Ideology or Insanity? Media Presentation of Ted Kaczynski and Tim McVeigh

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IDEOLOGY OR INSANITY? MEDIA PRESENTATION OF
TED KACZYNSKI AND TIM McVEIGH

by

Matthew P. Sheptoski

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Sociology

Western Michigan University
August 2002
This dissertation explores mainstream media presentation of two convicted murderers: Theodore J. Kaczynski, otherwise known as "The Unabomber," and Timothy J. McVeigh, found guilty of the 1995 destruction of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. More specifically, I analyze *The New York Times*'s and *Time*'s presentation of these two actors in order to assess whether their acts were attributed to political and ideological motivation or psychological abnormality and mental illness. Quantitative and qualitative findings indicate that Kaczynski's crimes were more likely to be attributed to psychological abnormality and mental illness, while McVeigh's crimes were more likely to be attributed to political and ideological motivation. This dissertation thus stands at the intersection of mass media and the medicalization of deviance.
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

On the morning of April 19, 1995, a yellow Ryder truck parked in front of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. At 9:02 a.m. the four thousand pound homemade bomb which was in the truck's storage area detonated. The massive explosion sheared off a large chunk of the building, killing 168 people, including 19 children, and injuring 500. What motivated the man, Timothy J. McVeigh, who was eventually convicted of this act? According to *The New York Times*, the Oklahoma City bombing was done "in the service of ideology" (Goodman, 1997). In other words, McVeigh's acts were attributed to political and ideological motivation.

Just five days later, on April 24th, a bomb exploded in a Sacramento, California office, killing timber industry lobbyist Gilbert B. Murray. It was the final explosion in a string of mail bombs dating back to 1978, which resulted in three deaths and 23 injuries. What motivated the man, Theodore J. Kaczynski, better known as "The Unabomber," who was eventually convicted of these acts? According to *The New York Times*, Kaczynski's actions were the result of individual psychological abnormality: he killed due to "an inner psychological need" (Johnston, 1995a). In other words, Kaczynski's actions were attributed to illness. In contrast to McVeigh, he was not presented as a politically and ideologically motivated actor.

These cases present an interesting opportunity to compare mainstream mass media coverage of Theodore J. Kaczynski and Timothy J. McVeigh, paying special attention
to the media's use and application of medical terminology. More specifically, these cases provide an opportunity to wed two distinct lines of inquiry: the mass media research of Herman and Chomsky (2002) and Conrad and Schneider's (1980) concept, medicalization, the process whereby conditions, behaviors, and actions come to be attributed to illness. In this dissertation, I ground the marriage of these research lines in empirical data by comparing The New York Times's and Time's presentations of Theodore J. Kaczynski and Timothy J. McVeigh. This dissertation thus stands at the intersection of mass media and medicalization.

Critical awareness and analysis of mass media and the images, frames and perspectives it presents is important because of the major role the media play in constructing our consciousness and perceptions of the world. Hall had this to say: "News media are a major source of cultural production and information. Their representations of the social world provide explanations, descriptions and frames for understanding how and why the world works as it does" (1982, p.35). Simply, the mass media do not just describe events; they also tell why those events occurred. They "provide explanations." This dissertation focuses on how The New York Times, chosen for analysis because of its status as the most important and influential paper in the country, and Time, chosen because of its status as the country's most widely distributed weekly newsmagazine, explained the actions of Ted Kaczynski and Tim McVeigh.

The media serve as our prime source of news and information about the world. In providing explanations of events and playing such a large role in the construction of our worldview, the mass media serve a social control function, or as
Herman and Chomsky put it, "a propaganda function," (1988, p. xi), especially "in a world of concentrated wealth and major conflicts of class interest" (1988, p. 1).

Critical analysis and understanding of the mass media is important, to be sure, but the concept of medicalization is crucial as well. As with the mass media, the significance of medicalization lies in its social control function. In fact, according to Conrad and Schneider, medicalization has become the main agent of social control (1980, p. 17).

To date, however, no systematic research has been undertaken which considers the intersection of mass media and medicalization. More specifically, no one has compared media coverage of two individuals, one, Kaczynski, an anarchist, the other, McVeigh, a rightist, who claimed to commit politically and ideologically motivated crimes, paying special attention to the media's use and application of medical terminology.

My specific empirical aim in this investigation of the intersection of mass media and medicalization is to assess whether or not mainstream media presentations displayed a double standard in the use and application of medical terminology as an explanation of the actions of Ted Kaczynski and Tim McVeigh: To what did the media attribute the actions of Kaczynski and McVeigh? Were the actions of one more likely to be attributed to political and ideological motivation? Were the actions of one more likely to be attributed to psychological abnormality? To answer these questions I performed quantitative and qualitative content analysis of *The New York Times's* and *Time's* coverage of Theodore J. Kaczynski, otherwise known as the Unabomber, convicted of sending mail bombs to leading technocrats in a 17-year
anti-technology campaign, killing 3 and injuring 17, and Timothy McVeigh, convicted of killing 168 people in the destruction of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, asking two more specific questions of the data in each article: First, did the article attribute a political ideology to the actor in question? Second, did the article define the actor in question as abnormal?

History: The McVeigh and Kaczynski Cases

The short histories that follow were drawn from The New York Times and Time.

Timothy McVeigh

Born April 23, 1968 in Lockport, New York, near Buffalo, Timothy McVeigh grew up in a middle-class neighborhood. After graduating from high school in 1986, McVeigh briefly attended a local community college before enlisting in the U.S. Army in May of 1988. After basic training he was stationed at Fort Riley, Kansas, as part of the Army's 1st Infantry Division.

In January of 1991 he was shipped to the Persian Gulf, eventually seeing combat action in the Persian Gulf War as a gunner in a Bradley Fighting Vehicle. But McVeigh left the Persian Gulf for Fort Bragg, North Carolina in February to try out for the Army's elite Special Forces unit. With very little preparation time, he was unable to endure a 90-minute march with a 45-pound pack, and withdrew from the program after two days. Upset by his failure to make the Special Forces, McVeigh
took an early discharge offer from the Army, returning to the Buffalo area in January 1992, where he lived with his father and found work as a security guard.

In February of 1993, six Branch Davidians were killed by Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agents trying to serve arrest and search warrants at the Branch Davidian compound near Waco, Texas, as part of an investigation into illegal possession of firearms and explosives. Four ATF agents were killed. McVeigh blamed the Federal Government in general and the ATF in particular, for the deaths, and saw the incident as evidence that the government had become a threat to Americans’ freedom. He took action.

In September 1994, McVeigh began assembling explosive material for use in the bomb that would eventually destroy the Murrah Federal Building. Seven months later, on April 18, 1995, the bomb was assembled as a mixture of ammonium nitrate, fuel, and other explosives were placed in the back of the infamous Ryder truck.

The following day, April 19, 1995, around 9 a.m. McVeigh lit the fuses on the bomb, and parked the Ryder truck outside the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in downtown Oklahoma City. The massive blast occurred at 9:02 a.m., killing 168 people and injuring hundreds more.

McVeigh fled in a getaway car he had placed several blocks from the building but was stopped 90 minutes later in Oklahoma by a state trooper for driving without a license plate. He was found to be carrying a concealed Glock pistol and arrested.

Two days later, on April 21, 1995, just prior to a court hearing in which he could have been released on bail, McVeigh was recognized as a bombing suspect and held. In a now famous scene, McVeigh, his face expressionless, was taken out of the

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Noble County Courthouse by federal agents, who walked him through an angry, shouting mob and transferred him to Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma City, where he appeared before a federal judge and was charged in the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building.

In August of 1995, McVeigh was indicted on 11 counts in the bombing. The first three were for conspiring to use a weapon of mass destruction to kill people and destroy federal property. The eight remaining counts were for killing federal law enforcement agents who were in the building. He was arraigned later that month and pled not guilty.

On February 20, 1996, the Judge in the case, Richard Matsch, ruled that McVeigh's trial would be moved to Denver, Colorado, from Oklahoma City due to pretrial publicity. Specifically, the judge said that the newspaper and television reports about the two men had demonized them.

The jury, comprised of seven men and five women, was seated April 22, 1997, and on June 2, 1997, McVeigh was found guilty of all 11 counts of murder, conspiracy, and use of a weapon of mass destruction. Eleven days later he was sentenced to die by lethal injection. Shortly thereafter Timothy McVeigh was transferred to the federal prison in Florence, Colorado, known as Supermax, the nation's most secure prison. Interestingly, he would eventually share a row of cells with Ted Kaczynski before his execution in June 2001.
Theodore J. Kaczynski

Theodore J. Kaczynski was born May 22, 1942 to Wanda and Theodore R. Kaczynski and grew up in Evergreen Park, a working-class suburb of Chicago. After finishing high school early, the 16-year old Kaczynski went off to Harvard in the fall of 1958 and graduated in 1962. From Harvard he went on to obtain a master’s and doctorate in math from the University of Michigan. In the fall of 1967 Kaczynski landed a job teaching mathematics at the University of California-Berkeley. In 1969 he abruptly quit.

Ted and his brother David, who would later contact the FBI after reading the Unabomber manifesto, bought 1.4 acres of land near Lincoln, Montana in 1971. This is where Kaczynski later built his 10 x 12-foot cabin, in which he lived with no electricity or running water.

On May 25, 1978 a bomb exploded at Northwestern University, injuring one. This was the first in a series of mail bomb explosions, which took place over the next 17 years, ending April 24th, 1995 with the death of a timber industry executive. Over the years, 23 people were injured and three were killed. The case came to be called “Unabomb” and the mysterious perpetrator came to be known as the Unabomber because the early targets were people associated with universities and airlines, though later targets varied from an advertising executive to the president of a timber industry company.

The next three bombs went off in Illinois as well: on May 9 1979, one person was injured when a bomb exploded at Northwestern’s Technology Institute. The next bomb went off on an American Airlines flight leaving Chicago on November 15,
1979. Twelve people suffered smoke inhalation and the plane made an emergency landing at Dulles International Airport. The third bomb went off at the home of an airline executive on June 10, 1980, resulting in one injury.

The next three bombings took place at universities: at the University of Utah on October 8, 1981, in which no one was injured; at Vanderbilt University, in Nashville, Tennessee on May 5, 1982, and at Cory Hall (housing the computer sciences) at the University of California at Berkeley, July 2, 1982, in which a professor of electrical engineering and computer science was injured.

The Unabomber struck several times in late 1985. The first incident took place at the University of California, Berkeley, on May 15, leaving one person injured. One month later, on June 13th, a bomb was found at the Boeing Company in Auburn Washington. There were no injuries. The next incident took place November 15, 1985 in Ann Arbor, Michigan, injuring two. The first fatality in the Unabom case occurred with the next incident, a bombing that took place outside of a computer store in Sacramento, December 11, 1985.

On February 20, 1987, the Unabomber was spotted outside a Salt Lake City computer store. The witness saw a man in a hooded sweatshirt and aviator sunglasses placing a bomb, and this description served as the basis for a widely distributed and well-known drawing of the Unabomber. He mailed no bombs over the next six years.

The Unabomber was silent until June 23, 1993, when he struck again in California, severely injuring a genetics professor by sending a mail bomb to his home. The following day a bomb exploded at Yale University, severely injuring a professor and computer scientist.
Also in June 1993, the Unabomber communicated for the first time in a letter to *The New York Times*, in which he described himself as an anarchist.

The second Unabom fatality took place December 10, 1994, in North Caldwell, New Jersey when an advertising executive was killed by a bomb sent to his home.

On April 20, 1995 Kaczynski sent four letters, including one to *The New York Times* and another to Yale University computer science professor David Gelernter, a victim of a Unbomber attack in 1993. In these letters the Unabomber said he had a long article that he wanted published in a leading newspaper, at which point he would stop sending mail bombs.

The final bombing took place on April 25, 1995 in Sacramento, California, when a timber lobbyist was killed as he opened a mail bomb intended for his predecessor in the forestry association. The Unabomber sent his 37,000-word manuscript to both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* on June 24, 1995. In accompanying letters, he said that if his full manuscript was published by one of the newspapers within three months, he would stop his bombing campaign. The article, titled “Industrial Society and Its Future,” called for a worldwide revolution against industrialization and technology. Over the course of 232 paragraphs Kaczynski argued that modern technology had forced humans to live and behave in ways that were increasingly removed from natural patterns of human behavior, thereby causing numerous problems, from psychological alienation to environmental destruction.
Several days later Penthouse owner Bob Guccione received a copy of the manuscript and a letter from Kaczynski in which he said that he wanted the manuscript published by a leading periodical but would accept publication in Penthouse if The New York Times, The Washington Post, and Time magazine refused. A condition, however, was added: if the manuscript was published in Penthouse only, then one final bomb would be sent.


In February 1996, Kaczynski's younger brother, David, having read the article and noted similarities between it and old letters written by his brother, contacted the FBI.

Shortly thereafter, on April 3, 1996, Ted Kaczynski was arrested at his mountain cabin in Montana and indicted in Sacramento, California for two murders and two other non-lethal attacks as well as the third fatality, which occurred in New Jersey.

Opening statements in the trial of Ted Kaczynski, scheduled for January 1998, were delayed when Kaczynski renewed his request to fire his lawyers and hire an attorney willing to construct a defense based on his political views. The attorney, Tony Serra of San Francisco, had agreed to represent Kaczynski for free, but the judge denied Kaczynski's request, forcing him to stick with his court-appointed
lawyers, who, the judge ruled previously, had the authority to determine which type of defense would be used.

Opening statements were again delayed on January 8, 1998, as Kaczynski asked to serve as his own attorney, whereupon Judge Burrell ordered Kaczynski to undergo a competency evaluation. It also became known that Kaczynski attempted suicide the previous night.

On January 17, 1998 court-appointed psychiatrist Dr. Sally Johnson of the Bureau of Prisons reported that Kaczynski was a paranoid schizophrenic, but competent to stand trial.

Five days later, on January 22, 1998, Judge Burrell again rejected Kaczynski’s request to act as his own attorney. Significantly, at this point a deal was struck and Kaczynski agreed to a plea bargain: in exchange for a guilty plea he was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole, thus avoiding the death penalty.

In this introductory chapter I have identified the topic under consideration in this dissertation as well as its significance, posed specific questions for empirical inquiry, and presented short histories of the McVeigh and Kaczynski cases. In the chapters that follow I: (1) discuss the theoretical underpinnings of this dissertation; (2) outline the methods used in addressing my research questions; (3) detail both quantitative and qualitative findings; and (4) interpret and discuss these findings.

I turn now to the theoretical orientation employed in this project.
CHAPTER II: THEORY

Having introduced my research topic and its general significance, as well as specifying the research questions under consideration, I turn now to an explication of the theoretical underpinnings of this dissertation, which draws together two distinct lines of research: Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model of news and Conrad and Schneider's notion of the medicalization of deviance.

Herman and Chomsky

First, Herman and Chomsky specify a set of structural factors, which they term filters, that account for the content and contour of corporate news media in U.S. (2002, p.35). Grounding their theoretical analysis in both quantitative and qualitative data from several case studies, they demonstrate how information, viewpoints, and perspectives which run counter to the interests of corporate and government elites are systematically filtered out, resulting in a portrayal of the world "as powerful groups wish it to be perceived (Herman & Chomsky, 1988, preface)," thus serving a propaganda or social control function in the process. The authors' account for this constriction with reference to the filters, which include ownership, advertising, media sourcing, "flak," and "the ruling ideology." The result is elite domination of the mass media as well as the marginalization of dissent. According to Herman (1996):

These factors are linked together, reflecting the multi-leveled capability of powerful business and government entities...to exert power over the flow of information. We noted that the five factors
involved: ownership, advertising, sourcing, flak, and anti-communist ideology, work as filters through which information must pass, and that individually and often in additive fashion they help shape media choices. (p. 118)

Far more germane to this dissertation, however, is their idea of “dichotomous” media coverage. Centering on several case studies, they “examine the differences in treatment of situations broadly similar in character, except for the political and economic interests at stake. Our expectation is that news as well as editorial opinion will be strongly influenced by those interests and should display a predictable bias” (Herman & Chomsky, 2002, p. xix). More simply, the media are expected to treat similar cases in a dichotomous matter depending on their relation to vested power interests.

