

News Sources as a Propaganda Filter: The *New York Times* Coverage of Palestine and Kosovo Unilateral Approaches of Statehood Recognition

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This paper examines the *New York Times* performance about the use of news sources in reporting unilateral approaches of statehood recognition. Following a critical perspective, the Propaganda Model is employed as a theoretical thrust. It argues that the free accessibility granted to the voices of government and its international allies is among the filters that affect the construction of media discourse. Two case studies are selected for juxtaposition, namely: Palestine and Kosovo. Both states are qualified to be internationally recognized according to international law theories. The unilateral approach of Palestine is firmly opposed by the U.S. government—unlike Kosovo. The analysis reveals a structural bias in favor of the U.S. foreign policy of statehood recognition. The news sources were positioned in a dichotomous order: “our” voices versus “theirs.” Specific news sources (i.e., the Russians) holding “opponent” views have been either completely suppressed or reverberated the voices of the “others/enemies.”

Keywords: News sources, *New York Times* coverage, manufacturing consent, Palestine and Kosovo, propaganda model, statehood recognition

In an ideal democratic society, the media constitute a platform of information. The media watch the performance of the policymakers and inform the public with the process of policymaking (Boaz, 2005). In so doing, the media are tools of the public to debate and express contentment or discontent of the ruling class. However, in the real world, the media are “tools of propaganda.” They are tools in the hands of ruling elites (p. 349). The media, thus, participate in the process of policymaking to gain public support. The public content over the state’s policies is obligatory in contemporary democratic systems.

News media are deemed the chief source of information to the public, especially on the subject of international events (Grinberg, 2019). The public relies overwhelmingly on the mainstream media to shape their perceptions about international affairs. The mainstream media, therefore, play a key role in promoting the state’s foreign affairs. There is a linear relationship that combines the political elites, the mainstream media, and the public in a capitalist democratic society vis-à-vis the state’s foreign affairs. In this relationship, the performance of mainstream media is seen as “following” the interests of the government (Muravchik, 1985). This performance is a “reflection” of the state involvement, interests, and commitment (p. 11).

The news media performance about the foreign policies of democratic governments is best interpreted as the phenomenon of “manufacturing consent.” This notion was first used by Walter Lippmann (1922) as a concept that critically describes functional democratic

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governments. In 1988, it was again employed by Herman and Chomsky in a way that introduces mainstream media in capitalist democracies as powerful ideological organizations. Manufacturing consent could be defined as the process of gaining public support—using mainstream media—over the state's foreign policies that serve the interests of political elites. The news media construct their discourses in a way that promotes the elites' agendas.

Advocates of the critical school, at the main, have dedicated their efforts to assess media behavior in reporting international conflicts, political crises, and natural disasters. More attention was paid to study the phenomenon of manufacturing the public's consent over the foreign policy of military and humanitarian interventions. Still, there is a noticeable dearth in scholarly research that examines how public consent is manufactured about foreign policies of diplomacy (i.e., statehood recognition). More attention was directed to political crises and how the western media promote involvement in international conflicts. For instance: the 1998-99 Kosovo Crisis (Balabanova, 2017; 2010; Bharthapudi, 2012); the 2003 Iraq War (Kennis, 2015a; Phillips, 2008; Boyd-Barrett, 2004; Chomsky, 1991), the North and South Korea Crisis (Moon, 2018); the liberation war of Bangladesh (Hossain, 2015); the U.S. intervention in Libya, Syria and Egypt (Zollmann, 2017) and the policy of U.S. Navy presence in Puerto Rico (Kennis, 2015b); crises within the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (Arqoub and Ozad, 2019; Qasem and Hussein, 2018).

Further, some scholarly attention was paid to support and oppose elections in allied and non-allied regimes of the U.S. (MacLeod, 2018; 2019; Herman and Chomsky, 1988, 2002). Most importantly, assessing the western media performance, in general, and the U.S. mainstream media specifically, regarding U.S. foreign policies of diplomacy (i.e., statehood recognition) has almost not been devoted. Albeit statehood recognition at present is subject to diplomatic relations among states, the international law contains criteria to determine which entities are eligible to be upgraded to states. It is crucial, at first, to clarify the intersection between governments' foreign diplomacy and international law on the topic of statehood recognition.

Statehood Recognition: A Foreign Policy of Diplomacy

Creating a state and consequently having it recognized is a debatable issue. It is subject to political considerations and certain legal criteria. The overlapping between political agendas and international law complicates the process of recognizing an entity as a state. After World War II ended, a major trend in the field of international law has taken the position of considering statehood recognition as a question of policy—not of law (Lauterpacht, 1947). This orientation is still strongly supported. Rich (1993) emphasizes that statehood recognition is becoming more optional and at states' discretion (p. 36). At present, the most important component to achieve a full statehood recognition is by receiving a unilateral acceptance and abstention from the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) (Panganiban, 2016). The process of statehood recognition, thus, is framed as a foreign policy rather than an exercise of international law. Statehood recognition is strongly affected by international relations with superpower states. This also demonstrates how much recognition by a superpower state, such as the U.S., is influential and determinant.

Two case studies of statehood recognition are adapted for juxtaposition, namely: Palestine; and Kosovo. The selection is purposive. Both states are not full members at the U.N., and their applications at the UNSC were threatened to be vetoed. Both states need the support of the permanent members of the UNSC to be upgraded to full U.N. member states.

However, Kosovo was immediately recognized by the U.S. after it declared its independence in February 2008. Britain and France recognize it, too. But, Russia and China are against its independence and recognition.

