

Still Manufacturing Consent

The Propaganda Model at Thirty

Edward S. Herman

The propaganda model (PM) is the theoretical core of *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, the book that Noam Chomsky and I published in 1988. We updated the work with a new introduction in 2002 and then with an afterword in 2008, but we left the rest of the book intact, comprising the presentation of the model (chapter 1), five chapters with lengthy case studies, and three appendices. It has held up quite well in its applicability, as illustrated by the additions in 2002 and 2008, and in the following updates.

The unique feature of the PM is that it offers a radical analysis and critique of the dominant, mainly commercial and advertising-based, mainstream media (MSM), locating their regular behavior and performance in their elite-dominated corporate structures and relationships, not in journalists' news-gathering practices or any supposed role as an independent watchdog serving the general public interest. The model was thus power-based, finding behavior and performance to originate from five sources related to institutional power. These five sources are (1) the ownership and profit orientation of the control group; (2) the impact of financial dependence on advertising and advertisers; (3) the sourcing of news, with power accruing to dominant sources like the Pentagon, the State Department, or Apple's headquarters, to which the media gravitate for credible and low-cost news; (4) flak, the negative feedback which is most important and influential when coming from agents of power; and (5) ideology, which also derives from individuals and institutions with economic or political power. In the 1988 edition we named "anticommunism" as the most relevant ideology. In later editions we added "free market

ideology” while acknowledging that there was some variability in this factor; e.g., the occasional prioritizing of “antiterrorism.”

We argued that the five elements in the model serve as filters, with news flows depending on the extent to which potential news events attract, and pass muster with, the underlying power sources that constitute the filters. For example, in a chapter titled “Worthy and Unworthy Victims,” we showed that the state murder of a priest in Communist Poland in 1984 was very attractive to the media and faced no filter obstacle. By contrast, the murders of one hundred religious workers in US client states in Latin America in the years after World War II, including eight who were US citizens, were unattractive, as attention given to these murders interfered with US policy support for the killer regimes, hence their failure to make it through the filters. The filtering process is built into the media structures and requires no top-down orders or conspiracy.

We found it very useful to make comparisons like that of the “worthy” and “unworthy” victims in Poland and Latin America because of the clarity with which they demonstrate systematic bias. In our chapter on the media’s treatment of Third World elections, we showed that the MSM were able to approve US-supported elections in El Salvador, while finding Nicaragua’s US-disapproved election a sham, by using different criteria and focusing on different kinds of facts, thereby serving a clear but completely misleading propaganda function. This same kind of deceptive double standard has been applied in the MSM’s designation of cases of alleged “aggression” and “genocide.” They have used the word “aggression” frequently in discussing Russia’s casualty-free takeover of Crimea in 2014, but have not been able to bring themselves to use it at all in dealing with the casualty-rich US invasion and occupation of Iraq that began in 2003. Similarly, the word “genocide” was used lavishly in the MSM to describe Bosnian Serb killings of a claimed eight thousand Bosnian Muslim “men and boys” in the “Srebrenica massacre” of July 1995, but the deaths of an estimated five hundred thousand children resulting from the US-sponsored “sanctions of mass destruction” applied to Iraq in the years 1990–2003 were never called genocide in the US MSM.¹ The Srebrenica deaths were carried out by a group targeted by the US and hence fitted the category of “worthy victims”;

the Iraqi children's deaths were inflicted by this country's actions, were declared "worth it" on national TV in 1996 by US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, and the victims were therefore treated as unworthy in the MSM (i.e., with silence).