The authors first predict that the victims of nations which are looked upon unfavorably by the United States will be found “worthy” and will be subject to more intense and sympathetic coverage than those victimized by the United States or its “client states,” who are “unworthy” (Herman & Chomsky, 2002, pp. xix-xx). They then compare the media’s treatment of victims of enemy states and those of the United States and its “client states.” Specifically, they compare the treatment by the media of the murder of a Polish priest, Jerzy Popieluszko, with victims of American “client states” in Central America. Their predictions are realized: quantitative and qualitative analysis reveals “worthy victims” and “unworthy victims,” depending upon their relationship to elite interests. Media coverage is extensive and sympathetic for the former, while coverage of the latter is scant and unsympathetic, if, in fact, they receive any coverage at all. Media treatment of Popieluszko, defined as a
"worthy victim," was voluminous and sympathetic. Coverage of murdered priests, nuns, and other victims in Central America, defined as "unworthy victims," was scant and much less sympathetic.

Next, they show that the mainstream media have followed a government agenda in covering elections in "client and disfavored states" (Herman & Chomsky, 2002, p. xxiv). Specifically, they analyze media coverage of elections in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua during the 1980s. Again, their findings reveal dichotomization: For example, The New York Times coverage of the Nicaraguan election planned for 1984 focused on such issues as freedom of the press, free speech, and freedom of assembly, whereas The Times's coverage of the election in El Salvador the same year made almost no mention of these freedoms, or lack thereof. The shape and contour of media coverage was expected: Nicaragua was defined as an "enemy state," whereas El Salvador was a "client state" of the U.S., clearly and forcefully demonstrating that the media displayed a double standard in its coverage.

They note:

This same bias is apparent in the press treatment of more recent elections in Cambodia, Yugoslavia, Kenya, Mexico, Russia, Turkey and Uruguay. Cambodia and Yugoslavia were the only two of these seven ruled by a party strongly objectionable to us policy makers, and it is in these cases that The New York Times warns of serious problems... (Herman & Chomsky, 2002, p. xxv)

In the other countries "deeply flawed" elections were portrayed "as steps toward democracy."

The concept of dichotomous media treatment also applied to the alleged Bulgarian KGB "plot" to murder the pope in the early 1980's (Herman & Chomsky,
2002, p. 39), as well as "the Indochina wars"; that is, United States aggression against Cambodia, Lao, and Vietnam (2002, p. xxix).

As their initial case study comparing the mass media's amount and quality of coverage devoted to Jerzy Popieluszko, a Polish priest murdered by the Polish police in October 1984, versus their coverage of priests, nuns, and other religious workers murdered within U.S. "client states" centers on the coverage of individuals, it most closely, though by no means fully, parallels this research project. As such, a deeper consideration of this case is warranted. According to the authors:

A propaganda system will consistently portray people abused in enemy states as worthy victims, whereas those treated with equal or greater severity by its own government or clients will be unworthy. The evidence of worth may be read from the extent and character of attention and indignation. We will show in this chapter...the US mass media's practical definitions of worth...(Herman & Chomsky, 2002, p. 37)

The authors expect Popieluszko, murdered in an enemy state, will be defined by the media as a "worthy victim," whereas priests murdered in our client states in Latin America will be defined as "unworthy victims": "The former may be expected to elicit a propaganda outburst by the mass media; the latter will not generate sustained coverage" (Herman & Chomsky, 2002, p. 37).

Coverage of Popieluszko's murder and the trial of his murderers by The New York Times, Time, Newsweek, and CBS News was compared to media coverage of (1) seventy two murdered priests, as listed in the book Cry of the People, by Penny Lernoux, in Latin America by agents of U.S. "client states"; (2) 23 priests, missionaries, and other religious workers murdered in Guatemala from 1980-1985;
(3) the murder of Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador, murdered in 1980; and
(4) four American nuns murdered in El Salvador, also in 1980.

The total coverage of those murdered in U.S. client states did not equal that devoted to Popieluszko: a total of 57 articles appeared in *The New York Times* (still 26.9% fewer articles than were devoted to Popieluszko). There were a total of 604.5 column inches (48.9% less than Popieluszko). *The Times* ran eight front-page article (20% fewer than Popieluszko) and no editorials. A total of ten articles were published in *Time* and *Newsweek* (37.5% less than Popieluszko), with 247.5 column inches (20.9% less than Popieluszko). CBS Evening News aired 16 pieces (30.4% less than Popieluszko).

In addition to these quantitative differences, which are obviously very large, Herman and Chomsky performed qualitative analysis, asking such questions as: Were the murders portrayed as outrageous acts of barbarity or treated as unfortunate outcomes in troubled regions? Did the stories contain demands for justice? Was there speculation as to the possible involvement of authorities? Were the details of the murder told in full and reiterated in story after story? The authors state, for example: “With Popieluszko the media tried hard to establish that there was knowledge of and responsibility for the crime at higher levels of the Polish government. Soviet interest and possible involvement were also regularly invoked. With Romero, in contrast, no such questions were raised or pressed” (Herman & Chomsky, 2002, p. 54).

And while the media described the murder of Popieluszko in great detail, the details of Romero’s murder were “concise” (Herman & Chomsky, 2002, p. 48). Of the murdered churchwomen, they say:
Gruesome details of Popieluszko were recounted extensively while in all four of the media institutions in our sample the accounts of the violence done to the four murdered women were very succinct, omitted many details and were not repeated after the initial disclosures. The murder of the four churchwomen was made remote and impersonal. (2002, p. 61)

They conclude:

We...show that the quality of treatment of the worthy and unworthy victims also differed sharply. While the coverage of the worthy victim was generous with gory details and quoted expressions of outrage and demands for justice, the coverage of the unworthy victims was low-keyed, designed to keep the lid on emotions and evoking regretful and philosophical generalities on the omnipresence of violence and the inherent tragedy of human life. (2002, p.39)

Each of the case studies analyzed by Herman and Chomsky dealt with media coverage of international events. How do their analyses bear out when applied to domestic events? Though they have not provided the in-depth and systematic quantitative and qualitative evidence as they have for coverage of Popieluszko and the murdered priests, for example, they say their ideas can be fruitfully applied to the domestic scene, explaining well media presentation of: Jesse Jackson’s 1988 presidential campaign (McChesney, 1989, p. 39), NAFTA (Herman & Chomsky, 2002, p. x1iii) and labor issues (2002, xiv), the chemical industry and its regulation or lack thereof (2002, p.x1vi), the “health insurance controversy” of 1992-93 (2002, p. x1vii), the “drug wars” (2002, p.x1viii), and the Seattle and Washington, D.C. protests of 1999 and 2000 (2002, p. x1iii).

Herman and Chomsky have not, however, applied their model to comparative coverage of two individuals who claim to have committed politically motivated
I turn now to the concept of medicalization.

Medicalization

What is the medicalization of deviance? The medicalization of deviance can be most simply characterized as the process whereby problems, behaviors, or social conditions come to be defined as caused by disease or illness; that is, they are defined as medical problems. The medical model assumes that the problem, behavior, or condition in question is caused by illness and this assumption impacts society's understanding of and response to the behavior, condition, or problem. According to Conrad: "The key to medicalization is the definitional issue. Medicalization consists of defining a problem in medical terms, using medical language to describe a problem," and "adopting a medical framework to understand a problem..." (1992, p.211). The "definitional issue" is an important one, as a variety of labels are usually culturally available. That is, a particular action, problem, or condition may be defined as being caused by sin, badness, or illness, as is increasingly the case in modern society. According to Szasz, medicalization of the personal, the social and the political are "pervasive characteristic of the modern age" (1970, p.5).

The point is that various labels are available for describing and defining acts, behaviors, and problems. For example, did political motivation, mental illness, or the devil cause the acts for which McVeigh and Kaczynski were convicted? Under the medicalization of deviance, acts are said to be caused by illness. Conceiving of
deviant behavior as caused by illness leads to emphasis, stress, and focus on that which is internal to social actors, while de-emphasizing the external environment. In so doing, “...the medical model of deviance locates the source of deviant behavior within the individual” (Conrad & Schneider, 1980, p. 35).

Conrad (1992) has identified three levels on which medicalization can occur. First, it can take place on the conceptual level, wherein a medical vocabulary or model is used to define and make sense of the problem, condition, or act in question. When medicalization occurs on this level, medical professionals may be only marginally involved and medical treatments may not be used (p. 211). This level of medicalization is most applicable to the present research, in which The New York Times and Time were more likely to use a medical vocabulary to define and describe Kaczynski than McVeigh and medical professionals such as psychiatrists were marginally involved.

The two other levels, the institutional and intersectional, though not germane to my research, deserve mention. On the institutional level, medicalization takes place when organizations use a medical approach. It is on the interactional level that “physicians are most directly involved. Medicalization occurs here as part of doctor-patient interaction, when a physician defines a problem as medical.”

Conditions from child abuse (Pfohl, 1977), to alcoholism (Schneider, 1978) have been medicalized. Work has also been done on the “medicalization of women’s lives”: battering, obesity, anorexia, and bulimia have been analyzed in terms of medicalization (Conrad, 1992, p. 221). Conrad has also identified work on the medicalization of aging (p. 222).
The typical focus in medicalization research has been "on the production of definitions, their use, and the consequences of that use" (Conrad & Schneider, 1992, p.278). In other work from the same year Conrad laid out areas of future research. It is clear that mass media use of medical vocabulary and definitions to depoliticize behavior was not on the agenda (Conrad, 1992). Nor have other researchers identified and analyzed these important issues since, though work continues to utilize the concept of medicalization.

I now take a very brief look at several recent projects which have taken medicalization as their focus, but which do not look at mass media and depoliticization. First, Carpiano (2001) says that Viagra has created a new model of medicalization, "passive medicalization," in which demand for the medication caused the medical industry to act as opposed to the oft-assumed "medical imperialism," whereby the medical industry and professions seek to widen the scope of their field (p. 444). Instead of medical professionals medicalizing a condition, erectile dysfunction, he claims the public has claimed the medical label. Likewise, the Kaczynski case does not display "medical imperialism".

Steen (2001) identified the medicalization of juvenile sex offenders in one Washington State county, emphasizing the conflicts which arise from competing legal and medical definitions which operate within the county’s juvenile justice system. Her work highlights the socially constructed nature and politics of the medicalization of deviance. With regard to media coverage of Kaczynski especially, but McVeigh as well, competing definitions were of obvious concern, again pointing to “the politics of definition” (Conrad and Schneider, 1980).
Rossol (2001) used Conrad's work on medicalization to show how members of the twelve-step program Gambler's Anonymous, in attending group meetings and interacting with other "compulsive gamblers," come to adopt a medical vocabulary and medical model to understanding and explain their behavior. He focused on how nonmedical laypersons in a non-medical setting adopt a medical vocabulary (Rossol, 2001, p. 318). The application of medical definitions in the absence of medical personnel typifies both Rossol's work on Gambler's Anonymous as well as the present research, but, to date, there is little note in the medicalization literature on the role of the mass media in medicalization which takes place on a conceptual level. That is, little attention is paid to mass media's use and application of medical definitions, particularly when those labels or definitions are applied to an act which is specifically claimed to be political, though several authors have noted the use of medical labels to depoliticize what would seem to be obviously political actions or behaviors. In the following paragraphs I briefly identify such work.

Several authors have noted the use of mental illness labels to depoliticize, and thus neutralize, political opponents or critics. Such practice has a rather long history. According to Bloch and Reddaway, the first recorded instance in which psychiatric means were used to depoliticize dissent in Russia occurred in 1836, when philosopher Pyotr Chaadayev wrote a "philosophical letter" critical of Nicholas I, who then declared him officially insane (1985, p. 133).

Conrad and Schneider cite the use in the United States of the medical label "draptomania," which was said to be a disease that caused slaves to run away from their masters (1980, p. 35). Nazi leaders defined their political opponents as mentally
ill before ordering their death, with political dissidents and racial minorities labeled “inveterate German haters” (1980, p. 223).

Medicalization results in the depoliticization of deviant behavior. Probably the most widely known instances of depoliticization of deviant behavior took place when political dissenters in the Soviet Union were labeled mentally ill and institutionalized. “This strategy served to neutralize the meaning of political protest and dissent, rendering it the ravings of mad persons” (Conrad, 1987, p.67).

The most in-depth analysis of the depoliticization of Soviet dissidents comes from Bloch and Reddaway (1977,1985). Systematic hospitalization of dissenters did not begin until the late 1930’s under Stalin, continuing through the 1960’s (Bloch & Reddaway, 1985, p. 138), with 500 documented cases over the past two decades (1985, p. 141). It is worth pointing out that schizophrenia was the medical label most often applied to Soviet dissidents (Bloch & Reddaway, 1985, p. 142), and was one of the labels applied to Ted Kaczynski.

Bloch and Reddaway focus on the state and its use of psychiatry to depoliticize: “For instance, the state may interpret a person’s intentions and actions in such a way as to undermine the legitimacy of the individual’s political dissent. Manipulated in this manner, political protest turns into a psychiatric issue” (1985, p.130). They continue: “The state, with the aid of psychiatrists, can thus discredit and effectively silence people who oppose its policies” (Bloch & Reddaway, 1985, p. 130). In the case of Soviet dissidents, the state had the power to apply medical labels as a way of neutralizing political protest.
Though Conrad and Bloch and Reddaway identify the use of medical labels as a tool used to control political opponents and dissent, the possible or potential role of the mass media in such processes is not mentioned. Several authors working in the specific area of the medicalization of deviance have at least mentioned the role of the media in these processes, though just one has mentioned the role media might play in the medicalization and depoliticization of political protest and dissent.

Authors have noted the rise of medicine and the medical label as a mechanism of social control, but to date little research has paid attention to the intersection of the media and medicalization with regard to depoliticization, though several researchers have at least mentioned the role of the media in medicalization processes.

Conrad and Schneider, for example, note that while the criminal justice system is typically understood to be the main institution and agent of social control, the mass media serve this function as well through the influencing of public perception and the social construction of reality (Conrad & Schneider, p. 1980). But they do not pursue this line of inquiry.

In his work on Viagra and the passive medicalization of erectile dysfunction Carpiano says that “news programs and newspaper articles” were “arguably” more responsible in promoting the medicalization of erectile dysfunction than the pharmaceutical industry (2001, p. 447). Yet he does not pursue this line or provide any evidence to support this claim.

Tiefer (1994) has analyzed the role of the mass media in one case of medicalization, the medicalization of impotence, in which the mass media served as one of four claims makers who promoted the medicalization of impotence. More
specifically, she looked at the media's role in defining for the public what constitutes an acceptable body, what it means to "function" properly, and the media's role in getting people to accept, adopt, and internalize medicalized definitions. The use of medicalized language by the mass media is instrumental to these processes.

According to Tiefer (1994, p. 268), the mass media promote a medicalized definition of sexual processes and impotence because it enables them to present sexual and titillating material legitimately and without protest. This raises the issue of economic concerns and interests merging with the mass media and the medicalization of deviance: medicalized definitions serve the interests of commercial media organizations in that they are more openly able to discuss and portray sex in an ultimate effort to sell more products.

Interestingly enough, one person who has acknowledged, however briefly, the mass media's role in the medicalization and depoliticization of individuals is psychiatrist Thomas Szasz, who, writing in 1970, noted *Time* magazine's coverage of Ezra Pound, indicted for treason at the end of WWII and committed to a psychiatric institution for 13 years. Upon his release from prison, *Time* printed a picture of Pound with the caption "Freedom for the warped" (Szasz, 1970, p. 207). Speaking more generally, he had this to say: "...not only the psychiatric and allied professions, the newspapers...are imbued with and purvey the ideology of mental health and illness" (Szasz, 1970, p. 75).

In this chapter, I have identified and explored the theoretical underpinnings of this dissertation, focusing on the critical mass media research perspective put forth by Herman and Chomsky as well as Conrad and Schneider's concept of medicalization.
More specifically, Herman and Chomsky provide quantitative and qualitative evidence of media distortion and uneven coverage. The strength of their analysis lies in the notion of "dichotomous" media coverage, whereby otherwise similar cases are presented differently based on their relation to vested power interests. They have not, however, discussed or even identified the uneven use and application of medical terminology by the mass media. On the other hand, Conrad and Schneider specifically, and the medicalization literature generally, have identified and discussed the use and application of medical terminology and labels to depoliticize behavior or actions, but very little research has identified or discussed the mass media's role in this process. My research draws together two distinct lines of research, wedding Herman and Chomsky's idea of "dichotomous coverage" to mass media use and application of medical terminology, leading me to an investigation of the media's uneven application of medical labels. This dissertation thus stands at the intersection of mass media and the medicalization of deviance.

