30 years after NWICO: Assessing the structure of global news flows through a comparative analysis of the coverage of the 2008 United States and Ghana Presidential elections by the Nigerian media

Ralph A. Akinfeleye, Ph.D.

Professor of Mass Communication

University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos, NIGERIA

Email: ralphakinfeleye@hotmail.com

Ifeoma T. Amobi

University of Lagos, Lagos, NIGERIA

Email: teribabe57@yahoo.com

Innocent E. Okoye, Ph.D.

University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos, NIGERIA

Email: inno6okoye@yahoo.com

Oloruntola Sunday

University of Lagos, Lagos, NIGERIA

Email: sonyto1@yahoo.com

Abstract

Concerns, that the pattern of global news flow is inherently lopsided, has occupied the realm of discourse for decades now. Developing nations had in the 60s cried out against the imbalance in the volume, intensity and direction of flow of news, observing that more attention was given to developed countries of the Northern Hemisphere and little to less-developed nations of the Southern Hemisphere, as important events were ignored and reality distorted. This controversy climaxed in the 1970s, culminating in the stillbirth of the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO). While some scholars have posited that the evolution of the new information communication technologies (ICTs) for global news distribution- from international wire services to global satellite television networks and to interactive multimedia systems have produced drastic changes in the character of global news flow, others still insist that though these new technologies have increased the quantity and quality of information flows, they have not yet threatened the basic hierarchical structure of those flows (Alleyne, 1997: 12). Using the Structural theory of Imperialism to explain the inequality in the structure of global news, Johan Galtung, (Cited in Mowlana, 1997: 25) identifies two world parts: the "center" or dominant states and the "periphery" or dependent "states and points to the preponderance of center news events reported in the world's press systems in contrast to the relatively little or no flow of news among

periphery nations, as the major factor in the inequality of global news flow. He also blames the imbalance on the intense vertical flow of news from the developed nations of the Northern Hemisphere to developing countries of the Southern Hemisphere, as against the significantly little flow of news from countries of the Southern Hemisphere to countries of the Northern Hemisphere. While also acknowledging the presence of horizontal flows of news within the Northern Hemisphere and within the Southern Hemisphere, he notes that the flow within the Southern Hemisphere is substantially lesser in volume. This paper examined the current structure of global news flow, and whether such structure still remains largely lopsided. We did so by examining the coverage of the 2008 USA and Ghanaian Presidential elections by three of the leading and largest circulation Nigerian national daily newspapers- *The Punch, the Guardian and the Nation.* The content analysis approach was employed to examine the variables in the coverage: frequency, prominence, and sources, and to generate data. Findings support Galtung's "center- periphery" and vertical and horizontal flows hypotheses. Finally, some recommendations are made.

Introduction

From the beginning of time, communication has occupied a strategic position in the life of society. The nexus of economic, military and political power has always depended on efficient systems of communication and the importance of communication has been demonstrated in its use for international propaganda as well as for socio-economic development. The Persian, Greek, Roman and British empires, used available communication channels represented by communication technologies to emphasize their existence, strengthen their power and religion, achieve their administrative goals and increase power over time and space (Thussu, 2006:1).

This importance is underscored by the preponderance of research and studies on the international flow of news; some published in journals; some unpublished materials presented at conferences and meetings; some in books; while others are published as monographs or occasional papers and though the medium of publication and mode of inquiry may vary, the theme and purpose have always remained the same; to determine the structure and character of global news flow. Their findings have also included some of the following:

- International news is western-centric, since the sources of news even in the Less Developed countries are western news agencies and wire services

- Developing World coverage that does exist focuses on negative or bad news- catastrophes, violence and corruption rather than developmental news or educational information.

- International news covers elites rather than the masses

- Emphasis of international news is on events, rather than on factors leading to and causing events.

The pattern meant that in most major news channels across the regions of the world, there were the continual newsmakers of the US and Western Europe, the "hot spots" of the Third World Crisis and a comparatively invisible world of State Socialism. The South did not learn much about other regions of the South, but received far more material about the First World. Hess observes that in charting the shape of the world as it appears in the American press, the rule of thumb has been that attention is paid in direct proportion to a country's closeness to New York City. Citing Adams' study of the coverage of natural disasters, he observes that the globe is prioritized so that the death of one Western European equaled three Eastern Europeans, equaled nine Latin Americans, equaled eleven Middle Easterners and equaled twelve Asians (1996:37).