Manufacturing Consent and the Propaganda Model were not welcomed and treated kindly by the MSM, or by most of the academic specialists on the media and communications. This was to be expected, and we predicted that the book and model would be mainly either ignored or treated harshly. After all, it is a radical analysis and critique that traces poor media performance to media structures and relationships that won't be correctable by exhortation or superficial reforms. This makes mainstream participants and liberal critics, who find the system essentially sound even if needing a little tweaking, uncomfortable and hostile. In the most extensive analysis of treatment of the PM by media and communications journals, Michael Mullen found that in ten European and North American journals between 1988 and 2007 only 79 of 3,053 articles (2.6 percent) even mentioned the PM, a majority of these only citing it without discussion.²

Much of the criticism of the PM has been extremely superficial and has failed to come to grips with its actual focus and claims. It is a framework of analysis that identifies major forces affecting media behavior and performance; it is not a model of effects, although media behavior and performance are surely likely to influence public opinion and actions (i.e., have effects). But these effects may vary widely, and even strenuous propaganda campaigns may fail, or at least fall short of the campaign managers' aims. We recognized this and pointed out that divisions among elites as well as the level of public knowledge and interest in an issue would impact public opinion. We did note, however, that in which elites were unified and felt strongly about an issue, the MSM would also present a united front, although even in this case media effects might be limited. This has been true, for example, in the case of trade-investment-rule campaigns such as those for the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1993–1994 and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) more recently, where the strong pro-NAFTA/TPP position of the corporate elite and MSM failed to produce polling majorities for these legislative proposals.

But even in these cases where virtually unified MSM-supported propaganda campaigns failed to produce support from a majority of the public, they may have reduced the size and vigor of public opposition and helped make these proposals more viable. This was also true in the case of the wars in Central America carried out during the Reagan years (1980–1988). Polls showed that the public did not support these wars, but the Reagan administration pursued them relentlessly, supporting them with a strong covert propaganda campaign plus, of course, a flood of ordinary propaganda (selectively and sometimes literally fake news).³ They also attacked dissident media and journalists. In one important case, after Raymond Bonner of the *New York Times* accurately reported on a major massacre in El Salvador by US-trained soldiers, attacks by the *Wall Street Journal* on Bonner led to his being removed from his post.⁴ With Bonner out of the way, the *Times* resumed its usual role as a dispenser of the official line on Central America.

In *Manufacturing Consent*'s chapter on Third World election coverage, we tabulated how, in reporting on the US-sponsored El Salvador election of 1984, the *Times* simply ignored all the matters bearing on fundamental electoral conditions, including freedom of speech and press, organizational freedom, and the absence of state terror—the type of democratic safeguards the military-dominated government actively opposed. By contrast, we showed how, in reporting Nicaragua's 1984 election, which the Reaganites wanted to discredit, the *New York Times* attended to each of these electoral conditions as much as possible (and with suitable misrepresentations). In a genuinely Orwellian process, although the basic electoral conditions in 1984 were far more favorable in Nicaragua than in El Salvador, with the help of the newspaper's thoroughgoing news bias, the editors felt able to conclude that the Nicaraguan election was “a sham” whereas the one in El Salvador was legitimate. We noted also that the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) sent an experienced observer team to Nicaragua in 1984, which produced a report with a depth unmatched by any other news or foreign observer analysis of the election. The report found that the Nicaraguan election was “a model of probity and fairness” by Latin American standards. Needless to say, the *New York Times* failed to mention the LASA report, but then no other major media source picked it up either.

The reviews and critiques of the PM have in most cases acknowledged that the case studies we provided were impressive, and very few of them offered critiques applicable to those studies. One partial exception was the assessment by media scholar Daniel Hallin, who claimed that the PM failed to explain media coverage of the Central American wars of the 1980s, when there was considerable domestic hostility to Reagan's policies. Hallin suggested that this durable public hostility contradicted the model.⁵ Another exception was historian Walter LaFeber's review, which also rested heavily on the continued opposition to these wars.⁶ But, again, the PM is not an effects model, so the failure of the Reagan administration and MSM to produce a pro-war majority doesn't refute the model at all; but the continued support of the wars by the MSM in the face of widespread public opposition does show *their* failure to represent that public while continuing their service as a virtual propaganda arm of the state during those wars. Hallin himself admitted that, during these wars, "coherent statements of alternative visions of the world order and of US policy rarely appeared in the news."⁷ There were hundreds of US reporters in El Salvador during its Reagan-era elections. If, as Hallin claimed, MSM journalism was steadily improving with increasing "professionalism," how is it that the "news" on Central American elections and wars so rarely reflected the perspectives of the majority? The PM can explain this. Hallin could not.

