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# Neocolonialism And The Ghanaian Media: An In-Depth Look at International News Coverage in Ghanaian Newspapers, Television and Radio

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**NEOCOLONIALISM AND THE GHANAIAIAN MEDIA**  
An In-Depth Look at International News Coverage in Ghanaian  
Newspapers, Television and Radio

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December 10, 1997

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## **ABSTRACT**

By using the framework of neocolonialism, the following paper examines foreign news in the Ghanaian media. Through observations, interviews and book research, the paper supplies background information on neocolonialism, the media and society, and an overview of the Ghanaian media. The paper then provides extensive discussion on sources of foreign news in the Ghanaian media, foreign news selection and processing, perceptions of the foreign news content among Ghanaian media personnel and the future of foreign news in Ghana's media. It concludes with an evaluation of foreign news in the Ghanaian media in light of the argument that neocolonialism has come to dominate the African mass media.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During my stay in Ghana I have met a number of individuals whose kindness has helped make my semester memorable and my research successful. First, I would like to thank my Academic directors Naana and Kwadwo Opoku-Agyemang whose dedication to the Diaspora program have made this semester the most memorable and cherished of my college career. Throughout the semester the two of you never ceased to amaze me with your intelligence, loving spirit, and resilience. You have facilitated my spiritual, emotional and academic growth in a way that is immeasurable – thank you.

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## INTRODUCTION

### *Background*

It is impossible to understand contemporary Ghana without looking at the country's colonial history. The lasting marks of colonization protrude from almost every facet of Ghanaian life. Ghanaian religion, culture, education and economy have all meshed with, or been adapted to fit the systems and traditions trumpeted by Ghana's colonial overlords.<sup>1</sup>

Although Ghana received its political independence in 1957, ties with its British colonial power have contained to influence the country. And in the years since independence, Ghana and sub-Saharan Africa as a whole, have become dependents not only on their former colonial masters, but on the developed international system as a whole.<sup>2</sup> Though not directly under colonial rule any longer, Ghana, has come to know and operate under a new type of colonialism, often referred to as neocolonialism. Neocolonialism can be thought of as the multidimensional system of dependency under which sub-Saharan Africa has continued to function since political independence.<sup>3</sup> While neocolonialism recognizes sub-Saharan Africa's political independence, it continues to control these developing countries economically:

Institutions like GATT, the World Bank and (the) International Monetary Fund have been established and all sub-Saharan African states are drawn into them – their sole aim being that these states remain as suppliers of raw materials and cheap labour in the service of world capitalist profits.<sup>4</sup>

Though many forms of neocolonialism are easy to identify in contemporary Ghana, others operate more subtly. I came to Ghana prepared to conduct research for my Independent Study Project that would coincide with work already done toward my senior honors thesis. Originally, I planned to analyze how the Ghanaian media reported the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Ghana was the only African country with troops stationed in Rwanda during the massacres and helped to ease the refugee problem after the fighting ended. Looking at how one African country covered a crisis occurring elsewhere on the continent, I thought, would be helpful in determining whether Africans are more sympathetic toward hardships their fellow Africans endure.

During our group's initial visit to Accra, I browsed through a number of back issues of the Ghanaian newspapers. What I discovered was that virtually all of the articles on Rwanda came from

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<sup>1</sup> Ali Mohammadi. "Cultural Imperialism and Culture Identity", *Mass Media and Popular Culture*. Volume number and date of publication unavailable.

<sup>2</sup> Jerry Domatob. "Sub-Saharan Africa's Media and Neocolonialism". *Africa Media Review* Vol. 3 no. 1, 1988 pages 149-174.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 153

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 155

foreign sources. Almost every report had originated from the British newswire – Reuters. Furthermore, I found front page news articles on the crisis in Bosnia, while paragraph-long reports on happenings in Rwanda were buried toward the back of the paper.

In subsequent weeks, I began to pay close attention to news reports on the radio and television. News was often rebroadcast directly from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and television news reports often came directly from the Central News Network (CNN). Upon making these observations, I began to question the extent to which the Ghanaian news media<sup>5</sup> is dominated by outside sources.

If, I reasoned, the foreign news Ghana receives comes from news distributors outside of Ghanaian , does that not taint the view of the world that Ghanaians receive? If Ghanaian newspapers, television, and radio get stories about other parts of Africa and the rest of the world from media organizations in England or America, will there not be an inherent “Western bias” in those stories? Where are the foreign news articles printed in Ghanaian newspapers, and broadcast on Ghanaian radio and television coming from? What happens to them before they end up on the pages of the newspaper or on the evening news? And why do these occur? After posing these questions, I expanded the scope of my research to the topic of foreign news in the Ghanaian media. These were the questions I was interested in exploring when I set out to conduct my Independent Study Project.

### *The Media and Society*

The foreign news media can be thought of as the vehicle that helps to define for us the world beyond our immediate experience. When events occur that we are unable to witness or participate in, we rely on the media to inform and educate us about these happenings. Over a half-century ago, scholars began to assess the important role of the press in society. Walter Lippman, a professor renown for his work on the media and society, was first to piece together the effect that the press has on the public. In his chapter “The World Outside and the Pictures in Our Heads,” Lippman pointed to the central role the media plays in defining the world beyond an individual’s firsthand experience : The world that we have to deal with politically is out of reach, out of sight, out of mind. It has to be explored, reported and imagined.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> In this study, the terms news media and media will be used interchangeably. Specifically, these terms are to refer to newspapers, television news, and radio news broadcasts.

<sup>6</sup> James Dearing refers to, quotes, and prints excerpts of Lippman’s work in *Agenda Setting* (California: SAGE Publications, 1996),11.