It was however, Galtung who in his 1971 article 'A Structural Theory of Imperialism' attempts to explain the inequality within and between nations and the resistance of this inequality to change. In his analysis, he develops a Center- periphery model in which the world's nations are divided into two parts

and classified as; the center or dominant communities of the Northern Hemisphere and the periphery or dependent communities of the Southern Hemisphere. He identifies vertical interaction and a feudal interaction structure whereby the dominated nations in the periphery are kept apart, as the major factors in the inequality of nations and puts forward a hypothesis which can be summarized in the following:

1. There is a preponderance of "center" news events reported in the world press systems

2. There is a much larger discrepancy in the news exchange ratios of "center' and "periphery" nations than in the exchange ratios of "center" nations.

3. "Center" news occupies a larger proportion of the foreign news content in the media of "periphery" nations than "periphery" news occupies in the "center" nations.

4. There is a feudal interaction structure whereby the dominated nations in the periphery are kept apart, with little communication among themselves.

5. Consequently, there is relatively little or no flow of news among "periphery" nations, especially across colonial-based bloc borders. (Mowlana, 1985: 24)

In the quest to correct these imbalances, debates, resolutions, meetings and manifestos calling for a new order in international structures and policies became a common feature in the 1960s and 1970s. The debate was generated

by the developing "non-aligned" nations, with Tunisia's Minister of Information, Mustapha Masmoudi as the lead advocate. They condemned the unidirectional flow of news in favor of the developed world adding that even when Developing World coverage exists, it focuses on negative or bad news- catastrophes, violence and corruption rather than developmental news or educational information. They also accused the western press of covering the elites rather than the masses and that emphasis of international news is on events, rather than on factors leading to and causing events.

Their demand was simply – a just and equitable balance in the flow and content of information, a right to national self-determination of domestic communication policies and at the international level, a two-way information flow reflecting more accurately the aspirations and activities of less developed countries. The United Nations and Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1979, set up a 16 man commission headed by Irishman Sean Macbride, to study the communication problems. In 1980, the commission came up with a report titled "Many Voices, One World" containing 82 recommendations. They called for a "New World Information and Communication Order" and their final conclusion stated that the subsisting order of information flow was far from satisfactory; they demanded for the plurality of sources and conduit of information, the elimination of negative effects of certain monopolies, and excessive concentrations, the democratization of communication and augmentation of national media to circumvent dependence on only external sources. These propositions which

were seen by the West as a "Soviet-inspired Third World design" aimed at attacking the freedom of the press and their business interests in the developing world, culminated in the withdrawal from UNESCO, of the US, UK, and Singapore in 1984 and 1985 respectively. NWICO thus became stillbirth.

Dahir (2009) wonders if the African story would be told differently if the recommendations had been implemented as he laments the use of programs such as "Inside Africa" on CNN and "Africa Journal" on Reuters to portray the image of Africa from a western perspective, dwelling on themes which Nigerian journalist and author Pascal Eze calls PIDIC (poverty, instability, disease, illiteracy, and corruption.

To provide a contra flow in communication and allow journalists especially editors of developing countries some degree of control over editorial contents, regional news agencies such as Pan African News Agency (PANA) were established, but these failed to step up to the plate.

Statement of the problem

In spite of all the hue and cry against the lopsided structure of global news flow, globalization, along with other innovations have produced political and technological changes, especially in the last two decades and these may have produced new road maps. There are new forces of nationalism, new struggles for development and democracy, new concerns about human rights and the environment, all clamoring for media attention. Broadcast signals are becoming more available to more and more of the world's population and news gathering

techniques have changed, added to the rapid distribution of live television news which perhaps is the key new ingredient in the global news environment. There are also new corporate players in international news provision such as CNN, BBC World Service television and other global networks among the major global players. The Southern international news gathering agencies also now appear to be making efforts towards providing contra flow to the major Western Agencies news flow. This study therefore examined the current structure to determine if there is emerging news geography both in terms of major suppliers of news and the direction of global news flows.

Objectives

The primary objectives of this study include:

- To determine the current structure of global news flow
- To validate or invalidate Galtung's theory of Structural Imperialism
- To stimulate increased discourse on the stillbirth New World Information and Communication Order especially by scholars in developing nations with the aim of sustaining international attention and objective solutions.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1. What is the frequency of coverage given to the US presidential elections in comparison with that of the Ghana presidential elections by Nigerian newspapers?

RQ2. What is the degree of prominence accorded the news items on the US presidential elections as compared with that given to the Ghana presidential elections?