Another academic media scholar, Michael Schudson, cited Hallin's analysis of the alleged weakness of the PM in covering the Central American wars as an important part of his own denigration of the PM. He claimed that we were "not so careful," as we failed to note that there had been a diminution of bias over time in covering elections, from Vietnam in the 1960s and 1970s to El Salvador and Nicaragua in the 1980s.⁸ His claim of our carelessness was not based on any independent study of his own but relied on Hallin's claim of MSM progress. Hallin never examined election coverage over time in detail and seems to have simply generalized from the greater public opposition to the wars in the 1980s as compared with the 1960s. This is a weak argument from unproven effects, and hence not a meaningful criticism of the PM.

Schudson had a later statement on the PM that was also neither

careful nor responsible criticism. He described the PM as a “rigid view that sees the media organizations working hand-in-glove with other large corporations to stifle dissent or promote a lethargic public acceptance of the existing distribution of power.” This perspective, Schudson asserted, “is inconsistent with what most journalists in democratic societies commonly believe they are doing. It also fails to explain a great deal of news content, especially news critical of corporate power . . . or news of corporate scandals, conflicts, illegalities and failures.”⁹ But the PM is in no way “rigid,” as it only attempts to provide a broad framework of analysis, and its authors have often stated that it does not purport to explain everything and that its effects will depend on a variety of factors, including the level of elite agreement as well as public understanding of the issues. We contended that the market-based system in which the MSM operate is largely uncoordinated, not one characterized by elites engaged as a joint management team that works toward “stifling” ends. We stated clearly that corporate abuses and scandals are real but outside our broader purview. We also explained that journalists can do their work with complete integrity while still following party lines and ideologies imposed by the institutional structures within which they work. Schudson apparently couldn’t imagine structural-institutional impacts that become built-in.¹⁰

Other media analysts have also criticized the PM as too “deterministic,” while still others have criticized it for not giving weights to the filters, i.e., not being sufficiently deterministic. But any scientific model or theory has to be deterministic to some degree in fixing its explanatory factors, and the PM is a broad framework of analysis, not a model or theory designed to give precise results. It works well in the numerous cases in which we can compare media treatment of similar events which are differently regarded by a powerful agent—e.g., “worthy” and “unworthy” victims, the Reagan-era elections in El Salvador and Nicaragua, and the Russian elections in 1996 (the Yeltsin era) and 2012 (the Putin era) as seen by US officials.¹¹ The PM also works well where we can see conflicts of interest between important parties, like governments and corporations wishing to carry out certain policies despite public interest groups or the broad public remaining skeptical of, or hostile to, such policies. This was

the case with struggles over NAFTA and TPP, in which the MSM's alignment with the government and pro-NAFTA and pro-TPP forces was impressive.¹² The same has been true of the struggle between the chemical industry and public health spokespersons over the regulation of chemicals, "junk science" on chemicals, and "scares" about chemical threats. The chemical industry has wanted freedom of action and minimal regulation, whereas many public health experts have sought—unsuccessfully—the installation of a "precautionary principle" rule that would require proof of safety before approval of new chemicals. The MSM have never pressed for precaution, have underplayed the environmental threat of weak regulation, have derided "scares" that were real, and have allowed the term "junk science" to be applied to critics of the chemical industry rather than to the industry itself, where it belongs.¹³

What is the status of the PM thirty years after publication? We can answer this by considering, first, the structural changes that have taken place since 1988 and their impact on the relevance of the PM; and, second, by testing the model in application to the contemporary performance of the MSM.