In the following chapter I detail the methodological tools employed in this dissertation.
CHAPTER III: METHODS

Introduction

Having addressed the theoretical underpinnings of this dissertation, I now describe and discuss the methods employed in this dissertation. First, I briefly explain why I compared the Kaczynski and McVeigh cases. Second, I address mass media research methods, defining content analysis and laying out my rationale for using it in this dissertation. Third, I explain why I chose *The New York Times* and *Time* as sources of data. This includes a description of how I acquired the documents for analysis in this dissertation. Fourth, I specify and discuss the specific steps involved in the recording of data from articles. More specifically, I detail the protocol categories used in the recording of data as well as my rationale in doing so. I then turn to the operational definitions used in this dissertation: How were “ideology” and “normalcy” to be measured? Finally, I briefly discuss the system of enumeration used in this dissertation. Throughout this chapter I identify, describe, and discuss the issues and problems with which I dealt, as well as my rationale in doing so.

Why Kaczynski and McVeigh? Why Two Cases?

I chose to compare media presentations of Kaczynski and McVeigh for three reasons. First, both actors claimed to have committed acts of politically and ideologically motivated violence, but did so in the name of different ideologies: Kaczynski attributed his actions to anarchist ideology, while McVeigh attributed his
actions to rightist ideology. Second, the cases, both of which received heavy media coverage, occurred along a roughly similar timeline: though Kaczynski began sending mail bombs in 1978, the case did not come to prominence until 1995. In fact, the first *New York Times* article on Kaczynski appeared just five days after the Oklahoma City Bombing, which took place on April 19, 1995. Kaczynski and McVeigh were in the news for roughly the next two years. Third, as my work draws on Herman and Chomsky’s idea that events and actors which are otherwise broadly similar will be presented differently by the media depending on their political ideology, the comparison of two cases was most appropriate.

**Content Analysis**

The most basic issue one faces in carrying out mass media research is which research method to use. Each carries with it advantages and disadvantages, strengths and weaknesses, but the chosen method must enable the researcher to answer his or her research questions (Hornig-Priest, 1996). According to Williams, Rice, and Rogers, the question: “Which research design or methodological approach should be used, should be re-phrased, to read: Which methods are appropriate for which types of questions?” (1988, p. 34). They continue: “…we think this conflict (over research methods) is often taken to an extreme, as no research method is the most appropriate for all research problems. Each has different advantages, disadvantages, assumptions, biases, and degrees of usefulness” (Williams et al, 1988, p. 34).

If the research questions center on media institutions and organizations qualitative methods may be most appropriate. If one wishes to study the daily
operations of a media organization, CBS, for example, participant observation is an appropriate method (Hornig-Priest, 1996, p. 103). The main issue here revolves around access: how is it to be obtained? It is much easier for someone such as Herbert Gans, who has a background in journalism and contacts in the business, to gain access. Of course the issue of access is relevant in all research involving participant observation, so gaining long-term access to mass media audiences will also be an issue. Archival research and secondary data analysis may also be appropriate ways of researching media institutions and organizations.

If the research questions center on the content of media text, as mine do, then content analysis, defined by Hornig-Priest as “the systematic description of the content of some part of the mass media” (1988, p. 66), is the most appropriate methodology: “Where media content itself is the object of study, content analysis—whether quantitative or qualitative—is the logical choice” (Hornig-Priest, 1996, p. 82).

There has been considerable debate in the social sciences in regard to whether or not content analysis must be quantitative. Holsti, writing in 1969, said the following, which today is widely accepted: “Our definition does not include any reference to quantification because a rigid qualitative-quantitative distinction seems unwarranted for the purposes of defining the technique” (p. 14).

When possible, however, media researchers should use multiple methods, or triangulation, whether asking questions of organization and institution, text, or audience. Williams, Rice, and Rogers state: “As for methodology, we take the position that the...media researcher should understand and take advantage of
alternative research designs, including use where appropriate of multiple research methods or 'triangulation.'" (1988, p. 13). They continue: "The logic for triangulation is that the weaknesses of any single method, qualitative or quantitative, are balanced by the strengths of the other method" (Williams et al., 1988, p. 47).

Content analysis, both quantitative and qualitative, was used in this dissertation because it was the most appropriate method to answer my research questions. Research questions focusing on media content are best answered by studying media content, hence the use of content analysis, about which Hornig-Priest says: "where media content itself is the object of study, content analysis—whether quantitative or more qualitative—is the logical choice" (1996, p. 83). She continues:

...you can't answer questions about media content by asking people—you answer them by looking at content. Conversely, you can't answer questions about how people think or feel or how they are influenced by looking only at content—you need to have data from people. (p. 83)


Two leading national publications were examined in this dissertation, one daily and one weekly. Analysis of _The New York Times_ and _Time_ was based on theoretical and practical considerations. As a daily "paper of record", _The New York Times_ is well respected and believed to be a leading forum for the formulation of elite opinion. What _The New York Times_ says carries weight. According to Merrill, it is "a national and world leader in the area of journalism" and "principal newspaper of record in the United States" (1983, p. 310).
The choice of a weekly newsmagazine came down to three possibilities: *Time*, *Newsweek*, or *US News and World Report*. I chose *Time* for a simple reason: with a circulation of almost four million it is the most widely distributed of the three publications, with almost double the circulation of *US News and World Report* and a million more than *Newsweek* ("U.S. News names," 2001)

On a more practical level, print media generally, and *The New York Times* and *Time* specifically, were analyzed for reasons of convenience. Obtaining either radio or television broadcasts dating back to 1995 would have been difficult, time consuming and expensive. On the other hand, print media sources, especially popular mainstream sources such as *The New York Times* and *Time* were readily available. Using Lexxus-Nexxus and Infotrac, I was able to access and print all articles from the comfort of my apartment. Researchers performing content analyses of television news, newspapers and magazines all face the issue of access to documents. Indeed, one cannot perform content analyses, qualitative or quantitative, without a sufficient number of documents (Hornig-Priest, 1996, p. 80).

Using the advanced search option on Lexxus Nexxus I searched for all articles in *The New York Times* that contained the keywords "Ted Kaczynski," "Unabomber," and "Timothy McVeigh." For purposes of analysis I included only articles of 250 words or more, beginning with the first mention of either Kaczynski, Unabomber, or McVeigh, and ending with the judge's sentencing of Kaczynski and with the jury's sentence of death for McVeigh. For Kaczynski this encompassed 132 articles. *The New York Times* published 314 articles on McVeigh, which met these parameters.
Curiously, though *The New York Times* and many other daily and weekly publications were in the Lexxus-Nexxus database, *Time* magazine was not. I was able to access *Time*’s articles on Kaczynski and McVeigh through Infotrac. Again, using the same keywords and including articles from the first mention of their names through their sentencing I found 26 articles on Kaczynski and 29 articles on McVeigh. The Kaczynski articles ran from December 12, 1994 to May 18, 1998, while coverage of McVeigh ran from May 1, 1995 to June 23, 1997.

**Data Collection**

**Protocol**

My next task was to devise a plan to gather/collect information from these 501 articles, which would allow me to answer my research questions. Specifically, which data were to be collected and recorded from these documents? I needed to devise a research protocol, which “is a way to ask questions of a document. It is a list of questions, items, categories, or variables that guide data collection from documents” (Altheide, 1996, p.26).

Following the tenets of qualitative content analysis, I did not yet know which information I would record. To get a feel for the content of these documents and to decide which information was germane to my research questions and interests I read *The New York Times*’s first twenty-five articles on Kaczynski and McVeigh and *Time*’s first ten articles on each. Then I constructed a protocol, based on those outlined by Altheide (1996, p. 28), that guided my data collection. The following information was recorded for each article: first, the date and complete headline as
well as, for *The New York Times* articles, the section of the paper in which the article appeared, including whether or not it was an editorial. For the *Time* articles I noted whether or not the article was a cover story. The remaining three protocol columns were used to record category data.

A brief explication of the principles of category construction follows. First, categories must enable the researcher to answer his or her questions. Accordingly, they will vary according to the researcher’s questions. If the researcher wants to know whether acts or events were attributed to ideology or psychological abnormality he or she must have a category which allows for the recording of this attribute or characteristic. Were I only interested in whether or not the acts of Kaczynski and McVeigh were attributed to abnormality there would have been no reason to include the category of “ideology.” The categories used in a particular content analysis must reflect the research questions. As such, there are no specific categories a researcher must include.

Categories must also be mutually exclusive. According to Holsti: “The requirement of mutual exclusiveness stipulates that no content datum can be placed in more than a single cell. That is, categories must be specific and distinct so that any single piece of data can only be placed in one category” (1969, p.99). The category “ideology” was operationally defined as single words, essentially reducing my task to a clerical one. The category of “abnormal”, though more difficult to operationally define, was so distinct from “ideology” that there was little chance of a content item being placed in more than one category.
Categories must also be exhaustive. That is, there must be a category into which each relevant recording unit or unit of analysis can be placed (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1992, p. 315). Finally, categories, and by extension, operational definitions, should be distinct and precise enough that replication of the research is possible. In other words, if other researchers follow the format the project should yield consistent results.

The process of protocol, and more specifically, category construction, must be done with care and thought, for category construction is the most important aspect in content analysis (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1992, p. 314).

Bearing this in mind and using the guidelines outlined above, I decided to use two categories: my protocol contained columns to record whether or not the article defined either Kaczynski or McVeigh as “abnormal,” and whether or not a political “ideology” was attributed to the actor in question. These categories, “abnormal” and “ideology”, emerged from the data during my initial reading of the first twenty five New York Times articles on Kaczynski and McVeigh and the first ten articles on each in Time.

For each of the 501 articles I recorded whether or not a particular attribute was present or absent. If, for example, Kaczynski was defined as “abnormal” in an article I wrote “yes” in the “abnormal” column and then recorded, in the same column, the word or words which were used to define him as such. On November 6, 1995, The New York Times ran an article with the headline “Bomber is Called Killer Who is Not on a Political Mission” (Johnston) in which Kaczynski was defined as abnormal. Written in the appropriate column is “yes,” followed by the word or phrase used to
define him as abnormal: "serial murderer who kills to satisfy an inner psychological need."

Though Altheide covers the main information that is generally included in the protocol, there is no single protocol format which is appropriate for all content analyses, just as there are no set categories a researcher must use. The test of a protocol lies in whether it enables the researcher to record all the information necessary to adequately address the research questions. The researcher must ask whether the necessary information can be obtained from the articles using the protocol at hand (Altheide, 1996, p. 7). If not, the protocol must be revised.

Operational Definitions

Having settled on the categories of "abnormal" and "ideology," my next task was to code the data. I needed to devise a set of indicators that determined whether or not an attribute was present and into which category it fell (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1992, p. 315). How would I measure the concepts "abnormal" and "ideology"? What would count? In other words, operational definitions had to be constructed.

Constructing operational definitions for the category "ideology" was relatively simple. After reading the first twenty-five New York Times articles on Kaczynski and McVeigh I constructed word lists of terms identifying the concept (Holsti, 1969, p. 95). I had to measure whether or not articles identified a political ideology with each of these men. If an article on Kaczynski contained one of the following words, the article, for purposes of coding was defined as having attributed to him a political ideology: "anarchist," "environmentalist," and "left". Variations of the first two
words were accepted as well. For example, “anarchism” and “environmentalism” counted. These words were used for several reasons. First, Kaczynski specifically identified himself as an anarchist in several letters to the New York Times as well as in his article, “Industrial Society and its Future.” As for environmentalist/ism, Kaczynski said in his writings that clues to his thinking and position could be found in the “radical environmentalist journals.” Finally, though “Industrial Society and its Future” specifically criticized “leftists,” he was labeled a leftist in several articles and was associated with the campus turmoil of the sixties, having been a student at both the University of Michigan and the University of California-Berkeley during the sixties.

However, I used these words as operational definitions because they were in the articles: that is, my operational definitions were not constructed beforehand and then applied to the data. Instead, following the reflexive approach espoused by methods scholars such as Holsti (1969), as well as more recent writers such as Altheide (1996), I first read a portion of the documents in order to get a feel for the material. In other words, the operational definitions emerged from the data rather than being pre-conceived. As with the categories I ultimately settled on, how was I to know, before reading a portion of the documents, if the operational definitions were appropriate?

The following words were used as operational definitions in assessing whether or not a political ideology was attributed to McVeigh: “right,” or, as with Kaczynski, a variation of this word, such as “right-wing” or “rightist.” Second, I looked for the word “patriot.” Third, I looked for the word “militia.” If any one of these words...
appeared in an article on McVeigh it was coded in my protocol as attributing to McVeigh a political ideology. Because the operational definitions for the category "ideology" were so straightforward, my coding task was essentially reduced to clerical work.

Finally, and most importantly for this dissertation, I had to operationalize "abnormal." Again, rather than hoping the data fit my operational definitions, my operational definitions emerged from the documents. Rather than having a pre-defined list of terms for which I was looking and which would be used to measure the presence of this attribute, I read each article, and if either Kaczynski or McVeigh seemed to be defined as abnormal I wrote the word or words which were used in the description in that article's slot in the protocol. A complete list of all terms, which were counted as defining either Kaczynski or McVeigh as abnormal, appears in the Appendix.

**Enumeration**

Finally, I had to decide how to count the presence of these attributes. In other words, I needed to decide upon a system of enumeration, the two main possibilities being frequency and appearance (Holsti, 1969, p.121). Would I tally the frequency with which an attribute appeared within an article or would I simply count whether or not the attribute was present in the particular article? For example, on May 7, 1995, *The New York Times* ran an article on Kaczynski under the headline "Prominent Anarchist Finds Unsought Ally In Serial Bomber," in which the word "anarchist" appeared ten times. When coding this article was I to count "anarchist" as having
appeared ten times or was I to count the attribute as simply present within the article? Because my interest lay in finding the percentage of articles in which the attributes of interest appeared, I simply counted whether an attribute was present within a given article. This system of enumeration is known as "contingency analysis," "in which the coding of material depends on the absence or presence of the attribute within the document or section of the document, rather than on the frequency of its presence…” (Holsti, 1969, p 7). A frequency count, though the most widely used system of enumeration in content analysis (Holsti, 1969, p. 122), would not yield data appropriate to my research.

In this chapter I have identified and discussed the methodological approach employed in this dissertation. I turn now to the findings of my quantitative and qualitative content analyses of media presentations of Ted Kaczynski and Tim McVeigh.
CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

In the previous chapter I have laid out the methods utilized in this dissertation. In this chapter I address my findings. First, I offer a simple presentation and interpretation of the quantitative data culled from The New York Times and Time. Second, I turn to qualitative analysis of The New York Times’s and Time’s coverage of Kaczynski and McVeigh. First, I analyze media presentation of Kaczynski with regard to “Abnormality.” I then do the same with regard to McVeigh. Third, I analyze media presentation of Kaczynski with regard to “Ideology.” I then do the same with regard to McVeigh. I now turn to my quantitative findings.

Quantitative Findings

Table 1 indicates the following. In each of the five categories under consideration – (1) all articles which appeared in The New York Times; (2) The New York Times editorials; (3) front page New York Times articles; (4) all articles which appeared in Time; and (5) Time cover stories – Ted Kaczynski was more likely than Tim McVeigh to be defined as abnormal. In other words, his acts were more likely to have been attributed to abnormality than those of Tim McVeigh. Again, this dynamic held for all five categories. First, Kaczynski was defined as abnormal in 48% of The New York Times’s articles overall, compared to 6% for McVeigh. Second, Kaczynski was defined as abnormal in 60% of The New York Times’s editorials, compared to 14% for McVeigh. Third, Kaczynski was defined as abnormal in 51% of The New

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York Times's front-page articles, compared to 19% for McVeigh. Fourth, Kaczynski was defined as abnormal in 62% of the Time articles overall, compared to 31% for McVeigh. Fifth, Kaczynski was defined as abnormal in 80% of the Time cover articles, compared to 33% for McVeigh.

Table 1
Abnormal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>The New York Times</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All Articles</td>
<td>Front Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McVeigh Defined as Abnormal</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20 of 314</td>
<td>13 of 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaczynski Defined as Abnormal</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>64 of 132</td>
<td>17 of 33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 indicates the following. In each of the five categories under consideration: 1) all articles which appeared in The New York Times 2) The New York Times editorials 3) front page New York Times articles 4) all articles which appeared in Time 5) Time cover stories; Tim McVeigh was more likely to have an ideology attributed to him than Ted Kaczynski. In other words, his acts were more likely to have been attributed to political and ideological motivation than those of Ted Kaczynski. Again, this dynamic held for all five categories. First, an ideology was attributed to McVeigh in 37% of The New York Times articles overall, compared to 23% for Kaczynski. Second, an ideology was attributed to McVeigh in 57% of The
New York Times's editorials, compared to 0% for Kaczynski. Third, an ideology was attributed to McVeigh in 47% of The New York Times's front-page articles, compared to 30% for Kaczynski. Fourth, an ideology was attributed to McVeigh in 52% of the Time articles overall, compared to 22% for Kaczynski. Fifth, an ideology was attributed to McVeigh in 100% of the Time cover articles, compared to 20% for Kaczynski.