RQ3. To what extent did Nigerian newspapers depend on foreign sources as against local sources for news about the US and Ghana presidential elections?

RQ4. Do findings validate or invalidate Galtung's Structural Imperialism Theory?

 Literature Review

In a content analysis of four geographically dispersed prestige dailies, Semmel (1976) compared the foreign news attention patterns of the papers - the *New York Times* (East), *Miami Herald* (South), *Chicago Tribune* (Mid-West) and *Los Angeles Times* (West). He found evidence of geographical influence in the foreign attention pattern of the papers. The study also revealed that the papers paid attention only to events in world capitals, individual elites, elite groups and governmental agencies. Highly industrialized and economically advanced countries were well covered by the four newspapers.

Hicks and Avishag (1974) in a content analysis of three Israeli and one American Newspaper found that the American newspaper- *Times Picayune* - published more news involving the US than it did news not involving the US. They found that all papers reported more elite-oriented news than those

relating to common people. The study also found some support for the argument that news flow between big and small nations tends to be one way.

In another study conducted by Elliot Parker (1996) on global news flow, results revealed that many of the patterns discovered in the seventies and eighties still persist in the nineties. Most international news originates from the developed world, particularly the United States. He concludes that as a group, western countries are featured the most in the world news media.

In a study of "the image of the world through the eyes of five Nigerian newspapers from 1980 -1985", though Sobowale found that Nigerian newspapers do not cover the world adequately with only 10.5% of their total news stories dedicated to foreign news, he found that these stories contained more news about the developed countries than the Third World countries. However he found that the few stories on the Third World countries paid more attention to Africa (Sobowale, 1987: 62). This is in agreement with the findings of Pratt's 1974 study of six Nigerian newspapers to determine their foreign news content in relation to their local news content. The study had found that for every foreign story in the press there were slightly more than three local stories, with the papers paying noticeable attention to Africa and Middle East. This is in contrast to Nwuneli's study in 1971 on the coverage of the Guinea invasion by Nigerian newspapers, which found that although the stories of the invasion reached Nigeria about one hour after the invasion started, Nigerian newspapers did not report the event until the third day and when they did it was considerably played down (Cited in Sobowale, 1987: 55). Similarly, Alleyne

posits that the quantity and quality of news flowing from the richer countries of the North to South, greatly exceeds the quantity and quality going in the other direction. "While there are high quantitative and qualitative news flows between the richer countries, the reverse is the case with the poorer nations, as the "Big five" international news agencies, the elite newspapers and magazines of North America and Europe and the global TV networks such as CNN, have vast majority of their foreign news bureaus concentrated in the major capitals of the world- London, New York, Paris, Washington, Brussels, Tokyo and Hong Kong." These bureaus disseminate millions of words, still and moving pictures and sounds, daily, to their head offices where they are processed as newscasts and radio reports. He concludes that unless there is a major or natural disaster occurring in the less developed countries, these regions hardly get covered and even when they do the reports are often low, for instance, the reports may come in just words without still or moving pictures. He also notes that that South-South flow is peculiar because of its higher propensity not to flow directly, since most of the bureaus are located in the North and news about say Africa may have to go through London or New York.

Mowlana notes that several research efforts have tested Galtung's hypothesis, including Buitjtenhuijs and Baesjou who conclude that though there exists a news flow across bloc borders in Africa, there exists a dominance of "center" news agencies in the news of the two African countries served by the newspapers examined. Similarly, McKenzie and Overton, in their 1981 content analysis study of mass media in Australia, upheld Galtung's hypothesis,

concluding that the pattern of international news flow, to and from Australia, largely remained colonial, with traditional news sources prevailing ((1986: 24).

Interpreting Galtung's second hypothesis, Mowlana (1986:25) agrees that news flow is vertical from developed countries of the Northern Hemisphere to the less developed countries of the Southern hemisphere, with supplemental horizontal flows within the North and lesser volume of supplemental flow within the South. He also notes that while there is a considerable quantity of news flow South to North, it tends to be significantly less in volume in comparison with the flow from the North to South.

