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American Press and Decolonization Processes of Indonesia and Indo-China

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Abstract

Editorial attitudes on self-determination, colonialism and the local nationalist leaders' ability to govern expressed in American newspapers toward Indonesia and Indo-China in 1945 to 1947 are shaped by national interests. Using a thematic content analysis of editorials that appeared in the New York Times and the Washington Post, this study is based on three assumptions: that the idea of self-determination has traditionally been one of many values American generally champion, that colonialism has been one of many values Americans generally oppose, and that Americans shared with the Dutch and French a view of non-western nationalist leaders as not being ready to govern themselves. Based on these assumptions, two hypotheses are proposed: the two newspapers' editorials would support the idea of self-determination and would not support colonialism, and they would not support the idea that the Indonesian and Indo-Chinese nationalist leaders were able to maintain peace, stability and order in their own countries. The data found support the argument that editorial attitudes regarding international issues are shaped by national interests and cultural values. In dealing with the international events, the editorials favored Indonesia and Indo-China when discussing the idea of self-determination and colonialism, but they favored the Dutch and French when discussing the ability to govern.

Key words: American press, Indonesia, Indo-China, self-government, colonialism

How does the press perform when covering international issues that inherently represent conflicting cultural values? The values of the media country (meaning the country of the media covering the event) may differ or be in conflict with those of countries that are subjects of coverage. Or the media country's values may conflict with one party to the international news event and coincide with those of second or other parties to it. Do the media of the media country cover the event at the expense of coverage of issues affecting the country whose values differ from those of the media country?

Such a problem is not a new one. Walter Lippmann, for example, in 1960, provided a theoretical basis of how to understand the problem. Lippmann (1960: 485) theorized that since the world is difficult to see, touch, smell, or remember, in describing the world, people make for themselves a trustworthy picture or pattern of stereotypes formed by their own interests.

Conclusions from six research works cited below are that the coverage of international issues is shaped by the media country's interests and values. In his 1937 research on news of the Far East in U.S. dailies, Ernest O Hauser (1938: 652) came to the conclusion that the U.S. dailies' coverage of the Far East issues

at the time was shaped by the "sentimental" and political interests, and the "maternal instinct". Both the "sentimental" values, which refer to American feelings created by past Sino-American relationships, and the "maternal instinct," which refers to the traditional sympathy for the underdog, made the American press sympathetic to China.

Martin Kriesberg, who did research on Soviet news in the *New York Times* from March 1917 through May 1946, concluded that the coverage of Soviet news was marked by the ethnocentric and chauvinistic predispositions within the country (Kriesberg 1946: 562-3). Martin D Lynch and Atiya Effendi (1964: 432), who did research on the *New York Times* editorial image of India from 1950 to 1962, concluded that themes supporting American national interests received more favorable treatment than those that were not supporting American national interests. They concluded that the improvement of American-Indian relations in 1959 led to Indian issues receiving better treatment.

Daniel Riffe and Eugene F Shaw (1982: 624), who did research on the *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune* coverage of the Third World during the years 1970-1979, concluded that, compared to coverage

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of the First and Second Worlds, the coverage of the Third World was more likely to deal with conflicts and upheavals. Andrew K Semmel (1976: 736), who did research on foreign news in twenty-five editions of four U.S. “elite” dailies in 1974, concluded that the image of the global system made by the prestige U.S. dailies was basically “Euro-centric, big power dominant, and western-oriented.” And Haluk Sahin (1973:68), who did research on the *New York Times* coverage of Turkish politics during two four-year periods of 1951–1954 and 1965–1968, concluded that, despite all claims and attempts of objectivity, the *New York Times* coverage and treatment of international issues was shaped by American ideals and interests. Besides, summing up some research findings on American media and foreign countries image in the context of national interests, Saleem (2007:139–140) concludes that American media generally support their national interest and policies.

This paper is based on research dealing with American media editorial treatment of self-determination for Asian countries. It is generally assumed that Americans have always supported the idea of self-determination for nations. And that is an assumption underlying this research. Yet, American values have been closer generally to those of nations from which Third World countries have sought independence. In reporting, editorializing or commenting about the struggle of nations seeking independence, have American media editorially supported the idea of self-determination? Or have editorials rather reflected cultural kinship with the colonial powers from which countries have sought independence?