Table 2
Ideology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th>Time</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Editorials</td>
<td>Front Page</td>
<td>All Articles</td>
<td>Covers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McVeigh,</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>32 of 68</td>
<td>15 of 29</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaczynski,</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
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<td>0 of 15</td>
<td>11 of 33</td>
<td>6 of 27</td>
<td>1 of 5</td>
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<td>Attributed To</td>
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</table>

Qualitative Findings: Kaczynski, "Abnormal"

While quantitative analysis showed that The New York Times and Time were both far more likely to label Kaczynski abnormal than McVeigh, qualitative analysis revealed patterns and dynamics uncaptured by statistics. Throughout their coverage
of Kaczynski both publications specifically depoliticized Kaczynski’s acts, his behavior and his ideology by attributing his actions to his psychological abnormality. Second, Kaczynski’s rejection of the labels “mentally ill” and “schizophrenic” were taken as evidence of his illness. Kaczynski was cast as abnormal long before he was caught and exposed as a reclusive genius hermit. Finally, qualitative analysis revealed a strong countervailing tendency. While Kaczynski was consistently defined as abnormal, there were points at which, particularly in The New York Times, forceful claims were put forward rejecting the notion that Kaczynski was psychologically abnormal.

The first article of interest appeared in Time and set a pattern. Kaczynski was defined as a “methodical madman,” and “authorities speculate that he may have been in prison or a psychiatric facility.” Also, FBI investigators said he was compulsive, and he had, according to “retired FBI bomb expert James Ronay, an uncontrollable urge to fool with his bombs’ (Gleick, 1994). Kaczynski is psychologized.

In the first New York Times article Kaczynski was framed as someone striking out at demons, despite the article also using the word “anarchist”. He was situated as a sick individual. Already, the motivation for his actions has been located within his psyche. He was cast as a crazy person, not someone motivated by politics and ideology: “We’d like to hear from this guy if he’s got some sort of an agenda,’ says San Francisco Postal Inspector. ‘But I doubt he’s that focused, other than to strike out at whatever demons he’s striking out at’” (“Long-running Unabom,” 1995).

Two days later The New York Times ran a front-page article in which a letter Kaczynski sent to several newspapers, including The New York Times, was quoted.
Interestingly, Kaczynski was already well aware of the depoliticization process that had begun to unfold. Kaczynski knew he was being marginalized, medicalized, and depoliticized:

The FBI has tried to portray these bombings as the work of an isolated nut. We won’t waste our time arguing about whether we are nuts, but we certainly are not isolated. . . . anyone who will read the anarchist and radical environmentalist journals will see that opposition to the industrial-technological system is widespread and growing. (Barron, 1995b)

On June 30, The New York Times ran an article entitled “Bomb Hoax Leaves Los Angeles Airport With The Jitters,” in which a “comic actor” defined Kaczynski as a “sociopath” (Mydans, 1995).

This next article, a New York Times editorial which ran after Kaczynski sent several letters to newspapers outlining his general view of the industrial revolution and technology, put forth a complicated picture of the Unabomber: He was taken as a serious thinker, but he was depoliticized and medicalized as well. The author stated emphatically that he was not a nut, but later said he was “evidently disturbed.”

The author, a well-known technology critic, acknowledged the legitimacy of Kaczynski’s arguments, strongly noting their resonance with sectors of the public. He also said that Kaczynski was unbalanced.

This complex portrayal is conveyed in the following quote:

It is possible to draw a preliminary psychopolitical portrait of him. Enough so that we can understand the Unabomber to be intelligent if somewhat illogical, sincere if evidently disturbed, perceptive if foolish—and a person whose ideas must be confronted. First he is not a nut. He is a rational man and his principle beliefs are, if hardly mainstream, entirely reasonable. He thinks that “the Industrial Revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human
race," increasing life expectancy but causing social instability, physical and psychological suffering, economic hardship and environmental damage. This stands squarely in a long political tradition…” Carlyle, Dickens, Thoreau, Veblen and Weber, Lewis Mumford, Paul Goodman, Rachel Carson and Rene Dubos, “among many other distinguished critics of modernity and its machines. (Sale, 1995)

He continued: “All that said, it is also obvious that the Unabomber is measurably unbalanced” (Sale, 1995).

When Kaczynski was first identified, his Montana neighbors were quoted as saying that Kaczynski did not seem insane to them. One neighbor described him as a “quiet loner” and “not that remarkable.” “It seemed like he was quite intelligent” (Kifner, 1996). Though Kaczynski’s actions were eventually attributed to psychological abnormalities, there was nothing at this point to suggest that he was psychologically abnormal, that he was not what he claimed to be: a politically motivated terrorist. His neighbor, quoted above, saw no abnormality. His captors also noticed nothing to suggest psychological abnormality either, as the following quote from the front page of The New York Times makes clear:

The officials said that Mr. Kaczynski tried to withdraw inside the cabin, but was restrained. After his capture, Mr. Kaczynski gave no further resistance, but instead, one official said, became “quite personable and well spoken,” but asked for a lawyer. Although a psychological profile suggested he might be eager to cooperate, he declined to answer questions but engaged in pleasant small talk with the agents...(Johnston, 1996)

Kaczynski was also called a “sociopath” and a “madman” in a Time cover story that appeared April 15, 1996. According to Time, authorities believed they had
“not only stopped an 18-year crime spree but also bagged an exceptional specimen: the brilliant sociopath who made himself virtually invisible (Gibbs, 1996).

Throughout the coverage of Kaczynski there was disagreement and tension over whether he was psychologically abnormal or not and whether his actions were politically or psychologically motivated: were his actions motivated by sickness or politics? An article that reflected these tensions appeared in *The New York Times* on April 21. In this article, Kaczynski was cast as a sexual psychopath and linked with Ted Bundy, but was pulled back into political frame by authors Joyce Carol Oates and Dean Koontz. Whereas Kaczynski’s neighbors said he did not seem insane to them, these authors specifically attributed political motivation to Kaczynski. First, Kaczynski was linked with Ted Bundy and Jeffrey Dahmer:

The Unabomber, who attacked through the mail, at first seems to have little in common with sexual psychopaths like Bundy or Jeffrey Dahmer, whose sadistic murders were committed at close range. But many experts, including the FBI serial crime unit that tracked the Unabomber for years, consider him a member of the fold. (Gabriel, 1996)

Authors Oates and Koontz, however, did not cast Kaczynski as a sexual psychopath, instead seeing him as politically motivated. The article said of Oates: “...she is intrigued by his resemblance to fanatic ideologues like John Brown, the abolitionist who murdered supporters of slavery in the 1850’s.” Oates specifically cast Kaczynski as a politically motivated figure: “...he is in this very American tradition of using violence for some ideal.” Author Dean Koontz viewed Kaczynski in much the same light, as the following paragraph indicates:
The very espousal of ideology, as manifested in the Unabomber’s anti-technology diatribe and his targeting of computer-science professors, is met with deep indifference by other authors. “I don’t consider him a serial killer, because he’s politically motivated,” said Dean Koontz. “As soon as he begins to have an agenda, and it’s political, it becomes tedious to me.” (Gabriel, 1996)

An interesting pattern was established in the next *Time* article. This and several subsequent articles contained speculation that Kaczynski’s actions could be attributed to an illness Kaczynski suffered in childhood. Former Chairman of the Mathematics Department at the University of California, Berkeley, was quoted as saying Kaczynski was “almost pathologically shy.” *Time* then posed the question:

> “Was Ted different almost from the start? Investigators say that at the age of six months he was hospitalized for several weeks after suffering an allergic reaction to a drug. During that time, his parents were not allowed to hold or hug him. When he came home, they found him listless and withdrawn”. (Lacayo, 1996)

In searching for a biological explanation for Kaczynski’s actions he was depoliticized. His actions were clearly framed as emanating from and explained by sickness. He sent bombs not because he was a politically motivated actor, but because he was mentally ill.

*Time* presented a poet’s analysis of Kaczynski’s actions in “Robert Bly On The Mind Of The Unabomber Suspect.” Bly acknowledged Kaczynski’s attempts at protesting technology, then depoliticized Kaczynski’s actions, moving them from the political realm to the psychological or medical realm. The article is quoted at length below:
No one has written more vividly about today's troubled male psyche than the poet Robert Bly, author of the best-selling Iron John. TIME asked Bly to reflect on the Unabomber suspect's behavior.

The actions of the Unabomber give evidence of a protest against technology, and possibly a serious form of mental illness. Details of his life also show a pattern of regression to younger and younger stages, a pattern we may see repeated around us in the coming years.

In the case of Theodore J. Kaczynski, the retreat to Montana without the community of his peers seems to be a retreat to childhood. His withdrawal has the unresponsive quality of a boy who wants to show his parents they can't abandon him—he will abandon them.

As the late Austrian child psychoanalyst Melanie Klein noted, the thwarted infant feels a desire to tear up everything... (Bly, 1996)

The New York Times ran a front-page article on May 26, 1996, in which Kaczynski was depoliticized and medicalized. Cast as a sick individual, his actions were again said to have been caused by the childhood illness identified earlier:

David and his parents had long worried over Ted's anger and wondered at its origins... when he was only 9 months old, an unusual medical problem arose. David, who had been told the story by his parents, said the infant Teddy developed a severe allergy and was hospitalized for a week. There were rigid regulations about when parents could and couldn't visit, David said.

After Teddy came home, he became very unresponsive, David said. "He had been a smiling, happy jovial kind of baby beforehand, and when he returned from the hospital, he showed little emotions for months." (McFadden, 1996)

An interesting article appeared in Time, July 29, 1996, in which Kaczynski was depoliticized by comparing him to a paranoid schizophrenic. The article stated: "We know that the mentally ill—paranoid schizophrenics, for example—hear menacing voices speaking from unlikely sources (harmless strangers, inanimate objects), or they read malignant meanings into random events, or they think the very furniture will rise up and murder them" (Morrow, 1996).
Later, Kaczynski’s refusal to accept his lawyers plan to portray him as suffering from a mental defect was taken as evidence that he does suffer from mental illness, specifically paranoid schizophrenia. It was a line that was repeated not once or twice, but consistently.

In the meantime, the portrayal of Kaczynski’s mental state was not cut and dried. Psychiatrists questioned people from Kaczynski’s town in Montana:

Was he mentally ill? Or not? The inquisitive visitors were two prosecution psychiatrists, and the answers they got may not help the ‘mental defect’ defense that Kaczynski’s lawyers are planning for his trial…. “I can’t imagine anybody saying he’s insane,” says Becky Garland, 41, who befriended Kaczynski while working at Garland’s Town & Country store in Lincoln. (Jackson, 1997a)

Two other neighbors were quoted as saying that Kaczynski was sane, including one who said, “I always though that he acted, for a person who was a recluse, well within the bounds of society” (Jackson, 1997a).

The next article of interest appeared in Time, November 17, 1997. This article set a pattern: from this point until he pled guilty and was sentenced, Ted Kaczynski’s refusal to accept the label of mental illness generally, and paranoid schizophrenic specifically, was taken as evidence of mental illness. The following lengthy quote sets the context and reveals this dynamic:

Kaczynski’s defense strategy is in turmoil. The first public sign of trouble was the Harvard graduate’s abrupt refusal to be examined by prosecution psychiatrists. But time has learned that he initially resisted examination by even his own doctors. They had planned to argue that Kaczynski suffers from paranoid schizophrenia…But now U.S. District Court Judge Garland Burrell Jr. is weighing a prosecution request to bar all expert psychiatric testimony, leaving his defense in tatters.
But if the jury in this case is allowed to hear details about 
paranoid schizophrenia, they may see some disturbing parallels with 
Kaczynski’s life. For example, psychiatrists say true schizophrenics 
often resist diagnosis. “They don’t like to think of themselves as 
mentally ill,” says Dr. Ira Glick, a Professor of Psychiatry at Stanford. 
“They’d think something else caused their problems, like bad 
parenting or bad government or too many drugs—anything but being 
labeled crazy.” (Jackson, 1997b)

A point to which *Time* added: “Kaczynski has lashed out at both his parents 
and government.” Lashing out at one’s parents and government was taken as 
evidence of schizophrenia. The same can be said of Timothy McVeigh: He “lashed 
out” at the government and he also lashed out at his mother, calling her a “slut” and a 
“whore.” Was this taken as evidence that Timothy McVeigh was a paranoid 
schizophrenic? No.

In this article a biological explanation for Kaczynski’s alleged actions was 
also sought, once again focused on his childhood illness. The article stated:

The mystery illness that sent Kaczynski to the hospital when he was 
only 10 months old could take on new significance. Some researchers 
believe that schizophrenia could come from a virus that strikes 
pregnant mothers and infants, causing brain damage that usually 
doesn’t become fully apparent until the teens or early 20’s. 
Kaczynski’s family has said he was always an anti-social child and 
that his behavior got worse as he got older. At 26, he abruptly 
resigned from a prestigious teaching post at the University of 
California, Berkeley and dropped out of society. The first Unabom 
attack occurred three days after his 36th birthday. (Jackson, 1997b)

At this point Kaczynski’s ‘mental state’ was the focus of both *The Times* and 
*Time*. Four days later *The New York Times* repeated the claims of the alleged 
Unabomber’s lawyers: “Mr Kaczynski’s lawyers say their client is so delusional that 
he denies that he is mentally ill.” Kaczynski’s alleged criminal actions were
medicalized, his refusal to accept the label of paranoid schizophrenic was medicalized, and his refusal to be examined by psychiatrists was medicalized: The defense lawyers said part of Mr. Kaczynski’s illness was a “pathological fear” of psychiatrists that explained why he refused to be examined by prosecution experts.

This article also mentioned, for the third time, Kaczynski’s alleged belief that he was controlled by an omnipotent organization: “The defense quoted one of its own psychiatrists, David Vernon Foster, who said Mr. Kaczynski felt ‘that every aspect of his existence is controlled by an omnipotent organization against which he is powerless.’” When it was reported that McVeigh had claimed the Government implanted a computer chip in his buttocks no speculation regarding his mental state followed (Glaberson, 1997b).

*The Times* understood Kaczynski’s rejection of the mental illness label to be a symptom of his mental illness:

David Kaczynski, who turned in his brother to the authorities, has been asserting that Mr. Kaczynski’s mental illness explains his actions and would make a death penalty inhumane. David Kaczynski has long said his brother’s staunch denial that he has mental problems is a clear symptom of how ill he is. (Glaberson, 1997b)

A similar line was reported from David Kaczynski’s attorney, who claimed Ted’s handling of his case provided evidence of his mental illness:

Today, Mr. Bisceglie said the withdrawal of the effort to assert a mental defect argument was continuing evidence of Theodore Kaczynski’s distorted view of reality. “It proves what my client has been saying for months and months,” he said, “and that is that Ted Kaczynski is fixated in his denial that he is suffering from a mental illness.” (Glaberson, 1997b)
The same day *The Times* ran an editorial in which they repeated the notion that Kaczynski’s alleged actions were explained by mental illness. They also repeated the claim that Kaczynski suffered “…delusions that he is controlled by satellites.” Of Kaczynski’s mental state they said he was someone “…who, by all outward signs, suffers from severe mental illness.” In this article the alleged actions of Ted Kaczynski were depoliticized and medicalized: he was not a politically motivated actor, but a sick man in need of help (“Wrong step in,” 1997).

Kaczynski was again depoliticized and medicalized in a *New York Times* editorial that ran in January 1998. According to *The Times*, Kaczynski “…shows signs of being severely mentally disturbed.” In addition, the claim that Kaczynski believed he was controlled by satellites was repeated. Finally, his refusal to cooperate with defense lawyers who planned to portray him as a paranoid delusional schizophrenic was presented as potential evidence of illness:

…Judge Garland Burrell Jr. denied Mr. Kaczynski’s request to dismiss his lawyers and issued a ruling that allowed them to carry on a mental defect defense over his objections. The ruling apparently led Mr. Kaczynski to demand that he be allowed to represent himself. That request caused Judge Burrell to question Mr. Kaczynski’s mental fitness to make such a critical decision. (“The Unabom travesty,” 1998)

*Time’s* coverage followed the pattern, typically taking for granted that Kaczynski was mentally ill and interpreting his resistance to the label of schizophrenic as evidence of schizophrenia. In fact, this was done in the article’s headline: “At His Own Request: Is Kaczynski’s Rejection of his Best Chance for a Defense a Result of Paranoid Schizophrenia?”
In the opening paragraph Kaczynski’s mental illness was taken for granted:

“Ted Kaczynski has one big problem: he is apparently too crazy to appreciate how crazy he is....” Several paragraphs below, reference is made to “…the particular illness he has.” Finally, insanity was said to be “the most obvious defense.”