The main structural change that has affected the MSM has been the growth of the Internet, with a rapid concentration process there and a huge drain of advertising revenue from the legacy media to the leading firms providing search information access and social media, i.e., Google, Facebook, Yahoo, Microsoft, and Twitter.¹⁴ Newspapers have been particularly hard hit, with a 60 percent drop in the workforce from 1990 to 2016,¹⁵ and a precipitous drop in advertising revenue from \$65.8 billion in 2000 to \$18 billion in 2014.¹⁶ As newspapers' advertising revenues have collapsed, Google and Facebook have experienced spectacular windfalls: In 2015, for example, Google and Facebook earned an estimated \$30 billion and \$8 billion, respectively, in digital advertising revenues.¹⁷ Google's total revenues grew from \$1.5 billion in 2003 to \$74.5 billion in 2015.¹⁸ By 2016, Alphabet, Google's holding company, was the largest media company in the world, with revenues 166 percent greater than Walt Disney's, its nearest rival.¹⁹

Although Internet optimists had forecast that we were entering a new era of media democratization, with thousands, or millions, of

bloggers and other news sources, it turns out that the power and pull of advertising, the networking effect of increasing size and outreach, and government policies, have rapidly led to levels of concentration in communication on Internet sites greater than those attained earlier by the legacy media—with Google attaining an 88 percent market share in online searches and search advertising and Facebook a 77 percent market share in mobile social media.²⁰ These two giants have used micro-technology to identify and sell to advertisers full dossiers on the personal habits, relationships, and tastes of the vast number of people using Google’s powerful search engine and posting their “likes” along with other personal information on Facebook.²¹

These Internet giants are in the surveillance-marketing (“spying and selling”) business, not in the business of creating news or other content. But users of Google and especially Facebook want news, so Facebook has become a platform through which news created elsewhere flows and is consumed and redirected. Postings on Facebook have become a major news source for ordinary Facebook users and for other online services like Huffington Post and BuzzFeed, and Facebook officials, partly in response to charges of allowing and passing along “fake news,” have been driven to manage the flow of news. This has included developing and utilizing algorithms that can automatically prune out materials that violate moral or other standards. But Facebook officials have also engaged in negotiations with reputable news sources that seek access to the Facebook platform and want to participate in Facebook’s rulemaking on access. As Jonathan Taplin asks, “How long before Facebook becomes the controlling force in the online journalism business?”²²

How did this structural transformation affect the workings of the filters identified by the PM? The for-profit sector of the media has certainly not diminished in relative size, and the revenue losses of the legacy media have intensified the MSM’s search for advertising and made for greater dependence on powerful primary sources for news. The desire to avoid flak from the powerful and the unwillingness to challenge prevailing ideologies has also probably risen. The new Internet giants—not themselves in the journalism business but with significant power over news choices via their increasing role as news platforms—make for considerable uncertainty. They are likely

to reflect in part the news choices determined by actual journalists, but the latter may be influenced by what produces traffic and advertising on the large new platforms.

The news performance of the MSM in recent decades has strongly confirmed the continued applicability of the PM. The Iraq War itself provides a plethora of evidence supportive of the PM. The intense war propaganda of the Bush administration succeeded in convincing a majority of US citizens that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMD), but even as late as February 2003 (the attack began on March 20) a majority of the US public wanted further investigations by the UN inspection teams before the launch of any attack.²³ On February 15 and 16, 2003, there were mass antiwar protests with probably over one million people on the streets in dozens of US cities (and many millions in six hundred cities globally), a unique event since a war had yet to begin. But this massive demonstration of public opposition hardly moved the war-makers, and the MSM did not give the protests sympathetic coverage or diminish their own service as war facilitators.

The Bush administration aimed at regime change in Iraq. But as this was too conspicuous a violation of the UN Charter and international law, the officially declared aim was to remove Saddam Hussein's WMD. The Bush–Blair axis wanted to attack immediately, but a majority of the Security Council wanted to allow UN inspection teams to verify Bush's claims that Iraq possessed such weapons and, in the event that the weapons existed, to perhaps allow the inspection teams to remove them. Such inspections had, in fact, been in process for a decade. And there was already substantial evidence that such weapons had been entirely or almost entirely eliminated. Scott Ritter, a top inspector from 1991 to 1998, claimed that 90–95 percent of those weapons had been “verifiably eliminated” and that the residual was old and unusable.²⁴ Even more important, Hussein Kamel, Saddam Hussein's son-in-law and long in charge of Iraq's weapons program, defected in 1995, and in information he supplied to the CIA he claimed that Saddam's entire stock of chemical and biological WMD had been destroyed.²⁵