To gain insights about this problem, editorials about Indonesia and Indo-China in two American newspapers were studied for the period 1945–1947. The research question guiding the research was: did these two American newspapers’ editorials favor the idea of self-determination or colonialists when discussing Indonesia and Indo-China immediately after World War II?

Since there were only two newspapers studied in this research, the results of this research cannot be generalized. The most this research can show is how the subject was treated in editorials of these two newspapers. There should be research of many American newspapers and many types of coverage on the subject. However, this study, it is hoped, will contribute to an understanding of American media attitudes toward the struggle for independence of specific Third World countries immediately after World War II. Besides that, this study, it is also

hoped, will add to general knowledge about the way the press performs when covering international issues.

Method

The method used in this research was a thematic content analysis of editorials on Indonesia and Indo-China that appeared in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* between August 1945 and December 1947. The term Indonesia is clear, because it refers to the Dutch colony that is often called the Dutch East Indies. The term Indo-China in this research actually refers to Vietnam, rather than to three countries (Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea). Probably at that time the term Vietnam was not yet familiar to American readers, so the American media tended to use the term Indo-China even when they only meant Vietnam.

The two newspapers were selected for their reputation of being two of the most influential newspaper at the time. The *New York Times* has long been considered the most important newspaper in the U.S. This newspaper is considered part of America’s elite press (Weiss 1974: 5), and it publishes great quantities of foreign news (Sparkes 1978: 26). It is also credited as being the most authoritative newspaper in the U.S. (Kriesberg 1946: 541), because of its acknowledged opinion leadership and influence in this country (Semmel 1976: 732).

The *Washington Post* is also considered as elite in the membership structure of what John Merrill called in a 1960 book *the Elite Press Pyramid*. Besides that, the *Washington Post*, located in the nation’s capital, was considered as the newspaper of Washington officialdom and likely read by most of America’s leaders; therefore, it had a potency to influence at least those involved with international or foreign policy (Weiss 1974: 5).

Editorials in the two newspapers were read for 29 months –from August 1945 through December 1947. August 1945 was chosen as a starting point because it was a month in which Japan surrendered and left a “vacuum of power” period that led to the nationalists’ fight against the colonial power over the authority to govern Indonesia and Indo-China. In the period in which the Japanese had given up authority over Indonesia and Indo-China and before the Dutch and French had taken authority over them, both Indonesian and Indo-Chinese nationalist leaders proclaimed their independence: Indonesia on August 17, 1945, and Indo-China on September 2, 1945. Both the Dutch and French, as the colonialists, ignored

those declarations of independence. The colonial powers tried to rebuild their empires that were broken during World War II, while the nationalists attempted to defend their rights to independence and to gain authority to govern their own countries. In the years after World War II, the conflict between the Dutch and the Indonesian nationalists, and between the French and the Viet Minh, were marked by violence and cruelty that attracted the attention of the American press (Feith 1964: 21; Jumper and Normand 1964: 392-3).

The year of 1948 was excluded for two reasons. First, beginning in 1948 the Cold War became an important factor that helped shape American views of foreign affairs. The symptomatic communist victory in mainland China and the rivalry of the United States and the Soviet Union led to American views of foreign affairs being influenced by a perceived need to contain the spread of communism. Secondly, in the same year, world opinion became strongly anti-Dutch. This was because in 1948 the Dutch used military threat overtly in dealing with the nationalists, arousing hostility around the world. Both the United Nations and the United States Congress began to take stands against the Dutch (Feith 1964: 20). Those events could be major factors in altering the American press editorial treatment of Indonesia and Indo-China.

The editorials about Indonesia and Indo-China were studied for evidence of attitudes towards three themes: (1) self-determination, (2) colonialism, and (3) the ability of the nationalists to maintain peace, stability and order. What views did editorials convey about Indonesia and Indo-China at the time? Were the editorial attitudes positive or negative about self-determination, colonialism, and the ability of the nationalists for maintaining peace, stability, and order?