Meanwhile, the State of Palestine is still not recognized by the U.S. although it was upgraded into an observer state at the U.N. in November 2012. Neither France nor Britain officially recognizes it. However, it has been recognized by Russia and China since 1988.

The U.S. Foreign Policy of Statehood Recognition

The U.S. is the only leading capitalist and a democratic system where no labor parties are involved in its political structure. Its foreign policies—whether trade, defense, foreign aid, intelligence, sanctions, or diplomacy—are powerful and prominent. Within the context of achieving a fully independent and sovereign Palestinian state, the U.S. recognition is vital. By opposing Palestine's recognition, the U.S. is deemed the major actor that prevents granting Palestine a sovereign status and full membership at the UNSC. The U.S. opposes the Palestinian unilateral approach in pursuing statehood. It also stands against Palestine's international recognition. Contrariwise, the unilateral declaration of Kosovo independence by the ethnic Albanians was immediately supported. To a great degree, the U.S. pushed forward, adopting a U.N. unilateral plan for Kosovo independence.

Such an outcome puts the U.S. opposition to the Palestinian unilateral approach into question. To date, the U.S. insists on a bilateral approach to achieve Palestinian statehood. Its official position manifests in condemnation, disapproval and calling for non-preconditioned negotiations with Israel. According to Chomsky (2016), accepting the American offer means that the Palestinians will negotiate while the Israeli illegal settlements continue proliferating. He construes that the peace process will remain in the hands of the U.S., the senior ally to Israel, instead of being administered by a relatively neutral state (pp. 138-139). Likewise, Falk (2013) sees the Palestinian refusal of the American request since September 2010 is logically valid for because they have the right to search for alternative solutions that guarantee to achieve a full sovereign and independent statehood (p. xvii).

After the UNGA upgraded the status of Palestine to an observer state in 2012, the Palestinian unilateral approach started witnessing a growing international momentum of support. Sweden (October 2014) and the Vatican (May 2015) have officially recognized the State of Palestine. A significant wave of European Parliamentary resolutions encouraging its official recognition (e.g., the British Parliament vote (October 2014); the French Parliament vote (December 2014); and the European Parliament vote (December 2014)). At the same time, the European Parliament has also voted on reversing the terrorist labeling of Hamas. During the same period, Hamas and Fatah have signed a reconciliation agreement (April 2014) and consequently formed a national unity government in Gaza Strip and the West Bank (June 2014). They joined several significant international organizations and signed several international treaties (e.g., the International Criminal Court (ICC) (April 2015); the Rome Statute (January 2015); the U.N. Convention of the Law of the Sea (June 2016)).

Following the declaration of independence in February 2008, several events about Kosovo's unilateral approach of statehood have taken place. On April 2008, the government approved a new Constitution. It also submitted a membership application to the EU. On November 2009, Kosovo held its first local elections. On the other hand, Serbia demanded the U.N. revise Kosovo independence (October 2008). At the international level, several countries recognized Kosovo independence. On top of them is the U.S. (February 2008), the

EU recognition of Kosovo, and the triple recognition by Croatia, Hungary, and Bulgaria (March 2008). The advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the legality of Kosovo's independence was also one of the related key events (July 2010).

As a leading democratic country, the U.S. shows a double-standard foreign policy of statehood recognition. The U.S. public opinion is determinant and has the power to gain support for the U.S. official recognition of Palestine statehood. It is crucial, therefore, to investigate how the U.S. administration maintains its position of opposing Palestine's recognition in the face of the growing momentum of international support. On the other hand, it is also essential to examine how it supports Kosovo statehood against the voices of opposition, especially those of Serbia and its ally, Russia.

News Sources as a Propaganda Filter

Herman and Chomsky (1988) have developed the Propaganda Model (PM) to examine the phenomenon of "manufacturing consent." It primarily constitutes a critical assessment of U.S. media performance (Herman, 2018, p. 54). It suggests that U.S. corporate and political elites pursue foreign policies that serve their interests. To gain public support over these policies, they rely on the U.S. mainstream media as the major source of information for the public. Critical media scholars argue that the U.S. media behavior is significantly influenced by American rationales, elite interests and standards (Guyot, 2009, p. 69; Bennett, 2016; Kennis, 2015a; 2015b; Lancaster, 2008; Bennett et al., 2007; Bagdikian, 2004; Boyd-Barrett, 2004; Kozol, 2004; Herman, 2018; 2000; 1996; 1993; Herman and Peterson, 2000; Hertog, 2000; Zaller and Chiu, 1996; Bennett, 1990; Hertsgaard, 1988; Hallin, 1984).

The news media maintain strong effects. They can mobilize public support and gain their consent, especially over foreign policies. They are not independent. The PM explains this alignment between the mainstream media and the elites' interests. The U.S. mainstream media are subject to several structural factors (filters) that control their performance and direct them in a way to serve the agenda of corporate/political elites. These factors are media ownership, advertising as the major income of news media, the free accessibility of the state into the news content, the "flaks" as watchers of media performance and the dominance of anti-Communism ideology. The scope of this article is principally focused on how the reliance on "our" news sources contributes to manufacturing public consent over the U.S. foreign policy of statehood recognition.