Furthermore, under UN auspices there were two inspection teams at work, a United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection

Commission (UNMOVIC), headed by Hans Blix; and an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), headed by Mohamed ElBaradei. Both of these operations worked hard at inspections, found the Iraqi government quite cooperative, and continued to find nothing. This was exceedingly annoying to the Bush administration, which wanted a quick “favorable” finding and therefore assailed the inspectors’ lack of speed and strove to discredit and bypass them. The MSM cooperated, treating the inspections as ineffective and largely ignoring their findings, thus helping set the stage for denying their authority and going to war.

The media’s cooperation in this drive to war went far. There was the further demonization of Saddam Hussein and suppression of the news of his cooperation with inspections. Ignoring the credible negative findings from the on-the-scene inspectors, the MSM allowed the Bush team, their apologists, and their usually anonymous Iraqi sources to dominate the flow of purported information. Bush and company claimed that Iraq had an active nuclear weapons program as well as hidden chemical and biological weapons. The inspector chiefs denied this. The inspectors’ evidence and Hussein Kamel’s 1995 testimony had to be kept out of the public domain, and the MSM saw to this.

Bush, Cheney, and other officials had cited Kamel as authoritative, and in his notorious presentation to the UN Security Council on February 5, 2003, Secretary of State Colin Powell also cited Kamel as acknowledging Iraqi production of four tons of nerve gas, but he failed to mention that Kamel had said this had all been completely destroyed. Although the *Times* and other media had reported earlier on some of Hussein Kamel’s evidence, his statement about destroyed WMD was suppressed except for one very late article published in *Newsweek* under the elusive title, “The Defector’s Secrets.”²⁶ Colin Powell’s February 5 performance rested heavily on the claims of an Iraqi defector, Rafid Ahmed Alwan al-Janabi, also known as “Curveball,” whose detailed claims of Iraq’s biological warfare program were later admitted to have been entirely fraudulent. Curveball resided in Germany and the BND, Germany’s Federal Intelligence Service, had warned US officials that his testimony was dubious. But his claims were obviously preferable to those of Hussein Kamel. The MSM

treated Powell's extensively disinforming Security Council performance as compelling.

MSM news flowed from Bush administration leaders, CIA and Pentagon sources, and a steady stream of Iraqi defectors, many supplied to the media by Ahmed Chalabi, an Iraqi expatriate and head of the Iraqi National Congress. Chalabi's organization was given millions by the CIA, and he served the Bush program well.²⁷ Judith Miller, the principal *New York Times* reporter on the Iraq War campaign, acknowledged depending heavily on Chalabi and his supply of informants.²⁸ She wrote dozens of articles featured in the *Times*, sourced entirely from Bush officials and Iraqi defectors.

The coordination with the war-makers' propaganda needs was exemplary. Best known, and perhaps most revealing, was Miller's article, written with Michael Gordon, published on September 8, 2002, "Threats and Responses: The Iraqis; U.S. Says Hussein Intensifies Quest for A-Bomb Parts."²⁹ The information was false. The aluminum tubes that Iraq was acquiring were not designed for bomb use, as was disclosed later with less fanfare: The article was based on a leak of classified information fed to the authors by Lewis Scooter Libby, Vice President Dick Cheney's chief of staff.³⁰ The same day Cheney cited Gordon and Miller's article on *Meet the Press* in support of his claim that Saddam was aggressively seeking to enrich uranium, as evidenced by his buying aluminum tubes. Other Bush officials also quickly cited the same article as indication of the acute menace. This was an exemplary case of government officials using a cooperative media source for rapid propaganda service.