The editorials' positive or negative attitudes towards the three themes were determined by considering carefully each editorial. An editorial was coded as positive toward a theme, if it contained direct or indirect statements, verbs, or phrases that support the theme. For example, a positive attitude toward self-government was an editorial, titled "French Indo-China," in the *New York Times* March 9, 1946, which said: "The manner in which the French are meeting the demands for independence is encouraging." On the contrary, an editorial was coded as negative, if it contained direct or indirect statements, verbs, or phrases that did not support the theme. For example, a negative attitude toward the nationalist leadership was in an editorial, titled "Trouble Indonesia," in the

New York Times May 2, 1947, which said: "There probably will be trouble for a long time in Indonesia. A largely illiterate people, with only a thin veneer of educated leaders, does not make the transition from colonialism to self-government without considerable growing pains." An editorial was coded as neutral if it contained no statement, verbs, or phrases showing attitudes toward the theme. In coding the data studied, the positive attitude was scored +1, the negative one was scored -1, and the neutral one was scored 0.

The assumption underlying this research were that (1) the idea of self-determination was traditionally been one of many values American generally champion, (2) colonialism has been one of many values Americans generally oppose, and (3) Americans shared with the Dutch and French a view of non-western nationalist leaders as not being ready to govern themselves. Therefore, based on these assumptions, two hypotheses guiding this research were that: (1) the two newspapers' editorials would support the idea of self-determination and would not support colonialism, and (2) they would not support the idea that the Indonesian and Indo-Chinese nationalist leaders were able to maintain peace, stability, and order in their own countries.

Findings

From August 1945 to December 1947, 45 editorials on Indonesia and Indo-China appeared in the two newspapers. The *New York Times* contained more editorials about the two countries than the *Washington Post*, with 32 contrasted to 13. As shown in Table 1 and 2, Indonesia received more attention than Indo-China, with 19 editorials in the *New York Times* and 13 in the *Washington Post* contrasted to 13 in the *New York Times* and none in the *Washington Post* about Indo-China.

Table 1

List of *New York Times*' editorials on Indonesia and Indo-China between 17 August 1945 and 31 December 1947

No	Dates	Titles
1	10-09-1945	Unrest in Indonesia
2	12-04-1945	War Aims in Indonesia
3	12-21-1945	Policy in the East
4	01-23-1946	Let UNO Investigate
5	01-24-1946	Allied Job in the Pacific
6	02-17-1946	Peace Prospect in Indonesia
7	04-19-1946	Dutch Troops in Java
8	09-09-1946	Indies Withdrawal
9	04-14-1947	News from Indonesia
10	05-02-1947	Troubled Indonesia
11	07-04-1947	Hope for Peace in Java
12	07-18-1947	New Crisis in Java

No	Dates	Titles
13	07-22-1947	War in Indonesia
14	08-02-1947	The Case of Indonesia
15	08-04-1947	Triumph of the U.N.
16	08-05-1947	"Cease Fire" in Java
17	08-07-1947	Action on Indonesia
18	10-02-1947	Committee on Indonesia
19	10-24-1947	"Cease Fire" in Java
20	10-04-1945	Empires in the East
21	12-21-1945	Policy in the East
22	03-09-1946	French Indo-China
23	09-21-1946	Accord in Indo-China
24	12-22-1946	Ferment in the Far East
25	12-29-1946	Indo-China Revolt
26	01-09-1947	France and Her Empire
27	01-22-1947	Outlook in Indo-China
28	03-30-1947	France in Indo-China
29	05-06-1947	Hope in Indo-China
30	06-23-1947	The War in Indo-China
31	07-15-1947	Indo-China Stalemate
32	09-12-1947	Indo-China and Indonesia

Table 2

List of *Washington Post's* editorials on Indonesia between 17 August 1945 and 31 December 1947

No	Dates	Titles
1	11-14-1945	End of Soekarno
2	02-14-1946	Indonesia
3	04-21-1946	Talk on Indonesia
4	10-18-1946	Truce in Java
5	11-24-1946	US of Indonesia
6	04-20-1947	Indonesia Republic
7	07-24-1947	Trouble in the East
8	08-05-1947	After the Dutch "Yes"
9	08-07-1947	Indonesia Truce
10	08-21-1947	Indonesia Snag
11	08-26-1947	Impasse on Indonesia
12	08-28-1947	Progress on Indonesia
13	09-26-1947	Indonesia's Travail

Since editorials tended to be event-oriented, they did not always contain references concerning the three themes. Some revealed no attitude at all; some revealed attitudes toward on theme; some revealed two themes; and some others revealed attitudes toward three themes. As shown in Table 3, 14 editorials contained one theme; 13 editorials contained two themes; three editorials contained three themes; and 11 editorials contained no theme.

