

## Chapter 22

# Latent Styles of German Newspaper Coverage of Allied Prisoners of War During the Gulf War

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### 1. Introduction

The present paper applies Latent Class Analysis to obtain empirical evidence for some aspects of a propaganda model developed by Herman & Chomsky (1988) in order to explain why some subjects are preferably dealt with by the news media whereas no attention is paid to others. An essential criterion for this is the usefulness of a topic. Herman & Chomsky, therefore, refer to „worthy“ und „unworthy victims“: victims of national or international violence, whose torments, though comparable from an objective point of view, are useful as a weapon against an actual enemy in one case, while they are useless, and hence devoid of interest, in another. If responsibility for violence lies in one's own sphere of influence, any reporting on its victims would be unfavorable to one's national interest.

According to Herman & Chomsky, press coverage of worthy victims differentiates from that of unworthy victims both with regard to the focusing on and substantiation of reproaches against the perpetrator, as well as with regard to the featuring of the actions and the victims.

In the case of worthy victims, the reproaches

- are delivered in a convincing style,
- which permits no criticism or alternative interpretations whatsoever,
- and makes efforts for corroboration from an authority figure.

The featuring of the actions and their victims

- make use of an aggravating choice of words,
- and search for the responsibility of the actions at the top;
- the events are dramatized,
- and the victim humanized and featured in great detail and context.

### 2. Method

In order to test this conjecture, both these dimensions were operationalised by a number of variables to be used in a content analysis of the German newspaper coverage of Allied Prisoners of War (PoWs) during the Gulf War. For details of definition of these so-called „style-characteristics“ see Kempf & Reimann (1994).

The major nationwide daily newspapers were examined: *Die Tageszeitung (taz)*, *Frankfurter Rundschau (FR)*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ)*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine (FAZ)* and *Die Welt*, all of which are considered to be „good quality newspapers with a high journalistic level... representing most of the political spectrum in the Federal Republic of Germany“ (Staab, 1991). Aside from these, other newspapers were analysed: the *Bild* newspaper, by far the most widely circulated daily newspaper of the Federal Republic of Germany; as well as the *Südkurier (SK)* and the *Stuttgarter Zeitung (StZ)*, two major regional newspapers of Baden-Württemberg; and the *Neue Züricher Zeitung (NZZ)*, which has often been praised for its serious journalism.

Articles from these newspapers were analysed, monitoring the up-to-date press coverage on the Gulf War. Commentaries, leading articles, etc. were not taken into consideration. The same holds for articles in other sections of the newspapers, i.e., the culture and business sections.

The time periods of January 21-26 (parading of Allied PoWs on Iraqi television) and March 4-20 (return of the PoWs to their home countries) were examined, although, however, no more thematically relevant articles were found after March 16. The daily newspapers analysed contained a total of 146 thematically relevant articles with 911 paragraphs (including headlines and titles, which were handled as paragraphs). Among them, 480 paragraphs (52.69%) were thematically relevant. These served as coding units for the content analysis.

Since the analysed texts (paragraphs) come from various daily newspapers, representing a very wide political spectrum, it cannot be assumed that all of these texts adhere to the same press coverage style. Additionally, the press coverage style of a particular newspaper itself could have changed during the war and even different paragraphs within one and the same newspaper article could follow different styles.

An overall frequency distribution of the style characteristics (cf. Table 1 and Table 5), therefore, is not capable of describing the very style of news coverage with respect to the dimensions analysed. Instead it may be a mixture distribution, resulting from the blending of various (latent) press coverage styles. In order to identify these latent styles, the mixture distribution must be unmixed, as can be done with the help of the method of Latent Class Analysis (Lazarsfeld, 1950).

In the present paper, the calculations of Latent Class Analyses were made according to the algorithm from Goodman (1974) and were computed by use of the computer program LACORD by Rost (1988). Both, Akaike's (1987) Information Criterion (AIC-Index) and Bozdogan's Best Information Criterion (BIC-Index), served as goodness of fit criteria.