Media's strong dependency on the government as the major source of information has a negative impact. Businesspersons and experts funded by the government are also deemed among those primary sources of information. Herman and Chomsky (2002) argue that the mainstream media are involved in an interdependence relationship with these powerful sources of information. Economic necessity and mutuality of interests rule this relationship (p. 18). There is a clear inclination toward favoring official news sources (such as those of the White House, the U.S. Department of State, the Pentagon and the like). These sources of information cost notably less than unofficial ones due to its regularity, newsworthiness, and scheduled flow. Besides, the official news sources are not investigative-oriented demanding (p. 19). These sources are claimed to be the accurate, prestigious, credible, and objective choice for the sake of avoiding bias accusations. As for the mutuality of interests, official news sources exploit the "licensed" access to media and direct the flow of information in line with their agendas and frameworks (p. 23). The mainstream media, in turn, will remain the major platform and the main source of information for the public.

Dichotomization Hypothesis

The PM assumes that the mainstream media will offer notable accessibility to the voices of the corporate/political elites over the unofficial and the “others” point of view. This very assumption interlocks with Bennett’s (1990) and Zaller and Chiu’s (1996) Hypothesis of Indexing. The journalists are inclined to “index” their coverage to illustrate the variety of standpoints within the government. They are more hawkish than the state’s official news sources when they are facing “the enemy.” They are also more dovish during military setbacks scenarios. The mainstream media are biased in favor of the government’s positions, especially during foreign policy crises. Journalists “index” their coverage in the direction of the government’s opinion (Bennett, 1990). Along the same line, Zaller and Chiu (1996) argue that the journalists “follow” the direction of the government officials on how to label the foreign policy news—whether dovish or hawkish (p. 399). In reporting the state’s foreign affairs, it is, therefore, crucial to investigate the degree of mainstream media reliance on official news sources that represent the government’s voice. The PM hypothesizes an occurrence of the dichotomy between “proponent” and “opponent” voices of a foreign policy, where a clear slant toward government news sources and “proponents” is taking place.

The PM does not examine the effects of the media discourse on public opinion (DiMaggio, 2017). It rather describes how the mass media function following their subordination of the corporate/political elites (p. 276). In particular, it focuses on studying media content (Herman, 2018). This binary structure of media discourse is best represented through the Dichotomization Hypothesis (Bharthapudi, 2012). This hypothesis is considered as the impact of the structural factors of the PM on the related media discourses. More accessibility will be granted to the voices of “our” political elites than “their” voices. In this sense, the hypothesis invites to examine the degree of reliance on the news sources employed in the related discourse.

Methodology

Qualitative content analysis is applied to the U.S. media coverage of Palestine and Kosovo statehood recognition. The voices of support/opposition of U.S. foreign policy will be identified. To achieve that, the affiliation of all the news sources that appear within the coverage has to be categorized. For instance, if the U.S. Secretary of State quoted directly or indirectly, s/he will be classified following her/his affiliation as a “U.S. administration official.” Bearing in mind that the affiliation of news sources does not necessarily mean that the news source is always holding a supportive standpoint of the foreign policy under examination, another step of analysis is adopted. Following Zaller and Chiu’s (1996) framework of Power Index, those news sources—regardless of their affiliations—who are supporting the related U.S. foreign policy will be classified as “Proponents.” Meanwhile, the voices that hold opposite viewpoints will be regarded as “Opponents.” The lexical choices and cohesion of concerned quotations determine the labeling news sources.

Selected U.S. Mainstream Newspaper

The *New York Times* (NYT) is selected due to its circulation criterion. Very high circulation rates guaranteed to address a large proportion of the audience, which in return enhances the rigor and validity of the data and findings (Ismail, 2010, p. 72). U.S. local media depend on the NYT in reporting international events (Noaks and Wilkins, 2002, p. 655). The NYT is

deemed the most influential U.S. newspaper (Martin and Hansen, 1998, p. 30) and a master in news-making and public opinion shaping (Aqtash et al., 2004, p. 385; Ten Eyck and Williment, 2003, p. 130; Ross, 2003). By winning 125 Pulitzer prizes-till 2018-it excels all other news organizations. It is known as a “newspaper of record.” This daily provides a great understanding of how the U.S. press gathers and disperses information in a democratic society, particularly foreign policy issues (Dickson, 1992, p. 563).

Timeframe and Selected Periods of Study

Two periods of study are juxtaposed. The first represents the NYT discourse of Palestine statehood recognition. It extends from the date of the Palestinian bid at the UNGA and the recognition of Palestine as an observer state on November 29, 2012, through the date of the 2334 UNSC Resolution on December 23, 2016. This resolution was addressing the Israeli settlements' expansion in the Palestinian occupied territories. The voting has passed with an extreme majority (14:1), where the U.S. abstained without vetoing. It is the first time the U.S. does not veto a U.N. resolution condemns the Israeli occupation. This date marks the end of the first period of study. The second period represents the discourse of Kosovo statehood recognition. It extends from the date of Kosovo declaration of independence on February 17, 2008, through the date of granting the ethnic Albanian government full sovereignty over Kosovo (September 7, 2012).

Sample of the Data

The data are collected from ProQuest Central Database searching the keywords “Palestine Recognition,” “Palestine Statehood,” “Kosovo Independence,” and “KOSOVO STATEHOOD.” Purposive sampling is conducted. A total of 215 news items have been collected. Only those items (news stories, editorials, opinion editorials (op-ed), letters to editor... etc.) that deal with the creation and recognition of Palestine and Kosovo statehood are selected. The coverage that focused on other surrounding conflicts, separatist movements and violent incidents aggravated as a consequence or retaliation outside the borders of Kosovo and Palestine (i.e., separation movements in Abkhazia and South Ossetia) have been eliminated. Sports, obituaries, and feature stories have been excluded, too. Subsequently, 171 news items are under scrutiny (25 and 19 items of Palestine, and Kosovo data have been excluded, respectively). Seventy-eight items are communicated with the discourse of Palestine statehood recognition. Meanwhile, 93 news items represent the discourse of Kosovo statehood recognition.