Table 3

Number of Themes Discussed in Each Editorial of *New York Times* and *Washington Post*

Newspaper	3 Themes	2 Themes	1 Theme	None	Totals
NYT	3	8	11	10	32
WP	1	5	3	4	13
Totals	4	13	14	14	45

In all 45 editorials, as shown in Table 4, self-determination was discussed or referred to 18 times and was supported in all 18 instances; colonialism was referred to 11 times and was supported only once among 11 references to it; the ability of nationalists to maintain peace, stability, and order was discussed 23 times, and only seven of the 23 references indicated support for the idea. The editorials in the two newspapers are treated separately below.

Table 4

Attitudes on All Themes in All Editorials of *New York Times* and *Washington Post*

Themes	Positive	Negative	Totals
Self-determination	18	0	18
Colonialism	1	10	11
Nationalists' ability to Maintain Peace, Stability and Order	7	16	23
Totals	26	26	52

N = 45 editorials

The *New York Times* contained 32 editorials on Indonesia and Indo-China, among which self-determination was discussed 11 times, colonialism was discussed 10 times, and the nationalists' ability to govern was discussed 15 times. As shown in Table 5, in all 11 references to self-determination, the editorial attitude supported it; in only one of 10 references to colonialism was the attitudes supportive of colonialism; and only five of the 15 references to the nationalists' ability to govern reflected a positive view.

Table 5

Attitudes on All Themes in All Editorials in the *New York Times*

Themes	Positive	Negative	Totals
Self-determination	11	0	11
Colonialism	1	9	10
Nationalists' ability to Maintain Peace, Stability and Order	5	10	15
Totals	26	26	36

N = 32 editorials

The newspaper gave more editorial attention to Indonesia than to Indo-China, with 19 contrasted to 13. Besides that, the newspaper's editorial treatment of Indonesia differed from that of Indo-China in that it tended to support the idea of self-determination for Indonesians more often than for Indo-Chinese. For example, in seven references to self-determination for Indonesians, the newspaper's editorials were positive, but in only four instances were they positive toward self-determination for the Indo-Chinese.

The subject of colonialism appeared less frequently in *New York Times* editorials about

Indonesia than in those about Indo-China. But the attitude toward colonialism was primarily negative in discussions of both countries. For example, in all three references to colonialism in Indonesia, the editorials were negative, and in six of seven instances discussing colonialism for Indo-China, the editorials were negative.

Regarding nationalists' ability to maintain peace, stability and order, the *New York Times* editorial attitude seemed divided according to the country under discussion. For example, editorial references to Indonesian leaders were primarily negative, with eight instances suggesting inability of Indonesian leadership and only two instances suggesting Indonesians had the necessary leadership ability. Editorial references to Indo-Chinese leaders, on the other hand, suggested in three of five instances that they would be able to carry on leadership of the country.

The *Washington Post* contained 13 editorials on Indonesia and none on Indo-China. Among the 13 editorials on Indonesia, self-determination was discussed seven times, and all seven instances showed support; colonialism was discussed only once, and the attitude toward continued colonialism was negative; the nationalists' ability to govern was discussed eight times, and only two of the eight references reflected a positive view.

Table 6

Attitudes on All Themes in All Editorials in the *Washington Post*

Themes	Positive	Negative	Totals
Self-determination	7	0	7
Colonialism	0	1	1
Nationalists' ability to Maintain Peace, Stability and Order	2	6	8
Totals	9	7	16

N = 13 editorials

The numbers indicate that the editorials writer strongly supported the idea of self-determination with seven positive references and no negative point. The editorial writer seemed to be reluctant to discuss or to make comments about the idea of colonialism, with only one negative point, and no positive one. In regard to the nationalists' ability to govern, the editors clearly opposed the idea, with six negative references and only two positive.