Later, as was the pattern, his resistance to the label was taken as evidence of illness: “His lawyers had planned to argue that he suffered from paranoid schizophrenia.... But paranoid schizophrenics typically resist being labeled mentally ill, and Kaczynski proved to be all too typical.” Clearly, Kaczynski was depoliticized and medicalized. His actions were attributed to illness (Jackson, 1998a).

Not everyone believed Kaczynski was mentally ill, however, or that his actions were motivated by schizophrenia. In a New York Times editorial, noted social scientist James Q. Wilson clearly and forcefully attempted to pull Kaczynski back into a political context. According to Wilson:

If Mr. Kaczynski is as competent today as he was over the 10 years when prosecutors say he killed three people and injured 28 others, he is highly rational. There is nothing in the manifesto that looks at all like the work of a madman. The language is clear, precise and calm. The argument is subtle and carefully developed, lacking anything even faintly resembling the wild claims or irrational speculation that a lunatic might produce. If it is the work of a madman, then the writings of many political philosophers—Jean Jacques Rousseau, Tom Paine, Karl Marx—are scarcely more sane. Assuming that Mr. Kaczynski is the Unabomber, then his manifesto, his skill in manufacturing bombs and the clever ways in which he concealed his identity suggest to me that he was clearly sane by any reading of the Federal test. He did not hallucinate, had no bizarre delusions and clearly knew what he was doing and that it was (by the standards of a society he disliked) illegal. (Wilson, 1998)
Wilson’s opinions regarding Kaczynski, however, were drowned out. The following day Kaczynski’s refusal to cooperate with defense lawyers’ was again understood as evidence of his illness. According to The Times, defense lawyers “… have said Mr. Kaczynski’s mental illness includes a heightened sensitivity to being labeled mentally ill, which makes it impossible for him to endure a defense that would say he suffers from paranoid schizophrenia” (Glaberson, 1998a).

In the following Time article the alleged actions of Kaczynski were depoliticized. Time labeled him insane, repeating the mantra that his rejection of the mental illness label is actually evidence of his illness. There was a clear assumption throughout the article that Kaczynski was mentally ill. Early on it was stated: “America’s legal system is laced with protections for people who are too sick to know what they are doing or what is best for them.” The article continued, “Just what does the U.S. Constitution owe a mad genius?” (Jackson, 1998b). Kaczynski’s actions during the trial: His refusal to cooperate with his lawyers and his expressed desire to act as his own lawyer were portrayed as evidence of illness.

Two days later, on January 21, The Times reported that Dr. Sally Johnson, a court appointed psychiatrist proclaimed Kaczynski competent to stand trial despite suffering from “serious mental illness,” including “schizophrenia, paranoid type.”

Significantly, his alleged actions were defined as emanating from his illness. Kaczynski was not a politically motivated actor, but a sick man, motivated by paranoid schizophrenia, who needed help:
The lawyer who read Dr. Johnson’s report said it suggested a direct link between Mr. Kaczynski’s mental illness and the Unabom campaign. “Consistent with other individuals with persecutory types of delusions,” said a report excerpt provided by the lawyer, “he is resentful and angry and fantasizes and actually does resort to violence against those individuals and organizations that he believes are hurting him.” (Glaberson, 1998d)

Two days later, on the 23rd, The New York Times reported that Kaczynski pled guilty, avoiding a death sentence. According to The Times: “Theodore Kaczynski had been fighting an increasingly futile battle to, in effect insist on his sanity.”

Again, his refusal to cooperate with his lawyers, defined here as “unpredictable behavior in court,” was taken as evidence of illness. Kaczynski was described as a “...man whose insanity seemed evident.” He was medicalized (Glaberson, 1998c).

That same day The Times reported that the plea bargain was “common sense,” given that “Mr. Kaczynski’s mental illness threatened to disrupt the progress of any trial and made him a dubious target for execution.” “Disrupting the trial,” as it meant in previous articles, is what Kaczynski has done in rejecting the defense strategy of his lawyers. Actions that could be politically motivated were understood as a symptom of illness.

Also interesting to note was The Times’s desire to end speculation as to Kaczynski’s mental state. Dr. Johnson labeled him a paranoid schizophrenic, the same label applied by Kaczynski’s defense team, who obviously had a vested interest in their client being defined as mentally ill in order to avoid a death penalty. The
Times defined this as “expert consensus”: “Given expert consensus on his condition, a jury might well have found Mr. Kaczynski not guilty by reason of insanity”.

Finally, we see the last claims that Kaczynski is not mentally ill snuffed out by the authority of the medical model:

Advocates of the death penalty for Mr. Kaczynski have said that his ability to create bizarre legal problems is evidence that he is clever and sane. But the medical evaluations show otherwise. Public safety and the interests of humane justice are best served by a life sentence without parole. (“Justice in the,” 1998)

In accord with a general feature of the medical model, the outcome is defined as being in the best interest of Kaczynski, what The Times called “humane justice.”

The following day The Times ran an interesting front-page article under the headline “Evil, or Sick, to his Core: Two views of Unabomber.” The headline was revealing. Readers were only given two options: he had to be evil or sick. At this point, there was very little suggestion that Kaczynski was a politically motivated actor (Glaberson, 1998b).

Kaczynski’s brother was also quoted one last time: “To David, his brother remains a person with a core of humanity whose horrible acts were caused by psychosis. ‘I think what we have seen from Ted is still a manifestation of his illness,’ he said.” Kaczynski’s behavior was medicalized one last time.

Qualitative Findings: McVeigh, “Abnormal”

This first article on Tim McVeigh, a front page article from The New York Times, set a pattern which endured throughout The New York Times’s and Time’s
coverage: His alleged abnormalities were cast as political. Here, and in many of the following articles, he was said to be “obsessed” with the date April 19, 1995, the date the Waco siege ended in the deaths of 56 Branch Davidians (McFadden, 1995a).

On this first day of coverage, The New York Times ran several articles on McVeigh. In addition to being described as “obsessed” with the date the Waco siege ended, McVeigh was said to be “enraged” over Waco, as described in the lead paragraph of this next article: “Just 48 hours after the Oklahoma City bombing, the authorities on Friday arrested a suspect whom a witness described in court papers as enraged over the federal raid on the BD compound near Waco, Tex, two years to the day before the blast.” (Purdum, 1995). On this initial day of coverage this was as close as The New York Times came to raising the issue of whether Mr. McVeigh was abnormal.

The next article, which appeared on The New York Times editorial page on April 24, 1995, followed the same pattern of casting McVeigh’s alleged abnormalities as political abnormalities. The opening paragraph of this initial New York Times editorial comment on McVeigh stated: “Can the Oklahoma City bombing be the product of a rage against the federal government so paranoid and demented that those in its grip thought to strike a blow for freedom by demolishing a federal building, killing scores of innocent individuals inside? (“A twisted rage,” 1995).

“Paranoid” and “demented” were used in a political context. There was no suggestion that those responsible for the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building were actually mentally ill.
On that same day, April 24, 1995, The New York Times ran an article detailing McVeigh’s love of weapons. He “…carried a 9-millimeter Glock handgun loaded with ‘cop killer’ bullets, and shared the pathological hatred of the federal government that motivates most extreme right organizations” (Schmemann, 1995).

On April 26, The New York Times ran an article under the byline “Many Theories About Choice of Target,” which speculated that the Murrah Federal Building may have been specifically targeted because of its on-site day-care center, which was demolished in the blast, killing 19 children, an aspect of the bombing which received a good deal of media coverage. For purposes of this dissertation, it is interesting to note that neither The New York Times nor Time took this opportunity to speculate as to whether McVeigh might have been abnormal. These publications did not even pose the question, let alone answer it. One might, for example, have raised the issue somewhere in the following sentences, which appeared in The New York Times:

And in plainly the most diabolical theory of all, the Murrah building may have been chosen specifically because its layout insured that a bomb could be placed so close to children, in the America’s Kids day-care center on the second floor. Federal buildings elsewhere in the south-central United States, including Dallas, Denver and Kansas City, Mo., either do not have day-care centers or place them in areas somewhat less accessible to a bomb. (Verhovek, 1995)

This article contained an implicit assumption that the bomber or bombers were not psychologically abnormal, but that they were rational, politically motivated people, as the following paragraph indicated: “There is simply no way to know if this was on the bombers’ minds. But if it was, there was logic to the awful choice: the
second-floor, window location of the day-care center in the Murrah building was just above where the truck blew up.”

As we will see in the following pages, this article established a pattern: *The New York Times* and *Time* mentioned the large number of dead children without even raising the issue of whether or not the person or people responsible were psychologically abnormal.

On April 26, *The New York Times* ran another editorial dealing with the Oklahoma City bombing, in which the far right was characterized as possessing a “paranoid ideology.” As in the initial *New York Times* editorial, this paranoia was a political paranoia that, according to this article, was part of a larger ideology (Hasselbach, 1995).

Another editorial appeared the next day, also casting McVeigh and the Oklahoma City bombing as being motivated by political paranoia. This editorial spoke of President Clinton’s reference to militias as “promoters of paranoia.” (Rich, 1995). Clearly, this “paranoia” was cast as a political paranoia. There was no suggestion that these folks, McVeigh foremost among them, were psychologically abnormal. Rather, they were politically and ideologically motivated.

This next article, which appeared on the front page of *The New York Times* on April 29, 1995, was very interesting. The children who died in the blast were mentioned, but there was no speculation as to whether or not McVeigh was abnormal. This failure to pose what might be considered a very obvious, legitimate, and relevant question was highlighted by the many questions this article did pose. In all, about twenty questions were posed of McVeigh, none of which dealt with whether he was
abnormal. Questions included: Who is the second suspect? Who else may have helped carry out the attack? What were the plans behind it? Where did Mr. McVeigh spend recent months? When was the bomb built? What was the specific target of the blast?

The following passages from the article reveal a lack of interest in the question of whether McVeigh was abnormal, and are quoted at length:

A week after the Federal Bureau of Investigation found Timothy J. McVeigh, a drifting Army veteran, sitting in a county jail in Perry, Oklahoma, the list of questions about him and the Oklahoma City bombing continues to grow. Why Oklahoma City? Was the bombers' target the entire Federal Government and everything it represents? Was it the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, And Firearms? Did the bombers know there was a day-care center in the building they destroyed? If so, did they pick their target to avenge the death of children in a second Federal raid on the Branch Davidian compound, the operation that brought the fire ending a two-month Government siege there? How did he get the money to live and, by the authorities account, spend money on the plot? Was he selling weapons, legally or illegally? Was he involved in a recent string of unsolved bank robberies throughout the Midwest? Did he receive financial support from people who were aware of plans for the bombing? Who is the second suspect? Where and when was the bomb built, and who supplied the materials? Where was Mr. McVeigh headed when he was arrested? How did it come to pass that he was driving a car without license plates when the Oklahoma state trooper, Charles Hanger, stopped him? Was he so foolish as to believe that he could speed down an open highway with no tags in broad daylight and escape a patrolman's attention? (Weiner, 1995b)

Though the dead children were mentioned, and in the article a friend of McVeigh's was quoted as saying that "Mr. McVeigh had returned believing that the Army had implanted a computer chip in his buttocks in order to keep him under surveillance," there was no suggestion on the part of The New York Times that one who made such a claim might be abnormal. Again, the issue was not raised. The
oversight seems more glaring in light of the many, many questions they did ask about McVeigh.

*Time* magazine's initial coverage of McVeigh was a cover story and followed the pattern set by *The New York Times* in two ways. First, as in *The New York Times* article discussed in the previous paragraph, this article mentioned that McVeigh reportedly claimed to have had a computer chip implanted in his buttocks while in the Army as a means of surveillance. *The New York Times* did not speculate on McVeigh's mental state and neither did *Time*: “His politics veered far rightward. He claimed that the army had implanted a computer chip in his buttocks” (Gleick, 1995b). Such a claim might reasonably have raised speculation as to whether he was abnormal. Here, *Time* seemed to attribute this claim to his “politics,” which “veered far rightward.”

*Time*’s coverage also mirrored that of *The New York Times* in casting McVeigh’s alleged abnormalities as politically motivated. For example, rather than simply labeling McVeigh “paranoid,” he was cast as a politically paranoid, which he was said to share with other militia members. *Time* said of McVeigh and the militias: “It is clear that the members, along with those in similar groups throughout the country, nurture a profound paranoia about the federal government even as they express their deepest patriotism.”

McVeigh’s “obsession” with guns was now cast in terms of a defense of the Second Amendment. Rather than being a simple “fanatic,” McVeigh was described as fanatical about protecting the Second Amendment:
According to Kerry Kling, who served in McVeigh’s platoon, he was fanatical and loved to collect guns, and he always had a gun with him. He was a calm, laid-back person. But he felt strongly about the right to bear arms and protecting the Second Amendment—he was fanatical about that. (McFadden, 1995a)

This article also detailed McVeigh’s failed attempt to join the Army’s Special Forces. From reading the article one might reasonably have raised questions as to the impact of this failure on his mental state and normalcy. The Times skirted around the issue, and did not follow it up with any suggestion, let alone discussion, that McVeigh might be abnormal. According to The New York Times, McVeigh: “...saw his cherished hope of becoming a Green Beret shattered by psychological tests. It was apparently a blow so crushing that he quit the Army and went into a psychic tailspin.”

More specifically:

It was his dream to join the Special Forces, the elite Green Berets, and he returned from the war early for training. But he left on the second day of a 210th day assessment period, and military officials said that preliminary psychological screening had shown him to be unfit. The death of this dream appears to have been a major turning point for a man who had dedicated himself to the service. (McFadden, 1995a)

On May 8, 1995 Time again ran a cover story on McVeigh in which his alleged abnormality was put into a political context and the children who died in the collapse of the Murrah Federal Building were mentioned, but there was no speculation as to McVeigh’s normalcy.

First, McVeigh was again said to be “obsessed” with guns. Time even detailed his arsenal: “McVeigh was obsessed with guns. He often kept a 9-mm Glock pistol in the barracks with him—not locked up in the arms room, as rules
His personal arsenal, including a Czech machine gun and assorted pistols, shotguns, and rifles, was stashed in the trunk of his car" (Gleick, 1995a). As for the children: "Even when confronted last week with photographs of the children carried from the crumpled Alfred P. Murrah federal building—some bloody and numb with shock, others already dead—McVeigh appeared unshaken. The accused bomber seems to have decided that he is a prisoner of war" (Gleick, 1995a).

McVeigh's lack of emotion in regard to the children obviously raised some eyebrows, but no speculation in regard to McVeigh's normalcy. Instead, the scene was again cast in a political context.

The next article offered *The New York Times* another perfect opportunity to raise the issue of McVeigh's normalcy. But they did not. In this article, Stephen Jones, McVeigh's lawyer, asked the judge to remove a surveillance camera from his cell, but there was no speculation as to McVeigh's normalcy. *The Times* quoted Jones: "I see the camera as simply an attempt to engage in psychological warfare, and I think, ultimately, perhaps, it would have an effect on his mental stability..." (Belluck, 1995a).

At this point the dead children have returned. In this and several other articles that mentioned the dead children McVeigh's stoicism and lack of emotion were obviously at issue. In several early articles on the children, they were simply mentioned. Perhaps the death toll was given, but McVeigh's lack of emotion or apparent remorse did not surface until his trial. Neither *Time* nor *The New York Times* asked whether one who might have knowingly bombed a day-care center might have been abnormal or even insane. Even when the defendant sat unemotionally when
confronted with photos of dead children the print media under consideration failed to ask seemingly relevant and legitimate questions. *The New York Times*:

Mr. McVeigh, who wore civilian rather than prison clothes for the first time today, had looked animated and at ease all week, smiling at his lawyers and angering some of the bombing victims. “The smugness of him,” Arlene Blanchard, an army sergeant who survived the blast, said on Wednesday. “Even if he is not guilty, how can he be so callous? All the children and the vanished hopes? How can he sit there with that attitude, not caring?” (Thomas, 1996)

Next were several articles in which the notion that McVeigh needed a body count to make his political point was not cause to question his normalcy. On March 1, *The New York Times* reported:

During an interview in July 1995, Mr. McVeigh was asked about an anti-government activist’s assertion that he would have been a hero if he had bombed the building at night when fewer people would have been killed… Mr. McVeigh looked directly into my eyes and told me “That would not have gotten the point across to the government. We needed a body count to make our point.” (Brooke, 1997)

*The Times* ran the same quote the following day (Thomas, 1997d). A person has inflicted this philosophy on a civilian population in his own country and the print media did not even question McVeigh’s normalcy. The following day the body count quote was mentioned yet again (Myerson, 1997).