It was Lippman who first argued that the media is the vital link between events that take place and the pictures of these events that we preserve in our minds. Following Lippman, Harold Lasswell, another media specialist, also highlighted the functions of the media within society. According to Lasswell, the news media are supposed to track events taking place in the world and report them, so as to keep the public informed about the world they live in.<sup>7</sup> The press, Lasswell argues, also serves to interpret events taking place in the world: “Media not only survey the events of the day and make them the focus of public and private attention, but they also interpret their meanings, put them into a context, and speculate about their consequences.”<sup>8</sup>

In addition to informing us about events taking place in the world, many argue that the influence of the media is more drastic, that it in fact ‘defines’ the external world for us. Bernard Cohen, a foreign policy expert interested in the connection between the media and foreign policy, advanced research on this topic. He concluded that the media actually helps determine what the public thinks about:

For most of the foreign policy audience, the really effective map of the world- that is to say, their operational map of the world – is drawn by the reporter and the editor, not by the cartographer. And if we do not see a story in the newspapers (or catch it on radio or television), it effectively has not happened as far as we are concerned. This is to say, then, that the press is significantly more than a purveyor of information and opinion. It may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling it readers (listeners watchers) what to think about.<sup>9</sup>

The fact that the media is an influential source with the ability to shape our understanding of events, even define our perceptions of the outside world, is not too disconcerting when considering it from an American citizen’s perspective. The United States’ wire services, newspapers, and television stations have the ability to position media personnel virtually anywhere in the world to cover an event as it unfolds. In the US., I watch the evening news, read the morning paper and listen to radio news reports secure in the knowledge that if anything is happening elsewhere in the world, my country’s media is there covering it. Furthermore, I can be sure the journalists covering it have a thorough understanding of my culture, its values, and beliefs.

But what implications does this scenario have for a citizen watching the evening news, reading the morning paper, or listening to radio news reports from a developing country such as

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<sup>7</sup> Harold Lasswell “The Structure and Function of Communication in Society”, Mass Communications (Illinois: U. of IL, 1960), 118.

<sup>8</sup> Doris Graber describes Lasswell’s statement about the press this way in Mass Media and American Politics (DC: CQ Press, 1993), 4-9.

<sup>9</sup> Bernard Cohen. The Press and Foreign Policy (New Jersey: Princeton U Press, 1963), 12 – 13.



Ghana? In the Ghanaian's case, much of the footage, commentary, and articles on international happenings were not written by reporters of their own cultural identity, but by reporters and journalists of the 'developed' world. This is what I intended to find out through the course of my research.

### *Overview of the Ghanaian Media*

The history of the press in Ghana, formerly the Gold Coast, dates back to 1822 when the British colonial government first introduced newspapers to the colony in handwritten form.<sup>10</sup> In subsequent years, the press was largely used as a tool by the colonial government "to extend and consolidate its sphere of influence and authority in West Africa." During the period following the press's introduction, several other newspapers and publications in the Gold Coast emerged. While initially, these publications were owned by the colonial government, soon thereafter African-owned print media criticizing the colonial government began to appear. But the more the Ghanaian press began to question colonial rule, the more the colonial government began to question "freedom" of the Ghanaian press.<sup>11</sup> The colonial government imposed press laws to combat criticism and make it easier to identify publishers, the location of offices where publications were produced, and publications' circulation numbers were introduced.<sup>12</sup>

Continuously, however, Ghanaians established newspapers. Over time, the press gained momentum, and, in pre-independence Ghana, served as an agent to help achieve the country's independence. Newspapers assumed a more nationalistic tone, advocating long-term changes in the country's political, social, economic and educational structure.<sup>13</sup> Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first president, played an active role in this function of the Ghanaian press. Upon returning to Ghana after studying abroad, Nkrumah started a number of his own newspapers. These papers, with mottoes such as "We have the right to govern ourselves" and "Self-government Now", helped perpetuate the movement to get the colonial government out of Ghana.<sup>14</sup> The press industry in Ghana continued to flourish and reached its peak in the 1950s, just before the country gained independence.<sup>15</sup>

At the time of independence, the media was divided into two primary categories – the government owned media and the private media.<sup>16</sup> The press's primary role under Kwame Nkrumah was to safeguard "Ghana's sovereignty and independence."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Clement E. Asante. *The Press in Ghana Problems and Prospects* (Maryland: U Press of America, 1996), 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

Since the time that Nkrumah led the country to independence Ghana's press has oscillated between varying degrees of freedom. Today, there is one wire service in Ghana, the Ghana News Agency (GNA). The GNA was developed in 1957, with help of Reuters, Great Britain's news agency. There are two national daily papers, the Ghanaian Times, established in 1958, the Daily Graphic, established in 1953. both are state owned, subsidized heavily by the government. There are a number of independent weeklies and bi-weeklies, but no independent daily newspapers. Currently there are two television stations operating in Accra, Ghana Television (GTV) and Television<sup>3</sup> (TV3). Ghana television was established in the 1960s under the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC). The GBC also has a radio division which functions under it as well.<sup>18</sup> TV3 is a young television station; it just began operation in October of 1997. There are a number of radio stations that currently operate in the country as well.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., Chapter 1.

## METHODOLOGY

I used a combination of observations, background research, and interviews to collect data for this research project. My observations of foreign news on Ghanaian television, radio in Ghanaian papers are what led me to question the dominance of foreign news distributors in Ghana's media. Through the use of books and journal articles on the Ghanaian media, the media in general and neocolonialism, I conducted adequate background research.

Following my background study, I targeted the different media organizations at which I hoped to conduct interviews. I interviewed personnel news. I wanted to gain a thorough understanding of the foreign news coming through to the Ghana News Agency, the daily Ghanaian newspapers, an independent newspaper, the television stations and a couple of the radio stations known for the news they broadcast.

In light of these goals, I conducted formal interviews with the following people: Harry Mouzalas, Reuter Correspondent and Senior Editor on the Africa-Europe desk at the Ghana News Agency; Abigail Acquaye, Foreign News Editor at the Ghanaian Times, Kobby Asmah, Foreign News Editor Public Agenda, Charles Pappoe, Head of Production at Television<sup>3</sup> (TV3); Francis Sasu, journalist and Foreign News Editor at Ghana Television (GTV); Mawuko Zormelo, Head of Talks at JoyFM; Jacqueline Asante-Danso newscaster and journalist at Radio Gold.

After I identified the media organizations and personnel with whom I wanted to conduct interviews, I drafted introduction letters present when visiting the organizations to make appointments to conduct interviews. Simultaneously, I developed three standard questionnaires: one for the print media, one for radio, and one for television to be used as guides during my interviews. I asked questions pertaining to the sources of foreign news at the media organizations, questions regarding the selection and processing of foreign news at the organization and questions about the interviewees own personal perceptions of the foreign news content coming through to their organization.

In the meantime, I met Kwasi Opoku-Amankwa, a graduate student at the School of Communications at Legon. After our first couple of meetings, I discussed my research with Kwasi and he offered to accompany me on my initial visits to the media houses in Accra. Though I did not realize it at the time, Kwasi's help proved to be invaluable for a number of reasons as I set out to conduct my research.