Analysis and Findings

Affiliation of News Sources: “Our” Voice is Louder

Within both coverages, major categories of affiliated news sources have been recurrently observed: the U.S. news sources (administration officials, lawmakers of Congress and Senate House, and others who represent the voice of U.S. experts and analysts); U.N. representatives (officials, spokespersons, and workers). Some categories only exist within the discourse of Palestine statehood recognition: Palestinian and Israeli officials; and experts, journalists, and civilians. Similarly, the discourse of Kosovo statehood recognition

has exclusive categories: both ethnic Albanian and Serb officials, experts, journalists, and civilians; Russian officials; and NATO officials (see Table 1).

Overall, the new sources with U.S. affiliation are higher in the discourse of Kosovo statehood recognition (41.7%) than in Palestine (24.0%). The news sources of U.S. administration are almost doubled within the discourse Kosovo statehood recognition (21.8% to 10.2%). The category of U.S. experts is also higher with the related discourse of Kosovo (19.2%) than with Palestine discourse (12.9%). The U.S. lawmakers in both discourse have markedly shown low frequencies (0.9% and 0.7% within Palestine and Kosovo, respectively).

Table 1. The affiliation of news sources in the NYT coverage of Palestine and Kosovo discourse of statehood recognition

Affiliation of source	F		%	
Palestine				
U.S. Officials (Administration)	108	46	24.0	10.2
U.S. Lawmakers (Congresspersons and Senators)		4		0.9
U.S. Others (Experts, analysts, journalists, civilians)		58		12.9
Palestinian Officials (PLO, Hamas, and Other factions)	134	91	29.8	20.2
Palestinian Others (Experts, analysts, journalists, civilians)		43		9.6
Israeli Officials	127	98	28.2	21.8
Israeli Others (Experts, analysts, journalists, civilians)		29		6.4
U.N. Representatives	a	1.3		
Other Countries' Officials	57	12.7		
Others	18	4.0		
Total	450	100.0		
Kosovo				
U.S. officials (administration)	178	93	41.7	21.8
U.S. lawmakers (Congresspersons and Senators)		3		0.7
U.S. others (Experts, analysts, journalists, civilians)		82		19.2
Russian officials	28	6.6		
Ethnic Albanian officials	35	26	8.2	6.1
Ethnic Albanians (Experts, analysts, journalists, civilians)		9		2.1
Serb Officials	113	68	26.4	15.9
Ethnic Serbs (Experts, analysts, journalists, civilians)		45		10.5
U.N. representatives	14	3.3		
NATO officials	10	2.3		
Other countries' officials	49	11.5		
Other	0	0.0		
Total	427	100.0		

If the comparison is taking place among the categories of each discourse separately, the news sources of U.S. officials will remain the highest (21.8%) in the discourse of Kosovo statehood recognition. The second place is occupied by U.S. experts (19.2%). In total, the U.S. affiliated news sources within Kosovo coverage received the highest frequencies (41.7%). Their quotations are notably higher than all ethnic Albanian sources (8.2%). However, U.S. officials are not dominating Palestine coverage. The Palestinian news sources have received the highest frequencies, 29.8% (officials: 20.2%; non-officials: 9.6%). These initial findings are supporting the theoretical assumption—an occurrence of dichotomous construction of voices. The U.S. administration's voice is more apparent with the states whose recognition and independence is supported by them. Unlike

the states that their recognition is opposed, the news sources of U.S. administration officials are not dominant. The lack of reliance on news sources of U.S. lawmakers has a significant indication. The U.S. Congress plays a key role in consenting and adopting most of the U.S. administration's policies, including those of foreign affairs. So, to limit their access to news content is somehow silencing the voice of the representatives of the American people.

The NYT reliance on news sources of the U.N. has appeared to be remarkably low. Only 1.3% and 3.3% of U.N. representatives appeared in both discourses. The U.N. is, at the main, involved in the process of statehood recognition as an international umbrella hosts all recognized countries. Upgrading Palestine status to observer state had taken place at the U.N. headquarter. More reliance on U.N. representatives should have appeared within the concerning coverage. Had the coverage included more U.N. representative, the NYT reliance on other sources—including those of the U.S.—would have been lesser. The U.N. voice appears to be overshadowed by the dominance of U.S. administration voices. This denotes that there is an inclination to impose the viewpoint of U.S. foreign policy of statehood recognition—whether of support or opposition.

Another significant finding is the lack of reliance on Russian officials within the discourse of Kosovo statehood recognition. This category has completely disappeared from the discourse of Palestine statehood recognition, although Russia is one of the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council. It is also a member of the Middle East Quartet established in 2002 to mediate the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The Russian voice in the discourse of Kosovo constitutes only 6.6% of the overall news sources. Russia holds an oppositional stance from Kosovo unilateral approach. They are against the U.S. administration's support of the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Israeli officials are almost frequent as the Palestinian officials. The NYT has relied on 21.8% of Israeli governmental news sources and 20.2% of official Palestinian sources. The voice of official ethnic Serbs within the discourse of Kosovo statehood recognition is also high (15.9%). These results demonstrate the NYT tendency to rely on allies' sources to construct more mobilization for the opposition than the support of statehood recognition. This justifies why Kosovo officials have appeared with only 6.1%. The discrepancy could be referred to as the growing international momentum to recognize Palestine. Hence, the U.S. opposition to the Palestine international recognition needs more mobilization than supporting Kosovo independence, which is already gaining international momentum.