*Time* also reported the alleged body count remark: Why didn’t you bomb the Alfred P Murrah federal building at night, when fewer people would be killed? The prisoner looked his interlocutor in the eye and said, “that would not have gotten the point across to the government. We needed a body count to make our point.” (Chua-
Goan, 1997). *Time* magazine, like *The New York Times*, did not define this as reason to raise the issue of McVeigh's normalcy.

On May 13, 1997 an article appeared on the front page of *The New York Times* in which McVeigh compared the people in the Alfred Murrah building to stormtroopers in the movie *Star Wars*. As *The Times* reported:

Mr. McVeigh originally set the hour for the blast at 11 A.M. because "everybody would be getting ready for lunch," Mr. Fortier testified. And when Mr. Fortier protested that the bombing would kill a lot of people, he said Mr. McVeigh replied that he "considered all those people to be as if they were storm troopers in the movie *Star Wars*. They may be individually innocent, but because they are part of the evil empire they were guilty by association." (Thomas, 1997a).

Again, *The New York Times* did not view this comparison allegedly made by Mr. McVeigh as reason to question his normalcy.

When McVeigh was sentenced to death in June of 1997 it was front-page news. *The New York Times* again pointed out his stoicism and lack of remorse without raising the issue of McVeigh's normalcy: "The prosecutors did not mention the killer's apparent lack of remorse, but it seemed evident in the courtroom: Mr. McVeigh never shed a tear during heart-wrenching testimony that had men and women on the jury weeping and reaching for their handkerchiefs" (Thomas, 1997c).

*The Times* also offered a post-conviction editorial assessment, entitled "The Militia Threat," in which McVeigh's alleged abnormalities were understood in a political context. As throughout, the paranoia is political. As *The Times* put it, "The militias are a particularly insidious strain of the American viruses of paranoia and
violence. They echo the white supremacy of the Ku Klux Klan and the conspiracy theories and gun obsessions of the John Birch Society" (1997).

*Time* offered post-conviction comment on McVeigh as well, continuing the pattern set early on and followed by both print media sources under consideration in this dissertation: At seemingly obvious points in their coverage of the McVeigh case questions might reasonably have been asked about his normalcy but were not. None of the three articles in the June 16, 1997 edition of *Time* posed questions regarding McVeigh's normalcy. In one article, the defense was said to eschew a severe mental disturbance defense in favor of ideological explanation. McVeigh was not cast as abnormal. Instead, he was cast as a revolutionary. He was sincerely motivated by anger over the Federal assault at Waco. The article mentioned his "blank look at trial," but there was no suggestion of abnormality, as there might reasonably have been, especially in light of the lengthy, and final, quote that follows:

Of all the people involved in the case, the one who has been the most stoical is the defendant. He showed no emotion when the verdicts were read, nor did he react during the testimony of the victims last week. While others wept, he sat at the defense table in his impassive pose, with his chin resting on his hands. Lawyers and spectators were shocked that McVeigh remained so unmoved, and the jury may also have been affected. ("Death or life," 1997)

The article continued:

That afternoon, Kathleen Treanor took the stand and told about kissing her four-year-old daughter Ashley goodbye and never seeing her alive again. After unspeakable days of waiting, Treanor recovered Ashley's body from the rubble, buried the little girl, and trudged on. Seven months later, someone called from the medical examiner's office. "He said, 'We have recovered a portion of Ashley's hand,'" Treanor testified in a trembling voice that rose as she fought to get through each sentence, "'and we wanted to know if you wanted that buried in
the mass grave or if you would like to have it.’ And I said, ‘Of course, I want it. It’s a part of her.’” (“Death or life,” 1997)

Finally:

That was about all she could manage. Treanor dissolved, her body racked by sobs, and almost everyone in the courtroom dissolved with her. Jurors wept openly, survivors wailed, reporters groped for hankies and sodden bits of tissue. Through it all sat McVeigh, cold and silent as stone. (“Death or life,” 1995)

Qualitative Findings: Kaczynski, “Ideology”

Quantitative analysis showed that The New York Times and Time were much more likely to attribute a political ideology and motivation to McVeigh, thereby depoliticizing Kaczynski, in comparison. Qualitative analysis, however, revealed that even when an ideology was attributed to Kaczynski his actions were often depoliticized and sometimes medicalized in the same article. Also, in several articles Kaczynski’s ideas received favorable and serious coverage but were not identified as part of an overall political ideology. Qualitative evidence of these patterns and dynamics is presented in the following pages.

In this initial Time article the actions of the Unabomber were depoliticized, even though he was quoted describing himself as an anarchist. A self-described anarchist mailed a bomb to an advertising executive and people were at a loss as to why someone might do such a thing. It was not understood as a political act:

But what people who knew the 50-year old advertising executive still cannot fathom is why—why Tom Mosser? Recently promoted to one of the top jobs at Young & Rubican and described by friends and colleagues as quiet and reliable, he was a family man who on the day
of his death had planned to go Christmas tree shopping with his wife and children. (Gleick, 1994)

The article continued with a quote from friend James Dowling, an ad executive at Burson Marstellar: “With death by natural causes, it’s easier, because you think there is a reason for it. Here there is no reason…” (Gleick, 1994).

In the initial *New York Times* article, though an ideology was attributed to the Unabomber, he was depoliticized and medicalized: “In a letter to *The New York Times* in June 1993, the bomber said he belonged to an anarchist group.” However, later in the same paragraph the Unabomber was said to be “striking out at demons.” The actions of the Unabomber were not defined as politically motivated acts (“Long-running Unabom,” 1995).

The following day on the front page, *The Times* depoliticized the actions of the Unabomber by simply mentioning, again, that they received a letter in 1993 in which the Unabomber claimed to be an anarchist. *The Times* mentioned anarchism but there was no further definition or discussion of anarchism (Noble, 1995b).

The next day the Unabomber was again front-page news in *The Times*, and again his actions were depoliticized, this time by putting quotes around anarchist. Clearly, they were reluctant to accept the claim that he was a politically motivated anarchist.

The Unabomber’s actions were depoliticized in other ways as well. Referring to letters sent by the Unabomber to several publications, including *The Times*, they said: “The letter offered the most detailed explanation yet of what the bomber says
are his motives.” But there was no mention of these motives in this paragraph. Instead, the next sentence focused on his “taunting of the FBI.”

Though they described the content of the letter, which cast the killing of ad executive Thomas Mosser as a politically motivated crime, they were clearly unwilling to accept this as a political crime, using marginalizing language. The Unabomber was said to “complain” about the public relations industry:

> The agency was mentioned in a paragraph that said the bomber had built the package bomb that killed Thomas Mosser, a longtime Burson-Marsteller executive...the letter complained that the agency’s business “is the development of techniques for manipulating people’s attitudes.” (Barron, 1995b)

Though an article on the letters sent by the Unabomber appeared on the front page of *The Times*, excerpts from the letter were reserved for page sixteen, where Kaczynski was allowed to define anarchism and state his motivation:

> Since “anarchist” is a vague word that has been applied to a variety of attitudes, further explanation is needed. We call ourselves anarchists because we would like, ideally, to break down all society into very small, completely autonomous units. Regrettably, we don’t see any clear road to this goal...Our more immediate goal...is the destruction of the worldwide industrial system.

This goal was not revealed in the front-page article on the letter. Kaczynski was allowed to define his goals on page sixteen: “Through our bombing we hope to promote social instability in industrial society, propagate anti-industrial ideas and give encouragement to those who hate the industrial system.” Finally: “…anyone who will read the anarchist and radical environmentalist journals will see that
opposition to the industrial-technological system is widespread and growing”

On May 7, 1995 The Times ran an interesting article which presented the actions of the Unabomber as politically and ideologically motivated. The article featured an interview with anarchist author John Zerzan, ‘anarchist’ was even used in the headline: “Prominent Anarchist Finds Unsought Ally in Serial Bomber.”

The Unabomber was linked with Zerzan and anarchism: “But just before his most recent attack, which killed a timber industry executive in Sacramento, California on April 24, he left a number of intriguing leads in letters that described his hatred of technology and his desire for an anarchist world.” Zerzan himself was allowed to comment on the Unabomber’s letter to The Times, calling it “a pretty thoroughgoing critique.”

Zerzan was even allowed to present his ideas:

Mr. Zerzan himself believes that technology is by its nature a master of mankind and therefore antithetical to freedom. “There are a lot of anarchists who have no beef whatsoever with technology. They would just like to see a world in which technology serves, and so forth. Our point of view is that that’s a tremendous illusion, that the impoverishment of society and the individual is just not going to be changed with modern technology. That’s right at the heart of what is so chronically wrong with the fabric of society.” (Noble, 1995c)

The Times again linked the Unabomber to Zerzan: “The serial bomber expressed a similar ideal in his letter to The Times.”

A prominent critic of technology was even allowed to speculate that the Unabomber had this specific anarchist author, Zerzan, in mind when he made reference to “anarchists and radical environmentalists” in his letter:
Kirkpatrick Sale, an author who has written extensively and skeptically about technology and who describes himself as “a great admirer of Zerzan,” said he would not be surprised if Mr. Zerzan was among those the bomber had in mind when he referred in his letter to anarchists and radical environmentalism. (Noble, 1995c)

Interestingly, this article also made reference to the “anarchist movement”:

Now investigators, who had been looking at extremist groups of all types in their search for clues, have narrowed their focus to the anarchist movement, a small and obscure network of intellectuals, labor organizers and political idealists who share a darkly apocalyptic view of western civilization. (Noble, 1995c)

The article continued, “No one appears to know how big or far-flung that network is—Mr. Zerzan himself says he does not know—but Oregon and Northern California, dotted by a number of anarchist bookstores and reading rooms, are believed to be its center.” Then this theme completely disappeared.

This article represented a specific acknowledgement that the Unabomber had an ideology, that he was politically and ideologically motivated, making future non-coverage and discussion of anarchism all the more glaring. Also, though there was reference to an “anarchist movement,” there was no more discussion of it in The New York Times or Time, though Kaczynski would not be arrested for another eleven months.

This next article, which appeared in Time, was the first of a number of articles in which feature the intersection of ideology and abnormality. Specifically, in this and other articles, the Unabomber’s ideology, sometimes identified as anarchist, sometimes not, was taken as evidence of abnormality. Qualitative coverage of
Kaczynski with regard to abnormality revealed clear depoliticization and medicalization. The depoliticization and medicalization to which I refer in this and following paragraphs seems more blatant, as it is specifically Kaczynski's ideology which was depoliticized and medicalized. *Penthouse* publisher Bob Guccione said the following regarding the printing of the Unabomber's article, later known as "Industrial Society and Its Future": "I would do it in an instant. This is the philosophical ramblings of a tortured mind" (Lemonick, 1995). This differs from other articles, as will become clear, in which Kaczynski's behavior in court or his refusal to cooperate with his lawyers was taken as evidence of illness. Here, his very ideology, usually as expressed in his writing, was taken as evidence of abnormality and sickness.

When the Unabomber made it known that he would stop sending mail bombs if his 37,000-word article was published it was front-page news. Though *The Times* identified and discussed his ideology he was labeled a "self-described anarchist," again revealing their reluctance to accept his actions as politically motivated. Also, through language and placement his ideology was distorted and marginalized. For example, his "manifesto" was said to call "for revolution against what he says is a corrupt industrial technological society controlled by a shadow international elite of government and corporate figures seeking to subvert human freedom." This was a distorted presentation of Kaczynski's article. *The Times*’s interpretation reduces it to a conspiracy theory.

As for placement, the title of the "manifesto," "Industrial Society and Its Future," was not even stated until the last few paragraphs of the article. While the
document was quoted throughout, some of the most critical quotes were, like the revelation of the title, left for the end of the article. For example, the first extended quote was as follows: “To increase our chances of getting our stuff published in some ‘respectable periodical we have to offer less in exchange for publication in Penthouse.” That stands in stark contrast to a quote near the article’s end:

> The manifesto entitled “Industrial Society and Its Future,” opens with a basic assertion: “The Industrial Revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race.” He is not quoted on his ultimate goal until the end: “We therefore advocate a revolution against the industrial system.” (McFadden, 1995c)

Interestingly, there were no claims that the document was a manifestation of abnormality on the part of its author. According to The Times, in fact, the article was:

> A 62 page, single-spaced document that often reads like a closely reasoned scholarly tract, touching on politics, history, sociology and science as it posits a cataclysmic struggle between freedom and technology. The document, mixing revolutionary rhetoric and back-to-nature-sentiments in a blend that might have come from Trotsky or Thoreau... (McFadden, 1995c)

Later, after Kaczynski was apprehended, the same document was reported as a manifestation of abnormality.

Though Kaczynski’s alleged actions were usually depoliticized, there were points, as in the qualitative coverage of his mental state, at which a strong countervailing tendency was readily identifiable, as in the following two New York Times articles. Though the Unabomber was described in both as a “self-described anarchist” he was interpreted as a politically and ideologically motivated actor. Some
of his ideas were even given credence. On July 4, 1995, The Times reported on a letter sent by the Unabomber to Tom Tyler, Professor of Social Psychology at the University of California, Berkeley. According to The Times, Professor Tyler “said discussion was a 'much more effective way to bring about change than violence.'” (McFadden, 1995e). The Unabomber wished to bring about social change. He was a politically and ideologically motivated actor.

The next day The Times reported: “In an open letter to the serial mail bomber known as the Unabomber, a professor at the University of California at Berkeley said that he agreed with some beliefs expressed by the self-described anarchist but that he strenuously disavowed the bomber’s violent means.” Means to what? To bring about social change, the goal of a politically motivated actor. The article continued:

The professor said that he agreed that technology created many social problems and that many people felt they were losing control over their lives because of technology. “People are developing the type of anti-technology ideology that you advocate in your manuscript.” Mr. Tyler wrote that the anti-industrial ideas advocated by the bomber would more likely be embraced if he eschewed violence for education and other peaceful means to encourage social change. (“Professor asks bomber,” 1995)

A blatant instance of depoliticization occurred when the Unabomber was defined as a “hate-fueled obsessive...who uses his ideology as a cover for his will to dominate,” by John Douglas, an ex-FBI agent who developed the bureau’s serial killer profiling technique (Elson, 1995).

On August 2, 1995, The New York Times ran an article containing excerpts from “Industrial Society and Its Future.” The opening paragraph was not an excerpt, but, written by The Times, framed the article, giving the title of the Unabomber’s
paper. Nowhere in the article was a specific ideology attributed to the Unabomber, though in one excerpt Kaczynski actually used the term. In other words, an ideology was discussed in the article, but it was not identified by The Times as an anarchist, leftist, or radical environmentalist ideology:

…it is necessary to develop and propagate an ideology that opposes technology and the industrial system. Such an ideology can become the basis for a revolution against industrial society if and when the system becomes sufficiently weakened. And such an ideology will help to assure that, if and when industrial society breaks down, its remnants will be smashed beyond repair, so that the system cannot be reconstituted. The factories should be destroyed, technical books burned etc...Until the industrial system has been thoroughly wrecked, the destruction of that system must be the revolutionaries' ONLY goal. ("Excerpts from manuscript," 1995)

The New York Times published an article on the FBI's search for the Unabomber among the leftist community in the San Francisco Bay Area in which the Unabomber's actions were clearly set in a political context: the words “anarchist,” “leftist,” and “radical environmentalist” were used. Then, out of seemingly nowhere, the actions of the Unabomber were depoliticized and medicalized. In an article on Bay Area radicals a self-described leftist and environmentalist was quoted as saying the bomber was “sick” (Noble, 1995a).

A month later The New York Times and The Washington Post published Kaczynski’s article, and it was front-page news in The Times. The Unabomber’s call “for revolution against the industrial and technological underpinnings of society…” was reported, the title of the article was identified, and it was described as “closely reasoned.” The article “… touched on politics, history, sociology, science and particularly the history of science and called for a nonpolitical revolution in which
factories would be destroyed, books burned and humanity saved from economic and
technological slavery" (McFadden, 1995f). However, as in other articles, no ideology
was attributed to the Unabomber. Again, was he an anarchist? A leftist? A radical
environmentalist? *The Times* did not say.

In the following article the actions of the Unabomber were depoliticized. We
are told that the authorities were “revising important assumptions” about him.
Specifically, he was no longer said to be a politically motivated actor, though neither
*The New York Times* nor *Time* were ever committed to that definition, as the
preceding pages made clear. The article stated:

> ...the authorities are revising important assumptions about the
background and motives of the criminal...interviews with
investigators and academics who are closely following the case
suggest that the 35,000 word manuscript is the work of a man whose
profile more closely fits that of a serial murderer than a domestic
terrorist with a political agenda...The threatening circumstances
surrounding the manuscript, the growing strength of his bombs and a
pattern of erratic behavior this year, including a false threat in June to
blow up a plane, led some criminal profilers on the case to alter their
initial view that the bomber was a terrorist with a political agenda.
Instead, they now regard him as a serial murderer who kills to satisfy
an inner psychological need. (Johnston, 1995a)

This reinterpretation was reiterated in several subsequent articles.