While most Ghanaians love and welcome foreigners some media personnel, particularly members of the state owned media, can be suspicious of outsiders requesting interviews and access

to information. As a graduate student having conducted research of his own, Kwasi knew someone or had a friend working at virtually all of the media organizations I planned to visit. Furthermore, he knew the correct protocol for arranging interviews at the media houses here.

Typically, Kwasi approached the receptionist's desk first and introduced himself. Then, he would mention the name of the person he is familiar with at that institution and request to speak with him or her. At that time I would approach the receptionist, show him or her my University of Ghana affiliation letter and the introduction letter presenting my topic of research. When the person Kwasi knew came out to meet us, he and I would both approach him or her and discuss my objective of conducting an interview on foreign news content in the Ghanaian media. Then that person would normally put us in touch with the editor or station manager I was attempting to arrange an interview with. I would then book an appointment to conduct the interview. Though the process sounds convoluted, it generally worked well, and I procured most of my interviews this way.

Having Kwasi as my companion on my initial visits not only made me seem less intrusive to those I was trying to arrange interviews with, but it also legitimized my affiliation with the University of Ghana. Furthermore, having a Ghanaian companion, knowledgeable about the system of tro tros going in and out of Accra proved very helpful to me as I was just getting acclimated to the city. I quickly learned how to get around Accra on 200 cedi tro tro rides, which complemented my limited budget for the month.

Additionally, Kwasi's company assisted me when I came up against obstacles that otherwise may have halted my research. For instance, when I first visited the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) the receptionist notified me that I was required to have a permit from the Ministry of Information before I would be allowed to pass through the entrance gates of the GBC. Kwasi recognized that this request was simply a formality the GBC requires foreigners to comply with. He then filled out a visitor's form himself, went in to the GBC offices, tracked down the man I was attempting to meet with and brought him out to the waiting room so I could speak with him. Had Kwasi not been there accompanying me, I probably would have spent the following couple of days attempting to secure a research permit from the Ministry of Information.

Though I am proud of what I accomplished in this month, as in all research, there were definite limitations on my study. While I am confident in the techniques I used to collect my data and the objectivity with which my interviews were conducted, a number of constraining factors my have compromised my data and conclusions.

Time was the biggest limiting factor. The time it took to move from one location in Accra to another during the afternoon traffic jams the city limited the number of interviews I could conduct in one day. Having to visit most of the media organizations in person to book appointments to conduct my interviews also absorbed an exorbitant amount of time. Waiting for those I had booked

appointment with to interview, sometimes for periods of close to two hours, and having to reschedule a number of interviews I arranged because of other engagements that arose in my interviewees schedules also monopolized time that could have been better spent.

In addition, I was researching under the impression that those I interviewed would divulge their impressions of the foreign news received, processed and broadcast or printed by their organization. Though my interviewees were willing to share information with me, they may have been less willing to express a good deal of their perceptions or impressions about foreign news content broadcast or printed by their media organization for fear of abandoning their loyalties to their employer.

Furthermore, I constantly felt I was working against the media's desire to find out exactly what I was researching. Though I avoided divulging too much information for fear of biasing interviewees response, I feel that in some cases, impressions of my research, or the bits of knowledge respondents might have had about my project could have tainted the way they answered my questions. Once collected, I analysed my data in terms of describing the sources, processing and selection of foreign news, evaluating media personnel's perceptions of foreign news content in the Ghanaian media.

## CHAPTER 1

### *Sources of Foreign News*

Each of the newspapers, television stations, and radio stations in Ghana rely on one or a combination of international news agencies or wire services, for foreign news. By looking at the international news agencies each media organization utilizes, and analyzing how much of each organisation's foreign news is supplied by foreign wire services, we can better understand how dependent Ghana's media is on outside sources for foreign news.

#### **The News Distributor**

##### *The Ghana News Agency (GNA)*

“We hold the monopoly of foreign news in this country,” says Harry Mouzalas, Senior Editor on the GNA's Africa-Europe desk.<sup>19</sup> Virtually all of the foreign news coming into Ghana passes through the Ghana News Agency before it is disseminated to Ghanaian newspapers, television and radio stations. The GNA monitors news from a number of international news agencies and has service contracts with three main international news agencies: Reuters (UK), Agence France Press (AFP) (France) and Deutschland Press Association DPA (Germany). It receives transmissions from these three agencies via satellite.

Though the Ghana News Agency has contracts with three international news agencies, most of the international news coming into the GNA is from Reuters: “Reuters makes up about 55 to 60 percent of our foreign news, maybe even up to 75 percent.”<sup>20</sup> While the crux of foreign news comes from Reuters contracts the Ghana News Agency maintains with other foreign news suppliers sometimes fluctuate. For instance, the GNA presently has a contract with AFP, but is currently not receiving news from the French wire because of an unpaid bill.<sup>21</sup>

The Ghana News Agency is also a member of the Pan-African News Agency (PANA) a news organization made up of various African member events in the state to the collective PANA news pool. Once article contributions are collected from each member state, articles are then distributed to all members. Once the Ghana News Agency receives articles from PANA, the GNA then forwards these articles to its clients. Clients then decide which articles to include in their publications or on their broadcasts.

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<sup>19</sup> Harry Mouzalas. Senior Editor GNA, interview by author, 27 November 1997, Accra tape recording, possession of author. Here and after, all references to this experience will be for this date and time.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 27 November 1997

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. 27 November 1997.

## **Print Media**

### *Ghanaian Times*

The Ghanaian Times, has two pages of foreign news. One page is devoted solely to news on Africa. Another, separate page is devoted to events occurring in parts of the world outside of Africa. The Times subscribes to news from the Ghana News Agency. Therefore, all of the foreign news going into the Times passes through the GNA first. Because the Times relies on the GNA for its international news, virtually<sup>22</sup> all of the international news in the Times comes from international news wires. The Times receives its foreign news from the GNA, which relies on Reuters for an overwhelming amount of its foreign news coverage. Therefore, the majority of the international news stories, between 70-8- percent, in each edition of the Times originate from Reuters.<sup>23</sup> Other foreign news comes from AFP, DPA and PANA. Only on rare occasions are PANA news articles used in the Times.

### *Daily Graphic*

Like the Ghanaian Times, the Daily Graphic also has two full pages of international news in each edition – one page of African news and another page of foreign news events taking place outside the continent. The Daily Graphic also has a service agreement with the GNA; so most of the Graphic's foreign news is received this way. Consequently, the majority of foreign news going into the Graphic comes from Reuters. The Graphic supplements the news it receives from the GNA with the use of internet websites for international news. The foreign news staff at the Graphic visits websites of inter-media organizations for stories; for example, "Excitement" has a range of foreign stories the Graphic staff often selects from.