In its opinion columns also, the *New York Times* served the war party well. The *Times* not only paid no attention to the evidence of Scott Ritter, who had been a top UN Special Commission inspector and was outspoken on the errors and dangers of Bush's Iraq policy, it actually published an article in its *Magazine* devoted to discrediting him.³¹ The *Times* much preferred Kenneth Pollack, author of the 2002 book, *The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq*, who had four pro-war op-ed columns in the paper in 2002–2003. The editorial page supported Pollack's false claims that Iraq possessed WMD and pursued a nuclear weapons program.³² In both its opinion columns and news reporting on Iraq, the "Newspaper of Record" transmitted

fabricated propaganda claims flowing from the CIA, the Pentagon, and Ahmed Chalabi, an Iraqi funded by the CIA.

In sum, the performance of the *Times* and the MSM, before and during the invasion and occupation of Iraq, was as good a fit to the PM as any of the case studies presented in *Manufacturing Consent*. MSM coverage was built on Bush administration lies that were quickly exposed with the failed search for WMD. The *Times* and *Washington Post* both issued quasi-apologies for their performance in servicing the Iraq war-makers, but the responsible editors were not fired, and were almost immediately engaged in a similar performance on the next main target, Iran.

In fact, an enlightening comparison can be made of the media's treatment of the 2009 elections in Iran with elections in Honduras, also in 2009, following a coup there in the same year. A regime that the US had long targeted for destabilization and regime change carried out the Iranian election. The Honduran election took place after a democratically-elected liberal government, which had been disliked by both the domestic elite and the US-supported military establishment, had been overthrown by force on June 28. It took many weeks before the Obama government would use the word "coup" to describe what had happened in Honduras. And the United States stood pretty isolated as it tried to get other North and South American states to accept, alongside Obama and Clinton, the regime established by the coup.

With Washington opposing the Iranian government, it was a foregone conclusion that its election, like Nicaragua's in 1984, would be declared a sham, even though it was a contested election, with dissident Mir-Hossein Mousavi running against the demonized (by Western powers) incumbent Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. In the November 2009 Honduran election, there were no dissidents running, only two members of the elite, both of whom had supported the coup, and repression was almost certainly more severe than in Iran. Nevertheless, an analysis of US newspaper coverage found that derogatory terms such as "fraud" and "rigged" were used to describe the election in Honduras just 28 times, compared with 2,139 such uses in coverage of Iran's election.³³

Another revealing difference can be seen in the treatment of the

deaths of dissidents in the two countries.³⁴ On June 20, 2009, twenty-six-year-old Neda Agha-Soltan was shot to death in Iran while participating in a peaceful demonstration in Tehran. Her death became a “galvanizing symbol, both within Iran and increasingly around the world,” Rachel Maddow said on MSNBC.³⁵ Video images of her plight circled the globe. That same day Roger Cohen denounced the killing on the editorial page of the *New York Times*. Only fifteen days later, nineteen-year-old Isis Obed Murillo was shot dead by the Honduran military during a peaceful protest in Honduras. Like Agha-Soltan’s, his death was recorded in video images that circulated on the Internet. The differential media interest in US newspaper coverage was 736–8 in favor of Agha-Soltan; the TV differential was 231–1 in favor of Agha-Soltan.³⁶ The dramatic video images of Murillo’s killing never caught hold in the world beyond Honduras. The social media, which had displayed such potential for organizing protest in Iran, failed to come to life in Honduras.

The agenda-setting capability of the powerful, and the resultant double standard, so obvious in the comparison of elections in El Salvador and Nicaragua in 1984, showed itself to be just as strong in the elections held in Iran and Honduras in 2009. The PM fits both of these pairings very comfortably.

The Propaganda Model is as strong and applicable as it was thirty years ago. The structural conditions have, if anything, given it more salience, with greater media concentration but still more competition for advertising revenue, enhanced power and reach of advertisers, and little if any diminution in the effects of the other three filters. What is more, the performance of the MSM in treating the run-up to the Iraq War, the conflict with Iran, and Russia’s alleged election “meddling” and “aggression” in Ukraine and Crimea, offer case studies of biases as dramatic as those offered in the 1988 edition of *Manufacturing Consent*. The Propaganda Model lives on.

