucial to the creation of the narrative that compromises the Uyghur Muslims' autonomy. By the implementation of censorship and an increase in security measures, the Chinese government can keep a watchful eye on both its physical and virtual society. The PRC with this immense control can reproduce the narrative of Islamophobia against the Uyghur Muslims, a narrative when in conjunction with the War on terror, is accepted throughout the international community. China's ascent as the global hegemony, along with their dependency on many international markets, can reproduce their control over the Uyghur Muslims throughout the globe. Not only do they control their narrative, but they influence the responses from the international community.

The War on Terror: International Responses to Human Rights Violations in China

The events of September 11, 2001, horrified the entire international community and awakened the fear of Islam. All nations were now unified through the mutual threat of global terrorism as they came together on the battleground of the war on terror. The United States of America,

agonized by the immense loss of life and in preparation to fight against the threat along the horizon, was quick to support any other nations in the same battle. The United States and China, though common enemies in the battle for global hegemony, were now beside one another in the War on terror. Hence, the “Sino-American relationship” that is the economic and political relationship between the United States and China, drastically shaped the response to China’s human rights violations against the Uyghur Muslims (Krumbein 2015). China with its immense economic and political relationships throughout the globe was able to control the international community’s responses to their human rights violations against the Uyghur Muslims. The international community, heavily reliant on China for its resources and manufacturing industry was silent in its responses. Hence, the political and economic power that China has over the entire global community and market assisted them in maintaining their control and oppression of the Uyghur Muslims of the XUAR.

Many nations rely on China for economic growth. China through the development of the Belt and Road Initiative has created an infrastructure to connect international markets through the trade of capital and resources (Çaksu 2020). The Belt and Road Initiative is foundational to China’s narrative for control over the Xinjiang region. Hence, the international community has been passive to the human rights violations against the Uyghur Muslims as to not strain their economic relationship with China (Debata 2010). A vast majority of the nations that rely heavily on China economically and are unassertive against the human rights violations are as follows: Afghanistan, The European Union, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, India, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, The United States of America, and Uzbekistan (Debata 2010, 55). These nations are of particular importance for three reasons. They are heavily dependent on China in terms of their economic and political relationship. They have unified with China in the fight against the war on terror and have fallen victim to terrorism. Lastly, they are home to an Islamic population of the Uyghur diasporas. Each of these nations either wants to overcome the threat of terrorism or do not want to involve themselves in China’s “internal” affairs and ruin their relationship with the powerful Chinese hegemony. It is evident that the Chinese narrative of the production of fear does not only apply internally to the Uyghur Muslims but extends to the entire international community.

In particular, the relationship between the United States and China has prompted the Western world to remain silent against human rights violations. The United States, through its bouts with terrorism, understands the threat this has over the entire international community. Hence, they have prioritized their fight against terror and their unsteady relationship with China over aid to assist the Uyghur Muslims in the restoration of their rights. Essentially, the United States wants to remain in partnership with China (Debata 2010, 58). Though the United States has attempted to implement policies against ethnic conflicts in China, due to the immense surveillance and censorship in Xinjiang, this territory has been left untouched (Debata 2010, 57). The United States had attempted to provide a couple of actions that have assured the Chinese community that they are aware of the situation against the Uyghur Muslims, such as, the release and protection of safety for Uyghur Muslim and activist Rebiya Kadeer in 2005 and arguments from international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) such as *Amnesty International* and *Human Rights Watch*. The United States of America convictions include the argument that the Chinese government is criminal through their actions against the Uyghur Muslims (Clarke 2010;

Culpepper 2012; Debata 2010)²¹. These insignificant actions do not do justice against the deprivations of life and liberty that the Uyghur Muslims must face daily. Thus, the Chinese control of the Uyghur Muslim narrative through the media and economic dependency from the international community directly hinders the likelihood of positive international responses for the benefit of this marginalized population.

China's immense control over the Central Asian region has silenced nations adjacent to the XUAR from standing against the oppression of the Uyghur Muslim community. The nations of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Nepal, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan have been complacent in the PRC's development of policies against the Uyghur Muslims (Clarke 2010; Debata 2010). They have stood with China in the fight against Uyghur separatism out of fear that their Uyghur Muslim populations may one day fight for their rights and demand a separate statehood (Debata 2010, 68). It is evident the theme fear has had as it impacts each of China's relationships among the entire global community. Through this perspective, fear is stronger than the desire to do good and aid those deprived of their human rights. The fear of Islam and the fear of strain against economic relationships with China is the fundamental reason for the international communities' silence in human rights violations. The global community through complacency towards the injustices of the Uyghur Muslims is now victim to China's control and power over the entire global narrative.

Conclusion

China's long-time pursuit for more political and economic power has led to the immense exploitation of terrorism, specifically against the population of Uyghur Muslims' in the XUAR, as they struggle for cultural, religious, and social autonomy. This case study is significant in providing examples of a strategy based on the use of surveillance, social media, state media, and censorship to control the narrative of the Uyghur Muslims. China's promotion of the Uyghur Muslims as a potential terror threat assists them in their legitimization of human rights violations against this population. Likewise, it perpetuates the stereotypes and stigma that produces and more importantly solidifies Chinese public opinion against the Uyghur Muslims of Xinjiang. This study is important as it shows how the malicious use of the media and extreme control over the spread of information can lead to the infringement of a marginalized population's human rights.

This analysis emphasizes the importance of the Uyghur Muslims home region, the XUAR, as it economically and politically benefits China. Control of this region is vital to China's growth as global hegemony through economic trade and resource distribution. A threat to China's control of this region is an independent Uyghur Muslim population. Conveniently, "The War on Terror" enabled China in their control of this region as they could compose a narrative centered on the Uyghur Muslims as terrorists. This control would not have been likely without censorship and surveillance of China's physical and virtual society to scope the region for potential terror threats

²¹ The Biden Administration is actively imposing sanctions against the Chinese government for their actions against the Uyghur Muslim population of Xinjiang. See, "The US is Sanctioning Chinese officials over alleged abuse of Uyghurs in Xinjiang. Here's what you need to know," *CNN*, 25 March 2021, <https://www.cnn.com/2021/03/24/china/xinjiang-uyghur-explainer-intl-hnk/index.html>, (accessed 2 May 2021).

and reproduce the oppressive narrative. The international community, also fearful of terrorism and heavily reliant on China for their economies, remained silent to the oppression of the Uyghur Muslims as to not hamper their relationship with the PRC. Hence, China not only had control over its nation but now has the entire international community under its submission. This case study is important to the CNN effect theory as it exposes the harmful relationship between the control of information, public opinion, and policy interventions by leaders as it relates to human rights abuses against marginalized populations. It is important to understand how the control of this narrative against the Uyghur Muslims leads to the deprivation of their human rights. A comprehensive approach to this problem allows the global community dedicated to democratic principles to analyze the situation and select appropriate measures to ensure this does not happen elsewhere. Unfortunately, the Islamophobic narrative is present throughout the global community, in correspondence with the spread of information via the media, leads to immense oppression against this population internationally. However, much more work would need to be done to reverse the entrenched, global opinion of Islamophobia by the media, as it has led to oppression through the production of the Uyghur Muslim narrative in China.

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