### *Public Agenda*

The international news in the weekly news publication, the Public Agenda, is patterned after the daily Ghanaian newspapers. Each weekly edition had two pages of international news – one devoted to African news, and another devoted to news happening in the rest of the world. Sources of

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<sup>22</sup> Abigail Acquaye, Editor Foreign News Ghanaian Times, 21 November 1997, Accra, tape recording, possession of author. Here and after, all references to this experience will be for this date and time. In the interview, Ms. Acquaye stated that 'all' international news in the Ghanaian Times comes from foreign sources. Later in the interview, however, she discussed the efforts the Times to send reporters abroad to cover events. So due to uncertainty, the word 'practically' has been added above.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 21 November 1997

foreign news at the Agenda, however, differ from those at the Times and the Graphic. The Agenda does not subscribe to the GNA for foreign news. Rather, most of the foreign news in the Agenda comes from the International Press Service (IPS) and African Informatic Agency (AIA). The IPS and AIA have information in article form on the internet, which can be used without a formal agreement, as long as the information is credited in the paper when used.<sup>24</sup> Richard Afari, the Acting News Editor at the Agenda, was unsure, however, whether any payment is made to these organizations for the use of these articles.<sup>25</sup>

The news staff at the Agenda monitors British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Cable News Network (CNN), and picks up information from them as well. Additionally, connections the Agenda has outside the country, in what Mr. Afari describes as “third world circles” provide information as well. “Third world circles” are progressive circles outside of Ghana, in places such as Malaysia, that send publications and printed material to the Agenda on topics such as the environment. This material is often adapted and reproduced in the paper. And while the sources of information are credited the Agenda need not have a formal agreement with the provider to use such stories.

## **Television**

### *Ghana Television (GTV)*

GTV broadcasts a thirty-minute news bulletin each evening at 7.00 pm. Of that thirty-minutes, approximately ten-minutes of the news is international news. Virtually all of that foreign news coverage is from other sources. GTV news comes from these sources, except when on occasion the GTV has reporters outside of Ghana covering events independently. Additionally, the GTV is a part of a news exchange program called “Afro Vision” which bears similarities to PANA. AfroVision attempts to link and disseminate African news to African countries. The philosophy behind the program is that “Africa must cover Africa from Africa’s own point of view.” Each member country sends news stories from their country to the collective AfroVision pool. The collected stories are then sent to all member countries.

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<sup>24</sup> Richard Afari, Acting News Editor Public Agenda, interview by author, 1 December 1997, Accra, tape recording, possession of author. Here and after all references to this experience will be for this date and time.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 1 December 1997



## *TV<sup>3</sup>*

TV<sup>3</sup> broadcasts its first evening news bulletin every night at 7.00 pm for thirty minutes. Its second news bulletin is broadcast at 10.30 pm and runs for fifteen minutes. While the 10.30 bulletin consists mostly of local news, the seven o'clock bulletin includes a blend of both national and international news. On average, ten to twelve minutes of the seven o'clock bulletin is devoted to foreign news. The station relies on Reuters, for all international news it receives. Because TV3 has a direct agreement with Reuters television, both the visual feed and commentary reach TV3 without passing through the GNA first. The Reuters visual feed is transmitted to TV3 via satellite. The commentary is transmitted by way of computer.

## **Radio**

### *JoyFM*

JoyFM broadcasts the news every hour on the hour beginning at 7.00 am each morning. Most newscasts consist of local news. For foreign news Joy has a standing contract with the BBC, from which it receives the radio news broadcasts aired on British radio. The station rebroadcast BBC news periodically throughout the day and also broadcasts BBC sponsored shows mandated by the contract. One such show is "Focus on Africa" most often referred to as "FOCUS" The show is broadcast every afternoon at 3.00 pm and concentrates solely on events occurring in Africa.

### *Radio Gold*

The news on Radio Gold is broadcast every hour. The hourly newscasts are 5-6 minutes in length, and include both local and foreign news. While Radio Gold relies on the GNA for local news stories, the crux of foreign news broadcast on station comes from the internet. Staff members access the CNN and BBC websites for the latest foreign news stories.

Radio Gold also has a standing contract Voice of America (VOA), through which it receives radio news broadcast on American radio. In addition to the Voice of America radio news, particular VOA shows are rebroadcast every day on Radio Gold as well. "Talk to America" and "Africa Well Tonight" are two such shows rebroadcast directly from VOA.

## CHAPTER II

### Selecting and Processing of Foreign News

The manner in which media personnel process the foreign news coming into their organization plays an important role in how the story is displayed on the pages of the Ghanaian newspaper, or broadcast on the television or radio news. While some stories may be edited, others may be directly reprinted or rebroadcast from foreign sources without any alterations made to them. How each media organization processes the international news it receives is indicative of how that establishment views the news that comes in from foreign sources.

#### Print Media

##### *Ghanaian Times*

Once the foreign news reports arrive at the Times, the foreign news editor, Abigail Acquaye, sifts through the stories and selects the articles to be used. While a variety of articles come through the wire, only a number of them can be included in each edition of the Times. The first criteria used in selecting a story is how current the story is. “We pick out those (articles) that are important to us. We look at the trend internationally – what is important what is interesting.”<sup>26</sup>

After the articles deemed most important are selected, they then go through an editing process. Sometimes, an article is rejected outrightly. Other times, portions of articles are edited. For example, some of the language might be slightly altered or the framing of the article might be edited. For instance, if an article uses insulting language with regard to a political leader, the Times will attempt to edit that language out. Because, Ms. Acquaye explained, it is in the Ghanaian culture, no matter what the circumstance, for Ghanaians to respect their leaders and elders.

Additionally, Ms. Acquaye said, the Times attempts to rid articles of sensationalism of the facts, though this is sometimes difficult. At times, articles exaggerate the facts: “Five people are killed and we are led to believe that 100 or 10 people have been butchered.” While some alterations may be made to particular stories, they are still credited to the news source they originated from.