EDWARD S. HERMAN is an economist and an analyst of politics and media. Among his publications are three editions of *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (1988, 2002, 2008), coauthored with Noam Chomsky; and the two-volume set, *The Political Economy of Human Rights* (1979), also with Chomsky. His most recent books, with David Peterson, are *The Politics of Genocide* (2010) and *Enduring Lies: The Rwandan Genocide in the Propaganda System, 20 Years Later* (2014).

Notes

1. There were few if any “boys” killed at Srebrenica; most of the eight thousand were soldiers killed in combat, not executed. See Edward S. Herman, ed., *The Srebrenica Massacre: Evidence, Context, Politics* (Evergreen Park, Illinois: Alphabet Soup, 2011).
2. Andrew Mullen, “Twenty Years On: The Second-Order Prediction of the Herman–Chomsky Propaganda Model,” *Media, Culture & Society*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (July 2010), 673–90.
3. One illustration of fake news: the Reagan administration claimed that Soviet MiGs were being imported into Nicaragua in the midst of their election preparations, a false and negative distraction from the election reality. See Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon, 2002), 137–39.
4. Raymond Bonner, *Weakness and Deceit: U.S. Policy and El Salvador* (New York: Times Books, 1984). See also Edward S. Herman, “The Journal’s War on the Media,” in Herman, *The Myth of the Liberal Media: An Edward Herman Reader* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 111–13.
5. Daniel Hallin, *We Keep America on Top of the World: Television Journalism and the Public Sphere* (Milton Park, Abingdon: Routledge, 1994), 11–12.
6. Walter LaFeber, “Whose News?” *New York Times*, November 6, 1988, <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/11/06/books/whose-news.html>.
7. Hallin, *We Keep America on Top of the World*, 67.
8. Michael Schudson, “The Sociology of News Production,” *Media, Culture & Society*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (July 1989), 263–82, 269.
9. Michael Schudson, “Four Approaches to the Sociology of News,” in James Curran, ed., *Media and Society* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2010), 164–85, 168.
10. For a detailed analysis of Schudson’s critique, see Yigal Godler, “Why Anti-Realist Views Persist in Communication Research: A Political Economic Reflection on Relativism’s Prominence,” *Critical Sociology*, May 16, 2016, 1–19, doi: 10.1177/0896920516645935.
11. For analysis of media performance in the Yeltsin and Putin eras, see Edward S. Herman, “Fake News on Russia and Other Official Enemies: The *New York Times*, 1917–2017,” *Monthly Review*, Vol. 69, No. 3 (July–August 2017), 98–112.
12. Edward S. Herman, “NAFTA, Mexican Meltdown, and the Propaganda System,” in Herman, *Myth of the Liberal Media*, 181–95.
13. Edward S. Herman, “Corporate Junk Science in the Media,” in Herman, *Myth of the Liberal Media*, 231–56.
14. See “State of the News Media 2016,” Pew Research Center, June 15, 2016, 56; available for download at <http://www.journalism.org/files/2016/06/State-of-the-News-Media-Report-2016-FINAL.pdf>.
15. Roy Greenslade, “Almost 60% of US Newspaper Jobs Vanish in 26 Years,” *Guardian*, June 6, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/media/greenslade/2016/jun/06/almost-60-of-us-newspaper-jobs-vanish-in-26-years>.
16. Jonathan Taplin, *Move Fast and Break Things: How Facebook, Google, and Amazon Cornered Culture and Undermined Democracy* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2017), 7.
17. Mathew Ingram, “How Google and Facebook Have Taken Over the Digital Ad Industry,” *Fortune*, January 4, 2017, <http://fortune.com/2017/01/04/google-facebook-ad-industry/>.
18. Taplin, *Move Fast and Break Things*, 7.
19. Lauren Johnson, “Google Now Controls 12 Percent of All Global Media Spend,” *Adweek*, May 26, 2016, <http://www.adweek.com/digital/google-now-controls-12-percent-all-global-media-spend-171701/>.
20. Taplin, *Move Fast and Break Things*, 21.
21. See, for example, “Facebook Buys Sensitive User Data to Offer Marketers Targeted Advertising,” story #23 in Chapter 1 of this volume.
22. Taplin, *Move Fast and Break Things*, 93.
23. E.g., “Americans on Iraq and the UN Inspections,” World Public Opinion, February 21, 2003, <http://worldpublicopinion.net/americans-on-iraq-and-the-un-inspections/>.