Separate Latent Class Analyses were calculated for each of the two dimensions, identifying latent styles of focusing on reproaches and on the featuring of victims. In order to examine, how these are combined with each other, a Latent Class Analysis of second order was calculated.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1 Focusing on and substantiation of reproaches

In order to comprehend the style of focusing on and substantiation of reproaches, the text passages (paragraphs) to be analysed were examined to see whether they contain the style characteristics described in Table 1.

		<i>Style characteristic</i>	<i>frequency</i>	
The allied position: Reproaches against Iraq:	1:	The focus on reproaches	217	45.2%
	2:	Factual corroboration * Repudiation of doubt about the reproaches * or repudiation of counter-reproaches	46	9.6%
	3:	Expert corroboration * Experts and authorities give the reproaches more weight * or corroborate doubt about counter-reproaches	85	17.7%
Iraqi position: (Counter-) reproaches against the Allies:	4:	The focus on counter-reproaches	57	11.9%
	5:	Factual corroboration * Repudiation of doubt about the counter-reproaches * or repudiation of the reproaches themselves	72	15.0%
	6:	Expert corroboration * Experts and persons of authority give the counter-reproaches more weight * or corroborate doubt about the reproaches themselves	43	9.0%

**Table 1:** The frequency of the style characteristics of the focusing on and substantiation of reproaches against the war parties.

Table 2 shows that, with regard to the focusing on and substantiation of reproaches against the war parties, five different styles of press coverage could be identified. Both, AIC and BIC, have their minimum value at G = 5 latent classes.

G	ln(L)	n(P)	AIC	BIC
1	-1228.814	6	2469.627	2494.671
2	-1144.677	13	2315.354	2369.613
3	-1117.526	20	2275.052	2358.528
4	-1100.780	27	2255.559	2368.252
5	-1068.413	34	2204.826	2346.735
6	-1066.192	41	2214.383	2385.509

**Table 2:** Goodness of fit criteria for the Latent Class Analysis of the focusing on and substantiation of reproaches against both war parties.

The parameters of the identified latent styles are shown in Table 3.

1. The style characteristic for 41.1% of the analysed paragraphs, and therefore by far the most wide-spread style, describes such text passages in which the reproaches are only

touched upon in the fringes. (Such paragraphs, for example, report factually about the Geneva Convention). Among them:

- reproaches against Iraq occur only seldom (5.5%); even less frequent are their factual (2.2%) and/or expert corroboration (1%) and/or also factual down-toning (1.3%);
  - there are no reproaches whatsoever (0%) and/or expert corroboration (0%) against the allied forces.
2. With 38.0% of the analysed paragraphs, the image of Iraq as the enemy occurs as the second most frequent style of press coverage. It is characterized by:
- Reproaches against Iraq (94.4%), and frequently their expert corroboration (36.5%), hardly any factual corroboration (0.6%), but occasionally factual down-toning (10.9%).
  - No reproaches (0%) and/or expert corroboration (0%) against the allied forces.

This style, to a large extent, corresponds with the propaganda style described by Herman & Chomsky of focusing on and substantiation of reproaches. However, the propaganda proves to be more differentiated and not completely without criticism on the reproaches. Occasionally it also provides counter-arguments. Obviously, these play a role in the anticipation of counter-arguments: By the use of so-called two-sided presentations attitude changes can be made more resistant against subsequent counter-propaganda (Lumsdaine & Janis, 1953).

3. In 9.2% of the analysed paragraphs there is a style which expresses a critical attitude towards the allied forces:
- These text passages contain without exception reproaches against the allied forces (100%), which frequently find corroboration from experts (43.9%), and occasionally in the facts (12.1%);
  - occasionally, in this context, also reproaches against Iraq are focused upon (18.6%) and factually corroborated (21.3%). Reproaches against Iraq experience, however, no expert corroboration whatsoever (0%).
4. The defence of Iraq characterizes the style of 7.1% of the analysed text passages. This includes:
- without exception, the down-toning of reproaches against Iraq (100%), frequently with expert corroboration (52.1%);
  - in addition, the reproaches against Iraq itself are also frequently made (27.2%), and arguments about their factual corroboration are cited (48.2%). For these, however, there are no efforts for expert corroboration (0%).
  - Reproaches against the allied forces, in contrast, do not occur (0%).
5. Found in 4.7% of the analysed paragraphs, the least frequent style focuses on reproaches against both war parties, especially, though, against Iraq. This style is characterized by the frequent occurrence of all the examined style characteristics,
- whereby reproaches against Iraq (73.8%), their factual (65.8%) and expert corroboration (73.3%) occur relatively more frequently than

- reproaches against the allied forces (56.8%) and/or their corroboration in the facts (46.2%) and from experts (26.4%).