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<sup>26</sup> Acquaye, 21 November 1997

## *Daily Graphic*

Processing and selecting articles at the Daily Graphic resembles the process used at the Ghanaian Times. Relevance is the primary concern when selecting, foreign news stories to include in the Daily Graphic. A number of articles come through the Graphic each day. They must compete for selection. Kobby Asmah, an editor and journalist on the foreign news desk at the Daily Graphic explains, “A newspaper should be like a mirror. It should reflect what is happening in the society.” So the paper attempts to select foreign news stories that adequately reflect what is happening in Africa and the rest of the world.

Once the foreign news stories are selected, the stories are then edited. According to Asmah, the foreign news stories are edited in an attempt to report just the substance matter. Sometimes, Asmah explains, unnecessary descriptive language is used simply to enrich a story:

Reporting a coup in Nigeria does not give you license to say the people of Nigeria are dirty looking, barbaric and everything else... at the end of the day you are harming that country because of the impression that you leave with the story.<sup>27</sup>

Also during the editing process, Ghana’s foreign policy agenda is taken into consideration. For example, Ghana is a member of the United Nations (UN). If the UN has taken a stand against Iraq, Asmah explained, the Daily Graphic will not “rail against” the UN. There are certain responsibilities according to Asmah, attached to being a UN member state.

## *Public Agenda*

While the sources of foreign news are different for the Public Agenda than for the Ghanaian Times and the Daily Graphic, the processing and selection of articles is much the same. When preparing to put out any given issue of the Public Agenda, there are always more articles to choose from than can be included in the edition of the paper. During the selection process, the issues the Public Agenda champions, such as policy issues and developmental issues are what the editors’ bears in mind. So one of the chief objectives in the selection process is that the articles reflect the paper’s concerns.

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<sup>27</sup> Kobby Asmah, Foreign News Editor and Journalist Daily Graphic, interview by author, 21 November 1997, Accra, personal work journal, possession of author. Here and after, all references to this experience will be for this date and time.

After selection, articles are then adapted and / or edited before they are printed in the newspaper. For example, articles may be rewritten to reflect the concerns of the paper. Articles may also be edited for language. Sensitive words, diction that is considered “too strong” is omitted from articles: “There are words that might look appropriate in some cultures, but they are insults over here... For example, ‘He’s a foolish man.’”

Additionally, articles coming from foreign sources may have to be edited for context. Locations, are often referred to in articles originating from foreign sources that are unfamiliar to the typical Ghanaian. “The original writers assume that everybody knows where Essex is. But a Ghanaian may not know it. So we have to place all those things in context and rewrite it so that it makes sense to a Ghanaian.”<sup>28</sup> Similarly, the articles may have to be edited for words in the English language that may be unfamiliar to Ghanaians for whom English is a second language. English vocabulary that is commonly used in some cultures is often not familiar here in Ghana.

## **Television**

### *Ghana Television (GTV)*

Because Ghana Television is dealing with both incoming video footage and incoming commentary, the selection and processing of international news is lightly different. Of the international news coverage that is broadcast on the GTV, the video footage is almost always broadcast without is going through an editing process. The footage might be clipped for length, but generally, the images are not edited or rearranged once they have been received.

Commentary, however, is almost rewritten or edited. According to Francis Sasu, a journalist working for GTV, based at the GBC. “The way the American press reports something from Africa is a little bit different from the way and African will report it from Africa,” so the commentaries often must be edited to reflect an African perspective.<sup>29</sup>

### *TV3*

When selecting the processing the foreign news at TV3, a number of things are done. Because TV3 receives visual feed and commentary for close to 100 items, a great deal of selection has to be done. Priorities of selection include (1) Importance of the story to Ghana (2) Importance of story to Africa (3) Importance of story to the rest of the world. In general the only editing the visual

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<sup>28</sup> Afari, 1 December 1997

<sup>29</sup> Francis Sasu, foreign news journalist Ghana Television, interview by author, 24 November 1997, Accra, tape recording, possession of author. Here and after, all references to this experience will be for this date and time.

feed might undergo in addition to the editing that occurs due to length are for purposes of graphic images. For instance, if the video images are too graphic, they will be eliminated from the visual feed.

The article commentaries that accompany the visual feed are typically edited. Primarily, scripts are edited because they are longer than the time allotted for foreign news on the news broadcasts. At times, stories are also edited for other reasons:

Some stories have slants that are not in the interests of Africa. They are slanted because they were written not by Africans, but by non-Africans... I'll give you an example. The Reuters script may describe a group as a rebel group. But if we consider what they (the group) are doing as nationalistic we won't describe them as rebels, we'll describe them as nationalists.<sup>30</sup>

## **Radio**

### *JoyFM*

Selection and processing the foreign news broadcasts that take place on JoyFM differ from the preparations made by other forms of the media. Because Joy has a standing contract with the British Broadcasting Corporation, when the news from the BBC is retransmitted, no selection or editing process takes place. In the case of the foreign news coming from sources other than the BBC, the stories do go through a selection and editing process.

When selecting articles from various sources, the first criteria considered is how pertinent a story is. Stories that are “fresh and hot” are those elected from among the many incoming stories. Many articles must then be edited before they are read over the radio airwaves. For instance, particular news items “may have certain salient derogatory adjectives like ‘primitive’ – like ‘black West Africa’,”<sup>31</sup> So deletions are made to eliminate those adjectives. Once the articles are void of those descriptions, the remaining information is correct. While editing is impossible when directly rebroadcasting the BBC, editing may occur in follow up broadcasts that carry the same story. For example, if the BBC carries a story containing particular adjectives, those adjectives will not be carried on the follow-up news broadcasts on Joy.

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<sup>30</sup> Charles Pappoe, Head of Production Television 3, interview by author, 25 November 1997, Accra, tape recording, possession of author. Here and after, all references to this experience will be for this date and time.

<sup>31</sup> Mawuko Zormelo, Head of Talks JoyFM, interview by author, 24 November 1997, Accra, tape recording, possession of author. Here and after, all references to this experience will be for this date and time.

When rebroadcasting the news from Voice of America, editing is not possible. The foreign news coming from sources other than Voice of America, is subject to a selection and editing process. The selection is done primarily when news is searched for via computer on the internet, when editors and broadcasters from Radio Gold are searching for the latest news of the day at the various news websites they visit.<sup>32</sup> Stories with an international focus are of top priority, particularly stories where Africa, Ghana particularly, might be effected.

The editing that then takes place is done primarily for purposes of length. Because the news broadcasts on Radio Gold are so brief, it is not possible to broadcast the entire news articles that are taken from the net. The bare facts are selected from the story and the rest is omitted from the news broadcast. “Undesirable” things are omitted from the stories as well. For example, if someone is quoted and uses offensive language, the offensive words are removed from the article. But generally, only the facts are extracted from the stories and broadcast.

