A comparative analysis of Channels TV and CNN’s coverage of World News

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This study did an analysis of the Western and Third world coverage of World News using the broadcast stations (CNN and Channels TV) as case study. In other words, the study sought to examine if the Western and Third World nations are still guilty of imbalance, bias and distortion in their treatment of news. The findings showed that both the North and South nations are guilty of bias and imbalance in their coverage of World News and that each nation seeks to promote their interest rather than a true world interest or the interest of their counterpart nations. The study further revealed that the Third World media still depend heavily on Western media sources for its news albeit their standpoint on the News Flow debate. About 50% of the entire World News stories on Channels TV were sourced ‘outside’, while about 40% were unidentified. Only 10% were from the in-house personnel. It was also observed that about 55 and 67% of World News coverage by Channels TV and CNN, respectively, were focused on ‘bad news’; an age-long controversy that has bedeviled news coverage globally. In view of the foregoing, it has been recommended that there is need for the acceptance of ‘imbalance’ as a major feature of all media systems as well as a re-evaluation of the standards and values of news evaluation. The rapid industrialization of Third World economies will also go a long way to stop the one-way traffic in international communication which is what encourages media dependence.

INTRODUCTION

There is no gainsaying that the News Flow Controversy is one of the current and most topical issues in international communication today. Generations have come and gone, issues have been raised and lowered, yet the News Flow Controversy remains undeterred. The controversy is largely about the demand by the Third World countries known as the South who desire a change in the existing pattern of news representation and flow between her countries and that of the First World nations known as the North. It is also one of the key debates in the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) (Figures 1 and 2).

At present, one constant way of staying connected with our world is through getting adequate information and communication which is customarily given by the media. Information can be regarded as a valued resource that fuels the economy and at the same time drives individuals. Even today’s advanced technologies in many areas are deeply immersed in information and that is why today’s society is called an ‘Information Society’. Abeb (2007: 1) plainly establishes the importance of communication in the society thus:

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"Every human society so called primitive or modern, depends on communication to enable its members to live together, to maintain and modify working arrangements about the social order and social regulation and to cope with the environment."

Despite the need for adequate information/communication in countries, there are still expanding gaps between and within countries. Specifically, the type of gap being discussed is the one that exists between the North and South countries. ‘Information empowers, and those who work with information must realize that its flow like good communication must be two way’ (Godlee, 2008: 1) (Figures 3 and 4)

This situation can be regarded as an ‘Information Divide or Gap’. This gap between the Western and Third World countries is currently widening such that it is more vivid than any imbalance in other fields. As mentioned earlier, the News Flow Controversy is one of the key debates in the NWICO. Without any doubt, the debate which was taken up by the United Nations Educational,