24. Scott Ritter and William Rivers Pitt, *War on Iraq: What Team Bush Doesn't Want You to Know* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2002), 28.
25. John Barry, "The Defector's Secrets," *Newsweek*, March 2, 2003, <http://www.newsweek.com/exclusive-defectors-secrets-132803>.
26. Ibid.
27. E.g., Sewell Chan, "Ahmad Chalabi, Iraqi Politician Who Pushed for U.S. Invasion, Dies at 71," *New York Times*, November 3, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/04/world/middleeast/ahmad-chalabi-iraq-dead.html>.
28. Miller acknowledged that Chalabi "has provided most of the front-page exclusives on WMD to our paper." Quoted in Howard Friel and Richard Falk, *The Record of the Paper: How the New York Times Misreports US Foreign Policy* (London: Verso, 2004), 11.
29. Michael R. Gordon and Judith Miller, "Threats and Responses; The Iraqis; U.S. Says Hussein Intensifies Quest for A-Bomb Parts," *New York Times*, September 8, 2002, <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/09/08/world/threats-responses-iraqis-us-says-hussein-intensifies-quest-for-bomb-parts.html>.
30. David E. Sanger and David Barstow, "Iraq Findings Leaked by Aide were Disputed," *New York Times*, April 9, 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/09/washington/us/iraq-findings-leaked-by-aide-were-disputed.html>.
31. Barry Bearak, "Scott Ritter's Iraq Complex," *New York Times Magazine*, November 24, 2002, <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/11/24/magazine/scott-ritter-s-iraq-complex.html>.
32. For a good discussion of Pollack and his role in the *Times's* war apologetics, see Friel and Falk, *The Record of the Paper*, 42–50.
33. For a full analysis of the two elections, see David Peterson and Edward S. Herman, "Iran and Honduras in the Propaganda System: Part 2, The 2009 Iranian and Honduran Elections," MROnline, October 24, 2010, <https://mronline.org/2010/10/24/iran-and-honduras-in-the-propaganda-system-part-2-the-2009-iranian-and-honduran-elections/>.
34. David Peterson and Edward S. Herman, "Iran and Honduras in the Propaganda System: Part 1, Neda Agha-Soltan versus Isis Obed Murillo," MROnline, October 5, 2010, <https://mronline.org/2010/10/05/iran-and-honduras-in-the-propaganda-system-part-1-neda-agma-soltan-versus-isis-obed-murillo/>.
35. *The Rachel Maddow Show*, MSNBC, June 22, 2009, <http://www.msnbc.com/transcripts/rachel-maddow-show/2009-06-22>.
36. Peterson and Herman, "Iran and Honduras in the Propaganda System: Part 1."

CENSORED 2018

PRESS FREEDOMS IN A “POST-TRUTH” WORLD

The Top Censored Stories and Media Analysis of 2016–17

Andy Lee Roth and **Mickey Huff**
with **Project Censored**

Foreword by

Deepa Kumar

Cartoons by

Khalil Bendib



Seven Stories Press

New York • Oakland • London

Copyright © 2017 by Mickey Huff and Andy Lee Roth

Foreword © 2017 by Deepa Kumar

A Seven Stories Press First Edition

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means, including mechanical, electronic, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Seven Stories Press
140 Watts Street
New York, NY 10013
www.sevenstories.com

ISBN 978-1-60980-781-8 (paperback)

ISBN 978-1-60980-782-5 (electronic)

ISSN 1074-5998

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Book design by Jon Gilbert

Printed in the USA