### **The News Distributor**

#### *Ghana News Agency (GNA)*

“We hold the monopoly of foreign news in this country,” commented Harry Mouzalas, senior editor on the Africa-Europe Desk at the Ghana News Agency. Because the GNA monitors a number of international news agencies selection and processing is lengthy. Once the foreign news comes through to the GNA, the foreign desk edits the articles and then disseminated from the GNA’s clients. On average, 100-200 foreign news items are disseminated from the GNA daily typically, only a fifth of those stories are actually used in the papers or broadcast on radio or television.

The criteria used in selecting foreign news items first includes relevance to Ghana: “For example, what is happening in Nigeria is of much more interest to us – if there is a workers’ strike in Nigeria, it is of much more interest to us than a strike in France would be discarded for the strike in Nigeria. In addition, stories that have some political, economic, and social implications internationally. Furthermore, stories that would be of particular interest to GNA clients are selected.

After the selection is made, the stories are then edited. Primarily the editing is conducted to correct grammatical errors that come through the wire. Other times, negative words might appear that are omitted. For example, language like “impoverished Sierra Leone – or impoverished West

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<sup>32</sup> Jacqueline Asante-Danso, broadcaster and news editor, Radio Gold, interview by author, 25 November 1997, Accra, tape recording, possession of author. Here and after, all references to this experience will be for this date and time.

African state” would be taken out according to Mouzalas.<sup>33</sup> After minor alterations are made, the articles are then distributed to GNA’s clients.

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<sup>33</sup> Mouzalas, 27 November 1997.

## CHAPTER III

### Perceptions of Incoming Foreign News

While all of the media organizations in Ghana depend on one or some combination of international news organizations to supply them with foreign news, many of those selecting and processing, incoming foreign news from these organizations have varied perceptions of the news that flows in. Some are unsatisfied with aspects of the foreign news coverage. One of the most frequently expressed dissatisfactions among Ghanaian media personnel concerns the way Africa is portrayed by international news organizations. Specifically, personnel are apprehensive about international news agencies' lopsided coverage of the continent. The glut of news reports from the foreign wire, many argue, focus solely on Africa's trouble spots:

We are very cautious about how we use the stories that come from outside (of Africa) concerning Africa... Most of the stories that come from foreign sources regarding the African continent, they always harbor on the negative happenings in Africa – drought, starvation, genocide, civil wars, so on and so forth... they hardly ever touch on the development aspects of Africa.<sup>34</sup>

The fact that foreign news agencies focus on negative events, without giving positive events adequate coverage, repeatedly came up in the interviews with members of the Ghanaian media that I conducted. While no one contested the factual accuracy of news reports concerning disastrous happenings in Africa, recurrently the sentiment was expressed that the overwhelming negative reports of the continent creates an impression that nothing positive takes place in Africa. And while the editors and journalists interviewed exhibited some degree of concern about the implications of this negative coverage for those receiving it inside Africa, more concern was expressed about the image of Africa this creates for the outside world.

The majority of media personnel interviewed feel that Ghana's newspapers, television reports, and radio news reports are able to counter this influx of negative news with their own reports which highlight positive happenings on the continent. The worry is that this same balancing does not occur in other parts of the world. As a result, the world only hears about the negative occurrences in Africa, and has no choice but to view Africa in the terms laid out by those reports – as a continent rife with disorder and hardships.

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<sup>34</sup> Acquaye, 21 November 1997



Some can “understand”, to an extent, the reasons for this negative focus.<sup>35</sup> Catastrophic happenings in the Western world, especially when they pertain to countries that are geographically distant, are often what we considered to be newsworthy events. At the same time, however, interviewees argue that it is unreasonable for the Western world to focus almost solely on these negative happenings, without giving positive occurrences some amount of news space as well.

Others recognize that this “negative” coverage reaps some benefits when Africa is in turmoil. The amount of attention these types of events receive, according to Kobby Asmah of the Daily Graphic, prompts more countries to respond to these crises when they are occurring. If these events did not receive as much media attention, he believes there would be less of a response from the international community when they happen.<sup>36</sup>

In addition to the perception that the glut of news reports concerning Africa are negative, a number of interviewees articulated the belief that there is a marked difference in perspective that can often be detected in stories coming in through from foreign news agencies. The inclusion of locations, such as Essex, and descriptive adjectives like “black West Africa”, both noted in the previous chapter, indicate that the authors of those articles were not writing for an African audience. While the most interviewees feel these things can easily be adjusted in the editing process the articles undergo, they acknowledge that minor attachments like these still indicate a kind of “western bias”.

A few interviewees went on to note that at times, the difference in perspective remains in some articles, despite the alterations that the editing process allows. Sometimes, removing the descriptive adjectives is not enough to eliminate the difference in point of view that is sometimes integrated in articles coming from foreign news agencies:

...the way and American press (employee) will something from Africa will be a little bit different from how an African is seeing it... If I as an African go to Liberia and cover the war in Liberia, I may understand it from an African point of view, what is happening in an African sub-region, better than when someone from the Western world is covering it.<sup>37</sup>

It is not solely a matter of difference in personal perspective that concerns media personnel with regard to articles coming in from foreign news agencies. Differences in cultural values are also apparent in a percentage of foreign news reports as well “Western” definitions of democracy and human rights, often differ from the way a Ghanaian defines such things. Because notions about what

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<sup>35</sup> Asante-Danso, 25 November 1997

<sup>36</sup> Asmah, 21 November 1997

<sup>37</sup> Sasu, 24 November 1997

is democratic, or a violation of human rights, is often different for someone in the United Kingdom than for someone in West Africa, articles and story commentary frequently reflect this discrepancy.

A number of interviewees, for instance, mentioned articles coming in from foreign news wires that label Laurent Kabila, the leader of the resistance movement to overthrow Mobutu Sese-Seko in the former Zaire, as a “rebel”. Because Kabila led the movement to depose what most western governments would refer to as a “democratically elected president” he was portrayed as a rebel insurrectionist in the Western media. Many interviewees, however, feel Africans view Kabila not as a ‘rebel’ but as a “victor.”<sup>38</sup>

While members of the Ghanaian media think that international news coming from foreign news distributors is still less than ideal at times, a couple of those interviewed have the impression that current coverage is an improvement from the foreign news coverage Ghana received in the past. They acknowledge that changes in the way that foreign news wires go about covering events have minimized much of the bias that used to exist in international news coverage. For example, where previously, the Reuters correspondent in Ghana would have been a British citizen, today it is common to find local people serving as correspondents for foreign news wires.