McQuail (2005: 254), citing Galtung, posits that certain larger, more central countries such as the United States and the larger countries of Western Europe (France, Britain, Italy, Germany, Spain), originate news and other media content and distribute to their media 'satellites' in tow. While acknowledging regional and language-based patterns of exchange, he identifies the predominant feature of this model as limited flow of information among peripheral countries themselves. He views this situation as imperialism which he defines as a special type of dominance of one collectivity, usually a nation, over another and characterized by two mechanisms; the pattern of vertical interaction whereby the dominating nation enriches itself more as a result of the interaction process than the dominated nation, particularly the neo-colonialist forms with its spin-off effects in the developed nations when they exchange manufactured goods for raw materials from the underdeveloped

nations; the feudal interaction structure whereby the dominated nations in the periphery are kept apart, with little communication and trade among themselves.

To address this imbalance, the Non-Aligned Movement and UNESCO encouraged initiatives such as the institution of regional news agencies such as the Pan African News Agency PANA, the Caribbean News Agency CANA, the Non-Aligned News Agencies Pool NANAP were established to give journalists in these regions, more editorial control over news from their regions and abroad, but none of these organizations had the resources to set up their own bureau in far away capitals, to balance the North- South and South-South flows (Alleyne, 1997: 13).

Agreeing with Alleyne, Ejime, (2009), a correspondent with PANA, observes that sustaining the agency had become near impossible as other African countries, with the exception of Nigeria were unable to pay their bills and by 1991, the agency was on the brink of collapse and UNESCO once again intervened with a recovery plan, part of which is the intention to privatize PANA, allocating 25% holdings to African states and 75% to African investors. This plan has however yielded little or no results as only very few investors have indicated interest and though the agency is still in operation, it is unable to function optimally

New Technologies and the structure of global news flow

New technologies have produced drastic changes in the character of global news flows, especially with the coming of global satellite television networks and interactive multimedia systems. The old structure had provided governments and domestic media organizations with opportunities to censor, edit or control flows of news into their countries or region. Wire copy could be edited and even when news was provided in video form, it came in form of video cassette or feeds for rebroadcast. With the advent of global television networks, the adding of sounds and pictures improved the quality of news. The qualitative nature was also made better by the fact that breaking news events such as the release of Mandela from jail, the 9/11 terrorists attacks, the students demonstration in Tiananmen Square could be relayed live, uncensored and seemingly unmediated by prejudiced opinions of reporters and even governments. The live television camera appeared to be a global mirror, an objective tool for the collection and dissemination of the potentially volatile information called news.

Exploiting the profitability of financial news and utilizing new technologies, a new dimension to the provision of international news came in the 1990s with the Bloomberg network providing about 30,000 subscribers around the world via interactive multimedia computer terminals, quotes on stocks, currencies, commodities, bonds and other securities as well as breaking business news.

The information flowed in numbers, words, pictures and sounds and most of the world's Central banks were subscribers (Alleyne, 1997: 11).

However, Alleyne argues that the evolution in technologies which has transformed global news distribution from the international wire services to global satellite networks and interactive multimedia systems, have only increased the quantity and quality of information flows, but has failed to subvert the basic hierarchical structure of those flows. He notes that the new financial information networks, have merely mirrored the patterns of world trade and investment flows and these are still concentrated in the richer countries of North America, Europe and Japan. Arguing that the tempting assumption that more efficient international communication has produced globalization is rather incorrect, he states that what is more precise is that there is an uneven globalization (1997). Indeed some scholars view globalization as a new form of cultural domination through international communication.

In agreement, Mowlana (1997) posits that there is a gap between the industrially developed and developing countries in the way they are able to create, process, and apply the needed information for economic, political and cultural development. He argues that while such development as convergence between telecommunication and computing, underlines a trend in the industrialized countries, the increasing needs and determination of developing countries to provide telecommunications in support of their national and

international policies remain basic. Research supports the fact that the growth of technology is not necessarily increasing the access of all peoples to information, nationally or internationally as there is a disparity between the poor and the rich. At the same time competition within and between the industrialized countries in the area of implementation and services is growing (Mowlana, 1997) and driving further increase in tasks and efficiency of the communication systems of industrialized nations.

Methodology

In his day to day living, man informally deciphers the messages he receives from his environment. As a communication researcher, he does so formally through a method known as content analysis. In this regard, what accounts for the significance of content analysis as a research method, perhaps more than anything else, is its requirement for a systematic and objective analysis of messages produced by mass media. It is this requirement that makes it possible for different persons observing the same content to arrive at the same conclusions. As regards current disagreements in world forums over the nature of communication content in the international news media system, especially as they relate to the developing countries, such conflicting conclusions are not far-fetched and as these disagreements over communication content persist, interested parties are turning more and more to scientific methods of resolving them. It is here that content analysis comes into play.