Other countries' officials include governmental news sources of states have taken part in the discourse of Palestine and Kosovo statehood recognition. These countries are at the main Europeans, where the E.U., Britain, and Eastern European countries have occupied notable positions in supporting or opposing the recognition of both states under scrutiny. This category has received 12.7% and 11.5% within the discourse of Palestine and Kosovo, respectively. As for NATO officials, they have received 2.3% of Kosovo news sources. The NATO had participated in the 1999 bombings that resultantly led to U.N. administration of Kosovo.

For this reason, NATO officials have only been quoted about Kosovo recognition. However, merely following the affiliation of a news source is not enough to decide whether it supports or opposes the recognition of statehood. A U.S. official news source—for instance—may be quoted revealing a supportive stance for creating a Palestinian statehood. Or, an ethnic Serb official may occupy a position of a news source showing consent over the ethnic Albanians' declaration of Kosovo independence. Therefore, the following section includes further analysis of these categories of news sources.

Power Index: Reverberating the U.S. Policy Voice

In the current analysis, the Power Index indicates the degree of allocating support voices to the U.S. foreign policy of statehood recognition. Zaller and Chiu (1996) contend that the voices that fall in line with the U.S. foreign policy are dominant and have more accessibility than those who oppose. Consequently, the degree of the NYT reliance on news sources that support the related U.S. administration's foreign policy is examined—regardless of their affiliation. The news sources that support the U.S. foreign policy of backing Kosovo declaration of independence and opposing Palestine statehood recognition are coded as “Proponents.”

Meanwhile, the news sources that have appeared against the concerned U.S. foreign policy are coded as “Opponents.” The lexical choice and cohesion within the quotations of news sources are deemed determinant of labeling the news sources either “Proponents” or “Opponents.” Overall, the findings show that the news sources within both Palestine and Kosovo coverage are markedly proponent and promoting the U.S. foreign policy of statehood recognition (see Table 2).

Table 2. The distribution of Power Index on the news sources within NYT coverage of Palestine and Kosovo statehood recognition¹

Coverage	Power index	Frequency	Percent
Palestine	Proponent	273	61.6%
	Opponent	170	38.4%
	Total	443	100.0%
Kosovo	Proponent	302	72.4%
	Opponent	115	27.6%
	Total	417	100.0%

¹Note: Seven news sources from Palestine related coverage and ten from Kosovo related coverage were excluded as they are not applicable.

In detail, the analysis demonstrates that 61.6% are in line with the U.S. foreign policy of opposing Palestine statehood. Similarly, those “Proponent” news sources of the U.S. foreign policy toward Kosovo statehood recognition has also shown a higher percentage on the Power Index (72.4%). The news sources that hold the opposite stance from the U.S. foreign policy have only received 27.6% (Kosovo) and 38.4% (Palestine). Given that, it has to be further clarified following each category of news sources and its position through the Power Index to investigate how much of its news sources are in line/against the related U.S. foreign policy.

The U.S. administration officials have appeared almost completely “Proponent” of the related U.S. foreign policy in both discourses (100.0% and 96.7% in Palestine and Kosovo, respectively). Likewise, those of U.S. lawmakers are fully in line with the U.S. foreign policy (see Table 3). The voices of the U.S. lawmakers who opposed the U.S. foreign policy of supporting Kosovo recognition in one hand, and support the recognition of Palestinian statehood are avoided. In the same context, the U.S. experts and analysts within the discourse of Kosovo are dominant “Proponents” of the U.S. foreign policy (96.7%). Only 3.3% of the U.S. experts and analysts have shown disagreement with backing Kosovo declaration of independence. Such a result concurs with what Koehler (2016) referred to as “false balance.” Although the analysis of the affiliation variable illustrates variety in

news sources that should supposedly entail diversity in opinions, the U.S. official stand remains the most dominant. The U.S. experts within the discourse of Palestine statehood recognition are at the main expressing support for the U.S. related foreign policy. 78.9% of them are opposing the Palestinian unilateral approach or even the creation of a statehood. Meanwhile, only 21.1% of these news sources are opponents. The following excerpts are instances on news sources of U.S. administration officials who have been quoted voicing support of the related U.S. foreign policy:

Table 3. Detailed distribution of Power Index on the news sources of the NYT coverage of Palestine and Kosovo statehood recognition

Source affiliation	Power Index					
	Proponent		Opponent		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Palestine						
U.S. administration officials	46	100.0	0	0.0	46	100.0
U.S. lawmakers	4	100.0	0	0.0	4	100.0
U.S. others	45	78.9	12	21.1	57	100.0
Palestinian officials	18	20.0	72	80.0	90	100.0
Palestinian others	29	67.4	14	32.6	43	100.0
Israeli officials	76	78.4	21	21.6	97	100.0
Israeli others	25	86.2	4	13.8	29	100.0
U.N. representatives	0	0.0	4	100.0	4	100.0
Other countries' officials	20	36.4	35	63.6	55	100.0
Kosovo						
U.S. administration officials	89	96.7	3	3.3	92	100.0
U.S. lawmakers	3	100.0	0	0.0	3	100.0
U.S. others	74	91.3	7	8.7	81	100.0
Russian officials	0	0.0	28	100.0	28	100.0
Ethnic Albanians officials	22	100.0	0	0.0	22	100.0
Ethnic Albanian others	8	88.9	1	11.1	9	100.0
Ethnic Serb officials	19	28.4	48	71.6	67	100.0
Ethnic Serb others	21	46.7	24	53.3	45	100.0
U.N. representatives	13	100.0	0	0.0	13	100.0
NATO officials	10	100.0	0	0.0	10	100.0
Other countries' officials	42	89.4	5	10.6	47	100.0