Harry Mouzalas, GNA Reuter correspondent, believes that while some of the news stories coming in through the foreign wire still have an inherent western bias, many of the past biases associated with things like parachute reporting<sup>39</sup> have been shed: “These (former) biases have, I might say, have even been eliminated because of the new breed of correspondents, which are now localized.”<sup>40</sup> None of the other interviewees went so far as to declare that the bias in international news coverage from foreign news sources “has been eliminated.” However, others interviewed also expressed the sentiment that the bias used to be more blatant than it is today.

Despite some of the drawbacks of relying on foreign news distributors for international news, overall, those interviewed believe that coverage Ghanaians receive is thorough. All were secure in the fact that if anything newsworthy is occurring in the world, the foreign news services their media organizations depend on will cover it. But while all feel that important events will without a doubt be covered, those interviewed have conflicting perceptions as to how well the foreign news services cover the events.

Of those interviewed, some feel that Ghana will continue to see the outside world through a western lens as long as it depends on foreign news agencies for the bulk of its international news. Others believe that the western biases in reporting are not drastic enough to warrant serious concern.

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<sup>38</sup> Reference to Laurent Kabila was made in interviews with both Kobby Asmah, 21 November 1997 and Charles Pappoe, 25 November 1997.

<sup>39</sup> Parachute reporting was a tactic used by many foreign news agencies in the 1980s. It involved sending reporters to foreign countries to cover events for only a brief period of time. Often reporters lacked knowledge about the host culture, the country’s history, and did not have a firm grasp of the language spoken there.

<sup>40</sup> Mouzalas, 27 November 1997.

But all interviewees believe that depending on international news agencies for foreign news coverage is all the Ghanaian media can do as a developing country, with limited finances, to adequately find out what is happening in the world.

## CHAPTER IV

### The Future of Foreign News Content in the Ghanaian Media

In Africa our problem is finance. It all boils down to finance...the media in Ghana would like to be in Somalia to find out what is happening there, we would like to go to Kenya to find out what is happening there, we would like to go to Zaire or Congo to find out what is happening there – but we can't go. So we have to rely on the western world to feed us some of the information.<sup>41</sup>

Repeatedly, interviewees stated that as much as their media organization wants to be everywhere in the world covering events, until the issue of finance can be addressed, they will continue to depend on international news agencies for foreign news. And while most respondents stated that the time when Ghana's media will function independently is far off in the future, some attempts to decrease dependence on international news agencies are being made.

PANA and "AfroVision", both explained in Chapter II, are two steps the Ghanaian media is making to increase foreign news covered from an African perspective. The Pan-African News Agency (PANA) is the first effort Ghana media has made to decrease dependence on the large international news agencies. But while the philosophy behind PANA is shared by the media organizations in Ghana, effective implementation of PANA as a news agency has not been realized. Recently PANA's level of operation has decreased due to lack of funds.<sup>42</sup> And only a small amount of news stories offered by PANA are actually used by the media organizations in Ghana. While interviewees expressed the desire to use PANA more effectively in the future, it is important to note that without the necessary funds that goal cannot be achieved.

AfroVision is another project that has the potential to increase the number of news stories coming into Ghana from other parts of Africa and ensure that they are covered from an African perspective. Though relatively new now, the program is gaining momentum. In the future, AfroVision has the potential to become the source not only from which Africans receive African news, by the source from which the world receives news about events happening in Africa.<sup>43</sup> In order for this to occur, however, a sustained effort must be made to finance and contribute to the organization.<sup>44</sup>

While a number of options exist through which the Ghanaian media can increase the amount of African coverage in the media and the perspective form which it is written, few options appear to be readily available for the Ghanaian media to begin decreasing reliance on foreign news sources for

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<sup>41</sup> Sasu, 24 November 1997

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 24 November 1997.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 24 November 1997.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 24 November 1997.

news occurring outside of Africa. Currently, the Ghana News Agency now focuses the bulk of its resources on covering news events happening in Ghana. The staff of reporters at the GNA cover local events in every region of Ghana. Because the GNA depends on government funding to run the news agency and employ staff, the budget does not allow for GNA to independently cover international events.

Eventually, the GNA hopes to function like the American Associated Press or the British Press Association. In this instance, the agency would be funded by the various media organizations in Ghana – the Ghanaian Times, Daily Graphic, the GBC etc. In this instance, the GNA would be indirectly owned by the media houses in Ghana to whom it supplies information. In order for this to be possible, however, the necessary capital must be available.

The media organizations in Ghana have laid out a number of goals they hope to accomplish in the future. The chief goal cited in interviews was accentuating an African perspective when covering African events. But until the necessary financial backing can be procured, this aim will never be achieved. And while most respondents stated the objective of covering international news independently of the foreign news agencies they now rely on, when asked, they were reluctant to even consider the possibility of this happening in the foreseeable future, according to interviewees, the adequate finances to take on such a mission, or even begin to take steps toward such a mission, just do not exist for the Ghanaian media. And as long as the Ghanaian media continues to grapple with the serious issue of finance, foreign news content in the Ghanaian media, for better or for worse, will continue to come from international news agencies.

## Analysis and Conclusions

Kwame Nkrumah envisioned the press as a revolutionary tool through which Ghana could shed the weight of its colonial rulers:

Our revolutionary African press must carry our revolutionary purposes. This is to establish a progressive political and economic system upon our continent that will free men from want and every form of social injustice and enable them to work out their social and cultural destinies in peace and at ease. (In this respect)... the African newspaper is a collective educator – a weapon, first and foremost to overflow colonialism and imperialism, and to assist total African independence and unity.<sup>45</sup>

And while Ghana's media successfully called its country's people to collectively throw off the fetters of colonialism, it can be argued that since independence the Ghanaian media has become an unwitting agent of neocolonialism. In "Sub-Saharan Africa's media and Neocolonialism," Jerry Domatob argues that in relying on foreign news services and outside sources for news "the African mass media practitioners champion neocolonialism by promoting values, lifestyles and issues that are anathema to theirs." This suggestion, however, is overly simplistic.