Concerning mass media content at the international level, the questions that are being raised are primarily those relating to the amount and nature i.e. the quantity and quality of coverage given to the less developed countries. In investigating these questions, researchers almost exclusively have had to resort to the use of content analysis. Hence, one finds that the relevant literature on the content of international news abounds with content analysis studies. It is against this backdrop that content analysis as a method of research, finds relevance in this study which comparatively content analyzed the coverage of the 2008 US and Ghana presidential elections by three Nigerian newspapers in the context of frequency, prominence and sources of news.

The study was premised on the assumption that if scholars from the developing world and indeed the press believed that the developing countries got little or no attention from the media of the industrialized nations, then they would give more attention to Third World events and more prominence to their stories than the attention and prominence given to news stories from and about the developed nations.

Based on these assumptions, the following research questions were formulated:

RQ1. What is the frequency of coverage given to the US presidential elections in comparison with that given to the Ghana presidential elections by Nigerian newspapers?

RQ2. What is the degree of prominence accorded the news items on the US presidential elections as compared with that given to the Ghana presidential elections?

RQ3. To what extent did Nigerian newspapers depend on foreign sources as against local sources for news about the US and Ghana presidential elections?

RQ4. Do findings validate or invalidate Galtung's Structural Imperialism Theory?

To answer these questions, three Nigeria daily national newspapers, The Punch, Guardian and The Nation were selected based on their wide reach and readership popularity. A period of four months, October, November, December and January were also chosen and justification for this is that while the US Presidential elections held in November 2008, the Ghana Presidential elections held in December 2008, making it one month before and three months after the US presidential elections and two months before and after for the Ghana presidential elections. All the 123 editions of each newspaper for the four month period, making a total of 369 editions of the three newspapers for the four month period were selected for analysis, and the categories selected. M'Bayo (2010), citing Budd, et al (1969) states that a content analyst must consider three requirements in the development of content categories – (1) categories must accurately fit the needs of the study (2) they must be exhaustive relative to the study, and (3) they must be mutually exclusive. With this in mind, five different sets of categories for observation were developed, namely straight news, features, editorials, cartoons and photographs.

One masters student, one 500 level student, one 400 level and two 300 level students of the Department of Mass Communication at the University of Lagos, Nigeria did the coding. Inter-coding consensus was reached in a few situations where a particular content did not fit neatly into a content category. Also prominence which is defined in terms of the placement of the story in the newspaper, frequency defined by the number of news reports about the events and news source defined as the byline on the story.

Results and Analysis

To find out the current structure of global news flow, three research questions were asked. The data analysis for this study was based on the 1100 news items on the US and Ghana presidential elections as reported by The Punch, Guardian and The Nation between October 2008 and January 2009. These news items were analyzed using simple percentage and frequency tables to answer the three research questions which are as follows:

RQ1. *What is the frequency of coverage given to the US presidential elections in comparison with that given to the Ghana presidential elections by Nigerian newspapers?*

Table 1: Frequency of coverage of the US and Ghana elections by the three Nigerian newspapers

Election coverage	Frequency	Percentage
USA Elections	1015	92.27
Ghana Elections	85	7.72
Total	1100	100%

Table 2: Showing Frequency of coverage of the US and Ghana elections by each of the three Nigerian newspapers

Election coverage	Guardian %	Punch %	The Nation %
USA Elections	424(90.99%)	293(94.52%)	298(91.98%)
Ghana Elections	42(9.01%)	17(5.48%)	26(8.02%)
Total n	100% 466	100% 310	100% 324

Table 1 indicates how many news items were carried on both the US and Ghana presidential elections by the three newspapers, while Table 2 shows how many news items were carried on both elections by each of the papers. The total news items on both the US and Ghana presidential elections is 1100 representing 100%, of these, 1015 items representing 92.27% of the total news reports were on the US presidential elections, while 85 or 7.72% of the total news items were on the Ghana presidential elections. When analyzed individually, Guardian recorded the highest number of news reports with 424 news items on the US elections and 42 news items on the Ghana elections. While The Nation came a distant second with 298 reports representing 91.98% on the US elections and 26 or 8.02% on the Ghana elections Punch came third with a total of 293 representing 94.52% reports on the US elections and 17 or 5.48% on the Ghana elections.

RQ2. What is the degree of prominence accorded the news items on the US presidential elections as compared with that given to the Ghana presidential elections?