Excerpt 1: *"Susan E. Rice, the American ambassador to the United Nations, was dismissive of the entire exercise [upgrading Palestine status at the UNGA]. "Today's grand pronouncements will soon fade," she said. "And the Palestinian people will wake up tomorrow and find that little about their lives has changed" (Bronner and Hauser, November 30, 2012).*

Excerpt 2: *"President Bush wrote: "On behalf of the American people, I at this moment recognize Kosovo as an independent and sovereign state. I congratulate you and Kosovo's citizens for having taken this important step in your democratic and national development" (Kulish and Chivers, February 19, 2008).*

Bearing in mind that both Palestine and Kosovo statehood creations are deemed unilateral moves, the news sources quoted in Excerpts 1 and two are articulating different standpoints. Both underlined news sources, the U.S. ambassador to the U.N. and the President of the U.S. are news sources affiliated to the U.S. administration. However, in Excerpt 1, the news source is quoted showing disagreement over the Palestinian bid at the U.N. to upgrade the status of Palestine into an observer state. The U.S. ambassador is reverberating the U.S. administration policy of opposing the Palestinian unilateral move. Such a news source is, therefore, coded as "Proponent" within the Power Index.

On the other hand, the news source in Excerpt 2 is showing support of the Kosovo declaration of independence. The President of the U.S. as the head of the U.S. administration is quoted recognizing Kosovo statehood. Thus he is coded as a "Proponent." Excerpts 3 and 4 are also instances on news sources of U.S. experts who have been constructed within the related discourses of Palestine and Kosovo as "Proponent."

Excerpt 3: "But Ms. Hijab of the Washington-based *Al-Shabaka Group* said that Wednesday's move [of the State of Palestine joining the ICC] might have been unnecessary" (Rudoren, January 1, 2015).

Excerpt 4: "If the aim of intervention and state building is to bring order out of chaos, then we have succeeded in Bosnia and Kosovo and Macedonia," said *Christopher S. Chivvis, a Balkans specialist at the RAND Corporation* [an American nonprofit global policy think tank]" (Baker, July 22, 2010).

In Excerpt 3, the news source is a U.S. expert in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict commenting on the Palestinian move of joining the ICC. The expert sees that this unilateral Palestine move is "unnecessary." She is coded as a "Proponent." Although the news source in Excerpt 4 is a U.S. expert, his employment within the text serves to support rather than oppose. As an expert in the Balkans, he is quoted emphasizing that the U.S. role of supporting the separatists' movements, including Kosovo, is a successful mission. It was meant, according to him, to help to stabilize the Balkan region. It is clear that this news source is in line with the U.S. foreign policy of supporting the Kosovo declaration of independence. Similarly, the following excerpts are also instances of using news sources of U.S. lawmakers to support the U.S. foreign policy of statehood recognition:

Excerpt 5: "*Calling the Palestinian bid* [at the UNGA] "an unhealthy step that could undermine the peace," *Senator Lindsey Graham, Republican of South Carolina*, said that he and other senators, including *Charles E. Schumer, Democratic of New York*, would be closely monitoring the situation" (Bronner and Hauser, November 30, 2012).

Excerpt 6: "*Mr. Biden* [Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr. of Delaware] later supported Kosovo's independence despite protests from Moscow" (Gordon, August 24, 2008).

Besides that the degree of reliance on news sources of U.S. lawmakers is notably low, the distribution according to the Power Index shows their full support of the related U.S. foreign policy statehood recognition. The data offer no single quotation of a Congressperson or a Senator who is supporting the recognition of Palestine statehood or opposing Kosovo declaration of independence. In Excerpt 5, the news sources are a combination of U.S. lawmakers from both Republican and Democrats parties. This reveals that both Houses are showing consent over rejecting the Palestinian bid at the U.N. Again, their voice is reverberating the U.S. administration's policy of opposing this unilateral move. In Excerpt 6, the then Senator of Delaware is indirectly quoted showing support of Kosovo independence. Both news sources are considered "Proponents."

Table 3 also demonstrates a significant distinction through the distribution of the Power Index within the U.N. representatives. They have appeared as completely "Opponents" with the U.S. foreign policy of opposing Palestine statehood recognition. This means that the U.N. representatives who have occupied positions as news sources within the related discourse are showing no objection to what the Palestinians have unilaterally achieved. They are showing an almost similar position about Kosovo declaration of independence, and therefore they have appeared as completely "Proponents" to the U.S. related foreign policy (see Excerpt 7 and 8).