The focus on reproaches against both war parties can either be the result of the use of two-sided presentations as a vehicle for propaganda, as, for example, is often the case in the *Welt*, where this style occurs relatively most frequently, with 8.34%; or it could also be the expression of critical distance against both war parties, as it can be found somewhat in the *taz*, where this style occurs, at 6.64%, with a similar frequency as in the *Welt* (cf. Table 4).

		<i>Reproaches against Iraq</i>			<i>Reproaches against Allies</i>		
g	$\pi_g$	Focus	Fact.	Exp.	Focus	Fact	Exp.
1	0.411	0.055	0.022	0.010	0.000	0.013	0.000
2	0.380	0.944	0.006	0.365	0.000	0.109	0.000
3	0.092	0.186	0.213	0.000	1.000	0.121	0.439
4	0.071	0.272	0.482	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.521
5	0.047	0.738	0.658	0.733	0.568	0.462	0.264
Total		0.452	0.096	0.177	0.119	0.150	0.090

**Table 3:** Latent styles of focusing on and substantiation of reproaches against both war parties. Focus = Focusing on theme; Fact. = Factual corroboration; Exp. = Expert corroboration.

If the probability of occurrence for the identified styles in the various daily newspapers (cf. Table 4) is examined, a great difference in the types of press coverage can be seen.

While objective press coverage, where reproaches are only touched upon in the fringes (Style 1), most frequently occurs in the *NZZ* (58.46%) and both of the regional newspapers *StZ* (57.26%) and *SK* (52.08%), it occurs least in the *Welt* (25.27%).

The most frequent style in the *Welt* (57.42%) is the image of Iraq as the enemy (Style 2), which is also typical for the press coverage of the *Bild* (54.72%). A significant difference between the press coverage of the *Welt* and the *Bild* can be seen, however, in that the *Bild* strictly avoids critical statements against the allied forces, so that not only the critical attitude does not occur at all towards the allied forces (expressed in Style 3) in the *Bild* (0%), but also in the *Bild* there are basically no two-sided presentations made use of as vehicles for propaganda (Style 5) (0.6%).

The image of Iraq as the enemy (Style 2) is found least frequently in the *FAZ* (27.59%), which also expresses a critical attitude towards the allied forces (Style 3) most frequently (19.7%).

Attempts at defending Iraq (Style 4) were most frequently made in the *FR* (17.03%). In the *StZ* (1.5%), the *NZZ* (1.6%) and in the *taz* (2.41%), they occur least frequently. The *taz* was also the only major nationwide daily newspaper that had already taken a stance in clear opposition to Iraq in the first Gulf war (Palmbach & Kempf, 1994).

In the *Bild*, critical statements against the allied forces were strictly avoided (0%); the focus on reproaches against both war parties nearly did not occur either (0.6%).

<i>g</i>	<i>taz</i>	<i>FR</i>	<i>SZ</i>	<i>FAZ</i>	<i>Welt</i>	<i>Bild</i>	<i>SK</i>	<i>StZ</i>	<i>NZZ</i>
1	0.3975	0.3994	0.3175	0.4069	0.2527	0.3847	0.5208	0.5726	0.5846
2	0.3944	0.3064	0.3929	0.2759	0.5742	0.5472	0.2898	0.3140	0.2923
3	0.1172	0.0796	0.1384	0.1970	0.0546	0.000	0.0653	0.0944	0.0629
4	0.0241	0.1703	0.1028	0.0648	0.0346	0.0606	0.0913	0.0150	0.0160
5	0.0664	0.0437	0.0482	0.0550	0.0834	0.0069	0.00324	0.0033	0.0435

**Table 4:** The probability of occurrence for the identified styles in the analysed daily newspapers.

### 3.2 Featuring of worthy and unworthy victims

In order to comprehend the style of featuring of worthy and unworthy victims as described by Herman & Chomsky, the text passages to be analysed were consequently examined to ascertain whether they contain the style characteristics listed in Table 5.