Though the Ghanaian media relies on outside sources for its foreign news, which is far less ideal than covering events independently, is not safe to assume that this information passes onto the pages of the newspapers and is broadcast on news reports unfiltered. After interviewing a number of media personnel who process and select the international news coming into Ghana each day, it is clear that the Ghanaian media does not serve as a junkyard in which the international news distributors are free to dump their cultural values and mores.

While biases that perpetuate stereotypes about Africa and categories world happenings according to western frames of reference can undoubtedly be found in some of the stories coming through from the foreign wire, the editing process stories go through is usually adequate to remove unnecessary descriptors and to recast the story so references will be more familiar to someone living outside the "developed" world. Therefore, when considering the Ghanaian media's reliance on foreign news distributors, it is important not to discount the editing process most stories are subjected to. There appears to be a heightened consciousness among the media professionals in Ghana regarding international news content, especially stories concerning other parts of Africa, coming in from these foreign sources. According to interviewees, coverage from foreign sources, in fact is subject to more scrutiny because it comes in through the foreign wire.

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<sup>45</sup> Kwame Nkrumah. "The African Journalist". Dar-es-Salaam: Tanzanian Publishers, December, 1965. Cited in *Ibid.*, 155.

Frequently, however, interviewees assumed that slants or biases in foreign news articles coming through the wire are always obvious. Respondents almost always remarked about the ease with which the biases could be removed from the articles. Only on rare occasions was it noted that it is often impossible to detect whether or not incoming information is completely valid. “Facts are facts” stated Mawuko Zormelo, of JoyFM after reviewing the editing process incoming news undergoes at the station, “just because someone says ‘black man’ (instead of just ‘man’) you can’t say you’re not going to take his information.” Biases in incoming news, however, are not always this obtrusive.

While the Ghanaian media makes an attempt to identify and rid incoming articles of blatant biases, when relying so heavily on foreign news wires for information it is sometimes impossible to be sure that the information received is valid. While the reputation of an international news organisation can lend credence to its news reports, if there is not way to cross check information, the Ghanaian media must trust that the news coming through is accurate. Being in a position where faith is the only cross checker of information, however, leaves room for the subtle type of neocolonialism mentioned in the introductory chapter of this study.

When interviewing Daily Graphic reporter Kobby Asmah about his experiences as a journalist in Rwanda immediately following the 1994 Rwanda genocide, he pointed out that it was not until after he went to Rwanda to report the crisis that he realized how much Ghanaian troops had done both during and after the genocide. “Because we weren’t there, we weren’t aware of the scale that our troops were contributing.”<sup>46</sup>

Prior to the two-week period in 1994 when a group of Ghanaian media personnel were sent to Rwanda to cover the contributions Ghanaian troops were making to ease the genocide’s aftermath, the Ghanaian media relied on news reports from foreign news agencies. According to both Kobby Asmah and Francis Sasu, the journalist sent to Rwanda to cover the genocide for GTV, the role the Ghanaian troops played in the genocide was glossed over by the international news distributors. Me. Sasu, pointed out that the efforts of American or Canadian troops were those that were highlighted in the media with respect to Rwanda. Prior to going, he thought the Ghanaian troops were only contributing minimal to the United Nations mission there. It was only after he went into Rwanda that he and the other Ghanaian media personnel discovered the extent to which the troops were contributing.

But what about the many instances where it is impossible for the Ghanaian media to travel outside of Ghana to cover events on its own? When this question was posed, respondents most often cited that they double check information coming in with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and other

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<sup>46</sup> Asmah, 21 November 1997

sources. Most stated that the inability to sometimes verify information in one drawback of depending almost solely on foreign news distributors for international news.

The foreign wires' failure to acknowledge contributions made by Ghanaian troops stationed in Rwanda is only one example where the international news coverage provided by foreign news distributors was inadequate. In this instance, articles coming in through the foreign wire were focused through a western lens that chose to accentuate only the efforts of developed countries. Had Ghana's media not traveled there to investigate the efforts of their troops, Ghanaians might not have even known that their country was contributing to the UN mission. This example demonstrates the greatest threat of the Ghanaian media's dependence on international news distributors. By depending on foreign sources for international news, the Ghanaian media thereby had no option but to accept the way the coverage is fashioned. While some alterations can be made, there is really nothing that can be done to discern whether the article is reflective of the situation on the ground. Any reporter is subject to his or her own biases and must operate against them. But because the Ghanaian media relies on the developed world, namely that the bias inherent in the articles it receives will be a western or first world bias.

Lack of funding in the Ghanaian media is at the root of its reliance on outside sources for international news. With more funding, the media could focus attention on sustaining PANA and Afro-Vision and depending less and less on outside sources for its news about the world. But media personnel seem to lack confidence in the possibility of Ghana's media ever functioning as a truly independent entity. No cohesive vision, comparable to the vision linking the media during the struggle for independence, currently exists. Because no outlook toward the future presently unites the Ghanaian media it has failed, thus far, to pursue options through which it will eventually be able to free itself from relying on outside sources for international news, and until that happens, the Ghanaian media will be unable to sever its dependency on outside sources for international news coverage any time soon.

The consequences of relying almost exclusively on foreign news wires for foreign news coverage, does have implications for Ghana and sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. It adds to the ways in which the developing world rely on the developed world. It is clear that the Ghanaian media, despite limited funds and resources, does its best to filter the information it receives. Likewise, foreign news agencies have cut down on biases because of efforts to install correspondents that localized. Despite this, however, the Ghanaian media inevitably is on the receiving end of a relationship that fosters the seeds of neocolonialism. The relationship of foreign news is not clear-cut enough to declare that the Ghanaian media promotes or champions neocolonialism through foreign news coverage. However, it is obvious that as long as the Ghanaian media continues to rely on outside sources for its information, a Ghanaian listening to foreign news on radio, television or



reading it in the paper cannot be sure whose cultural values, frames or reference, or stereotypes he or she is receiving. The only way to be sure, is to station your own people on the ground. Even that action, however, has the potential for bias.

To conclude, there are a number of suggestions for further study that were beyond the scope of this work, but would be helpful in determining the course the Ghanaian media is taking with regarding to both foreign news content and neocolonialism of the Ghanaian media. Firstly, it would be helpful to study neocolonialism of the Ghanaian media through advertising that promotes values and tastes of the western world. It would also be enlightening to discover how much attention “important” events in the western world receive in the Ghanaian press, and whether they overshadow events taking place in Africa. Furthermore, conducting a comparative study tracking news events in the United Kingdom press and Ghana’s printed press would be helpful as well.

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