The Two Newspapers' Treatments of the Two Countries

The *New York Times* editorial attitudes toward the three themes were similar to those of the *Washington*

Post. The two newspapers' editorials strongly favored the idea of self-determination. The two newspapers' editorials did not reflect any negative attitudes toward self-determination. The *New York Times* editorials contained seven positive references to self-determination for Indonesia and four positive references to self-determination for Indo-China. The *Washington Post* editorials contained seven references, all of which were positive.

In regard to colonialism, the *New York Times* editorials seemed to be more strongly against the idea than those in the *Washington Post*. The *New York Times* editorials contained nine references coded as negative and only one positive, while the *Washington Post* contained only one reference coded negative on colonialism. Negative attitudes toward colonialism in the newspapers' editorials can be illustrated by phrases such as "all nations, East and West, recognize that the colonial era in Asia is over forever," which appeared in the *New York Times* December 22, 1946, under the title of "Ferment in the far East."

In regard to the nationalists' ability to maintain peace, stability, and order, editorials in the two newspapers in general reflected similar attitudes. The *New York Times* editorials contained 10 references coded as negative, and five coded as positive. However, by looking at the country studied, the *New York Times* editorials seemed to suggest that the Indo-Chinese leaders were better than the Indonesian leaders. Regarding Indonesian leaders, this newspaper's editorials contained eight references coded as negative and two references coded as positive; regarding to Indo-Chinese leaders, editorials contained three references coded as negative. The *Washington Post* had no editorial on Indo-China. Its editorials about Indonesian leadership included six references coded as negative and two references coded as positive. Negative attitudes toward the theme can be illustrated by phrase such as in the *Washington Post* editorial of August 7, 1947, under title "Indonesian Truce," which said: "It is doubtful, also, whether the government at Jogjakarta will find much support from the potential sister republics in archipelagoes."

To provide a view of the nature of the editorials and evidence of coding decisions, the section below presents the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* editorials on Indonesia.

New York Times on Self-determination for Indonesia: +7

The seven editorials cited below were classified as positive toward self-determination, because they

reflected positive attitudes toward self-determination for Indonesia. In “Unrest in Indonesia” (10-09-1945), the editor compared Indonesia with the Philippines. While the Philippines already had independence, the editor said that Indonesia should have its own liberty, too. In “War Aims in Indonesia” (12-04-1945), although the editor criticized strongly an anti-American statement of Premier Sjahrir of Indonesia, the editorial reflected sympathy for Indonesia’s efforts to assure self-government.

In “Allied Job in the Pacific” (01-24-1946), the editor argued that though some Indonesians wanted to keep British troops in Indonesia to maintain peace and order, the editor did not mean that the great upsurge of national sentiment was not genuine. In “Peace Prospect in Java” (02-17-1946), the editorial praised the Dutch for offering Indonesian nationalists a commonwealth status and self-government.

In “News from Indonesia” (05-19-1947), the editor wrote about the dominion status and reminded the Dutch of its *de facto* recognition of the Republic authority. In “Hope for Peace in Java” (07-04-1947), the editor hoped that the new premier, Amir Sjahrifoedin, could create at last a peaceful transition from colonialism to self-government. And in “New Crisis in Java” (07-18-1947), the editor insisted that the Dutch should be patients and make every effort for a peaceful transition from colonialism to self-government.

Washington Post on Self-determination for Indonesia: +7

All seven references were positive toward self-determination for Indonesia. In “End of Soekarno” (11-14-1945), the editor mentioned that “the desire for independence is a tidal wave sweeping the Orient, a force that cannot long be checked.” In “Indonesia” (02-14-1946), the editor insisted the Dutch to offer an advance to self-rule for Indonesia. In “Talks on Indonesia” (04-21-1946), the editor seemed to be happy when Dutch and Indonesian representatives had begun discussions to settle the future status of Indonesia. The editor wrote: “The indications nor are, however, that the parley will be a success, that from it will emerge an agreement which will go along way to satisfy the Indonesia urge for self-rule without immediately severing the link that for so long has bound Indonesia to the Dutch crown.”