	<i>Style characteristic</i>	<i>frequency</i>	
Featuring of allied victims	7: Use of aggravating words	164	34.2%
	8: Iraqi responsibility at the top	65	13.5%
	9: Humanization of the allied forces	153	31.9%
	10: Dramatic featuring of the Allies	90	18.7%
	11: The placing of the events in the everyday world of the allied forces	47	9.8%
Featuring of allied victims	12: Attempt to see things also from the Iraqi point of view * Negation of aggravating words for the construction of reproaches * Use of aggravating words for counter-reproaches * allied responsibility at the top * Humanization of Iraqis * Dramatic featuring of Iraqis * The placing of the events in the everyday world of the Iraqis	32	6.7%

**Table 5:** The frequency of the style characteristics for the featuring of worthy and unworthy victims.

Table 5 shows that the various style characteristics found very different application: in spite of the combination of all the style characteristics of Iraqi victims into one single characteristic, this occurs with only 6.7% of the analysed paragraphs. This is grossly less than the frequency of any single style characteristic for the featuring of allied victims.

G	ln(L)	n(P)	AIC	BIC
1	-1302.049	6	2616.098	2641.141
2	-1178.639	13	2383.279	2437.537
3	-1151.666	20	2343.333	2426.808
4	-1146.268	27	2346.536	2459.228

**Table 6:** Goodness of fit criteria for the Latent Class Analysis of the featuring of worthy and unworthy victims.

The results of the Latent Class Analysis show that, in the analysed text passages, three styles for the featuring of worthy and unworthy victims can be differentiated (cf. Table 6).

The parameters of the identified latent styles are shown in Table 7.

1. 71.4% of the analysed paragraphs contain a relatively unbiased press coverage: they portray, however, Iraq unequivocally in the role of the perpetrator:
  - "with just rage" (28.2% aggravating words), with the occasional humanization of allied victims (14.1%), the Iraqi responsibility was occasionally searched for at the top (6.9%), occasionally, though, also taking the Iraqi perspective (8.7%);
  - dramatic featuring of the stories (0.1%) and the inclusion of elements from the everyday world of the allied forces (0.0%), however, are basically never deployed, i.e., never as a style means.
2. Following in second place, with 17.8% of the analysed text passages, is a propaganda style which does not occur, in this form, in the model by Herman & Chomsky, and which can be described as a propaganda construction of human interest stories:
  - Humanization (96.0%) and usually also dramatic featuring (80.4%) of the allied protagonists with frequent inclusions of elements from their everyday world (38.0%), and with occasional use of aggravating words (25%), remain in the foreground of the reporting represented.
  - On the other hand, it is hardly the case, however, that the responsibility is searched for at the top (1.2%). The stories speak for themselves.
  - In this respect, as Iraqi protagonists also appear in human interest stories, a focusing on the Iraqi perspective (i.e. the humanization of Iraqis) also (2.7%) appears minimally.
3. In the third place only (10.8% of the analysed paragraphs) follows the propaganda style described by Herman & Chomsky:
  - Usually, through the use of aggravating words (88.5%), the responsibility is searched for at the top (78.1%). Allied victims are frequently humanized (43.8%) and dramatically featured (40.5%). There is also often an inclusion of elements from the everyday world of the Allies (28.1%).
  - The Iraqi perspective, in contrast, is never taken up (0%).

A significant difference between this propaganda style and the propaganda construction of human interest stories lies in the fact that the reader is presented here with a completed judgement: concerning the atrocity of the action, as well as concerning the responsibility at the top.

This is missing from the human interest stories stories. In these, the readers must (apparently) form their own judgement, even when this is already given by the characteristic style of the story, and cannot be interpreted in any other way than is intended by the propaganda. Through this, however, the reader might get the impression that he/she had formed his/her own judgements, based on individual experience. Because of this, a judgement might come about that seems particularly credible and thus becomes especially immune to counter-propaganda as well as to attempts at emancipating enlightenment.