For almost two months there were no articles on the Unabomber. One
appeared January 21, 1996, then, on April 4, Kaczynski was apprehended. Of course
the news made the front-page of *The New York Times* and the reinterpretation of the
Unabomber, from politically motivated terrorist to serial killer who is driven by an
inner psychological need, was repeated:
The manifesto and a false threat in California to blow up a plane, both of which seemed uncharacteristically erratic, prompted some criminal profilers to alter their view of the bomber. They now saw him not as a disciplined terrorist with a political aim but as a driven serial killer whose bombs fulfilled a psychological need. (Johnston, 1996)

On June 22, *The New York Times* ran an article under the headline “Plot Against Long Island Leaders is Tied to Fear of UFO’s.” In this article the Unabomber’s ideas were described as “bizarre” and put in the context of UFO’s. Unlike many previous articles, specific reference was made to his writing in applying this label. Whereas *The Times* earlier on had called the manuscript “a closely reasoned tract,” it was now presented as evidence that Kaczynski was a “kook” or a “far out”. The article is quoted below:

Fearing that space aliens had crashed on Long Island and that the authorities were covering it up, three members of a UFO group plotted to assassinate Suffolk County officials with radioactive materials and seize control of county government, prosecutors said today. “Yes, this all sounds way out,” District Attorney James M. Catterson said. “But when I read the Unabomber Manifesto some of his ideas were just as bizarre.” (McQuiston, 1996)

Clearly Kaczynski was marginalized and depoliticized.

In November of 1997 *The Times* quoted David Kaczynski’s lawyer, who made specific reference to Kaczynski’s writing in depoliticizing him and casting him as mentally ill:

In his correspondence, Ted projects his own feelings of anger, depression and powerlessness onto society at large... He blames these ill effects on a wide variety of external factors, including childhood classmates, teachers and his family as well as the media, chemical and electronic mind control, education, science and technology. (Jackson, 1997b)
The dynamic was repeated six days later, when *The Times* reported David Kaczynski’s claim that Federal agents “working on the case told him before his brother was arrested in 1996 that reading the Unabomber’s lengthy manifesto on why he felt compelled to carry out the bombings had convinced them that they were not dealing with a political terrorist but with a disturbed individual (Glaberson, 1997a). Kaczynski was obviously depoliticized and medicalized, and it was done with specific reference to his writing.

For the new year, *The New York Times* reported old news, repeating David Kaczynski’s claims “…that prosecutors had led him to believe in the early phases of the investigation that they understood his brother was not a political terrorist but a troubled man who should receive psychiatric help in prison” (Glaberson, 1998e).

On January 12, specific reference was again made, in a *Time* article, to Kaczynski’s writings in labeling him “nuts.” According to a “high ranking Justice Department official”: “‘This man is a cold-blooded killer. Read his writing. Any serial killer is nuts.’” (Jackson, 1998a). Clearly, this article depoliticized and medicalized Kaczynski: his writing was taken as a manifestation of illness. He was not a politically and ideologically motivated actor.

The following *New York Times* editorial by James Q. Wilson forcefully attempted to pull Kaczynski back into a political context, representing the tension, displayed throughout, between those who cast the alleged actions of Kaczynski as politically and ideologically motivated and those who claim his actions were simply a manifestation of abnormality and mental illness.

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Wilson put Kaczynski in a political context, and "Industrial Society and Its Future" was taken to be anything but a manifestation of illness. Actually, Wilson's position was close to The New York Times's early assertions that the paper was "closely reasoned" and "scholarly." He called it "...a carefully reasoned, artfully written paper." Furthermore, Wilson linked Kaczynski to such thinkers as Rousseau and Marx, forcefully rejecting claims that "Industrial Society and Its Future" was a manifestation of mental illness:

There is nothing in the manifesto that looks at all like the work of a madman. The language is clear, precise and calm. The argument is subtle and carefully developed, lacking anything even faintly resembling the wild claims or irrational speculation that a lunatic might produce. If it is the work of a madman, then the writings of many political philosophers—Jean Jacques Rousseau, Tom Paine, Karl Marx—are scarcely more sane. (Wilson, 1998)

Four days later Time again defined Kaczynski's writing as a manifestation of illness, going so far as to claim that its thoroughness was explained by illness. He was depoliticized and medicalized. David Kaczynski's lawyer:

"Part of Ted's affliction is the inability to stop analyzing," says Kaczynski family attorney Bisceglie. "If you go back to the letters and the manifesto, you will see this analysis and re-analysis and analyses of analyses and endless drawing of distinctions and of footnotes. It's almost as if he has no off switch. He isn't in control." (Jackson, 1998b)

Two days later we read that court-appointed psychiatrist Dr. Sally Johnson's has officially applied the mental illness label to Kaczynski in the form of paranoid schizophrenia, but she also pronounced him competent to stand trial. "The Unabom campaign" was blamed on mental illness. The alleged actions of Kaczynski were said
to have been caused by mental illness rather than political motivation, thereby

The lawyer who read Dr. Johnson’s report said it suggested a direct link between Mr. Kaczynski’s mental illness and the Unabom campaign. “Consistent with other individuals with persecutory types of delusions,” said a report excerpt provided by the lawyer, “he is resentful and angry and fantasizes and actually does resort to violence against those individuals and organizations that he believes are hurting him.” (Glaberson, 1998c)

On January 23, 1998, *The New York Times* reported on its front page that Kaczynski avoided a death sentence by pleading guilty. As in many previous articles, a specific ideology is not attributed to Kaczynski and very little was said regarding “the Unabomb campaign,” which was simply described as “... a solitary 18-year campaign aimed at bringing down the technological system.” (Glaberson, 1998d).

Theodore Kaczynski was certainly not presented as a politically motivated actor, and the use of “solitary” is interesting, marginalizing him in two ways. First, “solitary” may simply depoliticize, as in, “This guy was acting alone. He was not part of a larger political movement.” Second, “solitary” may medicalize, as in, “This guy is crazy in thinking that the world system can be brought down by one man.”

Kaczynski’s brother David was allowed to specifically attribute the actions of his brother to mental illness one last time, depoliticizing and medicalizing as throughout: “To David, his brother remains a person with a core of humanity whose horrible acts were caused by psychosis. ‘I think what we have seen from Ted is still a manifestation of his illness’” (Glaberson, 1998b).
Time’s coverage wrapped up February 2, 1998, with the article “Crazy is as Crazy Does: Why the Unabomber Agreed to Trade a Guilty Plea for a Life Sentence.” By this time discussion of the possible political dimensions and motivations of the case had been reduced to a trickle. This article simply stated that Kaczynski had wanted to use a necessity defense to explain “his 18-year killing spree—aimed mainly at those he considered technocrats, like computer scientist and business executives” by arguing that it “…was necessary to save an environment-despoiling America from itself” (Edwards, 1998). But Time repeated and accepted the claims of Dr. Johnson that Kaczynski was a delusional paranoid schizophrenic. Theodore J. Kaczynski, the Unabomber, “the self styled scourge of society” was “mentally ill.” He has been medicalized and depoliticized.

Finally, The New York Times coverage ended with publication of Kaczynski’s personal journal entries, which were selectively released by the prosecution in order to convey the impression that he was a sane, rational killer, but not politically and ideologically motivated. The following quote from one of Kaczynski’s journals, dated April 6, 1971, was presented: “My motive for doing what I am going to do is simply personal revenge. I do not expect to accomplish anything by it. Of course, if my crime gets any public attention, it may help to stimulate public interest in the technology question …” (“Excerpts from Unabomber’s,” 1998).

Qualitative Findings: McVeigh, “Ideology”

In contrast to Kaczynski, McVeigh was consistently defined as a politically and ideologically motivated actor. The New York Times first mentioned McVeigh on
April 22, 1995. In this first front page article, the destruction of the Murrah Federal Building was placed in a right-wing context: "The date, as the fiery end of the Federal siege of the Branch Davidian compound, had become a defining moment and rallying cry for scores of armed right-wing paramilitary groups." The bombing of the Murrah Federal Building was understood to be a politically inspired act, driven by right-wing ideology. More specifically, McVeigh and the right were also motivated by anger over Waco. In this initial article The New York Times laid out the grievances of the militias: they oppose gun control, taxes, The United Nations, and the "New World Order" (McFadden, 1995b). Other articles that appeared April 22 echoed these themes, as they would throughout The New York Times’s and Time’s coverage of McVeigh.

We learned more about McVeigh on the front page of The New York Times the following day, April 23, 1995. According to The Times he was involved in

... a far right world of tax-protesters and anti-government activists, and finally into a deep sympathy with the Branch Davidians who died in a fire that followed a siege by Federal agents near Waco, Texas in 1993. He visited Waco, acquaintances said, and went away with deep-seated anger and resentment against the Federal Government. (McFadden, 1995d)

In this next passage, McVeigh’s “far-right political views” were cited as a motivating factor in his alleged crime: “Federal officials say his far-right political views, his anger and his taste for weapons merged last Monday…”

This next article focused not on the wider right wing but on McVeigh’s ideology specifically. The opening paragraph stated, “In a letter to the editor of a newspaper in upstate New York in 1992, the Oklahoma City bombing suspect
suggested that violence might be the only way to change things." The article
continued, quoting McVeigh: "'What is it going to take to open the eyes of our
elected officials?' the suspect, Timothy J. McVeigh, wrote in The Union-Sun and
Journal of Lockport, N.Y. 'Do we have to shed blood to reform the current system? I
hope it doesn't come to that. But it might'" (Barron, 1995a).

*The Times* clearly situated McVeigh in a political context in the following
article, in which a lawyer known for representing leftists is asked if he would
represent McVeigh. He said "no," then *The Times* asked, "And if the accused
bomber were from the political left? Mr. Kuby said he did not believe that those on
the American left have committed or would intentionally commit a similar crime"
(Applebome, 1995).

Clearly, McVeigh was understood as a politically motivated actor.

Furthermore, in this next passage his case was further solidified as a political one
when his trial was compared to that of Sacco and Vanzetti, an irony given that they
were anarchists. According to *The Times*:

Charles Wolfram, a professor at Cornell University Law School said
that despite public animus toward Mr. McVeigh, the level of judicial
fairness in such cases now is much higher than in earlier eras. He
cited, for example, the prosecution of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo
Vanzetti, Italian-born anarchists accused of a 1920 murder and
executed seven years later. (Applebome, 1995)

Finally, McVeigh was put in the context of Adolf Hitler and Adolf Eichmann:

"I've said to many people, the acid test of a criminal defense lawyer is could you
represent Hitler or Adolph Eichmann?" Reviled figures indeed, but like Sacco and
Vanzetti, political figures.
At this point *Time* began to comment. On May 1, 1995, the cover story focused on the blast at the Murrah Building, paying attention to McVeigh. His alleged actions were situated as politically motivated. *Time* gave us a long list of militia grievances, then highlighted "the movements twin tragedies," one of them being Waco. *Time* followed the pattern established by *The New York Times*: McVeigh’s alleged actions were cast as politically and ideologically motivated and he was located within the context of a wider right wing movement (Gleick, 1995b).

On May 2, 1995, *The New York Times* reported, “President Clinton said today that Americans should resist the idea that the bombing in Oklahoma City was a political act, an argument that some right-wing paramilitary groups have advanced” (Johnston, 1995b). Yet both *The New York Times* and *Time* presented the Oklahoma City bombing as a political act by using terms like “ideology,” by putting McVeigh in the context of Hitler, Eichmann, and Sacco and Vanzetti, and by repeating details about Waco and stressing it as a motivating factor.

An interesting article appeared in *The New York Times* May 11, in which McVeigh was said to have been motivated by “a philosophy broader than Waco” (Belluck, 1995b). McVeigh was clearly presented as someone motivated by ideology. The Oklahoma City bombing was presented as a political crime.

The Oklahoma City bombing was also situated as a political act on the front page of *The New York Times* on May 28, 1995, in which letters written by McVeigh to his hometown newspaper were presented as giving insight into his political motivation (Rimer, 1995). Interestingly, when Kaczynski’s writing was analyzed it was said to reveal, and actually be evidence of, abnormality and mental illness.
On June 26, *The New York Times* made reference to McVeigh’s “political views” (Belluck, 1995c) and in a front-page article which appeared in July of 1995 specific reference was made to “McVeigh’s political anger,” and he was located within a larger right-wing movement (Kifner, 1995a). A “political philosophy” was attributed to McVeigh. (Weiner, 1995a). Finally, *The Times* identified McVeigh’s “search for ideological converts” (Kifner, 1995b). In all of these articles McVeigh was defined as a politically and ideologically motivated actor.

Two years after the bombing *The New York Times* took the opportunity to “look back,” and in the process repeated the idea of Waco as a specific motivating factor in the destruction of the Murrah Building. McVeigh was motivated by ideology, and for him, the proof of that ideology came in the form of Waco, which “enraged the chief bombing suspect in the Oklahoma bombing, Timothy J. McVeigh, and spurred him into what he is said to have envisioned as an act of retaliation against the government (Verhovek, 1997).

In June 1997, McVeigh was convicted of blowing up the Murrah Federal Building. He was still presented as being politically motivated, and was placed in the context of, and linked to, a wider right-wing/militia movement (Thomas, 1997b).

An interesting article appeared in *The Times* on June 3, 1997, in which speculation was offered as to why the trial was not followed closely by the nation. Why were we not riveted as we were in the O.J. case? Obviously, the trial was not televised, but, according to *The Times*, there was another factor: “And anyway, the weight of all those people killed—all those children—by a bomber in the service of ideology was too heavy” (Goodman, 1997). As was the case throughout, both *The
New York Times and Time, presented McVeigh’s actions as politically motivated and his case was placed in a political context.

The pattern continued: McVeigh, now convicted of blowing up the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, was still presented as an ideologically and politically motivated actor. The New York Times presented McVeigh in this light, not only in the text of articles, but in headlines as well: “Political Ideas Of McVeigh Are Subject At Bomb Trial” (Thomas, 1997d).

Finally, The Times offered their final editorial statement on the issue, casting McVeigh as ideologically driven and part of a larger right wing or militia movement. Timothy McVeigh was presented as a political actor: “...militia ideology has already provoked the Oklahoma City bombing...” (“The militia threat,” 1997).

Predictably, Time also continued to portray McVeigh as politically motivated, casting him as a would-be revolutionary:

He spends most of his time in jail reading the piles of mail he receives. He also reads books. Last month it was Somerset Maugham's The Razor's Edge, and he is now finishing Man’s Fate by Andre Malraux. A book about a young man’s spiritual quest and one about revolutionaries—McVeigh must be taking both seriously. (Collins, 1997)

In this chapter I have provided quantitative and qualitative analysis showing that Ted Kaczynski was more likely than Tim McVeigh to have been defined as abnormal. In other words Kaczynski’s acts were more likely to have been attributed to abnormality than those of Tim McVeigh. Second, The New York Times and Time were more likely to attribute an ideology to Tim McVeigh than Ted Kaczynski. In
other words, McVeigh's acts were more likely than those of Kaczynski to have been attributed to political and ideological motivation.

Interestingly, qualitative analysis revealed that at points in the coverage strong claims were put forth asserting Kaczynski to be both normal and politically and ideologically motivated. At other points, however, he was defined as abnormal even when a political ideology was attributed to him.

As for McVeigh, qualitative analysis revealed that at many points during the coverage his normalcy might reasonably have been raised but was not. Furthermore, even when he was defined as abnormal, his abnormalities were often cast as, or placed in the context of, political abnormalities.
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

I now return to the initial concerns, aims, and questions that guided this research. My specific empirical aim in this investigation of the intersection of mass media and medicalization was to assess whether or not mainstream media presentations displayed a double standard in the use and application of medical terminology as an explanation of the actions of Ted Kaczynski and Tim McVeigh: To what did the media attribute the actions of Kaczynski and McVeigh? Were the actions of one more likely to be attributed to political and ideological motivation? Were the actions of one more likely to be attributed to psychological abnormality?

To answer these questions I performed quantitative and qualitative content analysis of The New York Times's and Time's coverage of Ted Kaczynski, otherwise known as the Unabomber, convicted of sending mail bombs to leading technocrats in a 17-year anti-technology campaign, killing 3 and injuring 17, and Tim McVeigh, convicted of killing 168 people in the destruction of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, asking two more specific questions of the data in each article: First, did the article attribute a political ideology to the actor in question? Second, did the article define the actor in question as abnormal?