Excerpt 7: *"A United Nations spokesman... said: "It's incumbent on the new Israeli government to... realize the creation of a viable Palestinian state living in peace and security alongside Israel" (Hadid, March 19, 2015).*

Excerpt 8: *"Hisashi Owada, president of the International Court of Justice, said that international law contained "no prohibition on declarations of independence" and consequently that Kosovo's declaration "did not violate international law" (Bilefsky, July 23, 2010).*

The Russians have only been found within Kosovo data. There was no single Russian news source quoted either directly or indirectly within Palestine data. However, those Russian officials within Kosovo data are totally against the U.S. foreign policy of supporting Kosovo independence. Therefore, they have appeared as fully "Opponents." Contrariwise, the NATO officials have appeared as completely "Proponents." The U.S. is one of the founders of the alliance. Neither Russia nor Serbia are members of NATO. Besides, NATO played a key role in separating Kosovo from Serbia through a military intervention in 1999. Russia took an opposite stance from the intervention or even having U.S. military bases in Eastern Europe. The following excerpts are examples of news sources of both Russian and NATO officials within the discourse of Kosovo statehood recognition, respectively:

Excerpt 9: *"The Russians insisted that independence for Kosovo would be a serious affront" (Cooper et al., August 18, 2008). "Vladimir V. Putin, Russia's former president, and the current prime minister have said Russia could never accept a NATO presence in the Caucasus" (Traub, August 10, 2008).*

Excerpt 10: *"Our mandate is to ensure a safe and secure environment and to assure the freedom of movement through all of Kosovo," said James Appathurai, a NATO spokesman" (Bilefsky, March 18, 2008).*

As stated earlier, the official Palestinian have occupied 20.2% of all the news sources that appeared within the discourse of Palestine statehood recognition. Although this percentage is relatively high if compared with the ethnic Albanian officials (6.1%), the distribution of Power Index shows the significant distinction. Table 3 demonstrates that 20.0% of Palestinian officials are "Proponents" of opposing the recognition of a Palestinian state. In other words, almost a quarter of the Palestinian officials are quoted opposing the creation and recognition of the State of Palestine. This shows a lack of consensus over the Palestinian unilateral moves in this direction. So, highlighting official Palestinian voices that are against the recognition of Palestine state policy serves to undermine the Palestinian moves themselves. On the other hand, the ethnic Albanian officials have shown full support of the declaration of independence. None of them was against the creation and recognition of the State of Kosovo.

The Palestinian experts, analysts, and civilians have shown significant support of the related U.S. foreign of policy. More than two-thirds (67.4%) of this category are demonstrating opposition to the creation of Palestinian statehood. Contrariwise, the non-officials ethnic Albanians are marked, showing greater support and desire about the declaration of independence. Only 11.1% of them are "Opponents." At the main, those who are against support the partition of the northern part of Kosovo, which hosts the majority of ethnic Serb Kosovars. Therefore, their voices are not totally against the declaration of independence as in the case with their counterparts of Palestinian news sources. Excerpts from 11 to 14 clarify such a discrepancy. A population that desires to separate and establish its sovereign and independent state is one of the main constituents of validating the creation

and recognition of a given statehood according to the Declarative Theory in the international law (see Dixon, 2005, pp. 105-108). Therefore, dominating or suppressing the existence of this constituent among population helps to subsequently legitimize or delegitimize the creation and recognition of statehood.

Excerpt 11: "The peaceful solution [of joining ICC] doesn't bring any result," said *Jalal Mahmoud*, 23 [a Palestinian civilian]. "I don't want to participate in the march. It is useless,"... *Mahdi Abdul-Hadi*, *Director of the Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs*, said criticism of the Palestinian Authority from the public and intellectuals had mounted in recent weeks" (Rudoren, January 1, 2015).

Excerpt 12: "*Salah Bardawil*, another Hamas leader, said that *Mr. Abbas* [the PA president]... "Does not have constitutional legitimacy" (Al Waheidi and Rudoren, January 15, 2015).

Excerpt 13: "Independence of Kosovo is a catharsis," said *Antoneta Kastrati*, 26, an Albanian [civilian]" (Bilefsky, February 18, 2008). "*I deeply believe we* [Albanians and Serbs] *can live together*," *Mr. Mripa* [ethnic Albanian civilian] said" (Brunwasser, October 2, 2011).

Excerpt 14: "We reject it [the partition of Kosovo] 100 percent," *Kosovo's Deputy Prime Minister, Hajredin Kuqi*, said... "We want to help create cooperation between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo—not division" (Bilefsky, March 25, 2008).

The Israelis and ethnic Serbs at the main oppose the statehood creation and recognition of both Palestine and Kosovo. Table 3 shows further distinctions in this respect. Despite that, the analysis reveals higher reliance on ethnic Serb news sources than ethnic Albanians, 28.4% of ethnic Serb officials and 46.7% of ethnic Serb experts, analysts and civilians have appeared to be in line with the U.S. foreign policy of supporting Kosovo independence. These percentages indicate that the Serbian opposition of the creation and recognition of Kosovo statehood is far from reaching consensus. However, they are more quoted than the ethnic Albanians in a way that shows their lack of consensus over the opposition, which justifies the high percentages of being "Proponents."

Only 21.6% of Israeli officials and 13.8% of Israeli experts, analysts and civilians are "Opponents." This means that 78.4% and 86.2% of official and non-official Israeli news sources are supporting the U.S. foreign policy of opposing the Palestinian unilateral approach. The following excerpts are examples of Serbian and Israeli news sources quoted reverberating the U.S. foreign policy:

Excerpt 15: "Mr. Tadic [the President of Serbia]... I also tried to calm the situation by sending top officials to Kosovo to negotiate with NATO. "We do not want any war," *Mr. Tadic said*" (Dempsey, July 28, 2011). "If we return to the dark isolation of the Milosevic years [former president of Serbia who controlled Kosovo], it will be a disaster for this country [Serbia]," she [Serbian civilian] said" (Bilefsky, April 26, 2008).