		<i>Featuring of allied victims</i>					<i>Iraqi</i>
$g$	$\pi_g$	Aggr.	Resp.	Human	Dram.	Every	Persp.
1	0.714	0.282	0.069	0.141	0.001	0.000	0.087
2	0.178	0.250	0.012	0.960	0.804	0.380	0.027
3	0.108	0.885	0.781	0.438	0.405	0.281	0.000
Total		0.342	0.135	0.319	0.187	0.098	0.067

**Table 7:** Latent styles of featuring of worthy and unworthy victims. Aggr. = Aggravating Words; Resp. = Responsibility at the top; Human = Humanization; Dram. = Dramatic featuring; Every = Everyday world. Iraqi. Persp. = Attempt to see things also from the Iraqi point of view.

Summing up it can be said that nearly one-third of all the analysed text passages (28.6%) contain propaganda featuring of worthy victims. For these, the propaganda style described by Herman & Chomsky does not represent the most usual case, however. Nearly twice as frequently there is a propaganda style found that has not been described by Herman & Chomsky, and is based on the recounting of human interest stories.

The *FR*, the *FAZ* and the *NZZ* only very seldom make use of such vehicles for propaganda and, as a rule, report objectively; whereas in the *Welt*, objective press coverage can only be found in every second text passage (cf. Table 8).

Even more than in the *Welt*, in which half of all text passages are tainted with propaganda, the rules of objective press coverage are flagrantly broken by the *Bild*, in which propagandist tainting (82.2%), in fact, represents the normal case.

A significant difference between the two respective propaganda vehicles, the *Welt* and the *Bild*, lies in their preference of the two propaganda styles. While both styles occur in the *Welt* almost as frequently, the *Bild* chiefly makes use of the recounting of human interest stories.

A relative preference for human interest stories can also be seen in the *SK*, *SZ*, and *taz*. Only the *FAZ* largely avoided this form of muck-raking propaganda.

$g$	<i>taz</i>	<i>FR</i>	<i>SZ</i>	<i>FAZ</i>	<i>Welt</i>	<i>Bild</i>	<i>SK</i>	<i>StZ</i>	<i>NZZ</i>
1	0.7770	0.8876	0.7244	0.8841	0.5069	0.1794	0.7790	0.8401	0.8467
2	0.1265	0.0599	0.2015	0.0290	0.2390	0.6336	0.1821	0.0828	0.0612
3	0.0969	0.0530	0.0746	0.0877	0.2544	0.1870	0.0394	0.0777	0.0928

**Table 8:** The probability of occurrence for the identified styles in the analysed daily newspapers.

### 3.3 The interaction of focusing on reproaches and featuring of victims

Finally, it should be examined how the various styles of focusing on reproaches, on the one hand, and the featuring of victims, on the other, are combined with each other. For this purpose, Kempf & Reimann (1994) calculated a so-called Latent Class Analysis of second order, into which the above identified styles were entered as fundamental variables. Since - with only two variables analysed - the results of the analysis might not be unequivocally identifiable, however, the present paper makes use of a slightly different approach and includes the source of the analysed text passages as an additional covariate in the analysis.

Tables 9 and 10 show that the Latent Class Analysis of second order led to the identification of two latent styles which are in good accordance with the results originally reported by Reimann & Kempf.

G	ln(L)	n(P)	AIC	BIC
1	-2013.727	14	4055.454	4113.887
2	-1945.191	29	3948.381	4069.422

**Table 9:** Goodness of fit criteria for the Latent Class Analysis of second order. Since no maximum of the likelihood could be found for three or more latent classes, only goodness of fit statistics for the one- and two-class solutions are presented.

The parameters of the identified latent styles are shown in Table 10.

1. The style which is typical for 62.2% of the analysed text passages, and therefore the most frequently used style, is characteristic in relatively unbiased press coverage:

- it touches upon the topic of the ascertained reproaches against Iraq only in the fringes (48.1%). Occasionally it makes use of the image of Iraq as the enemy (23.8%). Still it does not exclude a critical attitude towards the allied forces (15.7%);
- only seldom (but twice as often as Style 2) is Iraq defended (9.1%), and (just as seldom as Style 2) reproaches are ascertained against both war parties (3.3%);
- concerning the featuring of worthy and unworthy victims it is limited to relatively unbiased press coverage (99%);
- human interest stories are never recounted (0%) and the propaganda style described by Herman & Chomsky is also practically non-existent (1%).