In “Truce in Java” (10-18-1946), the editor seemed to believe that self-determination for Indonesia was only a matter of time. The editor wrote: “What still divides the two sides is not the

question of self-rule for Indonesia but when, to what degree and in what circumstances such a system of self-rule is to operate.” In “U.S. of Indonesia” (11-24-1946), the editor seemed to be convinced that complete self-rule was visible for Indonesians. The editor wrote: “Thus the 80 million people of Indonesia will join the 400 million people of India and 13 million people of the Philippines in the list of those who have achieved complete self-rule. It is an event of far-reaching magnitude and importance in world history.”

In “Indonesian Republic” (04-20-1947), the editor supported the United States’ *de facto* recognition of Indonesia as “a happy reminder that we ourselves opened --in the Philippines-- this movement toward the realization of the rights of Asiatic peoples to choose their own destiny.” And in “Trouble in the East” (07-24-1947), the editor’s positive attitude toward self-rule was expressed in the first sentence: “Self-rule, the aim of most of the colonial peoples in the East, is not an end, but a beginning ...”.

New York Times on Self-determination for Indo-China; +4

The four editorials conveying attitudes toward self-determination for Indo-China were all positive. In “Policy in the East” (12-21-1945), the editor made an analogy between Indo-China and Indonesia which had natural aspiration for self-government that should be encouraged. In “French Indo-China” (03-09-1946), the editor insisted that the effort of Indo-China to gain autonomy or status as an independent kingdom should be encouraged.

In “Outlook in Indo-China” (01-22-1947), the editor reflected sympathy toward the Indo-Chinese struggle for independence. The editor wrote that “without waiting to demonstrate the capacity of self-government, they are deeply determined to have it.” And in “Indo-China and Indonesia” (09-12-1947), the editor mentioned that actually Indo-Chinese nationalists had very strong motive to fight on to complete independence.

New York Times on Colonialism in Indonesia: -3

The three editorials that mentioned the colonial status seemed to attack colonialism as something old and out of date. In “Policy in the East” (12-21-1945), the editor strongly showed a negative attitude toward colonialism. The editor wrote that it was “obviously impossible simply to restore the old colonial system.”

Again, in “Allied Job in the Pacific” (01-24-1946), the editor made a negative comment on colonialism by writing that it was impossible that “the old order can be restored unchanged.” And in “War in Indonesia” (07-22-1947), the editor criticized the Dutch military action launched to reestablish the Dutch colonial empire in Indonesia.

***Washington Post* on Colonialism in Indonesia: –1**

Among 13 editorials, there was only one that expressed an attitude toward colonialism. However, the only one editorial seemed to criticized strongly the Dutch colonialism in Indonesia. The editor wrote: “The age of colonialism is in liquidation, and we hope the Dutch will not forget it ...”.

***New York Times* on Colonialism in Indo-China: –6, and +1**

The only positive comment was when the editor mentioned in “Policy in the East” (12-21-1945) that the French still held legitimate rights and interests in Indo-China. The six negative comments were easy to find, because the editor so often attacked explicitly the French policy in Indo-China. In “Empires in the East” (10-04-1945), the editor mentioned the refusal of the Orient to return to colonial status which existed before World War II. In “Ferment in the Far East” (12-22-1946), the editor wrote that “all nations, east and West, recognize that the colonial era in Asia is over forever.”

In “Outlook in Indo-China” (01-22-1947), the editor criticized the French, which wanted to rebuild colonialism “at the same old stand and with the same old policy.” In “Hope in indo-China” (05-06-1947), again the editor very strongly criticized the French policy in Indo-China. It was written in rude words, such as “nothing so clearly illustrates the moral bankruptcy of the former French policy in indo-China ...”. In “The War in Indo-China” (06-23-1947), the editor supported an American attempt to get French to terminate its colonial war in Indo-China. And in “Indo-China Stalemate” (07-15-1947), again the editor attacked the policy of “divide and rule” of the French in dealing with Indo-China.

***New York Times* on Ability to Govern of Indonesia: +2, and –8**

The two editorials classified as positive were shown both in “New Crisis in Java” (07-18-1947) and

“The Case of Indonesia” (08-02-1947). In these two editorials, the editor said the Dutch, by recognizing the Republic as the de facto authority, implied a belief that the Republic was able to maintain peace, stability, and order.