Excerpt 16: "*Israel's Foreign Ministries* said it was "disappointed" by the Vatican's decision [to recognize the State of Palestine], and that the recognition would "not advance the peace process" (Rudoren and Hadid, May 14, 2015). "But *Ms. Raanan*, 49, a teacher of public policy at a regional college [Israeli civilian], also said that Israel should face the legal consequences of its settlement-building policies, an untypical view in Israel" (Kershner, May 5, 2014).

The news sources of other countries' officials chiefly include officials from countries were involved in supporting or opposing the recognition of Palestine and Kosovo statehood. The U.S., Russia, Israel, and Serbia have been excluded from this category. It has received low frequencies (12.7% with Palestine and 11.5% with Kosovo). Table 3 demonstrates a significant distinction. 63.6% of other countries' officials—chiefly from

the EU—have appeared as “Opponents” within Palestine data. Meanwhile, only 10.6% are “Opponents” to Kosovo independence. This difference could be justified as the international recognition of the State of Palestine has been larger than Kosovo (138 to 111 out of the 193 U.N. member states, respectively). There also was a wave of successful European parliamentary votes to push their governments to recognize the State of Palestine. However, these parliamentary resolutions and official recognition were seen as abandoning the American camp and playing against their foreign policy (see Excerpt 17 and Excerpt 18).

Excerpt 17: “As the vote [of U.N. to grant Palestine an observer status] approached, a handful of European nations moved away from the American camp... *France and Spain* have said they will vote for the resolution” (Gordon and Lander, November 29, 2012).

Excerpt 18: “*France’s foreign minister* said the declaration [of Kosovo independence] was “a victory for common sense” (Kulish and Chivers, February 19, 2008).

Discussion and Conclusion

Several studies correspond with the current findings (Hallin, 1984; Brown et al., 1987; Bennett, 1990; Zaller & Chiu, 1996; Herman and Peterson, 2000; Hertog, 2000; Dimitrova and Connolly-Ahern, 2007; Bennett et al., 2007; Bharthapudi, 2012; Schwalbe, 2013; Schwalbe & Dougherty, 2015; Kruger, 2015; Koehler, 2016; Zollmann, 2017). At large, the NYT discourse of statehood recognition of both Palestine and Kosovo have been constructed with an overbearing reliance on official news sources. In spite of being crucial criteria of statehood, the Palestinian and Kosovo populations (non-officials) were slightly resorted to. Regardless of the affiliation, only 28.9% are non-official news sources that have been used in Palestine statehood discourse comparing to 64.4% of official news sources. Similarly, Kosovo discourse shows 31.8% of non-official news sources and 52.7% of officials.

The current findings support the argument of the hegemony of dominant ideology over mainstream media, especially in democratic societies. The conclusion that could be drawn asserts on the PM’s premise and triangulates with Altheide’s (1984) notion of media practices and the hegemony of prevailing ideology. Both U.S. officials and ally regimes—as news sources—are expected to be employed heavily and uncritically (Herman and Chomsky, 2002, pp. 34.35; see also Kennis, 2015a). Altheide (1984) also contends that mainstream media reverberate the leading ideology in a given society, and are subject to the control of economic interests, through several notions. On top of them lies a set of routines, guidelines, and orientations (p. 478). This notion is represented in the structural factor (filter) of the PM: the free accessibility of powerful elites’ voices to the media texts. Likewise, Herman (1993) backs this perspective by asserting on the role of economic motivations in creating partiality toward the U.S. administration’s news sources as they provide “credible stories.” However, it has been argued that journalists intentionally practice these routines. They are compelled to the leading ideology and economic interests of elites (Chaney, 1981, p. 117; Bennett, 2016, p. 15). Also, the PM refers to the economic standards that give preference to powerful sources as they are less costly and offer supposed credibility (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). In this connection, the PM calls for examining these journalists’ routines, particularly what they termed as the “filter of powerful news sources accessibility.” The current findings confirm the influential role as a structural factor (filter) in manufacturing public consent. These news sources are echoing the U.S. foreign policy’s voice through the NYT discourse.

Supporting this conclusion, Hall et al. (1978) see the relationship that combines the journalists and their news sources as designed in dominance. They classify the official

voices as “primary definers,” who introduce the first definition of a given situation. On the other hand, the media constitute the “secondary definers,” where they systematically confirm the primary definition. The opposite voices are classified as “counter definers.” Their voices are backgrounded and marginalized, if not omitted at all (Bacon & Nash, 2003; 2004). The “issue definition” of Hall’s et al. (1978) triangulates with Bennett (1990), Zaller and Chiu’s (1996) “indexing,” concurring with the current findings and conclusion. Both concepts are corresponding to the structured over-accessing of powerful political and economic elites to the social production of news, where the interpretations they provide support their powerfulness and dominance (Bacon & Nash, 2004, p. 21).

What is on the agenda of powerful elites will, therefore, be repeatedly delivered to the public through the mainstream media. According to Bennett (2016), there is an inverse relationship between the popularity of a media outlet and the dominance of government propaganda. The more the media are mainstream, the less they are challenging the accessibility of the powerful elites’ voices to their content (p. 17). In other words, the mainstream media are emphasizing on the viewpoint/“definition” of official news sources. Or as Hall et al. (1978) earlier put it, “secondary definers.” So, in spite of the clear existence of counter voices that also hold credibilities, such as the news sources of U.N. representatives and the Russians in this article, the official sources of U.S. administrations and its allies enjoy the privilege of free accessibility to the public. In the end, “*with so few opposition voices in the news, who and what were the American people to believe?*” (Bennett, 2016, p. 14).

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