Table 3: Showing a comparison of the degree of prominence given to the US and Ghana presidential elections by the three Nigerian newspapers

Prominence	USA	Ghana	Total
Front Page News/Photo	314(31.8%)	23(20.5.8%)	337(30.6%)
Back page news/photo/editorial	175(17.7%)	14(12.5%)	189(17.2%)
Inside page news/photo	499(50.5%)	75(67%)	574(52.2%)
Total n	100% 988	100% 112	100% 1100

Table 3 shows the degree of prominence given to the news items by the three Nigerian newspapers. The data displayed in table 3 shows the degree of prominence using the placement of news items by the newspapers. Of the 988 news items on the US elections carried by the three newspapers, 314 representing 31.8% were placed on the front page, while of the 112 news items on the Ghana elections 23 representing 20.58% were placed on the front page. Thus, of the 1100 news items carried on the two elections by the three newspapers, 337 representing 30.6% were carried on the front page, 189 representing 17.2% were carried on the back page and 574 representing 52.2% were carried on the inside pages.

Table 4: Comparing the degree of prominence given to the US and Ghana presidential elections

Election coverage	Front page news items	Back page news items
US	314(93.2%)	175(92.6%)
Ghana	23 (6.8%)	14(7.4%)
Total n	100% 337	100% 189

Comparing the degree of prominence given to the coverage of both elections as determined by the number of front page placements given to the news items, the US presidential elections got 93.2% prominence as against 6.8% prominence given to the Ghana presidential elections. Again, of the 189 news items that got placement on the back page, 175 representing 92.6% were on the US presidential elections, while 14 news items representing 7.4% were on the Ghana presidential elections.

Table 5: Showing the degree of Prominence given to the coverage of the US presidential elections by each of the three Nigerian newspapers

Prominence	Guardian	Punch	The Nation	Total
Front Page News/Photo	151(37.4%)	96(32.8%)	67(23.1%)	314(31.8%)
Back page news/photo/editorial	80(19.8%)	23(7.8%)	72(24.7%)	175(17.7%)
Inside page news/photo	173(42.8%)	174(59.4%)	152(52.2%)	499(50.5%)
Total n	100% 404	100% 293	100% 291	(100%) 988

Table 6: Showing the degree of Prominence given to the coverage of the Ghana presidential elections by each of the three Nigerian newspapers

Prominence	Guardian	Punch	The Nation	Total
Front Page News/Photo	12(19.35%)	0	11(33.33%)	23(20.5.8%)
Back page news/photo	5(8.1%)	2(11.8%)	7(21.21%)	14(12.5%)
Inside page news/photo	45(72.55%)	15(88.2%)	15(45.46%)	75(67%)
Total n	100% 62	100% 17	100% 33	100% 112

Tables 5 and 6 show the degree of prominence given to the coverage of both elections by the individual newspapers. Of the 404 news items carried by Guardian newspaper on the US elections, 151 representing 37.4% appeared on the front page, 80 representing 19.8% on the back page and 173 representing 42.8% appeared on the inside pages. Further, 12 representing 19.4% of the 62 news items on the Ghana elections appeared on the front page, 5 representing 8.1% on the back page and 45 representing 72.6% appeared on the inside pages.

For the Punch newspaper, out of its 293 news items 96 representing 32.8% appeared on the front page, 23 representing 7.8% on the back page and 174 representing 59.4% appeared on the inside pages. There were no front page news reports on the Ghana elections. However, 2 news items representing 11.8% appeared on the back page and 15 representing 88.2% appeared on the inside pages.

The Nation newspaper carried a total number of 291 news items on the US elections, out of which 67 representing 23.1% appeared on the front page, 72

news items representing 24.7% appeared on the back page, while 152 representing 52,2% appeared on the inside pages. For the degree of prominence given to the coverage of the Ghana elections by The Nation newspaper, out of the 33 news items carried, 11 representing 33.33% appeared on the front page, 7 representing 21.21% appeared on the back page and 15 news items representing 45.46% were carried on the inside pages.

RQ3. To what extent did Nigerian newspapers depend on foreign sources as against local sources for news about the US and Ghana presidential elections?