<i>g</i>	$\pi_g$	<i>x</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Feat.</i>	<i>Focus = focusing on and substantiation of reproaches.</i>
1	0.622	1	0.481	0.990	1 = Topic only in the fringes 2 = The image of Iraq as the enemy 3 = Crit. Attitude towards allied forces 4 = Defence of Iraq 5 = Reproaches against both
		2	0.238	0.000	
		3	0.157	0.010	
		4	0.091		
		5	0.033		
2	0.378	1	0.245	0.306	<i>Feat. = Featuring of worthy and unworthy victims.</i> 1 = Relatively unbiased with Iraq in the role of the perpetrator 2 = human interest stories 3 = Propaganda style as described by Herman & Chomsky
		2	0.677	0.424	
		3	0.000	0.270	
		4	0.043		
		5	0.034		

**Table 10:** Latent styles of the interaction of focusing on reproaches and featuring of victims.

2. With 37.8%, there is a propaganda function in more than one-third of the analysed text passages:

- reproaches are usually ascertained under the image of Iraq as the enemy (67.7%). Sometimes the topic is dealt with only in the fringes (24.5%);
- Reproaches against both war parties (3.4%) or the defence of Iraq (4.3%) hardly occur; a critical attitude towards the allied forces is never taken up at all (0%);

- more than two-thirds of the text passages make use of the propaganda style described by Herman & Chomsky (27.0%) and/or the vehicle of propaganda in the form of human interest stories (42.4%).

The probabilities of the styles' occurrence in the various daily newspapers (cf. Table 11), which were entered as covariates into the Latent Class Analysis, reconfirm the role of the *Welt* and *Bild* newspapers as vehicles for propaganda even more dramatically than the original analysis. Additionally, they also reveal a considerably strong propaganda bias in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ).

While the propaganda function of press coverage (Style 2) in all of the other newspapers amounts to between 14.11% (FAZ) and 32.17% (taz) of the examined text passages, it is characteristic for 41.85% of the text passages in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and for almost three quarters of the text passages in the *Welt* (74.34%). The most dramatic propaganda bias is shown in *Bild*, where the propaganda style occurs in 100% of the analysed text passages.

<i>g</i>	<i>taz</i>	<i>FR</i>	<i>SZ</i>	<i>FAZ</i>	<i>Welt</i>	<i>Bild</i>	<i>SK</i>	<i>StZ</i>	<i>NZZ</i>
1	0.6783	0.7476	0.5815	0.8589	0.2566	0.0000	0.7266	0.7883	0.8195
2	0.3217	0.2524	0.4185	0.1411	0.7434	1.0000	0.2734	0.2117	0.1805

**Table 11:** The probability of occurrence for the identified styles in the analysed daily newspapers.

#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that the propaganda model from Herman & Chomsky could be partially confirmed both with regard to the focus on and substantiation of reproaches against Iraq, as well as with regard to the featuring of the allied victims.

In contrast to the propaganda styles described by Herman & Chomsky, however, it was shown that the focus on and substantiation of reproaches against Iraq were also reinforced by two-sided presentations. Counter-arguments and alternative interpretations are not as strictly avoided as forecast by Herman & Chomsky. Instead there is also criticism on the reproaches. This is focused upon in order to make the achieved attitude changes immune to counter-propaganda.

Concerning the featuring of allied victims, in addition to the propaganda style described by Herman & Chomsky, the propaganda construction of human interest stories was proven. The latter, which is especially characteristic of the propaganda style of the *Bild* newspaper, occurs altogether even a little more frequently than the style described by Herman & Chomsky.

With regard to the application frequency of the different styles, the *Welt* and *Bild* newspapers could be identified, as it were, as prototypes of propaganda media, making a very clear distinction from most the other daily newspapers with exception of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, which also shows a considerably strong propaganda bias.

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