In the previous chapter I have provided empirical evidence, both quantitative and qualitative, showing that: (1) The New York Times and Time were more likely to attribute the acts of McVeigh to political and ideological motivation; and (2) The New York Times and Time were more likely to attribute Kaczynski's acts to psychological
abnormality. In short, I have provided evidence of the media's double standard in the use and application of medical terminology in explaining the acts of Ted Kaczynski and Tim McVeigh: The destruction of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, undertaken by a rightist, was more likely to be attributed to political and ideological motivation, while "The Unabomber campaign," undertaken by an anarchist, was more likely to be attributed to psychological abnormality and mental illness. McVeigh's acts were willful, Kaczynski's were not.

In this final chapter I: (1) turn to a discussion of the significance and meaning of mass media medicalization of the Unabomber, focusing on the implications of the media's double standard in the use and application of medical terminology as an explanation of the acts of McVeigh and Kaczynski; (2) identify and address two shortcomings or limitations of this study; and (3) suggest a future line of inquiry with regard to the intersection of mass media and medicalization.

The main implications of the media's uneven application of medical terminology as an explanation of the actions of Kaczynski and McVeigh lies in social control. The media play a powerful role in modern American society by shaping public perception. Much of what we think we know about the world comes from the media. In short, it plays a large role in the construction of reality for most people. The media have the power to frame and define, and as such are one of the most powerful social control agents in this society.

What is social control? According to Conrad and Schneider, the conflict perspective "defines social control as a political mechanism by which certain groups can dominate others" (1980, p. 21). Speaking more specifically, they identify
medical social control as "the acceptance of a medical perspective as the dominant definition of a certain phenomenon" (p. 242). More specific still, they identify a specific type of social control, "medical ideology," which involves defining a behavior or condition as an illness primarily because of the social and ideological benefits accrued by conceptualizing it in medical terms" (p. 245). They make it clear that "disease designations can support dominant social interests and institutions" (p. 245).

For example, as mentioned earlier, the medicalization of runaway slaves through the application of the disease diagnosis "drapetomania," as well as the labeling of Soviet dissidents as schizophrenics served the interests of dominant elites of those respective societies. Though both represent extreme and seemingly obvious uses of medicalization in the service of ideology and the status quo, the case of Kaczynski is more subtle, yet he represented a definite ideological and symbolic threat to dominant interests, including owners of commercial mass media organizations such as The New York Times and Time, whereas McVeigh’s “critique” was confined to criticizing the Federal Government. Though he committed violent acts, McVeigh was not a revolutionary: he did not critique commercial interests, capitalism, or technology, and was presented by the commercial mass media as a politically and ideologically motivated actor. The system was able to deal with his critique. Kaczynski’s critique, by contrast, focused on industrialization and technology. His critique was truly revolutionary. As such, the system could not handle it. He critiqued commercial interests and those commercial interests attributed his criminal actions to psychological abnormality. The commercial media allow critique of the Federal
Government, but not the whole of industrial society. In other words, McVeigh’s critique was not a real threat to vested interests; Kaczynski’s was.

The medicalization of Kaczynski served a social control function in that his actions were not held out to the public as examples of politically motivated behavior from which people can draw. The ideas of Ted Kaczynski could serve as a cognitive tool or resource people who wish to bring about social change might draw upon. If he is categorized as psychologically abnormal or ill his comments are no longer worthy of consideration. He is neutralized. Mass media and the medicalization of deviance merge in the case of Ted Kaczynski, serving social control processes most generally as well as medical ideology specifically.

Thus, one of the main implications of uneven media coverage with regard to McVeigh and Kaczynski is that the status quo was upheld and reinforced. Conrad has identified medicine as “a de facto agent of the status quo” (1987, p. 67). With regard to this dissertation, however, mass media use of medical language and vocabulary served the social control function of upholding the status quo or distribution of power and resources rather than the medical profession itself, which was only marginally involved. Thus, the medicalization of Ted Kaczynski took place on what Conrad has identified as the conceptual level, wherein a medical vocabulary or model is used to define and make sense of the problem, condition, or act in question. When medicalization occurs on this level, medical professionals may be only marginally involved and medical treatments may not be used (1992, p.211). This level of medicalization is most applicable to the present research, in which The New York Times and Time were more likely to use a medical vocabulary to define and describe
Kaczynski than McVeigh, and medical professionals such as psychiatrists were marginally involved. That is, rather than reporting the claims of psychiatrists or other medical professions, media themselves applied medical labels, which is a testament to their power. They defined the situation.

Talking specifically about medicalization, Conrad and Schneider say, “The greatest social control power comes from having the authority to define certain behaviors, persons, and things” (Conrad & Schneider, 1980, p. 8). This case represents the intersection of mass media and the medicalization and depoliticization of deviant behavior. The media, already an institution with the power to frame and define reality, also used the authority of medical language and terminology to medicalize, marginalize, and depoliticize Ted Kaczynski. As Conrad said, “the key issue is definitional” (1992, p. 216). Steen takes this statement a bit further in saying that “The definition that comes to prevail, be it a legal, moral, political, or medical definition, determines in large part how society will view the individuals engaging in problem behaviors” (2001, p.327). Finally, Szasz adds a point most germane to this dissertation when he says that to “classify another person’s behavior is usually a means of constraining him” (1970, p. 213). Of course some classifications or labels are more constraining than others. While Tim McVeigh was defined as a criminal, political ideology and motivation were generally attributed to him, whereas Ted Kaczynski’s medicalized label was constraining in that it served to depoliticize and neutralize his critique of modern industrial society.

When an action or behavior is medicalized, other possible social sources, explanations, and causes are downplayed or ignored altogether. For example, Carrier
argues that learning disability theory "misrecognizes and thus masks the effects of social practices and hierarchy," thus serving not only to obfuscate, but to deflect attention from issues of power and privilege, thereby reinforcing the status quo (1983, p. 952). This dynamic has been identified in regard to other problems as well (Conrad 1992, p. 224), such as battering, thereby deflecting attention from issues of patriarchy and social inequality.

Just as other explanations for the behavior or action in question are ruled out, so too is will and motivation. When behavior is interpreted as being caused by illness the social actor is stripped of his or her capacity to act with will or motivation. When Ted Kaczynski is said to be "sick," "crazy," or "schizophrenic," he is relieved of his agency, precluding the possibility that his actions, though illegal and opposed by most, were the result of deliberate political protest, "an intentional repudiation of existing political arrangements" (Conrad 1992, p. 251). Timothy McVeigh, however, despite being responsible for far more death and destruction, was granted agency by the media.

Another aspect of media coverage that resulted in the medicalizaton of Ted Kaczynski, with implications for social control, involves the media's use of medical terminology and the medical model. According to Conrad and Schneider, the "medical model and the associated medical designations are assumed to have a scientific basis and are treated as if they are morally neutral (1980, p. 35). In other words these judgments are assumed to be objective, value-free, rational and scientific diagnoses rather than political or moral judgements. Again, such notions serve a social control function by masking the inherently political nature of the definitional
process. More specifically, Conrad and Schneider point out that “medical
designations are social judgments and the adoption of a medical model of behavior is
a political decision (1980, p. 35). The political nature of medical designations is
covered over by the assumed objectivity of the medical model. The result, according
to Conrad and Schneider, of interpreting criminal acts in medical terms “is to
depoliticize and remove moral judgment from the behavior in question. Much as the
label “crime” allows no attention to the social environment, “sickness” removes the
offending act and actor even farther from any political and ethical context” (1980, p.
222). In other words, the act, person, or condition is depoliticized and what might
otherwise be understood as political protest is neutralized.

Reynolds has written perceptively on the social consequences of
medicalization and depoliticization. It

...results in the withdrawal of more and more areas of human
experience from the realm of public discussion. For when
drunkenness, juvenile delinquency, sub par performance and extreme
political beliefs are seen as symptoms of an underlying illness or
biological defect the merits and drawbacks of such behavior or beliefs
need not be evaluated. (1973, pp. 200-221)

In other words, public discourse about important social issues and problems,
such as environmental destruction and the role of technology in modern industrial
society, both major concerns of Ted Kaczynski’s, is downplayed and ignored.

As was demonstrated in my findings chapter, both The New York Times and
Time were more likely to medicalize the actions of Ted Kaczynski than Tim
McVeigh, leading me to refer to “the medicalization of Ted Kaczynski.” As Conrad
points out, however, the process of medicalization is rarely complete and should
properly be thought of as occurring on a continuum in which we think of medicalization not as an either-or, dichotomous process, but as a process which can be thought of in degrees. Hence, Conrad utilizes the notion of “degrees of medicalization” (1992, p. 220).

Though he notes that we lack a clear understanding of the factors that impact degrees of medicalization, it is clear that the existence of competing definitions is a crucial factor. Throughout the qualitative portion of this dissertation these dynamics were clearly played out. Though Kaczynski was more likely to be medicalized than McVeigh, his medicalization was not complete, as was noted at various points. More than once specific claims rejecting the medicalization of Kaczynski and asserting him to be a politically and ideologically motivated actor were put forth. These competing definitions appeared at various points in the coverage of Kaczynski.

It would seem that the more fully medicalized a condition or behavior becomes the greater the potential social control. For instance, if Kaczynski were completely medicalized there would be no claims challenging a medicalized definition of his actions; there would be no claims asserting him to be a politically and ideologically motivated actor, effectively sealing off and confining public understanding of the case to the medical realm. The public’s perception and understanding is thus shaped and controlled, precluding the use of Kaczynski and his actions as a model or cognitive resource for others who desire radical social transformation. The political spectrum is thus narrowed.

I now return to Herman and Chomsky’s notion of “dichotomous coverage.” As noted earlier, though they most fully apply this idea to coverage of international
events, they have found it useful in understanding media presentation of domestic events as well. However, it has not been used to understand coverage of individuals who claim to have committed domestic political crimes, but who represent different ideologies.

Does their idea aid our understanding of media coverage of Timothy McVeigh and Ted Kaczynski? Broadly speaking, the concept of dichotomous coverage seems to explain the coverage fairly well. The thrust of their work relies on the idea of dichotomous media coverage, whereby broadly similar situations or individuals are covered differently based upon their relation to elite commercial interests. Their work anticipates the general dynamics I have presented throughout this dissertation: violent political protest from the right has been accepted as politically and ideologically motivated, while violent political protest from the left has been marginalized. Cases broadly similar except for the respective ideologies claimed by McVeigh and Kaczynski, garner different media coverage. The New York Times and Time treated McVeigh and Kaczynski differently. This bears out empirically.

But the present research built on their perspective in two ways. First, as I stressed throughout my qualitative analysis, though Kaczynski was more likely to be medicalized than McVeigh, coverage was far from monolithic. Throughout the coverage of both McVeigh and Kaczynski, but especially Kaczynski, competing definitions of their behavior were to be found. As pointed out earlier in reference to Conrad's notion of "degrees of medicalization," the medicalization of Kaczynski was not complete. Possible public understanding of Kaczynski as a politically and
ideologically motivated actor was not completely sealed off. Kellner (1990) has critiqued Herman and Chomsky's work, opting instead for a hegemonic conception, which takes into account media presentations and definitions that challenge established and accepted interests. In light of the qualitative analysis presented in this dissertation, Kellner's point is instructive.

Second, and more importantly, I wed their work to Conrad and Schneider's concept, medicalization. That is, Herman and Chomsky do not identify or discuss the intersection of the mass media and the medicalization and depoliticization of deviant behavior.

Issues

At this juncture it is necessary to address two issues and limitations of this dissertation. First, the media output with regard to the two cases was very large. As mentioned at several points, 501 articles were included for analysis. It comes as no surprise, then, that 501 articles resulted in a small mountain of qualitative notes, which then had to be organized and boiled down. Reading, sorting, coding, and analyzing the data challenged my organizational skills. There were logistical problems. Keeping detailed notes and being generally organized were difficult. Obviously, researchers conducting all such projects face issues such as these: How will the notes be organized? What will be included? What must be cut? These issues were simply magnified with respect to this dissertation.

Second, the coding of articles in terms of the "abnormal" category was problematic. With the category of "ideology" it was easy to code articles. Very few
words, such as "left," "right," "anarchist," and "patriot," as well as variations of these, were indicators that an ideology was being attributed to either McVeigh or Kaczynski in a particular article. As mentioned earlier, this reduced my task to an essentially clerical one. One or more of the words was present in a particular article or it was not. With the "abnormal" category, however, deciding whether or not a particular article defined its subject as abnormal was more difficult to define, making my coding task a bit more difficult. Many words or phrases can be used to describe a person as abnormal, so constructing a pre-determined word list was simply impractical. Thus, I had to assess each article on an individual basis, letting the data emerge throughout the entire project rather than the first 25 articles only, as was the case with the category "ideology."

Future Research

The McVeigh and Kaczynski cases provided an interesting opportunity to wed two distinct lines of inquiry: the mass media research of Herman and Chomsky and Conrad and Schneider's concept, medicalization, the process whereby conditions, behaviors, and actions come to be attributed to illness, paying special attention to the media's use and application of medical terminology. In other words, I have grounded the marriage of these research lines in empirical data by comparing *The New York Times*'s and *Time*'s presentations of McVeigh and Kaczynski. This dissertation thus stands at the intersection of mass media and medicalization. Prior to this project no systematic research had been undertaken which took as its focus the role of the mass media in processes of medicalization and depoliticization. More specifically, no
researchers had compared media coverage of two individuals who claimed to commit politically and ideologically motivated crimes in the service of different ideologies, paying close attention to the media’s use and application of medical terminology in explaining those crimes.

In what directions might future research go? Bagdikian (1992) as well as Herman and Chomsky have provided evidence of the increasing concentration of the mass media, under which fewer and fewer media corporations provide news and information for ever-larger numbers of people. In addition, the cultural significance of the mass media and their presentations continues to expand. These factors combine with the power of the medical model and medicalization, which, as noted earlier, has become one of the most powerful modes of social control. As such, future research should take this intersection as a point of departure.

For example, one project might maintain Herman and Chomsky’s notion of “dichotomous coverage” and the notion of medicalization, assessing their utility in understanding media presentations of less commercialized systems. At least one critic has questioned the applicability of Herman and Chomsky’s ideas to European mass media (Goodwin, 1994). Is it possible that the media’s double standard in using and applying medical terminology takes its shape because it is so different from communication systems of European democracies, for instance? To what extent can the distortion, which my research has documented, be understood as an outcome of the particulars of the American commercial system? It would be interesting to compare American media coverage of Kaczynski to European coverage. Were his actions more likely to be attributed to political and ideological motivation or was he
still likely to be medicalized? If European media presentations of Kaczynski were less likely to attribute his actions to abnormality, portraying him instead as an ideologically and politically motivated actor, this would be significant, raising social control issues once again. Did the European media present Kaczynski as a politically and ideologically motivated actor while the U.S. media attributed his actions to abnormality and mental illness?

Much more generally, research should continue to focus on the intersection of mass media and medicalization: those interested in general medicalization processes could benefit from paying specific attention to mass media issues and presentations, while mass media researchers could benefit from paying increased attention to medicalization processes, generally, and the media’s use and application of medical terminology specifically.
Appendix

Words and phrases used by *The New York Times* and *Time* in defining Kaczynski and McVeigh as “abnormal”
Words and phrases used by *The New York Times* and *Time* in defining Kaczynski and McVeigh as “abnormal”

**Kaczynski**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methodical madman</th>
<th>Mental illness</th>
<th>Delusional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tortured mind</td>
<td>Mentally ill</td>
<td>Psychosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hate-fueled obsessive</td>
<td>Paranoid schizophrenic</td>
<td>Sociopath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathological alienation</td>
<td>Mental defect defense</td>
<td>Paranoid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monster from the Id</td>
<td>Maniacal</td>
<td>Crazy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twisted</td>
<td>Mental problems</td>
<td>Sick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madman</td>
<td>Mad genius</td>
<td>Unbalanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathologically shy</td>
<td>Brilliant sociopath</td>
<td>Disturbed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demented</td>
<td>Psychological demons</td>
<td>Nuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality pushed over the edge</td>
<td>Striking out at demons</td>
<td>Kook</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kills to satisfy inner psychological need

**McVeigh**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathological hatred</th>
<th>Bizarre</th>
<th>Human madness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obsessed</td>
<td>Crazed</td>
<td>Mind snapped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unstable</td>
<td>Sick</td>
<td>Kook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He went crazy</td>
<td>Psychotic</td>
<td>Paranoid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deteriorated mentally</td>
<td>Fanatic</td>
<td>Nuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abnormal (love of guns)</td>
<td>Psychological deterioration</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

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REFERENCES


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