Table 7: Comparing the sources of news items of the three Nigerian newspapers

Source	Frequency	Percentage
Local source	250	22.73
Foreign source	850	77.27
Total	1100	100%

Table 8: Comparing the sources of news items of each of the three Nigerian newspapers

Source	Guardian %	Punch	The Nation %	Total
Local sources	126(27.04%)	76(24.5%)	48(14.81%)	250(22.73%)
Foreign sources	340(72.96%)	234(75.5%)	276(85.19%)	850(77.27%)
Total n	100% 466	100% 310	100% 324	100% 1100

Data on table 7 shows that of the 1100 news items, 850 were from foreign sources, mostly international news agencies such as Reuters, AP, and AFP, while 250 were from local sources. Table 8 analyzes the sources used by the

individual newspapers and shows that of the 466 news items carried by the Guardian, 340 representing 72.96% were from foreign sources, while 126 representing 27.04% were from local sources. For Punch newspaper, 234 news items representing 75.5% out of a total of 310 were from foreign sources while 76 representing 24.5% were from local sources. Similarly 276 representing 85.19% of the 324 news items carried by The Nation newspaper were from foreign sources as against 48 representing 14.81% from local sources.

RQ4. Do findings validate or invalidate Galtung's Structural Imperialism Theory?

The data in all the frequency tables 1-6 were used to answer the questions posed in Galtung's hypotheses 3 and 4, while tables 7 and 8 are used to answer questions posed by hypotheses 5 as well as 4.

Discussion/ Interpretation

To determine the structure of global news flow, let us consider the following findings:

Frequency

- 1100 news items were carried on both elections

- 1015 representing 92.27% of these were on the US presidential elections

- 85 representing 7.72% were on the Ghana presidential elections

- Each of the three newspapers studied gave more coverage to the US elections as follows:

- Comparatively, Guardian gave 90.99% coverage to the US elections as against 9.01% coverage given to the Ghana elections

- Punch gave 94.52% coverage as against 5.48% given to Ghana presidential elections

- While The Nation gave 91.98% coverage as against 8.02% coverage given to the Ghana presidential elections

The frequency of coverage of both the US and Ghana Presidential elections is largely skewed in favor of the US. The above findings therefore, while showing a preponderance of "center news in the foreign news content of the media of a periphery nation" as is postulated in Galtung's third hypothesis, also clearly demonstrates that the South does not learn much about other regions of the South, but receives far more materials about the First World, especially the United States and Britain. It also agrees with Zuckerman's submission that media attention has a strong correlation with economic factors, especially to a nation's wealth as measured by gross domestic product (2003). Consequently these findings also support Galtung's fourth hypothesis which states that "there is a feudal interaction structure whereby the dominated nations in the periphery are kept apart with little communication among themselves".

Prominence

- Of the 1100 news items, 337 got front page placement

- 317 representing 93.2% of these news items were on the US presidential elections

- 23 representing 6.8% were on the Ghana presidential elections

- Guardian placed 151 representing 92.6% news items on the US elections on its front page as against the placement of 12 representing 7.4% news items on the Ghana presidential elections.

- Punch placed 96 representing 100% news items on the US elections on its front page, while none of its news items on the Ghana presidential elections got front page placement.

- For the Nation, 67 representing 85.9% news items were on the US elections, and 11 representing 14.1% news items were on the Ghana presidential elections.

The degree of prominence given to the coverage of the US presidential election over the coverage of the Ghana presidential election is not only a strong indication of the lopsided nature of the global news structure but also mirrors the global political and economic structure. This perhaps agrees with Hess' view that in charting the shape of the world as it appears in the American press, the rule of thumb has been that attention is paid in direct proportion to a country's closeness to New York City, adding that the globe is prioritized so that the death of one Western European equaled three Eastern Europeans, equaled nine Latin Americans, equaled eleven Middle Easterners and equaled twelve Asians (1996:37). Thus, one US election is perhaps worth more than all the national elections in the continent of Africa, when added up.

Sources

- Of the 1100 news items carried by the three newspapers on both elections, 850 representing 77.27% were from foreign sources, while 250 representing 22.73% originated from local sources.

- For Guardian, the news items originated from 72.96 foreign sources and 27.04% local sources

- Punch got 75.55 of its news items on both elections from foreign sources and 24.45% from local sources

- Similarly, The Nation got 77.27% of its news items on both elections from foreign sources as against 22.73% from local sources.

Findings of this study show that the major suppliers of news still remain the international news agencies of Reuters, AP, and AFP and the global satellite TV news networks with occasional stories from News Agency of Nigeria NAN. This supports Galtung's second hypothesis which states that "news flow is vertical from developed countries of the Northern hemisphere to the less developed countries of the Southern hemisphere with substantially lesser volume of supplemental flow within the South and Parker's 1996 study which revealed that most international news originates from the developed world, particularly the US. It also supports Boyd-Barrett's position that developing countries are overly dependent on Western-based media to articulate and disseminate information, even about the developing world itself (2003: 35).