The other eight editorials seemed to doubt Indonesian leaders’ ability to govern. In “Unrest in Indonesia” (10-09-1945), the editor mentioned that the nationalistic movement in Indonesia has lost its ground since the Japanese occupation. Moreover, compared to the Dutch, the nationalist forces were very inferior. In “Policy in the East” (12-21-1945), the editor clearly questioned the capability of the nationalists by considering that they were still not ripe for self-government.

In “Allied Job in the Pacific” (01-24-1946), the editor mentioned internal conflicts among nationalist forces and criticized national leaders for failing to prevent such internal conflicts. In “Peace Prospect in java” (02-17-1946), the editor underestimated the popularity of President Soekarno by considering him as a Japanese-sponsored president. In “Dutch Troops in java” (03-11-1946), the editor again criticized Soekarno as a Japanese-appointed “head of state” in an unrecognized Indonesian Republic. In “Troubled Indonesia” (05-02-1947), again the editor said that Indonesia was not “ripe enough” for self-government, because most people were still illiterate and their leaders could not handle internal conflicts among nationalistic forces.

In “New Crisis in Java” (07-18-1947), the editor pointed out another negative factor of the nationalists. It was said that there was not a united policy among Indonesian leaders, which made negotiations between Indonesia and the Dutch quite difficult. And in “Triumph of the U.N.” (08-04-1947), the editor mentioned doubt of the nationalists’ capability to maintain stability and peace in Indonesia. Moreover, the editor seemed to agree with the great majority of the Security Council that a Dutch withdrawal could create chaos.

***Washington Post* on Ability to Govern of Indonesia: +2, and –6**

From eight references, there were only two that expressed positive attitudes toward the Indonesian leaders’ ability to govern. In “Talk on Indonesia” (04-21-1946), the editor praised the Indonesian leaders who were able to engage amicable discussions with the Dutch. In “Indonesian Republic” (04-20-1947), the editor mentioned that “since the end of the war, the Indonesian independence movement has actually

held most local authority in the three principal islands of Java, Sumatra and Madoera.”

The other six references doubted the ability of the Indonesian nationalists to govern. In “End of Soekarno” (11-14-1945), the editor mentioned the inability of Indonesian leaders to unite and maintain order. The editor said that “attacks on foreigners by superheated Nationalists prove to the outside world that they are not a united people and are not ripe politically.” In “Truce in Java” (10-18-1946), the editor mentioned that Indonesia was controlled by the extremists. In “Trouble in the East” (07-14-1947), again the editor mentioned that the extremist took over situation. The editor wrote: “Sjahrir, formerly Prime Minister, has been deposed, and the extremists are in the saddle.”

In “Indonesia Truce” (08-07-1947), the editor doubted about the popularity of Indonesian leaders. The editor wrote: “It is doubtful, also, whether the government at Jogjakarta will find much support from the potential system republics in the archipelago.” In “Indonesian Snag” (08-21-1947), the editor explicitly expressed its doubt of the Indonesian leaders. The editor wrote: “How much pro-Republican sentiment remains in Indonesia is difficult to determine. Probably very little.” And in “Indonesia’s Travail” (09-26-1947), the editor wrote: “Underlying the whole situation, however, is the fact that the republican government at Jogjakarta has not been able to enforce its policies in the face of opposition from armed local chieftains.”

***New York Times* on Ability to Govern of Indo-Chinese: +3, and –2**

The image of the Indo-Chinese nationalists was better than that of the Indonesian nationalists. There were three editorials that made positive comments and only two that made negative comments. The editor mentioned in “Accord in Indo-China” (09-21-1946) that Ho Chi-minh was a professional revolutionist, who had the ability to lead his people and did not commit Vietnam to Communism. In “Outlook in Indo-China” (01-22-1947), the editor wrote that in guerrilla warfare in Indo-china, the nationalist forces were better organized than the French. And in “France in Indo-China” (03-30-1947), the editor mentioned that the nationalists were deeply determined to have the capacity made some competent military observers doubt that the French could maintain itself in Indo-China.