Scope and Limitations of study

This study covered only the print media in Nigeria and consequently limits generalization. Due to time constraint, researchers were unable to carry out hypotheses testing and to also examine Galtung's hypotheses 1 and 2 which state that:

1. There is a preponderance of "center" news events reported in the world press systems and

2. There is a much larger discrepancy in the news exchange ratios of "center" and "periphery" nations than in the exchange ratios of "center" nations.

As a result of similar constraints, researchers were also unable to study the electronic media and the internet. However, since this is an ongoing study, these limitations will be addressed in subsequent studies

Conclusion

Against the backdrop of the South's argument alleging unidirectional information flow and that communication today has become an exchange between unequal partners in favor of the more powerful, richer and better equipped North (Masmoudi, 1979, Macbride, 1980:34) and attempts by world bodies such as UNESCO to correct the imbalance, this paper studied the current structure of global news flow, to determine if such structure still remains largely lopsided. In doing so the researcher examined the coverage of

the 2008 USA and Ghanaian Presidential elections by three of the leading and largest circulation Nigerian national daily newspapers- *The Punch, the Guardian and the Nation.* The content analysis approach, featuring a set of formal characteristics of frequency, prominence, and sources, were employed to generate data. Findings suggest that if there is emerging news geography it has not been revealed in this study. Rather, it shows that "Center" news occupies a larger proportion of the foreign news content in the media of "periphery" nations than the developed countries and that the major suppliers of news still remain the international news agencies and the global satellite news networks. Similarly, results show that even though the new information communication technologies have made broadcast signals more available, they have not threatened the hierarchical structure of those flows which still appear largely lopsided. Regional news agencies such as PANA which were established to give contra flow and give journalists greater editorial control have not stepped up to the plate, while NAN which would have bridged the gap is unable to maintain bureaus outside Nigeria.

However, findings support Galtung's hypotheses 3, 4, & 5 which state that:

- "Center" news occupies a larger proportion of the foreign news content in the media of "periphery" nations than "periphery" news occupies.

- There is a feudal interaction structure whereby the dominated nations in the periphery are kept apart, with little communication among themselves.

- Consequently, there is relatively little or no flow of news among "periphery" nations, especially across colonial-based bloc borders.

Recommendations

- Leaders of developing nations should place high on their agenda, the need to develop communication policies that will make them part of the global information society and ensure that these policies are implemented and more importantly, sustained.

- Journalists of the developing countries should cultivate what Merrill terms "Third world self- assurance" (2008: 182) and stop accusing the developed countries of communications imperialism when they are equally guilty of playing down serious developmental news in favor of the more sensational ones.

- African nations must as a matter of urgency resuscitate PANA and set up bureaus in far away capitals, as a means of providing contra flow to the major Western agencies news flows. This will also give journalists in Africa, more editorial control over news from their region and abroad and hopefully balance the lop-sided North- South and South-South flows.

- Developed world media, while not compromising press freedom, must be fair, balanced and objective in their representation of developing world. They must report the developments and triumphs of developing nations as much as they report their failures and catastrophes. For instance programs such as CNN "Inside Africa" which mirrors Africa to the rest of the world should apply some restraint in portraying the developing world only as corrupt, backward and

never do well, as this is unethical and misrepresentative, since developing countries, while having more than their own fair share of setbacks, are replete with talents.

- There should be a rebirth and sustenance of the discourse on the stillbirth New World Information and Communication Order especially by scholars in developing nations as this will maintain international attention. This discourse should take place at three levels; national, continental and international and should focus on the areas of procurement, assembly and manufacturing.

- Leaders of developing nations should invest in human capital, particularly in the area of information and communication for development and not communication about development (Akinfeleye, 2010: 187). They must also recognize the power of information in sustaining democracy, accountability, transparency and good governance.

- In agreement with Alozie (2010: 49), developing countries should invest heavily in communication infrastructures as this will serve as a vehicle to catapult them into the future, by promoting openness, access, networking and problem solving that transform societies and bring people together.

- Developing countries should invest on more on capacity building in the information and communication sector, by integrating communication training in line with the relevant aspects of UNESCO Model of Journalism training. Without the development of human capacity to use information services and professionals to create and maintain the facilities, the African information sector will remain constrained (Alozie, 2010: 57).

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