The negative comment on the ability to govern was in “Indo-China Stalemate” (07-15-1947),

in which the editor mentioned that although the nationalists were better organized, they were not strong enough to drive out the French from Indo-China. The other negative comment was in “Policy in the East” (12-21-1945), in which the editor mentioned the question of how far the nationalists were ripe for self-government, because most people were still illiterate and poor.

Analysis and Discussion

The findings seem to support the hypotheses stated in the research. Hypothesis (1), which said that the two newspapers would support the idea of self-government and would not support colonialism, was supported by the data found. As shown in Figure 1, the two newspapers’ editorials had 18 positive references to the idea of self-determination and no negative ones. Editorials in the two newspapers clearly supported the idea of self-determination. Editorials in the two newspapers most often opposed colonialism, with 10 references coded as negative and only one coded as positive on the theme.

Hypothesis (2), which said that editorials in the two newspapers would not support the idea that the nationalist leaders were able to govern, was also supported by the data found. The two newspapers’ editorials revealed negative attitudes more often than positive attitudes toward this theme, with 16 references coded as negative compared to seven coded as positive. However, this hypothesis was not supported by the *New York Times* editorial attitudes toward the Indo-Chinese leaders, with only two references coded as negative compared to three coded as positive. Three out of five, however, is not sufficient to say that the newspaper’s editorials supported the idea that the Indo-Chinese leaders were able to govern their country.

Editorials in the two newspapers may be interpreted as ambivalent regarding the Indonesian and Indo-Chinese struggle for independence if one assumes support for nationalist leaders follows logically from support for self-determination as a value. On the one hand, editorials conveyed positive attitudes toward the idea of self-determination and negative attitudes toward colonialism. On the other hand, they conveyed negative attitudes toward the ability of the nationalists to maintain peace, stability and order in their countries. The editorial writers seemed to favor the nationalists when discussing the idea of self-determination and colonialism, but they seemed to favor the colonial powers when discussing the ability to maintain peace, stability and order. In

general, it appears that the two newspapers' editors were doubtful about the nationalists' abilities to maintain peace, stability and order.

At least three facts should be considered in reading these research conclusions. First, the percentage of editorials that mentioned the themes was small. If each editorial contained three themes, there should be 135 attitudes. But there were only 52 or 38.5 per cent of the 135 attitudes the editorials could have. The small percentage of editorials that mentioned the themes could raise questions about the editors' editorial policy. By giving no comment on colonialism, for example, were the editorial writers definitely neutral? Or was the issue of too little interest for comment? Or did the editors choose to keep silent rather than to write something that could hurt one party in the conflicting situation?

Secondly, the small number of editorials dealing with the two countries could also raise questions. Perhaps the two newspapers devoted ample space to news about Indonesia and Indo-China and simply did not carry many editorials about them. It seemed that the newspapers' front pages contained much news on the relevant issues, and there were discussions in special columnists' space, such as Walter Lippmann's column in the *Washington Post*. Nevertheless, although the number of editorials dealing with the two countries was small, those editorials represented the two newspapers' complete editorial treatments of the issues in the period studied.

Thirdly, the research did not focus on the problems that may have been significant in shaping the American newspapers' editorial treatment, namely the relationships between the United States and Holland, and between the United States and France at the time. These could raise questions, such as: Did these relationships play any important role in shaping the American newspapers' editorial attitudes toward the themes studied in this research?

Conclusion

His paper has examined editorial attitudes expressed in two American newspapers toward specific international news and issues. The data found tend to support the argument that editorial attitudes regarding international issues are shaped by national interests and cultural values. In dealing with the international events, the editorials favored Indonesia and Indo-China when discussing the idea of self-determination and colonialism, but they

favored the Dutch and French when discussing the ability to govern.

The research reported here is insufficient to support generalizations, and some limitations of this research should be noted. Since the research focused on only the two newspapers, the conclusions drawn are limited necessarily to the two newspapers' editorials treatment of the issues. The most this research can show is how the subject studied was treated in editorials of the two newspapers. More research is needed on more newspapers, either domestic or foreign, before generalizations may be stated. The question of editorials policy is also beyond the focus of this research. However, some knowledge of editorial policies of editors would increase understanding of the data reported here.

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